

# An Analysis of Moral Value Potrayed in Paulo Coelho's *The Spy* and Eka Kurniawan's *Cantik itu Luka*: A Comparative Literature Analysis

Citra Mei Riana Tambunan<sup>1\*</sup>, Martha Pardede<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study discusses a comparative literary study of two literary works with different nations and languages, but with similar motif, which is Moral Values. This study uses the concept of Moral Values which provides the concept of values that have a Commitment to something greater than oneself, Self-respect but with humility, self-discipline, and acceptance of personal responsibility, Respect and caring for others, Caring for other living things and the environment. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, that uses the data sources the two novels *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho and *Cantik itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan and the data is obtained from novel quotes of the data in the form of words and sentences. Then, the results The novel *The Spy* fulfills these four moral values. Meanwhile, the novel *Cantik itu Luka* only fulfills three of the four moral values.

**Keyword:** Comparative Literature, Immorality, Moral Values, Novel

Received [25 Aug 2022] | Revised [2 Sept 2022] | Accepted [12 Sept 2022]

## 1 Introduction

Values are things that enable individuals or social groups to make decisions about what is needed or as something to be achieved. Values are important things that need to be known and then encouraged by morals so that certain attitudes can be formed towards these values. Moral plays an important role in human life. Moral comes from the Latin; *mores* which means the procedures for behaving or habits that are common and accepted in human actions which are good and reasonable. Moral is habits, it is a picture of good and bad that is determined for individuals as social beings. It can vary from a geographical area, religion, family and life experiences to others.

---

\* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

E-mail address: citratambunan05@gmail.com

Nowdays, most people seem to ignore the behavior that reflects the moral attitude, especially for women. Women, who reflect bad moral can be seen from the way she speaks impolitely, and how she chooses promiscuity by having different freesex relationship. The motif of women's moral values such as attitudes in moral actions are motivated by the failure of women to carry out the right way of life, self-guilt for harm is done to others, respect for others. Motif is dominant ideas, central themes and deeper meaning of a story and motif has similarity with the other meaning which is universal traditional and appears repeatedly in the two literary works. Moral values of woman as a motif again and again appeared in literary works.

Along with that, literature is a picture of the real-life of human socialit. There are three genres of literary works, these genres originated from prose, poetry, and drama. In this paper the writer tends to analyze the novel. Novel as a literary works gives information to readers about reflection reality that existed in human's life. In the novels, there are characters to resrepresentative of human behavior that reflected through novels. Moral has a close relationship with character, because moral is reflected by character. This study, interested in seeing the similarities and differences in the morals of women in literary works from two different nation, so this study compare analysis the two literary works.

Comparative Literature looks at the similarities and differences between the two literary works from two different nations, in addition to observing both, at the same time looking for a relationship or connection between the two literary works. This study, the researcher wants to compare two literary works by applying motif analysis which focuses on the motif of moral values of women as the object of the study. This study finds moral values of main character as the dominant motif in the novels. In addition, focuses on the moral values of the main characters in the novel.

In the novel *The Spy*, the life Of Margarete Gertrud Zelle is shrouded in myth. born in the Netherlands as Margaretha Geertruida Zella and married at the age of 18 to a Dutch officer. She change her name become Mata Hari when she lived in Indonesia. Mata Hari is one of those woman who seek and uphold truth and justice when her husband who is 20 years her senior turns out to be an alcoholic and is often bullied, but Mata Hari remains committed to something bigger like taking responsibility for herself. *The Spy* has a job as a dancer to make ends meet and Mata Hari began to experience economic difficulties that made her a paid prostitute. Mata Hari is responsible for what made her suffer and she accepts the things that happened because of her actions.

In the novel *Cantik itu Luka*, describes the real life of most people very uniquely. This beautiful novel tells the story of a woman named Dewi Ayu. Her beauty is famous everywhere but her beauty brings bad luck to her life and her descendant. Dewi Ayu aware even though she is a prostitute, Dewi Ayu is still a woman who has a motherly soul, affection, and love for a child.

She takes care of her children to avoid all kinds of actions that hurt her children. Dewi Ayu has humility and is not selfish. Even when Dewi Ayu wanted to decide to end her life, Dewi Ayu was never selfish. Dewi Ayu thinks about her four children and the maid who is still her responsibility. So that Dewi Ayu left a legacy for them to survive after she died.

Writer Paulo Coelho tells the story of the beautiful and mysterious espionage expert Mata Hari in the novel *The Spy*. This novel comes from Portuguese and has been translated into English, Indonesian and several other language. This novel of course departs from the dramatic story of a spy and the power of Coelho's imagination, which uses a first person narrative form. The novel *Cantik itu Luka*, the novelist Eka Kurniawan from Indonesia, is very open and talks about the sex drive with the sometimes strange imagination of each character. Eka Kurniawan's novel has been translated into English, Japanese also been discussed in the New York Times.

## **2 Research Method**

This research conducted by using qualitative descriptive method. In the current study is to describe descriptively the moral value that found in *The Spy* and *Cantik itu Luka* Novel. Qualitative research is methods for the study of [1]. The data for this research are the quotation such as words, clauses, sentences, found in the two literary works which are the data source as following *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho and *Cantik itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan. In the collecting the data, the writer did the steps reading the primary data, which are the two novels, repeatedly and indentifyinf the moral values that are in the two novels, searching the secondary data, which are the books and articles of journal related to comparative literature and moral values, and collect all the data based on the classification and selecting particular data considered relevant for analysis. After reading the primary data, reading the secondary data and then collecting all data, the data will be combined and analyzed to problem of this study. The writer use the model od data analysis as well as sata collection in qualitative research according to Miles and Huberman analysis into three phases, consisting of Data Reduction, Data Displays, and Conclusion.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

Both of these novels have got the similarities that deal with moral value potrayed in Paulo Coelho's *The Spy* and Eka Kurniawan's *Cantik itu Luka*. The motif of these novels basically talks about Moral Value which discribed about woman that showed by most of the main character.

### **3.1 Result**

This study observed the similarities and differences each of novel. The two novels have same motif Moral Values. The writer found in novel *The Spy*, Mata Hari fulfillls Kinner's four

classifications of moral values: Commitment to something greater than oneself, Self-respect but with humility self-discipline, and acceptance of personal responsibility, Respect and caring for others, Caring for other living things and the environment. In the novel *Cantik itu Luka*, the writer found that Dewi Ayu does not fulfill the four classifications of Kinner's moral values, one of which is caring for other living things and the environment.

**Table 1.** Table of similarities and differences of moral values in novel *The Spy* and *Cantik itu Luka*

| Classification of moral values  | The Spy   | Cantik itu Luka   |
|---|---|---|
| Commitment to something greater than oneself.   | <p>“They do not speak about God or condemn me for what society calls my “sins of the flesh.” (Coelho, 2016:14)</p> <p>“If God gave you a second chance, would you do anything differently?” I said yes, but really, I do not know.” (Coelho, 2016:14)</p>   | <p>“Nevertheless, she participated in the joint prayers held by the sisters for the safety of their families living in Europe, regardless Dewi Ayu felt that she did not enjoy the news of the war from anyone there” (Kurniawan,2002:39)</p> <p>“Of course, Grandma. They owed sixteen Christmas gifts and sixteen birthday gifts. That does not include the sixteen Easter eggs.”(Kurniawan, 2002:40)</p>   |
| Self-respect but with humility selfdiscipline, and acceptance of personal responsibility. | <p>“I am a woman who was born at the wrong time and nothing can be done to fix this. I don’t know if the future will remember me, but if it does, may it never see me as a victim, but as someone who moved forward with courage, fearlessly paying the price she had to pay.” (Coelho, 2016:14)</p> <p>“I was never innocent, not since I first set foot in this city I love so dearly. I thought I could manipulate those who wanted state secrets. I thought the Germans, French, English, Spanish would never be able to resist me-and yet, in the end, I was the one manipulated. The crimes I did commit, I escaped, the greatest of which was being an emancipated and independent woman in a world ruled by men. I was convicted of espionage even though the thing concrete I traded was the gossip from high-society salons.” (Coelho, 2016:12)</p> <p>“As I spoke, tears began to stream down my face. Astruc asked if I was okay, but I continued to tell him everything and he said nothing, just sat there listening to me in silence. In finally accepting that I was not at all what I’d thought, I felt I was sinking into a black pit. Suddenly, however, as I faced my wounds and scars, I began to feel stronger. My tears did not come from my eyes, but a</p> | <p>“Dewi Ayu gathered some small children, and the instincts of the prospective teacher came out. She set up a small school in an unused corner of the hall, teaching them many things: reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography. Even at night, she would tell stories to the children.” (Kuniawan,2002:65)</p> <p>“I replaced the earlier girl, Commander. Sleep with me and give her mother medicine and doctor. And the doctor!” (Kurniawan, 2002:67)</p> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | deeper, darker place in my heart, telling me a story that I didn't even fully understand in a voice of its own." (Coelho, 2016:82)  |   |
| Respect and caring for others                      | <p>"My days were spent caring for my daughter, shuffling about the house with a vacant look on my face. I concealed the scratches and bruises under extra makeup, but I knew I wasn't fooling anyone." (Coelho, 2016:26)</p> <p>"I asked if we could sit. It was difficult for me to concentrate as we walked among the crowds of people. She agreed, and we found a bench on the Champ de Mars."(Coelho,2016:63)</p>   | <p>"Dewi Ayu brought the mute girl home, not because she was the payment for that sad night, but because the mute no longer had a father and mother and no other relatives either." (Kurniawan, 2002:14)</p> <p>"Dewi Ayu gathered several small children, and the instincts of the prospective teacher came out. She set up a small school in an unused corner of the hall, teaching them many things: reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography. Even at night, she would tell stories to the children." (Kuniawan, 2002:65)</p> <p>"She finally left while Dewi Ayu tried to compress the sick woman and calm her little sister Ola. She had to wait about ten minutes for Ola to come back without medicine..." (Kurniawan, 2002:67)</p> <p>"That's where Dewi Ayu became a prostitute. She didn't live in "Make Love To Death," nutshell however because she had a home. She left at dusk and returned another dusk. After all, she got three daughters to take care of Alamanda, Adinda, and Maya Dewi who were born three years after Adinda. At night, they are accompanied by Mirah, but during the day she takes care of them like a normal mother. She sent them to the best schools, and even sent them to a surau to learn the Koran (Qur'an) from Kyai Jahro." (Kurniawan, 2002:104)</p> |
| Caring for other living things and the environment | <p>I asked what the seeds were for. "They're tulip seeds, the symbol of our country. But, more than that, they represent a truth you must learn. These seeds will always be tulips, even if at the moment you cannot tell them apart from other flowers. They will never turn into roses or sunflowers, no matter how much they might desire to. And if they try to deny their existence, they will live life bitter and die." (Coelho, 2016:18)</p> <p>"Even the tallest trees can grow from tiny seeds like these. Remember this, and try not to rush time."(Coelho, 2016:19)</p> |   |

**Table 2.** Table situation and immorality in the two novels

| Novel                  | Condition/situation  | Immorality   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>The Spy</b>         | <p>World War I</p> <p>In this condition, it affects the life of Mata Hari. Experiencing violence from her husband and also this condition affected her family's economic condition so she chose to go to Paris to start her life.</p> <p>This war was not an ordinary situation, but it made Mata Hari difficult to fulfill her daily needs, sexual violence happened to Mata Hari by the invaders and also affected Mata Hari's education which had to be ended because the war was unavoidable</p> | <p><b>Prostitution</b></p> <p>Mata Hari committed prostitution due to conditions that she could not control, financial conditions and at that time World War I, in the family's economic condition going bankrupt and the violence experienced by her husband. Being a prostitute, Mata Hari did that just to get money and luxuries, not out of love.</p>   |
|                        | <p><b>Economic conditions</b></p> <p>In this condition, Mata Hari experienced economic difficulties. Her family went bankrupt and this condition made her a person who saw everything valued in terms of money and luxury. Being a prostitute is not a taboo in Mata Hari's circle, she is easy to get money from prostitution and she also has dancing and beauty skills that make it easy for her to earn money.</p>   | <p><b>Materialistic</b></p> <p>Mata Hari saw that the unstable economic situation in her having to find a decent life for herself by accepting luxury jewelry from several men, it was enough to make Mata Hari happy.</p> <p>Being a famous dancer, Mata Hari makes a pretty hefty fee for each of her performances. Apart from being a dancer, Mata Hari makes prostitution a profitable income, she does not serve men without paying for it. Mata Hari sees everything with money. Her happiness was enough from the money she got from the professions she got as a dancer and prostitution</p> |
| <i>Cantik itu Luka</i> | <p><b>War</b></p> <p>In this situation, Dewi Ayu and other beautiful women served as female servants for the soldiers in detention. They couldn't fight back in the situation, so they were forced to do it.</p> <p>In this war, this is not an ordinary situation, Dewi Ayu is one of the women who is forced to become a sex servant for the soldiers, the war situation causes Dewi Ayu to experience difficulties in education and also affect her family</p>                                    | <p><b>Prostitution</b></p> <p>Dewi Ayu became a prostitute not on the basis of her will, but at that time there was colonization in Halimunda. Dewi Ayu sacrificed herself to save her friend's mother by giving her body to a prison commander. Dewi Ayu began to think that being a prostitute would provide benefits such as earning money. She tries to become a prostitute who is not arbitrary, but a prostitute who is expensive.</p>   |
|                        | <p><b>Economic conditions</b></p> <p>In this condition, Dewi Ayu has to work to support her four children. She tries to give her children a proper education and pays off the debt she borrowed from Mama Kalong.</p>  | <p><b>Materialistic</b></p> <p>Dewi Ayu experiences economic difficulties, she is required to return to be a prostitute at Mama Kalong's place. She has to face the fact that she has to support her children and provide them with a proper education. Dewi Ayu will not serve men who come to her if she is not paid or has no money.</p>  |

### 3.2 Discussion

The main characters in each novels are within the middle of a conflict. The moral of the two women within the novels overlooking the struggle isn't an easy factor to keep. The conflicts they experience from some men and additionally the hard financial status makes them violate the moral values. being a prostitution and materialistic woman is immoral. They do not this because they like it or their willingness, it is the struggle that occurs to makes them matters which can be opposite to moral values.

Conditions that occur in the two novels are not morals and immorality in ordinary conditions but are influenced b war conditions that affect their lives. The conditions of war in *The Spy* and *Cantik itu Luka* are forced to choose a job that violates moral values, the conditions of war are full of pressure on the two main characters. The conditions of war that make them difficult for them to live a decent life that requires them to work to meet their economic needs, women are served in the army, prostitution, materialistic and become spies, all affected by the conditions of war that they cannot escape.

The conflict about being a prostitute that happened to Mata Hari and Dewi Ayu was affected by the culture of the two different countries. In the novel *The Spy*, being a prostitute is an easy thing and not a taboo thing That's why, Mata Hari being a prostitute is easy to get money. In the novel *Cantik itu Luka*, Dewi Ayu is not easy to become a prostitute. She had to go through the conflict that sacrificed herself for other men and she also had to bitterly accept other people's views of her as a prostitute.

The *Spy* by Paulo Coelho and *Eka Kurniawan Cantik itu Luka* is a reflection of society. As a reflection, stories in the novel will always be filled by culture and take an important role in human life because there are several human alternatives to follow up on the life problems stated in the novel. The novel *Cantik itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan describes the moral values of women during the Dutch and Japanese colonial times.

Meanwhile, in the novel *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho as a writer from Brazil, he describes Indonesian culture by telling stories about Javanese dances, Mata Hari who uses kebaya as a typical Indonesian, the name of the main character Margarete Gertrud Zelle is changed to Mata Hari and in this novel the author tells the story of the world war I. Eka Kurniawan and Paulo Coelho's novel is a reflection of women's lives.

### 4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the current study of the Universal Moral Values theory proposed to [2] to categorize moral values contained in Paulo Coelho's *The Spy*, revealing the novel almost meet the four major categories of moral values, there is 1. Commitment to something greater

than oneself, 2. Self-respect, but with humility, self-discipline, and acceptance of personal responsibility and, 3. Respect and caring for others, 4. Caring for other living things and environments. In the novel *Cantik itu Luka* care about the creatures and the environment the writer not found. This novel is more focused on the personal lives of its characters, especially the main characters Dewi Ayu. The moral of women in war is not in ordinary conditions and situations, but they are forced by the situation to fight for and defend their morals even though they have to be involved in immorality in the midst of a war full of pressures that they cannot avoid. From the results of the analysis of this study, the writer suggest the reader apply moral values and lessons that have been presented to be someone who has good behavior towards ourselves, others, and also trusts to something greater from us.

## REFERENCES

---

- [1] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 1984.
- [2] T. R. Kinner, *A Short List of Universal Moral Values*. 2000.
- [3] Esten, M. (1978). *Kesustraan (Pengantar, Teori, dan Sejarah)*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- [4] Jost, F. (1974). *Introduction to comparative literature*. Pegasus Publications.
- [5] Koelb, C. & Noakes, S. (1988). *The comparative perspective on literature: approaches to theory and practice*. Cornell University Press.
- [6] Noakes, C. K. (1988). *The Comparative perspective an literature: approaches to theory and practice*. Cornell University Press.
- [7] Remak., H.H.H. (1961). *Comparative Literature: It is Definition and Function*. Southern Illinois University Press
- [8] Pardede, M. (2016). *Literature An Introductory Material*. Medan: USU Press.
- [9] Taylor, R. (1981). *Understanding the Elements of Literature*. The Macmillan Press.
- [10] Wellek, R. A. (1989). *Sastra Bandingan, Sastra Umum, dan Sastra Nasional dalam Theory of Literature*. Jakarta: Gramedia.