

A Linguistic Study: Metaphore in Iberamsyah Barbary's 1001 Gurindam

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors allow us to understand and describe an abstract concept by comparing it to something more concrete and familiar. In this context, Gurindam 1001 by Iberhamsyah Barbary serves as a compelling subject of study, as its rich use of metaphors conveys profound reflections on the relationship between humanity and divinity, the essence of life and love, the significance of moral values, and the preservation of cultural heritage. This research seeks to investigate and interpret the various types of metaphors employed in 1001 Gurindam by Iberhamsyah Barbary, particularly those that convey themes of divinity, life, love, morality, and cultural values. It also aims to understand how the use of these metaphors enhances the depth of meaning and enriches the interpretative dimension of the gurindam. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the types of metaphors based on the theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The findings of this study show that ontological metaphors of the personification type are the most frequently found, reaching 26 (40 %); structural metaphors appear 16 (24,6 %); orientational metaphors 14 (21,5%); and the least frequent are ontological metaphors of the metonymy type, found 9 (13,9 %). The frequent use of ontological metaphors in the form of personification (26 %) indicates that attributing human qualities to objects or abstract concepts makes the complex ideas in the gurindam easier to understand. This shows the poet's tendency to view these themes through a human lens and to create an emotional connection between the reader and the messages conveyed. The limited use of metonymic metaphors (9 %) in the gurindam suggests that the poet delivers his messages in a more direct, clear, and assertive manner—focusing on moral teachings, reflections on life, spirituality, love, and cultural values—while avoiding overly abstract or complex expressions that might cause confusion or misinterpretation among readers

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool used by humans to convey ideas, emotions, and communication. It is expressed through symbols such as words, gestures, and writing. Through language, humans form concepts and ideas and communicate them with others. In communicating ideas and thoughts, language can be expressed both orally and in writing with the aim of conveying a meaningful message. The messages and ideas delivered must be clear and understandable to others in order to create good interaction and communication. However, each person's linguistic style in expressing ideas and thoughts differs from one another. This is influenced by customs, traditions, and everyday communication habits. Likewise, a writer has their own distinctive linguistic style in conveying their ideas and thoughts through their works. To create beauty in language and attract readers' attention, a writer may use certain language styles that make their work more appealing. One such style is metaphor, which has the power to move one's emotions and imagination through the written words.

A metaphor can be defined as the use of a word or group of words not in their literal meaning, but to compare or describe something based on shared qualities or characteristics. In this context, metaphors are used to express ideas, feelings, or concepts indirectly, inviting the reader or listener to think and draw connections between the things being compared. They also give language a sense of beauty, uniqueness, and artistry. Lakoff and Johnson, in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), assert that metaphors are not merely ornamental language devices but are fundamental to how humans think and understand the world. Metaphors continue to be regarded as an essential tool in language because of their ability to transfer meaning, enrich expression, and open new perspectives for readers or listeners. From this perspective, metaphors are not simply decorative elements of language but serve as essential instruments of communication and cognition in human experience.

Through metaphors, humans can express abstract ideas, emotions, and experiences in a concrete, imaginative, and easily understandable way. For example, in the sentence "a storm of emotion swept through her heart", the word "storm" is used to describe intense and chaotic feelings, even though there is no literal storm. The use of metaphor invites us to understand abstract aspects of life and emotion through more concrete imagery that is easier to grasp. Metaphors are frequently used in literature, speeches, news, and everyday communication because they create dramatic, imaginative, and persuasive effects on readers or listeners. They are effective in both literary and everyday communication, as they provide strong, concise, and beautiful emotional descriptions that are expressive and aesthetic—making language more lively and enjoyable to read or hear. According to Afandi (2025), metaphors function not only as aesthetic tools in literature but also as means to convey complex ideas or concepts in a way that is easier for readers or listeners to understand. They also serve as tools to develop critical and creative thinking skills expressed through literary works. One literary form that extensively uses metaphoric language is the *gurindam*, an old poetic form from Malay literature.

Gurindam is a traditional Malay poem consisting of two paired lines with the same rhyme, containing moral advice or life lessons. The word gurindam comes from the Sanskrit term kirindam, meaning parable or comparison. Gurindam developed within the Malay literary tradition and typically contains messages of wisdom, moral reminders, and reflections on the deeds of past generations as they upheld ancestral values that form the foundation of life.

One of the most renowned gurindam works in Indonesia is Gurindam Dua Belas (The Twelve Gurindam) by Raja Ali Haji, composed in 1847 and comprising 81 stanzas. However, this study uses 1001 Gurindam by Iberhamsyah Barbary as the primary data source to explore the use of metaphoric language in the writing of 1001 Gurindam. This makes for a unique and important exploration of the beauty of Malay literature through its use of metaphors in gurindam, as well as a contribution to the preservation of Indonesia's literary and cultural heritage.

For example, consider the following verse as the primary data of this study:

(Sin, p.48, second verse)

Dosa adalah makhluk neraka

(Sin is the dweller of hell)

Janganlah kita bersekutu dengannya

(Don't let us unite with it)

The gurindam above contains metaphorical language because it uses figurative expressions to convey a deeper, non-literal meaning. A metaphor is a figurative expression that draws an implicit comparison between two dissimilar entities without employing comparative terms such as like or as. Here's why the verse contains metaphors: "Dosa adalah makhluk neraka" (Sin is the dweller of hell) – This expression does not mean that sin is literally a living creature in hell. Instead, it is a metaphor comparing sin to a creature of hell because of their shared characteristics: evil, darkness, and the cause of suffering. By using this metaphor, the author emphasizes how wicked and dangerous sin is. "Janganlah kita bersekutu dengannya" (Don't let us unite with it) – The word bersekutu (unite) here is also metaphorical. It does not mean physically joining with sin but rather avoiding sinful behavior and not letting oneself be influenced by it. The use of metaphors makes the gurindam more vivid, engaging, and memorable. Metaphors help readers better understand the author's message about the dangers of sin and the importance of avoiding it. The use of metaphoric language also enhances the aesthetic value of the gurindam. The type of metaphor found in the gurindam above is an ontological metaphor of the personification type because it attributes human characteristics to something non-human—in this case, sin. By describing sin as a "creature of hell," it is depicted as though it has existence and traits like a living being, even a demonic one. This creates the impression that sin is active, dangerous, and has a tangible negative influence, like an evil being. Thus, although other elements may be implicitly present, personification is the most prominent metaphor here because it gives human-like qualities to sin, making it feel more real and threatening.

A previous study by Saragih (2021), entitled "An analysis of Metaphor in Batak Toba Song Lyrics (Mother's Love Theme)", classified the metaphors across eight Batak Toba song lyrics using Kövecses's theory (2010). The research found that the songs were dominated by ontological metaphors (10 data, 47.61%), It visualizes abstract elements (such as affection, patience, and struggle) that contribute to enhance the emotional effect, both physically and emotionally, regarding the role and sacrifice of mothers, making the lyrics more meaningful, and then followed by orientational metaphors (28.57%), and structural metaphors (5 data, 23.80%). Zulfadhina, et al (2022) in a study entitled "Metaphor in Atticus' Selected Poems" identified the types of metaphors used in selected poems by social media poet Atticus. Using the theoretical framework by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), this study analyzed 20 poems from Atticus' book *Love Her Wild*. The results of this study indicate that all three categories of metaphors – structural, orientational, and ontological are present in Atticus's poems. In addition, Katz et al, (2023) in "On Poetry and the Science(s) of Meaning" combine scientific and poetic approaches to meaning, which have long been considered separate domains.

Their main findings show that meaning is not a single entity, but a layered and complex phenomenon involving cognitive, linguistic, and cultural processes. A study conducted by Lubis et al. (2024), titled "Metaphors in Petatah Petitih Babako Ceremonies in Minangkabau Wedding Traditions," concentrated on examining the use of metaphors within the Petatah Petitih Babako ceremonies that form part of Minangkabau wedding traditions. The findings of the study revealed that the ontological or personification metaphor emerged as the most dominant type, accounting for 36.1% of the total occurrences. This indicates that the language used to describe some objects in nature follows the influence of nature, such as imitating human movements. Moreover, Simarmata, et al (2025) in their article *Exploring Metaphor in Sylvia Plath's Poetry Collection: A Study in Literary Research*, employ a narrative qualitative approach framed by Miles and Huberman to analyze metaphoric language in Plath's "Mirror," "Morning Song," "Lady Lazarus," and "Tulips". The findings shows that Plath's vivid, powerful metaphors articulate themes of identity, self-doubt, emotional conflict, isolation, and the search for self while revealing tensions between individual experience and social expectations. in this study, metaphor functions as a potent device for exploring abstract concepts and connecting readers to the speaker's inner world, providing deep emotional and existential insight.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A metaphor is one of the forms of figurative language that plays an important role in human communication – in literature, speeches, and even in daily conversations. The word metaphor itself originates from the Greek word *metapherein*, which consists of two parts: *meta*, meaning "beyond" or "across," and *pherein*, meaning "to carry" or "to transfer." Literally, metaphor can be interpreted as "transferring meaning from one object to another" or "carrying meaning from one thing to another." In the development of linguistic studies, The term refers to the use of a word or a group of words that are intended not in their

literal sense, but in a figurative manner, to depict something that possesses certain similarities, analogies, or shared characteristics. The concept of metaphor did not only appear in ancient Greek but has also been a crucial element in Western rhetoric and philosophy since the time of Aristotle. In his work *Poetics*, Aristotle identified metaphor as one of the primary means of giving beauty and depth to language because it allows the transfer of meaning from something familiar to something abstract or unfamiliar, thereby creating new understanding for the listener or reader. In literary works, metaphors are often used as figurative expressions that beautify and give a unique impression to the language being conveyed. Nevertheless, metaphors have become deeply embedded in everyday language, particularly following the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's influential work *Metaphors We Live By*, which asserts that "metaphors pervade our everyday way of thinking, speaking, and acting." According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980:10), there are three types of Conceptual Metaphors, such as;

- Orientational Metaphor,
- Ontological Metaphor (Personification and Metonymy),
- Structural Metaphor

Orientational Metaphor

An orientational metaphor organizes a concept in relation to another concept based on spatial orientation (such as up-down, front-back, in-out, center-periphery, etc.). This type of metaphor helps us understand abstract concepts by projecting our physical and spatial experiences into thought and language.

Examples:

a. "She Felt Sad at the Cheerful Party"

The sentence "She felt sad at the cheerful party" contains elements of orientational metaphor because it utilizes the conceptual mapping between emotions and spatial orientation, particularly in relation to happiness and sadness. Although the sentence does not explicitly state a spatial relationship, the use of words that describe contrasting emotions and atmospheres activates a metaphorical understanding of 'up' and 'down' in an emotional context.

b. "He Remained in High Spirits Despite his Basketball Team's Defeat"

The sentence "He remained in high spirits despite his basketball team's defeat" is an orientational metaphor because it implicitly uses the conceptual mapping between emotions and spatial orientation. The phrase "high spirits" directly associates a positive emotional state with the "up" position, while the word "defeat" implies the "down" position. By maintaining "high spirits" despite experiencing "defeat," the individual demonstrates resilience and the ability to resist the negative effects of loss, all of which align with the principles of orientational metaphor.

Ontological Metaphor

An ontological metaphor functions as a core cognitive process that enables individuals to comprehend and conceptualize abstract, intangible, or unstructured phenomena by representing them as concrete entities, substances, or physical objects. It is not merely a decorative use of language but a basic way

the human mind gives form and structure to complex concepts so they can be processed and communicated. Ontological metaphors aim to make abstract concepts more concrete, transforming ideas like “mind,” “time,” “emotion,” or “information” into something we can imagine, measure, or manipulate. Ontological metaphors are generally divided into personification and metonymy.

A. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that describes an inanimate object or non-human entity as if it were alive or had human feelings and actions. The purpose of personification is to make the description of something more vivid and relatable, helping readers grasp abstract concepts in a more concrete way.

Examples:

- a. “Because of too many assignments, my computer sulked and stopped working.”

This sentence contains personification because the computer – an inanimate machine – is given a human trait, “sulked.” The computer is not merely broken or malfunctioning but is depicted as if it had emotions like a human who is upset. The verb sulked usually describes a human expression of displeasure or annoyance. Giving this human trait to a machine makes the sentence more expressive and easier to visualize.

- b. “The wind blew strongly, and the leaves danced to its rhythm.”

This sentence contains personification because the leaves – parts of a plant – are described as dancing. The movement of the leaves due to the wind is figuratively compared to the coordinated and expressive action of dancing, which is a human activity. This personification creates a more poetic image, suggesting that the leaves are consciously moving in rhythm with the wind, adding artistic beauty to the description.

B. Metonymy

Metonymy is a rhetorical device in which a word or concept is substituted with another that bears a close association or conceptual relationship to it. The substitution is based on a logical or contextual relationship between the two. In *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson assert that metonymy constitutes a fundamental aspect of human cognition and plays a crucial role in shaping how we perceive and make sense of the world. They argue that metonymy helps us simplify and categorize our everyday experiences. It functions not only as a linguistic device but also as a cognitive mechanism that facilitates more efficient information processing. Metonymy enables us to understand one concept through another related concept, making thought and communication easier.

Examples:

- a. “I spent much time reading Shakespeare this afternoon.”
(Shakespeare = the plays written by Shakespeare)

This sentence is a metonymy because it uses the author’s name, Shakespeare, to refer to his works. The name does not refer to the person himself but to his literary creations. There is a strong association between the author and his writings, allowing his name to stand for his works.

- b. "The company needs new blood."
(Blood = new employees/fresh ideas)

This is also a metonymy because the word blood is used to represent new employees or fresh ideas needed by the company. Here, blood does not refer to physical blood but symbolically to something new, fresh, and full of life. The association between blood and vitality makes it a fitting metaphor for new energy or innovation within the company.

Structural Metaphor

A structural metaphor is defined as a conceptual mapping through which one domain, termed the source domain, is employed to understand, structure, and interpret another domain, known as the target domain, in an organized and holistic way. In this type, an abstract or complex concept is comprehended and expressed through the framework of a more concrete, structured, and familiar concept. Structural metaphors go beyond implicit comparisons – they shape the way we think, feel, and act toward the abstract concept. In other words, structural metaphors form the foundation of how we understand the world by mapping abstract experiences onto familiar, concrete ones.

Examples:

- a. "Education is a Staircase to Success."

This metaphor depicts education as a series of steps leading toward success. It implies that education is a gradual process that one must go through step by step to achieve success.

- b. "The Stock Market is a Roller Coaster."

This metaphor describes the stock market as a ride full of unpredictable ups and downs. It conveys that the stock market operates within a conceptual framework characterized by dramatic fluctuations, uncertainty, and instability.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the characteristics of phenomena and to obtain data derived from individuals' written or spoken expressions as well as observable behaviors. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2020), descriptive qualitative research involves collecting data in the form of words or images rather than focusing on numerical ones. The primary data source for this research is Iberhamsyah Barbary's 1001 Gurindam. The analysis focuses on Metaphore of textual content of 1001 Gurindam, which conveys moral, philosophical, and cultural values through poetic expression. The researcher thoroughly read and interpreted each line to identify the text that has Metaphorical meaning. The data source for this study was a Malay 1001 Gurindam manuscript written by Iberamsyah Barbary . Each line was then broken down and examined to determine how it represents metaphorical meaning that conveying lessons in life, love, God, morality, philosophical insights, or reflections on social life. The data were analyzed contextually and theoretically based on Lakoff dan Johnson 's Theory (1980:10), to enable readers to understand how 1001 Gurindam embodies the aesthetic and didactic essence of traditional Malay poetry.

RESULTS

Table 1. Result

NO	Kinds Of Metaphore	Number	Percentage
1	Orientation	14	21,5%
2	Ontology		
	A. Personfication	26	40%
	B. Metonymy	9	13,9%
3	Structural Metaphore	16	24.6%
	Total	65	100%

DISCUSSION

Orientation Metaphor

(Pahala, verse 159, p:46)

Pahala datang dan pergi

(Reward could come and go)

Bagaimanalah niat di hati

(It depends on the intension)

The sentence “Pahala datang dan pergi” (“Reward comes and goes”) – literally, pahala (reward) refers to recompense for good deeds. In the context of orientational metaphor, the coming of reward can be interpreted as something that approaches or moves toward us, which spatially can be associated with the direction of forward or upward. Conversely, the departure of reward represents something that moves away from us, which can be spatially associated with the direction of backward or downward. The phrase “Bagaimanalah niat di hati” (“How is the intention in the heart”) refers to one’s inner purpose or motive. This phrase emphasizes the importance of clarity and steadfastness of intention. In orientational metaphor, a good and firm intention can be analogized as having a clear and straight direction. On the other hand, a bad or weak intention can be compared to a direction that is unclear, winding, or even circular. The idea that rewards come and go symbolizes the transient nature of merit – it depends on our actions. This can be linked to the Up-Down concept, where the arrival of reward represents ascension (upward movement), while the departure of reward represents decline (downward movement).

Ontological Metaphor

a. Personification

(Tangan, verse 98, p:28)

Apabila tangan menjadi saksi

(When hands become a witness)

Di hari akhirat akan bernyanyi

(In the afterlife they will testify)

The verse above contains personification, which is the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects or parts of the body. The hand, as a body part often used to act, will become a witness in the Hereafter. Thus, the hand is described as performing a human action – to testify.” Apabila tangan menjadi saksi” (when the hand as a witness) is a powerful metaphor illustrating that no

deed is hidden from the judgment of Allah SWT. This verse encourages humans to be always cautious in their actions and to use their bodies to do good. In the verse "Di hari akhirat akan bernyanyi" (In the afterlife they will testify), The word "bernyanyi" (sing) in this context means to bear witness or to confess to the deeds performed during one's lifetime. Singing is generally an activity performed by humans to express themselves or convey a message. The use of personification here effectively brings the imagery to life, emphasizes the moral message, and helps readers understand the concept of accountability in the Hereafter.

b. Metonymy

(Percaya diri, verse 237, p:68)

Manusia di dunia sebagai pemenang

(Human is the winner in the world)

Maka percaya dirilah dalam berjuang

(So, just be confident in struggle)

The verse above can be categorized as metonymy, in which the word "human" is used to represent "champion" or "fighter." This interpretation emphasizes the inherent potential within every human being to struggle and achieve victory, while also serving as an encouragement to be confident and to optimize the potential. The metonymic relationship between "human" and "champion" can be explained that "human" as potential, in this context, does not merely refer to a biological being, but rather to the potential possessed by every person to struggle and achieve a success. Each individual has abilities, talents, and inner strength that can be developed to reach specific goals. The "champion" or "fighter" represents the manifestation of that potential. They are individuals who actively use their abilities and determination to overcome obstacles, achieve their dreams, and make positive contributions to the world. There is a strong association between "human" and "champion" because every human being has the potential to become a fighter in their own field. The verse invites us to recognize and fully realize that potential.

Structural Metaphore

(Iman dan Taqwa, verse 149, p:44)

Bilalah iman sebagai pondasi

(When faith as foundation)

Takwa adalah bangunan dan isi

(Piety is a building and the content)

This verse represents a structural metaphor, which uses one concept (source domain) to understand and structure another concept (target domain) as a whole. The sentence provides an understanding of how a building is constructed (with its foundation, structure, and contents) to conceptualize and structure the idea of an ideal religious life (with faith as the foundation, piety as the structure, and values as the contents). In the verse "Bilalah iman sebagai pondasi" (when faith as the Foundation), a foundation is a strong and stable base that supports an entire building. In this context, faith is likened to a solid and unshakable foundation that underpins one's entire religious life. Without strong faith, religious life becomes unstable and easily collapses. In the verse "Takwa

adalah bangunan dan isi (Piety is as a building and content), a building refers to the physical structure built upon the foundation, and its contents refer to everything within that structure that makes it functional and meaningful. In this context, piety represents the target concept, the actions, behaviors, and values that are built upon the foundation of faith. Piety encompasses everything that makes a person's religious life complete and meaningful

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

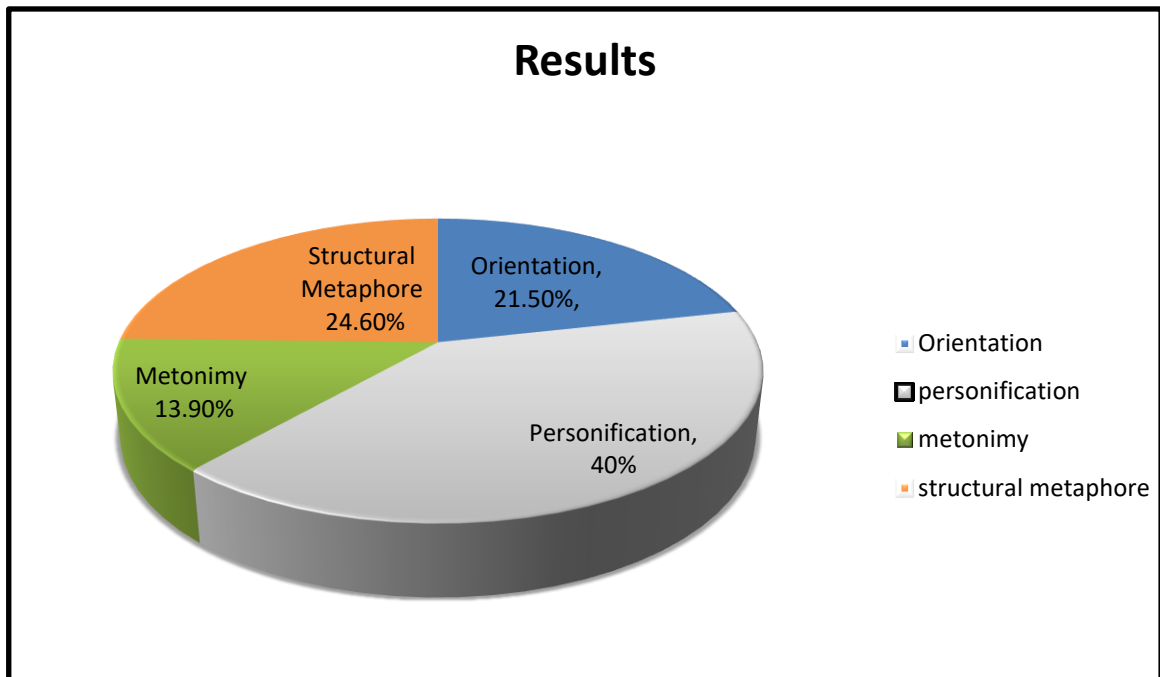


Figure 1

Gurindam, as a form of traditional Malay poetry, is often used as a medium to convey religious teachings, life advice, expressions of love, and moral values. In 1001 Gurindam by IBerhamsyah Barbary, these themes are deeply explored through the use of Metaphor. Metaphors are employed to connect abstract concepts such as divinity, life, love, and morality with concrete, everyday experiences, making the intended messages easier for readers to understand and internalize. This article examines the use of metaphors in 1001 Gurindam by IBerhamsyah Barbary, with a particular focus on Gurindam that contain themes of divinity, life, love, and morality. The study aims to identify and analyze the types of metaphors used to express these themes, and to understand how their use contributes to the depth of meaning and interpretation within the gurindam.

The findings of this research show that ontological metaphors of the personification type are the most frequently found, reaching 26 (40 %), followed by structural metaphors with 16 (24,6%), orientational metaphors with 14 (21,5 %), and the least frequent being ontological metaphors of the metonymy type with 9 (13,9 %).The frequent use of ontological metaphors, particularly personification (26 %), indicates that attributing human qualities to objects or abstract concepts makes the complex ideas in 1001 Gurindam easier to grasp.

Readers can quickly relate human experiences to ideas that once seemed distant or abstract, transforming them into messages that feel more vivid and profound. This demonstrates the poet's tendency to view these themes through a human lens, creating an emotional connection between the readers and the intended message. Meanwhile, the rarity of metonymic metaphors in 1001 Gurindam suggests that the poet preferred to communicate messages directly, clearly, and assertively, ensuring the moral, spiritual, romantic, and cultural messages remain relevant and easy to interpret, avoiding abstraction or complexity that might confuse readers. Overall, the analysis of metaphors in 1001 Gurindam provides valuable insights into how Iberhamsyah Barbary, as a poet, utilizes figurative language especially Metaphor to convey messages related to divinity, life, love, and morality. This study significantly contributes to our understanding of the use of Metaphor – in Malay literature, especially in expressing themes of faith, life, love, morality, and cultural values.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to conduct further research related to the topic of A Linguistic Study: Metaphor in Iberamsyah Barbary's 1001 Gurindam in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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