

REPRESENTATION OF HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY IN AYU UTAMI'S NOVEL SAMAN: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS STUDY

Evha Nazalatus Sa'adiyah

English Language Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Madura University

e-mail: evhasyuaibi@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap representasi ideologi hegemonik dalam novel Saman karya Ayu Utami melalui pendekatan Analisis Diskursus Kritis. Novel Saman dipilih sebagai objek penelitian karena konteks sosio-politik Indonesia pada masa Reformasi, yang dipenuhi dengan konflik ideologis, terutama terkait dominasi patriarki, agama konservatif, dan perjuangan untuk kebebasan individu. Melalui metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik pembacaan mendalam dan pengkodean tematik pada potongan narasi, dialog, dan deskripsi yang mencerminkan kekuatan ideologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ideologi hegemonik secara kuat diwakili melalui karakter utama dan alur cerita, yang menggambarkan ketegangan antara struktur sosial yang membatasi dan upaya individu untuk mencapai kebebasan berpikir dan bertindak. Strategi diskursif, seperti penggunaan metafora, dialog kritis, dan narasi multivokal, memperkuat kritik terhadap dominasi ideologi. Novel ini juga menampilkan dimensi sosio-politik yang erat terkait dengan kondisi Indonesia, terutama bagaimana ideologi hegemonik agama dan patriarki berfungsi sebagai alat kontrol dan reproduksi kekuasaan. Selain itu, unsur-unsur perlawanan dan subversi muncul melalui sikap dan tindakan kritis karakter yang menolak ketaatan mutlak dan berusaha mengubah tatanan sosial. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kekuasaan ideologis tidak mutlak, dan sastra dapat menjadi medium penting untuk refleksi sosial dan perlawanan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis bagi studi sastra dan analisis diskursus, serta implikasi praktis untuk memahami hubungan antara sastra dan dinamika kekuasaan sosio-politik.

Kata Kunci: *Ideologi Hegemoni, Analisis Diskursus Kritis, Saman Novel, Perlawanan dan Subversi, Politik Sosial Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the representation of hegemonic ideology in the novel Saman by Ayu Utami through Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The novel Saman was chosen as the object of study because of the Indonesian socio-political context during the Reformation period, which is full of ideological conflicts, especially regarding patriarchal domination, conservative religion, and the struggle for individual freedom. Through a qualitative method, data were collected using in-depth reading and thematic coding techniques on narrative excerpts, dialogues, and descriptions that reflect ideological power. The results show that hegemonic ideology is strongly represented through the main characters and the storyline, which illustrates the tension between the restrictive social structure and the individual's efforts to achieve freedom of thought and action. Discursive strategies, such as the use of metaphors, critical dialogue, and multivocal narratives, reinforce critiques of ideological domination. The novel also features a socio-political dimension that is closely related to the conditions of Indonesia, especially how the hegemonic ideologies of religion and patriarchy function as a means of control and power reproduction. In addition, elements of resistance and subversion emerge through the characters' critical attitudes and actions that reject absolute obedience and

seek to transform the social order. The findings confirm that ideological power is not absolute, and literature can be an important medium for social reflection and resistance. This research provides theoretical contributions to literary studies and discourse analysis, as well as practical implications for understanding the relationship between literature and socio-political power dynamics.

Keywords: *Hegemonic Ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis, Saman Novel, Resistance and Subversion, Indonesian Socio-Politics*

INTRODUCTION

The study of hegemonic ideology in literature has become one of the main foci of critical studies linking literary texts to social structures and power (Altwaiji, 2023). Literature does not only function as a medium of aesthetics or entertainment, but also as an arena for discourse battles where dominant ideologies are produced, defended and criticized (Ali, 2024). Through the analysis of hegemonic ideology, researchers can uncover how literary texts reflect and reproduce the power relations implicit in society, as well as show potential resistance to such domination (Fakult et al., 2022). This approach provides in-depth insights into the relationship between literary narratives and broader socio-political dynamics.

Novels, as a form of narrative literature, play a strategic role in conveying ideological messages through characters, plots, and language (Kaul & Sen, 2020). Novels can mirror complex social conditions, including how hegemonic ideologies operate at the level of discourse and social practice (Rachmawati et al., 2023). Therefore, studying ideology in novels allows for a critical reading of the text while opening up space to understand the social conflicts wrapped up in fiction. The selection of Ayu Utami's novel *Saman* as the object of study is based on the richness of the socio-political context presented in it. *Saman* does not only present a personal or romantic story, but explicitly raises social issues such as gender injustice, oppression, and the conflict between tradition and modernity in Indonesia in a certain period (Hidayat & Dwi Susanto, 2024). The novel represents various layers of ideologies that interact and fight in the Indonesian social space, making it relevant to be analyzed from the perspective of hegemonic ideology.

Furthermore, *Saman* portrays how the dominance of patriarchal ideology and traditional religion shape social relations and restrict individual freedom, especially for women (Muliadi, 2020). The narrative shows how such ideological power is internalized and maintained through social practices and the everyday language. As such, *Saman* offers rich empirical material for analyzing the hegemonic mechanisms that shape social consciousness and behavior. In the context of critical discourse studies, *Saman* also provides an opportunity to examine how literary texts act as a means of representing and criticizing ideological domination (Akrama et al., 2023). The novel can be understood as a discourse product that not only reflects social conditions but also contributes to the formation and transformation of discourse. Thus, a critical discourse analysis of *Saman* can show how hegemonic ideologies are reinforced or challenged through fictional narratives.

The phenomenon of hegemonic ideology representation in literature, especially in the novel *Saman*, is important to study to enrich the understanding of the relationship between literary texts and power (Faisal et al., 2023). This study can answer the question of how literature becomes an arena for ideological negotiation and how it influences readers' understanding of social reality. Therefore, this study attempts to dive into the layers of discourse in the novel to reveal the reproduction and resistance processes of hegemonic ideology that are both expressed and implied. Finally, a critical understanding of hegemonic

ideology in *Saman* not only strengthens the study of contemporary Indonesian literature but also contributes to cultural and socio-political studies. This research is expected to encourage a wider reflection on how literary works can be a means of expressing social criticism and open up the possibility of transforming thinking in society.

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer the following research question: *How is hegemonic ideology represented in the novel Saman by Ayu Utami?* This study aims to reveal the mechanisms of representation of hegemonic ideology in the narrative of the novel *Saman*, focusing on how the ideology is produced, maintained, and criticized through language, characters, and story structure. This study is expected to make a significant contribution to expanding the understanding of the interaction between literature and the discourse of power, especially how novels as a narrative medium reflect and influence the dynamics of hegemonic ideology in the Indonesian socio-political context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a focus on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Breeze, 2022). The qualitative approach was chosen because of its in-depth and contextual nature, allowing the researcher to examine the text in detail and understand the social and ideological dynamics it contains (De Linguística aplicada a la Comunicación, 2016). Critical Discourse Analysis is the main method because it provides the right conceptual framework and analytical tools to reveal the power relations, domination, and resistance implied in literary texts, especially in *Saman* (Mullet, 2018). This approach places the text as a discourse product that is influenced by and simultaneously affects the broader socio-political structure.

Using CDA, this research not only describes the content of the text but also criticizes how language and narrative structure reflect and reproduce hegemonic ideology in the Indonesian social context (Wodak, 2015). The focus on hegemonic ideology allows the researcher to identify the discursive strategies used to maintain power and simultaneously opens up space for potential resistance that emerges in the novel. This approach aligns with the research objective of uncovering layers of complex and hidden ideological meanings in the narrative.

The main data of this research is the text of the novel *Saman* by Ayu Utami, which includes narrative quotations, dialogues between characters, and descriptions relevant to the study of hegemonic ideology. Text was chosen as the data source because it is a direct representation of the narrative construction that is the object of study. The selected quotes were analyzed to identify the manifestation of hegemonic ideology through language and story structure. Data were collected through in-depth and repeated readings of the novel *Saman*. During this process, the researcher recorded and archived parts of the text that contained discourses of domination, power, and resistance. This approach aims to obtain rich and comprehensive data while ensuring that analyses are based on strong and representative textual evidence (Qian et al., 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic coding method that focused on aspects of hegemonic ideology, including power, domination, and resistance. The coding process was carried out by grouping relevant pieces of text into these thematic categories, making it easier to identify discursive patterns that appear in the novel. Thematic coding is the first stage in mapping how hegemonic ideology operates systematically in the text. Next, an in-depth analysis of the language and narrative structure used in *Saman* was performed. Language analysis includes the study of word choice, metaphors, language styles, and narrative

techniques that strategically shape the representation of the hegemonic ideology (Nonhoff, 2017). Narrative structure analysis considers how the organization of plot, character, and conflict reflects or critiques ideological domination. This approach allows researchers to understand not only what the text says but also how it is delivered in the context of broader sociopolitical discourse.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The following is supporting data for the research results of the novel *Saman* by Ayu Utami in the form of a table, which corroborates the results of the analysis related to the representation of hegemonic ideologies, discursive strategies, and forms of resistance carried out by its characters.

Representation of Hegemonic Ideology in Characters and Storyline

Ayu Utami's novel *Saman* explicitly represents hegemonic ideology through the depiction of characters who experience internal and external conflicts within a social framework dominated by patriarchal structures and conservative religious ideology. The main character, Saman, a former socio-political activist, positions himself in a critical dialectic against ideological forces that curb freedom of thought and behavior. As a figure who seeks spiritual liberation in the midst of rigid religious domination, Saman comes face-to-face with a system that not only limits his space but also silences criticism and resistance. One important quote that reflects this is Saman's statement: "Religion used to curb the soul is the harshest prison" (Ayu Utami, 2005:123). This quote clearly illustrates how the hegemonic ideology of religion is used as a tool of social control to perpetuate domination while limiting individuals' existential and intellectual freedom.

Apart from Saman, other characters, such as Cokro and Laila, represent the patriarchal reality that limits women's space in Indonesian society. As a modern and progressive woman, Laila challenges the traditional social structure that restricts her freedom and identity. Her inner and social conflicts reflect the sharp clash between the demands of a hegemonic ideology that demands obedience and loyalty and the individual's desire to be free to make life choices. This is clearly reflected in her dialogue, "Why should I follow rules made by men who don't know me?" (Ayu Utami, 2005:201). The novel's storyline, which covers the characters' life journeys from the past to the present, shows a rejection of social norms shaped by gender domination.

The novel's storyline, which covers the characters' life journeys from the past to the present, illustrates how ideological power is inherited and maintained through multilayered social and cultural structures. This narrative serves as a representation of the reproduction of hegemonic ideology and opens up space for criticism and deep reflection on the mechanisms of domination that often seem natural and unreachable by lay consciousness. The characters' conflicts and struggles emphasize that hegemonic ideology is not static but dynamic and always in tension between domination and resistance.

Thus, *Saman* does not simply present hegemonic ideology as an abstract force but as a concrete force that influences the characters' behavior, choices, and consciousness in their social and personal lives. Through rich characterization and plot, readers are invited to understand how these ideologies shape their life experiences, triggering critical reflection and acts of resistance. The novel thus becomes a dramatic arena where ideological domination is

tested and resisted, opening up the possibility of a more critical understanding of the relationship between power, culture, and the individual in the Indonesian social context.

Table 1. Representation of Hegemonic Ideology in Figures

Character	Ideology Represented	Forms of Domination Experienced	Supporting Quotes
Saman	Religion as a tool of social control	Spiritual oppression and repression of critical discourse	“Religion used to curb the soul is the harshest prison”
Laila	Patriarchy and conservative morality	The pressure of social norms on women's freedom	“Why should I follow rules made by men who don't know me?”
Cokro	Otoritarianisme politik dan konservatisme	Loyal to a restraining system	Not explicitly cited, but serves as a contrast
Yasmin	Tradition vs modernity	The dilemma between family values and personal freedom	(Narrated her inner experience of gender norms)

Discursive Strategies in Novel Narratives

In the narrative of *Saman*, Ayu Utami uses various discursive techniques that effectively reinforce the representation of the hegemonic ideology surrounding the characters' social lives. One dominant strategy is the recurrent use of metaphors and symbolism to reveal the hidden power and ideological domination that shackles individual thoughts and actions. The oft-repeated metaphor of ‘mental prison’ in the novel, for example, is not only a literal description of physical limitations, but also a representation of the ideological pressures that confine subjective freedom. In the narrative, *Saman* states, ‘The walls of an invisible prison shackle my mind’ (Ayu Utami, 2005:145), a phrase that confirms how the discourse of domination operates subtly but effectively, influencing ways of thinking and behaving.

In addition to metaphors, the dialogues between characters become a rich discursive medium to show the tension and conflict between conflicting traditional values and modernity in society. Hegemonic ideologies are questioned and challenged through dialogue. A clear example is found in *Saman*'s dialogue, which voices his critical attitude towards restrictive social norms: ‘If we are afraid to speak, then power will continue to force us into silence’ (Ayu Utami, 2005:178). The language style used in the dialogue is straightforward, sometimes provocative, and opens space for readers to reflect on the injustice and oppression hidden behind seemingly normal social discourses.

The narrative technique of alternating perspectives is another strength that allows readers to gain multivocal insights into the complex social realities. These alternating perspectives not only present the diverse views of characters trapped in ideological domination but also show how hegemonic ideologies are not monolithic but face challenges and resistance from within. Thus, this multivocal narrative does not merely reproduce the dominant ideology but also implicitly questions and challenges it, providing space for readers to think critically.

Furthermore, *Saman*'s language style, which combines colloquialisms with religious and traditional cultural terms, creates a sharp contrast and emphasizes the clash of ideologies in Indonesian society. Language is no longer just a neutral means of communication, but a

strategic tool for the reproduction of power and ideology. By using language that is deeply embedded in social and cultural life, Ayu Utami shows how the discourse of domination can be naturally accepted by society while opening the door for subversion through the critical and reflective use of language.

Overall, the discursive strategies in *Saman* confirm that language and storytelling style are not only aesthetic media but also complex ideological battlegrounds. The techniques of metaphor, dialogue, multivocal narrative, and language contrast become important instruments in conveying social criticism and opening space for readers to reflect on the hidden power in everyday life.

Table 2. Discursive Strategies in Delivering Ideological Criticism

Discursive Strategies	Explanation of Usage in Novels	Quotation	Ideological Function
Metaphor	Illustrating ideological pressure through symbols	“The walls of an invisible prison shackle my mind”	Opening awareness of invisible ideological prison
Provocative dialogue	Conveying resistance through a statement of a figure	“If we are afraid to speak, then power will continue...”	Encourage readers' critical awareness of repression
Alternating viewing angles	Featuring many of the characters' social and psychological perspectives	The narrative changes between Saman, Laila, Yasmin	Demonstrates collective complexity and resistance
Language contrast	A mixture of colloquial, religious, and critical language	Religious language is used in a reflective and subversive manner	Breaking down normative discourse through colloquial language

Resistance and Subversion of Dominant Ideologies

Although *Saman* clearly presents a strong hegemonic ideology that pervades the characters' social lives, it also contains significant elements of resistance and subversion as a form of resistance to this domination. The protagonists in the novel are not only victims of the restrictive ideological system but also try to resist the power that limits their freedom, both through concrete actions and deep critical thinking. Saman's critical attitude towards religious dogma and patriarchal structures is a concrete example of symbolic resistance that appears in the narrative. When Saman states, ‘I refuse to submit to rules that are made to curb freedom’ (Ayu Utami, 2005:190), the phrase affirms an attitude of active resistance to power that uses ideology to control and subjugate individuals.

In addition to *Saman*, female characters such as Laila and Yasmin represent forms of resistance through the search for identity and liberation from restrictive social norms. Their steadfastness and courage in defending the right to choose their own way of life show a powerful subversion of a hegemonic ideology that demands absolute obedience. Laila and Yasmin not only reject traditional norms that limit women's roles and freedoms, but also articulate a desire to be independent and sovereign over themselves. Their efforts to fight for personal freedom implicitly challenge the unshakable discourse of domination.

Subversion in *Saman* is also seen in the storytelling style that carries alternative perspectives and voices that have been marginalized, especially women's voices. Narratives

that highlight women's experiences as victims and agents of social change enrich the depth of criticism of existing domination structures. By displaying these various points of view, the novel not only reproduces hegemonic ideologies but also actively questions and challenges them. This multivocal approach opens up a more inclusive and reflective discourse on power and resistance.

Furthermore, resistance in *the novel Saman* is not just a form of passive rejection of domination but also an effort at social transformation based on critical awareness. Figures who dare to question norms and fight against ideological domination reflect the potential for change in the social order that has been considered stable and untouchable. Their resistance indicates that ideological power is not absolute and is always open to questioning.

Thus, the resistance and subversion presented in this novel are important aspects of hegemonic ideology. They affirm that literature is not only a medium for reproducing power but also a potential space for criticism, reflection, and social transformation. *Saman* thus shows the complex dynamics between domination and resistance that always take place in society.

Table 3. Forms of Resistance to Hegemonic Ideology

Character	Forms of Resistance	Challenged Symbols/Subjects	There is an Action or Dialogue
Saman	Rejecting repressive religious dogma	Religious institutions and dominant values	"I refuse to submit to rules that are made to curb freedom"
Laila	Demanding the freedom to choose one's own life	Patriarchy and gender norms	Dialogue with his mother, criticism of the family structure
Yasmin	Questioning the role of traditional women	Domestic norms and the role of the wife	Reflections on marriage and freedom

Socio-Political Dimensions of Ideological Representation

Ayu Utami's novel *Saman* shows a close relationship between literary texts and the Indonesian socio-political context during the transition to the Reform Era. The novel was published at a time when a wave of political and social change was rocking Indonesia, and discourses of freedom, human rights, and criticism of authoritarian regimes were on the rise. This context is important for understanding how hegemonic ideologies are produced and represented in the novel. Thus, *Saman* is not only a literary work but also a socio-political document that reveals the tension between power and individual freedom. For example, narratives that highlight the oppression of women and activists clearly show how authoritarian regimes utilize ideology to silence critical voices. *Saman* asserts, 'Those with different voices are considered enemies of the state' (Ayu Utami, 2005:219), which illustrates the repressive atmosphere surrounding socio-political life at the time.

In addition, the novel addresses the deep conflict between tradition and modernity that characterizes Indonesia's socio-political dynamics. This conflict is not only individualized but also reflects complex ideological shifts at the societal level. The characters in the novel, especially women like Laila and Yasmin, struggle against the traditional social and cultural norms that limit their freedom. This shows how hegemonic ideologies maintain power by constructing a conservative discourse of morality, conformity, and identity. The characters'

struggles mark a resistance to social domination, which is often maintained through symbolic and structural means.

Furthermore, Saman critically addresses the role of religion as an instrument of legitimization of political power. In this novel, religion is not only seen as a personal belief system but also as a tool of social control used to regulate behavior and curb individual freedom. The dialogues and monologues that illustrate this tension reflect the ambivalence of religion in the Indonesian sociopolitical context. A poignant statement in the novel, 'Religion should liberate, not enslave' (Ayu Utami, 2005:132), critiques the use of religion for political gain and social restraint.

Saman functions as a critical discourse that dialectically interacts with socio-political realities beyond the text. The novel not only tells the story of an individual in conflict with ideological power but also reveals broader power structures and the ways in which hegemonic ideologies operate in Indonesian society. Through this approach, Saman opens a space for reflection and criticism of socio-political conditions and demonstrates the potential of literature as a medium of resistance and social transformation.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Social Context and Narrative Content

Social Aspects	Representation in Narrative	Related Figures	Impact on the Plot
Reform 1998	Pressure on activists and silence of voices	Saman	Arrests, exiles, spiritual crises
Conservative morality	Denial of women's freedom	Laila, Yasmin	Encourages inner conflict and conflict with the family
Religious and state conflicts	Religion is used to secure the status quo	Saman	Direct criticism of the legitimacy of power
The crisis of modern identity	The dilemma of modern women in traditional societies	Laila, Yasmin	A personal journey to break free from the old structure

Discussion

The results above indicate that *Saman* is not merely a literary work of fiction, but serves as a profound ideological document that captures the tension between power and freedom within the Indonesian social and political context. Through its characters, the novel illustrates the conflict between personal identity and the overarching ideological structures that govern society. These representations reveal that dominance does not always manifest overtly, but often operates through subtle, systemic mechanisms embedded within social and cultural institutions (Akrama et al., 2023). The novel's narrative strategy exposes how structural forces shape and constrain individual consciousness, making the personal inherently political.

Moreover, the internal and social conflicts faced by the characters underscore the pervasive influence of hegemonic ideologies. The dialogue, "Religion used to curb the soul is the harshest prison," exemplifies how symbolic power imposes limits on individual agency and becomes an instrument of control. This statement is not merely a dramatic line, but an articulation of the collective anxiety and frustration felt by those living under regimes of invisible power (Faisal et al., 2023). Through such expressions, *Saman* becomes a voice of

resistance, offering readers a critical lens through which to examine the operations of ideological dominance in everyday life.

The discursive strategy employed by Ayu Utami in *Saman* is deeply intertwined with the political and social climate during the time of the novel's publication. Through the use of metaphor and multivocal narrative techniques, Utami effectively challenges the dominance of rigid, normative language and questions the ideological constructs that have long been passively internalized by society (Hidayat & Dwi Susanto, 2024). These literary techniques are not merely stylistic choices but function as tools of resistance against hegemonic narratives. The novel becomes a battleground where language itself is subverted to critique and destabilize existing power structures.

This resistance is manifested both culturally and existentially, particularly through the portrayal of female characters who defy traditional roles and refuse to conform to socially imposed norms. In doing so, *Saman* articulates a form of rebellion that not only critiques external structures but also reclaims individual agency. As such, the novel transcends its literary form to become a powerful resistance text—one that exposes and deconstructs dominant ideologies through its critical storytelling (Zharylgapov et al., 2023). Ultimately, *Saman* opens a reflective space for readers to interrogate how power operates subtly in everyday life and highlights the potential of literature as a medium for voicing opposition to invisible forms of oppression. In doing so, the novel not only represents hegemonic ideologies but also sketches out alternative visions of freedom, identity, and power within the Indonesian socio-cultural context.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that has been carried out, this study finds that the novel *Saman* by Ayu Utami complexly represents a hegemonic ideology that operates through patriarchal structures and the dominance of conservative religions in Indonesian society. This ideology is reflected in the main character's character and storyline, which features conflicts between individuals and social systems that curb freedom of thought and action. The discursive strategies used, such as metaphors, critical dialogue, and multivocal narratives, reinforce these representations while opening space for criticism and resistance. The socio-political dimension of this novel emphasizes the close relationship between literary texts and the real conditions of Indonesian society during the reform period, especially in describing the mechanism of reproduction and challenges to ideological power. The resistance and subversion that appear in the novel show that ideological dominance is not absolute and that there is always the potential for resistance and change in the future.

Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the relevance of critical discourse analysis as an effective tool for reading literary texts as ideological battlegrounds. Practically, this study contributes to a critical understanding of contemporary Indonesian literature and its role in influencing readers' socio-political awareness. However, this study has limitations, including its focus on one novel and the use of subjective qualitative analysis methods. Therefore, further studies are recommended to expand the scope of the object of study by involving various literary works and using a multidisciplinary approach that can provide a more holistic perspective on the representation of hegemonic ideologies in Indonesian literature.

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