Creativity in Andrea Hirata's "Ayah":
A Reference to Formulate a Creativity Figure from the Creative Work Aspect

Endah Tri Priyatni[1]; Gatut Susanto[2]; Huang Thi Hue3
[1])Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang
Jl. Semarang 5 Malang, East Java, Indonesia

[2])Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang
Jl. Semarang 5 Malang, East Java, Indonesia

3)Linguistic and Literature Faculty
University of Education, Vietnam
34 Le Loi Str, Hue City, Vietnam

Corresponding author: endah.tri.fs@um.ac.id

ABSTRACT

For all this time, creativity figures have been always considered irrational, unconscious, indirectable, and unteachable. Therefore, teachers are hesitant to implement creative learning in the classroom. This research aimed to reveal creativity figures or characteristics from a creative work aspect, employing a qualitative document analysis method on Andrea Hirata's "*Ayah*". Words, sentences, paragraphs, symbols, ideas, and figurative language from the novel that indicated creativity elements were analyzed using Mile and Huberman's interactive model. The research findings suggest that a novel called "*Ayah*" written by Andrea Hirata contains six elements of creativity, that include creativity in the development and elaboration of ideas, the selection of the characters' names, the development of the storyline, the creation of new expressions, and the integration of poetry into the story.

Keywords: creativity, creative work, novelty, originality, and elaboration of ideas

INTRODUCTION

Ayah (Father) is a 412-page novel authored by a young, productive, and world-renowned novelist from Indonesia, Andrea Hirata. *Ayah* is the ninth Hirata's novel published officially in May 2015 after six years spent on research and writing (Hirata, 2015). As one of Hirata's creative works, this novel brings something new to the table because it does not only tell a story of himself and *Belitong,* but is also written in an expanded setting of Sumatra.

The main character of *Ayah* is Sabari, a man whose name literally translates to patience. *Ayah* narrates a story about the love and extraordinary loyalty of a man whose eyes were only fixed on one woman and whose feelings were true and unchangeable. This trait is normally considered as a feminine feature which is not

found in men; however, in this novel, Andrea Hirata deliberately serves his readers with his contradictory gender stereotype as the main ingredient.

Ayah constitutes a manifestation of Andrea Hirata's rejection of negative stereotypes cling to men. This unusual creative idea is going to be revealed in this research article as a reference to formulate creativity figures/characteristics based on a creative work aspect, especially in literary texts. Many questions have been raised about the concept or characteristics of a creative work. The findings of this study are hopefully able to explain creativity figures as a rational and conscious force which is directable and teachable (Paul & Elder, 2008).

Creativity plays an important role in all facets of life to give birth to a new creation. Without creativity, art, literature, science, innovation, problem solving, and advancement will not exist (Starko, 2010). Formulating the definition of creativity is quite complicated due to experts' various perspectives. In fact, the word creativity shows a strong association between things. One's creativity highly depends on their way of thinking and other factors, such as the environment and culture surrounding them, and their individual abilities (Starko, 2010).

There are countless definitions of creativity and some of them are paradoxical as creativity figures/characteristics are frequently associated with numerous contradictions (Beghetto & Sriraman, 2017). Creativity is often interpreted as something original or "out of the box" (Beghetto & Sriraman, 2017). People also tend to see creativity as an artistic endeavor (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Novelty and originality are the main characteristics of a work categorized as creative (Sternberg & Smith, 1988). Therefore, a creative product may contain: (1) rich and deep imaginative ideas, (2) new elements that are unique, distinctive, and capable of creating new values, and (3) the potential to reignite readers' inner experience (Yunus, 2015). In other words, a creative work is characterized by the presence of new and useful things (Harrington, 2018); (Gaut, B., 2010). The novelty in a creative work refers to the different, unique, or innovative idea carried out by the product. In addition, a creative work is also useful for certain contexts. Creativity is strongly related to imagination, innovation, originality, and intellectual power (Pope, 2005); (Swann, Pope, & Carter, 2011). Creativity can be identified based on the following four things: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Kim, 2006).

The definitions of creativity above have a lot in common (Amabile, 1983); (Baer, 1993); (Sternberg & Smith, 1988) which suggests that the essence of creativity lies on the product's novelty, originality, uniqueness, usefulness, or flexibility. Creativity needs to be explained in such a way so that it is feasible, especially in learning. What are the characteristics of a creative work that contains elements of novelty and originality, which are flexible, useful and innovative? Since creativity constitutes a fruitful mindset that tends to lead to creative results and is focused more on products than processes, creativity figures/characteristics can be identified by revealing their concrete forms in creative works (Marzano, R. J. et al., 1988); (Marzano, Pickering, & Arredondo, 2011).

Based on the description above, this research article aims to uncover creativity figures/characteristics in *Ayah,* a creative work by Andrea Hirata. The findings of this research can be used as one of the references to formulate and clarify creativity figures/characteristics so that they can be applied into planning, implementing, and evaluating literary learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In line with the objective of this research, that was to discover creativity figures/characteristics in Andrea Hirata's *Ayah,* a qualitative approach was adopted. Thus data were collected directly from natural background in the form of words (instead of numbers), and analyzed inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007); (Moleong, 2013).

Document analysis was conducted to Andrea Hirata's *Ayah* (Father), a literary work with high creativity published in 2015 (Hirata, 2015). Words, sentences, paragraphs, symbols, ideas, and figurative language that indicated the elements of creativity were collected as the primary data. Data collection was performed in three steps as follows: (1) read *Ayah* carefully and thoroughly, (2) directly quoted words, sentences, paragraphs, symbols, ideas, and figurative language from the novel that indicated the elements of creativity, and (3) inserted the excerpts into the database. The data were gathered using an instrument called data identification guide.

Data of the research were then analyzed using Mile and Huberman's interactive model (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which consisted of three stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction referred to the process of re-reading, selecting, and classifying the collected data based on the elements of creativity using the data identification guide. In data display, the data were organized, described, and presented based on the objective of the research. Conclusion drawing involved formulating creativity figures/characteristics found in Andrea Hirata's *Ayah.*

The validity of the data was ensured by peer-checking. Two external members were invited to read the novel and examine the results of the analysis. They were also asked to provide feedback on the findings and conclusion drawing. These inputs were used as a reference to review the results and the conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Andrea Hirata's *Ayah* contains six creativity elements, that include creativity in the development and elaboration of ideas, the selection of the characters' names, the development of the storyline, the creation of new expressions, and the integration of poetry into the story. The six components are discussed as follows.

Creativity in the Development of Ideas

Ayah tells a story about the love and extraordinary loyalty of a man named Sabari (the main character) whose eyes were only fixed on one woman and whose love was pure and long-lasting (Hirata, 2015). Such character is usually portrayed by

a woman instead of a man. A traditional society does not normally accept a man who chooses to embrace one or more than one feminine traits. This statement is clearly depicted in one of the excerpts from the novel:

> *Maka Sabari gelisah, lalu kecewa, lalu menderita. Tentu kemudian khalayak ramai tak habis pikir melihat seorang lelaki hanya terpaku pada satu perempuan, tak dapat dibelok-belokkan ke perempuan lain, seolah dunia ini hanya selebar saputangan Lena (Ayah Novel, page 3).*

> Sabari is nervous, then disappointed, then suffered. Of course the society could not stop judging a man whose eyes were only fixed on one woman, who is unable to move on, as if the world is just as wide as Lena's handkerchief (*Ayah,* page 3).

Andrea Hirata seems to deliberately presents this contradictory gender stereotype as the main ingredient in the development of his ideas, as a manifestation of his rejection of negative stereotypes given to men. Gender stereotypes are a generalization of traits that are considered to belong either to men or women (Darma, 2009). These traits are believed to be true in certain people's cultures. There is even a stereotype that mentions about what men or women deserve. Gender stereotypes can be negative and/or positive (Johnson & Freedman, 2005). Negative gender stereotypes are characteristics that are negatively negotiated and associated with particular social groups and members, while positive gender stereotypes accentuate traits that are positively negotiated and associated with certain social groups and members.

Negative gender stereotypes that are usually attached to the characteristics of women are weak, emotional, and passive, while positive gender stereotypes that are typical of women include children-friendly, shy, caring, gentle, loving, sympathetic, and understanding. On the other hand, men are portrayed positively as strong, gentle, powerful, rational, self-defending, independent, aggressive and assertive, and negatively viewed as unfaithful, easily tempted, and fickle.

These negative gender stereotypes that are attached to men have been rejected by Andrea Hirata through the realization of the main character, Sabari. Andrea Hirata's disclosure of the contradictive gender stereotypes successfully represents his unique and innovative ideas in *Ayah*.

Creativity in the Elaboration of Ideas

The quality of ideas elaboration in a story depends on the writer's ability in developing his ideas. Andrea Hirata's ability to cultivate ideas is extraordinary and has never been shown by any novelists who precede him. Andrea Hirata's expertise in elaborating his ideas in *Ayah* is reflected in the way he opens and closes the 67 chapters of the novel. The first chapter and the last chapter of *Ayah* have the same title, that is *Purnama Ke Dua Belas* (The Twelfth Full Moon). The first *Purnama Ke Dua Belas* narrates the story of how Subari fell in love with Marlena, while the last *Purnama Ke Dua Belas* delineates Marlena as Subari's everlasting love, the only one woman in his life who is irreplaceable. The following quote emphasizes the point:

Sering Amiru menemani ayahnya berjalan-jalan sore. Begitu dekat hubungan mereka sehingga Amiru tak sungkan bertanya apakah ayahnya masih mencintai ibunya?
"Ingat, Boi, dalam hidup ini semuanya terjadi tiga kali. Pertama aku mencintai ibumu, kedua aku mencintai ibumu, ketiga aku mencintai ibumu."
(Ayah, hal. 394).

Amiru often accompanies his father for an afternoon walk. Their relationship is so close that Amiru never hesitates to ask if his father still loves his mother. "Remember, Boy, in this life, everything happens three times. First, I love your mother. The second time, I love your mother. The third time, I love your mother." (*Ayah,* page 394)

The second chapter of *Ayah* is Radio and the third chapter is Pencil. These two priceless objects bring about unforgettable memories to the characters. Radio is the only valuable item, solace, that makes Amirza, Amiru's father smile and laugh. Likewise, pencil is the object through which Sabari knew Marlena, whose eyes are beautiful, calm but shiny like the twelfth full moon. Andrea Hirata's simple but meaningful ideas are flowing like a river and have originated from everyday things that surround him.

Creativity in the Selection of the Characters' Names

Characters are actors that move a story (Priyatni, E.T., 2010). Unlike in conventional novels, characters in contemporary novels are often anonymous because the emphasis is usually put on the ideas or values that are to be conveyed to the readers. The names of the characters in *Ayah* generally consist of an adjective. The characters' names in *Ayah* clearly represent the characters' traits, such as religious, hopeful, and motivated. The main character of the novel, Sabari, obtained his name from his father. His father hoped that his son could grow into a patient man. As the following excerpt suggests, Sabari lives his live with patience:

Dalam waktu singkat, Sabari telah menjawab semua soal, tetapi dia tidak ingin mengecewakan pihak-pihak yang telah memberinya nama Sabari, yakni ayahnya dan diaminkan neneknya. Ditunggunya dengan sabar sampai waktu mau habis. Jika menyerahkan jawaban secara mendadak, peserta lain bisa terintimidasi, lalu grogi, pecah konsentrasi, lalu berantakan. Betapa tampan budi pekerti anak itu (Ayah, page 11).

Sabari had answered all the questions, bu he did not want to disappoint his father and grandmother who named him Sabari. Therefore, he waited patiently until the time was up because if he submitted the answers earlier, he might probably intimidate other participants. They might get nervous and distracted. Their concentration could be broken. Sabari does have a decent character. (*Ayah*, p.11)

Sabari's name really reflects his character. Sabari is described as a person who is patient in facing a love journey that is complicated, bitter, melancholy and cruel. He has loved Marlena since high school. For Sabari, Marlena has always been his

first love, soulmate, his everything. He is willing to sacrifice anything for Marlena. When Marlena was pregnant with an irresponsible man, Sabari offered himself to marry her. Sadly, Marlena never appreciates Sabari's sacrifice. She even hates him so much, but Sabari never takes his love for granted for it is so strong and can never be dimmed by anyone. This is clearly stated in the following quote:

> *Ingin Ukun membelah kepala Sabari untuk melihat apa yang terjadi di dalamnya. Karena melihat Lena berkelebat sedikit saja, dia macam kena penyakit angin duduk. Sebaliknya, Lena benci. Sabari tak hirau. Filosofi hidupnya adalah mencintai seseorang merupakan hal yang fantastis, meskipun orang yang dicintai itu merasa muak. Itu soal lain, tidak relevan (Ayah, page 35-36).*

> Ukun really wanted to break Sabari's skull and see what was happening inside because Lena always drives him crazy. He was acting like someone who was hit by angina (a symptom of heart disease). On the contrary, Lena hates him very much, but Sabari's does not care at all. His philosophy of life is that loving someone is fantastic, even though the loved one feels disgusted. That does not matter, that is irrelevant. (Ayah, pg. 35-36)
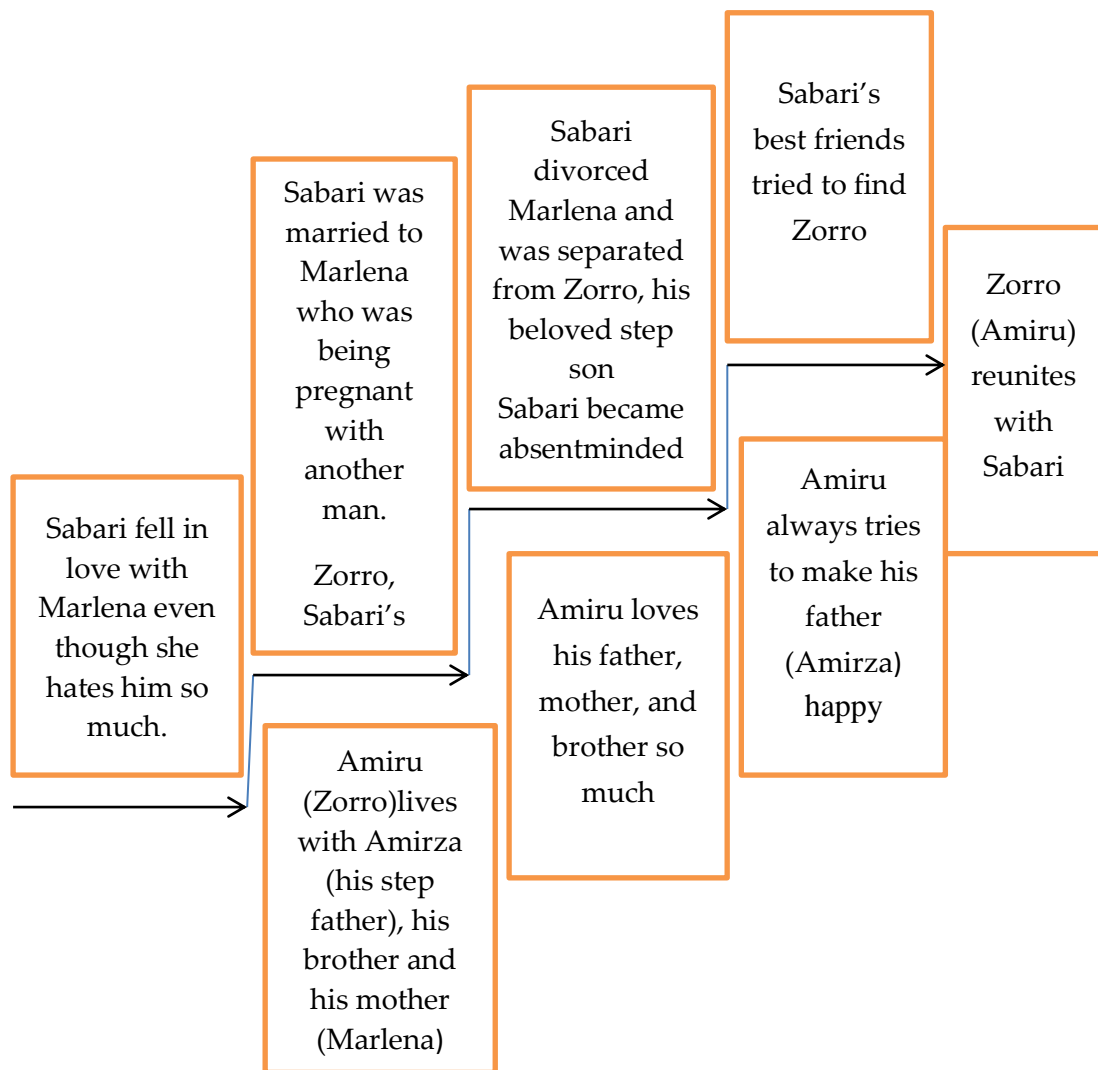
Table 1 presents the main characters' names in *Ayah* which can translate to a religious, hopeful, or motivated person.

Table 1: Characters' Names in *Ayah*

Name	Meaning
Sabari	A patient man
Berkahi	A man whose life is full of blessings
Pasrahi	A man who surrenders his life to God and accepts God's destiny with sincerity and endurance
Insyafi	A man who realizes his wrong deed and immediately fixes it
Tamat	A man who commits to stay single before completing education.

Creativity in the Development of the Storyline

Plot or storyline is a series of events that have a causal relationship (Priyatni, E.T., 2010). Andrea Hirata's *Ayah* has a complicated storyline which has never been found in its predecessors. To construct such a plot, deep understanding and thought are needed as two events at different times are told simultaneously. Surprisingly, in the end, the stories of the two different figures from different generations have been successfully merged. The storyline of *Ayah* is presented in Figure 1.

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                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                    │   Sabari's   │
                          ┌─────────│ best friends │
                          │ Sabari  │  tried to find│
                          │ divorced│     Zorro     │
              ┌──────────┐│ Marlena and│           │──────┐
              │Sabari was ││was separated│                 │
              │married to ││from Zorro, his│        ┌──────▼──────┐
              │  Marlena  ││  beloved step │        │    Zorro    │
              │ who was   ││      son      │        │  (Amiru)    │
              │  being    ││Sabari became  │        │  reunites   │
              │ pregnant  ││ absentminded  │        │    with     │
              │   with    │└───────────────┘        │   Sabari    │
              │  another  │              ┌──────────┴──────┐     │
              │   man.    │              │     Amiru       │     │
┌────────────┐│           │              │  always tries   │     │
│Sabari fell in│ Zorro,   │              │  to make his    │─────┘
│  love with │  Sabari's  │              │    father       │
│Marlena even│└───────────┘              │   (Amirza)      │
│though she  │       ┌──────────────┐    │    happy        │
│hates him so│──────▶│ Amiru loves  │    └─────────────────┘
│   much.    │       │ his father,  │
└────────────┘       │ mother, and  │
          │          │  brother so  │
          │ ┌────────┤    much      │
          │ │ Amiru  └──────────────┘
          └▶│(Zorro)lives│
            │with Amirza │
            │(his step   │
            │ father), his│
            │brother and │
            │ his mother │
            │ (Marlena)  │
            └────────────┘
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Figure 1: The Storyline of Andrea Hirata's *Ayah*

Creativity in the Creation of New Expressions

Expressions are words or groups of words that convey a special meaning (Qodratilah, 2011)). A lot of new expressions can be found in *Ayah*. One of the examples is stated in the following excerpt:

> *Kawan dekat Sabari, yakni Maulana Hasan Magribi lahir saat azan Magrib biasa dipanggil Ukun dan Mustamat Kalimat biasa dipanggil Tamat, berkali-kali mengingatkan Sabari bahwa dia bisa berakhir di Panti Rehabilitasi Gangguan Jiwa Amanah di bawah pimpinan Dra. IdaNuraini, apabila kepalanya yang ditumbuhi rambut keriting bergumpal-gumpal itu hanya dipenuhi bayangan Lena (Ayah, page 3-4).*

Sabari's close friends, Maulana Hasan Magribi or Ukun, who was born at Maghrib time and Mustamat Kalimat or Tamat, repeatedly reminded Sabari that he could end up at the Mental Disorder Rehabilitation Center Amanah

under the leadership of Dra. Ida Nuraini, if his head that is clumped with hair was only filled with the shadow of Lena.

Curly hair is normally paired with wavy hair, but in the novel, the author uses the word "clumped" instead of wavy to replace the word "curly". In contrast, clumped is usually used to describe cloud, soil, or smoke; for example, black clouds are clumped in the sky to sign that rain is coming. The writer's expertise in creating new expressions can also be seen in the following example:

Hati Sabari seperti digunting melihat panitera pengadilan menggunting buku nikahnya dan buku nikah Lena (Novel Ayah, page 212).

Sabari's heart was being cut with scissors as he saw the court clerk cut out his and Lena's Marriage book. (*Ayah,* page 212)

Feelings that are hurt are usually described as feelings that are cut (*tersayat*), sliced (*teriris*), sore (*perih*), or melancholy (*pilu*). However, in this novel, the author expresses feelings as something that can be cut with scissors; for example, *Sabari's heart was being cut* (with scissors). Being cut here means having someone to remove something from one's body with a sharp tool. When the "cut" is done by other people, the impact is much more severe. A new expression also appears in the following quote:

Sambil tersenyum lebar, Larrisa membuka pintu sedan Datsun 1967-nya, yang pedal gasnya harus diperlakukan dengan tingkat membelai pacar baru sebab jika terlalu kasar menekannya, mobil biru mentah itu pandai terbatuk-batuk (Ayah, page. 338)

While smiling from ear to ear, Larissa opened the door of her 1967-Datsun sedan. Its gas pedal had to be treated to the level of caressing a new boyfriend because if she treated it too harshly, the raw blue car would cough cleverly. (*Ayah,* page 338)

The combinations of blue usually include light blue, dark blue, sky blue, navy blue, or ink blue, but the author of *Ayah* picks the word "raw blue" to describe light blue in the novel. This word has never been used before. Similarly, the new expression "cough" in "the car that would cough cleverly" (*mobil yang pandai terbatuk-batuk)* is unusual and not common because cough is a disease that is experienced by humans, not by cars.

Creativity in the Integration of Poetry into the Story

The author's love for poetry has been expressed in a sweet way through the characters who are also in love with poetry. Therefore, automatically, the story also accommodates the integration of poetry into the plot. Sabari's fondness of poems can be seen in the following examples.

Sabari loves to study *Bahasa*. His father was a *Bahasa* teacher and a talented poet. Sabari inherits his father's talent in writing poems. His expertise in

poetry has been acknowledged by his colleagues, principal, teachers, and staff at school. His poetry-writing talent was immediately recognized when he discussed the topic in the classroom with his students. One of the poems written by Sabari is *Adalah*:

Cinta adalah mahkota puisi
Musim adalah giwang puisi
Hujan adalah kalung puisi
Bulan adalah gelang puisi
Cincin adalah perhiasan
(Ayah, page 37)

Love is the crown of poetry
Seasons are the earrings of poetry
Rain is the necklace of poetry
The Moon is the bracelet of poetry
Ring is its jewelry
(*Ayah, page 37*)

These poems have become an inseparable part of the story. Sabari's poems are short, solid, simple, symbolic, and meaningful. The first line of the poem "*Cinta adalah mahkota puisi*" (love is the crown of poetry) symbolizes that love holds a very high position while poetry is one of the forms of beauty, so it can be stated that love is a form of beauty that holds a very high position. Seasons, rain, and the moon are trinkets of love that actually bind the love itself. Beautiful poems that are merged into the story can also be seen in the following example.

Sing a poem for her, her name is poetry, seducing clouds. His father hummed:

Wahai awan
Kalau bersedih
Jangan menangis
Janganlah turunkan hujan
Karena aku mau pulang
Untukmu awan
Kan kuterbangkan layang-layang ....
(Ayah, page 63)

Oh Dear Clouds
If you are sad
Don't cry
Don't send the rain
Because I want to go home
For you, dear clouds
I will fly the kites . . . .
(Ayah, page 63)

CONCLUSIONS

Andrea Hirata's *Ayah* is a creative work that contains six novel, unique, and distinctive elements in (1) ideas development, (2) ideas elaboration, (3) the selection of the characters' names, (4) the development of the storyline, (5) the creation of new expressions, and (6) the integration of poetry into the story. In literature, the novelty, uniqueness, and peculiarities of this novel will not only be recognized at the micro but also macro level of novel writing (i.e. world-renowned novels).

This research has successfully explained the figures or characteristics of creativity, especially related to the concept of novelty, distinctiveness, uniqueness based on a creative work aspect. This research can provide insight for future researchers who plan to examine creativity figures from other aspects, such as from the aspects of creative writers and/or creative processes. The findings of this study are also expected to contribute to the planning, implementation, or assessment of learning, especially literary learning that promotes creativity.

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