

From Male to Female *Gandrung* Dancers: A Semiotic Analysis of Gender Transformation and Cultural Communication in the *Gandrung* Dance of *Banyuwangi*

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Abstract

Banyuwangi, a regency located at the easternmost tip of Java Island, Indonesia, is well known for its rich traditional arts and cultural heritage. One of its enduring cultural icons from the colonial era to the present is the *Gandrung* dance, which was originally performed by a male dancer named Marsan in the early twentieth century under the tradition known as *Gandrung Lanang* (Male *Gandrung*). Initially, this dance served as a gathering medium for local fighters resisting colonial occupation. Over time, however, social changes led to the feminization of the *Gandrung* performance, with women becoming central figures in ceremonies, rituals, and annual festivals. This study explores gender transformation and the meaning of cultural communication in *Banyuwangi's Gandrung* dance by employing Roland Barthes's semiotic framework. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through documentation studies and YouTube video observations to analyze visual signs such as body, costume, expression, and movement within their cultural context. The results reveal that the feminization of *Gandrung* dancers is not merely a practical transformation but also an ideological shift that reflects negotiations between tradition and modernity. Female dancers thus emerge as symbolic agents of identity and aesthetic adaptation in response to the dynamics of cultural tourism and globalization.

Keywords: *Gandrung* dance, gender representation, femininity, symbolic meaning, semiotics

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Introduction

Culture is the collective creation of society, encompassing all aspects of life that are passed down from generation to generation. According to Soemardjan and Soemardi, culture is defined as “the total result of human creativity, taste, and initiative.” Within Koentjaraningrat’s framework, one of the elements of culture is art (including dance), which serves a dual function: as entertainment and as an expression of communal gratitude for the blessings of nature and life. For example, in agricultural traditions, folk dances are often performed after harvest as a form of thanksgiving to God. Thus, artistic performances such as music, drama, and dance become not only media of cultural communication but also instruments for preserving traditional values.

Banyuwangi Regency is known for its wealth of traditional arts that are closely guarded by the local community. The indigenous inhabitants of *Banyuwangi* are the *Osing* people, also known as *Wong Blambangan*, who refer to their land as *Tanah Blambangan* (Santi, 2008). The *Osing* constitute the majority population in many districts of *Banyuwangi*, and their culture represents a unique blend of Javanese and Balinese elements. In *Osing* society, traditional arts play a vital role as symbols of local identity. Their distinctive dances such as *Gandrung Banyuwangi*, *Patrol*, *Seblang*, and others are maintained as ancestral heritage. These art forms are frequently performed during customary rituals and major regional celebrations, serving as emblems of *Osing* cultural pride.

The *Gandrung* dance is a cultural icon of *Banyuwangi* and a distinctive form of social performance among the *Osing* people. The term *gandrung* itself means admiration or deep affection, which, in the context of agrarian tradition, reflects the community’s reverence for *Dewi Sri*, the goddess of rice and fertility (Finahari & Rubiono, 2021). The dance was originally performed after the harvest season as an expression of gratitude among farmers. A key feature of *Gandrung* is the interaction between the main female dancer and male audience members, known as *paju* or *pemaju*; the dancer invites them to dance alternately, strengthening social bonds between performer and audience. Similar forms of social dance can also be found in other regions, such as *tayub* in Central Java and *joged* in Bali (Santi, 2008). During performances, *Gandrung* is accompanied by *Banyuwangi*’s traditional *gamelan* ensemble and songs in the *Osing* language, rich with local symbolism. Nowadays, *Gandrung* continues to be performed in ceremonies and public celebrations from weddings and circumcision rituals to sea festivals and Independence Day events making it an inseparable part of *Banyuwangi*’s social traditions (Dianto, 2017).

Following the designation of *Banyuwangi* as the *Blambangan* capital, the *Gandrung* performance art historically began its early development among the local community. (Yudiana & Istiqomah, 2022). Uniquely, in its early form the *Gandrung* dancers were men known as *Gandrung Lanang* who dressed as women. Legendary figures include *Druning* and his student *Marsan*, who traveled from village to village carrying drums and *terbang* (a type of small gong) (Yudiana & Istiqomah, 2022). In their performances, the dancers sang verses containing moral messages and covert war strategies aimed at resisting Dutch colonial rule. In return, villagers offered them rice and crops, which were then distributed to fighters and families of war victims (Dianto, 2017). Over time, *Gandrung* became a form of cultural politics and social cohesion among the defeated *Blambangan* people after their loss to the VOC. However, with the spread of Islam and social change, the practice of male dancers performing in female attire was gradually prohibited. By the 1890s, (Yudiana & Istiqomah, 2022) The demise of *Marsan*,

recognized as the final documented performer, marked the critical end point for the Gandrung Lanang tradition, which was already suffering a significant decline.

Entering the twentieth century, the absence of male *Gandrung* dancers was filled by women performers. *Gandrung Semi* is recognised as the pivotal figure who pioneered modern *Gandrung*. When she began her performances, she was recorded as the first female dancer in the tradition. With the transition to female performers, *Gandrung* formally abandoned the male-to-female dress tradition. Once banned for its transvestite elements, the dance was now performed by women in full traditional costume. In contemporary developments, new artistic creations have emerged inspired by *Gandrung Lanang*; for example, *Gandrung Marsan* dance by Subari Sufyan features nine male dancers in female attire, who gracefully transform back into masculine characters at the end of the performance. This transformation illustrates the dynamic gender meanings within *Gandrung*, from its ritualistic roots to modern artistic interpretations (Finahari & Rubiono, 2021).

This tradition has even been showcased in the grand cultural performance *Sendratari Gandrung Sewu*, which involves more than a thousand dancers and has been recognized as Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the modern era, the *Gandrung* dance is often regarded as an emblem of exotic beauty and the grace of *Banyuwangi* in the eyes of international tourists. Overall, the transformation of *Gandrung* dancers from male to female reflects an evolution of cultural values: while the form of performance has changed, the essence of reverence for tradition, gratitude, and love for local culture endures. This study analyzes gender transformation in *Banyuwangi's Gandrung* dance, focusing on the interpretation of visual signs such as the dancer's body, costume, expression, and movement within their cultural context.

Conceptual Framework

Culture

The term *culture* (*budaya* or *kebudayaan* in Indonesian) originates from the Sanskrit word *buddhayah*, the plural form of *buddhi*, meaning intellect or reason. Thus, culture refers to all matters related to human thought and consciousness (Sumarto, 2024). In English, the term corresponds to *culture*, derived from the Latin word *colere*, meaning “to cultivate” or “to work,” and is often associated with agricultural activity. In Indonesian usage, the word *culture* is sometimes adopted as *kultur* (Pudjitrherwanti, 2019).

According to *The Official Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI)*, culture is defined as thought, custom, something that develops, and habits that are difficult to change. It published by the *Language Development and Fostering Agency* under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, serves as the authoritative reference for the correct and standardized use of the Indonesian language. In the term *culture* is often used synonymously with *tradition*, referring to the habitual practices and collective behaviors observed in community life (Pudjitrherwanti, 2019). Academically, it is rooted in the discipline of social anthropology. Within the educational sphere, culture functions as a medium for the transmission of knowledge, given its broad and encompassing nature. It can be analogized as the “software” of the human mind, shaping perception, guiding attention toward particular aspects, and diverting it from others (Sumarto, 2024).

Culture may also be understood as a set of fundamental assumptions that are created and accepted by a group through a learning process in addressing problems of external adaptation and internal integration. When these patterns prove effective, they are transmitted to new members as the accepted ways of perceiving, thinking, and feeling when facing life's challenges. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines culture as an integrated pattern of human behavior that encompasses thought, speech, action, and artifacts all of which depend on humanity's capacity to understand and transmit knowledge to future generations (Sumarto, 2024).

Hall (1959) provides a foundational perspective in cultural communication, asserting that "culture is communication" and "communication is culture." In other words, the transmission and interpretation of values occur through the communication systems people use; hence, culture and communication are two interrelated and dynamic entities.

Furthermore, Jeff Cartwright emphasizes that culture is a dominant factor influencing individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Dailami & Mikasari, 2022). Its impact can be observed in how individuals are motivated to respond to their environment. Accordingly, Cartwright conceptualizes culture as an organized community possessing shared goals, beliefs, and values, where its influence is reflected in the motivation and collective behavior of its members.

Dance Art

Dance, as an integral part of a nation's cultural heritage, holds a vital position that must be protected and preserved especially in the current era of globalization. Every region in Indonesia possesses its own distinctive dances, characterized by unique movements and stylistic traits shaped by various influencing factors, including social dynamics, geographical conditions, religious values, and other dominant cultural aspects. For instance, the *Pattu'du* dance from West Sulawesi demonstrates how the richness of local culture is embodied through movement and expression.

The aesthetic concept in dance can be understood as an exploration of beauty. Such beauty may originate from divine creation such as the natural world that evokes admiration or from human creativity manifested through works of art, crafts, music, and dance that embody artistic value (Ardini et al., 2022). Terminologically, *The Official Dictionary of the Indonesian Language* (KBBI) defines dance as rhythmic bodily movement performed in harmony with accompanying sounds or music.

Sumaryono emphasizes that dance manifests in two forms of expression: collective and individual (Nurchaerani, 2016). The collective form is commonly found in traditional dances that are transmitted from generation to generation within a community. Meanwhile, individual expression places greater emphasis on the artist's personal creativity, which is often inspired by lived experiences and thus possesses a more subjective nature (Nurchaerani, 2016). Therefore, dance may be understood as a synthesis between the collective expression of a community and the personal experiences of its creator together producing the diverse forms of dance that continue to enrich Indonesia's artistic landscape today.

Gandrung Dance

Historical records reveal that the *Gandrung* performance was originally danced by men who dressed and appeared as women, a form that came to be known as *Gandrung Lanang* (Santi, 2008). In its earliest form, *Gandrung Lanang* was a modest performance held in public spaces, accompanied by simple musical instruments such as drums (*kendang*) and tambourines (*rebana*). At that time, its primary function extended far beyond entertainment; it served as a cultural strategy within the broader struggle against colonial rule (Finahari & Rubiono, 2021). Dancers would travel from village to village performing, receiving food supplies as compensation, which they then distributed to prisoners and victims of colonial oppression. During these performances, the dancers often embedded song lyrics containing calls to resist the colonizers, as well as subtle messages about enemy weaknesses and possible strategies of attack.

One of the most legendary figures in the *Gandrung Lanang* tradition was Marsan, widely recognized as the last male *Gandrung* dancer who remained committed to the art form until the age of forty. Because of his dedication, every performance was affectionately referred to by the local community as *Gandrung Marsan*. The tradition underwent a fundamental alteration during this period, constituting a major transformation. What was once performed by men in female costumes gradually began to be performed by women. This shift was accompanied by musical innovation: the instrumentation expanded beyond the basic *kendang* and *rebana* to include violin (*biola*), gong (*kempul*), *ketuk*, *kenong*, and triangle (*kluncing*) (Yudiana & Istiqomah, 2022). The rationale behind this transition was to restore the dance's original symbolic association with femininity, as the *Gandrung* dancer was historically conceived as a female figure embodying beauty, grace, and devotion.

Nevertheless, *Gandrung Marsan* continues to thrive as a distinctive creative expression that revives the legacy of *Gandrung Lanang* after its long disappearance. The dance's remarkable quality gained global attention when it was awarded the grand prize at the World Dance Festival held in Paris, France (Yudiana & Istiqomah, 2022). This achievement is particularly remarkable, as few contemporary female-led *Gandrung* performances have reached comparable global acclaim. Beyond its artistic recognition, *Gandrung Marsan* also serves as a cultural reminder to the people of *Banyuwangi* that the dance now regarded as a regional icon was originally born from the artistry of male performers.

According to (Dianto, 2017), another defining characteristic that distinguishes *Gandrung Marsan* from the female version lies in the element of humor featured at the end of each performance. The dancers, who begin the show dressed as women, surprise the audience by revealing their male identity often symbolized through the playful addition of false mustaches. This theatrical twist not only adds a humorous dimension but also reinvigorates the historical memory of *Gandrung Lanang*, transforming it into a refreshing and entertaining cultural revival.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Roland Barthes developed his semiotic theory by distinguishing three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and mythological (Amin, 2024). The denotative meaning refers to the literal or objective interpretation of a sign, representing the direct relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified*. For example, the image of a rose in a dance performance denotes only "a rose," defined by its physical characteristics. Meanwhile, the connotative meaning

emerges when that sign interacts with subjective elements such as emotion, belief, and cultural context (Nurul, 2022). Beyond this, myth is understood as a second-order system of signification an ideological framework through which culture reshapes existing signs to construct deeper, naturalized meanings. Barthes demonstrates how dominant cultures manipulate such meanings to appear self-evident, often through what he calls “modern myths,” visible in advertisements and photography.

Barthes’ semiotic approach has been widely employed to interpret meaning in visual culture and traditional performances (Hida, 2025). For instance, it has been applied to analyze movements and symbolic attributes within traditional dances. In this analytical framework, visual elements such as costumes, properties, and gestures.

Semiotics in Cultural Perspective

The semiotic approach within a cultural perspective emphasizes that every artistic sign including those found in traditional dance is deeply embedded with cultural values and codes (Indriyanto & Astuti, 2023). In this view, dance movements, musical accompaniment, costumes, and supporting rituals are not merely aesthetic components; they also function as symbolic systems that represent the social structures and belief systems of the community. Research indicates that the choreography and attributes of traditional dance must be interpreted within the cultural context that gives them meaning. Semiotic studies have revealed that the meaning of a dance is not determined solely by the choreographer but is also shaped by the prevailing social, cultural, and political ideologies within its society (Indriyanto & Astuti, 2023). In other words, the construction of signs in artistic performance is guided by ideological forces that naturalize the symbolic meanings embedded in the dance.

In practice, cultural semioticians interpret the visual elements of performance as cultural texts. For instance, the choice of *batik* motifs, costume colors, or pre-dance rituals can each be read as signs carrying specific messages. As a cultural product, dance thus operates as a medium of communication in which movement, ornamentation, and gesture serve as signs of socially constructed meanings shaped through cultural conventions. Therefore, semiotic analysis must account for the interaction between signs and their historical, religious, and customary contexts. For example, the traditional dances of *Banyuwangi* reflect an agrarian ethos and devotion to *Dewi Sri*, the goddess of fertility, while the incorporation of colonial or religious elements must likewise be interpreted through their respective sociocultural backgrounds (Hida, 2025).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method using Roland Barthes’ semiotic analysis approach. This framework was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of meaning, extending from the levels of denotation and connotation to the realm of myth. Within this research context, semiotic analysis is used to examine the transformation of gender roles in *Banyuwangi’s Gandrung* dance by investigating how symbols, movements, costumes, and performance narratives reflect broader meanings related to social and cultural constructions. Data were collected through documentation studies and the analysis of video content retrieved from YouTube, featuring both female *Gandrung* dancers and *Gandrung Lanang* (male *Gandrung*) performers. The documentation study involved reviewing relevant literature, archives, articles, and previous research. Meanwhile, the video observation focused on examining recorded *Gandrung* performances. The collected data were then analyzed using Barthes’ semiotic framework.

Following data collection, video observations and identifications were conducted by capturing still images (screenshots) from the selected recordings. The first stage involved reading denotative meanings those directly observable in the dancers' movements, costumes, music, and expressions. The second stage examined connotative meanings, which emerge from cultural associations and social values attached to the performance. Finally, the analysis extended to the mythological level, identifying the ideological or cultural myths underlying the gender role transformation in *Gandrung* performances, thereby revealing how society constructs and sustains its cultural identity through artistic expression.

Results and Discussion

This section employs Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to understand how the transformation of gender roles in *Banyuwangi's Gandrung* dance is represented through the shift from male to predominantly female performers. This analytical framework draws upon Barthes' three levels of meaning denotation, connotation, and myth to explore the layers of significance embedded in the dance's visual and symbolic elements. The analytical process involves close observation of dance scenes, focusing on costumes, body movements, and the interaction between dancers and the audience. Each of these elements is treated as a sign that operates collectively to construct meaning within a system of cultural communication. By examining visual imagery, gestures, and the narrative context of the performance, this study reveals how the gender shift in *Gandrung* dance not only signifies an aesthetic transformation but also functions as a medium of cultural communication. Through this lens, the analysis highlights how the transition from male to female dancers represents more than a change in performance practice it embodies the reconfiguration of social values, gender roles, and community identity within Banyuwangi's evolving cultural landscape. The transformation of the *Gandrung* thus becomes both an artistic and ideological statement that reflects broader societal negotiations between tradition and modernity.

Dance Movements

As previously discussed, *Gandrung* has historically been performed by both male and female dancers. The following section presents an analysis of the movements performed by female *Gandrung* dancers through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. This approach seeks to uncover the layers of meaning contained within each bodily gesture, interpreting movement as a sign that communicates not only aesthetic expression but also social and cultural significance.

Table 1
Female Gandrung Dancer

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	connotation	Myth
1.		<i>Ngiwir</i>	The movement of waving the sampur/fan forward or sideways while shaking the hips.	Gives a greeting to the audience and symbolizes joy	Symbolizes defense against enemies, as well as an expression of gratitude
2.		Tribute (<i>PENGHORMATAN</i>)	The opening movement is a greeting with a sampur or bow, with the right hand forward and the left hand facing backwards.	Greetings and respect to guests and ancestors.	Offerings and requests for blessings to ancestors and Goddess Sri.
3.		Left <i>Gedruk</i>	Leaning the body to the left and accompanied by waving the scarf.	Symbolizes the bad side, an invitation to distinguish between good and bad.	There is no mythical meaning because it is more about differentiating between good and bad.
4.		Right <i>Gedruk</i>	Leaning the body to the right and accompanied by waving the scarf.	Symbol of kindness and good manners.	There is no mythical meaning.

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	connotation	Myth
5.		Right and left <i>sagah</i>	Elaboration of the sagah movement to the right and left.	Symbolizes courage and steadfastness.	Pray that the spirit and resilience of the community will be preserved.
6.		<i>Ngalang</i>	The sagah movement is floating/waving with a sideways rotation and stretching out both hands.	Symbolizes the journey and spread of dance.	Prayers for Gandrung art to be widely known.
7.		Right and left <i>sagah</i>	The upright body position moves right and left.	Symbol of steadfastness and strength	An expression of the courage of the <i>Osing</i> people.
8.		<i>Ngiwir</i>	Raise both hands up while pulling the scarf, then walk around	Aesthetic elements to captivate the audience.	Symbolizes defense against enemies, as well as an expression of gratitude

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	connotation	Myth
9.		First <i>Tinjakan</i>	The body bends to the right, then both hands spread the scarf, the position of the left foot is in front and the right foot is behind.	A symbol of caution and introspection	Permission from the earth and ancestors.
10.		Right <i>Tinjakan</i>	The body bends forward while both hands extend the shawl, with the right hand positioned above the left, and the left foot placed in front while the right foot remains behind.	Symbolizes positive steps.	a symbol of spiritual readiness.
11.		<i>Song kloh</i>	Movement with the body facing forward and then stretching out the arms	A symbol of surrender to God.	Request for protection over fate.

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	connotation	Myth
12.		Right <i>sagah</i> development + <i>ngeupeut</i>	Variation of the right <i>sagah</i> movement plus clamping the <i>sampur/fan</i> .	A symbol of fertility and prayer for good fortune.	Offerings to Goddess Sri for abundant harvest.
13.		<i>Nglayung</i>	The body movement forms an arc as if floating.	A symbol of balance in the world and the afterlife.	An invitation to maintain harmony.
14.		Right of <i>Kencik nyerik</i>	The right hand is pointing upwards, the right hand is holding the fan with the body positioned sideways.	A symbol of transition towards better conditions.	A sign of life change towards a positive direction.
15.		<i>Sampur kipas ngiri</i>	Swing the <i>sampur/fan</i> to the left.	Resist reinforcements and bad influences.	Invite Dewi Sri to bless the earth.

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	connotation	Myth
16.		<i>Ngiwir sampur kipas</i>	Vibrate or throw the fan into the air.	Symbolizes the return of something that has gone away.	The symbol of Dewi Sri's return to heaven after giving blessings.

Source: From *Tutorial Tari Gandrung*, by dja gallery, 2018, YouTube, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ba2D-wAXbWU>).

The overall movements in *Banyuwangi's Gandrung* dance are not merely sequences of aesthetic bodily gestures but are imbued with deep philosophical meanings that reflect the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the Divine. Movements such as *penghormatan* (gesture of respect), *song kloh*, and *sampur kipas ngiri* affirm the spiritual foundation of the tradition, symbolizing reverence toward ancestors and prayers for fertility blessings addressed to *Dewi Sri*, the goddess of rice and prosperity. Meanwhile, movements such as *tinjakan awal*, *gedruk kanan*, and *sagah kanan kiri* convey moral messages about the importance of taking steady, cautious, and virtuous steps in life. Furthermore, gestures like *ngalang* and *nglayung* symbolize the dissemination of culture and the balance of life, reflecting the aspiration of the *Banyuwangi* people to preserve this art form for future generations. In this sense, *Gandrung* functions not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for transmitting cultural values, collective prayers, and the cultural identity of the *Osing* community.

Gandrung Lanang, as one of the variants within the *Gandrung* tradition, possesses distinctive characteristics and symbolic significance. This form is important to analyze because it was historically performed by male dancers and embodies representations of masculinity and the social dynamics of *Banyuwangi* society at the time. Through the study of its movements, expressions, and social functions, it becomes evident that this dance played a crucial role in affirming cultural identity, articulating collective aspirations, and serving simultaneously as a medium of social critique and popular entertainment.

Table 2
Male Gandrung Dancer (Lanang)

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
1.		<i>Jejer</i>	The dancer stands and sings a solo while moving his hands and the sampur.	Expression of respect and opening of the event.	Thanksgiving to Dewi Sri for the harvest
2.		<i>Gandrung</i>	The core movement of the dance with the sampur/fan, captivates the audience.	Symbolizes fascination/love and elegance.	Part of the thanksgiving ceremony to Dewi Sri.
3.		<i>Salatun</i>	Silat (war) movements or <i>Kuntulan</i> dance punches/kicks	A symbol of war training, the spirit of resistance.	The story of the struggle of the <i>Banyuwangi</i> people against the colonialists.
4.		<i>Tunjakan</i>	The movement of the horse stance forward or jumping with one leg forward.	A symbol of courage and determination.	War training, never give up until you win.
5.		<i>Banjaran</i>	Slow walking movements with elbows bent and body slightly bent.	Symbol of readiness to fight in line.	Depicting the ranks of Blambangan fighters.

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
6.		<i>Penthangan</i>	Defensive movement with both hands in front and body straight.	A symbol of steadfastness and vigilance.	The war training section of the Blambangan fighters.
7.		<i>Seblangan</i>	The final movement is solemn with the sampur moved slowly.	A symbol of ritual closure and self purification	Describes the soul's journey back to God.
8.		<i>Bali Balian</i>	Movement with two fans/two-handed scarf	Honoring ancestors and containing magical elements.	Inviting supernatural powers for protection and blessings.
9.		<i>Junjungan</i>	The movement of raising the hand/offering upwards.	Symbol of respect or offering.	Honoring ancestral spirits to ask for blessings.

No.	Picture	Name of Movement	Meaning		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
10.		<i>Tanjak</i>	The movement of putting a scarf on the head or swinging a weapon.	A symbol of masculinity and readiness for war.	Reflects the status and authority of the officer.
11.		<i>Trecet</i>	Fast foot movements or small rhythmic taps.	Symbolizes agility and youthful enthusiasm.	Describes the excitement before battle.
12.		<i>Kencik</i>	Small jumps while spinning the cloth	Symbolizes agility and enthusiasm.	Shows the joy of youth while practicing war.
13.		Agem Right/Left	Changing standing position to the right or left with one foot stepping.	Symbol of balance and harmony.	Maintaining spiritual and worldly harmony.

Source: From *Tari Gandrung Marsan*, by Ahmad Fuadi, 2020, YouTube, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7etZ1qCr9s&list=RDU7etZ1qCr9s&start_radio=1).

Movement Analysis in Gandrung Lanang and Female Gandrung

The movements in *Gandrung Lanang* are not merely aesthetic expressions; they are deeply infused with cultural, historical, and spiritual values. The opening gestures, such as *jejer* and *junjungan*, symbolize respect and prayer, while sequences like *salatun*, *tunjakan*, and *banjaran* embody the spirit of struggle and steadfastness. Elements such as *bali-balian* and *kencik* reflect cultural acculturation that nonetheless preserves strong local identity. In this sense, *Gandrung Lanang* serves as a medium for transmitting the values and identity of the *Banyuwangi* community to future generations.

The distinction between the movements of *Gandrung Lanang* and those of female *Gandrung* lies in their character, function, and symbolism. The female *Gandrung* emphasizes softness, allure, and aesthetic grace designed to captivate the audience demonstrated through gestures such as *ngiwir*, *sampur kipas ngiri*, and *song kloh*, all of which are rich in symbolic meaning associated with reverence and fertility prayers. Conversely, *Gandrung Lanang* underscores courage, vigor, and a fighting spirit through movements like *salatun*, *tunjakan*, and *banjaran*, representing martial training and the determination of the Blambangan people to resist colonial powers.

While the female *Gandrung* highlights harmony, modesty, and feminine charm, *Gandrung Lanang* embodies masculine identity, heroism, and social function as a vehicle of solidarity and social critique. Together, both forms intertwine to create an art form that transcends mere entertainment serving as a vessel for the transmission of cultural values, spirituality, and the enduring identity of the *Banyuwangi* people.

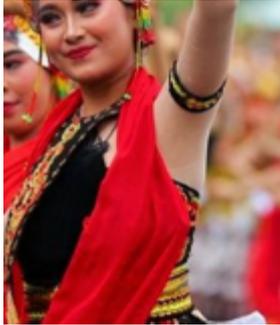
Costume in the Gandrung Dance

In performing arts, costume plays a crucial role not merely as a body covering, but as a medium of visual communication that constructs the dancer's character. According to Soedarsono Dianto (2017), dance costume serves several functions: to emphasize role identity, to enhance aesthetic appearance, and to strengthen the expressive quality of movement. In other words, dance attire functions as a semiotic medium that connects the audience to the cultural messages conveyed through performance.

The costumes worn by *Gandrung* dancers embody layers of symbolic meaning that extend beyond decoration. Each garment, ornament, and accessory operates as a *signifier* a visual code that reflects the values, identity, and worldview of *Banyuwangi's* cultural tradition. The following analysis interprets the *Gandrung* costume elements through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, exploring their denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings.

Table 3
Gandrung Dance Costume

No	Picture	Attribute Name	Meaning		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
1.		<i>Omprok 36 (Kulik, Mahkota/ Crown, Tiara)</i>	A headdress with 36 layers of ornaments, made of brass/copper metal, decorated with gems or colored glass.	Symbolizes elegance, the sacred status of the dancer, and perfection.	A symbol of offering to Dewi Sri and spiritual protection of dancers from supernatural disturbances.
2.		<i>Oto</i>	A large crescent moon necklace worn on the chest.	Symbolizes purity of heart and authority.	A symbol of protection from evil spirits and a symbol of prosperity.
3.		<i>Ilat-ilat</i>	A small decoration in the shape of a flame that is hung on the omprok.	Symbolizes a burning spirit.	A symbol of courage and repellent.
4.		<i>Pending</i>	A large belt of metal or decorated cloth, worn around the waist.	Symbol of self-control and control of lust.	Energy guards to keep dancers strong and protected.
5.		<i>Semboyan 36</i>	A series of oprok decorations consisting of 36 ornaments.	Symbolizes cosmic perfection and balance.	Depicts the number of prayers or protective spells of the dancer.

6.		Shoulder Strain (<i>Kelat Bahu</i>)	An accessory in the form of a bracelet worn on the upper arm.	Symbolizes strength and firmness.	Symbol of the bravery of Blambangan soldiers.
7.		Long Cloth (<i>Jarik</i>)	Long batik cloth used as a bottom.	A symbol of politeness and <i>Osing</i> identity.	The cloth is considered to have magical powers to maintain the sanctity of the dance.
8.		<i>Sintir</i>	An ornament in the form of a string of beads or metal that is hung on the chest.	Symbolizes beauty and prosperity.	It is believed to attract positive energy and good fortune.
9.		Fan (<i>kipas</i>)	The main property is a hand fan that is moved while dancing.	Symbolizes attraction, tenderness, and allure.	A means of mystical communication between dancers and ancestral spirits.
10.		<i>Ebok</i>	A long shawl draped over the shoulders.	Symbolizes both feminine tenderness and strength.	A symbol of the connection between the dancer and the spirit world.

11.		<i>Samir</i>	A small decorative scarf hanging from the waist or chest.	As a fashion accessory and to balance the costume composition.	Contains a symbol of repelling evil and protecting the dancer's honor.
12.		Socks	Foot coverings, usually white.	Symbolizes purity and cleanliness.	The symbol maintains the boundary between the dancer and the ground, so that spiritual energy is not lost.
13.		Belt (<i>Pending</i>)	Belt or long cloth belt (<i>jarik</i>)	A symbol of politeness and self-control.	The guard ensures that the dance movements are in harmony with traditional values.

Source: Adapted from Google Images.

The overall attributes in *Gandrung* function not merely as decorative complements to the costume, but as carriers of profound symbolism. From the *omprok* (head ornament) to the long draped cloth, each element represents purity, spiritual protection, and the cultural identity of the *Osing* community. The connotative and mythological meanings embedded within these attributes elevate them beyond mere ornamentation transforming them into mediums of inherited values, prayers, and beliefs that have been preserved and transmitted across generations through the medium of performance art.

Conclusion

The transformation from *Gandrung Lanang* (male *Gandrung*) to female *Gandrung* reflects the social, religious, and cultural changes that have taken place within the *Banyuwangi* community. The shift in performance roles from men cross-dressing as women to the dominance of female

dancers was not merely an adaptation to the religious and moral norms of the time but also a strategic effort by the community to sustain the existence of the *Gandrung* tradition. From a semiotic perspective, this transition does not erase the essence of *Gandrung* as a medium of gratitude, prayer, and social cohesion; rather, it redefines its meaning to align with the evolving cultural identity and values of the era.

The movements, costumes, and properties used in *Gandrung* continue to embody deep philosophical and spiritual meanings: from ancestral reverence and fertility prayers to *Dewi Sri* the goddess of rice and prosperity to the representation of the courage of the Blambangan people. Female *Gandrung* performances highlight aesthetic beauty, gentleness, and feminine allure, while *Gandrung Lanang* emphasizes valor, heroism, and masculine identity. Together, these two forms create a cohesive cultural narrative that functions as a medium of communication for collective values and reinforces the identity of the *Osing* community.

Hence, the gender transformation in the *Gandrung* dance represents a form of cultural adaptation that preserves traditional continuity while reflecting the flexibility of *Banyuwangi's* society in responding to social change. Today, *Gandrung* is not merely a historical legacy but also a living symbol of identity, pride, and the enduring vitality of *Osing* culture kept alive through rituals, festivals, and contemporary stage performances.

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