

A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Representation of Resistance In A. A. Navi's Short Story "Robohnya Surau Kami"

Cita Afiyah Nursanti¹, Otong Setiawan Djuharie²

English Literature Universitas Islam Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung^{1,w}

Author's Email: 26citaafiyah@gmail.com, otongsetiawandjuharie@uinsgd.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the theme of resistance in A. A. Navis's short story Robohnya Surau Kami (The Collapse of Our Surau) via Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. Initially published in 1956, this narrative is regarded as one of the pivotal pieces in Indonesian literature due to its commentary on religious formalism, societal fatalism, and apathy towards social inequities. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive technique, this study treats the text of the story as its main data and examines it through Fairclough's tripartite model: micro (textual examination), meso (discursive practice), and macro (sociocultural context). The results illustrate that on the micro level, Navis employs emotionally charged language, irony, satire, and repetition to contest limited understandings of faith and highlight social accountability as an ethical duty. On the meso level, the complex narrative structure and the employment of traditional Minangkabau storytelling methods serve as discursive techniques to express criticism in a subtle yet effective manner. Characters like Ajo Sidi and the Grandfather embody conflicting ideological viewpoints that shape the conversation around resistance. At the macro level, the narrative mirrors the socio-historical realities of Indonesia in the post-independence era, specifically addressing challenges such as structural poverty, religious formalism, and cultural fatalism. The research concludes that Robohnya Surau Kami is a significant example of ideological resistance, promoting a harmony between spiritual commitment and active societal involvement. These outcomes add to the increasing utilization of CDA in literary analysis and confirm the lasting significance of Navis's work as a medium for social critique and ideological contemplation.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis; resistance; ideology; religious formalism; The Collapse of Our Mosque.*

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INTRODUCTION

Literature has been acknowledged for ages as a significant channel for articulating social critique and illustrating the truths of human existence. Through various narrative strategies, writers can interrogate prevailing beliefs, contest societal conventions, and illustrate different types of defiance. A prominent example that encapsulates these aspects is the short story *Robohnya Surau Kami* by A. A. Navis, which delivers a deep assessment of religious practices and societal perspectives.

Since its foundational formulation, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been concerned with examining the relationship between language, power, and ideology. Fairclough (1995) argues that connections between language use and the exercise of power are often not immediately apparent yet are vitally important to understanding how social relations operate. In this regard, CDA offers an appropriate framework to investigate the connection between language, authority, and belief systems within the text. CDA facilitates a deeper insight into how meanings are generated on various levels, which encompass textual characteristics, discursive methods, and wider societal contexts. Utilizing this methodology makes it feasible to discern how the portrayal of resistance functions not just within the narrative framework but also concerning the societal realities it portrays.

(Hidayatullah, 2017) This study aims to examine the portrayal of resistance in the novel *Robohnya Surau Kami* by focusing on linguistic choices, narrative techniques, and the cultural context that is closely interwoven within the story. Furthermore, this study seeks to uncover the underlying ideologies that are being questioned, particularly those related to religious formalism and social apathy. Through this analysis, the study contributes to a broader understanding of literature as a vehicle for ideological resistance and social critique. CDA explores how various texts engage in larger social conflicts, the positioning of readers and figures within power structures, and the ways they either support or challenge dominant interpretations. This perspective aligns well with Navis's narrative, which serves as a reflexive discourse—a tale regarding the influence of narratives, illustrating how stories can manipulate, inspire, or dismantle.

As highlighted in current academic research, the narrative showcases various, clashing forms of resistance that elude simplistic classification. For instance, the grandfather's unwavering commitment to ritualistic worship at the surau could be seen either as sincere faithfulness or as a spiritually stagnant retreat from community involvement. Ajo Sidi's challenging storytelling acts as a form of political provocation, yet it also serves as psychological manipulation that ultimately triggers the grandfather's death by suicide. Furthermore, (Fajri, t.t.) Navis's own narrative contribution the story itself serves as a critique of Minangkabau culture, Indonesian Islam, and perhaps the surau as an institution of ideological confinement. This diverse array of resistance calls for an analytical approach that is attuned to the mechanisms of power, functioning not solely through blatant force but through the nuanced practices of discourse that determine what can be expressed, who has a voice, and what is considered a significant action.

(Basid & As Sulthoni, 2018) This introduction will begin by outlining the theoretical basis of critical discourse analysis as it pertains to the narrative, focusing specifically on how this approach interprets resistance in connection with power, ideology, and dominance. Next, it reviews the current academic research concerning "*Robohnya Surau Kami*," highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of earlier methodologies. Afterward, the introduction introduces the research inquiries, methodological strategies, and analytical framework that will steer the investigation. Lastly, it gives a summary of the organization of the forthcoming chapters.

(Agustin Linawati dkk., 2022) The opening chapter explores the structural elements of the narrative, focusing on the framing method—the meeting between "Aku" and his spouse that sets the stage for recounting the grandfather's tale—how it guides readers' perceptions of the narrated incidents and forms distinct subject positions from which resistance can be discerned and assessed. The subsequent chapter investigates the various forms of resistance depicted in the narrative, evaluating the grandfather's ritualistic commitment, Ajo Sidi's metaphorical storytelling, and the grandfather's act of suicide as the pivotal climax of the tale. The final chapter places the narrative in the wider context of the discursive frameworks of Indonesia during the mid-twentieth century, utilizing postcolonial theory, the sociology surrounding

Minangkabau culture, and the evolution of Islamic reform movements to shed light on how the portrayal of resistance in the story relates to specific historical conflicts.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

(Fairclough, 2012) Navis, celebrated not merely as an author but also as a critic of culture, developed a story that still resonates with audiences over time, sparking continuous academic analysis from various theoretical angles. The primary theme of the tale—how ritual devotion relates to genuine social accountability has shown to be exceptionally insightful, forecasting modern discussions regarding faith practices, community duties, and the role of holy spaces in today's society.

The main source of data for this study is the short story "The Collapse of Our Surau" by A. A. Navis, which stands as the exclusive textual material for analysis. Data was gathered through a methodical close reading approach, involving repeated readings of the text to uncover discursive trends connected to the theme of resistance. Extracts of significance — including dialogues, narrative elements, and descriptive sections — were chosen through intentional sampling based on their importance in discourse and alignment with the research objectives. These segments were thereafter organized and labeled according to Fairclough's three levels of analysis, which permitted a systematic and layered scrutiny of the text.

The analysis of data occurred in three phases that align with Fairclough's (1995) framework of description, interpretation, and explanation. During the description phase, the linguistic characteristics of the chosen extracts were pinpointed and articulated, focusing on transitivity frameworks, vocabulary areas related to resistance and submission, along with the rhetorical techniques utilized by both the narrator and the characters. In the interpretation phase, the discursive implications of these attributes were examined in the context of their origins and audience reception, paying attention to their intertextual connections with Islamic ethical discussions and postcolonial analysis. Finally, in the explanation phase, the ideological roles of the text were clarified in relation to the broader social milieu, considering how Navis's narrative mirrors and contests the prevailing discourses that existed in Indonesia during the mid-twentieth century.

As well as employing the method used by Norman Fairclough by analyzing Fairclough's three dimensions: the micro-level, which focuses on words, metaphors, sentence structure, cohesion, and representations of acts of resistance; the meso-level, which focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of texts, as well as the positions of readers and writers and intertextuality; and finally, the macro-level, which focuses on ideology, power, social structure, and historical context.

The dynamic structuralism approach applied by (Andini, 2021) focuses on how the structural elements of the short story interconnect and form overall meaning, differing from critical discourse analysis which emphasizes power relations and ideology. Data sources are categorized into primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources are the main information directly collected by the researcher; in this context, the primary data sources used as references are books containing short stories as the research subjects. Meanwhile, secondary data sources come from other references, whether in the form of books or relevant research that can strengthen and support this study. The data collection method employs documentation techniques, while data analysis is conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The short story "Robohnya Surau Kami," written by A. A. Navis, is a truly captivating piece. In this short story, the author uses simple language that is easy for readers to understand. (Siti Nurfuadah, 2018) Based on the collected transcript data, this discussion will explain how representations of resistance in the short story "Robohnya Surau Kami" are reflected through Fairclough's three dimensions of analysis, as well as how the dialectical relationships among these dimensions construct the overall meaning of

resistance. The analysis proceeds from the small scale of text characteristics, through the intermediate level of communicative activities, to the broad level of societal actions, thus revealing the intricate methods by which opposition is formed, influenced, and integrated into the story.

This discussion draws on the Critical Discourse Analysis framework developed (Fairclough, 2013). Fairclough categorizes discourse analysis into three dimensions that are dialectically interrelated: the micro-dimension (text), the meso-dimension (discourse practices/distribution), and the macro-dimension (social/cultural practices). These three dimensions are interrelated and inseparable, as texts are produced through specific discursive practices and, at the same time, shape and are shaped by broader social practices.

Table 1. Mikro (teks)

Analysis Aspects	Data/Quotes	Linguistic Analysis	Forms of Resistance
Word Choice (Diction)	"destitute"	A word with strong connotations that describes extreme	poverty A rejection of resignation (social fatalism)
	"cursed," "go to hell"	a statement intended as a form of criticism	Criticism of narrow religious views
Dialogue Between God and Haji Saleh	"What is your purpose in this world?"	n interrogative form that presses and tests	A challenge to the notion that worship alone is sufficient
	"Go on in" (to hell)	A direct and forceful statement	Subverting the character's beliefs → a critique of religious ideology
Irony	A pious person goes to hell	The conflict between hope and reality	Rejection of false beliefs
Satire (Sarcasm)	God's criticism of people who are devout but turn a blind eye to poverty.	Sharp satire through religious narrative	A challenge to social hypocrisy
Repetition	"worship," "God"	Repetition to emphasize the religious focus	Reinforces criticism of excessive worship without action
Tone	A serious and judgmental tone	Conveys an air of authority and truth	Establishes the criticism as "moral truth"

At the micro level, the examination shows that Navis utilizes a meticulously adjusted array of language techniques to express opposition to both societal determinism and restrictive religious beliefs. The use of emotionally charged vocabulary stands out as the most direct indicator of a critical viewpoint. The term *destitute*, for example, implies a level of profound and unwarranted poverty, serving not just as a descriptive word but as a rhetorical accusation aimed at social conditions that passive religious attitudes have neglected. Likewise, the terms *cursed* and *go to hell* featured in a theological conversation between God and Haji Saleh extend beyond their typical definitions to serve as tools of ideological criticism, questioning the limited belief that merely practicing devotion is adequate for a moral existence.

The format of the dialogue between God and Haji Saleh carries notable importance. The question "What is your purpose in this world? " acts as more than just a rhetorical inquiry; it poses a substantive challenge, urging the character to recognize the shortcomings of a belief system separated from social accountability. When God replies with "Go on in" (to hell), this command becomes both surprising and ironic, overturning the expectation that piety alone ensures salvation and consequently undermining the prevailing religious views that the text scrutinizes.

This connection between divine authority and social critique exemplifies Navis's rhetorical approach: resistance is validated when articulated through the highest moral figure possible. The repetition of lexical items such as worship and God within the text strengthens this critique by highlighting the characters' singular focus on ceremonial devotion, while the unwavering serious and critical tone establishes the narrative voice as a figure of moral authority whose disapproval holds the significance of "truth."

Table 2. Meso (Praktik Wacana)

Analysis Aspects	Data/Discourse Structure	Linguistic Analysis	Forms of Resistance
Layered Story	Ajo Sidi → Grandfather → "I" → the reader	A nested narrative structure (story within a story) that prevents the message from being conveyed directly	Resistance is conveyed indirectly to make it more subtle yet still critical
Folktales as a Tool for Criticism	The Story of Haji Saleh in the Afterlife	Folktales are used as a symbolic medium to convey social and religious criticism	Resistance to dominant ideologies without direct confrontation
Character Role: Ajo Sidi	A storyteller who recounts tales	Serves as a conduit for ideas and criticism through storytelling	An agent of resistance who spreads criticism throughout society
Character Role: Grandfather	A devoutly religious character	Represents a group trapped in traditional religious beliefs	Target of criticism → illustrates the impact of outdated ideologies
Narrator's Perspective ("I")	Listener and story intermediary	Serves as a bridge between the story and the reader	Helps spread the message of resistance
Communication Strategy	Indirect (implicit, symbolic)	Criticism is not expressed directly, but through the narrative and characters	A safe and effective form of resistance in a social context
Effects on Readers	Readers interpret the meaning of the story for themselves	Encourages readers to think critically about social reality	Resistance extends to the realm of the reader (social awareness)

At the meso level of discursive practice, the examination highlights how the configuration of structure and communication within the narrative influences the creation and understanding of resistance. The text's most prominent discursive characteristic is its complex narrative design: the story unfolds through a hierarchical format wherein Ajo Sidi narrates a story to the Grandfather, who is then recounted by the unnamed narrator ("I") to the audience. This *nachspiel* organization is not just a matter of style; it operates as a discursive shield that enables critical messages to be conveyed in a roundabout way. The incorporation of the folktale as a discursive category is also deliberate. By weaving social and religious criticisms into the conventions of conventional storytelling a culturally familiar and accepted format Navis makes resistance more digestible and potentially authoritative. The folktale genre resonates with the oral tradition of the Minangkabau (*kaba*), allowing the text to utilize the cultural significance of native narrative forms while also challenging their ideological implications. As Fairclough (1995) notes, intertextuality serves as a vital method through which discourses are repeated and altered; in this instance, the folktale genre is adapted and repurposed to fulfill a primarily critical role.

Every narrative participant holds a specific discursive function in the communication of resistance. Ajo Sidi acts as a dissenting figure, a storyteller whose narrative serves as a means for spreading ideological critique through the societal framework of the community. On the other hand, the Grandfather is depicted as a representation of the ideology under examination — a character ensnared in a belief system that places greater importance on ritual than on social interaction. The narrator takes on the role of a facilitator and observer, aiding in the delivery of critical discourse to the audience without explicitly supporting or rejecting it. This method of communication — indirect, implicit, and symbolic — embodies what Fairclough (1989) refers to as a discursive form of resistance particularly well-suited for situations where direct opposition is limited by social or political constraints.

Table 3. Makro (Sosiokultural)

Analysis Aspects	Data/Context in the Text	Linguistic Analysis	Forms of Resistance
Formalistic Religiosity	Characters focus only on worship without social action	Shows a form of religion limited to rituals without social responsibility	Resistance against narrow religious understanding
Structural Poverty	"A rich country but its people are poor"	Reflects social inequality and uneven distribution of wealth	Criticism of unjust social systems
Fatalistic Attitude (Passivity)	Characters accept poverty as destiny	Indicates a passive culture that avoids efforts to change conditions	Resistance against fatalistic ideology
Ideology Critiqued	Worship is seen as sufficient for salvation	Reveals flawed collective beliefs in society	Resistance against misleading dominant ideology
Social Impact	The Kakek ends his life tragically	Shows the real consequences of misguided ideology	Resistance as a form of critical awareness (though tragic)
Indonesian Context	A fertile and resource-rich country	Represents real social conditions in Indonesia	Social criticism of national reality

In Fairclough's analysis, this constitutes a form of resistance against the dominant ideology in traditional Muslim societies. Navi employs an alternative discourse (which emphasizes social responsibility) to counter the dominant discourse (which emphasizes individual rituals). This response is closely tied to the situation in Indonesia after independence. After gaining freedom from Dutch colonial rule, many hoped that independence would bring prosperity. (Hutagalung, t.t.) In reality, however, poverty remained widespread. Navi seems to be saying: "Don't just blame colonialism; also consider how our own interpretation of religion can contribute to inaction." From Fairclough's perspective, this claim constitutes a form of "ideological critique" that challenges the power structures within the economy. Navi does not merely attack lazy or corrupt individuals; he condemns the system that perpetuates poverty despite an abundance of natural resources. Is a country rich in natural resources—fertile, with many mines, and abundant marine resources. Yet, disappointingly, many of its people live in poverty. Navi does not provide a deep explanation of the causes, but through this short story approach, he encourages readers to question the unjust economic and political structures. Data indicates a fatalistic attitude among characters who accept poverty as a fate. In Fairclough's analysis, fatalism is viewed as an ideology that serves to maintain the

status quo. In Fairclough's framework, such actions can be seen as a form of "ideological struggle"—a struggle to challenge the dominant public understanding. Navis seeks to replace the prevailing notion of "rituals that suffice" with a new understanding of "rituals that must be accompanied by social action."

(Yudhistira Nasution, 2021) The depiction of formalistic religious devotion — where individuals focus solely on ritual practices while showing a lack of concern for societal hardship — serves as a criticism of what could be labeled the privatization of spirituality: a framework of religious existence where the sacred and the communal are completely disconnected. Navis illustrates this problematic ideological stance through the storyline logic of divine judgment, which reframes social accountability as a moral duty rather than a matter of public interest. This short story directs people to carry out a reformist movement in their constraints to the traditions they have lived for centuries because of colonialism. This short story was made in the 1990s where many Minangkabau Ulemas tended to focus more on education and intellectual activity rather than physical resistance. (Fairclough, 2012) Orientalist discourse manifests itself as an influential system of ideas or as a network of various intellectual interests and meanings that are implied in various contextual, social, political, and constitutional of colonial hegemony. As alluded above, surau becomes a symbol of the institutions used by the colonial to facilitate the process of inculcating ideology and religion as the means of control in society.

The mention of a nation that appears "wealthy" yet is filled with "impoverished" individuals conveys a critique of structural disparities, pointing to issues that transcend personal moral failures to highlight systemic and political constructs. (Hadi & Wahidatul Murtafi'ah, 2025) This insight links the personal narrative to broader social realities, indicating that the sense of fatalism criticized in the work is not solely a cultural attitude, but also a reaction to — and a continuation of — unfair socio-economic systems. The tragic fate of the Grandfather, who ends his life after embracing the moral judgment aimed at him, serves as the text's most poignant example of the tangible repercussions of ideological disconnection: it signifies resistance in its darkest aspect — an awareness that emerges too late to effect change in behavior, yet still disrupts the ideological complacency that the narrative has been deconstructing throughout.

CONCLUSION

(Amalia & Faznur, 2022) This short story remains sharp. It still stirs unease. It still compels us to ask: what is the true meaning of religion? According to Navis, religion cannot be viewed merely as a vertical relationship between humans and God. Religion is also a horizontal matter: our actions toward others, especially toward those who are most disadvantaged and marginalized. If religion is merely used as a means to escape social responsibility, then its essence has faded. And the mosque—which should be a place of liberation—has transformed into a prison.

So, let those mosques crumble. Let those empty rituals cease. And let a new awareness emerge from the ruins: that worshipping God means respecting humanity "The story of Robohnya Surau Kami by A. A. Navis is an indirectly provocative work of fiction which arouse eastern society, represented in the life of Minangkabau people at that time, to realize their helplessness in order to take the initiative and express their silenced voices. This short story directs people to carry out a reformist movement in their constraints to the traditions they have lived for centuries because of colonialism. (Fizriyani, t.t.)As alluded above, surau becomes a symbol of the institutions used by the colonial to facilitate the process of inculcating ideology and religion as the means of control in society. The result of this research represented that the construction of postcolonial discourse in the story Robohnya Surau Kami by AA. Navis reflected into the concept of demonization, dehumanization, western hegemonic. Paradigms that places eastern culture as old-fashioned, backward and stupidity are a construction to build demonization in the story. Thus, through the character of Ajo Sidi as an agent, the eastern people represented by the grandfathers are alienated, instigated, and subsequently experience a divided identity called by dehumanization. This demonization

and dehumanization continued to be created and maintained by instilling hegemonic doctrines even without violence. On the micro level, Navi utilizes a variety of linguistic techniques—such as powerful word choices, irony, satire, modality, and repetition—to challenge the prevailing belief system of formalistic religiosity and redefine social responsibility as a moral necessity.

At the meso level, the nested narrative framework and the deliberate use of the folktale genre serve as discursive tools that facilitate a powerful critique expressed indirectly, allowing the text to avoid the limitations of direct conflict while amplifying its critical resonance. On the macro level, the narrative is contextualized within the socio-historical backdrop of mid-twentieth-century Indonesia, addressing the ideological conflicts related to religious practices, systemic poverty, and cultural fatalism within Minangkabau society. (Fokt, 2013) The results of this research add to the expanding literature on Critical Discourse Analysis as a method for examining literature, showcasing its ability to reveal the ideological aspects of literary works that traditional literary critique might overlook. They also validate the continued significance of Navi's writings as a focal point for critical examination, highlighting the text's lasting influence as a means of verbal opposition against enduring social inequities and ideological apathy.

(Daulay & Arianto, 2020) Upcoming studies could build on this analysis by utilizing a comparative approach, exploring how resistance is expressed through discourse in various Indonesian literary works from the same era, or by employing additional theoretical perspectives — such as postcolonialism or Gramscian concepts of hegemony — to deepen the analytical framework. These methodologies would further clarify the intricate connections among language, authority, and resistance within Indonesian literary discussions.

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