



Figurative Language In Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan By Adia Puja As A Means Of Social Criticism (A Stylistic Study)

Nirwana Nirwana¹ , Syamsuddin Syamsuddin² ,
Juniati Juniati³ , Muh. Tahir⁴, Agustan Agustan⁵

¹²³⁴Tadulako University, Jl. Soekarno Hatta Km 09 Tondo, Palu, 94119, Indonesia
nirwana1998sastra@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms of figurative language in the novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* by Adia Puja as a means of conveying social criticism through a stylistic approach. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method to provide an in-depth understanding of the figurative language found in the novel. Data were collected through documentation study or library research. Meanwhile, data analysis was conducted using the Flow Analysis Model, which consists of three main stages carried out simultaneously: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. The results show that the novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* contains various forms of figurative language. The types of figurative language identified include personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, euphemism, paradox, and antithesis. The use of figurative language functions as a medium for the author to express social criticism toward phenomena occurring in society. Thus, figurative language in this novel not only provides aesthetic value to the literary work but also plays an essential role as a medium for delivering reflective social criticism of real-life situations.

Keywords: Figurative Language; Stylistics; Literature; Novel; Social Criticism

1. Introduction

Literary works are the result of an author's thoughts and creativity. Through literature, authors can express ideas, emotions, values, and social criticism in forms that possess both beauty and depth of meaning. Literary works are not only born from various life events but also from the author's awareness that literature represents an imaginative and fictional world. The creation process of a literary work is driven by the author's desire to present beauty while channeling ideas and feelings about the events they experience.

The view that literature is a form of imaginative expression rich in values is reinforced by Darma (2004:25), who states that literature is a part of art. Its branches such as literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history affirm that literary works contain an aesthetic structure that allows the author to express emotional and intellectual reactions to life experiences. In this context, the author does not merely record facts but transforms them into symbolic representations full of meaning.

The language used in literary works has aesthetic, imaginative, and expressive qualities. Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium to convey deep and beautiful meanings. The role of language in literature is crucial because it can arouse readers' interest

in the presented text. As stated by Semi (2012:6), the medium of literary creation is language; therefore, it can be understood that language plays a vital role in the world of literature. Language and literature have a very close relationship. Writers express and interpret their thoughts through language. In short, language is the medium through which literature exists.

The novel is one of the most concrete forms of an author's creativity in using written language. This creativity can be seen through the use of figurative language by the author. To enhance the narrative flow, authors often employ figurative language. Figurative language plays a significant role in building the overall story of a literary work. The distinctive features that can be analyzed in a novel are broad, including dialect, idiolect, and style. According to Aminuddin (2014:116), in the process of creating a literary work, language and literature are two inseparable elements. Both are latent forces that must be understood and mastered by the author.

The discussion of a novel cannot be separated from the use of figurative language. According to Keraf (2006:128), language style is a particular way used by a writer to express their thoughts and feelings through language, thus creating a specific effect on the reader. Figurative language not only beautifies the text but also strengthens the content and message being conveyed. In literary works, figurative language becomes an essential element that creates aesthetic appeal while deepening the implied meaning.

One of the novels rich in figurative language is *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* (*There Is No Ode for the Sea*) by Adia Puja (2024). This novel was first published in 2020 under the title *Makan Tahi* (*Eating Feces*) by Langgam Pustaka in West Java. Upon its initial publication, the novel received a mixed reception from readers both praise and criticism, mainly due to its unique title and theme: the story of a village whose inhabitants consume feces as their staple food. Beyond its unconventional theme, however, the novel addresses broader issues, including the lives of nomadic sea tribes, the state of modern journalism, and political tensions before and after elections. All of these issues are contained within this 209-page novel.

In 2024, the author changed the title from *Makan Tahi* to *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*. This change was driven by the author's desire to expand the novel's thematic scope beyond merely depicting the habits of the Karanggaling villagers who consume waste. In addition to the title change, several minor revisions were made to enhance reader enjoyment and strengthen the narrative.

The author, Adia Puja, is a former journalist and a competent novelist. One of her novels, *Mustika Zakar Celing* (2023), was recognized as a noteworthy manuscript in the 2021 Jakarta Arts Council Novel Competition and was listed in *Tempo* magazine's 2023 Longlist of Selected Literary Books.

Adia Puja skillfully presents *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* with figurative language that is both beautiful and straightforward, making it easy to understand. Figurative expressions appear throughout the narrative and are used to describe characters, events, and settings. As a result, readers feel as though they become familiar with the characters, the events they experience, and the places where the story unfolds. Therefore, *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* becomes particularly interesting to study from the perspective of figurative language as a medium for social criticism.

The novel not only explores everyday life but also offers social criticism. Social criticism refers to expressions of critique, feedback, objection, satire, or evaluation of phenomena that deviate from or violate social values. Such criticism is often delivered implicitly through creative language so that it does not directly offend its target. The beauty of *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* lies in its use of figurative language. This figurative language serves as a vehicle for the author to achieve specific purposes one of which is to criticize various aspects of social reality within contemporary society.

Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan can be seen as a medium to convey criticism toward the conditions of coastal communities who depend on the sea for their livelihoods, the current state of journalism, and other aspects of social critique. The social aspects depicted in the novel reflect the character and mentality of the community portrayed. Through these depictions, readers can perceive social inequalities and forms of social criticism embedded in the narrative. The novel's aesthetic strength lies in its use of figurative language, which not only enhances the beauty of the narrative but also functions effectively as a means of conveying social criticism.

This research employs a stylistic approach. According to Ratna (2007:236), stylistics is defined as the study of language style an interdisciplinary field between linguistics and literature. It examines the application of linguistic principles in literary style analysis, focusing on how language is used in literary works while considering both aesthetic aspects and their social background.

The stylistic analysis in this research focuses on the use of figurative language employed by the author to convey meaning through language as a medium. This serves as a strong basis for the researcher to conduct an in-depth study of the forms of figurative language used in Adia Puja's *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*. Based on the explanations above, the researcher titles this study: *Figurative Language in Adia Puja's Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan as a Means of Social Criticism*.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Methods

Stylistics is a branch of language study that encompasses a broad scope in revealing aesthetic expression through literary works. Pradopo (2009:10), in *Pengkajian Puisi (The Study of Poetry)*, explains that stylistics includes the study of intonation, sound, words, and sentences, which give rise to variations such as intonational style, sound style, lexical style, and syntactic style. Meanwhile, Sudjiman (1993:13–14), in *Bunga Rampai Stilistika (An Anthology of Stylistics)*, emphasizes that the focus of stylistics is style, namely the way a writer or speaker conveys meaning through language. Thus, stylistics highlights language style as not only a tool for communication but also an aesthetic medium within literary works.

In stylistic studies, figures of speech, figurative language, and style play a crucial role as instruments for expressing aesthetic values in literature. Figures of speech are linguistic strategies that produce beauty and suggestive power within a text. According to Keraf (2009:113), a figure of speech is a distinctive way of expressing thoughts through language that reflects the writer's personality and inner character. Figurative language, rooted in indirect or connotative meaning, serves as a medium for conveying messages in imaginative and symbolic ways. Its presence allows

readers to grasp deeper meanings not only literal interpretations but also the aesthetic and ideological values embedded in the text.

Furthermore, language style and figurative language become central elements in stylistics because both reveal an author's distinctive way of shaping language. Tarigan (2009:5) defines language style as a rhetorical form that uses words effectively to persuade, influence, or impress readers and listeners. Figurative language, as an overarching concept encompassing figures of speech and tropes, enhances the aesthetic and critical functions of literature. This aligns with Sudjiman's (1993:13) view that stylistics focuses on style the author's manner of conveying meaning through language. Hence, the involvement of these elements not only affirms the artistic value of a literary work but also enriches the process of interpretation and reader understanding of the author's intended message.

Figurative language or stylistic expression forms an essential part of stylistic analysis. Through the use of metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles, and other figures of speech, writers create expressions that are aesthetic, imaginative, and meaningful. Keraf (2009:55) notes that figurative language represents a deviation from everyday speech, intended to achieve specific aesthetic effects. Therefore, figurative style not only beautifies literary works but also strengthens the author's distinctive voice and serves as a marker of genre, movement, or literary period. Figurative language appears in both spoken and written forms and can be found in literary and non-literary works. Its elements include diction, sentence structure, figures of speech, imagery, rhyme, and the meanings constructed by the author. The distinctiveness of a writer's style allows readers to identify the genre, typography, and aesthetic patterns of a work. Thus, figurative language plays an essential role in shaping expressive and aesthetic nuances while reflecting the ideology and spirit of its time.

In line with this, Natawidjaja (1986:5), in *Apresiasi Stilistika Intermasa (Stylistic Appreciation of Intermasa)*, emphasizes that stylistics involves understanding, appreciating, applying, and utilizing language effectively to achieve artistic rhetoric. This study encompasses proverbs, expressions, language styles, sentence structures, and associative forms of language that reinforce an author's expression. This view is supported by Leech & Short (2007:11–13), who state that stylistics is the study of style in language, aiming to explain the relationship between linguistic form and artistic function. In this context, figurative language becomes a central element because it reveals stylistic uniqueness, rhetorical power, and the author's identity.

This study focuses on stylistic analysis of figurative language in the novel to uncover the aesthetic effects it produces. In traditional understanding, figurative language is often equated with figures of speech. Figurative language refers to the deliberate choice of words used by writers to achieve beauty and effectiveness in communication. Generally, the scope of figurative language is broader than that of figures of speech, since figures of speech are part of figurative language and function to support it (Ratna, 2014:164). Therefore, this study limits its discussion to figurative language due to its close relation to linguistic aspects used to convey social messages or social criticism in Adia Puja's *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. According to Bogdan and Taylor (as cited in Moleong, 2007:3), qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed people and behaviors. Qualitative research is chosen because it aims to understand phenomena as they naturally occur, rather than under controlled or experimental conditions. Thus, the descriptive qualitative method is considered the most appropriate for this study.

The primary data source in this research is the novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* by Adia Puja. This novel was selected because of its distinctive vocabulary and linguistic uniqueness. Based on the research problems and objectives, the novel demonstrates significant use of figurative language. Furthermore, it possesses originality and employs figurative expression as a vehicle for conveying social criticism, making it highly relevant to the focus of this study.

Data collection in this research is conducted through documentation or library research, focusing on the text of *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* as the primary data source. According to Moleong (2007:5), documentation involves direct engagement with the text and rational interpretation of its meaning. During the process, a documentation guide is developed to serve as the research instrument.

The collected data are analyzed in accordance with the research problems and objectives. The analysis technique employed is the Flow Analysis Model, which involves three concurrent activities: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, 1992:13).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Forms of Figurative Language in Adia Puja's *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*

Figurative language is one of the essential elements in literary works because it serves to enhance linguistic beauty while strengthening imagination and meaning. Through figurative expression, authors are able to convey messages that are aesthetic, emotional, and at the same time, critical. In her novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja utilizes the power of figurative language as a distinctive hallmark of her writing style, setting her apart from other authors. The imaginative choice of diction and the varied use of stylistic devices make this work not only aesthetically valuable but also rich in social, political, and ecological meaning.

The selection of this novel as the object of study is based on the fact that it contains various forms of figurative language that do not merely beautify the narrative but also function as a medium for social criticism. The novel reflects the realities of coastal communities, colonialism, environmental exploitation, and the moral decline of the media and government. The following section presents the various forms of figurative language found in Adia Puja's *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*.

3.1.1 Personification, Simile, Metaphor, and Hyperbole in the Description of Nature

In literary texts, descriptions of nature extend beyond their function as mere settings and serve as expressive tools for conveying emotional states, inner atmospheres, and aesthetic values through figurative language. Authors strategically employ stylistic devices to animate natural elements, construct sensory imagery, and articulate the characters' subjective experiences. In Adia Puja's novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, nature is represented through poetic diction that reflects both beauty and emotional immersion.

"I do not know how long I lay on the sand. The surge of the waves, akin to the sound of a harp played by Apollo, continued to soothe my ears... I could spend the remainder of my life in the same position to enjoy such a simple offering." (22)

This passage demonstrates the simultaneous use of multiple figurative devices. Personification is evident in the depiction of the waves as producing music, thereby attributing artistic agency to a natural phenomenon. Simile is explicitly realized through the comparison between the sound of the waves and the sound of a harp, enhancing auditory imagery. Metaphor appears in the phrase "a simple offering," which conceptualizes natural beauty as a form of aesthetic or spiritual sustenance. Furthermore, hyperbole is expressed in the character's claim that he could remain in the same position for the rest of his life, emphasizing the intensity of comfort and tranquility experienced. Together, these figurative elements generate a calm and lyrical atmosphere, highlighting Adia Puja's stylistic mastery in evoking aesthetic experience through imaginative language.

3.1.2 Metaphor and Personification as a Critique of Colonialism

Figurative language frequently functions as an effective medium through which authors articulate social and political criticism in a subtle yet incisive manner. By employing stylistic devices such as metaphor and personification, writers are able to embed critiques of social inequality and colonial history without overt exposition. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja utilizes imaginative language to expose colonial trauma and its enduring impact on both the land and its people.

"Large ships from the West soon filled the waters of the Dutch East Indies... an archipelagic land designated as a storehouse of spices and endowed with soil as fertile as a mother's womb." (46–47)

This excerpt foregrounds metaphor in the phrase "soil as fertile as a mother's womb," which emphasizes the Nusantara's role as a source of life, growth, and sustenance. Personification is also evident in the portrayal of the land as a maternal figure, implicitly endowed with nurturing qualities and emotional significance. These figurative forms function collectively as instruments of social criticism directed at the colonial exploitation of the archipelago's natural resources. The expression "storehouse of spices" reflects the colonial gaze that reduced the Nusantara to an economic object, valued primarily for its material wealth rather than recognized as a sovereign and culturally rich territory.

Historically, the passage alludes to the colonial era in which Indonesia's abundant natural resources became the focus of European competition and domination. Consequently, the use of metaphor and personification operates as a rhetorical strategy that exposes colonial inequality and underscores the enduring legacy of exploitation that continues to shape contemporary economic and social structures.

3.1.3. Hyperbole as a Critique of Marine Exploitation

In literary discourse, the sea is often represented not merely as a geographical entity but as a symbol of life, a source of livelihood, and a contested space of economic power. Through maritime imagery, authors are able to expose social realities that lie beneath natural beauty, including practices of exploitation and structural inequality. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja portrays the sea as a site of economic injustice experienced by coastal communities through the strategic use of evocative figurative language.

“Soon, gigantic ships once again crowded the Uru Strait... with a single haul, nets as large as a giant's palm were able to catch fish equal to the total catch of Karanggaling's fishermen over several months.” (61)

This excerpt employs hyperbole and metaphor to accentuate the stark disparity between traditional fishermen and the modern fishing industry. The phrases “nets as large as a giant's palm” and “the catch of several months” function as hyperbolic expressions that magnify the scale of excessive exploitation. Meanwhile, the metaphor “gigantic ships” symbolizes large corporate entities that monopolize marine resources with unchecked greed. Such stylistic choices operate as a form of social and ecological critique directed at capitalist economic systems that marginalize small coastal communities while simultaneously threatening marine sustainability.

Historically, this representation echoes the long trajectory of maritime exploitation in Indonesia, from the colonial period to the present, in which economic policies have persistently favored large-scale capital over local livelihoods.

3.1.4. Metaphor as a Critique of Social Life and the Media

In literary narratives, mass media is frequently portrayed as a reflective surface through which the social and moral dynamics of modern society are examined. By employing figurative language, authors are able to articulate sharp critiques of the media's shifting role from an instrument of public enlightenment to a mechanism of power and manipulation. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja utilizes metaphor and antithesis to expose the erosion of journalistic idealism amid political interests and information capitalism.

“News is no longer a form of nourishing information but has become a weapon used to attack opponents.” (146)

This statement employs both metaphor and antithesis to underscore the transformation of media functions. The phrase “nourishing information” metaphorically represents the ideal role of the media as a provider of knowledge and public education, whereas “a weapon used to attack opponents” symbolizes the distortion of journalism into an instrument of political conflict. The antithetical contrast between these two images highlights the moral degradation of contemporary journalism, which has become entangled in the interests of capital and power.

Through this figurative construction, the text delivers a pointed social critique of media commercialization and the erosion of press independence in fulfilling its democratic and educational responsibilities.

3.1.5. Euphemism and Metaphor in the Critique of Structural Violence

Language in literary texts functions not only as a means of narrating events but also as a mechanism for concealing or softening harsh realities. Through the use of figurative language, authors are able to articulate critiques of violence and oppression without stating them explicitly. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja employs euphemism and metaphor to reveal the structural violence experienced by marginalized communities, particularly those situated on the social and political periphery.

“It was not uncommon for their fellow wanderers to be captured and to disappear without a trace.” (91)

The phrase “disappear without a trace” functions as a euphemism that mitigates the brutality of forced disappearance and state violence. At the same time, the metaphorical framing of disappearance suggests the deliberate obscuring of violence within oppressive power structures. Together, these figurative devices operate as symbolic forms of resistance, exposing the normalized repression faced by vulnerable groups.

Historically, the passage reflects the collective trauma endured by coastal and nomadic maritime communities living under persistent political and economic threats, thereby underscoring the enduring presence of structural violence in their lived realities.

3.1.6. Irony and Cynicism as a Critique of Government and Politics

Literature frequently functions as a reflective medium through which political and governmental realities are critically examined. By employing satirical and figurative language, authors are able to express disillusionment with social inequality and political misconduct without explicit confrontation. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja utilizes irony and cynicism as rhetorical strategies to expose governmental hypocrisy and political practices that diverge from the interests of the people.

“Although this Republic is often celebrated as an agrarian and maritime nation... many people continue to live below the hunger line.” (117)

“Karanggaling has become a campaign object... along with other sudden concerns that invariably emerge on the eve of general elections.” (175)

These excerpts employ irony and cynicism to foreground the disparity between proclaimed national prosperity and the lived reality of widespread poverty. Irony arises from the stark contrast between the glorified image of an “agrarian and maritime nation” and the persistence of communities living “below the hunger line.” Cynicism is evident in the sarcastic portrayal of opportunistic political gestures that resurface only during election periods, suggesting the instrumentalization of marginalized communities for electoral purposes. Through this figurative language, the novel articulates a pointed social critique of governmental hypocrisy and political elites who prioritize short-term electoral gains over the long-term welfare of the populace.

3.1.7. Simile as Social Critique and Moral Reflection

Simile in literary discourse functions not merely as a decorative comparative device but as a medium for moral reflection and incisive social critique. Through analogy, authors are able to articulate critical perspectives on human behavior, power relations, and social conditions in a subtle yet thought-provoking manner. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja strategically employs similes to expose the irony of social and political life while awakening readers’ awareness of the erosion of idealism and moral responsibility.

“For the Government of the Republic is no different from the Colonial Government.” (93)

“Idealism is like a fart: it releases its odor at first, then quickly dissipates into nothing.” (130)

“The newspaper was no different from a pair of binoculars, constantly observing the government’s every move.” (131)

These excerpts demonstrate similes serving distinct critical functions. In the first statement, the comparison “no different from the Colonial Government” underscores the continuity between post-independence governance and colonial forms of domination. The second excerpt employs a satirical simile “idealism is like a fart” to critique moral hypocrisy and the rapid erosion of political commitment. Meanwhile, the third simile, “like a pair of binoculars,” represents the normative role of the media as a vigilant observer of governmental power. Collectively, these similes convey reflective moral criticism directed at the decline of idealism, ethical governance, and the media’s responsibility in safeguarding truth and accountability.

3.1.8. Paradox and Antithesis as a Reflection of Social Inequality

Paradox and antithesis are stylistic devices frequently employed to expose contradictions embedded within social realities. Through the juxtaposition of opposing ideas, authors are able to reveal the irony of human existence and the structural inequalities concealed beneath everyday life. In *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan*, Adia Puja utilizes these forms of figurative language to portray the

paradoxical conditions of coastal and inland communities who inhabit environments of natural abundance yet remain ensnared in poverty and injustice.

“Surviving in the forest is more difficult than surviving at sea, despite the greater abundance of food.” (52)

This statement exemplifies paradox, presenting a logical contradiction that nevertheless conveys a profound social truth. Although the forest is depicted as resource-rich, survival within it is portrayed as more challenging due to unjust social and economic structures. The paradox functions as a vehicle of social critique, underscoring that natural wealth does not automatically translate into human prosperity. Symbolically, the passage alludes to the broader dynamics of resource exploitation and economic inequality that entangle both coastal and inland communities within persistent systems of marginalization.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the novel *Tidak Ada Ode Bagi Lautan* by Adia Puja, it can be concluded that the use of figurative language in the work serves two main functions: the aesthetic function and the social critique function. Aesthetically, figurative language beautifies the narrative and enriches the expressive quality of the text. Adia Puja employs various figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, euphemism, irony, cynicism, antithesis, and paradox—to enhance the reader’s imagination and evoke poetic nuances in both the depiction of nature and the characters’ social lives.

Ideologically, the figurative language in this novel acts as a medium of social and political criticism, voicing issues of structural injustice, environmental exploitation, coastal poverty, modern colonialism, and the moral decline of the media and government. Through symbolic and satirical expressions, the author highlights how the suffering of marginalized communities is often neglected by power and capital.

Thus, it can be concluded that figurative language not only serves to beautify storytelling style but also plays a crucial role as a medium of resistance and social awareness. Adia Puja utilizes the power of language as a tool of consciousness encouraging readers to think critically about the power relations that oppress both humanity and nature.

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