



Cultural Semiotics of the Use of Jidur, Terbang, and Kendhang in Dolalak Dance: A Symbolic Analysis of Specific Instruments

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Abstract. The musical instruments in Dolalak dance; jidur, terbang, and kendhang, have become the main subject in the attempt to understand the essence flowing within each musical call and dance vibration. The presence of these instruments is not merely as accompaniment, but rather imbues the space with profound meaning. Questions arise: Why were these instruments chosen? Are they related to cultural values or hidden beliefs? This research is structured with a descriptive qualitative approach. The use of jidur, terbang, and kendhang musical instruments in Dolalak dance in Purworejo goes beyond mere musical elements and physical movements. In this understanding, through Roland Barthes' conception of signifier and signified, it opens the way to delve into deeper meanings and symbolism inherent in each musical instrument. Every beat on jidur, terbang strike, or kendhang resonance not only produces sound but also carries messages containing cultural values, history, and the cultural identity of the Purworejo community.

Keywords: Cultural, dolalak dance, musical instruments, semiotics

INTRODUCTION

The Dolalak dance, a rich and unique cultural heritage in Purworejo Regency, Central Java, is a clear testament to the diversity and depth of the nation's spirit. Manifested in the harmony of collective dance movements and iconic musical melodies, Dolalak is not merely a form of entertainment (Marwah et al., 2020). Beyond that, Dolalak art streams cultural richness, strengthens social bonds, and emits a spirituality that touches the heart (Setyawan, 2018). Dolalak is not just a stage performance but a living narrative reflecting the values, beliefs, and symbolism deeply embedded in the life of the Purworejo community (Dewi & Lestari, 2019).

In understanding the depth of Dolalak dance, it is unavoidable to approach it through the lens of cultural semiotics. Cultural semiotics serves as an extension of human efforts to explore the hidden meanings behind cultural practices. It does not merely

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observe the signs scattered on the surface but delves into the silence of existence, capturing the brilliance of language, symbols, myths, and rituals flowing through the stream of history. Cultural semiotics reveals how each sign does not stand alone but is intricately woven into the fabric of social life, shaping identities, building values, and establishing norms within a particular society (Triwahono et al., 2020).

Using cultural semiotics as an analytical tool, it is possible to uncover the hidden layers of meaning in every movement, note, and rhythm that build the beauty of Dolalak art. Moreover, cultural semiotics allows for reflection on the inherent cultural essence and the values passed down from generation to generation within the Purworejo community. Thus, cultural semiotics is not just an analytical tool (Kaelan, 2017), but a key to unlocking insights into the local wisdom that flows through every breath of Dolalak art.

The musical instruments in Dolalak art, such as jidur, terbang, and kendhang, become the main subjects of study in efforts to understand the essence flowing through every musical call and dance vibration (Santosa, 2013). The presence of these instruments does not merely fill the void of melody but permeates the space with deep meaning. Questions arise: Why were these specific instruments chosen? What is their connection to hidden cultural values or beliefs? This research invites us to penetrate the mystical veil surrounding the selection of these instruments, exploring the meanings buried beneath the created harmony and rhythm. Through this study, we aim to provide an understanding of the complexity and wisdom that flows within the practice of Dolalak art amidst the bustle of modern civilization.

Dolalak art, like a star illuminating the night, has long graced the stage of life for the Purworejo community. However, like shadows that continue to dance at the edge of light, this art faces equally intimidating challenges (Budiman et al., 2020). The younger generation, increasingly enticed by the allure of the modern world, often forgets the charm and meaning contained in the glittering Dolalak art. A life increasingly burdened by the noise of technology and instant entertainment has closed their eyes to the wisdom implicit in the movements and musical harmony of Dolalak. Thus, amid the roar of time, Dolalak art stands as a reminder of invaluable cultural richness, and a mirror reflecting the challenges that must be faced in preserving ancestral heritage amidst the currents of changing times.

In the journey to understand ancestral heritage, we cannot ignore the beauty embedded in the instruments accompanying the Dolalak dance: *jidur*, *terbang*, and *kendhang*. These instruments are not just accompanying tools but bearers of implicit messages of local wisdom. This research offers a stage for readers to delve into the depth of meaning and symbolism embedded behind the shimmering sounds and rhythms. With cultural semiotics as a guide, the researcher explores hidden paths connecting these instruments with cultural identity, the values upheld, and the spirituality flowing within the soul of the Purworejo community. Thus, through this effort, we not only explore the ocean of time that implies wisdom but also discover the light of wisdom that leads us to a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage we bear.

This research, with all its ambitions, is not merely an intellectual pursuit confined within the boundaries of academic classrooms. It is a journey that takes us through the dark corridors of the past, towards a life echoing with local wisdom. It is not enough to read theories and analyze data; we must also emit a light of wisdom that can illuminate the path of preserving traditional art. Purworejo Regency and its community are not just study objects but partners in the struggle to preserve ancestral heritage from the swift currents of modernity. Therefore, this research symbolizes hope for the continuity and prosperity of Dolalak art, which belongs not only to the past but also to the future we envision.

METHODS

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on qualitative observation and analysis rather than relying on numerical or quantitative data (Sugiyono, 2013). The main objective of this study is to explore the embedded meanings in the use of instruments in the Dolalak dance. The approach taken is semiotic analysis utilizing Roland Barthes' mythology theory. Barthes explains two systems of signification: denotation, which refers to the literal meaning of a sign, and connotation, which is more subjective or conceptual (Kurniawan, 2001). In the process of myth interpretation, a sign that initially has a denotative meaning then becomes a signifier for a deeper connotative meaning (Barthes, 1968).

The data underpinning this research are obtained through two methods: interviews and literature review. The subjects of this study are the residents of Sindurjan Village, Purworejo Regency. Data collection is conducted using interviews, aimed at gathering information related to the selection and use of musical instruments in the Dolalak dance. The collected data will then be further analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis technique, known as signification (Piliang, 1999). This analysis process involves two main stages: identifying the relationship between the signifier and the signified to produce denotative meaning, and interpreting the connotative meaning related to the denotative meaning (Barthes, 1990).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of the Use of Jidur, Terbang, and Kendhang Musical Instruments as Special Instruments in Dolalak Dance Art

In delving into the cultural semiotics of the use of jidur, terbang, and kendhang instruments in the Dolalak dance of Purworejo, the researcher ventures beyond mere musical elements and physical movements. Roland Barthes' theory of signifier and signified opens the door to understanding the depth of meaning and symbolism embedded in each musical instrument. Every beat of the jidur, strike of the terbang, or echo of the kendhang is not merely a sound but a series of signs conveying the values, history, and cultural identity of the Purworejo community. The signifier, in this context, does not merely produce a physical sound but also carries the weight of hidden cultural meanings. On the other hand, the signified highlights the subjective understanding of these sounds, derived from a rich and complex process of cultural interpretation.

1. Jidur

In the realm of Dolalak dance, the jidur instrument signifies its existence not merely as a producer of rhythmic beats but as a symbol rich with meaning for the people of Purworejo. From a cultural semiotic perspective, the jidur is not just a tangible material object but also a representation of cultural values and rich symbolism within the local community.



Picture 1. Jidur

(Source: Hapsari & Naam, 2023)

Roland Barthes, with his concepts of signifier and signified, helps analyze the jidur as a signifier that displays physical characteristics such as its wooden frame and prominent drumhead, and the technique of striking it using two mallets. However, beyond its tangible appearance, the signified of the jidur extends far beyond its physical dimension, encompassing a series of meanings closely related to the cultural heritage and social identity of the Purworejo community.

In the Dolalak dance, the jidur not only serves as a creator of musical rhythms but also conveys messages of unity, solidarity, and collective identity. It symbolizes communal strength and the spirit of mutual cooperation, reinforcing the social bonds between the dancers and their community. Additionally, the jidur reveals a spiritual dimension that connects humans with the universe or spiritual forces believed in by the local community.

These findings align with the research conducted by Bagiya (2016), who clearly demonstrated that local wisdom is reflected in the terminology related to categories and expressions in the language and culture of the fishing communities on the southern coast of Purworejo Regency, including the jidur. This indicates that within the context of the Dolalak dance, the jidur not only serves as a musical instrument but also carries a deeper message about unity, solidarity, and collective identity. The jidur becomes a symbol of communal strength and a strong spirit of mutual cooperation, reinforcing the social bonds between the dancers and their community.

a) The Denotative Meaning of the Jidur in Dolalak Dance

In the semiological perspective of Roland Barthes, denotation emerges as the primary foundation for exploring meaning. Denotation is the most basic part of a sign or symbol, implying a direct and concrete meaning (Trabaut, 1996). In other words, denotation presents a clear relationship between the sign and the object or phenomenon it represents. The main function of denotation is to provide recognition or identification of something without the need for additional interpretation (Culler, 1996). For instance, in the context of an image, denotation refers to the description of the visible object, such as its shape, color, or size, which can be understood by anyone without further analysis.

The jidur instrument in Dolalak dance symbolizes more than just an ordinary musical instrument. Beyond its seemingly simple physical description, the jidur becomes a symbol containing deep meanings and messages for the people of Purworejo. Far from being merely a wooden frame and drumhead, the jidur holds rich cultural values and a strong collective identity. When struck with two mallets, the jidur not only produces sound but also resonates with meanings of collective strength, togetherness, and the spirit of mutual cooperation that form the social and cultural foundation of the Purworejo community. In the context of Dolalak dance, the jidur does not merely produce musical rhythms but also marks the presence of a living and relevant cultural heritage in the everyday lives of the people, enriching the aesthetic and spiritual experience in every dance movement.

b) The Connotative Meaning of the Jidur in Dolalak Dance

In the realm of Roland Barthes' terminology, connotation reveals understanding of how signs interact with the feelings and values of their users through cultural layers that have formed (Munandar et al., 2004). This indicates a more complex phase in the interpretation process of a sign, where the sign not only carries its direct denotative meaning but also elicits emotional responses and implicit values from the receiver or user of the sign, shaped by the cultural context internalized by individuals or groups (Darma et al., 2020).

In Dolalak dance, the jidur instrument is not limited to its simple physical description but also carries additional meanings that transcend material boundaries. The connotations of the jidur instrument refer to various profound and complex aspects.

Firstly, within the realm of tradition and cultural identity, the jidur symbolizes the richness of cultural heritage and collective identity of the Purworejo community. Its use in Dolalak dance serves not only as a musical instrument but also as a marker of efforts to preserve and present traditions passed down from generation to generation. Secondly, in the context of rituals and spirituality, the jidur carries connotations that connect players and audiences with certain spiritual or mythological dimensions. The sound produced by the jidur can serve as a medium to strengthen the connection between humans and the universe or spiritual entities believed in by the local community.

Thirdly, in terms of expression and emotion, the sound and rhythm produced by the jidur contain emotional connotations that enrich the aesthetic experience in Dolalak dance performances. From joyful celebration to deep sorrow, the jidur communicates a variety of feelings and emotions to the audience. Lastly, in the aspect of social interaction, the use of the jidur in Dolalak dance also involves connotations related to collaboration among musicians and between musicians and dancers. This reflects values of togetherness, cooperation, and solidarity that form the social foundation within the culture of the Purworejo community.

2. Terbang

In Dolalak dance from Purworejo, the use of the terbang instrument, also known as rebana, goes beyond its function as a musical instrument that produces rhythms. More than that, the rebana becomes a symbol laden with meaning in the overall artistic experience. From a cultural semiotic perspective, the rebana is not merely seen as a tangible physical object but also as a symbol that carries various deep and rich meanings.



Picture 2. Terbang

(Source: Hapsari & Naam, 2023)

The rebana is a round and flat drum with a circular frame made of wood and covered with goat skin. However, from a semiotic perspective, the meaning of the rebana far exceeds its material aspects. It serves as a symbol of the rich cultural tradition and identity of the Malay ethnic group, abundant with religious values. Used in the Dolalak dance, the rebana functions not only as a musical instrument but also as an expression of reverence for the cultural heritage and spirituality that enriches the lives of the Purworejo community.

In Roland Barthes' theory, the rebana as a signifier denotes its concrete physical characteristics, such as its material composition and shape. However, the signified aspect of the rebana transcends its physical dimensions, encompassing meanings closely related to the cultural context and social values of the Purworejo community.

These findings align with Mustakim's (2016) analysis, which explains that Dolalak music, including instruments like the Terbang, serves not only as accompaniment to dance but also as an educational tool for musicians. Dolalak music conveys life messages through its lyrics, imparting teachings to music enthusiasts to apply the advice and positive messages embedded in the songs. This demonstrates that the Terbang instrument in Dolalak dance holds complex meanings that surpass its role as a mere accompanying musical instrument.

a) The Denotative Meaning of the Terbang in Dolalak Dance

In Roland Barthes' semiotic view, denotation emerges as the primary foundation that forms the first basis in exploring meaning. Denotation is the most fundamental part of a sign or symbol that directly and concretely implies meaning (Trabaut, 1996). In other

words, denotation establishes a clear relationship between the sign and the object or phenomenon it represents. The main function of denotation is to provide recognition or identification of something without requiring additional interpretation (Culler, 1996). For example, in the context of an image, denotation refers to the description of visible objects such as shape, color, or size, which can be understood by anyone without further analysis.

The denotation of the Terbang instrument in the context of Dolalak dance involves a concrete description of its physical attributes. The Terbang, a type of drum that is integral to the Dolalak dance performance, reflects the local wisdom of the Malay ethnic group. Carefully crafted by local artisans, the Terbang's frame is meticulously shaped in a circular form using carefully selected wood, in accordance with traditions passed down through generations.

One striking aspect of the Terbang is the selective use of goat skin to cover one of its sides. This goat skin is chosen carefully to ensure the quality of the sound produced, while imparting distinct sonic characteristics when the Terbang is struck. A special process is applied to this goat skin to achieve the desired tones. The beaters used also rely on natural materials such as wood or bamboo, chosen based on the desired sound properties.

Denotatively, the Terbang instrument in Dolalak dance is identified through its distinctive physical characteristics, including its shape, materials, and unique striking techniques. This emphasizes the Terbang's crucial role in producing distinctive music and creating the overall atmosphere in Dolalak dance performances.

b) The Connotative Meaning of the Terbang in Dolalak Dance

Barthes argues that connotation reveals an understanding of the interaction between signs and the feelings or values of their users through cultural layers that have formed (Munandar et al., 2004). This signifies a more complex phase in the process of interpreting a sign, where the sign not only directly conveys its denotative meaning but also evokes emotional responses and implied values from the receiver or user of the sign, shaped by the cultural context internalized by individuals or groups (Darma et al., 2020).

The Terbang instrument in the Dolalak dance performances in Purworejo is not just an ordinary musical instrument; it carries meanings that transcend its physical boundaries.

The Terbang symbolizes strength, unity, and the strong cultural identity of the Purworejo community.

In Dolalak dance, the Terbang serves not only as a sound producer and dance accompaniment but also reflects solidarity and a spirit of cooperation among the musicians and dancers. When they strike the Terbang with passion, it signifies collective strength in creating the beauty of dance art.

Moreover, the Terbang symbolizes a cultural heritage preserved and passed down by previous generations. Its use in Dolalak dance is a manifestation of commitment to uphold rich and valuable traditions, thus becoming an integral part of the cultural identity of the Purworejo community.

The Terbang also strengthens the spiritual bond between humans, nature, and ancestors. In every Dolalak dance performance, the Terbang serves as a mediator between the musicians, dancers, and higher spiritual dimensions. Its sound is considered a prayer or offering to ancestors and spiritual beings present in the performance.

The religious aspects reflected in the use of the Terbang add a dimension of spirituality to Dolalak dance. In Purworejo, the majority of the population adheres to Islam, yet there is also a strong influence from traditional beliefs and Javanese culture. In Dolalak dance performances, religious aspects are reflected in the sacredness of the event, where music and movements serve as a means to honor ancestors and spiritual beings. Therefore, the Terbang in Dolalak dance symbolizes unity, cultural heritage, spirituality, and religiosity that make it an inseparable part of the life and art of the Purworejo community.

3. Kendhang

In the Dolalak dance of Purworejo, the kendhang is not merely a typical musical instrument but also a symbol rich in cultural significance. By employing a cultural semiotic approach, we can elucidate the use of the kendhang in this dance in accordance with Roland Barthes' theory of signifier and signified.

As a signifier, the kendhang in Dolalak dance is its tangible physical presence: its round shape, materials such as wood and goat skin used in its construction, and its

distinctive percussion techniques. These are aspects that can be directly and clearly recognized by audiences or observers.



Picture 3. Kendhang

(Source: Hapsari & Naam, 2023)

When viewed physically, the kendhang is a musical instrument made of a long round wooden frame with a hollow interior, typically covered with skin, often sourced from East Java. However, far beyond its physical description, the kendhang carries much richer connotations. In Dolalak dance, the kendhang not only produces musical rhythms but also symbolizes the harmony between dance movements and musical rhythms. This reflects the concept of harmony and togetherness that lies at the core of Purworejo community culture.

In Barthes' theory, the kendhang as a signifier includes its physical attributes of wood, skin covering, and the sound it produces. Yet, more importantly, the signified aspects of the kendhang encompass deep cultural values. The kendhang not only creates music but also fosters emotional and spiritual connections among the dancers, musicians, and audience. In this context, the kendhang becomes a signifier of the rich Javanese cultural identity, often accompanying various traditional music and dance arts.

The use of the kendhang in Dolalak dance carries not only musical value but also profound cultural significance. A cultural semiotic approach with Barthes' theory helps us see how the kendhang is not just a musical instrument but also a symbol of unity, harmony, and strong cultural identity in Purworejo's traditional arts.

These findings align with Rachmawati's research (2020), which elucidates the crucial role of the kendhang in regulating tempo transitions in Dolalak dance songs. The kendhang features distinctive playing patterns with consistent improvisations in each

beat. This is significant because the kendhang serves as the primary regulator in all accompanying musical elements.

Furthermore, Mustakim's analysis (2016) highlights that the kendhang also plays a vital role in energizing the dancers and strengthening cohesion between dancers and musicians. This indicates that the kendhang is not merely an accompanying musical instrument but also brings deep emotional and social dimensions to Dolalak dance performances.

a) The Denotative Meaning of the Kendhang in Dolalak Dance

In Roland Barthes' semiotic view, denotation emerges as the primary foundation that forms the first basis for exploring meaning. Denotation is the most fundamental part of a sign or symbol that directly and concretely implies meaning (Trabaut, 1996). In other words, denotation presents a clear relationship between the sign and the object or phenomenon it represents. The main function of denotation is to provide recognition or identification of something without requiring additional interpretation (Culler, 1996). For example, in the context of an image, denotation refers to the description of visible objects such as shape, color, or size, which can be understood by anyone without the need for further analysis.

The denotation of the kendhang in Dolalak dance signifies not only its concrete physical form but also its indispensable functional role in creating musical harmony. Physically, the kendhang exhibits its long round shape with a hollow interior and ends covered with skin, often sourced from East Java. This is not just a depiction of physical objects alone but also a tangible manifestation of cultural power that spans geographic regions.

However, beyond its physical form, the kendhang also plays a crucial role in composing and regulating the rhythm in Dolalak music accompaniment. As a regulator of rhythm and tempo, the kendhang serves as the backbone ensuring harmony between dance movements and musical melodies. In this context, the kendhang is not merely an ordinary musical instrument but also an architect of sound that guides the emotions and movements of the dancers, creating an atmosphere of captivating harmony.

Therefore, in the realm of Dolalak dance, the kendhang is not only considered a musical instrument but also a guardian of tradition, a bearer of cultural identity, and a driver of spirituality within the unity of musical harmony and dance movements.

b) The Connotative Meaning of the Kendhang in Dolalak Dance

In Roland Barthes' terminology, connotation reveals an understanding of the interaction of signs with the feelings and values of their users through layers of established culture (Munandar et al., 2004). This indicates a more complex phase in the interpretation process of a sign, where the sign not only carries its direct denotative meaning but also evokes emotional responses and implied values from the receiver or user of the sign, shaped by the cultural context internalized by individuals or groups (Darma et al., 2020).

The connotation of the kendhang in the context of Dolalak dance goes beyond being just an ordinary musical instrument; it also represents a profound portrayal of cultural richness and deep harmony. Connotatively, the kendhang evokes strong associations with the rich Javanese cultural tradition, symbolizing the wisdom that has colored the lives of Purworejo's community for centuries.

In Dolalak dance, the kendhang serves not only as a musical instrument but also as a symbol of harmony. In this connotation, the kendhang does not merely produce melodious sounds but also guides the rhythm that beautifully integrates with the dancers' movements. With each beat, the kendhang builds captivating harmony, synergizing dance movements with musical melodies.

Moreover, the kendhang also carries profound spiritual meanings. Its sound in Dolalak performances is considered a call to spiritual entities or an attempt to unite with the forces of nature and ancestors. In this context, the kendhang acts as a mediator between humans and the spiritual world, leading audiences and dancers on a deep spiritual journey through its vibrations.

Thus, the connotation of the kendhang in Dolalak dance encompasses aspects of cultural richness, harmony, and spirituality, making it more than just an ordinary musical instrument but also a symbol of identity and cultural strength within Purworejo's community.

CONCLUSION

The use of musical instruments such as jidur, terbang, and kendhang in the Dolalak dance of Purworejo serves not only as musical elements and physical movements. Following Roland Barthes' concept of signifier and signified, the beats of jidur, the strikes of terbang, and the resonances of kendhang convey messages that embody values, history, and cultural identity of the Purworejo community. Jidur symbolizes unity, solidarity, and collective identity, with a spiritual dimension connecting humans to the universe. Terbang reflects solidarity, a spirit of mutual cooperation, and a commitment to preserving cultural heritage. Kendhang, serving as a rhythm regulator and carrier of cultural identity, plays a crucial role in the musical harmony and dance movements of Dolalak.

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