

CHAPTER IV

The Chicken Throwing as A Symbol

Peirce said that if a sign is something which represents something. Every sign has its own. Dependent interpret or ideology that developed in the surrounding communities. In Peirce's thought to mention that sign if seen from the object is divided into three parts:

- a) Icon is a sign that the relationship between signified and signifier are simultaneously natural forms. Or in other words, the icon is the relationship between the sign and the object or reference that is both similarities: for example, portraits and map.
- b) Index is the sign that shows that there is a natural relationship between signs and signifier that are causal relationships or causal, or sign which directly refers to the fact. The most obvious example is the smoke as a sign of the presence fire.
- c) Symbol is sign indicating a natural relationship between the signifier with petandanya. The relationship among them are arbitrer or semena, relationships based on conventions (pledge) society.¹

¹ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006

A. Trikotomi Peirce

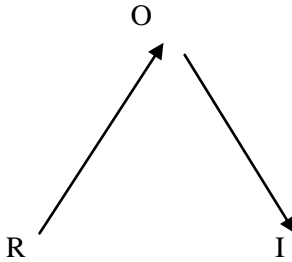
Semiotic theory directs his attention to the sign, "something which represents something". More specifically can be say that something that is represented by the "human experience", both physical and mental experience.

As has been stated, "a sign is something which represents something". Therefore, in this regard, can concluded that the sign is "something that represents experience". "Something" was, in this connection, for example smoke visible from far away according to the semiotic, called representament. According to Peirce, the trikotomis model the process of funeral sign follow three stages, namely (1) sensory perception of the representamen (example smoke seen from afar); (2) smoke on the referring object (event fires not immediately); and (3) establishment of interpretan [interpretation, for example "that the shops in the X area "]²

Definition of the sign occurs in a process called *semiosis*. As already stated, the signs are "captured" by the recipient sign a representamen is based on his knowledge refers to the object. That relationship may be based on connectedness (index), likeness (icon), or the convention (symbol), or a combination of

² Hoed, Benny H., *Semiotik dan Dinamika Sosial Budaya*, Komunitas Bambu, Depok.

all three. The process of *semiosis* can be seen in a triangular shape below:



However, according to Peirce (Noth 1990: 39-47) *semiosis* did not happen once, but continues to infinity or infinite (unlimited *semiosis*). This occurs because each process interpretan evolved into new representamen³.

In this discussion the researcher discuss the sign in the category symbol like the one at the third. Icons and index shows the true meaning or sense of reality contained in the sign. Unlike symbols are defined by convention (pledge) the community.

B. The Chicken Throwing Ceremony as A Symbol

As Peirce explained if symbol is the sign indicating a natural relationship between the signifier with petandanya. The

³ *Ibid*

relationship among them are arbitrer or semena, relationships based on conventions (pledge) society⁴

Judging from the time and space that existed at the time there are some traditions that are traversed by the tradition of dumping chicken. The first is the beginning of the tradition in the Hindhu. During this period almost all existing ritual is based on the belief of animism. Offerings devoted to fine spirits in order to find salvation.

The second is when the came brought by Sunan Kudus followers. This is where the start is no changes brought by him against the local traditions that exist. Islamic values are inserted into an existing tradition without altering the external packaging.

In this case the author also look at the tradition of dumping chicken as a symbol depicting the meaning contained in the symbol. Viewed from various aspects of the object granted to the tradition symbol turned out to provide a variety of meanings and interpretations.

The first authors will see the traditions at the beginning- that is, as a tradition belonging to the Hindhu. Hindhu society tradition in the belief this was done as an offering to the spirits

⁴ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006

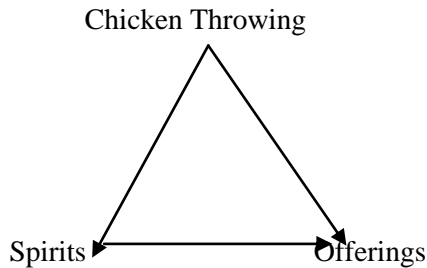
that reside in the river Gelis. They believed if the spirits are there on the river that would be disruptive and cause bad impact for prospective pegantin.

It is seen from the history of the tradition was originally very creamy with the myth. Animism that is rooted in the mayarakat mindset in ancient times larger to things that do not seem rather than things that look.

According to the beliefs of the people in ancient times Hindhu Gelis River is a living creature that takes the form of a snake. The Snake is a snake that is being seokar lived as a hermit on Mount Rahtawu. To avoid unwanted hazard by them then dibuanglah the chicken was as delicate beings peace to it.

There is a belief if in ancient times rivers were also inhabited by dangerous animals. Because at that time there has not been a permanent bridge as it is today. Then throw cock as a hoax so that groups of bridal who will pass through the River was able to walk safely and free from the disorder.

Peirce's theory of signs about the destination object in the tradition of the delicate creatures that exist on the river. So the tradition is the symbol of offerings provided as a way to resist the dangers that exist. In this case the tradition of dumping chicken is seen as a symbol of offerings or reject timber.



Reject timber is indeed one of the biggest factors that underlie sato from many traditions developed in the community along with the sacred in General. Almost every activity is believed to have had timber or misfortune. This is an already entrenched customs and is believed to be hereditary without need of evidence or proof.

After the coming of islam to the Kudus City by Sunan Kudus the tradition underwent a shift in meaning, however, tradition and prosesinya remains the same. Disposal of chicken is done by groups of brides who passed the Hindhu Gelis River is as a ritual of giving offerings to the spirits by Sunan Kudus changed its purpose.

View of the River at that time inhabited by bums and beggars and Sunan Kudus to the spirit of the original purpose of

da'wah replacing the tradition of tét is a charity or to a fellow shodaqoh more needy. Share it to others as a form of social. Indeed historically have been mentioned if in ancient times many suburb inhabited by the homeless because of their limitations and so could not make a decent home.

The shift of meaning created by Sunan Kudus indeed described how his Da'wah strategies in spreading islam is very lenient with local culture. By changing the object from the tradition that was originally addressed to the spirits were replaced to the homeless and beggars.

So in this case the tradition role as (R) associated with the object (O) bums have given new meaning as a charity event or shodaqoh. There is a meaning shift as a Da'wah strategies of Sunan Kudus. Then, (I) are produced as a strategy is Shodaqoh Da'wah. In Peirce's thought to mention that sign if seen from the object is divided into three parts:

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Kasmuji (67) villager of Demakan (Kudus *Wetan*), who lived on the banks of the Gelis river said if the ritual of chicken throwing already exist at the time of their ancestors. We as a generation only run what has already become a tradition that exists. We believe that every newlywed couwples bring “*sawan*” so with these exile chicken tradition can be eliminate and prevent newlywed from danger and doom.⁶

Kasmuji is also one of the people who ever get chicken in that ritual.

“Kulo nggeh nate mas angsal pitik buakan niku. Jenengan percoyo nggeh monggo mboten nggeh mboten nopo-nopo. Pitik seng dientuk niku nak dirumati cocok, gampang manak, mboten gampang keno penyakit. Gadahe kulo nate dugi eketan”

⁵ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006

⁶ Interview with Mr.Kasmuji in his home at Demakan village 15th September 2014 at 10.00 WIB

(I have got chicken from that tradition. You agree or disagree does not matter. The chicken from this tradition easy to keep. My mine is about 50 tails)

The history when tradition iti began no one knows. Almost every citizen that the author encountered say the same. Mr. Totok Demangan resident (54) (Kudus Kulon) explained as if from a young tradition that already exists.

“Nak ditakoni kapan dimulaine nggeh mboten ngertos mas, la wong niku pun dados tradisi turun temurun, awak dewe namung nglajutke opo seng dadi tradisi wong zaman biyen. Wong kuno niku kan duweni keyakinan nak kali iku akeh dipanggoni bongso jin lan setan. Supayane penganten seng lewat iku aman teko gangguan, terus dibuaki pitik nalikane ngliwati jembatan niku.”

(if you ask to me when the tradition begine i do not know, because this tradition was begine in the past, i just continue what the people done. Oldest has belief river is place of spirits kingdom. Make bridal free from spirit annoyance)

The belief made the hereditary tradition such as mandatory is implemented. Suggestion will get bad or evil impact many believed local societies. But it is also been said if that becomes their respective beliefs. If sure there are effects, then if not implemented later will get the plague.⁷

⁷ Interview with Mr. Totok (the keys of Masjid bubar) 17th September 2014 at 18.30 WIB

But, there are people do not belief for this tradition. There are part of Kudus people does not believe with that tradition. For example is from Muhammadiyah people, they are give argument this tradition is form of *ishraf* or spend our wealth and is mentioned as offerings. Because give offering to spirits in Gelis river.

One of the teachings given by sunan Kudus was continued by the next generations. Although they have been converted from the original non-religious islam then became Muslims.

In today era, the tradition of dumping chicken in river Gelis merely hereditary tradition of being taught by their parents. Their parents teach if there are any groups of brides who will pass through the river Gelis required throw chickens.

Those who now do not know the history of tradition and the tradition of the holding of destination. They just menyakini if what is being taught by their predecessor there was intent and purpose. And their menyakini if not running the tradition will get the plague.

After the development of the tradition of having a variety of shifts. Starting from the history and the meaning of the tradition. In fact most of the Kudus city do not know exactly from

whom or when beginning the tradition. They just did a hereditary as taught by parents and their predecessors. Kasmuji (67) villager of Demakan (Kudus *Wetan*), who lived on the banks of the Gelis river said if the ritual of chicken throwing already exist at the time of their ancestors. We as a generation only run what has already become a tradition that exists. We believe that every newlywed couples bring “*sawan*” so with these exile chicken tradition can be eliminate and prevent newlywed from danger and doom.⁸

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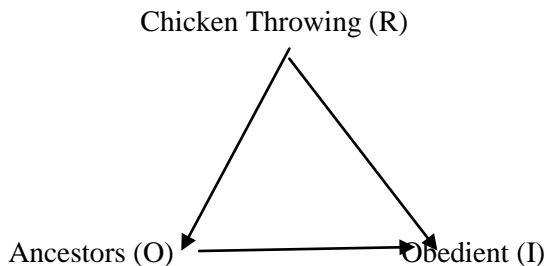
But, there are people do not belief for this tradition. There are some people who do not trust the tradiri. As an example among the Muhammadiyah, they argued that this tradition is a form of ishraf or scatter the favour and it is said as well as the activities of shirk. Due to give offerings to the spirits that exist on the river Gelis.

Among urban or modern circles-as well as many who didn't do the tradition. One of the factors underlying disease is the lack of penagjaran of the elderly and the weakening confidence in the traditions of their ancestral heritage. That makes them increasingly steady is not the occurrence of impact as told by many people. If there's someone who breaks the tradition they will get the hazards, such as collision, illness or divorce.

The tradition of the beginning was the symbol of offerings is then converted by Sunan Kudus as the symbol for calling up to now, become a tradition that was carried out due to follow their parents.

⁹ Interview with Mr. Totok (the keys of Masjid bubar) 17th September 2014 at 18.30 WIB

Kudus Kulon and Wetan on nowadays see the traditions of their ancestral heritage that should be preserved. Symbol dumping chicken traditions associated with their ancestors made the meaning will respect and adherence to the cultural heritage of their ancestors.



C. Evolution of Chicken Throwing Meaning

a. First Period

This tradition has existed in the 15th century before the Hindu. Almost all the towns around Kudus did this tradition. As an example of Jepara, Demak, Pati. In the past every bride's entourage who will pass through the great river are required to throw the chicken in the river. According to their beliefs is the residence of Jin and spirits. To avoid distractions and dangers that exist then throw it as a symbol of waste chicken plague.

The great river became an important point needs to be emphasized in the tradition. Gelis times e.g., during approximately the 14th/15 M of century this holy river, which

divides the public transportation for the trade sector. The river is famous for its fast. As the name "Gelis" comes from the Javanese language which means quick.

There is another belief if in ancient times rivers were also inhabited by wild animals. As an example of the crocodiles, snakes and others. Because there will be groups of brides who will pass through the bridge so safe from the dangers of the beast dibungalah the chicken as a distraction.

The discarded chicken is a chicken alive, it can gain time for the bridal party to pass the river. Because it is still alive and needs to be more effort for the crocodile to chase the chicken.

In general the definition of dumping chicken tradition in those days, still the same from the area around the Kudus with Kudus themselves. That tradition was interpreted as a ritual disposal of the catastrophe, could be from spirits or dangers from wild animals at the great river dwellers.

b. Second Period

The second period was the follower of Sunan Kudus about 19th century a.d. at this time this tradition has already shifted its meaning. This tradition is meant as a tradition of charity to others. Chicken dumped addressed to people living Inn beside the river Gelis.

The definition given to followers of Sunan Kudus saw the reality that exists around them. At that time around the edge of the river is already the tramp or group of social living River it.

Then the chicken is removed that is not referred to as shirk and its meaning changed as "shodaqoh". In their view shodaqoh also aimed as balak. This is almost the same as in the previous period, which aims to resist evil.

c. Third Period

The third period is on time today. On this tradition period disposal of chickens had had no meaning. This tradition is carried out only on the basis of orders from parents or just hereditary. They believe if the tradition is inherited from their ancestors that should be preserved, if not do it then it will be hit by the plague.

There is also the tradition of not doing so because of different beliefs. There are menyakini if the tradition as a tradition of shirk and scatter delights. Like among nationalist and muhammadiyah.