

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF BATIK IN MADURA BRIDAL KEBAYA CLOTHES

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the meaning of the batik symbol on the Madurese bridal kebaya. At weddings, Madurese people wear batik and kebaya, especially for women getting married. Madurese batik motifs are classified as having the characteristics of plant (vegetal) motifs, animals and geometric shapes. The influence on the Madurese batik motifs is the mixing of Javanese-Hindu, Chinese and Dutch cultures. Chinese mythology dominates the fenghuang bird and dragon motifs believed to have philosophy in each symbol. Bright and bold colors are characteristic of Madurese batik, such as red, black, yellow and green. This research approach using literature study is done by looking for references that are relevant to the cases or problems found using the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. By analyzing the data of this study, it was carried out by means of 5W1H, what, where, when, why, who, and how. The results of this study, a. The icon as a sign of the message using the kebaya dress interprets the kebaya as an Indonesian woman who is elegant, feminine and has manners, as a procession that is carried out is a cultural carnival procession as a mandatory dress that must be worn. b) symbols, the colors red, black, yellow and green on the decoration, as well as the appearance of the dragon and fenghuang bird motifs are characteristic of batik motifs, on the jarik or sarong worn at traditional wedding ceremonies in Madura. c) Index: Madurese philosophy considers that the colors red and black are courage and assertiveness, yellow symbolizes abundance and green means religious. The dragon motif brings fortune, guards and is authoritative. The fenghuang bird in batik means honesty and thoroughness, tolerance, knowledge, loyalty and integrity. When the dragon is juxtaposed with the fenghuang bird, it symbolizes bringing luck, honesty, happiness and repellent to evil, which is believed to be obtained from generations of cultural heritage to be preserved and maintained.

INTRODUCTION

Batik and kebaya cannot be separated from the characteristics of clothing which is an ancestral cultural icon throughout the ages, one of the typical clothes of Indonesian heritage (Khairani, 2020). In their attire, Indonesian women wear kebaya at every event, be it casual, official to state events, then combine it with the use of jarik or sarong with batik motifs. The use of batik cloth is not only for use as official clothing to casual wear, from births, weddings to death ceremonies (Meindrasari & Nurhayati, 2019).

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At weddings in Indonesia, there is a rich variety of traditional cultures in each region, which have their own characteristics and uniqueness, starting from the traditional wedding procession, the make-up dress and the shape of the decorative pattern (Saiin & Armita, 2019). The use of batik motifs during the wedding dress procession also has a symbolic meaning, both in terms of motifs and colors. The characteristics of these symbols contain philosophical meanings that have been inherited, for example in the Central Java region it has the characteristic Sidomukti batik motif which has the meaning of happiness, power and never lacks, Sidomulyo means to start which has the meaning of symbolizing a glorified king, Terumtum which has The characteristic feature of the motif is decorated with small flowers such as cape flowers and stars, which have a black background, which means that the shine of the star motif illuminates at night (Sabatari, 2012).

One of them is the culture of the traditional Madurese wedding ceremony, wedding dress in Madura also wears batik and kebaya, but the characteristics of Madurese batik are not the same as those of Javanese batik in general, even though Madura is still included in the East Java region. The center of government on the island of Madura is located in the Sumenep district. Sumenep is a district in East Java which is at the easternmost tip of the island of Madura, arguably one of the most important areas in the history of Madura. If you look back at the history of the Sumenep Palace, you can see that there really was a mix of cultures/ acculturation starting from Javanese-Hinduism and also the arrival of immigrants from China and the Netherlands in ancient times. From the form of decoration, the influence of Chinese culture can be seen clearly in the building art at the Sumenep palace (Suminto, 2015). In addition, Madurese batik has a characteristic pattern that is firm and rigid. The clothes on the long cloth of the Madurese bride were dominated by plant (vegetal) decoration, animal decoration (animal) and geometric decoration. The colors of batik are usually brighter and richer in color, such as green, yellow, bright red, bright blue and even orange and pink or pink. The traditional wedding procession in Madura has its own uniqueness, there are three series of traditional party processions, namely: 1. The first night is the *Legha* costume, 2. The second night is the Kapoetren dress and 3. Night three fashion with wax makeup (Nuraini, 2017). The procession is dressed in a kebaya with stripes or a sarong with the pattern of *fenghuang* birds and dragons, the meaning and meaning of the *fenghuang* bird, the dragon motif symbolizing the might of the motif, the *fenghuang* bird symbolizing gentleness and grace.

In the past, the *fenghuang* bird on batik was believed to be a repellent to disaster and generosity. The dragon juxtaposed with the *fenghuang* bird symbolizes marital happiness in the hope that a marriage will bring blessings and happiness in the future (Ningsih & Arita Puspitorini, n.d.). In ancient Chinese culture, both the *fenghuang* bird and the dragon were decorative patterns for weddings which symbolized the relationship between husband and wife which was also the embodiment of the concepts of "*yin*" and "*yang*" (Susantin & Rijal, 2020). In this research using a literature study research approach that is carried out by looking for relevant references trying to uncover the meaning of the signs used as well as reveal hidden messages contained in these traditional clothes. The use of batik motifs in kebaya clothing with the Semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce's model. The data analysis technique used in this research is a semiotic analysis of the triangle theory of meaning or "Triangle Meaning", analyzing the meaning of the batik symbol on the Madurese wedding kebaya, with the aim of maintaining a form of preservation of local wisdom, heritage and pride in one's own culture.

METHOD

This research method uses a literature study research approach that is carried out by looking for references that are relevant to the cases or problems found. Data collection techniques use research tools including observation, literature and documents (archives) (Cresswell, 2017). Observations were made by observing and searching for data and facts about the Madurese characteristic ornaments. The collected data were then analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. By observing and analyzing the data of this research, it is carried out by means of 5W1H. This method is one of the methods used to conduct research on a problem and to gather information. 5W1H stands for What, Where, When, Why, Who, and How. This method is a method of data analysis by understanding a person's identity and worldview by referring to the stories heard or told (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The story is not just a story, but stories that form an identity of a belief from certain area (Wattimena, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Batik is an Indonesian identity, where each region is rich in motifs that vary in shape, starting from the characteristics of the motifs, colors to the manufacturing process. One of the batiks in Indonesia that is quite famous and has its own characteristics is Madura batik, Madura batik has its own characteristics that are different from batik from other regions, such as Yogyakarta batik, Solo batik, Pekalongan batik and Cirebon batik. Madura batik is characterized by batik motifs that use bright and bold colors, such as red, black, golden yellow and green. In addition, Madurese batik motifs use many plant and animal motifs and geometric shapes, Madura batik is also known for its freer and more expressive motifs.

Madura batik motifs have their own characteristics that are not owned by batik from other regions. The characteristic of Madurese batik which is very easy to recognize is the rough and stiff strokes, the other characteristic is the red color on the flower, stem or leaf motifs. Likewise, in the motifs and colors on batik motifs for traditional Madurese weddings, they have symbols and meanings of a philosophy that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The Madurese ornamental motifs and ornaments were influenced by foreign cultures that stopped in Madura in ancient times. These influences consisted of Chinese, Javanese-Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Dutch people. On Madurese Batik. Madura batik is also inseparable from the influence of Chinese culture which can be seen in the motifs of fenghuang birds, butterflies, banji and others. Hindu influence can be seen in the decoration the swastika motif is the oldest geometric motif adopted by Madura, seen in the ornaments on the Jamik mosque building as the oldest historic mosque building in the Sumenep-Madura district. There is also a batik cloth with the name *blendeh* motif which means Dutch, because the decoration is based on Dutch-style flower arrangements.

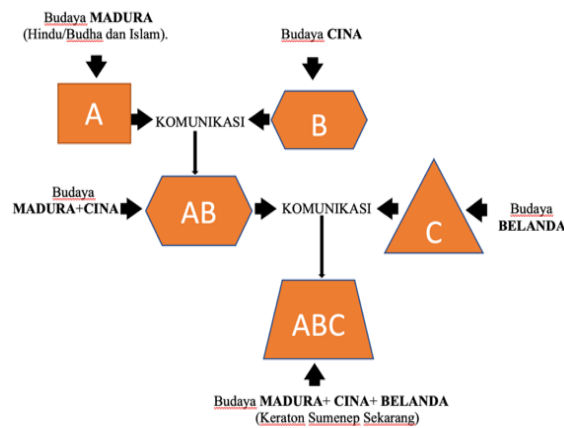


Figure 1. Madura Cultural Acculturation Scheme

Source: Personal document



Figure 2. Batik motifs characteristic of Dutch influence

Source: [Passed Sugeng Triandika \(2021\)](#)



Figure 3. Batik geometric motifs and door carvings of Javanese-Hindu influence

Source: [\(Choiroti, 2017\)](#)

Broadly speaking, the characteristics of Madura batik can be seen from two things, namely the color and the motif. In terms of color, the color characteristics of Madura batik tend to be bold and firm, such as red, yellow, *biruh* (green, in Indonesian) and blue itself. The colors used give the impression of being bright and prominent and varied, such as red, yellow, green and blue. Each color has its own meaning, namely: Red, symbolizing the character of the Madurese people who are strong and tough, Green: symbolizing the religious color where several Islamic kingdoms were established and developing in Madura, Yellow: symbolizing the grains of agricultural rice whose population means abundance, Blue : symbolizes the color of the sea that surrounds the island of Madura ([Suminto, 2015](#)). These colors are produced from natural dyes (*soga alam*) such as noni and high to produce a red color, tarum leaves for a blue color, noni skin mixed with alum to give a green (*biruh*) effect. Another characteristic that is owned by Madura

batik is the number of line pulls in one batik design.



Figure 4. Madura color scheme

Source: [Soelistyowati Collection \(2022\)](#)

The variety of Madura batik motifs is taken from animal, plant (vegetal) and geometric motifs as well as several combination motifs which are the creations of the batik makers. Each motif has a unique story and philosophy to interpret everyday life. What's unique is that every batik design and product that is produced from one another there is no repetition in the next batik, meaning that nothing will be the same even though there are similarities, but if you look more closely at the shape and color, they are not the same. This influence was present in every individual who made batik at that time, but there is a visible red thread if observed, which is a characteristic of Madurese batik.

Batik on the Madurese bridal kebaya, the wedding ceremony party is celebrated with great fanfare with quite elaborate processions in Madura. Broadly speaking, the series of ceremonies in this marriage immediately start from the application to the reception complete with make-up, wedding dress to wedding decorations. There are three series of processions in wedding customs, namely: (1) the first night the reception is wearing a Legha dress, and (2) the second night is wearing a *Kapoetren* dress and (3) the last night is wearing a dress with candle makeup.

Here it can be seen that Chinese culture dominates the decorative motifs in Madura. The Chinese and Madurese have had a good and strong relationship since long ago, this influence can be seen in the more dominant motifs in batik motifs on wedding dresses, including:

a. Dragon motif

In the *jarik* or *sarong* style wedding procession in the traditional Madurese wedding procession, the fenghuang bird and dragon motifs dominate. This influence is derived from Chinese culture, with the motif of two dragons facing each other, and their tails wrapped around each other. The twining of the tails of the two dragons is a symbol of marriage, or the joining of the two into one. This can also be seen from the sentence structure of Sengkalan, Dwi Naga Rasa Tunggal, which means the merging of two flavors into one, which has the connotation of having sex ([Suryana, 2018](#)). This mythological animal is actually a symbol of diversity which gives birth to a harmony. The symbol of glory or prosperity due to the unity of various existing elements. In philosophy that has been passed down for generations, the dragon motif is worn during wedding ceremonies as a symbol of bringing good luck to the bride and groom. This form of decoration can also be found in roof covering buildings with *top gevel* (mountains) in the Sumenep-Madura palace, ceramics, porcelain from China, carvings on doors and on dragon-shaped pillars.



Figure 5. Madura batik with dragon motifs
Source: (Yongkie Angkawijaya & Agustina, 2019)

b. Fenghuang bird motif

A motif found throughout the ages in batik. This bird is often confused with the phoenix. The phoenix is actually a male peacock who transforms into a fire bird. This bird is always depicted as bright red and never has a partner.



Figure 6. Fenghuang Batik Madura motif
Source: (Yongkie Angkawijaya & Agustina, 2019)

Meanwhile, the fenghuang bird is considered the queen of all birds, which has very beautiful colors and has a pair of fictional creatures that have been known since more than 8,000 years ago in China. Fenghuang birds are displayed in various styles, there is no standard standard regarding their appearance. Initially, the fenghuang birds were always shown in pairs, namely *feng* (male bird) and *huang* (female bird). Feng has 5 tail feathers that are long and curved at the end with an odd number which is a symbol of *yang* - a male trait, while Huang has two tail feathers with an even number representing a *yin* - a female trait (Suminto, 2015). However, later fenghuang described as a bird only. The tail feathers are black, white, red, green and yellow, which symbolize generosity, humanity, honesty, thoroughness, consideration, knowledge, loyalty, integrity and aversion to evil. But in the development of coastal batik art, especially Madura batik, the color of the tail feathers can be any color. This motif reveals a mythological animal called a *chimaera*, which is an imaginary animal composed of elements from other animals.



Figure 7. Madura batik fenghuang bird motif

Source: (Yongkie Angkawijaya & Agustina, 2019)



Figure 8. Madura batik fenghuang motif

Source: Soelistyowati Collection (2022)

Semiotic theory by conveying messages visually with the collected data then analyzed using the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. In Peirce's concept of semiotics, instruments of meaning are divided into three main elements consisting of Signs, Interpretants, and Objects, all three of which are then referred to as the triadic triangle (Lantowa et al., 2017). The sign here is the use of kebaya clothing, where in the analysis carried out is the use of kebaya clothing, which is a sign that has meaning as a form of interpretation of the intended message. Analysis of the meaning of the elaboration of semiotic studies including signs, icons, indexes and symbols produces a meaning of kebaya, namely, the symbol of an Indonesian woman who is elegant, simple, dignified, has manners and manners in acting, one of which is through standards or rules of dress.

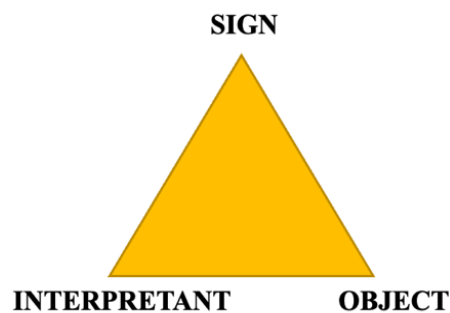


Figure 9. Relationship between sign, object and interpretant (Triangle of Meaning)

Source: Theory of Charles Sanders Peirce

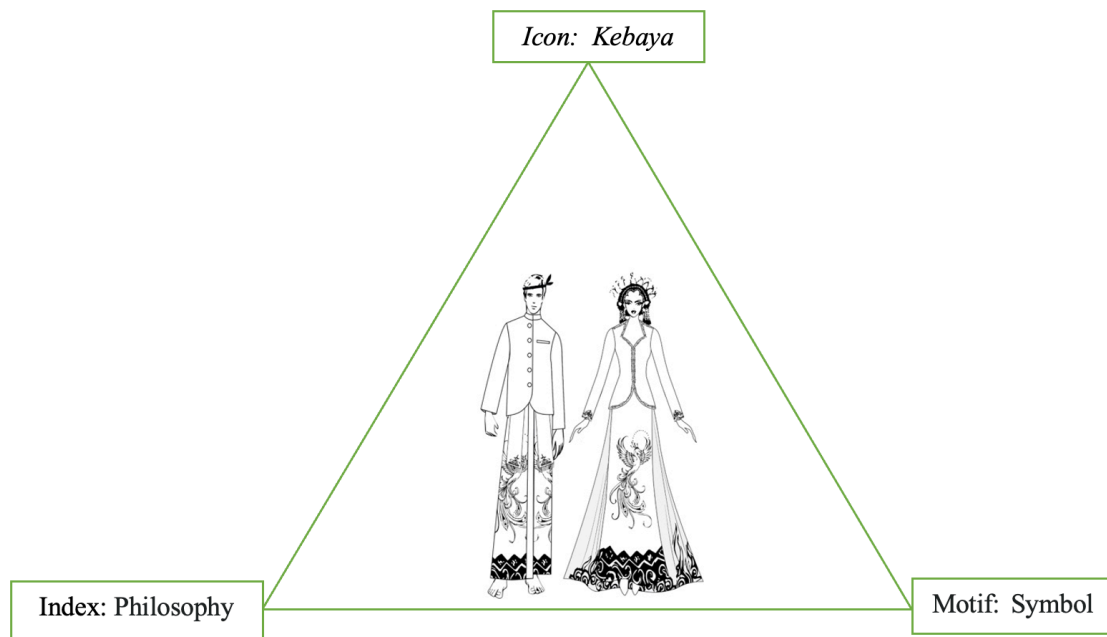


Figure 10. The relationship between sign, object and interpretant (Triangle of Meaning), in Madurese wedding dress

Source: Soelistyowati Document (2022)

In semiotic studies, sign is the main concept used as material. The sign here is the use of kebaya clothing, where in the analysis carried out is the use of kebaya clothing, kebaya is a sign that has meaning as a form of interpretation of the intended message. The sign is the use of the kebaya dress used in the traditional Madurese wedding ceremony. The object is a social context which in its implementation is used as an aspect of meaning or referred to by the sign. Based on the object, Peirce divides the sign into three things, namely:

- a) Icon: The use of a kebaya-type dress worn at the traditional Madurese wedding ceremony. The source of the use of kebaya dress in Madura in traditional cultural carnival wedding ceremonies is as a mandatory dress that must be worn.
- b) Symbol: the appearance of red, black, yellow and green colors, on the decorative motifs of dragons and fenghuang birds which are characteristic of batik motifs, on the jarik or sarong cloth worn at traditional wedding ceremonies in Madura.
- c) Index: Madurese Philosophy Dragon motifs bring fortune, guard and authority. Bird fenghuang on batik is considered honesty and thoroughness, consideration, knowledge, loyalty and integrity. When the dragon is paired with the fenghuang bird, it symbolizes good luck, honesty, happiness and repelling bad luck. The symbol is then placed on the use of kebaya at the traditional Madurese wedding ceremony.

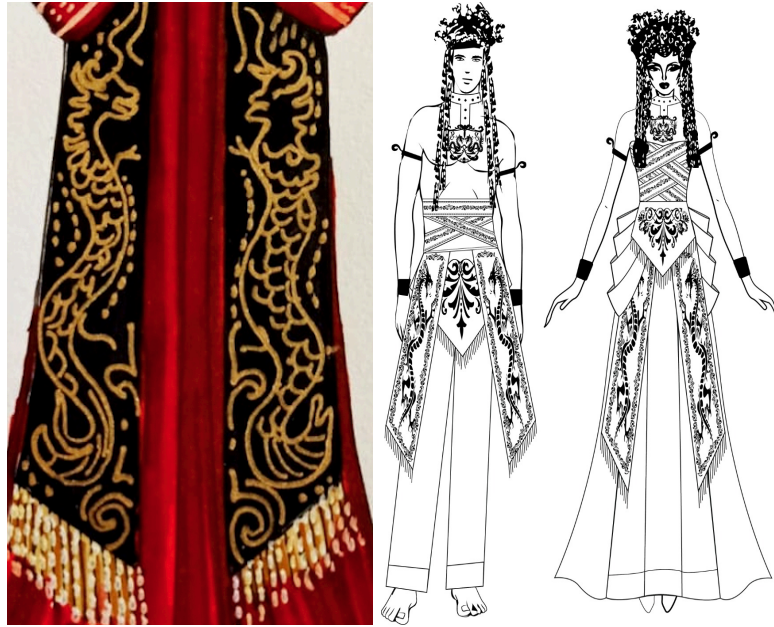


Figure 11. Dragon motif on the Sumenep-Madura wedding dress

Source: Soelistyowati Document (2022)

CONCLUSION

Wearing batik and kebaya is the pride of Indonesians, an Indonesian fashion icon that has gone global. This dress can be worn casually to other formal occasions. At weddings wearing batik and kebaya, especially for women who are getting married, wearing batik and kebaya is a must, which contains a lot of symbolic meanings from a style depending on each custom in their respective regions.

Madura has various cultural mixtures between Javanese-Hindu, Islam, Chinese Buddhism and the Netherlands. This is what makes the Madurese batik pattern unique and distinguishes it from Javanese batik in general. Chinese mythology is more dominant in the form of fenghuang birds and dragons which have been passed down from generation to generation. The fenghuang bird motif symbolizes generosity, humanity, honesty, thoroughness, tolerance, knowledge, loyalty, integrity and averting evil. The dragon motif is a symbol of glory or prosperity because of unity, bringing abundant blessings and fortune. In ancient Chinese culture, the two mythological animals, both the fenghuang bird and the dragon, were decorative patterns for weddings that symbolized the relationship between husband and wife which were also embodiments of the concepts of "yin" and "yang". When juxtaposed with this symbol, it has the meaning of bringing blessings and happiness forever, is the hope and prayer of every newly married couple. In terms of color, the characteristics of Madura batik consist of red, black, yellow and green. Red and black symbolize the strong, brave and hard character of the Madurese people, the yellow color represents the blessings of the yellowish grains of rice, the green color represents the religious color of faith in which the majority of the Madurese are Muslims. This cultural tradition is the legacy of local wisdom that needs to be maintained as an identity and personality. This Indonesian nation certainly adapts to the views of the life of the surrounding community so that there is no shift in values. Local wisdom is a means of cultivating culture and defending oneself from inappropriate foreign cultures.

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