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APAY'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION AS A PROCESS OF INITIATION OF THE TUBABA COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PERFORMANCE OF TIKEW: CIRCLE OF LIFE

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Abstract:

Tikew is one of plants that grows on swampy areas, in Tulang Bawang Barat, Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. One of the products made from Tikew is Apay, which is part of the local wisdom of the Tubaba community and is used in daily life. The implementation of Apay as an initiation maker of daily life in the Tubaba community is directly related to the philosophy they call "Hidup Tikew Mati Tikew". This research aims to explain the symbolic interpretation of Apay as an initiation process in the lives of Tubaba community through the performance art titled of "Tikew: Circle of Life". This leads to several research questions; Why Tikew considered to philosophy of Tubaba's community life that is implemented through Apay? How is Tikew and Apay implemented as symbols in the performance art? And, what is the relationship between Apay and the performance in the initiation process of Tubaba community's life? The research method employed is descriptive qualitative, who aims to participant observation and interviews. The approach underlying this research is the Symbolic Interpretivism Theory of Clifford Geertz. The finding of this study reveal the symbolic meaning of Apay as a marker of social change and as an initiatory sign of the life processes of the Tubaba community.

Keywords: Apay, Symbolic Interpretation, Initiation, Performance Art, Tikew

1. INTRODUCTION

West Bawang Bone has a characteristic tendency of swampy areas. From the characteristics of the land, this area is known as a habitat for Tikew plants (a type of weed). Lampung tribe *Pepadun* who inhabit the district of Tulang Bawang Barat or commonly called Tubaba since ancient times have used this plant to be used in daily life as handicrafts. Tiyuh Gedung Ratu which is one of the administrative villages in Tulang Bawang Barat, which until now still has efforts to preserve Tikew plants as local wisdom in the community. In an effort to preserve Tikew, the people of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu are actively carrying out the tradition of Tikew weaving by producing handicraft products in a more innovative form. To see the explanation of the Tikew plant in the botanical realm, Suprpto and Yudha's research provides information on the characteristics of the Tikew plant in the Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) district area, South Sumatra, known as Purun. The tradition of using Purun plants has been going on for generations in Menang Village, Pedamaran, OKI. According to Suprpto and Yudha in the *Journal Purun: Knitting Ecology and Tradition in the City of Mats in the Context of Social Studies* (Suprpto, 2019) mentioning that in particular this tradition has been going on for a long time. Botanically, Steenis (2003, in Suprpto and Yudha, 2019) explained that this plant has a short, flat-tipped rhizome, grayish to green in color, upright stems with a length of 50 – 200 cm and a thickness of 2 – 8 mm. So from their shape and characteristics, Tikew and Purun are the same type of



plants, only they are different names. This emphasizes that the Tulang Bawang Barat area is an area that is the habitat of Tikew as a plant that is used by the community to meet their needs.

Studies on ecological relations and performance tend to be seen in two contexts. The first is in the aesthetic context (Ikhwan, 2021) (Wiradiredja, 2022) The two authors explain the ecological relationship and sound in Sundanese music, as done by Wiradiredja who researches the interpretation of Sundanese poetry influenced by existing ecological values. Second, in the context of religiosity (Dei Rupa, 2024) (Efendi, 2021) (Laka Meko, 2022) The two authors explain that ecological and religious relations can be related because ecology is the same as religion/theological values, as it is Dei Rupa said that ecology is actually theological, meaning that things related to ecology such as human ecology, social ecology, and health ecology are directly related to theological nature. This is because the God we believe in is reflected in the creation of the universe and all its contents. So this thing between ecology and theology is connected to each other. From the studies that have been carried out, ecological relations in the context of initiating life processes have not been a concern for researchers. In its use, Tikew is made into a form of a product of local wisdom of the Tubaba community, namely *Whatever*. Apay is a traditional mat that has become part of the process of initiating the life of the Tubaba community. Therefore, the focus of this research emphasizes on the context of the initiation of the life process by answering several research questions as follows: first, why is Tikew used as a philosophy of community life implemented through Apay?, second, how is the implementation of Tikew and Apay as symbols in the performance?, third, how is the relationship between Apay and performance in the process of initiating the life of the Tubaba community?

The initiation process is a process that is carried out to mark the life transition in each individual, often this process is represented by a series of rituals or ceremonies. Every individual must go through the initiation process, starting from birth to death, in other words the initiation process is the process of validation. Geertz said in the book *Culture and Religion* translated by Susanto, that ritual is a process of binding individuals and giving meaning through the symbols they bring (Susanto, 1992). In a case study of Javanese society, Geertz said that in a social sense, ritual can be used as an initiation process because it can function to strengthen social and identity in a group. As already explained (Utami & Fitriani, 2021) Regarding the symbols present in the Gandai dance in marriage, it turns out to have its own meaning. This shows that Apay can be used as a symbol in a process of initiation in the Tubaba community through existing ceremonies/rituals.

From this phenomenon, it was transformed into a performance of a work entitled *Tikew: Circle of Life*. This performance is an effort to read the connection between Apay as a Tikew product and the process of initiating the life of the Tubaba community. This is correlated with the philosophy that has been initiated by the Tubaba people, namely *Tikew Death Tikew Death Tikew* which reflects that Tikew has been part of the life process of the Tubaba people through Apay. This research shows that Apay is not just a handicraft product, but also has a symbolic meaning in every phase of the life of the Tubaba community, starting from birth, life, to death. Through this performance, Apay is implemented as a narrative and visualization of the cultural values in Tubaba. Tikew and Apay as initiation markers in the

performance of Tikew: Circle of Life are studied through the theory of Interpretivism initiated by Clifford Geertz regarding the meaning behind the cultural practices represented by certain symbols. In a study conducted by (Putri, 2020) discussing the Lulup Mat in Ogan Komering Ilir Regency presented at the wedding event has a deep meaning and is used as an important element that is used as a symbol. The theory of symbolic interpretivism views humans as carriers of products as well as subjects of a system of actions and symbols as a means of communication to convey symbolic messages in a behavior or action. In his application to performance, Geertz argues that a culture can be understood through a certain text such as movement, music, and other symbols. Geertz also introduced the concept *Thick Description*, That is the concept of description that refers to the profound meaning of symbols to cultural practices. This concept includes a discussion of the cultural context, its meaning, and the interpretation of the actions behind it (Geertz, 1973). This shows that the research has relevance to the theory initiated by Clifford Geertz about cultural interpretation through symbolic meaning. It has been previously studied that the symbolic meaning of an element is needed to be used as an identity for its society. Thus, this research provides a symbolic meaning that exists in the *Stuttgart* as a marker of the initiation of the life process of the Tubaba community.

Symbolic interpretation is an approach that emphasizes that symbols do not only function as a means of representation, but can carry meanings/values contained in the social context. The concept of Interpretation initiated by Clifford Geertz defines culture as a system established on meanings and symbols that have been defined and expressed in each individual historically. Then Geertz revealed that symbols are objects, events, sounds, sounds, or written forms that are given meaning by humans (Hendro, 2020). It has been previously studied that the symbolic meaning of an element is needed to be used as an identity for its society (Anggraini et al., 2019) (Nurazizah et al., 2019) (Yanti et al., 2023). As discussed by Angraini, the use of attributes in the Nagari death ceremony has its own meaning.

2. METHOD

The qualitative descriptive research method is the main foothold of the researcher in obtaining data in the field that is in accordance with the context of the artwork process. In qualitative research, the main characteristics come from the natural background/reality in the community, by obtaining them through observation, interviews, and data analysis. The presentation and analysis of data in qualitative research is carried out narratively (Subandi, 2011). In the data collection process, the researcher uses interview techniques by curating several figures or communities. Interviews were conducted with Juaini Bandarsyah, namely the Head of Tiyuh of the Ratu Building to get information about the philosophy of Life Tikew Mati Tikew. Second, Muhammad Ali, namely the Traditional Head of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu to get information about the culture of the people of Lampung. Third, Danimah and Mulia, namely Tikew craftsmen at Tiyuh Ratu Building to get information about Tikew culture and Apay motifs. Furthermore, the researcher uses the technique of Observation involved, namely the researcher stays for 3 months with the community to witness, observe, and directly engage in several activities in the community. In making observations, the researcher participated in

participating in traditional ritual activities (*Begawi*), wedding activities, *Take Care of Damar* (introduction of teenagers) to do *Bonding* directly with the community. This observation is carried out by researchers in stages to obtain some information accurately and originally. All of these activities are documented by researchers using *Mobile* as a form of archiving.

The variety of facts in the field found from each data collection technique requires a data analysis stage. According to the perspective of Miles and Huberman, who divide the analysis stage in an interactive and organized manner. Includes stage 1) Data Reduction, which is the stage where a researcher selects, compiles, and focuses data on the issue that is the basis of the research. Then, 2) Data display, is the stage of presenting data in a narrative text so that later it will be easier for the researcher to understand what has been understood. Up to 3) Drawing conclusions, is the stage of drawing conclusions and verifying in the form of a temporary hypothesis from the results of data that have been understood (Saleh, 2017). For the first step, this study grouped data from the results of information about the focus of the research obtained from observation techniques and interviews from informants. At the stage of the interview process with a focus on asking questions about the issues in the research, information about the *Tikew* phenomenon in the culture of the *Tubaba* community was provided by several informants. Among them is information about *Tikew* in the processing process, *Tikew* products, the use of *Tikew* in people's daily lives, to the existence of a new philosophy towards *Tikew*. To follow up on the focus in the research, *Apay* information, which is one of *Tikew*'s products, is used as data that needs to be deepened and clarified through interviews with several other informants, as well as observation activities on *Apay*'s objects.

As a result of reducing the data, it can be presented that *Apay* has several motives that can be determined to be used at certain moments of events in people's daily lives. In addition, based on information found from the informants, there is a philosophy that shows the connection of the *Tubaba* people with *Tikew*, namely, *Tikew Mati Tikew*.

Based on the presentation of data as in the previous explanation, it can be concluded that *Apay* is a symbol of life initiation for the *Tubaba* community. Referring to the philosophy of *Tikew* Life Dead *Tikew*, the statement shows that *Tikew* is used from the beginning of life to the end of human life. *Apay*, which is one of *Tikew*'s products, can reflect the actions of the community from this philosophy. Through motifs, *Apay* is adjusted in its use at the moment of momentum of events, such as births, marriages, and deaths. In relation to the performance of *Tikew*: Circle of Life, the phenomenon of *Apay* in society and the narrative of the philosophical action are represented according to the reality that occurs. Clifford Geertz's paradigm of symbolic Interpretivism becomes a lens in seeing these relationships. As a result, *Apay* is a marker of the life initiation process based on the action of using *Apay* for the *Tubaba* community.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

A. *Tikew* as a Philosophy of Life

Tikew is one of the endemic swamp plants that grow in West Tulang Bawang (*Tubaba*), not just a plant that lives meaninglessly, but

as a gift that has become the culture of the community. The presence of Tikew in the midst of the Tubaba community brings good value for economic and social sustainability. Tikew has been used by the people of Tubaba, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu as a use value through products produced from its weaving. The use of Tikew as a community product in Tiyuh Gedung Ratu is the implementation of a local knowledge system related to the philosophy of life of the people in Tubaba. Related to this, this discussion is focused on Tikew as a useful value in society and Tikew as a philosophy of life, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu.

1. Tikew as a useful value in society

In the midst of the Tubaba community, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu, Tikew has an important role as a very useful use value. In its use, Tikew provides practical benefits that are used as a tool for daily needs. Tikew can develop into a useful value in the community because it has gone through a long processing process, especially weaving. At first, Tikew's processed products were only *Stuttgart* and containers, but along with the development of the craftsmen's innovations, Tikew currently has a variety of products that are used for daily use such as bags, peci, hats and so on. These products are not only beneficial for the local population, but also a source of income for artisans and have developed into sustainable economic opportunities in the Tubaba community, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. This is evidenced by the existence of the Atewgera community which routinely produces the tikew handicrafts. In addition, tikew has also supported the local creative industry to continue to progress and can increase competitiveness in the national and international markets. The following are Tikew products that have a useful value for the community.

Table 1. Tikew products to meet the needs of the community


Coding	Tikew Products	Image/Photo	Description
Tikew for fashion needs	Tikew Bag		Tikew bags are used to carry shopping materials or to travel to support fashion

Figure 1

Tikew Hat		Tikew hats are used for activities when outdoors, such as harvesting, gardening, and so on.
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Figure 2

Tikew
for
ritual
needs

Peci
Tikew



Peci tikew is usually used to perform worship or attend customary/religious events

Figure 3

Stuttgart



Apay is a mat made of woven tikew, usually used for ritual needs and daily activities.

Figure 4

Tikew
for
daily
needs

Container



Tikew containers that can be used for any household purpose (a place to store kitchen spices and daily necessities)

Figure 5

As shown in Table 1 shows several Tikew products that are commonly used by the people of Tubaba, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu to support their daily activities. From the table. 1 There are five kinds of Tikew products produced by the people of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. The five products can be grouped into three categories; The first category is Tikew products used for *fashion* needs as seen in figures 1 and 2. The product in the picture is the result of Tikew's handicraft innovation in the form of bags and hats that are popular and often used among the Tubaba people. These products are woven directly by the hands of artisans with various shapes, models and motifs in each product. This makes the product in the image able to support the fashion needs of its users, because it has *its own authenticity*. The second category is for ritual needs as seen in figures 3 and 4 in the form of Apay (mat) and Peci. In the Tubaba community, especially Tiyuh, Ratu Apay Building, and peci are often used in traditional processions/ceremonies. Apay is used in the implementation of life cycle rituals which are intended to be used in every life procession from birth to death. Usually Apay is also used as a base for people who are important in the traditional ceremony. The peci is used to perform worship or attend religious traditional events.

The third category is to facilitate daily needs as seen in figure 5, namely in the form of containers. Containers made of Tikew usually have three types of sizes, namely small sizes used to store kitchen spices

such as pepper, onions, and chili. Then medium and large size containers that are usually used to store various kinds of everyday items such as accessories (brooches, combs, hairpins, and so on), multipurpose equipment (scissors, sewing needles, thread, tweezers and so on). In daily use, this container made of Tikew can function to store various kinds of household items. This is because containers made of Tikew are not easily damaged so they have a long service life.

From the description above, it clearly shows that Tikew is in direct contact with the daily life of the people in Tiyyuh Gedung Ratu. For the community, Tikew supports their daily lives as a source of livelihood of high value. With various innovations that have developed among Tikew artisans, it shows that Tikew has grown in tandem which reflects the close relationship between humans and nature, which continues to be used to maintain the preservation and balance of the existing ecosystem.

2. Tikew's Philosophy of Life Dead Tikew

The *Tikew Mati Tikew Life Philosophy* was obtained through information submitted by informants from the results of interviews that have been conducted. Tikew as a philosophy has begun to be initiated as a guideline for the life of the people of Tubaba, especially Tiyyuh Gedung Ratu. The following is the data from interviews with informants about Tikew as a philosophy of life.

Table 2. Tikew as a philosophy of Life

Name of the Informant	Interview	Coding/theme
Muhammad Ali (Traditional Head of Tiyyuh Gedung Ratu) October 10, 2024	The people of Lampung have a philosophy of life, the Philosophy of Life of Berugo Mati Berugo (the human being must have a hold in life, must not be easily influenced by others)	As a source of knowledge for the people of Lampung, especially Tubaba which is related to the philosophy of tikew
Juaini Bandarsyah (Head of Tiyyuh of the Queen's Building) 8 October 2024	"I am also philosophizing about tikew itself. If you know about the philosophy of Living Berugo Dead Berugo, then I don't want it to be like Living Tikew Dead Tikew. If the philosophy has been around for a very long time and has been attached to the people of	Background of the formulation of the philosophy of Life Tikew Dead Tikew (construction of the tikew philosophy)

		Lampung. My goal is to make Tikew Mati Tikew Life also so that the people of Lampung are aware of the presence of tikew and how important tikew is as a support for our lives	
Ezed (Tikew handicraft entrepreneur – Atuqu)	Qyoko	"If the philosophy of life is tikew mati tikew, it is indeed a direct initiation from Mr. Juaini, because in Tubaba besides me, besides me, Tiyuh is indeed Tiyuh Gedung Ratu who processes tikew every day. So he wants this tikew to have its own meaning in society."	Background of tikew philosophy
October 2024	25,		

From Table. 2 shows the process of formulating Tikew as the philosophy of life of the people of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. Interview data in the table. 2 can be categorized into two tendencies related to tikew as the philosophy of life of the Tubaba people, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. First, the statement of Mr. Muhammad Ali (Traditional Head of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu) that historically the people of Lampung, especially the Pepadun tribe, have a philosophy of Living Berugo Mati Berugo. This philosophy is based on the character of Ayam Berugo who have never lived dependent on each other. This philosophy has the meaning that human beings must have a strong grip which means that as an individual must have a purpose in life and leave good things related to the individual's identity in life, starting from birth to death/end of life. This philosophy is believed by the people of Lampung for generations and has become a customary norm that is conveyed orally as a reminder of moral values for the people of Lampung, especially the Pepadun tribe. Second, the statement delivered by Mr. Juaini (Head of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu) explained that in the formulation of the Tikew philosophy, he was inspired by the philosophy of Berugo Mati Berugo which emphasizes more on the good identity that a person must leave behind to achieve life goals. In line with this, Mr. Juaini intends to make Tikew an identity for the people of Tubaba, especially Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. This identity is expected to be a life guide for the people of Tubaba so that he formulated the philosophy of Life Tikew Mati Tikew.

The Tikew Mati Tikew Life Philosophy is indeed quite new, but because it is motivated by the connection between Tikew and the life cycle of the Tubaba people, this philosophy is already very familiar to the community. "Tikew's life" reflects that the beginning of human life begins on Apay, then also "Tikew's Death" reflects that the end of human life will be ushered in by Apay as well. The philosophy also affirms that Tikew has indeed become an inseparable part, between society, the environment, and its social processes. The people of Tubaba, especially Tiuh Gedung Ratu have viewed Tikew not only as a natural resource, but also as an entity that has supported the life and identity of the region. This statement was validated by Mbak Ezed Qyoko (Tikew handicraft entrepreneur) he said "Mr. Juaini was indeed the one who triggered the philosophy which was inspired by the philosophy of *Berugo Mati Berugo*".

From the description above, it is emphasized that Tikew as the philosophy of life of the Tubaba people is sourced from the philosophy of life of the people of Lampung, especially the *Pepadun tribe*. This philosophy was derived into the philosophy of the Tubaba people, especially Tiuh Gedung Ratu which is related to Tikew. This is evidenced by making Tikew the flagship hub of the Tubaba community which is related to the fulfillment of facilities in supporting the daily life of the community.

B. Apay as an Implementation of Philosophy

1. Motives in Apay

Apay is one of the products of Tikew handicrafts in the form of mats that have been preserved since ancient times. Apay participated in the development of the creativity of the Tubaba people in processing Tikew, so now there are many motives that have emerged. These motifs are not only aesthetic, but also to distinguish their usefulness in the context of people's lives. Apay is always present in every ritual/procession around the Tubaba community, this makes Apay one of the Tikew products that is still preserved today. There are two main motifs in Apay, namely the Andak Motif and the Puring Motif. Both motifs can be seen in the Table. 3 below.

Table 3. Motives in Apay

Motif name	Image/photo	Description
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Motive of Andak Berjajew



Figure 6

The motif of Andak berjajew is used for the birth procession. Usually called Apay Illat

Your Motive Is Not To Be Ignored



Figure 7

The motif of Andak is not jajew is devoted to the death procession. Usually called Apay Talisman

Motif Puring



Figure 8

Puring motifs used for daily activities or big days. The puring motif has red, yellow, and green colors.

According to Table. 3 The two motifs show differences and to the characteristics of each motif. The first is that *the Andak* motif is a plain motif without color (according to the color of the tikew) as seen in figures 6 and 7. In both images, there are no colors that form certain motifs. *Andak motifs* are divided into two types, the first is the Andak motif with Jajew (figure 6) and the second is the non-Jajew motif (figure 7). In the process of weaving, *Jajew* is a mark on the edge that surrounds Apay with a weaving made in a different direction 4 rows from the direction of the main weaving. The difference between the two types is in their uses. The motif of andak berjajew is used for the birth procession and daily life. When a child is born, the baby will be placed on the Apay as a substitute for the bed. As for those who do not have jajew, they are used to wrap the body in the death ritual. To distinguish the Andak motif used for birth and death is in the *Jajew* section. *Jajew* is used to indicate that Apay is used for birth and daily activities. *Jajew* contains a philosophy that every human being must always have limits when he is alive. Usually Apay Motif Andak that has *Jajew* is called Apay Illat (for babies and prayers). While Apay which is devoted to death is Apay Talisman/Motif Andak does not have Jajew. This apay does not use *Jajew*, because it means that after death there will never be a limit to the journey afterwards.



The second motif is the Puring Motif as shown in table 3 figure 8. Puring motifs are motifs formed from the colors of woven crosses, this motif has various shapes according to the creativity of the craftsmen. This shape is shown through the colored *Tikew* on Apay as in figure 8, the Puring motif is formed by the red and green *Tikew* so that it forms rectangular squares. In the dyeing process, *Tikew* uses *Pacing* (one of the plants whose extract is used as a dyeing agent) to dye *Tikew* before weaving. The colors used in Puring motifs are Red, Yellow, and Green, which have cultural significance in the Tubaba community, this

is because these colors often appear in every social process there. This motif also has a Jajew because it is used for daily life. This motif is devoted to daily use and certain celebrations, such as Begawi, which is a traditional ceremony to give a traditional title, Wedding, Jaga Damar, which is a single girl introduction event, and others.

2. The Use of Apay in the Life Process of the Tubaba Community

Apay is a product of Tikew handicrafts in the form of mats which is also a cultural identity for the people of Tubaba, especially Tiyyuh Gedung Ratu. Apay has become the initiation of the life process of the people because it is always used in every stage of the life process, starting from birth, life, to death. Below is information from the results of interviews related to the use of Apay in the life process of the Tubaba community.

Table 4. Apay in the Process of Life

Name of the Informant	Interview	Coding/theme
Mrs. Danimah (Tikew Tiyyuh Craftsman, Queen's Building) October 20, 2024	Apay Illat is used to place a newborn baby as its base. In the birth procession there are also several rituals such as washing ari, blood transfusion, and nabor sagon, in these rituals the baby is still placed on Apay Illat.	Apay Illat Motif Andak BerJajew is used for birth procession 
Her Excellency (Chairperson of the Atewgera Community) October 22, 2024	Apay puring is usually used for activities such as Begawi, Wedding, and Jaga Damar.	Apay puring for daily activities and Apay Talisman for death procession 
	Apay Jimat is indeed specifically for wrapping the body, in the past Apay also entered the grave, but now it	Apay Talisman Motif Andak No BerJajew is used to wrap the body

is only used to deliver it.



From Table. 4, it shows that there are three tendencies to use Apay in initiating the life process of the community in Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. The first is related to the birth process, the second is the life process, and the third is the ritual of death. Apay as a result of the implementation of the philosophy of *Life Tikew Mati Tikew* that has been built by the community turns out to be very directly proportional to the existing social process. In accordance with what has been mentioned, the meaning of *Life Tikew Mati Tikew* is to start life on Apay until ending life rolled up with Apay. As explained above, this is evidenced by the social reality that exists in the Tubaba community, which always uses Apay in every process of life according to its motives.

First, in an interview with Mrs. Danimah (Tikew Tiyuh Craftsman of the Queen Building) related to the birth process of Apay used is Apay Illat Motif Andak Berjajew. In the knowledge system of the Tubaba community, Jajew is a sign that is deliberately made to categorize its use. Those who have Jajew are used for daily activities, while those who do not have Jajew are used for death rituals. In the previous discussion, it has been mentioned that the meaning of Jajew in life is to remind humans that life must have limits. He revealed that there are several processions that are carried out in the people of Lampung when someone has just given birth, namely washing the urine, blood transfusion, and nabor sagon. In each of the birth processions, the newborn is placed on top of the Apay Illat. In ancient times, Apay Illat was used because it was still very rare to find beds/mattresses. As the times develop, this procession is increasingly rare. However, there are still Tubaba people who carry out birth processions using Apay Illat.

Second, Apay Motif Puring or often called Apay Puring, as conveyed by Mrs. Mulia (head of the Atewgera Tiyuh Gedung Ratu community) Apay motif puring is used in life processes that are considered important by the people of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu such as, *Begawi*, Wedding, *Jaga Damar*, or just to welcome guests. Apay Motif Puring is also used as a base or place to sit for traditional leaders/people who are important in the activity. The goal is to pay respect to the important ones. This puring reflects the activities carried out by the people of Tiyuh Gedung Ratu. Third, Apay Amulet Motif Andak is not Jajew or what is often called Apay Amulet. Ibu Mulia added that Apay Jimat was made specifically for the death procession. Apay Talisman is usually used to wrap the body after the shroud and deliver the body to the burial ground. In the past, Apay Talimat, participated in being buried with the body, but due to the development of the times and spiritual understanding, now Apay Taliat is only to deliver the body. Apay Talisman does not have Jajew because it means that after death there are no more restrictions that govern the course of human life.

C. Tikew Implementation in the Tikew: Circle of Life Show

The performance of TIKEW: Circle of Life "Jak Bawang Adhok Keughikan" is the result of research and creative process by researchers in West Tulang Bawang, especially at Tiyyuh Gedung Ratu. The theme of *the Circle of Life* is the outline of the show. As already mentioned, Tikew is one of the gifts that has been well utilized by the people of Tubaba, so now Tikew has become part of the social process in every phase of life. This performance is based on the cycle of human life, which is drawn into three phases of human life, namely the phase of birth, the phase of life, and the phase of death. The use of this phase in this performance is motivated by the philosophy of *Tikew Mati Tikew Life* which is very thick in the Tubaba community. The three phases are transformed into three phases, each of which has several scenes in it. There is a transformation of local culture that is poured into the scenes in the performance through symbolic media representations. Of the three stages, Tikew becomes a marker symbol in each phase both in the form of plants and in the form of Apay. Therefore, in this discussion, Tikew is shown as the symbols present in the performance.

1. Tikew as a Symbol in the Show

The use of Tikew as a plant in the performance of Tikew: Circle of Life is dominated by the life and death scenes. In this episode, Tikew is present as a symbol that represents every life process in the show.

a. Stages of life



Figures 9 and 10. Tikew symbol in Growth scene

In the performance, Tikew is used as a symbol in act 2 in the growth scene performed through the *Ekam Sai Mbuah Dance*. The *Ekam Sai Tembuh* dance is a dance that represents a girl in Tubaba playing with Tikew. In reality, girls in Tubaba have been introduced to Tikew since they were little, usually when their mothers are *metuly* (punching Tikew) or weaving, they participate in seeing and helping. In pictures 9 and 10 there are 7 dancers each bringing 2 Tikew hands tied with a yellow cloth which is used as *hand property*.

b. Death scene



Figure 11. Tikew symbol in the death scene

In this act, Tikew is symbolically a corpse that represents a person who has completed his life cycle or died. In picture 11 there is an actor carrying a handful of Tikew which symbolizes a body that has been replanted and has been merged with nature. Not only representing the corpse, Tikew also represents the tikew plant itself, because humans and tikew are the same living beings that when their time is up, they must be regrown with soil. In the scene, there are 5 actors undergoing a death procession, including 1 actor carrying a handful of Tikew tied with a white cloth.

2. Apay as a Symbol in the Show

Tikew in the form of Apay in the performance is used as a basis in bringing this theme about the cycle of human life, namely birth, life, and death. Apay is not just a consumer product, but also has cultural values that are already inherent in the Tubaba community. In each round, Apay is presented as a symbol/marker according to its use in social reality. As in the discussion below.

a. Birth Scene



Figure 12. Birth Scene

In this round, Apay Motif Andak Berjajew/ Apay Illat is presented as a symbol of the scene used for the birth procession. In reality, Apay Illat is used for newborn baby pads. In this round there are also other social processes, including washing ari, blood transfusion, and nabor

sagon. In picture 12 there are 2 actors who are putting a jug on Apay which is represented as a newborn baby.

b. Stages of Life



Apay Motif Puring which was present in the life round was performed by dancers from the beginning of this round. This apay is symbolized as a base in every process of life of the Tubaba community. In this life stage, there are 3 scenes in it, namely the Growth Scene (children and teenagers), the Tikew Harvest Scene, and the Jaga Damar Scene. The three scenes also responded to the Puring Motif Apay.

c. Death scene



Figure 15. Death Scene

In the death round, Apay Motif Andak does not Berjajew/Apay Talisman is also presented as a symbol of death. In this scene, apay is used to roll up tikew which is represented as a corpse. There are also several death processions, including the ceremony of bathing the corpse; which presents 2 pusang fronds as a base for bathing corpses, the ceremony of fading the corpse; who presents Apay as a wrapper for the corpse, then the departure and burial ceremony of the corpse; who carried out the procession relatives walked under the coffin 7 times and presented chickens, 2 mahas, and 7 earthen heads.

3.2 Discussion

The performance *Tikew: Circle of Life* seeks to represent the Apay phenomenon in the life process of the Tubaba people as in reality. Both in material (noun) and non-material (meaning), Apay and its meaning are presented in the performance of works without changing the form and meaning that occurs in society. In line with this, Isa (2024) sees a direct relationship between aesthetic practice in a performance and the social processes that take place in society. This is what also appears in the performance of *Tikew: Circle of Life* related to the life process of the Tubaba people which is symbolically present from *Tikew's* product in the form of Apay. In this case, through the theory initiated by Clifford Geertz regarding the meaning of culture and symbols, the researcher uses the concept of Thick Description to describe the meaning of Apay as a marker of the initiation of the life process of the Tubaba community in depth. The use of Thick Description includes context, meaning, and interpretation (Geertz, 1973).

1. *Tikew* as a marker of social change

Evidence of *Tikew* as a marker of social change is the change in the products produced from *Tikew*. *Tikew* which was initially only a container for daily needs such as a place to store groceries or household items. However, over time, it has changed into a fashion supporter that opens the *Tikew* space from consumptive fulfillment to market commodity fulfillment. This represents the change in the Tubaba society in the view of *Tikew*. From just a practical tool, it becomes a tool that has a symbol and identity for its people. Through *Tikew*, people can express their identity through various products produced by *Tikew*. In addition, from developing this cultural identity, this change also creates a more spacious space for social interaction. In the case of the community building a small community, until now the community has spread its wings to the national arena in introducing *Tikew's* products. The transformation of *Tikew's* usability also has an impact on consumers, namely being more aware of local products and supporting the local economy to continue to progress. It was concluded that the presence of *Tikew* in the community has become a marker of social change, in the context of economy, cultural identity, and social interaction which has become a social dynamic that continues to develop in the Tubaba community.

2. Apay as an Initiation Marker and Relationship Marker

Apay has three types that are adapted to its use in these three phases of life. In the performance *Tikew: Circle of Life* is presented as a medium to convey the cultural values of the Tubab people through Apay as a symbol used to mark the initiation of each phase of life in accordance with the existing reality. Apay in the performance is not just a stage property, but a symbol to strengthen the meanings that have been born in the Tubaba community. For comparison, just like performing arts, it is used as a medium to convey the messages behind the mask of Burok Art conveyed by Toto Amsar (2019) in (Maulana et al., 2021). In this case, Apay has been used as an interpretation of the process of initiating the life of the Tubaba people through existing motives. The first is Apay Illat/ Motif Andak BerJajew, used as a sleeping mat for newborns. In this context, Apay Illat symbolizes purity and as the beginning of life. Jajew on Apay reflects the hope for babies to

have a directed life path and not cross boundaries. The limit in question is not violating the norms and rules on which it is based. The second is Apay Puring/Puring Motif, used as a base in every daily activity including ceremonial activities/traditional rituals. Apay Puring has a variety of colors and patterns, this is interpreted as diversity, social dynamics, and balance in the life of the Tubaba people. In the Puring Motive, there is also Jajew which reflects that in life, even though he is open to choosing his own way of life, he must still have limits. Third, namely Apay Jimat/Motif Andak No BerJajew, used as a body wrap. In the context of death, Apay Jimat is used as a symbol of the end of a person's life journey. The use of Apay Amulet is used as a transition from the phase of earthly life to eternal life. In this Apay there is no Jajew, this means that after death there are no more boundaries that govern. In other words, the journey after death will be eternal and limitless.

Thus, the performance by Tikew: Circle of Life has become a medium to implement Apay as a marker of initiation in the life process of the Tubaba community. This is also Apay can be used as a marker of relationships in the performance to convey the cultural identity of the Tubaba community.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Apay has an important role as a symbol that connects the life process of the Tubaba community with the performance of Tikew: Circle of Life. Through the implementation of the philosophy of "Hidup Tikew Mati Tikew" Apay is not only used as an aesthetic support, but also as a symbolic medium that strengthens the meaning of the life cycle in the Tubaba community. The result of this research is that Tikew has had an impact as a marker of social change for the Tubaba community, from being only used as consumptive fulfillment to transforming into a market commodity. In addition, Apay as one of the products produced by Tikew also has its own cultural identity for the Tubaba people as a marker of the initiation of each phase of life through the performance of Tikew: Circle of Life. In the performance, Apay is presented as a symbol of every process of the life of the Tubaba people in every act. This symbol shows that Apay in the Tubaba community has a meaning as a marker of initiation in the life process. Then the performance of Tikew: Circle of Life was implemented as a medium to convey the cultural values and identity of the Tubaba people. The results of this study show that there are several limitations experienced. Among them, such as in the aspect of data search, the ignorance of informants to define several local terms about the Apay object that is listed results in a lack of effectiveness in presenting information. Then, related to the search for references that are relevant to the focus of the research, it is also a limitation in this study. Because the research issue related to the study of the objects of Tikew and Apay in the problems of the community in Tulang Bawang Barat district has never been discussed in previous research. So that this study does not get a comparison in focus with the same research location. Based on these constraints, it is hoped that other researchers in the future can conduct research on the same focus of issues by presenting more comprehensive data or information, so as to generate a variety of information and novelty in the same research focus.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

This research is expected to be able to be a reference contribution for other researchers if there is a similar research. For the people of Tubaba, through this research the author can contribute to adding information about Tikew in the culture of the Tubaba people.

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