

**RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AS SEEN IN
SEQUELS ACTION MOVIE *FAST AND FURIOUS***

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the Degree of Bachelor in English Literature



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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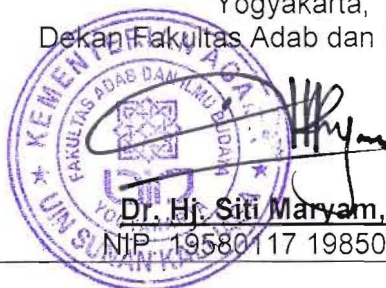
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

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*My beloved Mami and Romo, Sista 'Nit' Nino and Ririn,
Kenaz Johan Fachreza and Khanza Verolitha Johan,
Bang Jack, and my big family*



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MOTTO

It is not about how big your problem is.

It is about how you solve
and enjoy the obstacles.

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RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AS SEEN IN SEQUELS ACTION MOVIE *FAST AND FURIOUS*

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ABSTRACT

The researcher analyzes how can the religious symbols be interpreted in the action movies and with such symbols, the researcher also analyzes the popular topics of the movies in field of religion and film. Those popular topics are using religion to interpret movies (theological approach), using movies to critique religion, using movies to promote religion, and using movies expose cultural values (ideological approach). The objectives of this analysis are to analyze the interpretation of religious symbols in the movies and to analyze the popular topics of the movies in field of religion and movie.

The researcher focuses on the first, fourth, and fifth sequel and concerns in analyzing Dominic Toretto as the main character and the religious symbols related to him. This research practically is to analyze the religious symbols of the movie sequels. This research is to analyze the religious symbols for Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU), to know, to understand, and to be aware in interpreting the meaning of religious symbols so there will be no ambiguity and misunderstanding about religious symbols. The analysis of the religious symbols found in *Fast and Furious* which include the explanation on the tokens— Dominic's crucifix necklace, Maria statue, crucifix, church, Christ the Redeemer statue, and the name of Dominic, and activities—saying grace, signum crucis, and Dominic's dialogue which represents his religiosity— and to analyze the symbols, the researcher uses semiology theory by Roland Barthes and Ferdinand de Saussure. The researcher also uses film theory as the secondary theory to analyze the symbols because the researcher analyzes movies. Besides, the researcher also analyzes of the popular topic in field of religion and film so as to observe the role of the religious symbols.

The analysis is about the meaning behind the religious symbols such as to celebrate, to motivate, to luck, as religion, and other. From the analysis, the researcher concludes that the main role of the appearance of religious symbols in the movies is to expose cultural values.

Keywords: religious symbol, *Fast and Furious*, Dominic Toretto.

SIMBOL AGAMA DALAM FILM AKSI *FAST AND FURIOUS*

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ABSTRAK

Peneliti menganalisa bagaimana simbol agama diinterpretasikan dalam film aksi dan dengan simbol tersebut, peneliti juga menganalisa topik populer dalam film tersebut dibidang agama dan perfilman. Topik populer tersebut biasanya digunakan dalam film sebagai media menginterpretasi film, untuk mengkritik agama, mempromosikan agama, dan menyingkap suatu kebudayaan (ideologi). Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa makna simbol agama dan topik yang terdapat dalam film aksi *Fast and Furious* dalam kajian agama dan perfilman.

Peneliti fokus menganalisa seri film yang pertama, keempat, dan kelima dan hanya menganalisa simbol agama yang berhubungan dengan Dominic Toretto yang merupakan pemeran utama. Analisa ini bermanfaat untuk studi lintas budaya, untuk mengetahui, memahami, dan lebih berhati-hati dalam mengartikan arti dari simbol agama agar tidak terjadi ambiguitas dan salah menafsirkan simbol agama. Analisa simbol agama yang ditemukan di *Fast and Furious* yang terdiri dari tanda---kalung salib Dominic, patung Bunda Maria, salib, gereja, patung Christ the Redeemer, dan arti dari nama Dominic, and aktivitas--- doa, tanda salib, dan dialog Dominic yang merepresentasikan simbol agama---dianalisa dengan teori semiologi Roland Barthes dan semiotik Saussure serta teori per-film-an. Selain itu, peneliti juga menganalisa topik populer yang terdapat dalam film tersebut dibidang agama dan film an peranan simbol agama dalam film tersebut.

Untuk menganalisa simbol-simbol tersebut, peneliti menggunakan teori semiologi Roland Barthes dan Ferdinand de Saussure. Selain itu, peneliti juga menggunakan teori film sebagai teori penunjang karena objek kajian peneliti adalah film.

Analisa ini tentang arti dibalik simbol agama seperti perayaan, motivasi, keberuntungan, sebagai simbol keagamaan, dan yang lain. Dari analisa tersebut, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa peran utama munculnya simbol agama tersebut adalah untuk menyingkap suatu nilai kebudayaan.

Kata kunci: simbol agama, *Fast and Furious*, Dominic Toretto.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CU	: Close-Up
ECU	: Extreme Close-Up
ELeS	: Eye-Level Shot
ELS	: Extreme Long Shot
HA	: High-Angel Shot
LA	: Low-Angel Shot
LS	: Long Shot
MCU	: Medium Close-Up
MLS	: Medium Long Shot
MS	: Medium Shot
OAS	: Oblique Angel Shot

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Literature is something which cannot be separated from human life. Most of people learn about literature during their life. According to *Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary*, literature is a written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value while the products of literature are called literary works. One kind of literatures is modern literature or popular culture. Amy Villarejo said in her book *Film Studies the Basics* (104) that the idea of popular culture derives from its root *popularis*, belonging to “the people,” and, according to Williams, carries with it two senses: “inferior kinds of work” (popular literature as opposed to high cononical literature, for example), as well as “work deliberately setting out to win favour,” work that is well liked by many people. In this latter sense, it is most certainly not the sense of work made by the people for the people, as in folk culture or populism (R. William 237). The examples of popular literary works of popular culture are songs and movies. Since every literary work has its genre, movie has genre like romance, fiction, science fiction, and action movie just as song has its genres like pop, jazz, rock, and slow rock.

According to *Reverso Dictionary*, an action movie is a film in which a lot of dangerous and exciting things happen and has an actor hero as the main character of the movie and becomes the person who builds the conflict. Today, action movies are often associated with big-name stars who bring muscular bodies

and martial stars ability to the task. The most successful ones, however, usually feature a central character with whom at least the male members of the audience can identify, so that he has a personality and not only a well-oiled torso (Leyden 145). In addition, there is an innocent character too in action movies. Leyden says whether the hero is punished or not, therefore, has more to do with how far civilization has encroached and less with his guilt or innocence or our need for a sacrificial lamb to suffer for our own societal or individual violence (143). Action movie tells about war and fight during the scene. Besides, there is also love story in action movie whether love between a man and a woman, or love in friendship and family. There are many action movies in the world. Some of them are *The Raid*, *The A Team*, *The Expendables*, and *Fast and Furious* which are produced in Hollywood.

The largest film industry in the world is not, however, that of the United States. That distinction has for many years instead belonged to India, a country which produces 800 to 900 films per year, about a quarter of which, mainly Hindi super productions involving huge stars and musical numbers, emerge from “Bollywood” (Bombay Hollywood), compares to dwindling numbers of productions in the US (Amy Villarejo 14). However, it exports its products to most countries on earth and controls the market. Hollywood has some famous movie studios such as Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Universal, and Warner Bros. It also has many popular artists like Vin Diesel, Steven Siegel, Dwayne Johnson, Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham, Van Damme, Bruce Willis, Angelina Jolly, Brad Pitt, and so on.

The Fast and Furious is one of the sequels action movies. It has six sequels from 2001 to 2013. The second last movie, *Fast Five*, was first released in Indonesia on August 12, 2011 (imdb.title.tt1596343. Web. Accessed on 17 March 2012) while the last movie, *Fast and Furious Six*, was just released on 24 May 2013 in Indonesia (imdb.title.tt1905041. Web. Accessed on 19 June 2013). Many people have been curious to see these movies. It is proven by the fan page of *Fast and Furious* on *Facebook* which is liked by 21.370.483 people by September 18, 2012 (Facebook. *Fans Page: Fast and Furious*. Web. Accessed on 18 September 2012).

The sequels movie of *Fast and Furious* won some awards in some categories. In 2002, it won *ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards* in category of *Most Performs Songs from Motion Picture* (IMDbPro. *The Fast and The Furious: Awards*. Web. Accessed on 18 March 2012). It also won the same award in 2010 in category of *Top Box Office Film*. This sequels movie won *Teen Choice Awards* in categories of *Movie Chemistry* and *Choice Movie Fight/Action Sequence* in 2003 (IMDbPro. *2Fast and 2Furious: Awards*. Web. Accessed on 18 March 2012); and in 2010, it won the category of *World Stunts Awards* in categories of *Best Stunt Coordinator and/or 2nd Unit Director: Feature Film* and *Best Work with a Vehicle* from *Taurus Awards* (IMDbPro. *Fast and Furious: Awards*. Web. Accessed on 18 March 2012).

Despite action movies, most of *Fast and Furious* sequels have elements of religion.

Geertz says that religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of facility that the moods and the motivation seem uniquely realistic (Jay Mechling 95).

The sequels movie *Fast and Furious* are more than just action movies because they also tell about love, friendship, loyalty, and religiosity. Those all are delivered by the movie through symbol both tokens and activities.

According to M. H. Abrams, symbol:

Anything which signifies something else; in this sense all words is symbols. As commonly used in discussing literature, however, symbol is applied only to a word or set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is, the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself (168).

Concerning the popularity of the *Fast and Furious* sequels action movie, it is important to analyze the movies, especially the religious symbols in these movies to explain the meaning of religious symbols for cross cultural understanding among religions; to know, understand, and to be aware when interpreting the meaning of religious symbols so that there will be no ambiguity and misunderstanding in interpreting the symbols' meaning; every religion has its symbols and meaning, so it is important to analyze symbols of one religion in the world for understanding and tolerance; and because the researcher lives in

Indonesia which has five religions endorsed by the country, it is important to analyze in terms of tolerance and harmony in social life.

B. Scope of Study

The sequel of action movie *Fast and Furious* can be analyzed from several different perspectives like the character and characterization, moral value, and social life. However, this research focuses on analyzing the religious symbols. The researcher also concerns with the sequels movie *Fast and Furious* one, four, and five. It is because in those movies religious symbols are more explored than on the second and the third. Moreover, the main characters named Dominic Toretto, Mia Toretto, and Brian O'Conner completely play together in those movies. It is different from the second sequel, *2Fast and 2Furious* which only has Brian O'Conner as the main character. It is also different from the third sequel, *Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift*. In the third sequel, there are Sean and Han as the main characters. There is only Dominic Toretto in last scene when he is going to race with Sean. Although in *Fast and Furious Six* Dom is also the main character, the researcher does not analyze it because it is just released last May 2013 in Indonesia. Therefore, it is hard for the researcher to analyze the movie since the DVD of the movie is not available yet.

C. Problem Statements

There are many symbols in *Fast and Furious* sequels action movie.

However, this paper aims to analyze the religious symbols, in terms of tokens and activities. This paper will be concerned in:

1. What are the religious symbols found in *Fast and Furious* and what do the religious symbols in *Fast and Furious* symbolize?
2. What is the popular topic of *Fast and Furious* related to religious symbols in field of religion and film?

D. Objectives of Study

Based on the problem statements above, here are the main objectives in this research:

1. To find out the religious symbols in *Fast and Furious* and explain the interpretation of the religious symbols.
2. To explain the popular topic of *Fast and Furious* sequels action movie in field of religion and film.

E. Significances of Study

Practically, this research is to criticize and analyze the religious symbols in the movies. Theoretically, this research is to add knowledge, reference, and understanding to the meaning of symbols in scientific theory of popular culture especially the religious symbols in movie. Pragmatically, this research is to analyze the religious symbols in sequels movie *Fast and Furious* for cross cultural

understanding (CCU); to know, understand, and be aware when interpreting the meaning of religious symbols so that there will be no ambiguity and misunderstanding in interpreting the meaning of the religious symbols.

F. Prior Research

There has not been any thesis or dissertation studying the action movies *Fast and Furious*. Therefore, this research may be the first research about these objects.

G. Theoretical Approach

There are many theories that can be used to analyze movie. Some of those theories are semiotics, pragmatics, and phonemics. However, for analyzing these movies, the researcher uses structuralism approach by using semiotics theory to analyze the religious symbols in action movies *Fast and Furious*.

According *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, what they mean and how they are used. In other words, Roland Barthes in his book *Mythologies* defines semiotics as semiology which means a science of forms since it studies significations apart from their content (110). Semiology, according to Barthes, defines as sign. It divided into two components. There are signifier and signified. Signifier is the word. On the contrary, signified is the meaning. On the other hand, semiotics, with regard to film, is the study of the structural placement and integral function of major scenes in the development of the overall plot and theme (William K. Ferrell 38).

However, Saussure divided semiotics into three components names called sign, signifier, and signified. He said that sign is the union of the form which signifies – the signifier – and an idea signified –the signified; signifier is the sensible, material, acoustic or aspect of the sign; signified is a mental representation (Robert Stam 8). In short, signifier and signified are two aspects of sign. Together they form sign (Hamel 235).

In addition, the researcher also will use film theory as the secondary theory to analyze the religious symbols since the researcher analyzes movies. It will be analyzed in the perspective of depth of field, scale, camera angle, and lightning.

According to Dembrow on the “Glossary of Film Terms”, depth of field (DoF) is the degree to which an image is in sharp focus in depth (usually afunction of the size of the camera lens opening). In shallow focus (shallow depth of field), a very narrow zone of depth is in focus at any one time (foreground or midground or background), and everything closer and further from the camera is out of focus. Out of focus means the images are blurred and lack linear definition. However, deep focus all distance planes (foreground, midground, and background) remain clearly in focus, from close-up to infinity (195).

Focus, relating to fotografic and technical properties of film, is the degree of sharpness and clarity in a film image. There are two kinds of focus, rack focus and soft focus. Rack focus happens when the zone of sharp focus changes from foreground to background (vice-versa) within a single shot. The viewer attention is thus drawn from one plane to another (195).

Scale is the 'bigness' of the subject in a given shot, determined by the camera's distance from it. There are seven kinds of scale: (1) Extreme close-up (ECU): closer shot than a closeup; a single detail occupies most of the screen image; (2) Close-up (CU): the camera is close to the subject, so that when the image is projected most of screen shows a face and its expression, or some relatively small part of a larger whole; (3) Medium closeup (MCU): shot whose scale is between MS and CU: a character shown from the chest up; (4) Medium Shot (MS): a human subject in MS is generally shown from the waist up; background begins to be visible and potentially important, and two-shots are possible; (5) Medium Long Shot (MLS): human subject is shown from the knees up; (6) Long Shot (LS): the camera is a considerable distance from the subject (s) being filmed. The whole human figure from head to feet is concluded in the frame, with the surrounding environment very visible; (7) Extreme Long Shot (ELS): the camera is very far away from the subject, giving us a broad perspective. It often used to create an "establishing shot", setting up a new scene (195).

On the other hand, Dembrow says that camera angle is the position of the camera (in terms of height from the ground) in relation to the subject being filmed. There are some kinds of camera angle. First, Low-Angle Shot (LA): the camera is positioned below the subject, and shoots upward at it. The effect is to make the subject look dominating, powerful, as if a child were looking up at an adult. Second, Eye-Level Shot (ELeS): the camera is located at normal eye level (five to six feet from ground level) in relation to the subject. Third, High-Angle

Shot (HA): the camera is positioned somewhere above the subject and shoots down at it. Fourth, Dutch or Oblique Angel Shot (OAS): the camera is tilted so that on screen, the horizon appears to be tilted. It often used as a subjective shot to indicate stress, such as when a character is drunk or drugged (195).

Dembrow also says:

Lightning is the illumination of the set. Lighting may be described in terms of the direction from which the light enters the set (front-lighting, back-lighting, side-lighting, top-lighting, cross-lighting). Lighting may also be described in terms of the contrast between light and dark: High-key lighting (the main or key lights produce a diffuse illumination, with few shadows created); Chiaroscuro or low-key lighting (very contrasty, with some parts of the set highlighted and the rest in darkness); lots of shadows. Highlighting can also be a means of emphasizing a character's hair or eyes (195).

H. Method Of Research

1. Type of Research

There are two types of research. Those types are field and library research. Type of research in this paper is library research since the researcher uses the movies as the main data and the scripts of the movies.

2. Data Resources

There are two data resources of this analysis, the main data, and supporting data. The main data is the religious symbols in the movies of *Fast and Furious* and the scripts. Besides, the secondary data in this analysis are the books which are related to the symbol, religion, and popular culture. In addition, the researcher also uses internet to support the research about religious symbols, popular culture, and film analysis to analyze the roles of religious symbols in sequels movie *Fast and Furious*.

3. Methods of Collecting Data

The method used by the researcher is by watching *Fast and Furious* one through five and then try to find the symbols shown in these movies. After watching closely, the researcher lists the symbols in *Fast and Furious*. After that, the researcher scopes it to religious symbols related to Dominic Toretto and classifies the data based on tokens and activities symbols. After listing the religious symbols in the movies, the researcher divides the religious symbols into some categories. The categories are symbols as celebration, motivation, luck, religion, and religious as another.

In addition, the researcher also uses library visit to read some books and search in the internet to find more data about the roles of religious symbols shown in sequels movie *Fast and Furious*, the use in the social life, and how the religious symbols are interpreted in these movies.

4. Methods of Analyzing Data

The first analysis is to classify the religious symbols in the movies based on sequels movie *Fast and Furious*. Second, by using the pictures of the movies or documentation, the researcher relates the religious symbols to the event in the movie to analyze the meaning and the roles of the symbols. The third is to analyze the popular topic of religious symbols in *Fast and Furious*.

I. Thesis Organization

This paper is divided into four chapters. Chapter I, Introduction, describes the reason why it is important to analyze the religious symbols in *Fast and Furious*. It also provides the objective of study, the theoretical approaches, and method of analysis. Chapter II elaborates the movies of *Fast and Furious* one, four, and five. Chapter III provides the analysis of the data which show the symbols. Chapter IV is conclusion of this research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This research's objectives are to find out the religious symbols in *Fast and Furious* and explain the interpretation of the religious symbols and to explain the popular topic of *Fast and Furious* sequels action movie in field of religion and film. And based on the analysis on the movie, this research has found the tokens and activities symbols. The token symbols are Dominic's crucifix necklace, Maria statue, crucifix, church, Christ the Redeemer, and the name of Dominic itself while the activities symbols are saying grace, signum crucis, and Dominic's dialogue which represents his religiosity.

Based on the the tokens and activities symbols, this research has found that these symbols symbolize celebration, motivation, luck, religion, and another. Celebration means that the religious symbols appear in the scene when the main character, Dominic, shows himself with religious attribute when he celebrates something. Motivation symbol is drawn when Dominic motivated to do something when he sees, wears, or there are religious symbols close to him. The other symbolization is luck, that is, when he gets good lucks when he wears religious symbol or there is religious symbol near him. Moreover, the symbolization of religion itself can be found when the religious symbols use to the relation between God and man. In this case, it relates between God and Dominic. Last, others mean

when religious symbols have another meaning, for example, as the identity of a country and to show the viewer where the movie takes place.

The researcher not only analyzes the role of the religious symbols in the movies, but also the popular topics in field of religion and film. Those popular topics are using religion to interpret movies (what some call the “theological” approach), using movies to critique religion, using movies to promote religion, and using movies to expose cultural values (or what some call the “ideological” approach) (Watkins 17).

In other words, the *Fast and Furious* movies are more than just action movies. It is because the movies’ passages are not only about fighting, gun, and vengeance. If people watch the movies closer and deeper, people will find another passage from these movies. These passages can be seen from the events in the movies through the symbols whether tokens or activities. The other passages are, for example, love, friendship, and religiosity.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that the *Fast and Furious* sequels action movie, in field of religion and film, uses to expose cultural values or ideological approach. It is because Dominic, whether realize or not, wearing or using those religious symbols to justify his actions. When there is religious symbol near Dominic while he does something, even the wrong thing, he has no guilty feeling. It is related to his ideology that all he does is right even though in the eye of common people it is wrong.

One of the examples of ideological approach according to the research is when Dom kills Reyes' men to help Hobbs when they are ambushed by them. For Dom, he does no wrong thing because he wants to help people. In this case, he is an innocent person. Instead, Hobbs as the DSS agent who must arrest Dom and bring him back to America helps him to kill Reyes.

The explanation above is strengthened by the evidence in Chapter III that in field of religion and film, the using movies to expose cultural values are more than the using of religious symbols to interpret, promote, and critique the religion. Therefore, the main topic in terms of religion and film in the *Fast and Furious* is to expose cultural values.

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Appendix
Curriculum Vitae



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Place of Birth : Godong

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EDUCATION :

2009-2013 : English Literature (Undergraduate Program), Faculty of Letters and Cultural Sciences, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta
Degree : S.S. / Sarjana Sastra
(expected in 2013)

2005-2008 : MAN Purwodadi, Grobogan
Language Program

COURSE PROGRAM :

July-August 2011 : Speaking Step Two, The Daffodils, Pare, East Java

July-August 2011 : Translation English-Indonesia, ELFAST, Pare, East Java

November-Desember 2012 : Persian Language, University Library of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.

INTERESTS:

Writing (poem, short story), listening to music, theater, vacation.

ACTIVITIES:

- 2009-present : Active member of UKM SPBA (Unit Kegiatan Mahasiswa Studi dan Pengembangan Bahasa Asing)/ Student Association of Foreign Language, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta
- 2011-2012 : Secretary of UKM SPBA (Unit Kegiatan Mahasiswa Studi dan Pengembangan Bahasa Asing)/ Student Association of Foreign Language, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta
- 2013-present : Active member of Theater Sanggar Nuun Yogyakarta

ACHIVEMENTS:

- 2009 : The winner of Speech Contest, Senior High School Level, Grobogan
- 2010 : The third winner of Speech Contest, Pusat Bahasa, Budaya, dan Agama UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta
- 2011 : Participant of Speech Contest ESA WEEK 2011, Semarang State University
- 2011 : Official of Contingent UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Festival Timur Tengah 2011 (*Arabian Fairy Tales*)
- 2012 : Official of Contingent UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Festival Timur Tengah 2012 (*Meraih Semangat Peradaban*)
- 2012 : Participant of English Camp at the Indonesian Air Force Academy

SKILL :

- Language : Good in Germany (basic).