The Construction of Moral Symbols in *Murwakala* Text and Its Entanglement in Javanese Community Order

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Abstract. The study aims at scrutinizing the construction of moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text of Ki Suprapto, H.S., the designated successor of Ki Panut, one of the best Indonesian *Dalang*s (shadow-puppet artists). He was cordially invited to perform *ruwatan* (traditional Javanese ceremonies conducted to release people from misfortunes or threats) at Keraton Surakarta. Analyzing moral symbols is necessary to thoroughly understand the text as it shows not only a spectacle but also a guide for the community. The *Murwakala* text used as the data source is a story narrated by *Dalang Ruwat* named Ki Suprapto, H.S at the mass *ruwatan* in Nganjuk, East Java on Sunday, January 21, 2011. The study is projected to elucidate moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text, how they are constructed along the narratives, and how the symbols (and narratives) are entangled in the Javanese community order. The study reveals that moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text appear in the characters' names, the events in which the characters take part, and the objects used in the story. The construction of the *Murwakala* narratives depict the concept of Javanese philosophy *sangkan paraning dumadi*, an attempt to see the 'self' by interrogating its origin and life purpose. Moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text shape the order of Javanese community in terms of, for example, how they are supposed to spend time and communicate with others.

Keywords: Community order · dalang · moral symbols · ruwat(an) · wayang

1   Introduction

The existence of oral literature such as *ludruk, ketoprak,* and *wayang* is now going into considerable decline as their loyal fans are gradually limited to elderlies only. The millennial generation seems not to be highly interested in performing and enjoying oral literature. However, on-stage oral literature such as *Murwakala* is still performed in annual *ruwatan* events. *Murwakala* has been a 'text' read widely since the 17th century. *Ruwatan* is conducted to release the characteristics of *sukerta* (traits with evil aura leading to threats and misfortunes). The old and young groups are invited to join this traditional ceremony from beginning to end. Every year, RRI Malang organizes a *ruwatan* by playing *Murwakala* text. No less than 100 participants attend the event.

On Sunday, September 1, 2019, Blitar City Government held a mass *ruwatan*. Then, Saturday September 7 2019, the TMII Heritage Museum carried out a mass *ruwatan* attended by 62 participants. Rassers [1] points out that *ruwatan* is a ceremony intended to free people of the *sukerta* group, i.e., those afflicted with calamities and served as Bathara Kala's food. *Ruwatan* is a cultural ritual that aims to ward off disasters and adversities by acting out the *Murwakala* text.

Previous studies on *Murwakala* text mainly focuses on four aspects. *First,* studies looked at *Murwakala's* historical journeys such as those of Subalidinata et al. [2] and Rusdi [3]. *Second,* studies that analyzed its story patterns such as those conducted by Soetarno [4] and Kamajaya [5]. *Third,* studies that examined its ritual aspects. One of which is the study of Keeler [6]. *Fourth,* studies that focused on using *sajen* (offerings) were carried out by Brakel [7]. These studies do not specifically explore moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text, particularly that of Ki Suprapto, H.S, and its entanglement in a Javanese community order. One example of moral symbols in the text is the name 'Bathara Kala'. 'Bathara' shows his identity as a god; meanwhile, 'Kala' refers to both *time* and *disaster*. By referring to time, 'Kala' provides an order to how humans should spend the time carefully; otherwise, the time itself will destroy humanity. Furthermore, by referring to disaster, 'Kala' advises human beings to act properly to avoid disasters; however, when a disaster comes, they must take any ways possible to solve it [8].

This paper explores how moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text are constructed and entangled in Javanese community order. We raised three questions to answer: *first,* how are the moral symbols presented in the *Murwakala* text of Ki Suprapto, H.S; *second,* how do the moral symbols construct the narratives of the *Murwakala* text; *third,* how do the moral symbols entangle in Javanese community order in terms of the society's ideas (thoughts), values, and behaviors. We assume that the *Murwakala* text carries moral symbols that simultaneously construct the narrative and influence Javanese community order, such as their views of life, relation to nature, and ethics. It is the ideas (thoughts), as well as the values, surrounding the text that make *Murwakala* performance survive.

2   Literature Review

This section reviews three concepts relevant to the topic: literature and morality, symbols and meanings, and literature and social transformation.

2.1   Literature and Morality

Morality is generally defined as an assessment of what is 'right' and what is 'wrong,' what is 'good' and what is 'bad,' produced at the intersections between personal values, beliefs, standards, and negotiations in social settings [9]. Morality is a ruling system to get people to act collectively stably and productively [10]. Morality refers to norms that control attitudes and behaviors, particularly those that tend to benefit oneself and harm others, as well as to ethical habits passed down from generation to generation [11] so that morality can lead human beings to live a better life [12].

Morality comprises norms people consciously think about, question, revise, and conform to their ways of life. This notion distinguishes morality from the other two

types of evaluative norms. The first type is norms that are not questioned in a social setting and are thus adopted in an unreflective, almost automatic way (often referred to as 'ethos'). The second type is norms imposed on individuals by external forces and thus not freely and voluntarily adjusted [13]. In religious discourse, a sense of morality is integral to religious belief and practice [14]. Meanwhile, in the context of literature, morality is deemed as a part of life meanings and messages that any literary work should carry. 'Good' literary work is supposed to facilitate readers to learning 'good' values of morality [15].

Literature serves a potential role in the formation of readers' morality. Moral responsibility towards the environment has been one of the issues in literature. For example, the tale of *Batu Bergaung* from Central Kalimantan narrates the story of a King's daughter who is negligent of the nature. She always washes her hair with sesame seeds and lime in a river close to the Kingdom. As a result, the Kingdom of the Sea becomes a dirty, polluted, and damaged residence. The Kingdom of the Sea's inhabitants become helpless and weak. The underwater King's children die. For the Kingdom of the Sea, the sesame seeds and lime used by the princess for shampooing are dangerous poisons. The tale teaches moral values that human beings should take care of nature. The land, sea, and air in our environment is the home for the future generations and ecosystems [16].

2.2 Symbols and Meanings

The term 'symbol' finds its origin from the Ancient Greek, συμβαλλειν *(symbolon)*, which means to unite (in one unit), join, intertwine, add, attach (verb); sign or slogan (noun). Signs and symbols are key elements of religious and national dimensions in the communicative space. Symbols independently manifest reality, are not arbitrary, and are products of life and collective consciousness. The more meanings a symbol has, its deeper content covers [17]. Symbols can also be defined as shifting quantities, shapes, and organizations or as super-positioning objects. When symbols from various levels are hierarchically ordered, one can see how two ordered classes reflect two different worlds, namely the world of objects itself called signs and the world of objects that represent meanings [18].

On one side, symbols have a signaling function. They may refer to the meanings that are symbolized or to a set of meanings that are implicitly indicated. On the other side, symbols have a cognitive function. In some instances, they can help someone to solve difficult situations, although quite subjectively, by utilizing their interpretive capacity. In other words, symbols are spaces that allow one to model structural interrelationships for further practical applications [19]. Symbols do not express meanings; rather, symbols give people ability to make meanings [20]. Symbols have two significant properties: they are manipulable and point to something else. Naming or signifying something to commemorate a particular event [21], like the beaver officially adopted as a symbol of Canada in 1975 [22], is an example of how symbol(ization)s work.

Symbols, whose meanings are usually revealed through semiotic analysis, appear in most literary works. Literary works make use of symbolic language that is different from the language of mundane activities or the language of scientific works. In her research on *5 cm* novel, Astuti [23] showed that the work has several moral symbols. The meanings obtained from the characters' dialogues together create a unified storyline.

The meanings also carry some moral values with different dimensions, such as: (1) on the relationship between humans and themselves, e.g., honesty, hard work, self-confidence, responsibility, discipline, logical and critical thinking, curiosity, and love of knowledge; (2) on the relationship between humans and others, e.g., being aware of the obligations to self and others, obeying social rules, respecting the work and achievements of others, and being democratic and polite; (3) on the relationship between humans and the universe; and (4) on the relationship between men and God, e.g., obeying His commands and not doing things He forbids, being kind to Him, grateful for His blessings, and willing to make up His *qada* (fate) and *qadar* (destiny).

2.3   Literature and Social Transformation

Social transformation is defined as a change to better formally and informally organize society. Social transformation is a necessity to meet social goals. However, the transformation process always encounters external problems, including inter-community relations surrounded with conflicts, tensions, prejudice, and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion, and socio-political affiliation. Social transformation involves much more significant change, deeper insight, questioning assumptions, originality of solutions, and expectations in which unintended adverse consequences should be minimized. Social transformation may be found in theatre, mime, film, poetry, comedy, street murals, and protest songs. Some people use arts and literature as media for social change [24].

Literature is a socio-cultural product that can be fully understood when the socio-cultural background of the community that produces it is known. Literary works may be both the effects (products) of society's transformation and social transformation's causes (drives). Literature is never separated from social reality because it naturally works to reveal and record all aspects of human life changes [25]. Literature can transform the public's lifestyles, mindsets, and social structures. In Indonesian literature landscape, for example, Balai Pustaka novels have been admitted to triggering social changes. Even classical and oral literature such as myths and legends may also play a social function in changing the society [26].

Literary works are not created in a vacuum. Based on changing times, literary works of a particular period show characters differently from those of earlier and later periods. They are adapted to events that occur around the authors. Literary works portray the conditions of people living in the era when they are produced. New ideas and conventions can influence the way an author produces literary works. Social transformation may also shape the author's ideologies that, in turn, affect their work. One of the examples in which literature finds its correlation with social transformation is the emergence of mini fiction genre as triggered by technology development [27].

3   Method

Existing studies on the *Murwakala* text have not yet thoroughly discussed moral symbols and its relation to Javanese community order. This research seeks to elaborate meanings of moral symbols of the *Murwakala* text and how they contribute to the order of

Javanese community. The qualitative research data are utterances spoken by all characters in the *Murwakala* text of Ki Suprapto, H.S. He is a student of Ki Panut, one of the best shadow-puppet artists requested by Keraton Surakarta to hold *ruwatan.* However, Ki Panut narrated his version of *the Murwakala* text pattern, which differed from the Keraton's. This modification changed the meanings significantly. Ki Panut bequeathed his knowledge and skill to Ki Suprapto, H.S., who finally replaced Ki Panut's position as the shadow-puppet master artist and kept Ki Panut's patterns, narratives, and performance of *Murwakala.*

The data source is Ki Suprapto, H.S.'s version of the *Murwakala* text performed during the mass *Ruwatan* event in Nganjuk East Java in 2011. The data were texts delivered orally (oral literature). They were collected by tape- and video-recording devices. The video recording device is intended to back up the tape recorder in case of technical problems. The audio files were then, transcribed. Furthermore, the data were classified according to the categories of the symbols: names, events, and physical objects. Next, the symbols were examined to expose how they construct the story (line) of the *Murwakala* text. Finally, the symbols were analyzed in terms of their entanglement in Javanese community order through symbols and oral literature theories.

4   Findings

This section displays the results of data collection, which are categorized into three parts, i.e., moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text, construction of *Murwakala* narratives, and the entanglement of *Murwakala*'s moral symbols in Javanese community order. Analysis on the findings is presented in the subsequent "Discussion" part.

4.1   Moral Symbols in the Murwakala Text

The *Murwakala* text uses moral symbols in several ways, namely through names, events, and physical objects. The characters' names carry either positive or negative symbols; only a few have positive and negative traits. This binary 'positive-negative' opposition is a common division in the *wayang* (shadow-puppet) performance because it determines the characters' placement. Characters with positive traits are placed on the right side of the *dalang*, while characters with opposing traits are on the left side of the *dalang*.

Positive trait symbolization is identifiable in the characters of Narada, Wisnu, Brahma, Kandhabawana, and Sapu Jagad. Concerning their names, they carry out positive missions. For example, Narada brings positive traits as an advisor of morality affairs to examine what is considered 'good' and 'bad' person. In addition, Vishnu is a symbol of a good kid who is obedient to his parents and raise the parents' dignity. Meanwhile, Sapu Jagat symbolizes a nature-loving figure(s) who maintain environmental order.

Characters that symbolize negative traits are Bathara Kala and Sukerta. Bathara Kala is a symbol of human characters who are inclined to threatening the lives of others. In *wayang* discourse, *ruwatan* is a ritual to release people from such a Bathara Kala's "inclination of threats" to restore harmony. The same case is also found in Sukerta, which symbolizes human characters who live in a threatening condition. The threat results from his deviant behavior or the inherited deficiencies that place him under threat (Table 1).

Table 1. Characters with positive and negative traits in the *Murwakala* text

No	Characters	Positive	Negative
1	Bathara Guru	X	X
2	Bathara Narada	X	
3	Bathari Uma	X	X
4	Bathara Wisnu	X	
5	Bathara Brahma	X	
6	Bathara Kala		X
7	Dhalang Kandhabawana	X	
8	Bathara Sapu Jagad	X	
9	Sukerta		X

Table 2. Actions/events with positive and negative traits

No	Actions/Events	Positive	Negative
1	Bathari Uma refuses Bathara Guru's wish		X
2	Bathara Kala asks for clothes	X	
3	*Ruwatan* scenes: hair-cutting, kneeling down to parents, wearing white clothes, and opening the outer *ketupat*	X	
4	Bathara Kala chases after sukerta people		X
5	After following *ruwatan* ritual, the baby is bathed	X	

In addition to positive and negative traits, "dual personalities" is also found in *wayang*. Bathara Guru and Bethari Uma are two characters owning such double-sided traits in the *Murwakala*. Guru (teacher), who is supposed to be an ideal role model, have negative trait(s) as symbolized by his uncontrollable lust to curse his wife to be a demon giant. Guru's dual personality is also evident in his confession of wrongdoing committed. Likewise, Bathari Uma is a symbol of both a disobedient wife who does not submit to her husband and a pampering mother who over-spoils her children. Due to her mistakes, the character Bathari Uma turns into a demon giant named Durga. However, she finally transforms to a goddess after following *ruwatan*.

In line with the binary opposing traits of the *wayang* characters, the so-labeled 'positive' and 'negative' manners are also deeply conceptualized in Javanese cosmology. Table 2 shows some patterns of actions that symbolize the morals of *Murwakala* characters, in either positive or negative way.

'Positive' and 'negative' traits are attributed not only to characters but also to objects. In other words, moral symbols in *wayang* may be represented in objects, as shown in the *Murwakala* text (Table 3).

The characters' dialogues in *Murwakala* indicates their personality traits, as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Objects with positive and negative traits

No	Objects	Positive	Negative
1	*Bêdhama Maèsan*		X
2	*Éndhog saka cok bakal*	X	
3	*Banyuning sumur pitu*	X	
4	Kala Jengking		X
5	Kala Abang	X	
6	Kain Mori		

Table 4. Dialogues of *Murwakala* Characters

Characters	Dialogues	Coding
Bathara Guru	*Iya-iya Kala // Kaya-kaya wis rampung Kala / enggal angupaya mêmangsan nanging aja kongsi lali / Badhama Maesan saranane*	Bathara Guru's positive trait is seen when he advises Bathara Kala.
Bathara Narada	*Wa.., / kados pundi panjênengan punika // Kula wontên wingking Katêmben ngantuk / Ngantos panjenengan mbotên sumêrêp manawi kula katêmben ngantuk // Jatah-jatah ingkang panjênêngan ingkang paringakên kaki Kala / cara jaman samantên dipun sêbat / mêlampaui batas / mêlêbihi batas / Kêkathahên Adhi Guru*	As Bathara Guru's advisor, Narada does not hesitate to kindly warn the Guru when he makes mistakes.
Bathara Wisnu	*Srananipun / kirangan mangka paduka hanggadhahi kagungan putra pun kaki Wisnu / Timbalana kaki Wisnu / timbalana kaki Wisnu / supados nindakakên / karti sampeka anggenipun badhe hanjabêl mangsaning Bathara Kala*	Wisnu is in charge of preventing Bathara Kala's crimes by holding a *ruwatan* ritual.
Dhalang Kandhabawana	*Sumangga namung kêmawon / badhe angruwatakên putra punika / sarana sarananipun kêdah mantêp madhêp linambaran manah yakin /Panjênêngan kêdah ngawuningani bilih ruwatan punika saking têmbung ruwat / ruwat punika udhar / Ingkang angruwatakên punika mbêtahakên angudhari / angudhari mbêtahakên panyuwunan dhatêng ngarsanipun Gusti ingkang damêl jagad // Panjênêngan sudarmanipun / tiyang sêpuhipun / nyuwun kula dhalang nyuwunakên*	Dhalang is the incarnation of Wisnu. During *ruwatan*, Wisnu acts as Dhalang.

Table 4. (*continued*)

Characters	Dialogues	Coding
Bathara Kala	*Jênêngmu ontang-anting kêbanting / kowe dadi panganing Bathara Kala / Manuta tak pangan //*	Kala portrays evil traits. Kala eats sukerta people.
Bathari Durga	*Kula kintên mapan kêpara lêrês / Manawi paduka badhe cidra ing ubaya / hanyidrani dhawuhing ingkang sampun kawijil /* … *Paduka ratuning dewa ingkang tumindak mbotên adil / paduka mbotên kenging kangge paugêran pukulun*	Durga is the incarnation of Uma. Guru curses Uma as a demon giant because she presumptuously argues against guru. Durga represents a character with negative traits.
Sukerta	"*Kula inggih mêkatên Kyai Dhalang / anak kula punika namung kalih nama ugêr-ugêr lawang / mila ujare makina / anak kalih punika dipun ruwat / mangka wontên ing mriki / kula pados Dhalang paruwatan wontênipun namung ing ngriki / manawi tlatah ngare wontên / namung kula milih ingkang wontên tlatah mriki mawon*".	Sukerta has negative character traits. He lives under Kala's threat all his life.

Table 5. Characters' post-*ruwatan* transformation and Javanese community order

Charact.	Effort	Transformation	Order
Bathari Durga	Undergoing *ruwatan*	Bathari Uma	Behavior
Dhalang Khandha-bawana	Administering *ruwatan*	Changing sukerta to be better humans	Idea (way of thought), value, and behavior
Bathara Kala	Undergoing *ruwatan*	No longer eating sukerta	Behavior
Sukerta	Undergoing *ruwatan*	Believing in not to be eaten by Bathara Kala anymore	Idea (way of thought)

4.2 Construction of Murwakala Narratives

In general, the *Murwakala* storyline consist of three scenes or settings: pre-*ruwatan* in the *Kahyangan* (Heaven), whilst-*ruwatan* in the *Bumi* (Earth), and post-*ruwatan*.

The first scene is a series of events in the *Kahyangan*. It was narrated that Bathara Guru and Bathari Uma lived peacefully as a couple of gods and goddesses. Suddenly, a giant appeared, seeking for his parents. Bathara Narada advised Bathara Guru to acknowledge the giant as his son. The giant was indeed the god's descendent as Bathara

Guru had once been feeling a burning sexual desire but his wife Bathari Uma refused to have an intercourse, making Bathara Guru's *Kama* fall to the sea. It was Guru's *Kama* that in turn transformed into the giant. After being accepted as Guru's son, the giant asked for a name, clothes, and food. The giant was later known as Bathara Kala.

It was also narrated that there were overabundant humans die. Bathara Guru thought that his son Kala had eaten too many sukerta people. Therefore, Bathara Wishnu, Bathara Brahma, and Bathara Narada were sent to the Earth to cease Kala's barbaric human-hunting activities. Under Bathara Guru's approval, they decided to hold a *ruwatan* ritual. Bathari Uma strongly argued against the decision, which triggered Guru's anger. Bathara Guru cursed Bathari Uma to become a demon giant named Bathari Durga. Durga sought an apology and wished to return to her original form; however, the wish was rejected. Bathari Durga was then advised to come down to the Earth and find a *dalang ruwat.*

The second scene occurred on the Earth. It was narrated in the *Murwakala* text that Wishnu, Brahma, and Narada traveled to the Earth and incarnated into Dhalang Kandhabawana, Panjak Necklacelungan, and Panjak Seruni. The second scene also featured the journeys of Bathara Kala, who was chasing after sukerta children for food, and Bathari Durga, who struggled to find the *dalang ruwat*. Finally, Kala and Durga met Dhalang Kandhabawana and they, along with the sukerta children, were successfully released from misfortunes and threats through *ruwatan.*

The third scene displayed post-*ruwatan* activities in the *Kahyangan.* After attending *ruwatan,* sukerta children could live everyday life without any fear of Bathara Kala's threat. Kala was successfully treated, and he was asked to leave the land of Java. Next, the demon giant Bathari Durga returned to the graceful Bathari Uma. Then, Dhalang Kandhabawana, Panjak Necklacelungan, and Panjak Seruni performed a sacrament bathing before they finally transformed into Wishnu, Brahma, and Narada again and went back to *Kahyangan.*

4.3   The Entanglement of Murwakala's Moral Symbols in Javanese Community Order

Moral symbols manifest their ideas (ways of thinking), values, and behaviors in Javanese society. Javanese community order appears to be dynamic and open to transformation. Characters with negative (bad) traits can transform into the other self, i.e., characters with positive (good) traits, through *the ruwatan* process, a part of Javanese cultural practices. The following table shows the characters' transformation after undergoing *ruwatan* and how it entangles in Javanese community order (Table 5).

Murwakala is full of moral symbols that portray the complexities of human relations and the ideal conception of Javanese community order. The narrative, storyline, and language construction of *Murwakala* carries at least three orders: the *ideal*/cosmological order of society, the normative, *value* order that regulates human attitudes, and material order in the form of manifested *behaviors.*

The perfect order includes Javanese people's effort to find solutions to their problems. It can be seen from the struggles of sukerta people to get rid of Bathara Kala's threat. Not all characters undergo *ruwatan*. Some tries to relieve from *sukerta* traits by bathing in Lake Madirda. Furthermore, the value order is manifested in human efforts to carry out applicable rules of life. The *Murwakala* text itself contains some Javanese rules of life.

For instance, there are rules for how husband and wife engage in sexual intercourse, cook rice, and make good use of nature. Finally, the behavior order is presented as positive and negative attitudes throughout the narratives. Positive attitudes are evident in parents' responsibility to their children, husband's responsibility to his wife (and the reverse), and social responsibility. Meanwhile, negative attitudes appear in such unpleasant actions as being careless to duties or abusive to partners.

5 Discussion

The *Murwakala* text contains several moral symbols depicted both reflectively and constructively. The symbols reflectively show what happens in real life as *Murwakala* text provides readers with visionary messages conveyed in several ways, i.e., by names, events, and objects. Constructively, the moral symbols are likely to transform the Javanese community order.

A character's name in *wayang* symbolizes a particular behavior [28, 29]. Names in the *Murwakala* text shows positive and negative traits to convey the Javanese belief that 'the bad' will be defeated by 'the good.' The character's name that carries bad traits is Bathara Kala. 'Bathara' is a name attributed to the god while 'Kala' has two interrelated meanings: disaster and time. Bathara Kala is a disaster for sukerta people because he eats those who do not undergo *ruwatan*. Another reason for Bathara Kala's evil personality is because he was born inappropriately and at the wrong time. Bathara Kala was not born from his mother's womb, Bathari Uma. He was born because of a mistake made by his father, Bathara Guru.

One evening, Bathara Guru and Bathari Uma traveled around the world by riding a cow named Andini. All of a sudden, Bathara Guru felt a strong sexual desire. Bathara Guru invited Bathari Uma to have sexual intercourse but she rejected the invitation, considering that the intercourse should not occur in the open air and at twilight. The wife's refusal made Guru's *Kama* fall to the sea. The *Kama* turned into a flesh and eventually grew up into a giant named Kendhang Gumulung. After being recognized as a child by Bathara Guru, Kendhang Gumulung changed his name to Bathara Kala.

On the other side, the character's name that carries good traits is Bathara Wishnu. Wishnu was in charge of ensuring world security and social order. Wishnu defeated the evil Bathara Kala by disguising himself as Dhalang Kandhabawana and conducting *ruwatan*. Kandhabawana derives its origin from the word 'Kandha' which means 'to speak' or 'to convey' and 'Bawana' which means 'the world.' Therefore, Kandhabawana means someone who can speak about life values in the world and spread *kawruh sejaning urip* so that people can escape the threat of being Bathara Kala's food [30]. Dhalang Kandhabawana could answer all of Bathara Kala's questions and understand all writings marked on Kala's body.

One example of events in *Murwakala* text that symbolizes negative traits is Bathari Uma's bitter complaint against Bathara Guru's decision to reduce the amount of food for Bathara Kala. Guru was deeply upset about his wife's protest and cursed her as a demon giant. Protesting symbolizes a wife's disrespect towards her husband, which violates husband-and-wife communication norms in Javanese culture [8]. On the other hand, events that symbolize positive traits are depicted in a series of *ruwatan* ritual.

Sukerta's children, Bathara Kala, and Bathari Durga are the characters undergoing the ritual. They underwent *ruwatan* for different purposes: Sukerta's children to release themselves from Bathara Kala's threat, Bathara Kala to refrain from eating the children, and Bathari Durga to return to Bathari Uma.

Before undergoing *ruwatan,* the three characters did preliminary activities, such as hair-cutting and clothing. Hair-cutting means cleaning the dirt from the body. After that, they wear the so-called white mori cloth. The activities symbolize that anyone who undergoes *ruwatan* must purify their heart and surrender sincerely to God. After completing the *ruwatan* stages, Sukerta's children were released from Bathara Kala's threat, Bathara Kala felt comfort in his body. She no longer ate humans, and Bathari Durga returned to a goddess named Bathari Uma. *Ruwatan* can free people from negative traits. Javanese people believe that their bad qualities or destinies may be prevented or improved for the better.

Moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text also appear in the objects. The example of negative moral symbols is *Kalajengking* (scorpion). In a state of threat, this small venomous animal will carry out a savage attack. Meanwhile, the moral symbol that signifies positive traits is *bedhama maesan*, a tool Bathara Guru handed over to Bathara Kala to kill sukerta people for food. Bedhama maesan serves as a symbol of energy source. When Bathara Kala presented *bedhama maesan* to Bathara Guru in exchange of a baby, Bathara Kala's felt weak and helpless as if he had lost all his power.

All symbols in the *Murwakala* text designate Javanese community orders, including ideas (ways of thinking), values, and behaviors. *Murwakala*, in terms of Javanese people's idea, shows the origin of human beings called *purwaning dumadi*, i.e., when humans are born in the world and everything involved in their existence [30]. With all its ups and downs, life drives people to reflect on their 'self', trace their origins, and realize their ultimate goal in life. This way of thinking is represented in the character of Bathara Kala. He was initially named Kendhang Gumulung because he was bobbing in the sea. Then, he came out of the sea to find his parents. After being recognized as a child of Bathara Guru and provided with clothes, food, and new name Bathara Kala, he started hunting humans for food. As a result, Bathara Kala transformed into a threat to the Sukertas before finally meeting Dhalang Kandhabawana and requesting a *ruwatan* ritual. After undergoing the *ruwatan,* Bathara Kala felt comfort in his body and no longer ate humans.

In terms of Javanese values, *Murwakala* text depicts events experienced by, for instance, Bathari Durga, who was cursed by her husband Bathara Guru to be a demon giant. The event shows the value of respect and loyalty a wife should show her husband. Another character, Bathara Wishnu, was assigned to prevent Bathara Kala from eating the Sukertas. Bathara Wishnu held *ruwatan* for Bathara Kala and Bathari Durga. It represents the Javanese values of child's role in a family. A child should help solving their parents' problems. All characters in the *Murwakala* text show examples of positive and/or harmful behavior. Characters were getting into the Sukerta because of their negligence. For example, a woman was cooking rice and she negligently left it. When the rice was overboiled and spilled, the woman became Bathara Kala's food and needed to undergo *ruwatan.* All characters' attitudes in *Murwakala* suggest Javanese values and thus affirm the social function of literature [26].

The *Murwakala* text is always relevant because it reveals real-life problems humans constantly face. Not all people are born in a good condition. There are moments when humans make mistakes. In this context, the *Murwakala* text proposes alternative problem-solving so that they can return to their natural tendency of being better human beings who understand where they come and where they will return. It confirms the idea that literature as a social product can reveal and record all aspects of human life, including any likely transformation [25].

6   Conclusion

Murwakala is a symbol of the origin of time or the beginning of human life in the world. The symbol calls people to reflect on their 'self' and trace their origins. Humans are not born to be perfect. Some humans are born with deficiencies or destined to live unfortunate life of sukerta. Sukerta people tend to feel disturbed or threatened in their lives; therefore, they need to be freed from such disturbances or threats by undergoing *ruwatan*.

Moral symbols in the *Murwakala* text are presented by the characters' names carrying particular traits: positive or negative. The names depict Javanese people's belief that 'the bad' will be defeated by 'the good.' In addition to names, objects with positive and negative meanings are used to show that any entities in the world are in binary opposition, complementing each other. Besides, moral symbols are presented in the events that designate Javanese people's behaviors. Series of events that the characters experienced signifies an ultimate idea that everyone should live the life very carefully and vigilantly, understand what to do, and be disciplined in spending the time. For Javanese people, the implied advice derived from Bathara Kala's birth at twilight is that kids should not play outside their homes during sunsets. The shifting time from day to night is a moment to stop all outdoor activities because the dusk is coming. By that time, everyone should be staying at home to ponder their life in the silence of the night.

The symbols collectively construct the *Murwakala* story that entangles Javanese people's ideas on *sangkan paraning dumadi*. This concept encourages people to be aware of their life purposes, from where they come to where they will return. After conducting *ruwatan* for Bathara Kala, Dhalang Kandhabawana said: *Kala / Kala den eling sira / sira noble marang teak surangan / originira têka ora / sira noble marang ora / alisira têka ing jati ya muliha marang jati / ingsun sêjatining wasesa //*. The sentences can simply be translated as follows: *"Kala, always remember, go back to where you came from. You came from non-existence and will return to non-existence. I am the one who is responsible."*

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