

The Analysis of Moral Values in the Novel “the Midnight Library”

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Abstract: The study aims to find out how the main character reflects on himself and to find out people's attitudes towards the main character in the novel “The Midnight library” The analysis of moral value in novel “The midnight library. The analysis used is the method of analysis data. The data in this research are words that contain moral values in the novel "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig. The data obtained were analyzed using interactive model data analysis. The Data instrument is a tool used to collect data. In this research, the researcher acts as a key instrument in collecting data. Besides that, the researcher noted the moral values that exist in the novel under researcher. Notes are a tool that researchers use to collect data. Researchers used two sources of primary and secondary data. Primary data is the novel The Midnight Library written by Matt Haig. Secondary data is data sources that support this research such as journals, articles, related to novels, and websites. The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive, namely research procedures with the results of presenting descriptive data in the form of researcher quotes in the novel The Midnight Library. After analyzing the novel The Midnight Library, the writer found six types of moral values such as Bravery, Honesty, Fortitude, Gratitude, Kindness, Trust word and care .

Keywords: Chance to live again, Literature, Moral values, Novel

INTRODUCTION

Literature has consistently served as a profound medium for analyzing human behavior, ethical principles, and moral values. Narratives frequently illustrate how individuals navigate moral dilemmas, fostering deeper critical thinking and emotional engagement. Al Ma'ruf et al. (2024) assert that literary works often embed universal moral lessons, enabling readers to relate to complex ethical scenarios. In the contemporary global context, issues such as mental health and self-reflection have gained prominence. This is evident in the increasing popularity of novels that address existential and psychological themes (Halim et al., 2023; WHO, 2024). Examining the intersection between mental health and moral values through literature provides a nuanced understanding of contemporary societal challenges.

The novel *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, published in 2020, exemplifies a narrative that addresses these critical issues. The story revolves around Nora Seed, who explores alternative versions of her life through a metaphysical library, prompting reflections on choices, consequences, and ethical considerations. The novel's thematic exploration aligns with Natt (2017) assertion that literature serves as a lens through which to examine profound philosophical and ethical questions, positioning *The Midnight Library* as a compelling subject for academic inquiry.

Previous research has extensively examined the role of literature in facilitating moral and ethical understanding. Nussbaum (1992) argues that novels enhance moral



imagination by allowing readers to consider diverse perspectives and empathize with others' experiences. It highlights that contemporary novels often portray moral conflicts and resolutions, which are central to character development and thematic complexity. These studies provide a foundational framework for analyzing the moral values presented in *The Midnight Library*.

Studies focusing on Matt Haig's body of work reveal his thematic emphasis on mental health and existential reflection. (Westoby, 2023) analyzed Haig's non-fiction work *Reasons to Stay Alive*, which explores depression and resilience, offering insights into his narrative approach. Although *Reasons to Stay Alive* is non-fiction, its themes resonate in Haig's fictional works, including *The Midnight Library*. Additionally, it highlights how speculative fiction facilitates the exploration of moral dilemmas, using imaginative settings to address real-world ethical and psychological issues. These findings underscore the relevance of Haig's contributions to contemporary literature.

Further studies have investigated the use of speculative and fantastical elements in literature to address ethical and personal development themes. Houlden & Veletsianos (2023) emphasize that speculative fiction employs alternative realities to illuminate human struggles and ethical decision-making. This is particularly relevant to *The Midnight Library*, where the protagonist's metaphysical journey offers a platform to examine moral growth and self-discovery. Despite these contributions, limited research has specifically analyzed the moral values depicted in *The Midnight Library*, identifying a significant gap in the existing scholarship.

Synthesizing these findings, it becomes apparent that while there is extensive research on the broader themes of mental health and speculative fiction, the moral values articulated in *The Midnight Library* remain underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by systematically identifying and analyzing the moral values conveyed in the novel. The primary research question guiding this investigation is: What are the moral values depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*?

This research holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the understanding of moral philosophy in contemporary literature, particularly within the speculative fiction genre. Practically, it offers valuable insights for educators, mental health professionals, and readers by illustrating how literature can serve as a tool for ethical reflection and personal growth. By analyzing the moral values in *The Midnight Library*, this study underscores the potential of literature to inform and inspire thoughtful decision-making in real-life contexts.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach, specifically literary analysis, to examine the moral values portrayed in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* (2020). The novel served as the primary object of study, with a focus on key moments where the protagonist, Nora Seed, faced moral dilemmas and decisions. A purposive sampling method was employed to select this novel due to its relevance in exploring existential and moral themes, which aligned with the research's focus. The analysis was conducted through close reading of the text, paying special attention to passages that reflected Nora's shifting moral values as she explored alternative realities. Data collection involved reading the novel in its entirety, supported by secondary sources that addressed the philosophical and moral dimensions of the narrative (Patton, 2014). For data analysis, thematic analysis was applied to identify key moral values and attitudes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis allowed for the identification and interpretation of patterns within the text.

RESULTS

The primary research question of this study was: What are the moral values portrayed in *The Midnight Library*? Based on the analysis of the novel, the findings indicate that the moral values most prominently represented in the text are honesty, bravery, and gratitude. These values are significant in shaping the character of Nora Seed, the protagonist, and her decisions as she explores alternate realities. The results from the thematic analysis support the notion that moral values play a central role in the narrative, reflecting the novel's exploration of existential dilemmas and personal growth.

The most frequently occurring moral value was honesty, which appeared 11 times, accounting for 61% of the total references to moral values. Honesty is crucial in Nora's journey, as she grapples with the truth about her life choices and confronts her regrets. This value reflects the importance of self-awareness and reflection in making moral decisions. Throughout the narrative, Nora's ability to face the truth about herself and the life she has led is depicted as a key step in her personal transformation.

Bravery was the second most common moral value, appearing 3 times, or 16% of the total moral value references. Bravery is portrayed in the novel as Nora faces difficult choices, particularly in the alternative lives she experiences. The courage to confront one's own fears, regrets, and the consequences of past decisions is a theme that runs throughout the novel. Nora's bravery is not just physical but also emotional, as she must face the emotional challenges of each reality she encounters.

The moral value of gratitude appeared 4 times, or 22% of the total references to moral values. Gratitude in the novel is closely related to Nora's growing understanding of the value of her life and the relationships she has. This value emphasizes the importance of appreciating the moments and people that contribute to one's sense of fulfilment, even in the face of hardship. As Nora experiences different lives, gratitude becomes an essential theme in her realization that her life, despite its flaws, holds inherent value. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Kinds of Moral Values

No	Kinds of Moral Values	Data	Percent
1	Bravery Words	3	16%
2	Honesty Words	11	61%
3	Gratitude Words	4	22%
	Total	18	100%

In addition to the moral values, the analysis also identified key attitudes such as kindness, trust, and care. These attitudes played a significant role in Nora's interactions with others and in her evolving sense of self. Care was the most prominent attitude, with 4 occurrences (57% of the total attitude references). This attitude reflects Nora's growing empathy and concern for the well-being of others, particularly as she navigates through different realities. Kindness appeared 2 times (28%), highlighting moments where Nora showed compassion in her relationships. Trust, on the other hand, was the least represented attitude, appearing only once (14%), indicating Nora's gradual development of trust in herself and the people around her. The data collectively are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Kinds of Attitudes

No	Kinds of attitude	Data	Percent
1	Kindness	2	28%
2	Trust Words	1	14%
3	Care	4	57%
	Total	7	100%

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research address the primary research question: *What are the moral values portrayed in The Midnight Library?* Through an analysis of the novel, it becomes clear that three key moral values emerge: **bravery**, **honesty**, and **gratitude**. These values are integral to the protagonist Nora Seed's journey of self-discovery, emotional healing, and growth. As Nora navigates her feelings of regret and despair, these values provide a foundation for her transformation. The discussion below interprets these values and compares them with existing literature, offering insights into how they are portrayed in Nora's personal journey.

Bravery is a prominent moral value in the novel, occurring 16% of the time. Nora's

bravery is depicted through her willingness to confront difficult truths and make significant life choices. Her bravery is not only physical but also emotional, as she faces her past mistakes, regrets, and the possibility of death. This theme of bravery, particularly as it relates to women's agency and decision-making, aligns with feminist perspectives that view bravery as a form of empowerment. Scholars like Sanford (2020) argue that for women, bravery means owning one's decisions and confronting societal norms. Nora's emotional bravery, exemplified by her exploration of alternate life choices, demonstrates her ability to challenge the traditional expectations placed on her.

Honesty, which appears the most frequently at 61%, plays a crucial role in Nora's emotional healing. Her honesty is expressed through her openness about her past mistakes, her suicidal thoughts, and the regrets that have shaped her life. Nora's confession of her struggles marks a significant turning point in the narrative, as it allows her to begin processing her pain and taking responsibility for her actions. This portrayal of honesty aligns with the arguments of Valpied et al (2014), who emphasize the cathartic and empowering effects of revealing personal truths. For Nora, honesty becomes a way to reclaim her narrative and begin the path toward forgiveness and self-acceptance. This self-awareness helps Nora move past her past mistakes and opens up the possibility for emotional growth and healing.

Gratitude, which is present 22% of the time in the novel, becomes a transformative force in Nora's journey. Despite her overwhelming despair, Nora finds moments of gratitude, especially in her interactions with Mr. Elm, a character who offers her new motivation and perspective on life. This theme reflects the idea that even in the darkest moments, one can find reasons to be thankful and appreciate the small but significant aspects of life. The role of gratitude in fostering emotional well-being is supported by positive psychology research that suggest that practicing gratitude improves resilience and overall mental health. Nora's ability to find gratitude amidst her suffering helps her shift her focus from despair to hope, signaling a crucial step in her emotional recovery and personal transformation.

The analysis also uncovers important attitudes in the novel, such as kindness, trust, and care, which contribute to Nora's emotional and moral development. Nora's kindness, while subtle, is significant. She hides her suffering from her loved ones, particularly her father, in an attempt not to burden them. This reflects a sense of selflessness and emotional protection, which, though painful, demonstrates her desire to protect those she loves from her own despair. This act of kindness resonates that kindness is a key element of emotional intelligence. Nora's acts of kindness, despite her own challenges, help maintain her

relationships and demonstrate how kindness sustains human connection even in times of emotional turmoil.

The research also identifies trust as an important moral attitude, though it appears less frequently (14%). Nora's journey involves her growing trust in herself and in the possibility of change. Her belief that her life is part of a larger plan, especially in her willingness to continue despite her past failures, reflects her developing trust in the future. This shift toward self-trust and trust in the process of life is essential for emotional healing. The importance of trust in overcoming personal trauma which suggest that trust in oneself and in others is fundamental to resilience. Nora's ability to rebuild trust after experiencing significant emotional pain highlights the importance of hope and belief in the future as part of the healing process.

Care, the final moral attitude identified in the research, is another prominent theme in the novel. Nora's emotional development is deeply connected to the care she receives from others, particularly her father. His unwavering love and support, despite her feelings of failure, provide her with a sense of security and emotional nourishment. This theme of care, which appears the most frequently in the research (57%), reflects the deep emotional bonds that sustain Nora throughout her darkest times. It highlights the centrality of care in moral development, suggesting that it is not just an expression of love but also a moral force that helps individuals grow emotionally and ethically. In *The Midnight Library*, care is portrayed as an essential component of Nora's healing process. It is through the care and love she receives from her father that she is able to find hope and begin rebuilding her life.

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the portrayal of moral values in *The Midnight Library*. Unlike previous studies, such as "The Analysis of Moral Values in *The King's Speech* Movie" provide more general descriptions of moral values, this study offers a detailed examination of how specific moral values and attitudes manifest in the protagonist's journey. By focusing on values such as bravery, honesty, and gratitude, and attitudes like kindness, trust, and care, this research contributes a deeper understanding of the moral dilemmas faced by the protagonist. This detailed analysis fills a gap in the existing literature by offering a nuanced interpretation of how moral values influence character development in contemporary literature.

This research delves into the specific ways in which these values shape the character of Nora Seed. It highlights the transformative power of these moral values in her emotional journey, offering a new perspective on the role of moral growth in literature. By examining these themes in depth, this study provides a fresh contribution to the understanding of moral values in contemporary fiction, illustrating how they shape character development

and the emotional arcs of protagonists in ways that are both meaningful and relatable.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research indicates that *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig explores key moral values, including bravery, honesty, and gratitude, as well as attitudes like kindness, trust, and care. These values play a vital role in the protagonist, Nora Seed's, emotional growth and transformation. Through her journey, Nora embodies bravery in confronting her past, honesty in acknowledging her regrets, and gratitude in discovering new hope. The attitudes of kindness, trust, and care further support her healing process, with significant influence from her father's love and support.

The research questions are answered through the analysis of Nora's development, highlighting how these moral values and attitudes are intricately connected to her self-discovery. Bravery, honesty, and gratitude provide the foundation for her emotional recovery, while kindness, trust, and care guide her relationships and interactions with others.

However, the study is limited in scope, focusing mainly on the protagonist's personal values and not considering broader cultural contexts. Further research could explore the connection between the novel's themes and psychological theories, or conduct a comparative analysis with other works of contemporary fiction. Additionally, examining secondary characters' roles in shaping Nora's values would offer deeper insight into the moral dimensions of the story.

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