

# Architectural Metaphor of A.A. Navis's Works in Designing a Literary Appreciation Center in Yogyakarta

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Yogyakarta, a leading Indonesian literary centre, lacks a purpose-built facility for literary appreciation activities such as reading, discussion, performance, and critical engagement. This study designs a Literary Appreciation Building accommodating these activities through an architectural metaphor inspired by A.A. Navis's *Robohnya Surau Kami*, translating its literary values into architectural form.

**Research Methodology:** A qualitative design methodology employed a paradigm to concept framework, comprising thematic analysis of the short story, application of Antoniades's in 1990 Intangible Metaphor framework, and site analysis to develop strategies for massing, landscape, circulation, organisation, structure, and materials.

**Results:** The design proposes a two-mass building on a 1.9-hectare site in Pakualaman, Yogyakarta, with a gross floor area of 3,809 m<sup>2</sup>. The main building reflects the collapsing *surau* through a twisted façade, while the auditorium represents Ajo Sidi through a slanted roof and curved form. A pedestrian bridge connects both masses, symbolising reconciliation.

**Conclusions:** The Intangible Metaphor approach proposed by Antoniades in 1990 effectively translates literary values into architectural design, enabling the building to embody its literary subject.

**Limitations:** This study presents a conceptual design; construction and post-occupancy evaluation are needed to validate its effectiveness.

**Contributions:** This study presents a replicable method for translating literary metaphor into architecture, contributing to the application of intangible metaphor in cultural building design.

**Keywords:** *A.A. Navis, Architectural Metaphor, Cultural Architecture, Design Methodology, Literary Appreciation Building*

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## 1. Introduction

Yogyakarta occupies a singular position in the geography of Indonesian literary life. As [Wulandari and Asmara \(2023\)](#) observed, the city's literary activity in the 1950s marked the beginning of a new generation of Indonesian literary production, particularly in poetry, establishing Yogyakarta as a creative hub to which writers gravitated from across the archipelago. Sanusi Pane, Armijn Pane, Chairil Anwar, Usmar Ismail, and Aoh Kartahadimadja were among the nationally significant literary figures drawn to Yogyakarta, joining the city's indigenous creative community to produce a richly textured literary ecosystem, as documented in the historiography of Indonesian regional literary

movements ([Wulandari & Asmara, 2023](#)). This tradition continues are contemporary Yogyakarta remains a centre of Indonesian poetry, prose fiction, theatre, and cultural criticism, sustained by the presence of universities, arts communities, and a historically literate public culture. The persistence of place-based literary identity documented in Yogyakarta resonates with broader scholarship on literary geography, which demonstrates that certain cities accumulate a self-reinforcing creative density through the clustering of writers, publishers, and reading publics over successive generations ([Hones, & Leyda, 2021](#); [Reijnders, & Roodhuyzen, 2022](#)).

Despite this vibrant literary tradition, Yogyakarta lacks a dedicated physical facility specifically designed for literary appreciation activities, a space where writers, readers, scholars, students, and enthusiasts can gather for reading, discussion, performance, research, and exhibition of literary works. The literary appreciation is the genuine, engaged process of acquainting oneself with literary works, a process encompassing recognition, immersion, understanding, enjoyment, and ultimately application. This multi-dimensional process requires a facility that can support its diverse activity forms within a purposefully designed environment. The absence of such dedicated cultural infrastructure is not unique to Yogyakarta; comparative research on literary and cultural facility provision in mid-sized cities consistently finds that purpose-built spaces for literary culture lag behind equivalent investment in museums, performing arts centres, and visual art galleries, despite literature's comparable contribution to civic cultural identity ([Comunian, & England, 2020](#); [Reijnders and Roodhuyzen, 2022](#)).

This architectural design research proposes a Literary Appreciation Building for Yogyakarta, using the work of A.A. Navis, one of Indonesia's most celebrated short fiction writers, as the conceptual foundation. Ali Akbar Navis (1924-2003), born in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, is widely regarded as a canonical figure in Indonesian literature, particularly known for his short fiction ([Adilla, 2003](#)). His most celebrated work, *Robohnya Surau Kami* (The Collapse of Our Prayer House), published in 1955 and awarded the best short story prize by the literary magazine, encapsulates a complex moral dialogue about the tension between religious devotion and social responsibility, a dialogue deeply relevant to the Indonesian cultural values that animate literary culture across generations. The enduring relevance of Navis's moral critique reflects a broader pattern documented in postcolonial Southeast Asian literature, where short fiction frequently functions as a vehicle for negotiating tensions between traditional religious practice and the demands of modern civic participation ([Day, 2018](#); [Hellwig, 2019](#)).

The design employs architectural metaphor, specifically the Intangible Metaphor framework developed by [Antoniades \(1990\)](#), to translate the abstract values, narrative structure, and character dynamics of *Robohnya Surau Kami* into architectural form, spatial organisation, and landscape design. The use of literary narrative as a generative source for architectural concept development sits within an established and growing strand of design research that treats narrative structures, rather than purely formal or programmatic logics, as legitimate generators of spatial form ([Eilouti, 2021](#); [Yaneva, 2020](#)). This approach is consistent with broader theoretical work on metaphor in design cognition, which demonstrates that designers routinely draw on cross-domain analogies, including literary and narrative sources, to generate novel formal solutions that would not emerge from purely functionalist design reasoning ([Casakin, & Kreitler, 2021](#); [Hay, Cash, & Dorst, 2020](#)).

The research addresses three design problems. First, what facility requirements must the Literary Appreciation Building fulfil to support the full range of literary appreciation activities. Second, how can the Intangible Metaphor approach translate the abstract values and narrative elements of *Robohnya Surau Kami* into architectural design decisions. Third, what specific formal, spatial, and material design outcomes represent A.A. Navis's work and values in architectural terms. These three problems together define a research agenda that connects literary studies, architectural theory, and design methodology in a manner that has received comparatively limited attention in the existing literature on cultural building design, particularly within the Indonesian context, where most public cultural architecture research addresses museums and performance venues rather than facilities

oriented specifically toward literary culture ([Riyanto, Hardiman, & Murtini, 2021](#); [Suryani, & Putra, 2022](#)).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *Literary Appreciation and Building Programme Requirements*

Literary appreciation, as defined in the foundational Indonesian literary pedagogy literature, encompasses the active, engaged process of acquainting oneself with literary works through recognition, immersion, understanding, enjoyment, and application ([Rahadiyanti, 2013](#)). A dedicated Literary Appreciation Building must provide spatial support for the full range of activities that constitute this process. According to [Rahadiyanti \(2013\)](#), the programme of activities at a literary appreciation building encompasses educational activities such as literary discussions, work analysis sessions, research, seminars, and workshops; recreational activities such as theatrical performances and poetry declamation; commercial activities such as book sales, souvenirs, and food and beverage services; and operational activities such as facility management. To support these activities, the building requires a specialised literary library, discussion and seminar rooms, a theatre auditorium, an open-air theatre, exhibition galleries, communal plaza areas, a cafeteria, a bookshop, and administrative management offices.

This multi-functional programming model for literary cultural facilities aligns closely with international research on the design of contemporary public libraries and literary centres, which increasingly emphasises the integration of social, performative, and commercial functions alongside traditional collection-based library services. [Lawson and Kerlake \(2021\)](#) document how contemporary library design has shifted from a purely collection-storage model toward a community hub model that explicitly incorporates discussion spaces, event programming, and informal social interaction zones. [Johnson \(2018\)](#) similarly demonstrates that the perceived value of public library buildings to communities is strongly associated with the diversity of activities the building supports beyond book lending, including reading groups, author events, and exhibition space, a finding directly relevant to the programmatic breadth specified for the Yogyakarta facility. [Lenstra and Hall \(2019\)](#) further argue that contemporary library and literary facility programming should treat the building as a civic third place that supports informal social learning, a concept that extends naturally to the literary appreciation building typology by framing the facility not merely as a repository of texts but as an active site of communal literary practice.

The specific combination of educational, recreational, commercial, and operational programming identified by [Rahadiyanti \(2013\)](#) also reflects broader theoretical work on cultural facility typology in placemaking literature. [Lak and Hakimian \(2019\)](#) and [Mehta \(2022\)](#) both demonstrate that successful cultural venues integrate spaces for passive consumption, such as reading and exhibition viewing, with spaces for active production and performance, such as workshops and stages, because this integration sustains different modes of public engagement across different visit occasions and user groups. The amphitheatre and open plaza spaces specified in the Yogyakarta programme exemplify this integrative logic, providing flexible outdoor venues capable of hosting both formal literary events and informal spontaneous gatherings.

### 2.2 A.A. Navis and *Robohnya Surau Kami*

A.A. Navis was not merely a short fiction writer but a multidimensional cultural figure, described by Yusra as not only a short story writer but also a novelist, poet, and writer of non-fiction including articles and academic writing, as well as a musician, sculptor, painter, director, and radio drama performer ([Irdawati, 2010](#)). In the Indonesian literary canon, however, his identity is most strongly associated with the short story form, and particularly with *Robohnya Surau Kami*, the first work that brought him national recognition ([Adilla, 2003](#)). Navis's broader literary output, including his subsequent novel and essay collections, has been documented as consistently engaging with themes of moral hypocrisy, regional Minangkabau identity, and the tension between traditional adat custom and modern social change, themes that scholars of Indonesian literature have read as part of a wider postcolonial project of negotiating cultural identity through fiction ([Day, 2018](#); [Hellwig, 2019](#)).

The *Robohnya Surau Kami* narrates the decline of an unmaintained prayer house, the *surau*, following the death of its elderly guardian, referred to as *Kakek* or Grandfather. The central dramatic device is a story within a story by Ajo Sidi, a pragmatic community member, tells the Grandfather a satirical tale about Haji Saleh, a man so devoted to prayer and religious ritual that he neglected all productive contribution to his community and family, ultimately facing divine reproach despite his piety. The story's central thematic tension, between ritual devotion and social responsibility, between the individual and the community, is expressed through the conflict between *Kakek*, whose devout but socially isolated lifestyle is implicitly critiqued, and Ajo Sidi, who advocates for the integration of faith with purposeful social contribution ([Kurnia, 2013](#); [Irdawati, 2010](#)).

This narrative structure, in which an embedded story functions as a vehicle for moral critique of the frame narrative's protagonist, has been analysed extensively in comparative literature scholarship on metafictional and frame-narrative techniques. [Alber and Fludernik \(2019\)](#) account of narrative levels provides a theoretical vocabulary for understanding how the Haji Saleh story operates as a heterodiegetic embedded narrative that recontextualises and morally judges the frame story's events, a structural device that subsequent scholarship has shown to be a recurring feature of didactic short fiction across multiple literary traditions ([Bell, & Alber, 2021](#); [Mildorf, 2022](#)). Reading *Robohnya Surau Kami* through this comparative narratological lens clarifies why the story has proven such a productive source for architectural translation: its embedded structure already operates spatially, in the sense that the story creates a layered relationship between an inner narrative space, Haji Saleh's allegorical world, and an outer narrative space, *Kakek surau*, a layered relationship that maps with unusual directness onto the two-mass architectural configuration developed in the present design.

### **2.3 Architectural Metaphor: Antoniades's in 1990 Framework**

Architectural metaphor, in [Antoniades \(1990\)](#) framework, is the practice of designing a building as something else, transferring the properties of one domain, in this case literary narrative, into the architectural domain through systematic analogical translation. [Antoniades \(1990\)](#) identifies three categories of architectural metaphor. Intangible Metaphor begins from concepts, ideas, human conditions, or specific qualities such as individuality, naturalness, community, tradition, or culture. This is the category employed in this design: the abstract values of *Robohnya Surau Kami*, including spiritual-social balance, individual-community tension, and the moral weight of social responsibility, are translated into spatial, formal, and circulation design decisions. Tangible Metaphor begins from visual or material character, such as a house designed as a castle or a temple roof representing the sky. Combined Metaphor integrates abstract concept and material or visual character simultaneously as the creative departure point.

Antoniades's typology builds on a broader theoretical tradition in architectural theory concerning the role of metaphor and analogy in design cognition, a tradition extensively documented in architectural vocabulary scholarship tracing how concepts such as space, structure, and order have themselves functioned as metaphor-laden terms throughout the history of architectural theory ([Ostwald & Williams, 2022](#)). [Gibbs \(2022\)](#) account of conceptual metaphor demonstrates that metaphorical thinking is not merely a rhetorical or decorative device but a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which abstract domains are structured by reference to more concrete or embodied domains, a theoretical foundation that directly supports Antoniades's claim that intangible concepts such as individuality or community can be productively mapped onto spatial form. Subsequent design cognition research has empirically validated the generative role of metaphor in architectural ideation, building on earlier work establishing visual analogy as a core design reasoning strategy ([Goldschmidt & Tansa, 2023](#)). [Casakin and Kreitler \(2021\)](#) demonstrate experimentally that designers using explicit metaphorical reasoning produce more original design solutions than designers working from purely functional briefs, while [Lymer \(2019\)](#) further shows that the effectiveness of metaphor as a design tool depends on the cognitive distance between the source domain and the target domain, with moderate distance, neither too literal nor too abstract, producing the most productive design outcomes.

The Intangible Metaphor approach is most appropriate for representing A.A. Navis's work because the literary values of *Robohnya Surau Kami* are fundamentally abstract, moral, philosophical, and social

in character rather than physically or visually representable. The challenge of the design is to find architectural equivalents for these abstract values that communicate their essence to building users through spatial experience rather than literal representation. This challenge parallels what [Bille and Sorensen \(2022\)](#), and [Mildner and Conrad \(2021\)](#), describe as the phenomenological dimension of architectural meaning, and connects to neuroscience-informed design theory demonstrating that embodied spatial experience, rather than purely visual or semiotic reading, is central to how building occupants construct architectural meaning ([Robinson & Pallasmaa, 2021](#)), in which a building communicates significance not through explicit semiotic reference but through the embodied, experiential qualities of light, material, proportion, and movement sequence. [Bille and Sorensen \(2022\)](#) concept of atmospheric intertwining, the layering of programme, structure, and phenomenal experience to produce buildings whose meaning emerges through inhabitation rather than visual reading alone, offers a closely related theoretical complement to Antoniades's Intangible Metaphor category, reinforcing the methodological choice made in the present study.

#### ***2.4 Narrative and Metaphor in Contemporary Architectural Practice***

The translation of literary or narrative content into architectural form has an established, if still developing, presence in contemporary design research and practice. [Eilouti \(2021\)](#) provides an influential account of how narrative structure can inform spatial sequence and circulation design, arguing that architecture shares with literature a fundamental concern with the sequential unfolding of experience over time, such that narrative theory offers architects a productive conceptual toolkit for designing circulation and spatial sequence. [Yaneva \(2020\)](#) extends this argument by demonstrating, through a series of design case studies, that narrative-driven design methods produce buildings with stronger experiential coherence than purely diagrammatic or programmatic design approaches, because narrative provides an integrating logic that connects otherwise disparate formal and spatial decisions into a legible whole.

Within memorial and cultural architecture specifically, several scholars have documented how built form can be made to embody literary or historical narrative content. [Sumartojo and Pink \(2019\)](#) examine how museum and memorial architecture across multiple national contexts encodes historical narrative through sequence, threshold, and material symbolism, demonstrating that visitors can read coherent narrative meaning from architectural form even without textual explanation, provided the spatial sequence is carefully calibrated to the narrative content it represents. [Macdonald \(2021\)](#) similarly documents the capacity of architectural form to carry symbolic and narrative weight in contested cultural and political contexts, reinforcing the broader claim that architecture is not merely a neutral container for cultural content but an active medium through which narrative meaning can be constructed and communicated.

Within the Indonesian context specifically, recent design research has begun to explore similar translation methodologies, though with substantially less frequency than the broader international literature. [Riyanto et al. \(2021\)](#) document a design study applying narrative translation methods to a cultural heritage interpretation centre in Central Java, finding that visitors reported stronger emotional engagement with building forms explicitly derived from local oral history narratives compared to conventional museum typologies. [Suryani and Putra \(2022\)](#) similarly apply metaphorical translation methods to a regional performing arts centre design, concluding that the explicit documentation of metaphor translation logic, of the kind presented in Table 1 of the present study, is essential for ensuring that design decisions remain traceable to their narrative source rather than becoming arbitrary formal gestures disconnected from their conceptual origin. These Indonesian precedents, while methodologically related to the present study, have not previously addressed literary short fiction specifically as a metaphor source, nor have they addressed the particular challenge of translating an embedded frame-narrative structure into a two-mass building configuration, which constitutes the specific contribution of the present design research.

The growing body of international research on narrative-based and metaphor-based architectural design methods nonetheless converges on several shared findings directly relevant to the present study. First, abstract or intangible source content, such as moral themes or character relationships,

requires more deliberate and systematic translation methodology than concrete or visual source content, because the mapping from abstract concept to spatial form is not self-evident and must be constructed through explicit design reasoning ([Lymer, 2019](#); [Hay et al., 2020](#)). Second, the documentation of metaphor translation logic, making explicit the connection between each narrative element and its corresponding architectural decision, is itself a valuable design research output, because it renders the otherwise tacit reasoning of metaphorical design transparent and replicable for other designers and researchers ([Eilouti, 2018](#)). Third, narrative-derived architectural form is most successful when it operates across multiple design dimensions simultaneously, including mass configuration, circulation, material, and programming, rather than being confined to a single superficial formal gesture, since multi-dimensional translation produces a more coherent and legible overall design narrative ([Eilouti, 2021](#); [Yaneva, 2020](#)). These three findings directly informed the design methodology and the structure of the metaphor translation table developed in the present study.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative architectural design research methodology, a methodological approach increasingly recognised within architecture as a legitimate mode of generating and validating design knowledge through the systematic documentation of design reasoning rather than through statistical generalisation ([Cross, 2023](#); [Hay et al., 2020](#)). The design process proceeded through three sequential phases, each producing specific design research outputs that fed forward into subsequent phases.

Phase 1, Thematic Literary Analysis, involved a systematic close reading of *Robohnya Surau Kami* to identify the literary elements subject to architectural metaphor translation. This phase identified five categories of translatable literary content by title and theme, understood as the collapsing *surau* functioning as a structural metaphor; central characters, with *Kakek* and *Ajo Sidi* functioning as mass configuration metaphors; narrative conflict, understood as character tension translatable into building relationship; setting description, with the narrator's approach to the *surau* functioning as a site circulation metaphor; and central moral values, with the individual-community balance functioning as a programming metaphor. This analytical procedure follows established practice in literary close reading methodology, in which textual elements are systematically catalogued prior to any interpretive or translational work, ensuring that the subsequent architectural translation remains grounded in identifiable textual content rather than free interpretive association ([Alber & Fludernik, 2019](#); [Bell & Alber, 2021](#)), a sequencing also consistent with design expertise research showing that experienced designers systematically structure problem content before generating solution concepts ([Cross, 2023](#)).

Phase 2, Architectural Concept Development, translated each identified literary element into a corresponding architectural response using the Intangible Metaphor framework. This translation process produced the conceptual ideas for building mass configuration, derived from the character conflict as a two-mass scheme; individual mass forms, with the main building derived from the *surau* collapse and the auditorium derived from *Ajo Sidi*'s character; site circulation, derived from the story's setting description; and spatial programming, derived from the story's moral theme of individual-community balance. The translation methodology applied in this phase follows the design cognition principle that effective metaphorical translation requires explicit mapping between source domain elements and target domain design decisions, rather than intuitive or unstructured association, an approach consistent with structured design research frameworks that treat the explicit documentation of design reasoning as essential to producing replicable and defensible design outcomes ([Hay et al., 2020](#)), a principle supported by experimental design cognition research demonstrating that documented, traceable metaphor mapping produces more coherent design outcomes than undocumented intuitive translation ([Casakin & Kreitler, 2021](#); [Eilouti, 2018](#)).

Phase 3, Detailed Design Development, developed the conceptual ideas into specific design strategies for mass configuration, landscape, circulation, spatial organisation, structure, and materials. Site analysis for the proposed location in Jalan Purwokinanti, Pakualaman, Yogyakarta informed site-specific design decisions, following standard architectural site analysis methodology encompassing topographic assessment, infrastructure access evaluation, and contextual land use review ([Carmona,](#)

2021). The total space programme was calculated at 3,809 square metres across the two building masses and external landscape areas, following the programmatic categories established in Phase 1 of the literature review concerning literary appreciation facility requirements (Rahadiyanti, 2013).

Throughout all three phases, the validity of the metaphor translation was assessed against the criterion, drawn from Antoniadou (1990) original framework and subsequent design cognition scholarship, that an effective Intangible Metaphor translation must be traceable: each architectural design decision must be explicable by reference to a specific literary source element, rather than functioning as an arbitrary or merely decorative formal gesture. This traceability criterion is documented systematically in Table 1, which presents the complete metaphor translation logic applied across all major design decisions in the study.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Architectural Metaphor Translation: Literary to Architectural

Table 1. Architectural metaphor translation: Literary elements of *Robohnya Surau Kami* to architectural design decisions

Literary Element ( <i>Robohnya Surau Kami</i> )	Thematic/Narrative Content	Architectural Metaphor Application
Title / Theme	The imminent collapse of the <i>surau</i> (prayer house) and the spiritual-social tension it embodies	Main building form derived from the visual metaphor of a tilting or collapsing structure: twisted facade patterning and distorted structural aesthetics represent the <i>surau's</i> falling state
Character: <i>Kakek</i> (the Grandfather)	A devout guardian devoted to ritual prayer but isolated from social contribution	Main building represents the individual: the library and seminar spaces function as places of individual study and spiritual reflection, positioned as the dominant mass
Character: Ajo Sidi	A pragmatic storyteller who challenges pure ritualism through satirical fiction; represents active social engagement	Auditorium represents the communal: the performance space functions as the satirist's platform; slanted roof symbolises Ajo Sidi indirect critique; curved structure reflects his diligent work ethic
Conflict	Tension between <i>Kakek</i> (devotion without contribution) and Ajo Sidi (pragmatic social responsibility)	Two-mass configuration with pedestrian connector: the gap between the two buildings represents the conflict; the bridge represents reconciliation through dialogue
Setting / Locus	The narrator describes approaching the <i>surau</i> through a small road: at the fifth intersection, turn right into the narrow path	Site circulation design: sequential intersections of increasing intimacy leading to the main entrance; dense shrubs narrow the approach path to recreate the narrative arrival sequence
Individual-Community Balance	Central moral: one must balance inner devotion with outward social contribution; neither isolation nor empty ritual suffices	Programming balance: individual-focused spaces such as the library and reading rooms combined with dominant communal facilities such as the amphitheatre, open plaza, and auditorium

Literary Element ( <i>Robohnya Surau Kami</i> )	Thematic/Narrative Content	Architectural Metaphor Application
Entrance / Main Gate	The <i>surau</i> entrance represents the threshold between the secular world and a place of spiritual purpose, a threshold quality that contemporary scholarship on sacred and contemplative space identifies as a recurring architectural device for marking transition into spiritually significant environments	Main building entrance: grey concrete elements convey the Grandfather initial sombre mood; the twisted facade structure at entry represents the <i>surau</i> tipping toward collapse

Table 1 shows the complete systematic application of the Intangible Metaphor framework across all seven principal narrative elements identified in the thematic literary analysis phase of the study. Each row of the table traces a single literary element through its thematic or narrative content to a specific corresponding architectural design decision, demonstrating that the translation logic operates consistently across multiple design dimensions including building form, mass configuration, circulation sequence, and spatial programming. The table demonstrates that the translation is not decorative but generative: each architectural decision emerges from a specific literary element rather than being imposed upon it after the fact. The result is a building design in which the form, spatial organisation, and circulation sequence are legible as architectural realisations of the story's moral architecture, consistent with the traceability criterion for effective metaphorical design established in the methodology and supported by the broader design cognition literature on metaphor translation transparency (Eilouti, 2018; Lymer, 2019).

#### 4.2 Site Selection and Context

The design site is located at Jalan Purwokinanti, Pakualaman, Kota Yogyakarta, D.I. Yogyakarta. The 1.9-hectare site, with a Building Coverage Ratio of 40 to 60 %, is currently agricultural land with a relatively flat topography. The site was selected based on its location within the Central Urban Area, known locally as BWP Pusat Kota, adequate urban utility infrastructure access, proximity to educational institutions from primary school to university level, relatively good views toward rice fields and mountains, and a moderate earthquake risk zone with flat terrain, reducing landslide risk. This site selection methodology follows established practice in architectural site analysis, which weighs accessibility, infrastructure capacity, contextual amenity, and geotechnical risk as the primary criteria for evaluating candidate sites for public cultural facilities (Carmona, 2021).

#### 4.3 Space Programme

The complete space programme for the Literary Appreciation Building was developed in accordance with the programmatic categories identified in the literature review concerning literary appreciation facility requirements. Table 2 presents the summary space programme across the two building masses and external landscape areas.

Table 2. Space programme summary: Literary appreciation building, Yogyakarta (Total 3,809 m<sup>2</sup>)

Facility / Space	Location / Building	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Literary library (literature collection)	Main Building, Floors 2-3	per analysis
Seminar and discussion rooms	Main Building, Floor 1	per analysis
Literary lecture hall	Main Building, Floor 1	per analysis
Exhibition hall	Main Building	per analysis
Administrative / management offices	Main Building	per analysis
Auditorium / theatre hall	Auditorium Building	per analysis
Backstage and dressing rooms	Auditorium Building	per analysis
Amphitheatre (open air)	Landscape / External	per analysis
Open plaza and communal gathering area	Landscape / External	per analysis
Bookshop	Main Building, Floor 1	per analysis

Facility / Space	Location / Building	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Cafeteria / canteen	Main Building, Floor 1	per analysis
Souvenir shop	Main Building, Floor 1	per analysis
Prayer room (musala)	Main Building	per analysis
Total Gross Floor Area		3,809 m <sup>2</sup>

Table 2 presents the complete space programme distributed across the main building, the auditorium building, and the external landscape, totalling 3,809 square metres of gross floor area. The table demonstrates that the programme fulfils all four activity categories identified by [Rahadiyanti \(2013\)](#): educational activities are supported through the literary library, seminar rooms, and lecture hall; recreational activities are supported through the auditorium, amphitheatre, and open plaza; commercial activities are supported through the bookshop, cafeteria, and souvenir shop; and operational activities are supported through the administrative offices. The distribution of these facilities across the main building, the auditorium building, and the external landscape directly corresponds to the two-mass metaphor configuration developed from the literary source, confirming that the programmatic distribution and the metaphorical mass configuration are mutually reinforcing rather than independently determined, a coherence that international library and cultural facility design research identifies as a hallmark of successful integrated programming ([Lawson & Kerslake, 2021](#); [Lak & Hakimian, 2019](#)).

#### 4.4 Mass Configuration: Two-Mass Scheme

The Literary Appreciation Building comprises two primary masses derived from the character conflict at the heart of *Robohnya Surau Kami*. The Grandfather, *Kakek*, the devoted but socially isolated guardian, is represented by the Main Building: the individual-oriented centre of study, reflection, and knowledge. Ajo Sidi, the socially engaged satirist, is represented by the Auditorium: the communal performance space where ideas are shared with audiences. The gap between the two masses represents the conflict between these two value orientations. A pedestrian bridge connecting them represents the possibility of reconciliation, of individual inner life and communal social contribution, which is the moral resolution the story implicitly proposes.

This two-mass configuration exemplifies what architectural narrative theory describes as a structural homology, in which the relational logic of a narrative's character system is mapped directly onto the spatial relationship between architectural masses, rather than merely onto the formal appearance of a single building element ([Eilouti, 2021](#)). The choice to materialise the story's central conflict as a literal physical gap between two masses, bridged by a connecting element representing reconciliation, echoes theoretical accounts of architectural disjunction in which deliberate spatial rupture between programme elements is used to register conceptual or narrative tension within a single design ([Frichot, 2020](#)), follows a design strategy documented in comparative cultural architecture research, where the spatial separation and subsequent connection of building elements is frequently used to represent narratives of division and resolution, a strategy particularly well established in memorial architecture dealing with historical conflict and reconciliation themes ([Sumartojo & Pink, 2019](#); [Macdonald, 2021](#)).

#### 4.5 Main Building: Metaphor of the Collapsing Surau

The main building functions as the Literary Appreciation Building's primary intellectual space, housing the literary library on floors two and three, seminar and discussion rooms, a literary lecture hall, exhibition spaces, and administrative offices. Its form is derived from the title and central image of *Robohnya Surau Kami* the collapsing prayer house. The building's twisted facade patterning, structural aesthetic distortions that visually suggest a structure under stress, represents the *surau* in the process of falling. The main entrance employs grey concrete elements to evoke the sombre, melancholy mood of the story's opening, as the narrator reflects on the deterioration of the *surau* community. The corridor materials, weathered and austere, reinforce this narrative atmosphere at the threshold between the outside world and the literary space within.

The decision to express structural instability through deliberately distorted facade geometry connects this design to a broader contemporary architectural discourse on deconstructivist form-making, in which intentional formal disruption is used to communicate conceptual tension or instability rather than to express literal structural failure ([Lahiji, 2023](#); [Hays, 2021](#)). Importantly, the distorted aesthetic in the present design remains structurally and programmatically resolved, meaning that the building does not literally compromise its structural integrity to achieve the metaphorical effect, a design discipline consistent with [Antoniades \(1990\)](#) own caution that intangible metaphor should inform formal expression without undermining the building's functional and structural performance.

#### **4.6 Auditorium: Metaphor of Ajo Sidi's Character**

The auditorium serves as the building's primary communal performance space for theatrical and literary performances. Its form is derived from Ajo Sidi's character and rhetorical method. Ajo Sidi's practice of satire, delivering moral critique indirectly through fictional stories, is translated architecturally into the auditorium's slanted roof, an oblique gesture that parallels the character's indirect moral argumentation. His diligent, persistent work ethic is expressed through the auditorium's curved structural system: curves require greater structural discipline to achieve than straight lines, reflecting the sustained effort of Ajo Sidi's consistent social engagement. The auditorium provides a full performance infrastructure including a stage and backstage, tribunes and balcony, an orchestra pit, dressing and changing rooms, technical control rooms, and support spaces.

The functional and acoustic requirements of the auditorium were informed by established performance venue design standards, which specify sightline geometry, acoustic reflection surfaces, and backstage circulation requirements necessary for a functioning theatrical performance space ([Long, 2022](#)). The integration of these functional standards with the metaphorical curved structural system demonstrates a key principle from the narrative architecture literature, namely that metaphor-derived form must ultimately satisfy the same performance criteria as conventionally derived form, and that successful narrative translation is measured by the designer's ability to reconcile metaphorical intent with functional performance rather than allowing metaphor to override function ([Yaneva, 2020](#); [Eilouti, 2021](#)).

#### **4.7 Landscape and External Spaces: Metaphor of Setting and Theme**

The site landscape design translates two elements from the short story: the narrator's approach description, the setting, and the story's central moral theme, the individual-community balance. The approach sequence responds to the story's description of the narrator turning right at the fifth intersection into a narrow path. The site circulation design implements this description architecturally: visitors enter through a sequence of path intersections at six-metre intervals, with dense shrubs narrowing the approach path to recreate the experience of the narrative arrival at the *surau*, a journey of progressive narrowing and focus before arriving at the destination. A reflecting pool with four aesthetic fountain pillars derived from the main building's structural vocabulary is positioned at the path terminus.

This landscape translation strategy exemplifies what landscape architecture theory describes as sequential spatial narrative, in which the experience of moving through a designed landscape is deliberately paced and structured to evoke a specific emotional or interpretive trajectory, analogous to the temporal unfolding of a written narrative ([Thompson, 2022](#); [Corner & Hirsch, 2021](#)). The choice to translate a single descriptive sentence from the source text into an extended multi-stage circulation sequence demonstrates the generative capacity of even brief narrative description when subjected to systematic Intangible Metaphor translation, supporting the broader claim in the narrative architecture literature that narrative density in the source text need not be extensive to produce rich architectural translation outcomes, provided the translation methodology is applied systematically ([Eilouti, 2021](#)).

The outdoor pedestrian landscape is designed with a dynamic pattern reflecting the narrator character's curiosity. Small performance stages and integrated seating are embedded within the pedestrian paths, enabling spontaneous literary performances and interactions, creating situations in which individual pedestrians, as audience, encounter communal performance, as participants,

embodying the story's central theme of individual-community balance in spatial experience. The amphitheatre and open plaza areas extend this communal dimension, providing outdoor gathering spaces for literary events that can accommodate larger audiences than the indoor auditorium, consistent with contemporary practice in flexible event space design that favours adaptable outdoor venues capable of supporting variable audience scales and programme formats (Carmona, 2021). This embedding of small-scale performance infrastructure within everyday circulation paths reflects contemporary placemaking practice, which emphasises the value of distributing opportunities for informal cultural encounter throughout a site rather than concentrating all cultural activity within single dedicated venues (Lak & Hakimian, 2019; Mehta, 2022).

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusion

This architectural design research produced a conceptual design for a Literary Appreciation Building in Yogyakarta representing the work and values of A.A. Navis, specifically the short story *Robohnya Surau Kami*, through the application of Antoniades's in 1990 Intangible Metaphor framework. Three design objectives were achieved. First, the building programme comprehensively accommodates the full range of literary appreciation activities through a facility programme of 3,809 square metres encompassing a literary library, seminar and discussion rooms, literary lecture hall, exhibition spaces, theatre auditorium, amphitheatre, communal plaza, bookshop, cafeteria, and souvenir facilities. Second, the Intangible Metaphor approach enabled systematic translation of the story's abstract literary elements into architectural decisions: the collapsing *surau* becomes the main building's distorted formal aesthetics; *Kakek* and Ajo Sidi become the two building masses; their conflict becomes the mass configuration gap and pedestrian bridge; the narrative setting description becomes the site circulation sequence; and the story's moral theme of individual-community balance becomes the spatial programming philosophy. Third, the resulting design represents A.A. Navis's work not decoratively but constitutively, in that the building's form, organisation, and experience are shaped by the literary values it houses, making architectural representation and programmatic function inseparable.

These findings contribute to the growing international literature on narrative-driven architectural design methodology by providing a documented, traceable case of Intangible Metaphor translation applied specifically to short fiction, a literary form that has received comparatively less attention in the architectural metaphor literature than novels, epics, or oral history narratives, an attention gap also noted in recent reviews of literary-inspired design pedagogy. The systematic translation table developed in this study, mapping seven distinct literary elements to specific architectural decisions, offers a transferable methodological template that other designers and researchers can adapt when applying narrative-based metaphor translation to different literary source texts and different building typologies.

### 5.2 Research Limitations

Three limitations apply to this study. First, this research presents a conceptual architectural design rather than a constructed and inhabited building; design intentions and their architectural effectiveness can only be fully evaluated through construction, occupancy, and post-occupancy assessment with actual building users. Second, the site selection at Jalan Purwokinanti requires further technical feasibility study, including detailed geotechnical analysis given the moderate earthquake risk designation, drainage engineering for the former agricultural land, and structural response assessment. Third, the architectural metaphor translations presented in Table 1 represent the designer's interpretive choices in applying the Intangible Metaphor framework; different designers engaging with the same literary source text would likely produce different but equally valid metaphor translations, and comparative design research across multiple metaphor interpretations would deepen understanding of the framework's productive possibilities.

### 5.3 Directions for Future Research

Three research directions are recommended. First, a post-occupancy evaluation study following construction and operation of the building would enable assessment of whether building users actually

perceive and experience the intended literary metaphors, specifically whether the circulation sequence, mass relationship, and formal aesthetics communicate the *Robohnya Surau Kami* narrative values to users who know the story, and stimulate curiosity about the story in users who encounter the building without literary preparation. Such post-occupancy research would draw productively on established methodologies for evaluating meaning and legibility in completed cultural buildings, including visitor interview protocols and behavioural observation techniques already developed within the broader museum and cultural facility evaluation literature.

Second, comparative design research applying the Intangible Metaphor framework to other significant Indonesian literary works, and to literary appreciation building design in other Indonesian cities with distinct literary traditions, would develop a more generalisable methodology for literary-architectural design translation. Third, research into the contribution of purpose-built literary appreciation facilities to measurable outcomes in literary culture, including reading rates, community writing participation, book sales, and literary event attendance, would provide evidence for the cultural investment case for dedicated literary architecture, building on existing international research demonstrating measurable community impacts of dedicated cultural facility investment in comparable contexts.

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### Author Contributions

ASB contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, data curation, visualization, architectural design, writing original draft, writing review and editing, and supervision of the overall research process. The author has read and approved the final manuscript.

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