

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the theories and previous study of related topics. The discussion focuses on character development and the representation of moral values through the characterization of Pupus in the *Pupus Putus Sekolah* webtoon series.

2.1. Literature

A literary work is a reflection, depiction, or representation of society's life. Through literature, authors attempt to express the joys and sorrows of human life that they have felt or experienced (Milawasri, 2017). In addition, literature presents portraits of life conveyed in written form or through language. Thus, literature does not merely serve as entertainment, but also as a medium to reflect the realities of life through language.

In line with this, on a broader scale, literature is also regarded as an art form founded on the use of language. Any kind of work constructed from a series of words and language can be understood as a literary work. Literature also serves as a medium for its creator to express emotions, imagination, or share life experiences. It can take both written and oral forms. According to Yusanta and Wati (2020), literature initially developed through oral traditions, spreading from mouth to mouth. It was only later that literature began to take written form after humans became familiar with writing and printing technologies.

As an art form with the boundless beauty of language, literature does not merely exist for entertainment. In addition to its primary function of providing amusement, literature can also serve as a medium to convey messages and moral

values, as a tool for education, and as a means of transmitting other values relevant to life, whether explicitly or implicitly expressed. Wardani (2009) argues that literary works are not simply strings of words created to form beauty, nor are they collections of sentences whose meanings can be immediately grasped with a single reading. The meaning within literary works reflects the author's ideas, opinions, and perspectives on life. This demonstrates that literature also plays a role in shaping social and moral life.

There are many types of literature, but generally, literature is divided into two categories: fiction and nonfiction. Fiction refers to literary works created by authors based on imagination, such as poetry, prose, and drama. Nonfiction, on the other hand, consists of written works based on facts or data. Literature can also be distinguished by other classifications, such as classical literature and modern literature. The most striking difference between the two lies in writing style: traditional literature tends to follow rigid rules, while modern literature allows for more freedom.

Along with the advancement of human civilization and technology, literature has also undergone significant development. The most recent evolution is cyber literature or digital literature, in which literary works are published on the internet without the need for printing through major or minor publishers (Yusanta & Wati, 2020). Notable examples of cyber or digital literature, particularly in Indonesia, include Webtoon and Wattpad.

Literary works are representations of society expressed through language, serving to depict experiences, emotions, and the realities of human life. Literature functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying moral

values, education, and the author's worldview. Furthermore, as a form of linguistic art, literature can take various forms, both oral and written, and continues to evolve with the times. This evolution is evident in the transition from oral to written literature and the emergence of digital literature. Thus, literature plays a vital role not only in the realm of aesthetics but also in shaping social and moral values within society

2.1.1. Digital Literature

The development of technology has not only affected the ease of communication and the innovation that supports people's daily lives. As a result of technological advancement, literature has also been affected. With the growth of the digital and technological world, literary works can now be produced and presented in digital form. According to Yusanta and Wati (2020), digital literature was first introduced in 2001 by the Sastra Cyber community. Endraswara (2013, pp. 182–183, as cited in Cinthya & Wati, 2020) explains:

The definition of cyber literature originates from the term cyber sastra, which can be traced back to the word cyber. In English, the word cyber cannot stand alone but is instead combined with other words such as cyberspace, cybernate, and cybernetics. Cyberspace refers to a (computer-based) space that is interconnected, forming a culture among its users. Cybernate means the control of processes through the use of computers.

Thus, digital literature or cyber literature refers to literary works that are presented through digital media and can be accessed via internet-based devices such as computers, smartphones, or online platforms. Its presence not only transforms the medium of publication from print to digital, but also shapes a new culture of reading, writing, and distributing literature in modern society.

Digital literature has distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of literature, beyond its medium and accessibility. One of these is the addition of visualization, although not all digital literary works incorporate it. Nevertheless, the intrinsic elements that construct digital literature remain the same as those in other literary works. One popular form of digital literature among young people is Webtoon, which delivers narratives through visual imagery that enhances the reader's overall experience.

Technological advancements have brought significant changes to the world of literature, particularly through the emergence of digital literature or cyber literature. Literature, which was previously presented in print form, can now be accessed more widely through digital media such as the internet, computers, and smartphones, thereby simplifying the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of literary works. Furthermore, digital literature not only changes the medium of delivery but also shapes a new culture of reading and writing in modern society. Although it has distinctive features such as the use of visuals and high accessibility, the intrinsic elements of digital literature remain the same as those of literary works in general. One popular form of digital literature is the Webtoon, which combines text and visuals to provide a more engaging reading experience, particularly for younger audiences

2.1.2. Webtoon

A Webtoon is a digital entertainment tool in the form of comics that can be accessed through digital devices with internet access. The term webtoon comes from the words “web” and “cartoon,” meaning digital comics that can be accessed through websites or applications. In accordance with Ji's statement (2016, as cited

in Gustiawati, 2024) webtoon comes from a combination of two words, namely 'web' and 'cartoon', meaning comics published through page media and adapted for computer screens.

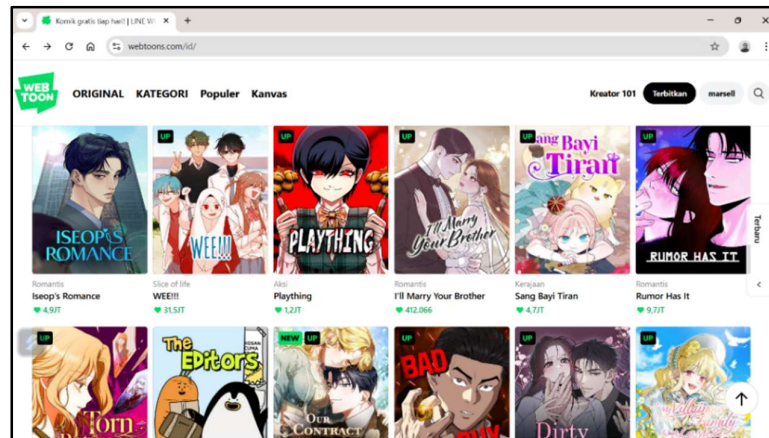


Image 2. 1 Homepage Webtoon

Webtoon was first recognized in South Korea, the creation of webtoon is one of the efforts of comic writers and caricatures to maintain the existence of comics in the era of the decline of printed comics. In Indonesia, LINE Webtoon became popular in early 2015 as one of the accessible webtoon platforms. Line webtoon in Indonesia developed as people began using the line chat application, where both line webtoon and line chat are one of the products of Naver as a technology company in South Korea.

Webtoon can be categorized as a form of literary work, specifically within the scope of cyber literature or digital literature. Although Webtoon is presented with visual illustrations, making its presentation somewhat different from conventional literary works that rely solely on language or text, it still contains intrinsic elements that allow it to be classified as literature. The intrinsic elements of Webtoon consist of theme, characters and characterization, plot, setting, and

moral message. These elements construct the way in which the story created by the author is conveyed to the readers.

It can be concluded that Webtoon is a form of digital comics accessible via the internet, derived from the combination of the word “web” and “cartoon.” Webtoons first emerged in South Korea as an effort to preserve the existence of comics amid the decline of print media, and subsequently gained popularity in Indonesia starting in 2015 through the Line Webtoon platform. Although presented in a visual format, Webtoons can still be categorized as digital literary works because they possess intrinsic elements such as themes, characters, plot, setting, and moral messages that form the foundation of the entire story.

2.2. Elements of Literature

Literary works are compositions constructed from several elements to form a complete whole. These elements are certainly very important; a work can be called a literary work if it fulfills the elements of literature in its creation. Therefore, literary works can be enjoyed by readers and literature enthusiasts. The elements that make up literary works are divided into two categories: intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2010), intrinsic elements are elements that form the work itself, which cause the text to exist as a literary text. Commonly known intrinsic elements of literature are: theme, character and characterization, setting, plot, moral values, style of language, and point of view. Meanwhile, extrinsic elements are elements that arise from the reader's understanding. These elements are called extrinsic because they are not directly presented in the text. According to Nurgiyantoro (2010), extrinsic elements indirectly influence the

structure or system of literary texts. Or, more specifically, they can be said to be elements that influence the structure of literary works but are not part of them. Examples of extrinsic elements in literature include the author's background and the socio-cultural conditions in the story.

In short, a literary work consists of two main elements—intrinsic and extrinsic, which both play a role in shaping the work's integrity. Intrinsic elements are those that directly constitute the literary text, such as theme, characters, plot, setting, and moral values, while extrinsic elements originate from outside the text, such as the author's background and sociocultural conditions, which also influence the work's formation. These two elements give literary works a complete meaning that can be understood and enjoyed by readers

1) Character and Character Development

Character and characterization are among the most important elements in a webtoon. Although they may sound similar, the two are different. A *character* is an individual or subject created by the author to act or perform within the constructed story. According to Milawasri, a character in a fictional narrative is the one who experiences events and problems, which in turn shape the story into something engaging. *Characterization*, on the other hand, is the method or process through which the author develops the traits of a character. These two aspects cannot be separated, as they are closely interconnected.

The presence of a character in a story is essential because without characters or actors, a narrative loses its dynamism (Milawasri, 2017). Based on their role and significance, characters are generally divided into two types: *main characters* and *sub-characters*. The main character is created to undergo the central conflict

presented in the story, while sub-characters function as supporting figures who accompany the main character through the conflict. Sub-characters may be portrayed as opposing the nature or goals of the main character, or as allies who help the main character confront challenges.

Furthermore, characters can also be classified into two categories based on their development: *flat characters* and *round characters*. According to Foster (1956, as cited in Maurifa, 2023), a flat character is an undeveloped character who maintains the same personality and life throughout the story. Flat characters are usually represented by one or two defining traits. In contrast, a round character undergoes development, changes in personality, experiences transformation in life, and is portrayed as complex with multiple dimensions.

In creating a character, an author must go through the process of characterization to construct figures that align with the narrative being built. As the core element of a story, a character cannot be separated from the process of characterization, which brings the figure to life in the eyes of the reader.

Characterization is the process used to describe and reveal the traits and qualities of characters in a literary work. According to Zaidan (2004, p. 206, as cited in Milawasri, 2017), characterization is the process of presenting characters by assigning them traits, qualities, or habits within the narrative. Characterization can also be seen as a narrative description or an explicit judgment. As stated by Minderop (2011, p. 6, as cited in Nurmawan), there are two methods of characterization.

- 1) Direct characterization (telling): describe the character's traits by the author directly

- 2) Indirect characterization (showing): dialogue and action, appearance, and interactions between characters the characterization method shows or describe the character by dialogue or action.

Characterization is very important in a literary work because without good characterization, a work will not be interesting to readers. According to Sayuti (in Prastika, 2016), characterization is an attempt to display the character or character of the character being played, which is something that cannot be separated from a work. This shows that characterization is a key element that affects the reader's interest and understanding of the story (Candra, 2025; Natalia, 2024)

In relation to this, Todorov's narrative theory provides a structural framework that explains how the flow of a story influences and shapes the process of characterization. According to Todorov's narrative theory, a story develops through five stages: initial equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to repair, and new equilibrium. These stages not only function as the structural framework of the plot but also play a significant role in shaping character development. In the stage of initial equilibrium, characters are usually introduced in a stable situation. The disruption that follows forces the characters to face conflicts, which then drives changes in their attitudes, thoughts, or actions. Through the recognition stage, characters become aware of the challenges they encounter, opening opportunities for personality growth and moral learning. In the attempt to repair stage, characters undergo struggles that reaffirm their identity and qualities. Finally, in the new equilibrium, characters experience transformation and emerge as more mature figures, different from how they were at the beginning. Thus, Todorov's theory can be applied to analyze how the progression of the plot directly influences the growth

and deepening of characters in analysis character development of Pupus in webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah*.

It can be concluded that characters and characterization are important elements in literary works, including webtoons, which are interrelated in the construction of a story. Characters serve as the agents who drive the plot, while characterization is the process of depicting a character's traits and personality, both directly and indirectly. Characters can be distinguished based on their roles and development, such as main and supporting characters, as well as flat and round characters. Additionally, character development is influenced by the plot, which can be analyzed using Todorov's narrative theory through the stages that shape the characters' changes and maturation throughout the story.

2) Moral Value

Moral values are principles or standards that govern individual behavior in society, relating to what is considered good or bad. These values serve as guidelines in everyday decision-making and actions, and reflect prevailing social norms. In the context of literature, moral values are often conveyed through characters and storylines, providing readers with lessons about ethics and expected behavior in life (Sri Ulina Beru Ginting et al., 2022; Winarsih et al., 2022). According to Zainul Arifin (2019), moral values in literary works reflect teachings about good and bad behavior, and serve as a reference for determining human attitudes in interacting with others and the environment.

Eyre and Eyre (1993) state that there are twelve core moral values, which are divided into two categories. The first is the *values of being*, moral values that are formed within the individual and derived from self-awareness. These include

honesty, courage, peaceability, self-reliance and potential, self-discipline, and moderation. The second category is the *values of giving*, moral values that are shaped by how an individual engages in social interactions. These values are influenced by external factors and consist of loyalty and dependability, respect, love, unselfishness and sensitivity, kindness and friendliness, as well as justice and mercy.

As explained above, moral values serve as important guidelines that govern individual behavior in determining right and wrong, and are reflected in the social norms of life. In literary works, moral values are conveyed through characters and plotlines as a means of teaching ethics to readers. According to Eyre and Eyre, moral values are divided into two categories: “values of being,” which stem from an individual’s self-awareness, and “values of giving,” which relate to social interaction; thus, both play a role in shaping human attitudes and behavior in daily life.

3) Character, Characterization, and Moral Value from the Perspective of Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic elements are important elements that make up a literary work. Intrinsic elements are the main foundation in constructing a literary work. Intrinsic elements in a literary work create a cohesive literary work. In addition, through intrinsic elements, story writers can convey messages and values that they want to share with readers. Intrinsic elements generally consist of theme, character and characterization, setting, point of view, style of language, and the message to be conveyed. Each of these intrinsic elements has its own role. In literary works with digital media such as webtoons, these intrinsic elements remain relevant but are expanded through visual codes such as panel composition, framing, and typography,

which become part of the style and perspective that influence the plot and characterization.

This study highlights characterization, character, and moral values, as mentioned earlier, that these three things are part of the intrinsic elements of a literary work. These three aspects were chosen because they play an important role in shaping the storyline and the message that the author wants to convey. Characters are seen as figures who experience events in the story, while characterization is understood as the way the author describes the nature, attitude, and changes of the characters through narration, dialogue, and actions. Moral values are seen as messages or lessons that emerge from the characters' journeys and the conflicts they face. In the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah*, these three aspects complement each other, both through text and visuals, thereby building a complete picture of Pupus' character development while conveying moral values to readers.

It can be concluded that intrinsic elements serve as the primary foundation for creating a complete and meaningful literary work, including in digital formats such as webtoons, which also utilize visual elements. In this study, the focus on characters, characterization, and moral values demonstrates that these three aspects are interrelated in shaping the plot and conveying a message to readers. Through the integration of text and visuals in the webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah*, the development of the main character and the moral values depicted can be portrayed in a more profound and comprehensive manner.

2.3. *Pupus Putus Sekolah* Webtoon Series

Pupus Putus Sekolah is one of the webtoon titles that is popular among webtoon readers in Indonesia. This webtoon by Kurnia Harta Winata was first released on August 20, 2021.

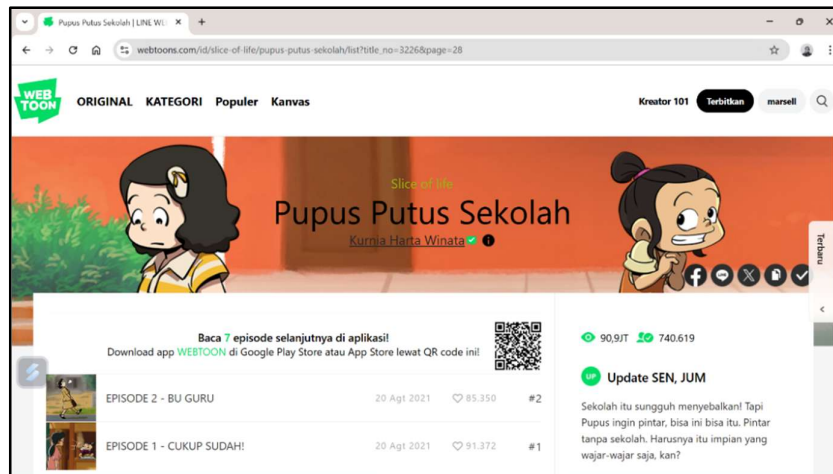


Image 2. 2 Cover Webtoon *Pupus Putus Sekolah* (Winata, 2021-present)

The story follows a little girl named Pupus who, after her grandmother's death, is forced to drop out of school and pursue alternative education. Pupus then meets Prof. Suryo who eventually makes Pupus a student of non-conventional lessons. This slice of life story presents various moral values contained in it, along with the development of characterization in the character of Pupus. Pupus is the main character in this story she can be considered the protagonist because she appears most frequently in the webtoon, and the author also uses her name as part of the title.

Currently, *Pupus Putus Sekolah* has been viewed by 90.9 million readers, can be accessed through Line Webtoon, with new episodes updated every Monday and Friday. With a total number of stories published on the webtoon 293 episodes divided into 7 seasons (data as of April 14, 2026). Some of the *Pupus Putus Sekolah*

stories have also been published as books. The published book is divided into 3 volumes. Each volume has a subtitle Vol. 1 *Anak Berharga*, Vol. 2 *Anak Gigih* Vol. 3 *Anak Keluarga*.

2.4. Previous Study

1) Analisis Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Komik Webtoon “Pupus Putus Sekolah”

Research conducted by Syntia Wahyu Adeisti entitled “*Analisis Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Komik Webtoon ‘Pupus Putus Sekolah’*” aims to identify and analyze the character education values contained in the comic. This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach, which includes observing the characters, storylines, and social context in the webtoon. The results showed that there are nine character education values represented by the Pupus character, namely independence, responsibility, honesty, curiosity, hard work, love to read, friendly and communicative, discipline, and respect for achievement. This research emphasizes that webtoon comics not only function as entertainment media, but also as a means to instill important character values for readers, especially the younger generation.

This study identified the character education values present in webtoons without explaining how those values develop through the main character’s growth process. The study focused primarily on classifying character education values and therefore did not link them to the narrative structure or the process of characterization. Furthermore, this study did not use any specific character development or moral theory as an analytical framework; consequently, the

relationship between Pupus's character development and the representation of moral values has not been systematically explained.

2) *Analisis Karakter dan Cerita Webtoon Berjudul "Your Letter"*

Research conducted by I Gede Yudha Pratama and I Gusti Agung Istri Intan Krisnaswari (2023) entitled "*Analisis Karakter dan Cerita Webtoon Berjudul 'Your Letter'*" aims to explore the characters and moral messages contained in the webtoon by Hyeon A Cho. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, which includes analysis of intrinsic elements such as theme, character, characterization, plot, setting, and point of view. The results show that although this webtoon has a school theme, there are fantasy elements that enrich the story. The research also reveals how bullying among students is portrayed and how the main character struggles to overcome it, as well as the character development and friendships that occur between the characters in the story.

The limitation of this study lies in the scope of the analysis, which remains general in nature because it covers nearly all intrinsic elements of literary works. As a result, the discussion of character development has not been analyzed using a specific narrative theory capable of systematically explaining the stages of character change. Furthermore, the moral message is presented only as part of the interpretive findings, without using a specific moral theory as the basis for analysis.

3) *Analisis Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Tokoh Utama Guru Honorer dalam Komik Pak Guru Inyong Berbasis Webtoon.*

Research conducted by Desi Nurcahyani, Nurliani Maulida, and Kiftian Hady Prasetya (2018) entitled “*Analisis Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Tokoh Utama Guru Honorer dalam Komik Pak Guru Inyong Berbasis Webtoon*” examines the character education values contained in the comic. This study aims to describe the characterization, character education values, and the implications of applying comics as teaching materials in schools. The results showed that there are four character education values raised in the comic, namely character values related to God, self, others, and nationality. This research also highlights the importance of using comics as learning media that can improve students' understanding of character values.

This study focuses primarily on analyzing character education values and their implications for the learning process. It has not yet examined the dynamics of character development throughout the plot, nor has it linked character changes to narrative structure. Additionally, the theory employed remains oriented toward character education, so the aspect of moral representation in literary works has not been discussed in depth.

4) *Moralitas Tokoh Utama Sun Wukong dalam Novel Xi You Ji Karya Wu Cheng En*

Research conducted by Bhima Shakti (2023) entitled “*Morality of the Main Character Sun Wukong in the Novel Xi You Ji by Wu Cheng En*” analyzes the morality of the main character Sun Wukong using Lawrence Kohlberg's moral theory. This study aims to identify how Sun Wukong's morality develops through three moral levels: preconventional, conventional, and post-conventional. The results of the analysis show that Sun Wukong experiences

irregular moral development, with some moral stages being reached according to the context of his life. This research provides insight into how characters in literature can reflect the moral development of individuals.

Although the study successfully explains the moral development of the characters, its focus is on the process of moral reasoning as understood in developmental psychology, rather than on the representation of moral values as embodied through characterization in literary works. Furthermore, this study does not link moral development to the narrative structure of the story; thus, character changes have not been analyzed as part of the plot's development.

Based on previous studies, it can be concluded that research on webtoons generally focuses on identifying character education values, analyzing intrinsic elements, or examining the moral development of characters separately. Previous research has not examined the relationship between character development and the representation of moral values through an approach that integrates Todorov's narrative theory (1971) with Linda and Richard Eyre's moral theory (1993). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing Pupus's character development based on Todorov's narrative stages and identifying the representation of moral values using Eyre and Eyre's theory, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between character development and moral values in the webtoon Pupus Putus Sekolah.