

What Symbolic Meaning Would Peirce Find in the Raspati Dance at the Galura Kencana Studio in Garut?

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the symbolic meanings embedded in the Raspati Dance performed at Sanggar Galura Kencana, Garut Regency, using the semiotic perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce. It aims to identify and interpret the system of signs found in the choreographic structure, movement vocabulary, makeup, and costume as representations of Sundanese women's leadership values in education. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review, and triangulation was applied to ensure validity. The analysis is based on Peirce's triadic model, which consists of the sign, object, and interpretant, to understand how visual and kinetic elements function as cultural signs within the performance. The findings show that the movement sequences of the Raspati Dance do not merely serve aesthetic purposes, but also represent values such as perseverance, intelligence, solidarity, and leadership vision among women. The makeup and costume further reinforce the visual dimension, highlighting the image of Sundanese women as graceful, firm, and dignified. All the interconnected elements of the dance create a symbolic narrative that reflects women's struggle to gain knowledge and contribute to societal development. In this sense, the Raspati Dance can be understood as a form of cultural expression that combines artistic creativity with symbolic meanings rooted in the social and cultural values of Sundanese society.

KEYWORDS

Symbolic Meaning
Raspati Dance
Galura Kencana
Garut
Women Struggle

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INTRODUCTION

West Java is widely recognized as a region rich in cultural assets and capacities, particularly in the domain of traditional dance (Kurniati et al., 2023). Dance is an art form that expresses ideas and aesthetic principles through the coordination of physical movement as one of the most fundamental means of communication (Rifandi et al., 2021). Within Sundanese tradition, dance is not merely a form of entertainment, but also a symbolic medium that preserves history, beliefs, and social values passed down through generations, forming a strong cultural identity (Sumardjo, 2014). The diversity of dance in West Java has evolved due to variations in historical background, purpose, and social context. Among the various dance forms, one notable development is *tari kreasi baru* (new creative dance), which remains grounded in traditional values as its primary foundation. Sundanese creative dance evolves from traditional forms while maintaining their values, aesthetics, and basic movement patterns, yet adapts to contemporary dynamics. This allows greater flexibility and opens space for the exploration of new ideas and symbols without losing its traditional roots (Hidayat et al., 2020).

One example of a tradition-based creative dance is the Raspati Dance, developed by Sanggar Galura Kencana in Garut Regency. This dance presents a narrative of women's perseverance, representing the figure of Rd Ayu Lasminingrat, a Sundanese woman who played a significant role in education and moral development. Conceptually, the Raspati Dance does not only present movement forms but also embodies a system of signs expressed through movement, makeup, and costume. However, preliminary observations indicate that public understanding, especially among younger generations, of the background and symbolic meanings of the Raspati Dance remains limited. Appreciation tends to focus on technical and performative aspects without fully engaging with its deeper cultural meanings.

Previous studies include Rifandi et al. (2021), titled "Tari Raspati di Sanggar Galura Kencana", which examines the dance within the framework of learning practices at the studio. While it shares the same research object, the study does not examine the integrated system of signs within movement, makeup, and costume using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model. Akanfani et al. (2022), in "*Tari Topeng Betawi: Kajian Filosofis dan Kajian Simbolis*", employ a descriptive qualitative method similar to this study, but focus on a different dance form. Amelia (2024), in "*Kostum Tarian Topeng Ireng Kabupaten Magelang Menurut Perspektif Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce*", also applies Peirce's semiotic theory and analyzes symbolic meanings, but limits the discussion to costume, without addressing movement or makeup. Wulandari (2024), in "*Analisis Semiotika Peirce dalam Tari Jambar di Desa Beringin Taluk Kecamatan Kuantan Tengah Kabupaten Kuantan Singingi*", shares similarities in method and approach, but differs in the dance object studied. Finally, Padjriah et al. (2024), in "*Analisis Semiotika Tari Topeng Sasikirana Studio Tari Indrawati Lukman Bandung*," likewise examines dance as a cultural sign system, though with a different object and cultural context. Although previous studies have explored dance as a system of signs, research specifically analyzing the symbolic meanings within the movement, makeup, and costume of the Raspati Dance using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework remains limited (Kusumawardani, 2013). This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining the Raspati Dance as a cultural sign system representing the leadership values and struggles of Sundanese women.

Nevertheless, these studies still tend to view dance as a symbolic object analyzed in isolation, without fully integrating the elements of movement, makeup, and costume into a cohesive system of signs. Furthermore, semiotic approaches in dance studies generally have not critically evaluated the compatibility between the performative nature of the subject of study and the theoretical framework applied.

Within this framework, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic stands out as an epistemologically relevant choice. Unlike Roland Barthes structural semiotic, which emphasizes the reading of sign as relatively stable system of meaning within the structure of texts and myths, Peirce triadic model encompassing the representamen, the object, and the interpretant facilitates a more dynamic and contextual analysis of meaning, one that remains open to the ongoing process of semiosis. This characteristic makes Peirce approach more suitable for examining dance as a performative practice that is not limited to visual signs alone, but also involves an interpretive process that unfolds through the interaction between movement, expression, and cultural context. Therefore, the application of Peirce semiotic in this study is not merely a methodological decision but is grounded in an epistemological need to understand the Raspati Dance as a complex and dynamic system of signs. This approach enables an integrative analysis of the elements of movement, makeup, and costume as interrelated presentations of meaning in constructing a cultural narrative.

Through this research gap, the present study aims to identify and analyze the symbols and meanings embedded in the movement, makeup and costume elements of the Raspati Dance in Garut. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework, this study explores the meanings conveyed through each element of the performance. Accordingly, the research is guided by the following questions: (1) what is the system of signs found in the choreography structure of the Raspati Dance at the Galura Kencana Studio in Garut Regency?; (2) what are the symbolic meaning found in the movement elements of the Raspati Dance?; and (3) what are symbolic meanings contained in the makeup and costume of the Raspati Dance based on Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic approach. This study is expected to provide a more systematic understanding of the Raspati Dance as a medium of cultural expression for the Sundanese society.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to examine the symbolic essence of the Raspati Dance through an in-depth application of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework. The qualitative approach is employed to explore and interpret the cultural meanings embedded in the elements of the dance, while the descriptive method aims to systematically organize, present, and analyze the collected data (Andiana, 2022). This study applies Peirce's semiotic framework to examine the dance as a system of signs through a triadic scheme that explains the relationship between the representamen (sign), object, and interpretant (Lat et al., 2006). The representamen refers to the observable forms of signs in the performance, such as movement, makeup, and costume. The object denotes the conceptual reference represented by the sign, while the interpretant refers to the meaning constructed in the observer's mind based on the relationship between the sign and its object. This framework is used to analyze the symbolic elements of the Raspati Dance, allowing for a deeper understanding of the meanings embedded in its movement, makeup, and costume (Padjriah et al., 2024). According to Peirce's triadic model, signs operate through a continuous process of semiosis, where the interpretant may become a new representamen. In this study, the elements of movement, makeup, and costume are analyzed through the three components of the triadic model—sign, object, and interpretant in order to understand how meaning is formed through the process of interpretation (Amelia, 2024). In the context of performing arts, semiotics serves as a method for examining the elements that contribute to meaning-making, which can be expressed through both verbal and nonverbal dimensions. Verbal elements may include text or spoken expression, while nonverbal elements encompass movement, facial expression, stage setting, color, as well as makeup and costume (Lat et al., 2006). This research was conducted at Sanggar Galura Kencana, the site where the Raspati Dance was created, located on Jalan Ciledug, Kotakulon Village, Garut Regency, West Java. Participants in the choreographer, Bambang Joko Basuki, as the primary informant, supported by trainers and dancer directly involved in the rehearsal and performance processes of the Raspati Dance, as well as Yogi Bintara as a supporting informant from outside the field of dance, who provided an external perspective on the interpretation of the Raspati Dance.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review (Kurniati et al., 2023; Sabaria et al., 2025). The data collection process involved participant observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and literature review to ensure the validity of the study. Observations were conducted during rehearsals and performances, while interviews followed a structured guideline. Documentation included photographs, videos, and archival materials related to the Raspati Dance. Literature review

was used to examine the theoretical framework and relevant previous studies. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation (Sabaria et al., 2025). The triangulation process involved several steps. First, data from different sources were compared to assess consistency regarding movement, makeup, and costume elements. Second, findings across different data collection methods were examined to ensure alignment. Third, any inconsistencies were addressed through further clarification with informants or additional observation. Finally, data that consistently supported one another were considered valid and used as the basis for interpreting symbolic meanings and drawing conclusions (Hariawan et al., 2025; M. Husnullail et al., 2024). The main informant in this study was the choreographer of the Raspati Dance, supported by trainers at Sanggar Galura Kencana, while additional data were obtained from documentation of rehearsals and performances.

Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to systematically verify research findings. Semiotic analysis in this study was conducted using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model, which encompasses the representamen, the object, and the interpretant. To further operationalize these concepts, this study also classifies signs into three main categories: icons, indices, and symbols.

An icon refers to a sign that denotes a direct physical or structural resemblance to the object it represents, such as a dance movement that explicitly mimics a specific activity or event. An index is a sign connected to its object through a cause and effect relationship or existential proximity to the object, such as facial expressions or body movements that directly indicate specific emotions or conditions. Meanwhile, a symbol is a sign whose meaning is constructed through cultural convention, such as costume colors, makeup styles, and fashion elements that represent certain values within a society.

Based on this classification, each element of the Raspati Dance including movement, makeup, and costume is analyzed through a systematic process: (1) identifying the representamen as a visible sign; (2) classifying the sign into the categories of icon, index, or symbol according to the relationship between the sign and its referent; (3) tracing the object referred to by the sign within the cultural context and the background of the dance's creation; and (4) interpreting the meaning of the sign that emerges from the interaction between the sign, the object, and the socio cultural context. This approach ensures that the analysis is not limited to merely illustrative descriptions but progresses step by step from the identification of sign types toward a deeper understanding of meaning, thereby yielding an accurate and structured semiotic interpretation. The units of analysis in this study include movement patterns, makeup, and costume of the Raspati Dance. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring data confidentiality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As a work produced by Sanggar Galura Kencana, the Raspati Dance was created by Bambang Joko Basuki in 2015, drawing its aesthetic foundation from *Tari Wayang*. This work belongs to the category of contemporary creative dance, expressing the spirit of leadership embodied by a prominent female figure from Garut Regency, Raden Ayu Lasminingrat, who is widely recognized for her contributions to education and moral development. She is regarded as a pioneer of women's education in Sundanese society. This group dance is performed by nine female dancers to visualize a figure who is intelligent, authoritative, and skilled in martial arts, reflecting her character. Artistically, the Raspati Dance retains its traditional roots through the use of fundamental movement vocabulary,

presented in a moderate tempo that makes it relatively accessible to learn. The performance further incorporates *sampur* and *gondewah* as visual elements. The Raspati Dance features twelve distinct movement patterns, including: *Trisi Geser*, *Gelar Galayar*, *Bantingan*, *Ayun Gondewa*, *Keupat*, *Sirig*, *Tumpang Tali*, *Ayun Capang*, *Keupat Randegam*, *Lontang*, *Jalan Ngesot*, and *Sawangan*.




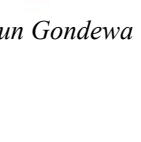
From a semiotic perspective, as articulated by Charles Sanders Peirce (Syaiful Qadar Basri, 2019), the movement vocabulary of the Raspati Dance can be interpreted as a system of signs that conveys meaning. Dance movements function as the representamen, or the observable form of the sign within the performance (Affriani & Kusumastuti, 2025). From the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic, meaning is neither singular nor fixed, but rather emerges through a dynamic process of semiosis that is open to a variety of possible interpretations (Patriansah & Wijaya, 2021). Thus, the diversity of movement in the Raspati Dance is not merely viewed as a direct representation of specific values, but as signs that trigger various interpretation, influenced by personal experience, cultural background, and the perspective of the interpreter whether dancer, choreographer, or audience member. Consequently, the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant in the Raspati Dance does not follow a linear pattern but forms a complex, multi layered network of meaning.

Based on an interview with Bambang Joko Basuki, S.Sn., the choreographer, the movement of *Trisi Geser* are interpreted as symbols of courage or a sense of purpose; however, from the perspective of Yogi Bintara, a literary scholar, the movements *Trisi Geser* can also be interpreted as a kinetic manifestation of the process of searching, inner dynamics, or the body's adaptation to the performance space. This phenomenon underscores the polysemic nature of meaning in the movement of the Raspati Dance, which is highly open to various interpretations.

Choreographic Structure

The term 'choreography', or 'dance composition', is derived from the Greek words *choreia*, meaning group dance, and *grapho*, meaning writing or notation; thus, it can be understood literally as the notation of group dance (Treny Hera, 2019). More broadly, choreography refers to the process of designing and organizing movement in space and time as a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and cultural meanings (Sunaryo, 2020). This implies that choreography is the result of a structured dance composition. The choreography of the Raspati Dance is systematically designed and rooted in the movements of the Wayang Dance; the presentation of movements in the Raspati Dance reflects the leadership character of a Sundanese woman, namely Rd. Ayu Lasminingrat, as a figure who is authoritative, knowledgeable, and resilient. In terms of composition, the Raspati Dance is presented as a group dance performed by nine dancers with a duration of 10 minutes. In the Raspati Dance, there are signs that carry profound meanings. Through a traditional framework, we can interpret the signs that emerge in the movements of the Raspati Dance. The "Sign" (T) column displays the movement forms featured in the Raspati Dance that serve as the focus of analysis, while the "Object" (O) column contains the meaning or reference of each movement based on the choreographer's perspective regarding the movements presented, and the "Interpreter" (I) column contains the author's interpretation of the relationship between the sign and the object based on an analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics, thereby yielding a profound interpretation and representing a dynamic process of semiosis.

Table 1. Interpretation of Raspati Dance Movements Based on Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics

No	Sign (S)	Object (O)	Interpretan (I)
1.	<p><i>Trisi Geser</i></p> 	This movement signifies the pursuit of goals and the act of gathering something of value	Represents inner dynamics, clarity of life direction, and goal-oriented determination in the pursuit of knowledge
2.	<p><i>Gelar Galayar</i></p> 	A guiding and directing movement (an act of leading someone to better understand and learn)	Symbolizes the role of women as intellectual guides who educate and direct society
3.	<p><i>Bantingan</i></p> 	A strong and firm movement indicating determination and hard work	Represents discipline, perseverance, and the resilience of women in developing intellectual capacity
4.	<p><i>Ayun Gondewa</i></p> 	A rhythmic and controlled swinging movement of the <i>gondewa</i> , signifying nurturing and teaching with persistence	Represents a dedicated female figure who educates with patience and consistency



5.

Keupat

A movement that signifies guidance toward the right direction or positive values

Reflects women's responsibility in shaping knowledgeable and ethical generations



6.

Sirig

A movement expressing firmness, certainty, and commitment to goals

Represents strong principles and women's determination in striving for rights and equalit



7.

Tumpang Tali

A movement symbolizing cooperation and solidarity

Represents social solidarity among women in supporting one another toward collective progress



8. *Ayun Capang*



A strong yet controlled movement, reflecting firmness balanced with patience

Represents wise leadership that balances firmness in principle with stability and professionalism.

9. *Keupat Randegam*



A restrained and controlled movement, signifying a gradual process toward success

Represents persistence and patience in achieving goals

10. *Lontang*



A movement symbolizing equality

Represents balance and equal rights for women in education and leadership

11. *Jalan Ngesot*



A low-position movement symbolizing respect and gratitude toward sources of knowledge

Represents women's struggle grounded in ethics, spirituality, and respect for God and teachers

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|--|
| 12. | <i>Sawangan</i> | A movement indicating orientation and future vision | Represents a visionary woman with strong aspirations and readiness to face life's challenges |
|-----|-----------------|---|--|



Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic framework enables researchers to systematically reveal the profound meanings embedded in dance performances (Padjriah et al., 2024). Overall, the sequence of movements in the Raspati Dance constructs a symbolic narrative of women's struggle in the fields of education and leadership. Each movement goes beyond its aesthetic function and operates as a cultural symbol that reflects perseverance, resilience, solidarity, and the worldview of Sundanese women (Wendhaningsih & Habsary, 2021). Meanwhile, the interpretant emerges through the audience's interpretation, linking these movements to the figure of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat as a symbol of an intellectual, dignified, and influential Sundanese woman in the development of education. In this way, the movement composition of the Raspati Dance does not merely serve as an aesthetic element of performance, but also functions as a symbolic medium that conveys values of leadership, education, and women's emancipation within the broader framework of Sundanese cultural values. Through the process of semiosis, the meaning of this struggle is constructed as an effort at social transformation grounded in moral and spiritual values and intellectual wisdom.

The table of movement interpretations presented above represents one possible reading of the signs that appear in the Raspati Dance. However, it should be noted that these meanings are not definitive, but rather the result of interpretive constructions that are subject to change when interacting with various social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. In this regard, audiences from different cultural backgrounds tend to produce interpretations that do not always align with the choreographer's intent. For the dancers themselves, the meaning of movement often emerges from experiences embedded in the body, which are difficult to fully reduce to verbal-based symbolic categories. Therefore, the semiotic analysis in this study does not aim to establish a single meaning, but rather to open space for broader and multidimensional interpretation.

According to Yogi Bintara, in many dance performances, women are often portrayed as objects of representation that emphasize physical beauty, gentleness, and domestic roles that have long been imposed by societal constructs. Such representations often reinforce the stereotype that women are passive, submissive, and confined to the domestic sphere. However, the Raspati Dance offers a different perspective. Through a variety of dynamic, assertive, and energetic movements, this dance instead portrays women as resilient, empowered, and capable of determining the course of their own lives.

This resilience is not only reflected through movement but is also reinforced by the use of dance attributes and props that serve as symbols of resistance against various forms of oppression of women. Each element of the performance seems to construct a narrative about women's courage in facing the various social, cultural, and structural challenges that limit their freedom of movement. These symbols serve as a rejection of the view that portrays

women as weak and dependent on others.

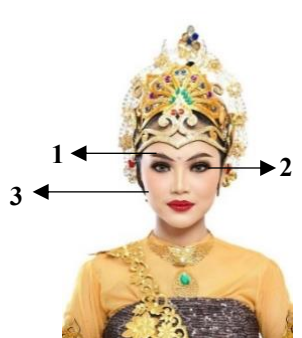


Figure 1. QR Code for the Raspati Dance Video
 (Archive of Galura Kencana Studio)

Makeup and Costume

Makeup and costume serve as important media through which dance artists align visual appearance with the character and conceptual ideas of a performance (Rusliana, 2012). Makeup represents a combination of art, culture, and technique used to shape and enhance facial appearance (Maharani et al., 2025; Amirulloh et al., 2024). Beyond its aesthetic function, makeup also acts as a medium of identity expression and, within performance contexts, serves as a symbolic element that supports the communication of character and meaning (Sunaryo et al., 2025). The analysis of makeup and costume in the Raspati Dance employs Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic approach, which views visible elements as a system of signs (Hutapea, 2025). These elements function not merely as decorative components, but as symbolic forms of communication that reflect the personality, values, and identity of Sundanese women through the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant (Yulimarni, 2025).

Table 2. Interpretation of Raspati Dance Makeup Based on Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotics

No	Sign (S)	Object (O)	Interpretan (I)
1.		1. <i>Jeler Paeh</i> Eyebrows: strong character	Reflects a beautiful female figure with determination, courage, and leadership qualities
		2. Dark Brown Eyeshadow: Sharpness of vision and intelligence	Reflects a woman with broad insight, intellectual sensitivity, and readiness to face life’s challenges
		3. Red/Orange Blush: Energy and cheerfulness	Reflects an energetic, optimistic woman and the dynamic nature of women’s roles in daily life
		4. <i>Godeg Eulis</i> : Softness and elegance	Represents a balance between firmness and gentleness, maintaining authority without losing femininity
		5. Red Lipstick: Passion and self-expression	Represents spirit of women’s confidence in expressing ideas, advocating for their



rights, and engaging in
public


Makeup in the Raspati Dance functions not only as a visual enhancement but also as an integral part of the performance's sign system, contributing to the communication of symbolic meaning, the reinforcement of emotional atmosphere, and the clarification of character portrayed by the dancers (Affriani & Kusumastuti, 2025). The interpretation of makeup in the Raspati Dance cannot be separated from the distinctive Sundanese cultural context. The meaning of visual elements such as color and form does not rely solely on conventional symbolic associations, but emerges from a specific and dynamic cultural construction. Makeup features such as bold eyebrows (*jeler paeh*), the emphasis of color around the eyes, and the use of red on the lips not only signify character but also shape an idealized representation of womanhood. This representation depicts a strong and authoritative woman, yet one who remains within the framework of normative feminine aesthetics.

The makeup design applies a character-based style to represent a female figure who is cheerful, intelligent, dynamic, and authoritative, while also demonstrating enthusiasm in every movement (Firdaus, 2018). The emphasis on bold eye and eyebrow makeup reflects a personality that is flexible yet full of energy (Sunaryo et al., 2025). The combination of brown and black tones on the eyelids not only enhances visual appeal but also sharpens facial expression, particularly through the eyes. Meanwhile, touches of pink and orange on the cheeks create a fresh and dynamic impression, and the use of red lipstick reinforces a lively and energetic character. From this perspective, makeup serves not only as an aesthetic element but also as a performative medium that helps shape and reproduce gender identity. Through Peirce's semiotic approach, makeup can be understood as a visual sign that generates meaning through the interaction between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant, as well as a cultural practice that reflects the social values of Sundanese society.

Thus, makeup in the Raspati Dance should not be seen merely as a decorative cosmetic element, but rather as an integral component of the performance's sign system that contributes to the construction of its symbolic narrative. It strengthens the portrayal of character expressed through movement while affirming the representation of Sundanese women as intelligent, resilient, dignified, and capable leaders. Through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic perspective, makeup can be understood as a visual sign that refers to specific character values and is interpreted as a representation of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat as an intelligent, strong, and authoritative Sundanese woman. In this sense, makeup extends beyond aesthetics and plays a significant role in reinforcing symbolic meaning within the performance.

Dance costume, likewise, is not merely a visual element but carries meaning and philosophical values aligned with the theme of the performance (Jumantri & Nugraheni, 2020). Costume plays an important role in affirming identity and clarifying the character portrayed by the dancer (Wijaya, 2025). In the Raspati Dance, costume elements also contain symbolic meanings that represent the character of Sundanese women. Costumes function not simply as visual decoration, but as a crucial component that supports artistic expression, helps the audience follow the narrative, and reflects cultural identity in performance (Sunaryo et al., 2025). These costume elements can be analyzed as a system of signs through Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic framework to uncover the relationship between visual form and symbolic meaning embedded in each component. In the context of the Raspati Dance, each costume element is conceptually designed to align with the creative idea of portraying a Sundanese woman who is intelligent, resilient, and dignified. The selection of form and color strengthens the character expressed through movement while contributing to a unified symbolic meaning within the performance. Therefore, costume functions as a visual medium that helps construct the symbolic narrative, allowing the audience not only to appreciate the aesthetic form but also to understand the cultural message conveyed through the representation of Sundanese women in the Raspati Dance.

Table 3. Interpretation of Raspati Dance Costume Based on Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotics

No	Sign (S)	Object (O)	Interpretan (I)
1.		1. <i>Makuta Gapura</i> : High aspirations and honor	Represents a woman with a strong vision, dignity, and a life oriented toward noble goals
2. <i>Green Soder</i> : Energy, life, and well-being		Symbolizes women’s role as drivers of life who bring balance, harmony, and prosperity to society	
3. <i>Kewer</i> : Protection of honor and ethics		Reflects politeness, moral values, and the identity of Sundanese women who uphold dignity and social norms	
4. <i>Rawis</i> : Humility		Represents a humble attitude despite high status or ability, illustrated by the downward-hanging position of the <i>rawis</i>	
5. <i>Gold Brocade</i> : Elegance, beauty, and nobility		Reflects women’s nobility, seen not only in appearance but also in intellectual and moral qualities	

The signs embedded in the costume elements of the Raspati Dance can be understood as part of a visual sign system that carries symbolic meanings closely related to the concept underlying the creation of the dance. The colors of the costume serve not merely aesthetic purposes but also emphasize character and identity through their psychological and cultural meanings (Sunaryo et al., 2025). The costume in the Raspati Dance is predominantly gold, symbolizing vitality, energy, and the elegance of Sundanese women. The meanings conveyed through each element of makeup and costume represent Raden Ayu Lasminingrat as a Sundanese female figure who played a significant role in education, particularly in empowering women to achieve equality with men (interview, February 21, 2026).

Based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework, both makeup and costume in the Raspati Dance function as a system of signs that reflects the character of Sundanese women as strong, intelligent, and respected, extending beyond their aesthetic role in performance (Syafei et al., 2017). Each element of makeup, such as defined eyebrows, eye makeup, and color selection, establishes a relationship between sign, object, and interpretant that produces specific symbolic meanings. Through this process of semiosis, makeup becomes a visual medium that reinforces the representation of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat as portrayed in the Raspati Dance.

This study effectively uncovers the profound meanings associated with the movement, makeup, and costume of the Raspati Dance by employing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach as a thorough analytical framework. The findings show that all elements of the Raspati Dance collectively construct a cohesive symbolic narrative of women's struggle and leadership. Movement is not merely understood as physical expression but also embodies ideological values related to perseverance, intelligence, and an orientation toward education. Meanwhile, makeup and costume strengthen the visual dimension, supporting character formation and affirming the identity of the figure represented. Thus, the Raspati Dance can be understood as a system of cultural signs that not only presents aesthetic beauty but also conveys messages reflecting social ethics and the cultural identity of Sundanese society, particularly in relation to the role of women in education and social life.

This representation is particularly relevant when considered in relation to Raden Ayu Lasminingrat. As one of the pioneers of women's education in the Sundanese region, Lasminingrat is known for her tenacity, courage, and independence in advocating for women's access to education during the colonial era. She rejected the notion that women belonged solely in the domestic sphere and proved that women possess intellectual capacity and play an important role in the social life of the community. It is this spirit that is reflected in the Raspati Dance. The powerful and confident movements in the Raspati Dance can be interpreted as a representation of Lasminingrat's struggle to break through the social barriers that confined women. Meanwhile, the use of dance attributes and props serves as a marker of women's identity one that is not only graceful but also embodies a fighting spirit and the ability to actively contribute in the public sphere. Thus, the Raspati Dance is not merely a display of aesthetic movement but also presents a discourse on women's emancipation, equality, and empowerment that aligns with the values of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat's struggle.

The portrayal of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat in the Raspati Dance as an ideal woman intelligent, graceful, and assertive can be interpreted as a form of recognition of women's roles in education and leadership. This portrayal can also reinforce normative constructions of femininity, positioning the female body not merely as an object of representation but as an active subject that generates meaning (Sains & Dinata, 2025). Thus, Raspati dance not only presents images of women but also shapes social and cultural perceptions.

Consequently, the semiotic analysis in this study goes beyond a purely symbolic reading and opens up space for understanding the relationship between aesthetics, power, and gender representation in the context of dance performance.

Peirce's semiotic approach in this study reveals that the process of semiosis unfolds dynamically and open-endedly, thereby producing meanings that are not monolithic. This meaning continues to evolve through the interaction between the choreographer, the dancers, and the audience across various cultural contexts. Therefore, the Raspati Dance not only presents aesthetic beauty but also functions as a medium for cultural reflection that contains narratives about women, education, and the dynamics of identity within Sundanese society, while simultaneously providing a space for critical readings of the constructions of meaning it produces.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Raspati Dance at Sanggar Galura Kencana in Garut Regency contains an integrated system of signs manifested in its choreography, movement, makeup, and costume. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, each element of the dance can be understood through a triadic relationship that constructs symbolic meaning. The movement elements of the Raspati Dance do not merely function aesthetically, but also embody values of struggle, perseverance, discipline, and leadership expressed through the dancers' movements. Meanwhile, makeup and costume reinforce the visual character of Sundanese women as intelligent, graceful, and dignified.

The symbolic meanings embedded in the Raspati Dance reflect the figure of Raden Ayu Lasminingrat as a woman who played an important role in education and social life. Therefore, dance is not merely a form of stage entertainment, but also a cultural medium for conveying moral values, knowledge, and social relations, particularly in relation to women's roles in building an educated and value-driven society. In this sense, the Raspati Dance expresses how artistic creativity and symbolic meanings connect within Sundanese cultural values.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of performance semiotics by demonstrating that Pierce's triadic model can be effectively used to uncover the meanings embedded in the verbal and nonverbal elements of a traditional dance. These findings enrich our understanding of dance as a cultural communication system rich in symbolic messages and social values. Methodologically, this study demonstrates that Pierce's semiotic approach can serve as a comprehensive analytical framework for examining the relationships between movement, makeup, costumes, and the underlying cultural context.

In practical terms, the results of this study can serve as a reference for efforts to preserve traditional dance, develop arts and cultural education, and strengthen local cultural identity through the symbolic meanings contained in dance works. For future research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study of other Sundanese dances featuring female characters, as well as an analysis of audience reception of the symbolic meanings in the Raspati Dance.

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