

Sibling Incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*

Sri Winarsih^{1*}, Fabiola D. Kurnia², Ali Mustofa³

State University of Surabaya, Jalan Ketintang Surabaya 60321

¹sriwinarsih10@mhs.unesa.ac.id

²fabioladharmawanti@unesa.ac.id

³alimustofa@unesa.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

Abstract- This study purposely appoints the topic of sibling incest as reacted from the phenomenon of proliferation of illicit relationships that are increasingly being shown blatantly especially in social media. Through literary works such as novel, the phenomenon can be analyzed since those works are the portrayal of real life. 'Forbidden' by Tabitha Suzuma and 'Flawed' by Kate Avelynn were analyzed with three objectives; 1) describing sibling incest in both novels, 2) finding out the causing factors, 3) describing the impact toward the characters' life. To achieve those objectives, the concept of incest, theory of psychoanalysis by Karen Horney and theory of comparative literature were applied. While in analyzing the data, it used interpretive perspective with author-oriented approach which concerns with psychoanalytic criticism. The results of this study reveal that the sibling incest in the two novels is different in type although the offenders' composition is the same, incest between older brother and younger sister. 'Forbidden' shows non-abusive incest since it is done on mutual willingness which is motivated by affection, while 'Flawed' shows abusive incest since it is done forcefully by the older brother against his sister which is motivated by affection, eroticism, and aggression. The similar factors causing the sibling incest found in both novels are dysfunctional family and between ages peers, while the factor of Law of Homogamy is only found in 'Forbidden'. Those factors do not cause the sibling incest just like the way without any influences of the characters' psychological condition which is shaped by their childhood experience and neurotic needs. This study also reveals how sibling incest impacts the characters' life. They suffer from psychological problems such as anxiety, self disgust, depression, self-destruction, self-blame, low self-esteem, and trauma. The enactment of incest taboo in their state also impacts them to self-isolation and prosecution. Evidently, this study reveals that any kinds of sibling incest with any reasons behind it lead into bad impact and dark phase of the offenders' life.

Keywords- flawed; forbidden; incest; sibling incest

1. INTRODUCTION

Having a happy family is the dream of all people in the world. People may have different standard or measurement of how happy is. But, from all arguments there is a core of happy family, it is love. The most important of all kinds of how parents play the role to their family, love positions the first place, as stated by Peck (1978:22)[18]. He warned with the concept of misconception of love. He differentiated the love in term of affection to sexually motivated love by saying "We do not fall in love with our children even though we may love them very deeply." (Peck, 1978: 83)[18].

But a viral case in social media news in about August 2016, reported a 36-year-old Mares and her son, Caleb Peterson, have been charge into court after declaring their love in an exclusive media. They told in the newspaper that they made their relationship public purposely to raise awareness about GSA, Genetic Sexual Attraction. The son stated that he loves his mother and hopes that by that

way he could keep her saved from abuse (Parry and Press, 2016)[17]. They have been charged with criminal incest.

Incest happened when the family members have sexual activities, even it is kissing, hugging, touching, as long as it is motivated by sexual desire it will be recognized as incest. Fortune (1932:620)[5] defined incest as illicit sexual relationship between the persons in consanguinity excluded from such relationship by socially determined regulations. While, Shepher (1983:26)[22] stated that sexual relationship may include kissing, hugging, and stroking. In other words, loving to family members whether they are biological family or step family which are included into consanguinity with sexually motivated such as desire to kiss, to hug, and other activities refer to sexuality is incest. Even Meigs and Barlow (2002:43)[15] viewed that incest is either actual or fantasized. The regulation mentioned by Fortune which is determined by the society as the prohibition to do the incest is then known as the term 'incest taboo'.

However, eventhough incest taboo does exist, in the last decade, incest has been discussed openly and used

explicitly as a central theme in memoirs, biographies, novels, plays, and films as confirmed by Barnes (2002:17)[2] The fact is showing the development of the wave of incestuous relationship in the world. When it is brought up openly it means that people will be ready for the possible development about it. Through the works as mentioned by Barnes, common people who perhaps never find such incest cases around their daily life, can learn and analyze what incest is, why and how it could happens. One of the ways to study such issue is by analyzing literary works since literary works portray and represent the truth of human life as Bennet and Royle's (2004:35)[3] statement. Literature teaches us about life. It helps us understand the world and the phenomena happened in it.

Related to the theme of incest, there are several literary works contains the incestuous relationship in the story, two of them are Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* (2010)[24] and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed* (2012)[1]. They narrate the same topic but show the different types of sibling incest. *Forbidden* by Tabitha Suzuma is a story set in London which tells the life of two teenagers in 17 and 16 years old as the main characters of the story and they are siblings. Lochan is the older brother of his sister Maya. Their parents got divorce when they were little. While Kate Avelynn in her work, *Flawed* tells story which is set in Washington about two siblings in the near age, James and Sarah who have made a pact. The pact is "always stay, never leave for each other" on having abusive father and alcoholic mother. Those rational thoughts and the two literary works above become the reason of this study was conducted. Through two literary works in genre novel, *Forbidden* by Tabitha Suzuma and *Flawed* by Kate Avelynn, the writer analyzed sibling incest in the two literary works in the same genre that is Yong Adult novel which are set in different countries, London and Washington, in same period, 2000s. The objectives of this study are; 1) Describing how sibling incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*. 2) Finding out the factors that cause sibling incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*. 3) Describing how sibling incest impact the main characters' life in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*. This study is expected to give several significant advantages for enriching either material or spiritual knowledge for scholars and the readers. In the end, the result of the research reveals that in any kinds of incest with any reasons or motivation behind it, sibling incest leads into bad impact or dark phase of the offenders' life.

2. SIBLING INCEST

Some previous studies related to this study had been conducted by some researchers. Some of them are the research conducted by Kokkola and Valovirta (2016)[12] They analyzed by comparing novel by Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* (2010)[24], Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992) and Pauline Melville's *The Ventriloquist's Tale*

(1997). The study compared the discourse of sibling incest evident in a corpus of fiction with the discourse found in clinical, sociological and criminal literature. Another study was done by Fordham (2008-2009) who analyzed two different genres of literary work, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is a novel, and Montaigne's 'On Affectionate Relationships' is an essay. The study compares the representation of Love in terms of incest. The main character in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* declares that his love is such kind of his fate, while Montaigne stated in his essay that love is as 'born of our own choice'. In addition, Ford shows the representation of love in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* as some critics as a rebellion against the society, while Montaigne shows love as the reaction of his own willing. While, the study of incest in real cases was conducted by Rudd and Herzberger (1999)[20] with the intention to identify the differing characteristics of each type of abuse and the effects of the abuse on their adult functioning. They hypothesized that there would indeed be differences in the characteristics of the abuse and its effects, and that this would be such important differing treatment strategies. Surveys were distributed to women attending support groups for incest survivors.

2.1 Types of Incest

Incest can be classified based on the features, such as the offenders of the incest, the motivation of offending incest, and the way the offenders treating in the incest.

2.1.1 Based on the Offenders

Shepher (1983:29)[22] divided incest based on the different dyads of the family members as the offenders of the incest.

- a. Father-Daughter Incest; the incestuous act is involved by father and his daughter. The male partner is older, and the female partner is younger.
- b. Mother-Son Incest; the incestuous act is involved by mother and her son. The male partner is younger and the female partner is older. It has the opposite composition of the first type.
- c. Sibling Incest; the incestuous act is involved by brother and sister. The composition can be either male or female as the older or younger.

2.1.2 Based on the Motivation

Maddock and Larson in Kluft (2011) categorized incest based on motivation that encourages people involve into incest

- a. Affection-Based; the incestuous act is motivated by the deep closeness such as in love in a family otherwise lacking in nurture and affection.
- b. Erotic-Based; the incestuous act is motivated by the eroticism seen by the offenders such as habit in changing clothes in front of other family members, sleeping in one bed, or having a bath together.
- c. Aggression-Based; the incestuous act that emerges by the bunch of anger perhaps from some frustration or conflict from the offenders.

d. Rage-Based; the incestuous act that is motivated by hostility. It can be overtly sadistic and more dangerous for the victims of incest.

2.1.3 Based on the Way of Treating

The way of treating in the incestuous act can differentiate the type of incest, as follows;

Abusive; non-consensual incest is the incestuous act which is done by only one side of the offenders who is then called as perpetrator, and the other one to be forced is called as the victim, as stated by Tower in Pesciallo (1998)[19]

a. Non-Abusive; consensual incest is the incestuous act which is done mutually from the two who are involved into incestuous relationship. They are mutually rewarding each other. Both of them are called as the offenders, since there is no perpetrator and victim.

2.2 Causing Factors

The causing factors are interrelated one another since they are in one bunch that is family.

Dysfunctional Family; Parents of the sibling incest offenders were reported to be significantly more dysfunctional and abusive. Considerably, children need parents that are functional and non-abusive. When parents are dysfunctional and abusive it places the children at risk of sibling incest, this potentially occurs because they both live with the same pair of dysfunctional parents. Both seek to meet their needs such as nurturance and comfort. It is found in the study of Pesciallo (1998)[19] and Hudson (1992:1)[9]

- a. Between Ages Peers; Ages peers potentially make the sibling closer than to their friends outside. While the age differences between generations, spacing of siblings, and the difference in gender numbers and order among siblings would moderate the number of incest cases. as asserted by Leavitt (2013:48)[14]
- b. Law of Homogamy; treated the Law of Homogamy in arguing that people have tendency to marry within their social group or to marry a person is close to them in status, as stated by Kalmijn (1998:395)[10] in his study.
- c. Genetic Sexual Attraction (GSA); an attraction that develops when biological family members meet as adults after having little to no previous contact. As stated by Sullens and DeNeen (2013:1)[23]

2.3 Possible Effects

The possible effects of sibling incest are basically general like other effect of all types of incest.

- a. Trauma; Relational trauma, lost of trust, lasting difficulties in establishing and maintaining close relationship with the family members (N, et al., 1989) and Betrayal trauma; associated with distrust to whom nurally protect her (Kluft, 2011)[11].
- b. Isolated on Social Sanction; as the risk of having incest is being isolated since the incest taboo. People have to marry out side of their own kin and communities or die

out from the detrimental effects of isolation. (Leavitt, 2013:45-46)

Self Blame and Self Mutilation; Self blame even self mutilation emerge to express their emotional pain of being involved into incest. Both of the self feelings potentially leads to suicide (Shapiro, 1987:46)[21]

c. Sexual Aversion Disorder; severe anxiety or disgust at the thought of sexual activity. It has many often interrelated causes, such as incest, molestation, rape, and psychological abuse. (L et.al., 2006:1-2)

d. Other Psychological Problems; The most frequently noted patterns of victimization of incest cases includes; depression, anxiety, self-destructive behavior, low self-esteem, somatic disturbances, eating disorders, a tendency becoming incest perpetrator, and substance abuse. (Beitchman et.al., 1992; Finkelhor, 1990 in Grand and Alpert, 1993:330)

3. PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF KAREN HORNEY

Theory of psychoanalysis from Karen Horney is well known as psychoanalytic social theory. It is built on the assumption that social and cultural condition, especially the childhood experiences are largely responsible for shaping person's personality. The person who does not gain satisfied love and affection from their parent will tend to develop the basic hostility, and as the impact of that the basic anxiety will develop. The basic anxiety emerges when the person's needs are not met which the condition can lead to neurotic problem. (Horney, 1997:4)[8]. It means there are two concerns in that statement. The first is childhood experience that causes the emergence of neurotic problem and the second is the neurotic needs that are not met because of the childhood experience.

3.1 Childhood Experience

Horney believes that childhood experience is closely related to parenting which hold great potential in shaping personality. How the child will be in his future depends on how the parents treated him in his childhood.

- a. Child Abuse and Neglect; The term child abuse and neglect is sometimes interchangeably with child maltreatment. It is defined as any non-accidental behavior by parents or other older adolescents which is outside of the norms of conduct of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Commonly child abuse and neglect is divided into five acts, they are; physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, neglect, sexual abuse, and exposure to family violence. Supported by Goldsworthy (2015)[6]
- b. Parental Indifference; is a lack of warmth and affection in childhood. It is considered different with abuse and neglect. The difference is that the lack can be both from the parents' intention or only the child's perception

3.2 Neurotic Problems

Horney (1997:5)[8] theorized that people will be anxious when the needs are not met. Then she listed ten neurotic needs as; 1) Affection and approval, 2) Dominant Partner, 3) Power, 4) Exploitation, 5) Prestige, 6) Admiration, 7) Achievement, 8) Self-Sufficiency, 9) Perfection, and 10) Narrow Limits to Life. From those ten neurotic needs then Horney clustered them into three neurotic trends which are the basic attitudes reacted from the neurotic needs. (Horney 1942 in Cherry, 2016)

- a. Moving toward people; people in this trend recognize others as potential resources that can support them and help reduce the anxiety. It is reacted from the neurotic needs affection and approval, and dominant partner.
- b. Moving against people; While seeking approval and help from others, the neurotic person also may seek to control others and reduce the threat and model of normality that others represent. It is reacted from the neurotic needs power, exploitation, prestige, admiration, and achievement.
- c. Moving away from people; Fearing criticism and the harm that other people may bring, the neurotic person may well pull back from them or hold parts of themselves at a safe distance. It is reacted from the neurotic needs self-sufficiency, perfection, and narrow limits to life.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is analyzing and then describing the sibling incest of the main characters of Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed* using the theory of incest, and the causing factors and the impact of sibling incest using psychoanalysis of Karen Horney which are supported and strengthened by other references. The data are collected from the monologue, dialogue and narration in the form of words which show the sibling incest of the main characters in both novels.

The design of this study is as qualitative research model with interpretive perspective using author-oriented approach as the method of interpretation which concerns the psychoanalytic literary criticism. For the finding of the study, it is analyzed by presenting the similarities and differences of the sibling incest, the causing factors and finally revealing the effect of sibling incest in the novels.

5. FINDINGS

This part contains of several findings concerning with sibling incest, its causing factors, and its impact. There are three main parts in this chapter. The first part describes sibling incest of main characters in both novels on three different features; based on the offenders, based on the motivation, based on the way of treating. The next part presents the causing factors of sibling incest experienced by the main characters in both novels. Those will be associated to the theory of psychoanalysis by Karen Horney in order to clarify how those factors possibly happened. While for the last part, it points out

the impact of the offenders of sibling incest as narrated in both novels.

To facilitate presentation of the findings those will be presented in the form of table.

Table 1. The Findings on Description of Sibling Incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*

Sibling Incest		Forbidden	Flawed
Based on the Offenders	Older brother	√	√
	Younger sister	√	-
Based on the Motivation	Affection	√	√
	Eroticism	-	√
	Aggression	-	√
	Rage	-	-
Based on the Way of Treating	Abusive	-	√
	Non-Abusive	√	-

Table 2. The Findings on Causing Factors of Sibling Incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*

Causing Factors of Sibling Incest	Forbidden	Flawed
Dysfunctional family	√	√
Between Ages Peers	√	√
Law of Homogamy	√	-
Genetic Sexual Attraction	-	-

Table 3. The Findings on Psychological Conditions of the Characters in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*

Psychoanalysis Theory of Karen Horney			Forbidden		Flawed	
			L	M	J	S
Childhood experience	Child abuse and neglect	Physical abuse	-		√	
		Emotional maltreatment	√		√	
		Neglect	√		√	
		Sexual abuse	-		√	
		Exposure to family violence	-		√	
	Parental Indifference		-		-	
Neurotic Needs	Moving toward people	Affection and Approval	√	√	√	√
		Dominant Partner	-	√	-	-
	Moving against people	Power	-	-	√	-
		Exploitation	-	-	√	-
		Prestige	-	-	-	-
		Admiration	-	-	-	-

		Achievement	-	-	-	-
	Moving away from people	Self-Sufficiency	√	-	-	-
		Perfection	-	-	-	-
		Narrow Limit to Life	√	-	-	√

Table 4. The Findings on the Impacts of Sibling Incest in Tabitha Suzuma's *Forbidden* and Kate Avelynn's *Flawed*

Impacts of Sibling Incest		<i>Forbidden</i>		<i>Flawed</i>	
		L	M	J	S
Psychological Problems	Anxiety	√	-	-	√
	Self-disgust	√	-	-	√
	Depression	√	-	√	-
	Self-destruction	-	-	√	-
	Self-blame	√	√	-	-
	Low self-esteem	-	-	-	√
	Trauma	-	-	-	√
Prosecution		√	-	-	-
Self-Isolation		-	√	√	-

Note:

L : Lochan

M : Maya

J : James

S : Sarah

6. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal three objectives. Concerning with the first objective, this study finds out that sibling incest in *Forbidden* is triggered from both side of the offenders. The older brother, Lochan and his sister, Maya are on the mutual desire and willingness to involve into passionate sibling incest. Their relationship does not create a perpetrator and a victim, both of them are offenders but the younger sister shows more aggressive than her brother. Their incest is motivated only by the affection to each other since they lack of the affection from their parents since childhood. The deep affection encourages them to be involved to passionate romantic incestuous relationship which is known as non abusive incest.

Different from *Forbidden*, *Flawed* tells about sibling incest that is forced only by one side of the offenders, that it James the older brother to his sister, Sarah. Their relationship creates James as a perpetrator and Sarah as a victim, so it is clear that James is the aggressive one in their relationship. James is encouraged by the affection, eroticism and aggression in inciting the incest. Eroticism emerges because James and Sarah share tiny bedroom, sleep in one bed, and change clothes in front of each other, while aggression emerges because of James' anger, jealousy and frustration on Sarah's rejection and her relationship with his friend, Sam. Thus, what makes he forces Sarah to do sexual activities which is then called as abusive incest.

This study also reveals the second objective that there are three causing factors of sibling incest in *Forbidden*, they are dysfunctional family, between ages peers, and law of homogamy. Lochan and Maya were left by their father and their mother turns to be alcoholic and out of house almost of her all times. Their ages peers leads them to deep closeness which show the compatibility and similarity of each other. Here is law of homogamy shown which is not in *Flawed*. James and Sarah show the dysfunctional family and between ages peers in their story, but not the law of homogamy. James incites sibling incest to his sister is not led by the seeking similarity and compatibility in her, but seeking her weakness. That is why the law of homogamy is not found in *Flawed*.

Psychoanalytic theory of Karen Horney is applied to find the psychology of those four characters and reveal how Lochan, Maya and James are involved into sibling incest, while Sarah is not. From the finding it is found that the four of them experienced the child neglect and abuse in their childhood, but James and Sarah experienced worse than Lochan and Maya. Lochan and Maya only suffered from neglect and emotional maltreatment, while James and Sarah suffered from physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, neglect, sexual abuse, and exposure to family violence. Their childhood experience then shapes their personality. The personality deals with psychological problems which are influenced by the neurotic needs they seek. Lochan needs affection, self-sufficiency, and narrow limits to life which they finds Maya as the one who fulfills his needs. While Maya, beside she needs affection, she needs dominant partner which makes her fear of being abandoned by someone she loves. And the one she believes will never leave her is her brother. That is why she chooses him instead of Nico, his schoolmate. As Lochan and Maya, James also needs affection and approval. But he also needs power and exploitation to fulfill the needs after taken by his father. So, he needs someone who can be dominated and even exploited by him, and the person is his sister who always needs his help from his father's violence. Thus, the reason of James is involved into sibling incest with his sister. The only safe from sibling incest is Sarah. Eventough she is in the same condition of causing factors as James, but the fact is that she rejects his brother to have sibling incest. It is caused by her need that is affection and approval which is she found in Sam, not James. James' affection is not felt like affection or love but more like protection even overprotection. Beside that she also needs the narrow limits to life which makes her stay unnoticed and undeserved until Sam shows his affection that makes her felt noticed, deserved and politely loved. Hence, the reason why she is not involved into sibling incest is because she needs affection not protection.

Due to the impacts of sibling incest towards the characters' life, it is found that all the offenders are attacked by the psychological problems, either the offenders on mutual desire or the perpetrator and the victim. Lochan and Sarah show the anxiety and self-

disgust of the intimate touching of their siblings. Then Lochan and James are attacked by depression which is then led to suicide as the result of self blame for Lochan, but not for James. After the death of the older brother, Maya shows the guilty feeling and low self-esteem, while Sarah shows trauma as she hates remembering his brother for about a year. And those impacts reach the third objective of this study.

7. CONCLUSION

The analyzing of sibling incest in both novels is on the purpose to find out the questions which are formulated in the objectives of this study; describing the sibling incest which is set in two different place with different culture, then finding out the causing factors that family circumstances basically holds the most important role, in this case is the parents' role, and describing the problems faced by the characters as the offenders of the sibling incest which are mostly attacked the psychological condition beside the prosecution. Evidently, this study reveals that any kinds of sibling incest with any reasons behind it lead into bad impact and dark phase of the offenders' life.

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Authors' Biography

Sri Winarsih



Sri Winarsih, S.Pd. was born in Merauke, a regency of Papua province, in the east of Indonesia, on May 28, 1986. She finished her elementary education in SD Inpres Kurik II Merauke in 1998. Then, in 1999 she moved to East Java to spend her Junior high level in

Islamic college, named MTs Al-Kautsar in Sumber Srono Banyuwangi and finished in 2002. In the same year she came back to Merauke and finished her Senior High education in 2005 at SMA Negeri 3 Merauke. She took her undergraduate program in English Education and Instruction Department of Cenderawasih University, Jayapura Papua and finished in 2009. And now she had finished her thesis as the requirement for completing the Degree of Magister in Language and Literature Education Program of the State University of Surabaya.

She had been an honorary English teacher in SMA Negeri 3 Merauke since 2009 to July 2014 before she was accepted as an English Lecturer in Musamus University, Merauke-Papua in August 2014 and she holds the occupation till now. She loves literature very much. Her first literary work, the folklore of Asmat (native Papuan) had been published within the collection of Papuan Folklores in the 10 Cerita Rakyat Papua Terpilih. (Jakarta. Indonesia. CV. Prasasti. 2010).

Her first article entitled "Between Egyptian and Papuan (Malind-Asmat) Myths: Archetypes Finding" was published in International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences (IJHMS) Volume 4, Issue 1 (2016) ISSN 2320-4044 (Online) which had been presented in International Conference on E-Governance, Law and Education (EGLE 16) in Bali, February, 2nd -3rd 2016.

Prof. Dr. Fabiola Dharmawanti Kurnia



Prof. Dr. Fabiola Dharmawanti Kurnia, M.Pd. was born in Surabaya in September 1945. She has been a lecturer in State University of Surabaya since March 1st 1979. Her last position is professor and her last education is Doctoral Program of Science of Literature in University of

Indonesia which was finished in 2006. She has been an advisor for many students of undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral program. One of her works is a review of a great writer, Prof. Budi Darma's novel entitled Laki-Laki Lain dalam Secarik Surat (2008) which then she gave the title Laki-Laki Basah Budi Darma. It was written in

January, 2009. Prof. Budi Darma is her fellow lecturer in State University of Surabaya.

Dr. Ali Mustofa



Dr. Ali Mustofa, S.S., M.Pd. was born in June 1975. He has been a lecturer in State University of Surabaya since January 1st, 2008. His last position is lector. He earned his Bachelor degree in English Literature of Dr. Soetomo University of Surabaya in 1998. And then he gained his Master degree in

Language and Literature Education Department in 2002. He gained his Doctoral Program of Language and Literature Education in State University of Surabaya. Since 2008, he has been serving as lecturer at State University of Surabaya. He teaches English Literature including Prose, Poetry, Drama, Folklore, Literary Criticism, and Research Method in Literary Studies. Most of his publications are of literature, films, gender, media, and the teaching of literature. He is currently assigned as Head of Confucius Institute of Surabaya.