

A Semiotic Analysis of Solo Basahan as a Traditional Javanese Clothes

Annisa Dewi Febryandini, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2018
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

In this century, the globalization is the common phenomena that can open the chance to influence the tradition and culture in some areas. The culture and its products like clothes will be easily replaced by the modern one. It already happens on Javanese traditional clothes called Solo Basahan, as we know that it contains the deep meanings. Related to the statement, this research aims to reveal the cultural meanings and values contained within Solo Basahan clothes. This qualitative research uses research methods dividing into three steps; (1) collecting the data by doing an interview as a primary data and using the literature as a secondary data, (2) classifying then analyzing the collected data with semiotic analysis, and (3) presenting the data. The result of this research is that Solo Basahan clothes and its parts have many cultural meaning that the married couple who use the clothes have to love and appreciate each other, prepare for new life, and also know their own responsibilities in a married life. Moreover, it contains some values such as religious, moral, and social values.

Keywords: semiotics, Solo Basahan, Javanese, traditional clothes, cultural meaning

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Human as a creature that created with the great brain, has a capability to create something in this world to build a culture and live the life. By this capability, human is a homo creator (Herusatoto, 2001:13). In building the culture, human can create any medium that useful for the life, such as language, custom, ceremony, technology, and arts, in which the medium will be a form of a culture. Discussing about culture, Javanese people especially in Solo are very thick with their Javanese culture. It is only because the influence of Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat as Javanese Kingdom. Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat has many cultures containing some glorious values and meanings almost in every single thing, including the clothes.

Clothes for the Keraton's environment and the people around it not only be regarded as the medium of covering the body, but also be a symbol including the current meaning and value. Moreover, the clothes can show the social status of the one who wear the clothes and has a special time to wear, for instance in traditional wedding ceremony. A wedding is one of the step of life that considered as a sacred step in Keraton's circle. So, in the wedding, there is a special clothes called Solo Basahan that will be discussed in this paper using semiotic analysis to uncover the meaning and value of the traditional clothes.

Semiotics is the theory of sign that can reveal what is the meaning of something (Lyons, 1997:100). Those sign is divided into three kinds by C.S.Pierce, there are icon, symbol, and index (Silverman, 1983:19). First is icon, the sign that represents or duplicates of a current object. For example the picture of bus. Second is symbol, the sign that represent of the concept of object arbitrary. For example the red color is a symbol of bravery. The last is index, the sign that represent something connected to the real object. For example, cloudy is an index of rain. In this research, there are two of the three kinds of sign analyzed in the discussion.

This research is the further research that completing the previous research talking about the traditional clothes in Indonesia, by Marlina (2016) with *Kajian Semiotik Pakaian Adat Suku Dayak Kenyah di Desa Pampang Samarinda Kalimantan Timur*, and Jalung (2015) with *Analisis Semiotika Pakaian Adat Dayak Bahu sebagai Alat Komunikasi Budaya dalam Adat Dayak Bahu*. Semiotic is used to analyse the object because by identify the sign of something, we can know the hidden meaning. Basahan is the clothes used by Javanese people in the parts of wedding ceremonies in Solo called *panggih* (meet each other), with the topless characteristic. At first, Solo Basahan was only used exclusively by Keraton's family in the *panggih* ceremony in Sasana Mulya inside Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat. By the time, the Javanese people outside Keraton can use Solo Basahan. In Javanese language, Basahan is synonymous with *ngliga sarira* which is not wearing clothes (Honggopuro, 2002:155). People in Solo assume that Solo Basahan is a symbol of *alam suwung* means the empty world that human has to surrender his life only to God The Almighty for all the things while living in the life.

Finding and Discussion

Solo Basahan is not only about fabric, but also the makeup, hair do, and the jewelry. In this part, Solo Basahan will be described from the top to the bottom.

Head

The Bride

Paes



Figure 1: Paes of The Bride

Paes is a current additional make up specific to Solo Basahan. Paes consists of four iconic items (1) *gajah* that iconic with the tip of egg, (2) *pengapit* that iconic with the buds of Kantil flower, (3) *penithis* that iconic with tip of small egg, and (4) *godheg* that iconic with the buds of Turi flower.

Eyebrow

This part of make up is interesting. As displayed on the Figure 1, there is a drawn eyebrow that iconic with the hartshorn of deer called *menjangan rangrang*. It is also a symbol that the bride has to have a great characteristics of deer that are skillfull, clever, and smart to maintain her family in the married life.

Hair Do



Figure 2: The Hair Do of The Bride

The Javanese bride has to wear a kind of hair do called *sanggul* with specific style or form, its name is Bokor Mengkurep. *Bokor* in Javanese is a big bowl, and *mengkurep* is confiscated. The meaning is, the bride has to 'kneel down' for her husband in her

married life, because the groom will be her husband that has a primary responsibility of their married life, so the bride as a wife has to obey her husband. This form is also as symbol of *bangun tulak* that means avoiding the bad things that may come into their married life.

Arranged Flower



Figure 3: The Arranged Flower of The Bride

The *sanggul* displayed in Figure 2, then covered by arranged jasmine flower like a round web, as a symbol of purity and holy. Jasmine is almost being used in Javanese culture. Then in the right side, there's a long arranged jasmine flower and the buds of Kantil flower at the end, called *sekar tiba dhadha*, because it is placed from the shoulder of bride to the heart approximately. In the arranged jasmine flower, there are arranged rose flower called *ceplokan*. It is a symbol of *hamimurba*, the characteristic in Javanese that wife has to be well managed to manage her household as her nature.

Jewelry

Cunduk mentul



Figure 4: The *Cunduk Mentul*

Cunduk mentul is a jewelry that iconic with the sun. It is usually 7 pieces, that has a meaning that the bride is a sun giving the shine to another one, giving a life for her children, so the bride will be a source of life.

The Groom

Kuluk Mathak



Figure 5: The *Kuluk Mathak*

Kuluk mathak is specific headgear used by the groom. The color is clear blue, that iconic to the sky or space, called *tawang* in Javanese. This blue color is a symbol that the groom already reached the peak step of his life, which is marriage. So, he has to be mature, responsible, and independent in his household.

Body



Figure 6. Dodot

The Bride

Dodot

Dodot is the most specific fabric that used in Solo Basahan. Dodot is a big and wide fabric with the specific motif called *alas-alasan*. *Alas* in Javanese language is a wild forest. The motif consists of many animals like snake, bee, snail, butterfly, and also

some plants. The green color of this motif describes the wild forest as a symbol of new chapter of life, in Javanese called *bebadra* or *babad alas anyar* (opening the forest). *Bebadra* means none lives and knows what will happen in married life, the couple have to prepare and be ready for anything happening in their life. Using this fabric is being *pepeling* or reminder that the couple will have a new life, new citizen, and also new family.

Kemben

The dodot of bride is used to cover from breast of the bride to the foot, as displayed in Figure 6. Eventhough this clothes is topless, the breast of woman should be covered and guarded, because it is a source of life, that children can grow healthyly from it.

Jewelry

Cincin

In Solo Basahan, the ring that used by the bride is called Kalpika. This kind of ring called *seser* or round ring. It means the fastener of two hearts, because it has no end, hopefully the married life will be long lasting marriage. This ring is a symbol of unity and togetherness between the couple and also their families. This ring also can bind the two different families, that put together by this marriage.

The Groom

Dodot

In the Figure 6, different from the bride, dodot used by the groom, start from the waist to the foot. Using dodot is without *kemben*, so the groom is absolutely topless. This is called *ngliga sarira* in Javanese, means that the groom has nothing in life. The only thing that he has to do is surrender to his God Almighty, without arrogancy.

Epek

Epek is a belt with the gold color that shows the social status of the groom, as a family of Keraton.

Keris



Figure 7: Keris Warangka Ladrang

Keris is a traditional javanese weapon, that really close with the bravery, power, virility, and politeness. This keris is a symbol that the groom is being prepared for all the bad things that may come to his married life and ready to fight whenever the bad things attack his family. In a wedding ceremony, keris should be put in the scabbard with the specific motif called *warangka ladrang*. This keris decorated with arranged jasmine flower with buds of Kantil flower at the end, and also given ceplokan that means *hamisesa* in Javanese that the husband is a King, a leader of his household, so he has to decide something wisely.

Buntal

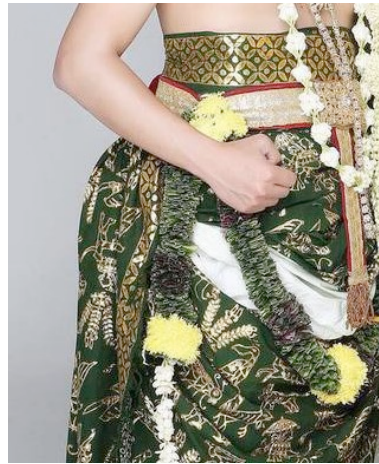


Figure 8: Buntal

Buntal is a decoration of Solo Basahan, consists of long arranged leaves and flowers. Buntal uses specific leaves, such as banyan leaf that means protecting each other (*ngayomi*), pandanus leaf that means compatible, matching each other with the same vision and mission for their life, kroton leaf that means staying, spinach leaf that means peaceful (*ayem*), banana leaf that means accepting the best and the worst. The specific flowers used in the buntal are kenikir (*kena ing pikir*) flower that means care, jasmine flower that means purity, holy, and Kantil flower that means always be there (*kumanthil*).

Jewelry

Kalung ulur



Figure 9: Kalung Ulur of The Groom

Kalung Ulur is the long necklace used by the groom that has a meaning that whenever the problems are coming, keep the patience. It is a symbol of eternal patience.

Conclusion

By this description, we can conclude that Solo Basahan as a traditional Javanese clothes not only as a clothes itself, but contains some meaning and values that very deep related to the hope for the married couple to has a good married life. This research is using Solo Basahan as the object in a small scope, so it can be used to be a starting point of the further discussion about culture meaning and value in Javanese culture and tradition, and provide a reference for the wider fields such as historical studies, philosophy, and even linguistics.

Acknowledgement

This research is fully supported by Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP) from Ministry of Finance of Indonesia. I also thank my Professor, Prof. Dr. Marsono, S.U. from Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta, as the expert lecturer in Semiotics that I discussed with for this research.

References

Herusatoto, B. (2001). *Simbolisme dalam Budaya Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Hanindita Graha Widia.

Honggopuro, K. (2002). *Batik sebagai Busana dalam Tatanan dan Tuntunan*. Surakarta: Yayasan Peduli Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat.

Jalung, M. (2015). Analisis semiotika pakaian adat Dayak Bahu sebagai Alat Komunikasi Budaya dalam Berinteraksi dengan Masyarakat. Skripsi Universitas Mulawarman. [Online] accessed on November 3rd 2017 <http://ejournal.ilkom.fisip-unmul.ac.id/site/?p=2220>

Lyons, J. (1997). *Semantics (Volume 1)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marlina, H. (2016). Kajian Semiotik Motif Pakaian Adat Suku Dayak Kenyah Di Desa Pampang Samarinda Kalimantan Timur. Skripsi Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta. [Online] accessed on November 3rd 2017 <http://digilib.isi.ac.id/1360/>

Silverman, K. (1983). *The Subject of Semiotics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Contact email: annisa.febyandini@gmail.com