



# Semantics and Poetry: The Death of a Nation by Kahlil Gibran

Saryulis

Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
[Saryulisulis99@gmail.com](mailto:Saryulisulis99@gmail.com)

Receive: 11/08/2024

Accepted: 10/09/2024

Published: 01/10/2024

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan makna denotasi dan konotasi dalam syair kematian sebuah bangsa karya Kahlil Gibran dalam buku Al 'Awasif. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Data yang dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik pustaka, dengan mengutip data yang relevan untuk dianalisis, serta teknik membaca dan mencatat untuk menyoroti poin-poin penting dari data penelitian. Setelah data terkumpul, dilakukan analisis dengan mereduksi data yang dianggap relevan untuk disajikan, serta menyimpulkan dan memverifikasi data yang dianggap relevan dengan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 10 kalimat dalam syair kematian sebuah bangsa karya Kahlil Gibran dalam buku Al 'Awasif yang mengandung makna denotasi dan konotasi. Makna denotasi dan konotasi tersebut terdapat dalam kalimat-kalimat yang menggambarkan air mata, darah, sinar matahari, bayang-bayang, kelaparan, sebutir gandum, seekor burung, madu, dan susu.

**Kata Kunci:** Semantik, Makna Denotasi, Makna Konotasi, syair kahlil gibran.

## Abstract

This study aims to describe the meaning of denotation and connotation in the poem of the death of a nation by Kahlil Gibran in the book Al 'Awasif. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach. The data collected using library techniques, by citing relevant data to be analyzed, as well as reading and note-taking techniques to highlight important points from the research data. After the data was collected, an analysis was carried out by reducing the data that was considered relevant to be presented, as well as concluding and verifying the data that was considered relevant to the study. The results of the study showed that there were 10 sentences in the poem of the death of a nation by Kahlil Gibran in the book Al 'Awasif that contained denotation and connotation meanings. The denotation and connotation meanings are found in sentences that describe tears, blood, sunlight, shadows, hunger, a grain of wheat, a bird, honey, and milk.

**Keywords:** *Semantics, Denotation Meaning, Connotation Meaning, Kahlil Gibran's poem.*

## Introduction

The meaning of denotation and connotation often appears in various daily activities, such as when interacting with others, in lectures, when joking, in the

learning process at school, when listening to literary works such as songs, plays, poems, verses, reading newspapers, novels, short stories, and so on. In addition, the meaning of denotation and connotation can also be found

in different types of media. The use of denotation meanings and connotations often occurs in the linguistic realm. This shows that the meaning of denotation and connotation is not something new, because it is often found in people's lives and becomes part of daily activities.

Conceptual or denotative meaning is the meaning of a word that is based on a direct designation of a thing or object outside of language. This meaning is objective because it directly refers to the object in question. Thus, this denotative meaning is related to objective factual information. Therefore, denotative meaning is often referred to as 'true meaning'. For example, in the words woman and man, the two words have two meanings in common, namely "adult human beings are not men". On the other hand, connotative meaning is the opposite of denotative meaning. If the denotative meaning includes the actual meaning of the word, then the connotative meaning is the opposite, which is also known as the figurative meaning. In addition, the meaning of connotation can be explained as the meaning given to a word or group of words to clarify and attract what is intended. For example, in the sentence "The house was engulfed by the red jago". The word "the red jago" in the sentence is not the actual meaning, but it is a figurative word that means "fire". The connotative meaning can also change over time.

Finding the meaning of denotation and connotation in poetry is an interesting thing to learn, because poetry is a form of literary work that contains values that can be taken by readers and literary enthusiasts. In this study, a poem entitled "Kemtian A Nation" was chosen as the object of research. Kahlil Gibran's poems were chosen because they contain social criticism of politics and economics. In addition, Gibran's works

always use language that is interesting to readers, with many meanings of denotation and connotation. His poems also have story conflicts that are able to describe people's lives in real life, and contain many implied meanings in each verse. This attraction is one of the factors that makes readers, especially fans of Kahlil Gibran's poetry, enjoy his literary works.

In Yanti Claudia Sinaga's journal, Jan Van Luxemburg "1989" defines song lyrics or verses as poetry, and vice versa. This definition corresponds to poetic texts that include not only literary types, but also expressions that are advertisements, proverbs, slogans, prayers, and pop song verses. Kahlil Gibran, a great poet whose works are admired and loved all over the world, including Indonesia. Not only was he well-liked in his time, but his books still sold well after he died. Today, the Lebanese-born poet's poems are still often read at weddings, on birthdays, and at the event of death. His books are also often used as gifts for a lover or a birthday gift. Kahlil Gibran was a great poet who was famous for his ability to string beautiful words.

Beautiful and poetic works of poetry and essays have become an inexhaustible source of inspiration for writers, poets, song composers, religious figures, and society at large. As time goes by, we have witnessed the emergence of many great poets who produced extraordinary works. However, it is difficult to find a poet whose skills can exceed his. It is truly unique and irreplaceable. His works, be it novels, scripts, plays, collections of essays, or poems, have now become monuments that illustrate his greatness.

There are three reasons that prompted the researcher to choose a poem titled "The Death of a Nation" by Khalil Gibran as the object of my research. First, until now there has not been much research done to explore

the meaning of denotation and connotation contained in this poem. Second, the researcher believes that in every verse of "The Death of a Nation" there is the use of denotation meanings and rich connotations. Third, many artists and writers recognize Khalil Gibran's influence in his works. Therefore, studying this verse can provide inspiration for those interested in art and literature.

In 1894, the term semantics emerged which was introduced through the American Philological Association. In fact, the term semantics has existed since the 17th century through the phrase "semantic philosophy". The origin of the word semantic itself comes from the Indonesian and Greek words "sema" which means "sign" or "symbol". The verb related to semantics is *semaino* which means "to mark" or "to symbolize". In this context, the word or symbol referred to as *sema* is a linguistic sign consisting of two components. Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics that studies meaning, including the types, divisions, formations, and changes of meanings. The formation and change of meaning does not occur spontaneously, but is influenced by many factors both from outside the language and within the language itself.

According to Pateda (2010:2), in the field of semantics we can learn about the understanding of meaning, the forms of meaning, the types of meaning, aspects related to meaning, the components of meaning, changes in meaning, the causes of words having one or more meanings, and how to understand the meaning in a word. All of these things can be traced through a discipline known as semantics.

According to Chomsky in Sudaryat (2009:5), semantics is one of the important components in grammar. In addition to syntax and phonology, semantics are also used to

analyze distinguishing traits or distinctive features. Interpreting the meaning of a word or sentence is not an easy thing, one must understand the intent and purpose of the text being written. This ability can be achieved if one has an adequate and adequate understanding of the theory of meaning. This then gives rise to a direction that meaning will arise if the language user has previously had an experience, then the experience becomes the direction of a reference.

The term meaning in the life of a language user is a confusing form of language. According to Pateda (2010:79), confusing terms often cause people to misinterpret the meaning of the words they see or read. In order to correctly understand the structure of the reality of meaning, it is important to arrange linguistic symbols logically. The complexity of the symbol must be in line with the complexity of the reality or reference indicated by the meaning, so that the two can be related precisely and correctly. Suhardi (2015:19) explained that there are two very important terms in talking about meaning, namely being meaningful and having a meaning. These two terms have different contexts. For example, meaning can be interpreted as something that gives an effect in the form of meaning. According to Sudaryat (2009:6), every word has a vague meaning when combined into a language because the meaning contained in the form of language basically only represents the reality it represents. The elements contained in the word are inseparable from the linguistic form that creates the meaning of the word and the sentence will appear by itself by the language user.

### **Research Methods**

This research aims to find and describe the meaning of denotation and connotation in the poetry of the death of a

nation. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative approach was chosen. This approach is suitable for use in this study because the data to be obtained comes from the poem and the focus of the research is the denotation and connotation in the poem. The descriptive qualitative method is known for the use of creative sentences to express all aspects of research, explain all the content of the research, and describe the data and results of the research clearly and in detail in order to gain a deep understanding.

The data source used in this study is Khalil Gibran's poem on the death of a nation published in 2012. The only source used to obtain the data to be researched in this study is Khalil Gibran's poem on the death of a nation. The data used in this study are excerpts from sentences contained in the death poems of a nation that have denotations and connotations. To collect these data, it is necessary to collect data through data sources.

In this study, there are three techniques used to collect data. First, the literature technique is used by reading data sources in the form of poetry of the death of a nation by Khalil Gibran. The researcher reads the poem to get information relevant to the research. Second, the reading technique is used by reading the verses of the nation's death over and over again. The goal of this technique is to find sentence quotes that contain the meaning, denotation, and connotation. Third, the note-taking technique is used to collect data that has been read repeatedly. The data is categorized and recorded to facilitate the next process in this study.

In obtaining accurate data, researchers need to use several techniques in the data analysis stage. First, data reduction techniques are used to group and sort data objects into denotation and connotation meanings. Second, the data presentation

technique is carried out by providing codes or numbers on the data to facilitate the analysis process. Finally, the conclusion or verification stage is carried out by re-examining the data that has been analyzed and making provisional conclusions. This conclusion is provisional and will be retested with facts on the ground. However, if the conclusion is relevant to the research objectives and supported by credible data, then the conclusion is fixed.

The researcher used this using the investigator triangulation technique to check the validity of the data. This technique involves comparing the results of a researcher's research with other studies to ensure the validity of the data obtained. In this study, the validity of the data was checked by comparing this study with previous studies that were relevant and had the same study. The use of the investigator triangulation technique aims to strengthen the research data carried out.

A research procedure is a series of steps taken by a researcher in carrying out his research that explains the stages during the research process. In language research, there are three stages that must be passed (Mahsun, 2014: 31), namely: 1) Pre-research stage, where the researcher clearly formulates the problem to be solved in the research, 2) Research implementation stage, where the researcher collects data, analyzes the data, and tests the validity of the data, 3) Research report writing stage, where the researcher writes a research report systematically.

### Results and Discussion

Analysis of the meaning of the denotation verse and the meaning of the connotation in the poem "the death of a nation" by khalil gibran as follows:

Meaning of contotasing	Meaning of denotation	Verse
The symbol of	The term	و غم

tears and blood symbolizes suffering, misery, or opposition. The term "plateau" can be interpreted as a country or region that is symbolically at the top or in the highest situation.	refers to a physical event or concrete event in which there is a flood of tears and blood in a hilly or highland region within a country. It describes the suffering, conflict, or struggle that occurs in the country.	رت الدموع، والدماء هضبات بلاد  And tears and blood flood the highlands of my country" (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran, 2012 p. 73)	stress, anxiety, or tension.	this context describes the peaceful atmosphere and state of a location.	tranquility" (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran 2012 p. 73)
describes the conditions in which the region or society is in a state of prosperity, happiness, or in an encouraging state.	The sunlight that radiates describes the beauty, warmth, and brightness that radiates from the plateau.	وهضبات بلادي مغمورة بنور الشمس  And my highlands are bathed in sunshine" (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran, 2012 p. 73)	This paper is used to express the idea that there is a group of individuals who do not pay attention to humanitarian issues. This can refer to elites, governments, or certain groups that do not prioritize humanitarian interests.	The proper explanation for an individual or group of people who are physically within a physical distance from people suffering from hunger is when they are geographically or physically separated from a society that is experiencing hunger.	وماذا عسى يقدر المنفي البعيد أن يقول لأهله الجائعين  "What can a distant exile say to his people who are hungry" (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran, 2012 p. 73)
The symbolization of the shadow of calm describes a situation or feeling in which a person feels his mind is calm, in the absence of	The term "shadow of tranquility" describes a representation or image that creates a feeling of tranquility. The use of the word "shadow" in	بل أنا ههنا وراء البحار السبعة أعيش في ظل الطمأنينة  "But here I am behind the seventh fire, living in the shadow of	This sentence contains a symbolic message that illustrates the importance of sacrifice and social responsibility.	A grain of wheat that grows in the land of this country refers to wheat that grows naturally in the territory of this country, which can be used as food or a source of nutrients that are useful for its residents. Children who	لو كنت سنبله من القمح نابته في تربة بلادي لكان الطفل الجائع يلتقطني، ويزيل بحباتي يد الموت عن نفسه  "If I were a grain of wheat growing on the soil of my country, a

	<p>experience hunger refer to children who are actually experiencing malnutrition and a state of hunger that threatens their lives. With the presence of grains, wheat will be a savior for hungry children, as it can provide enough food to prevent them from dying of starvation.</p>	<p>hungry child would pick me up and with grain I would remove the hand of death from himself" (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran 2012 p. 74)</p>		<p>valley of Lebanon": This is also a literal statement that illustrates that the subject of this sentence cannot be compared to the ripe fruit that grows in the valley of Lebanon. This can describe the subject as something that is not yet "mature" or unprepared.</p>	
<p>This sentence is a symbolic message that can reflect humility, or that the subject feels that he is not displaying such splendor or privilege as the wheat in the Syrian plains or the ripe fruit in the valley of Lebanon.</p>	<p>"I am not a grain of wheat in the plains of Syria": This is a literal statement that illustrates that "I" (the subject in this sentence) cannot be compared to a grain of wheat that grows in the plains of Syria. This can be interpreted as the subject feels that he or she is unusual or special. "And not the ripe fruit in the</p>	<p>لست بسنبلة من القمح في سهول سورية، ولا بثمره يانعة في أودية لبنان "I am not a grain of wheat in the plains of Syria, nor am I a ripe fruit in the valley of Lebanon (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran 2012 p. 74)</p>	<p>The word "bird" may have a connotative meaning as a symbol of freedom or tranquility, as birds are often associated with the ability to fly in the air and a freer life. "Space" may have a connotative meaning as a representation of the vastness of the world or its infinite possibilities.</p>	<p>Birds are a type of winged animal that can fly, space is the air space or sky. A country is the country where a person lives or comes from.</p>	<p>لو كنت طائرا في فضاء بلادي، لكان الرجل الجائع يصطادني، ويزيل بجسدي ظل القبر عن جسده "If I were a bird in the sky of my land, the hungry man would have taken a breath of fresh air and removed the shadow from my body a grave</p>

		separate from his body. (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran 2012 p. 74)	connotative meaning as an idilative or ideal description of a rich and pleasant place.		
"Dead" may have a connotative meaning as a symbol of a tragic end or a very bad state. "unpeaceful" may have a connotative meaning as conflict or instability, "hunger" may have a connotative meaning as a symbol of deeper suffering or deprivation, either in the context of food or life in general. "full of milk and honey" may have a	. "dead": Denotative meaning: Loss of life or experiencing death. Peace can be interpreted as harmony or tranquility. "hunger" Feeling very hungry or experiencing a lack of food. "full of milk and honey": Denotative meaning: Refers to a place that is very fertile and full of resources.	ماتوا لأنهم لم يكونوا مسالمين. ماتوا جوعا في الأرض التي تُدر لبنًا وعسلا "They died because they were not peaceful, they starved in a land full of milk and honey (Al awasif jibran kahlil gibran, 2012 p. 75)	Based on the table above, it can be seen that the meaning of the denotation is taken from each stanza. In the first stanza, there is the word "الدموع، والدماء" which means tears and blood in the Great Dictionary of Indonesian (KBBI) online means water that melts from the eyes (when crying and so on) the word liquid blood consists of plasma, red and white cells that flow in the blood vessels of humans or animals.  In the table above, it can be seen that the connotations are also taken from each stanza. In the first stanza, there are the words "tears and blood". Tears and blood have meaning as symbols of suffering, misery, or conflict. Blood is often used to reflect physical suffering, sacrifice, or bloodshed associated with conflict or struggle. Blood can symbolize hard physical struggles, injuries, or sacrifices that are necessary in a particular situation. In addition, blood can also be a symbol of violence that occurs as a result of conflict, especially in the context of war or other conflicts. This reflects the suffering and damage caused by armed conflict.		

## Conclusion

The Denotative Meaning in Kahlil Gibran's work "Death of a Nation" describes the situation and feelings of a nation that is experiencing destruction and death using concrete words and images. In this poem, Gibran explicitly explains the historical events, destruction, and extinction of the nation. The denotative meaning contained in this verse speaks of the conflict, oppression, chaos, and destruction faced by the nation. Meanwhile, the Connotative Meaning in this work is conveyed by Kahlil Gibran through the use of figurative language and symbols. Through its connotative meaning, this verse describes the feelings of hurt, longing, and uncertainty faced by the nation. In addition, the verse also implies a philosophical message and a deeper meaning about the need to appreciate and understand history and culture. By using figurative language and symbols, Gibran managed to summarize the complex meanings related to the revival, destruction, and identity of the nation.

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