

The Motifs of Semai Craft (Anyaman) in Malaysia

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Received: 1 October 2020 / Accepted: 15 November 2020 / Published online: 30 December 2020

Abstract

Anyaman is one of the most important crafts of Indigenous people. It is also the main craft and the economic source for this community. The pandanus and rattan are the most important material to make this craft. Anyaman is one of the acts of crossing some material especially pandanus and rattan until it is one object that can be used. It is because that craft is one of the identities of the Indigenous people especially Semai people. The Semai people is one of the biggest indigenous population in Malaysia. This research is focused on the motif of anyaman in the Semai community. This research took place in Pahang and Perak. The information was taken by using the qualitative method by observation, interview, and photograph. To get depth details of the research, Iconography theory by Erwin Panofsky was used. Despite that, there were ten motifs were retrieved from five weaving (anyaman) products in the Jahut tribe's craft. Those motifs are divided into three categories which are flora, faunas, and still life. This research hopes to give a clear and wider understanding to the reader especially in the context of art, culture, and heritage as well.

Keywords - Anyaman, Indigenous People, Motifs, Orang Asli, Semai.

1. Introduction

1.1 Orang Asli

According to Oxford Dictionary Second Edition (2000), the term 'tribe' is a group of people who have the same language and customs and who live in a particular area, often with one of the groups appointed as an official leader. For example, tribal art. Tribal art is habitually ceremonial or religious in the scenery. Characteristically, originating in village areas, tribal art submits to the topic and craftsmanships of artifacts from ethnic identity (Aditi Deka, 2018).

Carey (1976) exposed that the Orang Asli is a small indigenous minority group in Peninsular Malaysia. There are 18 district groups, three main sub-ethnic groups divided along with two district linguistic categories. In 1993, the total Orang Asli population was 92,959 and the number increased to 147,412 as of December 2003 (COAC, 2006). In 2018, the population of Orang Asli is 210,000 people in Malaysia. (JAKOA, 2018). Orang Asli has different languages, knowledge, and different belief (Tarmiji Masron, 2013). Orang Asli is divided into three community which is Senoi, Semang (Negrito), and Malay Proto.

Table 1. Tribal Groups of the Orang Asli

Tribe	West Malaysia	Sub Tribe
Semang (Negrito)	Northern	Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mandriq, and Batiq
Senoi	Middle	Temiar, Semai, Semaq Beri, Jahut, Mah Meri, and Che Wong
Proto Malay	Southern	Temuan, Semelai, Temoq, Jakun, Kanaq, Kuala, and Seletar.

1.2 Senai

Semai is one of the Orang Asli Tribe that is under Senoi Community. They are the largest tribe in Senoi. Semai is a group of Orang Asli that live in the middle of Peninsula Malaysia. Semai is also known as Mai Semai. The source of their economy is harvesting paddy, hunting, and fishing and before they sell it to the Malays. Usually, fish is caught by women. They are using Tanggok to catch the fish. Usually, men will go out to hunt by using Sumpit. The population of Semai are located at Pahang and Perak.


2. Objective

- a) To identify the motif of Semai craft (*anyaman*) in Malaysia.
- b) To categorize the motif of *anyaman* of Semai in Malaysia.

3. Methodology

A qualitative method was used in this research. The researcher was interviewed a few people from different places, taking a picture, and doing observation at the product and lifestyle of the Orang Asli Semai itself. The researcher also interviewed the expertise about the *anyaman* in a village at Perak. The researcher also using Erwin Panofsky to analyze each motif. Erwin Panofsky's Iconography theory was used to analyze the motifs of the *anyaman* obtained

4. Data Analysis


	<p>Name</p> <p>Material</p> <p>Category</p>	<p>Tampuk</p> <p>Tree bark</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Element and Principle of Art</p> <p>The lines that are in the object is the rough lines in the above part. The line on this object is a rough line at the top. It also has a thick line at the bottom. The shape of this object is organic at the top. It also has a positive and negative look at the object. It does not directly make it neat, comfortable and organized. The shape of this object also indicates the shape of the rectangle. It also has a concrete shape and is three-dimensional. The colour found on this object is also brown. The texture of the object can be defined by the touch sensation. The space on which the object is located is also relatively large. The design principle you see in this object is balance.</p>		

Analysis

The material that is used for making this 'Tampuk' is tree bark. That tree can be found near the river stream. That bark can produce a very nice smell and is so soothing. The smell will be stronger if that tree bark is soaked with the water. When it is wet, it produces a stronger smell but if it is dry, the smell is almost can be detected. The tree bark can be found near the village but this material is limited because that tree is hard to find. This *Tampuk* was also used as a headgear for the head village to perform anything about their village matters. For example, like welcoming the politician that comes to their village. This headgear is only for head village only.

Interpretation

This *Tampuk* only can be made by certain people. Not all people can make it. This is because if someone who sense the spirit of the tiger, like hearing tiger's roar, even though there is no tiger around, he is believed to be possessed by the tiger's spirit. As a result, that person is able to create the *Tampuk*.

	Name	Lek'
	Material	Bamboo (<i>buluh minyak</i>) and rattan
	Category	-

Element and Principle of Art


The line on the object is a fine line at the top and a thick line at the bottom. It also features a geometric look. However, it also has an organic look on top. It also has a long, oval and three-dimensional shape. The colours of the objects are black and brown. The textures that are found in this object are touch and visible links. The braided look is the one on top.

Analysis

This object is named *Lek'* which is used to fill the dam. *Damak* is a bullet that is used to blow piping. The materials that were made to this *Lek'* are *buluh minyak* and rattan. The rubber that is in the middle of this *Lek'* is called *chosh*. It is used to hold the *Lek'*. On the upper part called *Jerengkok*.

Interpretation

The Orang Asli is famous for its blowpipe. It is because they are using it for hunting. It is one of their famous weapons for them to hunt the animal in the forest and to defend themselves from the enemy. The dam is consisting of poison that can make their enemy or victim die slowly.

	<p>Name</p> <p>Material</p> <p>Category</p>	<p>Tampuk Pinang</p> <p>Bamboo</p> <p>Flora</p>
<p>Element and Principle of Art</p> <p>The lines that are in the object is the rough lines in the above part. The line on this object is a rough line at the top. It also has a thick line at the bottom. The shape of this object is organic at the top. It also has a positive and negative look at the object. It does not directly make it neat, comfortable and organized. The shape of this object also indicates the shape of the rectangle. It also has a concrete shape and is three-dimensional. The colour found on this object is also brown. The texture of the object can be defined by the sense of touch. The space on which the object is located is also relatively large. The design principle you see in this object is balance.</p>		
<p>Analysis</p> <p>The object is a <i>kelarai</i> that been use for the wall of the house. It is made of bamboo of different colours. The colour of the <i>anyaman kelarai</i> is a natural colour that is come from the colour of the tree, plant, and rattan itself.</p>		
<p>Interpretation</p> <p><i>Tampuk Pinang</i> is one of the motifs that is also available in the Malay society. But the motif of the Orang Asli is a simple motif and straightforward compare to the Malay's motif.</p>		

5. Conclusion

This research was discussed about the motif *anyaman* of the Semai people. This research will contribute to the JAKOA and Orang Asli itself. It is because this research will increase the deep knowledge for the researcher, Orang Asli, students, and NGO. Through this research will also can attract the foreigner to come to Malaysia and then indirectly will contribute to the tourism and economy in Malaysia.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the generous participation in the completion of this research. This study was conducted in the Faculty of Art & Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA. Fully appreciate for providing the facilities, equipment, and expertise to completing this research. Special thanks to the FSSR research initiative group for the assistance given for the research can be carried out successfully.

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