

## **Critical Discourse Analysis of the Poem "Sahifat al-Ahrar" by Badr Shakir al-Sayyab Based on Norman Fairclough's Theory**

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### **Introduction**

This research critically analyzes Badr Shakir al-Sayyab's poem "*Sahifat al-Ahrar*" using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study explores the interplay between language, power, and ideology in the poem, which embodies a discourse of resistance against colonialism and oppressive regimes in mid-20th-century Iraq. Al-Sayyab, a pioneering modernist poet, merges artistic expression with political activism, reflecting the socio-political struggles of his era. The poem's historical context—written during British colonial influence and Iraqi nationalist movements—highlights its role as both a literary work and a revolutionary manifesto. By applying Fairclough's framework, the study deciphers how linguistic choices, intertextuality, and symbolic imagery construct an ideological critique of power structures. The research addresses gaps in prior scholarship, as no existing studies have examined this poem through Fairclough's CDA lens, offering fresh insights into its revolutionary discourse.

### **Methodology**

The study employs Fairclough's CDA model, which integrates textual analysis with socio-political critique across three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the *descriptive* level, the poem's linguistic features—lexical choices (e.g., "revolution," "fire," "chains"), syntactic structures (imperatives, rhetorical questions), and figurative devices (metaphors like "newspaper as a scream")—are examined to reveal their ideological load. The *interpretive* level contextualizes these features within Iraq's 1940s anti-colonial climate, emphasizing intertextual links to religious/mythological texts (e.g., Quranic allusions to "light vs. darkness") and historical events (e.g., student protests). The *explanatory* level uncovers the poem's ideological functions, exposing how it challenges hegemonic power by framing resistance as a collective moral duty. Sources include al-Sayyab's diwan, historical records of British-occupied Iraq, and theoretical works by Fairclough and other discourse analysts.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analysis reveals three key findings. First, the poem's linguistic strategies—such as violent lexicon ("stab," "blood"), collective pronouns

(“our souls”), and rhythmic repetitions—construct a militant tone that mobilizes readers against oppression. These devices align with Fairclough’s view of discourse as a tool for ideological persuasion. Second, the intertextual references to religious symbols (e.g., Jerusalem as a site of justice) and myths (e.g., sacrificial heroes) universalize the Iraqi struggle, linking it to broader Arab and humanist narratives. This mirrors Fairclough’s emphasis on how discourses legitimize ideologies through cultural narratives. Third, the poem’s ideological framing juxtaposes the “tyrants as dying stars” with the “people as the sun,” portraying resistance as historically inevitable. This dichotomy critiques colonial-era power dynamics while affirming the poet’s role in shaping collective consciousness. The discussion contextualizes these results within Fairclough’s theory, arguing that al-ayyab’s language not only reflects but actively constructs a counter-hegemonic reality. Comparisons with prior studies (e.g., analyses of al-Jawahiri’s protest poetry) highlight the uniqueness of al-Sayyab’s fusion of aesthetic refinement and revolutionary urgency.

### Conclusion

The study demonstrates that *"Sahifat al-Ahrar"* is a seminal text of resistance literature, where linguistic artistry and ideological critique intersect. Through Fairclough’s CDA, the research exposes how al-Sayyab’s poem weaponizes language to dismantle oppressive narratives, offering a template for emancipatory discourse in Arabic literature. The findings underscore literature’s capacity to enact social change by reshaping perceptions of power and justice. Future research could extend this framework to other protest poets or explore the poem’s reception in contemporary movements. Ultimately, the study reaffirms CDA’s utility in bridging literary analysis and political critique, revealing the enduring relevance of al-Sayyab’s call for liberation.

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