Semiotica photostory Mertidusun as a noble value for environmental sustainability

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Abstract. Mertidusun semiostic photostory is the focus of this research. The aim is to illustrate how photostory can provide the Mertidusun ritual visual meaning in maintaining the noble value of environmental sustainability. Symbols of the noble value of the Javanese tradition can still be felt today. This perception can be built through the medium of photography that can build a visual language. The research method used is a visual methodology with a semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes. In the form of photostory semiotic exposure, the results of this study show that there is a relationship between visual photography with noble values of environmental sustainability.

Keywords: semiotic, photostory, Mertidusun, noble values, sustainability, environment

1. Introduction

Traditional ceremonies in Java are related to human life, nature, religion, and beliefs. Javanese people crave a dynamic relationship between humans and nature and God. Hamemayu hayuning bawana (preserving nature) is one of the obligations of the Javanese people. Temanggung is a district located in the middle of the island of Java, Indonesia, and is located between two mountains, namely Mount Sumbing and Mount Sindoro. The area is fertile for agricultural cultivation, such as tobacco, coffee, and vanilla farming. In processing their agriculture, the Temanggung community has special rituals throughout the growing season, especially tobacco plants. Some rituals include Mertidusun. It is often called the clean village, one of the traditional Javanese ceremonies, so that the village is always safe from danger or disaster. A ritual is a form of respect for the almighty God. With this awareness, they performed traditional ceremonies, which signified their gratitude to God for the gifts given through nature. It will maintain the best relationship with nature, which has provided various sources of life.

The researchers discuss the Mertidusun ritual in Lamuk, Legoksari Village, Tlogomulyo District, Temanggung Regency. Mertidusun is carried out when starting the tobacco growing season. The ritual is a form of a prayer request to God always to give safety and prosperity. Mertidusun in the village of Lamuk Legoksari involves the entire village community [1].
2. Research method

This research model uses visual methodology, considering the elements used are visual photography. The power of photography is the power of visual language. Visual language shows reality and honesty. According to Rachmah Ida, research using visual methodology has several concepts that must be understood. Such conceptions are representation, visualization, scopic regime, ocular centrism, simulacrum, and way of seeing. There are three meaning production sites in the visual methodology, namely: the site of the production of an image, the site of the image itself, and the site where various audiences see it. To produce meaning, the three sites have a difference called modalities [2].

This study uses a visual methodological approach on the site of the image itself side, namely the scope of the area of the researchers themselves. The researcher acts to interpret, interpret, and understand the object observed. According to Rachmah Ida, the researcher reads and parses the meaning one by one from the composition that forms attached to the existing visual image object. In this case, the researchers used photographic visual media to digest the meaning that is read. Researchers use semiotic analysis in observing social phenomena through images and signs to identify messages. Then, the use of semiotic theory sees the relationship between the meaning of denotation with something hidden in the visual as a form of connotation relating to photography and reading it using the visual methodology. In a visual reading, the researcher uses the theory of semiotics from Roland Barthes [3]. Visual assessment is packaged through a photostory.

All in human life can be seen as a sign and can be given meaning. The cultural symbols that appear in the Mertidusun are have been agreed upon in society. The symbolic meaning needs to be explained. The essence of Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, according to John Fiske, is the idea of two orders of signification, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is the first sign structure that describes the relationship between the sign and the sign in the sign. The connotation is a depiction of the interaction that takes place when the sign meets the feelings between users' emotions and cultural values. In this review of the photostory of Mertidusun, denotation is captured by the camera and appears in the photo. The connotations arise over what is in the frame, such as a series of stories, focus, point of view, lighting, and others. So, it will be able to explain the existence of a myth (see Figure 1). According to Roland Barthes, myth is a way of thinking from culture to understand something. Moreover, myth is a link to related concepts. Myths exist before photographs, and photos will activate the chains that form myths. If the connotation is the meaning of the second-order of the signifier, the myth is the meaning of the signified [4].

![Figure 1. Two Sign Orders by Barthes](#)

All photos are documentation and journalistic photos as part of the photo documentation. Journalism starts with everything that is written and announced. The advantage of photojournalism compared to the delivery of messages or other information is overcoming the limited human being in
letters and words. An important aspect presenting in photojournalism contains elements of facts, is informative and tells stories. Nevertheless, the technical beauty and the touch of art are the added values. According to Taufan Wijaya, there are elements of the photostory (see Figure 2). First, establishing shot is an opening photo to lead the reader into the story. Usually, the photo is in the form of a scenic location or the main character of the story. Second, interaction, in the form of a photo, contains the relationship between actors in the story. The depth of emotion in this section can be in the form of expressions, gestures, and eyes. Third, signature in the photo decides moment. It can be called as the core of the story. Fourth, portrait is the photo of the main character or character in the story. Fifth, details contain something that is an important part of the story. Sixth, clincker is a photo of the final situation or affirmation that closes the story [5].

3. Results and discussion
The Temanggung Regency people who have an agrarian culture can realize a form of stability between environmental life and other creatures through rituals. The people still adhere to traditional ceremonies, such as the salvation ritual. The most important salvation is the clean salvation of the village held once a year. It is addressed to the almighty God as a form of gratitude. Mertidusun activities in the village of Lamuk Legoksari begin in the morning around nine until noon. The community begins by marching and walking around the village. Customary leaders such as the village head and their staff guard of the group that bring sesaji (offerings), tumpeng, and two gunungan consisting of Gunungan Lanang and Gunungan Wadon. It is followed by the community and enlivened a variety of traditional arts such as Jaran Kepang, Angguk, Topeng Ireng, drumband, parade participants with traditional clothing, puppets, and others. The cultural festival ends at the spring of the Kali Ringin (river) and performs a ritual led by local elders by saying prayers. Tumpeng (rice cone) is eaten together, and gunungan is contested by residents to take home.

In the observations of researchers, when shooting the ritual activities, there are some interesting visuals. Researchers photograph the Mertidusun ritual using a DSLR camera as a medium for recording object photos and arrange them into a photostory. Then, the researchers discuss the object of the photo with the semiotics of Roland Barthes, namely by reading it in denotation and connotation, so that the myths will emerge from the photostory obtained.

In denotation, there are some visual appearing in photos that are part of the story. In the researcher's perspective, photographing Mertidusun events with a wide-angle is to take broad objects, and angles that focus on a particular object to produce details of the object. The following are photos of the Meritidusun ritual. The photos can be seen in Figure 3.
Photo of the village of Lamuk Legoksari, Tlogomulyo, Temanggung. The village is located on the slopes of Sumbing mountain and is the highest village on the slopes of the mountain. The beauty of the environment can be seen with the houses arranged neatly lined up.

The atmosphere when the gunungan is paraded around the village, preceded by village officials. Researchers photographed from high place to see the overall atmosphere of the village in the gunungan carnival carried around the village.

Gunungan is made from a variety of village fields.

Gunungan is fought over with excitement by the community.

The traditional leader, the village head, takes part in the offerings around the village.

Tumpeng with a series of offerings completes the gunungan carving.

Enlivened parades of villagers and folk art performances, such as the art of Jaran Kepang and Topeng Ireng.

**Figure 3. The Photostory of Mertidusun**

The connotation of the Mertidusun visual photostory can be interpreted as a part of how the village community can care for their environment well to better life sustainability. In more detail can be interpreted several visuals that emerge from the photostory. Photographing the village atmosphere can be connoted as a form of a good environment as a form of environmental sustainability. Then, a photo of the procession around the village will symbolize the togetherness of the entire village. Both the leader and the people are working together to preserve tradition. It is followed by a photo of the village head showing good leadership, as well as an example for the entire community. The next photo is the atmosphere of joy in fighting over the mountains that show togetherness in joy and sorrow.
In Javanese society, offerings are not food for ghosts. However, philosophical teachings are conveyed through symbols. It shows that the Javanese in giving philosophical teachings to the generation does not like to use words with clear intentions. They use symbols so that their generation likes to think and look for meaning. Gunungan is made of fruits and vegetables and in the shape of a cone-like a mountain. Gunungan can be interpreted as the origin of life. Tumpeng is rice made in the form of a cone. The meaning of tumpeng, which is "yen metu kudu sing memeng" teaches that humans have sincerity in achieving goals. In the ceremony Mertidusun, tumpeng is served in two types (white and yellow). The meaning of the white tumpeng means purity and be sacredness. Meanwhile, yellow tumpeng is noble wealth and morals as an expression of gratitude. Jajan pasar is used as supplies in parties containing light meals or cakes. It has the meaning of safety, especially in the spiritual field and survivors of the disturbance of spirits. Various fruits are the result of the earth. Banana fruit that is commonly used for offerings is plantain. It is a symbol of praying to God. The use of bananas is also associated with lessons in life ethics, which can live like the nature of bananas in accordance with the environment [6].

Pancawarna drinks consist of five colors, red—tea (wedang teh), Yellow- turmeric drink (wedang kunir), black- coffee (wedang kopi), white—white drink (wedang putih), and a combination of red and white (rujak degan). This drink symbolizes Sedulur papat kalima pancer. Four kinds of drinks (wedang teh, wedang kunir, wedang kopi, and wedang putih) symbolize the four human passions namely amarah (anger) that is red symbolized by wedang teh, yellow is supiyah symbolized by wedang kunir. Black is aluamah symbolized by wedang kopi. Then, white of Mutmainah is symbolized by wedang putih. Meanwhile, rujak degan symbolizes mental tranquility (sedulur pancer). Jenang abang putih consists of jenang abang and jenang putih. In the perception of Javanese, jenang abang putih symbolizes the occurrence of humans through the mother's seed (jenang abang) and the father's seed (jenang putih). Kembang mawar (rose flower) has a mawi-warsa meaning, which means will or intention to live up to noble values. Another meaning is awar-awar, that is to make the heart become bland or sincere. There are two roses, namely red roses and white roses. Red roses symbolize the process of human born in the world. It symbolizes the mother's womb. White roses symbolize the father pouring seeds into the mother's womb. Frankincense is usually burned, so it emits smoke and smells good. This is interpreted as a salvation that is carried out is expected to increase human faith in the almighty God [6].

Offerings are not only served for rituals brought to the ancestral graves as offerings form, but also at the time of performing arts, such as Jaran kepang and Wayang Kulit (a puppet show). The photo is a performance of Jaran Kepang, Topeng Ireng, and shadow puppets. All of which are carried out by all villagers.

The myth built from the visualization of this Mertidusun photostory is how the continuous efforts of the village environment must be maintained and cared for better survival. It is also as a manifestation of the village community's gratitude towards God for being blessed by nature which has provided material, and humans use it for various purposes. Hence, a good myth is realized as the best way to sustain the natural environment.

4. Conclusion
The existence of photostory becomes important, because it will help to remind the next generation of Mertidusun rituals. Photography will help the public to realize the importance of preserving traditional culture. As part of journalistic photos, photostories will stop time and provide a real picture of how time will form a history. Photostory will help to understand and identify the environment. As Roland Barthes said that photography did not need to tell what was gone, but only what has happened. The documentary photos of the village or Mertidusun ceremony provide benefits for the community, namely the community as villagers will have their documents when they meet and stay in touch with one another so that harmony is established in their lives. With the photostory presentation, it will always be reminded of public awareness in caring for nature and environment so that it is always protected from environmental destruction. Thus, the benefits of this Mertidusun photostory are expected to provide
memories of the hope of human connected with their natural environment and hopes for the survival of life, land, water, and air.

Acknowledgments
The author would like to thank for the support for this research provided by the School of Design. Furthermore, the authors also thank the Research and Technology Transfer Office (RTTO) Bina Nusantara University for encouraging us to participate in this International Conference on Biospheres Harmony (ICOBAR) activity.

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