

# Visualization of Spiritual Values on Relief Kunjarakarna at Jago Temple: A Visual Semiotics Study

Ika Fariyah Hentihu  
Postgraduate Student of Science Education  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami, Surakarta, Indonesia  
ikafariyah@uns.ac.id

Sumarlam  
Faculty of Cultural Sciences  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami, Surakarta, Indonesia  
sumarlam@staff.uns.ac.id

Sahid Teguh Widodo  
Faculty of Cultural Sciences  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami, Surakarta, Indonesia  
[sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com](mailto:sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com)

Wakit Abdullah  
Faculty of Cultural Sciences  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami, Surakarta, Indonesia  
[abdullahwakit@yahoo.com](mailto:abdullahwakit@yahoo.com)

**Abstract—** Jago temple is one of the most complete temples with reliefs among other temples in East Java. Jago Temple Relief brings the most disturbing questions related to the symbolic meaning it carries. Based on the description, this research tries to show symbolic manifestation and symbolic meaning in Relief Kunjarakarna at Jago Temple. The results of this study recommend that in Relief Kunjarakarna found approximately 15 pieces of symbolic form. The study on the relief of Kunjarakarna Jago Temple uses the basis of Charles Sanders Peirce semiotics theory and, because the rise of Trichotomy (sign, referent, interpretant) has ever been suggested more suitable to trace the hidden meaning of the story engraved in relief. The Trichotomy structure (sign—referent—interpretant) is used in analyzing the meanings behind the carved stories and the composing of the story itself. This is supported by textual data that will be interpreted through the Visual Semiotics approach. The data supported by Kakawin Kunjarakarna, Al Qur'an Hadith, Buddhism Book, Hinduism and Folktale Classification from Stith Thompson which has been cited by Danandjaya.

**Keywords—** relief; kunjarakarna; semiotika; Jago temple

## I. INTRODUCTION

Interpretation of Meaning of Relief Stories Referring to the Works of Literature Ancient Javanese stories carved in relief form, should not be viewed as a "freezing" of a story, or merely regarded as a decoration of a building. Stories that are carved of course has various meanings and purposes the carving. Ancient Javanese literary scholars have examined that in the literary contents are stored various religious or educational messages. It's just that all sorts of messages that have been coated and combined in a series of stories. Furthermore, welcome to the readers to do interpretations. In this case there are readers who are able to interpret the main meaning contained in the literary work, but some are

not able to interpret it so just look at the Javanese literary works as a mere story, the story of the gods, stories about the behavior of the knight, stories about animals that can talk, and so forth. In the semiotic viewpoint of Charles Sanders Peirce the reliefs of the carved story can be considered as a sign that has reference (referent). The link between the sign and the referent will give birth to the interpretant in the form of certain concepts as well. In the meantime there is also a link between the sign with the referent that will consist of three properties, the nature of the relationship then determines a sign that is formed, whether it is index (index), icon (icon) or symbol (symbol).

Saussure defined the sign, as we have seen, as the relationship between a signifier (that which carries or produces meaning) and the signified (the meaning itself). His primary insight was that the relationship between them is arbitrary; within language the signifier 'red', for example, is not in itself red and, further, different languages of course have different words for the same thing. In effect, Saussure emphasized the fact that entities do not precede or determine their naming, otherwise a name would mean the same thing in every language. Eskimos, for example, have many more words for 'snow' than English speakers, who only have one.

This idea was rendered more complex by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), who challenged the notion that a sign simply generates its idea, however arbitrary. In Peirce's model, semiosis functions through three, rather than two, positions. There is the sign (that which stands for something else) and the interpretant (also called meaning or meaning-effect, and basically means interpretation or the mental image the individual forms of the sign) and the object (or referent, the thing for which the sign stands).

For studies in visual and material culture, Peirce's classification of signs in terms of icon, index and symbol are

useful, though these are not the only classifications he created. An icon, simply put, is a sign that is linked to a signifier through similarity in appearance. Examples here include portraits or abstract paintings where color is, for example, black; the painting *is* black, *refers* to the color black and can then be interpreted differently. The point is that we can gain information (or think we can!) about the signified by looking at the sign. Think, for example, of computer icons. An indexical sign ties, as such, the signifier to the signified; the index has been described as visible sign which points to the invisible, though this may be too general. I would describe the indexical sign as *the registration of the real*; the sight of smoke, for example, can indicate fire, a bullet hole would refer to a specific act, or the sight of tears suggests sadness. Further, think of words such as 'this' or 'big' and 'small'.

Finally, a symbol links the signifier and the signified in a purely arbitrary or conventional way; unlike the icon or index, the link is not physical or logical. We are taught by our society to make the link between the symbolic sign and it's signified. For example, flags, dollar signs or the most obvious example, verbal language itself. Pierce's ideas can be useful but should not be understood uncritically. Like objects and images, these classifications are best understood as dynamic when applied to images and objects.

**II. SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS MODEL**

As explained earlier, semiotical analysis is a method or method for analyzing and giving meaning to symbolic packets of messages or text in all its forms (sign) both in mass media and other documents / texts (Pawito, 2007:155). In other words, semiotics analysis works to trace the meanings that are transported with text in the form of symbols, where the text is the focus of analysis in semiotics research.

Charles Sanders Peirce also distinguishes semiotic analysis of important aspects so often referred to as the triangle of meaning (Littlejohn, 1998). Three aspects are: a) Signs, b). References of signs or objects, c). User Signs (interpretant), (Kriyantono, 2007: 263). Similarly, Bungin (2010: 173) explains that in semiotic analysis there are generally three important issues that need to be addressed, namely; a) the problem of meaning; b) the problem of action concerning how to get something through the conversation; c) the problem of coherence is about how to describe the form of a pattern of speech so that it can be understood.

Furthermore, Pateda (in Sobur, 2001, 100-101) explains that in semiotic analysis there are patches of various ways that can be done, namely; a). Analysis of semiotic analytics, namely semiotics that analyze the sign system with has an object on signs and analyze it into ideas, objects and meaning. Ideas associated with symbols and meals are associated with the burden contained in symbols referring to a particular object, b). Descriptive semiotic analysis, ie semiotics that observe the observed sign system,

c). Semo-founal semiotic analysis, which is semiotic that takes into account the sign system of animals as a form of communication, d). Semiotic cultural analysis namely semiotics that pay attention or examine the system of signs that apply in a particular culture of a hereditary society, e). Semiotic narrative analysis, ie semiotic that observes or examines the sign system of mythical and verbal tales, f). Semiotic analysis of nature, ie semiotics that pay attention and examine the sign system generated by nature, g). Semiotic analysis of normative, ie, semiotic that pay attention or examine the system of sign made man tangible norm, h). Semiotic analysis of social semiotics, which pay attention or examine the sign system generated by man embodied symbol, both in the form of words and in the form of sentence. This means that social semiotics further examines the sign system contained in the language, i). The semiotic analysis of structural, semiotic that observes or examines the sign system manifested through the structure.

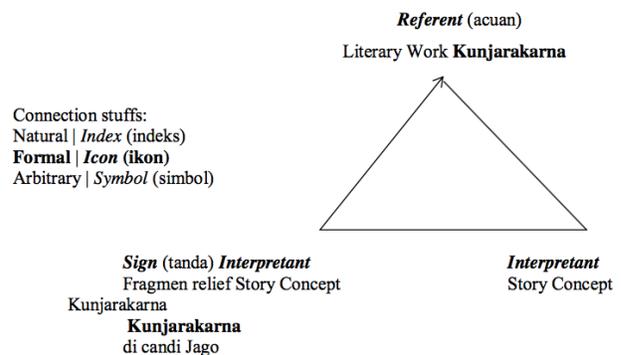


Fig. 1. The Structure of the semiotic analysis

If the depiction of a relief of a story in a particular temple is associated with Peirce's semiotics perspective, it is seen in the following Peirce trichotomy chart, (Spradley 1972: 13-14, Van Zoest and Sudjiman 1992: 8-9, 1993: 23-7, Munandar 2003: 2) Based on figure I it can be clearly known that the sculpture of Kunjarakarna relief fragment in Jago temple (14th century AD), referring to the Literature of Ancient Javanese Arjunawiwaha composed by Mpu Dusun. The forms of relief is a sign that refers to the description kakawin Kunjarakarna. The relationship between the shape of the relief with the description of the story is formal, hence from it gave birth to the form of icon mark. So, the physical form of the relief fragment of the Kunjarakarna story in Jago, is the iconic sign of the Ancient Javanese Literary Story.

The next step is to interpret the temple relief icon by using data support from Al Qur'an, Hadith, Buddhist Book, Hindu Book and Folktales Classification from Thompson.



Fig. 2. Kunjarakarna icon

One of the Kunjarakarna icon is as illustrated in Figure 2. There is depicted Kunjarakarna witnessing an empty crater. He who had a good chance to see the hell of a close to be worried because the empty crater was prepared for his friend, Purnawijaya. The crater is described as a cow is shaded by trees that have leaves of a knife. The knives are ready to fall and draw the man inside the cow-shaped crater. By using supporting data in interpreting icon Figure 2 then obtained:

A. **Literary Text:** Is a giant named Kunjarakarna. He runs a tapa on the slopes of Mahameru on the North East side because he is concerned about his rebirth. And Kunjarakarna had a good chance to visit hell first. (Mollen, 2011) In manuscript no 11v is revealed: I see that the crater is reversed and rubbed evenly. What does kakanda mean? So said the Kunjarakarna. Answer the Yamadipati, "Oh adinda Kunjarakarna, there are people who want to enter. He went into the crater. The fire went out. He himself will become his wood. They used to go before themselves into the crater. Because of his bad deeds first. They cannot be prevented by parents. They are jealous of their neighbors, take women's prohibitions, demeans parents and teachers and kings. Not friendly to the weak. Does not respect the rules. They are all dealing with his evil deeds and must follow him to the candragomuka crater.

B. **Qur'an:** Surah Al Isra verse 1. Glorified God who has rendered his servant Muhammad one night from the Grand Mosque to the Aqsa Mosque which we have blessed around him so that We may show him some of Our signs. Verily He is the Hearer and the Seer. In relation to the Folktale Classification by Stith Thomson, events occurring in the 6th century can be classified into no. 460A: The Journey to God to receive rewards. Rasulullah SAW journey of Isra and Mi'raj from Masjidil Haram to Masjidil Aqsha true is to travel religious to get reward. In this case after going through and / or seeing hell where the classification of its category is (475) and (A67), then get reward from Allah, based on that category. Reward is the command to perform prayer 5 time.

C. **Al Hadith:** Imam Abu Daawud narrated, has told us Ibn al-Mushaffaa, he said, has told us Baqiyyah and Abul Mughhiirah, both said, have told us Shafwaan, he said; had told me Raashid bin Sa'd and 'Abdurrahman bin

Jubair, from Anas bin Maalik, he said, "The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam said:" When I was raised to heaven (dimi'rajkan), I passed a people whose nails they made from the copper, they used the nails to scratch their faces and their chests. I then asked, "O Gabriel, who are they?" Gabriel replied, "They are the ones who eat human flesh (ghibah / say ugliness) and ruin their honor." [HR Abu Daawud no. 4235. Reported also by Imam Ahmad no. 12861].

D. **Manawa Dharma Sastra:** Rule No. 96 The Book of Manawa Dharma Literature page 18 That among all the creatures of God's creation is the best of living beings; among all the best living beings are those who live with the mind; among whom the mind is human; among them humans are Brahmins. This is one of the reasons why Yaksa Kunjarakarna wants to transform into a human being

E. **The Majapahit Book of Law:** In the Law of Madjapahit chapter PARADARA page 51 states that PARADARA is the wife of others. What is meant by PARADARA is indecent acts against the wives of others.

Bad deeds done by Purnawijaya, a female angel who will occupy the crater candragomuka because of bad deeds that he has done. Folktale Classification:

1. (460 A) The Journey to God to receive rewards is Kunjarakarna who wants to change into human form by going through or seeing hell first;
2. (475) The man as heater of Hell's Kettle is a Candragomuka crater that is purposely reserved for Kunjarakarna's comrade;
3. (A67) Hell is the existence of hell which is also mentioned in the Kunjarakarna literary story.

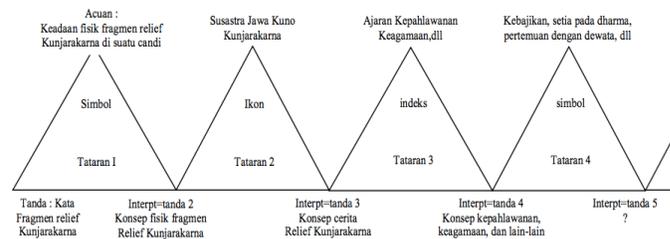


Fig. 3. The physical state of the fragments of the reliefs in a temple Kunjarakarna

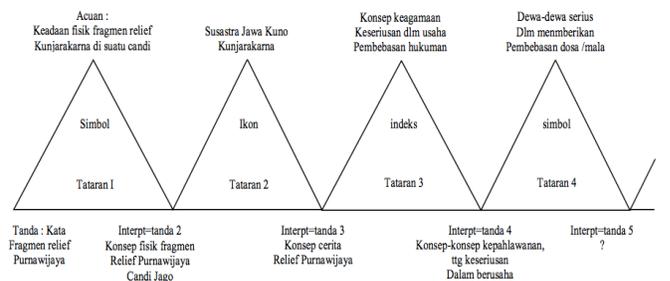


Fig. 4. The physical state of the fragments of the reliefs in a temple Kunjarakarna

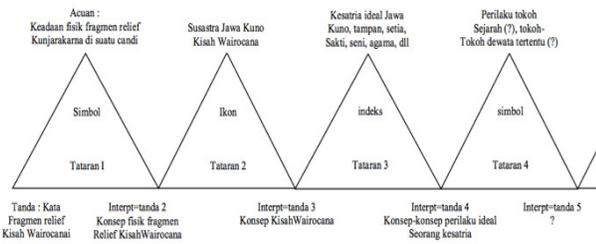


Fig. 5. The physical state of the fragments of the reliefs in a temple Kunjarakarna

### III. CONCLUSION

The result of research of symbolic manifestation and symbolic meaning in Relief Kunjarakarna at Candi Jago recommends that in Relief Kunjarakarna found about 15 pieces of symbolic form based on textual data interpreted through Visual Semiotics approach. The data is supported by Kakawin Kunjarakarna, Al Qur'an Hadith, Buddhist Book, Hinduism and Folktale Classification from Stith Thompson which has been cited by Danandjaya

### References

Achmad, S. W. (2017). *Sejarah Raja-raja Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Araska.

Budiman, K. (2011). *Semiotika Visual*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

Budiman, K. (2011). *Semiotika Visual Konsep, Isu, dan Problem Ikonitas*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

Bevins, C. (2014). A Visual Social Semiotic Analysis of Target's Branding Using Instagram. Unpublished Thesis

Cobley, P. (2001). *Semiotics and Linguistics*. Newyork: Routledge.

Dumarcay, J. (1989). *The Temples of Java*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Duranti, A. (2004). *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Eco, U. (1986). *Semiotics and The Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Haq, M. Z. (2011). *Mutiara Hidup Manusia Jawa*. Malang: Aditya Media Publishing

Intisari, M. (1992). *Siksa Neraka Kunjarakarna*

Jia, T. (2014). Analysis of Visual Symbol Application in Film and Television Animations Creation. Published Paper on: *International Conference on Education, Language Art and Cultural Communication (ICELAIC 2014)*.

John, A. E. (2013). Reading Meaning through the Visual Images: Social Semiotics Approach to TELL Magazine in Nigeria. *Journal L New Media and Communication* Vol 17, 2013.

Klokke, J. M. (1993). *The Tantri Reliefs on Ancient Javanese Candi*. Leiden: KITLV Press

Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group

Lelono, H TM. (2016). *Relief Candi Sebagai Media Efektif Untuk Menyampaikan Informasi Moral-Didaktif Pada Masa Jawa Kuna*. *Jurnal Arkeologi*, vol. 36, no. 1, hal 99.

Lehtonen, K. E. (2011). *Rhetoric of the Visual Metaphor in Still Image*. Jyveaskyla: Jyvaskyla University Press Reading House

van Leeuwen, T. (2012). *The Handbook of Visual Analysis Visual Meaning: A Social Semiotic Approach*. Cape Town: Sage Publication, Inc

Majalah Seni Budaya Cak Durasim, November (2017). *Surat Cinta Panji Buat Sang Kekasih Via Burung Pos*. Hal 39

Molen, W. v. d. (2011). *Kritik Teks Jawa*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia

Muljana, S. (1967). *Perundang-undangan Madjapahit*. Jakarta: Bhratara

Pierce, C. S. (2012). *Pierce on Signs: Writing on Semiotics*. Indiana University Press.

Prijotomo, J. (1984). *Ideas and Forms of Javanese Architecture*. Yogyakarta: Gajahmada University Press

Pudja, G. (1983). *Manawa Dharma Sastra*. Jakarta: Proyek Pengadaan Kitab Suci Hindu

Saarikivi, J. & Lavento, M. (2012). *Linguistic and Archaeology: A Critical View of and Interdisciplinary Approach with Reference to the Prehistory of Northern Scandinavia*. Helsinki: Memoires de la Societe Finno Ougrienne (177-216)

Santoso, R. (2003). *Semiotika Sosial Pandangan Terhadap Bahasa*. Surabaya: JP Press.

Spradley, J. P. (1972). *Culture and Stress: A Quantitative Analysis*. *American Anthropologist Journal*. Volume 74 Issue 3.

Stoian, C. E., (2015). *Analysing Image: A Social Semiotic Perspective*. *Scientific Bulletin of Politehnica University of Timisoara Transaction on Modern Language*, Vol. 14. No. 1.

Soebroto, B. G. (2016). *Kajian Estetika Relief Candi Jawa Timur*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu

Thompson, S. (n.d) *The Folktale*. New York: The Dryden Press

van Zoest, A. & Sudjiman, P. (1992). *Serba-serbi Semiotika*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama