

Semiotic analysis of gender bias in news coverage of Reog Ponorogo art

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Abstract The focus of this research is to analyse the semiotic meaning conceptualised by Roland Barthes, which includes denotative and connotative meanings. This also delves into the myths constructed by the media-related representation of gender switching in Jathil Dancers in Reog Ponorogo and its relationship with the Media Coverage of Gemblak. Researchers extracted data by collecting news from mass media portals that discussed Gemblak Ponorogo. The results showed that mass media significantly maintains people's views on culture and tradition. In Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, some media employ negative language that can influence a negative view of Gemblak. The media, with its point of view, news sources, and characterisation of those in the news, can significantly affect people's perceptions, and it continues to maintain these assumptions until now.

Keywords: cis heteronormativity; gemblak ponorogo; semiotics

INTRODUCTION

In a book titled "Reog Ponorogo" by Hartono published in 1980, it is stated that the art of Reog Ponorogo is a traditional form of art imbued with historical and legendary significance. This art form has thrived and evolved within the Ponorogo community from ancient times up to the present day (Hartono, 1980). Reog Ponorogo is a traditional dance performed in an open arena, serving as a form of folk entertainment that incorporates mystical elements. The central performer is a figure adorned with a lion's head and peacock feathers, accompanied by several masked dancers and lumping horses. Over time, Reog Ponorogo has not only become a source of pride for the Ponorogo region but has also attained national recognition (Sunarto, 1978). Reog Ponorogo art is also considered as a historical form of art, supported by the residents of Syailendrawangsa who adhered to Buddhism. Referring to the beliefs and practices of this religion, Reog Ponorogo has a close relationship with Buddhism, particularly the Tantrayana sect. Tantrayana is a sect within Buddhism that emphasises meditation practices, rituals, and the significance of "Sakti" or spiritual power, believed to bring perfection to life (Aji, 2007). Because of this belief, there is a taboo on interactions with women in the Tantrayana sect, which has led to the emergence of Warok or Wiratamtama, a revered character in Reog Ponorogo. "Warok" is a term used for men who follow ascetic practices and possess special powers. They are regarded as guardians or heroes in Reog Ponorogo performances.

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Due to the prohibition on interactions with women, their natural instincts are satisfied through same-sex relationships, as they avoid interactions with women and find closeness with other men of their choice. These individuals the Warok choose are eventually called "Gemblak" (Aji, 2007). Before the 1980s, Reog Ponorogo was closely associated with the Warok and Gemblak traditions. In Poerwowijoyo's text, Gemblak is openly recognised as homosexual. However, after the 1980s, the term "Gemblak" became taboo and was considered an insult. In fact, during those times, being a Gemblak was a matter of pride for a Warok. The number of Gemblak one had, and their attractive appearance became status symbols for a Warok. Moreover, being a gemblak also provided them with economic benefits (Zamzam, 2005: 127). In recent times, the practice of *gemblakan* has seen a decline and even led to disappearance. In a news coverage conducted by News.detik.com, which included an interview with Ridho Kurnianto, an academic who observes the art of Reog, he explained, "In Warok theology, there is a term that mandates avoiding contact with women. Before the arrival of Islam, Kanuragan theology existed. Because of this teaching, a Warok, when practising asceticism, cannot be accompanied by a woman, even if she is his own wife. Instead, they appoint a young man who serves as their ascetic assistant." In this context, "serving" means taking care of various hermitage equipment, offerings, and worship items. However, in Ponorogo society, the term "Gemblak" is often misinterpreted as a behaviour associated with "homosexuality" (Pebrianti, 2008). Gemblak is frequently viewed as synonymous with homosexual behaviour, but this interpretation is confined to the local and sectoral level. This means that the understanding of Gemblak as homosexuality may only apply or be accepted within a specific context. In a broader context or outside of that environment, the meaning or interpretation of Gemblak as homosexuality may not be relevant or recognised by the wider community. Eventually, in 1992, following the Jakarta Fair, the *jathil* transitioned from being male to female (Asmoro & Anggoro, 2023).

Reog Ponorogo is a traditional dance performed in an open arena that serves as a form of folk entertainment. It incorporates magical elements, with the main dancer being a lion-headed figure adorned with peacock feathers, accompanied by several masked dancers and lumping horses (Sunarto, 1978). Additionally, Reog Ponorogo is considered a form of historical art that has deep roots among the Syailendrawangsa people, who practised Buddhism. Referring to this religion's beliefs and practices, Reog Ponorogo is closely associated with Buddhism, particularly the Tantrayana sect. Tantrayana is a Buddhist sect that emphasises meditation practices, rituals, and the spiritual power known as "Sakti," believed to bring perfection to life (Aji, 2007). As a result of these beliefs, a taboo emerged within the Tantrayana sect, which discouraged contact with women. This led to the emergence of the Warok or Wiratamtama, a revered character in Reog Ponorogo. Warok is a term used to describe men who adhere to ascetic practices and possess special abilities. They are revered as guardians or heroes during Reog Ponorogo performances. Due to the prohibition on contact with women, their natural instincts are fulfilled through same-sex relationships, as they avoid interactions with women and form close bonds with other men of their choice. These individuals chosen by the Warok are eventually referred to as Gemblak (Aji, 2007). Before the 1980s, Reog Ponorogo was closely associated with the Warok and gemblak traditions. In Poerwowijoyo's text, Gemblak is openly recognised as homosexual. However, after the 1980s, "gemblak" became taboo or considered an insult. In fact, in those days, being a gemblak was a source of pride for a Warok. The number of gemblak owned and their handsome appearance became a status symbol for a Warok. Conversely, being a gemblak also provided them with economic benefits (Zamzam, 2005: 127). Recently, the practice of Gemblakan has tended to diminish and even disappear. In a news coverage conducted by News.detik.com, which interviewed with one of the academics who observe the art of Reog, Ridho Kurnianto, he said that "In Warok theology, it is known as the term must avoid contact with women, before Islam came, there was such a Kanuragan theology," so that the consequence of this teaching is that a Warok when doing asceticism cannot be accompanied by a woman even though she is his wife. So instead, they appoint a young man who is considered as their ascetic assistant to "serve." In this context, serving means taking care of all kinds of hermitage equipment, offerings, and worship equipment. But the term "Gemblak" in Ponorogo society is often misinterpreted as behaviour that leads to "homosexuality" (Pebrianti, 2008).

In conjunction with evolving societal perspectives on Gemblak Ponorogo, the media's

role is highly significant in moulding perceptions and influencing how people perceive this culture or tradition. The portrayal of Gemblak in media coverage can profoundly shape people's understanding and interpretation of this phenomenon. This research aims to comprehend how the gender transition of *Jathil* dancers in Reog Ponorogo has been depicted in media coverage. The analysis will be conducted utilising Roland Barthes' semiotics method, which incorporates the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. In semiotics, humans think and communicate through signs. These signs encompass objects and elements of language and social phenomena (Wibisono & Sari, 2021).

This research will scrutinise news texts employing Roland Barthes' semiotic approach.

Furthermore, the findings of the analysis will be correlated with the concept of Heteronormativity to understand how gender transition in *Jathil* dancers in Reog Ponorogo is portrayed in media coverage of Gemblak Ponorogo. Thus, this research is anticipated to furnish a deeper insight into the media's role in shaping public perceptions of culture and tradition, particularly concerning the gender transition that takes place among *Jathil* dancers. Representation is the crucial bridge between meaning and culture (Hall, 2004). Hall (2004: 15) states, "Representation means using language to convey meaningful messages about the world, making it intelligible to others." Representation constitutes an integral component of how meaning is generated and exchanged within cultural communities. It involves the utilisation of language, signs, and images to symbolise or depict various aspects (Ida, 2022). This study also aims to investigate whether the media can influence cultural shifts in connection with the gender switching of *Jathil* Dancers in Reog Ponorogo, as portrayed in their reporting on Gemblak Ponorogo. This research holds significance, especially in an era characterised as a "media-saturated world," where mass media heavily mediate human existence. The way we perceive, comprehend, and respond to social reality is profoundly influenced by mass media. What surrounds us shapes our actions and reactions because the content we observe, watch, read, listen to, and appreciate from mass media appears to instruct our behaviours. In essence, our culture is also moulded by the mass media we engage with daily (Ida, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

Data on the Reog Ponorogo performance art was collected from news portals that discuss Gemblak. The researcher used Roland Barthes' semiotics to understand the news text under study. Semiotics is the study of communication on how humans produce meaning and messages contained in communication systems (Prasetya, 2022). A sign is something that represents something other than itself (Danesi, 2004). Semiotics focuses its attention on texts (Fiske, 2011), so semiotics can be used to study various signs, including news texts in the media (Wirawanda & Arrasyid, 2021). Roland Barthes builds upon Saussure's ideas. This can be proven from Barthes' semiotic theory which is derived from Saussure's theory of language (Haryono & Dedi, 2017). Saussure's semiotics theory is divided into two parts: the signifier and signified. Roland Barthes then continued by developing the theory known as denotation, connotation, and myth (Figure 1).

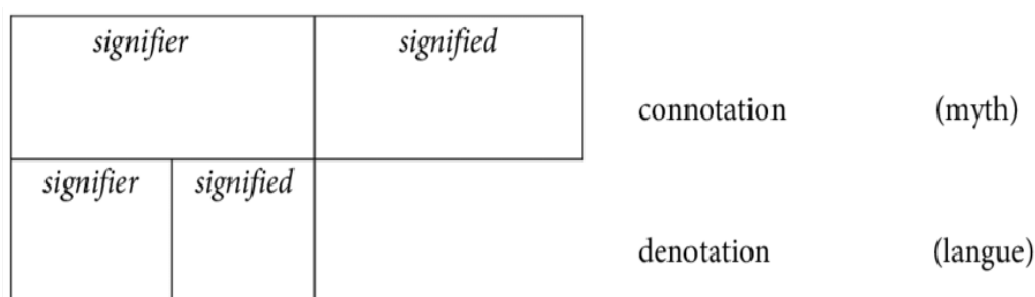


Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory
Source (Barthes, 2017:46)

A sign is a unity of a form of signifier with an idea or signified. In other words, the signifier is a "meaningful sound" or "meaningful scribble." So, the signifier is the material aspect of language: what is said or heard and what is written or read. The signified is a mental representation, thought, or concept. Therefore, the signified is the mental aspect of language. What must be noted in this theory is that in concrete language signs, these two elements cannot be separated (Barthes, 2017:46). Denotation is the literal meaning or the actual meaning captured by human senses. While denotation is the first level of meaning contained in a sign. It is the literal or objective description of what the sign represents. Connotation is the second level that gives rise to implicit or uncertain meaning that has much to do with psychology, feelings, and beliefs. It includes associations, interpretations, or values society gives to the sign. Meanwhile, myth is the highest stage in Barthes' semiotic analysis. It occurs when the connotation of the sign is seen as an undeniable truth or a widely accepted ideology in the culture. Myths are languages or meanings that emerge differently due to socio-cultural life's influence and the views surrounding them. Barthes defined myth as a series of interrelated concepts (Fiske, 2011). Barthes argues that the main way myth works is by naturalising history (Fiske, 2011). This myth is important to understand the significance of signs. Roland Barthes understands ideology as a false consciousness that makes people live in an imagined and idealised world when the reality of life is not. Ideology exists as long as culture exists, and that is why Roland Barthes explained that connotation is an expression of culture. Culture manifests itself in texts and as such, ideology manifests itself through various codes that permeate the text in the form of essential signifiers, such as character, setting, point of view, and others (Sobur, 2009:71).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes Model in Media Coverage Related to "Gemblak Ponorogo"

The first news article titled "This is Gemblak's Leaning Story in Ponorogo," was published by DetikNews on 13 January 2018 (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Media coverage of Gemblak Ponorogo
(Source: DetikNews.com)

Table 1. Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis First news story

Denotation	Connotation	Myths
In the news headline " <i>This is the Story of Gemblak's Tilt in Ponorogo</i> ," the denotation of the title of the word "tilt" has a downward meaning that is an angle or thing that is not perpendicular.	The use of diction such as "oblique" in the DetikNews headline is something that is not straight or not in accordance with the rules and nature.	The word "oblique" here reflects the myth or negative stereotype of Gemblak as something that is considered to violate social norms or the rules of truth that apply. So far, people understand that Gemblak Ponorogo is identical to the negative direction, namely the homosexual tradition.

Source: Author Analysis (2023)

The signifier is the physical form of a sign, such as a written word or picture. In the title, the signifier is found in the word "slanted." The word "slanted" is the signifier or signifier in the text. Physically, it is a written word used in the title. The sign refers to the concept or meaning associated with the signifier. In the paragraph, the sign of the word "slanted" is an angle or

something not perpendicular. The denotation of the word "slanted" in the above title implies that it refers to an angle or something not perfectly upright. In this case, the denotative explanation aligns with the word's literal meaning. However, in the context of the title, the use of the word "slanted" gives a negative connotation to Gemblak (Table 1).

However, the connotation suggests that stories involving Gemblak may contain controversial content or elements deemed inappropriate by society. The negative connotations associated with Gemblak arise from the use of the signifier "slanted" in the title. In the Javanese cultural context, "slanted" is often associated with unconventional or non-standard things, creating a stigma against Gemblak, especially regarding non-heteronormative sexual practices. Therefore, the signifier carries negative connotations that influence perceptions of Gemblak in the described context. Meanwhile, "myth" in this context refers to the symbolic or narrative constructions hidden behind language or representation. The analysis asserts that the myth in the title associates Gemblak Ponorogo with negative aspects, particularly in the context of the homosexual tradition that has developed in Ponorogo society, given that the news also features a photo of a man dressed similarly to a woman.

The second news article, titled "Warok and Gemblak: The Discordant Tale of Reog Ponorogo," was published by Merdeka.com on 11 May 2014 (Figure 3).

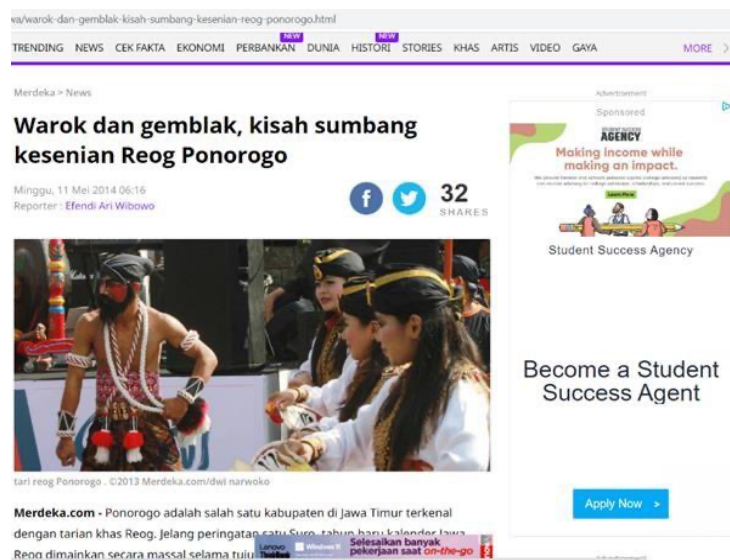


Figure 3. Media Coverage of Gemblag Ponorogo
Source: (Merdeka.com)

Table 2. Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis of the Second News Story

Denotation	Connotation	Myths
In the news title published by Merdeka.com "Warok and Gemblak, the story of the discord of Reog Ponorogo art" in the title, the word <i>Sumbang</i> in the title has a denotation meaning, namely something that is not appropriate.	The word " <i>sumbang</i> " in Merdeka.com's headline can create the impression that the Warok and Gemblak traditions violate customs or are inappropriate. In the KBBI, <i>sumbang</i> is defined as something that is guilty (about customs) of violating customs (habits, politeness, and so on).	In Javanese culture, particularly in the art of Reog Ponorogo, Warok and Gemblak are frequently linked to spiritual or mystical aspects.

Source: Author Analysis (2023)

In the title, the signifier is found in the word "*sumbang*". The word "*Sumbang*" serves as the signifier or sign in the text. Physically, it is a written word used in the title. The sign refers to the concept or meaning associated with the signifier. In the paragraph, the signifier of the word "*sumbang*" is something that is not in accordance. The title above uses the word "*sumbang*" which denotes something inappropriate. This corresponds to the word's literal meaning and suggests that the story of Warok and Gemblak is considered unsuitable for the tradition of Reog Ponorogo (Table 2). The connotation of the word "*sumbang*" in the title gives the impression that the tradition of Warok and Gemblak may violate customs, be

inappropriate, strange, or even controversial. The negative connotation associated with Gemblak arises from the use of the signifier "*sumbang*" in the title. In the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary), "*sumbang*" means violating customs, norms, decency, etc. This word can also refer to strange, unusual, or even controversial things. Therefore, using this word can create a negative connotation about the story being conveyed in the news. The analysis confirms that the myth in the title of Warok and Gemblak is often associated with spiritual or mystical aspects in Javanese culture, especially in the art of Reog Ponorogo.

The third news article, titled "Mystical and Complex Sensual Relationships Between Warok and Gemblak in Ponorogo," was published by Vice.com on 23 April 2019.

Table 3 Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis of the Third News Story

Denotation	Connotation	Myths
In the Title published by vice.com "The Mystical and Sensually Complicated Relationship Between Warok- Gemblak in Ponorogo" the word "Mystical" refers to things related to the spiritual or supernatural, "sensual" indicates physical or emotional involvement, and "complicated" indicates that the relationship is not simple and have complexities.	The words "mystical" and "sensual" may imply that there is a spiritual or magical dimension to their relationship, while "complicated" indicates that the relationship is not simple and may have many layers or conflicts.	The sensual and complicated sentence in the title is considered to imply a complicated relationship because the term "Gemblak" in Ponorogo society is often misinterpreted with behaviour that leads to the word "Homosexual".

Source: Author Analysis (2023)

In the title, the signifiers are found in the words "mystical," "sensual," and "complex." These words are signifiers or signifiers in the text. Physically, these are written words used in the title. The sign refers to the concept or meaning associated with the signifier. In the paragraph, the sign of the words "mystical," "sensual," and "complex" is something that represents attributes or characteristics associated with each word. For example, "mystical" refers to the spiritual or supernatural dimension, "sensual" refers to physical or emotional involvement, and "complex" indicates that the relationship has high complexity. Denotatively, the words in the title also have clear meanings; "mystical" refers to things related to the spiritual or supernatural, "sensual" indicates physical or emotional involvement, and "complex" signifies that the relationship is not simple and has complexity (Table 3). However, the connotations of these words add a deeper dimension to this title. The words "mystical" and "sensual" suggest a spiritual or magical dimension in the relationship between Warok and Gemblak, while "complex" indicates that the relationship may have many layers or conflicts that make it difficult to understand. This semiotic analysis highlights how language and representation can provide deeper meaning and add complexity to the topic discussed in the news. Additionally, there is also a prominent mythological aspect in this analysis, where it is mentioned that the words "sensual" and "complex" can trigger negative stereotypes about the relationship between Warok and Gemblak, especially in the public's view, which often misinterprets the term "Gemblak" with homosexual behaviour.

The fourth news article, titled "Reog Ponorogo Foundation: Negative Image Led to the Disappearance of Gemblak," was published by Tempo.com on July 16, 2017. In the title, the signifiers are found in the phrase "Negative Image Causes Gemblak Disappearance." These words are the signifiers or indicators in the text. Physically, they are written words used in the title (Table 4). The signifier refers to the concept or meaning associated with the signifier. In the paragraph, the signifier of the phrase "Negative Image Causes Gemblak Disappearance" is a representation of an event or phenomenon that has a negative perception or bad view of Gemblak in the context of the Reog Ponorogo art tradition, which ultimately leads to the disappearance of that tradition. This reflects how stereotypes or stigma against Gemblak have caused them to disappear or be marginalized from the practice of that art. Additionally, this phrase also highlights how negative perceptions can affect the sustainability of a society's culture and traditions. The title has a clear denotative meaning as well. "Negative Image Causes Gemblak Disappearance" indicates that Gemblak disappears from the Reog Ponorogo tradition due to negative perceptions or negative views associated with the Gemblak image.

However, behind this denotative meaning, there are deeper connotations. The connotation of this title reflects negative views or perceptions of the Reog Ponorogo art originating from the negative image caused by Gemblak. The word "disappearance" here can have several meanings, such as physically Gemblak no longer appearing or even culturally extinct due to the impact of the negative image attached to them. Furthermore, there is also a mythological aspect that emerges in this analysis. It is stated that the term "Gemblak" in Ponorogo society is often misconstrued as behaviour leading to "homosexuality."

Table 4. Fourth News Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myths
In the news published by tempo.com with the title "Reog Ponorogo Foundation: Negative Image Caused Gemblak to Disappear" The title illustrates that Gemblak disappeared in the reog tradition due to negative image.	There is a negative view or bad perception of the art of Reog Ponorogo that stems from the negative image caused by Gemblak. "Disappearing" here can have several meanings, such as physically no longer performing or even culturally extinct.	The term "Gemblak" in Ponorogo society is often misinterpreted with behaviour that leads to "Homosexual". So, it is called the negative view of the community related to Gemblak

Theoretical Analysis

In the analysis above, we see how Roland Barthes' semiotic theory helps us understand that this headline has not only a denotative (simple) meaning but also a more profound connotation that reflects a negative view or assumption of Gemblak and the traditions it involves. Barthes' semiotics can help us understand how language and representations shape people's perceptions and interpretations of a particular topic or subject. The media plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and influencing people's views towards a particular culture or tradition. In terms of public perception related to the Gemblak in the Reog Ponorogo art, some media use diction and sentences which implicate people to have a negative view of the Gemblak Ponorogo. In their reporting, the media can choose words that have negative connotations or lead readers to form a negative understanding of Gemblak. For example, the news published by DetikNews with the title "This is the Oblique Story of Gemblak in Ponorogo" (Pebrianti, 2008) and the news published by vice.com with the title "The Mystical and Sensual Relationship is Complicated Between Warok-Gemblak in Ponorogo" (Ishomuddin, 2019). Merdeka.com published the third news with the title "Warok and gemblak, the discordant story of Reog Ponorogo art".

Tempo.com published the fourth news article with the title "Reog Ponorogo Foundation: Negative Image Caused Gemblak to Disappear". The use of diction such as "oblique" in the DetikNews headline can give Gemblak a negative and demeaning connotation meaning that oblique is something that is not straight or not in accordance with the rules and nature. The use of the word "complicated" in the vice.com headline can also create the perception that the relationship between Gemblak and Warok is negative or unnatural. The title also has a connotation of "complicated" indicating that the relationship is not simple and may have many layers or conflicts. Similarly, the use of the word "sumbang" in Merdeka.com's headline can create the impression that the tradition of Warok and Gemblak violates customs or is inappropriate in terms of its connotative meaning in the Indonesian Dictionary "sumbang" is defined as something guilty (about customs) violating customs (habits, politeness, and so on). The last news from tempo.com. in the title of the news has a connotative meaning in the form of a negative view or bad perception of the art of Reog Ponorogo which comes from the negative image caused by Gemblak. "Disappearing" here can have several meanings, such as physically no longer performing or even culturally extinct. In the history of ponorogo reog dance there is also a myth that the term "Gemblak" in Ponorogo society is often misinterpreted with behaviour that leads to "Homosexual" and it is believed to make Gemblak eventually physically no longer appear or are now culturally extinct. Mass media does have a significant role to convey messages and information to the public (Masyhuri, 2016). But the media can also use the choice of diction, point of view, news sources, and actor definitions in the construction of their news (Boer et al., 2020; Fadli & Novita, 2021; Najihah, 2021). In the context of public

understanding of the Gemblak in Reog Ponorogo, the choice of diction, point of view, news sources, and actor definitions used by the media in their reporting can affect the way the public perceives and understands the Gemblak, the media coverage in the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes, the news above can lead to negative connotations and denotations or a demeaning assessment of the Gemblak can affect the public's view of them. In the beginning, it was mentioned that the actual interpretation of Gemblak as homosexual behaviour may only apply or be accepted within a certain scope. In a wider context or outside of that environment, the meaning or interpretation of Gemblak as homosexuality may not be relevant or recognised by the entire wider community. Therefore, it is important for the media to be responsible in choosing objective phrases, avoiding prejudicial judgments, and providing a comprehensive understanding of the culture and tradition of Gemblak in Reog Ponorogo.

Critical Analysis of CIS Heteronormativity in the History of Jathilan Dance

In the Reog Ponorogo tradition, the Jathilan dance was originally performed by a man and was known as "Gemblak." Gemblak were teenagers who were hired by a Warok. However, there has been a significant transformation in the art of Reog Ponorogo, where women now perform the Jathilan dance. While initially, the art of Reog Ponorogo was a critique of Majapahit soldiers who were reluctant to engage in combat, male dancers portrayed the dance with military-style attire and delicate, gentle movements. Nevertheless, the depiction of a male Jathil dancing softly and wearing makeup often led people to associate it with "homosexuality." These concerns eventually prompted a major shift in the Reog Ponorogo tradition, with Jathilan dancers no longer being exclusively male but also including females. As of today, the tradition of male Gemblak and Jathilan Reog Ponorogo has nearly disappeared. This transformation began in 1980 when President Soeharto requested Ponorogo to showcase 100 Reog groups and 200 Jathilan dancers (Intan, 2022). This change can be understood as a response to negative perceptions and misinterpretations of male dancers performing Jathilan. It also reflects a shift towards avoiding stereotypes and discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity within the Reog Ponorogo art tradition. It mirrors society's belief that heterosexual norms are the prevailing standard and perpetuate patriarchal structures.

In this case, the transition from male to female *Jathilan* dancers can be seen as an effort to circumvent stigmatisation and incorrect societal judgments regarding sexual identity and orientation. This might also stem from the binary thinking commonly employed by many people, especially in Indonesia, when it comes to gender identity. Both binary thinking and essentialism only acknowledge the existence of men and women, designating men as masculine and women as feminine. Consequently, individuals who fall outside these "norms" are often considered as deviations (Kartikaningdryani, 2019). It's important to note that these interpretations and changes represent social responses to the Reog Ponorogo tradition, and people's perspectives may differ based on context. This can be reflected in how the media portrays and broadens people's understanding of the tradition. For example, some of the news reports above were published by DetikNews with the title "This is the Slanted Story of Gemblak in Ponorogo" (Pebrianti, 2008). The title states that so far, the public understands that Gemblak is synonymous with negativity. In the title, these behaviours are considered as "oblique" in a news report, the word oblique means something that is not straight or not in accordance with the nature that applies in society. In CIS heteronormativity's view, this is considered in accordance with social assumptions and demands which assume that heterosexual sexual orientation (attracting the opposite sex) and gender identity in accordance with biological sex are the norms or standards expected in society. CIS heteronormativity also exerts influence on the gender expectations imposed on individuals. For instance, the belief that men should exhibit "masculine" behaviour while women should adhere to "feminine" roles exemplifies gender expectations stemming from CIS heteronormative norms. This can lead to gender stereotyping, discrimination, and social pressure on individuals who do not conform to these norms. These issues often arise from assumptions deeply embedded in people's daily lives, particularly in terms of sexuality. Sexuality, as a concept, describes how humans have historically understood and navigated aspects related to the body and pleasure. It is not something concealed or elusive, but rather a complex and visibly interconnected network. It encompasses the relationship between bodily stimulation, the intensity of pleasure, the development of specialised knowledge, and the interplay of control and resistance to sexual

desire (Foucault, 1998:105-106 in Setyorini, 2011).

According to Setyorini (2011), gender is an ongoing process in which individuals perform and repetitively imitate gender roles. It may be that when a man is expected to exhibit a masculine style, it is essentially an imitation of traditional notions regarding how a man should behave. In other words, there is no inherent authenticity to one's masculinity or femininity; these values are perpetually reiterated over time and eventually accepted as natural characteristics of being a masculine or feminine woman. Consequently, individuals unable to conform to existing gender and sexuality norms are often regarded as deviations (Kartikaningdryani, 2019). Ultimately, this can significantly impact various sectors of society, including culture. For example, society perceives men who wear makeup and perform gracefully in the *Jathilan* Reog Ponorogo tradition as deviant. This perception has prompted a change where *Jathilan* dancers, who were previously male, have been replaced by women. This transformation reflects an adaptation to the prevailing perceptions and values in society influenced by the CIS heteronormative view.

CONCLUSION

Mass media plays a significant role in shaping people's perceptions of culture and tradition, including Gemblak in Reog Ponorogo art up to the present day. According to Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, some media outlets use negative language that can influence a negative perception of Gemblak. The perspective, news sources, and how actors are defined in the news also impact public perception. The shift from male to female *Jathilan* dancers is a response to the negative perceptions and biases directed towards previous male dancers. This transformation reflects an effort to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination related to gender identity and sexual orientation. CIS heteronormativity also plays a role in shaping societal expectations regarding gender roles. For instance, the expectation that men should exhibit "masculine" behaviour and women should adhere to "feminine" behaviour is an example of gender roles stemming from CIS heteronormative norms. This can lead to gender stereotyping, discrimination, and social pressure for individuals who do not conform to these norms. Such changes indicate a cultural adaptation in response to prevailing societal views on gender identity and behaviour.

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