

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter contains research background, problem identification, problem limitation, research questions, research objectives and research significance related to the Character Development and Moral Values Representation Through the Characterization of Pupus in *Pupus Putus Sekolah* Webtoon Series.

1.1. Research Background

Literature is a form of arts that uses a series of words in its formation, such as novels, dramas and modern poetry. Through creative and precise word choice, literary works can build an idea, share experiences and convey emotions. Literary works themselves have many forms, both old literature such as myths, sagas and poems and new literature such as novels, dramas and modern poetry. As literature continues to evolve, the way it is created and consumed has also adapted to technological changes. But besides that, along with the development of the world and increasingly sophisticated technological devices, there is now a new term, namely digital literature or cyber literature. Digital literature is a literary work that uses digital media and technology as a means to create, publish and enjoy literary works. An example of a popular digital literary work is webtoon.

Among various forms of digital literature, webtoon stands out as one of the most accessible and widely consumed platforms today. Webtoon is one of the media used in accessing digital literature (Tri & Nurhaliza, 2024). According to Ji (2016, as cited in Gustiawati, 2024) webtoon comes from a combination of two words, namely 'web' and 'cartoon', meaning comics published through web media and

adapted for computer screens. As the origin of the word webtoon is a digital platform in the form of a web or application that displays images containing various types of stories. Simply put, webtoon is a digital version of comics that connects visuals and narrative. The ease of access for webtoon readers and writers makes this webtoon popular, especially among young people. With its ease, anyone can become a webtoon writer and publish it without the intermediary of a publisher. This can be an opportunity for anyone to be creative in conveying their ideas. Rather than only serving as a form of entertainment, some webtoons also raise social and educational issues through the conflicts faced by their characters. One example is *Pupus Putus Sekolah* by Kurnia Harta Winata.

This webtoon tells the story of a girl named Pupus who is forced to drop out of school after losing her grandmother, the only family member who cared for her. These circumstances force her to lead a life different from that of other children her age. Along the way, Pupus meets Prof. Suryo, who introduces her to the concept of alternative education through life experiences and learning outside the classroom. The experiences Pupus goes through reveal changes in her way of thinking, her attitude, and her responses to conflicts. For example, early in the story, Pupus refuses to return to school after being humiliated by her teacher and classmates, but she later begins to rebuild her self-confidence, embraces a new way of learning, and demonstrates a more mature attitude in facing life's challenges. Furthermore, Pupus's interactions with other characters also reveal traits such as honesty, responsibility, courage, compassion, and respect, which emerge gradually throughout the story. This phenomenon demonstrates that character development

and moral values are not conveyed directly but are built through experiences, conflicts, dialogue, actions, and relationships between characters

According to Imam Sukardi, moral value is an inherent characteristic that embodies values of goodness that are upheld in society based on a shared value system. Moral values in the literary work *Pupus Putus Sekolah* become a crucial aspect in character and story development. The importance of moral values in literature lies in its ability to shape characters and guide readers in understanding the conflicts faced, as well as the consequences of the choices made by the characters. By instilling strong moral values, the story not only entertains, but also invites readers to reflect and evaluate their attitudes and behaviors in everyday life. Through the characters struggling with moral dilemmas, readers can learn about the importance of integrity, empathy, and responsibility, thus making this work more than just entertainment, but also an effective educational tool. These values are strongly reflected through the portrayal of Pupus's personality throughout the story.

The characterization of Pupus as the main character in the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah* focuses on Pupus determination to get an education. Pupus is portrayed as a persistent, honest and inquisitive little girl. Pupus character is portrayed to convey the values of life. Not only academics, but also learning to appreciate how life experiences can play a role in shaping individual character and personality.

Considering this phenomenon, *Pupus Putus Sekolah* is an insightful case to study because it offers a portrayal of character development that goes hand in hand with the conveyance of moral values. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing Pupus's character development based on Tzvetan Todorov's (1971) narrative

structure, as well as the representation of moral values using the theory of Linda Eyre and Richard Eyre (1993), in order to provide a deeper understanding of how the main character develops while simultaneously representing moral values in the webtoon.

1.2. Identification of the Problems

As a form of digital literature, webtoons not only provide entertainment but also develop characters and convey values through plotlines, dialogue, and interactions between characters. However, the relationship between character development and the representation of moral values in webtoons has not yet been extensively studied in a comprehensive manner.

In *Pupus Putus Sekolah*, the character Pupus undergoes changes in attitude and personality as a result of various conflicts she faces. These changes also reveal the emergence of various moral values. However, there has been no in-depth explanation of how this character development is constructed through narrative structure or how moral values are represented during this process.

Previous studies have generally addressed character education values or intrinsic elements separately. Therefore, this study analyzes the character development of Pupus using Todorov's (1971) narrative theory and the representation of moral values using the theory of Linda and Richard Eyre (1993) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between character development and moral values in *Pupus Putus Sekolah*.

1.3. Limitation of the Problems

This study is limited to an analysis of Pupus's character development and the representation of moral values in the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah* Season 1, which consists of 33 episodes. Season 1 was selected because it serves as the story's foundation, introducing the characters, the main conflict, and the early stages of Pupus's character development. In this season, changes in Pupus's character begin to emerge through various significant events. Therefore, subsequent seasons were not analyzed because they focus more on the continuation of the character development established in Season 1 and fall outside the scope of this study.

In addition, this study focuses more on narrative aspects, particularly the development of the character Pupus based on Todorov's narrative structure and the representation of moral values based on Eyre and Eyre's theory. Although webtoons are a medium that combines verbal and visual elements, this study has not conducted an in-depth analysis of visual elements. Such as character expressions, gestures, panel composition, framing, color, or other visual techniques. That also play a role in constructing meaning.

1.4. Research Question

With regard to the issues outlined earlier, the research problems in this study are expressed through two key questions, below:

- 1) How is the character of Pupus in *Pupus Putus Sekolah* developed to represent moral values?
- 2) What are the moral values that can be identified through the characterization of Pupus as the main character in the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah*?

1.5. Objective of the Study

The researcher seeks to tackle the research problems and fulfill further goals through this study. Consequently, the key objectives to be realized through this research are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the character development of Pupus as the main character in *Pupus Putus Sekolah* and how the character represents moral values.
- 2) To identify the moral values contained in the characterization of Pupus as the main character in the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah*.

1.6. Significances of the Study

This study expected to enrich literary studies, particularly in the application of theories on character development and the representation of moral values in digital literature. Practically, this research benefits students, educators, and general readers in understanding the potential of webtoons as a medium for moral education and character development. It is also hoped that this study will encourage content creators to pay greater attention to moral values in their works.