

## Writing Poetry with the Development of Associative Meaning in Chairil Anwar's Poetry Collection: A Lesson of Poetry Writing Instruction

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### Abstract

This research is motivated by the importance of associative meaning in poetry as a formative element of imaginative power, emotion, and linguistic creativity. However, there has been limited research systematizing associative meaning techniques as a model for poetry writing instruction. This study aims to analyze associative meaning techniques in Chairil Anwar's poems and formulate their implications for poetry writing instruction. This research employs a qualitative descriptive design with semantic analysis of eight selected poems from the collection *Aku In I Binatang Jalang* (I Am a Wild Animal). Data were collected through repeated reading and note-taking techniques, while data analysis was conducted through componential analysis, referential analysis, and meaning verification using KBBI (the Indonesian Dictionary). The research findings indicate that there are three dominant techniques in the development of associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's poetry: meaning components, rewriting, and synonymy. The synonymy technique is the most frequently used, followed by rewriting and meaning components. These findings demonstrate that associative meaning plays a crucial role in strengthening the expressive power and semantic depth of poetry. These findings have implications for poetry writing instruction, namely the need for explicit teaching of associative techniques to help students enrich their diction choices and expand semantic creativity in their poetic works.

**Keywords:** Associative meaning; Semantic components; Synonyms; Creative writing; Writing instruction

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### INTRODUCTION

Chairil Anwar is one of the prominent writers of the 1945 generation in Indonesia. He is also known as a pioneer of modern poetry and has produced many literary works. In his poetry, he often discusses themes of love, death, life, and existentialism. His works have gained recognition from both literary figures and readers, as he successfully creates innovations in simple yet powerful language with profound emotional expressions. Chairil Anwar's success in poetry lies not only in his techniques and style but also in his ability to touch the hearts and emotions of every reader, allowing his works to have a wide influence in Indonesian literature.

Poetry is a literary work created under specific conditions and procedures meant for expressing the creator's emotions through written forms. Poetry is a form of literary work that prioritizes the power of language to convey aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual experiences. One important aspect in the creation of poetry is the use of associative

meaning, which is meaning that emerges from the associations of personal, social, or cultural experiences of the reader or poet. Associative meaning enables the poet to bring language to life through symbols, imagery, and connotations so that meaning is not only lexical but also interpretative and emotional. Poetry is a text rich in meaning and serves as a medium to express an individual's inner state through a series of words and sentences closely related to meaning (Ramadani et al., 2025). Poetry is an outpouring of human emotional expression. It possesses unique qualities, as it is born from imagination and contains the creator's deepest experiences, analogized into beautiful language (Rahman & Fitriyani, 2022).

Poetry is an imaginative expression of thoughts and feelings, organized by focusing all linguistic potential, both from its physical structure and its external structure (Hasibuan, 2021). In Chairil Anwar's poetry writing with the development of associative meaning, associative meaning refers to the connections or relationships that arise from an individual's thoughts when hearing or recalling a word, which are subjective and influenced by personal experiences, culture, and social context. The associative technique is a derivative method that develops from concept mapping, where learners are required to associate a word (Indarwati, 2021). Word associations can remind one of other concepts and ideas; for example, the word "Merdeka" can be associated with struggle, freedom, and oath. The meaning within a word, phrase, or sentence in poetry can be associative with something outside of language (Syaharani & Namang, 2024). Associations can expand language knowledge and support more effective communication. Karim, as cited in (Yayuk, 2022), states that associative meaning is the meaning used by society to express another concept that has similarities with the properties, states, or characteristics of the original concept or lexeme.

(Leech, 1974) discusses the meaning of language through a systematic approach that includes component meaning analysis, rewriting (paraphrasing), and synonymy. Leech explains that the meaning of a word can be broken down into semantic components or smaller meaning features. This approach, known as component meaning analysis, is useful for illustrating the differences in meaning among seemingly similar words. Furthermore, Leech emphasizes the importance of paraphrasing as a form of equivalent meaning, where two sentences have different grammatical structures but share the same propositional meaning. This indicates that meaning can be preserved even when linguistic forms change. Leech also discusses synonymy as the relationship between two or more words that have similar meanings, although he emphasizes that true synonyms are rare due to differences in nuances of meaning, context, and levels of formality. Through these three concepts, Leech asserts that the meaning of language is systematic and can be understood through the relationships among semantic elements.

The poem with the title gravestone ( nisan ), writes the words death ( kematian ) and sorrow ( duka ) as words that have a field of meaning with the word gravestone. The word gravestone is a sign of death, and death is associated with sorrow. Based on the analysis of component meaning, the poem gravestone incorporates associative words in its lyrics using the component meaning model to strengthen the theme of death. This can be evidenced by the conceptual meaning of gravestone The word gravestone refers to a stone or marker placed over a grave to signify the resting place of someone who has passed away.

Component meaning refers to the elements of the poem that connect the theme, identity, and emotions within the poem's content, as well as the conveyance of meaning from a poetic work. Through the rewriting of component meanings, the poet can reinforce the theme, making the poem more impactful, supported by the words present in the lyrics. Based on the presentation of Data 1, the associative technique in Chairil Anwar's poetry includes two techniques: the component meaning technique and the rewriting technique.

Other data that demonstrate the associative technique in Chairil Anwar's poetry writing are presented in the following data.

By using the associative technique of synonymy, the correct use of synonyms can convey depth and accuracy in expressing complex emotions. The writing of synonyms in poetry involves language forms that share the same or similar meanings, applicable to words, phrases, and sentences, although typically only words are considered synonyms. Words that have the same meaning and are repeated are called synonyms (Ummuh et al., 2022). The repetition of words in this title not only captures the readers' attention but also strengthens the conveyed meaning. Synonyms are used as expressions of similarity or sameness in meaning within a word form (Paino et al., 2021). Synonymy refers to the relationship of meaning among words, phrases, and sentences that have similarities or resemblances (Khaeryana et al., 2024). Synonymy indicates a relationship of meaning showing a word or phrase that has the same or similar meaning as another word (Yudmianti et al., 2022).

According to (Turnip et al., 2024). A comparison of Chairil Anwar's poetry structure analysis shows that understanding the physical and internal structure of poetry is crucial for uncovering deeper meanings. This research reveals that elements such as theme, tone, and message are interconnected with the use of distinctive language. Meanwhile, (Tinambunan et al., 2022). Who studies the stylistic elements in Chairil Anwar's poetry, shows that the use of certain stylistic devices can enhance the intended meaning. This research states that stylistic devices like litotes and irony are often used to deepen the emotional impact in poetry. According to (Dirman, 2022). The physical and internal structures of three specific poems are described using a literature-based method and in-depth structural analysis concerning theme, tone, and message.

The benefit of writing words as components of meaning in the title can help readers connect the theme and title within the content of the poem. On the other hand, rewriting words in the title also provides benefits by repeating a word in the poem's title, which can strengthen the theme and emotional response, making the poem more memorable. Meanwhile, the use of synonyms in poetry provides meaning variation and broadens the reader's response. By using synonyms, the writer can avoid repeating a word while maintaining the uniqueness and beauty of the poem.

The research aims to discover poetry writing techniques with associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's poetry collection. Associative meaning refers to a series of words whose meanings are related to the title of the poem. Several techniques were identified, including writing words within a single component of meaning, writing synonyms, and rewriting words in the title. These findings will contribute to poetry writing techniques and can be used as teaching materials in poetry writing courses. The way to write poetry is by employing associative techniques, resulting in poems with themes evident in the words of the lines.

The novelty of this research lies not only in analyzing associative meaning in general but also in breaking it down into three techniques in poetry writing: component meaning techniques, rewriting words in the title, and synonymy. The results of this analysis represent a new contribution that has not been explored in previous research, which generally focused only on stylistic devices and poetry structure.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative study. It is termed qualitative because the data used in this research are natural and unmanipulated, consisting of existing poetry texts. The data from Chairil Anwar's poetry have been available since 1986–2024 and are considered natural and authentic. The data in this study include titles and words from the poetry that align with the characteristics of component meaning, the rewriting of words in the title

using KBBI, and the writing of synonyms through descriptions. The data source for this study is Chairil Anwar's collection titled *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*, which was first published in 1986 and is now in its thirty-sixth edition in 2024. The data collection technique employs reading and note-taking methods. The reading technique involves reading the entire poetry collection repeatedly to understand the context and identify relevant semantic elements. Subsequently, the sought data is recorded. The note-taking method used in this research involves a data table classified into three sections: component meaning, rewriting words in the title, and writing synonyms.

The first data analysis technique employs component meaning, producing associative meaning relationships between the title and the words in the lines of the poetry. The second data analysis technique uses matching by looking for equivalents in KBBI. The third data analysis technique involves scanning words in the title as they appear in the lines of the poetry. Words with associative meaning relationships have been analyzed starting from the reading and note-taking techniques in data collection. This technique is referred to as interactive analysis, meaning that data analysis has been ongoing since data collection began.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collection from the study of Poetry Writing with the Development of Associative Meaning in Chairil Anwar's Poetry Collection, the overall analysis shows that the development of associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's poems has become a distinctive feature, including component meaning analysis, rewriting words in the title, and synonymy, which enrich the expressiveness of his poetry. The following is the data analysis that has been found by the author:

### Component Meaning

#### Data 1: Nisan

*Bukan kematian benar menusuk kalbu  
dan duka maha tuan bertakhta (kode)*

The poem with the title gravestone ( nisan ), writes the words death ( kematian ) and sorrow ( duka ) as words that have a field of meaning with the word gravestone. The word gravestone is a sign of death, and death is associated with sorrow. The following semantic analysis of the words gravestone, death, mourning has the following meaning components.

Table 1. Component Meaning

Field of Meaning	Gravestone	Death	Sorrow
Grave marker	+		
For the sign of Death	+		
Sign of Grief	+		
Leave the world		+	
Death causes sadness			+

Based on the analysis of meaning components, **gravestone** poetry writes associated words in its poetry lyrics with a meaning component model to strengthen the theme of death. This can be proven by the conceptual meaning of the tombstone. The word tombstone means a stone or mark used on a grave to mark the place of a deceased person.

#### Data 2: Pelarian

*Dalam lari (kode)*

escape: A poem with the title escape ( pelarian ), writes the word Run ( lari ) as a word that has a field of meaning with the word escape. This word is related in the context of avoidance, but also has different nuances. The following is an analysis of the meaning field for these two words:

Table 2. Component Meaning of Escape

Field of Meaning	Escape	Run
Avoid trouble	+	
Escape	+	+
The perpetrator who carried out the action ran away	+	+
Form of activity		+

Based on the meaning component analysis, it shows that the words escape and run have a semantic relationship, because both words come from the same word. Conceptually, the word running refers to physical activity in the form of fast movements using the legs. Apart from that, the word escape has experienced an expansion in semantic meaning, namely the act of avoiding or moving away from a situation. In the context of poetry, the word escape is not only understood as a sporting activity but also as a symbol of the human desire to escape from life's pressures and inner burdens.

### Data 3: Independent

*Aku mau bebas dari segala (kode)*

The poem with the title Independent (*Merdeka*), writes the word free ( bebas ) as a word that has a field of meaning, with the word Independent both related to the concepts of freedom and the absence of attachment. However, both have quite significant differences in nuances of meaning depending on the context of their use.

Table 3. Component Meaning of Independent

Field of Meaning	Independent	Free
Not colonized	+	
Not bound		+
Have full rights	+	+
Freedom in thinking	+	+
Independence	+	
Empowerment	+	
Freedom of action		+

Based on the analysis of component meaning, the poem Independent emphasizes components related to independence, empowerment, and full rights as a result of struggle or self-liberation from oppression. Meanwhile, the word "bebas" (free) is more personal and situational, describing a condition of someone or something that is not bound by limits or rules. In the context of the poem, the meaning of Independent does not only refer to physical or political freedom but also to the freedom of the soul, spirit, and mind from all forms of attachment. On the other hand, the word free in a more general context can encompass freedom without the connotation of struggle, sometimes even suggesting a sense of being out of control.

Component meaning is one way to identify or observe the connections between lexemes in the context of meaning (Hutagalung et al., 2024). Suhardi, as cited (Fauziyah, 2023). States that component meaning can be understood as a form of analysis to discover the elements of meaning present in one or several words through several systematic steps. Component meaning indicates that each meaning is formed from several elements or components, and these components are interrelated (Sarifuddin, 2020).

### Rewriting Words in Titles

Data 4 : Sudah dulu lagi

*Sudah dulu lagi terjadi begini*

*Sudah dulu lagi, sudah dulu lagi*

The poem titled *That's a long time ago* ( sudah dulu lagi ) appears in Chairil Anwar's poetry collection *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*. The phrase *That's a long time ago* is repeated in the first and ninth lines, appearing a total of three times. This repetition serves not only as a formal reiteration but also has a strong semantic and stylistic function in emphasizing the meaning and atmosphere that the poet wishes to convey. In the context of stylistics, the rewriting of this phrase creates a distinctive effect of musicality and rhythm, while simultaneously reinforcing the emotional nuance of boredom, resignation, and fatigue in response to a continually recurring situation. Associatively, this repetition symbolizes the entrapment of humans in a monotonous cycle of life and an existential awareness of mortality.

#### **Data 5: Ina Mia**

*Ina Mia* mencari

*Teraba Ina Mia*

*Ina Mia*

*Ina Mia* menekan tapak di hijau rumput

The poem titled "*Ina Mia*" appears in Chairil Anwar's poetry collection *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*. The phrase "*Ina Mia*" is repeated in the third, fifth, seventh, and fifteenth lines, appearing a total of four times. "*Ina Mia*" carries personal and affective meaning that can be associated with a female figure who is emotionally close to the poet. The repetition of this name becomes a symbol of intense presence in the poet's memory and inner self, illustrating longing, searching, or even loss. The repetition of the name "*Ina Mia*" also emphasizes the emotional expression filled with intense feelings.

#### **Data 6: Selama bulan menyinari dadanya**

*Selama bulan menyinari dadanya jadi pualam*

*Selama bulan menyinari dadanya jadi pualam*

The poem *As long as the moon shines on his chest* ( selama bulan menyinari dadanya ) appears in Chairil Anwar's poetry collection *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*. The phrase *As long as the moon shines on his chest* is repeated in the first and ninth lines, appearing a total of two times. This repetition serves not only as a repetition of sound or sentence structure but also has semantic meaning that reinforces the theme and atmosphere of the poem *As long as the moon shines on his chest* contains elements of symbolic and poetic meaning. The word "*bulan*" (moon) is often associated with beauty, softness, and the tranquility of the night, while "*dadanya*" (his/her chest) represents the center of human feelings or inner self. The repetition of the phrase *As long as the moon shines on his chest* is not merely a linguistic form of repetition; it is an aesthetic and semantic strategy used by the poet to emphasize the emotional and philosophical message in the poem.

Repetition refers to the reiteration of linguistic units, whether they are sounds, syllables, words, or parts of sentences that are deemed important to provide emphasis within a relevant context (Armet, 2023). As a stylistic device, repetition involves the use of repeated words, phrases, or sentences to create a specific impression on the reader or listener (Nugraha & Sofian, 2023). Repetition is a rhetorical style that conveys the reiteration of the same words, phrases, or clauses to reinforce the meaning of a sentence or discourse (Putri, 2023). Tarigan, as cited in (Amran, 2023). States that the rhetorical style of repetition encompasses the reiteration of sounds, syllables, or phrases. Repetition functions as an emphasis within a specific and appropriate context.

#### **Synonym**

#### **Data 7: Sendiri**

*Hidupnya tambah sepi, tambah hampa*

The poem titled Alone ( sendiri ) uses the word Alone to evoke deep feelings through words that share similar meanings, with synonyms such as empty and lonely. The following is a synonym analysis of the words "sendiri," "hampa," and "sepi".

Table 4. Synonim Analysis of Words

Component analysis	empty	lonely
Alone	+	+
Emptiness	+	
Lonely		+

Based on the synonym analysis, the three words **Alone**, **empty** and **lonely** are complementary components. The feeling of emptiness often arises from a state of loneliness, ultimately leading to a sense of being alone, using the associative technique of synonymy. The use of these synonymous words serves as an aesthetic means to emphasize the atmosphere of solitude, alienation, and the emptiness of the human soul, making the poem **Alone** a deep reflection of the poet's inner self.

### Data 8: Malam

#### *Mulai kelam*

The poem titled night ( malam ) features the word night, which has a synonymous relationship with the word gloomy ( kelam ) that appears in the line starting with gloomy. The words night and gloomy demonstrate a close synonymous relationship as both exist within the same meaning field, depicting an atmosphere of darkness, solitude, and dreariness.

Table 5. Synonim Analysis of Words in Night

Component Analysis	Night	Gloomy
Dark	+	+
Pitch Black	+	
Gloomy	+	+

Based on the synonym analysis, it is evident that the words night and gloomy share similar meaning components, namely "gelap" (dark) and "suram" (dreary), which illustrate their synonymous relationship. However, the word night includes an additional component of "gulita" (pitch black), indicating a deeper level of darkness. The use of the word gloomy following night is not merely a repetition of meaning; this synonymous relationship emphasizes the shift in atmosphere from the tangible darkness of night to the inner darkness that is felt.

Synonyms are forms of language that have similar meanings that are roughly the same or akin (Pratami et al., 2025). Synonyms refer to language forms that possess meanings similar to or the same as other forms; this similarity applies to words, phrases, or sentences, although generally, only words are considered synonyms (Normasunah, 2021). Synonyms can refer to more than just words; they also encompass phrases or sentences with similarities and shared meanings (Siu & Namang, 2024). Synonyms refer to the use of words that have nearly similar meanings (Sukron, 2022).

### Discussion

The analysis of associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's poetry collection *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang* reveals the significant role of semantic techniques in enriching the expressive depth of his poems. The study highlights three primary techniques used in developing associative meaning: component meaning, rewriting, and synonymy. These techniques not only enhance the meaning conveyed through the poems but also allow for a deeper emotional connection between the text and the reader. By employing these techniques, Anwar brings to life complex emotions and themes, transforming his poems into more than just expressions of thought, but into profound reflections on life, death, and freedom.

One of the key findings of this study is the prominent use of component meaning, where words within the same semantic field are grouped together to reinforce the central theme of the poem. For instance, in the poem *Nisan* (Gravestone), Anwar effectively connects the words "death" and "sorrow" to the concept of a gravestone. The use of associative words such as "death" and "sorrow" creates a coherence of meaning that strengthens the theme of mortality. This technique supports the claim that words, when strategically used, can evoke a broader spectrum of emotions and thoughts, as evidenced by Anwar's approach to deepening the theme of death through associative meaning. Similar findings were observed in studies by Ramadani et al. (2025), who argue that componential analysis is essential for understanding how words within a poem can intertwine to amplify the poem's underlying message.

The technique of rewriting in Anwar's poetry also plays a crucial role in enhancing the emotional and semantic depth. The repetition of phrases, such as "Sudah dulu lagi" (That's a long time ago) in the poem of the same title, not only provides a rhythmical quality but also reinforces the themes of resignation and fatigue. The repeated phrase captures the cyclical nature of human experiences, especially in the face of existential frustration. Repetition in this context serves as more than a stylistic device; it underscores the emotional toll of the situation being described. This use of repetition mirrors findings from Turnip et al. (2024), who emphasize the power of repetition in literature to evoke specific emotional responses and create a sense of continuity or stagnation.

Furthermore, the study reveals that synonymy is another technique frequently employed by Anwar to enhance the expressiveness of his poetry. In the poem *Sendiri* (Alone), Anwar uses synonyms like "empty" and "lonely" to depict a deep sense of solitude and emotional desolation. This technique of synonymy is not just a linguistic choice; it serves to broaden the reader's understanding of the central emotion, in this case, isolation. The use of synonymous terms helps convey nuanced emotions that might be limited if only one word were used. This aligns with the work of Syaharani and Namang (2024), who discuss how synonyms in poetry can create a layered meaning, adding emotional and conceptual depth to the text.

The findings of this study also contribute to the ongoing discussion on the role of associative meaning in poetry writing instruction. In the context of teaching poetry writing, the techniques identified in Anwar's work can serve as valuable tools for students to develop their own creative and expressive skills. By understanding how to use component meaning, rewriting, and synonymy, students can learn to enrich their poetic diction, create more emotionally resonant works, and expand their semantic creativity. This practical application of associative meaning techniques is crucial for fostering a deeper understanding of how language can be used not only to convey literal meaning but also to evoke feelings, provoke thought, and challenge readers' perceptions.

When comparing the findings of this study with previous research, it is evident that while much of the prior work has focused on the stylistic elements and structural analysis of Anwar's poetry, the current study offers a unique perspective by highlighting the specific techniques used to develop associative meaning. Previous research, such as that by Tinambunan et al. (2022), has focused on structural elements like theme, tone, and message, but has not delved deeply into the semantic strategies that contribute to the richness of these poems. By applying semantic analysis to Anwar's work, this study fills an important gap in the literature and provides a new framework for analyzing poetry in terms of its linguistic and emotional depth.

Moreover, this research challenges the limitations of traditional literary analysis by demonstrating that the development of associative meaning through component meaning, rewriting, and synonymy can enhance the overall impact of poetry. Unlike studies that primarily focus on surface-level thematic analysis, this study takes a deeper approach by

exploring how Anwar's choice of words and their associative meanings create a more profound emotional experience for the reader. This nuanced approach to literary analysis aligns with the views of Leech (1974), who proposed that meaning in language is not fixed but rather fluid, with words taking on new significance depending on their context and the relationships they have with other words.

The implications of this study extend beyond the analysis of Anwar's work to the broader field of poetry writing instruction. By incorporating the techniques of component meaning, rewriting, and synonymy into the teaching of poetry, educators can help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of language and its potential for emotional and intellectual expression. The ability to create associative meaning allows poets to craft works that resonate with readers on a deeper level, making poetry a more powerful tool for personal and social reflection. This approach can also inspire students to experiment with language and form, leading to more innovative and creative poetic expressions.

The development of associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's poetry plays a pivotal role in shaping the emotional and intellectual depth of his work. Through the use of component meaning, rewriting, and synonymy, Anwar demonstrates how language can be used to evoke complex emotions, provoke thought, and challenge societal norms. The findings of this study not only offer new insights into Anwar's poetry but also provide valuable techniques for poetry writing instruction, emphasizing the importance of semantic creativity in the production of meaningful and impactful poetry. Future research could further explore these techniques across other poetic works, expanding our understanding of how associative meaning can be utilized to enhance literary expression.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Chairil Anwar's poetry collection in the book *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*, it can be concluded that the development of associative meaning is a distinctive feature that enriches the expressiveness of his poems. This study identifies three techniques for writing poetry with associative meaning. First, the component meaning technique: Chairil Anwar uses words within the same meaning field to reinforce the title of the poem. This technique creates a coherence of meaning that emphasizes the central theme in each poem. Second, the technique of rewriting the title. Rewriting the title can be done partially or completely (with words or phrases). The rewriting of the title in the lines of the poem serves to emphasize meaning and create a distinctive effect of musicality and rhythm. This repetition also strengthens the emotional nuance and atmosphere that the poet wishes to convey.

Third, the technique of using synonyms for the title. Lines in the poem may include words that are synonymous with the title. This technique serves as an aesthetic means to emphasize the atmosphere and complex feelings. These three associative techniques demonstrate Chairil Anwar's skill in selecting and crafting words to create deeply impactful poetry with strong themes. The findings of this research have practical implications as teaching materials in poetry writing education. The development of associative techniques can help poets produce works with greater coherence of meaning and emotional strength. Thus, the poetry writing techniques based on associative meaning have proven effective in generating high-quality poems with clearly apparent themes through word choices in the lines.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this research on poetry writing through the development of associative meaning in Chairil Anwar's works, it is recommended that future studies expand the scope of analysis not only limited to the poetry collection *Aku Ini Binatang Jalang*, but also to the works of other poets from different periods to discover a wider variety of techniques in developing associative meaning. The obstacles encountered during

this research include the limited number of references that specifically discuss associative meaning in poetry, as well as the lack of previous studies that examine techniques for developing associative meaning in depth. To overcome these limitations, future researchers are encouraged to broaden their literature sources by exploring references from various related fields such as lexical semantics, stylistics, and literary pragmatics, which can support the analysis of associative meaning

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