

The Meaning of Practicing Compassion and Social Solidarity

Serat Driyabrata

(A Semiotic Analysis of the Teachings of the Succession of Perfection in Life)

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Keywords: Meaning, Compassionate Action, Social Solidarity, Serat Driyabrata	Abstract
Submitted: 09/07/2025	This study explores the moral consensus and divine function reflected in human multidimensional life through the Serat Driyabrata manuscript. Using a qualitative interpretive approach with Michael Riffaterre’s semiotic theory, the research reveals that moral order in human life is symbolically expressed through signs and teachings in the text. The meaning of compassionate behavior in Serat Driyabrata includes five elements: purifying the heart, living beneficially for others, lifelong sincere learning, eliminating arrogance (nar/api/iblis), and fostering gratitude with sincerity. Meanwhile, social solidarity in the manuscript is reflected through mutual deliberation, cooperation, mutual assistance, engagement in religious life, and mutual strengthening in facing challenges. These values symbolize togetherness and sincerity as the essence of harmonious social life envisioned in Serat Driyabrata, forming a system of ethical guidance for achieving perfection in life.
Revised: 15/07/2025	
Accepted: 30/07/2025	
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INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, as multidimensional beings, both internally-horizontally and externally-vertically, humans will always be involved in communication events. Regarding these communication events, whether internal or external, vertical or horizontal, humans cannot be separated from the factors that involve them in a communication event. These factors include (1) the general sign system or even the

symbols used and (2) the implied meaning within them (Purwito 1991). Signs as units of study can take the form of several artifacts that have been holistically interpreted as a form, style, or genre, which in cultural studies is called a text (Mudjiyanto and Nur 2013). Semiotic studies broadly distinguish between two types of semiotics, namely communication semiotics and signification semiotics (Drs. Alex Sobur 2013).

Literary works that are created cannot be separated from the dominance of human life, which contains values and is bound by an order that forms a complete system (Hartoko and Rahmanto 1986). This can be concluded from Perrine's definition of poetry, namely: "Poetry can be defined as a type of language that says more and more intensely than what is said by everyday language" (Pfeiffer and Perrine 1978). Because the language in poetry is a sign that differs from its actual or semantic meaning, has multiple meanings, and uses figurative language, in order to interpret it correctly, it requires deep interpretation to produce connectivity in relation to real human life (Samsuri 1980).

In this study, the researcher attempts to conduct an in-depth and structured contextual analysis of the meaning of concern and social solidarity in the teachings of Serat Driyabrata using semiotics as a tool of analysis, which in reality has a complexity related to the philosophy and way of life of the Javanese people, which serves as a reference in the system of life in order to achieve true perfection in life in the context of forming logical actions of strong solidarity in a series of symbols in achieving a line of perfection in life. The multidimensionality in the analysis is examined from an interpretive perspective.

The diversity of the contents of the manuscripts includes historical and social descriptions, genealogies, laws, wayang chapters, wayang literature, literature, piwulang, Islam, primbon, language, music, dance, and even modern architecture (Werdiningsih 2017). Critical reading or interpretation is necessary in order to see the connection with real social life (Riffaterre 1978). To interpret this, the role of semiotics related to sign systems is needed. This limitation of meaning is the same as the term thought, reference, which is the relationship between a symbol and its reference (Sudaryat 2008). The meaning in the Serat Driyabrata manuscript must be read critically in order to produce a correlation with social life as a whole and in a good way. A deeper meaning contains three elements in its critical reading in determining multiple meanings, namely (1) meaning, (2) the speaker's or writer's intention, and (3) the meaning given to a linguistic form (Haeri 2021).

Based on this description, the author is interested in researching and studying Serat Driyabrata because it contains complexity in its main meaning, namely the perfection of life, which needs to be critically and deeply studied and explored in its entirety through Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory approach in order to produce relevance to social life that is appropriate and accurate.

RESEARCH METHODS

Contextually, this study uses an interpretive paradigm. Meanwhile, the research approach used is qualitative research. The working principle in qualitative research that will be used in this study is text study, which includes content analysis of the entire Driyabrata manuscript. The type of research used is document or text studies. Research categorized as text studies or document studies is a logical method that focuses on signs and texts as objects of study, as well as how researchers interpret and understand the codes behind the signs and texts as a whole. The data source in this study is the Serat Driyabrata manuscript. Therefore, the data in this study consists of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to obtain a description of the patterns of symbolic mysticism

and the semiotic meanings contained in the context of the Serat Driyabrata manuscript using Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory.

The data collection methods used in this study are literature study and documentation, since the analysis material is in the form of text. The data analysis technique used by the researcher is Michael Riffaterre's semiotics by discussing the analysis of meaning in the context of signs by conducting an in-depth interpretation of semiotics. The signs in question are related to the meaning of concern and the meaning of social solidarity in Serat Driyabrata. In this study, the author conducted content analysis, which was deepened in the textual data, namely the Serat Driyabrata manuscript, to increase the sharpness of the analysis of the research object.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The unity and harmony logically depicted in the mystical ideal in the contextual mysticism between humans and God is present as a model for human relationships with society, especially Javanese society (Deni Sartika 2012). Humans in social harmony are essentially a depiction of the principle of beings and individuals who have a strong belief in the power that is widely spread throughout life (Nawafi 2020). Humans generally strive to get closer to God, and furthermore strive to unite with God, which is logically better known as *manunggaling* (Sosrosudigdo 1965). Trying to know God is an impression of human longing for their creator. As a sign and proof of the importance of life, humans strive to become ideal individuals in the context of perfect humans, *insan kamil* or *manungsa kang utama* in true meaningful perfection of life (Sofwan 2002).

Harmonization in the line of human life to be as close as possible to God in a series of achieving the process of perfection of life is generally referred to as mysticism (Margaret H. DeFleur 2012). The rules of mysticism have been known for quite some time both in the West and in the East. This spiritual journey in the mystical context is also found in various religions around the world, such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism (Niels Mulder 2007). Meanwhile, there are also groups or sects within these religions that have developed concepts or ideas of this kind of spiritual journey to another world (Nawafi 2020). In the Islamic context, the process of mystical journey is better known as *tasawuf* or *Sufism*, which is commonly practiced as a way of thinking in the *tarekat* school of thought. Meanwhile, the mystical perspective that is opposed to deep spiritual culture, in this case Javanese culture, is called Javanese mysticism, which is usually centered on inner spirituality (Nasution 1978).

Description of Semiotic Analysis at the Level of Meaning of the Laku Prihatin Serat Driyabrata

In terms of context, the textual depiction of the Driyabrata Manuscript begins with a description of the condition of the Javanese people at the time of the collapse of Majapahit and the emergence of the Demak Kingdom, when several regions had become priorities for the spread of Islam. Many people refer to Islam as the religion of the Arabs. When the Majapahit kingdom collapsed, a shift began to occur with the main Buddhist scriptures being gradually destroyed by their own followers, who gradually converted from Buddhism to Islam, which is based on a new scripture called the Quran.

Interpretation of the Meaning of Laku Prihatin in the Serat Driyabrata

The concept of the 9 main human characters

As a belief, symbolic mysticism teaches that the essence of faith and God can be achieved through meditation or spiritual enlightenment through textual understanding, regardless of thoughts and common sense (Sri Yudari 2019). This context is in line with what is contained in the 9 human characters.

Related to the concept of the nine human character traits as capital in carrying out compassionate actions with the aim of achieving perfection in life, this is very much in line with the Javanese character that has been inspired all this time. The Javanese personal concept that has been believed in, namely having a view of life and life goals as manifested in daily attitudes or actions, has resulted in specific and distinctive forms of expression that are often referred to as Javanese character. That is, the manifestation of morals or character that arises from psychological traits that are different from other people and shape the character and personality of the person concerned.

All of this is related to a number of traits that can be considered characteristic of the Javanese personality. In addition, the Javanese character is also explicitly described in the *unen-unen* that have developed in Javanese culture. A number of dominant positive characteristics that are inspired by and described in the *Serat Driyabrata* include: 1) Javanese people like to express everything indirectly, as expressed in the proverb: *wong Jawa ngone semu, sinamun ing samudana, sesadone ingadu manis*. Javanese people tend to be ambiguous or veiled, full of symbols, and like to convey veiled words. Everyone who comes is always welcomed with a sweet face. 2) Their speech and actions tend to be refined, using polite language, based on a spirit of brotherhood and high tolerance, as described in the proverb: *tepa slira*. 3) They are open and easy to relate to, communicate with, and socialize with anyone. They live in harmony, have a strong spirit of togetherness, and try as much as possible to avoid conflict, as reflected in the proverb: *rukun agawe santosa, crah agawe bu- brah, aja seneng padudon mundhak ngadohake paseduluran*. 4) They are compassionate and practice spiritual discipline. There is a proverb that explicitly states this, namely: *wong Jawa gedhe tapane*. Javanese people have a great spirit for meditation or spiritual discipline, as recommended in the expression: *cegah dhahar lawan guling*. 5) They have a willing nature as expressed in the proverb: *ri-la lamun ketaman, kelangan mora gegetun*, accepting various situations with an open heart, patience, and endurance against trials. 6) Having high loyalty in serving or cooperating. Being serious at work, and having a high commitment to practicing the spirit of *sepi ing pamrih rame ing gawe*. 7) Noble-minded, prioritizing good and bad considerations, as well as propriety in acting and in assessing various realities encountered. 8) Highly religious in accordance with their inner beliefs. 9) His actions tend to be cautious, *empan papan*, not *grusa-grusu*, not *srogal-srogol* and are greatly influenced by an attitude of *eling lan waspada*. In other words, he is not overly tempted by rank, position, prestige, honor, and respect.

The context of influence in Javanese personal success

The contextual orientation of Javanese personal success as depicted in the *Serat Driyabrata* is influenced by a number of situations, both internal and external, which have been used as references in the context of social life, namely: 1) education/intellectuality, 2) immediate family environment, 3) religion and beliefs, 4) physical condition, 5) natural environment, 6) livelihood, 7) government system government system.

The journey to a successful life

The essence of the meaning of *prihatin* implied in the content of the teachings of *Serat Driyabrata* is that there are five things that can be inspired in the interpretation, which are related to several signs, namely: 1) Purifying the heart, which is done by getting used to thinking positively, even when facing bad and unpleasant situations, but always trying to find the good side. 2) Striving at all times to live a life that is beneficial to fellow creatures. In Javanese terminology, this is called *donodriyah* or *sodaqoh*. *Dhonodriyah* has four methods and levels, namely in reality (a) *dhonodriyah* prayer, (b) *dhonodriyah* kind and soothing words/advice, then (c) *dhonodriyah* energy, (d)

dhonodriyah wealth. The last part is the most difficult to do but has the highest value. 3) Learn to be sincere and wholehearted at all times in a noble inner self. This is in order to be able to achieve perfect sincerity. The measure of real perfection in sincerity can be described as our “sincerity” when defecating or urinating. 4) Eliminate arrogance in both body and soul (nar/api/iblis), which means avoiding the tendency to seek your own righteousness, your own victory, and your own needs. 5) Be sincerely grateful, because there is no reason whatsoever to think that God has not given us blessings.

An Overview of the Meaning of Social Solidarity in the Semiotics of the Serat Driyabrata

The concept of social solidarity is a social process that is created because of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunities based on hope and trust (Nopianti et al. 2016). This understanding or definition is indeed based on the ability of individuals or groups to work together in an entity that will produce social solidarity in context. Solidarity emphasizes the state of interconnection between individuals and groups and underlies collective bonds in life, supported by moral values and beliefs that exist within the community (Al-hal 2014). This tradition of cooperation is reflected in various community activities such as building houses, repairing public facilities, holding village celebrations or events, during natural disasters, deaths, and others (Soulisa 1988). Koentjaraningrat classifies gotong royong into four types, consisting of gotong royong in agricultural production, formal gotong royong between neighbors, gotong royong in celebrations, and gotong royong in disasters and deaths (Pratama, Chariro, and Akbar 2021). This discussion focuses specifically on the meaning of social solidarity in the Driyabrata manuscript in the form of teachings that serve as guidelines for life.

Forms of Social Solidarity in Serat Driyabrata

The manuscript entitled Serat Driyabrata, as part of a textual product, has a meaning that is embodying in complex social solidarity values. The description of the forms of solidarity in Serat Driyabrata is important in seeing the moral treasures of life contained therein. The following are forms of solidarity in Serat Driyabrata

Always Deliberating in Life

The context of deliberation in its tendency can mean advice, discussion of ideas, consideration of agreement, or consultation by asking for advice or opinions from others to be used as material for consideration in decision making (Berutu 2005). In rembug or rembugan, for example, as one of the local wisdoms of deliberation, there are several criteria that are key to this activity, including an open attitude, a willingness to provide information, a willingness to discuss a matter, and not feeling that one is always right (Setyaningsih, Wulandari, and Saraswati 2017).

Mutual Assistance in Life

Humans, as social beings, cannot live alone but need other people in various aspects of life, such as socializing, working, behaving, helping each other, community service, security, and so on (Suryani RI 2018). Life in general has been characterized by a culture of harmony, where every member of society is expected to help one another and care for their fellow human beings.

Mutual Cooperation in Meeting Needs

In the past, when “Gotong Royong” was used as a force, community life was generally harmonious because capitalism was not yet so developed that the actions carried out on a massive scale by individuals in community groups were unconsciously influenced by the social facts that existed in their social environment (Derung 2019). As social beings, we should have empathy for other social beings. This condition is also based on the fact that humans cannot live alone. In Serat Driyabrata, the concept of mutual cooperation in meeting needs is described as byantu.

Involvement in Religious Activities

Religiousness can be manifested in various aspects of human life. Religious activities do not only occur when someone performs worship rituals, but also when they carry out other activities driven by spiritual power. Religion is a symbol, a system of beliefs, a system of values, and a system of behavior that is symbolized, which centers on issues that are considered most meaningful (Zamrodah 2016). Based on the above definition, it can be seen that religious activities are efforts made to realize or apply faith into forms of religious behavior in everyday life. In the Driyabrata manuscript, the meaning of solidarity is very apparent, which actually refers to human involvement in collective religious activities as depicted through the concepts of pepiling, eling, and memiling agami. This means working together to be involved in religious activities.

Strengthening Each Other in Facing Life's Obstacles

Reinforcing the importance of a multidimensional life is an inseparable line in the formation of order (Sahfutra 2018). The condition of mutual need becomes a momentum to jointly form a force that can take the form of support or encouragement that strengthens one's resolve to live life to the fullest. In the Driyabrata manuscript, human relationships in the form of social solidarity are depicted in pinikul kanthi reruruh bedha. This means that humans, in their actions to strengthen each other in interpreting the complex obstacles of life, need to understand the true purpose without having to base it on personal structures.

The Meaning of Social Solidarity in the Serat Driyabrata

According to Blumer, when talking about meaning, there is a concept that must be understood: nothing is inherent in an object that provides meaning for humans. Meaning comes from interaction with other people; the meaning of something comes from the ways people act towards it in relation to that thing. The actions they take will provide boundaries for others, in that actors choose, examine, think, categorize, and transform meaning in relation to the situation in which they are placed and the direction of their actions. In fact, interpretation should not be considered merely as the application of predetermined meanings, but as a process of formation in which meaning is used and refined as an instrument for directing and shaping actions. Meaning is something that is attached to the attributes of something. When talking about the meaning of social solidarity in the Driyabrata manuscript, the concept understood is how the solidarity in the manuscript can be part of the meaning. The meanings that arise or exist in the Driyabrata manuscript are explained through the following description.

Togetherness

Togetherness is known in English as cooperation, which means working together. However, togetherness is more than just working together because togetherness in our language is defined as a sense of awareness, commitment, concern, and willingness to help each other, give to each other, and further sacrifice selflessly in order to realize a better life together. This togetherness is a behavior that must be applied in social life, both at school and in the community. Behavior in an attitude structure shows how the behavior or tendency to behave that exists within a person is related to the object of the attitude they face. Thus, the sense of togetherness that exists in every human being will actually influence their behavior in responding to the objects of other people's attitudes or their interaction partners. Togetherness in the Driyabrata Scroll is recognized as a condition for achieving perfection in life, which is truly reflected in tetegin ati sangga permadhi.

Sincerity

In terms of sincerity, the Driyabrata Scroll reflects the Javanese concept of pribadi wutuh, which is a person who is able to live life fully without any flaws. If they make a

mistake, they must immediately cover it up with kindness, so that their integrity is maintained. A wutuh personality is an empathetic personality, which means controlling one's desires, being tolerant, polite and well-mannered, humble, peace-loving and democratic. A person with an empathetic personality is someone who has the ability to feel and think about the conditions and experiences of others as they are experienced by those others. An optimistic personality is one that is productive in real and massive material terms, innovative, able to improve systems for the better, or able to utilize the potential of the environment well and realize it appropriately. For Javanese people, someone with a wutuh personality in the context of sincerity has a refined or elegant personality, is polite, soft-spoken, adaptable, and sensitive, with an inner strength that appears to be self-deprecating on the surface. Emotions such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, anger, surrender, hope, and compassion should not be shown in public (Casmini 2020). Personal and social tensions, conflicts, and confrontations are carefully avoided by Javanese people, who consider harmony and peace to be very important qualities. Living in harmony means living in agreement, in a state of peace and tranquility without conflict and opposition, or uniting so that the community can help one another.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the symbolic mysticism of Serat Driyabrata using Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory and critical analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn : a) Based on the interpretation of the meaning of prihatin, it can be seen that there are five elements that form part of the description of the meaning of prihatin in the Serat Driyabrata manuscript, namely: 1) Purifying the heart, 2) Striving at all times to live a life that is beneficial to fellow creatures more, 3) Learning sincerely and wholeheartedly throughout life in a noble spiritual manner, 4) Eliminating arrogance both outwardly and inwardly (nar/api/iblis), 5) Being grateful with sincerity. b) The interpretation of the meaning of social solidarity in Serat Driyabrata as a whole consists of: The forms of social solidarity depicted in the Driyabrata manuscript are (1) always deliberating in life, (2) helping each other in life, (3) working together to meet needs, being involved in religious affairs, and finally (4) strengthening each other in facing life's obstacles. The meaning of social solidarity in the Driyabrata manuscript is (1) togetherness and (2) sincerity in living life.

Suggestion

Research on literary works in a textual context, in this case primarily related to Javanese manuscript data using Riffaterre's semiotic hermeneutic analysis, has not been conducted extensively in the sociology graduate program at UMM. Therefore, there is a need for further development so that many similar studies can be conducted to preserve the existence of archipelagic manuscripts, especially Javanese manuscripts, which contain complex scientific knowledge and are worthy of in-depth study, as has been done by researchers, namely by looking at the relationship between the textual pattern of the teachings of perfection in life in the Serat Driyabrata and social reality, namely the formation of social solidarity in Javanese society with the interpretation of the meaning of prihatin and the meaning of social solidarity.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the ministry of education and culture, especially the Beasiswa Unggulan or BU scholarship program batch 2020, and Postgraduate UMM for their support in this research. And also to my friend thank you for supported this research until publication has finish.

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