

Semiotics for Interpreting Quilt's Cultural Values from the U.S. and Indonesia*

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ABSTRACT

Historically, quilt making has been recorded in the United States (U.S.) since the 18th century. Not only is it popular for its function but also for the social expression of its people to their environment. In designing quilts, creators make use of different colors and symbols to express a certain phenomenon. By use of library research and semiotics for an analytical-descriptive discussion, the socio-cultural and historical perspectives of U.S. quilts are found to explain how designs have evolved from the 18th to the 21st century of the U.S. The semiotics method has also shown how through an American Studies transnational process of cross bordering countries, the U.S. quilt has influenced its neighboring countries, like Indonesia. This article shares how a number of U.S. quilt patterns, colors and cultural values are found in Indonesian quilt. Among the cultural values found are the maintenance of loyalty and obedience. Interestingly, while the U.S. cultural value of individualism is respected, the Indonesian collectivism is preferred more in quilt making.

Keywords: Transnational, American Studies, cultural values, quilt, semiotics, U.S., Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is a study that enables researchers to analyze language, images or objects that generate certain meanings. It studies about whatever represents a sign and something else as a result of what the surrounding has in store for us. According to Brian Curtin in his book, *Semiotics and Visual Representation*,

Semiotic analysis, in effect, acknowledges the variable relationship[s] we may have to representation and therefore images or objects are understood as *dynamic*; that is, the significance of images or objects is not understood as a one-way process from image or object to the individual but the result of complex inter-relationships between the individual, the image or object and other factors such as culture and society. (2017, p. 51)

In other words, in studying something with semiotics as a tool for analysis necessitates a researcher to use the dynamics of multi disciplines to interpret the results of the analysis.

Being an American Studies researcher and university lecturer, the dynamic characteristic of objects in a semiotician's viewpoint above is interesting to put into practice the need to scrutinize objects through a multidisciplinary perspective. As with most American Studies research, scholars would use semiotics to find out how, for example, an object would be seen through the multidiscipline of culture, art, history, communication, psychology and/or sociology that help contribute to the existence of objects. An American cultural object, which became the main data of research to discuss in this paper is patchwork quilt. Quilt has attracted some tailors in Indonesia to make similar crafts based on the patterns found in American quilt. Informed that American bedcover quilts, for example, are not just a cloth to cover somebody with in cold weather because there is a unique story behind the making of the quilt, makes the researcher interested to find out whether the patterns, colors, and types of cloth chosen for the bedcover quilt has certain meanings attached to it.

Denise Mucci Furnish from the University of Louisville, is one of those scholars who defines quilt

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as not merely a cloth, but it is also a “shelter, adornment, and gift” because a quilt is “a story – a text that reveals a time in history.” (2009, p. 2). On the grounds of history, Actinis Muqsitha Paradista’s research has found that the 1850s underground slaves have used some of the U.S. quilt’s design as a code for other slaves to decide on what to do with their enslaved lives (2013). Titisari Handayani (2009) is another Gadjah Mada University researcher, which makes use of quilt for her American Studies research to find that pastel colored quilts for the Amish people were unique as usually Amish were only allowed to have dark colored cloths for their outfits. With these background of quilt research in mind, therefore, it is appropriate that the dynamic characteristics of semiotics be the tool to deconstruct or reconstruct the multi meanings quilts may have.

LITERATURE REVIEW

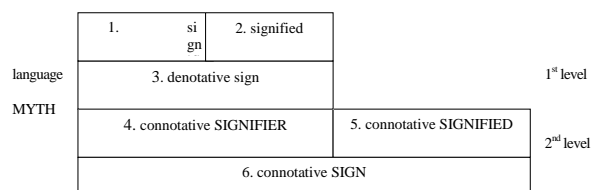
Using Semiotics to Analyze Quilts

Discussing about the origin of semiotics, Curtin (2017) and other semioticians relate semiotics to the idea of structuralism, which studies deeply on how phenomena is told in particular social contexts. Being the founding father of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure is the one that taught the relationship between a signifier and the signified. Signifier is something that carries and produces meaning, whereby signified, is the meaning itself. In its development, Charles Sanders Peirce sees semiotics as functioning through three positions: sign, interpretent, and object; and three classifications: icon, index, and symbol. Icon is a sign that shows similarity to something, index is the sign that refers to something factual, and symbol is a sign that is related to an object based on a certain conventional rule. For example, a cross used on a road sign is interpreted as a hospital ahead. In its development, however, Roland Barthes became the scholar that applies semiotics to analyze visual images that are found in for example, photography, motion pictures and other kinds of images, which would include the patterns used in quilts.

Using Barthes’ viewpoint to analyze quilt, a quilt must be seen as containing patterns of signs that must go through at least two levels of the process of denotative and connotative interpretation of meanings. As a start off, there must be a material of analysis, that is agreed as the signifier and signified (see picture 1).

The multilevel of interpreting a sign is necessary, so that a culturally specific analysis is found after

analyzing it. In his book, *Image, Music and Text*, Barthes explains that a photograph is an “imitative” art that comprises two kinds of messages: “a *denoted* message, which is the *analogon* itself, and a *connoted* message, which is the manners in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it” (1977, p. 17). In the classic example of seeing Chanel 5 perfume advertisement, the first signifier is the bottle of perfume; and the signified is the French lady who is glamorous, beautiful and sophisticated. From this, a reader will find that the denotative sign of the advertisement reads as: Chanel 5 perfume is for a beautiful, glamorous and sophisticated French lady. Next, given a connotative signifier, i.e. the picture of the lady in the advertisement being the famous French actress, Catherine Deneuve; and the connotative signified, as Chanel 5, which is comparable to Catherine Deneuve; in the end, a reader will arrive to the understanding that the connotative sign of the advertisement to mean that ladies buying and applying the perfume can be as glamorous, beautiful and sophisticated as the French actress, Catherine Deneuve.



Picture 1. Roland Barthes’ semiotics

In communication studies, Arthur Asa Berger (2000) shows that in reading images with semiotics, a researcher as reader could try to find answers by asking the following questions:

1. What is the general concept shown from seeing an image? What kind of mood does it create? How did it achieve that?
2. How is the pattern designed? How are the components and basic design elements organized?
3. What signs and symbols are found? What roles do they play?
4. Are there personal figures (man, woman, children, animals) in the patterns?
5. What is the background color of the cloth? Does it show a certain aesthetical value, setting, mood, or situation?
6. What sociological, political, cultural views are shown through analyzing the patterns/ designs?
7. What topics, themes, or life’s values are shown? What kinds of techniques are used to bring out the interpretation?

With those questions as a guideline to analyzing quilt’s images, upon finding the answers to those

questions, the researcher must take part in the creation of meanings, and not merely becoming a bystander. When the process has been carried out, it is only through this, that the researcher can see quilt as a code.

From Quilt as Codes to the History and Cultural Values of U.S. Quilt

Quilt is a product of culture. Similar to language, culture is defined as a “tissue of codes” (Solomon, 1988, p. 2) where on the surface level, the complex system of culture’s signs has meanings that are not always clearly understood. Thus, in order to grasp the ideas behind the given code or culture’s signs, a deep analysis of the culture’s codes needs to be done. Solomon (1988, p. 3) clarifies that to understand a code there is a need to link signs with their meanings. For example, when approaching a traffic intersection, it is not enough to know that one light is red and the other is green. The significance of the signs in addition to the function should be known to understand the function of the red or green light sign, so a traffic accident may not happen. Of similar condition, if someone is given a heart-shaped greeting card on the 14th of February, it does not suggest that the receiver is asked to obtain a cardiovascular examination, but rather a message is sent as the conventional code of St. Valentine, i.e. a sign that feelings of love is expressed to the receiver. Thus, understanding a code, needs an ability to link the signs. As informed above, a deep analysis of quilt making involves studying at least about the history, sociology and culture of America itself before finally focusing more in the details of the patterns used in quilts, which symbolizes or gives out signs about something experienced by the quilters.

Historically, Kare E. Smith (2017) from University of Iowa, exclaims that the art of quilting is started by the Mennonite women, who in the 1880s needed a media of passing their days to talk about family problems while doing quilt patchwork at a church. In this church forum, the ‘quilting bee’ (see picture 2) women who are often silent partners in their homes have the chance to speak up and decide what to do with their quilt (Kingelsmith, 1980).



Picture 2. The quilting bee
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/114982596716212897/>

Most of the time, results of the quilting is to put together a number of old scraps of fabrics until they are united again as one big piece to which it is cut up and resewn as new clothes, blankets or bed covers. In its development, however, the cut pieces are no longer old fabrics but new ones that have been deliberately cut up directly for quilting. A Mennonite woman is usually given a chance to come to the middle of the stage to show the ‘refined quilt craftwork’ as an auction activity to gather funds for a certain purpose. Citing Orlofsky, Judith Helen Elsley elaborates:

Every scrap off fabric was scarce and precious, to be conserved and reused. Nothing was thrown away. Textiles were preserved and used as long as possible. Pioneer life was one of extreme hardship, and the lack of goods made fabrics so precious that this recycling of even the smallest scraps was an abiding necessity. Not all of the scrap materials were from places of worn-out clothing; some were remnants from the fabrics used in making new garments and household furnishings (1990, p. 35).

Smith continues to explain that the fabrics used are of high value because “Indian chints, calicoes, linens, silks and wools were all imported” (2017, p. 80). The money received from auctioning refined quilts are usually managed by the quilt committee and donated to the needy Mennonite church members. This exercise continues a century later, that in 1981 someone has donated Us \$1500 for a quilt which is believed to show 23 Mennonite Relief Services (Smith, 2017, p. 81). Two years later, there is even a quilt that results in obtaining US \$6000. In addition to bringing up some historical or special characteristics, other reasons why a quilt was awarded such a high price is because the quilt has gone through the committee’s special inspection for the kind of perfection quality they can find. According to Smith,

Several women carefully scan each quilt for any missed stitches where quilters did not fill in lines in the quilting pattern and also check for stains or soiled areas. Skilled quilters are ready to correct any errors in the quilting, and other volunteers hand was small surface stains. If volunteers cannot remove a stain, they revise the quilt tag to warn potential bidders of the imperfection (2017, p. 86).

In other words, the more tedious a quilt result is, the more expensive the auction price of the quilt would be. Quilt has thus evolved not only as a cultural object that shelters, be an adornment and gift, but also as a political object for a society’s lively hood. More recently, the 21st century auction of quilt handicrafts has become an event to raise money for Aids movements.

Before Mennonite women decide to form quilting bees, history finds that most colonial women have been confined in their own homes to exhibit the Victorian example of submission. Elsley (1990, p. 50) describes the stitching of patchwork of a little girl who gives particular attention for the scraps to fit a certain pattern that go by certain colors, is an exercise of high obedience. Although quilting exercises women's process of creative decisions (Furnish, 2009, p. 4), the sitting position of the head bending for the eyes to work long and patiently in embroidering the patchwork with special stitches shows a subjugation attitude. Binney (as cited by Elsley, 1990, p. 52) has referred to quilting as "the quilter's sentimental journey" because during the long quilting activity, girls cannot go out of her own house and play freely.

The quilting activity of making one bedcover can take the growing up time of a 10 to 16-year-old-girl. Thereby, upon completion of a bedcover, a girl is regarded ready to be married as she has proven her initiation for the U.S. cultural values of obedience, perseverance, compassion, loyalty and cooperativeness. As the young lady gets older and has the opportunity to be with her quilting bee at church and be involved in an auction event, quilt becomes a pathway of their freedom of expressing how a woman could individually decide the kinds of patterns and colors of quilt patch working but also the freedom to exercise their leadership and management skills.

METHOD

The research under discussion makes use of qualitative research. With qualitative research, the researcher employs the process of making notes, categorizing and analyzing her data descriptively. Given that the 21st century quilt patterns from the U.S. and Indonesia are found through surfing the internet, the researcher downloads appropriate samples as the main data in order to frame what becomes the characteristics of quilt by analyzing the colors and the patterns. In understanding quilt, the researcher also finds out the functions and meanings of quilts through history books.

In analyzing the colors and patterns, Roland Barthes' suggests the process of semiotics reading by going through the first level of signification of denotation and connotation to find why certain patterns and colors may only be used for certain cultures. Through the second level of analysis, the researcher could reflect to the kinds of U.S. and Indonesian cultural values of quilt. In comparing the U.S. with the Indonesian quilt, the next level of analysis was to apply the transnational American Studies theory that

looks into the similarity and differences of the patterns as they cross border different nations, to which in this case, the end of the cross bordering ceased in Indonesia.

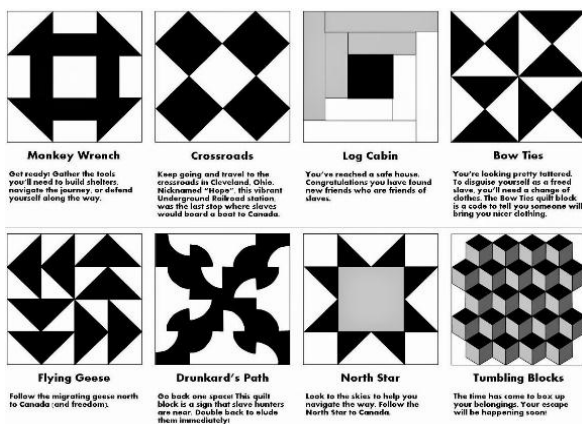
By taking in mind also of the communication studies scholar, Berger's questions, the quilts were analyzed as images that have dynamic characteristics. In this way, an analysis of the quilts' colors, patterns, historical backgrounds and cultural values of the U.S. quilts can give a better understanding of how the Indonesian quilt is made. At the same time, the analysis can reveal why the Indonesian quilts are produced in some similar ways with the U.S. version.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

U.S. Quilt Colors and Patterns

As informed earlier, the very earliest form of U.S. quilt dates back to the 1800s. According to Marcia Inzer Bost (2010) the quilts were "made of a single color and were called whole cloth quilts, even though sometimes the 'whole' cloth was created by stitching together two or more pieces of fabric", where the "quilting themselves form the only decoration" (p. 41). It has been regarded as amongst those having sophistication because it followed the European heritage. A white cloth quilt used for a marriage quilt with entwined stuffing hearts stitched at each of the lower corners of the cloth became a sample of the earliest 109-by-101-inch quilt were originally made by the Pennsylvanians. Citing Frederico, the use of white was "symbolic of classical purity" and in addition to hearts, the motifs could also be in the form of "feathers and wreaths" (Bost, 2010, p. 43). Not all quilters, however, have the money or leisure to make whole cloth quilts. Most of the people used left over scraps. Because of this, the composition of the colored scraps, that ranges from dark and light colors became a matter for quilters as they contribute certain meanings to the maker and the people who sees it. The dark and light, explains Bost is following the tradition of the Japanese *notan*, in addition to the Chinese Yin and Yang. A quilt using the *notan* tradition has been made by a nineteenth century quilter from New Jersey. This quilt is now owned by an American Museum in Britain. It was made for a single bed with five blocks wide and eight blocks long in size that totals for 10 x 10 inches. The v formation blocks are black in color and floating on a white background to look like darts and arrows that symbolizes mortality. With the white stitches making a lyre or harp patterns, Bost interprets that the quilter was a weeping widow at the time she quilted the *notan* piece (2010, pp. 44-46).

Quilt making is a result of tedious work. Bost (2010) cites Brackman who is a contemporary quilt historian, the bits and pieces of cloth that are put together as quilts usually make a sense of ordered block patterns with diverse colors has been documented for more than 4,000 patterns (p. 46). Physically, a quilt is usually made up of three layers: an applique at the top, an inner layer of batting with in it some other cut out scraps, cotton, or feathers in the middle; then at the back is another layer of fabric sewn to cover the batting. The cloth material used for quilting can be as fancy as using silk, wool, raw cotton, and even using used animal feed sacks. History shows that the feed sacks are commonly used before the U.S. Civil War era for slaves to send quilts with certain patterns to communicate secret messages about their attempt for freedom. For example, the website <https://www.pinterest.com/sageiger/underground-railroad-quilt-blocks/> (2017) displays (1) the Monkey Wrench pattern as a code for slaves to get ready to gather tools for a new shelter or be ready with something to defend themselves for the long a journey they might have, (2) the Crossroads as the pattern to signal the slaves to keep going and travel to the crossroads in Ohio to arrive at an underground railroad station and finally board on a ship to Canada, (3) the Log Cabin to signal a safe house with new friends, (4) Bow Ties to signal the need to disguise as a free slave by changing into nicer clothes, (5) Flying Geese to signal the slaves to migrate North to find freedom to Canada, (6) Drunkard's Path to tell the slaves to go back because slave hunters are nearby, (7) North Star to signal the way for freedom by looking at the skies for navigation, (8) and Tumbling Blocks to signal that it is time to box up belongings because the escape for freedom is approaching soon.



Picture 3. Codes of underground railroad quilts

(<https://www.pinterest.com/sageiger/underground-railroad-quilt-blocks/>)

As seen from the patterns on Picture 3, the quilting block usually starts off with a plain square, a square

with a diamond or a grid. The reason for this kind of pattern is to show that the center is the “power field” or source of energy. Consequently, the square, diamond or grid center, is then followed with a border consisting of small squares in a different color at the corner to frame it. This first border is framed by another, wider border that also has corner blocks. This can continue with as many frames as needed depending on how large the quilt material needs. Finally, as the finishing piece, there would be a binding to the quilt material.

By comparison, as can be seen in Picture 4, the center piece is a red diamond placed on top of a square green. Or looking at it from another angle, the red diamond has four green triangles at the sides to make a square box. On the outer side of the box are small red squares on each of the tip or corners of a larger square, with blue rectangles in between the small red squares. This kind of blocked quilt patterning is usually used by the Amish people. In viewing this, through a semiotic analysis, the centeredness is interpreted as one of the American cultural value of power of authority that is relied on the center. In other words, to become powerful, Americans believe that there is a need to be at the center of attraction.



Picture 4. Blocked quilt pattern of red, green and blue color of the Amish people
(<https://au.pinterest.com/explore/amish-quilt-patterns>)

With regards to quilt color, especially for the Amish community who still do this kind of patchwork until now in the 21st century; it is interesting to learn why many bright colors of red, green, and yellow are used for quilting. Most people know of the Amish people, who live a simple life without electricity and minimum modern facilities in their neighborhood. This is because they believe in simplicity and modern living is a distraction to the safe and calm environment that they are used to. Thus, in clothing, they prefer to also use simple fashion of women in long dress and bonnet, and men in in long trousers with suits and top hats. The colors of the fabrics they wear usually are not with flashy or striking colors,

because variety of colors invite different emotions on people. Henceforth, to avoid emotions that can make someone angry, for example, the colors used for the garments are mostly of grey, black, dark blue, dark brown and dark purple. If there are some other colors, they would most likely use white for the shirt or soft pastel colors for the bonnet. Yet, it is this point that gives reason for quilts to be very colorful. Any stripes, remnants or scrapes that are in bright red, glowing yellow, sunny orange or aqua greenish blue are usually not used for the Amish people's costume, but instead made into good use for their attractive quilts. This gives reason also for why the quilt are made of patches of cut out cloth rather than wide and lengthy cloth.

This colorful idea for quilts is also employed by the cultured and vibrant attitude of the Hawaiians and Seminole Indian Americans who are always hoping for a good life with nature. This is why the result of their quilting is sewn up not only as blankets but also for their jackets and dress, which are usually made in colorful stripes or flowery patterns like shown in picture 5.



Picture 5. Striped patterned quilt of bright yellowish orange, blueish green, and reddish brown purple color of the Seminole Indians
(<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/535787686897813671/>)

The stripe pattern often makes use of a zig zag combination of the three main colors. As seen with the blanket on the left of picture 3, as the outline they use mahogany brown, with its inside a combination of bright sunny yellow and turquoise aqua blue. On the right, is an outfit with yellow, white, red, brown, orange and blue colors quilted horizontally. By comparison, the U.S. Hawaiians also use a lot of colors but the pattern chosen are flowery ones. Although flowery, upon a closer inspection the flower pattern is made up of leaves arranged on four corners that makes a square block. These blocks are usually symmetrically laid out on a white background material that makes the colors strike out. Unlike the Amish that sews together patches and the Seminole

Indians' quilt that are tailored, the Hawaiian leafy pattern is embroidery sewn (see picture 6).



Picture 6. Flowery colored patterns of purple, green, red, orange and blue of the Hawaiians
(<https://www.pinterest.com/quiltinspire/hawaiian-quilts/>)

Interestingly, the leafy pattern can be alternated with an animal pattern such as the four blue turtle as though holding hands to make a square or be as modern as making an embroidery of using fruits, such as the popular honey gold pineapple, or a beach applique pattern like the pink hibiscus flower on the left corner with yellow plumeria and two coconut trees in front of blue ocean in picture 7 below.



Picture 7. Alternative Hawaiian patterns and colors
(<https://www.pinterest.com/quiltinspire/hawaiian-quilts/>)

The turtle, pineapple, hibiscus and plumeria flowers are iconic for the Hawaiians. The Hawaiians choice of the usually green sea turtle is to show how they respect the only indigenous reptile in Hawaii and also because it carries the symbol of good luck from a guardian spirit, named Aumakua. The sunny yellowish orange to brown colored pineapple, on the other hand, is a symbol of welcome and warmth. Whereas, the usually pink hibiscus symbolizes delicate beauty and the usually pink or white with yellow color at the center of each plumeria flower is popular for

Hawaiians, not because it is used to decorate the tomb of a death one, but it has the rich meaning to show charm, grace, new life or birth, new beginnings or creation, or to show the coming of spring and of a person's beauty. The quilt colors and patterns of the Seminole Indians and Hawaiians above are very attractive looking and is acknowledged worldwide to many countries. One of those countries is Indonesia, who also has its peculiar characteristics of batik in their quilting.

Indonesian Batik Quilting

Observing the kinds of colors and patterns of Indonesian quilts, there are traces of not only the pattern but also of the colorful Seminole Indians and Hawaiian quilts. Not only do Indonesians use the dark colors of brown, black, dark red mahogany which usually becomes the traditional colors of batik; but they also use vibrant bright ones such as the light blue, green, yellow, orange and pink colors.



Picture 8. Vibrant colors with blocked log cabin and star Seminole Indian and Hawaiian pattern is followed by Indonesian batik quilts

<http://boltonphoenixtheatre.com/batik-quilts-patterns/batik-strip-quilt-patterns-batik-quilts-patterns-fat-quarter-quilting-exploring-batiks-batik-quilt-patterns-for-beginners/>

As visualized in picture 8, the Indonesian quilt maker is careful to make patches of mostly brown with a much lighter brown dots or black with greyish brown dot shaped flowers for the batik motif. Interestingly, however, in the center there are also square patches of light brown background with some light green and yellowish modern batik strokes on it as a way of highlighting the center piece. More so interesting is the one pink patch positioned at the very center as though stating that all of the other patches have started from that center. Using the theory of transnational American Studies, to analyze the Indonesian quilt, there is an understanding that the cross bordering of quilt crafting from the U.S. to Indonesia has not changed dramatically. There are still traces of the way the U.S. Seminole Indians and Hawaiians create their

quilt patterns and colors. This is especially relevant when discussing about the pillow and bedcover quilt seen in picture 9.



Picture 9. Indonesian batik on a bedcover and pillows

<http://boltonphoenixtheatre.com/king-bed-quilts/>

The bedcover and pillow cases as shown in picture 9 shows the use of the traditionally organized U.S.'s blocked log cabin, in addition to the play of Seminole Indians' zig zag pattern. Yet in positioning the pattern, the Indonesian quilters do not often see the importance of the center as a value. The explanation for this is most likely because Indonesia values more about people's communal or group work that is appreciated more than the individual work of persons. Although most Indonesians value communal work more, the patches of uniformed batik that are sewn in symmetrical designs gives proof that Indonesians value loyalty and togetherness highly, just like the original cultural value of the U.S. quilt making.

As can be seen in picture 10, the loyalty of using the block design is used for the Indonesian quilt handi-crafts, such as the small colorful pencil case or mobile phone compartments and also the batik quilt bag on the top left corner, which alternately uses pink, white and green batik material. The use of applique like the Hawaiian style is, however, also used in the sofa pillow casing positioned on the right of the quilt bag, which has a white background with cut out bird appliques that are in solid red, blue, or flowery patterns sewn onto it. Another applique sample is in the traditional brown applique flower on a white background table cloth with a framed brown batik on the outside, in addition to the white calico curtains with brown batik hinge on the top with embroidery brown flowers on the wide curtain such as seen at the bottom left of picture 10. These examples, consequently, gives the understanding that Indonesian quilting is very creative as it does not stop by just mimicking the block railroad style of the U.S. slave time, but also make use of the Amish, Seminole Indians and Hawaiian style of quilting.



Picture 10. Patterned Indonesian batik quilts can be on all sorts of household accessories

https://www.google.co.id/search?q=kain+perca+batik+images&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=s9LV5RtDPgJCdM%253A%252CSGA0YqGb1PsIYM%252C_&usg=__PO9aNISSpWb_sZufej_Wu77JnxU%3D&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjH_suYs4HaAhVKOY8KHcmIBnoQ9QEIPDA#imgrc=s9LV5RtDPgJCdM

CONCLUSION

Studying about U.S. quilt has opened up a historical sketch of the U.S. people's lives which dates back from the colonial, slavery, and up to the recent century. With readings from quilt researchers and applying a semiotics analysis, it is found that a number of U.S. cultural values are shown behind the quilt making. The cultural values found among others are the obedience, perseverance and compassion of the people to being loyal with the pattern they are working on a quilt that may take up a 10-year-old girl until she is regarded ready to become the wife of someone. Through the quilting bee experience in the colonial times, the quilt craft also shows the respect for cooperativeness but at the same time an aspiration of power through the individual freedom of starting a quilt piece with a special patch chosen as the center of attraction.

With quilt transnationalized to other parts of the country besides the U.S., the research discussed in this paper finds that through a semiotic study, Indonesia has followed some of the unique characteristics of the U.S. patterns and colors of quilt. The patterns Indonesians used are the U.S. Amish log cabin pattern, in addition to the Seminole Indian's zig zag pattern and Hawaiian applique pattern of cut out birds or flowers. Having batik as their icon, Indonesian quilters put together different batik designs, which are mostly brown in color for curtains and bed covers. Yet the more colorful ones that are for dresses, table cloths, pencil cases and other utilized household handicrafts have followed the U.S. block design.

The block design proves that Indonesian quilt also shows the cultural value of loyalty and coopera-

tiveness. Unlike the U.S., which often show the importance of being in the center, however, the Indonesian quilters believe that the strength of power is in the collectiveness. This collectiveness spirit is often seen in the quilt design because Indonesians are claimed to be happier if power is reached when they are being supported by members of their group rather than trying to stand out above the rest to show power in authority. For this reason, there are more Indonesian quilts that use the symmetrical block pattern rather than the use of different forms of applique, and more use of colorful batik or cut out colored materials rather than just the traditional singular brown or black batik variation.

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