GOLDEN RATIO OF MAPPING IDEA AND LITERATURE FORMAT
VOLUME 5, ISSUE. 2 (2025)
Website: https://goldenratio.id/index.php/grmilf

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Remembering Place, Writing Loss: Cultural Memory in Kim Young Soo's Poetry on Indonesia and Its Curriculum Implications

Senny Suzanna Alwasilah[1]

[1] Department of English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Letters, Universitas Pasundan, Bandung, Indonesia.
Email: senny-alwasilah@unpas.ac.id[1]

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: May 22, 2025
Revised: June 12, 2026
Accepted: June 31, 2026

DOI
https://doi.org/10.52970/grmilf.v5i2.2802

ABSTRACT
This study examines how Indonesian places are represented through cultural memory, personal recollection, and experiences of loss in Kim Young Soo's poetry, while exploring their implications for university literature curricula. Employing a qualitative textual analysis and close-reading approach, the study analyzes 20 Indonesian-language poems from the bilingual anthology *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (2024). The analysis integrates cultural memory theory with ecocritical perspectives to interpret relationships among geographical landscapes, cultural symbols, environmental representations, social inequalities, and intercultural encounters. The findings identify six interconnected thematic patterns: personal memory and landscape, cultural heritage and historical transformation, social inequality and invisible labor, environmental deterioration and ecological loss, religious sound and cultural estrangement, and transnational longing and imaginative connection. These patterns demonstrate that places function not merely as geographical settings but as dynamic literary spaces where personal experiences intersect with culturally mediated meanings and perceived social and environmental changes. Loss emerges as a multidimensional experience encompassing personal, cultural, ecological, social, and intercultural dimensions. Nevertheless, the poems also reveal possibilities for imaginative connection and cultural negotiation beyond geographical distance and estrangement. The study contributes to literary scholarship by integrating cultural memory and ecocritical approaches to explain the complex relationships between place, remembrance, and loss within a Korean–Indonesian poetic corpus. The findings further offer theoretically grounded recommendations for developing critical, ecological, and intercultural reading activities in higher education, although their pedagogical effectiveness remains to be empirically examined.

Keywords: Cultural Memory, Ecocriticism, Intercultural Literature, Literary Education, Place And Memory.

I. Introduction

Literary representations of place extend beyond the description of geographical locations to encompass the construction, preservation, and reinterpretation of individual and collective experiences. In poetry, landscapes, historical monuments, rivers, forests, and urban environments can become meaningful spaces through which memories are articulated, cultural identities are negotiated, and experiences of belonging and loss are expressed. Rather than functioning merely as physical settings, places may acquire symbolic significance through their associations with personal recollections, historical narratives, and culturally transmitted meanings. Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) conceptualize cultural memory as a socially mediated process through which collective identities and understandings of the past are maintained across generations. Extending this perspective, Rigney (2005) emphasizes the selective and dynamic circulation of cultural memory, while Till (2008) highlights the relationship between memory, spatial experience, and place-

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

based practices. These perspectives suggest that literary representations of place can simultaneously preserve remembered experiences and expose tensions between historical meanings, contemporary realities, and experiences that remain marginalized or forgotten.

The relationship between place and memory becomes particularly significant in literary works produced through encounters across linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries. Cultural memory is not confined to a single geographical territory or cultural community; rather, it may circulate, undergo reinterpretation, and acquire new meanings as individuals and cultural representations move between different contexts. Erll (2011) develops this argument through the concept of *travelling memory*, emphasizing the movement and transformation of mnemonic practices across cultural boundaries. Such an approach is relevant to literary texts in which culturally situated experiences are represented through the perspective of an individual encountering another society. At the same time, representations of place require attention to the relationship between cultural experience and material environments. Heise (2008) argues that ecocritical inquiry benefits from moving beyond narrowly localized understandings of place toward broader transnational relationships. Similarly, Buell et al. (2011) demonstrate how environmental literary criticism addresses the interconnectedness of ecological conditions, cultural representation, environmental injustice, and human–environment relationships. Together, these perspectives provide a theoretical foundation for examining how poetry connects cultural memory, environmental change, and cross-cultural interpretation.

Within this conceptual context, the Indonesian-themed poetry of Korean poet Kim Young Soo offers an opportunity to investigate how places are remembered and reimagined through intercultural literary encounters. His poems, published in the bilingual Korean–Indonesian anthology *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (Kim & Alwasilah, 2024), represent a range of Indonesian geographical and cultural settings, including Kalimantan, Pulau Laut, Prambanan, Borobudur, Gedong Songo, Jakarta, Bengawan Solo, Batang, Semarang, Bandungan, Ungaran, and Bandung. These locations are presented not simply as destinations or objects of cultural admiration but as spaces associated with memories, emotional attachments, social inequalities, environmental deterioration, religious encounters, and experiences of displacement. The poems bring together personal recollection and culturally recognizable imagery while revealing tensions between the speaker's expectations of particular places and the realities represented within the poetic narratives. Their significance therefore lies not only in the depiction of Indonesian landscapes but also in the ways those landscapes become sites for negotiating memory, difference, and loss.

Several poems illustrate the complexity of these representations. In "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan," remembered landscapes evoke an earlier period of the speaker's life, whereas "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" associates place with bodily vulnerability, painful experiences, and the desire to distance oneself from difficult memories. "Dari Bengawan Solo" juxtaposes the cultural remembrance of a well-known river with images of environmental deterioration and human forgetfulness. Meanwhile, "Malam di Jakarta" foregrounds contrasts between urban privilege and socioeconomic vulnerability, while "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi" draws attention to the relationship between labor, consumption, and social inequality. Poems situated at Prambanan, Borobudur, and Gedong Songo further introduce questions concerning historical inheritance, religious symbolism, and the limitations of an outsider's cultural understanding. Other works, including "Adzan" and "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa," explore the relationship between unfamiliar cultural environments and memories associated with the speaker's Korean background. Considered together, these poems suggest that the representation of Indonesia is shaped by multiple, sometimes contradictory experiences of attachment, estrangement, recognition, and disappearance.

Such representations invite closer consideration of the relationship between the remembering subject, culturally meaningful places, and the social conditions represented in literary discourse. Cultural memory does not emerge automatically from the recollection of personal experiences; it involves the mediation of individual remembrance through culturally recognizable narratives, symbols, and practices. Likewise, literary landscapes should not be interpreted as neutral or comprehensive accounts of the societies they depict. Rigney (2005) argues that cultural remembrance involves processes of selection and circulation that influence which experiences become publicly visible. Rofe and Ripmeester (2023) similarly demonstrate

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

that landscapes associated with remembrance may simultaneously participate in processes of forgetting and exclusion. These perspectives are important for examining how Kim Young Soo's poetic representations foreground certain Indonesian experiences while inevitably remaining situated within the speaker's particular cultural position. An interpretation of these poems must therefore distinguish personal memory from cultural memory, examine the relationship between environmental imagery and social criticism, and remain attentive to the limits of the speaker's understanding of the places and communities represented.

Although cultural memory studies has developed substantial explanations of literary remembrance, transnational circulation, and place-based memory, important analytical questions remain concerning how these processes intersect within particular cross-cultural poetic texts. Existing theoretical perspectives establish that memory travels across cultural boundaries (Erll, 2011), that acts of remembrance are selective (Rigney, 2005), and that environmental representations involve interconnected ecological and cultural concerns (Buell et al., 2011). However, these perspectives do not independently explain how a particular poetic corpus may bring personal memory, cultural heritage, environmental loss, social inequality, and intercultural estrangement into a shared representational framework. The research gap addressed in the present study is therefore both corpus-specific and analytical. It concerns the need for a focused examination of how Indonesian places are reconstructed through a Korean poet's perspective and how different forms of remembering and forgetting interact within the same body of poetry. Rather than claiming the absence of previous scholarship on Kim Young Soo or Korean–Indonesian literary exchange, this study develops a specific interpretive framework for understanding the relationships among place, cultural memory, ecological representation, and multidimensional experiences of loss in the selected anthology.

Beyond its literary significance, the relationship between cultural memory and place also provides a basis for considering the educational relevance of cross-cultural poetry. Literary texts can offer opportunities for students to examine different cultural perspectives, question familiar assumptions, and develop interpretations grounded in textual evidence. Varga et al. (2020), through a collaborative higher education study, demonstrate how literary reading can support intercultural dialogue and reflection on citizenship across different educational and cultural contexts. Similarly, Martin et al. (2021) show how engagement with literary material can facilitate discussion of cultural difference, discrimination, and intercultural citizenship among university students. In the Indonesian higher education context, Syam et al. (2025) highlight the importance of integrating intercultural content, linguistic features, instructional objectives, teaching materials, and educational contexts in literature-based pedagogy. These studies provide a foundation for considering literary texts as resources for intercultural learning, although their findings cannot be assumed to apply directly to every genre or instructional setting.

The pedagogical potential of Kim Young Soo's poetry extends beyond the recognition of cultural differences to include critical reflection on environmental and social representations. The poems' depictions of polluted rivers, threatened forests, unequal urban conditions, and marginalized labor may encourage readers to examine how literary language shapes perceptions of ecological and social problems. Buell et al. (2011) establish the relevance of environmental literary criticism to questions of ecological responsibility and environmental injustice, while Truman (2023) emphasizes the importance of critically examining the relationships among literary imagination, environmental crises, and dominant cultural perspectives in literary education. Applied to university literature curricula, these approaches suggest opportunities for comparative close reading, reflection on the speaker's cultural position, and critical engagement with the relationship between literary representation and independently documented social or environmental conditions. Such applications should nevertheless be understood as pedagogical possibilities derived from textual interpretation rather than demonstrated learning outcomes.

Against this background, the present study examines Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poems in *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (2024) through qualitative textual analysis informed primarily by cultural memory theory and supported by ecocritical perspectives. The analysis focuses on the Indonesian-language versions of the poems and does not claim to identify translation-related semantic differences without systematic comparison with the Korean texts. Specifically, the study investigates how Indonesian

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

landscapes and cultural symbols are represented through personal recollection, how remembering and forgetting intersect with environmental deterioration and social inequalities, and how these representations may inform critical and intercultural reading practices in higher education. The study makes three interconnected contributions. Theoretically, it brings cultural memory and ecocritical perspectives into dialogue to interpret the relationship between place, remembrance, and loss. Analytically, it develops a text-centered account of the multiple forms of loss and cultural negotiation represented within a specific Korean–Indonesian poetic corpus. Pedagogically, it identifies potential principles for literary text selection and evidence-based reading activities that may be adapted to university literature curricula. These curriculum implications remain interpretive recommendations; the study does not evaluate an instructional intervention or establish its effectiveness.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Cultural Memory and Literary Representation

Cultural memory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how literary texts reconstruct relationships between the past, collective identities, and contemporary experiences. Unlike individual memory, which primarily concerns personal recollection, cultural memory involves socially mediated representations of the past sustained through symbolic practices, narratives, texts, and institutions. Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) establish that cultural memory contributes to the formation and continuity of collective identity by preserving and transmitting culturally significant knowledge. Nevertheless, cultural memory should not be understood as the passive preservation of historical experiences. Rigney (2005) emphasizes that cultural remembrance operates through selective processes of representation, circulation, and reinterpretation, through which particular experiences become culturally recognizable while others remain marginalized. From this perspective, literary texts participate in the construction of memory by organizing the relationship between remembered events, symbolic meanings, and present concerns. The relationship between literature and cultural memory becomes particularly important when experiences are represented across national and cultural boundaries. Erll (2011), through the concept of *travelling memory*, argues that memory is not confined to fixed geographical locations or nationally bounded communities. Rather, mnemonic representations move between cultural contexts through people, media, and symbolic forms, acquiring new meanings through processes of translation and reinterpretation. This perspective offers an analytical basis for examining literary works in which authors engage with cultural environments beyond their own national backgrounds. Such encounters may involve the recognition of familiar cultural meanings, the negotiation of unfamiliar practices, and the reinterpretation of personal memories in relation to new social and geographical settings.

In poetry, these processes are expressed through figurative language, imagery, spatial references, and the positioning of the poetic speaker. The meaning of a remembered place therefore depends not only on what is described but also on how the speaker organizes sensory experiences, emotional responses, and cultural associations. Sutton (2024) demonstrates that relationships between place and memory involve layered emotional experiences in which particular environments may contribute to how past events are recalled and interpreted. Accordingly, remembered landscapes can be understood as dynamic representations through which personal experiences interact with broader cultural meanings. This theoretical distinction is particularly relevant to Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poems in *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (Kim & Alwasilah, 2024). The poems represent Indonesian landscapes, religious practices, historical monuments, and everyday social environments through recollections shaped by the speaker's particular experiences. However, the presence of an individual recollection does not necessarily establish the existence of cultural memory. Cultural memory becomes analytically relevant when personal experiences are connected to recognizable cultural symbols, historically meaningful locations, and forms of remembrance extending beyond the individual speaker. Consequently, the analysis must consider how poetic

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

imagery mediates the relationship between personal recollection and culturally shared meanings without treating the speaker's experiences as representative of Indonesian society as a whole. This distinction leads to the first interpretive hypothesis: Indonesian places in Kim Young Soo's poetry are expected to function as symbolic sites where personal memories interact with wider cultural meanings. The analytical emphasis is placed on identifying the textual processes through which geographical settings acquire mnemonic significance, including place naming, temporal references, emotional associations, and culturally recognizable symbols.

2.2. Place, Cultural Heritage, and the Spatial Dimensions of Memory

The spatial dimensions of cultural memory highlight the importance of geographical environments in the construction and reinterpretation of the past. Places are not merely physical containers in which historical events occur; they may also become socially meaningful through narratives, embodied experiences, and cultural practices. Assmann (2015) explains that urban environments contain overlapping historical traces through which collective identities and memories are preserved, challenged, or transformed. Although this perspective focuses on cities, its conceptual relevance extends to historical monuments, religious sites, rivers, and other landscapes associated with cultural remembrance. Till (2008) further conceptualizes place-based memory as a process involving embodied experiences, social relationships, and situated practices of remembering. Her approach challenges interpretations that separate memory from the environments in which it is experienced. Similarly, Sutton (2024) emphasizes the interdependence of place, emotional attachment, and the reconstruction of past experiences, suggesting that environments can participate in the production of remembrance rather than functioning solely as its background. Together, these perspectives indicate that literary representations of place can be examined through the interactions among material surroundings, sensory experiences, emotional responses, and cultural interpretation.

Nevertheless, the relationship between place and memory is not necessarily stable or harmonious. Rofe and Ripmeester (2023) argue that memorial landscapes can simultaneously accommodate remembering and forgetting, making them sites of cultural negotiation and contestation. This insight complicates conventional interpretations of historical environments as unproblematic representations of collective identity. A historical monument, for instance, may symbolize the continuity of cultural heritage while also exposing changes in religious practices, social meanings, or relationships between past and present. These considerations are relevant to Kim Young Soo's representations of Indonesian historical and religious sites. Poems situated at Prambanan, Borobudur, and Gedong Songo introduce cultural symbols associated with historical inheritance, spiritual traditions, and contemporary encounters. Rather than offering comprehensive accounts of these traditions, the poems present culturally significant environments through the observations and responses of a particular speaker. Their significance lies partly in the tension between historically established meanings and the interpretations generated through an intercultural encounter. A related issue concerns the relationship between remembering and loss. When a poetic landscape is associated with disappearance, abandonment, or transformation, the place may become meaningful through the contrast between what remains visible and what is perceived to have been lost. Such contrasts can be examined through temporal juxtaposition, metaphors of disappearance, and descriptions of altered environments. Accordingly, the second interpretive hypothesis proposes that historical and culturally recognizable places are represented through tensions between remembrance and transformation, revealing different dimensions of cultural continuity, distance, and loss.

2.3. Ecocriticism, Environmental Memory, and the Representation of Loss

Ecocriticism extends the analysis of literary place by examining the relationships between human experiences, environmental conditions, and the cultural meanings assigned to nature. Buell et al. (2011) explain that environmental literary criticism addresses diverse relationships between literary imagination,

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

ecological problems, environmental injustice, and sociocultural structures. From this perspective, natural landscapes cannot always be separated from the social conditions and human practices through which they are represented. Rivers, forests, coastlines, and agricultural environments may simultaneously function as ecological settings, cultural symbols, and sites of social conflict. More recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of understanding the relationship between environmental experience and cultural remembrance. Gülüm et al. (2024) argue that memory and environment should be understood as interconnected rather than independent analytical categories. Environmental settings may operate as contexts for remembering, carriers of mnemonic meanings, and active components of memory-related processes. Their discussion supports an interdisciplinary understanding of ecological memory in which material environments and cultural representations are examined as mutually constitutive.

Within literary geography, Cresswell (2022) explores how poetry can contribute to the conceptualization of place during periods of environmental uncertainty. His discussion of ecopoetics, geopoetics, and topopoetics emphasizes the capacity of poetic language to establish relationships between environmental observation, spatial experience, and the imagination of alternative possibilities. Poetry, from this perspective, does not merely describe the natural world but participates in constructing understandings of relationships between people and their environments. Such an approach supports the interpretation of environmental imagery as an important component of literary meaning rather than as a decorative background. The intersection of environmental memory and ecocriticism is especially significant when literary representations contrast remembered landscapes with images of deterioration. A river associated with cultural recognition may acquire new meanings when portrayed as polluted or diminished, while a forest remembered through personal experience may simultaneously evoke vulnerability, exploitation, or disappearance. These representational contrasts invite analysis of how ecological loss is constructed through memory and how environmental conditions become connected to social and cultural concerns.

In Kim Young Soo's poetry, "Dari Bengawan Solo" offers a relevant example through its juxtaposition of a culturally remembered river and images of environmental deterioration. Similarly, "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" associates forest landscapes with painful personal recollections and the felling of trees, while "Di Tepi Laut Batang" presents contrasts between cultural associations and the material condition of a coastal environment. These poems provide opportunities to investigate how natural environments become sites through which remembered meanings and perceived losses are expressed. However, the interpretation of environmental deterioration in poetry requires a clear distinction between literary representation and independently established ecological conditions. Poetic descriptions may express concern, criticism, or emotional responses, but they cannot independently verify the causes, extent, or current status of environmental problems. Consequently, the present study treats environmental imagery as textual evidence of ecological representation rather than empirical evidence of environmental change. Based on this distinction, the third interpretive hypothesis proposes that representations of environmental deterioration are connected to processes of remembering and forgetting, through which ecological loss becomes intertwined with personal and cultural meanings.

2.4. Social Inequality, Intercultural Encounters, and the Politics of Representation

Cultural memory is closely related to questions of representation, particularly concerning whose experiences are remembered, marginalized, or excluded from dominant cultural narratives. Rigney (2005) demonstrates that the circulation of cultural memory involves selective processes that influence the visibility and recognition of particular experiences. Consequently, literary representations of place may reveal social tensions not only through explicit descriptions but also through the organization of contrasts among people, spaces, and material conditions. This relationship is important when poetry portrays urban environments, economic activities, and unequal social relationships. Urban landscapes may juxtapose wealth and deprivation, while descriptions of agricultural labor may expose differences between those who produce commodities and those who benefit from their consumption. In such contexts, poetic imagery can direct

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

attention toward overlooked experiences without functioning as comprehensive sociological documentation. The interpretation of social inequality therefore requires an examination of figurative language, the positioning of characters, and the relationship between visible conditions and implied social meanings.

The intercultural dimensions of these representations introduce further interpretive complexity. Erll's (2011) concept of travelling memory suggests that encounters across cultural boundaries can transform how familiar and unfamiliar environments are understood. Such encounters may generate recognition and meaningful connections, but they may also involve uncertainty, misunderstanding, or cultural distance. The poetic speaker's perspective must therefore be distinguished from the broader cultural communities being represented. This distinction is particularly relevant to religious imagery and cultural heritage. A religious practice perceived as unfamiliar by an outsider may carry established meanings within the community in which it occurs. Treating the speaker's interpretation as a universal description would risk reproducing an incomplete or culturally reductive understanding. A reflexive literary reading instead examines how the perspective of the observer influences the representation of difference and which contextual meanings remain unexplored.

Kim Young Soo's poems provide several examples of these intersecting concerns. "Malam di Jakarta" juxtaposes signs of urban privilege with representations of poverty and vulnerability. "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi" foregrounds the bodily demands of labor in contrast to the value associated with coffee consumption. Meanwhile, "Adzan," "Dari Semarang," and "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa" introduce experiences of religious unfamiliarity, cultural distance, and the persistence of memories associated with another cultural environment. Viewed together, these poems suggest that cross-cultural literary encounters can connect social observation with emotional and cultural negotiation. The representations should not be reduced to a uniformly critical or celebratory perspective, since they may express appreciation, estrangement, sympathy, uncertainty, and imaginative connection within the same corpus. The fourth interpretive hypothesis therefore proposes that the speaker's intercultural position mediates representations of Indonesian social and cultural environments, producing tensions between familiarity and estrangement while making particular experiences of inequality, belonging, and difference visible.

2.5. Literary Reading, Intercultural Learning, and Curriculum Development

The relationships among cultural memory, ecological representation, and intercultural experience also have implications for literary education. Literary texts can provide opportunities for students to examine how language constructs cultural meanings, how perspectives influence interpretation, and how different forms of evidence contribute to understanding social and environmental issues. Nevertheless, the educational value of literature depends not simply on the presence of culturally significant themes but also on the instructional practices through which texts are selected, interpreted, and discussed. Varga et al. (2020) investigate the use of literary texts to encourage cross-cultural dialogue about citizenship, highlighting the relevance of literary engagement to reflection on social perspectives and cultural experiences. Their study suggests that literature can provide a context for discussing cultural difference and the relationship between individual interpretation and broader social concerns. Similarly, Martin et al. (2021), in a qualitative study involving university students, report that engagement with a literary excerpt facilitated discussion of intercultural citizenship, discrimination, and cultural otherness. These findings support the relevance of literature to intercultural dialogue while remaining specific to the instructional contexts investigated.

Porto and Zembylas (2022) further emphasize the importance of affective and critical dimensions in intercultural literary education. Their analysis suggests that literary materials addressing experiences of suffering, difference, and injustice require pedagogical approaches that acknowledge emotional responses without reducing intercultural learning to simplified expressions of sympathy. This perspective is particularly relevant when students encounter poetic representations of poverty, environmental degradation, and unfamiliar religious practices. Rather than assuming that particular interpretations are inherently correct, instructors can encourage readers to examine the relationship between textual evidence, emotional

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

responses, cultural assumptions, and alternative interpretations. The educational possibilities of ecocritical reading have also received increasing scholarly attention. Myren-Svelstad (2024) examines dialogic approaches to poetry in the context of education for sustainable development, emphasizing collaborative interpretation, critical reasoning, and engagement with uncertainty. The study demonstrates the value of examining how readers construct meanings through discussion rather than treating literary texts as instruments for transmitting predetermined environmental attitudes. Truman (2023) similarly argues that literary education should critically examine the cultural assumptions embedded in representations of ecological crises and expand the range of literary perspectives available to learners.

Within Indonesian higher education, Syam et al. (2025) investigate lecturers' perspectives on integrating intercultural literary pedagogy into public-speaking instruction. Their findings identify several important considerations, including intercultural content, linguistic features, instructional objectives, teaching materials, and educational contexts. Although the study concerns a different instructional focus, it provides a locally relevant perspective on the conditions that may shape the integration of intercultural literature into higher education curricula. Collectively, these studies suggest that the educational relevance of literary texts is strengthened when instructors connect textual interpretation with clearly formulated learning objectives and appropriate instructional activities. For Kim Young Soo's poetry, the representations of Indonesian landscapes, cultural heritage, environmental loss, and social inequality may provide materials for comparative reading, evidence-based interpretation, ecocritical discussion, and intercultural reflection.

An instructional sequence could invite students to identify culturally meaningful images, compare different representations of place, evaluate the speaker's perspective, and distinguish literary interpretation from contextual or empirical information. Such an approach would position poetry as material for critical inquiry rather than as an authoritative account of the places and cultures represented. Nevertheless, the present study does not include classroom observations, student assessments, or an implemented teaching intervention. Therefore, claims about improved learning outcomes, intercultural competence, or environmental awareness cannot be established from the textual analysis alone. The educational contribution is limited to identifying theoretically grounded possibilities for literary text selection and instructional design. These considerations lead to a pedagogical proposition that the thematic and representational characteristics identified in the poems can inform the development of critical, ecological, and intercultural reading activities in university literature curricula.

2.6. Development of Interpretive Hypotheses and Theoretical Synthesis

The preceding review establishes an integrated analytical perspective connecting cultural memory, spatial representation, ecocriticism, social criticism, and intercultural literary interpretation. Cultural memory theory provides the principal framework for understanding how individual recollections interact with culturally recognizable symbols and narratives (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Erll, 2011; Rigney, 2005). Place-based memory perspectives explain how geographical environments acquire emotional, historical, and social significance (Till, 2008; Sutton, 2024). Ecocriticism provides a complementary framework for examining how environmental imagery articulates relationships between material landscapes, human activities, and experiences of loss (Buell et al., 2011; Cresswell, 2022; Gülüm et al., 2024). Bringing these perspectives together makes it possible to approach Kim Young Soo's poems as literary constructions in which physical places are represented through multiple layers of meaning. These layers include personal remembrance, cultural symbolism, historical inheritance, ecological concern, socioeconomic inequality, and intercultural experience. The perspectives are related but analytically distinguishable: personal remembrance does not automatically constitute cultural memory, environmental imagery does not independently establish ecological facts, and a poetic speaker's interpretation cannot be generalized to an entire cultural community.

On this basis, the study develops four interpretive hypotheses to guide close reading and thematic comparison across the selected poems.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

H1. Place and Cultural Memory

Indonesian places in Kim Young Soo's poetry are represented as memory-bearing spaces through the interaction of physical landscapes, personal recollections, and culturally recognizable symbols.

H2. Cultural Heritage and Remembering–Forgetting Tensions

Representations of culturally significant places construct tensions between remembrance, transformation, and disappearance, revealing different forms of cultural and personal loss.

H3. Environmental Representation and Ecological Loss

Poetic representations of environmental deterioration intersect with personal and cultural remembrance, positioning ecological loss as a significant dimension of place-based memory.

H4. Intercultural Perspective and Social Representation

The poetic speaker's intercultural position shapes representations of Indonesian social and cultural environments, generating tensions between familiarity, estrangement, inequality, and imaginative connection.

In addition to these interpretive hypotheses, the study develops the following pedagogical proposition:

PP1. Curriculum Implications

The identified patterns of place, memory, environmental representation, and intercultural encounter provide a theoretical basis for selecting literary texts and designing evidence-based, ecocritical, and intercultural reading activities in university literature curricula. These hypotheses and the pedagogical proposition are not formulated as statistical relationships between measurable independent and dependent variables. Instead, they function as provisional interpretive statements that guide the identification, comparison, and evaluation of textual evidence. Their analytical usefulness will be assessed through close reading, attention to contrasting representations, and consideration of interpretations that complicate or challenge the proposed patterns. The pedagogical proposition will be developed from the textual findings and relevant scholarship without claiming experimentally demonstrated educational effectiveness. Through this integrated framework, the study seeks to contribute a contextually grounded interpretation of Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry while identifying theoretically defensible implications for critical and intercultural literary education.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design and Methodological Approach

This study employed a qualitative research design integrating textual analysis, close reading, and theory-informed thematic interpretation to examine representations of place, cultural memory, and loss in Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand how literary meanings are constructed through imagery, symbolism, figurative language, narrative perspective, and relationships among textual elements rather than to measure relationships between numerical variables. The analysis focused on identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning within individual poems and across the selected corpus. The analytical approach was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) conceptualization of thematic analysis as a flexible method for identifying, examining, and interpreting patterns of meaning in qualitative material. However, because the primary objects of analysis were literary texts, thematic interpretation was integrated with close reading to preserve the linguistic, symbolic, and contextual complexity of each poem. This integration enabled the study to move

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

beyond identifying recurring topics toward explaining how poetic language constructs relationships among physical landscapes, remembered experiences, cultural symbols, and perceptions of social and environmental change.

The methodological orientation combined theoretical guidance with sensitivity to meanings emerging from the texts. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) demonstrate that qualitative thematic interpretation can integrate theory-driven categories with themes identified through engagement with the material. In the present study, cultural memory theory provided the principal interpretive framework, particularly concerning the relationship between individual recollection and culturally shared forms of remembrance. Ecocriticism served as a complementary perspective for examining environmental imagery, human–environment relationships, and representations of ecological loss. These theoretical perspectives were used to guide interpretation without assuming that every poem necessarily supported the same conceptual pattern. The study was interpretive rather than explanatory in a causal or statistical sense. The interpretive hypotheses developed in the theoretical framework functioned as provisional analytical propositions rather than hypotheses requiring statistical significance testing. Their purpose was to direct attention toward relationships among place, memory, cultural heritage, environmental change, and intercultural encounters. Consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2022) emphasis on methodological coherence, the study therefore evaluated these propositions through their interpretive relevance and correspondence with textual evidence, not through numerical confirmation or rejection.

3.2. Research Corpus and Selection Criteria

The primary data source was the bilingual Korean–Indonesian poetry anthology *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (Kim & Alwasilah, 2024). The study focused exclusively on the Indonesian-language versions of poems written by Kim Young Soo that represent Indonesian geographical settings, cultural experiences, social environments, or intercultural encounters. The anthology constituted a bounded literary corpus through which the relationships among place, memory, cultural identity, and loss could be examined within a defined publication context. The analytical corpus comprised 20 poems: "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan," "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'," "Di Candi Prambanan," "Kembali ke Candi Borobudur," "Di Candi Gedong Songo," "Malam di Jakarta," "Dari Bengawan Solo," "Di Tepi Laut Batang," "Dari Semarang," "Dari Bandungan," "Meninggalkan Ungaran," "Dari Bandung," "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi," "Adzan," "Kupu-Kupu Januari," "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa," "Fajar di Tanah Postkolonialisme," "Minum Kopi Bersama," "Kesan Sebuah Kota yang Ada Pohon Mangga," and "Takdir di Alam Khayalan."

The corpus was delimited purposively according to its relevance to the research questions. The primary considerations were the poems' association with Indonesian places or experiences and the presence of representations potentially relevant to personal remembrance, culturally recognizable symbols, social relationships, environmental conditions, or intercultural encounters. The corpus was not intended to constitute a statistically representative sample of Kim Young Soo's complete literary production. Rather, it provided a defined set of texts for examining how related themes were constructed within one anthology. The individual poem served as the principal unit of analysis, while words, images, metaphors, spatial references, contrasts, and descriptions of experiences constituted the textual elements examined through close reading. These elements were interpreted in relation to their immediate poetic context and the broader meaning of each poem. Individual images were not treated as independent evidence detached from the texts in which they appeared. Although the anthology contains Korean and Indonesian versions, the present investigation was restricted to the Indonesian-language texts. No systematic bilingual translation comparison was undertaken. Accordingly, the analysis did not claim to identify semantic equivalence, translation shifts, or differences between the Korean originals and their Indonesian versions. Its conclusions concerned the meanings and representations available in the Indonesian-language corpus.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

3.3. Analytical Procedure and Thematic Interpretation

The analytical procedure followed four interconnected stages involving textual familiarization, thematic categorization, cross-textual comparison, and theory-informed interpretation. This sequence was informed by qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) and adapted to the interpretive requirements of literary close reading. The stages provided an organizing structure, while interpretation involved returning to individual poems to examine the relationship between emerging themes and their textual contexts.

a. Stage 1: Textual Familiarization and Identification of Meaningful Elements

The first stage involved close reading of the selected poems to identify relevant representations of place, memory, cultural practices, environmental conditions, social relationships, and experiences of loss. Attention was directed toward geographical references, historical and religious symbols, sensory imagery, metaphors, temporal contrasts, and descriptions of emotional or cultural encounters. The purpose of this stage was to establish an understanding of each poem as a literary construction before assigning broader thematic meanings. Textual elements were considered analytically relevant when their wording, symbolic associations, or contextual relationships contributed to the research questions. The distinction between explicit textual description and interpretive inference was maintained to avoid attributing meanings to the poems without adequate textual support.

b. Stage 2: Thematic Categorization and Analytical Coding

The second stage involved organizing relevant textual elements into thematic categories reflecting the interaction between the theoretical framework and the meanings identified in the poems. Five principal categories structured the analysis: (1) personal memory and landscape; (2) cultural and religious heritage; (3) urban inequality and labor; (4) environmental deterioration and ecological loss; and (5) intercultural distance, longing, and imaginative connection. These categories provided an interpretive structure rather than a rigid or mutually exclusive classification system. A particular poem or textual image could contribute to more than one category when its meaning involved overlapping dimensions. For example, an image of a river might simultaneously represent a geographical setting, a culturally recognizable symbol, and a perceived condition of environmental deterioration. The coding process was interpretive and meaning-oriented. It was not designed to count the frequency of words, determine statistical distributions, or establish the prevalence of particular themes. The analytical value of a textual element depended on its relevance to the research questions and its contribution to understanding the poem's representation of place, memory, and loss.

c. Stage 3: Cross-Textual Comparison and Identification of Thematic Relationships

The third stage involved comparing representations across poems to identify similarities, differences, and relationships among thematic categories. Comparisons considered how different geographical settings were associated with emotional remembrance, how cultural symbols appeared within contemporary environments, and how representations of ecological and social loss varied across the corpus. Particular attention was given to contrasts between remembered and represented present conditions, as well as differences between familiar cultural meanings and the responses of an intercultural observer. For example, poems associated with Kalimantan and Pulau Laut were examined in relation to personal recollection and landscape, while the temple poems were considered in relation to cultural heritage and religious interpretation. Poems concerning Jakarta, coffee production, rivers, and coastal environments offered additional material for comparing social inequalities and ecological representations. Cross-textual comparison also allowed the analysis to recognize that experiences of place were not uniformly associated with loss or estrangement. Representations of imaginative connection, cultural appreciation, and longing were considered alongside portrayals of discomfort, inequality, and disappearance. This approach helped

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

prevent the theoretical framework from reducing the varied meanings of the poems to a single predetermined interpretation.

d. Stage 4: Theoretical Interpretation and Synthesis

The final stage involved interpreting the identified patterns through the theoretical perspectives developed in the literature review. Cultural memory theory was used to examine how personal recollections became connected to culturally meaningful places, symbols, and practices. Place-based memory perspectives supported interpretations of the emotional and historical significance of particular environments, while ecocriticism informed the analysis of environmental imagery and perceived ecological loss. The findings were then considered in relation to the four interpretive hypotheses concerning place and cultural memory, cultural heritage and remembering–forgetting tensions, environmental representation and ecological loss, and intercultural perspective and social representation. These propositions were examined as interpretive guides rather than treated as conclusions established in advance. The analysis considered whether the textual evidence supported, complicated, or limited each proposition. Interpretations were evaluated in relation to the poems as complete literary works, with attention to the distinction between what was explicitly represented and what could reasonably be inferred. The resulting synthesis addressed the first two research questions and provided the analytical foundation for considering the curriculum implications developed in response to the third research question.

3.4. Analytical Trustworthiness and Interpretive Rigor

The quality of qualitative literary interpretation depends on the coherence of the analytical approach, the adequacy of textual evidence, the transparency of interpretive reasoning, and the recognition of alternative meanings. Tracy (2010) identifies credibility, sincerity, methodological rigor, and meaningful coherence among the important considerations in evaluating qualitative research. Nowell et al. (2017) similarly emphasize the importance of transparent analytical procedures and clear relationships between qualitative evidence and thematic interpretations. In the present study, interpretive credibility was addressed primarily through contextual close reading and comparison across the selected poems. Interpretations were checked against the poems as complete texts rather than based exclusively on isolated words or images. Attention was given to differences across poems, including representations that complicated broader thematic generalizations. The distinction between textual description and analytical inference was also maintained throughout the interpretation.

The analysis did not assume that the poetic speaker's perspective was equivalent to the author's intentions or to the experiences of the Indonesian communities represented. This distinction was particularly important in interpreting religious practices, cultural heritage, poverty, labor conditions, and environmental deterioration. Descriptions within the poems were treated as literary representations rather than independently verified historical, sociological, or ecological evidence. The study's analytical rigor therefore rested on the relationship between conceptual interpretation and textual support, not on inter-coder agreement or quantitative reliability coefficients. No claim of independent coding validation or inter-rater reliability is made. The findings should instead be evaluated according to the clarity of their reasoning, the relevance of the textual evidence, and the extent to which the proposed interpretations account for the complexity of the selected corpus.

3.5. Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

Researcher positionality represents an important methodological consideration because literary interpretation is influenced by the researcher's knowledge, experiences, and relationship with the material being examined. Berger (2015) explains that a researcher's proximity to a subject may provide contextual insights while also creating interpretive assumptions that require critical reflection. Reflexivity therefore

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

involves recognizing how such relationships may influence the questions asked, the evidence emphasized, and the conclusions developed. In this study, the researcher, Senny Suzanna Alwasilah, is also a co-author of the anthology *Merangkul Dua Takdir yang Saling Berpapasan* (2024). Although the analysis focuses exclusively on Kim Young Soo's poems, the researcher's involvement in the publication creates a position of contextual familiarity with the literary collection. This relationship may assist understanding of the anthology's publication context, but it also introduces a potential risk of privileging prior knowledge or favorable interpretations over the published textual evidence.

To address this concern, the study treated the published Indonesian-language poems as the basis of interpretation. Personal familiarity with the anthology was not regarded as independent evidence of the poet's intentions, experiences, or intended meanings. Interpretive claims were confined to meanings that could reasonably be supported by the language, imagery, and contextual relationships within the selected texts. The researcher's relationship with the primary source is disclosed to support transparency. The study was conducted for scholarly purposes, and no external funding or competing financial interest was reported. Nevertheless, the researcher's co-authorship of the anthology remains an important positional consideration when evaluating the interpretation.

3.6. Scope, Methodological Limitations, and Curriculum Implications

The study was limited to 20 Indonesian-themed poems by Kim Young Soo published in one bilingual anthology. Its findings therefore concern a specific literary corpus and should not be generalized to the poet's complete body of work, Korean poetry more broadly, or Korean–Indonesian literary relations as a whole. A further limitation concerns the reliance on the Indonesian-language versions of the poems. Without systematic comparison with the Korean texts, the analysis cannot establish whether particular expressions, metaphors, or cultural meanings reflect the poet's original linguistic choices or the processes involved in translation. The study also did not include interviews with the poet, translators, or readers, and therefore did not investigate authorial intentions, translation decisions, or reader reception. The study's educational contribution was developed from the relationship between its textual findings and the theoretical literature on critical, ecological, and intercultural literary reading. In particular, representations of cultural memory, social inequality, environmental deterioration, and intercultural encounters were considered as possible starting points for literary text selection, comparative close reading, contextual inquiry, and reflective classroom discussion.

These curriculum implications were formulated as theoretically informed pedagogical recommendations rather than empirically validated instructional outcomes. The investigation did not involve classroom implementation, teaching experiments, student interviews, learning assessments, or observations of instructional practice. Consequently, it does not establish whether the proposed activities improve students' literary interpretation, environmental awareness, or intercultural competence. Despite these limitations, the methodological approach provides a framework for examining how literary representations of place can be interpreted through cultural memory and ecocritical perspectives. By maintaining a distinction between textual evidence, theoretical interpretation, and proposed pedagogical applications, the study seeks to contribute a contextually grounded analysis of Kim Young Soo’s Indonesian-themed poetry and its potential relevance to university literature curricula.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Overview of Thematic Findings

The qualitative analysis of Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry reveals that geographical places function as interconnected spaces of personal remembrance, cultural interpretation, environmental awareness, and social reflection. Rather than presenting Indonesian landscapes exclusively as destinations or

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

objects of aesthetic appreciation, the poems construct relationships between remembered experiences and the cultural, ecological, and social conditions encountered by the poetic speaker. Across the analyzed texts, place emerges as a dynamic literary construction in which personal memories interact with historical symbols, cultural practices, and perceived changes in the material environment. The analysis identifies six interrelated thematic patterns: (1) landscape and personal memory; (2) cultural heritage and the negotiation of historical meanings; (3) social inequality and the visibility of marginalized experiences; (4) environmental deterioration and ecological loss; (5) religious sound and intercultural estrangement; and (6) transnational longing and imaginative cultural connection. These patterns are analytically distinguishable but not mutually exclusive. Several poems engage with more than one theme, demonstrating that personal, cultural, environmental, and social meanings may intersect within a single representation of place.

The most significant finding is that remembering and forgetting do not operate as simple opposites. In these poems, remembering can preserve emotional attachments while intensifying awareness of disappearance, transformation, or estrangement. Similarly, forgetting is represented not only through the apparent disappearance of familiar landscapes and cultural practices but also through the limited visibility of particular people, experiences, and forms of labor. These interpretations are consistent with Rigney's (2005) understanding of cultural memory as a selective and continually reconstructed process and Erll's (2011) conceptualization of memory as mobile and open to reinterpretation across cultural contexts.

Table 1. Thematic Patterns in Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-Themed Poetry

Thematic dimension	Representative poems	Central interpretive finding	Related proposition
Landscape and personal remembrance	*Melintasi Langit Kalimantan*; *Merenung 'Pulau Laut'*	Landscapes function as emotional and spatial references through which earlier experiences are reconstructed	H1
Cultural heritage and historical transformation	*Di Candi Prambanan*; *Kembali ke Candi Borobudur*; *Di Candi Gedong Songo*	Historical sites reveal tensions between inherited cultural meanings and the speaker's contemporary encounters	H2
Social inequality and invisible labor	*Malam di Jakarta*; *Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi*	Contrasting images make social privilege, vulnerability, and labor visible	H4
Environmental deterioration and ecological loss	*Dari Bengawan Solo*; *Di Tepi Laut Batang*; *Merenung 'Pulau Laut'*	Remembered or culturally significant landscapes are contrasted with representations of environmental damage	H3
Religious sound and cultural estrangement	*Adzan*; *Dari Semarang*; *Dari Bandungan*; *Meninggalkan Ungaran*	Familiar local religious sounds become signs of cultural distance through the speaker's position	H4
Transnational longing and imaginative connection	*Chuseok di Khatulistiwa*; *Kupu-Kupu Januari*; *Minum Kopi Bersama*; *Dari Bandung*; *Takdir di Alam Khayalan*	Cultural memories and symbolic practices enable expressions of distance, mourning, belonging, and imaginative connection	H1 and H4

The following sections examine these patterns through close reading and dialogue with relevant scholarship. Particular attention is given to the relationships among textual evidence, theoretical interpretation, and alternative readings that complicate the study's interpretive propositions.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

4.2. Remembered Landscapes and the Emotional Reconstruction of Place

The poems "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan" and "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" demonstrate that geographical landscapes become meaningful through their relationships with personal experience. Although both poems recall Indonesian environments associated with an earlier period of life, they construct different emotional relationships with the past. The contrast between these representations reveals that remembrance is neither uniform nor necessarily reassuring. In "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan," images of red earth, forests, stars, night travel, and the Barito River provide the geographical and sensory coordinates of recollection. These images do more than establish the location of a remembered experience. Their arrangement allows the landscape to become a means of recovering a particular temporal and emotional relationship with the past. The landscape appears as a continuing reference through which an earlier version of the speaking self can be imaginatively revisited.

The relationship between physical surroundings and emotional remembrance is particularly important here. Sutton (2024) argues that places may participate in the construction of affective memory because experiences of the past are shaped through relationships among bodies, environments, and emotions. This perspective helps explain why the poem's natural imagery can carry significance beyond geographical description. The forest, river, and night sky operate as elements through which the experience of an earlier time becomes accessible within the present act of poetic recollection. A different configuration appears in "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'." The speaker recalls experiences associated with being twenty-eight years old, including encounters with dense forests, rattan thorns, leeches, and the felling of large trees. Rather than presenting the remembered landscape as an uncomplicated source of nostalgia, the poem connects place with bodily exposure, discomfort, and the desire to distance oneself from painful experiences. The forest is therefore both an environment that sustains recollection and a setting associated with memories the speaker may prefer to leave behind.

This contrast complicates a sentimental understanding of the relationship between memory and place. While "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan" emphasizes the evocative capacity of remembered landscapes, "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" reveals that the return to a particular place through language may also reactivate physical vulnerability and emotional unease. Remembering becomes an ambivalent process in which attachment and discomfort coexist. These findings extend Till's (2008) account of place-based memory by showing how the significance of remembered environments may be constructed through contrasting emotional experiences within a single poetic corpus. They are also consistent with Sutton's (2024) argument that places associated with difficult experiences cannot always be understood through harmonious relationships between memory and affect. Nevertheless, the distinction between personal memory and cultural memory remains essential. The presence of recognizable Indonesian geographical features does not automatically transform private recollection into collective remembrance. Cultural memory becomes relevant when these experiences are mediated through shared place names, recognizable geographical narratives, or culturally meaningful associations that allow readers to interpret the personal experience within a broader symbolic context. Accordingly, the analysis provides qualified interpretive support for H1. The poems establish Indonesian places as memory-bearing environments, but the movement from personal remembrance toward cultural memory varies according to the symbolic and contextual significance of the images represented. The contribution of these poems lies in their portrayal of landscapes not as fixed containers of memory but as environments through which remembrance continually acquires emotional and cultural meaning.

4.3. Cultural Heritage, Sacred Landscapes, and the Negotiation of Historical Meaning

The poems associated with Prambanan, Borobudur, and Gedong Songo reveal another dimension of place-based memory: the encounter between historically significant cultural environments and the perceptions of a speaker positioned outside the traditions represented. Unlike the landscapes primarily

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

associated with personal recollection, these sacred sites carry recognizable historical and religious meanings that precede the speaker's encounter with them. In "Di Candi Prambanan," the juxtaposition of Hindu deities, monkeys, rain clouds near Mount Merapi, and women wearing hijabs on slippery temple steps creates a multilayered representation of cultural space. The poem brings together symbolic references associated with the historical Hindu heritage of the site and images of contemporary visitors and environmental conditions. The significance of this juxtaposition lies in the coexistence of different temporal and cultural registers within the same location.

Rather than portraying the temple as an unchanged remnant of the past, the poem represents cultural heritage as something encountered within an active contemporary environment. The historical significance of the site is not erased by present-day practices, but neither is it reproduced as a completely self-contained tradition. The temple emerges as a space in which historical memory and contemporary experience are brought into contact. A related but distinct configuration appears in "Kembali ke Candi Borobudur." The Buddha image, rain, and a distant call invoking Allah create an encounter between Buddhist heritage and the soundscape of contemporary religious life. These elements should not be interpreted as evidence of an inherent conflict between religious traditions. Instead, their juxtaposition directs attention toward the speaker's experience of cultural difference and the coexistence of multiple religious references within the represented environment. "Di Candi Gedong Songo" presents a more pronounced sense of historical absence. Its images of a shrine from which incense and divine presences appear to have disappeared, together with imagery of fading hopes and melting stupas, suggest the fragility of remembered cultural meanings. The poem's representation of disappearance is significant precisely because the physical monument remains available as a site of encounter, while the speaker imagines a distance between its historical associations and the present.

These representations correspond to Rofe and Ripmeester's (2023) argument that memorial landscapes are simultaneously implicated in processes of remembering and forgetting. Their work challenges assumptions that commemorative environments provide stable or uncontested access to the past. Applied to Kim Young Soo's poetry, this perspective helps explain how historical monuments can become sites of interpretive uncertainty rather than straightforward symbols of cultural continuity. The findings also resonate with Rigney's (2005) emphasis on the selective character of cultural remembrance. The temples retain recognizable historical meanings, but the poems foreground particular aspects of those meanings while leaving others unexplored. Consequently, the speaker's observations cannot be treated as comprehensive interpretations of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, or the histories of the individual sites. A further interpretive concern involves the outsider's gaze. The poems represent cultural heritage through a specific subject position shaped by recognition, unfamiliarity, and occasional estrangement. This perspective can generate productive literary tensions, but it also requires attention to the limitations of the observer's knowledge. What appears absent, unfamiliar, or transformed from the speaker's perspective may have different meanings for communities connected to the places represented. The analysis therefore provides qualified support for H2. The temple poems construct tensions between historical remembrance and perceived transformation, but the meanings of disappearance and cultural distance remain situated within the poetic speaker's interpretation. This finding contributes to cultural memory studies by demonstrating how sacred landscapes can be represented through overlapping historical meanings and intercultural encounters without assuming that cultural heritage possesses a single, universally shared significance.

4.4. Urban Inequality, Invisible Labor, and the Selective Visibility of Social Experience

The relationship between place and memory extends beyond landscapes and historical monuments to include the visibility of social inequalities and marginalized experiences. In "Malam di Jakarta" and "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi," poetic representations of place draw attention to the unequal relationships among social position, labor, consumption, and material conditions. "Malam di Jakarta" constructs an image of urban inequality through the juxtaposition of contrasting social figures and environments. Motorcycles, an

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

official black car disregarding traffic signals, a girl asking for money, a hungry barefoot child, riverside settlements, and skyscrapers become interconnected elements of an unequal urban landscape. The contrast between the privileged vehicle and vulnerable figures is especially significant because it establishes a symbolic opposition between authority and deprivation.

The poem's social criticism emerges through the arrangement of these images rather than through the presentation of statistical evidence. Urban space is not represented as a unified environment experienced equally by its inhabitants. Instead, the poem directs attention toward differences in mobility, material security, and social visibility. The juxtaposition of skyscrapers and precarious living conditions transforms the city into a setting where economic development and social vulnerability appear simultaneously. Rigney's (2005) account of selective cultural remembrance provides a useful perspective for interpreting these contrasts. If cultural memory is shaped by the processes through which particular experiences become visible, literary representations can draw attention to those whose lives may be overlooked within dominant images of a place. Although "Malam di Jakarta" does not establish the actual distribution of urban poverty, it foregrounds social experiences that complicate idealized representations of the city.

A similar politics of visibility operates in "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi." The poem focuses on a barefoot woman collecting coffee beans under demanding working conditions while contrasting her labor with the high value of coffee consumed elsewhere. The contrast shifts attention from the commodity as an object of enjoyment to the bodily effort involved in its production. The woman's physical vulnerability is particularly important to the poem's ethical orientation. Rather than presenting coffee primarily through its cultural or commercial appeal, the poem directs the reader toward the worker whose labor makes consumption possible. This movement between production and consumption reveals a relationship between social visibility and economic distance. The contrast between these poems is also instructive. "Malam di Jakarta" represents inequality through the spatial coexistence of privilege and deprivation, whereas "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi" emphasizes the separation between the conditions of production and the experience of consumption. In the first poem, unequal social positions become visible within the same urban environment; in the second, their relationship is constructed through a commodity connecting otherwise distant experiences.

Buell et al. (2011) emphasize the importance of environmental injustice and social inequality within literary environmental criticism. Although the coffee poem is not reducible to an environmental narrative, its representation of agricultural labor illustrates how economic and material environments can become important components of literary social criticism. The emphasis on the worker's body also connects the analysis to Till's (2008) attention to embodied experiences and socially responsible interpretations of place. Nevertheless, these poems raise a further representational question: who is permitted to speak, and who is primarily observed? The marginalized figures are made visible through the speaker's perspective, but their own accounts of their experiences are not independently available through the analysis. Recognition of this limitation prevents the poems from being interpreted as transparent representations of the lives of the people depicted. The findings thus contribute to H4 by indicating that the speaker's position shapes how Indonesian social environments become visible. The poems invite reflection on inequality and labor, but their critical force remains mediated through literary selection, contrast, and perspective. Their distinctive contribution lies in demonstrating how representations of place can foreground social relationships that might otherwise remain peripheral to aesthetic descriptions of Indonesian landscapes.

4.5. Ecological Memory and the Representation of Environmental Loss

Environmental deterioration constitutes one of the most prominent forms of loss in the analyzed poems. "Dari Bengawan Solo," "Di Tepi Laut Batang," and "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" represent natural environments through contrasts between remembered meanings, cultural associations, and images of material transformation. Among these works, "Dari Bengawan Solo" provides a particularly clear intersection of cultural memory and ecological representation. The river appears as a place associated with cultural

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

remembrance, including its presence in a recognizable song, while the speaker simultaneously portrays it as narrower, polluted, and diminished in comparison with expectations. The disappearance of boats and the description of a dying river intensify the contrast between the river's remembered significance and its represented condition. The important analytical point is that the river's loss operates on more than one level. Environmental deterioration is represented through the physical imagery of pollution and decline, while cultural loss emerges from the apparent distance between the river preserved through remembrance and the river encountered in the poem. The river continues to exist as a recognizable cultural reference even as the speaker perceives a diminished material environment.

This relationship is consistent with Gülüm et al. (2024), who emphasize the interconnectedness of memory and environment and the need to examine how ecological conditions participate in processes of remembering. Their perspective helps explain why the poem's environmental imagery cannot be separated from its cultural significance. The river is simultaneously a physical setting, a recognizable cultural symbol, and a site through which loss becomes perceptible. Cresswell (2022) similarly argues that poetry can contribute to the understanding of place through forms of attention that connect material environments with broader ecological concerns. His discussion of ecopoetics and topopoetics is relevant to "Dari Bengawan Solo" because the poem makes environmental deterioration meaningful through a specific, culturally recognizable landscape rather than through an abstract description of ecological crisis. A different representation appears in "Di Tepi Laut Batang." The poem juxtaposes mythic associations involving Arjuna and a bird of paradise with muddy water, an almost empty beach, and a discarded instant-noodle wrapper. The contrast between mythic imagery and an ordinary discarded object gives the scene its interpretive tension. The wrapper becomes a small but recognizable material sign of contemporary human presence within a landscape associated with cultural imagination.

This juxtaposition is significant because the poem does not depend on a large-scale representation of environmental catastrophe. Instead, a relatively minor object becomes meaningful through its relationship with the surrounding landscape. The discarded wrapper interrupts the expectations associated with the coastal setting and directs attention toward the consequences of everyday human activity. In "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'," environmental concern emerges through the memory of forests and the felling of large trees. Unlike the more public cultural associations of Bengawan Solo, the forest is represented through personal experience involving bodily vulnerability and remembered encounters. The poem therefore connects the apparent loss of the natural environment with the speaker's own experience of an earlier period of life. These differences demonstrate that ecological memory is not a single thematic form. In "Dari Bengawan Solo," environmental deterioration is associated with a culturally remembered river. In "Di Tepi Laut Batang," ecological concern emerges through the contrast between mythic imagination and material traces of human activity. In "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'," the loss of trees is incorporated into recollections marked by vulnerability and discomfort.

Taken together, these findings extend the environmental-memory framework discussed by Gülüm et al. (2024) by showing how different poetic strategies connect material landscapes with personal and cultural remembrance. The analysis also corresponds to Buell et al. (2011), who emphasize that environmental literary representations involve complex relationships among ecological conditions, cultural meanings, and human activities. However, the environmental images cannot independently establish the actual ecological conditions of Bengawan Solo, Batang, or Pulau Laut. The poems do not provide environmental measurements, causal investigations, or current field observations. Their significance lies in how environmental deterioration is represented and incorporated into the speaker's understanding of place. The interpretation therefore supports H3 at the level of textual representation. Ecological loss is constructed through the interaction of material imagery, cultural associations, and remembered experiences. More broadly, the poems suggest that the loss of a place may be experienced not only through its physical transformation but also through the disruption of the meanings attached to it.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

4.6. Religious Sound, Cultural Distance, and the Limits of the Outsider's Gaze

Religious sound constitutes a recurring feature of Kim Young Soo's representations of Indonesian places. In "Dari Semarang," "Dari Bandungan," "Meninggalkan Ungaran," and "Adzan," the call to prayer enters poetic scenes containing environmental imagery, everyday experiences, and reflections on existence. The recurrence of this sound creates a thematic connection across geographically distinct settings while revealing the speaker's changing relationship with the surrounding cultural environment. In "Dari Semarang," the call to prayer is represented alongside rain, a gecko, and contemplative reflections. Its placement within a broader sensory environment suggests that religious sound becomes part of how the speaker experiences the city. The poem does not present the call to prayer in isolation but incorporates it into a scene where natural sounds, religious practice, and individual reflection coexist.

"Dari Bandungan" and "Meninggalkan Ungaran" similarly associate the distant call to prayer with mist, coffee flowers, mountain paths, and observations of social vulnerability. These combinations place religious sound within environments characterized by both natural beauty and human experience. The resulting images suggest that the meaning of the sound is shaped by its relationship with the surrounding landscape and the speaker's emotional position. In "Adzan," the experience of unfamiliarity becomes more pronounced. The call to prayer is represented as a sound that the speaker struggles to interpret. This difficulty should not be understood as evidence that the religious practice itself lacks meaning or coherence. Rather, the poem reveals a distance between the cultural significance of the practice within its community and the speaker's capacity to understand it from an external perspective.

Erll's (2011) concept of travelling memory provides a useful framework for interpreting this encounter. Cultural movement does not necessarily produce immediate understanding, since individuals may carry familiar interpretive frameworks into environments structured by different social and symbolic practices. The unfamiliarity represented in the poem can therefore be understood as a feature of the speaker's intercultural position rather than as an inherent characteristic of the religious practice. The importance of this distinction becomes clearer when these poems are compared with the temple poems. Religious sounds and sacred monuments both function as cultural signs, but they are encountered through different sensory and spatial arrangements. Historical temples are represented through visual and material features, while the call to prayer becomes meaningful through sound, distance, and the experience of listening.

The analysis consequently identifies religious sound as a form of sensory mediation through which place and cultural difference become interconnected. This observation is consistent with Till's (2008) emphasis on the multisensory dimensions of place-based experience. It also suggests that intercultural literary interpretation requires attention not only to what the speaker observes but also to how cultural practices are perceived, recognized, or misunderstood. These findings qualify H4 by showing that intercultural distance is not necessarily expressed through explicit opposition or rejection. It may also emerge through uncertainty, partial understanding, and the coexistence of unfamiliar cultural meanings within everyday environments. The poems therefore invite a reflexive interpretation that recognizes the speaker's perspective without generalizing that perspective to the cultures being represented.

4.7. Travelling Memory, Longing, and Imaginative Cultural Connection

Although several poems portray discomfort, inequality, or environmental loss, the corpus does not present intercultural experience exclusively through negative or alienating encounters. "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa," "Kupu-Kupu Januari," "Minum Kopi Bersama," "Dari Bandung," and "Takdir di Alam Khayalan" introduce alternative ways of understanding how memory and cultural connection can persist across geographical distance. "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa" offers a particularly significant example of transnational cultural remembrance. The poem introduces the Korean harvest festival Chuseok into an equatorial environment where the familiar seasonal characteristics associated with its cultural setting are absent. The resulting contrast makes geographical and cultural distance perceptible through differences in seasonal

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

experience. The importance of this representation lies in the continuity of remembrance despite the absence of familiar environmental conditions. The speaker's cultural associations do not disappear upon entering another geographical context. Instead, they are reactivated and reinterpreted through the experience of being elsewhere.

This finding closely corresponds to Erll's (2011) concept of travelling memory. Cultural remembrance can move beyond the geographical contexts in which particular practices acquired their meanings, but such movement may transform how those meanings are experienced. In the poem, the recollection of Chuseok is not simply transferred unchanged into Indonesia. Its significance emerges through the contrast between familiar cultural expectations and an unfamiliar seasonal environment. "Kupu-Kupu Januari" develops another relationship between symbolic imagery and remembrance. The white butterfly is associated with the spirit of the dead, mourning, flowers, and incense. These images introduce an affective dimension in which loss becomes meaningful through symbolic and sensory associations. The butterfly operates as an image connecting recollection, mortality, and emotional attachment. The precise cultural significance of these associations requires cautious interpretation. The poem's imagery can be read as an expression of mourning and remembrance without assuming that it provides a comprehensive account of a particular religious or cultural tradition.

In "Minum Kopi Bersama," geographical separation is approached through the possibility of imaginative companionship. The image of sharing coffee across thousands of miles and different time zones suggests that cultural and interpersonal connections can be sustained symbolically despite physical distance. The ordinary act of drinking coffee becomes a medium through which separation is temporarily negotiated. An interesting cross-textual contrast emerges when this poem is considered alongside "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi." In the latter, coffee becomes a means of exposing the relationship between bodily labor and distant consumption. In "Minum Kopi Bersama," coffee becomes a symbol of companionship and connection. The same everyday commodity thus acquires distinct meanings across the corpus: one associated with economic distance and unequal labor, the other with emotional proximity despite geographical separation. This comparison demonstrates that recurring objects do not necessarily carry stable meanings across literary texts. Their significance depends on the relationships established by the poem's imagery, speaker, and social context. It also complicates any interpretation that reduces the anthology to a single emotional orientation toward Indonesia.

Further examples of imaginative connection occur in "Dari Bandung" and "Takdir di Alam Khayalan," where Sundanese cultural elements, including *wayang golek* and *angklung*, are incorporated into a mythic search involving a fairy with a damaged or missing left wing. These elements suggest that encounters with local cultural forms can become resources for imaginative transformation rather than merely signs of unfamiliarity. The relationship between cultural difference and imaginative connection is important because it challenges the assumption that cross-cultural literary encounters necessarily produce either complete understanding or permanent estrangement. Instead, the poems suggest an intermediate space in which cultural elements can be recognized, reimagined, and brought into new symbolic relationships without eliminating their differences. These findings are consistent with Erll's (2011) argument that cultural memory develops through movement and reinterpretation. They also resonate with Sutton's (2024) discussion of how remembrance is shaped through ongoing relationships between environments, affective experiences, and the reconstruction of the past. The analysis provides further qualified support for H1 and H4. Cultural memory is represented as capable of travelling across geographical contexts, while the speaker's intercultural position shapes experiences of both difference and connection. Importantly, the corpus does not support a uniformly negative interpretation of intercultural encounters. Longing, mourning, unfamiliarity, and companionship coexist, revealing a broader range of emotional and symbolic relationships between place and cultural identity.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

GOLDEN RATIO
ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

4.8. Integrative Discussion: The Multidimensional Character of Loss

The cross-textual findings indicate that loss is a central organizing concern in Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry, but it does not appear as a single or uniform experience. Rather, the poems construct several overlapping dimensions of loss that become meaningful through different relationships among memory, place, and cultural interpretation. First, personal loss emerges through the emotional reconstruction of earlier experiences. "Melintasi Langit Kalimantan" and "Merenung 'Pulau Laut'" demonstrate how remembered landscapes can preserve attachments while also recalling vulnerability and discomfort. The relationship between place and personal memory is therefore characterized by emotional complexity rather than an exclusively nostalgic orientation. Second, cultural loss appears through representations of historical heritage and perceived changes in cultural meaning. The temple poems suggest that culturally recognizable environments may continue to exist physically while being interpreted through images of disappearance, transformation, or estrangement. This dimension corresponds to Rofe and Ripmeester's (2023) discussion of memorial landscapes as spaces in which remembrance and forgetting coexist.

Third, ecological loss is constructed through representations of altered rivers, forests, and coastal environments. The contrast between remembered landscapes and images of environmental deterioration suggests that ecological change can disturb both material environments and the meanings associated with them. This finding extends the relevance of Gülüm et al.'s (2024) memory–environment perspective to the interpretation of Indonesian-themed poetry. Fourth, social loss and exclusion appear through the limited visibility and vulnerability of marginalized figures. In "Malam di Jakarta" and "Wanita yang Mengumpulkan Biji Kopi," social criticism emerges through the contrast between privilege and deprivation or between consumption and labor. These representations suggest that the meanings attached to a place cannot be separated entirely from the social relationships depicted within it. Fifth, intercultural loss and distance become visible through unfamiliar religious practices, seasonal displacement, and the difficulties of interpreting cultural environments beyond one's familiar background. Nevertheless, this dimension is also complicated by imaginative connections that emerge through shared objects, cultural performances, and symbolic remembrance.

The coexistence of these dimensions supports a broader interpretation of loss as a relational and situated experience. What is perceived as lost depends partly on the speaker's relationship with a place, the cultural meanings associated with that place, and the distance between remembered expectations and represented conditions. At the same time, the poems challenge an exclusively loss-centered interpretation. The symbolic companionship of "Minum Kopi Bersama," the cultural mobility represented in "Chuseok di Khatulistiwa," and the imaginative use of Sundanese traditions indicate that remembrance can also sustain connection, creativity, and the reconstruction of meaning. This complexity provides an important qualification to the theoretical framework. Cultural memory is not merely a process of preserving what has disappeared, and ecocritical representation is not necessarily limited to documenting environmental destruction. Rather, the poems demonstrate how remembering, loss, and imaginative renewal can coexist within literary representations of place. The principal theoretical contribution of this interpretation lies in bringing cultural memory and ecocriticism into a shared framework while retaining their analytical distinctions. Cultural memory explains how places become connected to personal and collectively recognizable meanings. Ecocriticism clarifies how environmental imagery contributes to representations of deterioration and loss. Attention to social and intercultural perspectives further reveals that these meanings are mediated by the speaker's particular position. The result is a multidimensional understanding of poetic place in which geographical environments function simultaneously as material settings, emotional reference points, cultural signs, and sites of critical reflection. This interpretation builds on existing scholarship while demonstrating how these relationships are configured within the specific corpus of Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry.

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

4.9. Interpretation of the Research Propositions

The findings provide a basis for revisiting the four interpretive hypotheses developed in the theoretical framework. Because the study uses qualitative textual analysis, the propositions are evaluated through their correspondence with the representations examined rather than through statistical hypothesis testing.

a. H1: Place and Cultural Memory

The poems demonstrate that Indonesian places can function as memory-bearing spaces through the interaction of geographical imagery, personal recollection, and culturally meaningful associations. The strongest examples emerge where remembered landscapes are linked to recognizable cultural or historical meanings. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that personal recollection should not automatically be classified as cultural memory. H1 is therefore consistent with the interpretive evidence, subject to this conceptual distinction.

b. H2: Cultural Heritage and Remembering–Forgetting Tensions

The temple poems demonstrate how culturally significant places are represented through relationships between historical inheritance, contemporary encounters, and perceived absence. These representations are consistent with H2, although the meanings of disappearance and transformation remain shaped by the speaker's perspective and cannot establish the actual continuity or decline of the religious traditions represented.

c. H3: Environmental Representation and Ecological Loss

The representations of Bengawan Solo, Batang, and Pulau Laut demonstrate that environmental imagery intersects with personal and cultural remembrance. Ecological loss becomes meaningful through contrasts between remembered or culturally associated landscapes and their represented conditions. The textual evidence is consistent with H3 but does not establish independent empirical claims about environmental deterioration.

d. H4: Intercultural Perspective and Social Representation

The poems demonstrate that the speaker's intercultural position shapes representations of religious practices, social inequality, historical heritage, and personal relationships. However, the findings complicate any assumption that intercultural encounters necessarily produce estrangement. The presence of longing, companionship, and imaginative connection suggests that cultural difference is represented through multiple emotional and symbolic possibilities. H4 is therefore supported as an interpretive framework but requires recognition of these contrasting patterns. Overall, the propositions provide a coherent explanation of the relationships among place, cultural memory, environmental representation, and intercultural experience. Their significance lies in organizing and clarifying the textual findings rather than establishing universal propositions about poetry, Indonesia, or Korean–Indonesian cultural relations.

4.10. Implications for Critical, Ecological, and Intercultural Literary Reading

The findings also provide a theoretical basis for considering the relevance of Kim Young Soo's poetry to university literature curricula. The poems present opportunities to examine how cultural meanings are constructed through literary language, how representations of place reflect particular perspectives, and how environmental and social concerns can be interpreted without confusing poetic imagery with empirical evidence. These possibilities are consistent with Varga et al. (2020), whose study of higher education students across different national contexts demonstrates the relevance of literary texts for stimulating intercultural dialogue. Their findings also indicate that the relationship between literary interpretation and broader social

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

reflection depends on the educational context and the ways students engage with texts. Similarly, Myren-Svelstad (2024) emphasizes the significance of dialogic interpretation in literary education for sustainable development. Rather than assuming that environmentally oriented poetry produces predetermined attitudes, the study highlights collaborative reasoning, interpretive uncertainty, and students' active construction of meaning.

These perspectives suggest several potential applications of Kim Young Soo's poems. Contrasting the Kalimantan and Pulau Laut poems could support discussion of the relationship between landscape, memory, and emotional experience. Comparing the temple poems could encourage reflection on how cultural heritage is interpreted through different perspectives. The river and coastal poems could provide opportunities for ecocritical interpretation, while the poems concerning religious sounds and transnational longing could support intercultural and reflexive reading. The findings also suggest that literary education should distinguish textual evidence from contextual knowledge. For example, students may interpret the representation of Bengawan Solo as an image of ecological loss while separately consulting reliable environmental information to examine the conditions of the actual river. Similarly, discussions of religious imagery should recognize that the speaker's interpretation is not equivalent to the meanings assigned to religious practices by their communities.

The relationship between literature and intercultural learning also requires attention to emotional responses. Porto and Zembylas (2022) emphasize the importance of recognizing affective dimensions in intercultural literary education, particularly when texts address suffering, trauma, and unequal social relationships. Applied to the present corpus, this perspective suggests that discussions of poverty, labor, and cultural estrangement should encourage reflective interpretation rather than impose predetermined moral conclusions. These applications provide a basis for the pedagogical proposition developed in the theoretical framework. However, the present findings do not establish the effectiveness of the proposed activities. No classroom intervention, student assessment, or evaluation of learning outcomes was conducted. The curriculum implications should therefore be understood as theoretically informed possibilities derived from the textual analysis and relevant pedagogical scholarship.

4.11. Theoretical Contribution and Synthesis of Findings

This study contributes to literary and cultural memory scholarship by demonstrating how geographical place can become a point of intersection among personal remembrance, cultural heritage, ecological concern, social visibility, and intercultural experience within a specific Korean–Indonesian poetic corpus. Three contributions are particularly significant. First, the findings clarify the distinction and interaction between personal and cultural memory. The poems show that personal recollections acquire broader cultural significance through their relationships with recognizable places, symbols, and practices, but these relationships must be established interpretively rather than assumed. Second, the analysis brings cultural memory and ecocriticism into dialogue by showing how environmental loss can become meaningful through the disruption of remembered landscapes and cultural associations. Ecological representation is therefore examined not only as a response to perceived material deterioration but also as a component of place-based remembrance.

Third, the findings demonstrate that intercultural literary representation is characterized by tensions between attachment and estrangement, recognition and misunderstanding, and loss and imaginative connection. The speaker's perspective enables particular interpretations of Indonesian environments while simultaneously limiting the completeness of those representations. Taken together, these contributions suggest that place in Kim Young Soo's poetry is best understood not as a stable geographical background but as a relational literary space where different forms of memory and cultural meaning are continually negotiated. The findings address the first research question by identifying how landscapes, recollections, and cultural symbols jointly construct representations of Indonesian places. They address the second research question by demonstrating that remembering and forgetting intersect with ecological deterioration, social

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

inequalities, cultural heritage, and intercultural experience. Finally, they establish the theoretical basis for addressing the third research question through curriculum recommendations concerning evidence-based close reading, ecological interpretation, and intercultural reflection. The analysis thus positions Kim Young Soo's Indonesian-themed poetry as a corpus through which the relationships among remembering, loss, and cultural encounter can be examined critically, while maintaining a clear distinction between literary interpretation, empirical social or environmental knowledge, and proposed educational applications.

V. Conclusion

This study examined how Indonesian places are represented through cultural memory, personal recollection, and experiences of loss in Kim Young Soo's poetry. The findings demonstrate that geographical landscapes function not merely as physical settings but as meaningful literary spaces in which remembered experiences, cultural symbols, and contemporary social and environmental concerns intersect. Representations of Kalimantan and Pulau Laut reveal the emotional complexity of personal remembrance, while the historical temples of Prambanan, Borobudur, and Gedong Songo illustrate tensions between cultural heritage, historical continuity, and perceived transformation. Urban and agricultural settings foreground social inequality and marginalized labor, whereas rivers, forests, and coastal environments connect remembered landscapes with representations of ecological deterioration. These findings indicate that the significance of place emerges through the interaction of material environments, culturally recognizable meanings, and the poetic speaker's particular perspective. Importantly, personal recollection acquires broader cultural significance through its relationship with shared symbols and histories, rather than automatically constituting cultural memory.

The study further identifies loss as a multidimensional literary experience encompassing personal, cultural, ecological, social, and intercultural dimensions. These forms of loss are interconnected but cannot be reduced to a single interpretive category. Environmental deterioration becomes meaningful through contrasts between remembered and represented landscapes, while cultural estrangement emerges through encounters with unfamiliar religious practices and historical traditions. Nevertheless, the poems do not portray cross-cultural experience exclusively through separation or misunderstanding. Representations of Chuseok in an equatorial setting, companionship across geographical distance, and imaginative engagement with Sundanese cultural traditions demonstrate that intercultural encounters may also generate emotional attachment, symbolic connection, and renewed meanings. The findings therefore suggest that remembering and forgetting, attachment and estrangement, and loss and imaginative connection coexist within the poetic construction of place.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in integrating cultural memory theory and ecocritical perspectives to explain how geographical environments become sites of remembrance, cultural negotiation, and social reflection within a specific Korean–Indonesian literary corpus. By distinguishing personal recollection from culturally mediated memory and examining environmental representations alongside social inequality and intercultural experience, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between place and multidimensional loss. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings provide a theoretical basis for incorporating selected poems into university literature curricula through comparative close reading, evidence-based interpretation, ecocritical inquiry, and intercultural reflection. These approaches may encourage students to examine literary perspectives critically, recognize the complexity of cultural representations, and distinguish symbolic descriptions from independently established social or environmental conditions. However, these implications remain theoretically informed recommendations rather than empirically demonstrated educational outcomes.

The findings should be interpreted within the study's methodological boundaries. The analysis was restricted to the Indonesian-language versions of 20 poems in a single bilingual anthology and did not include systematic comparison with the Korean texts, interviews, reader responses, or classroom-based evidence. Moreover, the researcher's co-authorship of the anthology requires continued attention to interpretive

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

reflexivity. Consequently, the conclusions concern the representations constructed within the selected poems rather than the poet's verified intentions, the actual conditions of Indonesian locations, or the effectiveness of proposed instructional activities. Future research could examine the relationship between the Korean and Indonesian versions, investigate how readers from different cultural backgrounds interpret the poems, and evaluate their pedagogical applications through classroom-based qualitative or mixed-methods studies. Such investigations would extend understanding of how literary representations of place, memory, and loss contribute to intercultural interpretation and critical literary education.

References

Assmann, A. (2015). Memory of city. Pitannâ lìteraturoznavstva, 92, 7–25. https://doi.org/10.31861/pytlit2015.92.007

Assmann, J. (2011). Cultural memory and early civilization: Writing, remembrance, and political imagination. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996306

Assmann, J., & Czaplicka, J. (1995). Collective memory and cultural identity. New German Critique, 65, 125–133. https://doi.org/10.2307/488538

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. Qualitative Research, 15(2), 219–234. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. Qualitative Psychology, 9(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196

Buell, L. (2005). The future of environmental criticism: Environmental crisis and literary imagination. Blackwell Publishing.

Buell, L., Heise, U. K., & Thornber, K. (2011). Literature and environment. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 36, 417–440. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-111109-144855

Cresswell, T. (2022). Writing (new) worlds: Poetry and place in a time of emergency. Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography, 104(4), 374–389. https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.2022.2113551

Erll, A. (2011a). Memory in culture. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230321670

Erll, A. (2011b). Travelling memory. Parallax, 17(4), 4–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2011.605570

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107

Gülüm, E., Leworthy, P., Tabaszewska, J., & Teichler, H. (2024). Memory and environment. Memory Studies Review, 1(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1163/29498902-20240007

Heise, U. K. (2008a). Ecocriticism and the transnational turn in American studies. American Literary History, 20(1–2), 381–404. https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajm055

Heise, U. K. (2008b). Sense of place and sense of planet: The environmental imagination of the global. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195335637.001.0001

Kim, Y. S., & Alwasilah, S. S. (2024). Merangkul dua takdir yang saling berpapasan [Bilingual Korean–Indonesian poetry anthology]. 도서출판 들꽃.

Martin, T. J., Esteve-Faubel, J. M., & Esteve-Faubel, R. P. (2021). Developing intercultural citizenship competences in higher education by using a literary excerpt in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Intercultural Education, 32(6), 649–666. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2021.1985804

Myren-Svelstad, P. E. (2024). Exploring poetry in dialogue: Learning as sustainable development in the literary classroom. ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment, 31(3), 672–693. https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isad003

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Porto, M., & Zembylas, M. (2022). The role of literature in intercultural language education. Intercultural Communication Education, 5(3), 86–104. https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v5n3.669

Rigney, A. (2005). Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory. Journal of European Studies, 35(1), 11–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047244105051158

Rofe, M. W., & Ripmeester, M. (2023). Memorial landscapes and contestation: Destabilising artefacts of stability. Landscape Research, 48(5), 609–614. https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2023.2192471

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.

ISSN [Online]: 2776-6381

Sutton, J. (2024). Situated affects and place memory. Topoi, 43(3), 593–606. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-024-10053-8

Syam, A. F., Nurhikmah, A., Ali, S., Basri, M., Abrar, A. E. Y., Masita, M., Ilmiah, I., & Rossydi, A. (2025). Lecturer attitudes on the integrated intercultural literary pedagogy for teaching public speaking. Croatian Journal of Education, 27(2), 649–686. https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v27i2.6120

Till, K. E. (2008). Artistic and activist memory-work: Approaching place-based practice. Memory Studies, 1(1), 99–113. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698007083893

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. Qualitative Inquiry, 16(10), 837–851. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121

Truman, S. E. (2023). Colonial crises of imagination, climate fictions, and English literary education. Research in Education, 117(1), 26–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/00345237231183343

Varga, Z., McGuinn, N., Naylor, A., Rimmereide, H. E., & Syed, G. K. (2020). We are invited to imagine: Using a literary text to encourage cross-cultural dialogue about citizenship. Cambridge Journal of Education, 50(4), 501–519. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1736002

2025. The Author(s). This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY-SA) 4.0 licence.