



E-ISSN 2338-6770

Submitted date : -

Revised date : -

Accepted date : -

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THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE PROPERTY IN THE JARANAN DOR JOKO SOROH IN KEBONDALEM, KADEMANGAN, MOJOAGUNG, JOMBANG

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the symbolic meaning of props in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance. It employs a qualitative approach and data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the symbolic meaning of the props in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance goes beyond their function as mere props; they possess a deeper significance when linked to Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics as discussed in Dr. Nur Sahid's book. The props of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh include: 1. Jepaplok, 2. Jaranan, 3. Topengan, 4. Pecut/Cemeti, and 5. Panthek. It is hoped that the symbolic meanings of these props will contribute to motivating artists and preserving traditional culture, particularly for those involved in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh as well as those outside of it, serving as a reference or discourse on the development of jaranan in Indonesia, specifically in Jombang Regency.

Keywords: The Symbolic Meaning of Property, Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, Jombang

1. INTRODUCTION

Jaranan is a folk performance that has developed within the community and is a legacy of the ancestors of Java (Agustina, 2009). In Javanese, the word "jaranan" derives from the root word "jaran," which translates to "horse" in Indonesian. In Javanese tradition, the horse is a symbol of strength, loyalty, and virility. The imagery suggests that when humans use horses as a means of transportation, they are depicted as striving through life to achieve their life's goals. According to Trisakti (2013:379), the existence of Jaranan art within a community's culture is inseparable from the role this art plays in providing a sense of comfort to the community through its presence. This expression of comfort is inseparable from the form and function of the performance, which depend on the supporting community. Jaranan is an art form in which the performers appear to be riding, mounting a horse, or portraying themselves as a horse. According to Wibisono (2009:6), jaranan art is found in almost every region of East Java, and its existence exhibits great diversity, growth, and development. Some regions have seen quite rapid development of jaranan dor art, such as in Jombang Regency and Malang Regency.

In Jombang Regency, the art of jaranan is a form of folk performing art that thrives and continues to flourish among its supportive community. This art form serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium of cultural expression that reflects the values of courage, discipline, and spirituality of the Jombang community. According to Cahya (2019), Jaranan Dor is a traditional culture native to Jombang that distinguishes it from other forms of Jaranan found in other regions. Jombang's Jaranan Dor art itself is known as a form of



kuda lumping that developed in Jombang and is popularly referred to as Jepaplok Dor. During various traditional ceremonies, village celebrations, and folk entertainment events, local jaranan groups perform, showcasing choreography, accompanying music, and magical elements that reinforce the local cultural identity.

Kebondalem Hamlet is one of the areas in Kademangan Village, Mojoagung Subdistrict, Jombang Regency. This hamlet is known as a hub for artistic activities among the people of Jombang, particularly the local community. The social environment of this hamlet is dominated by an agrarian community with strong family ties, making this art a form of folk art born from a depiction of the culture and daily life of the Kebondalem Hamlet community during its time. One of the groups that emerged from this was Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh. Initially, this group had no name or leader, but it continued to operate and was coordinated by a man named Mbah Satir, who was regarded as the elder of the Jaranan tradition by the people of Kebondalem Hamlet. Mbah Satir played an active role and served as the Jaranan Dor leader until around the 1970s.

Historically, around 1970, the Jaranan dor Joko Soroh art form was originally known as "Sido Dadi," and from that time until 2017, it underwent several leadership changes, with all leaders remaining related by blood. Leadership, which was originally held by Mbah Satir, passed to Mr. Sami'an, then to Mr. Muslimin, and in 1975, it passed again to Mr. Muslikin. It was during Mr. Muslikin's leadership that the name of the Jaranan Dor group was changed—from the original "Sido Dadi" to "Joko Soroh"—and this name has remained to this day as the official identity of the Jaranan Dor group in Kebondalem Hamlet.

The term "jaranan dor" itself refers to the traditional Jombang-style horse dance, characterized by the loud, rhythmic beats of the jidor or large bedug drums, which produce a distinctive "dor" sound. The term "dor" itself originated from the accompanying music's strong, thumping rhythm, leading the local community to later call it jaranan dor or jaranan kepang dor, which distinguishes it from other jaranan or kuda lumping art forms.

In its performance, Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh actually consists of eleven performance sequences or scenes; however, in this study, the researcher focuses only on three main sequences: jepaplokan, jaranan, and topengan. These three performance sequences are always presented in sequence, with each sequence depicting aspects of daily life. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the symbolic meanings of the props in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, as each prop is believed to carry its own symbolic significance.

According to Sumandiyo Hadi (2012), dance is not merely understood as a series of physical movements, but as a symbolic language that conveys messages, values, and meanings rooted in the sociocultural context of its community. Symbols in dance are presented in an integrated manner through movement, space, time, musical accompaniment, costumes, and props, which cannot be interpreted separately but rather as a single expressive unit. In studies of Jaranan art, research on symbolic meaning has been widely utilized by previous researchers. One such study examines the function and symbolic meaning of the Jaranan Breng Kridha Bawana art form in Dongko Village, Dongko Subdistrict, Trenggalek Regency, stating that a work of art, as a symbol, is not a construct or arrangement whose elements can be dissected, but rather a complete unity whose

meaning is grasped in its entirety through the relationships between symbolic elements (Puspitasari Ririn, 2023).

The researcher's interest in studying the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh stems from a deep desire to uncover the symbolic meanings embedded in the props featured in each performance, particularly those in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, which embody the cultural values and cultural identity of the community in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung Subdistrict, Jombang Regency. On the other hand, this phenomenon has not yet been thoroughly studied by anyone, so the researcher hopes to fill the gap in understanding regarding Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh.

The props used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance have distinctive differences compared to other jaranan art forms; they serve not merely as visual accents in the performance but also function as symbols carrying their own symbolic meanings that represent the cultural values of the community in Kebondalem Hamlet. As stated directly, "It is these instruments or supplementary objects, known as props, that impart profound meaning to a dance performance" (Fajri S, 2024).

The distinctive props in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh include unique characters that serve as one of the primary markers of this performance's uniqueness: the Jepaplok, which features three colors—white, black, and brown—and the Topengan, shaped like a human. Other props include the Jaranan, which comes in black, brown, and white, as well as the Pecut and the Panthek.

Therefore, the props used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance are worth exploring in greater depth due to their distinctive characteristics and uniqueness compared to other jaranan performances in general. Furthermore, the props used also carry their own symbolic meanings.

Based on the above description, the researcher's interest in studying Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh stems from a desire to explore the symbolic meanings in greater depth, particularly regarding the props used in the performance—such as the Jepaplok and Topengan—which serve not merely as visual accents but as distinguishing features that define the unique character of this art form compared to other jaranan traditions. Understanding the symbolic meanings of these props is important for the community, especially the local community. In addition to efforts to preserve and develop local culture, this research can serve as a means to uncover layers of meaning that have not yet been revealed and to conduct an in-depth analysis.

2. METHOD

This study on the Symbolic Meaning of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh Ritual in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung Subdistrict, Jombang Regency, employs a qualitative research method as outlined by Sugiyono, utilizing a descriptive approach. This approach emphasizes an in-depth and comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon through factual data collected in the field. The descriptive data obtained—such as visual documentation (photos), audio recordings, interview results with informants, personal archival documents, and the researcher's field notes—were organized into coherent sentences and presented systematically.

For this study, the researcher utilized two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data consists of information obtained directly by the researcher during fieldwork, including oral accounts and observed events. Oral data was obtained from interviews with elders, artists, and performers of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh. The events observed were the direct witnessing of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performances. The secondary data sources, which do not directly provide data to the researcher, consist of performance photos and videos on social media platforms.

The subject of this study is Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh. The research location is in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung Subdistrict, Jombang Regency, which is the birthplace of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh as well as the residence of the elders, artists, and performers of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh.

The data collection techniques used in this study involved several approaches. The first was observation, a data collection method that involves direct observation of specific behaviors, events, or situations without interference or influence from the researcher (Sugiyono, 2015). In this case, the researcher conducted multiple observations of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the findings, thereby making the data more authentic. Second is interviews, a meeting between two people to exchange information and ideas through a question-and-answer process to gain insight into a specific topic (Sugiyono, 2015). In this study, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with elders, artists, and practitioners of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh to explore more holistic data regarding the symbolic meanings of each prop used in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh. The third method is documentation, which involves recording past events. According to Sugiyono (2016), document analysis complements the use of observation and interviews in qualitative research. In this context, the researcher supplements the data through documentation related to the research subject, specifically videos and other media relevant to Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh.

After the data was collected, the researcher proceeded to analyze it using the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, in which the researcher filtered and summarized relevant data from the collected results and identified key points related to the research objectives. Next, after data reduction, the researcher presents the data, which is organized into structured narratives and visual descriptions supported by the collected data. Finally, the researcher validates the data to ensure its validity and draws conclusions from the findings.

To test the validity of the data obtained by the researcher, two types of triangulation are applied in this stage: source triangulation, where the researcher compares information obtained from elders, artists, and practitioners of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh with field observations to determine whether the data is valid; and methodological triangulation, where the researcher employs three complementary data collection techniques—interviews, observation, and documentary analysis—to ensure the data regarding Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh is more reliable. Additionally, there is methodological triangulation, where the researcher uses three complementary data collection techniques—interviews, observation, and documentary

analysis—to ensure that the data regarding Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh can be comprehensively validated.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The symbolic meaning of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh lies in the props used in the performance. It is these instruments or supplementary objects—known as props—that imbue the dance performance with deep meaning. (Samsul Fajri, Malarsih, & Hartono, 2024). Each prop used is not merely a visual element but also carries its own meaning tied to the values of the local community.

Charles Sanders Peirce explains how signs in works of art—whether visual, auditory, or in other forms—serve to convey meaning. In the semiotic triad, Peirce proposes a relationship among three elements: the ground (the sign), the object (what is represented), and the interpretant (the interpretation). In the context of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, the props used, such as the Jepaplok and Topengan, can be understood as representaments that point to a specific object, while the audience's interpretation forms the meaning of the performance. Pierce connects the sign with its referent by distinguishing them into three categories, namely:

- a. Icon: According to Charles Sanders Pierce (2016) in the book *Semiotics of Representation*, an icon is defined as a sign that bears a resemblance to its referent. Icons are divided into three types: topological icons, which refer to spatial resemblance; diagrammatic icons, which refer to relational resemblance; and, finally, metaphorical icons, which do not indicate any resemblance between the sign and its referent.
- b. Index: According to Charles Sanders Pierce (2016) in the book *Semiotics of Performance*, an index is a sign that shares an existential proximity with its referent, where the relationship is causal or directly existential. An index indicates the existence of something related to cause-and-effect, temporal context, and space. Certain properties are not merely representational but also function as indices signaling changes in atmosphere, performance phases, or specific spiritual conditions.
- c. Symbol: According to Charles Sanders Pierce (2016), in the book *Semiotics of Performance*, a symbol can be defined as a sign related to a referent that takes a conventional form based on social, cultural, and communal traditions. Symbolic meaning is not determined by or dependent on formal resemblance, as with an icon, or causal relationships, as with an index, but requires collective interpretation and cultural understanding for its meaning to be properly grasped.

To gain a deeper understanding of the application of Pierce's semiotic concepts—which include icons, indices, and symbols—as they relate to the props used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, the researcher will provide a detailed explanation of these props, accompanied by illustrations.

a. Jepaplok



Figure 1. Property Jepaplok

1. Icon: According to Mbah Karen, an elder of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh tradition, this jepaplok originally depicted an ordinary person pretending to be a tiger—an animal considered in local culture to be a mythological creature possessing spiritual power to protect against supernatural disturbances or dangers. Thus, the jepaplok not only depicts the physical form of a tiger but also carries symbolic meaning regarding supernatural power; consequently, according to Peirce's semiotics, this jepaplok is categorized as a metaphorical icon of symbolic imitation and profound cultural representation.
2. Symbol: The jepaplok, resembling a tiger's head, serves as the central prop in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance to represent supernatural power as a protector. Although its physical form resembles a tiger, its symbolic meaning as a protector against evil spirits or danger does not stem from visual resemblance, but from the community's belief in the tiger as a mythological creature. Therefore, the jepaplok also functions as a symbol of power and a guardian, a meaning understood through cultural conventions.

b. Topengan



Figure 2. Property Topengan

1. Icon: The masks used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance are shaped like human faces, each with distinct visual characteristics, expressions, and symbolic meanings. These masks are used in entertainment scenes

as part of a dramatic introduction aimed at reviving the atmosphere and building emotional interaction with the audience, while simultaneously symbolically reflecting social realities, human nature, and moral messages through the aesthetically crafted forms of the masks. Based on Pierce's semiotic theory, the masks can be categorized as metaphorical icons because their forms not only resemble the physical form of humans but also depict certain human traits in a cultural and representational manner, making them a means of metaphorical expression in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance.

2. Symbols: The masks used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance depict various characters, such as comical and wise figures; each expression and shape of the mask reflects specific cultural values agreed upon by the local community. Understanding the meaning behind the masks' expressions requires cultural interpretation; thus, the masks not only represent physical faces but also convey messages and morals. Therefore, the masks can be categorized as symbols in Pierce's semiotic theory, as their meaning is formed through shared agreement.

c. Jaranan



Figure 3. Property Jaranan

1. Icon: In the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, the jaranan is the main prop, visually resembling a horse. In Javanese culture, the word "jaran" literally means horse, so the general public refers to the jaranan as a performance that uses a handmade replica of a horse as its central element. The jaranan in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh is crafted from woven bamboo, while its mane is made from shredded burlap sacks. The jaranan carries deep symbolic meaning, embodying spirit, strength, and dynamic movement that reflect courage. Based on Pierce's semiotic theory as outlined in Nur Sahid's book, the jaranan can be considered a metaphorical icon because, in traditional Javanese culture, the horse is not merely seen as an ordinary animal but symbolizes a spiritual journey.
2. Symbol: Physically, the jaranan is a prop shaped like a horse that dancers use in a performance. Furthermore, symbolically, the jaranan is more than just a mount. In Javanese tradition, the horse is often seen as a symbol of strength, masculinity, or even a mode of transportation in

its time. In ritual practice, the jaranan is believed to serve as a medium for channeling ancestral spirits or supernatural energy. Therefore, although its form is iconic, the jaranan is also symbolic because its meaning stems from a cultural construct passed down across generations since ancient times, aligning with Pierce's theory of semiotics.

d. Pecut/cemeti



Figure 4. Property Pecut/Cemeti

1. Icon: The whip is one of the distinctive props used in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance; it takes the form of a whip made from thick rattan. In practice, the whip is used by the bopo to produce sounds that serve as rhythmic cues and signal the transition between scenes. In local communities, the sound of the whip is believed to be capable of controlling supernatural and spiritual energies. Therefore, the whip is not merely a performance prop but can also be interpreted as a symbol of mastery over spiritual power. From a Peircean semiotic perspective, the whip/crop falls under the category of metaphorical icons; although visually resembling a whip, within the performance context it represents a more complex concept—namely, a mediator between the real and supernatural realms.
2. 2. Index: The whip/crop produces a loud sound when struck against the air or the ground. The sound of the whip/cemeti serves as a signal marking the beginning of a scene and the transition into the trance state (ndadi or kesurupan) in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance. In this context, the whip/cemeti functions not only as an icon due to its visual resemblance to a whip but also as an index because of its causal relationship with the dancer's changing state.
3. Symbol: In Javanese tradition and culture, the whip is not merely a sound-producing instrument, but also holds symbolic significance as a means of warding off evil spirits, controlling supernatural forces, and serving as a symbol of authority used by the bopo or elders to direct and maintain the flow of the performance. Based on Pierce's theory of semiotics, the whip/cemeti is also classified as a symbol due to the meaning that arises from the conventional agreements of Javanese culture,

where the sound of its crack symbolizes control over a dancer in a trance and protection from disturbances by supernatural beings during a ritual.

e. *PantheK*



Figure 5. Property *PantheK*

1. Icon: In the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, the pantheK is a dancer's prop shaped like a stick or club that resembles a simple weapon. Despite its simple form, the pantheK plays a crucial role in the performance's dramatic structure, serving as a signal marking the transition to the trance phase (*ndadi* or *kesurupan*), which forms the spiritual core of the performance. This prop is moved rhythmically and symbolically marks the dancer's shift in consciousness. According to Pierce's semiotic theory, the pantheK falls under the category of metaphoric icons; although its form visually resembles a stick, its deeper meaning lies in serving as a conduit connecting the dancer's body to supernatural forces triggered by the trance phase (*ndadi* or *kesurupan*).
2. 2. Index: The pantheK is used by the dancer to tap another dancer, signaling readiness to enter the trance phase (*ndadi* or *kesurupan*). In Pierce's semiotic theory, the pantheK functions as a contextual transition signifier and directly signals that the dancer is entering the *ndadi* or *kesurupan* state.
3. 3. Symbol: within the supporting elements of the jaranan tradition, the pantheK holds symbolic meaning as a staff of power, a spiritual weapon, or a tool for communicating with the supernatural realm, even though in form it is merely an ordinary staff. This meaning arises from a shared cultural convention. Thus, according to Pierce's semiotic theory, the pantheK can be categorized as a symbol.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted by scholars on the symbolic meanings of props in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance in

Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung Subdistrict, Jombang Regency, the symbolic meanings of props such as the jepaplok, whip/cemeti, mask, jaranan, and panthek, are not merely visual elements; rather, each prop used carries its own symbolic meaning that reinforces the cultural identity of the local community. Thus, the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh serves as a living medium that fully unites art, spirituality, and local traditions.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The researcher was directly involved in and responsible for the research conducted, including the formulation of the research question, the collection of field data—specifically through in-depth interviews with several informants involved in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance—and the analysis of the symbolic meanings of each prop used in the performance, applying Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics as outlined in Dr. Nur Sahid M.Hum.'s book *Semiotics of Performance*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher gives thanks to Allah SWT for His mercy and guidance, which enabled the completion of this study. My deepest gratitude goes to my academic advisor, who has consistently provided guidance throughout the writing of this article. To my beloved family—my father, mother, and younger sibling—who have been my source of encouragement and moral support. To my fellow researchers who shared ideas and engaged in inspiring discussions. And to myself for my perseverance and dedication throughout the writing of this article. Special thanks to the elders, practitioners, and artists of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh who have shared their information and knowledge. The researcher extends heartfelt thanks to all parties involved in the preparation of this article.

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