



Stagnation of Baduy Tribe's Modernization in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

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Culture is a way of life of people in various regions that develops and is shared by a person or group of people who are always transmitted from generation to generation. During the digital times, advances in information and communication technology have created a new environment. Indonesia is a country with many different ethnicities, races, languages, religions, and cultures. This research focuses on how a documentary film can represent culture with the concept of linguistic signs that discuss the connection between signs and meaning from Roland Barthes. In this paper, the authors use a qualitative research method with a semiotic research approach from Roland Barthes. The techniques used to collect existing data are documentation, observation, and literature review which are carried out by processing data, reading, analyzing and finding conclusions from various linear sources with the topic of this research. Source triangulation is a data validation technique that the authors use in this study where when primary data has been found, the authors can test the data with other data collection so that the authors can conclude that the data is the same. The result is that the Baduy tribe has stagnated because the Baduy themselves want to maintain the originality of their tribe with the guidance of the faith they are trying to protect. This research is expected to be a good contribution for readers to know how a movie can represent a culture.

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1. Introduction

Many aspects of human life have changed due to the rapid growth of digital technology. During the digital era, advances in information and communication technology have created a new environment where social interactions and information occur in a virtual space that is not limited by time and distance (Rahmayanti et al., 2024). Before the digital era, communities were often confined to a specific geographic space. Traditions, languages, arts and customs were passed down through traditional ways such as verbal and written as well as daily social interactions. Until now, Indonesian society is moving forward in developing education to achieve an easier life. For example, in terms of construction, people used to build houses with makeshift materials and tools. However, with the development of education, people can now build houses with more sophisticated materials and tools. This change is also reflected in culture, where modern technology and knowledge have merged with traditional ways, creating a balance between innovation and cultural heritage.

The current state of human civilization is very advanced, as proven by the emerging modern cultures that have filled the dimensions of human life ranging from household life to advances in industrial and information technology (Suryani, 2014). These advances have brought many cultures into situations of competition and clash with other cultures, often resulting in a process of acculturation. Acculturation is basically the mixing of two or more cultures that meet, influence each other, or the process of foreign cultural influences entering a society (Al-Amri et al., 2017). In this



process, people can absorb elements of the foreign culture selectively, either a little or a lot. This acculturation process can occur in a variety of ways. For example, when one culture borrows or adopts certain elements from another, or when two cultures interact and influence each other in terms of language, customs, religion, food, art and technology.

Culture is not seen as a generic thing that is a guideline that is passed down or inherited, but is seen as a differential culture that is negotiated in all social interactions (Arybowo, 2010). Culture is a way of life of humans in various regions that develops and is owned by a person or group of people who are always passed down from generation to generation. All cultures are unique and diverse, cultures throughout Indonesia vary depending on the environment and the social interaction power of the community. The technology used by a group of people is another way of looking at culture. In a culture, the technology part includes tools that can be used as living equipment.

Indonesia is a country that has various ethnicities, races, languages, religions, and different cultures (Lintang Sari & Ulfatun Najicha, 2022). Indonesia is a multicultural country that shows that unity and integrity are needed so that there is no division (Jadidah et al., 2023). However, in this modern era, Indonesian culture has changed due to the influence of modernization such as different lifestyles in society. This change is influenced by the media and easy access to information, which makes Indonesian culture easily influenced by outside cultures. Although this change has a positive impact, such as the creation of a new culture that combines elements of different cultures, it can also have a negative impact. One of them is the threat to local wisdom in Indonesia, which can be weakened by the dominance of outside cultures. However, some community groups still maintain their cultural identity, despite being affected by the modernization process. One interesting example is the Baduy tribe, which is divided into two parts: Outer Baduy and Inner Baduy, which still maintain their tradition and culture (Pudjiastuti et al., 2023). The reason why Baduy still maintain their culture is based on several factors that will be explained based on the meaning contained in the documentary video using Roland Barthes' theory, which consists of denotation, connotation, and myth.

The reason why the author wants to do this research is because with the existing progress, Baduy people still maintain their culture by not being affected by modernization. The stagnation of modernization of the Baduy tribe in the digital era is an interesting phenomenon to research. How the Baduy tribe, which is known for its strong traditions and culture, can be represented in a documentary film with the title "Baduy, Disini Bumi Seolah Berhenti Berputar". In her research, Du Xiaomei mentioned that the Baduy community is a group that is almost completely isolated from the outside world (Xiaomei & Isnendes, 2024). This research is expected to contribute to further understanding of how the Baduy face modernization and digital technology, as well as the factors that make the Baduy maintain their culture in the digital era. It can also provide valuable insights into how Baduy culture is interpreted by the wider community, and how it can affect the way it is perceived and understood.

2. Method

In this paper, the researcher uses a qualitative research method with a semiotic research study approach from Roland Barthes. This research focuses on how a documentary film produced by a YouTuber Tiara Mandalawangi represents culture with the concept of linguistic signs, which discusses the relationship between signs and meanings. The purpose of using the semiotic method of Roland Barthes is to find out the meaning and signs that become the representation standard of Baduy culture. The semiotics of Roland Barthes is divided into 3 parts, namely Denotation, Connotation, and Myth (Lustyantie, 2012). The data obtained to undergo this research is a documentary film on Tiara Mandalawangi's youtube channel called "Baduy, Disini Seolah Berhenti Berputar" which will then be selected several scenes related to the representation of Baduy culture.

This research does not stop at semiotic analysis, the techniques used to collect existing data are documentation, observation, and literature review which are carried out by processing data, reading, analyzing and finding conclusions from various sources that are linear with the topic of this research. Triangulation of sources is a data validation technique that the author uses in this study which when primary data has been found, the author can test the data with other data collection so that the author can conclude that the data is the same.

3. Result and Discussion

Explained by the semiotic method of Roland Barthes in the documentary film “Baduy, Disini Bumi Seolah Berhenti Berputar” which will be discussed in several scenes with an explanation of Denotation, Connotation and Myth. In the given scene there will be an implied meaning written from each scene piece that has a certain meaning in it.



Figure 1. Inner Baduy Tribe Dresses



Figure 2. Outer Baduy Tribe Dresses

Baduy traditional clothing is a very valuable cultural heritage. Through clothing, we can understand the values, beliefs, and way of life of the Baduy community. The preservation of traditional clothing is not only important to maintain cultural identity, but also as a form of respect for ancestors and the environment.

Denotation Stage: In this scene, an inner baduy resident wearing a white shirt with a white head covering and a black skirt and Tiara and kang Arman (outer baduy resident) wearing a black shirt with a dark blue head covering are on their way to the inner baduy border. **Connotation Stage:** The scene in this scene is intended to differentiate the inner baduy from the outer baduy in terms of daily clothing.

Myth Stage: In the belief of the baduy tribe, where the white color symbolizes cleanliness or purity, which is related to the existence of the inner baduy tribe which is located closer to the sacred

area and the way they respect their ancestors where the inner baduy are very obedient to the customs of kepu'unan (Muhibah & Rohimah, 2022).



Figure 3. Cijung River

Denotation Stage: In the middle of the journey to the border of the outer baduy with the inner baduy, it can be seen one of the scenes in this documentary, Tiara and kang Arman stopped for a moment at a spot of activity of the baduy tribe, there is a river named Cijung river. **Connotation Stage:** The scene showing the Cijung river signifies a place of activity for the Baduy tribe to bathe, wash and others. It also shows a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere that creates a sense of comfort. The green scenery around the river, with lush trees, adds to the beauty of this place. The fresh air and the smell of wet soil create a sense of comfort, as if time has stopped for a moment, giving each soul space to rest. **Myth Stage:** Cijung River is a precious river for the community so that not all points of the river can be used for daily activities, which means that Cijung River is not just a flow of water, but also the heart of the Baduy community's life. Through this river, we can see how the Baduy community has built a harmonious relationship with nature and preserved the environment for centuries. According to the myth, the inner Baduy tribe should not use any soap when using the river, which is considered to pollute/damage natural resources, which means that if bathing or washing, they should only use the water available in the river. Unlike the outer baduy tribe who are still a little free to allow using soap.



Figure 4. Leuit (Rice Barn)

Denotation Stage: Kang Arman and Tiara's journey down the path in the Baduy tribe's forest leads them past several traditional buildings known as Leuit, or rice barns. These buildings look simple, made of natural materials such as bamboo and wood, with thatched roofs that give the impression of harmony with the surrounding nature with the information that Leuit is used to store rice harvested by the Baduy community. Apart from that, there is a conversation “Ohh, jadi udah hukum adat disini ya”, “Ya asal jangan kalau disini jangan menghabisi semuanya”. **Connotation Stage:** Leuit/Rice Barn is used by the Baduy community to store rice per year, this leuit is built by the head of the family to avoid starvation, and it is not mandatory so that only those who can afford it build leuit (Yulia et al., 2018). **Myth Stage:** This tradition starts from legal awareness and how they obey ancestral traditions from the past (Yulia et al., 2018). Rice stored in the leuit is used only for major events for the baduy tribe such as weddings, mourning events and Rukun Kawalu events. Rukun kawalu is an event held once a year by the inner baduy where the outer baduy tribe must also participate in the event. Leuit is not just a physical structure, it contains deep cultural values. In the context of Baduy community, this leuit is a symbol of resistance. The existence of Leuit helps prevent hunger, especially in difficult seasons or when the harvest fails. It shows their understanding of the importance of preparation and wise resource management.



Figure 5. Outer Baduy Tribe without Footwear

Denotation Stage: In this scene, it was shown that the Baduy tribe carried out their daily activities without using shoes or sandals, on the way Tiara asked kang Arman about it. “aku penasaran banget nih orang baduy dalam terutama nya, kunaon sih e ai jalan kitu kemana mana the tara pake sandal?”, “e eta berurusan jadi adat, jadi muhun dilarang sama adat jadi mereka masih mematuhi adat”.

Connotation Stage: The Baduy tribe's deep reason for not using footwear or sandals is based on the traditional prohibitions that have been rooted in their traditions. For the Inner Baduy tribe, living a barefoot life is a form of obedience to the norms and values upheld by their community. This prohibition is not just a rule, but a part of their identity that reflects simplicity and closeness to nature. Meanwhile, the Outer Baduy community, which is slightly more open to modern influences, has some flexibility in the use of footwear due to daily needs. However, they still honor tradition by undergoing the month of Hade, a special period where the prohibition of sandals is strictly enforced. During this month, raids are conducted to ensure that all members of the community obey the rule, emphasizing the importance of tradition in their lives.

Myth Stage: The myth based on the prohibition of using footwear or sandals among the Baduy community is closely related to the beliefs that have existed for a long time and have been passed down from generation to generation. This rule is not just a norm, but also a part of a deep belief system that has been embedded in their daily lives. This myth also serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining the balance between humans and the environment (Kenedy & Deffinika, 2022). The Baduy believe that by abiding by this prohibition, they are not only preserving their tradition, but also maintaining their spiritual and physical well-being. In a wider context, the footwear prohibition helps

to form a strong cultural identity, affirming the Baduy tribe's position as the protector of tradition in the middle of the growing modernization. In this way, the myth of the footwear prohibition symbolizes the cultural resistance and spirituality of the Baduy community, and teaches the values of respect for nature and the importance of preserving the heritage of the ancestors.



Figure 6. Baduy Tribe Gotong Royong

Denotation Stage: After a long and exhausting journey, Tiara and Kang Arman finally arrived at Cibungur Village, the village where they were to spend the night. The village was peaceful, with natural scenery surrounding it and pleasant fresh air. As dawn breaks, the sunlight begins to shine through the gaps in the trees, creating a warm and bright atmosphere all around. The next morning, Tiara woke up excited and curious. As soon as she stepped out of the place where she was staying, she was greeted by an amazing sight. The Baduy tribe, in their simple traditional clothes, were busy working together. They were working together to renovate one of the houses. **Connotation Stage:** Gotong royong among the Baduy tribe is more than just helping each other, it reflects a deep sense of care and empathy among community members. In the Baduy tradition, gotong royong has a deeper meaning, reflecting the traditional values passed down from generation to generation. Whenever residents are involved in joint activities, such as house renovations or other events, they not only give their energy and time, but also distribute a sense of solidarity that strengthens social relations among them. In the perspective of Baduy community, helping others is a form of social responsibility that must be fulfilled by every individual. Participation in gotong royong becomes a way to show mutual respect and support among each other.

Myth Stage: In the belief of Baduy community, the value of gotong-royong is not just a concept, but it is lived and applied through various ancestral traditions that base their lives. Every aspect of life, from agriculture, house construction, to traditional ceremonies, is full of gotong-royong practices that reflect solidarity and togetherness (Somantri, 2012). The practice of gotong-royong is also integrated in various traditional ceremonies, where communities gather to celebrate important events such as weddings, births or religious rituals. In every celebration, the value of gotong-royong is evident as they work together to prepare food, decorations and all other preparations. This shows that togetherness and mutual support are at the core of every aspect of their lives. In this way, the Baduy community not only preserves traditions, but also teaches the younger generation about the importance of these values. Participation in gotong-royong activities serves as an effective educational tool, where children learn about empathy, responsibility, and the importance of maintaining harmonious social relationships.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion obtained from the research on five scenes in the documentary film titled “Baduy, Disini Bumi Seolah Berhenti Berputar” through semiotic analysis including denotation, connotation, and mythical meanings reveals that the filmmaker consistently highlights the Baduy culture and it

can be seen why the baduy tribe has stagnated in this digital era. This is shown through various visual and narrative elements such as traditional clothing, community activities, and other cultural aspects. This documentary not only records the reality of Baduy culture, but also tries to present moral messages hidden behind certain scenes. These messages include the values of gotong royong, life philosophy, community skills, the importance of maintaining human relationships, and compassion in social life (Nur et al., 2021). The filmmakers seem to want to emphasize that Baduy culture, although simple, has depth and noble values that are relevant to modern life. Each selected scene is not only documentative, but also expresses a philosophical view of a harmonious life, in harmony with nature, and full of local wisdom. In this way, the movie is able to provide a reflection of Baduy culture while inviting its audience to reflect on values that are often forgotten in modern life.

In addition, this kind of research needs to be developed further, especially in the field of film semiotics. Semiotic research will be very useful to uncover deeper myths and symbols hidden behind the narrative and visual images of a film (Gibran & Rahman, 2023). In seemingly simple documentaries, there are often rich meanings, both culturally and socially. By analyzing more documentaries through a semiotic approach, we can gain new insights into how culture is represented, interpreted, and developed on screen, as well as how profound moral messages can be conveyed in both subtle and effective ways. In the end, documentary films such as “Baduy, Here the Earth Seems to Stop Spinning” have an important role as a media for education and social reflection. Understanding local culture through the perspective of semiotics not only enriches our appreciation of the culture, but also allows us to be more critical in reading cultural messages hidden in visual works.

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