

REPRESENTATIONS OF LOVE AND LOSS IN THE POEM *DALAM KEMAH* BY GOENAWAN MOHAMAD

REPRESENTASI CINTA DAN KEHILANGAN PADA PUISI “DALAM KEMAH” KARYA GOENAWAN MOHAMAD

Sukma Indah Purnama Sari^a, Nina Queena Hadi Purtri^{b*}, & N. Ifga Gunawan

^{ab}Universitas Mulawarman

Jl. Kuaro, Gn. Kelua, Kec. Samarinda Ulu, Kota Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur 75117, Indonesia

^cMae Fah Luang University

333, Tha Sut, Mueang Chiang Rai District, Chiang Rai 57100, Thailand

Pos-el: sukmaindahpurnamasari765@gmail.com; nina.queenahadiputri@fkip.unmul.co.id;
nuan.gus@mfu.ac.th

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the representations of love, loss, and emotional atmosphere in the poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad. The representations explored include incomplete love, symbols of transient relationships, a melancholic atmosphere, and the sense of loss depicted in the poem. A descriptive-qualitative research method was employed, with the poem *Dalam Kemah* serving as the data source. Data collection was conducted using the "read-and-note" technique, while data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, comprising data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that *Dalam Kemah* portrays love as a relationship that is fleeting and not always whole. The symbol of the tent signifies a relationship that is temporary and fragile. Furthermore, the poet evokes a melancholic atmosphere through imagery involving rain, night, coldness, and the sounds of nature. The representation of loss emerges through an atmosphere of silence, a sense of restlessness, and a relationship that gradually drifts apart. The poem illustrates how human relationships can foster emotional closeness while simultaneously leaving behind a sense of loss.

Keywords: Poetry, representation of loss, love, melancholy atmosphere, Goenawan Mohamad

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi cinta, kehilangan, dan suasana emosional dalam puisi *Dalam Kemah* karya Goenawan Mohamad. Bentuk representasi yang dijelaskan berupa cinta yang tidak utuh, simbol hubungan sementara, suasana melankolis, serta kehilangan yang muncul dalam puisi *Dalam Kemah*. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data penelitian berupa puisi *Dalam Kemah* karya Goenawan Mohamad. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik baca dan catat. Teknik analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang terdiri atas reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa puisi *Dalam Kemah* menggambarkan cinta sebagai hubungan yang singkat dan tidak selalu utuh. Simbol kemah menunjukkan hubungan yang bersifat sementara dan rapuh. Selain itu, penyair membangun suasana melankolis melalui citraan hujan, malam, dingin, dan bunyi alam. Representasi kehilangan muncul melalui suasana sunyi, rasa gelisah, serta hubungan yang perlahan menjauh. Puisi ini memperlihatkan bagaimana hubungan manusia dapat menghadirkan kedekatan emosional sekaligus meninggalkan rasa kehilangan.

Kata Kunci: Puisi, representasi kehilangan, cinta, suasana melankolis, Goenawan Mohamad

INTRODUCTION

Literature serves not merely as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying an author's life experiences, emotions, and perspectives on life. It fulfills the function of *dulce et utile* delighting readers while simultaneously providing them with value (Hasani et al., 2025). Through literary works, readers can gain insight into various facets of the human inner experience, such as love, loss, sorrow, and longing. Poetry is one literary form frequently employed to convey such emotional experiences; it utilizes language that is concise yet rich in profound meaning. As the language of poetry is often symbolic, readers must decipher the meanings concealed beneath the poet's chosen diction (Launjaea, 2024).

Goenawan Mohamad is an Indonesian poet renowned for his distinctive use of language. His poems often employ simple diction yet convey profound meaning (Syafrial, 2011). One poem worthy of analysis is *Dalam Kemah*. It depicts the emotional connection between two characters through the setting of the night, the rain, and a brief conversation within the tent. Furthermore, the poem reveals a sense of loss and an emotional distance that emerges gradually (Nabila & Hasanah, 2021).

The author chose the poem *Dalam Kemah* because it not only addresses love but also reveals the uncertainty of human relationships. This is evident in the poem's atmosphere—such as the ceasing rain, the lengthening night, and the speaker's inability to call out to the figure walking away toward the forest. The use of atmosphere and diction in the poem intensifies the sense of loss, making it feel more profound and emotional.

Previous studies have examined the figures of speech, imagery, and poetry collections of Goenawan Mohamad from various perspectives. Research by Septiani (2020) demonstrates that the use of figures of speech and imagery in Goenawan Mohamad's poetry plays a crucial role in establishing the internal atmosphere and meaning of the poems. However, research specifically addressing the representation of loss in the poem *Dalam Kemah* remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore how loss is represented through atmosphere, diction, and the relationships between characters within the poem.

A synthesis of prior research reveals that studies on Goenawan Mohamad's poetry have largely focused on stylistic aspects, figures of speech, imagery, semiotics, and metaphors. Meanwhile, research specifically analyzing the representation of loss in *Dalam Kemah*—through the interplay of symbols, imagery, atmosphere, and character relationships—remains relatively scarce. Consequently, this study goes beyond examining language use to link these elements with the emotional significance embedded in the poem. In doing so, it aims to provide a deeper understanding of the meaning of loss within literary works.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Stuart Hall's theory of representation serves as the primary framework for this study, aiming to understand how the meanings of love and loss are constructed through language in the poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad. Hall (1997) views representation as a meaning-making practice that operates through language,

signs, and various symbolic systems, enabling humans to construct and convey meaning about the world. Consequently, language in literary works does not merely function as a tool to depict reality but also acts as a medium that shapes that reality through the process of signification. In the context of poetry, elements such as diction, metaphors, symbols, imagery, and other poetic devices can be understood as sign systems that generate specific meanings. Therefore, the representation of love and loss in *Dalam Kemah* is not interpreted as a direct reflection of the author's personal experience, but rather as a construction of meaning formed through linguistic choices and the relationships between signs within the text.

In literary works, the process of representation is closely linked to the use of symbols and imagery as devices for constructing meaning. Symbols allow a concrete object or situation to embody a significance that extends beyond its literal meaning, while imagery evokes sensory experiences, enabling the text to render situations, atmospheres, and emotional states more tangibly. In poetry, these two elements can work in tandem to shape a character's inner experience and guide the reader toward specific interpretations. Studies of poetry also demonstrate that representation can be analyzed through the sign relations present in the text—including icons, indices, and symbols—and their connection to the ideas developed throughout the poem. Within this framework, symbols such as the tent, rain, night, the pressure lamp, and the forest, along with various images of the natural world in **Dalam Kemah**, are understood not merely as decorative elements, but as poetic devices that contribute to the construction of meaning regarding closeness, separation, uncertainty, and loss.

From this perspective, love and loss in this study are positioned as emotional experiences represented through the interplay of language, symbols, imagery, and mood within the poem. Love is understood as a construction of meaning emerging from depictions of closeness, togetherness, and the bonds between figures, whereas loss is understood through signs indicating distance, separation, shifts in mood, and the end of a shared connection. A melancholic mood reinforces both representations, as elements such as silence, night, rain, cold, and fading light create an emotional atmosphere that facilitates the interpretation of both love and loss. Consequently, this study employs Hall's theory of representation as the primary framework to interpret how the meanings of love, transient relationships, melancholic mood, and loss are constructed in *Dalam Kemah*. The analysis focuses on the connection between linguistic and poetic elements and the resulting emotional significance, allowing the poem's representations to be understood as a process of meaning-making rather than merely a direct depiction of experience.

METODE PENELITIAN

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. This method was selected because the research aims to describe and interpret the representations of love, loss, and emotional atmosphere in the poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad. A qualitative approach was adopted because the research data—consisting of words, phrases, lines, and stanzas—contain symbolic meanings that require in-depth interpretation. The primary data source is the poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad. The analysis focuses on excerpts representing love, the symbol of a temporary relationship, a melancholic atmosphere, and loss.

Data collection was conducted using the "read-and-note" technique. The researcher read the poem repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the text's content and meaning. Subsequently, relevant excerpts were noted and categorized based on the analysis indicators: (1) representation of love; (2) the symbol of the tent as a temporary relationship; (3) imagery and melancholic atmosphere; and (4) representation of loss.

The researcher served as the research instrument (human instrument). The researcher played a role in identifying data, categorizing excerpts, interpreting meanings, and drawing conclusions based on the theories of representation and literature employed. To support the analysis process, the researcher also utilized various relevant scholarly references.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected excerpts aligning with the research indicators: representation of love, symbols, imagery, and loss. In the data display stage, these excerpts were systematically organized according to the analysis categories and interpreted using representation theory to explain how meaning is constructed through diction, symbols, and imagery within the poem. Finally, the interpretation results were compared with previous studies to identify similarities, differences, and the position of the current research. At the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher formulates findings regarding the representation of love and loss based on the overall analysis results, thereby arriving at a conclusion that aligns with the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. An Incomplete Representation of Love

The poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad portrays love not as a permanent state, but as an experience existing within finite boundaries of time and space. This portrayal is crafted through the interplay of diction, symbols, imagery, and atmosphere, conveying the idea that human relationships always carry the possibility of coming to an end. Viewed through the lens of Stuart Hall's theory of representation, meaning is not inherent in the text itself but is constructed through the language and symbols employed by the poet. Consequently, love in this poem is understood not merely as a romantic relationship, but as a transient emotional experience (Pujiati et al. 2018).

This is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 1

"cinta adalah potongan-potongan pendek interupsi – lima menit, tujuh menit, empat..."

The phrase "short fragments" (potongan-potongan pendek) suggests a relationship that is fragile and impermanent. Furthermore, the word "interruption" indicates that the relationship could be severed at any moment. The use of specific durations—such as "five minutes, seven minutes"—reinforces the impression that the togetherness depicted in the poem is merely fleeting. In this section, the poet appears to convey that love does not always manifest in a complete form or culminate in a happy ending; at times, love exists only in brief moments yet leaves a profound impression. The poem's atmosphere is also tinged with melancholy, arising from the awareness that the relationship could gradually fade away (Permatasari et al., 2025).

The findings from Data 1 align with research by Warti and Nabila (2022), which notes that love in poetry is often represented through emotional experiences such as longing, hope, and loss. However, this study reveals that Goenawan Mohamad presents a distinct representation: love as an experience recognized from the outset as being temporary.

2. The Symbol of the Tent as a Temporary Relationship

The poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad employs the symbol of a "tent" to depict a relationship that is not enduring. A tent is not a permanent dwelling; rather, it serves merely as a place for a brief stopover or temporary shelter. Consequently, the tent in this poem can be interpreted as a symbol of a fragile and transient relationship (Wirawan, 2016).

This is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 2

"Di ruang yang melindungi kita untuk sementara"

The word "sementara" (temporary) signals that the shared space between the "I" and "you" figures is time-bound. From the perspective of representation theory, the tent is interpreted not merely as a physical object but as a symbol constructing meaning around the uncertainty of human relationships; the warmth experienced by the figures exists within a space that can be abandoned at any moment (Armando & Mufid, 2024).

Data Finding 2 supports Efendi's (2015) research, which notes that Goenawan Mohamad's poems frequently employ symbols of time and space to depict the transience of life. However, in the poem **Dalam Kemah** (Inside the Tent), these symbols

specifically reinforce the representation of love as something impermanent.

3. Melancholic Atmosphere and Imagery in Poetry

Beyond the use of symbols, the representation of fleeting love is reinforced by the imagery and melancholic atmosphere crafted by the poet. Goenawan Mohamad establishes this atmosphere through natural imagery—such as rain, night, cold, and dim light. These elements allow the reader to visualize the setting of the poem while simultaneously experiencing the emotions of the persona (Armando & Mufid, 2024).

This is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 3

"Mungkin kita sebenarnya kita terlena oleh suara hujan di tepi terpal kemah."

Data Excerpt 3 demonstrates auditory imagery through the phrase "the sound of the rain." The sound of the rain creates a sense of stillness and creates a sense of closeness between the characters, yet it is also temporary. The camp setting reinforces the impression that their time together is fleeting (Wirawan, 2016).

The melancholy atmosphere is also evident in the following excerpt.

Data 4

"kini petromaks seakan-akan terbenam"

This section depicts the light of a lamp beginning to dim. This imagery conveys the impression that the relationship within the poem is gradually drifting apart and losing its warmth. The choice of simple language renders the poem's atmosphere more emotional and accessible to the reader.

Research into the stylistics of Goenawan Mohamad's poetry reveals that imagery and stylistic devices are employed to establish the poem's emotional atmosphere. Natural elements—such as night, rain, and cold—are frequently used to portray feelings of loneliness, loss, and uncertainty in human relationships. This same pattern is evident in the poem *Dalam Kemah* (Septiani, 2020).

4. Representations of Loss in Poetry

The representation of loss in the poem *Dalam Kemah* emerges through an atmosphere of silence, a relationship that is gradually drifting apart, and a sense of inability to hold onto something close. The loss in this poem is not depicted directly through a breakup but is instead conveyed through an emotional atmosphere that feels indistinct and slowly fades away.

This is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 5

*"Dan ketika hujan berhenti,
"malam memanjang karena pohon-
pohon berbunyi."*

Data 5 illustrates the shift in atmosphere after the rain ceases; the "lengthening" night creates a sense of time slowing down and stillness, while the sounds of trees at night reinforce an atmosphere of solitude and unease. This section reveals the character's emotional state as they begin to perceive a growing distance and emptiness within their relationship (Faradina, 2024).

The depiction of loss in this poem aligns with the research of Armando and Mufid (2024), which notes that the theme of loss in poetry often manifests through emotional atmosphere, loneliness, and an inner sense of emptiness. Loss does not always appear as an explicit parting of ways but can

also emerge through shifts in atmosphere and feelings of gradual estrangement (Armando & Mufid, 2024).

Furthermore, this sense of loss is even more evident in the following excerpt.

Data 6

*"Kulihat sosok tubuhku, berjalan ke
arah hutan.
Aku tak bisa memanggilnya."*

Data 6 reveals a distance between the "I" figure and the self. The speaker observes their own figure walking toward the forest yet is unable to call it back. In the poem, the forest can be interpreted as a dark and uncertain place; this passage illustrates a sense of loss that extends beyond interpersonal relationships to encompass a loss of direction and a disconnection from the self.

The atmosphere of loss in the poem is further reinforced by the following concluding section.

Data 7

*"Setelah itu, bau kecut, rumput,
harum daun ganja, pelan-pelan
meninggalkan kita."*

Data 7 indicates that the previously warm atmosphere is beginning to fade away. The word "leaving" signals the departure of something—whether it be comfort, closeness, or togetherness. The use of olfactory elements, such as the "sour smell of grass" and the "fragrance of cannabis leaves," renders the sense of loss more tangible and relatable to the human experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the poem *Dalam Kemah* by Goenawan Mohamad represents love and loss as interconnected emotional experiences.

Through an analysis of representation, love in the poem is constructed as a fragile relationship that does not always remain intact, while loss is depicted through symbols, imagery, and a melancholic atmosphere that reveals the widening distance between the characters. The symbol of the tent as a temporary shelter, the imagery of rain, night, and the light of a pressure lamp, along with simple yet meaningful diction, all contribute to constructing the representation of these emotional experiences, allowing the reader to grasp the meaning of love and loss more deeply.

These findings have implications for literary studies—specifically the study of modern Indonesian poetry—by demonstrating that representation theory can be used to uncover meanings constructed through symbols, imagery, and poetic elements in literary works. This research also enriches the study of Goenawan Mohamad's poetry by framing love and loss as interconnected constructs of meaning.

However, this study has limitations as it focuses on only one poem *Dalam Kemah*; consequently, the findings cannot fully capture the representation of love and loss across the entirety of Goenawan Mohamad's body of work. Therefore, future research is encouraged to examine other poems by Goenawan Mohamad or compare them with works by other Indonesian poets—using representation theory or other literary approaches—to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how emotional experiences are represented in literature.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

Armando, D., & Mufid, M. N. (2024). Representasi Kehilangan & Kesedihan Pada Puisi Bila Kau Tiada Karya Boy Candra: Sebuah Kajian Analisis Isi dan Gaya

Bahasa. *Inovasi Pendidikan dan Anak Usia Dini*, 1(3), 29—37. <https://doi.org/10.61132/inpaud.v1i3.6>

Efendi, A. (2015). Simbol Waktu dalam Kumpulan Puisi Asmaradana Karya Goenawan Mohamad. *Diksi*, 12(2), 312—326. <https://doi.org/10.21831/diksi.v12i2.5260>

Faradina, R. (2024). Kritik Objektif Terhadap Karya Sastra Puisi “Sembuh” Karya Tere Liye. *Alinea: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajaran*, 4(3), 453—462. <https://doi.org/10.58218/alinea.v4i3.1051>

Hasani, Y., Ratna, A., & Sabila, R. (2025). Kajian Dalam Puisi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisipliner*, 3(2), 803—810.

Launjaea, L. (2024). Pengaruh Deklamasi Puisi dalam Pemahaman Makna Puisi. *Jurnal Pembahsi (Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia)*, 14(1), 55—62. <https://doi.org/10.31851/pembahsi.v14i1.14017>

Nabila, U., & Hasanah, M. (2021). Metafora dalam Kumpulan Puisi Sajak-Sajak Lengkap 1961—2001 Karya Goenawan Mohamad. *BASINDO: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia, Dan Pembelajarannya*, 5(2), 239—249. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um007v5i22021p239-249>

Permatasari, R. D., Yusriansyah, E., & Mubarak, A. (2025). Nilai Moral dalam Cerpen Percakan Singkat Tentang Cinta Karya Yetti A.KA: Kajian Resepsi Sastra. *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 9(3), 593—606. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v9i3.21692>

- Pujiati, H., Usia, K. F., & Herdianti, I. A. (2018). Makna Cinta dalam Kumpulan Puisi W.S Rendra. *Asas Jurnal Sastra*, 7(2), 34—48. <https://doi.org/10.24114/ajs.v7i2.10015>
- Qomaruddin, Q., & Sa'diyah, H. (2024). Kajian Teoritis tentang Teknik Analisis Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles dan Huberman. *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration*, 1(2), 77–84. <https://doi.org/10.52620/jomaa.v1i2.93>
- Septiani, D. (2020). Majas dan Citraan dalam Puisi “Mishima” Karya Goenawan Mohamad (Kajian Stilistika). *Jurnal Sasindo Unpam*, 8(1), 12—24. <https://doi.org/10.32493/sasindo.v8i1.12-24>
- Syafrial, S. (2011). Semangat Patriotis dalam Puisi Angkatan 66. *Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sejarah, Budaya dan Sosial*, 2(4), 94—107.
- Warti, A. B., & Nabila, N. Y. (2022). Simbol Penantian pada Puisi Asmaradana Karya Goenawan Mohamad dan Puisi Hujan Bulan Juni Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono: Kajian Semiotika. *JoLLA: Journal of Language, Literature, and Arts*, 2(4), 519–530. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um064v2i42022p519-530>
- Wirawan, G. (2016). Analisis Struktural Antologi Puisi Hujan Lolos di Sela Jari Karya Yudhiswara. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 1(2), 39–44. <https://dx.doi.org/10.26737/jp-bisi.v1i2.89>