



MORAL VALUES IN ADELE'S SELECTED SONG LYRICS IN PARTIAL ALBUM "30"

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Abstract

The study aims to find out the moral values in Adele's selected song lyrics. The purposes of the study are: (1) to find out the moral values that contain in Adele's selected song lyrics in partial album "30" using Eyre & Eyre (2010) theory, and (2) to find out how the moral values portrayed in Adele's selected song lyrics in partial album "30" using Nurgiyantoro (2013) theory. The study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method. The data is taken from Adele's selected song lyrics in partial album "30" namely Easy on Me, I Drink Wine, To Be Loved, Love Is A Game, Hold On, Oh My God, My Little Love, Can I Get It, Woman Like Me, and Stranger by Nature. Based on the analysis, there are five types of moral values of being found, namely honesty, courage, peaceability, self-reliance, and self-discipline and there are six types of moral value of giving, namely loyalty, respect, caring, love, kindness, and justice/mercy. Moreover, each the types of moral values found in the study portrayed explicitly and implicitly.

Keywords: Adele, Song Lyrics, Moral Values, Portrayed.

INTRODUCTION

Literature and language are inherently connected, with language serving as the primary medium for expressing literary meaning. According to Wellek and Warren (2014), literature is an imaginative practice that uses language to interpret reality, often encompassing moral principles. Literary works such as novels, dramas, and songs frequently communicate moral values that shape human behavior. Nurgiyantoro (2010, 2013) also emphasizes literature's artistic use of language, which enables deeper emotional and moral engagement with audiences. Song lyrics are considered a form of literary expression due to their aesthetic and poetic use of language (Burke, 2014; Jakobson, 1960). Through figurative language and personal reflection, songwriters convey complex emotions and values. These lyrics often prompt listeners to reflect on the song's deeper meaning and moral messages. As such, analyzing song lyrics becomes a meaningful way to explore the moral dimension in literature. Moral values in literary works may be delivered explicitly through direct advice or implicitly through metaphors and narratives (Nurgiyantoro, 2010). In this study, the researcher focuses on moral values in selected songs from Adele's album *30*. Released in 2021, the album reflects Adele's personal experiences with divorce, motherhood, and self-discovery. The emotional depth and lyrical honesty in songs such as *Easy on Me*, *To Be Loved*, and *I Drink Wine* offer rich ground for moral analysis. Using the moral value framework proposed by Linda and Richard Eyre (2010), which includes principles such as honesty, courage, and love, this study examines ten selected songs from *30* to identify the moral values expressed and how they are portrayed. The findings aim

to deepen the understanding of how song lyrics function not only as artistic expressions but also as moral narratives that influence listeners.

METHOD

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the moral values found in Adele's selected song lyrics from the album *30*. As defined by Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016), this method focuses on understanding social reality through narrative interpretation, making it suitable for exploring song lyrics as literary texts. The data consist of the lyrics from eleven selected songs in the album, including *Easy on Me*, *To Be Loved*, and *I Drink Wine*, among others. The lyrics were sourced from online platforms and analyzed through close reading and listening to identify moral messages.

Data analysis procedures

The researcher collected data by browsing and print out the lyrics, then selecting lines and stanzas that contain moral values. The analysis involved classifying the identified values based on Linda and Richard Eyre's (2010) framework of moral values, and examining how they are portrayed, either explicitly or implicitly, using Nurgiyantoro's (2013) theory of moral value depiction. The final step included interpreting the meaning of each value and drawing conclusions relevant to the research questions.

FINDINGS

Values of Being

Values of Being in Linda and Richard Eyre's theory are moral values related to a person's character and personality. These values focus more on how a person becomes a good person internally, such as through attitudes, habits, and ways of thinking. Values of being do not depend on interactions with others, but rather on the qualities that an individual must have to build strong morality within themselves. The types of moral values in values of being in this analysis are honesty, courage, peaceability, self-reliance and potential, self-discipline and moderation

- **Honesty**

The value of honesty is clearly expressed in *Easy on Me*, where Adele openly shares her feelings and acknowledges her limitations in maintaining her relationship:

*“There ain't no gold in this river
That I've been washin' my hands in forever...”*
(*Easy on Me*, stanza 1)

She also admits that she was too young and inexperienced when making important life decisions:

*“Go easy on me, baby
I was still a child
Didn't get the chance to feel the world around me...”*
(*Easy on Me*, stanza 2)

- **Courage**

Adele shows moral courage in *Easy on Me*, where she dares to make a painful decision to end her marriage after trying hard to fix it:

*“You can’t deny how hard I’ve tried
I changed who I was to put you both first
But now I give up”*
(*Easy on Me*, stanza 3)

In *I Drink Wine*, she courageously reflects on her changes and her decision to stop living for others:

*“When I was a child
Every single thing could blow my mind...
But now I only soak up wine”*
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 3)

- **Peaceability**

Peaceability is found in *Easy on Me*, where Adele asks for understanding instead of conflict, choosing a peaceful approach to a painful situation:

*“Go easy on me, baby
I was still a child...”*
(*Easy on Me*, stanza 2)

She also expresses her calm response to emotional struggle in *I Drink Wine*:

“But now I only soak up wine”
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 3)

- **Self-Reliance and Potential**

Adele expresses self-reliance through her willingness to take responsibility and move forward after her divorce. In *I Drink Wine*, she shows perseverance and commitment to personal growth:

*“You better believe I’m trying (trying, trying)
To keep climbing (climbing, climbing)”*
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 5)

She also acknowledges her strengths and limits, showing self-awareness and independence:

*“Listen, I know how low I can go
I give as good as I get”*
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 11)

- **Self-Discipline and Moderation**

Adele shows self-discipline by choosing long-term emotional growth over immediate comfort. In *To Be Loved*, she expresses the need to sacrifice what feels essential in order to love fully:

*“To be loved and love at the highest count
Means to lose all the things I can't live without
Let it be known that I will choose to lose”
(To Be Loved, stanza 3)*

She also displays emotional control and patience, choosing to endure challenges with strength and timing:

*“Trying to learn to lean in to it all
I'll stand still and let the storm pass by
Keep my heart safe 'til the time feels right”
(To Be Loved, stanza 4)*

Values of Giving

Values of giving are value associated with giving to others. This values focus on how a person interacts and make positive contributions to other people and society at large. Values of giving are an expression of concern for others and social responsibility

- **Loyalty and Dependability**

Adele demonstrates loyalty and dependability through her continued care and effort to maintain respect toward her ex-husband. In *I Drink Wine*, she reveals emotional investment and struggle for the sake of the relationship:

*“You better believe for you I've cried (I've cried, I've cried)
High tides (high tides, high tides)”
(I Drink Wine, stanza 9)*

In *Oh My God*, Adele shows dependability by making time for someone despite her limited capacity, reflecting a commitment to maintain connection:

*“I ain't got too much time to spare
But I'll make time for you to show how much I care”
(Oh My God, stanza 1)*

- **Respect**

Adele shows respect toward her ex-husband and son by prioritizing them in her decisions, as seen in *Easy on Me*:

*“I changed who I was to put you both first”
(Easy on Me, stanza 3)*

She also shows respect and remorse in *Stranger by Nature*, acknowledging their shared history:

*“Every anniversary, I'll pay respects and say I'm sorry...”
(Stranger by Nature, stanza 1)*

- **Caring**

In *Easy on Me*, Adele expresses good intentions despite the failure of her marriage:

“I had good intentions and the highest hopes”
(*Easy on Me*, stanza 5)

In *I Drink Wine*, she shows emotional support and empathy:

“I give as good as I get... You're all I've got left”
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 11)

In *Oh My God*, she makes time to care for others:

“But I'll make time for you to show how much I care”
(*Oh My God*, stanza 1)

- **Love**

Love is expressed directly in *I Drink Wine*, highlighting disillusionment with the world:

“We're in love with the world, but the world just wants to bring us down”
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 2)

The theme of love also appears through sacrifice:

“They say to play hard, you work hard. Find balance in the sacrifice”
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 4)

- **Kindness and Friendliness**

Kindness is shown in Adele's willingness to give and be emotionally open, even in hardship:

“I give as good as I get”
(*I Drink Wine*, stanza 11)

In *To Be Loved*, she expresses vulnerability and sincerity:

“I'm so afraid but I'm open wide... I'll be the one to catch myself this time”
(*To Be Loved*, stanza 4)

- **Justice and Mercy**

Justice and mercy are values related to fairness and the ability to forgive. Justice involves treating others fairly and accepting consequences, while mercy is about letting go of anger and offering forgiveness, even silently. In Adele's album *30*, this value appears in the song *Hold On*, where she expresses the difficulty of healing from pain but chooses to forgive in silence rather than hold a grudge. This reflects her emotional maturity and desire for peace.

“Sometimes loneliness is the only rest we get
(*Just hold on, just hold on*)
... Sometimes forgiveness is easiest in secret”
(*Hold On*; 6th stanza)

How the Moral Values Are Portrayed in Adele's Selected Song Lyrics

After identifying the types of moral values found in Adele's selected songs using Eyre and Eyre's theory (2010), the next step is to analyze how these values are portrayed. According to Nurgiyantoro (2013), moral values in literary texts—including song lyrics—can be delivered in two ways: explicitly and implicitly.

- **Explicitly**

Explicit portrayal means the moral values are clearly stated in the lyrics, easily understood without needing deep interpretation. In Adele's songs, several values of *being* and *giving* are conveyed directly. For example, **honesty** is portrayed explicitly in *Easy on Me*, where Adele openly admits her regrets and good intentions:

*"I had good intention and highest hopes
But I know right now, it probably doesn't even show"
(Easy on Me; 5th stanza)*

Another example is **courage**, also clearly expressed in *To Be Loved*, as Adele acknowledges her willingness to endure loss in the name of love:

*"Let it be known that I will choose to lose, it's a sacrifice
Means to lose all the things I can't live without
Let it be known that I tried"
(To Be Loved; 3rd stanza)*

- **Implicitly**

Moral values conveyed implicitly are not stated directly but implied through metaphor, symbolism, or emotional context. This form requires interpretation from the listener to uncover the deeper meaning behind the lyrics. In *Easy on Me*, for example, **honesty** is implied in Adele's metaphor about a river and lost happiness:

*"There ain't no gold in this river
That I've been washin' my hands in forever"
(Easy on Me; 1st stanza)*

The river symbolizes her long struggle in the marriage, and the "gold" represents the happiness she no longer feels—an indirect yet honest reflection of her emotional truth. Another example is the value of **peace**, hinted at through her plea for understanding rather than conflict:

*"Go easy on me, baby
I was still a child"
(Easy on Me; 2nd stanza)*

Though the word "peace" isn't stated, the lyric suggests a peaceful resolution and a desire to avoid blame—demonstrating how moral values are conveyed subtly and require thoughtful interpretation.

CONCLUSION

In the analysis of moral values in Adele's selected song lyrics, there are several types of moral values that are divided into two parts, namely moral of being and moral of giving. In the moral value of being, there are types of moral values of honesty, courage, peaceability, self-reliance, and self-discipline. While in the moral value of giving, there are types of moral values of loyalty, respect, caring, love, kindness, and justice/mercy.

This conclusion also answers the second problem formulation question, namely the moral values portrayed in Adele's selected song lyrics. After the writer analyzes and classifies the moral values contained in the lyrics of Adele's songs, the writer explains which one of the moral values are portrayed directly or and indirectly. So the moral values in Adele's selected song lyrics contained moral values that are portrayed explicitly and moral values that are portrayed implicitly.

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