

## A SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS OF BATIK GEDOG TUBAN MOTIFS AS INSPIRATION FOR POETRY CREATION

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### Abstract

Batik Gedog Tuban is a local cultural heritage rich in symbolic meaning, but its potential as a source of literary inspiration is still rarely explored. This study aims to analyze the symbolic meaning of Batik Gedog Tuban motifs as a source of inspiration for poetry creation. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, with data collected through visual documentation and interviews with Batik Gedog Tuban sellers. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validation was performed using source triangulation to ensure accuracy. The results show that motifs such as Kembang Wuluh, Tumpal, Ganggeng, Lokcan, Beras Kutah, and Tujuh Rupa carry philosophical meanings that can be transformed into poetry, enriching literary expression while strengthening Tuban's cultural identity. This research highlights the importance of integrating visual arts and literature for cultural preservation and opens up opportunities for applying similar concepts to other traditional art forms. The study contributes to expanding the understanding of the relationship between visual symbols and literary expression and promotes the use of local cultural richness in education and community creativity development.

**Keywords:** Poetry, Symbolism, Batik Gedog Tuban

### INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a form of literary work that conveys the writer's feelings and thoughts (Wijayanti, 2019). It is also an expression of self-reflection composed with imaginative word choices (Dirman, 2022). Furthermore, poetry is an expression in the form of beautiful and meaningful language (Awalludin, Agustina, & Inawati, 2022). Therefore, poetry represents the poet's emotional expression through the use of beautiful and meaningful language.

In general, poetry is divided into two types: traditional poetry and free verse (Ginting, Sidiqin, & Mawaddah, 2022). Meanwhile, Jayanti, Surastina, and Permanasari (2022) state that there are three types of poetry: traditional, modern, and contemporary. Wicaksono and Mujiyono (2023) categorize poetry into narrative, lyric, and descriptive types. Thus, poetry is generally classified into two main types: traditional and modern poetry.

Traditional poetry is characterized by being passed down orally without a known author and adheres to strict writing rules (Launjara, 2024). On the other hand, modern poetry has a known author, features free-form writing, and is delivered both orally and in written form (Pitaloka & Sundari, 2020). According to Hawa (2017), poetry has unique features in its thematic structure, employing words that convey both literal and figurative meanings. Essentially, traditional and modern poetry differ in terms of authorship clarity, writing rules,

and modes of delivery. Poetry employs diction and figurative language as a means of communication and social interaction through symbolic use.

Symbolism refers to meaningful representations used verbally or nonverbally in social interaction (Effendi et al., 2024). In a social context, symbols are defined as objects used to represent something (Citraningsih & Noviandari, 2022). Jemias and Rahman (2022) support this by stating that symbols are objects used to convey meaning through physical forms, words, or behavior that reflect certain values. Therefore, symbolism is the use of objects to represent meaning in social interaction.

Symbolism is categorized into three main types: iconic signs, indexical signs, and symbols (Rahmawati & Hakim, 2023). According to Hendro (2020), these three types are used to convey meaning in human life: iconic, indexical, and symbolic. Meanwhile, Saifuddin in Pramanik et al. (2021) adds that symbolism encompasses elements such as art, gestures, clothing, rituals, religion, kinship, and ownership. Thus, symbolism consists of three main types: iconic, indexical, and symbolic.

Symbolism functions as a social guide, a tool for conveying implicit meanings, and a medium for delivering moral values (Wati, Karim, & Wilyanti, 2023). It also serves as a medium for cultural education (Susilaningtyas, Suprijono, & Jacky, 2020) and as a tool for transmitting values and unifying cultures (Nirwan et al., 2023). In essence, symbolism functions as a social guideline, a means of communication, and a way to preserve culture. Symbolic elements rich in cultural value can be found in Gedog batik.

Gedog batik is a flagship product of Tuban Regency that reflects local cultural values (Satriyani & Segara, 2022). It is also a distinctive batik craft from Tuban (Jannah, Irawati, & Purnomo, 2019). According to Kartikasari, Zaki, and Saifudin (2024), Gedog batik is a traditional cloth from Tuban, formerly worn during customary ceremonies and filled with philosophical motifs. Gedog batik is a cultural product of Tuban distinguished by its rich traditional values.

Gedog batik was brought to Tuban by Laksamana Cheng Ho from China and adopted by Ki Jontro (Sari, Nisrina, & Anggana, 2022). However, Gedog batik emerged from a process of cultural acculturation among Javanese, Islamic, and Chinese traditions in Tuban (Maulida & Agustin, 2020). According to Qomariyah (2017), the proximity of Lasem known for its renowned batik tradition—has also supported the growth of batik in Tuban. Thus, Admiral Cheng Ho introduced Gedog batik to Tuban, and Ki Jontro adopted and developed it among the local community.

The motifs of Gedog batik represent a blend of Javanese, Islamic, and Chinese cultural patterns (Pratiwi & Sulistyowati, 2020). These patterns give Gedog batik its distinctive stylistic strokes (Widiana, Retnowati, & Slamet, 2022). In 1987, the Tuban Regency Government patented 40 out of 100 Gedog batik motifs (Kartikasari & Sarmini, 2017). Thus, Gedog batik consists of 40 patented motifs with distinctive designs that integrate Javanese, Islamic, and Chinese cultural values.

A study on the symbolic analysis of Gedog batik motifs from Tuban is important because this type of batik is rich in cultural values and philosophical meanings of Tubanese society. Through symbolic analysis, it becomes evident that batik motifs reflect identity, tradition, and social values expressed creatively in poetry. This study also contributes to the preservation of local culture by combining visual art with literary expression.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative research is characterized by a systematic, well-planned structure, clearly organized from the initial stages through to the research design (Rahman & Kurniawati, 2021).

The data in this study consist of photographs and interview excerpts, obtained through documentation and interviews with sellers of Gedog batik native to Tuban.

The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman content analysis model. According to Miles and Huberman, the process of data analysis during data collection requires researchers to constantly shift between reflecting on existing data and seeking ways to gather new data (Sofwatillah et al., 2024). In the Miles and Huberman model, data analysis involves three main components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

### a. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of summarizing, selecting essential points, focusing on significant information, identifying patterns and themes, and discarding irrelevant data (Thalib, 2022). This process is highly relevant as it helps filter and highlight key symbols found in the motifs of Gedog batik from Tuban, thus making it easier for the researcher to identify meanings and themes that serve as inspiration for poetry creation.

### b. Data Display

Data display is the process of organizing information in a way that enables the researcher to draw conclusions, usually presented in the form of short narratives, diagrams, or other similar formats (Zulfirman, 2022). Presenting the data systematically is essential for organizing the results of the symbolic analysis of Gedog batik motifs, facilitating understanding and interpretation as a foundation for creating poetry.

### c. Conclusion Drawing

Conclusion drawing is a process that begins during field data collection, aiming to capture the meaning and significance of the collected information (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). This step helps to reveal the symbolic meanings of Gedog batik motifs, which become the foundational inspiration for the creation of poetic works.

Data validation was carried out through source triangulation. Source triangulation is a technique used to test the validity of data by gathering information from multiple informants (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). This technique allows for checking the consistency and accuracy of data by comparing information from various perspectives, thereby strengthening the validity of findings related to the symbolism in Gedog batik motifs as a source of inspiration for poetic creation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Batik Gedog Tuban holds deep cultural values and symbolic meanings. The motifs of Batik Gedog reflect the local wisdom and identity of Tuban Regency, serving as a source of inspiration for poetry that highlights both visual beauty and implied cultural meanings. The following are motifs that can serve as inspiration for poetic creation.

## 1. Kembang Wuluh Motif

One of the motifs of Batik Gedog Tuban is the Kembang Wuluh motif. This motif is inspired by the pumpkin (waluh) plant, which creeps along the ground and thrives in Tuban's agrarian environment. It features delicate tendrils and pumpkin flowers that trail in a flowing and interwoven pattern, symbolizing growth and fertility. The uniqueness of this motif lies in the fusion of the plant's natural, flowing forms with traditional batik patterns. This motif can be seen as follows.



Figure 1. Kembang Wuluh Motif

Based on the interview results regarding the Kembang Wuluh motif, it is revealed that this motif symbolizes happiness and goodness that triumph over evil. This philosophy is drawn from the nature of the pumpkin plant, which creeps and suppresses the surrounding weeds—interpreted as goodness that drives away negativity in life. This motif also represents a hope that its wearer will always receive blessings and live in harmony. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: "What is the meaning of the Kembang Wuluh motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?"

Informant: "The Kembang Wuluh motif carries the meaning of happiness and goodness that can overcome negative things. Its philosophy comes from the pumpkin plant that spreads and covers the wild grass around it. So, the essence is that goodness can drive away the negative aspects of our lives."

Interviewer: "What is the connection between the Kembang Wuluh motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?"

Informant: "For the people of Tuban, the Kembang Wuluh motif means a hope that our lives will always be good, full of blessings, and harmonious. Just like the pumpkin plant that creeps and eliminates the weeds around it."

Based on the symbolism in the Kembang Wuluh motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that could be created is one titled "The Traces of Goodness." An excerpt from the poem can be seen below.

### **The Traces of Goodness**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Creeping gently among the thorns,  
Pressing down the lurking shadows,  
Spreading peace, erasing sorrow.

Each leaf bears a hope,  
A path of life that holds grace,  
Harmony flows with every step.

In silence, goodness continues to grow,  
Defeating darkness with light,  
Bringing everlasting and whole happiness.

## 2. Tumpal Motif

The Tumpal motif serves as a border or edging on batik fabric. It is characterized by repeated triangular shapes or bold lines that form a neat pattern along the edge of the cloth. The simplicity and firmness of this motif creates a clear boundary effect while enhancing the aesthetic of the batik, emphasizing the importance of rules and boundaries in life. This motif can be seen as follows.

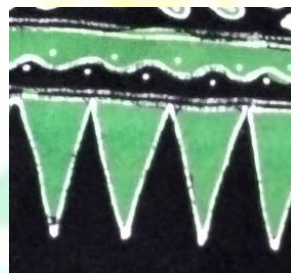


Figure 2. Tumpal Motif

Based on the interview results, the *Tumpal* motif carries a meaning that represents the boundaries in human life social, moral, and normative that must be upheld in order for society to remain harmonious and orderly. Although people may desire to do everything without limits, this motif teaches that it is far better to understand and respect those boundaries, as doing so allows communal life to proceed in balance, order, and peace. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: “What is the meaning of the Tumpal motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?”

Informant: “The Tumpal motif teaches us to respect social, moral, and normative boundaries so that we can live together in harmony and order.”

Interviewer: “What is the connection between the Tumpal motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?”

Informant: “The Tumpal motif is important for the people of Tuban because it reminds us to always uphold boundaries and rules so that life here remains peaceful and orderly.”

Based on the meaning within the Tumpal motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that may be created is titled "The Guarding Boundaries." An excerpt from this poem can be seen below.

## **The Guarding Boundaries**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Triangles aligned in steady stride,  
Guarding the line between heart and speech,  
Subtle borders, unseen yet true,  
To keep the world bound and renewed.

Though desires may wish to freely soar,  
These borders are lanterns in the night's uproar,  
Teaching us to be aware,  
That freedom needs a fence with care.

In every corner, a sacred feeling weaves,  
Peace preserved, and pain relieved,  
This image speaks the soul's decree,  
So life together stays balanced and meaningful, peacefully.

### **3. Ganggeng Motif**

The Ganggeng motif is inspired by seaweed or algae. Algae are one of the marine riches of Tuban Regency. This motif is characterized by patterns resembling seaweed swaying in the water, shaped like a millipede in motion symmetrical and orderly. The Ganggeng motif is unique because it portrays the dynamic movement of seaweed through neat geometric patterns, reflecting the harmony between humans and the marine environment of Tuban. This motif can be seen as follows.



Figure 3. Ganggeng Motif

Based on the interview results, the Ganggeng motif symbolizes strength, resilience, and longevity. Seaweed or algae, which continue to grow, are strong and not easily broken, become symbols of hope that the wearer will always be granted sustenance and enduring health. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: "What is the meaning of the Ganggeng motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?"

Informant: "The Ganggeng motif symbolizes strength and resilience, like seaweed that keeps growing and doesn't break easily."

Interviewer: "What is the connection between the Ganggeng motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?"

Informant: "The Ganggeng motif is closely tied to the lives of Tuban's people because strong seaweed represents resilience and hope that we can always be healthy and have enough in our daily lives."

Based on the meaning within the Ganggeng motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that could be created is titled "To Grow and Endure." An excerpt from the poem can be seen below.

### **To Grow and Endure**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Green strands stretch across the sea,  
Still growing though the waves shake fiercely,  
Like a soul that never tires,  
Keeping hope brightly afire.

Soft silhouettes dance beneath the light,  
Carrying prayers for long life and health,  
Each curve holds a silent plea,  
For a life of blessing and serenity.

#### **4. Lokcan Motif**

The Lokcan motif depicts the Hong bird (Phoenix), a symbol of Chinese culture that has entered Tuban. This motif is characterized by a stylized bird form that creates a rich, detailed, and harmonious pattern. The uniqueness of the Lokcan motif lies in the cultural acculturation between Javanese, Islamic, and Chinese influences, which is clearly reflected in the batik design. This motif can be seen as follows.



Figure 4. Lokcan Motif

Based on the interview results, the Lokcan motif symbolizes virtue, achievement, and eternity. It reflects hopes for a noble life, success, and the freedom to pursue dreams and aspirations. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: "What is the meaning of the Lokcan motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?"

Informant: "Well, this motif actually symbolizes goodness, achievement, and high status. It also represents the hope for a successful life and the freedom to pursue one's dreams."

Interviewer: "What is the connection between the Lokcan motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?"

Informant: "In Tuban society, this motif signifies the hope that the wearer may live a noble and successful life, with the freedom to chase dreams while fulfilling their responsibilities."

Based on the symbolism in the Lokcan motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that could be created is titled "The Traces of Lokcan." An excerpt from this poem can be seen below.

### **The Traces of Lokcan**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Virtue is etched within the soul,  
Achievement shines in every role,  
Eternity preserved in this design,  
Uplifting one's true status to align.

The hope for a noble life is near,  
Success awaits without fear,  
Freedom to chase dreams and desire,  
Becomes the strength that lifts us higher.

### **5. Beras Kutah Motif**

The Beras Kutah motif represents scattered grains of rice. This motif is characterized by a modified design of rice grains dispersed randomly. This motif can be seen as follows.

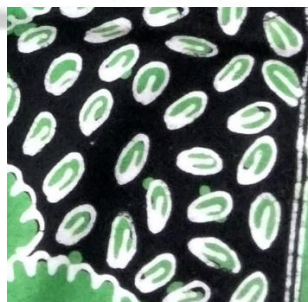


Figure 5. Beras Kutah Motif

Based on the interview results, the Beras Kutah motif symbolizes sustenance that is scattered or lost and serves as a reminder to always be grateful and to protect the blessings one has so that they are not wasted. In the daily life of the Tuban community, this motif teaches the importance of caution and gratitude, much like how farmers carefully tend to their harvest so that it is not wasted. However, even lost sustenance can bring goodness to other creatures for instance, spilled rice can be eaten by chickens, thus contributing to overall well-being. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: "What is the meaning of the Beras Kutah motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?"

Informant: "The Beras Kutah motif represents sustenance that can come and go."

Interviewer: "What is the connection between the Beras Kutah motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?"

Informant: "This motif teaches us all to be careful and grateful. Even if some sustenance is lost like rice that falls and is eaten by chickens it still brings benefit to life."

Based on the meaning of the Beras Kutah motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that could be created is titled "The Flowing Blessings." An excerpt from this poem can be seen below.

### **The Flowing Blessings**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Grains dance upon the silent field,  
Falling gently, whispered by the morning breeze.

Some are kept, some drift away,  
Flowing without a sound, yet full of meaning.

Like dew vanishing from a leaf,  
Lost fortune is never in vain.

It becomes a song for tiny creatures,  
Fallen rice, a morning feast for chickens.

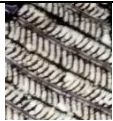


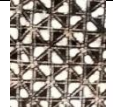


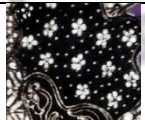
With patient hearts, farmers tend their souls,  
Guarding each grain, rich with purpose.

Blessings flow, owned by the universe,  
Teaching gratitude and shared harmony.

## 6. Tujuh Rupa Motif

The Tjupuh Rupa motif consists of seven variations of patterns or colors within a single piece of fabric. These are made up of seven different types of motifs or colors, yet they remain harmoniously arranged on one cloth. This motif is unique as it highlights both plurality and harmony, reflecting the dynamic and tolerant nature of Tuban society toward diversity. This motif can be seen as follows.

Table 1. Meaning of the Tjupuh Rupa Motif

Tjupuh Rupa Motif	Symbols/Meanings
	Parang Motif symbolizes the spirit of struggle, steadfastness, and a life lived with discipline and responsibility.
	Gringsing Motif represents protection, balance, and the hope for health and prosperity.
	Wajik Papat Motif symbolizes the balance of the universe and a call to maintain harmony with the environment.
	Sigar Kapat Motif stands for protection, safety, blessings, and togetherness in life.
	Squid (Cumi) Motif symbolizes the richness of the sea, resilience, and the hope for a sufficient life.
	Kawung Motif symbolizes <i>manunggaling kawula Gusti</i> (the unity of humans and the divine), life balance, and a reminder not to forget one's origins and wisdom.
	Flower (Kembang) Motif in batik represents beauty, fertility, and a flourishing life, often interpreted as happiness.

Based on the interview results, the meaning of the Tjupuh Rupa motif is the diversity and dynamic nature of human life, which changes each day like the seven days of the week. It teaches the importance of embracing differences and diversity in society while also reflecting harmony between humans, nature, and the surrounding environment. This is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: "What is the meaning of the Tjupuh Rupa motif in Batik Gedog Tuban?"

Informant: "The Tjupuh Rupa motif symbolizes diversity and daily changes, like the seven days of the week, and teaches us to appreciate differences and live in harmony with nature and others."

Interviewer: "What is the connection between the Tjupuh Rupa motif and the lives of the people of Tuban?"

Informant: "The Tujuh Rupa motif teaches the people of Tuban to appreciate diversity and live harmoniously, because their daily lives are filled with variety and change just like the seven days in a week."

Based on the meaning within the Tujuh Rupa motif, it can serve as inspiration for the creation of poetry. A poem that could be created is titled "The Seven Faces of Life." An excerpt from the poem can be seen below.

### **The Seven Faces of Life**

*By: Risa Nur Khoiriyah*

Seven colors blend in beauty,  
Like days that greet us endlessly,  
Teaching us to live in love.

Spirit, peace, and hope arise,  
Caring for nature and one another,  
In true and vibrant diversity.

Differences become our strength,  
Together we nurture harmony,  
Living a life full of meaning.

Poetry often emerges from symbols that carry deep meaning and awaken the imagination. Batik Gedog, with its rich philosophical motifs and cultural values, serves as a powerful source of inspiration for poets. The patterns and forms in this batik are not merely decorative, they tell stories about life, nature, and the relationship between humans and their environment. From these, poets can capture hidden messages and transform them into poetic works filled with meaning, portraying harmony, change, and social values within society.

The foundation for creating poetry from the symbols of Batik Gedog can stem from ideas sparked by the imagination and the inherent meaning of the motifs themselves. These symbols often reflect spiritual values and wisdom, becoming a source of contemplation and expression in poetry. Thus, poetry inspired by Batik Gedog is not only about visual beauty but also conveys messages about life and togetherness. The symbols in Batik Gedog provide a rich foundation for crafting meaningful and touching poetic works.

### **CONCLUSION**

The symbolic analysis of Batik Gedog motifs from Tuban reveals that the rich meanings and philosophies embedded within them can be transformed into a new source of inspiration for poetry creation, thereby expanding the understanding of the connection between visual art and literature in the preservation of local culture. This approach not only enriches insight into the cultural values of Tuban but also opens opportunities for applying similar concepts to other batik motifs or different traditional art forms. It further encourages collaboration among artists to strengthen the role of culture in education and the development of

community creativity. Moving forward, further development can be directed toward applying the results of this study in educational activities, cultural preservation programs, and the reinforcement of local identity through various artistic media.

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