

Aesthetic Values of Ornaments in Karawo Textile in Gorontalo

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This research is financed by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, through the doctoral dissertation research scheme in 2018.

Abstract

Ornaments in the *Karawo* textile in Gorontalo-Indonesia act as the expression of art representing the physical and social environments of the society. The forms of ornaments are made unique and able to reflect innumerable values to communicate. However, the existence of these ornaments is valued solely as the decorating elements of a product for the sake of economic interest, and therefore, it cannot contribute to the development of science, especially in the field of arts. This research aims to discuss the aesthetic values of *karawo* ornaments in their entirety, from the aspects of form, meaning, and appearance. The data were collected through observation, interview, and literature study. The data analysis was conducted interactively during and after the data collection. The results show that the ornaments of *karawo* were formed by visual elements in the forms of motives, colors, and textures arranged by following the principle of rhythm, contrast, harmony, unity and balance, to create dynamic impression, and fresh, pleasure, and energetic atmosphere. This belongs to the aesthetic excellence of the *karawo* ornaments. The aesthetic form at the same time reflects the diversity in meaning to communicate, such as the symbol of a leader with his noble nature, the symbol of cooperation culture, which is worth preserving, and the idea about natural preservation. The appearance of the *karawo* ornaments in the product can improve the quality of the product itself, and at once reflects the personal identity and social status of the wearer. This research findings prove that the ornaments function not only as the visual pleasure, but also as the communication of various meanings and social and individual status, so that the presence is always fundamental, as to enrich our art knowledge.

Keywords: *karawo* ornaments, aesthetic values, shape, meaning, appearance

1. Introduction

Karawo is a technique to shape ornaments in textiles through the process of designing, slicing, and retraction of the certain parts of the textile fiber to create the basic field, then back embroider the pulled out fibers to produce various motives. Motif structure shaped using *karawo* technique in textile is called *karawo* textile ornament, or known as “*karawo* ornament”, and the textile decorated with *karawo* ornaments is called “*karawo* textile”. The production and the products of the ornaments appear and develop massively in Gorontalo Province, Indonesia. Except by the designers, *karawo* textile production is carried out by women for generations, so that this practice is considered as the symbol of subordination of women in Gorontalo Province (Niode, 2007). More than 7000 women in Gorontalo work and earn money by producing *karawo* textile to raise the family economy (Domili, et al, 1996/1997). This means that the activity of making *karawo* ornaments is seen only as an economic activity, which aims to promote the local welfare. In other words, the skill and the masterpiece of women are valued merely as the commodities to support the economy of their families.

The making of *karawo* ornaments does not only rely on the hand skills, but also involves various expressions of feeling, to produce unique and aesthetic ornaments, which are rich of symbolic values. Therefore, the *karawo* ornaments are valued as the symbol of creativity and expression of the beauty of Gorontalo society (Niode, 2007). This shows that the production and products of *karawo* ornaments have taken root in social and cultural life of Gorontalo people. The uniqueness and beauty of *karawo* ornament shapes, which reflects many values to communicate, have not been fully revealed, and thus, its existence has a little contribution to the development of our art science.

This research aims to reveal the aesthetic values of *karawo* ornaments comprehensively, including many aspects such as shape, content (meaning), and appearance. From the aspect of shape, the visual structure is discussed on how it constructs the ornaments by following certain arrangement principles to produce artistic and entertaining ornaments. From the content (meaning) aspect, the social messages addressed to the public will be interpreted. The appearance aspect will discuss the contribution of the *karawo* ornaments when they are applied to decorate a product. This study is fundamental to be conducted to position the *karawo* ornaments in the art discourse of academic world and to enrich our knowledge on the ornament or decorative art.

2. Literature Reviews

Aesthetic value to refer to that which makes an object worthy or unworthy of being perceived, contemplated, or otherwise appreciated for its own sake (Auman, 2014: p.1). This theory implies that the source of the aesthetic value is the quality of the object itself. In general sense, the worthy and interesting objects with aesthetic values to be discussed and pondered are artworks. An individual perceives the aesthetic values when he/she is presented with the artworks. As the aesthetic object, artworks consist of three fundamental aspects: shape or structure, content or meaning of the shape, and appearance (Djelantik, 1999). *Karawo* ornaments as the aesthetic object certainly consist of those mentioned aspects, so that to reveal the aesthetic values, we need to delve the three aspects: shape, meaning, and appearance.

The shape of artworks is regarding the basic elements and the arrangements of those elements (Djelantik, 1999). In the ornamental art, the shape is constructed by motives as the basic elements of certain patterns. Pattern is a composition formed by one or more motives, which are then repeated and arranged regularly according to the principles of arrangement, decoration, and balance (Guntur, 2010). The principles of pattern arrangement include harmony, contrasts, rhythm, and gradation, with the unity and balance as the basis (Dharsono, 2016). The aesthetic values of the ornament shapes, such as in *karawo*, can be revealed through the basic elements and their principles of pattern arrangement. Motives as the element of ornaments are often used to classify the types of ornaments. Meyer (1917) classifies the ornaments based on the motives into four types, namely: geometric ornaments, plant ornaments, animal ornaments, and artificial object ornaments. This classification can also be used to categorize the types of *karawo* ornaments.

Content or meaning is the message of a certain artwork, which is addressed to the observer or public, such as: certain feeling or situation, idea or conception on something, and certain social messages (Djelantik, 1999). In other words, the aesthetic value of the art is not merely regarding the shape, but also the meaning intended to be communicated through the shape itself. Regarding the ornamental art, Criticos (2004) argues that ornament functions as the device to produce, articulate, and enhance the meaning; ornament symbolically produces representational strata needed by every individual or group to express the identity. It means that the ornament such as *karawo* ornament possesses the capacity to communicate the meaning articulated through the shape or symbolic representation.

The appearance of the artwork belongs to the ways of presenting the art to the public (Djelantik, 1999). This will lead to the role and function of the art when it is presented to the public. As for the ornamental art, it is usually presented as the decoration to an object or product. Glaveanu (2014: p. 83) argues, “ornaments as patterned ‘markings’ in the world resulting out of acts of decoration or embellishment that, when ‘added’ to objects or processes, contribute to both their aesthetic quality and individual and social value”. This means that the appearance of the ornament in a certain object supports not only the aesthetic visual, but also the individual and social values of the object itself. Such values are certainly possessed in the appearance of *karawo* ornaments in a certain product. Furthermore, once the product is purchased and used, the product gains the symbolic dimension and begins to communicate the meaning and values of social status and individual taste of the owner (Walker, 1989).

3. Methodology

This study belongs to a qualitative research, which specifically discusses the aesthetic values of the ornaments in the *karawo* textile. The data were collected through observation, interview, and literature study. Observation was conducted to delve the physical data concerning the shape and appearance of the *karawo* ornaments. The sample was selected based on certain criteria, that the ornaments have been commonly used and indicate a linkage with the natural, cultural, and social environment of Gorontalo society. The interview was conducted with some informants, namely: designer, expert craftswoman, customary figure, and cultural observer, with the range of age between 45-81 years old. The interview was intended to reveal the content (meaning) contained in the *karawo* ornaments, both in the shape and the appearance as the decoration of the product. Literature study was conducted to gain the secondary data as the accomplishment to the primary data (result of observation and interview) and to support the analysis. The data accuracy was determined by the data source triangulation, in which the same or similar data were matched through different data sources (Sutopo, 2001). Data were analyzed interactively during and after the data collection were completed, through the data categorization and selection, data interpretation with critical interpretation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4. Results and Discussion

After classifying the ornaments based on the motives, in accordance to Meyer (1917), the most popular *karawo* ornaments, which show the relation to the physical, social, and cultural environments of Gorontalo society, can be categorized to three types, namely: geometric ornaments, plant (floral) ornaments, and animal ornaments. The representation of each category has been selected as the sample in the discussion of aesthetic value of *karawo* ornaments intensively, from the shape, meaning, and appearance aspects.

4.1. Aesthetic Value of Geometric Motif of *Karawo* Ornament

4.1.1 Shape

The geometric motif ornament is the oldest type of all decorating elements, which develops gradually from the original (plain) to artistic geometric, along with the advancement of science and culture (Meyer, 1917). Geometric motive of *karawo* ornament also belongs to the oldest motives, given it has already existed since the appearance of *karawo* ornaments in Gorontalo. This motif develops from time to time along with the skill development of the artisan, the availability of the textile materials, and the complexity of function demands. The sample of geometric motif is in the figure 1.

The main motive of this ornament is the rhombus rectangular shapes made in various sizes. The medium sized motives are placed on the big sized ones with different colors, and then repeated with constant rhythm six times. Two small sized motives between the repetition act as the variation to make the shape more decorative. As for the edge motives, rhombus rectangular shapes are divided into four and positioned face to face. Between the motif group repetitions, there are small motives, as the connector to make the pattern looks united. All motives are arranged vertically to create the looming impression. The value of unity feels very strong due to the application of symmetrical balance.

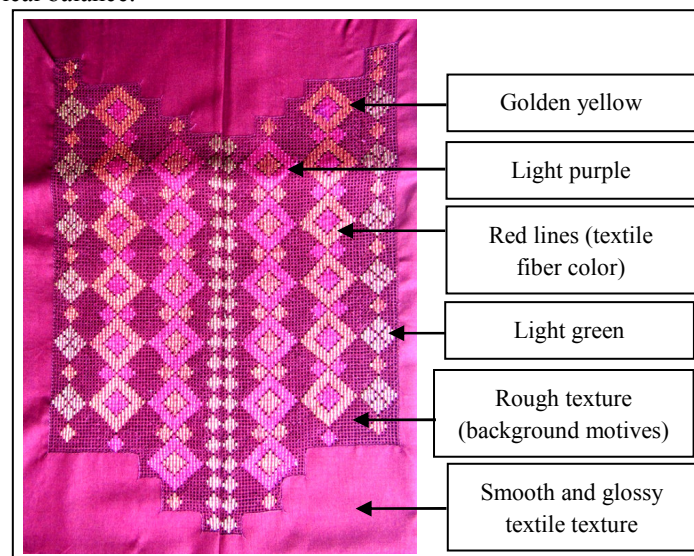


Figure 1. Geometric motif of *karawo* ornament
(Source: Rumah Karawo collection, 2017)

The colors applied consist of three types: golden yellow, purple, and light green. Despite of the contrast between three colors mentioned, the unity is attained. This is due to the regular color repetition and the variation of the textile basic color in the whole motives. The contrast composition is also shown by the combination of smooth and glossy texture of the textile and the rough texture of the motives and the background motives caused by the *rawangan*, the bonding thread in the perforated fabric (Sudana, 2015).

The color composition, which tends to contrast and the combination of the smooth and the rough textures make the geometric motives of *karawo* ornaments stand out, creating a strong dynamic. This dynamic is also resulted from the various rhombus rectangle motive arrangement with the diagonal straight lines, which give firm and sharp impression. Thereby, it arises the unity in diversity or the unity in cohesiveness, which is “the unity or the wholeness attained through the balanced power relation between the different elements” (Djelantik, 1999: p. 49). The strong dynamic of the shape of geometric *karawo* ornaments creates the dynamic and firm impression, and the tense and energetic atmosphere. Such impression and atmosphere belong to the aesthetic values of the ornament shape.

4.1.2 Content or Meaning

The meaning of geometric motive can be detected from the source of the idea. The designer, John Koraag, 54 years old, explains, “The rectangular lined up *karawo* motif was inspired by the *pahangga* I saw in the *poade* [aisle for custom brides in Gorontalo] pillars” (Interview, April 10 2018). It is clear that the source of idea of the *karawo* geometric motive is the shape of *pahangga*. The term *pahangga* comes from Gorontalo language, which means the palm sugar, wrapped with leaves and is shaped like two combined pyramids. This *pahangga* shape is later adapted as the decoration in the aisle pillars for the custom bride in Gorontalo. The designer then adapted this *pahangga* shape to *karawo* motifs.

The shape of *pahangga*, which becomes the inspiration in creating the geometric motive of *karawo* ornament, has a very noble meaning, as described by the *baate* (customary leader), Lihu, 81 years old:

Pahangga was once placed in front of the house of officials; to signify the level of their positions [...]

the number ranges from five to 13, according to the level. As for the village head is 5 *pahangga*, *Marsaoleh* or sub-district head is 6 *pahangga*, *Jogugu* or prime minister is 7-8 *pahangga*, and for the king is 9-13 *pahanga* [...] common people do not gain *pahangga* (Interview, March 18th, 2017).

This quote implies an idea that the *pahangga* plays role as the symbol of rank and authority of a leader in the royal government system in Gorontalo. The number of *pahangga* refers to the hierarchy of power possessed by a leader, from the lowest position namely village head with five *pahangga* to the highest position or the king with 9-13 *pahangga*. The hierarchy of power symbolized by the number of *pahangga* is actually a conception of leadership to manage the government structure so that the leaders work according to their authority and the wheels of government go well. Although the government system changes, the concept stays relevant. This leadership concept is the meaning of the geometric motif of *karawo* ornament, which is adapted from *pahangga* shape as the symbol.

The meaning of geometric motive in *karawo* ornament is also delivered by the type of colors applied (yellow, purple, red, and green), as explained by Abas, 54 years old: “The colors of *karawo* motives all belong to the custom colors and possess certain meanings. Yellow: the leader wisdom, purple: majesty, red: bravery, green: loyalty [...] whenever the craftswoman is presented with any motif design, they will choose those colors, because they are accustomed to such colors” (Interview, June 7 2016). It is explicitly shown that the colors applied to the geometric motif of *karawo* ornaments are custom colors, which are full of meaning, regarding the ideal characters of a leader, such as wise, brave, and loyal. Such colors have commonly been used and taken root in the social life of Gorontalo society. In the traditional uniform called *Tilabataila*, type and composition of such colors are found to deliver the same meaning. The appearance of those symbolic custom colors in *karawo* ornaments can be interpreted as the symbol to communicate the values of ideal leadership characters to be the role model of the society.

4.1.3 Appearance

Karawo ornament is usually presented as the decorating element of an apparel. As for *karawo* ornament, the geometric motive is considered to suit the male outfit as the decoration. The result is as follows.



Figure 2. The appearance of geometric motif of *karawo* ornament
(Source: Rumah Karawo collection, 2017)

The geometric motif of *karawo* ornament above is shown on the chest of a long sleeved men’s shirt. The proportion of the motif looks harmonious and distinctive with the shirt mode. The fashion critic, Abas 54 years old explained, “the *karawo* ornament with *pahangga* is indeed suitable for men’s apparel. The application must be in balance, in order to gain the bold and charismatic, not soft impression (interview, October 3rd, 2016). This explanation indicates the relation between shape, meaning, and appearance. The shape of the ornament gives the firm and calm impressions. The meaning itself is the symbol of a leader with the calm, decisive, and charismatic characters. The appearance of the shirt also gives the same impressions as the ideal characters of a leader. The harmony of the ornament shape with the fashion mode supports the visual beauty and reveals the character and

social status of the wearer. This is in accordance to the research finding by Glaveanu (2014: p. 87), “ornaments can bridge aesthetic and utilitarian, individual and social functions”. The color combination of the ornament, which is in contrast to the color of the long shirt, aims to communicate the social status and the taste of the wearer. This can be inferred from the explanation of the designer, Lahinta, 45 years old:

I chose *karawo* ornament with the contrast color combination for this design, because it has been the taste of Gorontalo people, [...] The model is long-sleeved shirt and it is worn outside the trousers, to make the wearer look elegant but stylish, and avoid too formal impression. This is suitable for the middle class leaders, the young executives who represent the establishment and important position in their jobs, but still respect the traditional culture. This is the fundamental point of the *karawo* ornament (Interview, February 23, 2018).

This quote indicates that the appearance of *karawo* ornament with the contrasting colors on the shirt is related to the aesthetic taste of Gorontalo people, who prefer the apparel with contrasting colors. Meanwhile, the appearance of *karawo* ornament in long-sleeved shirt worn outside aims to make the wearer look stylish and to reveal the character of a mature and established man. The fundamental role of *karawo* ornament at this point is to reflect the wearer as a modern man who still respects the traditional culture, so that he will be respected by the society where the culture is originated. The appearance of *karawo* ornament in this case is relevant to the argument which says that in every culture, the way a person dresses, the type of the type of fabric used, its color and motive speaks to the identity of the wearer, including to his social position and role within the community (Malik and Azhar, 2015).

4.2 Aesthetic Value of Plant Motif of *Karawo* Ornament

4.2.1. Shape

Plant motif ornament includes all ornaments adapted from the shapes of plants. Meyer (1917) explains, the selection of the type of plant is based on the beauty of the shape and the symbolic meaning. The shape beauty covers the delicacy, the fragrance, and the benefit for the livelihood. Based on the criteria mentioned, the type of plants will be selected and adapted as the *karawo* ornament. One of the type of plants selected is corns. This plant is commonly planted by farmers in Gorontalo and becomes the food source of the local people. In addition, corn has been the main farming commodity in Gorontalo Province. Corn as the realization of the natural environment is represented in unique and aesthetic way in the form of *karawo* ornament. The ornament shapes adapted from the corn plant are as in the figure 3.

The structure of *karawo* ornament adapted from the corn plant is composed by several motives, such as stalk, leaf, and fruit or flower. The arrangement of motives is interconnected, centered on one parent base point and then flows to every direction. This supports the proposition by Jones (1868: p. 6) “In surface decoration all lines [motives] should flow out of a parent stem”. The stem motive is made with various directions, slips from under the leaves to the fruit base, or panhandle out with a circular end (*ukel* line). Stalk motives made with varied straight lines following the direction of the textile fiber and organized with wavy rhythm, create the smooth dynamic impression. The construction of motives with the embroidery of varied straight lines following the direction of the textile fiber becomes the characteristic of all *karawo* ornaments (Sudana, 2015).

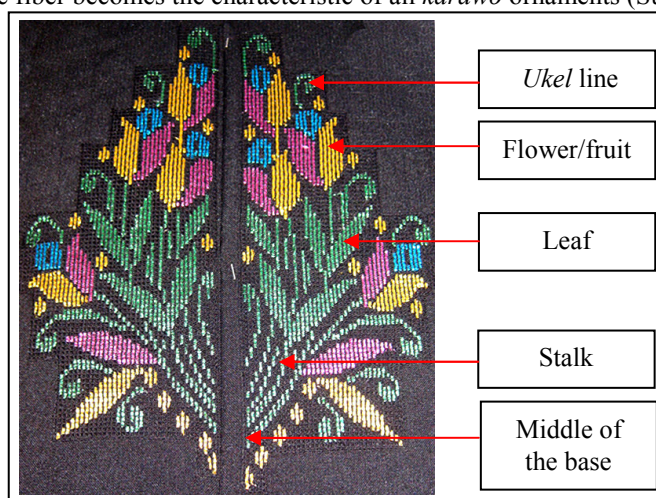


Figure 3. Plants motif of *karawo* ornament
(Source: Kasim Collection)

The leaf motives are arranged spreading out to all directions, creating a complicated impression as how the real leaves grow naturally. The fruit motives as the main motives are arranged in groups with light colors so that they look dominant. The impression of unity is shown by the application of symmetrical balance. The color types

composed in the *karawo* ornament with Plants motives are yellow, green, blue, and purple. Color is utilized to develop shapes and to distinguish an object or motif from others (Jones, 1868). Despite of the color type composition which is not contrast, the strong intensity of each color (light) creates the strong dynamic. Such arrangement of motives and color composition in the ornament as a whole creates the refreshing and energetic impressions as the aesthetic values.

4.2.2 Content or Meaning

The meaning of *karawo* ornament with corn plant motif is in accordance to the natural condition in Gorontalo, as exposed by John Koraag, 56 years old. “The first time I created the corn motif was in 1980 [...] because they are massively planted in Gorontalo, unlike Minahasa Region which is mainly planted with cloves [...] So, corn is most suitable to represent the natural resource in Gorontalo (Interview, April 10th, 2018). This indicates that *karawo* ornament with plant motif also acts as the representation of the natural treasure, which becomes the source of livelihood. Here, ornament acts as the symbol of the interdependency between human and the environment (Criticos, 2004).

For Gorontalo people, corn plant is the source of livelihood and the symbol of the cooperation culture. Lihu, 81 years old, explained “*Milu* [corn] is treasured as the source of livelihood, it is planted together, teaching us the *mohuyula* [mutual cooperation], because we cannot live by ourselves (interview, March 18th, 2017). More explicitly, Husain, 65 years old, stated “*milu* [corn] seeds, grow in groups regularly [...] In the Gorontalo culture we call it *huyula* [mutual cooperation], living together in harmony (interview, April 6th, 2018). Implicitly, the corn is treasured as the source of livelihood and the symbol of cooperation, because of the seeds which grow regularly in groups and the plantation which is done together by mutual cooperation of the farmers. Therefore, the agricultural community firstly applies *huyula* culture.

Huyula culture is the cooperation or mutual assistance system among the members of the society for the community purpose based on the social solidarity (Yunus, 2013). Corn motif is the symbol, which represents the *huyula* culture. In this *huyula* culture, there are unity, caring, and equality values to attain the community purpose. The existence of *karawo* ornament with corn motif becomes a medium to communicate the message about those values. This is fundamental because Gorontalo people’s behavior is indicated starting to ignore the *Huyula* tradition that had been practiced by their ancestors (Yunus, 2013).

4.2.3. Appearance

Karawo ornaments with plant motives are commonly presented as the decoration of women apparel, especially the big sized ornaments. The attractive appearance is shown in the long blouse as urban moslem women apparel, with the characteristic of the use of hijab and tight trousers (see figure 5). *Karawo* ornament is applied in the front side (bottom and top) of the blouse symmetrically. As for the lower part, the *karawo* ornament is applied in the right and left sides, so that the blouse looks more decorative. The color of the ornament looks more dominant combined with the contrasting basic color of the textile.

The appearance of *karawo* ornament in the Muslim apparel mode functions not only as the cover of body and the addition to the beauty of the apparel, but also as the reflection of the fashionable style of modern Muslim women. This is similar to the proposition by Walker (1989), that style or appearance is somewhat important in fashion, where the appearance is valued more significant than the function. Such fashion mode suits the taste of the urban Muslim women who always appear fashionable and sensual, but at once represent themselves as devoted Muslims. This is in accordance to the statement, “There are always desire and pride among women, whether they want to look devoted but still are beautiful and sensual; devoted but still stylish; spiritualist but also fashionable” (Ibrahim, 2007: p. 152-153).

The appearance of *karawo* ornament as the decorating element in Muslim women apparel was commented on by Abas, 54 years old. “The Muslim fashion with *karawo* ornament looks more distinctive and different from the Muslim fashion from other regions [...] We can easily distinguish the *Hajj* congregations from Gorontalo, from those congregations coming from other regions, because of the *karawo* ornaments in their apparel” (interview, October 3rd, 2016). It is explicitly shown that the Muslim apparel decorated with *karawo* ornament can reveal the social and cultural identity of the wearer, which distinguish them from the other regions in Indonesia. Therefore, Glăveanu (2014: p. 88) explains, “Decoration has long served as an identity marker able to increase the social cohesion of human communities and differentiate them from other communities, even within the same national culture”.



Figure 4. The appearance of *Karawo* ornament with plant motif
(Source: *Karawo* Festival, 2017)

Various meanings reflected by the appearance of *karawo* ornament with plant motives in the apparel are different from the initial meaning that is as the source of livelihood and the symbol of cooperation (*huyula*) culture. This is a very common phenomenon happening in the contextualization of ornaments meaning, because the object or the decorated products are varied. In this sense, the ornament can be interpreted in various meanings according to the context and the function. Therefore, it is important to note that the art or design critic must realize, the experience sourced from the sensitivity and subjectivity is not the absolute truth, and they have to be open minded to the meaning with new different values (Dharsono, 2016: 23).

4.3. Aesthetic Values of Animal Motif of *Karawo* Ornaments

4.3.1 Shape

Karawo ornament with animal motives are mostly adapted from the shapes of fish. This is considered due to its relation to the geographical location of Gorontalo Province that is surrounded by the sea, so that various fish shapes are common to the local people in their daily lives. The exotic fish shapes have inspired and aroused the designer to adapt them into *karawo* ornaments. One of the *karawo* ornament adapted from the fish shapes can be seen in figure 5 below.

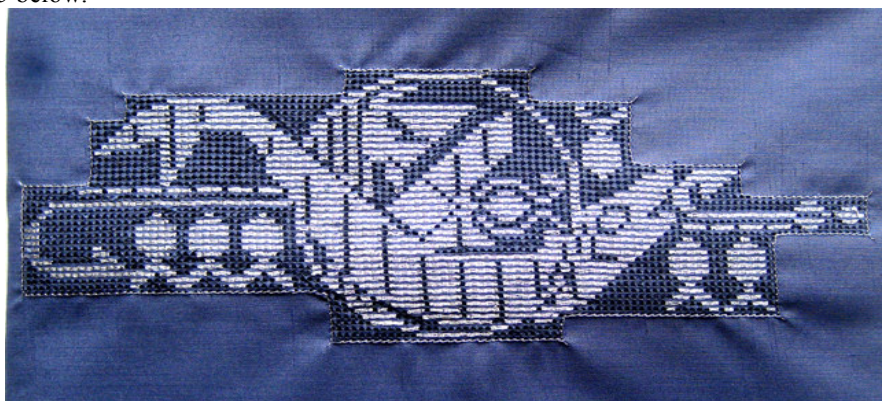


Figure 5. *Karawo* ornament with fish (animal) motif
(Source: Sudana Collection, 2018)

Types of fish adapted as the ornament in the picture resembles the dolphin. The biggest fish motif is pictured moving through a circle. The rhythm of the fish body moves creates the smooth dynamic impression. The big fish motif is the main motif completed with the supporting motives in forms of small fish and other various motives, making the ornament look more decorative and elaborate. The application of metallic white color to all motives combined with the basic blue color of the textile makes the character of the motif more

dominant and creates the impression of harmony. Such harmony reinforces the wholeness, through giving the calm and comfortable impression (Djelantik, 1999). This *karawo* ornament with fish motive depicts the dynamics and harmony of the atmosphere of marine life habitat.

4.3.2 Content or Meaning

Dolphin, which has been adapted into the main motif of *karawo* ornament, belongs to the intelligent fish species, because it can be easily trained and is very close to human life. Therefore, dolphin is commonly treated as a symbolic fish. Meyer (1917) reveals that dolphin became a noble title in France, started from Guigo IV and his successors who were required to acquire “Dauphin” title. This indicates that dolphin has been widely adapted as motives in ornament not only because of its beautiful shape, but also because it communicates the certain symbolic meaning.

In the fish motif of *karawo* ornament, the designer sees the fish not only as the representation of a specific fish type, but also the representation of all fish habitats. This can be inferred from the explanation of the designer, John Koraag, 56 years old: “Through the fish motives, I intend to show that Gorontalo is rich in types of fish [...] it becomes the food source [...] it is our source of livelihood. As for me, this reality is worth knowing” (Interview, April 10th, 2018). It is implicitly indicated that the emergence of fish motif in *karawo* ornament is due to the natural suggestion. The ornament binds human with the physical reality of the environment (Criticos, 2004). The designer is aroused to adapt the fish shapes in his surrounding environment as the ornament because he thinks that fish are important to the human life. It can thereby revealed that the meaning communicated through the fish motif of *karawo* ornament is the message to remind the people of the importance of fish to human life.

Apparently, the meaning or message communicated through the fish shaped *karawo* ornament can be captured by the community. This is indicated by the explanation of Usman, 81 years old. “when looking at fish motif in *karawo*, I immediately remember the environment in Gorontalo which is surrounded by the sea [...] our lake that once was full of fish but now it is damaged [...] hopefully, the fish motives in his *karawo* textile reminds us all about it” (interview, March 23rd, 2017). The meaning caught by people from the ornament is regarding the environmental (lake) damage as the habitat of many types of fish. Hopefully, the existence of the ornament can be a medium to remind the people about the environmental damage. The meaning communicated is not in the form of emotion, but an idea to remind people about the importance of fish as the source of livelihood and the environmental damage. The way of delivering the idea through the unique and aesthetic visual medium such as fish motive of *karawo* ornament is considered more successful and the message is easily absorbed by people, because delivering the idea through art is more prevalent compared to other ways (Djelantik, 1999).

4.3.3 Appearance

Fish motif of *karawo* ornament is usually displayed as the decoration to the men’s shirt for work, as seen in the picture 6 below.



Figure 6. The appearance of *karawo* ornament with fish (animal) motifs
(Source: Sudana Collection, 2018)

The fish motif of *karawo* ornament in the shirt is shown in the chest part. The big sized ornament is applied on the right side and the small sized ornament is on the left side (pocket), so that the dynamic asymmetrical

balance is attained. The *karawo* ornament on the shirt is composed in vertical direction to create the tall impression, because the eyes sight will go up and down while looking at it. This aims to make the person who wear this apparel look taller, because in the fashion design, the ideal tall posture is more attractive.

There are many things which become the consideration in the appearance of *karawo* ornament on the shirt, in order to make it more attractive and able to communicate the certain social values of the wearer. This is well explained by the designer, Lahinta, 45 years old. "The first thing that crossed my mind when I designed the shirt was the quality of the *karawo* ornament and the positioning on the design, and then who was going to wear it, and for what event [...] This is to make the wearer look charismatic, distinctive, and exclusive so that he or she will get a lot of praise" (Interview, May 23rd, 2018). This indicates that to present the *karawo* ornament on the apparel, there are many aspects to be considered, such as the quality and the composition of the ornament, the character of the wearer, the place to wear, and the mode of the clothes. The suitability between the elements creates the elegant and distinctive fashion style thus makes the appearance of the wearer more charismatic and exclusive, and he will get praise (compliment) during the social interaction. This is because the apparel functions as the effective communication tool in the social interaction (Higgins and Eicher, 1992).

5. Conclusion

The aesthetic value of the shape of *karawo* ornaments is derived from the organization of the visual elements namely motives, colors, and unique textures arranged by following the principles: rhythm (repetition), contrast, harmony, and the principles of unity and balance. The characteristic is that the composition of the motives in the pattern seems united and balance, the motives arranged in the pattern stand out and are obviously different from the textile, the color composition looks clear and contrast, but is in unity and harmony. The organization of visual elements with the principle of arrangement creates the dynamic impression and the refreshing, fun, alive, and energetic atmosphere. This makes the shape of *karawo* ornament looks beautiful and worthy to be enjoyed and appreciated.

Karawo ornaments offer not only visual beauty, but also a reflection of many values to communicated. Each ornament has a distinct meaning. *Karawo* ornament with geometric motif communicates the symbolic meaning about the authority and duty of the leaders in every position with their noble characters, such as bold, faithful, sincere, and wise. *Karawo* ornaments with the plant motif reflects the meaning about the significance of plants to the human's life and acts as the cultural symbol of mutual cooperation (*huyula*) which is worth preserving. The meaning of *karawo* ornament with animal motif is the idea to arouse people to preserve the various fish habitat and ecosystem as the source of livelihood. Various meanings communicated through the *karawo* ornaments show that the ornaments might act as the reminder and guide of our practical activities in life.

The appearance of *karawo* ornaments as the decoration in various apparel mode has physical and social functions. It physically enhances the beauty of the structure of the apparel in which it is applied as the decoration. Socially, *karawo* ornaments appearance in the apparel when it is worn can reflect the identity and the social status of the wearer, for instance: reflects the identity as the Gorontalo local people; reflects a successful, charismatic, and stylish man; reflects a devoted, fashionable, and trendy moslem woman, but respects the traditional culture. Identity and social image are reflected not by the structure of the apparel, but by the decoration of *karawo* ornaments. This proves that the existence of ornaments in a certain object or product contributes not only to the enhancement of physical quality, but also to the social and individual dimensions of the user or the owner of the product itself.

The research on the ornaments conducted comprehensively from the shape, meaning, and appearance aspects, such as in this *karawo* ornaments, enables the revelation of the excellences of the studied ornaments. Therefore, this research method is suitable to be applied to the other cases on ornaments, to show that ornaments possess many significant roles in our lives.

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