INDONESIAN SOCIO – POLITICAL REALITIES REFLECTED AT AYU UTAMI’S SAMAN (1998): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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SUMMARY


This study is strived to reveal Indonesian socio-political realities reflected in Ayu Utami’s Saman (1998) novel. Saman (1998) is analyzed by using a sociological approach. The analysis is done by determining two objects: the first is describing social background of Indonesia in twentieth century and the second is analyzing the issue based on a sociological approach. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. There are two types of data sources. The primary data sources is Ayu Utami’s Saman (1998) novel translated by Pamela Allen. The secondary data sources are books, journals, and internet sources related to the study. The two kinds of data collected through library research and analyzed with descriptive analysis. Based on the research, the researcher pulls the following conclusion. Based on a sociological approach, there is a close relationship between the novel and the realities of Indonesian life. The novel is as an object in which the author presents her world view corresponding with the socio – political life of New Order Era.

Keywords: Socio-Political, Saman, A Sociological Approach.
A. Introduction

For nearly 57 years as an independent nation Indonesian people are faced with the stage of history and constitutional politics with the decor, setting, actors, and the story was different. Each stage of history tends to be exclusive and stereotype. The uniqueness in each stage of the history that happened attached an attribute in each order. From this perspective it can be said that the Old Order has provided the foundation for the development of Indonesia nationality. Meanwhile, the New Order has provided growth in normative discourse for the establishment of national ideology, especially through the convergence of social values and culture (Majid, 1998).

In this sense, what Soekarno voiced about 'nation-state' in 1945 is not much different from the concept of 'nation-nationality' which inflamed the new order to reform. Because it is true that the development that intensified in the new order is the chain of the struggle for independence were inflamed when Sukarno declared freedom gate with the youth of this nation. The struggle towards this gate is blew by Budi Utomo breath in the bosom of the mighty against the invaders (Kate, 2010: 21).

Saman novel was written by Ayu Utami, a young female of Indonesia. It was published in 1998. Ayu Utami was born in Bogor, November 21 1968 and grew up in the Indonesian Capital, Jakarta. She obtained her Bachelor's degree from the University of Indonesia, where she studied Russian language and literature. During her college years she had already begun publishing reports and essays in various newspapers. In 1990, she was selected as a finalist in Wajah Femina, a beauty pageant in Indonesia. However she did not pursue a modeling career because of her dislike of cosmetics and make up. She has been a journalist for various Indonesian magazines, including Humor, Matra, Forum Keadilan and D&R.

Shortly after Soeharto three magazines in 1994 (Tempo, Editor and Detik) during the new order era, Ayu joined Aliansi Jurnalis Independen
(Alliance of Independent Journalist) to protest against the ban. She continued her journalistic work underground, which included the anonymous publication of a black book on corruption in the Soeharto regime. Ayu Utami currently works for Radio 68H, an independent news radio station that is broadcast all over the country, and also as a writer for the cultural Journal Kalam and in Teater Utan Kayu in Jakarta. Her new play and book protesting against anti pornography legislation Pengadilan Susila (Susila’s Trial) appeared in 2008.

Saman novel tells about a man who named Wisanggeni. Wisanggeni was born in Muntilan Yogyakarta. He is a lucky boy because he is the only one who are born from his mother’s womb and life. His brother was never born. They got strange experience that was just known by Wisanggeni and this experience happened in his last period. His father name is Sudoyo, he worked as official in BRI and as health employee in Yogyakarta. His mother was still descent of Raden Ayu. When Wis was still four years, his father was moved to Prabumulih, In Prabumulih, father worked as head of BRI branch.

In Prabumulih, Wis met with a deformity girl and who had mental backwardness. That girl was Upi. Upi was a child of a transmigran Sei Kumbang who stayed in Lubukrantau. Because her attitude was considered endanger to other people, her family decided to confine Upi in a chamber room that was made from wood and bamboo which had bad condition. As long as in jail Wis always was be irritated. In that time Wis started to be despondent with the condition that fall him, Anso and young man of Lubukrantau saved Wis and brought him from jail. Wis came out from jail in the bad situation. There, Wis was taken care of Marietta nunnery for about three months. Wis read complaints about him in newspaper. After he felt good, Wis went to the place that had known by five nunneries and a doctor. In his shelter, after that situation, Wis changed his identity with changed his name became Saman (Utami, 1998).
There are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel; first is because this novel tries to give description about reality of life with all of kinds of problem that happen in transition era. Second is because *Saman* novel tells about a man who defends transmigration society of Sei Kumbang. The third is this novel shows about the conflict whether it is internal and external conflict that happen in the economic area. And the last is it tells about morality, sexuality, religion, politics and etc.

From the explanation above, the writer uses the sociological approach to analyze this novel, because the story of this novel is about social deviation which relates to social problem. By so doing, the writer gives the title: *Indonesian Socio – Political Realities Reflected At Ayu Utami’s Saman (1998): A Sociological Approach.*

The problem statement of this research is how indonesian socio-political of the major and minor characters reflected in *Saman* novel. The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows: a) To analyze Ayu Utami’s *Saman* novel based on the structural elements of the novel, b) To describe the Indonesian socio-political realities reflected in *Saman* novel based on A Sociological approach.

The research on the *Saman* has been conducted by some students, the first study about *Saman* novel was conducted by Lusia Nety Harwati, a Brawijaya University’s student, in her article published on March 17, 2012, entitled “*Saman: Is It A Gratuitous Pornography?*”. The research concludes that Ayu Utami’s *Saman* is considered as an Indonesian controversial novel because of its openness in depicting sexual problem.. The second was study was conducted by Oktivita (UMS, 2009) entitled *Perilaku Seksual Dalam Novel Saman Karya Ayu Utami :Tinjauan Psikologi Sastra.* This study describes sexual disorientations and reveals complex sexual behavior in *Saman* novel.
B. Research Method

In this research, the writer analyzes Ayu Utami’s *Saman* novel (1998). In writing this study, the writer employs the descriptive qualitative research. Then, the steps of conducting this qualitative study are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining the data sources, (4) determining the technique of the data collection. The object of the study is *Saman* novel (1998) by Ayu Utami is published in 1998. It is analyzed by using a sociological approach. There are two types of data namely primary data and secondary data that are needed to do this research. The primary data sources of the study are *Saman* novel (1998) by Ayu Utami. The secondary data of the study are taken from any information related the novel. In conducting the study, the writer uses the techniques in collecting the data as follows: a) Reading the novel repeatedly, b) Taking notes of important part in both primary and secondary data, c) Underlying the important word, phrases and sentences which is related to the study, d) Arranging the data into several part based on its classification, e) Selecting the data by rejecting the irrelevant information which does not support the topic of the study.

In analyzing data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The steps of technique of the data analysis are compiled as follows: a) Analyzing the structural elements of the novel. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel, b) Deciding the sociological analysis of the literary work, c) Making discussion of the finding, d) Making conclusion.

C. Finding and Discussion

*Saman* novel is written by Ayu Utami. It is translated by Pamela Allen in 2005. This novel is an omen of the changing cultural and political landscape in Indonesia. It is very interesting to be read because this novel reveals some important issues such as politic in Suharto’s regime, sex deviation and a former Catholic priest.
The condition of Indonesian society in the twentieth century was reflected in the *Saman* novel, in this century, it was depicted the twin stories of resistance to neo-colonial policies that devastated farmers and villagers during the Suharto era and Indonesian feminist awakening. But Ayu Utami does not portray the overall Indonesian society in her novel. She only emphasized the social aspect in South Sumatra, especially in the oil-rig in the South China Sea, Perabumulih, and Lubukrantau.

Social dissimilarity was very visible in this novel story because there were inequality classes among society there, namely among the employers and the employees. Actually in oil-rig located at South China Sea that happened a tragic accident on the rig caused by the negligence of the oil company’s supervisor and made two of his workers died. Tops act as they wish because they are superiors who always reigned their subordinates. The subordinates are always being powerless, because the most of them come from a community of small-scale. And the superiors always felt as the strongest people and had the right to command everything, also the subordinates must always obey their order.

The life of the rich people and the poor people was very different. The rich people could get what they wanted; throne, glorify, treasure, opposite with the rich people, the poor people always became the victim of this inequality. The rich people could continue their study in University, even they could go abroad to study and work in a good place with a high salary. Meanwhile, the poor people did not study at school and being uneducated people, so that made they must work as agricultural labores and usually they worked with full of risk.

The population growth was not described in *Saman* novel. Ayu Utami only reveals about transmigration. Through a program called transmigration, the Indonesian government during 1970s and 1980s transposed this agricultural system along with Javanese farmers to other islands in order to distribute evenly. This policy aimed to relieve population pressures in Java and to “Indonesianize” other island people by converting them to wet-rice
farming. Transmigration was also referred in *Saman* novel. The farmers from the island of Java were transferred to another island through this program. This was one way to reduce the population explosion in Java. One of the transmigration point that was mentioned by Ayu Utami was in Lubukrantau. This was the village where Mak Argani and other families lived. In this village the majority of the people worked as rubber plantation workers.

Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia was very modern city, opposite with the transmigration village in Lubukrantau that was been Ayu Utami depicted in *Saman* novel. She made comparison between the both places. Social intercourse was very free in Jakarta as revealed by Cok’s experienced. But, in Lubukrantau as a transmigration area that was so far from modernity whose had a mad girl Upi, she must be put in unhealthty cage because her family did not have much money to take care of her in hospital.

*Saman* novel also depicted about Indonesian that contains various ethnic groups. Batak tribe was the largest tribe in Sumatra. The physical characteristics of Batak tribe are usually their jaw line was very solid and they had thick and broad nose. The characteristic of Batak dialect was harsh contained quality of honesty, courage and usually used the high intonation. In Sumatra, there are many tribes that could live together as the good society, usually they come from Java, Chinese, etc as transmigrant.
D. Conclusion

After analyzing *Saman* novel by using sociological approach it was depicted the social realities of Indonesian society at the turn of the century in which give concerns to the issue that related to law and land social justice that happened in Perabumulih, as a transmigration area in Perabumulih South Sumatra at 1990s. The story of the novel described the real condition under the destructiveness of Suharto’s political authoritarianism during “New Order”. This novel being the witness of historical event in Indonesia, that was described in this novel especially was depicted in chapter three about social background. This injustice caused many inflictions to the poor society, suffered and anxiety to the society in there. *Saman* novel decribed problems related to the independently of thought. They have strong that freedom of thought is right for every one. The major characters who was depicted the independently thought is Shakuntala and Saman, that was agains patriarchal culture in society between man and women. The sexual taboos also was depicted in this novel, the characters in Upi, Shakuntala, Saman, Cok, Laila and Yasmin. In this novel wanted to gived the moral value about to keept the virginity for the woman.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


