

## **THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF MAK ATA AND PAK ANON IN SUKURAGA PUPPET**

**Meira Saprila Salma**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi

e-mail: [meirasaprila77@gmail.com](mailto:meirasaprila77@gmail.com)

Corresponding author: [meirasaprila77@gmail.com](mailto:meirasaprila77@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

*This research aims to analyze the symbolism contained in the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon in the Sukuraga puppet. Mak Ata is a wayang character that is depicted as a woman, while Pak Anon is a figure or character that is depicted as a man. In this study, we will analyze the symbolism of these two characters using a cultural and philosophical approach that involves the use of symbols such as their color, name, and physique. This research provides a deeper understanding of local policies, ethics, and values embedded in Indonesian culture by understanding and analyzing the symbolism of wayang characters such as Mak Ata and Pak Anon in the Sukuraga puppet.*

**Keywords: Sukuraga Puppet, Symbol, Mak Ata, Pak Anon.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Puppet is one of Indonesia's traditional performing arts which has a rich and complex history. Puppet is not just entertainment, but also a means of conveying moral messages, mythology, and epic stories that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Sukuraga puppet is an art that includes into the category of contemporary wayang. This puppet contemporary because it gives rise to stories and characters that characteristic of this puppet itself. This puppet was born and grew up in Sukabumi around 1996 which was created by an artist named Effendi. Sukuraga Puppet is different from the type of puppet that has been previously developed in Indonesia, especially West Java. Sukuraga puppet art is made of leather and two-dimensional, different from puppet which grows and develops in West Java usually three-dimensional.

In the official website Sukuraga puppet ([www.sukuragafoundation.org/id/](http://www.sukuragafoundation.org/id/)) it is said that this puppet is a type of puppet whose story and characterization are very different from puppets in general. Puppet that grows and developing in Indonesia in general tells about the stories of Mahabarata and Ramayana and their characters also taken from the story of Hindu puppet in Indonesia.

According to Effendy as a resource person (interview, 2023) Sukuraga puppet is a type of puppet art show from Sukabumi made by Effendy himself in 1997. By the etymology of Sukuraga puppet comes from the word "part" which means member and "body" which means body. Matter this refers to the characteristics of Sukuraga puppet the creation is inspired by the human body. The application of inspiration can be seen from how Sukuraga puppet adopts body shape human

like eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hands, and feet, into the shape of the hands, feet, and heads of the puppets and motive.

Contemporary puppet is a puppet that is not bound by existing traditional packages. This type of puppet usually has unique and strange characteristics. Many forms of contemporary wayang have now been created in Indonesia as creations of the nation's children who have contributed to advancing art and culture in Indonesia, namely modern puppet and Digital Puppet. The presence of contemporary puppet is indeed enough to enliven the world of puppet today, from year to year new contemporary puppet are starting to emerge. Speaking of contemporary puppet, there is one puppet that is quite interesting at the moment because of its uniqueness, this puppet comes from the city of Sukabumi, this puppet named sukuraga puppet is an art that belongs to the category of contemporary puppet. This puppet is contemporary because it brings out stories and characters that are unique to this wayang itself. One of the important elements in a puppet show is the characters presented, including Sukuraga, Pak Anon, and Mak Ata.

Symbolism in puppet characters is an interesting aspect to study and understand, because each character has a meaning and message related to the culture and philosophy behind it. In this paper, we will discuss two prominent wayang characters, namely Sukuraga, Pak Anon, and Mak Ata, and explore the symbolism contained in them.

Pak Anon is a character who often represents ordinary people or the general public in puppet performances. He is often depicted as intelligent, courageous, and passionate. Pak Anon symbolizes courage, fighting spirit, and intelligence in facing life's challenges. These characteristics make him a character that can be identified by the wider community and a source of inspiration for wayang audiences.

Mak Ata is a female character in wayang performances who is often depicted as a loving mother or caregiver. Mak Ata symbolizes the values of motherhood, gentleness, and women's wisdom. The symbolism in the character of Mak Ata emphasizes the important role of women in maintaining family and community harmony and teaches the values of love and sacrifice.

We can gain deeper insight into local wisdom, ethics, and values embedded in Indonesian culture by understanding and analyzing the symbolism of wayang characters such as Sukuraga, Pak Anon, and Mak Ata. In addition, research on the symbolism of wayang characters can also contribute to preserving and appreciating traditional performing arts which have become an inseparable part of Indonesian cultural identity.

Based on the background of the study, the statement of the problem will be discussed are about what type of symbols found in Mak Ata and Pak Anon figur in Sukuraga puppet and also what are the meaning of the symbols found in Mak Ata and Pak Anon figure in Sukuraga puppet. According to statement of the problem so the objective of the study are to analyse the type of symbols found in Mak Ata and Pak Anon figure in Sukuraga puppet and also to analyse the meaning of the symbols found in Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet. The significance of the study can be devided into theoretical significance and practical significance. In theoritically this study will help the reader understand types of symbolism, both literal and symbolic, along with the definition and the meaning of each symbolism found in Mak Ata and Pak Anon figure in Sukuraga puppet. In practically to increase knowledge, awareness and to provide a clear

understanding of people. Practically, this research has significance for community to provide a new paradigm about the symbolic meaning of Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet.

## **THEORETICAL STUDY**

### **Definition of Symbolism**

In Sukuraga puppet each character has its own symbol. According to (Fadaee 20) Symbolism uses symbols to express ideas and qualities by giving them a Symbolic meaning that is different from the literal meaning. Generally, An object represents something else, giving it different meanings, more significant And deeper. Symbolism is when the author uses an object, situation, person, color Or even an element to give a given text a deeper and more internal meaning than the factual text (Monet 24). In this case, the object, the situation, the person, the color and even an element portrays other ideas than they usually represent.

Symbolism plays an important role in literature. The word symbol has a long and complicated history since ancient times. For example, color is used to represent various characteristics or emotions (Tavaragi and Sushma 117). White is a symbol of kindness, innocence and peace. Black is a symbol of evil. The villains in old movies often wear black. Red is a symbol of love or courage. Green is a symbol of hope, new life and growth (Vik and Vikova 17). In spring, the land turns green, bringing hope for a new season. Gold also symbolizes wealth.

### **Definition of symbols**

The idea of symbols appeared in ancient times. The definition of symbol has been the center of attention for many researchers, particularly when they tackle the issue of literature as a subject. So, one cannot help but wonder about the meaning of the word symbol. The Oxford Dictionary provides a precise definition of the word, “a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract” (Oxford University). It can be understood that the term symbol represents a word or phrase that indicates a level of reference beyond itself. According to Collins Dictionary, a symbol is “an object, person, idea used in a literary work, film to stand for or suggest something else” (Collins Dictionary).

### **Symbol in Literature**

A symbol maybe used contrarily in a literary work to signify a number of different things. Commonly, a symbol will present itself in the form of a character, a word, a figure of speech, an event, a name or an action. Some conventional symbols that commonly used in literature are as follows:

#### **Colors**

Color is one of the elements that can be a symbol in the Sukuraga puppet, color can also have its own meaning that can convey messages to other people. According to (Alam 3) colors have been commonly used to play a central role in literature because they are important to people around the world. Writers and poets primarily use color to create real-world images of characters, scenes, and events. The symbolism of the literary color conveys a deep meaning to the words and it helps to turn the written text into a larger instrument this time around. Color is used to describe nature, or to help the reader develop certain emotions and emotions for a particular object or scene.

## **Names**

Names are words which are symbols or verbal signs, through which the name of an object or living thing can have its own characteristics. According to Cohen, Anthony P. (1997) In his book, Cohen discusses the importance of names in shaping identity and the construction of symbolic meanings in the context of a community. He outlines how the names of individuals or places reflect the social, cultural and historical aspects of a society. Cohen considers names as symbols that play an important role in forming and maintaining social bonds in communities. Like the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon, although they are characters who have the same physical characteristics, it is through this name symbol that the characters Pak Anon and Mak Ata can be seen to have differences.

## **Physics**

Physical is the outer form of an object or animate creature, the physical can be seen using the human eye, can be touched and its form can be seen. According to (Polunin, Ivan. 1971) Physical aspects such as eyes, hands, feet and other organs of the body can have symbolic connotations in various cultures. Polunin identifies the relationship between physical form and symbolic understanding related to identity, social roles, spirituality, and mythology in society.

In addition, the theory of physical symbols can also be found in the context of art, especially in the fields of dance, theater or fine arts, where body movements, costumes and visual expressions have deep symbolic meanings. In this case, the study of physical symbol theory can involve more specific sources related to performing arts or visual arts.

## **Character**

According to Abrams (Nurgiantoro, 2012: 247) characters are people who are shown in a narrative work or drama, which the reader interprets as having certain moral qualities and tendencies as expressed in speech and what is done in action. Character is an important thing in a literary work, especially a novel.

Figures according to Aminuddin (2011: 79) that characters are actors who carry out events in fictional stories so that these events are able to weave a good story to read. From the definition above, the character is the perpetrator of the role in the story so that the story becomes interesting, the depiction of the character includes personality, character, physique that is in the character which is the foundation for the author to convey the message in the story, so that the story can be conveyed properly. Characters in novels are usually human to convey and explain the events experienced.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was conducted in the village of Sukakarya, Warudoyong District, to be precise at the Sukuraga Wayang cultural house. Wayang Sukuraga is a typical Sukabumi art that combines visual arts, music, wayang theater and literature. This art has received recognition from the Sukabumi City Government since 2016. This was stated in the Decree of the Mayor of Sukabumi City Number 55 of 2016 concerning Wayang Sukuraga as Original Art from the City of Sukabumi. In this study, researchers used qualitative methods which were carried out in the Wayang Sukuraga cultural house.

Data collection is done by conducting interviews. The interview guide used is only an outline of the problems to be questioned. This documentation researchers do through primary data and secondary data. Primary documentation comes from notes held by researchers during the interview process, and researchers record interviews via mobile phones, while secondary data, namely photos and videos, both from libraries and the internet. So that the data obtained can be accounted for, can be tested for truth, and the reliability of a data obtained in research.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Types of symbols found in the figure Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet**

The use of symbolism allows a writer the freedom to add different points of interpretation to a literary work. Symbolism, therefore, gives universality to the themes of literary work. Symbolism in the literature suggests an interest in readers as they find an opportunity to get an insight of the writer's mind on how he views the world and how he thinks of familiar objects and actions, also reader can have broader implications. In the figure Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet, there are many symbolism found. However the researcher focuses on three types of symbolism, symbolism of color, symbolism of Name and symbolism of body. These are the three types of symbolism found in the figure Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet :

#### **Symbol of colors**

Efendi gives color to each character's clothing with basic colors such as red, blue and yellow. Similar to the other Sukuraga puppet characters, the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon also have the basic colors of red and blue on their clothes.

Red is known as one of the primary colors that is widely used to symbolize courage. Red is synonymous with bold, passionate, aggressive and passionate. Positively, the color red means love, passion, courage, strength, aggression, independence, freedom, and warmth. Philosophically, this blue color describes a calm feeling and mind. That makes the color blue is often described as a security, calm, order and peace.

#### **Symbol of Names**

The names Mak Ata and Pak Anon can be symbols of identity that describe the characters and their roles in wayang stories. These names can carry certain connotations and meanings that describe the characters' personalities, traits, or social positions in the wayang narrative. The names Mak Ata and Pak Anon can also function as a symbol of existence or a sign that these characters exist and are involved in the story. These names represent these characters and symbolize their presence in the narrative.

#### **Symbol of Physics**

The physical appearance of Mak Ata and Pak Anon can have a symbolic meaning. Mak Ata and Pak Anon are depicted with all their limbs in the shape of human eyes except for their bodies which are described as the same as the human body in general. The physical appearance of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon is different from the other characters. But as a whole, the oain character is also depicted with parts of the body such as eyes, nose, mouth, ears and so on.

### **The Meaning of symbols found in the figure Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Sukuraga puppet**

The figures of Mak Ata and Pak Anon have deep meanings and have several symbols. In this discussion chapter, we will explain some of the symbols in the Mak Ata and Pak Anon shops. The following is an explanation of the meanings of the color symbols, name symbols and physical symbols of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon in the Sukuraga puppet.

#### **Meaning of Symbols of Colors**

In the Sukuraga puppet, the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon wear red and blue clothing. Each color must have its own symbolic meaning, as well as the colors on the clothes of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon. The color red is often associated with strong and symbolic meanings that vary in different cultures. In the context of the Mak Ata character, the red color on clothing or its attributes can symbolize courage, strength and fiery passion. The red color symbol on Mak Ata can also describe the power, majesty, and strength it has in the Wayang Sukuraga narrative. The red color can also reflect the traits that are brave, passionate, or even the passion for fire that is inherent in Mak Ata's character. The color blue, on the other hand, is associated with serenity, harmony and spirituality in many cultures. In Pak Anon's character, the blue color on his clothing or attributes can symbolize qualities such as peace, wisdom, and emotional depth.

The blue color symbol can also describe the calm and dexterity of Pak Anon's character in the Wayang Sukuraga story. In addition, blue is also often associated with healing properties, calm courage, or deep understanding in a spiritual or philosophical context. It is important to remember that the meaning of the red and blue color symbols in Sukuraga puppet can very depending on the context of the story being performed, as well as the interpretation of the puppeteer or tradition used.

#### **Meaning of Symbols of Names**

The meaning of the symbol in the name has an important role in shaping the character's characteristics and identity, as well as providing clues about the characteristics possessed by each character. Through the meaning of this name symbol, a deeper understanding of the roles and contributions of Mak Ata and Pak Anon can be explored in puppet stories that are rich in cultural and spiritual values. The symbolic name Mak Ata has a rich and deep meaning in the context of Sukuraga puppet. The word "Mak" can refer to a mother or grandmother, which shows Mak Ata's role as a mother figure or a wise figure. The word "Ata" can mean high or noble, which means shows the respectable status and position possessed by Mak Ata in the Sukuraga puppet story. The name "Mak Ata" can also symbolize the character's strength, courage and wisdom.

The symbolic name Pak Ata has the word "Pak" and it used in Javanese to refer to a father or an adult man. In the context of Sukuraga puppet, the use of the word "Pak" indicates Pak Anon's role as an adult male character and emphasizes his position in the story as a respected and wise figure. Although the symbolic name "Anon" or the word "Anon" does not have a specific meaning related to the Sukuraga puppet story, in general it can symbolize the qualities of simplicity, calm, or wisdom. The name "Anon" was probably chosen to reflect the character of Pak Anon who has a calm, wise demeanor and exudes an aura of simplicity in his role. The meaning of the symbol of the name "Pak Anon" describes the character's role and characteristics in Sukuraga puppet. The

name reflects the figure of a mature man who is respected and possesses qualities such as wisdom, calm, and modesty.

## **Meaning of Symbols of Physics**

The physical symbols of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon are described through their physical characteristics which are different from those of other puppet. If other typical West Java puppets have complete limbs in one character, such as puppet show characters and so on. In contrast to the sukuraga puppet, each character has its own characteristics and one limb dominates most of the body.

The characters of Mak Ata and Pak Anon have a characteristic that their faces, arms and legs are in the form of one of the limbs of a human eye. The physical characteristics of Mak Ata and Pak Anon are in line with the names of the characters given by the creator, namely Efendi, Mak Ata comes from the words eyes in Indonesian language and Pak Anon comes from panon in Sundanese language but has the same meaning which means eye. The physical symbols on the figures of Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Wayang Sukuraga can symbolize the knowledge and wisdom possessed by these two characters. because the face, legs and arms are in the shape of human eyes so that the eyes are considered as windows to the soul, and the presence of the eyes on the body of the puppet shows that Mak Ata and Pak Anon are wise figures, have extensive knowledge, and have deep insight into the world and events that occur around them.

The physical symbols depicted through the eyes of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon can also describe their ability to see and understand everything carefully and deeply. These eyes reflect open-mindedness, sensitivity to detail, and a deep understanding of situations and people around them. The eye as a physical symbol shows that Mak Ata and Pak Anon have keen observation and deep sensitivity towards everything. The physical symbols in the form of eyes on the bodies of Mak Ata and Pak Anon in sukuraga puppet illustrate the qualities such as knowledge, wisdom, insight, and deep understanding possessed by these two characters. The eye as a physical symbol provides a deeper dimension in our characterization and understanding of Mak Ata and Pak Anon in the puppet story.

## **CONCLUSION**

In Wayang Sukuraga, the color symbols, name symbols, and physical symbols on the characters of Mak Ata and Pak Anon have distinctive and important meanings in forming an understanding of their characters. The red color symbol on Mak Ata's clothing represents courage and passion, while the blue color represents peace and serenity. The name symbol "Mak Ata" reflects the character's motherly nature, wisdom, and strength. The physical symbols in the form of eyes on the bodies of Mak Ata and Pak Anon illustrate the knowledge, wisdom, insight and deep understanding possessed by these two figures.

In further research on the meaning of symbols in the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Wayang Sukuraga, it is suggested to expand the analysis of the other symbols present in these characters. For example, research can focus on the meaning of symbols of accessories or attributes used by Mak Ata and Pak Anon in wayang performances. In addition, exploring further understanding of the cultural context and traditions of Wayang Sukuraga will also provide deeper insight into the meaning of these symbols. By understanding the meaning of the color, name and

physical symbols of the characters Mak Ata and Pak Anon in Wayang Sukuraga, we can appreciate the richness and depth of the symbols contained in this wayang story. This understanding can also help enrich the interpretation and retelling of Wayang Sukuraga stories, as well as increase appreciation of the traditional arts and culture represented by puppet.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Alam, Md. Zaikul "symbolism : Theory, Function, Characteristics and Dimension." *Journal of University of Dhaka*. 2013
- Aminuddin. (2011). Pengantar Apresiasi Karya Sastra. Bandung: Sinar Baru Algesindo Offset Bandung.
- Cohen, Anthony P. (1997). *"The Symbolic Construction of Community"*. Routledge.
- Elmahdi, Omer, and Abdulrahman Hezam. "The Deep Meaning of Symbolism and Significance in *Men in the Sun*." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 33-39, 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1001.05>.
- Fadaee, Elahieh. "Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of 'Animal Farm'." *Journal of English and Literature*, Vol. 2(2), pp. 19-27, 2011. <http://www.academicjournals.org/ijel> ISSN 2141-2626.
- Monnet, Jérôme. "The Symbolism of Place: a Geography of Relationships between Space, Power and Identity." *European Journal of Geography*, Translated by Angela Verdier, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4000/cybergeogeo.24747>.
- Nurgiyantoro, B. (2012). Teori Pengkajian Fiksi. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Oxford University. "Oxford Learner's Dictionaries." Dictionary, 2020. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>.
- Polunin, Ivan. (1971). *Body Symbolism: "A Study of the Symbolic Interpretation of Limbs and Organs in Human Anatomy"*. Routledge.
- Tavaragi, Meghamala, and Sushma C. "Colors and Its Significance." *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 3, Issue 2, No.7, pp. 116-131, 2016. DIP: 18.01.127/20160302.
- Vik, Michal, and Martina Vikova. "Semantic Symbolism of Colors." *Journal of Technical University of Liberec*, 2014. DOI: 10.13140/2.1.3350.8161.