

Rumors of Cannibalism as a Support for Cultural Tourism with Baudrillard's Hyperreality Analysis at Huta Siallagan

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Abstract. This research focuses on tracing the behavior and strategies of local people in Huta Siallagan in constructing the existence of cannibalism stories. A rumor that was intentionally attached to the Trial Stone cultural heritage in support of tourism in Huta Siallagan. Data tracking in this study used a qualitative research type with an ethnographic approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation and in-depth interviews. The data were then analyzed using ethnographic, domain, and taxonomic interview analysis. The existence of cannibalism stories is still debated because no data supports the truth that the Batak people were cannibals in the past. Rumors of cannibals create negative narratives about the Batak ethnicity, but local people continue to construct these rumors to support the strengthening of cultural tourism. Theoretically, this leads to a form of simulacra, creating a hyperreality of cannibalism in this cultural heritage site. Several forms of strategy were carried out, namely (1) the generalization of cannibalism stories carried out by the manager of the Batutrial cultural heritage, (2) Strengthening the story through reenactment practices or performances carried out by local guides, (3) The existence of animism geopark which is associated with cultural heritage because both this location is nearby.

Keywords: Cannibalism, Rumors, Cultural Tourism

1. Introduction

Stories about cannibalism carried out by the Batak people in the past still exist today in Samosir Regency. One area always identified with this story is the cultural tourism area in Huta Siallagan. Several cultural reserves include the Animism Geopark and the Batu Persidangan cultural heritage. This trial stone cultural heritage is in the form of an arrangement of stones and tables like a trial arena, which is full of historical value and has become an international tourist destination in Samosir Regency. The correlation between the story of cannibalism and the trial stone cannot be separated from the legend of the trial stone, which contains elements of a story about the practice of cannibalism.

The legend of Batu Persidangan tells the story of an arena used as a place for customary law judicial negotiations in the past. Sinamo said the reigning King would do justice by providing legal sanctions for serious crimes committed by enemies or the public [1]. A person will be sentenced to beheading if he commits a crime such as killing, robbing, betraying the King, raping or committing adultery[2].

Something interesting in the legend of the trial stone is part of the story about the law of beheading, carried out at the trial stone and continued with the tradition of eating human flesh (cannibalism) by the King after the execution. The tradition of eating human flesh is a cannibalistic practice that has existed in primitive societies since ancient times which is often associated with strength or authority. Picchio also conveyed this: "Actions the signs the survival of anthropophagical rites intended to transfer the charisma of a man to his[3].

This true story of cannibalism certainly carries a negative impression or label because it identifies that historically, Batak people in the past were wild, uncivilized, and extreme. However, the exciting thing is that this story continues to be maintained, and there is even an exaggerated reality (hyperreality) by the local community through the stories told to every visitor (tourist) who comes to Huta Siallagan. Baudrillard's thinking explains that there is a culture that leads to everything being "hyper" (exceeding existing capacity). Societal life has moved from a modern phase to a postmodern phase in several aspects.

Baudrillard describes postmodern life as a life characterized by simulation (simulacra) [4]. Baudrillard explains that a simulation process leads to the modern creation or "reproduction of objects and events"[5]. The difference between signs and reality is blurred, making it increasingly difficult to differentiate between genuine and counterfeit goods. Baudrillard wrote about a world produced by models, which do not refer to reality or base themselves on any "reality" other than itself. Hyperreality makes people passive towards the information, messages, and signs around them, whereas hyperreality becomes a chaotic consumer society. Society only absorbs the values of external fascination without absorbing any more intangible values.

Postmodernism is a simulation of patterns that dominate the current phase, controlled by codes, namely a phase dominated by the production of artificial reality[6]. The beginning of the era of hyperreality, according to Baudrillard, is marked by the disappearance of the signified, and metaphysics, representation, the collapse of ideology, and the bankruptcy of reality itself, which is taken over by the duplication of the world of nostalgia and fantasy[7]. Hyperreality is a phenomenon that goes beyond limits in the development of current society; previously known signs no longer represent something because the signifier is dead. There are no boundaries between the real or reality and the imaginary.

2. Methods

The research method used in this research is qualitative research with a Spradley ethnographic approach[8]. An ethnographic approach to help reveal the cultural activities of storytelling (oral traditions) related to legends in the Toba Batak ethnic group in Huta Siallagan. The disclosure of this oral tradition narrative culture will later be examined from Baudrillard's Hyperreality perspective. The data collection techniques applied in this research are participant observation, ethnographic, and deep interviews. The key informants in this research were traditional leaders, village heads, tour guides, and local communities who lived in Huta Siallagan. The results of the data that have been obtained will be analyzed by applying Spradley's ethnographic analysis techniques, namely ethnographic interview analysis, domain analysis, and taxonomic analysis. These three analyses were carried out using software-based

data analysis, namely Atlas. ti. This aims to obtain accurate data analysis and make it easier for researchers to carry out various analyses that are relevant to the research focus.

3. Result and Discussions

In the past, the Stone Trial location was used to carry out the judicial process against people who committed crimes or violated applicable customary laws. Sugiharta said that the Stone Conference began to be built during Dutch rule in the 1920s and was completed in 1937, carved by the traditional leader, King Hendrik Siallagan[9].

The Batu Persidangan cultural heritage area is divided into three areas. The first area is where the King and his family lived. The second area is a trial stone area is a place for judicial deliberations for suspects in severe cases such as committing social deviations (stealing, killing, and raping), violating customary law (using black magic to harm other people), and planning to revolt against the King. The third area is the area of a trial where the execution of beheadings of defendants in severe cases is carried out.

3.1 Narrative of Anthropophagy in the Legend of the Trial Stone

Based on the observations and interviews conducted with traditional leaders, local guides, and the community telling the legend of Batu Persidangan to tourists, the narrative form is summarized into three parts.

1) Stories

• Part 1.

The executioner will behead the perpetrator, placing it on a round table and bringing his body to a square table.

• Part 2. Practice of cannibalism

There are various versions, including (a) The King said that criminals should be killed and (*Ta Sobur ma mudarna*) their blood should be drunk together (community version), (b) The King would say that criminals should be killed and (*Ta Allang ate-ate na do hot jattung na*) eat their hearts and hearts together (Local Guide version), (c) The King said that criminals should be killed and (*Ta sobur ma mudarna jala ta allang ma sibukna*) drink their blood and eat their flesh together (Performance version, contained in the performance script.

• Part 3. Disposal of the body

The perpetrator's head will be thrown into the forest, and the perpetrator's body will be thrown into Lake Toba for seven days and seven nights. During that time, the public is prohibited from participating in the lake. Meanwhile, his head will be placed in front of the entrance gate to Huta Siallagan. The goal is to prevent others from doing the same thing.

2) Cannibalism is just a story

The location points mentioned are the basis for tracing the truth of the cannibalism story as simple proof. However, the results of observations and interviews conducted show that there are discrepancies regarding the truth of the story, thus confirming that the cannibalism in the legend of Batu Persidangan is just a story that cannot be proven and is an exaggeration (hyperreality) contained in the legend. As for the basis for strengthening that cannibalism is only a form of hyperreality, these include (1) The location of the forest where the heads were dumped did not show any piles, graves, or excavations

containing human skulls. (2) Around the forest, there are also no signs of discarded human skulls; (3) Apart from that, people living around the forest never knew about the story of the dumping of human heads; (4) the story of cannibalism was only strengthened with historical writings from traders, missionaries and researchers who did not directly see the practice of cannibalism in the trial stone area. One is Nomensen's complaint to the Dutch government[10].

3.2 Simulacra in strengthening the existence of cannibalism stories

Stories of cannibalism among the Batak people are the product of oral traditions from the past. This oral tradition negatively impacts the wild and primitive Batak people. However, the telling of the Cannibal story among the Batak people in Huta Siallagan through the telling of the Legend of Batu Persidangan has experienced a form of hyperreality of truth that has not been proven.

Based on the results of observations and interviews that have been carried out, several forms of simulacra can be summarized which are described as follows:

(1) Generalization of the legend of the trial stone.

Based on the results of interviews with traditional leaders, the traditional leaders played a role in generalizing the story of the trial stone legend, which the Local Guide and the local community followed. According to the informant, this aims to standardize the story and add an entertaining element to the narrative.

(2) Narrative through Local Guide demonstration.

The image of anthropophagy in the legend of the trial stone is further strengthened through the guide's narrative when guiding tourists visiting Huta Siallagan. The local guide will explain in detail how executing a criminal starts from the trial period, the shackling process to execution, and the ceremony of eating the defendant's organs.

(3) Cannibalistic displays at festivals.

Huta Siallagan also held a festival at the Trial Stone Arena in November 2021 and at the W-20 activity, which was held in July 2022 in Samosir Regency. The beheading process is also one part of the story that is demonstrated to tourists.

(4) Animist Geopark information board.

The placement of an animist Geopark information board close to the trial stone is one sign confirming that the tradition of eating human flesh occurred in the past, even though there is no connection or connection between the existence of the animist Geopark and the trial stone.

Apart from the form of hyperreality that is deliberately created, there are other values contained in the story of Batu Persidangan, which are described as follows: (1) **Historical Value:** The existence of the story of Batu Persidangan shows that the Batak people have local history, especially in the deliberative system in the past which strong and the deliberation pattern has been maintained to this day. (2) **Juridical Values:** The application of law and sanctions in the trial system shows the values of customary law that were established long ago and still adhered to and implemented by the Batak community. (3) **Political Value:** The trial chaired and determined by the King shows the absolute power of the King, who leads and has great sovereignty in determining decisions in a village. (4) **Sociological Value:** Applying laws and sanctions in the customary system in the Huta Siallagan community can be a preventive measure and anticipate deviant behavior in society. (5) **Economic Value:** The anthropophagy

image built in Siallagan Forest has an economic function in modern times. The story of Batak people eating people has been deconstructed and used as a tourist attraction, which can later help the community's economy. Until now, the existence of cannibalism stories continues to be revived with a series of simulacra as an effort to strengthen economic value. The community is impacted by the arrival of local and international tourists to see firsthand evidence of cultural artifacts packed with stories about the practice of cannibalism.

4. Conclusion

The conclusions in this article are: (1) The narrative of anthropophagy (cannibalism) in the legend of the Trial Stone is divided into three parts. Almost all the parts have the same content, but there are different versions in the second part, which concerns explicitly the practice of cannibalism, but this is just a story. For which there is no justification. (2) The story of cannibalism in the Legend of the Trial Stone still maintains its existence through four specific strategies, namely generalizing the story of the legend of the Trial Stone, telling it through local guide demonstrations, performances of the Legend of the Trial stone and animist geopark information boards. (3). The story of cannibalism, packaged as one of Huta Siallagan's main promotions, has proven to increase the attraction for visitors to the trial stone site.

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