

# A Stylistic Analysis of Ayu Utami's *Saman*

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## Introduction

Ayu Utami is one of the most prominent contemporary Indonesian female writers. Her novel, *Saman*, which was first published in April 1998 was seen as one of the breakthroughs in the history of modern Indonesian literature. This novel describes Indonesian people who are undergoing changes at the cultural and political levels. So far, there have been studies on Ayu Utami's *Saman* by researchers.

Ratnawati (2014) concludes that the social realities of Indonesia contribute to the creation of character and characterization, setting, plot, and theme of the story. Libriani et al. (2015) conclude that there is a close relationship between the novel and the reality of Indonesia. All the major and some minor characters represent their world view on freedom of thought. Liss Marie Das (2015) concludes that Ayu, along with her contemporaries have created a new literary and cultural paradigm in Indonesian literature which has revolutionised the literary scenario, and their work deserves to be acknowledged as part of mainstream literature from Indonesia.

In general, the research is concerned with exploring aspects of the novel's theme. Research related to the writing technique or style was carried out by Sugiharti (2013). She concluded that in *Saman* there are five types of sentences, namely question sentences, declarative sentences, command sentences, exciting sentences and emphatic sentences. Meanwhile, Sugiarti (2017) concluded that the speech style in *Saman* tends to be open and innocent by means of non-verbalized symbols. The author has the freedom to express her speech plainly and by making use of language signs.

The author argues that research on the topic of the author's writing style needs to be further developed to complement previous studies. In connection with that, the researcher will conduct a study of the stylistic aspects of the novel.

## Methodology

The study analyzes stylistic devices in novel *Saman*. Specifically, the study identified the types of stylistic devices used by the author and evaluates the use of language in the stylistic devices in *Saman*. Furthermore, it assessed the usefulness of stylistic devices in the novel. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The primary data is Ayu Utami's *Saman* while secondary data includes books, journals, and relevant sources. Both types of data are collected through literature studies and analyzed based on the stylistic analysis framework.

## Results

In *Saman* the author uses vocabulary that is generally taboo because aspects of sexuality stand out, for example: seks (sex), pelacuran (prostitution), masturbasi (masturbation), penis (penis), kondom (condom), groin, and bitch. The use of this vocabulary is related to aspects of sexuality which is one of the themes of the novel.

Table 1: Description of Vocabulary with Sexuality, Religion and Resistance Context in *Saman*

Vocabulary		
Sexuality	Religion	Resistance
perawan	salawat	teologi pembebasan
penis	misa arwah	aktivis
telanjang	sakramen presbiterat	HRW
kontol	altar	rezim
masturbasi	requiem	komunis
perkosa	pastor	
kondom	keuskupan	
selangkangan	rosario	
seks	doa litani	
sundal	salat	
persetubuhan	Allahu Akbar	
persanggamaan	gereja	
orgasme	ulama	
payudara	Tuhan	
vagina	Gusti Yesus	
telanjang	Kristus	
	salib	
	paroki	
	pater	
	uskup	

Table 2: Description of the name of the character / event in the *Saman* novel and the context of its meaning

Figures / Events	Meaning Context
Stalin, Lenin, Nyoto, Nyono, Aidit	These communist figures were associated with <i>Saman</i> to show that <i>Saman</i> was a communist.
Marsinah	To describe a woman who was killed by the ruling regime while fighting for her rights. (Marsinah is a female laborer in Sidoarjo who was killed in 1994)
Peristiwa Malari (January 1974 riots in Jakarta)	To show the destructive impact of actions that incite the masses.

## Discussion

The novel's first sub-theme is a lawsuit against the public view of female sexuality. According to Ayu, this view tends to be patriarchal. Through *Saman*, Ayu tries to show a female sexuality that is more egalitarian, open and honest. With this principle, she uses a lot of vocabulary that is considered obscene and taboo, such as *penis* (penis), *vagina* (vagina), and *masturbasi* (masturbation). Another sub-theme in the novel is rebellion against the standard interpretation of religious doctrines. The main character of the novel, Wisanggeni, at the end doubts the existence of God. He left the pastoral assignment and became an atheist. The next sub-theme is social resistance to the ruling regime. The main character of the novel sided with the community who was intimidated by the authorities. They were forced to turn rubber plantations into oil palm plantations.

The main themes and sub-themes of the novel are closely related to the background developed by the author. The setting of the place in the novel consists of a number of cities, both inside and outside of Indonesia. Cities in Indonesia include Jakarta, Yogyakarta (Java island); Perabumulih, Palembang, Lubukrantau, Sei Kumbang (Sumatra island); overseas is New York (United States). The relevant aspects of literary sociology are discussed in an effort to analyze the stylistic aspects of Ayu Utami's *Saman*. Literary sociology is related to the social background of the author and the social environment of the reader. That is, to better understand the contents of the novel, it is also necessary to discuss the origin of the author and the social background of the reading community. This, among others, is indicated by the use of abbreviations of the name of the organization/institution in the novel. Abbreviations of the name of institutions are written without an explanation. For example: LSM (*lembaga swadaya masyarakat*- non-governmental organizations), BRI (*Bank Rakyat Indonesia*-Indonesia People's Banks), PTP (*perseroan terbatas perkebunan*- plantation limited companies), KUD (*koperasi unit desa*- village unit cooperatives), PIR (*perkebunan inti rakyat*- nucleus plantation), SK (*surat keputusan*- decree), DPU (*dinas pekerjaan umum*-public works service), puspren ABRI (*pusat penerangan Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*- Information Center of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia). The name of police/military positions was written in acronym without an explanation, for example *pangdam* (*panglima daerah militer*- military regional commander), *kapolda Sumbagsel* (*kepala kepolisian daerah Sumatra Bagian Selatan*- head of the southern Sumatra regional police). This can be understood if it is associated with Ayu Utami's profession as a journalist who is accustomed to using a journalistic language style. This style is usually straightforward, directly refers to the core problem, and is efficient in the use of words. The absence of additional information of the abbreviations in this novel is somewhat motivated by this factor.

## Conclusion

This novel has a main theme and several sub-themes. The main theme is friendship, while the sub-themes are female sexuality, a critical attitude towards religious doctrine, and social resistance to the ruling regime. This study also revealed that Ayu Utami's novel has utilized literary device such as imagery, exclamation, dialogue, repetition, symbolism, and personification. Also the writer has employed various kind of plots to convey her message effectively.

## References

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