



Cultural Representation as Promotion and Existence of the *Banyu Panguripan* Tradition in the Instagram feed @fwg_pulosari

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Abstract. Social media platform Instagram has become a compelling attraction in today's era, whether for marketing a local product or in the field of cultural tourism. This is evident in the traditions upheld by the community in Pulosari Subdistrict, known as the Banyu Panguripan Tradition. Essentially, the Banyu Panguripan Tradition is a ritual intended to request abundant water sources since Pulosari Subdistrict is known for water shortages, especially during the dry season. Initially, the Banyu Panguripan Tradition was regularly practiced by the residents of Jurangmangu Village, one of the villages in Pulosari Subdistrict. Subsequently, the subdistrict government took the initiative to revamp the packaging of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition into a cultural entertainment involving fourteen villages. This research is qualitative, using a descriptive-interpretative approach. To facilitate the analysis process, this study employs Roland Barthes' semiotics theory, with the research object being posts on the official Festival Wong Gunung account. The purpose of this simple research is to understand the role of the Instagram social media account owned by Official Festival Wong Gunung in documenting and promoting the implementation of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition..

Keywords: *Cultural representation, promotion, existence, Banyu Panguripan tradition, social media, Instagram*

1 Introduction

Discussing the traditions present in society naturally relates to the unique characteristics of the region inhabited by that society. Tradition is a heritage passed down through generations by ancestors, originally based on the agreement of the local community, practiced regularly, and becoming a habit (Warisno, 2017). Tradition also serves as a bridge between the past and the present (Suprpto, 2020:98). Traditions are not exact; they can be either oral or written, containing information believed to be true through generations (Kuncoroningrat, 1954:103).

The existence of tradition requires awareness that it is not only the responsibility of the local government but also of the community, which plays a role in preserving the traditions that thrive within society. There needs to be strong principles or ideologies in

maintaining the presence of traditions to prevent them from being influenced by the modernity of changing times (Elvandari, 2020:94).

Currently, many traditions that were previously overlooked are now receiving attention, even though they were once neglected by the government. One example is a cultural tradition in the Pulosari District of Pemalang Regency. Pemalang Regency is located in Central Java Province and has various potentials, including culinary, marine products, and traditional arts and culture, spread from coastal areas to mountainous regions. Pulosari District is a highland area with 12 villages, 47 hamlets, 60 RW (community units), and 291 RT (neighborhood units). According to the Pemalang Central Statistics Agency, the population of Pulosari District in 2023 was 66.02 thousand people, consisting of 33,467 males and 32,554 females. The community in Pulosari District relies on rainwater for their drinking water needs.

Given that Pulosari District is located in a highland area, the local cultural tradition is known as the Banyu Panguripan Tradition. There are three versions of how this tradition is viewed, evaluated, and described in Pulosari District: the Prabasari Hermitage, the Manunggal Jati Utama School, and the Wong Gunung Festival.

This research focuses on the Banyu Panguripan Tradition preserved and developed by the Wong Gunung Festival. Initially, before becoming part of the Wong Gunung Festival activities, the Banyu Panguripan Tradition was practiced only by the Jurangmangu Village community in Pulosari District. The purpose of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition, conducted by the Jurangmangu Village community, is to seek ease and abundance of water sources, given the district's highland location with water scarcity issues.

Recognizing the potential for cultural tourism, the district government organized the Wong Gunung Festival. In collaboration with the Pulosari community, the festival features several events focusing on the Banyu Panguripan ritual. The name Banyu Panguripan is not exclusive to Pulosari District, though the water-based cultural tradition is unique to this area in Pemalang Regency. The term Banyu Panguripan is common in Javanese regions, such as Kudus, where it is believed to be sacred water capable of healing diseases and bringing blessings to those willing to drink it (Ikmalinnuha, 2022:2).

The Wong Gunung Festival committee, which includes community members, uses social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to promote the event. According to [napoleoncat.com](https://www.napoleoncat.com), Instagram had 89,891,000 users in Indonesia as of January 2024. Instagram allows users to share photos and videos, apply digital filters, and engage in other networking activities. The name Instagram is derived from "instant" and "telegram," with "insta" referring to instant photography, akin to Polaroid photos (Subiyanto, 2022:287).

The Banyu Panguripan Tradition was initially carried out by the Jurangmangu Village community in Pulosari District, Pemalang Regency. However, in 2016, the Pulosari District Government formed the Wong Gunung Festival committee to package the Banyu Panguripan Tradition into traditional entertainment. This was because the tradition was considered to have unique values not found in other traditions in Pemalang Regency. The festival's committee uses Instagram to create an official Wong Gunung Festival account.

The posts on the official Wong Gunung Festival account include content on the implementation of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition within the festival, advertisements for sponsors, documentary clips, and videos from the 12 village heads in Pulosari District.

This research aims to understand the cultural representation displayed by the official Wong Gunung Festival account in promoting the Banyu Panguripan Tradition.

2 Methods

This research is a qualitative study that employs Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to examine the signs in each content post on the official Instagram account of the Wong Gunung Festival @fwg_pulosari. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis classifies semiotic meanings, including signs, denotation, connotation, and myth. The explanation of these classifications is as follows: denotation refers to the objective facts observed by the eye, while connotation pertains to the original context of the sign (Paul, 2002). Myth, on the other hand, is a code or encoding of scientific social values and meanings. Barthes mentions that myth is a theory developed from connotation into an established theory. In its interpretation, myth is formed from power, majority, and groups, providing a stable connotation until a myth is created. Data collection was conducted using documentation and literature review techniques

3 Result Discussion

3.1 Result



Fig. 1 Scene from the epic film *pendekar tirta*
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signifier

- A man wearing a head cover, dressed in a beskap and jarik cloth, sitting on a red velvet chair.
- To his left is a man standing, wearing a blankon, not wearing a shirt but wrapped in cloth.
- To the right is a girl wearing a velvet kebaya in the kutu baru style with a gold brooch accessory. Her hair is styled in a bun and adorned with a gold headpiece. She is also wearing jarik cloth.
- A young man wearing a lurik shirt and headband, sitting cross-legged facing a man in a velvet beskap.

Signified

- a. Interpreted as a king
- b. Guard
- c. The king's daughter
- d. A young man who loves the king's daughter

Denotasi

A young man who comes to face a man who is the king, to propose to the king's daughter. However, he must fulfill several conditions given.

Konotasi

A father who holds a throne naturally wants to provide a life partner for his child according to their lineage, character, and qualities. Thus, he sets conditions for the young man who wishes to propose to his daughter.

Myth

Stories set in a royal background are often associated with a marriage where the parents want to find a life partner for their child according to their lineage, character, and qualities. Giving their blessing is accompanied by certain requests

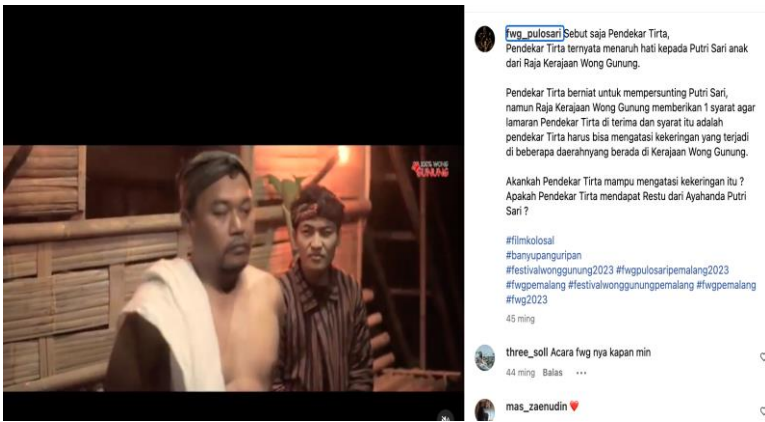


Fig. 2. Scene from the epic film “pendekar tirta”
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signified

Engaged in discussion

Signifier

Two men, each wearing a headband. The man in the front is not wearing a shirt but has a white cloth draped over his right shoulder. The man behind is wearing a long-sleeved lurik shirt.

Denotation

A student comes to meet his teacher for a consultation

Connotation

The student is asking about holy water that has been sanctified to become banyu pangu-ripan (life-giving water).

Myth

A man will go to great lengths to marry the woman he loves, even if he faces obstacles



Fig. 3. Excerpt from an advertisement by one of the sponsors of the Wong Gunung Festival
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signifier

A man sitting cross-legged, wearing black clothes and a head cover, giving information to a male trader who is wearing a short-sleeved shirt, a cap, and a small towel around his neck.

Signified

1. Shaman
2. Male trader

Denotation The behavior of a trader who visits a shaman for business success.

Connotation Shamans are still considered a solution.

Myth Shamanic practices remain interesting in the modern era, as there are still people who believe in the skills of shamans, such as in the matter of boosting sales.



Fig. 4. Excerpt from an advertisement by one of the sponsors of the Wong Gunung Festival
Source: Instagram

Signified

Product offering

Signifier

A man dressed like Wiro Sableng is sitting cross-legged, meditating in a lotus position. He is approached by a man wearing a black patterned shirt, a watch, and a cap.

Denotation

Product marketing in the style of the legendary martial artist Wiro Sableng to influence the followers of the Instagram account @fwg_pulosari.

Connotation

The more interesting the advertisement, the more value it has. The television world is familiar with the character Wiro Sableng, who is known for his 212 emblem and white headband. Therefore, this ad posted by FWG aims to create a new perspective that the ad made by the FWG team has significant value.

Myth

Often, in creating advertisements, talent that is already known in the television industry is needed.

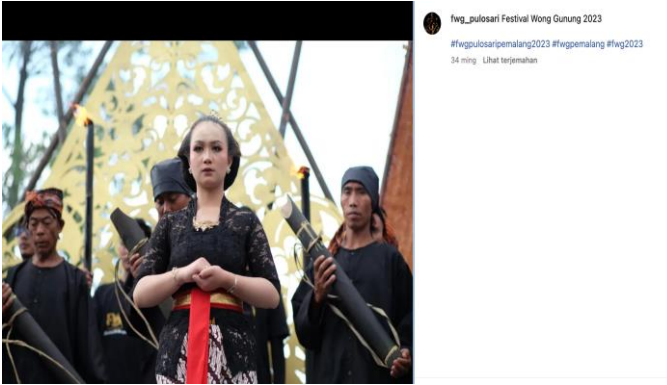


Fig. 5. Before the ritual of pamundutan *banyu panguripan*
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signifier

A girl standing at the front, wearing a black kutubaru lace dress, a red sash, and jarik cloth with a parang motif. Behind her are several adult men wearing long-sleeved black shirts and patterned or plain headbands, carrying lodong. Additionally, there is a young man wearing a shirt with the Festival Wong Gunung logo, holding a torch.

Signified

Three lodong carried by three men, a young man holding a torch, and a girl. They are all dressed in black clothing.

Denotation A girl who is the village princess representative from Pulosari sub-district, accompanying the water-fetching procession at seven springs.

Connotation The procession before fetching water from the seven springs.

Myth The community believes in the sacredness of the water.



Fig. 6. The pinasrahan banyu panguripan procession
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signified

Each of the seven girls takes the sacred water (banyu panguripan) that has been placed in lodong, then it is given to the Regent of Pemalang, who then hands it over to the head of FWG, and then to the Sub-district Head of Pulosari, who then gives it to each village head. On stage, there are scattered flowers (kembang setaman). The image above gives the impression that banyu panguripan is sacred water, and its handover process is packaged with elements of sacredness.

Signifier

The handover of banyu panguripan after several processes such as pamundutan, ruwat, and kirab banyu panguripan. On the main stage, there are the Regent of Pemalang, the Chairman of the Wong Gunung Festival, the Sub-district Head of Pulosari, and fourteen village heads, all dressed in traditional Javanese attire.

Denotation The handover procession of banyu panguripan, which is one of the series of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition in the Wong Gunung Festival packaging.

Connotation The sacredness of banyu panguripan is believed by the community in Pulosari Sub-district.

Myth Banyu panguripan is believed to have benefits, but in the packaging of the Banyu Panguripan Tradition, it is only intended for the twelve village heads in Pulosari. Banyu panguripan is something that has value.

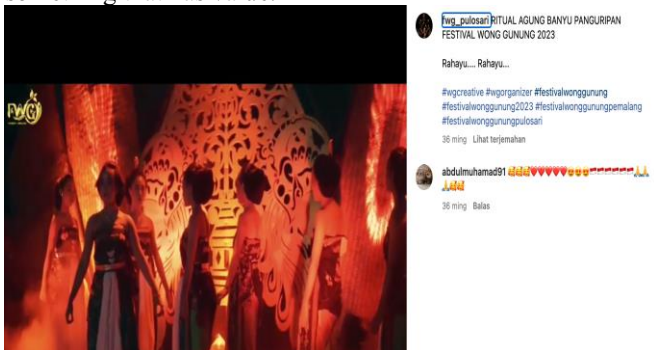


Fig. 7. banyu panguripan dance performance
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signifier

Seven water dancers of panguripan wear kemben costumes with a sash around their waists, have their hair styled up, and do not wear footwear.

Signified

The seven dancers perform the water panguripan dance, which in each of its movements contains meaning and philosophy. The water panguripan dance is created based on references from classical dances of Surakarta.

Denotation Denotatively, the upload from @fwg_pulosari shows seven dancers performing the water panguripan dance.

Connotation Connotatively, it shows that the sacredness of water panguripan is interpreted through the movements of the water panguripan dance.

Myth The performance of the water panguripan dance is identical to the sacredness of something that is created and believed to exist. The philosophy of the number seven in the number of water panguripan dancers is identical to the Javanese understanding that the number seven is associated with "pitutulangan" or help.

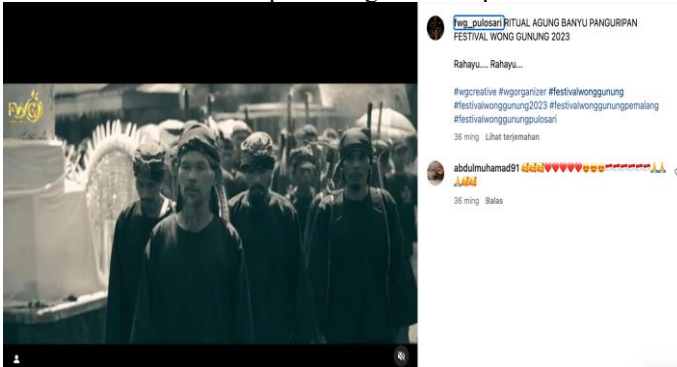


Fig. 8. kirab *banyu panguripan*
source: Instagram @fwg_pulosari

Signified

The implementation of the grand water panguripan procession gives an impression of solemnity, focus, and sacredness towards the water panguripan that has undergone a unification process from seven springs located in Pulosari. Water panguripan is interpreted as something sacred, so in the procession, which will later be distributed to 14 villages in the Pulosari district, it is filled with solemnity.

Signifier

The leader of the group carrying the water panguripan begins the procession. There are seven lodong (containers for water panguripan) carried by warriors. Behind them, there are seven participants carrying torches.

Denotation The video posted by @fwg_pulosari shows several men walking (in a procession) while carrying torches and some carrying lodong.

Connotation Connotatively, the upload from @fwg_pulosari conveys the message that in Pulosari district, there is a tradition that has existed for a long time. Initially, the water panguripan tradition was performed by the community in Jurangmangu village, but because this tradition is unique and not found in other districts, the Pulosari government packaged the water panguripan tradition within the framework of the Festival

Wong Gunung (FWG). The implementation of the Water Panguripan tradition within the FWG is an entertaining tradition that involves 12 villages in Pulosari district and related stakeholders.

Myth The water panguripan tradition combines water from seven springs in Pulosari district. The collected waters are then unified or go through a ruwat process, and the resulting water is called water panguripan. Water panguripan is considered sacred, and many believe that it aligns with the intentions of those seeking it. However, within the context of the water panguripan tradition, which is then packaged as entertainment, the existence of water panguripan is returned to each village in Pulosari district, even

3.2 Discussion

The Instagram account Festival Wong Gunung @fwg_pulosari has posted several uploads not only about the implementation of the Banyu Panguripan tradition, including both its execution and speeches from the 12 village heads in Pulosari Regency, but also several advertisements created as part of the cooperation between the committee and sponsors. There is also an upload of a short film that tells the story of the search for sacred water. The connection between the short film and the Banyu Panguripan tradition is that the @fwg_pulosari committee wants to turn the Banyu Panguripan myth into a story scripted to align with market developments. From these posts, the researcher categorizes the cultural meanings contained in each post or upload made by the committee through the festival account @fwg_pulosari, which is not only for documentation but also as a means of promotion and existence of the tradition that only exists in Pulosari District, packaged in a series of events at the Wong Gunung Festival.

The categorization of uploads on the @fwg_pulosari account as mapped by the researcher is as follows:

a. Cultural promotion

In Pematang, the tradition associated with the name Banyu Panguripan is not only found in Pulosari District and is packaged in the Wong Gunung Festival series. However, the branding or image that the committee and the district government use in packaging the Banyu Panguripan tradition has made this tradition known as a hallmark of Pulosari. In Pulosari, there are several cultural tradition preservers with similar traditions under the name Banyu Panguripan, such as Prabasari Padepokan and Manunggal Jati School. Therefore, in packaging the cultural traditions in Pulosari, a series of events is created that inevitably involves commodification and commercialization due to market demand. The implementation of a cultural tradition in the community and for its existence requires attractive packaging to draw tourists to the area. Through the social media account managed by the Wong Gunung Festival committee, information related to the implementation of the Banyu Panguripan tradition is provided, which can be seen from each upload, so that the public viewing these posts gains an understanding of how the tradition is developed and preserved, contributing to the district's revenue or the community's economy. Moreover, the packaging of this tradition can expand to other natural tourism spots in Pulosari.

b. Tradition existence

Instagram is a social media platform that reaches various timelines in society, akin to two sides of a coin. Many choose Instagram for its ease of use, as is done by the Wong Gunung Festival committee, which utilizes Instagram for promoting and informing about the Banyu Panguripan tradition that has been modernly packaged and entertainment-based. The committee posts educational uploads about the Banyu Panguripan tradition processions, which have become an annual agenda in Pulosari District and one of the scheduled tourist destinations in the Central Java event calendar. Additionally, there are story uploads and testimonials from the 12 village heads

in Pulosari District, who are involved in preserving and developing the tradition within the community. The Wong Gunung Festival committee also uses Instagram for event promotion, attracting visitors or new followers who are not yet aware of the Wong Gunung Festival celebration.

4 Conclusion

Traditions and cultures within a community are part of the community's life itself, reflecting the uniqueness or characteristic of the region. Both the community and the government play a role in preserving and promoting the traditions and cultures of their area, and there needs to be synergy, as seen in the Banyu Panguripan Tradition in Pulosari District, Pemalang Regency. Through the Wong Gunung Festival committee, a collaboration between the community and the district government, the Banyu Panguripan tradition is preserved and developed, emphasizing its cultural meaning and value within the community.

The research on the content of the @fwg_pulosari committee account selected several posts that contain markers and meanings indicated through images. The Wong Gunung Festival explores the cultural meaning and promotion of the Banyu Panguripan tradition, a cultural tradition that has become a distinctive feature of the community. The posts or uploads made by the Wong Gunung Festival committee are not just documentation but also promotion and preservation of the Banyu Panguripan tradition, emphasizing the importance of promotion and the existence of the Banyu Panguripan tradition through Instagram.

The Wong Gunung Festival committee's Instagram account strategically uses social media to attract tourists to attend the Banyu Panguripan Tradition, which is held only once a year. It also showcases the culture and traditions of Pulosari, involving a wide audience to increase awareness and participation in the series of events at the Wong Gunung Festival.

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