

Literature as counter discourse in the construction of history in Laila S. Chudori's novels

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Received: February 24, 2026

Revised: August 10, 2026

Accepted: August 16, 2026

KEYWORDS

Collective Memory
Critical Discourse
Analysis
Historical
Construction
Literary Narrative
State Violence

ABSTRACT

This study examines how linguistic and narrative choices in three novels by Laila S. Chudori, *Pulang*, *Laut Bercerita*, and *Namaku Alam*, ideologically construct history, using Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. Rather than treating the three novels as isolated case studies, this study reads them as a continuous, cross-generational discourse on Indonesia's unresolved historical trauma. The analysis moves beyond identifying which marginalized historical events are represented, such as state violence and forced disappearances, to examine the textual mechanisms, namely macrostructural topic selection, narrative schema, lexical choice, agentless syntax, and metaphor, through which these events are constructed ideologically at the levels of text structure, social cognition, and social context. The findings indicate that a fragmentary, multiperspectival narrative schema, combined with emotionally charged diction and agent-deleting passive constructions, works systematically to foreground victims' experiences while implicitly contesting the state's evasion of accountability. The author's social cognition, shaped by her position as a journalist and witness to Indonesian political history, is realized through an ideology of humanity and justice; at the level of social context, the novels function as a counter discourse to the state's official narrative. These findings suggest that literature not only represents history but also actively participates in shaping historical awareness and public discourse. The findings contribute to the field of literary criticism and CDA in Indonesia, as well as to an understanding of the ideological, rather than merely thematic, function of literature in the context of post-state violence.

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Introduction

Literature holds a strategic role in recording, interpreting, and critiquing history, particularly when historical narratives are produced through mechanisms of hegemonic power (Djokosujatno, 2002; Rahayu & Priyatna, 2020). In this context, literary works function not only as an aesthetic representation of reality, but also as a discursive practice that effectively challenges official historical narratives (Akmal, 2013; Apriyani & Daulay, 2024; Atikurrahman et al., 2022). The novel, as one of the dominant forms of literary narrative, provides an alternative space for the articulation of historical experiences that have been marginalized or silenced by official historiography (Alkhaerat et al., 2024; Gunawan et al., 2021). This approach enables the reconstruction of historical narratives that are more inclusive of neglected voices (Cahyasari & Efendi, 2018; Purwanto, 2012). Through subjective and empathic narrative strategies, literature opens possibilities for reconstructing the past from alternative perspectives -- particularly the

perspectives of victims and marginalized groups often overlooked in official state archives (Fox, 2023). Thus, literature does not merely supplement, but actively revises dominant historical discourse through a profound humanistic dimension.

The political history of Indonesia during the Orde Baru era and the post-Orde Baru period serves as a clear example of how official state narratives tend to marginalize the experiences of victims and oppressed groups (Baharuddin, 2024). The events of 1965 and the forced disappearances of activists in 1998, for instance, are more frequently represented in a simplified and depoliticized manner within formal historiography (Heryanto, 2006). The Orde Baru constructed political hegemony by controlling historical narratives through education, media, and popular culture, rendering alternative memories dangerous and subversive (Hearman, 2013). Consequently, the collective trauma experienced by individuals and groups was denied adequate representational space in mainstream history (Citrawan & Putri, 2024). In such circumstances, the novel emerged as a cultural medium enabling the reconstruction of history from the perspectives of victims and marginalized witnesses. The novels of Laila S. Chudori consistently portray traumatic episodes of Indonesian history, particularly state violence, forced disappearances, and the lives of political exiles (Widyaiswara & Affandy, 2022). This observation affirms that literature, particularly the historical novel, has the potential to serve as an alternative archive recording traumatic experiences not accommodated in official narratives.

Laila S. Chudori is among the Indonesian literary writers who consistently present Indonesian political history through a humanistic and personal narrative approach (Widyaiswara & Affandy, 2022). The novel *Pulang* narrates the lives of Indonesian political exiles following the Events of 1965 (Tamba & Harahap, 2024). *Laut Bercerita* focuses on the tragedy of the forced disappearances of activists in 1998 (Safitri et al., 2022). Meanwhile, *Namaku Alam* reflects the continuity of trauma and historical memory in the post-Reformasi generation (Saragih et al., 2019). This generation did not directly experience state violence, but inherited it through stories, documents, and family relationships (Apriyani & Daulay, 2024). These three novels together constitute an alternative historical narrative that merits critical scholarly examination, as they present a continuity of historical discourse across generations and events.

The urgency of this research rests on two primary dimensions. First, academically, studies on the construction of history in contemporary Indonesian literature remain relatively limited (Purwanta, 2022). In particular, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach has rarely been applied to narrative literary works (Susanto et al., 2022). The majority of CDA studies in Indonesia are more commonly used to analyze mass media texts or political speeches (Suntini, 2017). Second, in socio-political terms, this research is relevant to the post-Reformasi Indonesian context, which continues to face stagnation in the resolution of serious human rights violations (Fadly, 2018). Chudori's novels function as a counter discourse challenging state hegemony over history and reinforcing collective memory grounded in the experiences of victims.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that regards discourse not merely as a linguistic phenomenon, but as a social practice laden with power and ideology (Van Dijk, 1998). Teun A. Van Dijk asserts that discourse is never neutral; rather, it always reflects and simultaneously reproduces particular power structures (Van Dijk, 2017; Yuyun et al., 2022). Van Dijk's CDA model divides discourse analysis into three interrelated major dimensions. First, text structure, which encompasses macrostructure (the main theme or topic), superstructure (the schema or flow of the text), and microstructure (lexical choices, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric). Second, social cognition, namely the system of knowledge, ideology, and beliefs held by writers and readers in producing and interpreting texts. Third, social context, which covers the social, political, and historical conditions underlying the genesis of a text and the power relations operating within it. In literary texts, ideology can be traced through narrative strategies, lexical choices, binary oppositions, and the representation of social actors. Thus, CDA enables a reading of literature not only at the level of aesthetics, but also as an ideological practice interacting with its social context.

History in literature cannot be understood merely as a factual representation of past events, but rather as a narrative construction shaped by particular viewpoints, ideologies, and interests (Sundari, 2015). Hayden White asserts that both history and literature employ narrative structures that are rhetorical and imaginative in nature, such that the boundary between fact and fiction becomes blurred (Skodo, 2012). Modern historical novels tend to present marginal perspectives by foregrounding the voices of victims, personal experiences, and collective memory as acts of resistance against hegemonic dominant narratives (Goff, 1996). Michel Foucault contends that history constitutes an arena of power, wherein knowledge about the past is produced through particular power relations (Medina, 2011). Further, Paul Ricoeur asserts that narratives -- whether historiographical or literary -- are inherently selective and ideological, being shaped by a particular point of view (Orth et al., 2004). In this context, literature functions to interrupt the claims of objectivity made by historiography, by providing more pluralistic and reflective narratives. Thus, literature can serve as a means for deconstructing official historical narratives and opening space for new, more complex and diverse understandings of the past.

Literature also plays a role in the rehumanization of history (Purwanto, 2012). Literary narratives possess a moral force, as they are capable of evoking empathy and a deeper understanding of human suffering and dilemmas (Hvidt, 1984). Collective memory, meanwhile, is formed through the social and cultural experiences of a group, not merely through formal state documents (Le Hunte & Golembiewski, 2014). The concept of postmemory is relevant for understanding how second or third generations inherit trauma through stories, photographs, and artifacts (Fernanda, 2017). Furthermore, polyphony in literary texts reflects the heterogeneous and contested social reality (Santoso et al., 2023). The modern historical novel thus rejects singular claims to truth and affirms a plurality of perspectives.

A number of previous studies have examined the novels *Pulang* and *Laut Bercerita* from various perspectives. Research on *Pulang* generally emphasizes issues of political exile, diasporic identity, and first-generation trauma. *Laut Bercerita*, meanwhile, has more frequently been analyzed within frameworks of historical testimony, the representation of student activism, and victim narratives in human rights violations (Balkis & Mardhiah, 2025). Other studies have employed a trauma-studies approach to reveal how these novels represent unhealed collective wounds (Le Hunte & Golembiewski, 2014; Santoso et al., 2023). Nonetheless, several significant research gaps remain (Purwanta, 2022). First, the majority of studies are still partial in nature, analyzing a single novel in isolation, and thus have not examined the construction of history as a continuous discourse across works (Susanto et al., 2022). Second, the application of Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis in Indonesian literary studies remains limited (Anggraeni et al., 2023; Suntini, 2017). Third, the novel *Namaku Alam* has received relatively little academic attention and has not yet been positioned as part of a continuity of historical narrative and intergenerational memory (Fernanda, 2017). Based on these gaps, this study positions all three novels as a unified, interconnected historical discourse, and applies Van Dijk's CDA model comprehensively to uncover the author's ideology, power relations, and discursive strategies.

This study aims to analyze the construction of history in the novels *Pulang*, *Laut Bercerita*, and *Namaku Alam* by Laila S. Chudori, using Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model (Anggraeni et al., 2023; Van Dijk, 1998). The study focuses on three dimensions of discourse: text structure, social cognition, and social context (Balkis & Mardhiah, 2025). Rather than treating text structure as an inventory of themes, this study foregrounds the linguistic and narrative mechanisms through which those themes are ideologically constructed: at the level of macrostructure, how topics are selected, foregrounded, and hierarchized; at the level of superstructure, how the sequencing and schematic organization of narrative units position readers in relation to victims and the state; and at the level of microstructure, how lexical choice, agentless syntax, and metaphor encode particular ideological positions. At the level of social cognition, the analysis seeks to uncover the mental models, ideology, and historical consciousness of the author that underlie the production of the texts, and how these are textually realized rather than merely asserted. At the level of social context, the analysis situates the findings within the social-political conditions of Indonesia, particularly the Orde Baru era and the post-Reformasi period, as well as the function of discourse in responding to hegemonic power relations. Through this study, it is hoped that an understanding will emerge of how history is constructed, through specific discursive choices, as an arena of contested meaning, and how the novel functions as a medium of symbolic resistance and the formation of critical consciousness toward the past.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach following the model of Van Dijk (1998, 2017). The type of research is library research (library research), with narrative literary texts as the object of study. The primary data sources are three novels by Laila S. Chudori: *Pulang* (Chudori, 2012), *Laut Bercerita* (Chudori, 2017), and *Namaku Alam* (Chudori, 2023). The research data consist of linguistic and narrative units that represent historical events, power relations, and the ideological positions of characters and narrators. Data were classified into the forms of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and complete narrative structures containing representations of Indonesian political history. Secondary data sources include journal articles, literary theory texts, studies in Indonesian literary history, and prior research relevant to the issues of collective memory, historical trauma, and Critical Discourse Analysis.

Data collection was carried out through intensive close reading using a purposive sampling technique, namely the selection of data based on relevance to the focus of the study (Creswell, 1994). Data analysis was conducted in stages according to the three dimensions of Van Dijk's CDA. First, at the level of text structure, the macrostructure (main themes and topics), superstructure (narrative flow and schema), and microstructure (lexicon, syntax, metaphor, and rhetorical strategies) were identified. Second, at the level of social cognition, the author's mental models, ideology, and historical consciousness were interpreted on the

basis of her intellectual, biographical, and social background. Third, at the level of social context, the analytical findings were related to the socio-historical conditions of Indonesia, particularly the events of 1965, the tragedy of 1998, and the political dynamics of the post-Reformasi era. The validity of the data was maintained through theoretical triangulation -- comparing analytical findings with various theoretical perspectives -- and through peer debriefing with other researchers in the fields of literary studies and discourse. Ethical research standards were upheld by respecting copyright, limiting quotations in accordance with fair use principles, and presenting interpretations objectively without distorting the original context of the texts.

Results and Discussion

Macro Text Structure

At the macro level, macrostructure is treated here not merely as an inventory of themes, but as a set of selections about what is foregrounded as the dominant topic and what is backgrounded or omitted altogether; this selection is itself ideological, since it determines which version of the past becomes narratively dominant for the reader (Van Dijk, 1998). Across all three novels, the state's institutional voice, legal proceedings, and official justifications for violence are consistently backgrounded or left unnarrated, while the embodied, experiential consequences of violence, such as exile, disappearance, and inherited grief, are foregrounded as the primary macro-topic. The novel *Pulang* foregrounds the tragedy of 1965 through the topic of political exile, backgrounding the state's own account of the period in favor of alienation, longing, and diasporic identity. *Laut Bercerita* foregrounds the resistance of student activists and the tragedy of forced disappearances in 1998, privileging testimony and the struggle for truth over official versions of the events. *Namaku Alam*, meanwhile, foregrounds the inheritance of intergenerational trauma and self-discovery, positioning the historical consciousness of a generation that did not directly experience state violence but inherited traumatic memories through family narratives and cultural artifacts as the dominant topic, rather than the state's own historiography of the period. Table 1 summarizes this mapping of foregrounded historical topics as a form of historical discourse construction across the three novels.

Table 1. Macro structure analysis

<i>Novel</i>	<i>Historical Event</i>	<i>Dominant Theme</i>	<i>Ideological Position</i>
<i>Pulang</i>	Tragedy of 1965 & political exile	Alienation, identity, longing	Critique of the state and exclusive nationalism
<i>Laut Bercerita</i>	Forced disappearances of 1998	Resistance, humanity, testimony	Defense of human rights and victims' voices
<i>Namaku Alam</i>	Post-Reformasi	Traumatic inheritance, self-discovery	Historical consciousness of the younger generation

Through this consistent pattern of foregrounding victims' experience while backgrounding the state's institutional voice, history is constructed not as a single objective fact, but as a discourse continuously produced and contested in the public sphere (Apriyani & Daulay, 2024). It is this macrostructural asymmetry, rather than any explicit authorial commentary, that constitutes the primary mechanism by which all three novels arrive at a consistent ideological position: a critique of state authoritarianism and a defense of human rights. In Van Dijk's terms, this asymmetry can be read as an instance of the ideological square, whereby the in-group of victims, exiles, and the disappeared receives sustained macro-level attention and elaboration, while the out-group represented by the state apparatus is narratively marginalized and denied comparable narrative space. These topic-selection strategies thus function as discursive mechanisms for building readers' critical awareness of an official history that tends to exclude the voices of victims.

Superstructure

The narrative superstructure of all three novels is organized in a fragmentary and multiperspective manner; more precisely, it is the schematic ordering of narrative units, namely which viewpoint is granted narrative priority, at what point resolution is granted or withheld, and how the sequence of disclosure is paced, that discursively expands the meaning of history from mere political events into complex human tragedies. The novel *Laut Bercerita*, for example, employs alternating viewpoints between Biru Laut (the disappeared activist) and the victim's family members who await certainty. This alternation is not a neutral distribution of narrative time but a schematic strategy in which the reader is repeatedly returned to the family's unresolved waiting rather than granted narrative closure regarding Biru Laut's fate; this structural

withholding can be read as enacting, at the level of the reading experience, the same epistemic uncertainty imposed on victims' families by the state's refusal to disclose the fate of the disappeared, so that the schema itself becomes an ideological device rather than a merely aesthetic one. This narrative pattern aligns with the findings of other studies on *postmemory*, which demonstrate that fragmentary narratives are effective in representing collective trauma (Windharto, 2019). The following quotation illustrates the fragmentation of traumatic experience in *Laut Bercerita*:

"Laut tidak pernah diam. Laut selalu bercerita. Tentang mereka yang hilang" (Chudori, 2017).

The metaphor of the sea in this passage functions as a symbol of collective memory that flows continuously and cannot be silenced. Likewise, in *Pulang*, the narrative structure shifts between the past in Indonesia and the life of the exile in Paris, and this shifting is schematically recurrent rather than a single flashback: scenes of exile are repeatedly interrupted by fragments of pre-1965 memory instead of being presented in linear sequence. This recurring interruption schematically encodes the idea that the past cannot be narratively closed off from the present, reflecting the unbroken relationship between the subject and the homeland, despite the separation imposed by geographic and political distance:

"Pulang adalah kata yang paling indah dan paling menyakitkan bagi kami" (Chudori, 2012)

Meanwhile, in the novel *Namaku Alam*, the superstructure is constructed through the reflection of a young protagonist attempting to understand the traumatic inheritance of his family; the schema deliberately delays direct access to the events of 1965 and 1998, granting the reader access only through mediated fragments, documents, and family stories that the protagonist himself must piece together, so that the ordering of disclosure structurally replicates the very process of postmemory transmission the novel thematizes:

"Aku tidak pernah mengalami, tapi aku merasakan. Sejarah itu hidup dalam diriku" (Chudori, 2023).

This passage can be read as illustrating how the second or third generation inherits trauma through family narrative, a phenomenon referred to as *postmemory* (Fernanda, 2017). This fragmentary and multiperspective narrative strategy is not, in itself, what carries ideological weight; rather, it is the specific schematic choices of sequencing, withholding, and mediating disclosure that realize this strategy and position readers to inhabit an epistemic uncertainty analogous to that experienced by the characters themselves. In this way, the novels affirm that history cannot be recounted linearly and objectively, but must be reconstructed from multiple viewpoints in order to capture the complexity of human experience.

Microstructure

At the level of microstructure, the choices of lexicon, syntax, and metaphor in all three novels reveal a consistent ideological strategy that can be described through Van Dijk's notion of the ideological square: features that emphasize the suffering and moral standing of victims are systematically elaborated, while features that would specify the identity or agency of perpetrators are systematically suppressed. The use of emotional diction such as "hilang", "sunyi", "menunggu", dan "luka" recurs repeatedly to mark the absence of justice and the perpetuation of trauma; this recurrence is not incidental but constitutes a lexical pattern of positive in-group presentation that foregrounds the moral legitimacy of victims' suffering. This lexicon can be read as a discursive marker that invites readers' empathy toward the experiences of victims. The following quotation illustrates the use of emotional lexicon in *Laut Bercerita*:

"Kami menunggu. Bertahun-tahun menunggu. Menunggu kepastian yang tak kunjung datang" (Chudori, 2017).

Furthermore, the use of agentless passive constructions in representing perpetrators of violence constitutes the syntactic counterpart of this same ideological square: whereas victims are named, particularized, and granted emotional interiority, agents of state violence are systematically deleted from the clause structure. Syntactic constructions such as "dibawa", "diamankan", and "dihilangkan" without naming the subject actor can be read as a linguistic strategy that mirrors, at the level of the sentence, the official state narrative's own evasion of accountability, rather than merely describing that evasion from the outside (Fairclough, 2013). This syntactic suppression of agency is reinforced by nominalization, whereby acts of violence are rendered as abstract processes detached from any actor, further obscuring responsibility. Metaphor operates as a third microstructural resource for ideological meaning-making, working in the opposite direction from this suppression by elaborating, rather than deleting, the experiential world of victims. The metaphor of the "laut" in *Laut Bercerita* symbolizes a collective memory that flows ceaselessly and cannot be dammed, while the metaphors of "Rumah" and "pulang" in *Pulang*

symbolize a longing for the homeland and a lost identity. Another example may be seen in the following quotation from *Pulang*:

"Rumah bukan sekadar tempat. Rumah adalah ingatan yang tak pernah mati." (Chudori, 2012).

Through this combination of lexical elaboration of victims' suffering, syntactic deletion of perpetrators' agency, and metaphorical elaboration of loss and longing, the three novels do not merely convey information about historical events; they enact, at the level of the sentence, the same ideological asymmetry identified at the levels of macrostructure and superstructure. This microstructural pattern constructs an empathic space that invites readers to understand the suffering of victims and to question official narratives that tend to strip history of its human dimension.

Author's Social Cognition

The author's social cognition is reflected in the consistency of the narrative across all three novels in siding with victims and marginalized groups, and in adopting a critical stance toward official state narratives. As a senior journalist long engaged in the media world and a direct witness to the development of Indonesian politics, Laila S. Chudori possesses deep historical knowledge of the events of 1965 and 1998 (Barus et al., 2023). This intellectual and biographical background plausibly shapes a cognitive framework that positions history as an arena of contested meaning, rather than a mere chronology of objective events, although this inference is drawn from textual patterns rather than from direct authorial testimony. The consistency of these textual patterns is nonetheless suggestive of a mental model that values representational space for voices silenced by official historiography (Van Dijk, 1998).

The ideologies of humanity, justice, and human rights serve as the foundations for framing historical events. This aligns with Antonio Gramsci's conception of the role of the organic intellectual, who functions to articulate the interests of subaltern groups and challenge the hegemony of dominant power (Gramsci et al., 1971). Through an empathic and multiperspective narrative strategy, the author guides readers toward building a critical consciousness, not only toward the past, but also toward current practices of historical remembrance and forgetting. The author's social cognition is also reflected in the selection of characters who represent marginalized groups: political exiles, student activists, the families of victims, and younger generations who have inherited trauma. This selection is not accidental, but rather an ideological strategy for presenting alternative perspectives that challenge the singular narrative of official history (Sariyatun et al., 2024).

Social Context and Discourse Function

All three novels were born in the socio-political context of the post-Reformasi era, characterized by greater openness in public discourse, yet also by stagnation in the resolution of serious human rights violations. The novel *Pulang* (Chudori, 2012) reflects the opening of space for discussions about political exile and the tragedy of 1965, topics that were previously taboo during the Orde Baru era (Heryanto, 2006). The novel *Laut Bercerita* (Chudori, 2017) emerged as a response to the demand for justice for the victims of the forced disappearances of 1998, which to this day remain unresolved in legal terms (Sembada & Andalas, 2019). *Namaku Alam* (Chudori, 2023), meanwhile, shows how young people live in the shadow of an unfinished history, inheriting trauma without having directly experienced the violence.

In this context, Laila S. Chudori's novels function as a *counter discourse* that challenges state hegemony over history and reinforces collective memory grounded in the experiences of victims (Fadilah & Marcaida, 2024). This discursive function aligns with the notion of collective memory as a social construction shaped through narratives, symbols, and cultural practices (Sudibyo et al., 2025). These novels also function as alternative archives recording experiences not accommodated in official historiography, thereby contributing to the formation of the public's critical consciousness toward both the past and the present. Furthermore, the discourse function in all three novels is also performative -- not merely representing history, but shaping how readers understand and interpret historical events (Widyaiswara & Affandy, 2022). In this way, literature functions as a political medium capable of intervening in public discourse and influencing the process of social reconciliation in the aftermath of state violence.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of three dimensions of discourse -- text structure, social cognition, and social context -- it can be concluded that the novels *Pulang*, *Laut Bercerita*, and *Namaku Alam* by Laila S. Chudori consistently construct history as an arena of contested meaning and as a critique of state authoritarianism (Apriyani & Daulay, 2024; Balkis & Mardhiah, 2025). These findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the importance of literature as a medium of symbolic resistance (Safitri et al., 2022). However,

this study makes an additional contribution in two respects. First, by demonstrating that the construction of history in the three novels is not partial in nature, but rather constitutes a continuous discourse across generations and events (Sudibyo et al., 2025). Second, and more centrally, by showing that this ideological continuity is not simply asserted through recurring themes, but is realized through a consistent set of discursive mechanisms across all three levels of Van Dijk's model: macrostructural foregrounding and backgrounding of topics, superstructural schemas that withhold or mediate narrative disclosure, and microstructural patterns of lexical elaboration and syntactic agent-deletion that together constitute an ideological square favoring victims over the state. The integration of all three dimensions of Van Dijk's CDA thus enables a more mechanism-oriented reading of the author's discursive strategies, from lexical choices and narrative structure to ideological positioning and the socio-political function of the texts (Yuyun et al., 2022), distinguishing this study from conventional thematic analyses of the same novels. Specifically, this analysis identifies how these works strategically re-present past serious human rights violations -- particularly those associated with the Orde Baru regime -- and challenge deeply entrenched narratives of impunity.

More broadly, these findings demonstrate that the historical novel can function as a discursive arena in which dominant versions of the past are questioned, negotiated, and reconstructed. By foregrounding the experiences of victims and their families, Laila S. Chudori's novels provide narrative space for memories that are often marginalized or absent from official historical discourse. The use of multiple perspectives, emotional vocabulary, metaphorical expressions, and the strategic representation or omission of agency allows literary discourse to transform individual experiences of violence and loss into a broader form of collective memory. In this sense, the novels do not merely represent historical events but participate in the production of alternative historical knowledge by encouraging readers to reconsider whose experiences are recognized, whose voices are silenced, and how power determines the legitimacy of versions of history.

The integration of textual analysis, social cognition, and social context also reveals the importance of examining literary discourse as part of wider social and ideological processes. The ideological positioning identified in the three novels is produced not by isolated linguistic features but through the interaction between narrative choices, the authors socially situated perspectives, and the historical conditions surrounding the represented events. This interaction illustrates how literature can mediate between personal memory and public history, enabling traumatic experiences to be communicated across generations while simultaneously questioning established relations of power. Consequently, the study strengthens the relevance of Van Dijk's critical discourse framework for literary analysis by showing that the ideological dimensions of fiction can be traced systematically through linguistic organization, narrative perspective, and the socio-historical contexts in which literary texts are produced and interpreted.

The findings of this analysis not only enrich the study of critical discourse in contemporary Indonesian literature (Widyaiswara & Affandy, 2022) but also highlight the potential of literature as a continuing instrument of socio-political intervention (Safitri et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the approach employed in this study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged in order to maintain objectivity and open space for improvement (Yuyun et al., 2022). While the integration of Van Dijk's CDA model is comprehensive, an exclusive focus on three novels limits the generalizability of findings to other literary works or different historical contexts. Furthermore, the dimension of reader reception and the actual influence of the novels on public discourse has not been thoroughly explored, which may constitute a gap for future research.

The limitations of this study lie in its analytical focus on three novels, which means it does not encompass other works by Laila S. Chudori that also engage with historical issues. In addition, the analysis of the author's social cognition remains inferential and has not been supplemented by direct interviews or a more in-depth analysis of paratexts. Future research may therefore expand the data corpus by including other novels or contemporary Indonesian literary works addressing similar issues, and by conducting reader reception analysis to understand how the discourse in these novels is received and interpreted by the public. Comparative research with historical novels from other countries that have experienced similar traumas, such as Argentina or Cambodia, may also offer insights into universal patterns in the construction of history in post-state-violence literature.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Laila S. Chudori's three novels construct history as an ideological practice through the interaction of text structure, social cognition, and social context. At the textual level, macrostructural foregrounding and backgrounding, fragmentary and multiperspective narrative structures, emotional lexicon, metaphor, and agentless passive constructions work together to foreground victims' suffering, obscure perpetrators' agency, evoke empathy, and challenge official state narratives. At the level of social cognition, the author's commitment to humanity, justice, and human rights is reflected in

the selection of characters, perspectives, and narrative strategies that position victims as historical subjects, while at the social-context level, the novels function as counter-discourses that contest state hegemony over history, strengthen collective memory, and encourage critical public consciousness. The integration of these dimensions of Van Dijk's CDA confirms that historical representation in these novels is not neutral but closely connected to power relations in society. This study contributes to the application of Van Dijk's CDA to contemporary Indonesian historical fiction and reinforces the view of literature as an active medium for shaping historical consciousness and public discourse, with theoretical implications for critical discourse studies and practical implications for understanding literature's socio-political function in post-state-violence contexts. The findings also suggest that Chudori's novels may be used as alternative materials in history education to develop critical awareness and foreground victims' perspectives, while also serving as references in human rights discourse through their role as literary testimony and collective memory. Future research may further examine readers' reception of these novels and compare the construction of history in Indonesian literature with that of other societies that have experienced similar historical trauma.

Declarations

- Author contribution** : Agus Wardhono is responsible for the overall research. He led the manuscript writing and collaborated with the second author. Kumaidi participated in reading the novel and analyzing the data within it; he also collaborated with Suantoko on finalizing the theoretical analysis and served as a discussion partner in defining the scope of the study. Additionally, he revised the manuscript. All three authors have approved the final manuscript.
- Funding statement** : This research received no external funding. (This research was self-funded by the members affiliated with the study)
- Conflict of interest** : All authors declare that they have no competing interests.
- Ethics Approval** : The research has received approval from colleagues affiliated with this study.
The research will be published in the journal *BAHA STRA* in 2026.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

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