

The Study of Zoomorphic Expression and its Relationship with Javanese Keris

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Abstract

Returning of Naga Siluman – name of a state keris – from the Netherlands back to the Indonesian government sparked controversy over the subject of icon relieving a dragon. Opinions appeared in two mode determining (iconic ornament) or not (ornamental icon) toward the name of a keris. Those opinion represents consecutively the public and intellectuals (the presidential staff assigned to take care of the return of the artifact) opinion. This is the first case and will be useful for assessing whether or not the Indonesian people are ready to accept the return of other artifacts. A question arises how do people define a keris so that the ownership of a keris both in art and culture is an expedience. Zoomorphic expression (art) and the meaning in contingency – meaning in the making – imply the death of meaning especially in sequential case of animals present (culture). Observation of two kerisses containing dichotomous zoomorphic expressions – van Knaud and Jalak Dinding – attempts to shed some light on this complexity on keris knowledge. Such controversy is good, not need be mediated, and be a signal of expertise pursuit.

Keywords:

Zoomorphic, episodic memory, semantic memory, collective memory

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1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, the Indonesian people were appalled by the Dutch Government returning Keris Diponegoro. All printed and electronic media, including the internet news sites, reported this event for several days. Keris handed over was Kyai Naga Siluman, which had been kept in the Volkendkunde Museum in the Netherlands. This handover sparked clamor and evoked some controversy. The first controversy is related to semantic memory, because the name of the keris does not match to the shape of the keris as it is known in the collective memory of Javanese popular tradition. According to the detik.com news site (March 11, 2020), the characteristics of that keris point to a keris named Nagasasra, not Naga Siluman. The Presidential staff in charge of examining the keris stated that the naga siluman (dragon the stealth) was indicated by relief of an iconic animal on the wuwungan ganja (lower surface of the keris basement). So, no specific mention of dragons. Meanwhile, the keris community stated that the Naga Siluman keris has a distinctive feature in of a dragon icon relief where the crowned head on the gandhik (name of front-below a keris blade), without body and tail. That controversial keris actually characterizes it as a Nagasasra because its appearance of an iconic relief of an intact dragon (full feature of a crowned head, body, and tail) (Damartaji, 1998:75).

Picture 1.Keris Kyai Naga Siluman (Detik.com, March 11, 2020)



The second controversy is still related to semantic memory, on March 11, 2020 CNN released the news

that the keris was not the important keris of the late Prince Diponegoro. This statement came from Peter Carey, who has been researching Prince Diponegoro's activities for a long time. Several keris experts in Surakarta, through interviews, stated that the keris that has a higher historical value and is currently overseas is the van Knaud keris.

The third controversy relates to episodic memory, the existence of an unmatched features between the Surakarta-style warangka and the Yogyakarta-style keris handle. The two styles of art are apparently very sensitive, so their use in the same object is considered impossible. Several informants interviewed expressed their views that the political fragments of the state fission of the Yogyakarta and Surakarta Palaces still linger today. The Mataram kingdom was split into the Yogyakarta and Surakarta Palaces through the Giyanti Agreement (1755) (Soekanto, 1952:182). The treaty marked the end of the Third Javanese War of Succession. The historical sentiment was then formed in the period after the division of the country. One of the historical sentiments is about the heroism of Diponegoro from Yogyakarta, even though the figure has been designated a national hero. This controversy was still a public discussion as of this research report.

Academically, the controversy comprises three things. First, regarding the authenticity of Diponegoro's keris: was it true that this keris in the past belonged to Prince Diponegoro. The commoners doubted that assumption, on the other hand the presidential expert staff – of course seen as the owner of academic authority – believed that the keris really belonged to Prince Diponegoro and the keris was named Kyai Naga Siluman. The basis of truth judgment is presence/absent of the dragon's iconic ornament.

Second, the iconic ornament – or vice versa: ornamental icon – which became the center of the controversy was the dragon. There are different versions of this dragon icon. Presidential staff stated that the word 'naga siluman' (dragon the stealth) is symbolized in the 'dragon' relief on the lower side of the ganja. The keris community generally thinks that the dragon icon cannot be placed in the wuwungan ganja, but on the blade. If the dragon figure is described fully (head, body, and tail) the head must be located on the front side of the (called gandhik), the body and tail dangle upwards towards the top of the keris. The opinion of the presidential staff implies the notion that dragons are ornamental icons and can be anywhere. On the other hand, the keris community believes that the dragon is an iconic ornament, so the dragon ornament distinguish the name of the keris and the location of the icon's placement must be in gandhik (name of keris's area on blade).

Third, the implication of the controversy is the existence of class-free expertise. That is, there is a class in society as a determinant of truth. In the case of this keris, the presidential staff occupies the upper class while the common people are in the lower class. However, all of this may be just an assumption, because keris from the past until now is a popular tradition that forms and transmits collective memory. Any one has the greatest access and the most literacy to the collective memory will have the highest status as the owner of the truth, namely the truth that is attributed to a keris. Therefore, the knowledge of keris and its collective memory will be a means of hunting for expertise. The bigger the access to collective memory, the higher her/his status as a determinant of truth. Thus, the dragon icon has been transformed into a semantic-semiotic battleground for people who are fighting for their status of mastery in collective memory. That is the future of our keris.

Apart from all those controversies it is interesting to research the Javanese Keris related to depicting iconic animal and why some inconsistencies tend to be polysemy, as illustrated earlier. The description of zoomorphic expressions is a strategy for tracing collective memory sequentially. There are two hypotheses developed as the starting point for the practice of polysemic interpretation, namely: 1) there is a certain interest behind the existence of a keris (art); and 2) the existence of animal imagery in a popular tradition (culture). Both will have an impact on knowledge creation, storage into collective memory, and polysemic retrieve as a necessity for independent subjects. The research problems raised are: 1) zoomorphic depiction in Javanese Keris; and 2) an explanation of the polysemic interpretation of the Javanese Keris.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This Cultural Studies research aims to describe the uniqueness of the zoomorphic expressions on Javanese keris, which the knowledge gained in this research will be useful to support a philosophical explanation of the existence of certain mental states. The focus on zoomorphic expressions will be useful to strengthen the theoretical position of the significance of the zoomorphism study as well as to encourage keris literacy so that collective memory about keris is maintained as mandated by UNESCO. In addition, hermeneutical research aims to maintain the spirit of democracy because knowledge has the potential to emancipate.

The keris issues discussed in Indonesia are very likely to be of concern to citizens outside Indonesia, not only because of the UNESCO recognition viewed on June 6, 2020) keris as a world heritage. In fact, the keris has become a debate about which country is more entitled to have historical legitimacy of origin. When there

is a controversy, the Indonesian people should be motivated to provide a correct explanation or understanding.

In accordance with the characteristics of Cultural Studies research, the publication of this article will be a self-criticism that industrialization has neglected animals in human life, on the contrary there is an assumption that animals are only a source of protein (Guin, 1996: 149). The wisdom of the human mind does not prevent the increasingly marginalized animals, even most of them disappear. Even if animals exist in our lives, they are nothing more than objects. Some animals are kept as pets, some are part of the subsistence industry. Unfortunately, research on animal elements within the framework of a zoomorphic approach has never been done before. Therefore, this research is expected to be a pioneer and model of approach, especially to the Javanese Keris.

This study focuses on episodic memory and semantic memory. Categorically semantic and episodic memory are classified as propositional memory, where semantic memory is knowledge about the world that is not related to one's identity and the past. While episodic memory is the storing and sequential retrieval of the memory of the course of event (Tulving, 1983:9). As for supporting the validity of the memorial contents, hierarchical visual observation method (Wagemans, 2015) will applied, namely low-level vision and high-level vision. Between those positions an agency – maybe more – plays the midlevel vision. Two controversial agencies play a role in midlevel vision called determinant or emancipator. The high-level vision method is used to show aspects of vision that are affected by information stored in memory such as the identity of the object, its name, or the context in which it is located. It is usually distinguished from low-level visual processing, which is driven primarily by visual input. Higher-order vision involves functions such as object recognition, face perception, mental imagery, image naming, visual categorization, or sight perception. The midlevel vision is the primary sketch which represents the basic appearance and spatial relations at the low-level vision level and the 2.5 (2.5-D) dimension sketch which represents the surface elements and shapes from the observer's point of view (midlevel vision) (Wagemans, 2015:153).

Related to the issue of the iconic dragon-shaped ornament, as a form of sequential retrieval method, this research will focus on structuring zoomorphic expressions on Javanese keris. The zoomorphism concept operationally used is the theory developed by Nanay (2017). The results of this study are expected to explain the polysemy phenomenon that happens to elicit meaning of a keris. Javanese people have literacy on keris because they own keris, even keris is part of their daily life.

Clifford argued the practice of forming Western subjectivity in cases of ownership of ethnic objects (Clifford, 1988:220-1). Likewise – although thousands of kilometers apart – collectibles (art) and meaning (culture) also play an important role in life outside of Western civilization. This article attempts to describe how the Javanese see the natural surroundings play a role in shaping their cognition and storing it in collective memory. The controversial case - the setting of this research - can be viewed as a sequential retrieval to the collective memory.

3. METHODOLOGY

The starting point of this study is the material culture as the research's subject matter points of view. From that view, things (natural and artificial) in human hands are perceived as a complexity because there is a reciprocal relationship between human ideas, thoughts, and emotions between both (Dan, 1991:1). For this reason, this research paid attention to the principle of data triangulation: subject matter in the form of Javanese Keris as the material culture – which is further elaborated in the discussion chapter – and was supported by literary and informant sources as part of the keris reality, especially in Java.

On the other hand, zoomorphic expressions are intended as supportive philosophical explanations (Nanay, 2018:2). It is the starting point for the addition of animal properties in an object as a symbols system. It is different from the general zoomorphic theory, where this research on the phenomenon in Javanese Keris sought to find additional animal properties on particular objects and was considered ethical guidance. Ethical guidance is an abstract thing about consciousness creation and the awakening in human efforts to achieve a better life. This consciousness is somewhat different from the Western understanding, which considers it to be material (Pereira Jr, 2018:183).

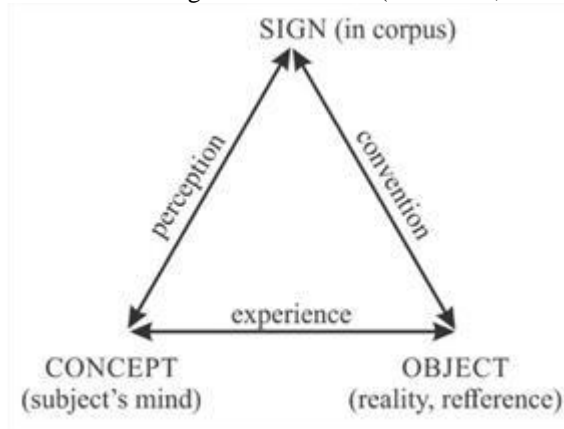
The zoomorphic expressions are present in Javanese culture and embodied to cultural codes historically. Codes contained in the cultural objects are not only a mirror of reality but also able to form an understanding of a society's idea system and an ethical guide (Daulet, 2019:878).

Keris as a site for the zoomorphic expression occurrences can be seen in depicting fictitious animals bearing human nature (anthropomorphic). The animals, their nature, and human nature were depicted in a keris through ways of coding. Generate meaning for all codes is carried out through a Semiotics approach, especially for reference, which is a fictitious reality (hyper-reality) and not an actual reality. The semiotics model related to fictitious matters was proposed by Baudrillard as the semiotics of simulacra (in positive

sense).

The Semiotics scheme would be used as a theoretical basis for the subject in interpreting the objects that exist in their lives. The functional analysis in the Semiotics of communication gives meaning to the sign by looking at its function; one of them is used as a part of a lifestyle. This pragmatic Semiotics sign theory can be illustrated as follows.

Sketch 1. Pragmatic Semiotics (Purwasito, 2017:4).



Explanations:

1. Perception: a process in the human mind that receives data from its environment.
2. Convention: people's habit of interpreting signs
3. Experience: memory attached to the mind that always changes when gaining new experiences; some others come from conventions that already exist in society.

Sketch 1. shows that the center of Semiotics is in humans because the perceptions, conventions, and experiences are typical of human cognition. Meanwhile, conventions are the relationship between people in a particular community that form a specific deal or agreement. In this study, its relationship with the meaning is in the keris function in the mental aspect related to keris material as arranged in the keris's code. Thus, the subject with hyper-reality thoughts tries to do the perception. Furthermore, the perception process is followed by responses that occur in consciousness and lead to cultural concepts and practices. On the other hand, community literacy in reading the signs in the form of keris codes can be a) homological (reflective) and critical; b) as a direct literacy result, competencies are articulated according to certain motives; c) the emergence of excessive aesthetization in keris's appearance.

In order to reveal the meaning in the process of significance in pragmatics Semiotics, the researchers must determine the corpus as the main observation object. Corpus lexically has a very close meaning to the corps (Ratna, 2010:147). The corpus limitation is its inability to display the context of events naturally as experienced when the corpus is formed (Ratna, 2010:148), and it is the researcher's duty to uncover it. In order to discover the meaning of the corpus's existence, it is necessarily needed to disclose absent things accompanying a corpus.

According to Martinet, a representative corpus must show the totality of the signifying fields of a signification system (Martinet, 2010:173). The significance system is integrated into a code in the form of entity combinations, present with the units that are not present. If an entity is actually presented to the recipient's perceptions and stands for something else, it is when the signification occurs (Eco, 1976:8). Along with these considerations, the determined corpus in this study is Keris van Knaud and Keris Jalak Dinding, which are considered to be both a collection and an organized body. These Keris are described in the discussion part.

4. RESULTS

Keris is described as a dagger whose length varies between 10 to 70 cm; has sharp edges on both sides of the blade, shrinking towards an edge; has ganja (peculiar asymmetrical base); straight or curved (sinuous) blades; has done in intricate details with a specific patterned damascened surface; its several details are covered with gold (kinatah in gold) (Jensen, 2007a:15). These complex works have been done for a long time, as seen in the Keris van Knaud displayed in the Amsterdam Tropen Museum (on the east side, in the Indonesian pavilion). It is hoped that the exposure of this keris will not cause a new stir, where the depiction of animals and the possibility of attributing human behavior to animals already exist in this classic keris.

Picture 2.The Amsterdam Tropen Museum's Keris Collection with Inventory Number of TM-6046-1



This keris is called van Knaud because it is owned by the van Knaud family. It is mentioned in Dr. N.J. Krom's book entitled *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst* as the oldest Majapahit Keris and was declared missing (Krom, 1920:315).

Picture 3.Keris van Knaud (Krom, 1920:317)



Keris van Knaud consists of steel blades with a short size of peksi (a rounded iron to connect the blade with the keris handles). One side of the blade is coated with copper, while on the other side, there is a number 1264 (1342 AD). Close to the number, there is an image of a deer and snake's head and a prince with two servants. Furthermore, continuing towards the tip of keris, there was a picture of a snake and several scenes of Ramayana (the scenes of Hanuman met Sinta). On the opposite side, there is a dragon with scaly wings and a picture of Ganesh. Hanuman was depicted as the leader of the monkeys' race and standing against an enemy riding an elephant, a war chariot, and an archer, and a soldier carrying a flag (Krom, 1920:315; Duuren, 1996:8).

In the past, keris functions were described as technical weapons (stabbing and cutting tools) and magic weapons, such as offering furniture and magical heirlooms. Both functions were written in ancient inscriptions and books, such as *Arjunawiwaha*, *Sumanasantaka*, *Sutasoma*, and *Pararaton* (Sedyawati, 2011:28-31). However, according to the visual appearance of Keris van Knaud, its function may be more than

that. Keris also functions as a communication medium even though, in Europe, this tradition of delivering messages through symbolic objects has been left out since the 19th century (Kelly, 2020:134).

Keris as a stabbing weapon and an heirloom can also be seen in Rembrandt van Rijn's paintings. In Rembrandt's painting entitled *The Blinding of Samson*, as Corrigan (2015: 289) explained, someone uses a curved keris to pierce Samson's eye. In addition, in another painting entitled *Samson Betrayed by Delilah*, Samson is seen wearing a keris tied to a rope wrapped around his waist (Bruyn, 1982: 250).

Picture 4. Rembrandt van Rijn's painting entitled *The Blinding of Samson*



Picture 5. Rembrandt van Rijn's painting entitled *Samson Betrayed by Delilah*.



In addition, the tradition of making keris has been around for a very long time but seems to have declined during the colonial period (Groneman, 1910:91; Yasin, 2020:2). Based on the assumption that keris was first made in the 8th century, the keris maker profession has been almost two thousand years old until now. Furthermore, if the cultural practices are not in the empty space and time, the forms, functions, and meanings of keris may have evolved in ways. Contextually, keris present in human life according to the spirit of its era.

The shape of the keris has also evolved. The initial shape of keris is very simple, consisting only of a) straight shaped blade; and b) pesi or peksi (iron embedded in the handle of a dagger). This shape then developed into then parts: a) blade; b) ganja (blade base); c) peksi. The straight blade then also developed into a curved keris. Besides, the curves in the keris also developed, which were initially only known as a curved

keris of 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11, then becoming curved keris of 11, 13, 15, 17, and so on, until they are unlimited as long as the number is odd. However, the odd number is not always "obeyed" because there are even curved keris.

Moreover, the blade's surface is not only straight and curvy but also decorated with several ornaments that were given a name. These decorations play a specific role depending on the keris's meaning and function. The decoration in the form of a cavity at the bottom of the keris is called *pijetan* because it has a purpose as a place to put the thumb when keris is held (Harsrinuksmo, 2008:356). In other codes, this functional part is given a symbolic name. Further, the same ornaments but presented in different sizes are named after different terms. For example, the wider *pijetan* ornament is called *blumbangan* (ponds) (Harsrinuksmo, 2008:104).

There are no less than 24 ornaments of keris, in which the code arrangement in certain ornament combinations determines the name of a keris. The naming of keris is an essential part of keris's knowledge in Java, and it remains an agreement. For example, the blade-shaped or *dhapur Tilam Upih* is a straight-flat keris with ornaments called *pijetan* and *tikel alis* (curvy similar to human eyebrows) (Haryoguritno, 2006:175). The naming of keris can be obtained from the various libraries that have been long agreed upon in the keris world. Meanwhile, the terminological meaning in Semiotics perspective refers to various literature, which has been around for a long time and given various opinions and discourses presented by the subjects who have authority in the keris's field, even by the subjects who only "feel" to have the authority of the keris's world. The meaning of Javanese keris is polysemic, so that the study and the subject determination and how the context of the meaning require a separate study.

5. DISCUSSION

Furthermore, the name of keris's ornaments is the place to put expressions related to the animals. The zoomorphic phenomenon in Javanese keris can be seen in the naming categorically, including metaphoric, metonymic, and personification. The metaphoric naming as an intellectual activity in describing the physical world (Richards, 1965:91) can be seen in the naming of the *dhapur* (shape). *Dhapur* of keris is named based on keris's ornaments-commonly called *ricikan* – and usually the realization of a keris, and its *dhapur* is also determined by the *empu* (keris-smith) and/or through an agreement between *empu* and the keris buyer. A suitable example is keris in *dhapur Peksi Naga Liman* (President Joko Widodo's keris), now displayed at the Keris Nusantara Museum in Surakarta City. That keris has a distinctive ornament like the relief of a bird, dragon, and an elephant head on the *gandhik*. Besides, almost all names of *dhapur* are based on the ornaments on the *gandhik*.

Meanwhile, metonymic naming is based on reducing an object becoming an associative character that replaces an object (Al-Sharafi, 2004:1). In the Javanese Keris, the metonymic naming is seen in the use of specific elements. For example, keris *Jalak* is marked with a thorn-like ornament on the back of the blade bottom and named *thingil*. *Thingil* means spurs found in the poultry's wings, and this meaning is not found in the Javanese lexicon (Yuwono, interview on May 24, 2020).

The personification of naming a certain keris is personally given by another subject, for example, a king or a ruler who ordered and instructed the making of particular keris. The naming of keris is usually accompanied by a particular title, which shows the level of archetypal productions, second-level duplicates, and so on. *Kanjeng Kyai Ageng Jaka Piturun* which is the official heirloom of the Kasultanan Yogyakarta is one example. The title of *Kanjeng Kyai Ageng* is the archaeology degree of the archetype. It means that keris was made in the first generation. This keris was made with *dhapur Jalak Dinding* (Harsrinuksmo, 2008:199). If it holds the archetypal degree, it means that keris is made in the first form. It also means that even though the *dhapur* of *Tilam Upih* existed before, there must be something new in that keris. If the keris is made in a certain number of duplicates (first level duplicate), its derivatives will be entitled *Kanjeng Kyai Jaka Piturun*. Keris produced based on the initial prototype at the third level is named *Kyai Jaka Piturun*. This duplication process is called *mutrani* (Dharsono, 2020:53).

The term "jalak" in *Keris Jalak Dinding*, as seen in the naming of the keris, is a symbol of the succession of power in Keraton Yogyakarta. It refers to the name of the *Jalak* bird (*Leucopsar* sp.) in a very high flight position. It was named *Jalak*, albeit no depiction of *Jalak* in those keris. *Jalak* birds are only found in Javanese imagination guided by way of naming, which is based on the agreement between *empu* and the community. In the cultural system of *keraton*, there is a poet in charge to introduce a meaning of a certain keris in the manuscript book issued by the *keraton*, for example, *Serat Sejarah Empu*. *Serat Sejarah Empu* is songwriting composed by Prince *Wijil*, a poet who lived during the *Keraton Mataram Kartasura* and is well known as a descendant of *Sunan Kalijaga*, a prominent guardian of Islam in Java.

In addition to the *dhapur* naming, the animals also present in the naming of keris *pamor*. *Pamor* (damascene) is an ornament of a lighter color on the keris's blade. This lighter color in the initial prototype of the keris was obtained from the carbon and other materials, which were not homogeneous in the iron or steel

in keris materials. This prototype later evolved along with the discovery of other mixed materials, producing a better light color effect and at the same time improving the sharpness of keris using meteorite and nickel. Besides, some pamor are named related to the animals, such as Klabang Sayuta (a million centipede) and ngelar gangsir (as the color of cricket's wings).

There are at least five naming models in keris associated with animals in the Javanese keris, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Zoomorphic expression models in Javanese Keris

No.	Category	Visualization	Example <i>Dhapur/Ricikan/Pamor</i>
1.	real animal figures:	elephants, lions, tigers, dogs, dragons, birds, horses, deer, cows	<i>dhapur</i> Peksi Naga Liman, <i>dhapur</i> Nagasasra, <i>dhapur</i> Panji Kuda
2.	resembling the physical properties of animals	snake, leech, shrimp tail, <i>mimi</i> fishtail, a million centipede, cricket	<i>dhapur</i> Bandhotan, <i>ricikan ganja kelap lintah</i> , <i>ricikan buntut urang</i> , <i>ricikan buntut mimi</i> , <i>pamor Klabang Sayuta</i> , <i>pamor ngelar gangsir</i>
3.	name of the animal anatomic part	spurs, beak, head, tail, wings	<i>ricikan thingil</i> , <i>ricikan cocor bebek</i> , <i>ricikan ndhas cecak</i> , <i>dhapur Lar Ngatap</i>
4.	image of an animal	jalak birds, johan birds, buffalo, caterpillars	<i>dhapur Jalak Sangu Tumpeng</i> , <i>dhapur Johan Mangan Kalak</i> , <i>dhapur Mahesa Lajer</i> , <i>pamor uler lulut</i>
5.	imagery related to animal behavior	purified shower, soak, flying, <i>guyang</i> , <i>peniwen</i> , <i>blumbangan</i>	<i>dhapur Jalak Dinding</i> , <i>dhapur Jaran Guyang</i> , <i>dhapur Panji Peniwen</i>

Picture 6. Keris with *dhapur Jalak Dinding* (picture and artifact are the collections of Dietrich Dreschers, on April 21, 2020)



The code's arrangement in a *dhapur* and ornaments are clearly seen in Dietrich Dreschers's collection in

Jalak Dinding keris, in which the pattern is very likely with van Knaud's keris. This keris is not the duplicate of Kanjeng Kyai Ageng JakaPiturun. Dhapur Jalak Dinding had existed long before the creation of Kanjeng Kyai Ageng Jaka Piturun. Jalak Dinding keris is marked with a straight blade with pijetan, gusen (a cavity on the left and right sides of the blade extending from the base to the top), and thingil ornaments (Jasper, 1930:206).

The depiction of keris looks like a weapon, but it has "something" that can be considered merely as a weapon. On the other hand, keris is also seen as a "something" symbolic object, which certainly has a context – the codes require special observation – but it functions as a weapon. This phenomenon is similar to what happened to the Arabian who consider firearms to have the appearance's element and instead refused to be called only a cold piece of metal (Saramifar, 2017:84). In order to propose keris as an intangible humanitarian legacy for UNESCO, keris is declared as no longer a weapon (Damartaji, 2004:6). Its Semiotics that puts keris as an object in figurative language (al-Sharafi, 2004:8) will become an entry point to reveal the meaning of keris appearance visually.

Moreover, the depiction of keris is supported by ancient poetic books (Serat Centhini, Serat Empu). Keris does not only reflect the beauty and the harmony but also is perceived as a place to put values. Meanwhile, the reference of the semiotic process is an imaginative hyper-realistic. The peculiarity of the hyper-realistic is as an appropriate place for the animal's glorification. The glorification of animals through zoomorphic expressions has specific motives. Jalak (starlings) bird in the Keris Jalak Dinding (Picture 6) is portrayed as a very high-flying bird. The Javanese people interpret this image as the good nature of the Jalak bird that bring humans flying very high to reach their highest ideals. In Keris Jalak Dinding case named Kanjeng Kyai Ageng Jaka Piturun, the highest ideal is the Kasultanan Yogyakarta's throne. This meaning reflects that the zoomorphic expression is only the initial step in adding human nature to a particular animal. Jalak bird as a poultry concept is first given the reference not from the Jalak in nature or reality realm but in hyper-reality. The sound of Jalak is associated with winged animals that, with their wings, they bring humans to the higher or highest place. In this regard, the imaginative reality as creating humans' ideas has the advantage of being untouched by bad character. The creation of reality that only recognizes good qualities in the glorification of animals' nature is different from real-world reality. Thus, this Javanese glorification needs to be preserved as a concept (Yarrow, 2019:19), which should still exist.

The Javanese believe that the source of truth is not merely something visible or that can be digested with only five senses. Conversely, things or the invisible world also contain truth and even the ultimate truth. The invisible or supernatural world – called the ghoib realm – must be trusted as a guide by their religion. Western thought also recognizes that fictitious entities also contain truth, although they must be explained logically (Quinn, 2012:2). These beliefs have led to the Javanese behavior in both religious and spiritual courses. The spiritual behavior that seems still carried out today is shown in keris bathing in the month of Suro (the Javanese lunar calendar system). The term used when cleaning keris is not "washing" but "bathing". Apart from that, on certain days, some people still make offerings of the kembang telon (three-colored flowers) or kembang setaman (more than three kinds of flowers) and incense smoke, which is called caos dhahar (serving food) for certain keris.

Meanwhile, the meaning of keris is polysemic. Thus, the meaning of the Jalak bird as means to bring humans into a very high place is not the only meaning. Lexically, polysemy means "the capacity for a word or phrase to have multiple meanings, usually related to the contiguity of meaning within a semantic field" (Oxford Dictionaries Online, read on May 11, 2020). According to this limitation, there is a specific capacity as a determinant meaning. Structural-functionally, the main actors in keris are the empu (faber functions), the king (celebral function), and the community (consumption function). These three actors are very likely to carry out different perceptions and conceptions when interpreting keris according to their respective experiences. In this regard, the literary meaning of the Jalak bird and human nature in keris Jalak Dinding, as supported by written sources and applied in general understanding, is the metonymy of a bird that can fly very high. When the bird wants to fly high, it takes a holy shower as a human's spiritual behavior who wants to come before God.

Those literary meanings then become different when linking the Jalak bird as ethical guidance, a discursive discourse from the empu to the community. Firstly, the Jalak bird represents kukila (bird) in the pancagatra (five elements), the Javanese male's symbolism. These pancagatra comprise wisma (home), wanita (wife), curiga (keris), kukila (bird) and turangga (horse) (Centhini, 1986:761). Kukila is an ethical value for men to have a hobby in their life, and it must be fun. Jalak bird is classified as pets and taken the benefit from its beautiful figures and singing. This passion is not only mundane, but it can bring humans' imaginations to the spiritual realm. Therefore, certain characters that can bring humans to this imaginative realm are then added to this bird's figure. According to keris crafts-master, it is known no less than 24 dhapur of keris Jalak, and the most popular is Jalak Sangu Tumpeng, Jalak Ngore, and Jalak Dinding.

Despite the empu and the king in the keris realm, there are also the communities. Communities are the largest source of demand, which drives the industry of keris. Therefore, if the Social License to Operate

(SLO) in the various form of economic activities are dominated by the industry and a discursive government (Newton, 2020), then it is the communities who are truly in control of the SLO of Javanese keris industry since the communities are in the state of mastering the literacy of keris. The subject of today's society can even give a zoomorphic meaning as the current lifestyle filler. In this case, this lifestyle is the awareness to take control over the symbols. The symbolic literacy becomes the individual affinity to their social groups – of Javanese people – who are spiritually characterized as a nation having an awareness of honoring their ancestors.

On the other hand, the consciousness of reflective hyper-reality in terms of homology – is the recognition of what has happened in the past time –is seen in its alignment with the existence of traditional arts and cultures, a place where an actor is totally involved. Potentially, keris will be used as a means for any individual to gain recognition as a mature Javanese person. In some instances, these three values owned by keris, spiritual values, good fortunes, and utility values, are utilized at once to support certain professions, such as leather puppeteers. For example, Keris with dhapur Singa Barong (the zoomorphic expression of the mythical lion) that belongs to Ki Purbo Asmoro is empirically effective to be used to stop the rain. The link between the mythical animal of a lion and its ability to stop the rain requires further research. The utilization of the usage value of this keris is certainly based on the consciousness of instrumentation, along with the divine awareness that refrains from the attitude of deifying the keris. On the other hand, the profanity of keris becomes an articulation tool along with the new aesthetic fashion values in the actors' elegant performance in public (Purbo Asmoro in Aribowo, 2018:105).

Furthermore, Keris Singa Barong, owned by Ki Purbo Asmoro is also believed to have some power to support his fashion performance that strengthens his self-confidence. This fashion performance seen as excessive aestheticization is given to the fact that the focus of audience's attention actually not in the fashion of the dalang but instead on what the audience sees and hears (the whole puppet shows). Even by seeing the show from behind the kelir (screen as the area of the show), the appearance of the keris does not look perfect because the audience sight is hindered by penyimping (the puppeteer assistant) behind the puppeteer. Keris for puppeteer is not a crucial thing (Aribowo, 2018:106).

The polysemic meaning as the semantics meaning in Javanese keris also becomes a means for celebrating plurality. Polysemic also indicates the meaning diversity of a signifier (Piliang, 210:314). As a single word, polysemy has a connection with several different meanings (Falkum, 2011:9). Polysemy is firstly triggered by metaphors, a language with more than one meaning (Pasaribu, 2014:51).The visual form as a complete unit of language is marked by the ownership of polysemy's character. According to the illustration, polysemy in keris is marked by a totally different meaning of the cavity on Keris van Knaud and Keris Jalak Dinding. The wider cavity is called pijetan, the relatively longer cavity is called sogokan, the cavity above the pijetan is called tikelalis, the cavity in the rear part of keris is called sraweyan, etc. Furthermore, the cavity that extends from the base of the dagger to the top of the keris is called wuwungan. The naming of wuwungan ornaments in Keris Jalak Dinding is even given the meaning as the water container to wash the head or take a holy shower. These two actions, washing the head and taking a holy shower, are specifically crafted on keris containing winged animal elements, such as Jalak Dinding and Panji Peniwen.

Picture 7. A. Gall's collection of Keris Panji Peniwen (Java-Instituut, 1938:32) (left) and Panji Peniwen collection of Dietrich Dresser (right) downloaded on, May 26, 2020)



The word "wuwungan" in the Keris Jalak Dinding's ornament comes from the word "wuwung", which

means as a holy shower in Javanese by watering the head (Poerwadarminta, 1939:75). Generally, the Javanese interprets this ornament as ethical guidance so that humans must always draw closer to the Almighty God, and this action is preceded by a ritual of purification or a holy shower. In relation to Keris Jalak Dinding, it can be interpreted that the Jalak bird is an animal that can bring humans closer to the Almighty God. During this activity, the Jalak bird also performs a purification ritual. The code's arrangement in a cavity as a symbol of a place to take a holy shower has the same meaning as Keris Jalak Dinding and Panji Peniwen, although their contexts are different. In Keris Jalak Dinding, the Jalak bird is the one that performs a holy shower ritual. Meanwhile, in Keris Panji Peniwen, Panji is the one that performs a holy shower. Panji symbolizes a young person who seeks his identity (Yuwono, interview on May 24, 2020). The behavior of taking a holy shower belongs to humans, which is added attributively to the animals. Nevertheless, there is a prohibition in describing humans' figures in any form during the Islamic culture, and this prohibition seems to be obeyed by the communities and the empu so that the human's figure on the keris is hard to be found after the Majapahit Kingdom (Jensen, 2007b:2). The relation between the human figures disguised and poultry as animals that take a holy shower attains the precise context in this case. This symbolic meaning is different if keris considered as a symbolic stabbing weapon. Wuwung and sterling can also be interpreted as the emphasis on the effectiveness of this lethal heirloom to deliver the life to the Creator of Life (Yuwono, interview on May 24, 2020).

In the past, Javanese keris normally relied on the naming and meaning given by a poet through a manuscript issued by the keraton. The manuscripts are such as Serat Centhini and Babad Tanah Jawi. The naming and meaning of keris then spread through oral tradition sourced from empu or certain community leaders. In its development, where keraton is no longer the source of meaning, the community obtains the ideas or opinions about a keris from a specific figure. These figures act as a Javanese cultural agent that obtains authentication and the naming authority in various ways. For example, an aristocrat named K.P.H. Hadiwijoyo wrote Dhapur Keris book containing pictures of several dhapur keris, which have been believed to be the "true" realities of keris. The keraton's hegemony on the socio-cultural life of the community also leads to the figure of the king descendant of Keraton Surakarta being considered to have authority as a legitimate heir of Keraton Surakarta's culture. Shortly, this figure is considered to have a qualified literacy level for Javanese culture, especially keris.

In the present era, keraton has no legitimacy as the center of Javanese culture. Thus, the emergence of communities' figures from the outside of keraton or those who do not have a keraton's nobility blood can stand as a role model for naming the keris. Today, in Surakarta, several figures from the outside of keraton are considered to have sufficient literacy about the Javanese keris, and their opinions are then used as a reference by the public even though they do not possess a nobility lineage. Concerning this, souvenirs and antique dealers in the Keraton Surakarta Square become the determinant of whether a keris is valuable. Furthermore, it also becomes a reference of what a fair price for a keris. This figure has its standards about the age of a keris, whether old or new, original or not, even a keris is appropriate or not for someone. The latter criterion derives from the understanding that a keris can only be owned by a specific person with a particular profession or social status, while other keris is anyone's keris.

Since a long time ago, keris has been entered the area of cultural capitalization or commodification.

Commodification is expanding market trade, which was previously a non-market area (Luck in Hahn, 2015:75). Furthermore, keris becomes a trading commodity. Everyone can have their keris, not only through inheritance from its predecessor but by buying it. Besides, the exchange rate of keris in the market is determined by the buyer's and seller's literacy with a tacit agreement to a specific criterion, such as its rareness, usefulness, and demand (Foucault, 2007:191).

The rarity criterion determines the ancient keris values because it is more difficult to obtain. This criterion brings out the term TUS (abbreviation from Tangguh, Utuh, and Sepuh). Tangguh is the certainty of keris madetime, and it is usually estimated by how many hundred years old keris was. The more precise the estimate of keris's origin, the more expensive the keris is. The Utuh criterion is intended as the physical completeness and that the object is defective in its part. Keris, which is relatively intact, including those vulnerable to age-related damage, such as in ornament called the kembang kacang and the greneng, indicates that the keris is made from good materials even though it is a hundred or even a hundred thousand years old. Meanwhile, Sepuh is related to the age of a keris blade. The older the blade, the more expensive a keris is. Keris in the younger category (called nom-noman), which is from the early period of Surakarta (Pakubuwono III-Pakubuwono X), is an exception because they are considered the golden age of Javanese keris and are valued very expensive. For example, keris from Pakubuwono IX epoch may be valued at hundreds of millions of rupiahs. It is much more expensive than a keris from the Majapahit one.

The second determinant of keris value, according to Foucault, is expediency/usefulness. It is intended to be a keris with specific uses, such as stopping the rain like keris owned by Ki Purbo Asmoro, a famous puppeteer live in Surakarta. Keris with empirical uses, such as stopping the rain, extinguishing the fires (Keris Singkir Geni), stopping storms (Keris Singkir Angin), curing skin pain (Keris Karawelang), and disappearing

from eyesight (Keris Naga Siluman's Diponegoro), have very high selling values.

The last, the demands criterion, is based on a person's desire to have a certain keris, usually based on particular motives. For instance, parents who want to give keris for their newly married children may need Keris Tilam Upih. Meanwhile, a law apparatus needs keris Balebang or Carita to support his profession, and so on. These motives to buy a keris cause the weaker the bargaining position of a potential buyer than those who have the supply of keris so that the price does not become the major consideration.

The existence of buying and selling keris activities, on the other hand, causes many community members to have keris and its literacy. In various ways, they certainly tried to have knowledge about keris that they liked or had. Thus, the meaning of keris is increasingly widely known by the community. Indeed, there are times when the meaning of keris is distorted, for example, caused by excessive worship (fetishism) of their keris. However, the literacy source of keris is now very much available in various media, such as the internet, to minimize the meaning distortion of keris. Much social media on the internet, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, provide content with high validity and reliability. The communities are also increasingly more sensitive toward codes in keris so that the slightest inaccuracy of meaning, as in Keris Naga Siluman, will immediately cause controversy. This controversy, at the same time, becomes a celebration of plurality.

The final section of this discussion emphasizes the meaning of keris that cannot be standardized easily. The meaning of the keris is always in the process (in the making) according to the demand and literature abilities of the subject. The illustration below is an example of a dragon depiction, which is very different from the Keris Diponegoro mentioned in the introduction. This keris is a collection of the Amsterdam Tropical Museum with Inventory Number Nr. A-5864. The dragon figure depicted in the keris is not in the form of a three-dimensional relief as seen in Diponegoro's keris but two dimensions employing the gold inlay technique. The headgear worn by the dragon is not a Javanese king's crown, but it is in European style. There is an explanation 'that seems to suck the blood channels empty' in the caption accompanying this keris (Groneman, 2009: 83), and the Javanese would easily guess this keris as an allusion to the Dutch Colonial.

Picture 8.The Dragon Keris Inventory Number A-5864 (TM) in the collection of the Amsterdam Tropical Museum (Groneman, 2009:83)



6. CONCLUSION

The brief description in this article leads to the following conclusions. Firstly, keris can be treated as a technical and magical weapon. In terms of magical weapons, Javanese culture views life in glorifying animals as part of religious and spiritual systems. Javanese people also have a belief system in the invisible thing, and it functions as a guide for religious and spiritual behavior. The animal glorification has been found in the

Keris van Knaud as the prototype of the oldest classic keris. Secondly, the polysemic characteristics in interpreting keris are caused by: 1) the imaginative reality references that allow each person to have the individual freedom to interpret. 2) There is a loose interpretation authority because the function of keraton as the guardian meaning of keris has undergone ups and downs; thus, keris literacy as the meaning reference can be from any actor who is socially authenticated. 3) The selling and buying activities of keris allow the public to possess keris so that the subjects that give meaning also widespread and often polysemic.

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