

Reading Women's Clothing in Hormozgan from Roland Barthes' Perspective: A Semiotic Analysis of Signs in Kandureh and Shila

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ABSTRACT

This study employs Roland Barthes' semiological approach to examine the traditional clothing of women in Hormozgan, particularly Kandureh and Shila, utilizing a qualitative research methodology based on semiotic analysis. The primary objective is to represent the semantic, cultural, and social layers embedded in these garments and to analyze how they transform into multilayered texts within their cultural context. The research adopts a qualitative, interpretive-critical method, drawing upon historical sources, anthropological documents, and Barthes' theoretical framework. The findings reveal that Kandureh, characterized by its loose fit, vibrant colors, and diverse ornamentation, symbolizes communal life, social vitality, and the creative agency of Hormozgan's women. In contrast, Shila, with its more subdued form, harmonious colors, and delicate embellishments, predominantly expresses ritual values, social norms, and the cultural status of women. Barthes' tri-level analysis (denotation, connotation, and myth) demonstrates that these garments transcend their utilitarian function as coverings, embodying historical and cultural identity while reproducing value systems and social structures. Consequently, Kandureh and Shila function as cultural texts, enabling the study of clothing's role in representing identity, power dynamics, and the intangible heritage of Hormozgan's women.

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Introduction

The semiotics of clothing constitutes a branch of semiological studies that examines dress and attire as a meaning-making system. Within this approach, clothing is perceived not merely as a means of bodily coverage but as a cultural and social text bearing specific messages, symbols, and codes. Every element of attire (from fabric texture and color to cut, ornamentation, and manner of wearing) can carry meaning, conveying messages about identity, social class, gender, spatial location, and even individual or collective beliefs. The semiotics of clothing endeavors to uncover these meanings through the analysis of structures, codes, and cultural conventions underlying the selection and use of garments.

The nature of the semiotics of clothing rests on the premise that garments, like language, are composed of signs that acquire meaning through interaction with cultural and social contexts. In other words, a particular garment may symbolize high social status in one culture while assuming a different or even contradictory meaning in another. Theorists such as Roland Barthes, through their analysis of clothing from the perspective of sign systems, have demonstrated that garments possess multiple layers of signification: the first layer, or denotation, refers to the direct and literal meaning of the garment; the second layer, or connotation, carries cultural, evaluative, and symbolic weight. From this vantage point, the semiotics of clothing enables researchers to move beyond the physical aspects of dress to study hidden meanings, cultural communications, and its role in representing identity and power. Such an approach proves particularly potent in societies where clothing constitutes an inseparable component of ethnic and cultural identity (as exemplified by the attire of women in Hormozgan) offering a robust tool for understanding and analyzing the semantic and social structures embedded in dress (Barthes, 1983; Sharify, and Maleki, 2020; Reeja-Jayan, 2022; Xie, 2021; Assunção, Martinez, and Jacques, 2021; Vincentini, Có, and Avelar, 2020; Barthes, 2002; Caputo, 2017; Wilce, 2017; Boklund-Lagopoulou, and Lagopoulos, 2012; Hudoyo, 2022; Zhang, and Shu-ping, 2011; Muñoz López, 1988).

Kandureh is one of the traditional and indigenous garments worn by women in Hormozgan, deeply rooted in the region's culture and history. This garment is typically tailored as a short dress with a fitted bodice and a loose skirt that extends to the ankle. The most salient feature of Kandureh is its simple, loose cut, which accommodates the hot, humid climate of southern Iran, ensuring comfort and adequate ventilation. The fabric used in Kandureh is generally lightweight cotton or cool textiles, available in a variety of colors and patterns. Historically, vibrant, bold colors such as red, purple, blue, and green were favored, and in some instances, embellishments including colored bands or embroidery were applied to the collar, cuffs, and hem. Beyond its everyday utility, Kandureh was also tailored in certain regions for special occasions and ceremonies, featuring higher-quality fabrics and more elaborate decoration. This garment not only reflects the taste and creativity of Hormozgan's indigenous women but also constitutes a

component of the province's cultural identity and intangible heritage, and continues to be worn in some villages and coastal towns, particularly among older generations. Historically, Kandureh ranks among the oldest women's garments in the coastal regions of southern Iran, particularly Hormozgan. The garment's provenance predates the spread of urban clothing and Western fashion, when garments were designed entirely in accordance with climatic conditions and local subsistence needs. Ethnographic evidence suggests that Kandureh likely emerged from a synthesis of indigenous Gulf Coast attire and garments introduced through maritime trade. Hormozgan, owing to its port location and longstanding connections with Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, India, and East Africa, has historically served as a site of cultural exchange. Lightweight Indian fabrics, African patterns, and the simple cuts of Arabian garments have all contributed to the formation of Kandureh (Yasini, 2017; Mahmoudi Alami, and Mohammadi, 2022).

Shila is another traditional and elegant garment among Hormozgan's women, recognized as comfortable, cool attire suited to the region's hot, humid climate. This garment essentially comprises a long, loose dress or overgarment extending to the knee or below, whose relaxed cut facilitates ease of movement and proper ventilation. The fabric of Shila is predominantly lightweight cotton or thin imported textiles that effectively wick moisture. The colors and patterns used in Shila are diverse and vibrant, ranging from pink, blue, green, and yellow to floral or geometric prints. The garment typically features a round or V-neck, moderately loose sleeves, and a long hemline, with the sleeve edges, collar, or hem sometimes embellished with colored bands or embroidery in certain examples. Shila is primarily worn as home attire or everyday clothing; however, in the past and in some villages and smaller towns of Hormozgan, women also wore it outside the home, often paired with local trousers or an abaya for more complete coverage. This garment also features prominently in informal ceremonies, its cheerful colors and patterns creating a lively and intimate atmosphere. Compared to Kandureh, which is more formal and longer, Shila is simpler and slightly shorter in cut. It also differs from the abaya, which is a plain black over-garment, whereas Shila constitutes the primary garment itself and exhibits color and pattern variety. Shila forms part of Hormozgan's intangible heritage and continues to be worn, particularly in coastal villages, by older women who remain committed to this tradition. This garment not only reflects the taste and creativity of local women but has also been historically shaped by maritime trade and cultural exchange with Persian Gulf countries, India, and East Africa, thereby enriching its diversity of color, pattern, and fabric. The history of Shila is closely intertwined with Hormozgan's status as one of southern Iran's most significant maritime trade centers. For centuries, the province's ports (including Bandar Abbas, Qeshm, Bandar Lengeh, and Minab) lay along the active Persian Gulf trade routes, with ships carrying textiles, spices, jewelry, and other goods from India, Oman, Zanzibar, and Arab ports frequenting these shores. Among these, lightweight Indian cotton fabrics, colorful African linens, and imported patterned textiles played a crucial role in shaping Shila's appearance and materiality. Shila

initially served as a simple, practical garment for the daily use of coastal women, but the introduction of high-quality, patterned textiles through maritime trade endowed the garment with more artistic and decorative dimensions. Floral patterns, Boteh Jegheh designs, and geometric motifs appearing on imported fabrics gradually replaced plain local textiles. Moreover, the diverse color spectrum (including Indian lapis lazuli, warm Omani red, and bright African yellow) transformed Shila into one of the most colorful garments worn by Hormozgan's women (Yasini, 2017; Mahmoudi Alami, and Mohammadi, 2022).

Literature Review

Semiotic studies of ethnic clothing in Iran place particular emphasis on reinterpreting the cultural and symbolic dimensions of various ethnic groups' attire. A notable example of this analytical approach is a study examining Luristan ethnic clothing from a semiotic perspective. In this research, visual elements such as form, color, and meaningful patterns were effectively coded and analyzed in terms of signifiers, signifieds, and symbolic signs. The findings demonstrated that the clothing of these ethnic groups reflects migration, ritual, religion, and climatic conditions (4). Additionally, a significant contribution appears in the book *Semiotics in the Clothing of Turkish and Kurdish Women in Iran*, which provides a comprehensive analysis of Azerbaijani Turkish and Kurdish women's attire. The author, adopting sociological and anthropological perspectives, identifies dress as a representation of cultural and identity expression, examining its role in transmitting ethnic values, particularly how fashion and modernism can influence traditional clothing (5). In contemporary semiotic analyses, research has also addressed the symbolic influences of ancient Iranian cultures on clothing. For instance, one scholarly article investigated signs and symbols from ancient Iran and their effects on historical costume. Through the classification of mythological and symbolic signs and comparative analysis of clothing across different historical periods, this research demonstrates that cultural heritage functions as a signifying repository of ancient beliefs and narratives, redefining a symbolic and continuous identity within material clothing spaces (3) (Mahmoudi Alami, and Mohammadi, 2022; Nourahmadi, Mohammadi, and Mohammadzadeh, 2019; Mohammadi-Seyf, 2016).

Roland Barthes' Theory: Core Concepts and the Method of Fashion Text Analysis

Roland Barthes, employing semiological methodology in cultural studies, examined clothing and fashion as readable cultural texts. His most significant work in this domain is the book *The Fashion System*. This researcher systematically analyzed fashion articles from numerous magazines and demonstrated that narratives of clothing in textual representation encompass two layers of meaning: explicit meaning (denotation) and implicit meaning (connotation). He emphasizes that these descriptions are not merely technical but also carry cultural, aesthetic, and normative weights (Barthes, 1983; Mambrol, 2018).

Barthes defines denotation as the obvious, objective surface level of clothing for example, what details such as form or texture a garment possesses, or how it is described in words. In contrast, connotation refers to the cultural and symbolic interpretations derived from the clothing text. In other words, the language of fashion simultaneously provides direct information about garments and attempts to present an ideological and valorized image of them. Beyond these two levels, Barthes introduces the concept of myth as a third semantic layer. Myth signifies that signs, without our conscious awareness, naturalize dominant cultural ideologies, beliefs, and values that is, clothing can become a tool for reproducing societal norms and ideological structures. For example, in his essay "The Rhetoric of the Image," Barthes demonstrates how advertising images (and particularly fashion images) convey a linguistic message, a coded iconic message, and a myth. He explains that myths gradually erode the boundary between cultural message and nature.

In his method of fashion text analysis, Barthes views fashion texts as complex sign systems wherein not only the relationship between signifier and signified matters, but also the combination of clothing form, cultural context, and ideological structure must be analyzed. Within the fashion system, Barthes introduces specific analytical terms and attends to how meaning is generated through the interaction between garment components and their socio-cultural context. Barthes' theoretical framework relies on three semantic levels (denotation, connotation, and myth). With this approach, clothing is never merely a covering device but rather a semantic system arising from the synergy between form, culture, and social norm. This theory provides a highly suitable framework for analyzing traditional and narrative clothing (such as Kandureh and Shila in Hormozgan) enabling the semiological methodology to reveal the hidden layers of these garments within both modern and traditional cultural contexts (Barthes, 1977).

Barthes' Tri-Level Model for Clothing Analysis (Denotation, Connotation, Myth)

Roland Barthes' three-level model for clothing analysis, comprising denotation, connotation, and myth, can be elaborated as follows:

At the most basic level of Barthes' semiotic analysis, denotation refers to the overt, direct meaning of the sign what is seen in the appearance of the garment without any interpretation or cultural weight. For example, seeing a coat or pair of trousers at first glance simply tells you "this is clothing." Barthes identifies this level as the most fundamental stage in the meaning-making process.

In the second stage, connotation encompasses meanings added through the cultural, social, and ideological space surrounding the sign. This semantic level is built upon the audience's experience and cultural presuppositions; for instance, a particular hat might symbolize formality in one society and tradition in another. Barthes notes that this layer extends beyond literal meaning and relates to what might be termed meta-signification.

In the third layer, Barthes engages with the concept of myth a level of meaning that harnesses signs in the service of ideology, presenting them as natural. Myths, according to Barthes, present dominant cultural messages (ideas, values, norms) as if they were historical and self-evident. At this level, clothing is no longer merely apparel but carries values that potentially resist critique.

For example, consider a photograph of a woman in traditional Hormozgan attire (such as Kandureh):

- Denotation: Reference to form, color, pattern, and type of garment, e.g., a short dress in a particular color.
- Connotation: Meanings such as dignity, ethnic belonging, or collective identity that this garment evokes in the viewer's mind.
- Myth: The transformation of local dress into a symbol of national identity and representation of authenticity-oriented cultural presence an identity that instills "antiquity" and "historical stability" in the audience.

Barthes' tri-level model provides a powerful analytical tool for studying clothing not merely as a consumer commodity but as a complex cultural text. Within this framework, clothing transforms from a mere "signifier" at the surface level into a carrier of "cultural and ideological signifieds." Applying this model to the analysis of traditional Hormozgan attire (such as Kandureh and Shila) enables one to embed the overt, implicit, and mythic layers of meaning at the heart of research, demonstrating how local garments can reproduce collective and cultural narratives.

Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative, based on interpretive-critical analysis, utilizing Roland Barthes' theoretical framework to examine the semiotics of women's clothing in Hormozgan. This approach relies on data collection through library research, historical documents, academic sources, cultural archives, and the analysis of artistic texts, with a focus on deep understanding of meanings embedded within social, cultural, and ideological contexts of artistic works. The objective of this method is to elucidate power structures and dominant culture within creative processes and to provide a multilayered, critical understanding of creativity, as framed within Roland Barthes' theoretical perspectives.

Discussion and Analysis

Reinterpreting Roland Barthes' Semiotic Principles in the Analysis of Women's Clothing in Hormozgan

Handicrafts Reinterpreting Roland Barthes' semiotic principles for analyzing women's clothing in Hormozgan provides a key approach to understanding the semantic and cultural layers of these

garments. Barthes, in his semiotic theory, introduces clothing as a system of signs and dual meanings, comprising the first level (the primary signifier encompassing the outward form and tangible characteristics of the garment) and the second level (the signified conveying cultural, social, and ideological meanings). In Hormozgan women's clothing, visual characteristics such as color, cut, garment length, and ornamentation constitute the first level of signs, while cultural concepts, social norms, and the representation of women's identity in the region construct the second level, or meaning. Vibrant, bright colors in garments such as Kandureh and Shila, beyond their aesthetic dimension, carry symbolic messages about joy, vitality, communal life, and connection to the natural environment and warm climate of Hormozgan. Barthes emphasizes that signs are never neutral and always carry cultural and social weight. Therefore, analyzing Hormozgan women's clothing without attention to its social, historical, and cultural context would remain incomplete. In other words, any embroidery, pattern, or embellishment on garments functions as a "visual language" conveying identity and symbolic concepts to the audience.

Furthermore, according to Barthes' perspective, clothing can reveal the processes of representing dominant culture and power structures. For example, the selection of fabric type, color, and ornamentation in Kandureh or Shila reflects not only individual taste but also one's role in society and belonging to specific social groups. From this standpoint, Hormozgan women's clothing constitutes a living text capable of analyzing and interpreting ways of life, beliefs, and cultural values of the community. Employing this analytical framework enables multilayered and profound understanding of semiotic concepts present in clothing, demonstrating that dress is not merely physical covering but carries a cultural and symbolic message connecting generations and local identity.

Semiotic Analysis of Kandureh

The visual and structural characteristics of Kandureh demonstrate the intelligent adaptation of this garment to the climatic, cultural, and social needs of Hormozgan's women. Kandureh is typically a short dress with a fitted bodice reaching to the ankle or below, its loose form facilitating ease of movement and proper ventilation in southern Iran's hot, humid climate. This structural feature, in addition to comfort, aligns with cultural values concerning modesty and coverage for women, illustrating a balance between physical comfort and observance of social norms. Regarding fabric and texture, Kandureh is primarily crafted from lightweight cotton or linen, which effectively wicks moisture and maintains a cool sensation throughout the day. The type and quality of fabric can also signify the family's social or economic status; higher-quality, finer textiles were typically used for special occasions or by affluent families.

In terms of design and ornamentation, Kandureh generally features a round or V-neck and relatively loose sleeves. The hems, sleeve edges, collars, and lower skirt borders in some

examples are adorned with colored bands, embroidery, or decorative stitching. These ornamental elements possess not only aesthetic value but also convey cultural and identity-related messages, reflecting the taste, skill, and creativity of Hormozgan's women.

The color palette of Kandureh is also noteworthy from a semiotic perspective. The use of vibrant, diverse colors such as red, blue, green, and yellow, in addition to creating visual appeal, expresses vitality, liveliness, and connection to the region's climatic and natural environment. These colors and visual patterns, combined with the loose, comfortable form of the garment, present an image of communal life, intimacy, and cultural identity of Hormozgan's women, transforming Kandureh from simple attire into a cultural and social symbol.

Overall, the visual and structural characteristics of Kandureh acquire meaning both in practical and climatic dimensions and in cultural and symbolic terms. Their analysis through a semiotic approach enables deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and identity-related messages embedded in this traditional garment.



Figure 1. Sample of Kandureh

Semiotic Analysis of Shila

The visual and structural characteristics of Shila reflect the intelligent adaptation of this garment to the cultural, social, and climatic needs of Hormozgan's women, expressing indigenous creativity in the design of traditional clothing. Shila is a long, relatively loose garment that typically extends from the shoulder to the lower body, its relaxed form facilitating comfortable movement and proper ventilation in the region's hot, humid climate. This loose form aligns with cultural values and social norms concerning women's modesty, demonstrating a balance between physical comfort and observance of hijab.

Regarding fabric and texture, Shila is often made from lightweight, cotton, or cambric textiles that, in addition to providing proper ventilation, maintain a cool and comfortable feeling

throughout the day. The type and quality of fabric can also signify the family's economic or social status; higher-quality, patterned fabrics were typically used for special occasions or by well-off families, indicating the individual's position in society.

In terms of design and ornamentation, Shila often features a simple neckline and loose sleeves, with some examples incorporating delicate embroidery, colored bands, or decorative stitching at the collar, sleeves, and hems. These embellishments, beyond their aesthetic dimension, convey cultural and identity-related messages, representing the skill, taste, and creativity of Hormozgan's women in traditional garment design.

The color palette of Shila also carries symbolic significance. The use of vibrant, diverse colors such as blue, green, red, and yellow, in addition to creating visual appeal, expresses vitality, communal life, and harmony with the natural and climatic environment of southern Iran. These colors, combined with the loose form and delicate ornamentation, present an image of the cultural identity, social belonging, and collective values of Hormozgan's women.

Overall, the visual and structural characteristics of Shila acquire meaning both from practical and climatic perspectives and from cultural and symbolic dimensions. The analysis of these features enables deeper understanding of identity, cultural, and social concepts, demonstrating that Shila is more than traditional attire—it carries the messages and cultural values of Hormozgan's women.

Analysis of Social, Cultural, and Climatic Influences on the Formation of Signs

Social, cultural, and climatic influences on the formation of signs in Hormozgan women's clothing, particularly in Kandureh and Shila, constitute one of the most significant determining factors of form, color, pattern, and ornamentation of these garments. These garments are not merely functional clothing for protecting the body against environmental conditions but also carry cultural, social, and identity-related messages. Examining the semiotic relationship and comparison between Kandureh and Shila reveals that various factors (from the natural environment to social relations and cultural rituals) have directly influenced the design and meaning-making of these garments.

From climatic and environmental perspectives, Hormozgan is a region with a hot, humid climate requiring lightweight, breathable, and comfortable clothing. In both garments, the loose form, lightweight fabric, and ventilation capability signify intelligent adaptation to environmental conditions. Bright, light colors also help reduce absorbed heat while simultaneously providing a sense of coolness and comfort. Thus, many of the visual and structural features of Kandureh and Shila are not merely aesthetic but represent direct responses to the region's climatic constraints and needs.

From social and cultural perspectives, Hormozgan women's clothing carries messages about individual status in society, cultural belonging, and social role. Kandureh, with its lively colors, elaborate ornamentation, and diverse patterns, is predominantly used in everyday life and social occasions, representing collective vitality, women's creativity, and the individual's connection to the community. In contrast, Shila, with its more limited colors and ornamentation, delicate embroidery, and patterns harmonized with ritual occasions, expresses cultural values and symbolic social norms. These differences indicate that the visual and symbolic signs of each garment are directly linked to its social and cultural function, with each element transmitting specific messages about the individual and society (Table 1).

Table 1. Climatic, Social, and Cultural Influences on the Signs of Kandureh and Shila.

Influence Axis	Kandureh	Shila	Semiotic Explanation/Analysis
Climatic	Short form with fitted bodice and loose skirt; lightweight, breathable fabric; bright colors	Long, loose form; lightweight fabric; bright but more limited colors	Both garments respond directly to Hormozgan's heat and humidity; Kandureh, with more open colors and form, is more suitable for daily life and social activities; Shila, with more subdued form and limited colors, is used for ritual and formal occasions
Social Function	Everyday use and social ceremonies; display of collective vitality and creativity	Use in ritual and religious occasions; representation of symbolic values	Signs in Kandureh convey messages related to daily life and collective belonging, while Shila carries identity and cultural messages specific to occasions
Cultural and Symbolic Identity	Vibrant colors and diverse patterns; prominent ornamentation; display of creativity and collective belonging	Colors and patterns harmonized with traditions and rituals; delicate and symbolic embroidery	Kandureh represents the individual's connection to community and daily life; Shila reflects norms, values, and cultural rituals
Historical Influences and Cultural Exchanges	Diverse patterns and embroidery inspired by regional and commercial interactions; expression of cultural history and social exchanges	Patterns and colors with traditional and ritual motifs; more limited influence from commercial exchanges	Both garments carry historical and cultural signs, but Kandureh, due to its everyday and social use, exhibits greater diversity in regional influences; Shila emphasizes traditional and ritual identity more
Symbolic Message	Vitality, communal life, cultural belonging, skill and creativity	Cultural values, social norms, religious and ritual occasions	Semiotic analysis shows each garment carries multilayered messages, with form, ornamentation, and colors all effective in transmitting meaning

Conceptual Analysis of Findings

The findings of this research demonstrate that the clothing of Hormozgan's women, particularly Kandureh and Shila, transcends their practical function as coverings to carry complex cultural, social, and identity-related messages. The conceptual analysis of these results, utilizing

Roland Barthes' theoretical framework, enables the identification of different layers of meaning, signs, and cultural codes.

One of the most significant findings concerns the relationship between form, color, and pattern with the region's climatic and environmental conditions. The loose form of both garments, in addition to facilitating ventilation and comfort in hot, humid weather, reflects the observance of social norms and women's modesty. This demonstrates that Hormozgan's traditional clothing results from the interaction between biological needs and social constraints. In other words, the form of the garment functions as a climatic and social sign, and its meaning and message cannot be grasped through visual observation alone but require understanding of cultural and social context. Regarding colors and patterns, the findings indicate that vibrant, diverse colors in Kandureh convey messages about social vitality, participation in collective occasions, and women's creativity. In contrast, the colors and patterns of Shila are more limited and harmonious, reflecting ritual occasions, cultural norms, and symbolic values of the community. This difference in color and ornamentation selection indicates the distinct social and cultural functions of each garment and demonstrates that signs in Hormozgan's traditional clothing are always functions of social and cultural contexts. Conceptual analysis also reveals that embellishments and patterns carry identity and historical messages. Embroidery, colored bands, and geometric or floral patterns in both garments not only express the aesthetics and skill of Hormozgan's women but also reflect historical experiences, cultural exchanges, and regional commercial interactions.

Another significant finding concerns the relationship between every day and ritual functions of garments and the representation of women's identity. Kandureh, with its loose form, prominent ornamentation, and vibrant colors, is predominantly used in social occasions and daily activities, reflecting communal life, cultural belonging, and individual creativity. Shila, with its more subdued form, delicate ornamentation, and harmonious colors, assumes a more prominent role in ritual, religious, and formal occasions, expressing adherence to cultural norms, symbolic values, and women's social status within the collective structure of society. This analysis demonstrates that each garment, depending on its functional context, conveys different layers of meaning and message, and the concept of Hormozgan women's identity is represented at these two distinct levels.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize that Hormozgan's traditional clothing establishes a connection between past and present. The patterns and motifs employed in Kandureh and Shila bear signs of historical cultural exchanges, maritime trade routes, and regional interactions, and for this reason, the garments carry the historical, cultural, and social identity of women as well. This indicates that traditional attire, beyond beauty and utility, serves as an important tool for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage and collective identity.

This conceptual analysis provides a solid foundation for understanding the relationship between form, ornamentation, color, pattern, and socio-cultural contexts in Hormozgan's traditional clothing, demonstrating that Kandureh and Shila constitute living instruments for studying identity, symbols, and culture among women in this region.



Figure 2. Sample of Shila.

Presenting New Foundations for the Semiotic Analysis of Kandureh and Shila from Roland Barthes' Perspective

Analysis The analysis of traditional clothing worn by women in Hormozgan, particularly Kandureh and Shila, through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotics reveals that these garments are not merely covering devices but carriers of cultural, social, and identity-related texts. Presenting new foundations for analyzing these garments requires a reinterpretation of Barthes' theoretical principles and their application to the cultural, historical, and social characteristics of Hormozgan.

From Roland Barthes' perspective, each garment can be analyzed as a multilayered text possessing two levels of meaning: the first level encompasses tangible, observable characteristics such as form, color, fabric type, and ornamentation; the second level represents the cultural, social, and identity-related concepts embedded in the garment. In analyzing Kandureh, the loose and relaxed form, vibrant colors, and diverse patterns constitute the first level of signs, while the second level conveys messages about daily life, collective vitality, cultural belonging, and women's creativity. In Shila, the long, loose form, harmonious patterns, and delicate embroidery form the first level of signs, while the second level represents ritual concepts, adherence to norms, symbolic values, and women's social status.

Ultimately, the presentation of these new foundations provides a basis for subsequent research that can undertake semiotic analyses of traditional clothing in other regions of Iran or the world from similar perspectives, demonstrating that traditional attire consistently carries multilayered,

cultural, and identity-related meanings whose comprehension necessitates the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives and attention to social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Conclusion

This The present study, focusing on the semiotics of traditional clothing worn by women in Hormozgan (particularly Kandureh and Shila) demonstrated that these garments, beyond their purely utilitarian aspects, carry complex layers of cultural, social, historical, and symbolic meanings. Based on Roland Barthes' tri-level model, both garments not only function at the denotative level as suitable coverings for the hot, humid climate of southern Iran but also, at the levels of connotation and myth, play a significant role in reproducing and transmitting cultural and social values. In other words, Kandureh and Shila can be read as cultural texts bearing signs of identity, beliefs, and the collective memory of women in this region. Kandureh, with features such as loose cut, vibrant colors, and diverse ornamentation, primarily reflects the daily life, social vitality, and creativity of Hormozgan's women. This garment demonstrates how clothing can simultaneously respond to climatic needs and embody local taste and art. In contrast, Shila, with its more subdued form, harmonious colors, and delicate ornamentation, is more closely tied to ritual occasions and symbolic values of the community, functioning as a symbol of norm observance, adherence to traditions, and representation of women's social status. This distinction between the two garments indicates the functional and semantic diversity of clothing within Hormozgan's cultural context—diversity that itself, as a cultural sign, signifies the multilayered nature of women's identity in this region.

Furthermore, the research findings revealed that Kandureh and Shila, in addition to their social and cultural functions, also reflect the history of Hormozgan's economic and commercial interactions with other regions of the world. The presence of patterns, colors, and fabrics imported from India, Africa, and Arab countries demonstrates that these garments are not merely part of indigenous heritage but products of broader historical and cultural exchange processes. This underscores the importance of the semiotics of clothing, as it shows that garments can narrate history, economic interactions, and the transmission of transnational values as well.

From a theoretical perspective, this research confirms that Barthes' semiotic framework constitutes a powerful tool for analyzing traditional clothing. This framework enables researchers to move beyond the surface appearance of garments and reveal their hidden cultural, social, and ideological layers. Thus, traditional clothing is understood not merely as material heritage but as a dynamic semiotic text that continuously reproduces meaning within the context of time and culture.

Ultimately, it can be concluded that Kandureh and Shila, as two prominent examples of Hormozgan women's clothing, carry narratives of individual and collective identity, the history of

cultural exchanges, and the reflection of social values and norms. These garments serve as instruments for understanding the connection between past and present, individual and society, and tradition and modernity. From this perspective, attention to the semiotics of clothing is not only essential for understanding Hormozgan's cultural heritage but can also provide a broad foundation for comparative studies in other societies and cultures. Such an approach reminds us that garments are not merely coverings but constitute a visual and cultural language that reflects the values, identities, and beliefs of a society and transmits them to future generations.

Author Contributions

The authors have conceptualized the article and writing of the original and subsequent drafts.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors.

Ethical considerations

The authors avoided data fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and misconduct.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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