



## The Symbolic Meaning, Educational Value of the Offering Dance in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands in the Semiotic Perspective of Roland Barthes

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### **Abstract**

The word offering contains the exact same meaning as the word, namely as an offering for the guests present. This dance has become an iconic tradition of the Malay community, especially Riau and the Riau Islands because the dance is always displayed as the opening of the event. Persembahan Dance is a characteristic as well as an identity of the Malay community that is friendly to others. Based on the results of the research, it can be obtained: 1) The form of Presentation of Offering Dance includes movement, floor patterns, makeup and clothing, props and accompanying music, 2) The symbolic meaning contained in the dance composition is: (a) upholding tepak movement: maintaining each other's speech and manners, (b) the movement of the sapudi footprint: humble attitude, (c) open greeting movement: must respect each other, (d) areca nut movement: easily accept the presence of the outside world, (e) puteri movement: elegance, beauty and gentleness of Malay women, (f) pancung sauk movement: we must be careful in our actions and words, (g) intersection of open attitudes, (h) twin picking movements: everything that is well cared for will continue to be preserved in its authenticity, (i) the movement of the state fence: very protective of its customs and culture, (j) the movement of the beni series: having a sense of "Shame", (k) the movement of closing greetings: never forget the customs. (l) Junjung Tepak Floor Pattern: If we fellow humans must be kind, (m) Jermal Buka pattern: an open attitude of Malay culture towards every culture that comes from outside, (n) Kite Pattern: never forget their identity and cultural customs, (o) Padjung Tepak Floor Pattern: reject other cultures if they feel that they are not in the same direction or if they are betrayed. (p) twin dome floor pattern: maintaining the rules in the custom, (q) closing greeting floor pattern: having a very open principle, (r) the accompanying music of the Offering Dance, namely the violin, bebano and accordion, (s) the makeup using realistic makeup that increases the beauty and elegance of the dancers, (t) the fashion of the Offering Dance using a kebaya lapuh made of songket weaving. (v) dance property: Tepak Sirih. (3) The educational values contained in the Offering Dance in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands (a) aesthetic value, (b) religious value, (c) cultural value, (d) value of mutual respect and respect, (e) value of responsibility, (f) value of mutual cooperation.

**Keywords:** *Symbolic Meaning; Educational Value; Dance Offering*

## ***Introduction***

The betel nut eating dance is the opening in every Malay community event, this dance has a distinctive characteristic, namely one of the dancers brings a tepak containing betel nut that will be served to guests as respect. Overall, the movements in this dance are gentle movements, therefore the dancers in the offering use female dancers and the basic movement used in the Offering Dance is the movement of the nine broken lenggang, (Dawood, 2006:606). Malay dance always glorifies politeness and decency, this can be seen from the movements of the dancers who are not in contact with those who are not mahrams or dance partners. Female dancers are required to wear a scarf even if it is only placed on the shoulders or wrapped around the waist.

For the Malay community, betel is not just an ordinary leaf, but is considered an adhesive medium in society. In the past, the king would be angry if there were guests who did not eat the betel nut that had been served because it was considered disrespectful and disrespectful to the host. This dance has been around for a very long time and is still often performed at every major event in Natuna Regency until now.

It is unfortunate that there are still many Malay people who do not know the symbolic meaning of the dance. Symbols are known by other terms, namely signs and signals. A sign is anything in which the subject informs the object in such a way that the object is aware of it, whereas a sign is an object or state that explains or informs the object or subject. This was expressed by Wibisono (in Agustianto, 2011: 2-3), that the relationship between symbols and objects is not as easy as the relationship between the sign object and itself, but there is a basic need for symbolization.

In human life, it is always related to symbols or signs both in communication and movement, just as humans must have intermediaries, namely schemes and symbols. Schemas contain images of direct understanding in a demon-strative manner, while symbols contain images indirectly or using analogies. Symbols will always exist in human life, so interpretation is needed. (Kant, 1974:59).

## ***Research Methods***

This research is a qualitative research. The results of qualitative research emphasize more on understanding meaning and constructing phenomena than generalizations. (Sugiyono, 2019:26). Qualitative research describes objects that are relevant to the existing phenomenon or problem. This study uses a descriptive method as in the method used to obtain the data needed by the researcher in the research process in the form of words or pictures, so that it does not emphasize numbers.

## ***Discussion and Results***

### **A. Forms of Dance Presentation**

Performing dance is a classical traditional dance in the Riau and Riau Islands districts. This dance was formerly known as "Betel Eating Dance" the philosophy of the name of the dance because at the end of this dance the guests are welcome to eat the betel that has been served in the tepak performed by one of the dancers, if there are guests who cannot eat the betel nut then it is recommended to tear a little betel nut that has been served because if the guests do not take or tear the betel nut it is considered disrespectful and disrespectful to the host.

This dance was created in 1957 in Pekanbaru, Riau by OK Nizamil Jamil and his peers, Alm. Johan Syarifudin with the name "Dancing Eating Betels". This dance was created because of the inspiration from the artists to welcome the royal guests to be more attractive and not seem monotonous.

At the beginning of the creation of the dance, it was danced by couples, but what has become a commonality in the dance until now is that one of the dancers carries a betel nut.

Humans and change will always go hand in hand, therefore there is a saying that says everyone has a time and every time has a person. Changes made to obtain something more creative and better than the previous one and present something new without eliminating the taste that has been formed. As in this dance, there was also a change in 1983 made by the creator of this dance and other artists to the name of this dance which was originally "Makan Sirih Dance" to "Offering Dance". The changes that occur are because this dance is always performed as an offering to the elderly or majestic guests and there is some movement development and refinement of the movements without changing the basic movements in this dance.

Based on a joint agreement made by the Tourism and Culture Office and senior artists in the Riau Islands in the process of making movement motifs so that it becomes a complete choreography in the Offering Dance. The movement of the Offering Dance rests on the movement of the hands and feet called the "broken nine" movement and the number of dancers must be odd such as 5, 7, 9 or more because one of the dancers is carrying a betel nut with a position in front. After the implementation of the Offering Dance, there are already rules in the performance both in terms of the form of presentation and a variety of movements consisting of eleven types of movements, namely the variety of *junjung tepak*, *tapak sapudi*, *Salam Open*, *Racik Pinang*, *Variety of Puteri*, *Variety of intersectional steps*, *Variety of Sauk*, *Variety of twin picks*, *Variety of fences of the country*, *Variety of beni series* and *Variety of Salam Close*. The fashion used is a *kebaya lauh* complete with supporting accessories such as sunpoles, brooches/necklaces, *jurai* and *pending* and the makeup used on the dancers is realistic makeup which in this makeup functions to increase beauty and highlight beautiful facial features and disguise or cover parts of the face that are considered less than perfect. The performance stage is the place where the performance takes place, which on the stage as a determinant of success in the work and the comfort and safety of the audience can also help in the success of the work. In dance, the performance stage uses the type of arena or proscenium, closed stage, open stage or field.

## **B. Symbolic Meaning in Offering Dance**

### **1. Meaning of Variety of Motion**

Dance movement is one of the media to communicate through movement, the choreographer can express the emotions he feels in his work so that the meaning or message of the dance is conveyed to the audience. In a work of art, be it form, theater, music and dance, there must be a meaning that the artist wants to convey and the beauty of dance also lies in the satisfaction, happiness and emotion felt by choreographers, dancers, and audiences. The following is the meaning of the variety of dance movements in the Offering dance:

#### **a. Variety of Movements of *Junjung Tepak***

The variety of movements of *upholding tepak* is the first movement in this dance where the dancer enters the stage arena while singing to the corner of the stage with the position of the left hand on the left side like a wing, then the position of the right hand is in front of the chest and the dancer who carries the *tepak* is in the front position while carrying the *tepak* with the body upright and the direction of the face facing forward, then the betel nut is lifted upwards following the dancer's music. The denotation of the meaning of the movement is to symbolize the host who wants to open the door to welcome guests and *tepak betel* is also interpreted as an opening word in every event.



Picture 1. Variety of Motion Junjung Tepak

The connotation of meaning in this gesture of upholding tepak is to symbolize the meaning of the warmth and hospitality of the Malay community towards the guests who come to visit. As the Malay community is very well known for its friendly attitude and manners. For the host, the guest is the king who we must serve and be entertained with the best of our ability, as well as if we want to guest at someone else's house, we must be an ethical and civilized guest.

The myth of the Junjung Tepak movement is to describe the philosophy of human life in speech, manners and manners. In life, we as human beings must take care of each other's speech and manners, this is also expressed by the Malay proverb "Because of the mouth, the body is destroyed" which means because of our words we will get something that turns over to ourselves, if we say good then good things will come but if the words are bad, bad things will also befall us.

#### b. Variety of Sweep Site Movements

In the variety of broom tread, the dancer's right foot steps crosswise forward, while the left leg crosses backwards and the position of the right hand is raised upwards and the left hand is in front of the chest. The position of the body is slightly tilted forward, the position of the head is parallel to the body line so that it is slightly lowered when walking forward. The denotation of meaning in this movement is the host who invites guests to enter the house.



Picture 2. Variety of Motion Sapudi Site

The connotation of the meaning of the sweep site movement symbolizes that the Malay people have a humble and respectful attitude, and always want to give the best to the guests who come. As human beings, we must have a sense of humility so that there is no selfishness in us that can cause damage to the heart, and we must respect each other so that we are also appreciated by others.

The myth of this movement describes the philosophy of rice which the more it contains, the more it ducks. Similarly, in life, we should not be arrogant about the material (wealth) and knowledge that we have because all of it is only entrusted to us by Allah SWT, in fact, if we have more wealth and enough knowledge then we share it with others it makes us a person who is grateful for the blessings of Allah SWT.

### c. Variety of Movements of Opening Greetings

In the variety of open greetings, the dancer's hands stretch to the left and right sides of the bottom until they touch the floor/ground, the position of the face faces to the right, then follow the direction of the hand movement forward and look down. The denotation of this gesture is to symbolize greeting the guests who come.



Picture 3. Variety of Movements of Opening Greetings

The connotation in this movement symbolizes that the Malay community has a respectful and gentle attitude. The Malay community is very respectful of the guests who visit by presenting *tepak betel* and its contents which symbolizes that the host warmly welcomes the arrival.

The myth of this movement is that it symbolizes the philosophy of life in society must respect each other, give greetings when entering the house or meeting other people, with mutual respect we will not hurt each other's feelings, both from words and deeds.

### d. Variety of Betel Nut Recipe

The position of the dancer's right hand face down touching the floor is like taking chalk, while the left hand is in a position to lie on his back like a betel leaf that will be smeared with lime. Then the position of the two hands contracting up and down like folding betel and betel nut ready to be served to guests, this becomes a denotation of meaning.



Picture 4. Variety of Betel Nut Recipe

The connotation of the meaning of this movement symbolizes that the cultural attitude of the Malay community is always open to foreign cultures that enter. The Malay community highly appreciates the foreign culture that enters their area but never forgets their own culture, even the Malay community always develops culture so that it is not outdated and increasingly modern.

The myth of this movement symbolizes that the Malay community is happy to accept the presence of foreign cultures, which causes many ethnic groups to come, blend, and integrate for generations and give birth to a pluralistic society.

#### e. Variety of Puteri Movements

The position of the dancer is half standing using his knees followed by his hands Riding while going up, then count 4 right hands cross-piercing the left hand with the position of the body following the hand movements, then both hands are stretched to the side and the direction of view is facing the right hand. The denotation of meaning in this movement symbolizes presenting the betel nut that has been prepared to the guests.



Picture 5. Variety of Puteri Movements

The connotation of the meaning of this movement symbolizes the elegance, beauty and gentleness of Malay women when welcoming guests full of smiles and joy. The beauty of Malay women can be seen from their beautiful faces even without polish makeup, good words that are assembled through good and polite language, maintaining elegance by maintaining her trust in God by covering her aurat with a shawl or veil.

The myth of the movement symbolizes that serving betel leaves to guests is a custom carried out by the Malay community as a form of respect for guests who come to visit. The Malay community uses betel leaf as a medium for communication or establishing friendship between others.

#### f. Variety of Sauk Bow Movements

The dancer spreads both hands then the right hand moves to touch the left hand which is repeated 2 times and followed by the movement of the right leg which is crossed in front of the left leg, then pulled back with the position of the right hand swinging up and the left hand swinging in front of the chest and the position of the right leg tiptoe while the position of the left leg is bent. This is a denotation of meaning.



Picture 6. Variety of Motion Pancung Sauk

The connotation of the meaning of this movement symbolizes that a person must have a sense of responsibility for themselves and others, as the saying KH. Bachtiar Ahmad said "the hand tightens the shoulder to carry" which means that whoever does it is responsible and the problem must be solved wisely so as not to cause new problems. The myth of this movement reflects the law of sowing the harvest where we must be careful in our actions and words because whatever we do to others, it will turn against us.

#### g. Variety of Sympathy Movements

The dancer steps sideways with the position of the right leg crossed in front of the left leg, followed by the movement of the right hand plucking in front of the chest and brought back, the next movement is the right hand piercing the left hand and being pulled to the side of the waist then pushed up and the right hand is pulled back to the side of the waist with the position of the body facing forward and the legs moving back and forth following the movement of the hand. The denotation of meaning in this movement is to take the good and discard the bad.



Picture 7. Variety of Motion Steps of Simpang

The connotation of meaning contained in the intersection step is that it has the meaning that the Malay community always selects all influences that come from outside so that unwanted things do not happen. The selective attitude that the Malay community has is to maintain its own culture so that it is not lost to the times.

This dance myth symbolizes that the openness of the Malay community must also be balanced by sorting out everything that can have an influence on the Malay environment, if it is good, it will be well accepted and if it is bad, it must be discarded. This can help in the development of the Malay community, especially in Malay dance art, so that it continues to preserve its regional culture and dance by following the times without eliminating its traditions

#### h. Variety of Twin Picks

This variety of movements begins with the right hand movement in the upper hand with the body position lowered and tilted according to the direction of hand movement and the direction of the dancer's view looking at the hand that is below and vice versa in the left hand such as picking or taking. This is a denotation of meaning.



Picture 8. Variety of Motion Pick Twins

The connotation of the meaning contained in this movement is how the Malay community maintains culture so that it remains sustainable and does not become extinct by the times. This is done so that the next generation can continue to witness and take part in preserving their culture in the future.

The myth in this movement is that everything that is well cared for will continue to be maintained in its authenticity, even though there has been a development in terms of movement, makeup and



clothing, but this is also seen from the rules that have been set so that it does not change the value of the dance but can add a more elegant and attractive impression than before.

#### i. Variety of Movement of the State Fence

The dancer walks in unison with his hands from below then rises up until he is parallel to the chest, then both hands form a semicircle from left to right in front of the chest and are uncovered. The denotation of meaning in this movement is like making a fence or wall as a self-defense from outside things.



Picture 9. Variety of Motion State Fence

The connotation of meaning in this movement symbolizes that the Malay community will clean itself from factors that can damage the culture that has been maintained so far. For the Malay community, customs and culture are an important part of life, because customs and culture are self-identity.

The myth of this movement is that it symbolizes that the Malay community is very protective of their customs and culture because for them it is a set of values and rules and habits that grow, develop, be recognized, lived and practiced from generation to generation. Customs and culture for the Malay community can make a considerable contribution to the survival of society, nation and state

#### j. Variety of Beni Series Movements

In the beni series, the movement of the right hand piercing the left hand while crossing the right leg in front of the left leg, the next movement of both hands contracting to the waist and flapping the wings to the right side with the position of the left hand swinging in front of the chest and the right hand on the right side. Then rotate and perform the same movement.



Picture 10. Variety of Motion Beni Series

The connotation of meaning in the various movements of Seri Beni symbolizes the foundation of life for the Malay community, where the Malay community highly upholds customs, culture and basic religious values so that the Malays are identified with Islam. Islam as a belief system is the foundation for a Malay outlook on life with personality.

The myth of the various movements of the beni series symbolizes that the basis of Malay people's behavior is to have a sense of "Siri". The word siri is not just about covering oneself or aurat wearing good and polite clothes but the word series is a benchmark for the Malay community.

#### i. Variety of Closing Greetings

The dancer walks forward with his right hand Ngerayung above and the left hand of the singer in front of the chest then both hands form a semicircle from each side until it closes tightly towards the front. The denotation of the meaning of this movement is the last gesture of respect.



Picture 11. Variety of Closing Greetings

The connotation of meaning in this movement reflects gratitude for his visit and hopes to come back to visit. The Malay community is very happy and proud if people are welcomed, accept it well and feel happy, it means that what they do to welcome guests is not in vain.

The myth here contains the meaning that no matter how far we go/migrate, we always adhere to our customs such as the saying "Where the Earth is in the Footing, there the Sky is in Junjung" which means we must appreciate the culture in a new place but we must not forget our own customs and culture.

### **C. Educational value in Offering Dance in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands**

Offering Dance has values that have a great influence on the survival of society. The following are the values found in the Offering Dance in Natuna City, Riau Islands:

#### **1. Educational Value on Variety of Dance Performances**

##### **a. Aesthetic Value**

All the beauty that exists in a dance using the sense of sight, it can be seen in terms of dance movements, makeup and clothing as well as dance accompaniment. The aesthetic value of the offering dance movements is by displaying graceful, gentle dance movements and slow tempos. This is found in every variety of Offering dance movements. This makes this dance more elegant.

##### **b. Religious Values**

Religious values are religious beliefs and acts of gratitude to God Almighty and are generally associated with religious ideals. There are several ways in which a person's religiosity adds value to their life. When a person engages in certain behaviors (such as worship), as well as other actions that are driven by supernatural forces, many things happen. Based on the results of interviews about the Offering dance has religious value, it can be seen from the variety of movements of the opening and closing greetings where in this variety of movements pay homage to the grand guests who come, it symbolizes respect and courtesy when welcoming guests.

##### **c. Cultural Values**

Cultural values are something in the form of values that have been embedded and agreed upon by the community in the form of habits as a form of behavior and response to a situation that has or has not occurred. In the past, this dance was only performed to welcome Agung or honored guests, while at this time this dance has been performed in cultural events and ordinary folk weddings. Judging from the results of the interview, cultural values can also be seen from the variety of betel nut movements in which the dancer concocts betel nut and other spices to be applied to betel nut and then served to the grand guest, as is usually done by the Malay community, namely eating betel nut for themselves and for guests.

##### **d. The value of Mutual Respect and Respect**

Mutual respect means acknowledging the existence and rights of each individual in living their lives. Everyone certainly has different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs, but we as humans must respect each other and must respect each other by accepting these differences. Judging from the results of interviews with the interviewees that the Offering Dance has the value of mutual respect and respect for others, it is found in a variety of opening greetings that symbolize the philosophy of life in society must respect each other, give greetings when entering the house or meeting other people.

##### **e. Responsibility Value**

A person's attitude and behavior to carry out duties and obligations that should be done both

towards themselves, society, the environment (natural, social and cultural), the country and God Almighty. Based on the interviews conducted at the time of the study, there is a value of responsibility for the variety of movements Pancung Sauk which in this variety of movements has the meaning that a Malay person is able to take responsibility for himself or herself as well as the mandate that has been given by others.

## 2. Educational Value on Offering Dance Floor Patterns

The religious value of religious beliefs and acts of gratitude to God are generally associated with religious ideals. There are several ways in which a person's religiosity adds value to their life. The difference is not only when a person performs an act (worship), but also when they perform other activities that are encouraged by supernatural forces. Based on an interview with the main speaker, it was explained that the pattern of the twin dome floors is shaped like a mosque dome which symbolizes the strengthening of Islamic influence in Malay culture. This special feature of Islam can be unraveled and studied through the rules and rulings that have been outlined by Allah swt and applied according to the sunnah and hadith of the Prophet (saw). Simply put, humans really need religion and a handle. In simple words, human beings need Islamic education and moral guidance so that they can form their humanity and play the role of those who are appointed by Allah swt as caliphs on this earth.

## 3. Educational Value on the Number of Dance Dancers Performed

Social values, attitudes and mutual cooperation behaviors are a reflection of social values that prioritize group life. In addition, mutual cooperation, especially in rural areas, is claimed to have united the community. Based on the results of the interview, data on the social value of Offering Dance can be seen in the combination between dancers and musicians where these two things collaborate, support each other and are compact during the performance. The harmony of the collaboration makes the dance even more interesting to watch.

## 4. Educational Value in Makeup and Costume Dance Offerings

Based on the results of the interviews conducted on the educational values contained in makeup and fashion, namely:

### a. Aesthetic Value

Beauty in dance can also be seen from makeup and fashion which is also a supporting element in a dance to look more attractive and beautiful.

- 1) The aesthetic value of makeup is by displaying realist or beautiful makeup used by dancers. For women, appearance is the main thing, if they look beautiful and good, then other people who see them also feel happy.
- 2) The aesthetic value of the performance dance costume is to wear luxurious clothes with nuances like royalty with accessories such as scarves, necklaces/brooches, crowns, pending or golden belts.

## ***Conclusion and Suggestions***

Based on the results and discussions that have been discussed, it can be concluded that the Offering Dance is a welcoming dance intended to welcome the Grand guests. Based on the name of this dance, of course, this dance presents betel nut to guests to be eaten or torn a little as a sign of appreciation for the welcome and this dance is also an icon of the Malay community because the dance is always displayed.

The overall meaning of the Offering Dance performance is a symbol of the Malay community's view of life in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands. One of them is the areca nut movement which is a symbolic meaning of the cultural attitude possessed by the Malay community which is always open to outside culture that enters the local area.

The educational value contained in the Offering Dance is the aesthetic value seen from movement, makeup and fashion. Religious value is found in the opening and closing salutations as in these movements such as giving respect, then the *seri beni* movement which symbolizes that the Malay community has a sense of "siri" or shame, as in Islam, especially for women, they should have shame both towards themselves and others. The twin dome floor pattern is also included in religious values; this can be seen from the dancer formation which is shaped like a mosque dome that reflects Islam. Social value can be seen from the collaboration, mutual respect and cohesiveness that exists between dancers and musicians in order to make the performance a success.

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