

## **Investigating The Character Education Value Encapsulated within the Novel 'Rara Mendut' by Y.B. Mangunwijaya**

Sutri<sup>1</sup>, Suyitno<sup>2</sup>, Sahid Teguh Widodo<sup>3</sup>

sutrii@student.uns.ac.id [sutrii@fkip.unsika.ac.id](mailto:sutrii@fkip.unsika.ac.id)

Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta<sup>2</sup>, Universitas sebelas Maret Surakarta<sup>3</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

Novels serve as repositories of deep value, offering readers both experiential insights and valuable lessons. This research aims to meticulously illuminate the inherent character education values encapsulated in the novel "Rara Mendut" by Y.B. Mangunwijaya. This study employs a qualitative research approach and content analysis as the analysis method to comprehend and expound upon the character education values embedded in the narrative structure. The findings of this research underscore that the most highlighted value found in 'Rara Mendut' as the main character is independence. This value emphasized initiative without relying on people, imparting crucial lessons that extend beyond the realm of fiction into the real-world domain. This research thus underscores the novel's pedagogical significance as a reservoir of character education, illustrating how literary work can serve as a potent medium for fostering ethical and virtuous values in its readership.

**Keywords:** *Character education value, literary work, 'Rara Mendut' novel*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Literary works reflect societal activities woven by authors who draw upon their imagination to describe the nuances of reality (Agustin et al., 2022). Within Literary works, a significant role unfolds as it becomes an instrumental medium in instilling character. The absence of character renders an individual vulnerable to reprehensible behaviors. Character, in essence, emerges as the foundational value that molds an individual's identity. This construct takes shape through hereditary traits, innate qualities, and the environmental forces that distinguish one person from another. It materializes in the myriad attitudes and behaviors exhibited in everyday life, as Madu (2020) expounded. Personality development underscores its profound impact on character. An individual's character is an evolving aspect shaped by hereditary factors and environmental influences. These influences manifest in an individual's demeanor, attitudes, and conduct, forming the essence of their existence. This perspective aligns with Madu's (2020) assertion that character represents

a fundamental value system that plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's responses to the world around them.

A compelling facet of character development is its interconnectedness with the surrounding community and the familial environment. The work of Putra et al. (2020) posits that the crucible of character formation lies within the nurturing confines of the home. As the primary crucible of an individual's formative years, the family unit instills values and attitudes that lay the foundation for a robust character. Consequently, the learning acquired within the familial realm potentiates in shaping an individual's worldview and behavioral inclinations. Moreover, the community is pivotal in contributing to the tapestry of character development. As one navigates the intricate fabric of societal interactions, the interplay between personal character and communal expectations becomes evident. This symbiotic relationship between individual character and collaborative ethos highlights the complex dance that shapes individuals' moral and ethical compass within society.

Character formation can be instilled through engagement with literary works, particularly novels, as emphasized (Saragih et al., 2019). As a distinct form of literary expression, novels serve as vessels capable of imparting values integral to character education (Sembiring & Pakpahan, 2021). These literary creations represent events meticulously curated by authors from their life experiences, offering a semblance of reality interwoven with potent imaginative elements (Rosmiati, 2022). Novels, enriched with extraordinary creative elements, encapsulate numerous character educational values, as emphasized by Pusvita (2017).

The significance of novels as a literary product extends beyond mere entertainment, pivotal in presenting diverse perspectives for navigating life's complexities. Pusvita (2017) underscores the abundance of character education values embedded within novels, highlighting their role as a reservoir of insights for individuals contending with life's myriad challenges. In education, novels emerge as valuable tools for character development. They serve as a medium through which individuals can absorb literary lessons, contributing to the holistic formation of their character. Novels are particularly crucial in an era where educational priorities often skew towards academic achievements, neglecting the essential non-academic aspects that constitute the foundation of character education, as elucidated by Febriana et al. (2018).

A comprehensive exploration of character education values in literary works, encompassing novels and various other genres, has been undertaken by previous scholars. Nurika Irma (2018) advocates incorporating the novel "*Ibuk*" into the high school literature curriculum, citing its rich repository of educational values. Meanwhile, Junaidi (2017) delves into folklore, specifically the "*Andai-andai*" stories in Kedurang Bengkulu, asserting their suitability as teaching materials for literature subjects due to their inherent character education virtues. Preserving and

transmitting such folk tales are essential for imparting valuable lessons from one generation to the next. Folklore, in general, emerges as a potent tool in shaping students' character, as emphasized by Junaidi et al. (2022). Notably, the " *Andai-andai* " folklore is identified by Cahyani and Junaidi (2019) as a source of teaching with positive values, emphasizing harmony and friendship to instill moral and character development in children.

Furthermore, research conducted by Putra et al. (2020) delves into character values embedded in traditional games, specifically "*Kaulinan Cingciripit*." The study reveals the presence of character values in the movements and activities associated with the game, thereby advocating its utilization in character-strengthening programs for adults engaged in learning at *ECO Bambu Cipaku*. In essence, character education values, as illuminated by Junaidi et al. (2018), are paramount elements that necessitate internalization within every student. The amalgamation of literary works, ranging from novels to folklore and traditional games, offers a comprehensive reservoir from which individuals can draw lessons essential for developing a robust and morally upright character.

In light of the descriptions above, educators could instill character education values to the students by studying literary works. Its text selection is a discerning process, with preference given to those imbued with a plethora of commendable values worthy of emulation. Beyond their role as mere reading materials, literary works serve as formidable mediums for learning, facilitating the exploration of values and experiences. It is imperative to recognize their multifaceted utility in the educational realm. The present research focuses on examining the values encapsulated within the novel "*Rara Mendut*." This scrutiny extends to assessing the novel's relevance as a substantive component of literary learning material.

As the chosen literary text, the novel can unveil a reservoir of character education values that can be instrumental in shaping individuals' moral compass and ethical foundations. By delving into the intricacies of "*Rara Mendut*," this research aims to uncover the nuanced layers of character values embedded within its narrative fabric. Furthermore, the inquiry extends to establishing the applicability and pertinence of the novel as an educational resource, affirming its capacity to serve as a valuable medium for literary learning. The significance lies not only in recognizing literature as a conduit for imbibing values but also in discerning the specific contributions of this chosen academic work toward the broader landscape of character education. Through this exploration, a nuanced understanding is sought, enriching the discourse on the role of literature in fostering virtuous character development within the realm of education.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative methodology, a form of inquiry characterized by its expression in natural language. Qualitative research frequently directs its focus toward individual cases, specific events, and

contextual intricacies, resulting in an idiographic style of analysis (Gerring, 2017). Qualitative data collection methods are strategically employed to understand human experiences, behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and emotions within a particular context and from a specific population's perspective.

The method chosen for this study is the content analysis method. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis transcends the conventional perception of data as representations of physical events. It views it as comprising texts, images, and expressions intentionally crafted for viewing, reading, interpretation, and subsequent action to derive meaning. The role of content analysts extends beyond mere observation to a comprehensive analysis of these textual and visual elements with due consideration to their intended purpose.

This research's primary task involved a meticulous investigation of the novel "Rara Mendut." During this process, the researcher conscientiously identified and marked several quotations reflecting character education values embedded within the narrative. Subsequently, a systematic collection and classification of these specified values were undertaken. The ensuing step encompassed a rigorous data analysis procedure to derive meaningful insights.

The data amassed through this content analysis are then presented in a discussion format, accompanied by an interpretation of the results. This interpretative process aligns with the theoretical framework underpinning the value of character education. By drawing upon established theories in the field, the analysis strives to illuminate the significance of the identified character education values within the sociocultural context encapsulated by the novel "Rara Mendut." This approach enriches the comprehension of the novel's thematic elements and contributes to the broader discourse on the integration of character education values in literary works.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **FINDINGS**

#### ***Summary of the Novel 'Rara Mendut' by Y.B Mangunwijaya***

The novel "Rara Mendut" by Y.B. Mangunwijaya is a seminal work within Indonesian literature, offering a deep exploration of Javanese society during the Dutch colonial period. The narrative reveals the complexities of Javanese life amidst Dutch colonial dominance. The novel's core is the intricate tangle of relationships, encompassing familial, friendly, and romantic bonds, each with conflicts and dynamics. Within this literary, the novel pictures the clash between social classes, cultural discrepancies, and the perennial struggle between tradition and modernity. The narrative meticulously scrutinizes how Dutch dominance interpenetrated the social, economic, and cultural fabric of Nglorog village, the story's backdrop.

A focal point in this literary masterpiece is the nuanced exploration of human relationships, delving into the intricate web of familial and

romantic dynamics. The characters' myriad conflicts reflect human existence's complexity, challenges, and dynamism. Rebellion and discontent emerge as prominent themes, with certain characters embodying a spirit of antagonism against colonial oppression and societal injustices.

Moreover, the novel highlights the importance of tradition and culture in Javanese life. The author intricately depicts traditional values, ceremonies, and cultural heritage as integral components of daily existence. This portrayal spotlights local heritage's enduring richness and beauty, resilient even in the face of approaching modernization. Within the narrative, the role of women in Javanese society takes center stage, particularly exemplified through characters like Rara Mendut. The female protagonists are depicted as possessing strength and an indomitable spirit, challenging the social norms prevalent in their era. This enlightened portrayal of women in the novel adds an intriguing and inspiring dimension to the narrative.

In essence, "Rara Mendut" transcends the boundaries of a mere literary work, serving as a potent vehicle for social critique and a vivid portrayal of the intricacies of Javanese life during the Dutch colonial era. Besides, Mangunwijaya's narrative mastery intertwines with insightful commentary, offering readers a compelling journey through the complexities of human relationships, societal struggles, and the enduring significance of tradition.

### ***The Character Education Values in the Novel 'Rara Mendut'***

The foundation of a nation's standing is intricately tied to its character, a determinant that renders a nation respected and appreciated among its global counterparts (Mughtar & Suryani, 2019). Recognizing this idea, the value of character education emerges as a pivotal initiative by the government to instill robust character traits within Indonesian society. The Ministry of National Education, in 2011, delineated 18 core values constituting character education: religious belief, honesty, tolerance, discipline, diligence, creativity, independence, democratic principles, curiosity, nationalistic spirit, patriotism, respect for achievements, communicativeness, love of peace, a penchant for reading, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and a sense of duty.

By delving into the values of character education encapsulated in the novel "Rara Mendut," we discern a narrative that reflects these fundamental virtues. By analyzing Rara Mendut's and her colleagues' experiences, readers gain insights into the transformative potential of fostering an independent and creative mindset. The character education values encapsulated in the novel 'Rara Mendut' are described below.

#### ***1. Religious Belief***

The religious aspect within the Ministry of Education and Culture's character education focuses on cultivating religious values,

spirituality, and adherence to religious doctrines. Within the pages of this novel, expressions of religious values manifest in the demonstration of gratitude and submission to God for bestowed blessings. This is exemplified in the subsequent quotes.

*"The aged fisherman's gaze shifted from the periphery to the young woman beside him..." (2019 edition, p. 2)*

*"Pamintaku mring Gusti kang Mahaasih: Parnga aksama, Mring dasih kang nandhang kingkin. Linuwarna sing rubeda (Praying to Allah: Grant forgiveness, the Most Loving. May those grappling with sorrow be liberated from adversity)" (2019 edition, p. 300)*

Within a religious framework, gratitude is intricately linked to expressing thanks to God. This excerpt elucidates the old fisherman's expression of appreciation, signifying happiness and newfound optimism in his existence. People express gratitude for bestowed gifts, endowments, or life itself, attributing these to spiritual origins or a higher power. Furthermore, "...Grant forgiveness, the Most Loving" encapsulates Pranacita's acknowledgment of personal limitations and implores protection from sacred impact. This revelation also underscores elements of spirituality and prayer as avenues for seeking guidance and safeguarding against religious forces.

## 2. *Honesty*

As delineated by the Ministry of National Education in 2011, the honest value embodies the imperative to communicate truthfully and abstain from falsehoods. Additionally, it encompasses the principles of openness and transparency in daily conduct. As a result, the character value of honest education plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals who are trustworthy and capable of making constructive contributions to society. In the novel 'Rara Mendut,' the embodiment of honest value is shown in the subsequent quotation.

*"Kakanda Wiraguna, kindly grant me the opportunity to articulate this matter, given my status as a woman. I am confident that Kakanda is already aware..." (2019 edition, p. 245)*

Honesty within the Javanese culture or traditional society is frequently associated with transparency and sincerity in social exchanges. Nyai Ajeng's selection of courteous language and seeking permission from his husband may indicate her commitment to honesty by respecting established social hierarchies and upholding cultural traditions. Consequently, virtues such as openness and



fidelity to societal norms can be interpreted as manifestations of honesty within this particular cultural milieu.

### 3. *Tolerance*

The tolerance value, as delineated by the Ministry of National Education in 2011, maintains an open disposition that respects and embraces the diversity of cultures, religions, and perspectives prevailing in society. Tolerance aims to cultivate individuals capable of valuing differences, comprehending alternative viewpoints, and fostering social harmony. In the novel 'Rara Mendut,' the embodiment of the value of tolerance is evident in the subsequent quote.

*"Full of love like her own child, Mrs. Ni Semangka conveyed this advice to the beach girl who was entrusted to her..." (2019 edition, p. 14).*

Within this quote, the tolerance value manifests through Ni Semangka's action of concern and love for the girl from the beach. This affectionate attitude and the advice provided reflect tolerance towards differences in social status or background. Tolerance in this context extends beyond religious or cultural considerations and encompasses a focus on addressing social inequality. Ni Semangka treated the girl with profound affection, irrespective of her status and background. Through these actions and advice, the tolerance value are evident, fostering harmonious relationships, and contributing to the cultivation of a character that upholds diversity and equality in society.

### 4. *Discipline*

The value of discipline, delineated by the Ministry of National Education in 2011, encompasses aspects of behavior, manners, and regularity within daily life. Discipline transcends mere adherence to regulations; it encapsulates responsibility, autonomy, and unwavering determination in pursuing purposes. In the novel 'Rara Mendut,' the exemplification of the value of discipline is conspicuously noticeable in the subsequent quote.

*"...That night... Wiraguna issued stringent directives for the soldiers to rest that night genuinely... So the Mataram soldiers would be fresh the next morning... the princesses were occasionally compelled to walk." (2019 edition, p. 44).*

This quote elucidates that discipline translates to the adherence to Wiraguna's orders to ensure the soldiers genuinely rest during the

night. Discipline here signifies unwavering adherence to rules and instructions propounded by the leader, with the expectation that Mataram soldiers will dutifully comply to secure adequate rest.

##### 5. *Hard Work*

The "hard work" value refers to an individual's attitude or disposition that demonstrates perseverance and maximum effort in performing tasks or achieving goals. Individuals embodying the value of hard work exhibit high dedication, consistency, and determination to produce the best possible outcomes. This includes a willingness to fully engage, work diligently, and remain tireless in the face of challenges. In novel "Rara Mendut," a hard work value could be seen in this following quote.

*"The dress rehearsal exercises are intensifying, commencing early in the morning. However, during the dress rehearsal, when every panéwu and penatus has internalized the troops' stylistic movements, and the soldiers understand the nuances of their demonstrations, the training can be executed after the sun completes three-quarters of its rotation..." (2019 edition p.149).*

In this context, the value of "hard work" is distinctly depicted through Wiraguna's unwavering dedication and commitment to the rigorous training regimen, integrating it seamlessly into the fabric of daily life. This underscores the notion that through sustained effort and industrialism, one can achieve optimal results across various facets of life, including meticulous preparations for warfare.

##### 6. *Creativity*

The creativity value according to the Ministry of National Education in 2011, involves fostering an individual's ability to think innovatively, explore alternative solutions, and approach challenges with an open mind. Creativity is considered an essential aspect of character development, contributing to the holistic growth of individuals within an educational framework. The following excerpt illustrates the embodiment of creative values:

*"Five reals!" Wiraguna succinctly declared.  
"Five reals, can you forgive me, Kakanda?" queried Nyai Ajeng, visibly surprised, glancing left and right.  
"The taxes!" Ah, Wiraguna's curiosity is genuinely piqued,  
"What was it?" Nyai Ajeng failed to fully comprehend.  
"The taxes!" Ah, Wiraguna's curiosity is genuinely piqued,  
"Kakanda wants to impose five reals on Mendut?"  
"Every day..." Wiraguna persisted, undeterred by his wife's interjection.*



(2019 Edition p.155).

In this excerpt, Commander Wiraguna attempts to derive creative solutions to challenges by proposing alternatives and seeking clarification. Not confined to a singular approach, Wiraguna explores diverse avenues to address the issue at hand. The interpretation of the creative character value encapsulated in this narrative is that Wiraguna exemplifies an ability to think innovatively, venturing beyond conventional frameworks to uncover solutions not previously considered. His creative disposition is further evidenced by his pursuit of fair and effective resolutions, indicative of his resilience, a quality that refrains from yielding easily and persistently seeking avenues to surmount obstacles.

#### 7. *Independence*

As outlined by the Ministry of National Education in 2011, the independence value encompasses an individual's capacity to lead an autonomous life and take initiative in various aspects. This entails demonstrating independence in time management, decision-making, and confronting challenges without overreliance on external assistance. The following excerpt exemplifies the manifestation of independent values:

*"Amid all the excitement, Rara Mendut remained uninformed. She sought entertainment and diversion, unaccustomed to the confinement and pampering she now experienced. Initially relishing the pampering, Mendut, a discerning and intelligent young woman, found comfort in moderation..." (2019 Edition p.50).*

In this instance, Rara Mendut demonstrates an unreserved expression of herself and a pursuit of happiness. Despite initially being perceived as a pampered daughter, her independent character surfaces as she realizes a preference for independence over dependency.

#### 8. *Democratic*

The democratic value refers to efforts to cultivate values and attitudes consistent with democratic principles in an educational context, such as equality, justice, active participation, mutual respect, the development of social skills, and appreciation for freedom and human rights. This idea can be noticed in the following quotation.

*"O, Kiai Ernpu, it's nice, even being tickled continuously by Ayu, Mendut."*

*"But the lowest-ranking guards even say he's like a lustful man," (2019 Edition p. 147).*

Wiraguna is observed engaging in a more relaxed conversation and respecting the opinions of others, including Kiai Empu Keris. An open and non-authoritarian attitude in communication illustrates a democratic character.

#### 9. *National Spirit*

National spirit refers to love, loyalty, and dedication towards a specific country or nation. This idea encompasses a sense of pride in the national identity, history, culture, and values upheld by a particular society or nation. It can be seen in the following quotation.

*"... the people welcomed the Mataram heroes who had repeatedly succeeded in restoring the unity and grandeur of Mataram... Many men shed tears witnessing all these triumphs... as if their dignity on this earth was also elevated." (2019 Edition p. 54).*

The statement paints a picture of the national spirit that grows through the achievements and successes of the nation, strengthening the bond between heroes and the people and enhancing collective pride and self-esteem.

#### 10. *Curiosity*

The curiosity value pertains to the inherent quality of an individual, character, or persona within a narrative, marked by a robust interest and curiosity regarding various elements in their surroundings. Curious value frequently explores, poses inquiries, and seeks out new information. This value injects dynamism into a storyline, propelling characters to actively pursue knowledge, unravel mysteries, or investigate the world around them. It can be encountered in the following quotation.

*"Hahaha! Suwitaaa, Suwita! It's true that you are, Suwitapraja. Mendut is indeed a country boy, really, Mosok!" (2019 edition p. 183).*

In this excerpt, the Tumenggung responds with laughter to Suwitapraja's statement, demonstrating his curiosity about the information or opinions expressed by other individuals regarding Mendut.

#### 11. *Patriotism*

The Patriotism value defined by the Ministry of National Education in 2011 signifies affection, appreciation, and Responsibility towards one's homeland. This concept underscores

the significance of cultivating individuals aware of national values, history, and local culture. By instilling the value of patriotism, character education aspires to mold a generation characterized by a sense of unity, integrity, and dedication to participate in developing and preserving the nation's integrity actively. This idea can be seen in the following quotation.

*"... the Mataram ranges still enjoy the fertile valley that stretches from the cloud-covered mountain peaks to Lake Banyubiru-Lembah Rawa..." (2019 Edition p. 43).*

This passage conveys an appreciation for the beauty of nature experienced during the journey. It paints a picture of a voyage that transcends physical tasks or movements, encapsulating a loving encounter with the homeland and its natural splendor. Their love for the motherland manifests in how they relish and value every part of the beauty encountered along their journey.

#### 12. *Respect for achievement*

The 'respect for achievement' value pertains to the disposition of an individual capable of recognizing, respecting, and assigning positive value to the accomplishments of others. Individuals possessing this character trait are inclined to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of others without harboring feelings of jealousy or envy. This idea can be noticeable in the following quotation.

*"...So Inggang Sinuhun Hanyakrakusuma ordered the Commander of the Mataram Army to receive this keris from the Pati rebel in the name of His Majesty the King, as proof of the victory of Tumenggung's Golden Brother and the glory of the Mataram kingdom..." (2019 Edition p. 79).*

This excerpt exemplifies the value of "Respect for achievements" in Inggang Sinuhun Hanyakrakusuma's directive to the Commander of the Mataram Army. The acknowledgment of the bravery displayed by Tumenggung's younger brothers in quelling the rebellion in Pati is manifested through presenting a Keris to the rebels as evidence of victory. This gesture is a gift demonstrating appreciation for the accomplished feats. Through this symbolic gesture, Inggang Sinuhun Hanyakrakusuma acknowledges the individual achievements of Tumenggung's Golden Brother and fortifies the glory of the entire Mataram kingdom. Bestowing a Keris as a symbol of achievement fosters emotional bonds and loyalty, instills a fighting spirit among

soldiers, and underscores the magnificence and grandeur of the kingdom in safeguarding its sovereignty.

### 13. *Sociable and Communicative*

The 'sociable and communicative' value pertains to the behavior or manners of an individual who can develop positive relationships, particularly within friendship and communication. Individuals embodying a social and communicative character typically exhibit several characteristics and attitudes that foster a favorable relationship atmosphere. It can be seen from the following quotation.

*"Why doesn't Den Rara Mendut want to be married to the powerful and rich Tumenggung?"*

*Mendut was stunned for a moment. "Yes, why...?"*

*Genduk Duku persisted, adopting the role of a concerned younger sibling sharing a similar fate as their elder counterpart (2019 Edition Page 143).*

Genduk Duku exhibits a 'sociable and communicative' value in this passage by conveying her concern and empathy for Mendut. Her persistent questioning reflects a genuine desire to comprehend the motivations behind Mendut's decisions. Genduk Duku goes beyond mere inquiry; with an open, friendly, and non-judgmental approach, she establishes a comfortable environment for Mendut to express and share her feelings openly. Her behavior, resembling that of a supportive younger sibling, underscores their close friendship bond. Genduk Duku not only assumes the role of a friend but also proves to be a trustworthy and supportive ally in every decision Mendut makes in her life. Through this interaction, Genduk Duku successfully forges robust relationships, establishes effective communicative channels, and positions himself as a caring and supportive presence in the complex and stressful narrative of the story.

### 14. *Love for Peace*

The 'love for peace' value encourages individuals to foster harmony, prevent conflict, and cultivate positive relationships with others. Those representing this character exhibit the capacity to maintain inner calm, embrace differences with tolerance, and remain receptive to diverse perspectives and experiences. Central to this character is empathy, enabling individuals to comprehend and resonate with others' feelings, even when opinions differ. Through education, life experiences, and self-awareness, individuals can

fortify this character, transforming into agents of positive change within their environment. It can be seen in the following quotation.

*"ooh...Rustic ! Jaaaan-jan.. plebeian!  
"That's how it was brought here."  
"Where are the ladies-in-waiting?"  
"While they were bathing, their jaw dropped when they saw Mendut.  
"Uah, edaaaaan! This kid is crazy."  
Mendut listened half-heartedly to the daughters talking about her  
but didn't care. Enjoy your body; enjoy it (2019 edition, p. 118)*

In this excerpt, Rara Mendut exhibits a composed demeanor and remains unaffected by others' negative perceptions. She relishes her circumstances without responding to ridicule or feeling threatened by external comments. This reflects the value of Love for Peace, where an individual dwells in tranquility and abstains from conflict or hatred.

#### 15. *Passion for Reading*

This article does not explicitly present excerpts that specifically showcase the educational character of a book lover. None of the provided excerpts explicitly emphasize a passion for reading. However, some passages indirectly suggest the presence of a love for reading. For instance:

*"Ni Semangka alias Sri Wahyuni is the son of a puppeteer, who was often asked to perform in villages around Mount Muria during his flowering period." (2019 Edition p.15)*

This passage mentions that Ni Semangka's father was a dalang, and in his prime, he frequently performed in the villages surrounding Mount Muria. This indicates a cultural and educational facet related to reading and storytelling, often intertwined with the dalang profession in Indonesian culture.

#### 16. *Environmental Stewardship*

The 'environmental stewardship' value involves cultivating attitudes, values, and behaviors that demonstrate a genuine concern for the natural environment. This value encompasses understanding the significance of preserving environmental sustainability, taking Responsibility for the prudent management of natural resources, and acknowledging the impact of human activities on the ecosystem. While the novel under consideration lacks explicit evidence regarding the character of environmental stewardship, this deletion may arise from the story's thematic focus or the author's chosen

narrative emphasis. Literary works differ in their emphasis on specific aspects of life, and not all novels encompass comprehensive explorations, including those related to environmental education. Authors may prioritize elements such as narrative, character development, or other themes that they deem more pertinent to the message or meaning they intend to convey.

#### 17. *Social Responsibility*

The value of "social responsibility" pertains to an individual's capacity to express concern, empathy, and a commitment to the well-being of society and the surrounding environment. This educational emphasis underscores the significance of fostering a compassionate attitude towards those in need and an awareness of social issues affecting the community. It can be seen in the following quotation.

*"Rara Mendut approached the locals, requesting to hold an infant nursing in its mother's arms. Alternatively, she distributed food to joyful, barefoot children who enthusiastically danced, vying for delectable gifts from the divine presence." (2019 edition, p. 49).*

Active engagement in social initiatives, support for poverty alleviation endeavors, and positive contributions to building harmonious relationships within society all fall under the umbrella of Social Responsibility. Rara Mendut's direct interaction with residents, seeking to hold babies being breastfed by their mothers, manifests concern for children and a shared responsibility for their care. Additionally, distributing food to joyous, frolicking children demonstrates attention to their basic needs. This action encapsulates the essence of social Responsibility, encompassing empathy, consideration for social conditions, and active contributions towards fostering shared prosperity in society.

#### 18. *Responsibility*

The value of "Responsibility encompasses an individual's awareness and commitment to fulfilling duties and obligations with unwavering integrity. This signifies a responsible approach to actions, decisions, and their potential impacts. Within accountability, character education motivates individuals to lead their lives guided by Responsibility towards themselves, others, and the environment.

*"...Remember it well. Demonstrate that we, as wives, are not only faithful and obedient in serving him..." (2019 edition, pg. 157).*

The provided excerpt illustrates the value of Responsibility within the context of the role of a wife. It emphasizes the virtues of



faithfulness and obedience and the assumption of additional responsibilities. Responsibility in marriage extends to fulfilling obligations as life partners, including supporting one's husband and managing household affairs. It showcases the wife's commitment to comprehending and meeting her husband's needs, actively contributing to preserving family harmony. This underscores a responsibility to establish a stable environment and offer emotional support, emphasizing the pivotal role of wives in constructing the foundations of a robust and sustainable family life.

Among the various character education values elucidated in Y.B. Mangunwijaya's novel "Rara Mendut," the predominant value conveyed by the author is the virtue of independence – denoting the ability to be self-reliant and proactive. This underscores the author's focal point on cultivating Rara Mendut's character with a strong emphasis on autonomy and initiative within the narrative. The following outcomes may arise from accentuating the independent character:

- a. *Freedom and Independence*: Rara Mendut is portrayed as a figure not only endowed with the liberty to make autonomous decisions but also adept at overcoming adversities without excessive reliance on others.
- b. *Initiative in Facing Challenges*: Independent character manifests through the ability to confront challenges with initiative and determination. Rara Mendut may exhibit proactive measures to attain goals and navigate obstacles.
- c. *Personal Growth*: The emphasis on independent character mirrors Rara Mendut's journey of personal growth throughout the novel. Through experiences and challenges, the character is poised to evolve into a more resilient and capable individual.

By underscoring Rara Mendut's independent character, the author seeks to communicate these values to the reader and explore the character's developmental trajectory throughout the unfolding narrative.

### ***The Relevance of the Novel Rara Mendut as Literature Learning Material***

The novel "Rara Mendut" by Y.B. Mangunwijaya inherently possesses educational character values, rendering it especially pertinent for integration into literature studies at the university level, particularly within the Indonesian Language Education study program. Exploring prose fiction, including novelistic forms, is an integral facet of comprehending and appreciating Indonesian literature.

Within the confines of the study program, "Rara Mendut" can serve as an invaluable learning resource, offering students a more profound understanding of literary concepts such as plot, characterization, setting,

and theme. In tandem, this academic exploration facilitates a nuanced examination of character education values embedded in the narrative. It invites discussions on technical values and wisdom in navigating conflicts and profound love between the central characters. Through literary analysis, students internalize these values, preparing them for application in daily life, particularly as aspiring educators aiming to shape the characters of future students. The enduring benefits of such learning extend beyond academic realms, contributing significantly to personal and professional development.

## **DISCUSSION**

"Rara Mendut" serves as educational material for students to comprehend a profound comprehension of Javanese society during the Dutch colonial era, critically assess the colonial system, scrutinize the intricacies of character relationships, and discern the character education values embedded in the narrative.

The present research analysis shows that the novel positively instills student personality development within character education. It becomes a line through which students assimilate essential values, including religious belief, honesty, tolerance, discipline, diligence, creativity, independence, democratic principles, curiosity, nationalistic spirit, patriotism, respect for achievements, communicativeness, love of peace, a penchant for reading, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and a sense of duty.

As a pedagogical tool, this novel significantly shapes student character, especially within character education values. Through its intricate storytelling and robust character portrayals, students explore multifaceted values that collectively contribute to the formation of a resilient personality and character. A salient character value illuminated by the novel is independence. The narrative unveils the essence of an independent character through the experiences and decisions of its characters, showcasing individual autonomy, personal responsibility, self-management, self-development, and adeptly facing challenges with composure. Students glean inspiration from characters exercising independence in pivotal decision-making moments, unswayed by external influences. Moreover, they learn the intrinsic meaning of personal responsibility and effective self-management, encompassing emotional and temporal dimensions. The narrative imparts the significance of continuous self-development and a spirit of curiosity, fostering perpetual personal growth. The ability to confront challenges with a composed demeanor and unwavering fortitude also underscores the aspect of independence, providing students with inspirational insights. Consequently, as students internalize the value of an independent character from this novel, they are poised to apply these principles in their daily lives, nurturing qualities of independence, strength, and responsibility.

In essence, "Rara Mendut" emerges as a literary work and a pedagogical tool fostering a comprehensive understanding of historical and societal contexts, promoting critical thinking, and instilling a rich tapestry of character education values within the student body. The novel's narrative richness and thematic complexity propels students towards intellectual and moral growth, equipping them with a robust foundation for personal and academic development.

Moreover, the significance of this novel as literary learning material extends to the cultural and historical values embedded within the narrative. Within the context of studying Indonesian literature, students can comprehensively understand Javanese life during that historical era, encompassing traditions and the societal role of women. Beyond aiding in comprehending literature, the novel serves as a reservoir of rich cultural and historical insights.

The exploration of tradition, culture, and the influential role of women, coupled with the noble values prevalent in Javanese society, becomes a focal point for in-depth learning within the study of Indonesian literature. Students can distinguish how these values manifest in the character of Rara Mendut and the author's meticulous portrayal of the social dynamics of that era. Hence, "Rara Mendut" by Y.B. Mangunwijaya exceeds its status as a mere literary novel, emerging as a profound source of knowledge encompassing character education, culture, and history. Its incorporation into higher education as academic learning material presents an opportunity for a holistic and deep learning experience for students. By exploring this novel, students deepen their understanding of Indonesian literature and cultivate a broader perspective on life and human values.

## **CONCLUSION**

The novel "Rara Mendut" by Y.B. Mangunwijaya transcends its identity as a literary work; it emerges as a profound source of knowledge, rich in character education, culture, and history. This research underscores the positive impact of the novel in a learning context, illuminating its role in contributing to students' personality development by exploring various character values inherent in the journey of the main characters.

Through a nuanced understanding of the story and the interactions between characters, students gain profound insights into Javanese life during the Dutch colonial period, the critique of the colonial system, and the intricacies of character relationships. Furthermore, the novel addresses expressions of religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, and creativity, offering inspirational content that can motivate students to cultivate these values. Critical values such as tolerance, discipline, and hard work are intricately woven into the main character's journey as they confront challenges and obstacles. The learning derived from this novel instills an appreciation for diversity. It fosters an open attitude towards

differences but also encourages the development of a disciplined approach and a spirit of hard work in navigating life.

The profound relevance of this novel as a literary learning material is not confined to its academic aspects alone; it encompasses the cultural and historical values intricately interwoven into the narrative. Through an understanding of this work, students attain a deeper understanding of Javanese life during that era, traditions, and the role of women in society. This dual focus enhances students' literary insight and provides a nuanced understanding of rich cultural and historical contexts.

While this research delves into the character education values within the novel "Rara Mendut," certain limitations warrant consideration. The exclusive focus on a single novel may limit the generalizability of character values, and the subjectivity inherent in content analysis might influence the interpretation of these values. The data sources are limited to the novel's content, potentially limiting a comprehensive representation of broader social, historical, or cultural contexts. Additionally, societal responses to the novel during its time should be considered, necessitating caution in drawing conclusions considering these limitations.

In summation, "Rara Mendut" is not merely a literary novel but a fundamental cornerstone in shaping students' characters. Beyond providing a comprehensive academic learning experience, this novel contributes to developing a broader understanding of life and human values.

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