

REINFORCING CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH NOVEL: KEMBARA RINDU I

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Character education reflects two interrelated elements. Character is a person's natural quality from birth that can be formed from surrounding influences, while education provides a process so that these influences occur. Through this character education, one's potential and usefulness can be developed. However, the progress of the current educational mindset does not guarantee that the good character of humans will also progress. The use of the internet to access many things without limits tends to damage a person's good character, especially the younger generation. For this reason, character education needs to be carried out by adjusting the modernization of their lifestyle, one of which is through literary works in the form of novels. *Kembara Rindu I* is a novel written by Habiburrahman El Shirazy with the theme of the virtue of studying religion which emphasizes exemplary and moral messages.

Keywords: Values, Character Education, Novel

INTRODUCTION

A character can be defined as the values of individual reactions to Allah SWT, themselves, other people, the environment, and the country. These values are shown in thoughts, behaviors, feelings, words, and actions based on religion, laws, manners, culture, customs, and aesthetic standards. (Yulianto et al., 2020). This shows that character is the character possessed by everyone from birth and then formed from surrounding influences such as family, environment, and society (Asyari et al., 2021; Hendayani, 2019; Iswatiningsih, 2019; Sopian, 2021; Sari et.al, 2023). On the other hand, education is a process

that can occur continuously in people's life, which allows them to develop their abilities, talents, skills, and interests (Annur et al., 2021; Iswatiningsih, 2019; Sholekah, 2020). Education forms young people to be smart, innovative, creative, and have good character. In other words, education can be interpreted as a process of character formation, while the character itself is the result to be achieved through the educational process.

Character education is defined as an effort to educate and empower potential students to build their character so they can become people who are beneficial to themselves and their environment (Akhmad, 2020; Annur et al., 2021; Hendayani, 2019; Iswatiningsih, 2019; Muchtar & Suryani, 2019). In Indonesia, character education is carried out by instilling values under the nation's culture with components of aspects of knowledge (cognitive), feelings (affection) mutual respect, cooperation, togetherness, friendly, respectful, tolerant, nationalist, caring, cosmopolitan (global), prioritizing the public interest, loving the homeland (patriotic), being proud to use Indonesian language and products, being dynamic, hard-working, and with a work ethic (Muchtar & Suryani, 2019). Character education has a function to form and develop potential so that they can think well, have a good heart, and behave according to the philosophy of life of Pancasila, improve negative character in individuals, and strengthen the role of the family, educational units, society and government, and the final function is to sort out the nation's cultural values and other positive cultures (Andriyani, 2021). Then, Anggeraini (2015) mentioned that the teachers not only transfer the knowledge but also should pay attention on character building in the classroom. In addition, character education also aims to form individuals who are wise, honest, disciplined, responsible, and able to respect others (Sobari et al., 2022). The character classification according to the Ministry of National Education includes:

- 1). Value of behavior related to God (Religious)
- 2). The value of behavior related to oneself
- 3). The value of behavior related to fellow human beings

- 4). Behavioral values related to the environment (Caring for the environment)
- 5). Behavioral values related to nationality, namely the spirit of nationalism and love for the motherland

The progress of the current educational mindset does not guarantee that the good character of humans will also progress, especially the younger generation. Problems related to the degradation of character values still occur a lot (Yulianto et.al, 2020). The use of the internet which makes it easy for them to access many things tends to potentially damage these good characters (Ali et al., 2021; Andi et al., 2022; Hendayani, 2019; Iswatiningsih, 2019). For this reason, character education should not only be carried out in formal education (through schools or other educational institutions) but through media that can be in accordance with the modernization of their lifestyle. One of these media is a literary work in the form of a novel.

A novel is a type of long prose that tells various events or stories from a person's life and the people around him with a focus on the character and attitude of each person (Andriyani, 2021). The novel is a story that tells the conflict of actors so that changes in the character's fate occur. In a novel, there are ideas that are stated more clearly and easily for the reader to understand and come from the personal experience or imagination of the author. The novel is also inseparable from the element of the message that leads to the value of character education (Mukrimaa et al., 2016; Saputri & Laeliah, 2020; Sari et al., 2023; Sobari et al., 2022). The novel *Kembara Rindu* is a work by Habiburrahman Shirazy which was published in 2019 with a total of 266 pages. This novel raises the theme of the virtue of seeking religious knowledge interspersed with various thorny issues about everyday life. This novel tells of the main character who is full of tenacity, patience, and sincerity in serving loved ones. This story teaches readers how to struggle to study in a faraway place and learn the meaning of longing for loved ones, sincerity, sincerity, and devotion. The storyline of this novel is able to bring its reading as

if it were students in a *pesantren* who interacted with many pious people. This makes exemplary and moral messages an element that is highly emphasized, such as never stopping trying and always believing in the help of Allah SWT, and doing good without expecting anything in return.

NOVEL AS AN EFFECTIVE LITERATURE WORK TO REINFORCE CHARACTER EDUCATION

Literature is considered a medium that effectively attracts other people to become open-minded and manage their behavior so that they can communicate with themselves as a form of deep unconscious contemplation. According to Semi (1993), literature reflects social life, human studies, life, ideology, and culture. Furthermore, literary works are defined as an expression of life in human society (Endraswara, 2011). It shows that literary works provide portraits of life that influence human social characteristics.

A literary work is a vessel for all the ideas from the author to be conveyed to the readers (Sughihastuti, 2007). Literature can provide insight, knowledge, and entertainment presenting factual social reality. Thus, literature becomes an interpretation of human behavior from various aspects of life-based on certain views brought by a person (a writer) with an attractive language style that is easily accepted. The attractiveness of this style of language seems very clear in writing, such as in a novel.

The novel is a long story (chronology) that tells an event, whether it really happened or manipulated. It is a literary work that closely resembles the reality of life. In the novel, there are moral, religious, cultural, political, and social to educational values. In line with this, Kartikasari (2021) states that a good novel can give entertainment (*dulce*) as well as being useful (*utile*) to provide positive things for its readers. So, strengthening the value of character education can also be done by telling the inspirational lives of the characters in the novel.

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