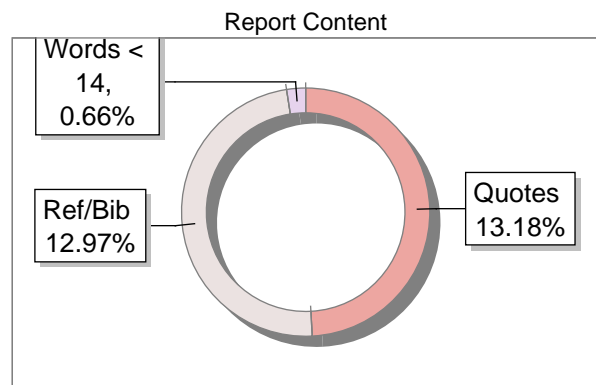
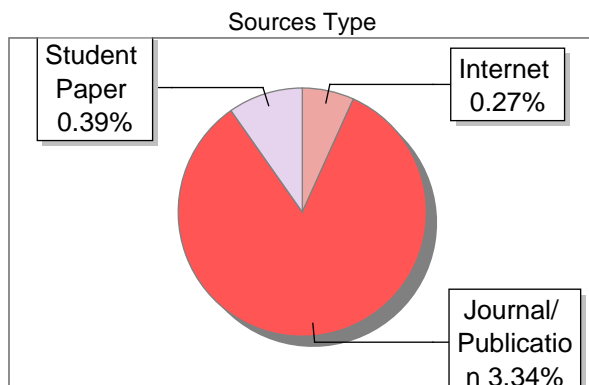
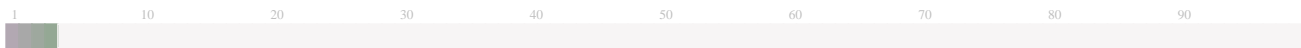


### Submission Information

Author Name	Rina Ratih
Title	Symbolism of three political powers in Arok Dedes by Pramoedya Ananta Toer
Paper/Submission ID	1823476
Submitted by	naning.wardani@staff.uad.ac.id
Submission Date	2024-05-18 09:45:36
Total Pages, Total Words	7, 3316
Document type	Article

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To cite this article: Purwantini *et al* 2018 *J. Phys.: Conf. Ser.* **953** 012020

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## Symbolism of three political powers in *Arok-Dedes* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer

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**Abstract.** This research entitled “Symbolism of three political powers in *arok-dedes* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer is aimed at finding the actor behind the act of taking over the reign. The three political powers fighting to take over the reign are military (Arok) collaborating with the dominating party Golongan Karya (*Brahmana*) to face the Old Order and the Indonesia Communist Party (*Tunggul Ametung* supported by King of *Kediri*). This research employs semiotic theory which results to the criticism to the Old and the New Orders. The smart and resourcefull Arok is a threat to his opponent and ally is the symbol of the authority of the New Order Soeharto, while Tunggul Ametung is the symbol of the Old Order Soekarno. The New Order rezim collaborates with Golongan Karya and the authority of the Old Order Lama collaborates with the Indonesia Communist Party which is anti to Islam. The political battle won by the military force supported by Golongan Karya directs Soeharto to his presidency as the second Indonesia President.

### 1. Introduction

There are three political powers in *Arok-Dedes*. Politic has a relation with trick, action, and any ways to obtain the highest social position in a country. The three political powers achieve this highest status and preserve it by carrying out either legal or illegal ways. Frankly, they realize that the path they take in the perspective of law is incorrect. *Temu* or *Arok* (the former name was used in the childhood, the latter was at the adulthood) was an unknown child with unclear genealogy and no one knows who his parents are since he was thrown away by the parents and raised up by peasant family. The intellectuals educate little *Temu* that he becomes a robust knight or military force member, of which he becomes master in war strategy. Little *Temu* becomes adult *Arok* with strong wit with broaden knowledge and insight he learned from the *brahmana*. With all these as the background, this research addresses a question, what do the three political powers symbolize?



## 2. Theory

To find out the meaning behind the symbol of the three political powers, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics theory is utilized. Semiotics deals with the study of symbol and anything relate with sign. There are three approaches in the theory of representation, i.e. reflectif, intentional, and constructionist. Reflective is a logical reasoning exposed to object, human being, and activities in the real world, and language functions as the reflection of the actual meaning as the real world recognizes. Intentional reduces the role of an author. Next is the constructionist which attempts to recognize the social character of language so that meaning has to be suited to the local culture. One of the examples of representation is traffic light - that is the traffic signs in the intersection. The colour of the traffic light has meaning, red is for 'stop', yellow is for 'alert', and green for 'go'. In certain culture red means blood or danger, even relates to communism, while green means the village. The meaning of colours is arbitrary (Stuart Hall, 2003: 24-31). The representation of reality is Auerbach's theme, so he had to make a judgment as to where and in what literature it was most ably represented (2003: xv).

Ferdinand de Saussure, a scholar in modern constructionist theory on language mentions that representation is a term for semantics. For Saussure, the production of meaning depends on language, and language is the system of sign. Sound, image, written words, painting as well as photo will function as sign when it is used to express ideas. So, in this case there are forms and idea or concept. The first element of sign that signifies thing is called *signifier*, while the second element is idea or concept which is signified is called *signified*. Although it looks like a sapare unit these two elements become the center of fact. The unstable scientific meaning of sign is called arbitrary. In this case, scientifically there is no strong chain between *signifier* and *signified* and it is uncertain. (Culler, 1977: 16-17 and in Stuart Hall, 2003: 31).

The arbitrary relation between *signifier* and *signified* because of its mixture with local culture and the conceptual meaning appointed historically eventually changes as well. For example, in centuries the western society related the word *black* with something 'dark', fearfull, malicious entity full of sins. But, the perception of black people in Americ in 1960-s changes after the phrase "Black is Beautiful" becomes a popular slogan. At last, the *signifier* 'black' is used to signify the meaning opposes the former meaning. So, language does not only yield different *signifier* both for its articulation and the phoneme, but language also produces different *signified*. This change and this movement result in the emergence of a concept (Stuart Hall, 2003:32). The relation between *signifier* and *signified* when they are used to expressed intended intentions is called *reference*, which means it appoints the thing, *signa*, and the activity outside the language exists in the real world. Saussure's prominent contribution is the study of linguistic in a narrow scope. This Saussure's theory is used as the foundation to make a generalization of approach to language or as the model of representation applied to cultural object in wider context and its practical uses. The theory to study signs in culture is called semiotics (Stuart Hall, 2003: 34-36).

Riffaterre asserts that the move of a certain sign from the level of one discourse to the other discourse is the scope of linguistics (1978: 4-5). Sign is anything that substitutes the other thing significantly (Eco, 1997: 134). For Pierce there are three types of signs, i.e. icon, index, and symbol. Icon is a sign that demonstrates the scientific element between *signifier* and *signified*, for example is the relation between equation and similarity. Index is sign that demonstrates the causal relation between *signifier* and *signified*, for example smoke which signify fire. Symbol is sign that does not have scientific relation between *signifier* and *signified* which is arbitrary, meaning sign is established by the convention of the society (Hawkes, 1977: 128-129). According to Peirce signification incorparates three parts interrelate one to the others: a sign, an object, and an interpretant (in Wilkinson, 2017: 366). There is no simple relationship between sign and object when one talk about this signification as a sign signifies an object only if it can be interpreted. A sign might come to signify its object which in turn will generate an interpretant.

This research employs descriptive method. The nature of this descriptive method according to Nawawi is, first, to give attention to problem. Second, describe the fact of the problem under scrutiny completed with the

rational interpretation. Besides these two natures, there are additional points which involve survey, the study of relation, and the study of development (2012: 68).

### 3. Results and Discussion

Before the colonial era, the eastern part of Java was the location of great kingdoms that reached their triumph, but each fell due to war to win authority over the others. King Airlangga reigned between 1019-1049 with Kediri as the central of the government. Before reaching the power and authority, he used to go for adventures to the jungle to obtain dignity.

Signifier in novel *Arok-Dedes* are in the proper names of prominent characters in the novel such as Kretajaya, Tunggul Ametung, Arok, Dedes, Kebo Ijo, Dang Hyang Lohgawe, Tantripala, Lembung, Belakangka, Empu Gandring, Bango Samparan, etc. the signified of those characters have significant role in the society. For Abrams there are two settings, i.e temporal and spatial (1981: 175). The temporal structure used in the novel was in 1220 and the spatial structure uses Tumapel and Kediri. Kretajaya was the King who ruled Kediri Kingdom, the ancestor of Airlangga. Kretajaya was the last King who ruled Kediri started 1188 to 1222 AD. In history, Kretajaya was defeated by Arok who moved the central of the government in Singosari.

#### 3.1. Social stratification in Novel *Arok-Dedes*

In novel *Arok-Dedes* readers can find social classes or *kasta*. The highest *kasta* is *brahmana*, then *satria*, and the lowest is *sudra*. In the context of politics anyone can move from one *kasta* to the other because of one's intellectual capacity or becomes the *Akuwu* because of one's close relation with the King. Tunggul Ametung who came from the *sudra* move to a higher *kasta* because of King's wish. He became an *Akuwu*, a person who ruled certain smaller area (county), in this case he moved from the *sudra* to *brahmana*. It happened to Arok when his name was Temu, Arok was a *sudra*; he learned the strategy of war that made him a *satria*, and after studying and learning a lot more Arok passed and entitled to be a *brahmana*. This is described in an excerpt from the novel below.

*You are eligible to gain a better position, a ksatria. Erlangga once asserted: triwangsa was not decided by the gods, but human could move from one class position to the other one, from lower to the highest kasta because of one's commitment, sudra can move to satria, sudra can move to brahmana. Since then triwangsa is not pure anymore. I am a brahmana not because of the quality of my family but because of my knowledge and insight. And you, Temu, you could become a satria because of your capacity and ability. Given your conduct which does not belong to sudra, you are a satria. Your eyes are the eyes of a satria, not a brahmana. You deserve to get weapons (Ananta Toer, 2015: 85).*

#### 3.2. Relation between signifier and signified

The three political powers in novel *Arok Dedes* as mentioned above has the relation of signified and signifier. The first political power filled by the ones in ruling position in Kediri kingdom under the reign of King Kretajaya. He assigned Tunggul Ametung as an *Akuwu* in Tumapel county to escort the transfer process of the King's treasure from Tumapel to Kediri. Tunggul Ametung himself belongs to *sudra* and was once a robber. Tunggul Ametung was assigned by King Kretajaya to escort the treasure he got from the robbery.

The second political power is Arok whose power is at his wit and resourcefulness. Arok is a *sudra* with unclear genealogy because when he was a baby was left and thrown away by his parents in front of the gate of a village and laid down on an old mat. A farmer named Lembung found and took him home. Because Lembung family does not have son then this baby was taken as a foster baby and was named Temu. Temu was assigned as the shepherd of Lembung's cows and lambs. Temu was a good shepherd. When Temu found a child neighbor cried because his lamb was stolen by Tumapel soldiers, Temu stole a lamb of his other neighbor and gave it to the child. This was the genesis of Temu becoming a thief. While Temu was on the prairie taking his animals he played around and one of the animals was killed by a tiger. Lembung, Temu's foster father was very angry

and Temu decided to leave his foster parent's house. Temu joined the flock of thieves and robbers so that he involved in fightings. Sometimes he got hurt. When Tumapel soldiers chased him, Temu ran away and was helped by Bango Samparan. Bango sent Temu to Dang Hyang Lohgawe, Temu changed his name into Arok which meant the Developer. Arok, was a sudra, and this made him a satria (a knight) and at last became a brahmana. Then Arok was sent by Lohgawe to Tumapel to extinct political rebellion although the main aim was to kill Tunggul Ametung.

The *brahmana* is the third political power beside his role as an intellect; brahmana is a prominent figure in Syiwa (a religion). Lohgawe is an expert of war strategy and Arok was his golden student. When Arok had a plan to kill Tunggul Ametung with his own hand, Lohgawe forbode it as Tunggul Ametung was a *sudra* from the Wisynu religion who was assigned by King Kretajaya to rule in Tumapel (a county). If Arok had killed Tunggul Ametung and substituted him as ruler of a Tumapel county, all kings in Java would be angry and Arok would have been punished

### 3.3. Symbolism of Three Political Powers in Novel Arok-Dedes

Novel *Arok-Dedes* is written in Buru Island in the era of New Order. Tunggul Ametung was a symbol of Soekarno who had more than one wives and the last wife is Dedes. Tunggul Ametung was killed by Arok by the help of Dedes, but Arok killed Kebo Ijo. The killing strategy Arok employed to kill Tunggul Ametung was inspired by *Surat Perintah sebelas Maret* (a Decree) well known as Super-Semar which was symbolized by Dedes (Purwantini, 2017). Tunggul Ametung died killed by Arok, not by Kebo Ijo. Arok was the symbol of Soeharto. Kebo Ijo's destiny was the same with General Nasution's faith who was accused by the Revolution Council.

*"Catch Kebo!" Arok gave command.*

*The spears of the escorting troop undersieged Kebo Ijo. Sword in his hand fell over the floor.*

*Cacth all the outside privates!*

*Most of the guards ran and undersieged the privates in the hall. Tie them up. And Kebo Ijo was Tied up.*

*"Murderer of Akuwu!"*

*"He's dead already when I came in, said Kebo. His voice and legs trembled.*

*"Lier! Your sword and hans are full of blood"*

*"My dear ....! My dear ....! Ken Dedes cried, bent to her husband.*

*"How many times did you beat your sword on to him ?" Arok insisted.*

*"Only once on his belly." (Ananta Toer, 2015: 524-525)*

### 3.4. The Diagram of the Relation of signified-signifier and the symbol of three political Powers

Figure 1 shows relation of the signified-signifier and the symbol of three political powers . The *brahmana* who supports Arok is the symbol of Golongan Karya (Golkar). Golkar was created by the Joint Secretariat of Golkar on 2 October 1964 as initiated by Indonesian Military Arm Forces (ABRI) to stand Indonesian Communist Party in the National Front. Golkar in this context was identical with the development and the biggest supporter of The New Order. Outside Golkar is the military, civil bureaucracy, the mass organization, the entrepreneurs, and the traditional group (Puspoyo, 2012: 106). Between 1961-1965, there was a triangle game which involved Soekarno, PKI and the army. This triangle powers collide to each other until one of them becomes the winner and the military force becomes the winner.

The military group holds the intellectuals because they are allergic to parties in the period of Soekarno regime in 1950-s. To counter balance the political party, Soeharto uses independent group led by the anti Soekarno and anti-PKI intellectual groups. However, Soeharto leaves this idea and chooses Golkar secretariat created since 1964 as the prominent political means (Suryadinata, 1992: 28).



**Figure 3.** Diagram of the Relation of signified-signifier and the symbol of three political Powers

#### 4. Conclusion

Pramoedya's novel *Arok Dedes* is a criticism to the authority of the New Order, Soeharto who won the war battle in oppose to the Old Order. Three political powers are the military force that collaborate Golongan Karya to fight Soekarno. Yet, inside the military force has been fractured, the founding father of Golkar was Nasution, but Soeharto makes use of Golkar which had turned a huge mass organization as his vehicle. Generale Nasution as Golkar founding father was abandoned and left behind, as if the assassinated *Kebo Ijo*.

In summary, Soeharto's power who was supported by the intellectuals and the religious men in the country won the battle against Soekarno who was backed up by the communist Indonesian leaders. To win this battle one has to use war strategy once had been used by Arok, that was by accusing *Kebo Ijo* as the murderer of *Tunggul Ametung*, who collaborated with an insider. The insider is Dedes, and Dedes is the symbol of the Decree of March eleven (better known as SUPERSEMAR).

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