


Analysing the Interconnectedness of Cultural Values in Fine Art Works with Roland Barthes' Semiotic Approach

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Cultural Value, Art, Roland Barthes Semiotics	Cultural values are concepts, beliefs, principles, and standards of behavior shared by a particular society or group. These values reflect the way a community views the world, life, and social interaction, and provide guidance for group members in living their daily lives. The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. This method is carried out by analyzing, describing, and summarizing various conditions and situations from various data that have been collected from interviews or observations about problems in the field. This research was conducted in several steps to ensure accurate and relevant data. The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that each work has its own cultural values contained in it, where each work has similarities in reflecting the identity and cultural heritage of the community. These values provide guidance for the community to maintain traditions and understand the meaning of life through the symbols in the artwork. This confirms that artwork is not only an aesthetic expression, but also a medium to convey deep and meaningful cultural messages. Thus, artworks play an important role in preserving and teaching cultural values to future generations.
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INTRODUCTION

Cultural values are the concepts, beliefs, principles, and standards of behaviour adhered to by a particular society or group. These values reflect a community's perspective on the world, life, and social interactions, providing guidance for group members in their daily lives. Djamaris et al. (1996: 6) elucidate in their book that cultural values are categorised based on five categories of human relationships, namely (1) cultural values in relation to God, (2) cultural values in relation to humans and nature, (3) cultural values in relation to humans and society, (4) cultural values in relation to humans and other individuals, and (5) cultural values in relation to humans and themselves.

The most fundamental and primary relationship in existence is how humans can abstract their behaviour with their Creator, namely God. Humans possess a relationship with nature, which pertains to how they perceive nature, as each culture has a distinct perception of the environment. Another relationship is the horizontal relationship, which is the parallel connection between fellow humans. This horizontal relationship is further divided into three:

the relationship between humans and society, the relationship between humans and other individuals, and the relationship between humans and themselves. In these matters, specific values will be formed and generated in their relationships, which will indirectly manifest within society.

Humans can express their values through various forms, one of which is through artistic works, including visual arts. In these contexts, specific values will be shaped and generated in their relationships. These values will indirectly be established within society. One way humans express themselves is by creating visual art, which reflects their beliefs, principles, and worldviews. Art is an expression of feelings that crystallises ideas derived from imaginative experiences. It serves as a response to observations and explorations of societal life, including religion, culture, customs, and the natural environment.

Subsequently, from internal impulses arise intuitive vibrations that stimulate emotions and imagination to be expressed in artistic works. In creating art, artists cannot detach themselves from environmental influences, such as religion, customs, and culture. Therefore, each artwork will reflect the cultural values of its society and is a reality directly faced as a stimulus or trigger for artistic creativity (Sumardjo, 2000: 233). In visual arts, the influence of the environment and the impact of changing times serve as catalysts for the emergence and expression of ideas through their works. The emergence of a piece of art goes through a lengthy process.

According to Maruto (2014), every artwork created by an artist is, in essence, a characteristic. The characteristics present in an artwork simultaneously reflect the personal identity of its creator. The personal identity embedded in an artwork is fundamentally a result of thought combined with the aesthetic taste and experiences of the artist, manifested in a medium of expression, utilising the technical skills at their disposal. The ability to translate ideas into a medium of expression varies between artists, each possessing distinct skills and characteristics. An artist's work may sometimes provoke both support and opposition within society due to differing perceptions arising from various signs or symbols present in a piece. This phenomenon is commonplace and understandable, as society comprises multiple layers, groups, and varying levels of education, leading to diverse ways of understanding and interpreting signs.

The connotative meaning, a term used by Barthes to elucidate one of the three functions of signs at the second stage of signification, describes the interaction that occurs when a sign encounters the feelings or emotions of its user and the values within their culture (Riwu & Pujiati, 2018). Barthes also examines another aspect of signification, namely "myth," which marks a society. Myths, according to Barthes, reside at the second level of signification; thus, after the sign-signifier-signified system is established, the sign becomes a new signifier that then possesses a second signified, forming a new sign. Therefore, when a sign with a connotative meaning subsequently develops into a denotative meaning, that denotative meaning becomes a myth (Sudarto et al., 2015). The application of Roland Barthes' semiotics in this research serves as a means to uncover signs in order to comprehend the meaning, impressions of artworks, and the cultural values present. In this study, the researcher analyses the cultural values of four works by various artists, each possessing a distinctive style of visual

art. The first work is by Prihatmoko Moki, followed by a piece by Rakajana, then Arifin S., and finally a work by I Gusti Lanang M.R.S. From these artists, the researcher analyses one work created by each. The objective of this research is to uncover the denotations, connotations, and myths present in each piece.

Previous research entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on the Mona Lisa Painting by Leonardo Da Vinci" shares similarities with this study, as both investigate a work of visual art through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotics. The difference from the earlier study lies in the research object; while the previous study discusses the Mona Lisa painting by Leonardo Da Vinci, this research examines four artworks from four different artists. Additionally, there is research entitled "Cultural Value Analysis in the Novel Lampuki by Arafat Nur," which includes an analysis of the cultural values contained within Arafat Nur's novel. The novelty of this research lies in discussing and analysing the semiotic values of four works from different artists, each possessing unique characteristics yet containing cultural values within them. The contribution of this research is to provide a comprehensive exposition of the total four works of visual art, thereby offering differing perspectives on the works created by each artist.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative descriptive research method. Descriptive qualitative research is a technique conducted by analysing, describing, and summarising various conditions and situations based on data collected from interviews or observations regarding field issues. This research is conducted in several steps. The first step involves collecting one work from each artist. The subsequent step is to gather data related to cultural values sourced from literature reviews, compiling various information from books, journals, and relevant online articles. The third step consists of analysing the data from the collected sources, with the analysis being a semiotic analysis based on Roland Barthes, conducted through observation of the research objects, namely the visual art designs, whether paintings or digital works. The data analysis proceeds through four stages of Roland Barthes' semiotics, which include denotative analysis, connotative analysis, and myth analysis; each work will be presented in tabular form to facilitate the comparison of differences. The subsequent analysis will be described in paragraph form. Finally, the concluding step of this research will present the conclusions drawn from the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semiotics as an analytical method

Semiotics comes from the Greek word for sign. Semiotics is the science of signs (Tinarbuko, 2003). Starting from the field of language, the branch of semiotics developed into the field of art and design. The basic ideas of semiotics are messages and codes (Mudjiyanto & Nur, 2013). Semiotics is a science that discusses signs is still too broad because there are several semiotic thinkers such as: Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, Hjelmslev, Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes (Rosalina, W, 2015). Each semiotic theory from several figures has a different concept (Zikrillah, & Sa'dudin, 2009).

Roland Barthes Semiotics

One of the semiotics thinkers is Roland Barthes. Roland Barthes is the successor of Saussure's thought. This can be proven from Barthes' semiotic theory almost literally derived from de Saussure's theory of language (Haryono & Dedi, 2017). Saussure's theory that semiotics is divided into two parts signifier and signified. Roland Barthes then went on to develop the theory known as denotation, connotation and myth.

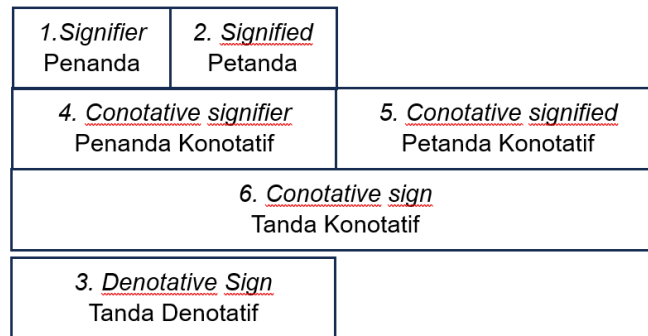



Figure 1 Teori semiotika Roland Barthes (Sobour, 2006)

The image above illustrates how denotation, as the literal or actual meaning, is the meaning perceived by the human senses. Connotation represents the second level, which generates implicit or uncertain meanings that are often associated with psychological aspects, feelings, and beliefs. Myth signifies language or meaning that varies due to the influence of socio-cultural life and the prevailing perspectives in its surroundings (Dewi & Riris, 2020). This research will focus on the interpretation of signs through the semiotics of Roland Barthes, specifically examining four works by different artists. The first work is by Prihatmoko Moki, titled "Prajurit Kalah Tanpa Raja."

Representation of cultural values in the visual "Prajurit Kalah Tanpa Raja" by Prihatmoko Moki

Visual analysis of the work "Prajurit Kalah Tanpa Raja" by Prihatmoko Moki employs a semiotic approach based on the theories of signs posited by Roland Barthes, focusing on the stages of denotation, connotation, and myth.

Tabel 1.1 Representation of cultural values in the visual "Prajurit Kalah Tanpa Raja" by Prihatmoko Moki

No	Visual Works	Information
1	The selection of typography 	The word "lost" constitutes a contrasting element within this work, rendered in black with a script or handwritten font style.

No	Visual Works	Information
2	Colour - The Atmosphere	In this image, warm colours are predominant compared to cool colours. It is evident that the warm hues present, such as red, yellow, green, and orange, dominate over the cool colours, such as blue. The warm colours in this image are more dominant as they attract attention and highlight important elements within the artwork. Furthermore, warm colours provide a strong contrast with the green background, enhancing the dramatic and visually engaging aspects of the piece (Eliot & Maier, 2007).
3	Subject of the artwork	The subject of this artwork is the hall of the Combat Soldiers: the soldiers clad in red and blue uniforms appear as the primary subjects within this image. They are engaged in combat with weapons such as swords and spears, creating an impression of intense battle. Additionally, there are animals being ridden, specifically horses, which served as war vehicles during that era.

Interpretasi



Figure 2. Figure 3. Soldier Defeated Without a King

Denotation : Denotatively, this image depicts a scene of battle between two groups of soldiers wearing red and blue uniforms, with female soldiers dressed in grey. The soldiers are engaged in combat using weapons such as firearms and krises, with several soldiers appearing injured or fallen on the battlefield. The background of the image is filled with wavy patterns and intricate decorations, imparting a dramatic and intense impression to the artwork.

Connotation : At a connotative level, this image may illustrate themes of struggle and sacrifice in battle. The red colour of the soldiers' uniforms symbolises bravery and the blood shed in combat, while the blue may reflect steadfastness; however, in this image, it signifies

threat and oppression. The fierce battle scene reflects the heroic struggle of Indonesian fighters against colonisers or formidable foes. This intense combat scene also embodies the fighting spirit and loyalty of the soldiers towards their duty.

Myth : In the context of myth, this image represents a heroic narrative about the Indonesian people's struggle for independence. The Indonesian fighters in red are portrayed as brave and tenacious heroes, prepared to sacrifice everything for the freedom of their homeland. This myth creates a narrative of patriotism, courage, and resilience that has been passed down through generations, inspiring the Indonesian populace to continue to honour and preserve the values of struggle and independence.


Cultural Values Contained

1. Patriotisme dan Nasionalisme Patriotism and Nationalism In the context of human relationships within society, the scene depicted in the image, characterised by the prominent red of the soldiers' uniforms, illustrates the Indonesian fighters and underscores the spirit of patriotism and nationalism. These soldiers are portrayed with courage and tenacity in their confrontation with the enemy, reflecting their love and dedication to their homeland..
2. Sacrifice In the interaction between individuals, the intense battle scenes reveal the sacrifices that must be made by the fighters in their quest for independence and freedom. The injured or fallen soldiers in combat epitomise the cost that must be borne to attain liberty.
3. Solidarity and Unity The conflict between the red soldiers and the blue adversaries embodies the values of solidarity and unity among the fighters. They collaborate and support one another in the face of the enemy, illustrating the significance of unity in achieving common objectives.


Representation of Cultural Values in the Visual “Year of the Wood Dragon” by Rakajana

Visual analysis of the work "Year of the Wood Dragon" by Rakajan is conducted using a semiotic approach based on the theories of signs proposed by Roland Barthes, focusing on the stages of denotation, connotation, and myth.

Tabel 1.2 Representation of cultural values in the visual "Warrior Defeated Without a King" by Rakajan.

No	Visual artwork	Description
1	Colour - Atmosphere of 	The dominating colours in the artwork titled ‘Year of the Wood Dragon’ are bright and striking colours such as blue, red, yellow and purple. Hot colours such as red and yellow attract attention and create a sense of energy and intensity. Blue, although more subdued, provides a strong contrast to the other hot colours, reinforcing the visual complexity of the work. These colours also give a sense of dynamism and life to the creatures depicted.

Colour

No	Visual artwork	Description
2		<p>The subjects of this work are as follows:</p> <p>Myths Creatures: The mythological beings depicted in this image are two intricate and lively entities. The green creature possesses a red face, characterised by large eyes, sharp teeth, and thick black hair. The creature below is blue, exhibiting a similar expression, complete with large eyes, sharp teeth, and a helmet adorned with elaborate decorations.</p> <p>The woman in this image is portrayed with a sorrowful expression. Her face conveys a profound sense of grief or concern. This sorrowful expression may symbolise feelings of loss, suffering, or the emotional burdens that one must bear.</p>

Interpretation



Denotation: In a denotative sense, the artwork titled "Year of the Wood Dragon" features two intricate and vibrant mythological creatures. The creature above possesses a red face with large eyes, sharp teeth, and thick black hair. The creature below is blue, exhibiting a similar expression, complete with large eyes, sharp teeth, and a helmet adorned with intricate decorations. Both are clad in golden armour on their arms. The background of the image is filled with wavy patterns in various colours that enhance the intensity and complexity of the piece.

Connotation : On a connotative level, these mythological beings symbolise strength and protection. The red hue of the face of the upper creature may represent bravery, power, and fighting spirit, while the blue colour of the lower creature might signify calmness, steadfastness, and potentially a threat that must be confronted. The intricate wavy patterns in the background could reflect the dynamics of life or the universe, as well as the energy that is constantly in motion and change. The presence of a woman with a sorrowful expression in this image adds an emotional layer and may symbolise the suffering or emotional burden that must be faced in the journey of life.

Myth: "Year of the Wood Dragon" depicts the symbolism of the dragon in Chinese culture, which embodies strength, protection, and good fortune. The wood dragon, in particular,

is associated with the element of wood, symbolising growth, innovation, and balance. The mythological creatures in this work can be viewed as guardians who maintain the harmony between nature and humanity against malevolent or destructive forces. The woman portrayed with a sorrowful expression may reflect the sacrifices necessary to uphold that balance and harmony. The influence of Bali's ogoh-ogoh is also evident in the decorative details and aesthetics of the creatures, adding a local and cultural dimension to this piece.

Cultural Values Embedded

1. Protection

In the context of human relationships within society, particularly in Chinese culture, the dragon serves as a symbol of strength, protection, and fortune. The mythological creature depicted in this work, with its intricate design and vibrant colours, may represent a guardian that shields against malevolent or destructive forces. The values of bravery and protection are reflected in the visual representation of these beings, which appear robust and formidable.

2. Cultural Heritage and Tradition

As a creation of an artist from Bali, the influence of Balinese ogoh-ogoh is evident in the decorative details and aesthetics of the creatures illustrated in this piece. Ogoh-ogoh are symbols of tradition employed to dispel evil spirits and negative energy, reflecting cultural values centred on purification and the restoration of harmony. This work celebrates and preserves such traditions, thereby reinforcing a rich cultural identity.

3. Representation of Cultural Values in the Visual "The Collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom in the Hikayat Banjar 1663 AD" by Arifin S



Figure 6. The Collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom in the Hikayat Banjar 1663 AD

Source: selingkarwilis.com

Visual analysis of the work "The Collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom in the Hikayat Banjar 1663 AD" by Arifin S utilising a semiotic approach based on Roland Barthes' theory of signs, by examining the stages of denotation, connotation, and myth.

Table 1.3 Representation of cultural values in the visual "Soldiers Defeated Without a King" by Arifin S.

No	Visual Work	Description
1	Colour - Colour Atmosphere	Warm colours such as red, orange, and yellow, as well as neutral colours like brown and grey, are prominent within the context. The colour red is observed on the flags and attire of several figures, imparting a sense of energy, bravery, and fighting spirit. Orange and yellow are depicted in the backgrounds representing sunlight, thereby creating a dramatic and intense atmosphere. Brown and grey are present in the clothing and skin tones of the characters, as well as in the horses and the ruins of buildings, enhancing the sense of realism and antiquity.
2	Subject of the work	<p>The subjects depicted in this work are as follows:</p> <p>Soldiers: Several soldiers are portrayed wearing traditional attire and armed with weapons; some carry shields and spears. They appear to be situated within a scene of battle or journey, exemplifying their fighting spirit and bravery.</p> <p>Cavalry Soldiers: Two soldiers are depicted mounted on horses, with one positioned centrally, appearing to lead. Their presence adds dynamism and movement to the image, signifying leadership and mobility.</p> <p>Red Flag: A red flag adorned with a gold symbol, which may represent strength, courage, and the identity of a nation or group engaged in struggle.</p> <p>Ruins of Ancient Buildings: The background illustrates the ruins of ancient structures and large statues, providing historical context and highlighting the devastation experienced by the Majapahit Kingdom.</p>



Figure 7. The Decline of the Majapahit Kingdom in the Hikayat Banjar 1663 AD
 Source: selingkarwilis.com

Denotation: The depiction illustrates several soldiers engaged in a scene of battle or journey.

These soldiers are adorned in traditional attire of red and blue, wielding weapons such as spears and shields. Some soldiers are seen riding horses. In the background, there are the ruins of ancient buildings that reflect destruction, alongside a red flag bearing a golden symbol that flutters in the wind. Trees and sunlight illuminate the scene, adding a natural element to this image.

Connotation: On a connotative level, the colour red in the soldiers' attire symbolises bravery, fighting spirit, and sacrifice, while the colour blue may reflect calmness and steadfastness in the face of adversaries. The presence of the ruins suggests devastation and the downfall of the Majapahit Kingdom, conveying a message about the end of an era and significant changes in history. The red flag with the golden symbol reinforces national identity and pride, as well as a spirit of patriotism amidst battle. The trees and sunlight illuminating the scene provide a contrast between destruction and hope, indicating that despite devastation, there is always the prospect of resurgence and recovery.

Myth: In the context of mythology, this work portrays the legendary narrative regarding the collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom, which was one of the great kingdoms in Indonesian history. This tale is an integral part of the historical and cultural narrative passed down through generations, imparting values of heroism, patriotism, and sacrifice. The significance of this myth also serves as a cautionary tale regarding the consequences of instability and internal conflict that can lead to the downfall of a great civilisation. The trees and sunlight in this work symbolise hope and new life following destruction, reflecting the cycle of life and rebirth after challenging times.

Cultural Values Embedded:

1. **Patriotism:** In the relationship between humanity and society, the value of patriotism encapsulated in this work is profoundly strong. The Indonesian soldiers depicted fighting against enemies in the image reflect their dedication and love for their homeland. They risk their lives and safety to uphold the independence and honour of the nation.
2. **Cultural Heritage and Tradition:** This work portrays a significant historical event, namely the collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom, which is one of the great kingdoms in Indonesian history. It reflects the importance of preserving cultural heritage and history as part of national identity. The depiction of the ruins of ancient buildings further underscores the crucial role of history in shaping the future.

Representation of Cultural Values in the Visual “Odalán” by I Gusti Lanang M.R.S.





Figure 8. Odalan

Source: selingkarwilis.com

Visual analysis of "Odalán" by I Gusti Lanang M.R.S employing a semiotic approach based on Roland Barthes' theory of signs, focusing on the stages of denotation, connotation, and myth.

Table 1.4 Representation of cultural values in the visual "Odalán" by I Gusti Lanang M.R.S

No	Visual Works	Information
1	 Color - Color Ambience	Warm colors such as red, orange, and yellow, and neutral colors such as brown and grey. The red color is seen in the fire in the later work and the clothes of some of the characters, giving the impression of energy and enthusiasm. Orange and yellow are seen in the background depicting sunlight, creating a dramatic and intense atmosphere. The colors brown and gray, and puth are seen in the clothes and skin of the barong figures in the background.
2	 The subject of the work	The subject of this work is : Dancers or musicians who are depicted from the subject wearing white Balinese clothes, holding musical instruments. Then there is a banten maker who is here depicted by not wearing clothes. The Barong Barong adds a sacred and spiritual element to the ceremony, and reflects the cultural values and beliefs of the Balinese people.

Denotation : Denotatively, this work depicts the atmosphere of odalan, which is a religious ceremony conducted at temples in Bali to celebrate the anniversary or birthday of the temple. This ceremony involves various rituals such as offerings (banten), dances, songs, and prayers led by a priest or spiritual leader. During odalan, the Hindu community of Bali gathers at the temple to worship and celebrate the grandeur of the temple as a revered sacred space.

Connotation : At a connotative level, odalan carries a deeper meaning as an expression of gratitude and reverence towards the deities and ancestors. In this work, the odalan ceremony reflects the harmony between humanity, nature, and the spiritual realm. This is represented by the image of a man playing a musical instrument and the offerings presented, symbolising the sincerity and devotion of the worshippers to the gods. The dances and songs performed during odalan also possess profound symbolic meanings, illustrating beauty, balance, and harmony in life.

Myth : In the tradition of odalan, Barong serves as a protective symbol that combats evil spirits and negative energies. Its presence in the artwork depicting odalan, alongside elements of fire, music, and offerings, underscores the significance of cleansing and safeguarding the spiritual environment. Barong embodies goodness and balance, maintaining harmony between humanity, nature, and the spiritual world. This work not only reflects the beauty and complexity of the odalan ceremony but also imparts deep cultural and spiritual values inherent in Balinese society.

1. Protection

The cultural value of protection within artistic works that depict odalan against the backdrop of Barong is clearly illustrated through the symbolism of Barong itself, which represents a protective force that combats malevolent spirits and negative energies. The presence of Barong in the odalan ceremony underscores the importance of maintaining balance and harmony between humanity, cultural heritage, and tradition.

2. Harmony and Balance

Odalan reflects the principles of harmony and balance between humanity, nature, and the spiritual realm. This ceremony involves offerings (banten) to the deities as a manifestation of gratitude and respect, highlighting the significance of preserving a harmonious relationship with nature and the spiritual world.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that each work possesses its own cultural value, wherein there are commonalities among the works of Prihatmoko Moki and Arfin S, which convey that values within Indonesian culture, such as patriotism and a high fighting spirit, are vividly depicted through various denotative and connotative signs, as well as myths contained within them. Both works provide a portrayal of the atmosphere or tragedy of historical times, evoking the emotions and tensions present within. Furthermore, the two works by artists Rakajana and I Gusti Lanang M.R.S illustrate significant occasions packaged within an artistic expression. Rakajana's work depicts hopes and aspirations anticipated for the New Year 2023, specifically the anniversary of Naga Kayu, featuring representations of a dragon and a sorrowful woman filled with concerns about her experiences on this new anniversary. In contrast, the second work by artist I Gusti Lanang M.R.S portrays the atmosphere of the odalan anniversary, which serves as an annual ceremony for the Balinese community. Through his artwork, the artist aims to convey the sacredness of this moment on a spiritual level.

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