

## CHARACTER EDUCATION IN AHMAD FUADI'S *NEGERI 5 MENARA*

**Muhammad Tahir**

Master's Program, Fakultas Sastra  
Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan

*Corresponding author:* muhammad.tahir718@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

Character Education is indeed a high priority, the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Character education is not a process of transferring knowledge and memorizing the materials to have an exam. Character education requires habituation. It refers to real action of becoming caring, perseverance, and team work, being ashamed to cheat and also being ashamed to be lazy. Character Education is indeed a high priority, one of the important factors in determining a country's development. It can bring a country in advance or even in decline. Education has important role to create and develop young generations' potential to have the the spiritual strength of religious, include caring, confidence, courage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiative, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline, teamwork, and the skills needed for themselves and society. The points of discussion in this study are *Caring*, *Perseverance* and *Teamwork* with a purpose to find out and describe the traits of characters education found in the novel. The research is conducted by means of descriptive qualitative research proposed by Creswell (2009) and Ary (2002) The results show that the three traits Caring, Perseverance and Teamwork are found in the novel.

**Keywords:** character education, caring, perseverance, teamwork.

### **Introduction**

Character Education has important role to create and develop young generations' potential to have the spiritual strength of religion, including caring, confidence, courage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiativeness, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline, teamwork, and the skills needed for themselves and society. Every country in this world tries to find the best way of improving its best education system to form qualified young generations. It is done since they will be activators in a country in order to make the country in prosperity. Nowadays, every school is insisted to be able to facilitate students to have good characters. The school takes some efforts to realize the government's policy through the application of a curriculum. The implemented model is, then, called character education. Consequently, every subject should

contribute to the development of students' good characters. As a result, every school has significant roles to educate students' characters. Although educating students' characters is not a new issue it must be taken into consideration by every school, and the issue needs a serious attention.

It is widely known that educational process does not only stop in the transfer of knowledge but also the transfer of character education and even the transfer of action. Therefore, this process of education develops a person both academically and mentally. Many teachers teach moral and religion subjects to introduce caring, perseverance, and team work. However, the character education of those good characters cannot be easily understood and implemented by the students. It still needs a real model to be imitated.

In formal schools, teachers play important roles in education not only to teach but also to educate. The students are expected to develop their good characters through learning in school. School is a second home for students, where they are studying and socializing themselves with their friends. When they are at home, the students become entirely the responsibility of parents. Educating is not just delivering course material and giving the students scores when they can answer the questions correctly. Educating, on the other hand, is an effort to build positive character traits in students. So, they grow up to be a qualified person, civilized with noble character. The fact shows that there is misunderstanding in the public. People assume that education happens only at school, so that parents sometimes have less attention to the quality of their children's education at home and in their environment. Cultivating the character does not only happen through formal and non-formal education. But along with the development of science and technology. Education undergoes a paradigm shift that it also occurs outside of the classroom through the mass media, both printed and electronical. The diversity of media presentation models has taken an important role in education.

Among the kinds of literary works, novel is written for the purpose of sending message to the reader. Novel as a literary works that so far only as entertain readings, or as a satisfying hobby, has a lot of characters contained in it. The character education can be in the form of caring, confidence, caurage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiative, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline, teamwork. Novelist tries to internalize the character education to the readers that slowly form public opinion in a way that is very smooth.

Based on those reasons, the writer is very interested in conducting a research entitled "Character Education in Ahmad Fuadi Novel *Negeri 5 Menara*". This research is expected to provide a positive contribution in education institution, especially in terms of educating and developing students' positive character.

## **Literature Review**

### **Character Education**

McElmeel (2002: xiii) informs that in recent years, there has been a return to “character education” discussion of values and appropriate behavior in our nation’s classrooms. This trend stems from many publicized incidents of serious violence. The question of who would take responsibility for the changing character of our society turn public attention toward the issue of building desirable traits in citizens-traits that would help youngsters develop as responsible citizens. Many school districts and institutions create a list of desired traits, each with their own terminology and definition.

McElmeel (2002: xxiii) adds that there are some traits of character education. They are caring, confidence, courage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiative, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline and teamwork. Three of them can be further explained below.

### **Caring**

Caring is the act of being concerned about or interested in another person or situation. It is feeling or acting with compassion, concern, or empathy (McElmeel, 2002: 1).

Nodding (2002: 14) defines that caring is always aimed at establishing, restoring, or enhancing the kind of relation in which we respond freely because we want to do so.

### **Perseverance**

Perseverance is the ability to keep working toward a goal, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of difficulty, opposition, or discouragement; the capacity to carry on, especially under adverse circumstances (McElmeel, 2002: 147).

### **Teamwork**

Teamwork is working with others to reach a common goal; acting together to achieve a shared vision (McElmeel, 2002: 197). Welty (2009: 13) states that the benefits of working with a team are spelled out right in the letters that make up the word: Together Everyone Achieves More. This simple idea of working together to accomplish more than any one person could do alone is the essence of teamwork.

### **Research Method**

The method of this research is library and qualitative research method that describes the character education in the novel *Negeri 5 Menara* by Ahmad Fuadi.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. (Sugiyono, 2012). These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self (Creswell, 2009) and Ary (2002). In short, the qualitative refers to the data and meaning and serve the data in the forms of word. This research employs qualitative design that produces descriptive data in the form of written words not numbers. Thus, the research report contained excerpts of data to provide an overview presentation of the report. Quotations from the data presented in this research were

to confirm the data obtained from the understanding of the meaning contained in each word, sentence, paragraph, text and also the development of literary elements especially related to the character education in Ahmad Fuadi's novel *Negeri 5 Menara*.

## **Discussion**

There are seventeen traits of character education: *caring, confidence, courage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiativeness, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline and teamwork*. The points of discussion are *Caring, Perseverance and Teamwork*.

### **Caring**

The trait of caring in this novel is shown by Alif. The form of his caring is when Baso looks lethargic on the edge of the field and there is no intention of playing basketball without a book in hand and without learning even though it is not a Baso custom.

After playing basketball, I went up to him and volunteered to accompany him to the PM clinic next to the sports complex.

"Unwell? Tooth ache? Let's go to the clinic, "I said

He shook his head. His eyes were still covered with fog.

"Do not be afraid of friends, this doctor does not like to play. He gives anti-pain pills". (Fuadi, 2009: 358)

From the quotation above it can be seen that Alif shows caring to Baso by offering to accompany him to the clinic next to the sports complex. The trait of caring is also shown by Alif when he gets the news that Baso's grandmother is ill and always mentions his name. Baso was bewildered between continuing to study at the PM or coming home to take care of his grandmother. Conditions like this is then seen by his friends. Alif then approached and tried to talk. And traits of caring can be proven by the quotation below.

In my heart I promise to help him as hard as I can. Baso nodded appreciatively as he blew his grief-stricken nose. Suddenly my nose also watered like felling cold. (Fuadi, 2009: 363)

The quotation above shows Alif's trait of caring for the sadness that befell his best friend. Although Alif's attention was only proclaimed in the heart, but he promised to help ease his friend's grief with all his might. And he also shared the sadness experienced by his friend until he did not realize his nose also drained the water.

### **Perseverance**

The trait of perseverance in this novel is shown by Alif. The form of his perseverance is when the exam will be coming soon. The exam will be very tough and it needs some good preparations. And in doing preparations, Alif has got lots of challenges such as drowsiness, physical weakness and loss of concentration.

I also do not want to lose. Although sleepy, I want to run the determination that I have written in the book. I'll work hard on it first.

Standing up to stretch, to get rid of the drowsiness. After wetting my face and doing ablutions, it subsided quite a bit. Every time I felt compelled to give up and go to sleep, I prodded myself, "Come on, one more page, one more line, one more word..." Eventually, with a struggle, I was able to finish my reading. (Fuadi, 2009: 199)

In the quotation above Alif shows his perseverance to face exam. He expresses his struggle to face his sleepiness during studying. Although he was sleepy but still in his determination and perseverance to finish his reading book and in the end he could finish his reading. Another trait of perseverance is also shown by Alif.

After becoming a campus magazine writer, I learned a lot from mentors, one of them is *Ustad Salman*. Even I dare to write poetry and short stories to be sent to magazines and newspapers to be published in Java and Sumatra. The result? Time and time again I get thick envelopes from these papers, containing my own manuscript and the apology letter stating that they have not been able to upload my writing for various reasons. But according to the magical word I believe it is, *man jadda wajada*, I try not to lose. (Fuadi, 2009: 160)

The quotation above shows that Alif has got great perseverance. Most of the scripts he has sent to various newspapers and magazines are rejected but he does not give up. He accepts that as a living trial and again he never gets bored to try. He has got his own motto, *man jadda wa jada*. He knows for sure that in the learning process a barrier is a common thing.

### **Teamwork**

The trait of teamwork in this novel is shown by Alif. The form of his teamwork is when they realize they have weaknesses in their respective subjects where Alif is weak in memorizing *mahfuzhat* while Baso is expert in memorizing but he has difficulties in reading English while he is a good at English. Being aware of the weakness of each other, he and Baso make a pact to perform symbiosis mutualism, where Baso makes sure that his memorizing is right, while Alif makes sure of his English. The traits of teamwork can be proven by the quotation below.

Realizing each other's weaknesses, Baso and I made the pact to perform the symbiosis of mutualism. He made sure my memory is correct, while I make sure his English is free of *tajwid* (grammar). Every Monday night and Thursday night, we make sure our folding mattress is close together. I started spelling *mahfuzhat* recitation for tomorrow. In the darkness he whispered repeatedly correcting my recitation. If tomorrow there is English my turn is listening his reading. So over and over until one of us started snoring. Miraculously, this is powerful enough to help me memorize, though within days it fades again. (Fuadi, 2009: 118)

In the quotation above it is seen how Alif and Baso collaborate in overcoming learning barriers. They have weaknesses in different subjects. The strategy they make is mutually correcting their weaknesses to improve the quality of their competence. So seriously they work together in learning until one of them gets into sleep. Alif realizes that this effort is successful in increasing their ability to memorize.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the research, there are three traits found in the novel *Negeri 5 Menara* by Ahmad Fuadi shown by one of the main characters of the novel, Alif Fikri. The three traits of character education in the novel are caring, *perseverance*, and *teamwork*.

Those traits are important to be possessed by every individual. Those traits, practically, can be beneficial for each individual to live together in the society. Those traits, in fact, can inspire the individual in his or her daily activity that lead him or her to be successful in achieving self-esteem and even self-actualization.

So in general, character education are trained and implemented in a real life, including formal, informal, and non-formal school or institution. However, those characters can also be found or learned in the literary works. As representative of real life, literary works are composed based on the real life. Hence, a literary work is the representative of life itself. As a representation of life, literary works show how every character behaves. In literary work, the readers can learn how the characters solve their problems. The character education presented in the literary work may be performed by a certain character. Through their social interaction in the story, the readers can identify and even learn more appropriate aspects of life, such as caring, confidence, courage, curiosity, flexibility, friendship, goal setting, humility, humor, initiative, integrity, patience, perseverance, positive attitude, problem solving, self discipline, teamwork. In short, literary works guide and show the readers character education that can be implemented in their daily life.

## **References**

- Ary, Donald. (2002). *Introduction to Research in Education (Sixth Edition)*. Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Creswell, John W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approach*. Third Edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publication, Inc.
- Fuadi, A. (2009). *Negeri Lima Menara*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Fuadi, A. (2011). *The Land of Five Towers*. Translated by Angie Kilbane. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- McElmeel, Sharron L. (2002). *Character Education a book guide for teachers, librarians, and Parents*. Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.
- Nodding, Nel. (2002). *Educating Moral People: a caring alternative to character education*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Sugiyono. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

*Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference on Language and Literature, 18-19 April 2018, Fakultas Sastra, UISU, Medan, Indonesia.*

Welty, Tara. (2009). *Character Education: Handling Teamwork and Respect for Others*. New York: Infobase Publishing.