

# Visual Narration of Reyog *Obyogan* Ponorogo in Bantarangin version

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**Abstract**—Ponorogo has special traditional mask dance performance, Reyog Ponorogo. There are two versions of Reyog, Reyog Ponorogo in Festival and Obyogan. In Obyogan performance, they're starting to leave the origin of the stories, and myths that lie behind the origins of Reyog itself. This research is an answer to the increasing abandonment of noble values in Reyog performances, especially in the Obyogan performance who are displaced by the festivity of Reyog in Festival. Whereas Reyog in the form of a festival has agreed with the Bantarangin mythical story which is a reference for the story in the show, but this is not the same case with the Reyog obyogan. Visual narration is a method used in describing the conditions this Reyog performance in Ponorogo, especially in the form of Reyog Obyogan, which is mostly performed in rural, or suburban areas. This research is a scientific visual tracking and exploration based on existing visual data and recorded in photographic media. This research is a unique study which as the main study material and the main goal is to use photography as the main material in presenting research data. The results of this research show there are still many Reyog Obyogan which not applied the myths, and stories of Bantarangin as the origin of Reyog itself, instead aspects of jokes and popular trends are highlighted. But there are some Reyog groups begin to improve by consistently holding the Bantarangin story as the main story in conveying the legendary message of King Klanasewandana in the myth of the kingdom of Bantarangin.

**Keywords**—Reyog, Obyogan, Ponorogo, Culture, Visual Narration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reyog is a native Indonesian art with all its uniqueness and diversity from various aspects. Reyog is one of the regionals arts that was born and appeared in several regions in the islands of Java, especially western East Java. Reyog developed in several areas such as Madiun, Tulungagung, Kediri, and Ponorogo itself. Reyog Ponorogo is a dynamic and attractive dance performance. There's two versions of Reyog, Reyog Ponorogo in Festival and Obyogan.

Reyog with the Festival version, is a performance arrangement with a standard form that is staged in the National Reyog Festival which is usually held on the eve of the celebration of 1 Muharam in the Islamic calendar or 1 Syuro in the Javanese calendar. Reyog Obyogan is Reyog's performing arts which are not bound by the rules, does not follow the standard rules governing the performance, prefers the value of togetherness and fun (entertainment) of the

players and the people involved in the show. Obyog or obyogan can be interpreted in the Javanese dictionary is work together [1, pp. 23-24]. In practice, the reyog of obyogan is getting far away from the story of legend reyog itself, as we can see the visual evidence.

This research is trying to uncover the phenomena that occur in reyog performances in the field, especially obyogan version. Visually searching performance with stronghold in Ponoragan values and not forsake the legends or myths in Bantarangin version which has been agreed together as the origin of Reyog story by the Regional Government of Ponorogo Regency.

This research uses the visual narrative method which is the existing phenomena are summarized in the image and retold in accordance with the order of the story the myth of Reyog Ponorogo in Bantarangin version visually. The media used in recording this phenomenon is photographic media. This media is considered the most suitable because it is more complete in the delivery of narrative stories. The label 'Visual Narrative' is applied in a generic sense to denote anything from an illustrated story-book to motion pictures [2, p. 25].

The visual narrative is often also called a story in visual form, is a form of a story that is expressed in the form of visual media. The media used can vary, such as photography, films, posters, graphic images and so on. More briefly is the process of delivering a story with pictures [3].

As a medium of communication, we cannot forget the medium that we have been using in our daily lives, specifically photography. These media are a visual medium that is universal and easy to understand a message. "Photography is my language; I only speak with my eyes. The camera is my passionate pen, light is my infinite ink, and film is my paper" [4, p. 28]. Therefore, photography is an important medium in the delivery of information, especially in the form of images.

New technological advancements that enable the artist to capture light have all merely been a part of a broader evolution of the image as a visual communicator [5, p. 7]. Technological developments also affect the easier, cheaper and more advanced use of this photographic media. Everyone with technological sophistication are increasingly easy to become communicators in the field of visual communication, recording and disseminating in the form of social media or other media in accordance with the needs and development of the era. Technological developments are also carry the

information faster, wider and more diverse in understanding, meaning in various perspectives.

Photography has an important role in the delivery of information in the form of images where the way of communicating with this model has one advantage, i.e. universal language. The creative eye of photographers in composing stories with this photo media make this media one of the media that has more value in the delivery of information. Media photography invites communicators and communicants to communicate together in a picture media. The communicant is free to interpret, understand and interpret every element in this illustrated story. ...., a creative eye, the comprehension of their equipment and the ability to communicate both to their subject and the intended audiences or as I like to say, the three C's of photography, creativity, comprehension and communication [6].

The challenge in the visual narrative of photography in summarizing the legend of Reyog that is in folk shows is quite complicated and requires carefulness in capturing existing phenomena. Because not all reyog performers fully understand the essence of the mythical version of the Bantarangin version.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Visual Communication

Civilization and the development of the modern world have come to the use of art with a blend of technology, creativity and function, so it is with visual media. Visual communication media is a communication of ideas through communication visuals media that are usually in the form of two dimensions include art, signs, photography, typography, images, colors or electronic sources. Visual communication is the delivery of message through the use of visual elements, such as charts and graphs, clip art and electronic images, to convey ideas and information to audience [7].

Communication with visual language has several advantages compared to verbal communication [8, p. 5]:

- Provide more information on a limited scale
- Simple, but with complex concepts
- clear concept and easily captured message from a large abstract
- organized message
- improve understanding as desired creators

### B. Photography and Communication

Photography has become a milestone in the progress of art and technology since its first discovery in the 17th century. The most important thing is human awareness to see the phenomena that are happening around them and the pictorial tradition as an implementation of communication with others with visual language. Ernst Cassirer a German philosopher said that humans are "Animal Sybolicum", which means a creature that likes to make signs / symbols as self-image, the environment, the situation at that time and the community they are living in. Simply stated, humans are animal picturiums, which are creators creating images [9].

Photography is all about communication. The reason you click the shutter is because you want to share the best parts of

your environment with others. Communicating a scene or an object is similar to communicating in writing [10].

A combination of art and technology as a medium of communication where photography itself is about communication, where someone squeezes the shutter button to share a feeling about an event around him with others. In this case communication with pictures is a way of communicating that is as important using written language.

In contrast with written communication, communication with photography is very complex, unlimited to the media used, unlimited by equipment and creativity. Critical power and creativity in photography are required in order to strengthen a message through photography. Photography in the realm of communicating uses several methods including composition, focus, lens focal length and light. Thus photography is a unique way of conveying a message by visual communication [10].

Today, photography becoming an important medium to convey messages that can be received universally and quickly absorbed. The messages reception in the form of photography is different from other media such as film or audio visual media. Photography is a time capsule, cutting time and freezing moment that is presented in the form of images. Photography show us some of the information at that time, both in color, atmosphere, composition and all the objects in the photo were scrambling to show themselves. Photography may be more memorable than moving images, because they are neat slice of time, not a flow [11, p. 13].

The practical and symbolic relevance of circulation, exchange and travelling in the acceptance and practical use of photography, suggests that photography contributed in the nineteenth century not only to a shift in the techniques of representations, but in a certain extent also to the development of modern communication media [12, p. 9].

The development of technology, the need for information and human curiosity are human nature in finding information in him. The development of technology that drives photography into a medium of communication by exchanging signs, accepted or ignored in the practical world of photography. Photography also made a shifting role in the presentation model, further preserves the meaning and shifts of time and technology as a new medium of communication.

### C. Visual Naration

Visual narration is a form has long been developed and become the first material of communication between humans and other humans. This method of communication is visible of exchanging information in order to socialize and convey a message from generation to generation. The first generation of human visual narratives began in 40800 BC where the first time humans delivered a message by drawing in a cave wall found in Spain El Castillo [13].

Visual narrative is a method in expressing stories from the past that are summarized in a series of images that contain a message of the history of human life, from cave paintings to series of drawings in comic. *Sequential images are as natural at conveying narratives as verbal language, and have appeared throughout human history, from cave paintings and tapestries right through to modern comics* [14]

### III. METHOD

In this qualitative study, researchers try to express many things that are usually not just numerical data. This selection of the context of the problem and the activity then builds various possibilities in order to understand an interesting event. This qualitative approach is the development of experience which ultimately leads to an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. [15, p. 57].

#### A. Subject

Research on visual communication was carried out on Reyog Ponorogo in the form of Obyogan reyog located in Ponorogo Regency. Subject of this research is the reyog performance Ponorogo Regency especially reyog performance in *obyogan* version.

#### B. Data Collection

##### 1) In Depth interview

The method of collecting data through in-depth interviews is a way to obtain broader data in terms of information culture in which several scheduled time structures, important information about cultural and religious activities, fairy tales or legend, history, song, how to place yourself in various contexts in a community [16, pp. 99-100].

In-depth interviews with figures in reog art, especially Reyog Obyogan are Rido Kurnianto (Reyog expert in academic perspective), Mbah Bikan from Plunturan Pulung (reyog obyogan expert from traditional expert perspective) and interview after performance is over.

##### 2) Photography data collection

This show is not easy to find, especially this Obyogan reyog show does not have a definite time and is not bound by any event. To get information about Reyog show, the researcher must actively look for the schedule to the police station, because each show will certainly ask for crowd permission from the police.

Additional information about reyog shows can also be obtained from some people who are fanatical about seeing reyog shows or by asking the reyog group directly or always see the schedule of shows that have been scheduled in the tourism department of Ponorogo regency.

Specifically in this research, the authors used several models and types of camera in accordance with the needs and functions, most of the cameras used are Digital Single Reflect Lens or cameras DSLR.

Lens is the most important factor in the series of capture

picture. Like humans, lens is the eye. This research uses several types of lenses in accordance with the concepts and needs. There are several types of lenses used such as 50mm fix lens, 18-140mm zoom lens, 80-200mm telephoto lens and 10-24mm wide angle lens.

##### 3) Data Analysis

Data analysis, according to Miles and Huberman's perspective, consists of three main activities that occur simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing / verification. [17, pp. 16-20].

Data reduction is defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplification, abstracting and transformation of "raw" data emerged from written records while in the field.

In this case, the raw data in the form of the number of photos must be selected with the needs of this research, especially those concerning the history of the Bantarangin mythology.

"Presentation" as a set of possible compiled information the conclusion and the taking of actions. Everything is made to combine information arranged in a form that is easily seen and analyzed.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Concepts of Reyog Performance in Bantarangin mythology

Mythology about the history of reyog began around the 12th century, as the kingdom of Kediri be in command in the years 1024-1222M. Reyog himself is believed to have origins directly related to Kediri who had a beautiful daughter Dewi Songgolangit, who was trying to be proposed by Prabu Klana Sewandana from the kingdom of Bantarangin. Therefore, reyog art had existed before the city of Ponorogo was established. The myth of the Bantarangin version is believed to be the origin of Ponorogo reyog long before the Ponorogo name was established.

The Local Government of Ponorogo assign that the mythology of reyog which becomes the background of the performance is the Bantarangin version. This version was agreed because this story logical and easily accepted in common sense with a clear and chronological timeline. This statement also supported by the opinion of the chairman Yayasan Reyog Ponorogo also chairman of the 2019 Reyog Ponorogo National Festival, Drs Rido Kurnianto. Who explained that as a mythical story accompanying reyog performances was a version of the Bantarangin Kingdom version.

Reyog Obyogan concept is very different from the concept of reyog festival. Reyog Obyogan is a folk art where people can blend, participate and play in a stage. Peoples as audiences or we can say 'konco reyog' in the obyogan reyog stage are active viewers, where this audience can interact directly with the players and sometimes can join as players themselves.

In short story, a king from the Bantarangin Kingdom named Prabu KlanaSewandana wanted to propose the princess Songgolangit, daughter of the Kediri kingdom. But with a condition, princess asking for an art that does not yet exist in this world. KlanaSewandana then returned to Bantarangin and seek for the advice from his subordinate. Someday was agreed that Prabu Klanasewandana departed to propose Dewi Songgolangit. Before leave the kingdom, prabu klanasewandana asked for the blessing from all the people of Bantarangin, then the King left with a cavalry force, the governor named Bujangganong and some court servants such as Penthul Tholo and Penthul Tembem and accompanied by some his citizen. Until in the middle of the forest, this troupe by a group of dancing tigers and peacocks. This expedition was defeated cavalry of Prabu Klanasewandana, but with his heirloom weapons, the Samandiman whip, this herd can be defeated. This story has no ending, whether the proposal from the king is accepted or rejected by Princess Songgolangit.



Fig. 1. A relief illustration of the fragments narrate the origin of reyog Ponorogo locate in sport stadium.(photo by:okicahyo)

## B. Visual Naration of Reyog Obyogan Ponorogo in Bantarangin Version

### 1) Greetings (Uluk Salam;Javanese)

Greetings or in simpler language, asking for permission and blessing is a mandatory requirement for some reyog groups, especially those who still tightly hold the *kejawen* belief.

The greeting can be various, one of them is by burning incense, full offering of food and other material and praying in front of a peacock or *barongan*. The variety of religiosity belief and knowledge of some *Obyogan* reyog groups has increased with the model of a Islamic prayer or praying in the Muslim way as example. The prayers ask for safety throughout reyog performance.

Consistent with the story of the Bantarangin mythology, this greeting is a form of communication from King Klanasewandana to his ancestors who asked the blessing of all Bantarangin residents in their efforts to proposed Princess Dewi Songgolangit from the kingdom of Kediri.

Plunturan,in the Pulung Subdistrict is one of the unique villages that still maintains the obyogan performance model with an Bantarangin myth.



Fig. 2. One form of greetings with complete offerings from the Plunturan pulung (photo:okicahyo)



Fig. 3. Greetings with Islamic way from Purwosari, Babadan(photo:okicahyo)

### C. Play Music (Tabuhan;Javanese)

*Tabuhan* Javanese means play music reyog instrument, and performed right before the show begin. This is a traditional form of communication in order to invite people to come and watch this show. *Tabuhan* hold very important role for performances that the crew will prepared for everityhing from person to musical dan dance instruments. Today's language or in modern music shows is general rehearsal.

This procession can be done anywhere, but the prevalent and most common is where the starting place of the show. In Ponoragan's social and cultural status, this is special honor to the citizen when their home yard are used as a media or arena for reyog obyogan's performances.

In the Bantarangin mythology, *Tabuhan* mean as a form of preparation in the process of departed from his castle. This is important part where the king gather his people to witness and accompany the application process to the kingdom of Kediri.



Fig. 4. Playing music in order to gather the people around in Ngilo-ilo Village (photo:okicahyo)

### 1) Trailer (Gebyakan;Javanese)

*Gebyakan*(javanese) or trailer is a fragment or scene where King KlanaSewandana gives an illustration to his people how difficulty of the journey that will be taken to. This journey full of wisdom and obstacles, because referring to the mythology, the princess Songgolangit asking very difficult conditions.

The term of *gebyakan* (Javanese) or some people says *gagrak* (javenese) is a form of reyog performance that played together. Term of *Obyog* or *obyogan* in javanese dictionary have meaning working together [1, p. 23] . Match with the reyog performance in the form of obyogan that cannot be done



alone. Reyog is a communal art and involving the people from many social status or wider community from various aspects.

Viewed from the communication aspect, this reyog performance with the context surrounding is a merged concepts with nature and full of meaning and message. There's no boundaries between communicators and communicants. This mass media collectors are effective inviting the community and inexpensive for rural communities perspective. The use of reyog gamelan devices without electronic equipment looks traditional but effective gathering hundreds of people from various surrounding areas.

Reyog performance in rural village nuanced with social status behind. People with higher status like government village official (lurah) etc have more proportion to start or just stop by from the reyog obyogan performance, or sometimes they start to show the performance from this higher status peoples. It is an honor for local residents whose yard used for reyog performances and many people visit or stop to watching the performance.

For other perspective, this Gebyakan have another meaning. This event also called opening circle for the show, ask for safety pray from all of people surrounding.



Fig. 5. Ones of the fragment shows trailers from the whole story will be taken by the king Klanaseandana journey (photo:okicahyo)

### 2) Convoy (iring-iring:japanese)

The concept convoy or iring-iring in javanese dictionary in reyog shows is a form that the performance is moving from one place to another. The way of moving in full teams includes players, devices and spectators, or what is called *konco reyog*. This procession is easy can we found in the *obyogan* reyog stage which is held in the village, and such things are very rarely found on-stage performances or cities or even in any region outside Ponorogo.

The concept of a convoy and moving from one place to another is a part of Ponorogan cultural values implicit in it. We can see these values clearly in the procession of Obyogan reyog performances in various places with diversity and uniqueness in them. Another concept of convoy or *iring-iring* is togetherness and egalitarian from King Klanasewandana.

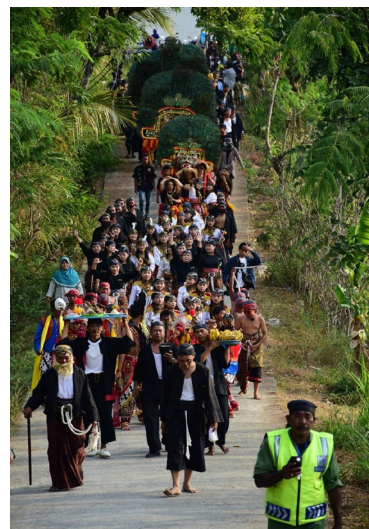


Fig. 6. Convoy (iring-iring) procession with dadak merak, horse cavalry, Klanasewandana and Bujangganong (photo:okicahyo)

### 3) Edreg

One special features in the reyog obyogan performance called *Edreg*. *Edreg* is a movement of Jathil dancer walking sideways approaching a peacock or bujangganong [18, p. 130]. *Edreg* in the philosophy of Bantarangin mythology is a fragment where on a journey, tthis troupe rests and jokes among fellow members of the group. Taunting and teasing each other is a form of closeness between King Klanasewandana and his servants. This form is not standard in reyog performance and sometimes we cant see visually clearly. This fragment consist of two model:

- Jathil Dancer to Bujangganong



Fig. 7. Edreg from Jathil Dancer to Bujangganong (photo:okicahyo)

- Jathil dancer to Dadak merak



Fig. 8. Edreg from Jathil Dancer to Dadak Merak (photo:okicahyo)

#### 4) War (*perangan*; Javanese)

This stage is the peak of the show where the herd of tigers can be defeated by King Klanasewandana and Patih Bujangganong with their ultimate weapon, Pecut Samandima. The shape of this weapon is a whip made of rattan and has 100 cm length [19].



Fig. 9. King Klanasewandana vs dadak merak and holding his ultimate weapon Pecut Samandiman (photo:okicahyo)

#### V. CONCLUSION

The results of this research found a lot of gaps knowledge in understanding and applying Bantarangin mythology in the performance of the Obyogan reyog it-self. Reyog in the obyogan format, leave so many important elements such as *uluk salam* (greeting) and *perangan* (war), which in this process shows the role of an older person and the role of King Klanasewandana in his efforts to apply for the princess Songgolangit with the special request.

The visual narrative in the mythology of Bantarangin version is ultimately piece by piece or we can say in another word per story which is sometimes difficult to understand in reyog shows in general. The public as a spectator is more concerned with aspects of the joke as a show magnet by highlighting Bujangganong and the role of *konco Reyog* in reviving the atmosphere of reyog obyogan.

But, with the concern of village governance, some village still holds tightly this mythical form, for example, are the reyog group Ki Onggopati, from Plunturan Pulung Village, and the Reyog Group, Kreet Village, Jambon District, and the reyog group, Purwosari village, Babadan sub-district. These groups try to maintain appearance with the myth of the Bantarangin story as well as with a complete appearance according to the standard.

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