

# Building the Literature-based Character

*by* Kasnadi Adip Arifin

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**Editors:**

Supriadi  
Yepi Sedyia Purwananti  
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Budi Hermawan

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## Building the Literature-based Character

Kasnadi\*  
Adip Arifin\*

### Abstract

Building the young generation's character can be done through the literature. It is important because the literature contains moral values that very useful for building human's character. People who intensively interact with literature will be more humanist, as the important value of life. Character building is very important to be introduced for young generation as they grew up in the childhood. In realizing the literature -based character building, we cannot separate it from the three educational institutions; informal, formal and non-formal education. Informal education is the foundation of character education. Therefore, the family is the most primary education in preparing the next generation. In family life, the parents can start to introduce literature to the children earlier. Through the introduction, storytelling, reading fairy tales and stories, the parents either share or plant the values to build the children character. In formal education, language and literature teachers should empower the learners to read literature. The teachers should be able to select and deliver the appropriate literature as the learning materials. Forming the reading habit and visiting the library to read literature are one one of the ways to introduce literature to the young generation. Besides that, more important thing is, lets the students to get close with literary by practicing it. Non-formal education should support the effort made by families and schools in building the young generation character through literature. Spread the reading culture at the public places, such as in the train station, bus station, public health and so on. It is the time for the society to prepare the literature in the public places.

Keywords: character education, formal, informal, non-formal, literacy

### INTRODUCTION

Education is an outstanding investment. Therefore, education should be the concern of every people in building the nation character. In this global era, education faces a big challenge. Education expert, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich suggested that in the early 1970s, there was an oppression in the education field (O'Neil, 2001: xi)

Alvin Tofler, a futurologist has predicted there will be civilizations conflict in the global era. Gandhi (in Lati, 2009: 79) stated that there were seven social sins in the human life, as follows: (1) politics without principle, (2) wealth without hard work, (3) commerce without morality, (4) pleasure without conscience, (5) science without humanity, (6) worship without humanity, and (7) education without character. To empower character education, Rushworth

Kidder proposed his concept, included (1) empowerment, (2) effective, (3) extended into the community (ertended into community) , (4) embedded) , (5) engaged , (6) epistemological , and (7) evaluative (Latif , 2009: 86) .

Teachers are the most important aspect for the success of the learning process to produce the qualified students. Therefore, the teachers should have the appropriate knowledge, skill, and better qualification to improve their professionalism. A good teacher is able to create a safe and fun learning atmosphere, flexible, reflective, creative, innovative, and meet the students' needs. A teacher should understand the above concept to build the students' character, for the nation future.

### **Literature and Character Building**

Reading the literature is very helpful; one of its benefits is widening the knowledge for facing the real life. Besides that, reading literature can be very entertaining for the readers (Tjahjono, 1988:7). According to Umar Yunus, literature is the reaction of the fact which passed the process of deep thinking, and even contemplation (Hoerip, 1982: 195). Through literature, the readers are given the chance to recognize themselves, environment, and the various problems in life, therefore, the readers will be more humanist (Sarumpaet, 2010:1).

Probably, we can observe the publishing of novel *Laskar Pelangi*, written by Andrea Hirata, was widely sold soon. After filming, that novel hypnotized many students to idolize the main characters; Ical, Lintang and Bu muslimah. The message behind the movie has stimulated the students to make their dreams come true. One more monumental movie that hypnotized many Indonesian people was *Ayat-ayt Cinta*. That movie is successfully filmed and got te good response from the society. People watched the movie at the cinemas, and finally idolized Fahri and Aisya, as the main character in the movie.

According to Budi Darma (1984:47: 1995:105), a good literature always lets the readers to appreciate and respect the norms. Thus, literature is considered as a means of moral education. Literature, philosophy and religion are considered as a means of developing 'humanist', that is the person with humanism, culture and norms. Therefore, literature is appropriate to attract people for building the characters, especially the character of young generation.

### **Three Education Institutions**

The important foundations to build the characters can be separated from the integrated of three education institutions; informal, formal, and non-formal education. Those three levels of education must be integrated to lead the same direction and the same ultimate goal. It is impossible to achieve the goal, if there is no integration among those three.

The strong foundation to build the young generation character is needed to be introduced since in the family life. The family becomes the starting point of building the character of the generation. If the character education in the family is strong, the qualified generation will born, otherwise, if the character is not strongly planted earlier, the unqualified generation will be birth later.

The role of the family becomes very significant, especially a mother. She likes an angel, ready to cover her children every time and everywhere. A father, as the second figure in the family, should be ready to accompany the mother every time. Being the parents must be careful and focus in taking care their children. The parents should pay attention more to keep their children right on the track, and do not much negatively influenced by television programs and gadget.

As the builder of young generation character, the society has the big role to educate the children earlier. Nowadays, promoting the children to learn comfortably is a must. Therefore, for the success of character building, the role model becomes very important. The good model comes from the parents, the teacher supports it, and the society makes it perfect. The founding father, Ki Hajar Dewantara said that character education was not the speech in the academic forum, but the concrete actions and the good model in the real life. Yakob Sumarjo stated that the urgency of character education will born the 'more act less talk' generation, and not the opposite.

If the family keeps their children from the current deadly virus of globalization, thus the society must be functioned as the teacher for building the young generation character. The society must be careful every time. Family, school and society must be hand in hand to develop this nation future. The process of building the character in the family is incredible, the school strengthens it, and the society makes it perfect. But, when we see the rider doesn't stop at the red color traffic light, it destroys the building of character.

#### **Introducing Literature in the Family**

Since birth, humans are creatures who love to play (*homo ludens*) and likes to have story (*homo fabulans*). According to Budi Darma, both *homo ludens* and *homo fabulans* are the basis of human creativity (Suyatno, 2009: vii). To generate the important creativity of listening, comprehension and rethinking of what have been said by Tony Busan in his book *Ten Ways to be the Most Genius and Creative People* (2003). The creative children have some characteristics, as follows: doodling, daydreaming, fantasizing, and dream beyond reality.

Some conditions that encourage children to develop their creativity are as follows: (1) time, (2) the opportunity to be alone, (3) parents' encouragement of (4) parents-children relationship (5) facility, (6) the stimulating environment, (7) the way of educating, and (8) the opportunity to obtain knowledge (Hurlock, in Suyatno, 2009: 37). Meanwhile, the results of research done by Suyatno shows that the factors that affect most the child writes novels are (1) the habit of reading, either read the story or any other book, (2) listening to the parents' stories (3) writing a diary, (4) operating the computer and playing its game, (5) parents' motivation, and (6) observe the surrounding area (2009: 44). Hence, to develop creativity, the children need the help and guidance from adults. If someone wants to be successful must be tightly thinking the concept of one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration, or one percent talent, ninety-nine percent supporting factors. This is in line with Einstein' words, that success is determined by a hard work do not determined by inborn talent.

Introducing the literature to the children can be started by telling them the legend, story, fable, tale, and so on. Because those kinds of literature, will stimulate the children to be more creative. Besides that, the children can learn about the real life. Through recognizing the characters in the story, the children learn about life values; honesty, generosity, understanding, tolerance, hard work and recognizing the surrounding, finally the children will have a lot of knowledge that make them more confident (Yaniar, Compass, 01.04.2015). Playing and telling story contains the same concept with the child's world, full of dreams and imagination.

The family should early forming the reading habit as a part of the children's need, for instance: a mother when lulls her dear child, always sings a song derived from meaningful tales. In day-to-day care, every baby sitter can also read the stories as the children preferred. It is better for the family to have private library, as the place for reading and getting knowledge for the children.

The parents can be the real example of literature activity. Let's the children visiting the bookstore or book fairs, playing digital literature and other literate activities. This is one of the ways to introduce to a variety of reading literature, fairy tales and folklore and various books of children's literature. Nowadays, many emerging writers child (aged 6-12 years) who are the members of KKPK (Children have works) as Izzati, Andri Saleh, Nabila Nurkhasanah Harris, Ramya Sukardi, Qonita Aliyatumuha, Riza Dwita Auldina, Adelia Ruby Firishta, Wanda Amyra Mayshara, etc. As reported by Kompas (01/05/2015) books for children and adolescents dominate the book market in Indonesia. According to the Chairman of the Association of Indonesian Publishers, Lucy Andam Dewi, the percentage of children's books at 45% of the total existing books. KKPK book, published by Mizan publisher within a month can be printed four times 5000 copies in each.

### **Learning Literature at School**

The role of the school, as the successor of informal education, should promote the professional teachers. According to PP No. 19, 2005, article 28 the professional teachers should have four competences, namely pedagogical, personality, professional, and social. Teacher competence can be defined as the comprehensive knowledge, skills and attitudes which are manifested in the form of smart action and full responsibilities. Those are the needs to be the professional teacher.

As the one who directly involves with the students, a teacher (including a teacher of literature), should be professional. Ideal figure of literature teacher should have; (1) an adequate literary competence, (2) creativity in selecting learning materials, (3) ability to reproduce literature, (4) able to create galleries of literature, literary workshops, literary laboratory, clinical literature, and (5) has a personal library (Kasnadi & Sutejo, 2010: xvi-xix). To stimulate students in working with literature, Ghazali (1999: 12) offers three concepts, namely (1) teaching should immerse students into poetry, (2) provide an opportunity for students to be active in listening and reading poetry, and (3) write poetry by imitating existing example.



Bring them to the real world, which directly deals with the literature, such as literary workshop, literature forum, literary feast, literary tent, literature camping, literary field trips, outbound literature, monthly literature, literary text, literary coffee, literature Olympiad and so on. According to Suwardi Endraswara, to get into the ideal and democratic literature teacher at school needs to build "literature laboratory". Through the "literature lab" both teachers and learners will always bothered to get closed with the literature, please, fond, and getting familiar with the literature. So, they will actively work with literature (Sarumpaet, 2002: 59-61). It is the time for professional teacher to invite the students for realizing their activities through the motto "say it with literature" as the daily hints for peers.

Nowadays, there are still many people being skeptical with literature, whereas according to B. Rahmanto, if the teaching of literature has done well, then the teaching of literature can also contribute significantly to solve the real problems in life (1988: 15). As done by the Centre of Language Development in National Scientific Meeting, 1999, with the theme "Literature Goes to School". During the meeting Indra Jati Sidi, the members of Education ministry, has pointed out that the importance of language and literary learning. Literary works makes people smoother behaviorally and more mature, generates the imagination, increase the sense and thinking (Sarumpaet, 2002: viii). Likewise, in 2000 the Ministry of National Education held a program to improve school libraries and literary subjects, with the title SBSB program (Poets-students discussion). Through the program, the poets and writers directly visited the schools in hopes of having discussion with the students. The program was actually looking for a way to introduce the importance of literature for students, as an portrait of poet and humanist, Taufiq Ismail in his last stanza poem entitled "Pelajaran Tatabahasa dan Mengajar" (The Lessons of Grammar and Writing) below:

*"Wahai Pak Guru, jangan kami disalahkan apalagi dicerca  
Bila kami tak mampu mengembangkan kosa kata  
Selama ini kami 'kan diajar menghafal dan menghafal saja  
Mana ada dididik mengembangkan logika  
Mana ada diajar berargumentasi dengan pendapat berbeda  
Dan mengenai masalah membaca buku dan karya sastra  
Pak Guru sudah tahu lama sekali  
Mata kami rabun novel, rabun cerpen, rabun drama, dan rabun puisi  
Tapi mata kami 'kan nyalang bila menonton televisi"*

According to Rahmanto (1988: 16), the teaching of literature helps the education as a whole, that beneficial for: (1) improve the language skills, (2) improve cultural knowledge, (3) develop creativity, and (4) promote the character formation. In line with what Rahmanto, one of the goals of teaching literature is to develop students' affective aspect, which includes appreciation, organizing values, and taking the characterization values (Waluyo, 2003: 165). According Endraswara (2005: 40) the affective aspect in listening and reading literature would lead the students to (1) appreciate the moral values, honesty, ethic, generosity, etc., (2) the students's appreciation towards learning, both the material

and teaching. The affective attitude is realized through responding, appreciating, assessing, and internalizing the values within the literature. Promoting the literature learning must touch the children's personality. The touch is presented through language, communication and understanding of the existing problems in the student environment (Sumanto, 2005: 77).

Therefore, when dealing with the students, go into their world and teaching them by heart, with love, with the soul, and with love. Forming the character is more essential, rather than forming the intelligence.

### **Literature in the Society**

Now is the time for filling the public spaces with literature, reading room, and literary works. What a beautiful if at the train station, at the bus station, at the airport, at the doctor's office, at a barbershop, at the beauty center are supplied with books. People who waiting for the train, bus, plane, waiting the doctor's queue, and beautify themselves can spend the time by reading literary texts. Longing to the activity of reading, check out the every single line of the below poem by Taufiq Ismail, entitled "Kupu-kupu di dalam Buku" (Butterfly inside the book).

#### **1 Kupu-kupu di dalam Buku**

*Ketika duduk di stasiun bis, di gerbong kereta api, di ruang tunggu praktek dokter anak, di balai desa, kulihat orang-orang di sekitarku duduk membaca buku, dan aku bertanya di negeri mana gerangan aku sekarang,*

*Ketika saya berjalan sepanjang gang antara rak-rak panjang, di perpustakaan yang mengandung ratusan ribu buku dan cahaya lampunya terang benderang, kulihat anak-anak muda dan anak-anak tua sibuk membaca dan menuliskan catatan, dan aku bertanya di negeri mana gerangan aku sekarang,*

*Ketika bertandang di sebuah toko, warna-warni produk yang dipajang terpajang, orang-orang memborong itu barang dan mereka berdiri beraturan di depan tempat pembayaran dan aku bertanya di toko buku negeri mana gerangan aku sekarang,*

*Ketika singgah di sebuah rumah, kulihat ada anak kecil bertanya tentang kupu-kupu pada mamanya, dan mamanya tak bias menjawab keingin-tahuan puterinya, kemudian akatanya, "tunggu mama buka ensiklopedia dulu, yang tahu tentang kupu-kupu", dan aku bertanya di rumah negeri mana gerangan aku sekarang,*

*Agaknya inilah kita rindukan bersama, di stasiun bis dan ruang tunggu kereta api negeri ini buku dibaca, di perpustakaan perguruan, kota dan desa buku dibaca, di*

tempat penjualan buku laris di beli, dan ensiklopedia yang terpajang di ruang tamu tidak berselimut debu karena memang dibaca

### Conclusion

Character education is important to be built since the early childhood. To realize the character building for young generations, actually can be done through literature, because literature contains the moral values which are absolutely needed at present. Literature can be delivered to the young generation through three educational institutions namely; informal, formal and non-formal education

In informal education, the parents can introduce the literature to their children, such as: fairy tales and stories. The parents should love storytelling and reading stories for their children. It is better for the parents to provide a reading of literature for their children at home. The parents should be the role models for their children in case of literature reading.

At school, the students should not be left at will. Language and literature teachers should be the role models also in reading and working with literature. Literature teacher should be able to pick and deliver the literary material that appropriate with the students' needs. Besides that, the literature teacher should be able to lead their students to love reading literature.

Ideally, nonformal education must support the two previous education levels. The society should be equal with the parents and teachers' efforts in building the young generation character. Therefore, the society takes the role to support the reading habit in public places.

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