

# Interpretative Meaning of Symbolic Color on Costumes and Artifacts *Jaran Kepang* Temanggung, Indonesia

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Abstract: The traditional art of *Jaran Kepang* is one of the hallmarks of Indonesian art and culture. *Jaran Kepang* is a cultural art that is actually supported and interpreted all the process, which is presented in various rituals of salvation related to the life cycle events of the local community, including birth and death. The focus of the main research problem that is interesting to study is about the symbolic meaning of colors in the *Jaran Kepang* costumes and artifacts. The purpose of this study is to describe how the interpretative meaning of denotative and connotative colors, and how the meaning of the values of the colors if analyzed by Roland Barthes semiotics theory. Basically, these colors have symbolic meanings, which can help to create their own meaning, besides color also has the ability to convey the message connotatively with symbolic values according to local culture. This research uses qualitative interpretative approach. The results of this study indicate that interpretatively found the values of denotative meanings and connotative meanings on costume colors and artifacts *Jaran Kepang* Temanggung, Indonesia.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*Jaran Kepang* is one type of traditional art that lives and thrives in rural communities. *Jaran Kepang* art has the character of easy to recognize and socialize. The art of *Jaran Kepang* is a traditional Javanese dance featuring a group of warriors who are riding a horse. This dance uses an artificial horse made of bamboo that is woven and cut like a horse shape. This horse woven is decorated with colorful paint and fabrics. But in some appearances, *Jaran Kepang* also presenting attractions possession, immunity, and magical powers. (Radhia, H. A., 2016) Traditional art, in various shades and expressions, is the creativity of citizens who support a particular culture. Art is present and is needed by the community. As the result of creativity that supports a culture, then art is actually an expression of creativity from the culture itself. (Kayam, U., 1981) Understanding the value of a work in society must have meaning, that the work of art can provide benefits for the community around him, either directly or indirectly. The word 'value' itself, now means very complex not only oriented to economic problems but can also be related to moral, religious and aesthetic issues. (Prasetyo, J., 1986) This

traditional *Jaran Kepang* dance is born, grown, and developed in a society which is then passed down to be passed from generation to generation, and developed in society today. *Jaran Kepang* became the performing arts tradition that is actually supported and understood all the process. Performing arts of *Jaran Kepang* are presented in various rituals of salvation related to the life cycle events of society which include birth, death, ruwatan. In fact, the *Jaran Kepang*, which is performed in a village clean ritual, appears as a positive symbol to guard against distress (Trisakti, 2013).

### 1.1 Colors Semiotics

Color can be defined as the nature of transmitted light, from the experience of the psychic sense of vision. Color becomes very important in everyday life because colour evokes a spontaneous feeling to the person who sees it. The human mind is programmed involuntarily by colour as if seeing a red light on, then the motorist will stop. Color also unknowingly affects human emotions, such as anger, sadness, or imagination (Monica, L., L., C., 2011).

Basically, the human capture of the color reaction is almost the same, but the human self-has different interpretations of the meaning of color. Most of the properties of color can be understood when associated with the environment, where they can be interpreted through observation and use of color, but some colors contain the same meaning in different cultures (Purbasari, M., 2014; Luzar, L., C., 2014; Farhia, Y., 2014). That meaning is not something possessed by a sign because of itself; rather, meaning comes from the interaction, from the context in which the sign in question is obtained. According to Keith Allan, the meaning of connotation is a semantic effect that arises from a broad insight into something and comes from experience, belief, and prejudice about the contents of the context (Allan, K., 2001). In many traditions and in cultured life, certain societies express themselves in various ways. One of them is the use of color as a symbol in culture (Diputra, G., D., 2017).

A Color can help to create meaning, compared to other visual elements, color has the ability to make a person aware of what is seen. The color can also be used to convey an atmosphere, feelings, and connotations have cultural-specific symbolic value. To understand a communication in the proper context one must understand the meaning in communication (Keraf, G., 2007). The color in a connotative way has more implicit meaning, so it has to think more deeply, to achieve its true meaning (Trisakti, 2013).

## 1.2 Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes

Semiotics is basically a science that studies the relationship between signs, in analyzing the visual meaning through the semiotic approach. The first tier in Roland Barthes semiotics is the denotation level. The denotation mark is the real meaning, which is socially agreed upon, its reference to reality. At the second level referred to in the semiotics of Roland Barthes is the level of connotation. The connotative sign is a sign whose markers have the openness of meaning or meaning implicit, indirect and uncertain, meaning open to new interpretations (Vera, N., 2014).

In analyzing the visual meaning through the semiotics approach, there needs to be more review and determine the visual which is considered as a sign contained in costume objects and Jaran Kepang artifacts. Aesthetic value in costume and artifacts Jaran Kepang, festivity, thickness, and striking

colors in the use of makeup, thus bringing the character of Jaran Kepang dancer.

- 1 Costume used Jaran Kepang is a vest and shorts suit, black and then plaid checkered cloth as covering the dancer's body. The costume is a clothing and black pants that show the color of the symbol of power and toughness. The black philosophy contains a positive meaning among others: 1. reflects courage, 2. becomes the center of attention, 3. Strength and toughness. Clothing or costume and make-up is a form of artifactual communication. Being able to deliver non-verbal messages (Ibrahim, I., S., 2007).

## 2 METHOD

The form used in this study is qualitative interpretative which is a method related to the socio-cultural environment. Where researchers try to understand the meaning of an object based on the facts obtained from the results of research. The reason for using a qualitative interpretive form in this research is able to describe the meaning of colors in costume and artifact *Jaran Kepang* Temanggung, Indonesia. The descriptive-analytic method that is by describing and analyzing (Ratna, N., 2010).

Using the semiotics interpretative approach, related to all things that can be interpreted as signs. Signs related to its existence have a causal relationship, because of the convention ties with these signs. More descriptive methods are concerned with outlining the findings and interpreting.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

As in Temanggung Regency, the people culture agrarian, village resilience and stability between life environment with other creatures is realized through the form of ritual. In the rural areas of Central Java, people still adhere to the ritual of salvation, as a ceremony that overshadows all forms of human life cycle events. These events include birth, maturity to death. The ultimate salvation, the clean village salvation held once a year, is aimed at the spirit of the village guardian, who always presents the arts, among them *Jaran Kepang* performing arts (Radhia, H. A., 2016).

### 3.1 Interpretative Meaning

To study the interpretative meaning of symbolic values on costume colors and artifacts of *Jaran Kepang*, this study will use Barthes's thinking. Roland Barthes is one of the famous semiotic figures, in his concept, the connotative sign does not merely have additional meanings but also contains both the denotative meanings underlying its existence. The reference used is to conduct research based on denotative and connotative. Where will be divided into the meaning of which parts, which is denotative and the meaning of the connotative of the interpretation of the color display costume and *Jaran Kepang*. The signs convey an information, so that is communicative. He is able to replace something else that can be thought of or imagined. This branch of science all evolved in the field of language and then developed also in the field of visual arts and visual communication design (Tinarbuko, S., 2008). Connotative meaning can be subjective in the sense that there is a shift from the general meaning of denotative. Therefore, Berger in Tinarbuko, trying to compare between denotation and connotation as follows:

Table 1. Chart of Denotation and Connotation Comparison, Source: Tinarbuko.

DENOTATION	CONNOTATION
Literature	Use of form / figure
Bookmarks	Markers
Clear	Conclusion
Describe	Give the impression of meaning

A 'sign' is said to have connotative meaning when the 'sign' has a 'taste value', either positive or negative. If it has no taste value it is said to have no connotation, but it can also be called a neutral connotation. The positive and negative sense of a 'sign' often also occurs as a result of the use of the 'sign' referent as a symbol. If used as a symbol of something positive it will be worth a positive taste, and if used as a symbol of something negative it will be worth a negative taste.



YellowGold BlackWhiteRedBlue YellowGold

Figure 1. Photo of Costume and Artefact Jaran Kepang & Colours Scheme. Source: Abdul Aziz.

In this analysis take sample images of costumes and examples of *Jaran Kepang* artifacts above, which will then be analyzed using Barthes' semiotics. The focus of analysis starts from the denotation-connotation level to the search for myths.

Table 2. Semiotics Chart Roland Barthes (Vera, N., 2014).

<b>1. (signifier)</b>	
<b>2. (signified)</b>	
<b>3. Sign (Denotative)</b>	
<b>I. Signifier (Connotative)</b>	<b>II. Signifier (Connotative)</b>
<b>III. Sign (Connotative)</b>	

Semiotics Roland Barthes is a derivative of Saussure's semiology, adapting a signifier-signified theory developed into a connotative sign. Saussure focuses on denotative denominations, while Roland Barthes develops them on a connotative level. In addition, another aspect that Barthes developed in tagging is a myth (Vera, N., 2014).

Each message in a sign consists of two levels of meaning expressed explicitly on the surface and the implicitly articulated meaning behind the surface of the *Jaran Kepang* costume and artifact. Thus, semiotics becomes an appropriate method to find out the meaning constructions that occur in these *Jaran Kepang* costumes and artifacts, emphasizing the role of the sign system with the construction of reality, then through the semiotics, the values behind the artifact can be dismantled (Feralina, N., 2013).

### 3.2 Object of Denotative and Connotative Colours

Black color found on the artifact *Jaran Kepang* part of the tail up on the face, as a denotative meaning that shows as a black horse. The connotative meaning of black on *Jaran Kepang* here is a symbol of strength, toughness and elegance. The myth of black in the artifact can also be interpreted again into mysterious, mystical forms, such as a trance scene.

The white color denotatively in the *Jaran Kepang* artifact is used as the underlying color of the entire artifact. The meaning of white in connotative is a symbol of the purity of the soul, the purity of the self. The myth of the white color in the position for the artifacts of *Jaran Kepang* in the arts became the main thing where the character at the end of the values of honesty, and the holiness of the self appeared.

In red, denotatively as a color on the details of the ornaments that decorate every part of the *Jaran Kepang* artifact. This red color becomes the most eye-catching color. Hence, the impression of red is synonymous with strength, adrenaline, passion, and spirit. Often also associated with energy, joy, love, energetic, luxury, lust and warning. In addition, red is also synonymous with violence, anxiety, and even aggressiveness. The myth of red is a force in life. The blood is red and becomes a major part of living things.

In denotative use of blue color is not too dominant, just as an accent sweetener only. Blue impression shows a stable, intelligence, confidence, even a symbol of strength. While the myth of the blue is the forms of breadth and something that cools the atmosphere. Then this cool color is believed to unite from the colors are hot.

The use of the yellow color in denotative is almost the same as the red color, which is an aspect that reinforces the outline of the ornament. The impression from yellow usually is cheerful, happy, energetic and optimistic. The yellow color is also believed to stimulate mental and mental activity. The myth of the yellow color is to show the impression of greatness and warmth.

The use of gold in the artifact 'rare braid' is no more as an accent of a series of existing ornaments. The impression is to show achievement, success, luxury, victory, and prosperity. The myth of gold is a manifestation of grandeur, eternity. Thus, it is believed to be applied to objects that can support splendor, as well as immortality.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Dance *Jaran Kepang* is a famous folk art and fertile life among the people in Temanggung District. The *Jaran Kepang* player costume character is brave, tough and strong. *Jaran Kepang* dance contains the value of life that basically adheres to religious values and social life. Symbolic meanings contained in the artifacts *Jaran Kepang* is a color, as well as elements of motive that exists. Then the meanings contained in the costume *Jaran Kepang* is not only a mere fashion dance, but it makes a distinctive feature of the local community culture that has symbolic values.

Colour can help to create meaning, besides color also has the ability to convey messages connotatively with symbolic values according to local culture.

In conclusion that the colors in costumes and artifacts *Jaran Kepang* has a symbolic meaning. As the color black as a symbol of power and toughness. white as a symbol of purity. red has a symbol of courage, blue color as a form of patience, peace of mind, and yellow color has a meaning of wisdom, and the color of gold as a form of grandeur, and immortality. Each message in a sign consists of two levels of meaning expressed explicitly on the surface and the meaning implicitly expressed beneath the surface. The color as a sign can be a medium for conveying a message and the color itself can replace something else that can be thought of or imagined.

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