

Hermeneutics Analysis of *Osi* and *Ji* Mascots

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Osi and Ji are city mascots that were inaugurated at the end of 2016 by the city government of Malang in conjunction with the celebration of its 103rd anniversary. The mascots which are resulted from a contest were made by Papang Jakfar and won through several stage stages process including presentation from hundreds of participants. This brings its own fascination as the use of mascots as city icons has not been so popular in Indonesia due to the complex composition of its creation process, from its relationship with the culture, resources, community characteristic to infrastructure facilities of a city. This complexity is summed up in the form of a city mascot as a paradox. Form in hermeneutics is text and can be viewed polisemically, so interpretation becomes a central problem. Thus, hermeneutics aims to *verstehen* (comprehend) through the method of abduction, not just interpreting. Interpretation is always a reconstruction of the meaning of a text. Analysis with hermeneutics method becomes an immanent part in the mascot's profanity as a design product, mascot's form is an entity created from the results of thinking in design that is loaded with consideration and ability of a qualified individual. Osi and Ji mascots are specifically analyzed by applying Paul Ricouer's theory of Hermeneutics, in which hermeneutics can be briefly defined as a theory or philosophy of interpretation of meaning that analyzes the various symbols in its form. The objective of the research is to analyze more deeply and interpret the existing circumstances or relationships, ongoing processes, ongoing effects or emerging phenomena, since the results of the Osi and Ji analysis generate to a new knowledge formed from various entities.

Keywords: city mascot, entity, hermeneutics.

Analisis Hermeneutika Maskot Osi dan Ji

Osi dan Ji adalah maskot kota yang diresmikan pada akhir tahun 2016 oleh pemerintah kota Malang bersamaan dengan peringatan ulang tahun kotanya yang ke-103 tahun. Maskot hasil dari sayembara ini dibuat oleh Papang Jakfar dan dimenangkan melalui beberapa proses tahapan lomba termasuk presentasi dari ratusan peserta. Hal ini membawa ketertarikan sendiri mengingat penggunaan maskot sebagai ikon kota belumlah begitu populer di Indonesia dikarenakan komposisi yang kompleks dalam proses pembuatannya, mulai dari hubungan dengan budaya, sumberdaya, watak masyarakat hingga fasilitas infrastruktur suatu kota. Kompleksitas yang rumit ini terangkum dalam wujud maskot kota sebagai sebuah paradoks. Wujud dalam hermeneutik adalah teks dan dapat dipandang secara polisemis, sehingga penafsiran menjadi masalah sentral. Jadi, hermeneutik bertujuan untuk *verstehen* (memahami) melalui metode abduksi, bukan hanya menafsirkan. Interpretasi (penafsiran) selalu merupakan rekonstruksi makna sebuah teks. Analisa dengan metode hermeunetik menjadi bagian yang imanem di dalam profanitas maskot sebagai sebuah produk desain. Wujud maskot merupakan sebuah entitas yang tercipta dari hasil berpikir secara desain yang sarat dengan pertimbangan dan kemampuan olah individu yang mumpuni. Maskot Osi dan Ji secara khusus dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori Hermeneutik Paul Ricouer, dimana hermeneutika dapat didefinisikan singkat sebagai suatu teori atau filsafat interpretasi makna yang menganalisis pelbagai simbol di dalam wujudnya. Tujuan penelitian agar dapat menganalisis lebih mendalam dan menginterpretasikan kondisi atau hubungan yang ada, proses yang sedang berlangsung, akibat yang sedang terjadi atau fenomena yang sedang berkembang, karena hasil analisis Osi dan Ji ini telah melahirkan sebuah pengetahuan baru yang terbentuk dari pelbagai macam entitas.

Kata kunci : maskot kota, wujud, hermeneutik.

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INTRODUCTION

Mascot is a form of personification that is made through the process of design thinking as a figure of livelihood and luck factor. This form can be displayed in a variety of activities and displayed in a wide variety of media. The use of mascots often appears especially in sport events in various scales. The existence of mascot after 2010 began to be discussed in the academic circles and practitioners of visual communication design, because it is not just applied in the sport event but has expanded into various other areas whether for business promotion, imaging efforts to campaign forms. In this case mascot becomes a visual form that is close to the community and utilized in an effort to communicate something.

One of the most interesting topics to discuss is the adoption of mascot as a city imaging ambassador referring to *Kumamon* figure as the mascot of Kumamoto prefecture in Japan. Since its inauguration on March 12, 2010, the mascot named *Kumamon* has generated 29.3 million Yen only from merchandise sales in its first year. The amount that looks quite fantastic from the creation of a city mascot. The matter of numbers and financial benefit always become such attraction to be discussed in any situation in Indonesia. However this seemingly enormous amount is incomparable with the world football sporting event in the same year in South Africa with *Zakumi* figure as the official mascot, as listed on FIFA's official website, www.fifa.com, regarding the financial statements of 2010, it recorded income of 55 million dollar just for the license of merchandise sales rights. Yet, when compared with *Kumamon* over the past 7 years after its inauguration, whereas it is still traded and continues to record revenues for Kumamoto prefecture, and it will last for a longer time.

Aside from being discussion this city mascot phenomenon eventually began to spread in Indonesia. This can be seen from the emergence of the mascot of Surabaya city in 2015 and the mascot of Malang city at the end of 2016. And for the first time mascot was inaugurated as the identity of a city in Indonesia namely in Malang as an effort to promote tourism and distinguish the city. The mascot of Malang city is created by Papang Jakfar who won a contest held by ADGI Chapter Malang in cooperation with the government of Malang. City mascot created by Papang Jakfar takes form of two figures, namely lion and Manyar bird, and given the name Osi and Ji. This mascot's use was officially started in coincidence the 103rd anniversary of Malang.



Picture 1. Malang city's Mascot, Osi and Ji
(Source: Papang Jakfar, 2016)

Osi and Ji mascots are an initiative product from the creative community in Malang city as an effort to improve the image of Malang city so it is expected to give positive impact in various fields such as public relations, tourism, regional promotion, urban planning and education. On its website (www.osidanji.com) which is its activation channel, said that the presence of Osi and Ji mascots is an asset of Malang city which is expected to be the pride of its citizens. Papang Jakfar's intellectual work is the result of a pretty good quadrabelix collaboration after a case study on the melodrama of Asian Games' mascot creation named *Drawa* which was quite controversial. Further said that the existence of this mascot is a public rights that can be used by the citizens of Malang, even for commercial purposes though with provided reproduction reference and guidelines.

City's mascot that has a stake in building the image of the city, then on its visual formation must originate from the understanding of its identity first, in order to obtain perception that has conformity with its representation. In further understanding, it should be underlined that the image and the identity of a city are two different things. This identity is closely related to the historical rhythm of an area that has been through such a long process to form the identity of the city or the character of its people. Regarding this, it should be underlined that the understanding of identity will become the forming element and symbolic meaning embodied explicitly in the city mascot.

Identity understanding becomes very important when we discuss the pattern of city mascot formation which can represent the image of the city. It also reinforces the position of the mascot with the community to have proximity, because sometimes

identity maker factors revealed are very unique and have depth of meaning that is very different from what appears physically. In an effort to reveal the identity uniqueness to strengthen the position of city mascot existence, three stages are taken. They are to describe, to analyze and to interpret. Describing is defined as an activity in giving verbal explanation about something; or describing a verbal representation. Describing something takes skill and it is imperative to fully describe the observation result of all backgrounds, even the history of the city founding even though it takes quite a long time. This skill will not experience sharpening if it is not done continuously.

The analysis stage is the intellectual activity to comprehend a matter (object) thoroughly by first looking at the components or parts in detail. Analyze is a verb whose activity is done by dissecting each piece of information and highlighting the details of each section and sorting out based on its importance to understand it more closely. The end of the analysis is to find a hypothesis or initial conclusion that can be used in interpreting a problem. Interpreting is done after the identification step is completed, this activity is done to reveal the deeper meaning of a text (phenomenon). Interpretation can be done in several approaches, but first describe the meaning contained in detail, interpret the statement, then interpret the meaning.

Interpretation serves to point meaning, to define in words, to tell, to express, to let appear, to reveal something that is a message of reality. The method used is the one which enables reality to preach, to speak for itself, away from all distortions. The measure of the truth of interpretation is a growing interpretation, based on objective evidences; on what really can be identified. Thus interpretation is not a monologue but a dialogue. Dialogue is a process that interprets an articulated reality. Announcing a reality that is not immediately final but also a process. So the interpretation always do the action of (re)interpretation towards itself.

Papang Jakfar's visual work as it is seen from the side of its existence has two things that intersect and interesting to interpret, first normatively its physical creation refers to the figure that is already known by the wider community, especially the citizens of Malang. The figure becomes a part that has been considered a unity in representing the entity of Malang city residents. The second thing is the essence of its existence which turned out that in Malang or other cities in Indonesia, lion is not a native animal. The same thing happened in Kumamoto prefecture where black bear is not a

living animal in the area. But this becomes interesting fact to be examined, where the ability to adopt history on various sides can be embodied in an effort to create and bring newness of understanding. Interestingly, it turns out the process of symbolic creation here is not much known by designers or practitioners of visual communication, but clearly in it, the relation has become something fundamental for shaping the character of the mascot.

METHODS

Etymologically, the word "hermeneutics" originates from the Greek *hermeneuein* which means "to interpret", so that it can clearly mean "interpretation". Embodiment in hermeneutics is text and can be viewed polisemically, so interpretation becomes the main problem. Thus, hermeneutics aims to *verstehen* (understand) through the method of abduction, not just interpreting. Interpretation is always a reconstruction of the meaning of a text, or in Ricoeur's term, reproduction (Hoed, 2011: 93). Paul Ricoeur, in this case views hermeneutics not only as a theory of interpretation of symbols alone, but rather extends it as "attention to the text". Text as a hint of sign language and symbols can limit the scope of hermeneutics because oral culture can be narrowed (Sumaryono, 1999: 107). Such statement concentrically makes text the center of its analysis.

For Ricoeur, hermeneutics has two main tasks, the first is to look for internal dynamics that govern the structural work within a text and the second is to seek the power that the text's work owns to project itself out and allow its "thing" to emerge (Sumaryono, 1999: 107). He also defined hermeneutics as "the theory of operation of understanding in relation to text interpretation" (Sumaryono, 1999: 107). Text in Ricoeur's view is plural in context. He calls it a polysemic, namely textual meaningful according to the related contextual. Thus, a text, according to Ricoeur, is essentially autonomous for "decontextualization", from both sociological and psychological point of view, and for performing "recontextualization" differently in reading action ("de-contextualization" = 'liberation' process from context: "recontextualization" re-entry process into context). (Sumaryono, 1999: 109).

According to Ricoeur there are three steps of understanding, namely symbolic step, or understanding from symbol to symbol. The second step is the giving of meaning through symbols and the scrupulous 'exploration' of meaning. The third step is the most philosophical, namely thinking by

using symbol as its starting point ([Sumaryono, 1999: 111](#)). Here the subject of the symbol becomes crucial thing to interpret.

For Paul Ricoeur, text is placed in central position. To him, text is the embodiment of what he calls "speech" (oral language). Thus, text according to Ricoeur is a derivative of speech which has its own reference system so it is no longer bound by a single speech system. Therefore, text should be explained through its autonomy and understood by the steps mentioned above. It is a logical consequence of his hermeneutics theory that seeks understanding of explanations and interpretations ([Hoed, 2011: 94](#)).

In the visual context of Malang city mascot, Osi and Ji, hermeneutics theory of Paul Ricoeur is used as a theory that analyzes its form to explain the relationship of various cultural symbols that are interlocked and must be understood as something substantial. According Ricoeur every word is a symbol and if the symbols are involved then the interpretation becomes important, because there is a meaning that has multi-layer here. It is not surprising if Ricoeur states that hermeneutics aims to dispel the mystery contained in a symbol by unveiling the unknown and hidden viels of powers in the symbols (Montefiore 1983: 192).

DISCUSSION

Ricoeur states that the main task of hermeneutics is to understand text, this is because a text always relates to the society, the traditions and the schools that emerge from various ideas. Understanding of text becomes crucial in applying hermeneutics theory by Paul Ricouer. Ricoeur explains that text is, "Any discourse fixed by writing". Text is the language used to communicate, text is anything readable. The form (visual) in this case is also a text because it can be read. Thus, the form of Osi and Ji is also a text because it has symbols to perform an action of communication. As a text, the form of Osi and Ji is worthy of interpretation by using the hermeneutics theory of Paul Ricoeur. Interpretation is done to analyze the symbols that appear in the visual display.

Text: The form of Osi and Ji

Osi and Ji by Papang Jakfar are an unified mascot though visually are two different figures. Osi is in the form of a lion and Ji is in the form of a bird. The naming of both mascots will be discussed further in the process of giving meaning to the symbols. Osi in a flash of the whole visual form was created from the understanding of the history of Malang which began to emerge in the Dutch colonial period with the urban planning created by architect, Thomas J. Karsten. As we know, lion figure is known as a symbol used by the Dutch kingdom and became the symbolic foundation of Van Oranje dynasty. This form was also commonly used in Europe at the time, especially the era of the reigning Hapsburg dynasty whose descendants ruled the western hemisphere of Europe and divided it into several kingdoms. So this form is also found in the symbols and banners of other kingdoms in Europe. Less well known by the people of Malang itself is that in Kidal temple which is located in Rejokidal village, Tumpang Sub-district, Malang regency, about 20 km towards the east of Malang city, statues made of andesite stone in the form like a lion were found at every corner of the temple. The temple that was estimated to be built in the era of Singasari kingdom in 1248 AD was influenced by the Hindu Shiva teaching. Kidal temple existed about 4 centuries earlier before the beginning of European colonization. After being confirmed this also became one of the references in the understanding process of the symbolic use of lion figures that form Osi's visual.

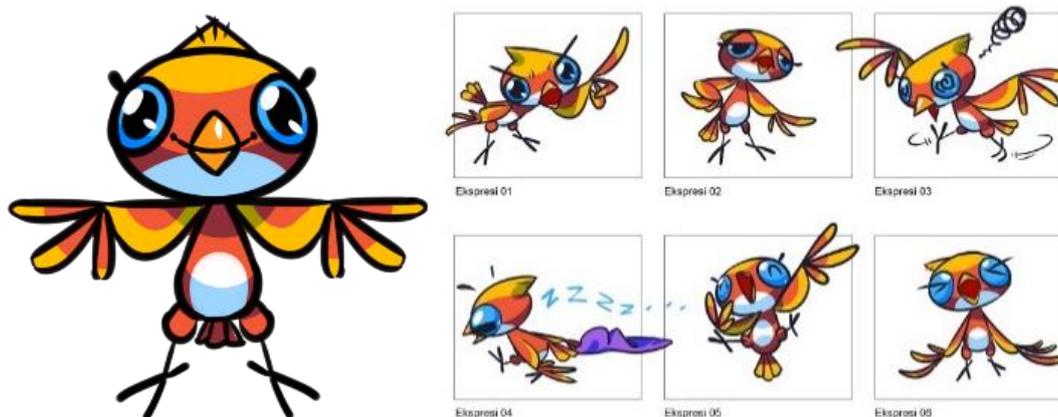
Although taking the form of a lion, in its visual, Osi displayed as friendly and cheerful with a wide smile. The depiction of its personification minimizes the animalistic element with four legs, although an insertion in the form of small fangs is visible sticking out in between its mouth, this even accentuated the facial expression rather than savagery. The dominant green on the mane and the anatomy of Osi's body stand out with the brownish color on the face, chest and arm. While the eyes are blue with small black noses. Another visual form that characterizes Osi is the use of scout boy tie (or known as *hasduk* in Indonesian language) on the neck. While the tail culminates in a green leaf shape.



Picture 2. The visual of expression variety of Osi (Source: Papang Jakfar, 2016)

Osi is illustrated to have green-clad legs wrapped in what appear to be like trousers, maybe for the decency factor that I met to be the character of Malang citizens. The hands have four fingers like an ape, so it has the ability to grasp and add the diversity of gestures. This part of the hand also looks like wearing gloves.

The form of Ji is depicted from Manyar bird (*Ploceus Manyar*), with the background of the adoption of Malang's native fauna which is determined through Governor's decree number 5225/16774/032/1996. The impression is more serious, on the contrary with the humorous Osi. While visually, Ji has quite smaller size compared with Osi's size.



Picture 3. The visual of Ji's various expressions (Source: Papang Jakfar, 2016)

In addition to having a beak like a bird, the wings as a symbol of flying ability is also owned by Ji. The color domination of Ji is made according to its serious character with warm colors i.e. yellow and orange. Blue eye circles make the impression of a larger eye and resemble the eyes of Osi. In addition Ji has a crest on the top of its head.

Text Environment

The form of Osi and Ji will bring up different interpretations, because the reading pattern depends on the background of the readers and the extent of their insight. According to Dadik Chang (Utero

Advertising), as one of the creative actors who initiate mascot contest in Malang city, a mascot will be more easily understood by the common people if the visual unity display has a strong point of interest both in the coloring and the selection of visual form. In addition, the most fundamental material is if the displayed form can cause a sense of mutual feeling with the audiences it represents and a friendly relationship if it is seen in the eye of visitors. In short, Osi and Ji as visual envoys of Malang city society must be able to represent all entities in Malang city and look fit with its environment, "*Kudu Malang banget!*" or "This should be truly Malang!"

Malang City which has cool atmosphere becomes one of the prominent tourist destinations in East Java. Some areas in the city of Malang, especially each sub-district has land that is built with function and character respectively. In Malang city itself there are many old buildings as well as new buildings built accordingly with the function of land in each area that has been set by the government, although there are some still ignore the rules. This land use almost has similarities with the function of regional blocks, but the land use is more detailed with the visual form that has stood in Malang city. The existing land use in Malang has many functions some of them are:

Commerce and Service Area

Malang city is famous for its meatballs, apples and *tahu petis* or tofu with shrimp paste condiment. Whereas one of the largest commerce area in the city is found in Kayutangan area which is known as Pasar Besar or the central market. This market is close to the town square which plays an important role for the society. In addition to Pasar Besar, in Kayutangan area there are many other trades that are done in small areas, one of them is in the old city area where many shops and stalls are still packed by the local people.

Education Area

Malang city is also known as a city of education. The area where many educational institutions from elementary, junior, to senior high school, as well as universities are located in Veteran street area on Lowokwaru sub-district.

Administration Area

Administration area which was used to be located in the town square area was moved to the New City area of Klojen sub-district where there is Bunder Monument square with city hall office, public facilities, hotels, as well as other administrative buildings. In this area there is also the very famous Ijen street which is well known for its old architectures and Ijen Festival.

Understanding symbol to symbol

Geographical conditions have formed the character of Malang city's citizens to have high solidarity, tolerance, upholding politeness as well as creative. This is embedded in the context of Malang city as an educational city that is beautiful like the slogan of the city's government. The symbols revealed in the observation process of Osi and Ji's visual also summarize them which then are explicitly summarized in the keywords during its creation process: education, beautiful and lion. These three

prominent things symbolically become the basic concepts of visual representation of Osi and Ji.

The symbol of education is manifested in Osi's figure in the form of a tie worn by scout boy (*hasduk*) and in the coloring of the eyes of the two figures that is sky blue. The dominant green color reflects beauty which is in accordance with the logo of Malang city. Osi's figure is depicted as the embodiment of lion with a leaf woven mane, at the tip of the tail, leaf shape is depicted more clearly. In his explanation, Papang reveals that Osi's mane is the home to Ji, the Manyar bird. Further, Papang's creation also raises fictional story about Osi's figure which is inspired by the shape of the statue on Kidal temple.



Picture 4. The symbol of Malang dominated by green which symbolizes the beauty of the city
(Source: Tourism Board of Malang)

Another uniqueness of Osi and Ji that will bring the distinction is the visual symbols which appear on the anatomy that is well-combined adopting both the aesthetic elements of nature and its conservation efforts. They also have slim shape structure that is so flexible in the range of motion processing (agility).

The Giving of Meaning through Symbol

The symbols raised in the visuals of Osi and Ji become more complete with the addition of local culture in the form of the discussion of Osi and Ji naming process. As it has been widely known Malang's citizens have local language called *Walikan* (*osob kiwalan*) which has been used since long time ago, especially during the independence era as a secret code for the fighters, and now growing among Arema (local football club) supporters and citizens of Malang in general. Osi's name comes

from the word "iso" which means "can" (Javanese language) with local dialect of Malang. The spelling of Malang's Walikan language is written and read from the back like reading Arabic letters (right to left). In daily conversations the pronunciation is usually adjusted to be more easily spoken, so it must not necessarily from the back to front. It is sometimes encountered that this Walikan language does not only use words from Javanese but also from Indonesian, Arabic, Madurese and Chinese. The main point of Walikan language of Malang is the consensus that formed at the time the word was used. While the name Ji comes from the word *siji* (Javanese language) which means one. So if it is combined, the meaning of Osi and Ji means *iso dadi siji*, or "can be one" (united). This also becomes the characteristic of Malang people which are always harmonious, united, cooperative.



Picture 5. Variety of visual gesture of Osi and Ji
(Source: Papang Jakfar, 2016)

Almost as a whole the visual appearance of Osi and Ji has manifested into a unity of symbols that are loaded with meaning. This meaning is perceived to be the typical of Malang citizens and their entities.

Thinking by using Symbols

The study of the symbol according to Ricoeur brings two meanings simultaneously. The concept of symbols also creates two dimensions, linguistic and non-linguistic rules. The theory of symbols will allow for metaphorical refinement. The difficulty that may be an obstacle is when attempts are made in understanding symbols and thinking by using symbols. As a work of visual, Osi and Ji have two dimensions, namely a visible visual appearance and non-physical form that can be felt. The visible being will be possibly parsed each part, one by one, and analyzed in depth with visual theories, whereas for non-physical dimensions then it takes strength in the sense of taste.

The ability to think by using symbols becomes a fundamental thing in the process of creating a mascot. Osi and Ji become one of the best mascot examples in terms of symbol processing and understanding of the creation background of the work. Another interesting thing is that the field of creation for mascot discussed here is still very rarely occupied although often used as learning materials in colleges and universities. This is very unusual considering the big public interest especially with the entry of cultural elements from other countries which increasingly enrich the perspective and thought in the society.

The educational background of Papang as the creator of Osi and Ji which is closely related to the world of art and design also becomes a force in the formation of Osi and Ji's figures. Things are reversed with the emerging phenomenon where the role of the network becomes the main source in the crafting of ideas and the creation of works, thus many good works that appear to be an entertainment but not yet able to be a guidance. Osi and Ji's creation mindset turns out to be different about the current position of mascot. Often the mascots in Indonesia have forced impression that changes mascot's visual appearance which ought to be able to represent the message conveyed to become merely form without any deep meaning.

CONCLUSION

A visually presented work such as the Osi and Ji mascot is basically part of a visual identity that aims as a messenger medium. The important role in the communication process is a unity that can not be separated in the formation of visual identity which is expected to have the most optimal impact. The road to its own creation process requires a design mindset that can only be mastered by those who are intense in the field and have understood the basics of creating processes as well as the ability to solve design problems. In addition, it takes a very capable observation power towards the symbols that become the spirit in the life of the society, as well as objective analysis plus the ability to create that eventually able to produce work that is responsible, even the great thing is that the work is able to bring change. As a text, the form of Osi and Ji in the future will be a motor of change in how to communicate between citizens and stakeholders.

The analysis of Osi and Ji as research material is basically one of the methods of art and design study that can be done with theoretical approach of

Ricoeur's hermeneutics. The form is text and has a high ability as a messenger and effective communication tool. Osi and Ji mascots as part of the communication element within the scope of Malang city society are shown objectively in this scientific writing. Yet, the author realizes that there are still many shortcomings contained in this writing. Therefore, criticism and suggestions from all parties are expected that eventually can build this understanding process becomes better in the future.

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