

## Complexity of Love in *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the theme of doomed love as depicted in Buya Hamka's *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* (1938) and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), examining the profound social barriers that doom these relationships. It particularly focuses on the characters Zainuddin and Heathcliff, who are both rejected by their societies and lovers due to insurmountable social inequalities—a rejection that culminates in the tragic deaths of their beloveds. The aim of this paper is to dissect how intrinsic narrative elements and socio-cultural contexts collectively shape the central themes of love and societal rejection in these works. The approach used in this study is Genetic Structuralism, as formulated by Lucien Goldmann (1980), a literary theory that combines structural analysis with socio-cultural context. This approach argues that a literary work should be understood as a product of both its internal structure and the socio-historical conditions in which it was created. The dialectical method is used to analyze and compare literary works by examining the interaction between intrinsic elements of the texts (structures) and their socio-historical contexts (worldviews). Applying this method to *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* and *Wuthering Heights* involves tracing the internal structures of each text—including characters, narrators, irony, and worldviews—and the external socio-historical realities shaping these structures, such as colonialism and traditionalism in Indonesia for Hamka, and industrialization and social stratification in England for Brontë. The findings show that in both works, love is portrayed as a complex and often obstructed idea, shaped by the cultural and social barriers of their eras and the worldviews of their authors. This idea simultaneously reflects their unique cultural contexts while engaging with universal human questions about morality, love, and society.

**Keywords:** *comparative study, genetics structuralism, love, theme.*

### INTRODUCTION

Love, as a central theme in literature, offers profound insights into the cultural and social fabric of societies.

This study examines the depictions of love in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* by Buya Hamka and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë—two classical works from Indonesian and English

literature that provide a rich ground for This research aims to explore the concept of *worldview*—a term coined by Lucien Goldmann referring to the collective cultural perspective on love as presented in these narratives—illustrating how each reflects and contradicts the socio-cultural conditions of its respective time. The cultural significance of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* and *Wuthering Heights* lies in their ability to depict universal themes of love and societal constraints within distinct socio-cultural contexts. Both novels feature tragic heroes: Zainuddin and Heathcliff, whose romantic conflicts are shaped and challenged by the societal norms of their time. These struggles highlight deeper cultural values and tensions—Hamka's portrayal reflects the intersection of Minangkabau traditions and Islamic values in Indonesia's pre-independence era, while Brontë captures the rigid class divisions and emotional intensity of Victorian England. The compelling interplay between personal desires and cultural forces in these works inspires this study to analyze their representations of cultural identity and societal expectations through the lens of literary comparison. *Wuthering Heights*, a product of mid-19th-century England, intertwines love with social stratification, reflecting the intense cultural constraints of the era. Nearly a century later, in Indonesia, *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* echoes this thematic complexity, placing love against the backdrop of the stringent social customs of Minang culture. Hamka prioritizes Minang culture and its social customs by narrating the journey of a young man who endures love trials that ultimately fail to lead to a happy ending. The romance depicted in the fictional works of Brontë and Hamka is strengthened by socio-cultural issues and conflicts, which simultaneously reveal both similarities and contradictions within their narratives.

The perspective of critical literacy represents the unexpressed aspiration of native people for freedom from colonial rule. This idea is vividly depicted in the novel and further supported by Hartoko and Rahmanto (as cited in Nurgiantoro, 2018), who argue that themes serve as fundamental concepts underpinning literary works (Azis & Burhanuddin, 2022).

In *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* by Hamka, the theme of love is deeply intertwined with the idea of critical literacy and the unexpressed

desire for independence from colonialism. The novel explores not only romantic love but also social oppression, cultural constraints, and resistance against rigid traditions, which serve as a metaphor for the broader struggle against colonial and societal domination.

The theme of love as a struggle against social constraints in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* closely parallels *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, where love is also shaped by social hierarchy, oppression, and unfulfilled desires. Just as Zainuddin and Hayati's love is obstructed by Minangkabau traditions, Heathcliff and Catherine's love is constrained by class divisions and rigid societal expectations (Vargish, 1971). In both novels, love is not merely a personal emotion but a symbol of resistance against an oppressive system that dictates whom one can love based on social status or heritage.

From a critical literacy perspective, both novels critique their respective societies by exposing the suffering caused by rigid structures—whether colonial-era social stratification in Indonesia or class-based oppression in 19th-century England.

By comparing *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* with *Wuthering Heights*, this study promotes a broader appreciation of Indonesian literature and encourages literary critics to explore its depth through diverse interpretive frameworks. This contributes to fostering cross-cultural dialogue and enriching global literary discussions by presenting Indonesian literature as equally significant in examining universal human themes and cultural complexities.

Using the Genetic Structuralism approach, this research seeks to dispel the notion that literary works should be interpreted solely through their intrinsic elements—a view held by Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of the Structuralism movement. Saussure's theory serves as the foundation for thinkers across various fields of knowledge, including literary criticism. He argued that a text should be interpreted through the structure that determines its unity, setting aside extrinsic elements such as the social and cultural aspects of the author.

However, in 1976, Lucien Goldmann (Muniroch, 2017) introduced the idea that a historical perspective is necessary to connect the author's worldview with the worldview of their

social group. This distinction sets Goldmann's approach apart from other structuralist perspectives, which focus solely on relational elements.

This research addresses two key questions: (1) How does the narrative structure of each novel reflect the author's perspective on the complexity of love? and (2) How do the socio-cultural contexts of each work illustrate the author's worldview on the theme of love? Through a Genetic Structuralism approach, this comparative study—*Complexity of Love in Wuthering Heights and Tenggelmnya Kapal Van der Wijck*—examines these questions and underscores the urgency of promoting Indonesian classical literature as part of global literary discourse.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To support this research, the researcher consulted several references to aid the analysis. The main theoretical book used as a reference in applying the Genetic Structuralism approach is *Genetic Structuralism: Concept, Theory, and Application* (2013) by Prof. Dr. Taufiq Ahmad Dardiri, S.U. This book explains the emergence of the concept, which arose as a protest against the earlier structuralist approach that excluded the extrinsic elements of literature and positioned sociology as the entry point for this perspective. It also discusses practical theory and analysis in the application of Genetic Structuralism.

According to Lucien Goldmann (1890), human life is influenced by three basic tendencies: significancy (significance), consistency (consistency), and transcendency (transcendence) (Dardiri, 2013). He argues that these three tendencies play a crucial role in the study of literature across various contexts. In line with its conceptual foundation, Genetic Structuralism begins with *human facts*, meaning that all activities and behaviors—both verbal and physical—are represented in science, just as culture is depicted in social science. Thus, *human facts*, like culture, can take the form of specific social or individual activities, reflected in cultural works such as paintings, musical compositions, and literary texts.

Several previous studies have analyzed *Tenggelmnya Kapal Van der Wijck* and *Wuthering*

*Heights* separately, but no study has attempted to compare these two novels. However, *Wuthering Heights* has been juxtaposed with one of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet*, by Girdler (1956). In her article, *Wuthering Heights and Shakespeare*, she discusses how Emily Brontë may have indirectly read or been inspired by Shakespeare's stories in character development—particularly Heathcliff and the Earnshaw family (Catherine's family)—and how family discord serves as the central conflict that prevents the two lovers from uniting in the end.

On the other hand, Garofalo (2016) suggests that Heathcliff's character within capitalist culture reflects the characterization of the Victorian era, where consumption and production became obsessive forces leading to misfortune, loss, and death. Garofalo also examines the challenges Heathcliff must face to fulfill Catherine's request and the resulting dilemma—namely, the idea that love does not necessitate possession, a concept Heathcliff struggles to accept, ultimately transforming him from a loving individual into an unfeeling person.

Both Heathcliff and Zainuddin convey a message of revenge for the heartbreak they experienced—not due to unrequited love, but rather love hindered by social and cultural status. In Heathcliff's case, he was an orphan raised by the Earnshaw family from childhood. They regarded Heathcliff and Catherine as mere playmates and deemed their union impossible because Heathcliff lacked a clear class and social status in society.

Zainuddin, in *Tenggelmnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, is of mixed Bugis and Minang descent. Hayati's family rejected his proposal because he was not of Minang descent and was not financially well off at the time. The cultural and marriage system in Minangkabau, which places significant burdens on men, also contributed to his inability to marry Hayati. Bahri (2014), in his research, explores the elements of custom and culture in Minangkabau marriages, where society adheres to a matrilineal system based on maternal lineage.

In *Tenggelmnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, Hayati is an orphan and has uncles and aunts from her mother's lineage. When Zainuddin proposed to her, a special meeting was held by Niniak Mamak, a council from Hayati's maternal family, whose role

was to determine whether a niece's proposal was acceptable. Thus, the decision to marry was not made by the man and woman involved, but rather by the woman's maternal family.

Other studies interpret *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* as a symbolic romance reflecting Indonesia's condition under Japanese colonial rule. Zainuddin's circumstances—where love becomes his life's hope, yet he is marginalized by cultural customs—symbolize Indonesia's ongoing struggle for independence amid prolonged colonial domination. His efforts to fight for his place in society, culminating in his success as a writer, represent the broader struggle of the government and society in reclaiming freedom from colonial rule.

Many elements of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* depict the socio-cultural conditions of Indonesia at the time, as seen through Hamka's perspective. As a writer, Hamka conveys numerous moral messages that uphold religious and cultural norms central to Indonesian identity. His other work, *Falsafah Hidup* (1940), has also been compared to the renowned work of Lebanese-American writer Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (1923). In her study, Nahdhiyah explores the values of character education in both works, noting their shared humanistic and social perspectives. The key difference is that in *The Prophet*, the values presented do not adhere to a specific religion or belief system, whereas Hamka's *Falsafah Hidup* consistently draws upon the *Al-Qur'an* and *Hadith* as foundational sources.

By looking at previous researches, it can be concluded that *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* both make the theme of love a strength in the plot and contain socio-cultural values that are the background of conflict to enrich prose. The two authors, Brontë and Hamka, have also indirectly given the idea that love is something complex and does not only involve feelings between individuals, but also part of a socio-cultural device that involves a wider group of people, namely the community. Studying Hamka's works and how his works are interpreted by Indonesian literary critics can be a reference for foreign literary enthusiasts to study Indonesian character and culture.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs the Genetic Structuralism approach developed by Lucien Goldmann, who argued that literary works are products not merely of individual authors but also of the socio-cultural contexts in which they are created (Nurhasanah, 2015). According to Goldmann, the meaning embedded within literature extends beyond the text to reflect the collective consciousness of its time and place (Zimmerman, 1978).

The study also highlights the role of genetic activity within a theoretical framework that emphasizes structured agency—the idea that individuals shape their own history by navigating the conditions that influence their actions. This occurs within a conceptual space defined by Mayrl and other critics of Goldmann (Zimmerman, 1978), who seek to refine theoretical principles grounded in structuralist epistemology.

Genetic Structuralism can be identified as a non-pure method, opposing the pure method, which focuses solely on the intrinsic values of literary works (Helaluddin, 2019). Unlike pure literary analysis, which examines only internal elements such as themes, characters, and narrative structure, Genetic Structuralism incorporates external factors—including historical, social, and ideological influences—to provide a more comprehensive understanding of literature.

Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism provides a framework for analyzing comparative literary works through the dialectical method, which examines the interplay between social structures and individual agency in shaping literature. By comparing literary texts from different cultural or historical contexts, scholars can identify how each work reflects the dominant worldview of its time while also revealing underlying social contradictions. Goldmann's method allows researchers to trace how literature both expresses and critiques the prevailing ideological tensions of an era, highlighting the dynamic relationship between cultural production and social transformation.

Applying the dialectical method in comparative literature also requires recognizing how

literature embodies collective consciousness rather than merely individual expression. Goldmann's approach explores the historical and structural forces that shape meaning, demonstrating how literary works function as both products of and responses to social change across different contexts.

According to Brady (1974), structuralist scholars—Jacques Lacan, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Georg Lukács—differ in their approaches to studying inner (psychological) and outer (socio-economic) structures. Lacan argues that social structures cannot be fully understood from an external perspective, focusing instead on analyzing the unconscious mind to uncover its underlying organization and mechanisms. In contrast, Lévi-Strauss examines social behavior to identify recurring patterns that reveal how human actions are shaped by subconscious structures. Meanwhile, Georg Lukács, a Marxist theorist, emphasizes the role of economic and social infrastructure in shaping literary forms, interpreting these formal structures as reflections of broader socio-economic systems. Despite their differences, all three theorists share an interest in how deeper, often hidden structures influence human thought and culture (Brady, 1974).

Ultimately, by comparing *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, this study will illuminate the distinct and shared cultural narratives that these works articulate, offering insights into how British and Indonesian societies understand and express complex themes such as love within their literary traditions.

## METHODS

Using a comparative research scheme, this study examines the similarities between two literary works while also exploring their differentiating factors. Literature and other art forms have frequently influenced, inspired, and collaborated with one another. A study of these interrelations constitutes a legitimate aspect of comparative literature (Mangattu, 2013).

In a similar study, Falah et al. (2020) argue that comparative literature examines the relationships between literary works. This approach

is widely used in literary criticism and other areas of literary study. Additionally, it is closely connected to a country's history, reflecting its culture and customs. As defined by Nazir (2014), comparative research is a form of descriptive analysis aimed at discerning underlying causes and effects within phenomena, making it ideal for examining the socio-cultural factors influencing the literary themes of both novels.

The central issue in comparative literature revolves around what happens to literature and in what ways—how it is written, published, distributed, read, censored, and imitated. The empirical study of literature emerged as a response to, and an effort to address, a fundamental problem in hermeneutics: demonstrating the validity of literary interpretation. Reception theory has already revealed that interpretations are influenced not only by the text itself but, to an even greater extent, by the reader—both as an individual and within the framework of social conventions (Zepetnek, 1998).

Data collection involved assembling primary sources—specifically, the texts of *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*—as well as secondary sources, including scholarly books and journal articles that provide contextual understanding and critical analyses of these works.

The research process was methodically structured into several phases (Nemesio, 1999), beginning with the selection of a pertinent topic, followed by an extensive review of existing literature and prior studies. Subsequently, the study identified similarities and divergences in romantic tragedy within the selected literary works, formulated hypotheses, and determined the comparison groups—focusing on intrinsic elements such as characters, setting, and plot, as well as extrinsic elements like the socio-cultural backdrop.

This study applies the Genetic Structuralism approach through the dialectical method, which emphasizes the synthesis of opposing forces (thesis and antithesis) to arrive at a deeper understanding (synthesis). This method facilitates a coherent interpretation of how intrinsic and extrinsic elements within the novels reflect the societal and individual viewpoints of their times.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study's analysis is organized into two main sections: intrinsic elements, which involve character analysis and thematic exploration, and extrinsic elements, which focus on the socio-cultural contexts of the novels. Each section is further subdivided into analyses of male and female characters, respectively.

### Intrinsic Elements: Characterization

The analysis begins with a focus on the protagonists, Zainuddin and Heathcliff, contrasting Zainuddin's heroic qualities with Heathcliff's anti-heroic traits. Zainuddin's religious adherence and sincerity in love, despite societal rejection, highlight a valorous depiction of love overcoming obstacles. In contrast, Heathcliff's journey—marked by revenge and social mobility—underscores a cynical critique of love's entanglement with social status.

Zainuddin is portrayed as a deeply religious and morally grounded character, whose love for Hayati is characterized by sincerity and unwavering loyalty. His actions throughout the novel demonstrate his steadfastness, even as societal norms and cultural barriers continually reject his place in Hayati's life. However, his ultimate decision to expel Hayati at the end of the novel appears contradictory to his compassionate nature. This moment, though dramatic, stems not from malice but from years of suppressed emotional pain.

Zainuddin's rejection of Hayati is symbolic of his internal conflict—caught between his spiritual values and the bitterness left by the social injustices he endured. The depth of his regret following this act reinforces his humanity, illustrating that his love, despite being damaged, was never tainted by cruelty or self-interest. Hamka's depiction of Zainuddin, therefore, aligns with the Islamic values of patience, mercy, and sincere love, even as personal suffering clouds his actions.

In contrast, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* embodies a much darker, more turbulent response to love and rejection. His decision to leave Catherine after overhearing her conversation with Nelly reveals both his vulnerability and the deep-rooted effects of social class on his identity. Catherine's claim that she could not marry him due to his status

shatters Heathcliff's sense of self-worth, leading him to internalize society's judgment that he is undeserving of love. Unlike Zainuddin, whose actions stem from residual pain tempered by moral consideration, Heathcliff's response is marked by self-degradation and burgeoning resentment. He becomes fixated on vengeance, which consumes him and poisons his relationships. Heathcliff's characterization is not defined by loyalty or mercy but by his passionate intensity and inability to transcend the social rejection he faces.

These characterizations reflect the cultural and ideological differences between the two novels. Zainuddin's portrayal as a man of faith aligns with Hamka's broader criticism of rigid social customs and his vision of love as a divine blessing, rooted in sincerity and moral integrity. Heathcliff, on the other hand, reflects the Romantic and Gothic elements of *Wuthering Heights*, where passion, class struggles, and psychological torment dominate the narrative. While Zainuddin is shaped by Minangkabau customs and Islamic teachings, Heathcliff's response to rejection is a product of the oppressive class hierarchy in Victorian England, where social mobility and identity are determined by wealth and status.

Both Zainuddin and Heathcliff endure the emotional consequences of love entangled with societal forces, yet their contrasting responses highlight their differing worldviews. Zainuddin's moral conflict and regret humanize him, presenting love as a test of faith and endurance. Heathcliff's descent into bitterness and self-destructive behavior portrays love as an untamed, consuming force that ultimately leads to destruction. By juxtaposing these characters, the novels explore how love, when confronted with societal rejection, reveals the inner struggles of individuals and reflects broader cultural and moral values within their respective societies.

### Intrinsic Elements: Irony

Irony plays a significant role in deepening the emotional complexity and thematic resonance of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* and *Wuthering Heights*. Through situational and dramatic irony, both Hamka and Brontë highlight the conflict between personal desires and societal expectations,

exposing the vulnerabilities of their characters and the consequences of their choices.

Zainuddin's journey to Padang and Batipuh, Minangkabau, is filled with hope and expectation. He yearns to reconnect with his roots, gain acceptance, and find a sense of belonging that would affirm his identity as a descendant of Minangkabau society. However, this aspiration is met with bitter disappointment when he is ostracized for being born of mixed ethnic descent (*Makassar-Minangkabau*). The very community he longs to embrace rejects him, leading to his eventual expulsion. This situational irony underscores the harsh rigidity of societal norms that prioritize lineage and tradition over individual character and merit.

Hamka uses this irony to critique Minangkabau's feudalistic customs and to emphasize the emotional and existential alienation experienced by individuals who do not conform to these rigid norms.

For Heathcliff, situational irony manifests in the contrast between his origins and his eventual acquisition of *Wuthering Heights*. As a homeless orphan, Heathcliff lacks agency and belonging, enduring humiliation from Hindley Earnshaw and rejection from Catherine. Yet, through relentless ambition and a vengeful drive, he accumulates wealth and power, ultimately seizing control of the very house where he once suffered. The irony lies in the fact that Heathcliff's triumph over *Wuthering Heights* does not bring him the fulfillment or love he yearned for. Instead, it deepens his bitterness and perpetuates the cycle of pain. Brontë uses this irony to illustrate the futility of revenge and the destructiveness of unchecked passion when rooted in unresolved trauma.

Hayati's character arc is steeped in dramatic irony, particularly regarding her loyalty to Zainuddin. Early in the narrative, she swears fidelity to him, asserting that her love is unwavering. However, when faced with societal and familial pressures, Hayati breaks her promise by choosing to marry Aziz, a wealthier and socially acceptable suitor. The audience is acutely aware of Hayati's internal struggle and the compromises she makes to adhere to societal expectations, while Zainuddin remains unaware of the extent of her sacrifice. This irony accentuates the tragedy of their relationship, as

Hayati's actions—though seemingly disloyal—are driven by societal forces beyond her control. Hamka employs this device to critique the double standards of loyalty and agency imposed on women in Minangkabau culture.

Catherine's declaration to Nelly that she cannot marry Heathcliff because of his low social status is laden with dramatic irony. While she verbally dismisses the possibility of their union, she simultaneously confesses that Heathcliff is an inseparable part of her being, famously stating, "*I am Heathcliff*." The audience understands Catherine's deep emotional bond with Heathcliff, even as her actions contradict her feelings. This irony heightens the tension between her social ambitions and her inner desires, emphasizing the Victorian era's rigid class distinctions. Catherine's decision to marry Edgar Linton, despite her profound connection with Heathcliff, ultimately leads to destruction and despair for both her and Heathcliff. Brontë employs this irony to highlight the internal conflicts faced by women who are torn between societal expectations and personal authenticity.

Both authors use situational irony in their male characters to expose societal failures. Zainuddin's rejection by his own community reflects the rigid social hierarchies of Minangkabau, where identity is determined by lineage rather than character. Similarly, Heathcliff's rise to power underscores the oppressive nature of class-based discrimination in Victorian England, showing how ambition can corrupt and perpetuate suffering rather than resolve it.

The dramatic irony surrounding the female characters underscores the constraints placed on women in both cultures. Hayati's broken loyalty and Catherine's inner contradictions reveal the tension between personal agency and societal pressures. These characters' actions and decisions highlight the limited freedom afforded to women, whose lives are often dictated by cultural expectations or class considerations.

### **Intrinsic Elements: Narrative Structure**

The story begins by introducing Zainuddin's backstory: an orphan of mixed Minangkabau-Makassar descent, isolated from both cultural heritages. His return to Padang, Minangkabau, serves

as a critical setting that establishes the cultural tensions central to the narrative.

The narrative structure resembles a classical form—similar to the Hikayat tradition in Indonesian literature—where a storyteller recounts events from beginning to end. At the start of the novel, there is a brief flashback in which Mak Base, Zainuddin's adoptive mother, narrates the origins of Zainuddin's father, including his exile from Minangkabau. Mak Base's story successfully convinces Zainuddin to leave Makassar (referred to as Mengkasar in the novel) and return to Minangkabau, his homeland, in pursuit of recognition and success.

“Thus, it was decided that Zainuddin should leave for Padang to search for his father's family, see the land of his ancestors, and deepen his knowledge of both worldly and spiritual matters. Later, if circumstances allowed, he would eventually return to Makassar.” (Hamka, p.23)

Zainuddin is characterized as a devoted, pious, and sincere young man, while Hayati is presented as the object of his love—an idealistic, obedient Minangkabau woman caught between love and societal expectations.

Zainuddin and Hayati's relationship develops through written correspondence, a narrative technique that allows Hamka to emphasize the intensity of Zainuddin's emotions and showcase his struggles. However, tension builds as Hayati's family disapproves of Zainuddin due to his lack of wealth and lineage. Hayati's eventual decision to accept Aziz's marriage proposal marks the central point of betrayal in the rising action.

The rising action gradually reveals the conflict between individual desires and societal norms. The tension heightens when love—initially portrayed as pure and loyal—succumbs to cultural expectations. Zainuddin's letters, as a literary device, deepen the reader's sympathy for him while reflecting his increasing emotional turmoil.

The climax occurs when Hayati marries Aziz, rejecting Zainuddin's devotion. This is followed by Hayati's later plea for forgiveness after Aziz's fall from fortune and their collective disgrace. Zainuddin, now a successful writer in Surabaya, confronts Hayati and, in a moment of emotional

vulnerability and bitterness, rejects her, telling her to return to her hometown.

*Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* can serve as a guiding example for young people aspiring to become successful entrepreneurs (Octaviyanti, 2017). Zainuddin's success in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* follows a period of heartbreak and personal struggle, demonstrating his resilience and determination. After being devastated by Hayati's marriage to another man, Zainuddin channels his pain into self-improvement, pursuing education and building a successful career as an author. He writes poems and tragic stories. Despite the societal and cultural barriers he faces—including his status as an outsider—Zainuddin's ultimate success reflects a narrative of personal growth and overcoming adversity.

The narrative takes a tragic turn with Hayati's death, an outcome that reflects both the consequences of societal expectations and the personal failings of its characters. Zainuddin's rejection of Hayati, driven by unresolved pain, gives way to overwhelming guilt upon learning of her death.

Hamka employs letters as a significant narrative tool to explore Zainuddin's inner world. Through his correspondence with Hayati, readers witness his sincerity, hope, and eventual devastation, deepening his emotional arc. Letters also serve as a medium to highlight Hayati's passive agency, as her responses often reflect societal constraints more than personal desires.

The narrative structure alternates between Zainuddin's internal struggles and his external battles with societal rejection. This dual focus allows Hamka to explore themes of identity, belonging, and cultural rigidity within a deeply personal context.

Irony permeates the narrative, aligning with key events to heighten the emotional impact. Zainuddin's hope for “home”—both physical (*Minangkabau*) and emotional (*Hayati*)—is met with rejection and failure. The climactic moment of Hayati's plea, followed by Zainuddin's rejection, creates a tragic irony that reinforces the complexity of human emotions. The narrative frequently returns to symbols of home and exile—both physical and emotional. Zainuddin's sense of homelessness becomes a metaphor for his alienation from society

and from love. The rejection of his homeland mirrors the rejection of Hayati, while the tragic resolution reflects his inability to reconcile these losses.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff's orphaned origins and his subsequent lower social status prevent Catherine from choosing him as her husband. Instead, she succumbs to societal expectations, marrying Edgar Linton for stability and status, despite her deeper connection with Heathcliff. Both stories revolve around a climactic moment where betrayal alters the trajectory of the main characters' lives, fueling their subsequent actions and leading to their ultimate suffering. Catherine's marriage to Edgar Linton drives Heathcliff away, but his return marks the beginning of his vengeful path.

Unlike Zainuddin, Heathcliff actively seeks to ruin the lives of others—marrying Isabella and manipulating Hindley's family—displaying a darker and more destructive form of revenge. The structural turning point in both stories—the female lead's betrayal—is followed by the male protagonist's emotional unraveling. In both cases, the climax results in a dramatic shift in the characters' motivations, leading to moments of confrontation, regret, or revenge.

### Intrinsic Elements: Narrator

Gideon Shunami (1973), in his article *The Unreliable Narrator in Wuthering Heights*, explores the limitations and biases of Nelly Dean as a narrator, arguing that she is not entirely reliable in recounting the events of the novel. He examines how Nelly's personal involvement in the story—her relationships with the Earnshaw and Linton families—shapes her perspective, leading to selective storytelling, personal judgments, and possible distortions of the truth.

Shunami also contrasts Nelly's narration with Lockwood's, showing how both narrators contribute to the novel's layered and subjective storytelling. While Lockwood is an outsider who misunderstands much of what he observes, Nelly, despite being an eyewitness, is influenced by her own emotions, social position, and moral judgments. Through this analysis, Shunami highlights how Emily Brontë uses unreliable narration to create ambiguity, forcing readers to question the truthfulness of events and characters' motivations.

The point of view in *Wuthering Heights* is shaped by the interplay of two narrators, creating a story within a story structure. The outer frame is provided by Lockwood, who recounts his encounters with the enigmatic and reclusive family residing in the desolate, rugged landscape of northern England. At that time, *Wuthering Heights* was owned by Heathcliff, the main character, requiring him to interact with Heathcliff and his family. Seeing Heathcliff's attitude toward him and the people around him, Lockwood develops a judgmental perception, which fuels his curiosity about Heathcliff's true nature and Catherine's significance. Catherine's name is inscribed all over Heathcliff's room, deepening Lockwood's intrigue. As a result, he insists that Nelly Dean, the second narrator, recount Heathcliff's past and explain the reasons behind his cold demeanor.

This narrative approach appears to reflect the social conditions of the Victorian era, where male perspectives often carried biases toward women's literature. (Many female writers of the time used pseudonyms to obscure their identities—Emily Brontë wrote under *Ellis Bell*.) After Nelly Dean takes over the narrative, the story intensifies, and the plot development becomes more dramatic. Readers also gain greater authority over their perception of the characters, as each individual possesses a strong motive behind their actions.

Nelly Dean then shares with Lockwood the history of the two intertwined families spanning two generations. While Nelly presents the events from a retrospective perspective, aiming to be an objective eyewitness, her reliability as a narrator is questionable due to certain limitations (Shunami, 1973).

In *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, the narrator is a single omniscient narrator, providing a comprehensive and emotionally charged account of Zainuddin and Hayati's tragic love story. However, at times, the storyteller, in this case the narrator, becomes intrusive, exposing readers to the author's subjective views, which creates an urgency for readers to pick sides on certain characters.

Unlike *Wuthering Heights*, which employs a frame narrative, Hamka's novel presents a more direct and immersive storytelling approach. While the narrator maintains an all-knowing perspective,

there is an undeniable moral and philosophical engagement with the events, particularly in portraying Zainuddin's suffering and eventual success as a reflection of broader social injustices. This differs from *Wuthering Heights*, where Nelly Dean's subjectivity makes her an unreliable narrator, whereas in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, the omniscient narrator is authoritative and didactic.

### Extrinsic Elements: Author's Worldview on Love

The worldview of the two authors, Hamka and Emily Brontë, on love as a thematic exploration reflects their respective cultural, religious, and societal contexts. Through their distinct narratives in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* and *Wuthering Heights*, each author delves into the complexities of love while revealing their personal philosophies and the socio-cultural dynamics of their time.

Hamka's profound statement on love—*"Love comes through several doors. One comes through the door of mercy, another comes through the door of yearning, but the safest and most eternal is love that comes through the door of mercy"* (Hamka, p.39)—serves as a cornerstone of the novel's thematic exploration. Zainuddin's love for Hayati, though rooted in affection and yearning, lacks the foundation of mercy, which Hamka elevates as the highest form of love. Mercy, as Hamka presents it, is a selfless, divine quality that transcends societal constraints and personal grievances.

In contrast to this ideal, Zainuddin's actions following Hayati's betrayal—particularly his decision to send her away in a moment of residual pain—lack mercy. His later regret highlights the gap between the idealized vision of love Hamka presents and the flawed, human responses of his characters. This narrative choice allows Hamka to present a morally complex, rather than didactic, portrayal of love—one in which aspirations for mercy and forgiveness are constantly at odds with the burdens of personal pain and societal pressures.

As a prominent Muslim scholar and writer, Hamka presents love as a sacred and divine emotion deeply rooted in religious and moral values. Love, in his perspective, is not just an earthly desire but also a reflection of mercy

(*rahmah*) and compassion (*kasih sayang*), attributes that echo the spiritual teachings of Islam.

In contrast, Brontë portrays love as a raw, instinctive, and all-consuming force that defies logic and societal norms. Her depiction of love in *Wuthering Heights* is deeply rooted in the Romantic tradition, where emotions and nature play a dominant role. Catherine's concept of love is grounded in a metaphysical and emotional connection that transcends conventional relationships or material considerations. While she acknowledges the practicality of wealth and social status in romantic decisions, her bond with Heathcliff reflects a profound intertwining of their very beings. This relationship is less about physical attraction or external circumstances and more about a shared essence—a deep, almost spiritual kinship that forms the foundation of their connection.

From their youth, Catherine and Heathcliff forge a bond that defies societal norms, reflecting a symbiosis stronger than familial ties. Their shared adventures across the wild moors become a symbolic expression of their rebellion against societal expectations, and their relationship becomes the axis on which their identities revolve. This inseparability forms a unique dynamic where their love is less about traditional compatibility and more about a sense of shared existence.

Catherine's declaration to Nelly—*"So he shall never know I love him... and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same"* (Brontë, p.84)—provides crucial insight into her perception of love. It is not grounded in superficial qualities like handsomeness but in an intrinsic unity that blurs the boundaries of individuality. For Catherine, love is the recognition of this unity and the realization that her sense of self is incomplete without Heathcliff. Her words convey the notion that their love transcends human definitions, operating on a higher plane where their identities are merged, making their relationship both deeply passionate and devastatingly intense.

This view of love, while beautiful, is also fraught with complexity and turmoil. Catherine's connection to Heathcliff is so powerful that it challenges societal structures and moral frameworks. Her love is not a mere sentimental feeling but a force

of nature—wild, untamed, and as destructive as it is all-consuming. It reflects the Romantic ideal of love as something sublime, transcending social constructs and even individual happiness—but at the cost of stability and peace.

Ultimately, Catherine's articulation of love captures the dichotomy of their bond: it is both a source of profound connection and a cause of relentless suffering. In emphasizing the metaphysical and eternal dimensions of their love, Brontë underscores the tragic inevitability of their story, as such an intense, transcendent connection proves incompatible with the rigid and pragmatic world around them.

In *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, Zainuddin states that marriage is based on love, sincerity, and perseverance in fulfilling promises—not merely beauty or material wealth. According to Hamka, in his book *Falsafah Hidup*, men's physical desires arise from seeing beautiful women. This desire then evolves into a longing for possession. A man, if he desires a woman, will fight and struggle for her to fall into his arms. However, Hamka argues that comfort is not always based on beauty alone. If a man's desires as a human being are led to a higher place, then a woman with a comforting attitude, a sincere heart, and kindly spoken words will be far more valuable.

"Hayati, you are so beautiful."

"While me? as you can see. I am no handsome. This is me. My look and possession do not deserve you. I am poor."

"However, if you want a love to be based on sincerity, on firmness in keeping promises, on looking at the kindness of the heart and of the appearance..... you will find me a mate who is steadfastly loyal." (Hamka, p.49)

This passage reflects a significant aspect of Hamka's worldview on love and marriage, as conveyed through Zainuddin's reflections above. Hamka uses Zainuddin's dialogue to critique the superficial aspects of relationships that often prioritize physical beauty and material wealth over deeper, more enduring qualities. Through both his narrative and philosophical writings in *Falsafah Hidup*, Hamka advocates for a perspective on love

that emphasizes sincerity, perseverance, and emotional compatibility as the true foundations of a fulfilling marriage.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the scene where Catherine is dying in Heathcliff's arms reveals the deep and destructive nature of their relationship. Catherine blames Heathcliff for worsening her condition, and Heathcliff accuses her of causing his suffering:

"You have killed yourself," I have not broken your heart – you have broken it – and in breaking it, you have broken mine."

This back-and-forth of blame demonstrates how their love is filled with pain and conflict. Their relationship is not an ideal or healthy bond but one marked by emotional harm and unresolved anger. For the Victorian era, where social norms demanded the concealment of private struggles, Brontë's decision to highlight such intense and messy emotions was bold. This scene challenges the romanticized idea of love common at the time, offering instead a stark depiction of the darker side of human connections.

Today, this exchange might be seen as an example of a harmful and co-dependent relationship. Both characters hurt each other, unable to separate their suffering from their love. Modern readers may see this as a timeless warning about the dangers of unhealthy attachments. While love is often portrayed as a source of happiness and fulfillment, Brontë shows how it can also lead to destruction and despair when passion and conflict go unchecked. This realistic portrayal of flawed love forces readers to reflect on the complex nature of human emotions.

Buya Hamka's world view in the story is also shown by the existence of the intrusive narrator, who says that there is a difference between men and women in love. "When a man has determined his love for a woman, that woman only belongs to him, no other men can have her."

"But women's love for men is the opposite of that. A man in a woman's view is like a chain of gold wrapped around her neck. So it is clear that a woman's love for a man is based more on possession than lust. A recognition on the glory or appearance of his look of her fiancé or her husband." (Hamka, p.85-86)

The intrusive narrator's statement about the differences in how men and women approach love offers a glimpse into Hamka's beliefs, which are influenced by his deep knowledge of Islamic teachings, specifically the Qur'an and Hadith. Hamka presents men as protective figures in relationships, seeing them as leaders in the household and figures of authority, much like an Imam in the context of prayer. This belief aligns with Hamka's view that a man should have control over his wife and protect her honor. His assertion that "*a woman only belongs to the man she loves*" suggests a possessive and authoritative approach to male-female relationships, consistent with his understanding of marital dynamics, where the husband is viewed as both guardian and decision-maker. This perspective stems from Hamka's interpretation of religious teachings, which assign men a protective, guiding role in marriage, placing women under their responsibility.

Hamka's perspective is also shown through Zainuddin's reaction to Hayati's changed appearance, signaling a conflict between traditional norms and modern influences. Hayati, who has always followed the modest and conservative customs of her village, transforms after visiting the city, adopting a more modern and less modest appearance. To Zainuddin, this change is a deep insult, as it threatens his sense of control and ownership over her. Hamka uses this moment to explore how men view women through the lens of protection and possession.

His assertion that "a man in a woman's view is like a chain of gold wrapped around her neck" indicates that, according to Hamka, women's love for men is more about admiration and possession than desire. While men are seen as the protectors and decision-makers, women, as portrayed here, are perceived as respecting the outward appearances and status of their partners, seeing them in terms of their role as husbands or fiancés. This dichotomy reflects a traditional view where love is linked to a sense of possession and respect for gendered roles, upholding the idea that men are dominant and women are more passive, bound by their attachment to the social standing of their male counterparts.

In contrast to the idea of love depicted in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, *Wuthering*

*Heights* portrays Catherine's struggle with the conflict between love and societal expectations. Catherine views her marriage to Linton as a pragmatic decision. Linton comes from a wealthy family, and by marrying him, Catherine believes she can escape the poverty and suffering that afflict both her and Heathcliff. Her choice highlights the gendered social pressures of the Victorian era, where women were expected to marry for security rather than love. The societal expectation for women to secure their future by marrying into wealth places Catherine in a difficult position, forcing her to sacrifice her love for Heathcliff in order to maintain social status and stability. In this sense, Catherine's decision reflects the harsh reality of Victorian society, where marriage was often seen as a financial transaction rather than a union based on affection.

Catherine's reflections on her feelings for Heathcliff and Linton in the quote, "My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees," convey a sense of resignation and a recognition that her love for Linton is fleeting and subject to change. In contrast, her love for Heathcliff is described as "the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary," implying that her love for him, though not outwardly satisfying or socially accepted, is an intrinsic part of her identity.

This tension between romantic love and social expectation underscores the tragic complexity of Catherine's character. She is torn between her deep, albeit troubled, connection with Heathcliff and the societal pressure to marry for security, exposing the restrictive and damaging expectations placed on women in her time. Catherine's internal conflict exemplifies the theme of societal constraints, forcing individuals to abandon personal desires in favor of survival and social acceptance, an issue that resonates across both Victorian and contemporary settings.

### **Extrinsic Elements: Societal Norms and Hierarchy in the Era**

The matrilineal structure of Minangkabau society significantly influences Hayati's decisions, illustrating how societal structures shape personal relationships and individual destinies. Similarly, the Victorian social hierarchy constrains Catherine,

reflecting Brontë's critique of the period's marital and class dynamics.

Hayati's family's social status grants her a superior position in the relationship, aligning with Minangkabau's matrilineal cultural heritage, where property and decision-making often reside with women. Hayati views Zainuddin with both pity and compassion, recognizing his vulnerability as a migrant orphan whose precarious position makes him an outsider in their community. However, this pity morphs into disillusionment as societal pressures force her to relinquish her loyalty to Zainuddin and marry someone deemed more suitable. Zainuddin's unfulfilled hopes—for Minangkabau to provide a sense of belonging and for Hayati to embody loyalty and home—reflect his ongoing struggle against systemic rejection and personal betrayal. Hamka's depiction critiques a system where materialism and lineage overpower emotional authenticity and human connection.

Hayati's statement, "I am afraid of being bound by love because I am a village girl who has long been motherless," reflects both her fear of emotional dependency and her awareness of her limited agency in decision-making. Growing up in a traditional village setting and lacking a maternal figure, she has likely been conditioned by societal and familial expectations to see herself as restricted by her circumstances. Her fear of being "bound by love" suggests an understanding that romantic attachment could entrap her, drawing her into a situation where her actions and choices might be dictated by the whims of love, rather than personal autonomy. Hayati's position in her community, where women's roles are often rigid and based on obedience and submission to male authority, adds to her sense of helplessness. In this context, love becomes yet another force that potentially limits her freedom, making her feel powerless in asserting her own desires.

Furthermore, Hayati's hesitation to fully embrace love reveals her deeper struggle with the constraints imposed by societal norms. As a "village girl," her identity is shaped by the limited opportunities afforded to her, where women are often expected to follow traditional paths of marriage and motherhood. Her lack of a mother figure compounds her vulnerability, as she may have lacked

guidance and emotional support in making choices for herself.

The fear of being "bound by love" indicates her understanding that love, in this context, is not just an emotional experience but a condition that could trap her in a preordained role within society. It suggests that Hayati's love for Zainuddin is complicated by larger pressures, where the expectation to marry and settle down weighs heavily on her, leaving her little space to act freely and make decisions based on her own will and desires. This dynamic reflects the broader theme of women's limited agency in traditional societies, where personal choices, especially in love and marriage, are heavily influenced by external factors like social standing and familial duty.

Buya Hamka defines love as something pure, a plant seed, which, when placed in its proper context, namely marriage, becomes more meaningful and serves as a form of worship. On the other hand, if planted in the wrong place, it will be destructive and turn into sin. In Hamka's worldview, love is ultimately a gift from God (Allah SWT).

"Love is God's gift, He sent it into the world so that it grows. If it is located on dry and barren land, its growth will torment other people. If it comes to a cloudy heart and a low mind, it will bring destruction. However, if it alights on a pure heart, it will inherit glory, sincerity and obedience to God." (Hamka, p.54)

On the other hand, Brontë considers love as a human authority. Even though Emily's father was a clergyman, she viewed love as entirely separate from religion—a single entity possessed by human beings, combining lust and convenience. Catherine's emotions toward Heathcliff reflect this idea, as she states that her happiness is not directed toward heaven, but toward the presence of her lover.

Emily's reserved and secretive nature, coupled with her fine countenance, led her to choose a different path from her elder sisters. She left teaching, preferring to remain idle at home, creating her own space for introspection and contemplation. Unlike her sisters, who pursued professions as governesses in the Victorian era, Emily remained detached from conventional roles, carving out her own way of engaging with life.

"I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy." (Brontë, p.83)

Visick argues that by comparing these two passages, we can understand what *Wuthering Heights* is truly "about" (Stoneman, 1996). Catherine reveals her inner conflict, choosing social status and romantic love over what might be described as a mystical calling. However, Visick's use of the term "romantic love" requires further explanation. By placing "social position and romantic love" in opposition to "a mystical vocation," she is clearly referring to the type of relationship Catherine has with Edgar Linton—a courtship and marriage that ultimately integrate her into the conventional structures of society. This aligns with the modern understanding of romantic love, which typically refers to the type of plot seen in novels labeled as "romantic."

According to Levin (2012), the love between Cathy and Heathcliff is deeply paradoxical. Although they share a profound love, Cathy's decision to marry Edgar prevents them from being together. She prioritizes wealth over love, yet does so with the intention of helping Heathcliff escape her brother's control. In this way, her choice is driven by love itself. Love plays a central role in the novel, and while it is not unrequited—since both Cathy and Heathcliff love each other—it remains unfulfilled.

Emily Brontë found the raw material for *Wuthering Heights* in her imagination. Some critics claimed that its characters are as false as they are loathsome. One critic even described Heathcliff, Hindley, Catherine, and the rest as "a perfect pandemonium" (Reef, 2015). Yet, despite these critiques, the novel remains a beloved literary classic. Brontë struggled with anxiety and illness, seeking respite in the familiar confines of her small town.

Meanwhile, Buya Hamka, in writing his novels, incorporates many moral, religious, cultural, social, and educational values. His settings range from his homelands to his working regions, reflecting his diverse experiences. Hamka's fundamental principle is having courage in seeking

knowledge anywhere and sharing it freely. He traveled widely during his lifetime, believing that knowledge should not be limited to lectures alone but conveyed through arts and literature as well.

## CONCLUSION

According to Hamka, as a Muslim scholar, he defines love as a form of mercy, based on sincerity and purity, as it is a blessing from God. Meanwhile, Brontë, as a reserved young woman, suggests that love is based on lust and convenience, considering it a human authority. Both male characters in the novels experience unexpected realities and broken expectations, reinforcing the theme of love's complexity.

Both authors acknowledge that in their respective eras—Victorian England and Indonesia's independence era—the issue of social status was a primary obstacle in pursuing love. The concept of love remained obscure and taboo, seldom discussed openly in society. In Indonesian literature, customs and traditions were closely intertwined with the skeptical notion that prosperity should belong to men before they could propose marriage or love.

These historical perspectives prompt reflection on contemporary views of love. While societal norms have evolved, and conversations about love are more open, it remains a taboo topic in many contexts. The question arises: Does love still retain its purity and sincerity in the modern era? Moreover, love is increasingly perceived as a form of personal fulfillment or a strategic means to achieve social status and influence. As social structures change, it becomes essential to examine whether love has transcended its historical materialistic ties or continues to be shaped by them.

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