

Fine Art Symbolism of Buta Cakil and Harjuna Characters in Javanese Culture

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Abstract: Many of today's generation are unfamiliar with Purwa shadow puppets, both in terms of figures and symbolic meanings. Despite the fact that there are many noble values that can be used as a source of character education for the younger generation as future leaders of the nation. The objective of this study is to explain the implied and explicit symbolism of the art of form in the shadow puppet figures of Purwa Buta Cakil and Harjuna in order to better comprehend Javanese culture. This study was designed using a phenomenological qualitative approach. In-depth interview techniques, content analysis, and a literature review were used to collect the data. The validity of the data was determined by using the source triangulation technique and interviewing informants. Data analysis was carried out using the flow model of analysis technique, which included cyclical stages such as data collection, reduction, data presentation, and verification. The results reveal that Buta Cakil and Harjuna are symbols of two contradictory realities that exist in the Javanese cultural value system, mirrors of complementary pairs. The paradox of good-bad, smooth-violence, victory-loss, black-and-white, brightness-darkness, etc. The fine art of the two figures is part of Javanese culture in that it instills life values taught to the community so that their lives are safe and prosperous both outwardly and inwardly.

Keywords: Symbolism; paradox; pair; Buta Cakil and Harjuna; fine art

1. Introduction

Examining character education for Indonesia's youth from a cultural studies viewpoint is important. This is due to the fact that generations of adherents of a culture use its noble values as a guide to maintain the moral standards they taught [1]. Because education is the cornerstone of a nation, its character and value are significant and advantageous for the future generation. The younger generation will also take over as the nation's leadership from the older generation, which will have to step down in order to move the country forward in a better, more developed, and civilized direction [2]. But it is very unfortunate that it turns out that knowledge about culture which is full of character education values is no longer known by most of the younger generation. Even if it is known, it is still limited to only a small part of the people who still survive. Even a data that shows how sad the moral condition of the younger generation in Indonesia is in the midst of the idea

of character education in the Indonesian education curriculum. All levels of society, both those who are involved in the world of education and those who are not expected to play an active role as social controllers with the concept of planting character education designed by the government.

Character formation must be carried out and the results and continuously, involving aspects of knowledge, feeling, loving, and action. Character development can be compared to the development of a person into a body builder, who requires regular training of the moral muscles to become stronger and more powerful. According to Thomas Lickona [3], character is a person's natural disposition in morally responding to situations, which is manifested in real actions through good behavior, honesty, responsibility, respect for others, and other noble characters. This view is akin to Aristotle's assertion that character is strongly tied to habits or practices that are consistently carried out [4].

Several researchers have conducted studies on wayang kulit purwa, characters, and values of Javanese culture, including Faiza, 2021, who investigated character education and local wisdom, Slamet Subiyantoro, and Hasan Zaenuri, who investigate the value of character education in gunungan wayang sadat, and Subiyantoro, 2022, who investigates the symbolic meaning of punokawan and character education. [5],[6]. Astuti 2014 explored the figure of Harjuna as a gentle knight, and Maliki 2021 investigated the figure of buto Cakil as a media for Islamic education. [7], [8]. There have been no studies on the contradictory figures of Harjuna and Cakil so far. There have been no studies that have examined at how Javanese cultural values change, which are always binary oppositions in the setting of the two shadow puppet characters. The symbolic meaning of the art figures of the wayang Purwa or shadow puppets Harjuna and Buta Cakil in Javanese culture might be presented as a challenge based on the background of the topic above. The purpose of this study is to examine the representations of two wayang figures, Harjuna and Blind Cakil, within the context of Javanese culture.

2. Research Method

The study was designed using a descriptive qualitative approach. This study was structured around the concept of culture rather than a specific area, in this case Javanese culture. Documents/archives, places and events, and informants are instances of derived data sources. To collect data in accordance with the study objectives, purposive sampling was performed. The data were collected through a literature review, observation, interviews, and document content analysis. Interviews were conducted with wayang kulit purwa puppeteers, cultural arts observers, cultural academics, and enthusiasts of wayang kulit purwa. There are numerous places in Java where events are observed around the center of wayang kulit performances. To ensure the validity of the data, sources are triangulated and informants are interviewed. The data were then analyzed in cycles using interactive analysis, commencing with data collection, reduction, data presentation, and verification [9].

3. Discussion

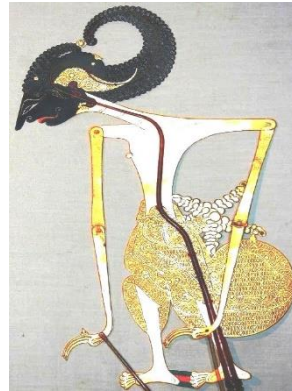


Figure 1. Harjuna Figure

Harjuna's character has had such an impact on Javanese society that people who are handsome and of good character are often referred to as Harjuna. A young man with many girlfriends is also known as Arjuna. More deeply, the character Harjuna has an impact on Javanese culture. During the seven months of pregnancy, an offering of two ivory coconuts is usually drawn, which is depicted by two figures in pairs, Harjuna and his wife Sembadra, as a form of hope that if the child is born a boy, he will be as handsome as Harjuna. Most Javanese people find this impression meaningful and positive [10].

The Mahabharata, which comprises of 18 parvas, contains several stories concerning the Pandhavas, including Arjuna. Not only is Harjuna's play popular as a reading in the palace environment, but it is also employed as an ornamental theme in temple reliefs in East Java, such as Harjuna Wiwaha's play at Candi Surawana, Partayatna at Candi Jago, and so on. Harjuna is described in oral and written traditions as having a perfect figure, a lovely face, a *pidexa* body (athletic), a smooth disposition, a brahmin spirit who likes to meditate, and a courageous knight who is always victorious in every battle. Harjuna has numerous benefits in wayang; for example, the third Pandu son is charming, manly, brave, pious, and the winner of all competitions. In the wayang spiritual realm, Harjuna's superior qualities are given specific titles, such as *Lelananging Jagat* for his character as a handsome and masculine man; *Satriya pinadhita* for his gentle nature, dedication, and skill in asceticism; *Mahabahu Jayeng Jurit* for his character who always excels in every match; and *Tohjalining Jagat* for Harjuna's life.

According to the several descriptions above, Harjuna is a figure of goodness that must be emulated in Javanese culture. Therefore, Harjuna's overall figure from head to toe is a tangle of symbols from the meaning of Harjuna's character.

Table 1. Harjuna's figure shape

Shape parts	Descriptions
Head Part	<i>Gelung minangkara, wali miring nose, liyepan eyes, and sumping pari sawuli.</i>
Wanda/roman face	sungging black colored
Body Parts	<i>Mangling neck, and pideksa posture</i>

Bottom Parts	limar ketangi cloth
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Table 2. Harjuna form element representation

Ornaments	Representations
Gelung minangkara	Shaped like a round bun like shrimp claws
Nose	<i>wali miring</i> with a sharp nose like the tip of a knife
Eyes	<i>Liyepan</i> eyes in the shape of closed eyes centered on the tip of the nose
Ear ornaments	<i>Sumping pari sawuli</i> is an ear ornament in the form of a rice sprig
Face color	In contrast to the golden skin on his body, the face appears dark black
Neck	<i>Manglung</i> with a long neck that leans forward and the head lowered
Body posture	Pideksa posture is neither too tall nor too short..
Covering Cloth	Kampuh limar ketangi is cloth with batik designs, circular gems lined up and ringed by small curved lines like hair.

Harjuna Figure Interpretant

Based on the data presented in the table above, it was found that the Harjuna figure can be understood symbolically as follows: First, a Minangkara coil shaped like shrimp claws. Shrimp claws, which resemble the link of two sharp serrated blades, are a lethal weapon for both freshwater and marine creatures. Shrimp have two pairs of claws on the front of their bodies that look like hands. That pair of clawed shrimp hands is undoubtedly a lethal tool for shrimp-eating predators. Sapit urang (shrimp claw) refers to a sharp weapon. The human brain's Minangkara coil, which means sharpness, is located in the middle and rear of the head. The mingkara coil might be viewed as a symbol of Harjuna's mental sharpness. Second, waling miring nose. Wali is a Javanese word that signifies a particular tiny knife used to slice the skin of an ox before turning it into a puppet. Wali, which means knife, symbolizes the sharpness of the sense of scent. Sharpness is also associated with sensory sensitivity.

Third, liyepan eyes. The word liyepan which means the eyes are closed, but not to sleep or sleepy, but half closed with the cornea focused on the tip of the nose in contemplation. With a focused outlook, this samadi attitude creates an interpretant of a humble and solemn attitude towards all work that is always founded on piety, namely trying as much as possible to achieve goals but just being sincere with the fate of the achievements obtained. In other words, all attitudes and behaviors are inextricably linked to the accompaniment of prayer.

Fourth, sumping pari sawuli. This is a Javanese term for a rice sprig. In addition to sumping Arjuna, the sawuli ray is used for badges or practices, such as the Radyalaksana of the Surakarta Palace, the Golkar Party, and the fifth principle of Pancasila. Rice sprigs / pari sawuli symbolizes food sufficiency. If pari sawuli is associated with a cotton sprig, it implies abundant clothing and food, but the core meaning is fertility. Fifth, dark black face romance. The dark color in the kawruh wanda wayang is associated with sangkan paran anasir Bumi, which means to accommodate and live.

The sixth, jangga manglung. The word's meaning is "the level of the neck sliding down." The neck shape is scratched with a chisel or sungging in three rows, top, middle,

and bottom. The attitude of bowing and three lines in a row are the interpretations that arise from the *jangga manglung*. In Javanese, the word *tumanduk* signifies "obedient attitude." The three strokes are related to the notion of *triwikrama*, which is the third phase in the Javanese structure that consists of *miwiti*, *nengahi*, and *mungkasi*, which means beginning, carrying out, and completing, being born alive and dead.

Seventh, *dedeg pidegsa*. The word indicates "middle posture, full body, not skinny and fat, neither tall nor short." The essence of its meaning is a balance in posture. The word has gained the connotation of moderate, simple, or *samadya*. In Javanese culture, the *Samadya* attitude emphasizes harmony in life.

Eighth, *limar kampuh ketangi*. The term refers to a cloth with a *limar ketangi* pattern. The shape of the *kampuh limar ketangi* pattern, as depicted by the representative above, is a scattering of bright pearls lined up and ringed by thin curving lines like hair. The interpretant that emerges from the image of the form is a scattering of pearl grains that make a complex and exquisite combination of ornaments on a regular basis. The Javanese convention's blend of beauty and intricacy is known as *ngrawit*. The *ngrawit* attitude is that of an adult individual who has evolved in regulating lust and can harmonize with all levels of life.

Harjuna is a positive symbol, as indicated by the previous description. In Javanese cultural society, *Harjuna* is also used as a guideline. Therefore, *Harjuna* is a symbol of goodness as well as guidance in actual life in society.



Figure 2. Buta Cakil Figure

The Buta Cakil's wayang character is placed as an antagonist in the overall storyline, which means that the main character hinders. Cakil appears mostly in the *Perang Kembang* scene, which is a specific war against *Gendiran*, Cakil against *Satriya*, particularly *Arjuna*. The term *perang kembang* does not apply to the meaning of flowers, but rather to a conflict in which flowers are used in various types of unique motion, particularly *gendiran*. It will be more effective to trace the meaning of the wayang Buta Cakil symbols using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, because the flow of the theory guides the exposure of myths and ideologies. This means that tracing this symbol will allow us to learn about the Javanese attitude and perspective on Buta Cakil's wayang works.

To unravel the ornaments worn on the Buta Cakil, see below:

Table 3. Cakil body shape

Objects	Buta cakil
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Body posture	Medium
Head shape	Opened, opened head looks spiky hair in front and curly pigtailed at the back of the head at the bottom
Mouth shape	Opened
Face	looks grimacing which fangs on the front of the lower jaw
Eye view	<i>Ngriyib</i>
Ear ornaments	elongate the petals of the <i>kluwih</i> flower
Shoulder Shape	<i>Njeplak</i> it refers a higher back
Back	<i>sangkuk</i> (slightly bent)
Stomach	Bloated
Cloth	<i>Rampekan batik ceplok</i> cloth

It can be fully described by ornaments which have symbolic meaning based on the data in the table above. Buto Cakil's image shows a human-like figure of medium stature. The open face appears to have spiky hair in front and curling pigtailed on the back of the head at the bottom. His eyes are 'ngriyib,' which means a narrow, nearly shuttered view. It appears peculiar for the size of the Javanese clothing code that the figure wears sumping sekar kluwih, particularly ear decorations that stretch like kluwih flower petals, but does not wear jamang as a headband.

The shoulders are njeplak, which means that the back is higher, the back is bowed (slightly bent), the neck is covered, and the belly is bloated. Hands dressed in warrior attire; shoulders and blibar bracelets, fingers are clenched and ready to pounce. The lower half of the body is covered in ceplok batik rampekan cloth, with wide feet, cindhe motif pants, ankles, and a keris with a frame that is quite huge in comparison to his body size.

In-depth analysis of Buta Cakil's symbolic body shapes based on interview data

The meaning of the object can be inferred from the representation text of the wayang image above, which reveals that the symbolic image is the Buta Cakil wayang, also known as Kala Bancuring, Klanhang Mimis, Gendir Penjalin, and etc. The puppet appears as the commander of the front-line soldiers, known as cucuking lampah in Javanese language.

Cakil is the lurahing prajurit, the leader of the senopati, whose posture is smaller than that of Kala Pragalba, Rambut Geni, Blind Galiuk and Buta Terong. Although his body is smaller but he has the king's trust as a warrior commander. His fast and agile movements, as well as his ingenuity in solving various problems, presumably caused the giant community to respect and obey Cakil. The hallmark of a cakil figure is its fangs in the lower jaw sticking out. From the position of the teeth, in Javanese terms it is called nyakil, which means the teeth sticking out to block the mouth of the upper jaw. Cakil's clothing ornaments look very quirky because his head is open revealing a tuft of hair above his forehead and the ends of the back of his hair that curl like a snake's tail. These ornaments are distinct from those worn by other giants, who typically wear jamang headbands. As a soldier commander, his slanted eyes appeared to be hunting something; exhibit attentiveness and responsibility. His kris appears incredibly huge in the kris

ornament compared to his tiny torso and hunchbacked back. His hands appeared powerful, with clawed fingers poised to grab the enemy. Cakil is Raja Yaksa's mainstay.

Cakil, as described above, is a symbol of negative behavior that ought to be avoided in daily life. Figure Cakil is also an antagonist who portrays a rough and negative image. Cakil is thus a transformation of Javanese cultural concept that regards it as a nasty thing, the polar opposite of a good Harjuna.

Wayang Cakil and Harjuna are figures that represent the realities of Javanese life and are used as sources of teachings that embody the value of character education, which is excellent to do and imitate while avoiding the bad. To do good is to imitate Harjuna's character. Cakil blind figures are those who engage in bad behavior. Meanwhile, those who exhibit good behavior are identified as Harjuna personalities, and so on.

4. Conclusion

Buto Cakil and Harjuna are completely contrary in terms of shape, character appearance, and other visual elements. Symbolically, Harjuna embodied the value of good character education and served as a role model for the Javanese community. Harjuna is a symbol of goodness, also known as Satria. Buto Cakil, on the other hand, represents the polar opposite, namely arrogance, wrath, and rudeness. These feature qualities should be avoided. Thus, it is apparent that Harjuna and Buto Cakil are symbols of the Javanese people's interconnected reality of life. Based on the results, it is possible to suggest the following; 1) The value of character education implied in the wayang kulit purwa figure must be institutionalized to the younger generation so that it is well understood that the wayang figure contains elements of positive values. This can also be institutionalized through formal education, namely by using the two figures as teaching materials. 2) The essence of good and bad character must be instilled in the daily lives of children at school and at home.

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