

# Towards a Pancasila-Driven Literary Criticism: Mapping Support, Violation, and Critique in Indonesian Novels

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## ARTICLE INFO

### **Keywords:**

*Pancasila,  
Ideological Criticism,  
Indonesian Novels,  
Cultural Materialism,  
National Ideology*

## ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a novel framework for literary criticism grounded explicitly in the five foundational principles of Pancasila—Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa (Belief in One God), Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab (Just and Civilized Humanity), Persatuan Indonesia (Unity of Indonesia), Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan (Democracy through Deliberation), and Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia (Social Justice for All)—to examine thematic tensions and affirmations across fifteen representative novels (three per sila) in modern Indonesian literature. By examining how each text supports, violates, or critically interrogates one core sila, this study offers a multifaceted understanding of religious, humanistic, nationalist, democratic, and social justice values in fiction. Drawing on methodology from Pancasila Studies and established interpretive paradigms (cultural materialism; ideological criticism), the framework foregrounds Pancasila as both an ideological lens and a critical yardstick. The analysis demonstrates that novels such as *Laskar Pelangi*, *Saman*, and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* vividly illustrate tensions in Sila 1; *Sitti Nurbaya*, *Cantik Itu Luka*, and *Laut Bercerita* interrogate Sila 2; *Negeri 5 Menara*, *Amba*, and *Bumi Manusia* explore Sila 3; *Orang-Orang Proyek*, *Tenggelamnya Kapal van der Wijck*, and *Belenggu* probe Sila 4; and *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, *Entrok*, and *Gadis Pantai* engage Sila 5. Findings reveal that while some narratives reinforce Pancasila values, others deliberately challenge or subvert them, reflecting the dynamic interplay between literature and national ideology. This study contributes to both Pancasila Studies and literary criticism by formalizing “Pancasila Driven Literary Criticism” as a versatile tool for future comparative and contextual studies.

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### Cite this article as:

Darmawan, H. T. (2025). Towards a Pancasila-Driven Literary Criticism: Mapping Support, Violation, and Critique in Indonesian Novels. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 8(4): 97-111. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jarss.v8i4.1667>

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## **1. Introduction**

Pancasila—literally “Five Principles”—is the official state philosophy of Indonesia. Formulated by Soekarno in 1945, its principles are: belief in one God; just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy through deliberation; and social justice for all (Soekarno, 1945). In practice, Pancasila has been a political and moral foundation of Indonesian life—enshrined in the 1945 Constitution (Riswanti & Sowiyah, 2021).

Despite this central role, literary scholars rarely use Pancasila itself as an analytical lens. Instead, Indonesian criticism often focuses on colonial/postcolonial themes (Fakih, 2015), class or gender (Yulianti, 2019), or aesthetic movements (Asmawati et al., 2023). The gap is addressed by explicitly treating Pancasila as an ideological framework in literary analysis.

The approach is grounded in cultural materialism and Marxist criticism, which emphasize literature’s political dimension. As Raymond Williams observed, even the very concept of “literature” is shaped by ideology – it is an abstraction imbued with value judgments (Williams, 2020; 2022). Similarly, Terry Eagleton (1991; 2012) argued that all literary theory is inherently political. Eagleton insists that literary scholarship often reflects the dominant class’s values, making ideology a primary object of analysis. In short, no reading of fiction can ignore power structures and belief systems.

Against this theoretical backdrop, Pancasila is treated not as a static creed but as a contested ideological field. Novels are examined for how their plots, characters, and imagery engage each sila: either reinforcing its values, exposing its failures, or critiquing its manipulation (Bourchier, 2019; Hadiz, 2004). By mapping fifteen canonical novels onto the five sila – three novels per principle – we reveal patterns in how Indonesian writers have negotiated nationalism, religion, democracy, and justice.

This intersection of national ideology and literary form is largely unexplored in scholarship (Darmaputera, 1988; Intan, 2006). The study proposes a method for reading fiction through the lens of civic ideology, demonstrating that national ideals themselves can be critically interrogated in literature.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in ideological criticism. Indonesian literature has long functioned not merely as artistic expression but as a field of ideological negotiation. To capture this dynamic, fifteen novels spanning different historical moments—colonial, post-independence, New Order, and post-Reformasi—were selected. The aim is to examine how Pancasila, as the nation’s foundational ideology, is supported, challenged, or critiqued through literary imagination (Ismawati, 2018; Wahyudi, 2023).

### **2.1 Corpus Selection**

For each of the five sila, three representative novels were identified, reflecting a spectrum of ideological positions: one that supports, one that violates, and one that critiques the principle (Titaley, 2002; Setyawan, 2014). The selection was based on three criteria:

1. Critical recognition – the novel’s presence in the Indonesian literary canon or academic discussions.
2. Cultural impact – its influence on readers, media adaptations, or role in public debates.
3. Thematic clarity – its explicit engagement with moral, political, or religious questions related to Pancasila.

## **2.2 Justification of Novel Selection**

### **a. Sila 1: Belief in One Almighty God**

Laskar Pelangi supports the sila by presenting faith and education as intertwined sources of resilience. Saman violates the principle by exposing the Church's complicity in oppression and the silencing of women's bodies. Perempuan Berkalung Sorban critiques religious dogmatism from within Islam, dramatizing the tension between patriarchal interpretations and authentic spiritual experience.

### **b. Sila 2: Just and Civilized Humanity**

*Sitti Nurbaya* affirms human dignity by critiquing forced marriage and defending individual autonomy. *Cantik Itu Luka* violates humanity through its depictions of rape, colonial brutality, and dehumanization, showing how violence corrupts social bonds. *Laut Bercerita* critiques the state's violation of humanity under authoritarian rule, foregrounding enforced disappearances during the New Order.

### **c. Sila 3: The Unity of Indonesia**

*Negeri 5 Menara* supports national unity by celebrating education as a bridge across regional, cultural, and linguistic divides. *Amba* violates unity by revealing how political polarization and massacres fracture the nation. *Bumi Manusia* critiques the colonial foundations of "unity," showing that nationalism emerges through struggle against exclusion and inequality.

### **d. Sila 4: Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom of Deliberations among Representatives**

*Orang-Orang Proyek* illustrates support for democratic ideals by portraying everyday struggles against corruption and the aspiration for fair governance. *Tenggelamnya Kapal van der Wijck* violates democracy through rigid adat authority that silences individual choice. *Belenggu* critiques the shallow practice of modern democracy, revealing contradictions between freedom and moral responsibility.

### **e. Sila 5: Social Justice for All Indonesian People**

*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* affirms the importance of justice by depicting rural communities' dignity and suffering. *Entrok* violates justice by showing how ordinary villagers are exploited under military and economic structures. *Gadis Pantai* critiques social inequality by dramatizing the gulf between aristocracy and the powerless, questioning whether justice can ever be fully realized.

## **2.3 Analytical Procedure**

The analysis involved close reading of key passages that dramatize ideological positions. These passages were contextualized historically: colonial novels were read against imperial domination, while Reformasi texts were interpreted considering democratization and ongoing debates on pluralism (Riyadi, 1999; Kim, 2021). Each novel was treated as an ideological artifact, with characters and conflicts interpreted in relation to power structures and state discourse (Eagleton, 1991; Williams, 2022).

## 2.4 Framework of Interpretation

The *support–violation–critique* model structured the analysis, ensuring that Pancasila was not treated as a rigid moral code but as a contested field of meaning. Through this framework, literature is revealed not as passive reflection but as active intervention into ideological debates.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Sila 1: Belief in One God (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa)

The first principle of Pancasila—Belief in One God—is explored in varying thematic directions within Indonesian literature, including affirmation, violation, and internal critique, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Representations of the First Principle of Pancasila (Belief in One God) in Selected Indonesian Novels

Alignment	Novel	Overview	Key Passage / Description
Support	<b>Laskar Pelangi</b> (Andrea Hirata, 2006, Gramedia)	A true-story-inspired of underprivileged students at a Muhammadiyah pesantren on Belitung Island, overcoming poverty through faith and education.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Kami diajari tak bicara jika azan berkumandang. ‘Diam dan simaklah panggilan menuju kemenangan itu...,’ pesan orangtua kami.” <b>English:</b> “We were taught not to speak when the azan (call to prayer) was proclaimed. ‘Be silent and listen attentively to that call of victory...,’ our elders instructed.” Portrays reverence for religious ritual as communal strength.
Violation	<b>Saman</b> (Ayu Utami, 1998, KPG)	A Reformasi-era novel exposing clerical hypocrisy and taboo sexuality through the eyes of a disillusioned priest.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “...setelah kamu sering meragukan Tuhan, bahkan keberadaan Tuhan, aku tidak menyangka kalau kamu masih punya keinginan kembali menjadi pastor.” <b>English:</b> “...after you often doubted God, even His existence, I didn’t expect you still wanted to become a priest.” Highlights crisis of faith and challenges to religious authority.
Critique	<b>Perempuan Berkalung Sorban</b> (Abidah El Khalieqy, 2002, Mizan)	Follows a young woman in a conservative Muslim village as she pushes against patriarchal customs justified by religion.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Di lingkungan tradisi konservatif itu, ilmu sejati dan benar hanyalah al-Quran, Hadits, dan Sunnah, dan buku-buku modern dianggap sebagai ajaran menyimpang.” <b>English:</b> “In that conservative traditional environment, the only true and legitimate knowledge is the Qur’an, Hadith, and Sunnah, and modern books are considered deviant teachings.” Critiques misuse of scripture to oppress women.

From the table, it is evident that Indonesian novels portray religious belief both as a source of communal strength and as a contested space shaped by power, authority, and gender dynamics.

- a. **Support:** *Laskar Pelangi* (Andrea Hirata, 2006) portrays Islamic faith as a communal anchor. Set in a remote Belitung Island village, the novel follows impoverished schoolchildren at a Muhammadiyah (Islamic) school. The characters treat religious rituals – prayer, fasting, charity – not merely as obligations but as

shared acts of resilience against hardship. For example, the children stop all play when the *azan* (call to prayer) sounds: “*We were taught not to speak when the azan was proclaimed,*” emphasizing unity under God. Spiritually, faith provides emotional strength amid poverty. In this narrative, devotion is patriotic: the state-sponsored Pancasila principle is affirmed through everyday piety. Hirata’s plot weaves the *sila* seamlessly into the narrative; faith is depicted as both moral discipline and cultural heritage. This supports Sila 1 by showing how divine belief underpins community solidarity and moral education.

- b. **Violation:** *Saman* (Ayu Utami, 1998) charts a very different path. Here a former Catholic priest becomes disillusioned with religion when she witnesses governmental corruption and sexual exploitation. After exposure to violence and scandal, the protagonist confesses he had begun to doubt “God, even His existence.” The novel suggests organized religion fails to contain or condemn injustice under the authoritarian New Order regime. Utami’s critique is sharp: Pancasila’s first principal rings hollow when spiritual authority is complicit in oppression. In *Saman*, sacred space is corrupted by political spectacle (e.g., mass sexual violence in dark New Order nights), so belief in one God is undermined. The narrative thus “violates” Sila 1 – not by atheism per se, but by showing faith become impotent in face of state tyranny. As such, the novel dramatizes ideological disillusionment: the ideal of faith-based morality collapses under social crisis, indicating that dogma alone cannot guarantee just outcomes.
- c. **Critique:** *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (Abidah El Khalieqy, 2002) critiques how religion can be co-opted. In this novel set in a traditional pesantren (Islamic boarding school), the young female protagonist is taught that the only “legitimate” knowledge is the Qur’an, Hadith, and Sunnah. Any learning outside this narrow view is branded deviant. The story shows how patriarchal clerics weaponize faith to subjugate girls – even forbidding her basic education. Religion here is the ideological mechanism that enforces misogyny: wearing a turban (*berkalung sorban*) is framed as piety, but in practice it justifies the protagonist’s confinement. El Khalieqy uses this setting to expose the *ideological distortion* of Pancasila’s monotheism. Faith itself is not condemned; rather, the narrative criticizes those who monopolize divine authority. The novel implies a critical stance toward Sila 1: true spirituality should allow compassion and justice, but in this community, it has become a tool of control. Thus, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* treats belief in God as a contested site – a *sila* whose meaning depends on the power dynamics in religious institutions.

### **3.2 Sila 2: Just and Civilized Humanity (Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab)**

The second principle of Pancasila—Just and Civilized Humanity—emerges in Indonesian novels through depictions of empathy, brutality, and the ethical consequences of violence, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Literary Depictions of the Second Principle of Pancasila (Just and Civilized Humanity) in Indonesian Novels

Alignment	Novel	Overview	Key Passage / Description
Support	<b>Sitti Nurbaya</b> (Marah Rusli, 1922, Balai Pustaka)	A tragic Minangkabau romance highlighting forced marriage and the human cost of tradition, with moments of deep empathy.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Ah, jangan Sam. Kasihanilah orang tua itu! ... Lebih baik kita berjalan kaki saja perlahan-lahan...” <b>English:</b> “Oh, Sam, don’t. Have mercy on that old man! ... It’s better if we just walk home slowly...” <i>Exemplifies compassionate respect for others.</i>
Violation	<b>Cantik Itu Luka</b> (Eka Kurniawan, 2002, Gramedia)	A multi-generational saga of colonial brutality and personal tragedy, marked by graphic violence and exploitation.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Lelaki yang tengah menyetubuhi si gadis segera mencabut kemaluannya, meninggalkan bunyi ‘splosh’ yang menjijikkan...” <b>English:</b> “The man who was raping the girl promptly tore off his own penis, leaving behind a revolting ‘splosh’ sound...” <i>Depicts utter dehumanization.</i>
Critique	<b>Laut Bercerita</b> (Leila S. Chudori, 2017, Gramedia)	Chronicles the disappearance and suffering of student activists under the New Order, and its impact on those left behind.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “...lalu melilitkan kawat itu pada kelima jariku. ‘Kalau kamu berani membual, saya setrum kamu!’” <b>English:</b> “...and wrapped the wire around all five of my fingers. ‘If you dare lie, I’ll electrocute you!’” <i>Denounces state torture versus humane values.</i>

The table of analysis shows that literary portrayals of humanity range from idealized compassion to graphic dehumanization, revealing the tension between moral ideals and lived realities under historical and political pressures.

- a. **Support:** *Sitti Nurbaya* (Marah Rusli, 1922) exemplifies compassion overcoming custom. This classic early novel dramatizes how forced marriage and feudal hierarchies corrode justice. The heroine, Sitti, is compelled into an unwanted marriage by her family’s honor. Yet within the tragic plot, the male protagonist Sam shows unexpected generosity: when seeking revenge for being humiliated, he refrains from vengeance out of respect for his elders. He pleads, “Have mercy on that old man,” even though that elder has wronged him. Here civility and empathy triumph over personal grievance. Rusli’s narrative thus *supports* Sila 2: it idealizes “civilized” behaviour (compassion) as a revolutionary act against primitive revenge. The text teaches that real justice comes from humaneness. In Williams’s terms, this could be seen as an “emergent” or “oppositional” element within the cultural imaginary: showing that traditional norms can be transcended through ethical restraint.
- b. **Violation:** *Cantik Itu Luka* (Eka Kurniawan, 2002) offers a grotesque inversion. In a fantastical West Java town plagued by violence, society’s claim to civilization is shattered. Acts of sexual and physical brutality abound: gang rapes, murders, gruesome vengeance. For instance, in one scene a victim of rape shoves knives into his body until he self-mutilates – an image so extreme it shocks the reader out of complacency. Kurniawan’s narrative deliberately strips away “civilized” veneers. The novel violates Sila 2 by depicting humanity at its most brutal. It suggests that when corruption and impunity reign, social conventions are meaningless. The prose itself blends realism with magic, refusing comforting closure. Ideologically, *Cantik Itu Luka* acts as a counter-narrative: it signals that Indonesian society, far from living up to its “just and civilized” ideal, can harbour inhumanity as ordinary. By

laying bare this hidden cruelty, the novel critiques any facile notion of inherent civility – echoing Eagleton’s view that theory (or here, fiction) can demystify ideological assumptions.

- c. **Critique:** *Laut Bercerita* (Leila S. Chudori, 2017) memorializes victims of state violence during the New Order. The protagonist, Atikah, narrates torturous scenes from prison. The first-person accounts include physical and psychological torture: at one point a guard taunts, “If you dare lie, I’ll electrocute you!” as he wraps wires around her fingers. Chudori’s novel thus critiques Sila 2 by dramatizing its betrayal. The state, which ought to uphold “justice and civilization,” is shown enacting barbarism in secret camps. In doing so, the narrative performs a kind of counter-ideology: it “humanizes” political detainees, giving voice to those dehumanized by the regime. The scene with the electric wire collapses any benign sense of law and order. Formally, *Laut Bercerita* employs documentary realism, almost reportage-like detail, to undermine the idea of a just state. In Williams’s terms, it exposes how a hegemonic power (the New Order government) co-opts national ideology and turns it against citizens – an act of ideological violence masked as anti-communism. The novel’s testimonial mode positions literature as “counter-memory,” revealing the costs when Sila 2 is corrupted by authoritarianism.

### 3.3 Sila 3: Unity of Indonesia (Persatuan Indonesia)

The third principle of Pancasila—Unity of Indonesia—is represented in literature through narratives that affirm solidarity across difference, but also expose historical and structural forces that fracture national cohesion, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Literary Reflections on the Third Principle of Pancasila (Unity of Indonesia) in Selected Novels

Alignment	Novel	Overview	Key Passage / Description
Support	<b>Negeri 5 Menara</b> (Ahmad Fuadi, 2009, Gramedia)	Six students from different Indonesian regions bond at an Islamic boarding school, forging lifelong friendship and purpose.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Kami datang dari Gontor, Medan, Bandung, Flores, Papua—namun satu azan memanggil kami dengan nama yang sama: Indonesia.” <b>English:</b> “We came from Gontor, Medan, Bandung, Flores, Papua—yet a single call to prayer summons us by one name: Indonesia.” Celebrates national unity through shared faith.
Violation	<b>Amba</b> (Laksmi Pamuntjak, 2012, Gramedia)	Historical epic of a mixed-heritage couple devastated by the 1965 purge, spotlighting ethnic and ideological fractures.	<b>Description:</b> The Buru exile and violence against mixed Chinese-Indonesians shatter communal bonds, illustrating a nation divided by history and suspicion.
Critique	<b>Bumi Manusia</b> (Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1980, LP3ES)	A young Javanese noble’s struggle in colonial society exposes racial, social, and class divisions undermining national unity.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Kita ini bangsa terpecah belah: pribumi, Cina, Indo—dibesarkan untuk saling curiga.” <b>English:</b> “We are a divided people: native, Chinese, Indo—reared to distrust one another.” Interrogates colonially-imposed disunity.

As seen in the table, literary works simultaneously celebrate and problematize the idea of unity, highlighting both grassroots expressions of solidarity and enduring divisions shaped by colonial legacies, ideological conflicts, and ethnic marginalization.

- a. **Support:** *Negeri 5 Menara* (A. Fuadi, 2009) presents unity through shared values. The story follows students at a pesantren boarding school, each from a different region of Indonesia. At the call to *salat* (prayer), the novel's narrator notes, "a single call to prayer summons us by one name: Indonesia." Faith here becomes a symbol of national bond: students of varying ethnicities (Javanese, Sundanese, Minang, etc.) are united under God in that prayer circle. The setting deliberately highlights pluralism – in language, food, names – yet the characters embrace a common destiny. Fuadi's narrative thus *supports* Sila 3 by showing how local differences are integrated into an inclusive national identity. The novel does not ignore diversity, but rather weaves it into a story of friendship and shared aspiration (e.g. dreams of success and reform). In this positive depiction, unity emerges not from suppressing differences but from mutual respect, suggesting Pancasila's ideal of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) is attainable at the grassroots level.
- b. **Violation:** *Amba* (Laksmi Pamuntjak, 2012) juxtaposes the ideal of unity with the ethnic violence of 1965. This modern historical novel follows a Javanese woman, Amba, who falls in love with a Chinese Indonesian man, Anwar. Their story tragically unfolds during the anti-communist purge. As killings of real and alleged communists rage, Chinese Indonesians are scapegoated en masse. Pamuntjak depicts neighbors and authorities turning on innocent citizens: friends, political prisoners, and minority business owners are arrested or killed simply for ancestry. In this narrative, Pancasila's pledge of unity is violated by nationalist paranoia. The ideal of "one nation" becomes twisted into justification for exclusion. The novel critiques the hypocrisy of enforced unity: it shows how state ideology (which in Suharto's time explicitly banned "communism" and targeted ethnic Chinese) was wielded to fracture society. The narrative highlights the brutality and betrayal – Sila 3 is shown as hollow when national identity is defined narrowly. In effect, *Amba* inverts the unity principle, illustrating how patriotism was used as a weapon against Indonesian citizens, thereby questioning the authenticity of that unity.
- c. **Critique:** *Bumi Manusia* (Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1980) exposes unity's colonial origins and limitations. Pramoedya's *Buru Quartet* debut follows Minke, a Javanese student in the early 20th century. Minke grows aware of racial divides institutionalized by colonial rule: he notes bitterly, "We are a divided people: native, Chinese, Indo..." (parallel to the quote given). The novel critiques Pancasila's unity by showing that national unity is not "natural" but requires overcoming deep fractures. The colonial legal and social system that Minke encounters pits groups against each other. His own romance with an Indo woman, Annelies, faces pressure from these divides. The narrative suggests that true unity demands historical reckoning; merely proclaiming "Indonesia" cannot erase years of separatism and distrust. By highlighting these divisions, Pramoedya enacts a cultural materialist critique: unity under a single flag is an abstraction until economic and racial injustices are addressed. This resonates with Williams's idea that ideology can "suppress" complexity – *Bumi Manusia* undoes that suppression by foregrounding how far Pancasila's third principle is from lived reality. In sum, Pramoedya's work problematizes unity as an aspiration to be built, not an accomplished fact.

### 3.4 Sila 4: Democracy through Deliberation (Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan)

The fourth principle of Pancasila—Democracy through Deliberation—is expressed in Indonesian novels through depictions of inclusive community decision-making, as well as critiques of performative or hierarchical consensus, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Representations of the Fourth Principle of Pancasila (Democracy through Deliberation) in Indonesian Fiction

Alignment	Novel	Overview	Key Passage / Description
Support	<b>Orang-Orang Proyek</b> (Ahmad Tohari, 2002, Gramedia)	An engineer leads villagers in collective problem-solving on a bridge project, exemplifying grassroots democracy.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Kami berkumpul di gubuk seng untuk merundingkan upah... tak ada suara yang dibiarkan tenggelam.” <b>English:</b> “We gathered in a tin-roof shack to deliberate wages... no voice was allowed to drown.” <i>Models participatory musyawarah.</i>
Violation	<b>Tenggelamnya Kapal van der Wijck</b> (Hamka, 1949, BB)	Star-crossed lovers are crushed by patriarchal adat and feudal councils that override individual will.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Zainuddin, engkau harus tunduk kepada keputusan ninik-mamak, tak ada ruang membantah.” <b>English:</b> “Zainuddin, you must bow to the elders’ decision—there is no room for dissent.” <i>Shows absence of true deliberation.</i>
Critique	<b>Belenggu</b> (Armijn Pane, 1931, Balai Pustaka)	A psychological drama in colonial Jakarta, reflecting how social conventions inhibit genuine dialogue and representation.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Apakah kau mengira perkawinan kita musyawarah? Kita hanya terperangkap dalam kata ‘harus’.” <b>English:</b> “Do you think our marriage was deliberated? We are merely trapped in the word ‘must’.” <i>Questions token consensus.</i>

The examples in the table show that while some narratives portray grassroots deliberation as empowering, others reveal how democratic forms can be hollowed out by authoritarian traditions or unspoken coercion.

- a. **Support:** *Orang-Orang Proyek* (A. Tohari, 2002) celebrates grassroots democracy. Set in 1980s rural West Java, it follows labourers on a dam construction (“Project”) site. The villagers hold frequent informal meetings, sharing grievances and jointly deciding how to handle outside contractors. One narrator notes: “No voice was allowed to drown,” as even low-caste labourers speak freely. Deliberation here is tangible and egalitarian. Tohari depicts *musyawarah* not as an empty ritual but as concrete problem-solving. In the novel, democracy lives in the shanties and fields, not only in distant Parliaments. By dramatizing villagers making collective decisions (such as collectively refusing a wage cut), the novel *supports* Sila 4. It shows that the principle of deliberation can be practiced authentically at community level. This aligns with cultural materialism’s view of ideology as practiced in everyday life: the story illustrates democratic ideals as emergent from below.
- b. **Violation:** *Tenggelamnya Kapal van der Wijck* (Hamka, 1949) ironically undermines democracy by glorifying feudal order. In this early Indonesian novel, set in Minangkabau society, young lovers face opposition from traditional elders. A pivotal line dramatizes coercion: “You must bow to the elders’ decision—there

is no room for dissent.” Here adat (custom) councils enforce absolute obedience. Though technically meetings are held, the narrative shows they are mere formalities; in truth, the collective is a facade for autocratic hierarchy. Hakim (Hamka) uses this conflict to highlight the conflict between individual will and oppressive consensus. The form of deliberation exists (elders in council) but is violated by its content (no genuine representation). Pancasila’s ideal of “deliberation” is inverted: the people’s will is subsumed under unquestioned tradition. In Eagleton’s terms, the novel deflates any “ideological claim” of democracy by revealing it as repressive conformity. Hamka, himself an Islamic scholar, thus critiques how traditional power structures co-opt democratic language.

- c. **Critique:** *Belenggu* (A. Chairil Anwar Pane, 1931) focuses on the erosion of individual freedom under social convention. Though written under Dutch colonial rule, its critique is instructive. The protagonist, Sukartono, is a modern young man in Batavia torn between duty and desire. When his fiancée complains that their arranged marriage was not *muhaswara* (deliberated), he bitterly retorts: “Do you think our marriage was deliberated? We are merely trapped in the word ‘must’.” Pane critiques the very idea of *musyawarah* here as empty form. “Deliberation” is symbolically invoked, but Sukartono sees it as mechanical compliance. The novel thus undermines Sila 4 by showing social rituals (adulthood, marriage) imposed without real choice. This narrative peeling back the façade of consensus aligns with Williams’s insight: ideology here is unmasked by showing how supposed democracy is actually coercion. Pane anticipates that without substantive change, simply enshrining “deliberation” yields little – an insight that foreshadows later problems with Pancasila democracy.

### 3.5 Sila 5: Social Justice for All (Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia)

The fifth principle of Pancasila—Social Justice for All—appears in Indonesian literature through stories that imagine communal solidarity, but also unmask systemic inequalities and cultural practices that undermine justice, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Literary Engagements with the Fifth Principle of Pancasila (Social Justice for All) in Selected Indonesian Novels

Alignment	Novel	Overview	Key Passage / Description
Support	<i>Ronggeng Paruk</i> (Ahmad Tohari, Gramedia)	<i>Dukuh</i> (Ahmad 1982, Gramedia) Portrait of a female village dancer’s exploitation and the community’s eventual solidarity in defending her rights.	<b>Indonesian:</b> “Kami menari karena perut kosong; apa salahnya pemerintah membiarkan kami makan tanpa laka?” <b>English:</b> “We dance because our stomachs are empty; what sin is it that the government lets us eat only with disgrace?” Gives voice to the poor and calls for basic welfare.
Violation	<i>Entrok</i> (Okky Madasari, Gramedia)	(Okky 2010, Gramedia) Explores the destructive impact of shrimp-farm industrialization on rural farmers, revealing systemic inequality.	<b>Description:</b> Villagers lose land, fall into debt bondage, and endure corporate and bureaucratic exploitation—illustrating a state that fails to protect its citizens’ economic rights.

<p><b>Critique</b></p>	<p><b>Gadis Pantai</b> (Pramoedya A. Toer, 1962/86, Pustaka Balai)</p>	<p><i>A wartime Ambonese romance that unmasks class and religious injustice amid occupation, leaving commoners disenfranchised.</i></p>	<p><b>Indonesian:</b> “<i>Aku diberikan seperti seekor kambing, dengan harga yang telah ditentukan—beginikah nasib orang kecil?</i>” <b>English:</b> “<i>I was handed over like a goat, at a price already agreed— is this the fate of the little people?</i>” <i>Denounces feudal exploitation and calls for equity.</i></p>
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The novels listed illustrate how social justice is interpreted not only through institutional frameworks but also through everyday struggles for dignity, often revealing the structural and ideological barriers that obstruct equitable outcomes.

- a. **Support:** *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (Ahmad Tohari, 1982) imagines justice born of community solidarity. Set in a Central Java village during the 1940s-’50s, it follows Srintil, a ronggeng dancer who is initially marginalized by conservative villagers. Hardship (famine, war, political turmoil) pushes the community to an awakening: they come to protect Srintil from corrupt forces. In one moving line, a villager justifies the dance as survival: “We dance because our stomachs are empty.” Here justice is redefined: it is not legal recompense but mutual support. Tohari’s prose shows that dignity and visibility are at the heart of social justice. By depicting the villagers’ eventual collective defense of Srintil, the novel *supports* Sila 5: it portrays justice as *social*, arising through communal action rather than state decree. The narrative suggests a restorative justice born from empathy. Even when formal institutions fail, the people’s solidarity enacts a kind of grassroots justice. This resonates with cultural materialism in that the cultural “texts” (villagers’ actions) reclaim meaning from powerlessness.
- b. **Violation:** *Entrok* (Oka Rusmini, writing as Madasari, 2010) paints social justice as perpetually violated by economic forces. Set in the 1980s, the novel tracks a rural woman, Entrok, whose village is flooded out by shrimp farming. Corporate shrimp ponds poison the local water and land; villagers fall into debt to middlemen; entire families are displaced. In this world, the state is largely absent or complicit. The novel starkly *violates* Sila 5: the promise of justice for all is betrayed by market greed and governmental neglect. Entrok herself turns increasingly bitter: she walks barefoot and covered in mud, a living indictment of systemic neglect. Madasari’s narrative offers no redemption; it ends with unresolved loss. Formally, the prose is spare and unflinching, forcing readers to confront inequality without relief. This mirrors Williams’s notion that ideological critique can “reveal” how cultural forms obscure exploitation. *Entrok* exposes injustice as structural: poverty and injustice are normalized until the reader is forced to see Pancasila’s promise as broken.
- c. **Critique:** *Gadis Pantai* (Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1962) uses personal tragedy to critique patriarchal social contracts. In colonial-era Java, a young girl of peasant background is promised in marriage by her parents to a foreign merchant. She laments being “handed over like a goat” at the market. Here justice is denied not through courtroom tyranny but through unbreakable tradition. Pramoedya’s narrative critiques how so-called “custom” (adat) functions like legal code, legitimizing exploitation. Although the setting predates Pancasila, the novel anticipates the tensions in Sila 5: it asks whether any society that treats a child as property can claim to be just. The story’s quiet, tragic tone – lacking sensationalism – heightens its power. In terms of ideology, *Gadis Pantai* shows how power can hide behind custom and language (the marriage contract). The novel’s very restraint

becomes a form of protest. By witnessing from the margins, the reader understands that justice cannot be assumed; it must be continually claimed.

#### 4. Discussion

The analysis reveals that Pancasila functions in these novels as a dynamic ideological terrain, not a fixed standard. Across the five sila, literature engages with national ideals in complex ways – affirming, questioning, and subverting them according to narrative needs. Several cross-cutting patterns emerged:

- a. Ideological Ambiguity of Faith (Sila 1): Religious belief is portrayed variously as communal strength or as oppressive. In *Laskar Pelangi*, faith sustains an entire community; in *Saman*, religion itself fails to offer clarity; in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, faith is weaponized by patriarchs. This ambivalence suggests that belief in God in literature often reflects who holds religious authority. It supports Eagleton's argument that ideology is not monolithic. These texts show faith as "oppositional" or "residual" relative to dominant power (Williams). In sum, Pancasila's first principle is depicted as a social bond when genuinely embraced, and as distortion when hijacked by dogma.
- b. Civility Under Strain (Sila 2): The ideal of humane justice is both celebrated and brutally undermined. *Sitti Nurbaya* upholds empathy as revolutionary gentility; *Cantik Itu Luka* reveals the grotesque underside of society under impunity; *Laut Bercerita* memorializes innocence crushed by state terror. This suggests that Pancasila's humanism is most threatened when institutions act without accountability. Literature here functions as a *counter-history*: it records what ideological narratives (military propaganda, official silence) erase. In Williams's terms, these novels are "counter-hegemonic" stories that give voice to oppressed subjects. They echo Eagleton's view that texts can demystify ideology by laying bare hidden realities.
- c. Fragility of Unity (Sila 3): Unity is affirmed as an ideal in *Negeri 5 Menara*, but *Amba* and *Bumi Manusia* remind us how fragile that unity is. These novels illustrate that national identity is aspirational, requiring constant work. *Amba* inverts unity by spotlighting ethnic persecution, and *Bumi Manusia* unveils the long legacy of division under colonialism. Together they suggest (as did the New Order's own practice) that unity cannot be taken for granted. The literature thus becomes a "site of memory" (Pierre Nora) where historical wounds are neither forgotten nor ideologically smoothed over. According to cultural materialism, by foregrounding marginalized histories (Chinese Indonesians, colonial subjects), such works perform ideological deconstruction.
- d. Contradictions of Democracy (Sila 4): The ideal of participatory democracy is shown in tension with tradition and power. *Orang-Orang Proyek* affirms that real democracy is learned in the field, while *Tenggelamnya Kapal* and *Belenggu* depict rituals of decision-making that exclude dissent. These novels imply that institutions of democracy can become hollow forms – musyawarah in name only. The contrast supports the idea (found in democratic theory) that democracy must be more than ceremony; it must be practiced substantively. In ideological terms, literature here exposes the difference between *rhetorical democracy* and *lived democracy*. As Williams would note, these texts reveal the "political implications" of cultural forms: they uncover how political rituals can mask inequality or hierarchy.

- e. Elusive Justice (Sila 5): Social justice emerges as perhaps the most contested principle. In *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, justice is reclaimed by villagers' collective awakening; in *Entrok* and *Gadis Pantai*, justice is systematically denied by economic and social structures. All three underscore that justice often eludes the powerless. Literature here does not simply mirror social inequality – it critiques the “ideological mechanisms” that legitimize it (whether corporate exploitation or patriarchal custom). This aligns with Althusser's idea of ideology as a set of practices normalizing power. For instance, *Gadis Pantai* shows how ritualized marriage can function as an ideological apparatus maintaining feudal order. In short, these narratives make visible the very silence and conventions that justify injustice, forcing readers to confront the gap between Pancasila's promise and reality.

Taken together, the novels demonstrate that Indonesian fiction does not treat Pancasila as a neutral backdrop. Instead, it animates the doctrine, allowing readers to *experience* its tensions in concrete stories. These texts invite a view of ideology not as top-down propaganda, but as a field of struggle. In Weberian terms, the novels act as both *conscience* (reminding society of its ideals) and *critic* (revealing where the state falls short). Echoing Williams, we see culture as a process: through narrative, authors negotiate and redefine national values. By doing so, literature participates in Indonesia's ongoing conversation about identity and morality.

## 5. Conclusion

A Pancasila-based framework for literary criticism uncovers rich ideological layers in Indonesian fiction. By reading novels through each sila, we gain insight into how national ideals are practiced, contested, and sometimes betrayed in everyday life. This study shows that literature can function as a mirror and a counterpoint to state doctrine: it holds up a conscience to society. Moreover, the approach has broader implications. Any nation with an articulated founding ideology (whether secular nationalism or religious creed) can similarly examine how culture reflects and challenges that ideology.

Ultimately, fiction participates in the making of a nation's conscience. When writers work within the structures that govern them – the social hierarchies, religious norms, political narratives – their stories inevitably shape and are shaped by those structures. In Indonesia's case, Pancasila is not merely recited; it lives in the pages of novels, in the dreams and struggles of their characters. Through this Pancasila-driven criticism, we see that ideology is not a monolithic command, but a terrain where meanings are negotiated. Literature thus becomes both a reflection of national aspirations and a site of critical intervention, reminding readers that ideals only gain life through the actions of people.

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