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Semiotics of the *Keris Srie Radja* at the Makam Panjang in Karawang, West Java

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the *Keris Srie Radja* from Karawang, West Java. A qualitative research approach was applied to collect data through observation, interviews, literature reviews, and studies. Data analysis was conducted using Peirce's semiotic approach. The research findings indicate that the *Keris Srie Radja* in Karawang consists of three parts. Viewed from the perspective of signs, symbols, and meanings, it represents a royal heirloom as a leader. In terms of the signs, the *Keris Srie Radja* has a form resembling a living creature divided into three parts: the *hulu* (hilt/head), the *bilah* (blade/body), and the *warangka* (scabbard/clothing). The hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* features an icon of a lion, symbolising strength and embodying the authority of a king. The shape of the three-curved blade is a legisign, referring to an icon of a mountain, which carries the meaning of life: *Srie* (sustenance), *lungguh* (position), and *dunya* (worldly existence). The scabbard of the *Keris* is conical, with a wavy top, symbolising the protection of the king, representing the safeguarding of the entire nation. From a semiotic perspective, the *Keris Srie Radja* in Karawang embodies values of life, specifically depicting the characteristics of a decisive and authoritative leader—one who can provide welfare for their people.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of kingdoms, the *Keris* was used by kings as a symbol of power (Harsrinuksmo, 2011, p. 12). During coronation ceremonies, the king was presented with a *Keris* by the previous ruler. The presentation of the *Keris* at the coronation symbolised the transfer of state responsibilities to the heir to the throne. Only upon receiving the *Keris* was the king's authority considered legitimate according to royal law. As stated by Yuwono and Zon (2016, p. ix), the *Keris* served as a symbol of the ruler and the aristocracy in the royal courts. According to Soedarsono (1990, p. 71), the *Keris* was one of the sacred heirlooms of Javanese kings, believed to be imbued with spiritual power, and served to legitimise royal authority. The *Keris Pusaka* (sacred heirloom *Keris*) as a symbol of royal heritage remains preserved in palaces, sultanates, and can be found in museums or historical sites today. Moreover, the *Keris* plays a significant role in the history of metallurgical craftsmanship (Handriyotopo & Simatupang, 2018, p. 77). It is a subject of interest due to its form, symbolic meaning, and the cultural values it embodies.

Siswanto (2012) researched the structure, symbols, and meaning of the Javanese *Keris* and its relevance to national morality. The results of the study indicate that, symbolically, the ancestors of the Javanese people imparted various moral teachings through the *Keris*, including: (1) lessons on religiosity and the awareness of human limitations, (2) teachings on modesty and avoiding arrogance, (3) teachings on living harmoniously with nature, (4) guidance on coexisting peacefully with others, and (5) principles of dynamism in life. Haryogurito (2006) examined the *Keris* of Java, focusing on the mystical and rational aspects. His findings describe the philosophy behind the shape of the *Keris*, with each design having an odd number of curves. This relates to the Javanese philosophy that tasks should not be done halfway but should be completed fully and perfectly, as we are responsible for making things whole. Supriaswoto (2016) investigated the tradition of *Keris*-making in the village of Ngentha-entha, Yogyakarta. His research details the *Keris*-making process, starting from the preparatory rituals, through iron processing and forging, to the crafting of the *hulu* (hilt) and *warangka* (scabbard). Neka & Yuwono (2010) examined the Bali *Keris*. Their findings describe four types of Bali *Keris*: the *Keris dhapur berlekuk* (curved), the straight *Keris dhapur lajer*, the sword-shaped *Keris*, and the *Keris dhapur mixed*, a hybrid between the sword-shaped and *luk* (curved) *Keris*.

Previous researchers have contributed to uncovering the history, production, meaning, and symbolism of the *Keris*. Their studies were conducted in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Bali, and Sumatra. Only one study has been conducted in West Java, specifically examining the meaning and symbolism of the *Keris* at the Makam Panjang in Karawang. From a historical context, Karawang was part of the Tarumanegara Kingdom, but after its fall, control was taken over by the Sunda Kingdom (Lubis, 2011, p. 11). Additionally, Karawang holds historical significance as a gathering place for princes and warriors from across the archipelago, in connection with the wars against the Dutch in Batavia (Rahman, 2016). However, the princes who fought the Dutch were ultimately defeated and retreated to Karawang. To erase their traces, they buried their war heirlooms, including *Keris*. The number of heirlooms was significant, and the burial site was elongated, which led to the name Makam Panjang Karawang (the Long Tomb of Karawang). It is at this site that the royal princes left behind their heirloom *Keris*, which are now preserved at the Makam Panjang Karawang site.

Rahman (2016) reported that the *Keris* found at the Makam Panjang Karawang comes in both *leres* (straight) and *luk* (wavy) forms. The straight *Keris* symbolises piety, while the *luk Keris* has a distinctive form compared to other heirloom *Keris*, which are typically flat. The *Keris* at the Makam Panjang has a thicker and uneven texture. This is believed to be a replica of the royal heirloom *Keris* that were buried, with Gede, who has a lineage connected to the prince who fought in Batavia, crafting the *Keris* replica using non-pure metal materials. The *luk Keris* holds meaning according to the identity of its owner. Rahman & Masunah (2019) further analysed the number of curves (*luk*) on the *Keris* and their relation to an individual's identity or rank within the kingdom. For instance, a *Keris* with 3 curves is worn by the King, a *Keris* with 5 curves is used by the Patih (chief minister), and a *Keris* with 7 curves is for the *Mahapatih* (grand vizier). A *Keris* with 9 curves is carried by the *Arya* (a noble title), while a *Keris* with 12 curves is used by the *Elang* (an esteemed title or high-ranking figure).

The number of *luk* (curves) and the identity of the wearer are interesting to explore further from the semiotic perspective introduced by Peirce. Peirce's semiotics involves three key elements, known as the triadic model or trichotomy: sign, object, and interpretant (Atkin, 2023). The *Keris* is the object, which contains signs or symbols. The relationship between the sign and the object can be interpreted to form symbols and meanings. Among the various *Keris* found at the Makam Panjang Karawang, this paper will focus on one specific type of *Keris*, the *Srie Radja*, which features 3 *luk*.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the findings of research on the *Keris* known as *Srie Radja* at the historical site of Makam Panjang in Karawang. This is significant because the *Keris Srie Radja* has a distinct form compared to other heirloom *Keris*, particularly in that the hilt features an animal-shaped icon, whereas other *Keris* typically resemble human forms. Additionally, the signs on the *Keris* contain norms or values associated with events in society. The relationship between signs, as a result of social consensus, is referred to as a symbol (Kaelan, 2017, p. 197). This study focuses on one main question: how do the signs that constitute the *Keris Srie Radja* in Karawang manifest from the perspective of Peirce's semiotics?

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to obtain comprehensive data regarding the signs, symbols, and meanings of the *Keris Srie Radja*. According to Cresswell (2014, p. 8), a qualitative approach falls within the constructivist paradigm. The method used in this study is descriptive analysis. Maleong (2010, p. 11) defines descriptive methods as research methods where the data is presented in sentences or images rather than in numerical form. In this research, the descriptive method is utilised to uncover the hidden knowledge associated with the *Keris Srie Radja* located at the Makam Panjang Karawang site.

The Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) fifth edition (Badan Pengembangan Bahasa dan Perbukuan Kemendikbud RI, 2016) explains that the term "*Srie*" is an honorary title for a king or noble, while "*Radja*" means the highest ruler in the kingdom. Therefore, the name *Keris Srie Radja* translates to "the *Keris* belonging to the noble highest ruler in the kingdom." The honorary titles of kings are often used as names for *Keris*, as the *Keris Srie Radja* is interpreted to embody state responsibilities for the king in each of its curves.

Data collection was conducted through interviews with community figures, specifically Gede and Aripin, who are custodians of the *Keris* with lineage connected to the royal family

at the Makam Panjang Karawang site. Observations were made regarding the object through the elements of fine arts that manifest the signs and represent specific icons. Data collection also included documentation studies and literature reviews. Interpretation of the data was conducted using Peirce's semiotic approach, relating the signs on the *Keris* to form a comprehensive meaning of its shape.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this article, the *Keris Srie Radja* is examined from the perspective of Peirce's semiotics, which includes sign or signs, object, and interpretant (interpretation) (Atkin, 2023). When considering the signs in the *Keris* from the field of fine arts, there are artistic elements that constitute these signs. According to Kartika and Perwira (2004, pp. 100-112), the elements of fine arts include shape, line, space, texture, and colour. However, Pamadhi (2012, pp. 44-47) states that to identify visual elements, one can consider contour, content, and context. Contour relates to the elements of shape, space, line, texture, and colour, while content refers to the meaning or essence contained within the contour. Context relates to the background that shapes the contour. Based on these two perspectives of fine arts, the author will use the elements of fine arts—shape, space, line, colour, and texture—to describe and analyse the signs present in the *Keris Srie Radja*. Thus, these signs will manifest through the elements of fine arts, such as shape, space, line, colour, and texture, transforming into an object. The signs and objects are situated within the *Keris Srie Radja*, which will be described in terms of its three parts: the hilt, blade, and scabbard. The hilt or head is the part of the *Keris* that is held, the blade is the body of the *Keris*, and the scabbard or *warangka* serves as a protective covering for the blade. The description of the signs will also be analysed based on the classifications established by Peirce (Kaelan, 2017, p. 196), which refer to specific references known as qualisign, sinsign, legisign, symbol, and argument. Qualisign refers to the quality of the sign, sinsign pertains to the actual object or event represented by the sign, and legisign represents the norms contained within the sign. Additionally, the signs in the object will be interpreted based on symbol and argument.

– *Hulu Keris Srie Radja*.



Figure 1. The Shape of the Hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* from the Right Side.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022).

Figure 1 displays the signs represented by the shape of the hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* can be observed from the side view at the back. This hilt is believed to be a replica of the original *Keris Srie Radja* hilt. The hilt is designed in the form of a lion's head, which has undergone modifications; the lion's head on the *Keris Srie Radja* is depicted in a slimmer form, with the ears appearing smaller and more pointed, yet it retains the essence of its original shape. When considering the midline, the shape of the *Keris* head tilts slightly to the left, indicating that the design of the *Keris Srie Radja* head appears heavier on the left side compared to the right side. From a semiotic perspective according to Peirce, the lion's head on the *Keris Srie Radja* is classified as a sinsign, as Huda (2010, p. 61) states that the use of animal forms in the head of the *Keris Srie Radja* is rooted in humanity's admiration for the characteristics of a lion.

The line elements on the head of the *Keris Srie Radja* are evident in the varying intensity of colours between the body and the head of the *Keris*, which form a circle. The most prominent line elements are found in the lion's mouth at the upper and lower sides, creating a diagonal line that tilts to the right, while the lower side of the lion's mouth forms a horizontal line. The front of the lion's mouth is depicted as open, measuring 2 cm wide, whereas the back of the lion's mouth is represented as a pointed line measuring 0.4 mm. In addition to the mouth, line elements are also present in the upper lion's teeth, forming a zig-zag pattern. There are four canine teeth—two on the top and two on the bottom—as well as two ears, one on the left and one on the right. The diagonal line is positioned at the upper side of the lion's mouth. According to Hendriyana (2019, p. 137), this lion's mouth conveys a sense of "dynamism and movement," while the horizontal line at the bottom of the lion's mouth provides a sense of calmness and peace. The impressions conveyed by these two lines are of a *legisign* nature, as these line elements represent the norms that the king must embody.

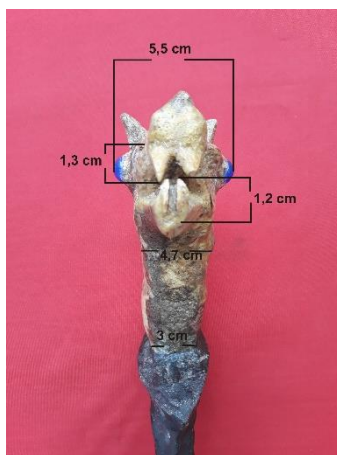


Figure 2. The Shape of the Hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* from the Front.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022).

Figure 2 displays the spatial elements of the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt are displayed from the front view. The space within the head of the *Keris Srie Radja* consists of three dimensions, categorised as real space, measuring 14 cm in length, 9 cm in width, and a thickness of 5.5 cm between the right and left eyes. The neck at the top of the *Keris Srie Radja* head has a diameter of 13.3 cm with a thickness of 4.7 cm, while the lower part of the head measures 10.5 cm in diameter with a thickness of 3 cm. From these

spatial elements, it is evident that the head of the *Keris* tapers in size as it descends. The shaft is firmly integrated with the head of the *Keris*, resulting in an ergonomic grip. The space within the head of the *Keris* is classified as a *sinsign*, as the dimensions of the *Keris Srie Radja* head are tailored to reflect the character and status of its owner.

The texture of the head of the *Keris Srie Radja* is both rough and smooth, classified as an artificial texture that arises from traditional processing methods, imparting a rugged appearance. In Peirce's semiotic theory, this texture is considered a *qualisign* (Sobur, 2013, pp. 40-41), as it reflects the quality of the material used in the head of the *Keris Srie Radja*. In addition, the signs represented by colour can be found in the eyes of the *Keris Srie Radja*, which are made from *triloka* stone sourced from Karawang. These eyes are round and blue. The presence of the blue colour in the eyes of the *Keris Srie Radja* exhibits high intensity, giving a sharp appearance. The blue colour in the eyes of the *Keris Srie Radja* is classified as a *legisign*, as Kartika and Perwira (2004, p. 109) state that the colour blue signifies "a vision that is very high and wide, akin to the vastness of the ocean and the height of the sky," which embodies the norms that the king must uphold. The lion figure carries ethical values, just as research on the dragon-headed *Keris* reflects strength and the ethical value of discipline (Aribowo et al., 2020, p. 295).



Figure 3. The Hilt Shape of the *Keris Srie Radja* Viewed from the Rear-side.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022).



Figure 4. The Lion Viewed from the Side.
Source: <https://www.google.com/search> (Accessed on 28 August 2022).

Figure 3 displays the back view of the hilt of the *Keris*, alongside Figure 4, which represents the lion head icon. The lion serves as the icon for the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt. Junaedi (2017, p. 46) states that an icon is "a sign whose character resembles its original form," such as the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt, which closely resembles the shape of a lion. Lions are characterised by their ferocity, strength, and status as rulers of the jungle; no one dares approach them due to their fierce nature. Neka (2014) explains that the lion is a symbol of authority. Furthermore, Karawang community leader Gede (interview, 20 January 2015) elaborates on the individual signs present in the *Keris* hilt, such as the mouth, teeth, ears, and eyes. The lion's open mouth, depicted as roaring, symbolises the king's speech. The sharp upper teeth on the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt, forming a zig-zag line, represent sharpness, symbolising danger (Salam et al., 2020, p. 19). The sharpness

is also present in the ears. According to Gede (interview, 21 April 2015) and Aripin (interview, 19 April 2017), the pointed ears on the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt represent keen hearing. Salam and Sukarman et al. (2020, p. 19) also state that pointed forms symbolise danger. Additionally, the lion's eyes on the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt are blue, looking to the left, right, and ahead, symbolising a broad and clear vision. The blue eyes represent the king's far-reaching and clear view. This aligns with Aripin's view (interview, 21 September 2018), who also believes that the lion's blue eyes are a symbol of the king's broad and clear vision. Hendriyana (2019, p. 135) explains that "the colour blue is associated with the sea, the sky, and places of great height, symbolising clarity and majesty."

According to Gede (interview, 14 January 2015), the rough texture of the hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* signifies that the kingdom's laws can be severe, with the king responsible for imposing penalties such as execution or imprisonment based on the nature of the wrongdoing. Conversely, the smooth texture at the bottom of the *Keris Srie Radja* hilt represents the notion that the king should possess a gentle and wise character when delivering justice to all state officials and citizens.

Overall, the lion head on the hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* serves as an icon that symbolizes the king's power, an invitation to goodness, keen hearing, vision, and the justice of a ruler in governing the kingdom. When this perspective is connected to Peirce's semiotics, it falls under the category of interpretant that is a *dicisign*, as the invitation to goodness, keen hearing, and the justice of a king represent truths that must be upheld by the ruler to provide protection and security for the people. The head of the *Keris Srie Radja* is an object that embodies the rules or norms that the king is obliged to manifest. As a sovereign, the king must possess a strong, decisive, authoritative, and wise character in promoting the welfare of the people. According to Peirce's theory, such a character is classified as an interpretant of an argument. Peirce states (Sobur, 2013, p. 41) that "an argument is a sign that directly provides a reason." A strong, decisive, authoritative, and wise character in leading the welfare of the people is essential for a king to ensure the tranquility of his subjects.

– Bilah Keris Srie Radja.



Figure 5. The Blade Shape of the *Keris Srie Radja* Viewed from the Rear-side.

Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022)

Figure 5 displays the signs represented by the shape of the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* can be observed from the rear-side. This *Keris* is a replica of the *Keris Srie Radja* belonging to King Sisingadiprana of the Kuningan Kingdom, crafted by Gede in 2015. The *Keris* feature 3 *luk* (curves) that tilt at an angle of 840 to the left. The design of these curves is inspired by mountainous terrain. Viewed from the right side, the body of the *Keris Srie Radja* exhibits 3 *luk*, and the left side also shows 3 *luk*, resulting in a total of 6 *luk*. However, according to Gede (interview, 11 September 2014), the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* is not counted as 6 *luk*, but rather as 3 *luk*. This is because the *luk* on the right side represents the contours of a mountain surface, amounting to 3 *luk*, while the 3 *luk* on the left depict mountain stakes that penetrate straight into the earth. Thus, the 6 *luk* present on both sides of the *Keris Srie Radja* are collectively regarded as 3 *luk*. This sign is classified as a legisign. From Peirce's perspective (in Sobur, 2013), the curvature on the blade's surface embodies the norms that the king is expected to uphold.



Figure 6. The Blade Shape of the *Keris Srie Radja* from the Front

Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 June 2022).

Figure 6 displays the front view of the *Keris*. According to Gede (interview, 02 May 2015), the *Keris Srie Radja*, featuring 3 *luk* (curves), embodies the meaning of life with the message of *sri*, *lungguh*, and *dunya* (Rahman, 2016, p. 130). The first *luk* signifies *Srie*. *Srie* represents the essence of all crops and animal life within the kingdom. In this first *luk*, the king is entrusted by the elders of the kingdom with the belief that “the king, as the ruler, must be responsible for the safety and welfare of all living beings in the state, including the people, plants, and animals in both the kingdom and rural areas” (Rahman, 2016, p. 181). In other words, *Srie* is related to food sources and trees that must be preserved as a means of sustenance for both the present and future. Nastiti (2020, p. 1) interprets *Srie* as a symbol of fertility, as *Sri* is believed to be the origin of rice plants. The message of *Srie* aims to ensure that all *Srie* within the state is preserved and not eradicated.

The second *luk* signifies *lungguh*. “*Lungguh* refers to rank and serves as a symbol of positions such as *patih*, *mahapatih*, *tumenggung*, *arya*, *kabayan*, *elang*, and the people, all seeking status and a prosperous life from the king” (Rahman, 2016, p. 182). The entrustment of *lungguh* to the king is meant to remind him that his position is derived from the people.

The third *luk* signifies *dunya*. “*Dunya* encompasses all life on earth and is a symbol of wealth and worldly matters. This aligns with Suharso and Retnoningsih (2009, p. 126), who state that 'the world is the realm or place of life, the earth with all its contents.' The term *dunya* on the body of the *Keris Srie Radja* is understood as a symbol of wealth and worldly affairs, as 'the world embodies the desire for prosperity, fertility, abundance, and blessings in both this life and the hereafter' (Rahman, 2016, p. 183). Through the *Keris* with 3 *luk*, the elders of the kingdom convey a message to the king that he and all the inhabitants of the state must lead their lives in righteous ways and protect all elements of the kingdom. Therefore, the elders bestow the message of *dunya* to the king to ensure that he leads effectively.



Figure 7. Double Curves on the Blade of the *Keris Srie Radja*.

Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 June 2022).

The line elements are present on the surface of the blade of the *Keris*, forming single and double curves that resemble the waves of the ocean, as illustrated in Figure 7. According to Hendriyana (2019, p. 137), curved lines exhibit characteristics of flexibility, elegance, grandeur, lightness, and dynamism, categorising them as legisigns, as the

curved lines on the surface of the *Keris* represent signs that the king is expected to embody. The double curves on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* resemble the shape of ocean waves. Gede (interview, 12 March 2015) states that the double curves represent the waves of the sea found in the archipelago. This aligns with Dafri (2011, p. 45), who notes that curved lines evoke a sense of movement akin to waves. According to Ebdi (2009), double curves symbolize “beauty and dynamism.” It can be concluded that the double curves are a symbol of the beautiful ocean. Gede (interview, 12 March 2015) also explains that the single curve on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* represents water-absorbing plants found along the shore, which corresponds with Aripin's view (interview, 21 September 2018) that the single curve symbolizes plant roots. Salam and Sukarman et al. (2020, p. 19) describe that “the single curve represents strength,” indicating that in this context, the single curve on the *Keris Srie Radja* is interpreted as a symbol of strong plant roots.

In this context, the single and double curves on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* serve as objects that signify the elders of the kingdom issuing a directive to the king and all citizens within the state to plant water-absorbing plants as a defensive barrier against tidal surges. As explained by Rahman (2016, p. 182), “1,000 meters from the shoreline must be planted with water-absorbing trees, and it should not be inhabited by residents, so that when tidal waters arrive, the surge does not directly strike the inhabitants but first impacts the water-absorbing plants lined along the coast. This way, the floodwaters will recede back into the sea, preventing harm to those living in the state.”

The spatial elements on the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* are structured in three dimensions, categorised as real space. The blade measures 24 cm in length, 11 cm in width, and has a thickness of 3.8 cm at the central *gonjo*. This *gonjo* is classified as an *iras gonjo*, where the *gonjo* merges seamlessly with the blade of the *Keris* (Harsrinuksmo, 2011). The spatial elements of the first *luk* on the *Keris Srie Radja* have a width of 5 cm and a thickness of 1.5 cm. The second *luk* has a width of 3 cm and a thickness of 1.2 cm. The third *luk* measures 1.7 cm in width and 0.6 cm in thickness, tapering to a point as it descends, featuring a convex surface with a tip shaped like “*anggabah kopong*.” According to Harsrinuksmo (2011, p. 70), *anggabah kopong* means “a grain of empty rice husk,” and the weight of the *Keris* is 424.1 grams.



Figure 8. The Blade Shape of the *Keris Srie Radja* from the Front Right Side
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 June 2022).

Figure 8 displays the thickness of the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* as seen from the front right side. The surface of the blade in the middle is convex, while the surfaces on the left and right sides are thin. The thickness on the right side is 0.2 mm, and the thickness on the left side is also 0.2 mm, resulting in two sharp edges on both sides, which taper to a point as they descend. However, the two sharp edges on the *Keris Srie Radja* are blunt and not sharp. When a midline is drawn from the *gonjo* to the tip of the *Keris*, it reveals that the *Keris Srie Radja* has an unbalanced shape, tilting to the left, making it appear heavier on that side compared to the right. The spatial elements of the blade are short, with a convex body and a tip resembling an empty rice husk. From Peirce's perspective (in Sobur, 2013), this sign is classified as a sinsign, depicting an event associated with the sign—specifically, a mountain—since much of the archipelago is surrounded by mountains, which provide numerous benefits for human life.

The texture of the surface of the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* on the right side feels smooth with a thick body, while the upper part of the *Keris* feels rough. This texture is classified as an artificial texture resulting from less refined materials. According to Gede (interview, Saturday, 14 February 2015), the *Keris Srie Radja* found at the Makam Panjang Karawang is made from clay, iron, bronze, black iron, brass, *maja*, and an adhesive made from a mixture of tree sap. Consequently, the texture of the *Keris Srie Radja* differs from that of typical *Keris*, which tend to be flatter. From Peirce's perspective (Sobur, 2013), this texture is classified as a qualisign, as the texture of the *Keris* body reflects the quality of the materials used in the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja*.

The texture of the lower part of the *Keris* blade is smooth. According to Gede (interview, 12 April 2015), the smooth surface of the blade combined with its thickness symbolises the king's need to deliberate carefully before making decisions. This aligns with Aripin's view (interview, 21 September 2017) that the smooth texture of the *Keris* blade represents gentle thinking. Suharso and Retnoningsih (2009, p. 289) state that “gentle means not harsh, soft, kind-hearted, and polite in language.” In this context, the gentle and thick texture of the *Keris Srie Radja* blade serves as a sign that the elders of the kingdom impart a message to the king, emphasising that he must possess gentle and thoughtful reasoning, as well as fair judgement. Conversely, the rough surface of the blade represents the symbol of harsh laws. Gede (interview, 21 September 2015) explains that the rough texture of the blade signifies the cruelty of the law. This is echoed by Aripin (interview, 22 June 2018), who states that a rough blade texture represents the brutality of justice, as prior to the establishment of the kingdom, there were no laws in the state; instead, the law of the jungle prevailed, where only the strong held power. After the kingdom was established, laws were created with the aim of preventing excessive violence, leading to the implementation of laws based on gentleness and consideration, as reflected in the surface signs of the *Keris Srie Radja* blade.

The element of black colour is present on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* blade. The black colour on the blade is displayed with a striking intensity and is classified as a qualisign. According to Kartika & Prawira (2004, p. 109), black symbolises “a dark outlook.” In addition to its *luk 3* curved blade design, the *Keris Srie Radja* is equipped with a *warangka* or scabbard, which serves to protect the *Keris*.

The colour element on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* blade is visible from the side view at the back. The blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* is black. According to Gede (interview, 12 April 2015), the black colour on the blade symbolises darkness and the

absence of light, representing a lack of guidance. This aligns with Hendriyana (2022, p. 136), who states that “black represents darkness and a space without light, symbolising suffering, ignorance, and gloom.” Based on the above, the black colour on the surface of the *Keris Srie Radja* blade symbolises dark thoughts, indicating the absence of guidance or truth.

However, when viewed from above, the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* also reveals small specks of gold. The gold colour on the blade symbolises luxury and signifies the king’s glory. According to Gede (interview, 21 September 2015), the gold on the blade represents a symbol of triumph. This is further supported by Aripin (interview, 14 May 2017), who states that the gold colour symbolises victory and success.

Based on the explanation above, the author interprets that the blade of the *Keris Srie Radja* as a whole represents an icon of mountains, ocean waves, and plants, symbolising (*sri*) fertility, (*lungguh*) status, and (*dunya*) worldly matters, which must be embodied by the king.

– *Warangka Keris Srie Radja*.



**Figure 9. The *Warangka* of *Keris Srie Radja* from the Side View at the back.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022).**

Figure 9 displays the *warangka* of the *Keris* from the side view at the back. This shape of the *warangka* is a replica of the *warangka* of the *Keris Srie Radja*. The *warangka* serves as the scabbard or protective cover for the *Keris* (Harsrinuksmo, 2011, p. 517). The *warangka* of the *Keris Srie Radja* is shaped like a cone, with a wavy top. The front of the *warangka* is depicted with a lower profile, while the back is shown with a higher profile, which classifies it as a legisign, as the front shape of the *warangka* is lower than that of the back. According to Haryoguritno (2006, p. 37), the position of the *warangka* shape signifies a gesture of respect, which is a norm that the king must uphold.

The curved lines are visible at the top of the *warangka*, visualised as ocean waves. These curved lines are located at the upper section of the *warangka*. This positioning, according to Salam et al. (2020, p. 19), creates an impression of gracefulness and dynamism, which in Peirce’s semiotic theory (Sobur, 2013, p. 19) is referred to as a legisign, as the lines convey a dynamic quality, representing a norm that the king must not violate. The rough texture of the *warangka* is classified as an artificial texture, made from coconut shell that is planned, sanded, and ground until it feels smooth. As

explained by Haryoguritno (2006, pp. 266-267), after forming the shape and contour of the wood using a rasp, the surface is then smoothed using sandpaper, resulting in a *warangka* that feels smooth and soft. This texture is classified as a qualisign, as it reflects the quality of the material used in the *warangka*. According to Sobur (2013, p. 41), “qualisign refers to the quality inherent in the sign.”



Figure 10. The *Warangka* of Keris Srie Radja from the Overhead View.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 July 2022).

Figure 10 displays the spatial elements of the *warangka* of the *Keris Srie Radja* from an overhead view. The space of the *warangka* is structured in three dimensions, classified as real space. The *warangka* measures 32 cm in length, with a width of 18.5 cm at the top. The middle section of the *warangka* has a diameter of 13 cm, while the tip has a diameter of 3 cm and a total weight of 3.1 grams. This spatial structure of the *warangka* is classified as a sinsign, as its dimensions are tailored to the character and needs of its owner.

The colour displayed on the *warangka* of the *Keris* is brown. This colour is a natural hue that arises from the use of coconut shell material, featuring a rough surface texture and a relatively dark intensity. The brown colour on the surface of the *warangka* is classified as a legisign, as Hendriyana (2019, p. 136) explains that brown represents the colour of the earth, symbolising politeness, wisdom, and honour—norms that must be embodied by the king.



Figure 11. Keris Srie Radja in the Warangka.
Source: Documentation by Diana (Sunday, 17 June 2022)

The *warangka*, as viewed from the side front, is pointed, as illustrated in Figure 11. According to Gede (interview, 21 September 2015), the pointed shape of the *warangka* of the *Keris Srie Radja* serves as a symbol of danger. This aligns with Aripin's perspective (interview, 21 April 2017), which states that the pointed design of the *warangka* signifies peril. Salam et al. (2022, pp. 19-20) also note that a pointed shape is a symbol of danger. From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the *warangka* of the *Keris Srie Radja* symbolises the king's protection against threats and dangers.

The object of the double curved lines found at the top of the *warangka* is significant. According to Gede (interview, 21 September 2015), the double curved lines at the top of the *warangka* represent the symbol of ocean waves found throughout the archipelago. This aligns with Dafri (2011, p. 45), who states that curved lines evoke a sense of moving waves. Furthermore, Salam and Sukarman et al. (2020, pp. 19-20) describe these lines as symbols of beauty and dynamism. From the above description, it can be concluded that the double curved lines at the top of the *warangka* signify that the *Keris Srie Radja* serves as a reminder from the elders of the kingdom to the king to be responsible for the safety of the state, encompassing the sustainability of the ocean, the resources of the mountains, and all that resides within them, which fall under the protection of the king.

The texture of the *warangka Srie Radja*, which is both rough and smooth, symbolises that harshness is to be enforced when laws of the state are violated. However, protection of the state's inhabitants must be carried out in a dynamic manner without any elements of violence. The brown colour on the surface of the *warangka Srie Radja* represents politeness, wisdom, and honour, conveying the meaning that the protection of the people and the contents of the state should be administered with full wisdom and respect.

4. CONCLUSION

The *Keris Srie Radja* at the Makam Panjang Karawang takes the form of a living creature with three parts: the hilt (or head), the blade (or body), and the *warangka* (or scabbard). The head of the *Keris Srie Radja* is represented by the icon of a lion, complete with features representing the five senses—eyes, ears, mouth, and teeth—that are classified as legisigns. The hilt of the *Keris Srie Radja* serves as an object of strength, symbolising the authority of the king. The blade, or body, of the *Keris* features a *luk 3* design, which is also a legisign, as its form refers to the icon of a mountain, encapsulating the essence of life and symbolising *Sri* (sustenance), *lungguh* (status), and *dunya* (worldly matters). The design of the *warangka* signifies the king's protection, representing the safeguarding of the entire state. The *Keris Srie Radja* at the Makam Panjang Karawang is believed to be a replica of the king's heirloom *Keris*, as the relationship between the signs and the object conveys deep meanings, symbols, and values of life. The *Keris* is seen as a marker of a firm and authoritative leader who ensures the prosperity of the state and its people. It is regarded as heirloom, preserved to this day by the descendants and heirs of the king.

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