

Mapping the Moral Mind

An Empirical Typology of Moral Residue Reading Experiences

Aristi Makrygiannaki, MA (Utrecht University, The Netherlands); Nuo Liu, MA (Xiamen University, China); Kenau Bester, MA (Utrecht University, The Netherlands); Anna Dijkstra, MA (Cambridge University, The United Kingdom)

Project Supervisor: Prof. Olivia Fialho (Huygens Institute)

This infographic presents preliminary findings from the MORE project, exploring how healthcare practitioners experience **Moral Residue (MR)** – the distress from a perceived failure to meet moral requirements despite not being normatively blameworthy (Solbakk) – when reading fictional narratives.

The Study: Unpacking Reading Experiences

Who Participated?

 **10** Dutch Healthcare Practitioners

- 70% Female, 30% Male
- Age Range: 22 - 77 years (Mean Age: 49)
- Current data from initial analysis: 7 interviews from Session 1, 4 from Session 2.

Research Journey

A bottom-up qualitative analysis of thematic, semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted in two sessions (120-180 mins total).

Session 1: Exploration

Participants discussed memorable MR reading experiences and introduced 3-5 self-selected or supplied MR fiction works.



Session 2: Deep Dive

Focused on rereading the most impactful story and analysing five evocative passages.

Materials included novels, YA fiction, films, and songs, either self-selected or provided by the MORE research team (e.g., McEwan's «Atonement», Szabo's «The Door»).

Our Approach: Lex-Nap Methodology

We employed the **Lexical Basis for Numerically Aided Phenomenology (Lex-Nap; Fialho, 2012, 2024a)**, a mixed-method approach to comparatively assess and taxonomise subjective reading experiences by identifying recurrent meaning expressions.

Level 1: Bottom-Up

Codes (constituents) emerge directly from participants' own words through constant comparative analysis.



Level 2: Pattern Recognition

Pattern repetitions identified by categorising constituents based on pronoun and verb frequency.



Level 3: Top-Down

Constituents taxonomised into theorised types of reading experiences, consulting prior empirical findings on transformative reading (e.g., Fialho, 2017; Schrijvers et al., 2019; Sikora, Kuiken, & Miall, 2011).

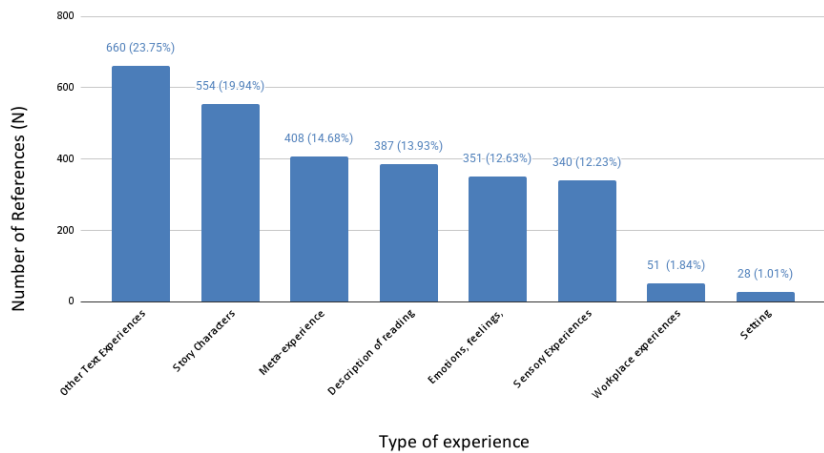
Inter-rater reliability was high (Cohen's Kappa: 82.55% - 100% for 82 constituents).

Key Findings: Types of Reading Experiences

Components of Transformative Reading

Our analysis identified ten primary categories of reading experiences. The graph below shows the frequency of these components.

Components of Transformative Reading



Type of Experience	Frequency (N=)	Description of Category
Other text experiences	647	Comments on interpretive meanings and aesthetic values
Vivid imagination	637	Deep reading engagement
Meta-experience response	522	Reflections on reading experiences
Story characters	452	Evaluations and judgements of character-related responses
Description of reading experience	386	General descriptions of participants' reading experience
Emotions*	348	Emotions evoked by the selection of moral related books
Sensory Experience	141	Descriptions of participants' sensory (visual, auditory, tactile) engagement while reading
Personal information	97	Participants' personal information
Workplace experience	35	Information provided by participants regarding their working experiences
Setting	7	References to describe the environments/settings of the selected texts

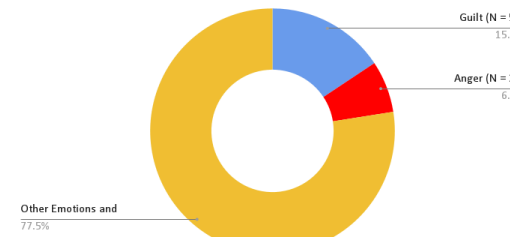
*For Emotions, see detailed breakdown below.

Focus on Emotions

Emotions evoked by MR-related literature were a significant component of the reading experience. Guilt and Anger were notably frequent.

Focus on Emotions

Emotions evoked by MR-related literature were a significant component of the reading experience.



Qualitative Insights: Voices from the Study

Evaluating Characters (External Perspective)

"What *she's* saying here. Or that *she* is lying here. *Because that is also what she finds very important. That she's not a liar.*"
- Participant P111

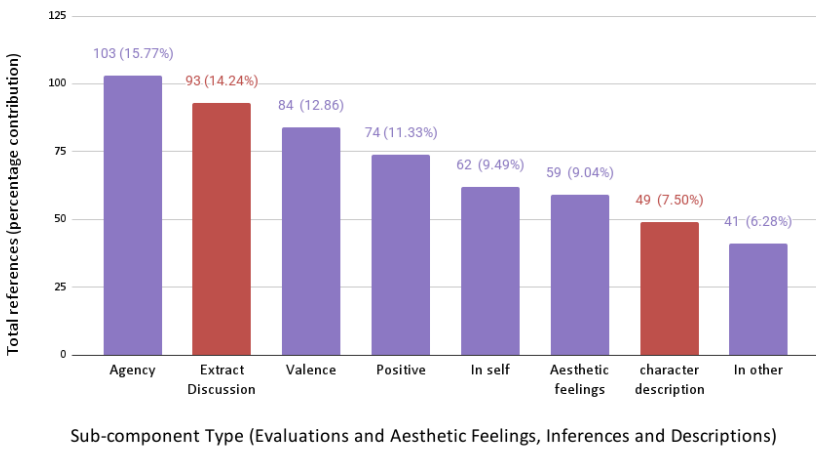
Connecting with Characters (Internal Reaction)

"So I was so very surprised and happy that *they* were together again. So that sense of relief I really understood. And, but also her dread of confronting him. So, to me that was a bit odd."
- Participant P112

Deeper Dive: Sub-Components of "Other Text Experiences"

Further analysis reveals the underlying elements contributing to broader experience categories. The graph below illustrates the percentage contribution of various sub-components to the 'Other Text Experiences' category.

Sub-components of "Other Text Experiences"



Impact & Next Steps

Key Conclusions

- Reading MR-related fiction deeply impacts healthcare practitioners' conceptualisations of moral residue.
- It offers pathways to revisit moral dilemmas and facilitate self-perceptual transformation.
- Lex-Nap methodology effectively identified thematic and linguistic constituents of MR reading experiences.
- This research contributes to an empirical typology of MR reading experiences.

Future Directions

- Complete data analysis of all 50 planned interviews.
- Further refine the typology with the complete dataset.
- Develop a validated instrument to assess MR awareness.
- Implement a transformative reading programme in medical ethics to help practitioners navigate unavoidable moral failure (e.g., Solbakk, 2022; Brown, 2025; de Snoo et al., 2025).
- Conduct deductive analysis based on theorised frameworks of MR.

This poster represents a work in progress.

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For more information, contact: nuo.liu@outlook.com or aristi.makry@gmail.com