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### The Aesthetics of Image in the Poem “Sihir Hujan” by Sapardi Djoko Damono: A Stylistic Study Based on Abrams' Classification

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#### Abstract

This research presents novelty by exploring in depth the construction of images in the poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono through a stylistic approach, especially the analysis of images according to Abrams' classification. In contrast to previous studies that tend to highlight the thematic aspects, diction, or structure of Sapardi's poetry in general, this study specifically fills a gap in Indonesian stylistic research by analyzing how visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and organic imagery is used strategically to build atmosphere and convey emotions implicitly. This study has never been conducted before comprehensively on the poem "Sihir Hujan". The results of the analysis show the dominance of visual and auditory imagery, which not only reinforces the imaginative power of poetry, but also reveals the poet's layers of meaning and emotional intensity. This study confirms that Sapardi Djoko Damono designs imagery as the main aesthetic element in conveying subjective experiences, not just as stylistic ornaments. These findings contribute to the study of stylistics in modern Indonesian poetry, especially in understanding the aesthetic workings of Sapardi's poetry, which has not been explored extensively from an imagery perspective comprehensively.

**Keywords:** style, image, poetry, Sapardi Djoko Damono, miracle of rain

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**Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini menghadirkan kebaruan dengan mengeksplorasi secara mendalam konstruksi citra dalam puisi "Sihir Hujan" karya Sapardi Djoko Damono melalui pendekatan stilistika, khususnya analisis citra menurut klasifikasi Abrams. Berbeda dengan kajian-kajian sebelumnya yang cenderung menyoroti aspek tematik, diksi, atau struktur puisi Sapardi secara umum, studi ini secara khusus mengisi kekosongan dalam penelitian stilistika Indonesia dengan menganalisis bagaimana citra visual, auditori, taktil, kinestetik, dan organik digunakan secara strategis untuk membangun atmosfer dan menyampaikan emosi secara implisit. Studi ini belum pernah dilakukan sebelumnya secara komprehensif terhadap puisi "Sihir Hujan". Hasil analisis menunjukkan dominasi citra visual dan pendengaran, yang tidak hanya memperkuat kekuatan imajinatif puisi, tetapi juga menyingkap lapisan makna dan intensitas emosional penyair. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa Sapardi Djoko Damono merancang citra sebagai elemen estetika utama dalam menyampaikan pengalaman subjektif, bukan sekadar sebagai ornamen gaya. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada kajian stilistik dalam puisi Indonesia modern, terutama dalam memahami cara kerja estetika puisi Sapardi, yang belum dieksplorasi secara ekstensif dari perspektif citra secara komprehensif.*

**Kata kunci:** gaya, citra, puisi, Sapardi Djoko Damono, keajaiban hujan

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**Introduction**

Poets often use distinctive and intensive language, even going beyond the usual communicative functions to create a certain effect of beauty. Language in poetry not only conveys a denotative meaning, but also builds an aesthetic nuance through the use of language or stylistic style.

Stylistic studies is a linguistic approach used to uncover the style of language in literary works. Ali Imron Al Ma'ruf (2017) explained that stylistics seeks to trace the relationship between linguistic forms and aesthetic meanings in texts. Through this approach, elements such as diction, majas, syntax, and imagery are studied in depth to understand how literary works convey meaning indirectly. In the context of poetry, the stylistic approach becomes very relevant because poetry is dense, symbolic, and relies on the power of language in conveying feelings, images, and inner moods. Stylistics helps readers and researchers explore the aesthetic power of poetry not only from the content, but from the way the poem is delivered.

One of the important elements that has received attention in stylistic studies is imagery, which is the image that poets construct through language to stimulate the reader's sensory response. Imagery not only embellishes the text, but also becomes the main means of creating the expressive and emotional power of poetry. Abrams (1999) calls image as a bridge between the poet's mind and the reader's aesthetic experience. Imagery in poetry can be visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, or organic all working to present a concrete and emotional atmosphere in the reader's mind. In the context of aesthetics, imagery is able to transfer the poet's subjective experience into the realm of reflection and collective experience through language.

In the realm of modern Indonesian poetry, Sapardi Djoko Damono occupies an important position as a poet known for the simplicity of language and the depth of meaning it produces. His poem entitled "Sihir Hujan" is one of the works that displays poetic power through the processing of images that are gentle but emotional. The rain in the poem is not only present as a natural object, but as a symbol of inner experience, memories, and intimate silence. Through the exploration of style, it can be seen how Sapardi builds the power of his poetry not through long narratives, but through the images he creates in a subtle and aesthetic way. This poem is also the right object to be analyzed with a stylistic approach, especially in the framework of image analysis.

A number of previous studies have raised Sapardi Djoko Damono's poems from various perspectives. Marlina (2017) in the journal *Language and Literature* examined the semantic aspects

in Sapardi's poems and found that the strength of Sapardi's poems lies in the simplicity of form and depth of meaning. Meanwhile, Rahmawati (2020) in her thesis entitled "Language Style in the Anthology of June Rain Poems" reveals the dominance of the use of personification and metaphor in the Sapardi language style. However, the two studies have not specifically addressed the aspect of image as the main focus, especially in a stylistic approach that associates it with the expressive and inner power of poetry. In this context, there is a void that has not been comprehensively explored.

This research is here to fill this void by placing imagery as the main focus in analyzing the poem "Sihir Hujan". This research not only highlights the types of imagery that Sapardi uses, but also examines how these images work aesthetically and emotionally in shaping the reader's experience. More specifically, this study focuses on affective imagery and inner movement, which includes organic and kinesthetic imagery in the Abrams classification. Thus, this research offers a new contribution to the stylistic study of Indonesian literature, especially in revealing the imaging techniques used by Sapardi to create inner atmosphere and emotional resonance.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: how the form and use of affective images and inner movements are manifested in the poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono, and what are the aesthetic implications of the use of these images in the context of modern Indonesian poetry? This research is based on the assumption that poetry not only conveys meaning in a denotative way, but also arranges reflective experiences through a distinctive style. Therefore, this study aims to reveal how Sapardi creates an inner and aesthetic effect through image processing, as well as enriching the treasures of Indonesian literary criticism with an approach that emphasizes the role of style in building meaning and atmosphere.

### Method

This study stylistically examines the poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono by highlighting two main aspects in the poetic style, namely affective imagery and inner movement. These terms are used as analytical categories to describe how Sapardi processes his poetic language into a medium to build an emotional atmosphere and convey inner dynamics that are not explicitly expressed. Although they are not standard terminology in classical stylistics, they are developed from theories of imagery in poetry that have been discussed by literary and aesthetic experts.

In general, the term imagery refers to the representation of language that evokes the reader's sensory response, either in the form of visual imagery (sight), auditory (hearing), tactile (touch), kinesthetic (movement), organic (body feelings), or a combination of all of them. In this sense, M.H. Abrams (1999) in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* emphasizes that imagery in poetry is the poet's way of bridging between the subjective world and the aesthetic experience of the reader through the presentation of sensations or perceptions. Abrams calls imagery a poet's primary tool for "moving abstract meaning into concrete form through intense sensory associations."

From this division, organic and kinesthetic images became the starting point for the birth of the terms affective image and inner movement in this study. Affective imagery refers to the representation of language that evokes emotions and psychological nuances in the mind of the reader. This term is reinforced by Wolosky (2001) in *The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem*, who explains that imagery can extend its meaning into an emotional or spiritual experience that is not just limited to physical sensations. Wolosky states that "Poetic Imagery Often Triggers Affective Responses That Are Psychological in Nature Rather Than Merely Sensory," which means that imagery in poetry also plays a role in evoking inner feelings such as sadness, serenity, hope, or emptiness. Thus, affective imagery in this study is understood as a poetic image that

creates a deep emotional resonance without explicitly mentioning that emotion.

Meanwhile, inner movements are adapted from the concept of kinesthetic imagery, which is an image that depicts movement or muscle tension. However, in the aesthetic approach of modern poetry, this concept extends to depiction of internal dynamics, namely mood swings, inner turmoil, and psychological transitions of lyrical characters. Mukarovsky (1977) in *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts* states that in modern poetry, mental movements are implicitly expressions of changes in consciousness and feeling, which are not narratically elaborated, but are felt through changes in atmosphere, rhythm, or imagery. Thus, mental movements in this context refer to emotional and reflective dynamics that develop along with the flow of the poem's array, as if the reader is invited to follow the poet's inner waves through symbolic and suggestive language.

The choice of terms affective imagery and mental movement is intended to emphasize that Sapardi's poetic style in the poem "Sihir Hujan" moves more in the realm of inner experience and subtle emotional atmosphere. Both serve as a medium to present contemplative and intimate nuances, which are characteristic of Sapardi's poems. This approach also expands the stylistic understanding of modern Indonesian poetry, as it proves that the imagery elements in poetry are not only descriptive, but also capable of being the main instrument in the formation of profound aesthetic and emotional effects.

On this basis, this research not only contributes to the stylistic study of Indonesian poetry, but also introduces a new perspective on reading Sapardi Djoko Damono's poetry, namely through the reading of imagery as an affective mechanism and inner movement as a dynamics of meaning. This approach is also a conceptual novelty in bridging classical stylistic theory with a more intersubjective and reflective practice of contemporary poetry reading.

## Results and Discussion

The poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono shows the power of aesthetics that lies in the use of images that are subtle, full of depth, and touch the emotional side of the reader. Imagery, according to M.H. Abrams (1999), is the use of language that represents sensory experiences, whether visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, or organic. In stylistics, imagery is used not only to depict objects, but to build atmosphere, convey emotions, and direct the reader to a deeper meaning. Sapardi uses imagery as the main strategy in creating aesthetic and inner effects. Here is the full text of the poem "Sihir Hujan" as a basis for analysis:

### **Sihir Hujan**

*(Sapardi Djoko Damono)*

Rain knows trees, roads, and ditches well  
the sound can be differentiated;  
You'll hear it even after you've closed the doors and windows  
Even though you have turned off the lights.

The rain, which knows the right to discriminate, has fallen  
in trees, roads, and ditches –  
bewitch you so that you don't have time to argue at all  
time to catch the revelation that you must keep secret.

The first stanza of the poem presents visual and auditory imagery simultaneously. The

phrase "Rain knows trees, roads, and ditches" depicts a concrete scene that can be visually imagined, but accompanied by the personification of rain as a "knowing" entity. This shows that the rain in this poem is not just a natural phenomenon, but an active and conscious subject. The sentence "the sound can be distinguished" presents a complex auditory image, where the sound of rain is a medium of differentiation between physical spaces. It reinforces the acoustic atmosphere of the poem, while introducing a central theme: that rain is not just a setting, but an actor who shapes the inner experience.

The line "you will hear it even though you have closed the doors and windows / even though you have turned off the lights" indicates the intensification of the sensory experience. The sound of rain is still present, even when all physical access to the outside world is closed. Here there is a combination of auditory and visual imagery (lights, doors, windows), which is interpreted as a metaphor for the presence of irrepressible emotions. Rain becomes a psychological force that transcends the boundaries of the body and space.

In the second stanza, Sapardi emphasized the role of rain as an agent of inner change. The line "The rain, which knows the right to discriminate, has fallen / on trees, roads, and ditches" repeats the visual and auditory imagery as the basis for atmospheric formation. But its stylistic function now shifts to the formation of a deeper contemplative atmosphere. This is the backdrop for the kinesthetic and organic imagery that appears in the next line: "bewitching you so that you don't have time at all / to catch the revelation you have to keep secret."

The kinesthetic image appears in the phrase "no time to groan", which implies body shock or restrained reflexive movement. Meanwhile, organic imagery is seen in "capturing revelation", implying a profound inner experience, a spiritual enlightenment or an epiphany that comes suddenly. The "revelation" here is not just religious, but a symbol of a very personal new understanding. The decision to "keep secret" the revelation also reinforces the emotional and reflective aspects, signaling that these experiences are internal, intense, and not to be expressed openly.

In a modern stylistic approach, Peter Verdonk (2002) explains that the use of imagery in poetry can form a complex psychological atmosphere, especially when conveyed in an indirect style of language. This is also reinforced by Reuven Tsur (2003) in the concept of cognitive poetics, which states that symbolism and diction choices are able to create emotional resonance in the reader's mind without having to express feelings explicitly. Sapardi utilizes both approaches effectively in "Sihir Hujan": he does not express sadness, longing, or emotion directly, but builds everything through controlled structures and symbols.

Table 1. Analysis of the Poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono

No.	Type of Imagery	Poetic Quotation	Meaning and Stylistic Function	Type of Experience
1	Visual	"Rain knows trees, roads, and ditches well" "The voice can be differentiated"	Describes a concrete scene; the rain is personified as a conscious subject.	External sensory experience (sight)
2	Auditory	"The voice can be differentiated"	The sound of rain as a spatial marker; enhances the acoustic atmosphere and rain's role as actor.	External sensory experience (hearing)
3	Visual &	"You will hear it	Combines sound imagery and	Sensory and

	Auditory	even after you have closed the doors and windows / you turn off the lights"	visual objects; a metaphor for emotions that cannot be suppressed.	psychological experience
4	Visual & Auditory	"The rain, who knows the right to discriminate, has fallen / on trees, roads, and ditches"	Repetition of imagery to create a contemplative and reflective atmosphere.	Deep perception of the natural surroundings
5	Kinesthetic	"No time to fight"	Suppressed reflexive movement; the body is shocked or resigned to internal change.	Bodily response to inner events
6	Organic	"Catching the revelation you must keep secret"	Deep spiritual experience; a symbol of enlightenment or awareness not verbally expressed.	Emotions and inner experiences (epiphany)

From this analysis it can be concluded that the poem "Sihir Hujan" strategically uses visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and organic imagery to establish a calm, yet deep reflective atmosphere. Sapardi's simple but meaningful style makes this poem a representation of contemplative aesthetics in modern Indonesian literature. The use of imagery serves not only as a description, but as a channel of emotions and touching inner experiences, showing how the style of language can bridge the outside world and the inner world of the poet.

Thus, the findings of this study strengthen Sapardi Djoko Damono's position as a contemplative poet who consciously uses style to convey spiritual and psychological experiences in a subtle way. This research contributes to the expansion of stylistic approaches to modern Indonesian poetry, especially in understanding how imagery is used as a medium of aesthetics and deep inner expression.

## Conclusion

The poem "Sihir Hujan" by Sapardi Djoko Damono offers a profound aesthetic dimension through the dominance of affective imagery and inner movements, which form a contemplative and emotional atmosphere. Through a stylistic approach, this study shows that Sapardi does not only use imagery as a linguistic ornament, but also as an expressive device to voice subtle but powerful inner experiences.

The use of simple diction, a calm syntactic structure, and symbolic non-visual imagery make this poem unique among rain-themed works. The focus on silence and inner longing opens up a new space in the meaning of modern Indonesian poetry, while emphasizing the importance of stylistic elements in building meaning and emotional resonance.

This study contributes to the development of the stylistic theory of modern Indonesian literature, by highlighting the function of emotional imagery as an effective aesthetic strategy in communicating the complexity of human feelings. These findings broaden the understanding of Sapardi's work and enrich a deeper and reflective approach to literary appreciation.

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