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ANTONIA SORIENTE

**The Study of Emotions in Literary Indonesian:  
Love, Sex and Transgression in the Novel *Saman*\***

*Introduction*

The main objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the methodology proposed by Santangelo (2003, 2004, 2009) as applied to the study of emotions and states of mind in Indonesian literary texts. In particular I shall investigate a contemporary Indonesian novel, *Saman*, and present an analysis of the emotions of love and sex in the Indonesian used by the author Ayu Utami. This novel is one of the most representative works in the recent era of Indonesian literature. It is an innovative novel on the Indonesian literary scene that has started a new literary trend,<sup>1</sup> by being representative of works by young female writers that explore formerly taboo topics such as sexuality and female desire, and that offer criticism of political violence, oppression and social injustice. Sexuality has become a focal point for these contemporary writers, who discuss this issue in all of its nuances, including satisfaction, exploitation, sexual orientation, homosexuality, lesbianism and sadomasochism. Initially this trend was an elite phenomenon, confined to an urban upper- and middle-class readership, but has more recently expanded into other social domains.

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\* A provisional part of this paper was presented at the Third Meeting of the Villa Vigoni conference on *Reconstruction of the Representation of Emotions, States of Mind and Imagery in Imperial China*, Villa Vigoni, 25-28 May 2011. I acknowledge the positive discussions with the other members of the conference, in particular Paolo Santangelo and Angelika Messner. I also acknowledge the suggestions given by an anonymous reviewer whose bibliographic reference I have found very helpful.

<sup>1</sup> This literary trend used to be referred to as *sastra wangi* (fragrant literature) although nowadays it is no longer considered a homogenous genre. It was represented by a heterogeneous group of writers who came from different academic and religious backgrounds and obviously had diverse motivations for fiction-writing. The features of this literary trend are the direct ways in which taboo topics are addressed, and the young age of the female writers. The popularity of this genre is striking: many *sastra wangi* texts became bestsellers, and the most popular texts *Saman* and *Supernova*, written by the Christian writers Ayu Utami and Dewi Lestari, respectively, sold almost 100,000 copies.

For the analysis of this novel, I am drawing from Santangelo (2009: 15), who presents an experimental method for creating an anthropological history of emotions by collecting information on emotional perception and evaluation through textual analysis of the literary and non-literary sources in particular cultures or periods. Being aware, as Santangelo says, that «consciousness, conscience, decisions, justifications, and the representation of themselves and their emotions resort to the intellectual and symbolic tools supplied by the society and its culture», it was felt appropriate to apply his methodology to the study of an Indonesian novel that is considered to have paved the way of a new trend in Indonesian literature. I am convinced, as Santangelo (2009: 19) says, that «the manifestation and the representation of the emotions, the forms of myths and the symbols, although they belong to inner consciousness, are also a ‘social phenomenon’».

Since, as Santangelo observes, the object of the research is not the emotion itself, but the representation of specific emotions and states of mind through the ways of communication and external descriptions that are available, I would like to show how, by applying the textual analysis methodology and, in particular, the analysis of emotions and states of mind related to the domain of love and sex to an Indonesian literary work like *Saman*, it is possible to observe changes in society and in culture. If love is generally identified as belonging to the category of positive expectations and interactions/satisfactory effects, when sex is involved, the emotion of love is not necessarily implied. In this novel in particular, as in the other works of the same literary genre, sex has a liberating function: the exaltation of the body, and the excitement and satisfaction of basic instincts, give women in this novel the chance to overcome the moral restrictions imposed by religion and the long-held conventions of a traditional patriarchal society.

### *The Study of Emotions*

The term ‘emotion’ has been deeply investigated by psychologists, philosophers, intellectuals and other theorists, and it involves a complex state of feeling that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behavior. Emotions are tied to our ancestral past and are developed as specific responses to social and environmental challenges. In psychology, emotion is a coherent system of psychological and bodily elements that are partly innate, partly acquired, that imply a cognitive reaction.

In the late nineteenth century, Charles Darwin had already theorized that emotions were biologically determined and universal to human culture. The psychologist of emotions, Ekman (1982, 1984), observed that facial expressions and their meanings were culturally determined through behavioral learning processes. In his search of emotional labels that fit facial expressions, he found that some emotions are universal: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. These universal emotions are also called basic emotions because they are



considered to be the primitive building blocks of other non-basic and more complex emotions. Ekman (1994) individuates eight characteristics to distinguish and define emotions: distinctive physiology, automatic appraisal, commonalities in antecedent events, their manifestation in other primates, quick onset, brief duration, unbidden occurrence, and existence of a universal signal.

Emotions are not observable: if we look at the emotional chain, the emotion is positioned between a trigger and an outcome event: what is called emotion is constituted by a cognitive appraisal, an inner sensation, and an individual evaluation. Nevertheless, we need labels to indicate this reaction. Emotions' names are the labels we give to the complex flowing of consciousness. Emotions as objects are only accessible in their manifestations that are expressed through a verbal, a gestural or metaphorical language. For this reason, in order to better define and analyze emotions, a multidisciplinary approach is required because, as Kövecses (2003) well puts it, cultural aspects of emotions, metaphorical language about the emotions, and human physiology in emotion are all part of an integrated system.

The concept of basic emotion over the years has become eroded as other psychologists do not agree with the number and the meaning of basic emotions (Ortony, Turner 1990). According to Ekman's theory (1994) for instance, love is not a basic emotion because it is not an instantaneous emotion, as it implies duration. But it is also true that other psychologists do consider love as a primary emotion despite its lack of brevity (Shaver *et al.* 2001). If Ekman would reject that love, sexual love and assertiveness, are prototypical emotions, other psychologists argue that Ekman's is not complete and it is arbitrary to exclude parental love and jealousy from the list of basic emotions (Sabini, Silver 2005).

If we overcome the psychological approach and the tediousness of listing emotions that not every psychologist agrees upon, I prefer to adopt a more comprehensive approach in examining the representation of emotions in the novel *Saman*, as explained by Santangelo (2003, 2009), where emotions like 'love' and 'sexual love' are seen as emotional complexes. Aware of the fact that the term 'emotion' still triggers a great debate among contemporary psychologists and philosophers, and of the many difficulties faced by theoretical and methodological point of view when analyzing the affective world and the image of it, Santangelo (2003) postulates three main concepts related to emotions: the social nature of emotion, the language of emotion and its representation and the social control of individual passions. In his multidisciplinary approach, Santangelo (*ibidem*) defines emotion as an abstraction from a sequence of dynamic processes that focus on peculiar moments in the stream of consciousness under specific perspectives (hedonic reaction, moral values, aims and projections, aesthetic attitude, regressive memories). According to him, physical sensations are also important because they are used to describe emotions that play an important role in the acculturation and internalization of cognitive representations. Emotions cannot be separated by expressions that have a relationship to states of mind like dispositions, qualities, affective man-

ifestations, or modes of representations. More complex definitions include emotional conditions and causative terms that do not represent an emotion but trigger an emotional reaction. It is interesting to include epithets and interjections and all the symbolic description and idiomatic expressions. Since emotions and passions can be understood as a part of a culture, of its moral norms and social roles, they reflect collective imagery and are expressed in human behaviors that justify them. Emotions comprise a system of communication that forms a language of its own. The study of this language and the analysis of the way emotions are represented, evaluated and imagined in a society, allows us to understand the values of a society in a certain period together with information based on anthropological perspectives and psychological knowledge, as well as historical, linguistic, and literary theories and aesthetic interpretation.

### *Why Study Saman?*

As already stated, the novel discussed in this study is representative of a new era of Indonesian literature, since its themes include formerly taboo issues like sex and female satisfaction and strong criticism of political violence, oppression and social injustice. These issues are addressed within the context of a historic period of great changes in the political, social and cultural landscape of Indonesia, namely the period prior to and following the fall of President Soeharto's government that occurred in May 1998. The writers, mostly women, openly discuss women's problems and thoughts, and testify to the changes currently taking place in their society. Aspects of these changes include how women understand themselves, how they understand their own sexuality and their relationships with others, how they face problems revolving around marriage and family matters, and their critical views towards traditions, conventional sexual relationships and values such as virginity, submission and religion.

In particular, this novel addresses the themes linked to political changes occurring in Indonesia before the fall of Soeharto in the metropolitan settings of New York and Jakarta, and in the village of Prabumulih in Sumatra. It describes the relationship among four female metropolitan, self-confident, independent friends (Utami 1998, 2005, 2010). Among other themes, female sexuality is a factor that has caused some controversy in Indonesia. The explicit descriptions of sexuality in this novel, as a way to challenge patriarchal authority in Indonesia, have been accused of being the result of the overt influence of an increasing Westernization of Indonesian culture. But as Hatley (2002) points out, the contemporary debate regarding depictions of sexuality in *Saman* has failed to enable the appreciation of the complex post-colonial approach of the novel (Marching 2007).

*Saman* represents a landmark in Indonesian literature in the way women are described and express themselves and show their emotions. The study of emotions and their representations in this novel is a way to study the change in the

Indonesian cultural background due to the major changes that society has undertaken, especially after the development of ideas of openness and democracy.

#### *Methodology and Previous Studies on Emotions in Literary Indonesian*

The background of this work was the figurative language database of the Jakarta Field Station of the Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology, whose objective was to explore the universalities and diversities across languages and cultures in the use of figurative language.<sup>2</sup> It was based on a Corpus of 203312 records of texts of various genre: news, economy, entertainment, essays, literature, politics, sport, health, etc., where single sentence units are linked to a number of functions aimed at studying the way metaphors, metonymies, and similes are expressed in Indonesian using the relational database application Filemaker Pro 6.<sup>3</sup>

Given that many emotions are conveyed in a symbolic way through metaphors, it was thought appropriate to apply the framework built by Santangelo (2003, 2009) to the already established figurative language database. To this were applied all the fields for the analysis of the study of emotions and states of mind following the methodology applied by Santangelo (2009).

As objects of historical studies, emotions are accessible only through the record of their manifestations. Research on emotions has to rely on outer social signs and evidence, as emotions as such are inner and inductive phenomena. The signs can be of different kinds, from the direct word that means a specific affective experience to the expression that conventionally or creatively hints at the state of mind. The analysis of these texts from the comprehensive perspective of emotions and states of minds allows a collection of qualitative and quantitative information on individual and collective perception of emotions.

When reading a text, every word expressing an emotion or state of mind, an idiom, or a metaphoric expression conveying an emotive description, is classified based on a classification proposed by Santangelo: whether it is an emotion (hate, fear, envy, indifference, anxiety, love/passion, curiosity) or state of mind, whether it is a manifestation, a representation or a gesture, or a causative term, whether it indicates a disposition, a habit or an epithet, or a bodily sensation. Then every single emotion is grouped under macro definitions like positive expectations and interactions (like love), satisfactory affections (like joy), unsatisfactory affections (like sadness), negative projections (like fear), aggressive-opposing emotions (like anger) etc.

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<sup>2</sup> The project was developed by David Gil from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and Yeshayahu Shen from Tel Aviv University to investigate the figurative language in Malay/Indonesian and in other languages of Indonesia, to study cognitive aspects of metaphor use with a series of experiments and observe typological aspects of figurative language (Shen, Gil 2008).

<sup>3</sup> The excellent collaboration of Bradley Taylor has been crucial to the realization of the database. I acknowledge his assistance and patience.

The flexibility of a relational database such as that of Filemaker Pro allows the researcher to consider a number of functions and the possibility of coding any single sentence according to the complex systems of emotions and states of minds. At the same time it allows the researcher to look at the contexts within the text, namely the surrounding phrases of the coded sentence. Moreover, a translation and any kind of comment can be added; eventually, counting of occurrences is an integral function of this technique.

The observation of emotions and their manifestations is a good way of observing how these are a reflection of change at the societal level and lay the ground for drawing a history of emotions in Indonesia. This is neither the first analysis of emotions in the Indonesian world (see for instance Heider 1991) nor the first time that the application of the methodology of the theory of emotions and states of mind according to Santangelo has been undertaken. Previous studies have been conducted by Soenoto (2004) and Sutami (2004, 2008), but this is the first attempt to use a new database program that could be fruitful in the long term in building a lexicon of emotions in Indonesian. If the study of emotions has been carried out on modern Indonesian literature by Soenoto and Sutami on single literary works, now all the literary work within the database is put together to allow a better view of emotions and states of mind across various works and ages.

The novel *Saman* is only one of the literary works in this database and for this paper exclusively the emotions of love and the sexual component are taken into account. In the future, these will be investigated in other works in comparison to other emotions. The advantage of a database is its openness in the sense that any time new material can be added and new functions can be searched for to analyze the occurrence of an emotion. Ideally, all the investigated works should be put together and any comment and consideration be done in a comprehensive way.

Prior to this work, several pilot studies were attempted on the database and the use of this methodology. The application of the theory of emotions and states of mind has been tested, for example, on the study of emotions of homosexual love in Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> This was a preliminary work on the textual analysis of emotions and states of mind in contemporary female literature addressing the issue of homosexuality. This theme turned out to be a highly relevant one, and no longer a taboo subject despite the fact that in part it had been driven by editorial market requests. Lesbian and gay characters populated and still populate many of the works of female writers, and the expression of their emotions was the main focus of that presentation. The representation of emotions of homosexual characters is very heterogeneous: it ranges from self confidence, to self pity, from happiness to sorrow and shame, from regret to belonging to a cursed group, to awareness of being able to express inner feelings

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<sup>4</sup> 'Emotions of homosexual characters in the work of contemporary female Indonesian writers', paper presented by Antonia Soriente at the conference 5 *EUROSEAS*, Napoli, 12-15 September 2007.

in an open way. The conclusion of that work was that it was indeed difficult to draw any conclusion or give a general description of these feelings as it depends on many factors including the heterogeneity of the writers and of the literary work. One common trend is the social status of the homosexual characters: mainly high-middle class people living in large towns and often being exposed to western culture. Some of them disguise their orientation by living normal lives of married people; others openly display their status and freely enjoy life as naturally as possible. In general, there is a common desire to open up about homosexuality and not refer to it as a disease but accept it as a natural orientation, similar to that of being male or female. Some expose the struggle between social and cultural values and the inner drive towards homosexuality.

In this direction was the analysis of emotions conveyed through smile and laughter on three contemporary novels.<sup>5</sup> A detailed textual analysis of the instances containing overt and covert expressions of smiling and laughter was carried out on these novels to ascertain whether the context influences the kinds of expression of smiling and laughter in these contemporary writers, and the kinds of emotions and dispositions displayed. The instances were coded following the guidelines proposed by Santangelo (2004) in agreement with the emotions expressed and classified accordingly, and their frequency was analyzed. I tried to give an answer to the question of whether these manifestations can convey more than one emotion and whether they are manifestations of universal basic emotions or whether Indonesian expressions are culturally bound. Comparing the results from the survey of these three novels, it appears clear that the turning point was in the lack of more traditional expressions of culture-related smiles and laughter of despondent and embarrassed smiles, and of amicable and ingratiating smiles.

Other applications of this approach were the study of emotions as related to the body to see how emotions are embodied,<sup>6</sup> and the analysis of pragmatic particles as conveyors of emotions.<sup>7</sup>

The study and application of the coding system to literary texts was carried out in collaboration with Poppy Siahaan (University of Köln) with the

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<sup>5</sup> This was the topic of 'Smile and Laugh: Manifestations of Emotions and Dispositions in Contemporary Indonesian Writers', paper presented by Antonia Soriente at *Emotions behind Smile and Laugh: from Facial Expression to Literary Descriptions*, Bologna, 18-19 May 2008.

<sup>6</sup> This topic was addressed in 'Expression of Emotions and States of Mind in Literary Indonesian', paper presented by Antonia Soriente at *Reconstructing the Fragments of Emotions: Textual Analysis for a Research of the Representation of States of Mind in East Asia*, 27-28 May 2009, Freie Universität Bozen/Bolzano, and in 'Mind and Emotion as a Body in Literary Indonesian. A Preliminary Report', paper presented by Antonia Soriente and Poppy Siahaan at *ISMIL 13 (the Thirteenth International Symposium on Malay and Indonesian linguistics)*, Lombok, 6-7 June 2009.

<sup>7</sup> 'Analysis of Particles and Interjections as Conveyors of Emotions and States of Mind in an Indonesian Novel', paper presented by Antonia Soriente at *Reconstruction of the Representation of Emotions, States of Mind and Imagery in Imperial China*, Villa Vigoni, 24-27 maggio 2010.

aim of applying the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor and the Theory of Emotions. The first theory claims that the mind is embodied (meaning that the mind is conceptualized as a body) with its correlated subsystems (Lakoff, Johnson 1999). Second, the Theory of Emotions as elaborated by Santangelo (2004) proposes a classification and a lexicon for the analysis of emotions and states of mind. We specifically analyzed how the human body functions in conceptualizing the world and how this provides the basis for our understanding of the most abstract concepts, namely the expression of emotions and states of mind, expressed through lexical items from body parts such as *otak* (brain), *kepala* (head), *hati* (liver).

The other study undertaken on the database was the analysis of pragmatic particles used in Indonesian to express emotions. The expression of emotion and effect are indispensable features of communication and interaction. Filled with affective meaning, particles and interjections are significant strategies to fulfil different functions with respect to discourse structure, speaker attitude, and the turn-taking system, and are among the most frequent words in spoken language. The meaning of particles is «crucial to the interaction mediated by speech», for «they express the speaker's attitude towards the addressee or towards the situation spoken about, his assumptions, his intentions, his emotions» (Wierzbicka 1991: 341). Particles are language-specific in that «no exact equivalents can be found in other languages» and they «reflect the culture of a given speech community» better than many other aspects of language (*ibid.*). Therefore, to better understand the culture of a speech community, one good way is to look at the meaning of its particles.

The main objective of that analysis was to describe the meaning of some of the Indonesian particles such as *kan*, *deh*, *kok* and to shed light on the cultural value associated with the use of these particles and answer the question of why some particles are more widespread than others. The proposed explanations reveal the nature of the speech or mental acts represented by the particles, which in turn give us a clue as to some of the cultural norms and attitudes valued by the Indonesian speech community. All discourse particles display certain emotions with respect to this system, for instance, in the creation of a harmonious basis for communication.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Analysis of the Emotions of Love and Sex in Saman*

*Saman* represents a landmark in Indonesian literature. It offers for the first time the perspective from the point of view of women. The plot revolves around four female characters, four self-confident, independent, metropolitan women, Laila, Shakuntala, Yasmin and Cok whose lives are intertwined with

<sup>8</sup> The three major functions of tag questions '*kan*' are the modal function to request confirmation, the facilitative function, to solicit participation and the softening function, to soften criticism. The particle *deh* emphasizes recommendation, difference of opinion or suggestion; it is an urging particle used to mark discontent attitude. *Kok* is associated with surprise.

that of a catholic priest, Wis, who then changes his name into Saman. He will become a defender of the rights of a local community forced to obey the laws of power and capitalism. It speaks to and about a new generation of Indonesian women – young, educated, mobile, cosmopolitan, sometimes involved in political issues and activities – at a time when old restrictions and taboos remain strong. Arguably, a text such as *Saman* opens up the field for the depiction of the world of women such as these, and other subcultural groups and forms of female experience in contemporary Indonesia (Hatley 1999: 459).

In this novel, the manifestation of sexual love is widely employed, and very little room is given to traditional female virtues such as virginity and obedience. The four characters here display emotions that are very far from those of devotion and passion as portrayed by Hellwig (1994) or Soenoto (2004) in the analysis of female characters of modern Indonesian novels. Just to give an example, the concept of love has been addressed among others by Soenoto (2004) and Sutami (2004). Here it is interesting to compare the results and show how the main emotions of the characters are not submission and acceptance as in Soenoto (2004) and Sutami (2004), but instead self-assertiveness and liberation.

The women in this novel are free and liberated, they pursue their own satisfaction and not that of their husbands or patrons, and they do not need to sacrifice themselves for the sake of social norms and obligations. Never are words referring to manifestations of emotions such as *pasrah* ‘accept’, *mengabdi* ‘respect’, or *takdir* ‘destiny’, used to refer to the feelings of the main characters.<sup>9</sup> As Hatley (1999: 450) says, a «key innovation of the text is its subversion of long-standing conventions of female representation and women’s writing in Indonesia, and of the concepts of womanly nature and gender relations in which these conventions are grounded».

What is most important to observe is the change of perspective in *Saman*: all the female characters are described from their own perspectives of love, sex and satisfaction unlike the traditional ideology in which women are expected to stay at home, caring for the husband and children, and not supposed to enter the public sphere, nor express their own feelings. Through the analysis of the emotions of main female characters like Shakuntala, Cok, Laila, Yasmin, Upi and Saman’s mother, we can observe how they are liberated and are free, in one way or another, to express themselves.

In a provocative and outspoken way, the most anti-conformist character, Shakuntala, declares from the very beginning that she has slept with men and

<sup>9</sup> Unlikely, the character of Pariyem in Linus Suriadi’s *Pengakuan Pariyem* (1981) considers that her affair with her young master is part of her devotion as a maid servant of a noble family. She says: *Saya sudah terima, kok, saya nrima ing pandum, saya pasrah saja, saya lega lila, saya menjadi selir priyayi*. «I am satisfied, I have completely accepted my fate, I am resigned, really I am relieved and willing to be a concubine of a noble man» (Soenoto 2004: 45).

women, and that for this she has lost her family's trust and says: *mereka tidak menghormatiku* «they do not respect me».<sup>10</sup>

*Namaku Shakuntala. Ayah dan kakak-perempuanku menyebutku [sundal]. Sebab aku telah [tidur] dengan beberapa lelaki dan beberapa perempuan. Meski tidak menarik bayaran. Kakak dan ayahku [tidak menghormatiku]. Aku [tidak menghormati] mereka* (Utami 1998: 114).

My name is Shakuntala. My dad and sisters used to call me a [whore]. Because I had slept with several men and women. Without being paid though. My sisters and my dad [do not respect] me. And I [do not respect] them.

Here it is clear that parental love is jeopardized by the fact that traditional values do not allow girls to lead a promiscuous life and go beyond conventions. Shakuntala is considered *sundal* 'whore', an epithet that obviously displays a moral judgment of contempt.

The duality of spirit and body is felt in this novel but, in the following passage and elsewhere, the body has a stronger power than the spirit. In the same description of how life came to be, the sexual component is very relevant.

*Tuhan baru meniupkan nafas pada hari keempat puluh setelah sel telur dan sperma menjadi gumpalan dalam rahim, maka ruh berhutang kepada tubuh (ibid.).*

God gives birth after the 40<sup>th</sup> days after the egg cell and sperm became one in the womb and so the spirit is indebted to the body.

It is for this reason that Shakuntala dances. Dance is a metaphor for sex. Through dance she can 'feel' any sentiment, any bodily sensation such as hurt, chill, pleasure and obtain the climax of love and passion.

*Sebab menari adalah [eksplorasi] yang tak habis-habis dengan kulit dan tulang-tulangku, yang dengannya aku rasakan [perih],[ngilu],[gigil], juga [nyaman] (ibid.).*

Because dancing is an endless [exploration] with the skin and bones and with it I can feel [pain], [hurt], [chill], [pleasure].

Emotions and sensations are felt through dancing and therefore through her own body, and in a sort of intellectual and physical pleasure Shakuntala can experience the feelings of sublimity and libido like in a labyrinth.

*Tubuhku menari. Ia menurut bukan [nafsu] melainkan [gairah]. Yang [Sublim]. [Libidinal]. Labirinth* (Utami 1998: 115).

My body dances. It does not follow [pleasure] but [passion]. [Sublime], [libidinal]. Labyrinth.

What makes Shakuntala dance is not *nafsu* 'lust', but *gairah* 'passion'. Passion is the ultimate cause of dance, it is sublime and libidinal. All these metaphorical expressions of sex used to express the emotions caused by dance

<sup>10</sup> I use the convention to mark Indonesian words or expressions representing emotions and states of mind with square parenthesis from the text *Saman* (Utami 1998). In the translation too (Utami 2005) the word or expression in square parenthesis represents an emotion or a state of mind.



are suggestive of the importance of sex and of its implications. Dancing is for Shakuntala a remedy against the sorrow and the frustration of the difficult relationship she has with her father, elsewhere in the novel considered the enemy number one. Her parent, in fact, scared of her early sexuality, having had sexual intercourse from the age of nine, sends her away from her home town to a foreign place from where she cannot escape. The rebellion of Shakuntala against her father's recommendations is expressed again through her falling in love with a giant. Since the giant cannot meet her in her boarding house, she visits him under the tree. Here again the meeting with the giant is expressed in a very sexual manner: the only objective is the satisfaction of pleasure. The encounter with the giant is described as *belit-membelit* 'twisting to each other' like the royal serpent Nagagini with a common snake.

*Ayah membuangku ke sebuah kota asing [...] Aku [menangis] karena aku ingin kembali ke kataku yang [teduh]. Tapi mustahil [melarikan diri]. Karena itu aku menari. Tubuhku menari.[...] Tapi aku [jatuh cinta] pada salah satu raksasa Karena raksasa akan dibunuh seperti wirok jika memasuki keputrian yang terletak di belakang kesatrian, akulah yang [mengunjunginya] di bawah pohon-pohon kepuh. [Belit-membelit] seperti Nagagini dengan seekor ular domestik (Utami 1998: 119).*

My dad threw me away to a foreign town [...] I [cried] because I desired to go back to my [comfortable] town. But it was impossible to [escape]. Because of that, I danced. My body danced [...]. But I [fell in love] with a giant. Since the giant would be killed if he entered my boarding house, I would meet with him under the trees. We [twisted to each other] like Nagagini with a common snake.

But the father finds out about this forbidden love and ties Shakuntala to a bed and gives her moral teaching about love and virginity. The love expressed by the father is far from the traditional picture of positive emotion, while marriage is not the final realization of a romantic attraction but only a social contract. This moral lesson is in fact a trigger starting a sort of rebellion against the patriarchal rules, and against school rules. And these rules will be disobeyed by Shakuntala.

*Pertama: Hanya lelaki yang boleh [menghampiri] perempuan Perempuan yang [mengejar-ngejar] lelaki pastilah [sundal]. Perempuan akan [memberikan tubuhnya] pada lelaki yang [pantas], dan lelaki itu akan menghidupinya dengan hartanya. Itu dinamakan [perkawinan]. Kelak, ketika dewasa, aku menganggapnya [persundalan] yang [hipokrit] (Utami 1998: 120-21).*

First: only men can [approach] women. A woman who [chases] a man is definitely a [whore]. The woman will give her body to the man that is [appropriate] and he will take care of her necessities. This is what is called [marriage]. In the future when I became an adult I would consider it a [hypocritical prostitution].

Through Shakuntala's lesson from her father we understand the moral teachings about love that a well-bred girl should not disobey. The same language used to address love and sex is aseptic and euphemistic. Having a relationship, either sexual or not, is defined by the neutral verb *menghampiri* 'ap-

proach' without any reference to the emotions involved in it and the woman who takes the first step in a relationship or, as the father says, *mencejar* 'chases' a man, is defined as *sundal* 'a whore'. Again, the notion of love and its realization indicated by sexual intercourse is simplified into a simple chasing, repeating the usual metaphor of a man as a hunter and the woman as prey. In this case, since the role is reversed, the consequence is that the woman is labeled with the derogatory epithet of *sundal* 'whore'. The sexual act is simply seen as a woman giving her body to a man who is right for her and he will take care of all the economic necessities. And this is the meaning of marriage. We can see from this brief excerpt the general and conventional view about sex and where women stand in all this. The general female image in Indonesian literature is of modesty, restraint and domesticity embodying 'traditional' virtues of submission and acceptance; even when described in terms of their sexual allure, these women devote sexual attention and 'service' to their esteemed male partners. Women simply do not have rights in sexual relationships and if they take the initiative are considered whores. Traditionally in literature, the ideal of a sexually pure woman is emphasized, and the control of women's roles; depictions of Indonesian women are mainly centred upon domesticity and rarely is the issue of their sexuality taken into account (Hellwig 1994: 182). Popular novels encouraged the importance of a woman's role as being an ideal wife and a mother, someone who is always loyal and, if necessary, takes full responsibility for children. We can see that throughout the novel *Saman*, the stereotyped roles are not respected and that the world of love, passion and sexuality is finally seen from the perspective of those who traditionally did not have a voice, those who were never considered: unconventional women (Shakuntala, Cok, Yasmin and Laila), a handicapped girl (Upi), and somebody who is not acquainted with sex, the catholic priest Saman. Furthermore, the general view about marriage is reversed and seen as a form of hypocritical prostitution.

The reaction of Shakuntala to her father's moral lesson about love, *cinta*, is exactly the opposite of what her father expects. From one side, she learns how to find pleasure in pain, *menikmati* 'to enjoy' when she is tied to her bed at night, and from the other she finds a way, during the day, to find inspiration from her body, twisting and stretching it when the chains are taken off.

*Tapi, tanpa dia tahu, pada malam hari aku belajar [menikmati] [rasa] [sakit]. Pada pagi hari aku belajar [menghayati] tubuhku menggeliat ketika rantai dilepas...* (Utami 1998: 121).

But, without him knowing it, each night I would learn how to [enjoy] the [pain]. In the morning I would learn how to [experience] my body stretching my limbs when the chains were taken off...

The innovation of a character like Shakuntala is in her assertiveness and her transgression. For Shakuntala, her body is the real inspiration and cause of pleasure. Her body and dancing are the only reasons to live. Metaphorically she declares that she does not dance for an audience but for herself.

Dancing is the highest form of self-realization because through it and through the awareness of her own body, she finds her own life. Dancing serves to celebrate, *merayakan*, her body. Here is the expression of the cognitive state of mind of realization-inner-awakening-consciousness (intuitive perception of reality).

*Sejak lama [kuteemukan] hidupku adalah menari. Bukan di panggung melainkan di sebuah ruang dalam diriku sendiri. [...] Aku menari sebab aku sedang [merayakan] tubuhku* (Utami 1998: 125).

From very early I [realized] that my life is dance. Not on a stage but in a space within myself. [...] I dance because I [celebrate] my body.

The problem arises when dancing is done for the audience's pleasure and therefore the dancer is not celebrating her own body. Her body does not belong to her, just as a wife does not possess her own body.

*Si Penari tak lagi [merayakan] tubuhnya. Tubuh itu bukan miliknya lagi. Seperti seorang istri yang tidak memiliki badannya* (Utami 1998: 126).

The dancer does not [celebrate] her body any longer. The body does not belong to her any longer. Like a wife who does not possess her body.

Here again there is the subversion and rebellion in response to the traditional role of a wife in a society where she is only seen as being for a man's utilization.

Manifestations of love passion and sexual love outnumber the traditional expressions of the emotion of romantic love. So in the text, words such as *bersetubuh* 'make love', *bersenggama* 'have a sexual intercourse', *bercumbu* 'have sex', *tidur* 'sleep with', *nikmat* 'enjoy (sex)', as well as other terms related to sex such as bodily sensations *ejakulasi* 'ejaculation', *masturbasi* 'masturbation', *basah* 'wet', the names of sexual organs, such as *puting* 'nipple', *selangkang* 'crotch', *klentit* 'clitoris', *zakar* 'penis', abound in comparison to words indicating manifestations of happiness, joy and satisfaction, such as *peluk* 'hug', *dekap* 'embrace', *senyum* 'smile', *mengelus* 'caress', *cium* 'kiss'. It seems to be an assertion in a very realistic way that whatever revolves around sex is the only way that the characters can express themselves and their self-confidence. In one way or other, sex is like a lens through which we become acquainted with the characters in the novel.

The character of Laila, involved in an extramarital affair with a married man, is that of an independent woman facing her problems of losing her virginity to someone who in all likelihood does not love her. She feels sinful but she does not make any attempt to prevent herself from committing the sin.

*Sebab saya ini orang yang [berdosa]. [...] Saya jawab, tolong, saya masih [perawan]* (Utami 1998: 4).

Because I am a [sinner]. [...] I replied, please, I am still a [virgin].

Instead, she worries about the possible pain and embarrassment of her first time with a married man, someone who is married and therefore acquainted with sex. Virginity, according to moral traditional conventions, is considered something very precious, so losing it is like ‘breaking a porcelain pot’. On the contrary, here this event is seen as a liberation from taboos and conventions.

Laila is not as unscrupulous as her friends Shakuntala and Cok, but she considers an extramarital affair as something very ordinary and not seen through the lens of moral perspective. She is not as rebellious as Cok and Shakuntala, and is often considered without sins, because her only juvenile love was with Wisanggeni, a seminary student, a religion teacher who could not be seen as an enemy like the other teachers or parents. In a sort of comradeship, the four friends talk about love, about sex, about enemies. It is through their discussion that we can see the rebellion against the conventions and against over-moralistic parents.

In an ironic manner Laila’s search for love is described just as a search for a man that is suitable to establish a family and to make her parents happy.

*Laila sedang dalam perjalanan [mencari] seorang lelaki yang [pantas] untuk membangun keluarga dan [membahagiakan] orangtua (Utami 1998: 127).*

Laila is on her way [in search] of a man that is [appropriate] to establish a family and to make her parents [happy].

But indeed, Laila is very much into love.

*Setiap kali [mencintai], Laila begitu penuh perhatian (ibid.).*

Every time she [loves], Laila is so into it.

In many parts of the text her virginity is seen as an obstacle to her realization and when the meeting with her lover is continually postponed she thinks that her virginity is the ‘real problem’. For this reason, the man appears reluctant and willing to protect her because she is still ‘a virgin’.

*Ia tidak mencoba [memperkosanya], atau sekadar [memaksa], bahkan ketika kami berdua terlentang di satu ranjang. Saya kira, jika ia menjauh, itu semata-mata karena [tak tahan], sementara ia [ingin] [menjaga] saya. Ia tak mau merusak saya. Sebab saya masih [perawan]. Saya percaya, ia masih [menyayangi] dan [menginginkan] saya (Utami 1998: 27).*

He did not try to [rape] or just [force] me to do that even when we were lying on a bed. I think, if he stays away, it’s probably because he cannot [resist] me but at the same time he also [wants to protect me]. He does not want to ruin me. Because I am still a [virgin]. I am convinced, he still [loves] and still [desires] me.

She fantasizes about her meeting with him and tries to find reasons to convince him that the time has arrived to finally have sex; that she has chosen to mate with him just as animals do when the season is right. Here we see that Laila shows her assertiveness by saying that she is ready (*siap*) and that she has chosen (*memilih*) the man to whom she will give her virginity to.

*Tapi akan saya katakan bahwa kali ini saya telah [siap]. Dan saya telah [memilihnya] sebagai [lelaki yang pertama]. Dia akan bertanya-tanya, kenapa dia. [...] Saya akan katakan, kita ini seperti burung yang bermigrasi ke musim [kawin] (Utami 1998: 29).*

But I will tell him that this time I am [ready]. And that I have [chosen] him for [my first time]. He will keep on asking why him. [...] I will tell him that we are like birds that migrate to the [mating] season.

Laila is convinced that having sex and losing her virginity is a necessity, not a sin (*dosa*). Eventually, they make love but the moral consideration is always mentioned through the repeated word *dosa* ‘sin’ and the word *perawan* ‘virgin’, an epithet that recalls the morality of a person according to general conventions. The male-female opposition and the unequal emphasis on female virginity of a woman as regards morality and sexual purity are also stressed when Shakuntala accuses God of unfairness for creating a hymen only for women.

*Sebab menurutku yang [curang] lagi-lagi Tuhan: dia menciptakan selaput dara, tapi tidak membikin selaput penis (Utami 1998: 149).*

Because I think God was [unfair]: he created hymen (for women) but he did not make any penis’ hymen.

But she finds the solution in that despite the fact that her lover has already a wife, they can make love and then separate without necessarily be overwhelmed by feelings of guilt. After all, she justifies, God never obliged a man and a woman to love each other when they want to have sex, or to mate only when love is involved.

*Sihar, umurku sudah tiga puluh. Dan kita di New York. Beribu-ribu mil dari Jakarta. Tak ada orangtua, tak ada istri. Tak ada [dosa]. Kecuali pada Tuhan, barangkali. Tapi kita bisa [kawin] sebentar, lalu bercerai. Tak ada yang perlu [ditangisi]. Bukankah kita saling [mencintai]? Apakah Tuhan memerintahkan lelaki dan perempuan untuk [mencintai] ketika mereka [kawin]? (Utami 1998: 30).*

Sihar, I am already thirty years old. And we are in New York, thousands of miles away from Jakarta. There are no parents, no wife, and no [sins]. Except towards God, maybe. But we can [mate] just a moment and then separate. We don’t need to [cry] about this. Don’t we [love] each other? Has ever God ordered men and women to [love] before [mate]?

The sexual act as a manifestation of sexual love and pleasure is very explicit and is expressed with very realistic images of pleasure and enjoyment (*menikmati*):

*Dan kami akan [melakukannya] di taman ini [...] dan mengulanginya di kamar hotel, tanpa berlekas-lekas, di mana kulit saya bisa [menikmati] kulitnya, dan kulitnya [menikmati] kulit saya (Utami 1998: 29).*

We will [do] it in this park [...] and after we’ll do it again in a hotel room, slowly, where my skin [enjoys] his, and his skin [enjoys] mine.

The emotion deriving from the sex act is that of happiness (*bahagia*) and neither sin nor moral constriction should be involved. Enjoyment overcomes everything, even though Laila is no longer a virgin.

*Setelah itu, [Sayang], kita tertidur. Dan ketika terbangun, kita begitu [bahagia]. Sebab ternyata kita [tidak berdosa]. Meskipun saya [tak lagi perawan] (Utami 1998: 30).*

After that, [darling], we fall asleep. And when we wake up, we will be so [happy]. Because we will not have [sinned]. Although I will no longer be a [virgin].

Sex and sexual experiences are discussed in very natural terms, without any moral implication, just like anything in life:

*Sudah? Sudah apa? Begitu.*

*Enggak sampai beneran. Nggak sampai? Dia sampai (Utami 1998: 129).*

Did you do it? What? That.

Not really. You did not come? He did.

The four friends exchange their experiences about sex in a very spontaneous way and without taboos:

*Taruhan kita adalah ada [seks] atau tidak Mereka [tidak berhubungan seks]! Apalagi sampai orgasme. Soal masuk atau tidak, itu cuma urusan teknis. Tak ada yang bisa membantahku bahwa [masturbasi] adalah tingkah laku [seks]. [...]Kami menginterogasi, posisi apa yang mereka lakukan waktu itu (Utami 1998: 130).*

Our bet was if they had [sex] or not. And they did not have [sex]. And there was no orgasm. The problem whether he penetrated her or not it's a technicality. Nobody can deny that [masturbation] is a [sexual] act. We interrogated her on what position they took.

Elsewhere Shakuntala, talking about Sihar, comments that with him sex would be plain and boring:

*Aku tidak suka Sihar [...] [Berhubungan seks] dengannya pasti [tidak imajinatif] dan tak ada pembicaraan [post-orgasme] yang [menyenangkan] (Utami 1998: 132).*

I do not like Sihar [...] having [sex] with him is [uninteresting], he does not have any imagination and surely there won't be any [pleasant] discussion [post orgasm].

Cok is portrayed with the adjective *buxom* (*berdada montok*) that evokes sensuality and sexuality. She is a very unconventional woman who has a very promiscuous sexual life and does not believe in marriage, eternal love or religion.

*Cok, temanku yang berdada [montok]. Dia [periang] dan [ringan] [hati]. [...]Tak ada [kemarahan] yang perlu diawetkan seperti [dendamku] pada Bapak. Juga tidak ada [cinta] yang tahan lama seperti [manisan] dalam botol selai. Cok sudah lima kali delapan kali [pacaran], dan masih belum [puas] juga (Utami 1998: 146).*

Cok, my [buxom] friend was [cheerful] and [happy]. [...] For her there was no [anger] that needed to be preserved like my [resentment] towards my father. Also, there is no [love] that lasts like the [sweetness] in a jar of jam. She had been with 40 different men and she was not [satisfied] yet.

Cok becomes Shakuntala's best friend and together they talk of all their sexual experiences:

*Aku dan Cok bertaruh melawan Yasmin bahwa pria ini tak akan tahan hanya [ciuman] terus-terusan. aku dan Cok mulai [saling membagi] pengalaman [bercumbu] kami, saling kros-cek bentuk dan zona [erotis] laki-laki yang kami [pacari] (Utami 1998: 150).*

Cok and I used to bet against Yasmin who said that generally men do not resist in relationships, when they can just exchange [kisses]. Cok and I started to exchange experiences of having [sexual] acts and cross-checking shapes and erotic zones of the men we were [dating].

Cok is very cynical about men and considers them the worst enemies of women because they betray them (*mengkhianati*) with the sole objective of stealing their virginity, here defined as purity (*kesucian*).

*Mereka [mengkhianati] wanita. Mereka cuma [menginginkan] [keperawanan], dan akan pergi setelah si wanita menyerahkan [kesucian]. Gue enggak tahan [pacaran] jarak jauh, jawabnya, tapi gue juga enggak tahan enggak [pacaran]. [...] Dan ia [kencan] dengan beberapa pria sekaligus dalam kurun waktu yang sama. Laila telah [jatuh cinta] beberapa kali, dan tak pernah [menyakiti] lelaki seperti Cok [memanfaatkan] dan [membongong] [pacar-pacarnya] (Utami 1998: 149).*

They (men) [betray] women. They just [want] to get their [virginity] and go after their woman has given them their [sacred] thing, I cannot stand long distance [relationships] but also I cannot stand to be without a man.

[...] And she [went with several men] at the same time. Laila had [fallen in love] several times but she had never [hurt] men like Cok who [used] men and [lied] with all her [boyfriends].

Yasmin, despite the fact she is a married woman, is another character who, in her way, transgresses the moral and social norms. She is portrayed as somebody who leaves an impression on men (*mengesankan*) but has been loyal to her husband for many years and, regardless of her attractive appearance, has maintained her morality, at least until she starts her transgressive relationship with the priest, Saman. She is portrayed as being embarrassed (*malu-malu*) when she confesses that she has had sex with her boyfriend and that she should resolve her feelings of the guilt of illicit sex (*berzinah*) by getting married. Her view on men is less negative than that of Cok and Shakuntala. For her men can still love without necessarily have sex (*mencintai tanpa sex*).

*Yasmin Moninga adalah perempuan yang [mengesankan] banyak lelaki karena kulitnya yang bersih dan tubuhnya yang [langsing]. [...] Yasmin yang dulu [alim] mulai [pacaran]. Senin sampai jumat ia dan [pacarnya] saling [mengesplorasi] tubuh dengan [kemarok].*

[...] Kemudian, dengan [malu-malu], Yasmin mengaku kepada kami bahwa ia sudah [tidur] dengan Lukas. "Tapi kami mau [nikah]," tambahnya cepat-cepat, sebab ia [merasa] telah [berzinah].

[...] Yasmin percaya bahwa pria bisa [mencintai] tanpa [seks].

[...] Dan mereka memang [kawin] setelah Lukas mendapat pekerjaan di BPPT, setelah delapan tahun mereka [saling setia] dalam masa [pacaran].

Memang, sejak dulu tak pernah aku dengar Yasmin punya [hubungan] dengan lelaki selain suaminya. [...] Aku dan Cok selalu[heran] bahwa ia bisa bertahan (Utami 1998: 23-24).

Yasmin Moningka is a woman who [impresses] many men because of her light skin and [slim] body [...]. But one day the once [pious] Yasmin starts to date men. [...] From Monday to Friday she and her boyfriend would [greedily] [explore] each other's bodies.

[...] Then, with slight [embarrassment] (one day) Yasmin confesses that she has [slept] with Lukas. «We are going to get [married]», she adds hastily, because she [feels] that she has had [illicit sex].

[...] Yasmin believes that men can [love] without [sex].

[...] And they eventually get [married] after Lukas gets a civil servant job at BPPT, and after eight years of [dating] they had been [loyal] to each other.

Actually, I had never heard that Yasmin had had any other [relationship] with a man but her husband. [...] Cok and I were always [surprised] that she could resist.

The beginning of the sexual encounter of the married Yasmin and the catholic priest Saman is very spontaneous and happens in a moment of high tension and danger. Yasmin takes the initiative and lets Saman lose control in a moment of weakness. He has an orgasm, just a tremor (*gemetar*) without actual sexual intercourse, and he feels ashamed and incapable of satisfying (*memuaskan*) a woman, such that she has to masturbate (*masturbasi*).

Ia terus [menangis], [pilu] bagaikan anak kecil, sehingga aku [mendekapnya] erat. Tubuh kami [berhimpit]. Namun, tanpa kupahami, akhirnya justru akulah yang menjadi seperti anak kecil: [terbenam] di [dadanya] yang kemudian terbuka, seperti bayi yang haus.

Tubuh kami [berhimpit]. [Gemetar], selesai sebelum mulai, seperti tak sempat mengerti apa yang baru saja terjadi. Aku tak tahu bagaimana aku akhirnya melakukannya. Ketika usai aku menjadi begitu [malu] [...] Terjaga dini hari atau tengah malam karena ada yang menggigit dekat ketiakku. Kulihat tangannya [masturbasi]. Ia naik ke atasku setelah [mencapainya]. Aku tahu aku tak tahu cara [memuaskannya] (Utami 1998: 177).

She [wept] [inconsolably], like a child, and I [held] her tighter. Then rather incomprehensibly, I became the child and [buried] myself between her exposed [breasts], like a thirsty child. Our bodies became [tighter]. I was [trembling]. It was over before it started. I had no time to understand what was happening. I don't know how I eventually did it. When it was over I felt so [ashamed]. [...] In the middle of the night I woke up because there was somebody biting me near my armpit. I saw her fingers [masturbating]. She climbed on top of me after she [finished]. I knew that I didn't know how to [satisfy] her.

The relationship between the two continues in a virtual way through the exchange of 'hot' emails where reference to sex is mixed with citations of biblical texts and moral considerations (*dosa*). Nevertheless, Saman says that sex



is too beautiful (*sex terlalu indah*) and expresses his desire to possess Yasmin and make her pregnant (*menghamili*).

*Yasmin, Aku tak tahu lagi apakah masih ada [dosa]. Tapi [seks] terlalu [indah].  
[...] Bolehkah aku mencoba [menghamili] kamu? (Utami 1998: 183).  
Yasmin I no longer know if there is such a thing as [sin]. [Sex] is too wonderful.  
[...] Can I try to make you [pregnant]?*

Yasmin confesses that she suffers from alloerotisme as she keeps on having sex with her husband by imagining Saman. The virtual conversation is very open and realistic.

*Saman, aku terkena [aloerotisme]. [Bersetubuh] dengan Lukas tetapi [membayangkan] kamu. Sebab yang aku [bayangkan] adalah wajah kamu, [tubuh] kamu (Utami 1998: 195).  
Saman, I have [alloerotism]. I have [sex] with Lukas but I [imagine] you. Because what I [imagine] is your face, your [body].*

Saman again acknowledges his jealousy, whereby she can have sex because she sleeps (*bersetubuh*) with her husband whereas he can not. He laments his lack of prowess in love-making compared with her husband who is better in bed (*perkasa*), and doubts his ability to satisfy Yasmin because he is too fast in having an orgasm and he realizes that their sexual 'intercourse' can only continue in a virtual way.

*Aku [cemburu]. Kamu [bersetubuh], aku tidak. Bukankah Lukas lebih [perkasa]? Aku terlalu [cepat]. [...] Mungkin [persetubuhan] kita memang harus hanya dalam [khayalan]. [Persanggamaan] maya. [...]. Aku bahkan tidak tahu bagaimana [memuaskan] kamu (Utami 1998: 195).  
I am [jealous]. You have [sex], I don't. Isn't Lukas [better than me in bed]? I [come too fast]. Maybe our [sexual intercourse] should remain in our [imagination]. Virtual [sex]. [...] I actually do not even know how to [satisfy] you.*

The email conversation continues with details of the virtual intercourse between the two. Yasmin explains that sex does not necessarily require penetration in order to be enjoyable. She recognizes that her husband is very good in bed but this does not prevent her from imagining sex and reaching orgasm just thinking of Saman.

*Saman, Lukas memang terlatih.  
[...] [Orgasme] dengan [penis] bukan sesuatu yang mutlak. Aku selalu [orgasme] jika [membayangkan] kamu. Aku [orgasme] karena keseluruhanmu (Utami 1998: 196).  
Saman, actually Lukas is very well trained.  
[...] [Orgasm] with the [penis] is not absolute. I always [climax] when I [think] about you. I [climax] because of all of you.  
Tahukah kamu, malam itu, malam itu yang aku [inginkan] adalah [menjamah] tubuhmu, dan [menikmati] wajahmu ketika [ejakulasi] (ibid.).*

What I [wanted] that night was to [touch] your body and to [enjoy] your expression when you [ejaculated].

The email communication of Saman and Yasmin ends with the disturbing desire of Yasmin to rape her virtual lover. This is another expression of a willingness to reverse traditional sexual positions.

*Aku [perkosa] kamu (ibid.).*

I will [rape] you.

The sexual component is relevant also in the portrayal of another character, Upi, who represents another provocative way of describing manifestations of emotions and bodily sensations from the side of the less powerful. Upi is a young developmentally challenged village girl who becomes Saman's object of attention and affection. She has a very 'natural' sexual aggressiveness, a sort of assertion of primitive sexuality that she expresses with self-masturbation, rubbing her genitals against poles or with having sex with animals. Her sexual escalation has its climax one week before her period (*darah kotor*), when she has to satisfy her drive with whatever brings her satisfaction.

*Di usia remaja ia mulai [kesambet] dan menjadi [beringas]. Semula, ketika orang-orang menyadap karet, dia malah suka [merancap] dengan pohon-pohon itu, [menggosok-gosok selangkangannya], untungnya tanpa membuka celana. Lama-kelamaan, ia juga [tertarik] pada binatang-binatang, terutama kambing. Karena ia juga [memperkosa] dan menyiksa ternak tetangga, kami terpaksa memasungnya. Ia biasanya menjadi ganas seminggu menjelang darah kotor itu datang. [...]Tungkai itu melipat, mengepit betung yang besar, dan [pinggulnya menggesek-gesek]. Dua menit kemudian perempuan itu [menjerit] lalu bilik itu tak lagi berderit (Utami 1998: 75, 77).*

Since her teens she started to be [possessed] and became [wild]. At the beginning, when people used to go tapping rubber, she liked to [masturbate] with trees, [rub her genitals] against them, luckily without taking off her clothes. Then she became [interested] in animals too, especially goats. Since she also [raped] and tortured neighbors' animals we decided to put her in a cage. She generally became wild one week before her period came. [...] She bent her leg against the bamboo and wrapped her hip on the bamboo poles [moving up and down]. Two minutes later she gave a [cry of pleasure] and then the hut stopped vibrating.

The empathy Saman shows her is well received by Upi, who manifests her joy with caressing his hands while smiling. But the moment of closeness is interrupted by the aggressive behavior of Upi, who manifests her arousal by touching Saman's sexual organ.

*Perempuan itu, tatapan sepasang matanya yang tidak seragam lalu [meluncur ke bawah]; dari wajah pemuda itu, ke perutnya, dan [berhenti di pangkal paha] si lelaki; seraya [tangannya menjamah gumpalan di sana] sebelum Wis sempat menyadari (Utami 1998: 76).*

The girl's lopsided gaze shifted [downwards], from his face to the stomach, coming to rest on his [groin], her hand was on the [bulge] in his trousers before he realized what she was doing.

Driven by compassion for her destiny, Saman decides to help her by providing a large cage where she can stay in better conditions and to build her a totem, a physical representation of a phallus.

*Upi! Kenalkan, ini [pacarmu]! Namanya Totem. Totem Phallus. Kau boleh [masturbasi] dengan dia. Dia laki-laki yang [baik] dan [setia]* (Utami 1998: 78).

Upi come and meet your [boyfriend]! His name is Totem Phallus. You can [masturbate] with him. He is a good and faithful man.

But Upi reacts by pulling Saman's hand towards her breast in a manifestation of sexual arousal. Saman is aware of the fact that being a man makes it impossible for him to help Upi, because his presence only serves to arouse her. And he is aware that he is feeling more and more empathy towards her:

*Ia [ingin], tetapi gadis itu nampak masih [birahi] padanya* (Utami 1998: 80).

He [desired] to do it but the girl still appeared to be [lustful] about him.

I conclude this overview with a few notes on another 'transgressive' female character in the novel that represents the archetypical emotions of a village woman with local and universal features (Hatley 2002: 175), a woman who cannot always be described in rational terms (she often seemed not to be in places where she was or to be in places where she wasn't). The mother of Saman is warm, vivacious, beautiful and mysterious.

*Tetapi jika ia sedang berada di tempat ia ada, maka dia adalah wanita yang amat [hangat] dan [membangkitkan] [rasa] [sayang], sehingga suaminya dan orang-orang [lupa] pada sisi lain dirinya yang sulit [dipahami]* (Utami 1998: 44).

But when she was present in the place she occupied, she was very [warm] and [affectionate] and her husband and the others could [forget] about the other [incomprehensible] side of her nature.

The emotions that transpire from this character and from the relationship with Saman's father are of love but also of acceptance of her irrational component. The mother is accepted in her totality by her husband who forgets (*lupa*) her 'spiritual' part (*sisi lain yang sulit dipahami* 'the other side that is difficult to understand). Her 'supernatural' and therefore 'transgressive' nature is expressed when she goes alone into the forest or when she is alone and 'talks' to spirits and mostly in the three cases of pregnancy and death of children whose bodies were never found. She is described by the cognitive state of mind of confusion and loss of control, of fancy-dreaming, as somebody who often falls into a contemplative state (*termenung*) and very often enters a state of emptiness (*suwung*) or of musing (*tercenung*), all emotions and states of mind that set this woman apart from the stereotypical woman who lives as a function of her husband. She has a world of her own where she often goes alone to find her own realization.

*Ibunya kelihatan makin [cantik], tetapi perempuan itu makin sering [termenung], makin kerap memasuki [suwung]. [...] Tetapi istrinya [tercenung] saja* (Utami 1998: 48).

His mother looked more [beautiful] than ever but she became increasingly [contemplative] and retreated more and more often into [daydream] and emptiness. But her wife kept on being [musing and pensive].

Her husband, although very rational, accepts his wife's strange behavior and often asks her to avoid daydreaming (*melamun*) or losing control of her mind. His unconditional love towards his wife is another way to show how traditional roles are reversed.

*Dia membujuk si istri supaya jangan [melamun], apalagi berjalan-jalan ke pepohonan dengan [jiwa kosong] (Utami 1998: 49).*

He tried to persuade her to avoid [daydreaming], and most of all walking in the forest with her [empty soul].

*[...]Sambil [airmatanya] menitik, ia [menciumi] tangan suaminya yang tak pernah kehilangan [cinta] padanya meskipun dia tidak pernah menceritakan apa yang terjadi (Utami 1998: 51).*

While [tears] dropped from her eyes, she [kissed] the hand of her husband who had never lost his [love] to her, although she had never told anybody what had happened.

### Conclusion

Despite accusations after publication that *Saman* was overwhelmingly influenced by Western culture, we realize the great value of this literary work in investigating the representation of emotions in a country where major changes are occurring. In this novel a major emphasis is given to emotions of self-realization and sexual love, emotions and manifestations of liberation and assertiveness, of the declaration of female autonomy in the face of the patriarchal order through promiscuous sexual adventures and the transgression of sexual taboos. As Amiruddin (2005) puts it: *Saman* is an example of how the metaphors of female sexuality are used to challenge «the stigma of female sexuality» and «conventions in patriarchal culture». Indonesian patriarchal society has imprisoned women's bodies and sexualities. The sexual transgressions of the main female characters in Ayu Utami's *Saman* show the ways to rebel against taboos. Through this discussion, the female body and female sexuality are also challenging those in power. On the other hand, conventional societal myths of womanhood and moral conventions are openly condemned. The use of direct and taboo body terminology such as nipple, crotch, clitoris, penis, and of bodily sensations related to sex, such as orgasm, wet, ejaculation and climax, is empowering and liberating in the context of the restrictive norms that have long oppressed women's writing.

As pointed out by Hatley (1999: 455), the transgressions of social and sexual habits by the female characters are expressed in Laila's relationship with the married Sihar, the passionate affair between Yasmin and the priest Saman, the sexual promiscuity of Cok and Shakuntala, the crude parody of

female sexual ‘assertion’ embodied in the behavior of the intellectually-handicapped Upi, and even the irrational and supernatural nature of Saman’s mother. There is overt criticism among the four friends of repressive gender conventions, the unequal emphasis on female virginity, the symbolism of the marriage ceremony, and the overbearing parental control of female children.

The stereotypical rules of sexual morality are never expressed in this novel, nor are the typical female behaviors predominant in modern Indonesian literature, such as innocence, purity and refined feelings. The female capability to resist temptation – sometimes a victim but never the initiator of lustful encounters – is never portrayed in *Saman*. More assertive female perspectives are expressed by the women of the novel, such as Laila and Yasmin, and also Saman’s mother, who likes to separate herself from the common world, while liberated sexual attitudes are expressed by female characters such as Shakuntala and Cok. All in all, no celebration of traditional myths and values, no emotions of devotion and passion (Soenoto 2004), are ever portrayed. The traditional images of women as wives and homemakers rather than participants in the political domain, who have to keep their supportive wife-and-mother roles, who have to appear modest, virtuous and compliant, dependent upon and supportive morally and sexually of their men, are dissolved. If in the modern Indonesian literature up to the 1990s the general female image has been one of modesty, restraint and domesticity, of ‘traditional’ virtues of submission and acceptance (Hellwig 1994; Soenoto 2004), now there is an overt deviation from all this. Women authors such as Ayu Utami overwhelmingly write of middle-class women like themselves experiencing the joys, difficulties and frustrations of romance and marriage.

Through the analysis of emotions and their manifestation in this novel, we can observe how changes in society are mirrored in the text, in ways that are innovation in subverting the long-standing conventions of female representation and writing.

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## SUMMARY

*Saman* is an innovative novel on the Indonesian literary scene because it explores formerly taboo topics, such as female sexuality and desire, that fulfil a liberating function. The exaltation of the body, the excitement and satisfaction of basic instincts, the continuous reference to sex, and transgression from traditional values give women in this novel the chance to overcome moral restrictions imposed by religion and the long-held conventions of a traditional patriarchal society. The study of emotions and their representations in this novel allows us to observe the changes

that have occurred in the Indonesian cultural background due to the major changes that society has undertaken, especially following the development of openness and democracy that started to flourish shortly before the fall of President Soeharto in May 1998. The analysis of emotions and their manifestation is a good way of seeing how these are a reflection of changes at the societal level and lay the ground for drawing a history of emotions in Indonesia. In this novel manifestation of sexual love is largely employed, and very little room is given to traditional emotions of romantic love and female virtues such as virginity and obedience. In fact, a major emphasis is given to the emotions of self-realization and sexual love, and the emotions and manifestations of liberation and assertiveness through the transgression of sexual taboos.

*Keywords:* Indonesian novel, female literature, emotions, love, sex, transgression





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