



Moral Values of the Main Character in *Yellowbird* Movie

Nilai Moral Tokoh Utama di Film *Yellowbird*

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Abstract

Yellowbird is a movie for children directed by Christian De Vita that contains a lot of moral values. This movie includes stories of family, friendship, fun, and happiness. It is necessary to discuss more deeply how the author conveys moral values in this movie. The method that is used in this study is a qualitative method. The primary data was taken from the *Yellowbird* movie and the secondary data were collected from various sources. The data were analyzed in the framework of moral values by Sam Harris (Harris, 2010). In the classification of moral values, the researcher uses 11 categories of moral values according to Hornby (2010). The findings revealed that there were 11 moral values: bravery, humbleness, honesty, steadfastness, sympathy to others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, trustworthiness, kind-hearted, sincerity and love, and affection. If viewed from the point of view of Sam Harris, this movie teaches the moral values that are allegorically carried by the *Yellowbird* character.

Keywords: *Yellowbird* movie; moral value; main character

Abstrak

Yellowbird adalah film anak-anak garapan Christian De Vita yang sangat sarat akan nilai moral. Film ini bercerita tentang keluarga, pertemanan, keseruan, dan kebahagiaan. Film ini perlu dibahas lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana penulis film menyampaikan nilai moral di film buatannya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif. Data primer penelitian diambil dari film *Yellowbird* dan data sekunder diambil dari berbagai sumber. Kedua data tersebut kemudian dianalisis menggunakan kerangka nilai moral cetusan Sam Harris (2010). Peneliti mengklasifikasikan nilai-nilai moral yang ditampilkan di film menggunakan 11 kategori nilai moral yang milik Hornby (2010). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 11 nilai moral dalam film ini, yaitu: keberanian, rasa rendah diri, kejujuran, keteguhan, simpati kepada sesama, sifat kooperatif, rasa syukur, kepercayaan, sifat baik hati, ketulusan dan cinta, dan kasih sayang. Jika dilihat dari teori Sam Harris (2010), film ini mengajarkan nilai-nilai moral yang secara alegoris dibawakan oleh tokoh utama film *Yellowbird* yang bernama *Yellowbird*.

Kata kunci: film *Yellowbird*; nilai moral; tokoh utama

1. Introduction

A movie develops literary drama works, then visualized into a complete story by actors and actresses. In addition to popular entertainment sources, a movie is also a medium for education because it contains moral values and provides social teachings. A movie works as a medium that provides information to the audience. A movie is also a form of expression similar to art media, formed through a series of images or visuals, sounds, and movements that are integrated and exported (Petrie, & Boggs, 2008). Movies are constructed of other forms of art, which include painting and photography, drama, art, music, and literature (poetry and novels) (Endraswara, 2016).

Children's movies have similarities with children's literature because they both contain children's stories. What distinguishes the two is the media used. Children's movies are stories that are shown visually, while children's literature is not. In addition, the thing that equates children's movies and children's literature lies in their function, which is both to entertain and provide education for children. According to Huck, Hepler, Hickman, and Kiefer (1987), children's literature contributes to children's development, one of which is personal values. Personal values in children's literature are emotional development, intellectual development, imagination development, social sense growth, and ethical and religious growth.

According to Sam Harris (2010), morality is the principle of behavior that allows people to flourish. As stated in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, morals are related to the standard or principles of good behavior (Hornby, 2010). Moral values are inherent in humans, which involve good and bad deeds as a guide to life in general. Moral value is considered very important because it can be used as a guide to encourage someone to act and as a source of motivation. Therefore, moral values tend to regulate and limit human actions in everyday life.

Researchers usually convey moral values through characterizations to show the character's personality. According to Kosasih (2012), characterization is how researchers describe and develop characters in stories. Meanwhile, as defined in *Kamus Istilah Sastra*, characterization is the process of the emergence of a character by giving the character, nature, or habit of a character in a story (Zaidan, Rustapa, & Hani'ah, 2004). Character or character gives physical and spiritual characteristics to an actor or character in the story (Sugiarti, 2007).

Literature intends to deliver a good message for the audiences. Likewise with literature in movies, one movie with a message for the audience is *Yellowbird* (De Vita, 2014) movie. *Yellowbird* movie is a French-Belgian animated fantasy released on October 11, 2014. Christina De Vita directed this movie with a duration of 88 minutes. There are 16 characters in this movie, namely Yellowbird, Delf, Karl, Michka, Darius, the Oul, Willy, Gus, Anton, Lisa, Gigi, Max, Maggie, Janet, Ladybug, and Fleck. *The Yellowbird* movie presents animals as characters in the story and is marketed for children to watch.

This research analyzes the moral values from the *Yellowbird* movie. This analysis is considered important because it can be used as a learning material for children. In this movie there are many personal values in children, such as children's emotional development, intellectual development, imagination development, social sense growth, and ethical sense growth. To understand the story of the movie, at first, the story of the movie will be assumed as children literature. Children's literature includes stories that can be enjoyed by children to adults. In general, children's stories contain interesting contents that children like, such as animal characters (Ateequ, 2015). The stories also emphasize the hope for better future as well as moral education (Lynch-Brown & Tomlison, 1999). Children's literature provides information and understanding about life that are delivered in a way children can understand (Nurgiyantoro, 2004). Shortly, morals are one of the elements that build children's literature.

Yellowbird movie tells the story of a great orphan bird who never gets out of his comfort zone but suddenly becomes a leader for immigrant birds. One of the focuses of the story is about the process of saving a group of immigrant birds from death before winter arrives. In this *Yellowbird* adventure, there are many stories of courage. *Yellowbird* has always been against his timid personality. In addition, *Yellowbird* has a helpful attitude, and has a high sense

of caring. In addition, this movie also includes family stories, sadness, and happiness. Animals, in children's stories, are present to teach moral and social behavior. The animal can be assumed as a form who used a mask upon the human face (Flynn, 2004). Based on this, it is necessary to discuss in more depth how the author conveys moral values in this movie. The moral values in this movie will be analyzed based on the categorization of the types of moral values proposed by Hornby (2010), which consist of bravery, humbleness, honesty, steadfastness, sympathetic to others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, kind-hearted, trustworthiness, sincerity, and love and affection.

2. Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The source of data is taken from two sources of data, namely primary data is data collected from the *Yellowbird* movie and secondary data is data collected from various sources. The technique of the data collection was obtained from several stages, namely watching, taking screenshots, note-taking, and identifying the data. The data is analyzed by presenting, describing, and then interpreting the data based on the moral values perspective. This study uses the concept of moral value by Sam Harris (2010). Harris says that moral values are the principles of behavior that allow people to develop. In the classification of moral values, the researcher uses 11 categories of moral values by Hornby (2010).

3. Finding and Discussion

Moral values are images of human behavior or attitudes. The standard of good behavior that everyone must follow is usually already set by society. It already exists in the community. According to Hornby (2010), morality relates to the standard or principles of good behavior. In addition, Susana (2018) states that moral values are beliefs and values of people that conform to normal standards of what is right and wrong and deals with people. Hornby categorizes moral values into 11 categories including, bravery, humbleness, honesty, steadfastness, sympathetic to others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, kind-hearted, trustworthiness, sincerity, and love and affection. The moral values above are depicted in *Yellowbird* character as seen in the explanation below.

To start with, *Yellowbird* dared to venture into the forest for the first time to fulfill *Ladybug*'s request, to pick up a game seed that had been thrown far away. It can be seen in the following figure and dialogue:



Figure 1. *Yellowbird* enters the forest for the first time

Yellowbird : *Oh no!*
Ladybug : *Oh, sorry! I didn't mean to hit that far..*
Now you have to take it.."
Yellowbird : *No problem*
Ladybug : *Aw..aaw..! (pretend)*

Yellowbird : *What's wrong?*
Ladybug : *Ouch it hurts, I sprained my jaw..or sprained it.
Aw..! My legs..., paralyzed! (pretend)
Oh, you have to take the seeds!*
Yellowbird : *But..you shot it very far over there...*
Ladybug : *You're a friend of Valiant!
You are our only hope.*
Yellowbird : *Can we play another one..?*
Ladybug : *Never! The seeds were a gift from Ladybug grandma!*
Yellowbird : *You said, those seeds were from the forest two days ago?*
Ladybug : *It's hereditary. Pleass, honey bunny..
I beg you! Aaww!!! It hurts!!*
Yellowbird : ***Ok, ok I'll do it..***
Just..stop calling me 'Bunny' OK!
I'm doing this because we're friends." (sad expression)
Ladybug : *Good .. (in a small voice)*

The figure and dialogue above shows a Yellowbird who is about to enter the game to collect game seeds. This story begins in an old damaged building in the middle of the forest. The building is used as a nest for Ladybug, Yellowbird and a herd of rabbits. Yellowbird never leave the nest to fly. Ladybug is very concerned about the Yellowbird, which cannot live like other birds that can fly across the world. Yellowbird never leave the nest because of its high fear. Yellowbird is sometimes taught by Ladybug how to deal with enemies, but that does not make him dare to leave the nest. However, one day Yellowbird is playing with Ladybug by throwing seeds into each other's goalposts. Ladybug is very upset because Yellowbird manages to get the seeds into the Ladybug's goalpost. When it is Ladybug's turn to throw, she thinks of a plan to throw the acorn deep into the forest. The female flea does this on purpose so that the Yellowbird can get out of the nest and into the forest.

From the above dialogue, it can be seen that Ladybug said that she accidentally throws the seed and pretends her feet hurt so that only Yellowbird has to take the seeds. Ladybugs are willing to lie so that Yellowbird will take the seeds. Ladybug says that the seed is the seed of Ladybug's grandmother so it is very valuable to Ladybug. Ladybug sends Yellowbird and says he is her only hope to get the seeds. Finally Yellowbird goes into the forest and takes the seeds. As seen in the dialogue above, Yellowbird says, "*ok I'll do it ..*", when Yellowbird says that, it shows that he is ready to face any problems or dangers that he may experience while in the forest. He is willing to do this because they are friends, as seen in the dialogue above when Yellowbird says, "*I'm doing this because we're friends."* It is Yellowbird's guiding principle that he can face all kinds of dangers and difficult obstacles while in the forest. Actually Yellowbird is afraid because it is his first time leaving the nest and entering the forest. However, because of this principle, he dares to do it. He has a reason to struggle to take the seed in the forest for his friend.

From the description above, the thing that shows the existence of bravery and moral value is when Yellowbird fights his fear to go into the forest to take seeds which are very valuable for Ladybug. According to Hornby, bravery is fighting for what is considered right by facing all forms of danger, difficulty, pain, and others. Here, even though Yellowbird is afraid, he is willing to face all forms of danger in the forest in order to retrieve the seeds that are very valuable for Ladybug. Therefore, what Yellowbird does is considered an act of bravery because he is willing to fight for what is considered right by facing all forms of danger, difficulty, and pain.

Beside being brave, the humbleness is shown also by Yellowbird.

Willy : *You save him again! Thank you, super hero.*

Previously, Willy thanks Yellowbird for saving Fleck from a strong wind after Fleck secretly goes from the inn tree to a high cliff to try to jump and learn to fly. Fleck loses control and falls off the cliff. When he falls, Fleck is immediately carried away by strong winds and it sends him flying. Willy, who is trying to help Fleck, is also thrown and hit by a rock. Finally, Yellowbird runs and tries to save Fleck from the strong winds but he fails. Luckily there are seals holding back the wind that carry them away, so they survive. After the incident, Willy immediately approaches his sister like in the dialogue above. In fact, Yellowbird has helped Fleck, although it fails because his small body is unable to dispel the wind and instead makes him toss about in the wind.

From the description above, Yellowbird's attitude shows humbleness and honesty when Yellowbird responds to Willy, who wants to thank him. He realizes that what he does is nothing. He admits his weakness and that he is not able to save Fleck, but he still has the bravery to try. McCloskey's theory (2006) states that someone humble as well as honest prefers to cover up his strengths and admit his weaknesses.

On the other hand, his effort to save Fleck shows his empathy to help others. His spontaneous action demonstrates his charity to save other people from getting hurt. In addition, empathy is always shown by people who are sincere in helping others. At the same time, children who watch this story will learn good moral values: humbleness, honesty, sincerity, kind-hearted, sincerity, love and affection, and also empathy to others.

In other dialogue from the movie, researchers found steadfastness. Steadfastness refers to the attitudes and aims which are not changed (Hornby, 2010) as like always praying if God decreases the test and no revenge. The value of steadfastness shown by Yellowbird in this movie is seen when he endures the decision he has made, which is to lie to a flock of newcomers about what Darius said to him in order to see the outside world and have friends who are similar to him. There are several scenes that show Yellowbird almost giving up on his decision, but it never happens, and sticks to his decision, (time duration, 33:32- 36:16). It can be seen in the following figures and dialogues:

City bird : *Hit! (teaching his friends). move there, short!
Find another place! (while pushing yellowbird). Fly you,
creamy!*
Yellowbird : *I just want to know, which way to Africa!*

Yellowbird is being mistreated while in town. It starts when Yellowbird wants to ask for directions to a flock of city birds (can be seen in the dialogue above). As a result of what he experiences above, Yellowbird finally hesitates to continue the journey with a flock of immigrant birds. After the incident in town, Yellowbird tells Delf of his indecision to continue the journey as shown in the following conversation:

Yellowbird : ***It's so difficult. I have to go home, lots of work at home***
Delf : *What are you talking about?*
Yellowbird : *This is what I think. Do we really have to go to "Africa"?*
Delf : *What do you mean?*

It shows that Yellowbird has a bad experience while in town and says he wants to give up and not continue his journey to Delf. He hesitates to continue after he finds that he misses the direction and nobody helps him when he asks for information. So, he expresses the utterances as shown in the above dialogue.

Yet, he then reaffirmed his resolve to continue his journey with the flock of immigrants and after Delf declared that he will take responsibility and continue their journey. Delf motivation becomes his strength to continue the journey.

Yellowbird together with Delf apply the spirit of cooperativeness from those dialogue and situations. Relying on a friend during a journey is the real example of cooperativeness since everyone in groups should share the same spirit and involve doing something together or work together toward a shared aim (Hornby, 2010).

Yellowbird also has a great personality who is always thankful with everything he has, as seen in these figures and dialogue below:



Figure 2. Fleck and Yellowbird are carried by strong wind



Figure 3. The seals save Fleck and Yellowbird

The figure above is the scene where Yellowbird thanks the seal for saving them from the strong winds. Yellowbird is very grateful that he and Fleck survive the strong winds. This scene begins when Yellowbird tries to help Fleck from a strong wind. However, because of Yellowbird's small body, he cannot help Fleck and is dragged along by the strong wind. However, after a while, there are seals that blocked the strong wind and make them stop and not be carried away by the wind anymore. In Figure 3, Yellowbird says *"Thank you very much, sir"*. These words of gratitude show that Yellowbird feel happy and grateful because he is saved from the strong wind. From that explanation, Yellowbird's actions and words thanking the seals for being saved from strong winds are moral action, namely the thankfulness value. Based on what Hornby (2010) says that thankfulness is a word or action that shows that someone is grateful to somebody for something.

In the scene above, Yellowbird is doing a conversation with Seals. Seals here have good character, love to smile and are friendly, and have great body characteristics. Seals here are

just an allegory of humans who have good character and are friendly to anyone. The scene above shows Yellowbird thanking the Seals for saving him. Here Yellowbird is an allegory that shows human behavior. If you get help, you must be grateful.

Yellowbird is a French-Belgian animated fantasy movie released on October 11, 2014. The movie is directed by Christina De Vita and it is 88 minutes long. *Yellowbird* movie is a movie that makes animals as characters in the story and also the story contains imagination and a good example of Yellowbird's attitude so this movie is very suitable for children. The researcher found that this movie is in line with Hornby's 11 types of moral values because it showcases bravery, humbleness, honesty, steadfastness, sympathy to others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, trustworthiness, kind hearted, sincerity and love, and affection.

The moral value of bravery in this movie is found more. This is because this movie tells the story of an orphaned bird, Yellowbird, who has a very big fear of the outside world, never leaves the nest, and does not fly like normal birds. However, suddenly he becomes the leader of a flock of immigrant birds to go to Africa, so he values a lot of bravery in this movie. The story begins in an old building that acts as a nest for Ladybugs and a herd of rabbits. An egg that is about to hatch falls in an old building and soon hatches. After it hatches, the baby bird meets Ladybug and a herd of rabbits. That is the first time Yellowbird is found and cared for by Ladybug. Yellowbird is taught by Ladybug about surviving in the world. Once Yellowbird is big, Ladybug begins to worry about Yellowbird because he lives unlike other birds that can fly around. Yellowbird has not been able to fight his fear of the outside world and continues to stay in the nest. Until one day, Yellowbird has to get out of the nest to fulfill Ladybug's request to retrieve some seeds. Yellowbird ventures into the forest and takes the seeds for Ladybug. Although he is initially afraid, Yellowbird eventually is able to go outside the nest and into the forest.

Due to his meeting with the leader of a flock of immigrant birds who is dying and leaving a message to him, finally Yellowbird never returns to the nest and is able to leave the nest. Yellowbird finds Darius dying in an old building in the woods and leaves a message for his family to change their previous route due to the large number of iron birds. Darius has been sought by his family, and is found before his last breath. Since the last word to Delf is to listen to Yellowbird, they finally asked Yellowbird what message their leader is conveying. Accompanied by Ladybug, Yellowbird conveys Darius' last message to his flock. Ladybug tells Yellowbird to lie to the flock about Darius's message that he will lead their journey to Africa because only he knows the new route. Yellowbird follows Ladybug's plan and is ready to lead the flock. He has to lie so that he can become part of the flock and travel the world. During his travels with them, Yellowbird is always kind to the flock. He is helpful, friendly, and polite. At the beginning of their trip, Yellowbird almost gives up because of a bad experience while they are in the city, but he perseveres. So in making this journey, Yellowbird has the toughness to survive. Even though he faces many obstacles, he remains patient. Until one day they get lost and stuck in winter. Yellowbird finally tries to be honest to the immigrant flock that he has been lying to them all this time. After telling the truth, Yellowbird goes to calm down and in the end he comes up with an idea to take responsibility for his mistakes by saving them from winter and also bringing them to Africa by riding iron birds. Seeing the sincerity of Yellowbird who is willing to sacrifice for them and has also been good to them all this time, the flock finally believe in Yellowbird. They follow his orders as they board the plane and in the end they make it to Africa.

From the story of Yellowbird's journey, there are many good values that can be taken. Because this movie contains children's stories, this movie is suitable to be used as a tool to provide education to children. This movie tells the story of happiness, sadness, adventure, and also many moral values that can be taken by children to develop their personalities. Such as emotional development, intellectual development, imagination development, social sense growth, and ethical, and religious sense growth. From the results of the study, it can be seen that bravery is the most prominent moral value found in this movie. In conclusion, children who watch this movie can get the enthusiasm so that they can apply it in their lives to fight their fears and become a brave person.

4. Conclusion

Moral values are one of the main elements in a children's movie. Moral values in children's movies are used as a tool to provide education to the audience. Children can capture or understand moral values in movies with children's stories directly because the characters convey moral values in movies that are simple and straightforward. For example, when a character conveys something good, the children can already determine whether it is good without having to re-analyze whether it is good or not. These good things will become education for children. This good education will develop personality and become life lessons for children who watch movies. According to Hornby (2010), moral values are divided into 11 categories: bravery, humbleness, honesty, steadfastness, sympathetic to others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, kind-heartedness, trustworthiness, sincerity, love, and affection. This research aims to describe the moral values that are depicted in the movie *Yellowbird* by following Hornby's (2010) 11 categories of moral values and Harris' (2010) framework of moral values. All the data found in this study is obtained from the main character's scene, which is based on every action, dialogue, and idea performed by the main character. Upon analyzing the data, it was found that the character Yellowbird showcases all the 11 types of moral values by Hornby (2010). The most prominent moral value in the Yellowbird movie is bravery. Yellowbird depicts this bravery by fighting his fears when he goes through life trials, where he initially is a fearful bird. He has managed to save flocks of immigrant birds from winter and bring them to Africa, following what Sam Harris says that moral values are principles of behavior that allow people to develop. So, because of the morals that Yellowbird has, he becomes a brave bird.

The implication of the research is that this movie is good learning material for children. The adventure story in this movie is very suitable for a moral life lesson for children aged over 10 years. The strength of the delivery of the movie and to the point will make children who watch this movie catch the moral message that the characters want to convey. *Yellowbird* movie contains children's stories, namely adventure stories, where these adventure stories can be life lessons for children, that life does not always go well, but there are many dangerous things out there. So by watching adventure movies, children are no longer surprised when they see unexpected events because they have seen it first through watching movies. In addition to moral discussion, there are still many interesting topics to be studied about from this movie.

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