

ADAT AND ISLAMIC INCEST IN LITERARY
MINANGKABAU SOCIETY: WORKS ON
A PROBLEM OF IDEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

There are several cases of incestuous marriages mentioned in literary works on Minangkabau (Mkb.) society, a matrilineal society in West Sumatra, Indonesia. They might be an adat¹ or an Islamic incest, both are, according to their ideology on each of them, treated differently.

However, it is better, first, to see the phenomenon in a wider perspective, how does it operate in other cultures which are culturally related to Mkb. The discussion is essentially an anthropological and a sociological study, by treating the literary works as a socio-cultural text.

THE VOCABULARY

One commits an adat incest by marrying a woman of his own matrilineage. It is, on the other hand, an Islamic incest, if one marries someone against the Islamic principle. I will illustrate it with the following examples.

One is not supposed, according to the Islamic principle, to marry his half-sister, the daughter of his father by a different mother, although she belongs to a different matrilineage. There is, however, no explicit adat rule on this matter. It is only by interpreting, extremely, the adat rule on lineage as an exogamous unit, one could not be prevented from marrying his half-sister from a different lineage, although he might encounter some moral problems.

Neither is one supposed, according to the Islamic principle, to marry a woman whose mother has breastfed him, although she belongs to a different matrilineage. Consequently, one might be prevented from marrying his *mo.br.da.*, supposed to be an ideal marriage partner in the Mkb. system (P.E. de Josselin de Jong 1961; Umar Junus 1964), if her mother has breastfed him or the other way round, his mother has breastfed her.

One then commits both kinds of incest if he marries his sister, as it is against the adat as well as against the Islamic law.

It is necessary to differentiate an 'incestuous relationship' from an 'incestuous marriage'. One who commits an incestuous relationship commits, as a matter of fact, two sins, the immoral extramarital relationship and the incest respectively. On the other hand, one who commits an incestuous marriage only commit a single sin, the incest.

I also differentiate a "would be" incestuous relationship or marriage from a manifest one. In the first instance, the marriage does not take place as it can be prevented in due time. In the second case, on the other hand, it has taken place. It then brings a further consequence, how to "(dis)solve" it.

The incest might take place between two peoples of different generations, a father and a daughter for example, an inter-generation incest². Or it concerns two peoples of the same generation, an intra-generation incest, such as between a (half) brother and a (half) sister, or between two cousins.

An ideology is understood in Althusserian sense as simplified by Catherine Belsey (1980:5) as follows:

... that ideology is not an optional extras, deliberately adopted by self-conscious individuals ('conservative ideology', for instance), but the very condition of our experience of the world, unconscious precisely in that it is unquestioned, taken for granted.

It can be compared to what Fredric Jameson (1972: 107) and Gunther Kress & Robert Hodge (1979: 6) say.

Accordingly, the essential element of an ideology is that it is unconsciously adopted and yet conditioning our actions. We might consciously adopt a "formal" ideology, and yet at the same time we are controlled by a "non-formal" one unconsciously practiced. I will illustrate it with an example.

Tulis St. Sati wrote a sequel of two novels, *Memutuskan Pertalian* 'Breaking off the Relationship' (1932a) and *Tak Disangka* 'Unexpected' (1932b) respectively. Both convey the following informations – as far as they are relevant to the present discussion:

MEMUTUSKAN PERTALIAN (MP)

1. Due to the pressure from her mother, Kassim's wife cannot join him in Pontianak, Kalimantan. She stays behind with her son, Syahrul, in her village in Minangkabau.
2. Although, she gets a consent from mother later on to join her husband, after an interference from her educated *mamak* 'mother's brother', she is not able to make it as she suddenly dies.
3. Syahrul's matrilineal kins do not allow Kassim to take him to Pontianak.
4. Kassim blames the Minangkabau "system" for his misfortune. He then breaks off his relationship with his family and village. He never returns home. Neither has he any contact with his maternal family and his son.

TAK DISANGKA (TD)

1. Syahrul is now working in Jakarta where he meets Ratna. They fall in love to each other and they are going to get married soon.
2. By accident, Syahrul looks attentively at the picture of Ratna's father. He then realizes that Ratna's father is also his father. They then call off the marriage plan.

St. Sati blames the practice in the Mkb. society for every misfortune in both novels. However, on the other hand, *unconsciously*, he acknowledges the validity of the Mkb. system. The misfortune, a would-be incestuous marriage between Syahrul and Ratna is simply due to the following factors:

a. Kassim has no longer had any contact with his village. He does not tell them that he gets another wife and a daughter in Pontianak. He does not tell his wife and daughter either about Syahrul, his son in Sumatra.

b. The engagement between Syahrul and Ratna (i) takes place outside the village boundary, and (ii) without any consultation with his family.

Due to that, St. Sati *unconsciously* advises his readers not to deviate from the social practice in Mkb. society. Neither should they forget the family tie with their maternal relatives. A failure to follow the advice will simply lead them to a misfortune. They might commit a sin³, an incest for instance. It is then his *ideology* although he is not *conscious* of it.

Sandra A. Niessen (1982)⁴ has discussed some cases of incest among the Toba and Karo Batak in relation to the myth of *Tunggal Penahuan*. There are a Toba and a Karo version respectively.

Toba myth (T)

(a) Twins, male and female, are born to a Raja 'king' and his wife during a full moon.

(b) The twins are very intimate to each other and the Raja, despite the advice from the elders to follow the adat, does not want to interfere.

(c) The brother rapes his sister in the rice-field, and she complains to her parents.

(d) Instead of putting the children to death, the Raja merely sends the boy away temporarily and the girl to her mo.br. village.

(e) On hearing that his sister is dead, the boy returns home. He then discovers her whereabouts — she is in fact not dead. He then visits his mo.br. village. He finds her there pounding rice.

(f) Both run away to the forest. When their food runs out, they climb a tree to pick fruit.

(g) Both turn into wood and merge with the trunk of the tree.

(h) The father tries to rescue them. Only the most powerful *datu* with the help of the highest spiritual powers, is able to cut down the tree — some less powerful *datu*s, in their attempt to cut down the tree, are absorbed by the tree. It is taken to the village. It becomes the first *tunggal penahuan* 'one in three' which is copied later on.

Karo myth (K)

(a) A guru's fertility potion given to a Raja's wife allows her to give birth to twins, a male and a female.

(b) They eventually, later on, commit an incestuous relationship while out hunting together.

(c) One day, while hunting, they follow a white civet cat up a tree. The male of the twins marries the spirit of the tree without a brideprice exchange taking place. (He has sent his sister home).

(d) Hunger forces him to see his wife's grandfather to get some magical rice which never runs out. On the way back, he meets his sister. As

they do not recognize each other, they then get married. He does not have to pay the brideprice as he has cured her mother.

(e) One day, they go to hunt a civet cat and follow it up a tree where they are transformed into part of the trunk — an act of vengeance on the part of the first wife. Both take the form of a statue, and if propitiated, the twins provide the well-being for their family.

Leontine Visser provided me with an information regarding a myth she heard in North Halmahera. The myth runs as follows:

(a) A man, Maleau, had several sons and daughters. His third son was Soba 'stick insect' and his third daughter was Nuru 'melati', a flower. The elder brothers disliked Nuru and threatened her life.

(b) She ran away together with Soba. They then committed an incestuous relationship and they settled down in a village.

(c) A flood cut the village into two, Banyu Tola 'split village' and Awe respectively. Nuru lived in the first village with her son with Soba; Soba in the second one. Other people then joined them. These two villages still exist today.

Those three myths have the following similarities:

1. The incestuous relationships are between twins, or pseudo twins—being either the third son and the third daughter, Soba and Nuru are twins. As a matter of fact, twins of different sexes is really a rare phenomenon.
2. The relationship takes place outside the village, outside the purview of the elders and parents.
3. The participants do realize that they commit an incest. Only in Karo myth, for the second time (see d.), they do not recognize each other as brother and sister. They now commit an incestuous marriage.
4. There is an ambiguous opinion regarding the incest. It might be regarded as a "sin", and they are "supernaturally" punished. They become statue in Batak myths. Or they have to live in two different "worlds", separated by a river. However, on the other hand, being a myth, it is accepted as a fact.

I would like to go to an inter-generation incest as it is related by a Sundanese myth and some Malay stories.

Sankuriang, a Sundanese myth, relates a story of Sankuriang who would like to marry Dayang Sumbi, his ever-young mother as he does not recognize her as his mother. She refuses to marry him as she recognizes him as her prodigal son. As he exercises his magical power, she has to accept the proposal on some conditions. Due to a trick she does he fails. He is very angry and he leaves for us the crater of Papandayan as a proof.

Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai (A.A. Hill 1960) talks about Sultan Ahmad, a king, who was infatuated by the beauty of his daughters and would like to "marry" them⁵. Luckily, or unluckily, his eldest son, Tun Beraim Bapa, was able to prevent him from exercising his power⁶. And there is a story about Semerluki in *Sejarah Melayu* (W.G. Shellabear 1977) who would like to

marry his step-mother. His father sent him away looking for a woman of the same posture with her.

Those would-be incestuous marriages are simply due to one's bad character or to one's ignorance. They can be prevented because of the awareness of a particular party.

We now have, as a matter of fact, the following situations:

TABLE I

	THE NATURE OF THE INCEST		FACTOR TO THE INCEST		THE INCEST TAKES PLACE IN	
	Would be (B1)	Manifest (B2)	Ignorance (C1)	Bad Behavior (C2)	+village (D1)	-village (D2)
Intra- generations (A1)	—	x	(x)	x	—	x
Inter- generation (A2)	x	—	x	x	x	—

Some *ludruk* stories, a folk drama in East Java, such as *Bengawan Solo* 'The Solo River', *Joget Melayu* 'The Malay Dance', *R. A. Murgianti* (a woman's name) and *Pisang Goreng* 'Fried Banana' talk about a would-be intra-generation incestuous marriage between a (half-) brother and a (half-) sister (James L. Peacock, 1968:106-8). As those stories are quite similar to one-another, I would simply give the sequence of story lines responsible for the would-be incestuous marriage between (half-) siblings, such as:

(a) It starts with a "mis-marriage" between an elite boy and a proletariat girl. Or the other way round.

(b) Due to the interference from the elite father, the marriage has to be annulled. The daughter is under the custody of the mother while the son the father. In case of the "mis-marriage" between an elite girl and a proletariat boy (in *Murgianti*), the daughter is under the custody of the father, while the son the mother. However, in *Pisang Goreng*, the marriage produces a son who is kept by his mother.

(c) The daughter, being adopted by an elite family, is now eligible to marry an elite boy, who happens, without her knowledge, her half-brother — the son of her father by an elite or, in *Murgianti*, her brother. The marriage plan has then to be abandoned as they discover that they are (half-) siblings.

There are two factors responsible for the would-be intra-generation incestuous marriage, the conservative outlooks and the ignorance of their genealogical relationship respectively. Being conservative, the old elite peoples simply tell their child to break-off his/her marriage to a proletariat girl/boy which has taken place without their knowledge and against their wish. As they simply ignore their genealogical relationship — due to long separation

forced to them by the conservative outlook of their grandparents— and are only interested in their love to each other which has been approved by their respective parents they almost commit an incest.

It seems that the stories simply blame the conservative outlook of an elite father for the would-be incestuous marriage they commit. They have followed a “correct” procedure in arranging their marriage. They have fulfilled the modern requirement by first falling in love to each other. They also have fulfilled the traditional requirement as their marriage is arranged by their respective parents. And yet, they almost commit a sin due to the “sin” of their grandfather. It is then really different from the phenomenon in *Memutuskan Pertalian* and *Tak Disangka* previously discussed.

Suryono in *Senja di Jakarta* ‘Twilight in Jakarta’, a novel by Mochtar Lubis (1964), has an incestuous relationship with his step-mother. However, it is not a complicated situation as it is not legalized. It is simply a moral problem, describing the moral decadence among some peoples.

A degraded Dutchman in *Senggara Membawa Nikmat*, a novel by Tulis St. Sati (1928), would like to “marry” the daughter of his late native mistress. However, she is able to escape from such a humiliating situation due to help Midun gives her. It also deals with a moral problem as the Dutchman is a bad man.

SOME CASES OF INCEST IN STORIES ON MKB. SOCIETY

As I am not interested in the incest *per se*, I simply use the literary data, the stories. The most important aspect of a story is not the happening, but how it is *created* and solved which depends on author’s ideology. Accordingly, a case in a story should be regarded as a hypothetical case, created by the author to make the audience realizing the weakness of the respective social system (cf. Wolfgang Iser 1975: 306). We might be able to see the ideology through the following processes:

1. How a particular incest is committed? With an intention? Or is it simply due to their ignorance of the nature of their kinship relationship?
2. What is the solution to a particular incest?
3. What is/are the reason(s) for taking such a solution? Does it have something to do with the concept of sin, or other concept?

I would like to deal first with the data from *kaba*, a traditional storytelling in Mkb. language. Storywise, there are a classical and new *kaba* respectively. The first one relates a story supposed to take place before the turn of the 20th century, while the second one dealing with the 20th century period⁷.

There is a reference to a would-be intra-generation Islamic incestuous marriage between Anggun Nan Tungga (ANT) and Gondan Gondaria (GG) in *Kaba Anggun Nan Tungga* (Ambas Mahkota, 1966), a classical *kaba*.

ANT was traditionally engaged, arranged by their respective matrilineages, to GG, his mo.br.da, an ideal marriage partner in the Mkb. social system. However, ANT’s father, an Islamic saint⁸, did not allow it to take place, as it was against the Islamic law. GG’s mother had breastfed ANT and

they were now siblings. They could not marry each other⁹. He then took them to the Heaven (*langit* (sky)) in a flying boat which came down from the sky to fetch them. The phenomenon can be *easily* understood as an interference of an Islamic principle to that of an adat.

Kaba Siti Syamsiah (Syamsuddin St. Rajo Endah 1961), a new *kaba*, tells about an adat as well as an Islamic intra-generation incestuous marriage. The story runs as follows:

- KS1: Due to the cruelty of their parents, the under-age Syamsiah and Kaharudin ran away from their village. They were then taken care by two different families. Each of them led a different way. Each family then moved separately to different places.
- KS2: Kaharudin was a successful businessman in Palembang, while Syamsiah had to work as a house-maid. She had to take a Javanese name to conceal her identity from the police.
- KS3: After the death of his wife, Kaharudin went to Jakarta, where he met Syamsiah under assumed name of Siti Sarinam. They then got married as they did not recognize each other.
- KS4: Kaharudin then took his wife and children to his native village to see his parents. Reaching home, they then realized that they were siblings.
- KS5: In order to keep the secret from the knowledge of their village folks, they invented a story, Kaharudin took Syamsiah and her children home after the death of her husband, a very thing a brother should do for his sister. Each then got married to their respective spouse from their own village. Kaharudin's children were now his sister's children, his *kemenakan*.

There are some cases of incest mentioned in modern stories written in Indonesian Malay. In "*Datangnya dan Perginya*" (He comes and he goes), a short story by A. A. Navis (1956), Masri got married to Arni, and already had two children. He did not know that Arni was his father's daughter from a different mother. The story can be itemized as follows:

- D1: After the death of Masri's mother, St. Duano, his father got married several times for every marriage ended up with a divorce. He divorced Iyah while she was carrying his daughter, Arni, as he did not know it.
- D2: As he was dissatisfied with every wife he got, he then decided not to have any more wife. He now visited prostitutes which made Masri ashamed. Masri ran away and he succeeded in making his own life. He then got married to Arni. Her mother did not object to it although she knew that Masri was Arni's half-brother.
- D3: Masri invited Duano to visit them. Duano then discovered that Masri had married his half-sister as Iyah told him about it —Masri and Arni were out when he arrived. Iyah told him not to tell their children about it, as it would make them leading to a miserable life and Duano would commit another sin towards them. He then simply left the house without seeing his children.

Navis, however, changes the ending in his novel *Kemarau* (Drought) (1967). In defending her opinion, Iyah hit Duano which made him unconscious. He was then at home when Arni and Masri returned home. They then had no choice but to annul their Islamic incestuous marriage.

Wisran Hadi (1978) in his drama *Puti Bungsu*, a girl's name, 'creates' a set of incestuous marriages and relationships. It is really a creation, not a *mimesis*, as he re-creates the story from several folktales. It then has no reality behind it.

Puti Bungsu is a "marriage" of the following (groups of) folktales: Malim Deman, Malim Kundang¹², and Sangkuriang. There are three stories within Malim Deman group, i.e. Malim Dewa, the father of Malim Deman, Malim Deman, and Malim Duano, the son of Malim Deman. The father is not important in Malim Kundang and Sangkuriang folktales.

Since everyone should have a father, Hadi then 'invents' a father for either Malim Kundang and Puti Bungsu¹³. Both were fathered by the man who fathered Malim Deman. He is referred to in the drama as *Lelaki* 'the man'. He is always in the background. He plays a role of a 'hidden father'¹⁴. He had three wives, living in different places¹⁵. Due to that, his children did not know his or her half-siblings.

Hadi has, as a matter of fact, de-constructed the folktales. Puti Bungsu is no longer Deman's wife —as in the folktale, she is now Kundang's wife¹⁶. She only had an extra-marital relationship with Deman who fathered Duano, his legitimate son in the folktale. Accordingly, Puti Bungsu committed an Islamic incestuous marriage with Kundang, an Islamic incestuous relationship with Deman and Duano, the last one is her son by Deman. She, as a matter of fact, almost married Duano.

It is quite possible that the incestuous marriage and relationships in *Puti Bungsu* is simply due to the fact that it is a "marriage" of several folktales. It has nothing to do with the social reality in one-to-one correspondence. However, it might correspond to the social reality in a different way. In this case we have to note down the following elements:

- PB1: Puti Bungsu has an intra-generation incestuous marriage to Kundang and an incestuous relationship to Deman. She also has an inter-generation incestuous relationship to Duano.
- PB2: The incests take place due to their ignorance of their genealogical relationship, and everything is done on one's own initiative without consultation with their respective lineage.
- PB3: The incestuous relationship between Puti Bungsu and Duano is also due to their participation in the "modern life of young people" and each assumes a different name. Puti Bungsu is now Tantri and Duano Christian. As a matter of fact, Puti Bungsu is now carrying Duano's baby.
- PB4: Hadi simply gives us facts with no solution. The main cause is the absence of a family life. The father (the man) is not taking care of his children. Deman and Puti Bungsu are not taking care of Duano, as he is their illegitimate son. He is a parentless son¹⁷.

In *Salah Pilih* (A Wrong Choice) (N. St. Iskandar 1928), a novel written during the peak of criticism towards the Mkb. adat, Asri and Asnah commits an adat incestuous marriage as both belong to the same exogamous unit. The following the part of the story relevant to the present discussion:

- SP1: The love affair between Asri and Asnah takes place in their village. It develops in the later stage of the development of the story as they do acknowledge that it is against the adat principle.
- SP2: They get married outside their village boundary, officiated by a "progressive priest" who does not feel bound by the adat law. Asri and Asnah then leave for Jakarta to start a new life.
- SP3: As their village needs, in pursuing the modern world, an educated head, Asri is then invited, without having to divorce Asnah, to return home. He is forgiven for the "crime" he has committed¹⁸.

That adat incestuous marriage is essentially different from an Islamic one. It is done in full awareness of its being an incest, with an intention to rebelling the system. It is a crime, with a moral implication, rather than a sin, against the system practised in a respective village. Consequently, they simply have to leave the village without dissolving their marriage¹⁹. And they might return home if their crime is forgiven.

Accordingly, an adat incest is treated differently from an Islamic one. It is related to their ideology as can be elaborated later on.

An Islamic incest is different from an adat one. Each is made possible by a different set of factors. An Islamic incest might take place due to their ignorance of their genealogical relationship. Or they do not know the Islamic rule preventing them from marrying each other as she is his 'rightful' wife according to the Mkb. social system. ANT did not know that he was no longer able to marry GG as her mother had breastfed him. He simply regarded that he was doing the best thing by marrying his mo.br.da. One commits, on the other hand, an adat incest in full awareness that he is committing an incest.

Once one knows that he has committed an Islamic incest, he has to dissolve the marriage. Or he has to abandon the idea of marrying her. Duano has to abandon the idea of marrying Puti Bungsu when he knows that she is his mother, although she has been carrying his baby. However, an adat incest is treated differently. One does not have to dissolve the marriage although they might be expelled from the village (life).

An Islamic incest takes place outside the village (life), without any knowledge of their respective family. They only realize that they are committing an incest after re-establishing the contact with their family. ANT realizes that he is going to commit an incest, by marrying GG, after re-establishing the contact with his father.

An incest is a new phenomenon. It is not reported in classical *kaba*. Although Manjau Ari and Murai Randin in *Hikayat Manjau Ari* (J. L. van den Toorn 1891) run away together from their village, they do not commit an incest. *Kaba Anggun nan Tungga* simply reports a would-be incestuous

marriage between ANT and GG. It is then different from the situation in *Kaba Siti Syamsiah*, a new one.

Tak Disangka, a prewar novel, simply 'reports' a would-be Islamic incestuous marriage, while "Datangnya dan Perginya" and *Kemarau*, two post-war stories, tells us that an incestuous marriage has already taken place. *Puti Bungsu* presents a more complicated case of incest.

Salah Pilih, a prewar novel, is the only story which relates an adat incest.

It is quite possible that an adat incest is also an Islamic incest, as is the case in *Kaba Siti Syamsiah*. Kaharudin and Syamsiah are siblings and then belonging to the same exogamous unit. But the reason given in the story for dissolving the marriage is not because they commit a sin, an Islamic incest, but simply because he has married his sister, an adat incest. They simply invent a story in order to keep their marriage from the knowledge of their village folks. As a matter of fact, we can raise a hypothetical question. Should they annul it in case they knew about it outside their village boundary and they did not have to return home? As there is no answer available, we simply have to dismiss the possibility.

Kaba Anggun Nan Tungga presents us an interesting problem. According to the Mkb. social system, the marriage between ANT and GG is an ideal one as she is his mo.br.da. However, it fails to materialize due to the interference of an Islamic principle. There is then an opposition between an Islamic and an adat principle, and the adat one has to give way to an Islamic one.

However, it is not so simple as ANT's father, a saint, takes both of them to Heaven. It might imply that they are going to get married in the heaven, a holy marriage. It might also imply that both are holy peoples. They are different from Malim Kundang who was condemned by turning him into stone for the sin he has committed.

One might conclude, after reading some stories in Indonesian, that an Islamic incestuous marriage has to be terminated. On the other hand, an adat incest is somewhat encouraged. Its participants are readmitted to the village life. They even give him a honorable position. However, it is only mentioned in a single novel. No other novel is taking up the idea later on. It can then be regarded as an unimportant phenomenon. We might question its relevancy to a Mkb. people. Does every Mkb. would like to rebel to the system in the same way? At this junction I would like to make a reference to a "short-story" in *Forsil*, an acronym of 'Forum Silungkang', a bulletin exclusively circulated among "citizens" of Silungkang published in Jakarta.

A young man falls in love to a beautiful girl in Jakarta. He then visits her house where he meets her mother. Their conversation reveals that the girl is his (distant) niece. They belong to the same exogamous unit. This kills his desire to marry her.

The story simply contradicts the 'tendency' in *Salah Pilih*. It simply advices not to marry within the same exogamous unit.

Accordingly, everything is not as simple as it appears. It then needs a

serioud discussion. However, before taking such a discussion, I would like to present the phenomenon in the following table:

TABLE 2

	KABA		MODERN PROSE	
	classical	new	prewar	postwar
Inter-generation				
Islamic/adat incest:				
rel. manifest mo/so	—	—	—	X(1)
mar. would-be mo/so	—	—	—	X(1)
Intra-generations				
Islamic incest:				
siblings: mar. manifest	—	X(1)	—	—
half-siblings:				
mar. would be	—	—	X(1)	—
manifest	—	—	—	X(3)
rel. manifest	—	—	—	X(1)
siblings due to				
breastfeeding: would-be	X	—	—	—
Adat incest:				
cousins: mar. manifest	—	—	X(1)	—
mar. = marriage rel. = relationship; numbers in bracket = the number of stories.				

THE INTERPRETATION

A story does not necessarily report an event, at least not as a naked reality. The author has at least refracted it according to his ideology (cf. Harry Levin 1973 : 67; Michel Zeraffa 1976 : 8; Caryl Emerson 1983 : 258; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983 : 6). Or he might simply creates a fictional reality, inventing an event for its sake. However, it has its foundation in the reality he experiences with (cf. Robert Scholes 1975 : 1-25). It is then an interpretation of the reality in which his ideology plays a decisive role.

Accordingly, an event in a fiction cannot be taken as a historical reality or truth. We might doubt the presence of an intra-generation Islamic incestuous marriage in the social life of Mkb. people. It is created within the author's mind in order to reveal the weakness of the Mkb. system, by using Iser's line of argumentation.

As a matter of fact, as a Mkb., I never know such an incest reported, not even in the world of gossip. It is quite possible that it is created by the respective authors by giving a particular signification to the phenomenon based on their ideology.

I do know, as a Mkb., the presence of an adat incest. But it is not only 'legally' condemned by expelling the respective couple, they are also regarded as immoral or stupid as they cannot differentiate "sisters" from non-

sisters. It is usually committed by "social outcasts", the man of failure. No successful person, materially or intellectually, would commit such an incest. They would never be re-admitted to the society, unless they abandon their marriage. However, they cannot erase their mark previously labelled by the society. Consequently, what Iskandar describes is not a historical reality. He creates it for the sake of his ideology vis-a-vis the Mkb. social system.

Every incest in those stories is not a historical reality. Navis has then a liberty to change the ending of his stories. Consequently, the problem of incest in those stories is not a problem of its presence in reality for it is only a fictional reality.

By creating an incestuous phenomenon, an author has given a signification to it. In order to discover it, one has to take into account two aspects of an incestuous phenomenon: the process which leads to it and the solution.

There are three steps leading someone to commit an Islamic incest, i.e.:

1. It starts with the mistake of their parents who do not (really) take care of their children.

2. After a long separation, the two siblings meet again as strangers. Or two half-siblings who never know that they have a half-sibling meet each other as strangers. They fall in love to each other. They might get married if they fail to trace their genealogical relationship in due time.

3. The marriage takes place outside Mkb. and without consultation with their respective lineages.

There are variations to the process. Kaharudin in *Kaba Siti Syamsiah* might not marry his sister if she did not encounter a misfortune which forced her to take an assumed name. Iyah—in two stories written by Navis—knows that Masri is Arni's half-brother. She does not, however, prevent them from marrying each other as she does not want their mistake—her and Arni's father—to interfere with her daughter's happiness. She then decides to hide the fact they have the same father. It is then a hidden father as is the case in *Puti Bungsu* and *Tak Disangka*.

They discover their mistake after re-establishing contact with their family. In most cases, they discover it after their father emerges from his hiding, re-establishing the genealogical relationship.

The discovery of their mistake forces them to abandon their marriage. However, since Masri and Arni in "Datangnya dan Perginya" are not told of it, they do not have to rectify it.

There are variations to the solution. *Puti Bungsu* does not provide us with any solution. The solution in *Kaba Siti Syamsiah*—it is either an adat or an Islamic incest—is an adat one rather than an Islamic one as can be seen in the formulation of the solution, translated as:

Then mak Sariah says: "Before the village folks know, let's have an agreement. We simply tell them that Syamsiah's husband has been dead. His brother brings then her home. Do not tell them that they are husband and wife, a shameful thing.

On the surface, the authors put the blame on the parents. Their children would not commit an incest if they really took care of them. They have

no intention of committing an incest. They do it, even in *Puti Bungsu* which has a very loose moral principle, because of their ignorance of their genealogical relationship. They regret it once they know it. Navis in his stories blames Iyah for the incestuous marriage between Masri and Arni as she does not prevent it.

It can be related to the ambiguous position a father traditionally holds in a Mkb. society. On the one hand, he is not supposed to be an authority towards his children, a right traditionally reserved for a *mamak*, mo.br. . On the other, he is expected to play a certain role in his children's future. And there is no clear-cut division between those two opposing rights. Everything depends on one's interpretation. And the stories do give us the two sides of the problem. *Manjau Ari* and *Siti Syamsiah* tell us the ill-effect of a father's action who really 'takes care' of his children by disciplining them harshly. Other stories, on the other hand, tell about a polygamous father who pays no attention to his children. And consequently, one does not recognize his/her half-sibling.

Only, at the next step, the authors unconsciously blame the couple as their marriage to the 'foreigner' is done outside Mkb. without any consultation with their respective families. It is supposed to be an incest-free marriage as one marries someone *theoretically* unrelated to him/her. But it is erased by the fact. Kaharudin *theoretically* marries Sarinam, a Javanese girl, but in fact, he marries Syamsiah, his sister. The stories then indoctrinates the young Mkb. peoples not to marry someone without consultation with their families²⁰. A complete stranger might turn out to be their (half-) siblings. The stories might even tell them to simply accept a marriage pre-arranged by their families, a traditional marriage arrangement, so far under criticism from young generation.

There is a reason for a complete stranger turns out to be one's half-sibling as the Mkb. people do go *merantau* anywhere in Indonesia and Malaysia. They admit get married there and have children who become half-siblings of the children of their Mkb. wife.

Kaba Siti Syamsiah might discourage a female Mkb. of going *merantau* as she is prone to a bad influence from foreign elements as is the case with Syamsiah²¹

The problem is, essentially, how a Mkb. people adapts himself to a new and non Mkb. world, the very phenomenon I have previously discussed (1983) being the main phenomenon in Indonesian novels. Whether he will let himself to be completely absorbed by the new world by cutting off his relationship to his Mkb. family line, or should he preserve the link while participating in a new world. Those stories, as matter of fact, advice him to take the second option.

There is no specific ruling in Mkb. adat on the nature of a marriage between half-siblings of the same father. No such an incident takes place at the village level. It is simply avoided. It is then essentially a foreign element as it only takes place outside the village boundary. It is mainly an Islamic incest. However, it is only identifiable through adat mechanism, through

re-establishing the contact with the village life, a province closely related to adat²². The whole mechanism, the identification of an Islamic incest through adat mechanism, I suppose, has something to do with the authors' ideology.

They might believe that there should be a cooperation between adat and Islam. An Islamic law might fail to operate without cooperation from adat mechanism. On the other hand, an adat mechanism needs the Islamic sanction for implementing its rule. The adat mechanism lack the ruling concerning the marriage between two half-siblings of the same father. It then simply incorporate the Islamic ruling to its own "perfection". Accordingly, they believe that there is no opposition, ideologically, between Islam and Mkb. adat, despite the fact that there are some historical facts which might lead one to think otherwise. An adat ruling is only applicable as long as it does not contradict the Islamic law. In case an adat ruling is more than enough, it is not necessary to apply the Islamic law. This is the case in *Kaba Siti Syamsiah*. They have, anyhow, to abandon their marriage by simply applying the adat law. It is then not necessary to subject them to an Islamic ruling.

The same principle is also applicable to *Kaba Anggun Nan Tungga*. ANT and GG are prevented from marrying each other due to the Islamic ruling as GG's mother had breastfed him. It is then an interference of an Islamic law to a supposed marriage according to the practice among the Mkb. peoples, unless we are able to interpret it differently.

A mo.br.da marriage is simply an ideal one in the Mkb. social system. It is only a preference, not obligatory. One might refuse to marry his mo.br.da. In this case, the Islamic ruling preventing ANT from marrying GG is not against the compulsory ruling of the adat²³. However its ending, ANT's father took ANT and GG to the Heaven, does show something which can be interpreted as a resistance towards the application of an Islamic ruling. It can be given several interpretations.

First, although they failed to get married in the profane world, they might get married in the 'divinal' world, with a divinal blessing/sanction, as both are taken there. It might be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the ideal nature of a mo.br.da. marriage as it is practised in Mkb.

Secondly, as ANT and GG were taken to the Heaven, they were then holy persons, free of any sin²⁴, as they were willing to sacrifice their love for the Islamic principle. They were different from Malim Kundang who was, according to his myth, turned into stone, staying forever in the mundane world, and at the same time, the stone also serves as a proof of his sin.

Accordingly, while accepting the interference of an Islamic ruling as a *conditio sine qua non*, they also state that the ruling is not against the mo.br.da. marriage practised in Mkb. for it gets a divinal blessing. The ruling is only for ANT and GG applicable in the profane world.

Such a resistance can be also seen in the development of the story. Until the emergence of ANT's father, nobody told them about the fact and the ruling. The elders simply allowed them to pursue their love. The elders might not know the ruling²⁵. They simply allowed them as it was traditional-

ly practised.

No such a resistance in the two former cases. The adat is silence on the marriage between two half-siblings, while it is also against the marriage between two siblings.

The previous discussion does not say much on the phenomenon in *Puti Bungsu*, which gives no explicit solution to the problem, although it does say that it is a sin — Duano changed his mind of marrying Puti Bungsu. In this case we have to take into account the *Doppelcharakter* of a literary work as proposed by Th.W. Adorno (cf. Peter V. Zima, 1978). A literary work has two characteristics, an autonomous literary phenomenon and a *social fait* respectively. The absence of an explicit solution in it is simply a literary phenomenon as Hadi creates a story out of “marriage” of several stories. It does not need a terminal ending since it might create other stories as Hadi has done to the previous ones. Malim Kundang is no longer a *dead stone* on the coast of Padang. He is alive with flesh and bone. He denies the story of his ever being turned into stone. It is his mother who does not recognize him and not the other way round. It is then impossible to treat it as a simple *social fait*.

An adat incest, found only in one novel, is an isolated phenomenon. No other author regards it a problem as it is done with an awareness of its being an incest and the participants will be expelled from the village (community). A sense of belonging to the community will prevent them from committing such an offence. Iskandar creates the incident to express his rebellion towards the system, by consciously opt out to another system. However, his rebellion is not total. Unconsciously, he admits that what he creates will not take place in reality. He purposely simplifies it by making his protagonist having no child since the presence of a child will create a problem.

A child of a couple who commit an adat incest living in the village would encounter a lot of problems. He would no longer be able to differentiate his mother's from his father's lineage. He would be an object of mockery by the village folks. When he grows up, he would face a problem finding a suitable wife as people would hesitate to take him as their in-law²⁶.

It can be stated that authors referred to in the present discussion have different opinions on the Islamic and adat incest. They respect the Islamic incest by not allowing their characters either to commit or to continue to commit it, as one commits it due to his ignorance. On the contrary, one of our authors do not respect the adat incest. He purposely lets his protagonist to commit it in full awareness that it is against the adat. Accordingly, each signifies something.

Kaba Anggun Nan Tungga is the only classical *kaba* which reports a would-be intra-generation incestuous marriage. The incest, manifest or would-be, is mostly reported in some modern stories, to which included *Kaba Sitti Syamsiah*. It then gives us a certain historical perspective.

The story of *Kaba Anggun Nan Tungga* supposed to take place at the early stage of the Islamisation of Mkb. . The Islamic law is only known to

conservative attitude of the parents for it. It is then different from the Mkb. stories as they blame the respective couple since they married without consultation with their respective families.

The *ludruk* stories are dealing with an upward social mobility. The mother fails to move upward as his elite husband has to divorce her. However, his child succeeds as he/she is either taken care by his/her father or is adopted by another elite family. The social status does not come into picture in Mkb. stories. They are dealing with the importance of the family ties. One who attempts to disrespect it is susceptible to commit an incest. The *ludruk* stories are then expressing a different cultural ideology from those on Mkb. people.

The stories on Mkb. society as well as the incest phenomenon in those stories are profane. They are then different from those on Batak and Halmahera society, which are sacral. Each also has its own cultural perspective or ideology as can be seen in the following elaborations.

The exogamous principle of a Batak patrilineage is given a supernatural sanction. Those who commit it would be punished by a supernatural power by turning them into wood and later on into statue—the Kundang phenomenon—as a reminder for others to not committing the same offence. The Halmaherans believe the same thing. It is then different from the Mkb. phenomenon. The exogamous principle of a Mkb. matrilineage is simply a social affair without any supernatural sanction.

The Batak and the Halmaheran myths relate the events that took place in the remote past when everything was 'created' (by God). They are myths of creation. The Mkb. stories, on the other hand, relate the events that took place in the recent past when the Mkb. people is under the continuing external influences.

NOTES

¹ *Adat* is used here as a convenient term. It should be read as 'according to the system or practice which arranges a possible marriage partnership' *Adat* law is also understood as a customary law.

² Applying this principle extremely, without taking into account any other consideration, one is then allowed to marry his daughter as she belongs to a different exogamous lineage. It is quite possible that *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* 'The story of Pasai kings' was "written" by someone with Mkb. background, as a king would like to marry his daughters. He might write the story in order to ridicule the system, or to show the role of a brother as a *mamak* who protects his sisters. It is related to the function of a literary work showing the weakness of a system as mentioned by Iser (1975: 306).

³ The situation in (a), which is different from (b), might only take place in a hypothetical situation. The existence of (a) in a literary work states that it is not reflecting a real life. It deals with a probability rather than with a reality. Using my arguments on *kaba* (Junus, 1984a), the situation can be explained as follows:

	presence (in literary work = absence in society)	absence (in literary work = presence in society)
A.	good	bad
B.	bad	good

By comparing the condition in a literary work to that in society it describes, one is directed to an ideal condition. He might reject the condition in the literary work (case B) or that in society (case A). However, it is only applicable in a literary work with a conclusion, a close-ended story or an epic type of story. It is not applicable to an open-ended story, ending with a problem rather than with a solution (cf. Emerson, 258-9).

⁴I owe Ms. Niessen my thanks for sending me her relevant article. At the same time, I would like to express my indebtedness to Prof. P. E. de Josselin de Jong who has given a special attention to my present discussion. He has done his best to help me. He asked Ms. Niessen to send me the relevant material. He also included in his letter the information he got from Ms. Leontine Visser. On this occasion, I would like to thank her as well for letting me sharing the information.

⁵In expressing his wish for "marrying" his daughters, the king asked his ministers the following question: "If we plant a tree, who would take, first of all, its fruits?" He anticipated that the answer was 'the man who plants it' as this will allow him to "marry" his daughters since they are the fruits of the tree he plants.

⁶Since the brother acts as a protector to his sisters in opposing their father's authority, I suspect that he acts as a *mamak* to his sisters, a Mkb. feature. It is quite possible that HRRP was composed by a Mkb. storyteller for it also has an "appendix" regarding the victory of Mkb. people in repudiating the advance of the Javanese dominance. It is quite difficult to see an overt relationship between this particular story to that of Pasai.

⁷Other differences between a classical and a new *kaba* see Junus 1984a, 1985.

⁸Previous to this event, he might be mentioned, but he never plays a role as a character of the story. He is always kept in the background. A hidden father. He is then also responsible for the fighting between ANT and his half-brother.

⁹It is interesting to note how the "author" formulates Tuanku Haji Muda's word regarding the situation to ANT and GG (Mahkota, 163), which has the following elements:

- a. The situation is not a secret to GG's mother and father, the latter is also ANT's *mamak*. However, they prefer to keep silent. It is then his duty as a saint to reveal it, so they do not commit an incestuous sin.
- b. It is not only an Islamic incest, it is also an adat incest as they are *badunsanak sapaanusuan* 'being siblings as both have been breastfed by the same woman'.
- c. In pursuing the adat ideal, they might be engaged to each other, but they cannot marry each other as the marriage is under the Islamic jurisdiction, officiated by an Islamic functionary. (Due to that, there is no urgency to dissolving Asri's marriages to Asnah in *Salah Pilih* as it is validated by the Islamic law, although it is against the adat principle.)

¹⁰Due to "the spirit of the age", provoked by prewar novels, it is believed that one only falls in love once in his life time. Navis then makes St. Duano experiencing a bad life after the death of his (first) wife, Masri's mother. He is always looking for the image of his first wife in every woman he marries, by comparing them to her. He ends up with a disappointment as he does not find it. Every marriage then ends up with a divorce.

¹¹The only reason she gives to St. Duano for letting them getting married is a humanistic one. She does not want St. Duano to commit another sin to them. Revealing the fact that they are half-siblings might make them leading a miserable life as she had previously experienced.

¹²Malim Deman, an earth man, got married to Puti Bungsu, a heaven girl, by deceiving her. She, by bringing Malim Duano, her son, later on, managed to return to heaven. It followed with her reconciliation with her husband later on. Malim Kundang is a legendary figure associated with a stone at the Padang beach. He went *merantau* to getting rich. He then returned home, to take the wealth to his mother, as a rich man. However, he failed to recognize her. To prove the fact, that Kundang was her son, she prayed to God to turn him into stone.

¹³Puti Bungsu in her role as Duano's mother with whom she has an incestuous

relationship plays a role of Dayang Sumbi but in a reverse situation to that described in (2).

¹⁴I suspect that it is related to the position of a father in the Mkb. social system. Without refuting the fact that he might play an important role, he is, as a matter of fact, not supposed to do that. His role is simply advisory. Due to that, ANT's father is always kept in the background for quite a long time. He only interfered when his son was going to commit a fatal sin. However, he was not willing to confront ANT's lineage. He simply took them to the Heaven.

¹⁵It is most possible by the practice in Mkb. society. It is assumed that a Mkb. man has a tendency to be polygamous, getting married all over places. He does not take care of his children. He even does not bother to know whether he has children or not. Due to that, it is possible that one does not know his/her halfsibling(s). ANT did not know that Katik Alamsudin was his half-brother. On top of that, the rivalry among one's many wives also encourage the rivalry among his children from different wives.

¹⁶Hadi, I suspect, has incorporated the contemporary feature to his story. It is a rich man who is able to get married to a beautiful girl, although he might be impotent (cf. Junus, 1984c). Kundang is, as a matter of fact, the only rich man in those folktales.

¹⁷Hadi simply presents facts without "solution". It is something to be understood (and tolerated) rather than to be condemned as it is not their mistake – apart from the extramarital relationship – that they commit an incest; it is their parents' mistake. It is then in line with the stories previously mentioned. In addition to that, we have to be careful in judging it. Hadi might do it as a means to demistifying the old myths. He then changes the would-be incestuous marriage in *Aankuriang* into a manifest one.

¹⁸By "honoring" the marriage between Asri and Asnah, Iskandar consciously expresses his rebellion towards the Mkb. adat. However, unconsciously, he might have a reservation as he does not credit them with child. A child would make their life intolerable. The family might encounter the following problems: (i) The non-existence of two important groups, *urang sumando* 'the male in-law' and *ninieki mamak* 'wife's male lineage members' respectively. Asri is both *urang sumando* and *ninieki mamak* to his wife. (ii) The child has no *bako* 'the father's matrilineage'. (iii) People would hesitate to take the child as their in-law as he/she is the offspring of the marriage outside the system practised within the community. (iv) The child will be the object of mockery by the village folks, especially by other children. Due to that, Iskandar does not allow them to have a child. However, it might also have to do with the tendency of the novel from such period. A couple is not shown having a child. It is the world of a husband and a wife only.

¹⁹I do recollect from my village life a case of adat incest. Both sides, the respective couple and the village folks did their best not to get in touch with each other. The village folks looked down on the couple. They were regarded as fools, being not able to look for an appropriate spouse, being not able to differentiate a "sister" from a non-sister. In addition to that, they were somewhat "out-casts". It is then really contradict the situation in *Salah Pilih*.

²⁰By returning to the matrilineage family for consultation, one will recognize the concept of a family in Mkb. and its mechanism, such as consultation among family members. It is their ideology, the essence of the social system. There are no fixed "law" which makes it different from Islam as it is expressed by *adat babuhue sintak*, *syarak babuhue mati* 'the rule of adat can be loosened, while that of Islam is fixed'. It accommodates some controversial views as expressed by the following *pantun*:

*Pincalang nak rang Tiku/nampak nan dari Sitingau Lauik.
Basilang kayu dalam tungku/di sinan api mangko iduik.*

as the last two lines can be translated into 'In order to make a fire, the woods should be arranged criss-cross'. A new element can be incorporated into the established system in order to perfect it, as it also expressed by the following maxims: *sekali aie gadang sekali tapian berubah* 'the bathing place in a river changes every flood' and *dipulun sagadang*

kuku dikambang salawe alam 'if you role the adat, it is as small as your finger tip, but if you spread it, it will be as wide as earth'. In this case, we have to be aware of the paradoxical or dialogue nature of a maxim (see note 8) which is responsible for some contrasting interpretations.

²¹There are other stories such as *Syair si Bansa Urai* 'The Syair of Bansa Urai', *Kaba Siti Nurlela*, and *Pengaruh Keadaan* 'Under Circumstances' which tell about a woman victimized by bad foreign elements. A woman who goes merantau by herself ends up with a tragedy. On the contrary, most man are successful. They become (very) rich.

²²The family link is important to a Mkb. people. One's attachment to his village will cease if he no longer has any close relative living there. He will hesitate to "return home" if he has no mother or sister living there. Due to that, one's attachment to his village is not cultural but genealogical.

²³The adat rule is more concerned about to whom one is not supposed to get married, rather than to whom one should get married. It is then not against the adat if one fails to marry his mo.br.da. It makes it easier to incorporate an Islamic principle to adat. It might be regarded as perfecting it. In *Pertemuan* 'The Meeting' (Abbas Pamuncak N.S., 1927), Masri's *mamak* manipulated an Islamic principle for the sake of adat. He borrowed the "power" of Masri's father – it is a sin to disobey a father – to make him obeying his will of marrying his daughter. It is believed that incorporation from new elements will not wipe out the adat. On the contrary, it will make it more meaningful as the following maxim: *adat dipakai baru, baju dipakai usang* 'adat is always rejuvenated after every use, while a piece of cloth is rotten after every use'. Due to that, the contradictory nature between Islamic and adat principle has been treated as being non-contradictory. Both are in a symbiotic relationship as one needs another in its implementation.

²⁴I do not want to take it as a mere influence from the story of Prophet Isa. It goes beyond it as the author has given a signification to it. It is created in his mind although he might borrow it from somewhere else.

²⁵It can be compared to the information in note 9.

²⁶Muhammad Dimiyati (1940) suspected that the absence of child in *Belunggu* (Armijin Pane, 1940) is simply due to the influence of western novels and films. I do not agree with him. The presence of a child would make a story complicated. The author has to find a "reasonable" solution to his fate in case there is a divorce. Or we might have a problem as we have in *Tak Disangka*. The author has also to invent a world for the child(ren). Does he have to follow his parents' footsteps? If it were the case it was then different from the father who had rebelled towards his parents. Or should he rebel towards his parents as his parents had previously done? If it were the case, he might be regarded as one who was not able to educate his children. It is really a dilemma. Or other possibilities.

²⁷Both ANT and GG had to fight their enemies for defending their love to each other. ANT had to fight Nangkodo Bahar and Katik Alamsudin, his half-brother, who would like to take GG as their wife. GG had to "fight" the women ANT married during his adventure to freeing GG's father from his enemy and to getting the bird she asked for.

²⁸There are many Mkb. maxims which have the same characteristics. It consists of two parts, each part is always in dialogue with the other. They might even contradict each other. It is then paradoxical in nature. It has then to be proved whether it is related to the ideology of the Mkb. people. Could we say that the Mkb. people live in the world of paradox?

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