

**MORAL VALUE FOUND IN THE MOVIE “DEAD POETS SOCIETY” BY
PETER WEIR**

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Abstract

The aim for this research first to identify the types of moral values in the movie Dead Poets Society by Peter Weir. Second, to find out how these values shape the characters' journeys and contribute to the film's overall message of individuality, integrity, and the importance of pursuing one's passions despite societal pressures. This research used qualitative research method with descriptive types. The result of this research show that there are 9 types of moral values in Dead Poets Society such as the moral value of bravery, honesty, steadfastness, sympathy for others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, kind-heartedness, trustworthiness, and love and affection.

Keywords: *Dead Poets Society, Movie, Moral Value*

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini pertama untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis nilai moral dalam film Dead Poets Society karya Peter Weir. Kedua, untuk mengetahui bagaimana nilai-nilai ini membentuk perjalanan karakter dan berkontribusi terhadap pesan keseluruhan film mengenai individualitas, integritas, dan pentingnya mengejar minat meskipun ada tekanan sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 9 jenis nilai moral yang ada dalam Dead Poets Society yaitu nilai moral keberanian, kejujuran, ketabahan, simpati terhadap sesama, kerjasama, rasa syukur, kebaikan hati, dapat dipercaya, serta cinta dan kasih sayang.

Kata kunci: *Dead Poets Society, Film, Nilai Moral*

1. INTROCUCTION

Movie has an element that often associated with moral value that includes characterization, plot and conflict, themes and messages, dialogue and languages. Characterization is the portrayal of characters in Movies plays a significant role in conveying moral values. Characters who exhibit virtues such as courage, kindness, honesty, and empathy often serve as moral exemplars. Conversely, characters who display negative traits like greed, deceit, or cruelty may represent moral warnings or cautionary tales. Plot and conflict is the narrative arc of a Movie, including its plot development and resolution, can reflect moral themes and values. Movies often present moral dilemmas faced by characters and explore the consequences of their decisions. Conflict resolution in Movies may emphasize moral growth, redemption, or the triumph of ethical principles. According to Movie theorist David Bordwell, "The resolution of conflicts in Movies often reinforces moral values, demonstrating the consequences of actions and the importance of ethical choices" (Bordwell, 2008). Themes in Movies frequently address moral themes and convey implicit or explicit messages about right and wrong, justice, responsibility, and the human condition. These themes may be woven into the narrative, dialogue, symbolism, or visual imagery of the Movie. Movie scholar Thomas Elsaesser noted, "Movie often reflect societal values and moral concerns, prompting audiences to reflect on their own beliefs and behaviors" (Elsaessar, 2019). The dialogue and language used in Movies can directly articulate moral values, ethical dilemmas, and philosophical inquiries. Well-crafted dialogue may convey moral lessons, moral reasoning, or moral ambiguity through characters' interactions and conversations. Movie theorist David Bordwell emphasized, "dialogue and Movies serves as a vehicle for exploring moral questions and engaging audiences in ethical reflection" (Bordwell, 2008).

Moral values are the principles and standards that guide individuals in distinguishing right from wrong and making ethical decisions. According to Schwartz (2006), moral value represents desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives. These values often encompass concepts like honesty, integrity, compassion, and justice, shaping behavior and attitudes. Lickona (2004) describes moral values as the foundation of ethical behavior, emphasizing the importance of virtues such as respect, responsibility, and fairness. They play a crucial role in personal development and social interactions, influencing how individuals relate to others and contribute to society.

Additionally, Haidt and Joseph (2008) highlight that moral values are often rooted in cultural, religious, and philosophical traditions, reflecting shared beliefs and practices that promote social cohesion and individual well-being. These values are not only personal but

also collective, guiding communities in establishing norms and expectations that foster mutual respect and cooperation. Lawrence Kohlberg (2008) expand on this by suggesting that moral values are developed through stages of moral reasoning, from obedience to avoid punishment to the adherence to universal ethical principles. According to Kohlberg, these stages reflect a person's ability to think critically about ethical issues and make decisions based on justice, rights, and human welfare.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative method. This approach is selected to deeply explore the narrative and thematic elements of the Movie and to understand the moral values conveyed through its characters, and dialogues. Qualitative analysis is employed to systematically examine the Movies content; this method involves categorizing various elements of the Movie to identify moral values. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative content analysis allows researchers to interpret and contextualize the material within its social and cultural framework, providing a comprehensive understanding of the underlying messages. Interpretive analysis is used to explore the deeper meanings and implications of the Movie's narrative. This involves analyzing the Movie's symbolism, dialogues and character interactions to uncover the moral and ethical lessons presented. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) suggest that interpretive analysis helps in understanding how viewers perceive and are influenced by the Movie's moral message.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher wants to explain the types of moral value that the researcher used to identified moral value in the movie Dead Poets Society including the dialogue that the researcher consider as the moral value from each moral value types.

a. Bravery

According to Pratiwi (2019), Bravery is the willingness to face and overcome adversities is a sign of courage and resilience. Characters who display these characteristics frequently inspire others via their determination and endurance. Whether they are overcoming personal difficulties, confronting external threats, or overcoming apparently insurmountable obstacles, their bravery and resilience serve as compelling models of what can be accomplished through unflinching resolve and character.

The data presented below:

“I stand upon my desk to remind myself that we must constantly look at things in a different way.” John Keating to his class. (43:12)

John Keating teaches his students to break free from conventional thinking and to see the world from new perspectives. His act of standing on the desk symbolizes bravery in challenging norms and encourages them to think independently and creatively.

b. Honesty

Character's honesty and integrity are critical for generating trust and respect because they constitute the foundation of ethical behavior and moral character. (Salima, 2022).

The data presented below:

“Acting’s everything to me.” Neil Perry to John Keating. (1:26:07)

Neil's honesty about his desires shows his courage to be open with Mr. Keating about something he wants to do in life.

c. Steadfastness

Characters who exhibit perseverance demonstrate the ability to remain dedicated to their principles and values in the face of hardship (Pratiwi, 2019)

The data presented below:

“Boys, you must strive to find your own voice. Because the longer you wait to begin, the less likely you are to find it at all.” (John Keating to his class 44:27)

In this dialogue John Keating urges his students to take ownership of their own voices and express their individuality. This dialogue encourages them to persevere in their search for self-identity, emphasizing the moral value of steadfastness in the face of societal expectations.

d. Sympathetic to others

Characters who demonstrate empathy and compassion for others, emphasizing the value of understanding and helping others (Pratiwi, 2019).

The data presented below:

”Neil, we love you!” (Todd Anderson to Neil Perry 1:38:45)

In this dialogue Todd Anderson give compliment to Neil after his performance is a moment of genuine support and encouragement. Todd's words show how sympathy and empathy can strengthen friendships and build confidence in others, fostering cooperation and understanding.

e. Cooperativeness

Characters who demonstrate empathy and compassion for others, emphasizing the significance of understanding and supporting others (Pratiwi, 2019).

The data presented below:

“We’re not laughing at you, we’re laughing near you.” (John Keating to his class 54:50)

In this dialogue Keating creates an environment of cooperation and mutual support, encouraging students to participate without fear of judgment. This line, delivered to reassure Todd during a poetry exercise, reflects the moral value of cooperativeness by showing how people can work together to create a safe, nurturing space for self-expression.

f. Thankfulness

Expressing gratitude and appreciation promotes a healthy and thankful mindset (Pratiwi, 2019).

The data presented below:

“Thank you, boys.” John Keating to class. (2:05:14)

John Keating’s gratitude toward his students reflects his appreciation for their openness and engagement. His words show that thankfulness can be reciprocal, as he values the students’ willingness to embrace his teachings. This dialogue conveys that gratitude is not only about receiving but also appreciating the growth and experiences shared together.

g. Kind-hearted

Characters that are empathetic and exhibit kindness to others, instilling empathy and concern (Pratiwi, 2019).

The data presented below:

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” Knox Overstreet to Chris (1:13:39)

Knox’s apology reveals his kind-hearted nature, as he shows genuine concern for Chris’s feelings, putting her comfort before his own.

h. Trustworthiness

Character reliability and dependability, which is critical for creating solid partnerships (Pratiwi, 2019).

The data presented below:

“I think you have something inside of you that is worth a great deal.” John Keating to Todd Anderson. (55:40)

Mr. Keating’s words to Todd convey his belief and trust in Todd’s potential, even when Todd himself is hesitant. By expressing his trust in Todd’s abilities, Keating fosters a bond of trust, encouraging Todd to be more open and self-assured. This moment illustrates how trustworthiness can help someone grow into their potential by believing in them even when they have doubts.

i. Love and Affection

The expression of love and affection is vital to human relationships and emotional well-being (Pratiwi, 2019)

The data presented below:

“If you don’t like me after tonight, I’ll stay away forever” Knox Overstreet to Chris (1:32:14)

Knox’s open expression of his feelings for Chris reflects love and affection, showcasing his genuine emotions and desire for a deeper connection.

I have collected the data of kinds of moral value quantity that found in the movie, the result is shown below:

No.	Kinds of Moral Value	Quantity
1	Bravery	6
2	Honesty	3
3	Steadfastness	5
4	Sympathetic to others	4
5	Cooperativeness	2
6	Thankfulness	2
7	Kind-hearted	1
8	Trustworthiness	2
9	Love and Affection	1

The most kind of moral value found by the researcher is moral value of bravery, and the most dialogues that embedded the moral value is dialogues between John Keating and his student.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This research has explored the moral values embedded in Peter Weir’s movie *Dead Poets Society* and examined how these values correlate with each character’s personal journey. The analysis found that *Dead Poets Society* is a rich narrative that presents essential moral values such as bravery, honesty, steadfastness, sympathy for others, cooperativeness, thankfulness, kind-heartedness, trustworthiness, love, and affection. Each of these values serves as a core component of the story, shedding light on the choices, challenges, and transformations that the character’s experience throughout the movie.

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