

Research Article

# Hollow Didacticism and Its Uncomfortable Failure: A Psychosocial Reading of A. A. Navis' *Nasihah-Nasihah* (Good Advices)

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**Abstract:** This article examines A. A. Navis's short story *Nasihah-Nasihah* (Good Advices), a satirical narrative that interrogates the cultural practice of moral advice-giving (*nasihat*) within Indonesian society. While advice *per se* traditionally carries moral weight and symbolic authority; in this context, Navis exposes how such didactic counsel can become hollow when shaped by ego, prejudice, and social performance. The story follows Hasibuan, a young man caught in a moral dilemma, who seeks guidance from an elder renowned for his wisdom. Yet the elder's counsel – framed as protective and morally sound – proves misguided, creating conflict and nearly leading Hasibuan to abandon an innocent person. Using a psychosocial approach, this study applies Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts such as projection, ego defence mechanisms, and self-deception, alongside Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital, to analyse how *nasihat* functions as a performance of moral authority rather than genuine ethical care. Through irony and narrative reversal, Navis reveals the psychological blind spots and social motivations underpinning hollow didacticism, illustrating how advice-giving can reinforce power hierarchies while failing to engage empathetically with real human complexity. The findings show that *Nasihah-Nasihah* critiques moral didacticism as both psychologically flawed and socially self-serving, while simultaneously questioning the cultural reverence for advice-givers in traditional communities. By subverting the expected moral outcome, Navis contributes to wider debates on morality, authority, and postcolonial social critique in Indonesian literature.

**Keywords:** A. A. Navis; Indonesian literature; *Nasihah-Nasihah*; psychoanalysis; symbolic capital

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## 1. Introduction

Ali Akbar Navis (1924–2003), widely known as A. A. Navis, was a prominent Indonesian author and poet with a distinct satirical voice from Padang Panjang, West Sumatra. His Minangkabau heritage deeply informed his literary voice, blending regional matrilineal tradition, strong Islamic values, and sharp social critique (Aini et al., 2025; Abdullah, 1966). Navis was particularly renowned for his short stories, which often exposed moral hypocrisy within the context of everyday life, satirising figures who prioritized appearances over substance (Ozols, 2014). His works are firmly rooted in the Minangkabau's vibrant oral literature culture, which historically prized proverb-rich wisdom (*petatah-petitih*) and mutual advice (*nasihat*) as communal virtue; yet Navis frequently used this cultural heritage to unravel the darker side of moral posturing.

This article offers a psychosocial reading of Navis's short story *Nasihah-Nasihah* (literally Good Advices), a sharply ironic tale that subverts its own didactic premise. The story portrays Hasibuan, a young man who, following a culturally prescribed act of respect, seeks counsel from a respected elder when he encounters a distressed young woman. The elder's advice – though delivered with solemn moral authority – proves misguided, nearly causing harm to an innocent. Through its plot and characterisation, *Nasihah-Nasihah* critiques the hollow nature of moral advice when disentangled from empathy. It suggests that moral authority can become a tool for social performance rather than genuine ethical guidance.

Guided by psychoanalytic theory and Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, this paper investigates how projection, ego defence, and performative moral authority function in the



story. Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian frameworks, we explore how the adviser's psychological blind spots distort his counsel. Concurrently, Bourdieu's concept helps illuminate how advice-giving serves to reaffirm social hierarchies and the adviser's prestige. The interaction of these psychological and social dynamics illustrates the story's central thesis: when moral counsel is hollow – driven by ego preservation and social hierarchy – it becomes precarious and prone to failure.

The article is to answer the following research question: How do psychological mechanisms and social power structures in *Nasihat-Nasihat* contribute to exposing the failures of hollow didacticism?

Therefore, this article argues that *Nasihat-Nasihat* deftly captures the ways in which moral advice, when used as a performance of authority underpinned by psychological projection and symbolic ambition, collapses under its own contradictions – demonstrating that genuine ethics require empathy and critical self-awareness.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *Studies on A. A. Navis and Moral Satire*

A. A. Navis has long been recognised as a distinctive satirical voice in modern Indonesian literature. His works often highlight the contradictions between outward displays of morality and the lived social realities of postcolonial Indonesia (Teeuw, 1967). Navis is best known for short stories such as *Robohnya Surau Kami* (The Collapse of Our Little Mosque), which critiques ritualistic piety detached from social responsibility. Scholars have interpreted this story as reflective of Navis's broader moral satire – rather than directly questioning religion itself, it criticises the superficial and performative expressions of piety that neglect genuine ethical responsibility towards others (Ferdinal, 2015).

Navis's literary style is rooted in the Minangkabau cultural tradition, marked by proverbial wisdom (*petatab-petitih*), oral storytelling, and strong communal norms. However, rather than glorifying these traditions uncritically, Navis often exposes their internal contradictions. Teeuw (1967) observed that Navis, although part of the Generation of 1950s (*Angkatan 50*), distinguished himself by grounding his social critiques in regional Sumatra rather than the more dominant Javanese setting. This regional perspective brought to national literature an alternative moral and cultural lens.

While *Robohnya Surau Kami* has attracted significant scholarly attention, *Nasihat-Nasihat* remains underexplored in academic discourse. Yet the story continues Navis's hallmark approach: critiquing entrenched authority figures who claim moral superiority but fail in practice. Ferdinal (2015) suggests that Navis's human rights-oriented themes and depictions of injustice align with his satirical portrayals of community leaders who misuse moral authority. Thus, *Nasihat-Nasihat* can be seen as part of Navis's broader engagement with questioning the inconsistencies between moral ideals and social practices in Indonesian society.

### 2.2. *The Cultural Role of Nasihat (Advice) in Indonesian Society*

In Malay-Indonesian culture, *nasihat* is more than personal opinion – it is a moral duty and a means of preserving social cohesion. Goddard (2002) notes that *nasihat* carries strong ethical and cultural weight, often expressed through formulaic or proverbial language to soften direct criticism and maintain social harmony. In Minangkabau society, this is closely tied to the oral tradition of *petatab-petitih* (proverbial sayings), which elders use to advise younger generations. Refusing the advice of an elder is typically seen as a breach of etiquette and a sign of poor upbringing.

Advice-giving also reinforces social hierarchies. Elders, religious figures, and community leaders occupy privileged positions as *pemberi nasihat* (givers of advice), while the younger or less experienced are expected to be receptive and deferential. In Islamic teaching – deeply embedded in Minangkabau life – the act of *nasihat* is further sacralised by the Prophetic tradition that “Religion is sincere advice” (*al-din al-nasiba*), making it both a social and spiritual obligation. Thus, the cultural reverence for advice gives it not only interpersonal but also symbolic power.

Navis's story operates within this cultural framework but subverts it. By depicting an elder's *nasihat* as misguided and harmful, *Nasihat-Nasihat* challenges the assumption that advice is inherently wise or virtuous. It suggests that, when given without empathy or self-awareness, *nasihat* can become hollow and even destructive.



### 2.3. Moral Didacticism in Literature

Didacticism has historically been a defining feature of Indonesian and Malay literature, especially in pre-independence works where storytelling served as a tool for moral instruction. Abrams and Harpham (2014) describe didactic literature as designed primarily to teach moral or ethical lessons. In traditional Malay *bikayat* and early Indonesian novels, the moral message was often explicit, reflecting the belief that literature should contribute to societal education.

However, in modern Indonesian literature, there has been a growing awareness of the limitations of overt didacticism. Authors such as Navis, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, and others have interrogated the tension between moral ideals and complex social realities. Teeuw (1967) argued that Navis's fiction represents a *self-reflexive* form of moral storytelling – while his works are ethical in orientation, they resist simplistic moral conclusions.

In *Nasihat-Nasihat*, Navis engages with the didactic tradition only to expose its fragility. The story begins with a conventional moral setup (a young man seeks advice from an elder) but ends with the elder's authority undermined by ironic reversal. This aligns with what Booth (1983) termed "ironic didacticism," where the failure of a moraliser's authority itself becomes the moral lesson.

### 2.4. Theoretical Framework

This study applies two complementary theoretical frameworks: psychoanalytic theory (Freud and Lacan) and Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital.

Freud's concept of ego defence mechanisms – particularly projection and rationalisation – illuminates how the elder in the story attributes his own insecurities and biases to the girl he judges. Projection allows individuals to externalise undesirable qualities, thereby preserving their ego (Freud, 1961). Lacan expands this idea by arguing that the ego itself is a misrecognition, a fragile fiction sustained through social validation (Lacan, 1977). This explains the elder's humiliation and collapse of self-image when proven wrong.

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital is equally relevant. Advice-giving is not only psychological but social: it is a performance that reinforces the giver's prestige and social standing. Symbolic capital – honour, recognition, and moral authority – is gained and maintained through such performances, especially in hierarchical cultures like the Minangkabau (Bourdieu, 1986). When the elder's advice fails, his symbolic capital is stripped away, revealing the performative nature of his authority.

By combining these frameworks, the analysis bridges the personal and the social, showing that hollow didacticism in *Nasihat-Nasihat* is both an individual psychological phenomenon and a product of broader cultural hierarchies.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive methodology to examine A. A. Navis' *Nasihat-Nasihat* as a literary text that critiques hollow didacticism through its characters and narrative structure. Rather than attempting to quantify textual features, the approach focuses on close reading and contextual interpretation, situating the story within its cultural and socio-historical background while applying selected theoretical lenses.

### 3.1. Approach

The analysis combines textual interpretation with a psychosocial framework, drawing on psychoanalytic theory and Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital. Psychoanalysis is used to explore the internal dynamics of the elder's behaviour – particularly the mechanisms of projection, rationalisation, and self-deception (Freud, 1923; Lacan, 1977). Simultaneously, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital allows for an examination of how advice-giving functions as a socially recognised performance that reinforces hierarchical relations (Bourdieu, 1986).

This dual framework is suitable because *Nasihat-Nasihat* presents both individual psychological motivations and broader social structures at play. The elder's flawed advice cannot be understood purely as a personal failing, nor solely as a cultural product; it emerges from the intersection of ego-defensive psychology and the performative nature of authority within Minangkabau tradition.

### 3.2. Textual Focus

The primary material is the short story *Nasihat-Nasihat*, first published in the collection *Bianglala* (1963). Key narrative elements are analysed, including: (1) Characterisation, focusing on how Hasibuan, the elder, and the young woman are constructed and perceived;



- (2) Dialogue and diction, especially the style of the elder's *nasihat* and its cultural connotations;
- (3) Plot structure, particularly the progression from advice-seeking to ironic reversal;
- (4) Narrative voice and tone, which subtly guide the reader's interpretation through irony.

Where relevant, these elements are related to the broader cultural norm of *nasihat* as moral instruction (Goddard, 2002) and to Navis's recurring thematic concern with the gap between moral ideals and lived reality (Teeuw, 1967; Ferdinal, 2015).

### 3.3. *Theoretical Application*

The theoretical frameworks are applied as interpretive lenses rather than rigid models. Psychoanalytic concepts clarify the elder's projection – attributing suspected immorality to the girl without evidence – and rationalisation, presenting fear driven advice as moral prudence (Freud, 1923). Lacanian theory extends this reading by showing how the elder's self image as a wise moral authority is an unstable construction dependent on social recognition, which collapses when reality contradicts it (Lacan, 1977).

Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital complements this by revealing how advice-giving is a performance of authority that derives power from cultural recognition rather than intrinsic moral merit (Bourdieu, 1986). The elder's eventual loss of credibility in the story is therefore both a psychological defeat and a social unmasking.

### 3.4. *Limitations*

This study focuses on a single short story and does not attempt to generalise its findings to all Indonesian literature. While the psychosocial approach is insightful, it remains interpretive, relying on textual cues and cultural context rather than empirical audience reception. However, the integration of cultural background, narrative analysis, and theory provides a balanced framework for understanding how *Nasihat Nasihat* critiques the limitations of moral advice in traditional settings.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. *Psychological Mechanisms in Advice-Giving*

The elder in *Nasihat-Nasihat* embodies the culturally sanctioned figure of moral authority, yet his advice ultimately proves misguided. A psychosocial reading reveals that his behaviour is shaped by unconscious psychological mechanisms – particularly projection and rationalisation – which undermine the ethical validity of his counsel.

Freud (1961) identifies projection as a defence mechanism in which an individual attributes undesirable feelings, thoughts, or motives to others. In the story, the elder projects his own fear of social scandal and moral failure onto the young woman Hasibuan encounters. Without knowing her circumstances, he assumes that her presence signifies danger or moral impropriety, and this assumption becomes the basis of his advice. By attributing potential immorality to the girl, he absolves himself from confronting his own anxiety about communal judgement.

Similarly, rationalisation – another ego defence – plays a crucial role. The elder frames his fearful and conservative advice as prudent moral guidance, cloaking his self-protective instincts in the language of ethics. This echoes Freud's observation that rationalisation allows the ego to disguise irrational or anxiety-laden impulses in socially acceptable reasoning. The elder's statement, delivered with solemn authority, appears to Hasibuan as a form of wisdom; yet the narrative's ironic reversal exposes it as a thin veneer for insecurity.

Lacan's (1977) insights into the fragility of the ego further illuminate this dynamic. The elder's self-image as a wise moral guide depends on social recognition: he is respected because the community sees him as embodying cultural ideals. His advice-giving therefore serves not only Hasibuan but also his own need to reaffirm this socially validated identity. When the advice is proven wrong, the elder's authority – and thus his ego – is destabilised. This aligns with Lacan's idea of *méconnaissance* (misrecognition), where the ego sustains itself through illusions of coherence that are easily disrupted.

The psychological mechanisms at play here demonstrate that the act of giving advice, though ostensibly altruistic, can also serve hidden personal functions. The elder does not consciously intend harm; rather, he is constrained by internalised fear of losing status and the deeply ingrained cultural expectation that an elder must always know what is best. By highlighting these unconscious motivations, Navis suggests that advice-giving is not a neutral moral act but one deeply entangled with the psyche of the adviser.

This reading reframes the story's moral lesson. Rather than portraying the elder as a



villain or simple hypocrite, *Nasihat-Nasihat* reveals the human vulnerability behind moral authority. The elder is caught between his own insecurities, cultural expectations of infallibility, and the performative nature of his role. Navis thus opens a more empathetic but still critical understanding of how psychological mechanisms can hollow out the ethical substance of *nasihat*.

#### 4.2. *Social Power and Symbolic Capital in Advice Giving*

Beyond individual psychology, *Nasihat-Nasihat* also illuminates the social dimensions of advice-giving. In Minangkabau society, elders occupy a privileged moral position: they are the custodians of *adat* (customary law) and the transmitters of communal wisdom through *nasihat*. Advice from an elder carries symbolic weight, reinforcing not only social cohesion but also the adviser's prestige. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of symbolic capital is particularly useful here, as it explains how social recognition, honour, and moral authority are accrued through culturally sanctioned practices such as advice-giving.

The elder in *Nasihat-Nasihat* exemplifies this dynamic. His role as an adviser is not merely interpersonal but also performative, reaffirming his position as a respected moral figure in the community. By dispensing guidance, he accumulates symbolic capital: each act of advice is a ritual of authority that strengthens his social standing. In this sense, *nasihat* operates as what Bourdieu calls a symbolic exchange – it is ostensibly altruistic but also serves to reproduce hierarchical relations by legitimising the elder's superior status.

However, the story subverts this cultural expectation by showing what happens when symbolic capital collapses. When the elder's advice is proven to be misguided, his prestige is undermined. The very authority that once seemed unassailable is revealed to depend on a fragile social consensus. As Bourdieu (1986) argues, symbolic power exists only as long as it is recognised by others; once recognition is withdrawn, the illusion of authority dissolves. In the narrative, this loss of credibility is both a personal and social failure.

This collapse of symbolic capital also reveals the cultural ambivalence of *nasihat*. While advice is meant to safeguard communal morality, it is also a tool for sustaining social order and hierarchy. In *Nasihat-Nasihat*, the elder's failure disrupts this order, exposing the vulnerability of traditional authority in the face of complex, unpredictable human situations. Navis suggests that moral authority based solely on position and cultural convention cannot withstand critical scrutiny when stripped of genuine empathy and wisdom.

Furthermore, this reading situates *Nasihat-Nasihat* within Navis's broader literary critique of hollow moral posturing. Just as *Robohnya Surau Kami* questions the performative nature of religious devotion (Ferdinal, 2015), *Nasihat-Nasihat* interrogates the performative nature of moral advice. In both cases, Navis demonstrates that authority figures often act not only out of ethical concern but also from an unconscious desire to preserve their symbolic capital.

Thus, the story illustrates how advice-giving is a social performance that sustains power relations, yet one that can unravel when its lack of substantive moral grounding is exposed. This social reading complements the psychological interpretation, showing that hollow didacticism is not simply an individual failing but also a structural feature of hierarchical cultures that prioritise authority over understanding.

#### 4.3. *Narrative Irony and the Failure of Didacticism*

One of the most striking features of *Nasihat-Nasihat* is its use of narrative irony to undermine the didactic expectation inherent in its premise. Traditionally, stories in the Malay-Indonesian oral and written tradition often feature a young protagonist seeking wisdom from an elder, leading to a clear moral resolution. This structure aligns with the didactic function of literature, which, as Abrams and Harpham (2014) note, is designed to instruct readers in ethical or moral lessons.

Navis begins *Nasihat-Nasihat* in a way that appears to uphold this convention. Hasibuan, faced with an ambiguous situation involving a distressed young woman, follows the cultural norm by consulting an elder for guidance. The act of seeking advice is framed as proper and responsible, reaffirming the social expectation that elders possess superior wisdom. Readers familiar with this cultural context would anticipate a reaffirmation of moral order through the elder's counsel.

However, Navis subverts this expectation through ironic reversal. The elder's advice, while outwardly prudent, proves not only ineffective but nearly harmful. The young woman, rather than embodying moral danger as the elder assumed, turns out to be innocent, and the elder's counsel brings Hasibuan close to an unjust act. This outcome creates situational irony, where the result of following moral guidance is the opposite of what is intended.



This narrative irony highlights the failure of hollow didacticism. The story demonstrates that advice grounded more in fear of scandal and social preservation than in empathy and critical thought cannot truly resolve moral dilemmas. Booth (1983) describes this as a form of “ironic didacticism,” where the narrative teaches a lesson by exposing the inadequacy of its supposed moral authority. Rather than offering a clear-cut moral maxim, *Nasihat-Nasihat* leaves readers with a reflective insight: that genuine ethics cannot be reduced to formulaic instructions or unquestioned deference to authority.

Navis’s approach also reflects broader trends in modern Indonesian literature, which often grappled with the limitations of moral didacticism in a rapidly changing postcolonial society. Teeuw (1967) notes that writers of the 1950s and 1960s increasingly questioned traditional values and their relevance in contemporary life. *Nasihat-Nasihat* fits this trajectory by illustrating that moral guidance rooted solely in tradition may lack the nuance needed for modern ethical challenges.

The irony also humanises the elder, preventing the story from becoming a simple attack on traditional authority. He is not malicious but trapped within cultural scripts and personal insecurities. His failure is emblematic of a larger systemic issue: when moral authority is performed without critical self-awareness, it becomes vulnerable to collapse. In this way, Navis invites readers to scrutinise the structures that support moral didacticism rather than merely blaming individual advisers.

Thus, through its ironic narrative design, *Nasihat-Nasihat* deconstructs the expectation that literature should always reinforce social norms. Instead, it uses the failure of advice to provoke reflection on the complexity of morality, the fallibility of authority, and the need for a more empathetic, context-sensitive understanding of ethical action.

#### 4.4. *Integrating Psychological, Social, and Narrative Dimensions: A Broader Cultural Critique*

Taken together, the psychological mechanisms, social structures, and narrative strategies in *Nasihat-Nasihat* produce a nuanced cultural critique. Rather than presenting a straightforward condemnation of traditional values or a simplistic defence of modernity, Navis explores the tensions between individual vulnerability, cultural expectations, and the performance of authority.

From a psychological perspective, the elder’s projection and rationalisation demonstrate how unconscious anxieties can distort moral judgement. His advice is shaped less by objective reasoning and more by internalised fears – fear of scandal, fear of losing social respect, and fear of moral ambiguity. This internal conflict humanises the elder, portraying him as a product of his cultural conditioning rather than an inherently flawed individual.

From a social perspective, the elder’s role is inseparable from the symbolic capital he accumulates as a respected adviser. His authority is not merely personal but embedded in the Minangkabau tradition, where elders are entrusted with safeguarding *adat* and ensuring communal harmony (Teeuw, 1967). Advice-giving, therefore, becomes a performative act that maintains the social order while simultaneously reinforcing the adviser’s status. The story shows how this symbolic power is precarious, collapsing when reality contradicts the assumptions on which it is built (Bourdieu, 1986).

Narratively, Navis uses irony and reversal to reveal the fragility of both psychological and social authority. The elder’s well-intentioned but misguided advice exemplifies what Booth (1983) describes as “ironic didacticism,” where the narrative teaches by undermining the credibility of its supposed moral guide. This literary strategy aligns with Navis’s broader satirical approach, which questions not morality itself but the superficial, performative ways in which it is often upheld (Ferdinal, 2015).

This integration of psychological, social, and narrative layers reflects a broader cultural moment in Indonesian literature, particularly in the post-independence era. Authors of Navis’s generation grappled with the changing role of tradition in a society negotiating modernity, nationalism, and global influences (Teeuw, 1967). *Nasihat-Nasihat* participates in this discourse by showing that traditional structures of moral authority, while culturally meaningful, may falter when confronted with the complexity of lived ethical situations.

Importantly, the story does not reject *nasihat* as a cultural practice outright. Instead, it suggests that advice must be grounded in empathy, critical self-awareness, and a willingness to listen, rather than in rigid adherence to social scripts or fear of communal judgement. In doing so, Navis offers a subtle yet powerful critique: the value of moral authority lies not in its formal position but in its capacity for genuine ethical engagement.

Thus, *Nasihat-Nasihat* transcends a simple moral lesson and instead invites readers to reflect on the conditions under which moral guidance becomes meaningful – or hollow. By

weaving together the psychological fragility of the adviser, the social dynamics of symbolic capital, and the narrative irony of didactic failure, Navis contributes to a deeper understanding of how culture, authority, and morality intersect in both empowering and constraining ways.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

A. A. Navis's *Nasihat-Nasihat* (Good Advices) offers a subtle yet incisive exploration of the fragility of moral authority when shaped by psychological insecurity and social performance. Beginning with a culturally familiar premise – a young man seeks guidance from a respected elder – the story sets up the expectation of moral clarity, only to unravel it through irony and reversal. This narrative structure reflects Navis's broader engagement with the complexities of morality in post-independence Indonesian society, particularly within the Minangkabau cultural context.

Through a psychosocial lens, this study has shown that the elder's advice is undermined by unconscious psychological mechanisms. His projection of fear and moral suspicion onto the young woman and his rationalisation of self-protective instincts as moral prudence reveal how ego defence mechanisms can distort ethical judgement (Freud, 1961). Lacan's concept of *méconnaissance* further clarifies how the elder's sense of authority depends on a fragile self-image sustained by social recognition, which collapses when reality exposes its flaws (Lacan, 1977).

Simultaneously, Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital explains the social function of advice-giving in maintaining hierarchical relations within Minangkabau society (Bourdieu, 1986). By giving advice, the elder reaffirms his status as a moral authority, yet this symbolic power is precarious, relying entirely on communal recognition. Once his advice is shown to be misguided, his symbolic capital – and the social order it upholds – loses its legitimacy.

Navis reinforces these psychological and social insights through narrative irony, which transforms what initially appears to be a didactic story into a critique of didacticism itself. As Booth (1983) describes, this "ironic didacticism" teaches not by offering a clear moral maxim but by demonstrating the failure of hollow moralising. Rather than rejecting *nasihat* outright, the story reveals that advice must be grounded in empathy, context, and critical reflection to hold genuine ethical value.

This reading positions *Nasihat-Nasihat* within a larger literary and cultural dialogue. Like *Robohnya Surau Kami*, the story reflects Navis's characteristic concern with the disjunction between moral ideals and social realities (Ferdinal, 2015). It also aligns with broader trends in modern Indonesian literature that question the adequacy of traditional moral frameworks in a rapidly changing society (Teeuw, 1967).

Ultimately, *Nasihat-Nasihat* contributes to a nuanced understanding of moral authority as both a psychological and social construction. It shows that authority figures, however well-intentioned, are vulnerable to internal insecurities and external pressures that may hollow out the ethical substance of their guidance. In doing so, Navis invites readers to consider not only the cultural role of *nasihat* but also the deeper human need for moral engagement rooted in empathy rather than performance.

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