Revealing the Meaning Behind Mandala Of Agung Karangasem Palace, Bali Indonesia: Investigating Through Semiotics For Preservation Of Historic Value

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Abstract

The Agung Karangasem Palace is one of the physical inheritances of a community culture. As a cultural artifact, the Agung Karangasem Palace can be read as a text representing the traditions of a community. There are messages contained in the Agung Karangasem Palace. In addition to the Balinese culture, there is a strong external cultural influence that influences the order of the Agung Karangasem Palace mandala. In order to find the message contained in the mandala of the Agung Karangasem Palace, it is necessary to decompose the components of the mandala. Semiotics is a method that can be used to read or reveal messages contained in an object based on existing codes or signs (decoding). The process of decomposition of the sign with this semiotic approach depends a lot on the social agreement that exists in a society where the object is located. The purpose of this document is to discover the message contained in the mandala of the Agung Karangasem Palace as an attempt at transposition to appreciate and preserve the values contained in the mandala of the Agung Karangasem Palace so that it can later be translated into a new mandala architecture in context current.

Keywords: Semiotics, the meaning of the mandala, Agung Karangasem Palace

1. Introduction

Semiotics is the study of how to identify signs and symbols. In architectural semiotics there are three categories of relations of signs with elements in its architecture. The sign system in architecture includes many aspects, such as physical form, parts, size, proportion, distance between parts, material, color, etc [5]. As a system of signs, everything can be interpreted (it has meaning and value) and provokes certain reactions (pragmatic) [4][11][13]. Similarly with the Agung Karangasem Palace Bali building, specifically the palace mandala building. With architectural semiotics, we can contemplate several things related to the architecture and composition of the spatial design of the palace mandala. Based on semiotics, the architecture, in this case the mandala puri, can be considered as a text.

2. Literature Review

Relation Between Signifier and Signified Ferdinand De Saussure Theory

The semiotic theory proposed by Ferdinand De Saussure, semiotics is divided into two parts, namely signifier and signified. Markers are seen as physical forms or shapes that can be recognized through architectural works, while signs are seen as meanings that are revealed through concepts, functions and values contained in architectural works. The existence of Saussure's semiotics is the relation between signifiers and markers based on the convention, commonly called signification [10][13][33]. Semiotic importance is a system of signs that studies the relationship of the elements of signs in a system based on certain rules or conventions. A social agreement is needed to be able to interpret the sign. According to Saussure, signs consist of: Sounds and images, called signifiers or markers, and concepts of sounds and images, called meanings [7].
Saussure put the sign in the context of human communication by separating it by making what is called signifier and signified. Signifiers are significant sounds or significant squiggles (material aspects), that is, what is said or what is written and read [10]. Meaning is a mental image, that is, the mind or the concept of the mental aspects of language. Saussure mentions the signifier as a significant sound or scribble, while it means a mental image or concept of something of the signifier. The relationship between the physical existence of the sign and the mental concept is called significance. In other words, significance is an effort to make sense of the world [13][39][43].

When communicating, someone uses a signal to send meaning over an object, and other people will interpret the signal. The object for Saussure is called "referent" [12]. Like Peirce, who called interpreter for signifier and object for signifier, the difference is that Saussure interprets "object" as a referent and calls it an additional element in the marking process. For example: when people say the word "dog" (signifier) in a cursed tone, it is a sign of bad luck (signified). Therefore, according to Saussure, "signifiers and signifieds are united, they are inseparable, like the two sides of a sheet of paper" [10][39].

Saussure developed language as a system of signs. Semiotics is known as a discipline that examines signs, marking processes, and marking processes. Language is a certain type of sign [15]. Therefore, it can be understood whether there is a relationship between linguistics and semiotics. Saussure uses the word semiology which has the same meaning as semiotics in the Pierce school. The word semiotics has a main rival, said semiology. These two words are used to identify the two traditions of semiotics. The linguistic tradition shows traditions related to the names from Saussure to Hjelmslev and Barthes that use the term semiology [33]. While those who use general theories about signs in the tradition associated with the names Pierce and Morris use the term semiotic. The word semiotic is accepted as a synonym for the word semiology [4][7].

The semiotics of the Saussure school used linguistic loan terms. In the post-Saussure period, the linguistic theory that marked most semiotic studies was the theory of Hjelmslev, a Danish structuralist [15]. This influence is mainly seen in the semiology of communication. This theory is the semiotic approach that only pays attention to signs accompanied by intention (signals) that are consciously used by those who send (the sender) and those who receive it (the recipient). Semiotic experts do not cling to the primary meaning (denotation) of the transmitted sign, but try to obtain a secondary meaning (connotation) [4].

According to Saussure, a sign has two entities, namely signifier and signified. The signs according to Saussure are a combination of a concept and an inseparable sound image. The relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary. There is no definite logical connection between the two, making the text or the sign interesting and problematic at the same time [7][12][39].

Saussure's thinking also had a strong echo in the sociocultural sciences in general and eventually became a source of inspiration for a notion of thinking called structuralism. Saussure's linguistic principles can be simplified in the following points of understanding [4][7][15]:

a. Language is a social fact.

b. As a social fact, language is latent, language is not a superficial phenomenon but rather like the rules that determine superficial symptoms, which are called Language. Language manifests as a probation, an individual act of language or speech.

c. Language is a system or structure of signs. Therefore, language has multilevel units, ranging from phonemes, morphemes, sentences, to speeches.

d. The elements at each level are interwoven with each other in a certain way called paradigmatic and syntactic relationships.

e. It is the relationship or relationships between the elements and levels that really builds a language. Relationships determine the value, meaning, and understanding of each element in the overall construction of language.

f. To obtain knowledge about the language whose principals have been mentioned above, language can be studied through a synchronous approach, that is, the study of language that limits the phenomena of language at a particular moment, does not review language in the development over time (diaconic).
Five Codes Roland Barthes Theory

Barthes semiotics is made up of levels of the language system. Barthes generally does so on two levels of language. First-level languages are object languages, and second-level languages are called metalanguages. This language is a system of signs that contains signifier (sign) and signified (sign). The second sign system is built and becomes the first level bookmarks and the bookmarks become new bookmarks which then have their own new bookmarks in a new sign system on a higher level [4][39].

The first sign system is sometimes known as a denotation or terminology system, while the second sign system is known as a connotation or rhetorical or mythological system. Generally, multiple denotation marks can be grouped to form a single connotation; while the signifier of connotation is at once general, global and dispersed. This sign can also be called an ideological fragment. This sign has a very close communication with culture, knowledge and history. And it can be said that "ideology" is a sign of connotation and "rhetoric" is a form of connotation [7][12]

The connotation and the metalanguages are reflections that contradict each other. Metalanguages are operations that make up most scientific languages, since markers, outside the unity of the original markers, can be said to be outside of a descriptive nature. While the connotation includes the main languages that are social terms of providing literal messages and providing support for meaning [4][15][65].

The unification of the connotation and the metalanguage will provide the opportunity to present a system or third marker that is naturally complemented by an extralinguistic code whose substance is an object or an image. The code as the third meaning system (external meaning) that is completed as a reference for each sign [12][15] consists of five types of codes. Hermeneutics, under the hermeneutical code, people will record a variety of (formal) terms in the form of puzzles (puzzles) that can be distinguished, suspected, formulated, maintained, and ultimately addressed. This code is also called the voice of truth (The Voice of Truth). Proairetic, It is a basic narrative action (basic narrative action) whose actions can occur in a variety of sequences that might be indicated. This code is also called an empirical voice [19][39].

Culture, as a reference to a science or scientific institution. Generally, people indicate the type of knowledge (physics, physiology, psychology, history, including architecture). And try to build a culture that takes place in a certain period of time that tries to express itself. This code is also called the voice of science. Semik, it is a relationship linking code (middle relationship code) that is the connotation of people, places, objects whose markers are a character (properties, attributes, predicates). Symbolic, It is the coding aspect of fiction that is most characteristic of a structural nature, or rather according to Barthes' concept, post-structural [4][15].

This is based on the idea that the meaning comes from some binary opposition or distinction, both at the sound level that are phonemes in the speech production process, and at the level of psychosexual opposition through the process. As a supporting theory (middle-theory), Semiotic Theory is used eclectically, especially in the analysis of the deconstruction of the meaning of the mandala by using Barthes theory and the discussion using Pierce's theory. The Semiotics theory above is then used to study and analyze the semiotics of the mandala meaning of Puri Agung Karangasem, in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

Uncover the Truth with Hermeneutics

Mandala Puri Agung Karangasem as an architectural word can be read as a sign that can be interpreted as a sign of an architectural style that has changed from the traditional architectural style to the modern architectural style [1][36]. Raja I Gusti Bagus Jelantik was very interested in the subject of architectural innovation and was the first figure to adopt modern (European) structures and Chinese ornaments in Balinese architecture [40][50]. Thanks to his great ideas, the first innovative architectural works were born and some elements of this innovation could contribute to the existence of traditional Balinese architecture in general.
One of these contributions is: a) to introduce the use of modern structures in traditional Balinese architecture; b) reintroduce (new) foreign ornaments called Egypt and China and sae [40]. Actually, this form of Chinese motifs and sae has been introduced in Bali during the reign of Old Bali by Chinese artists, as found in the ancient relics of the 12th century, namely the gate of Dalem Balingkang temple, Sukawana, Kintamani, Bangli, but the echoes have not spread to all of Bali [2][52][53]. Puri Agung Karangasem’s work has been classified in a modern style. Umberto Eco also explains the notion of architecture as a sign that contains its own language in Sign, Symbol, and Architecture. The truth that occurred at Agung Karangasem palace was that the form presented no longer followed the traditional architectural style. This can be distinguished and formulated in postmodern architectural styles [7][27][29].

Read the Meaning of the Mandala with the Proaretic Code
Agung Karangasem palace consists of various parts of the palebahan, but the division of the palebahan is simpler than the great palaces where the other kings were buried. In terms of structuring the courtyard of the Agung Karangasem palace, it does not follow the division of the Sanga Mandala, but forms the page into three parts as found in the Hindu sacred building (temples) [27] [31][52][54]. The first page (Jaba) is divided into three palebahan, namely: Bancingah, Roban and Keramen. The second page (Jaba Tengah), is a narrow courtyard that stretches from north to south. On the north side of the page is a second Kori Agung (the main gate) that connects the second page to the first page. The third page is the core of the palace. On this page are several important buildings, including Gedong Maskerdam as the king’s residence [30][36].

Figure 1. Utama Mandala, Madya Mandala and Nista Mandala
Source: Observation, 2019

Bali Island as one of the islands in Indonesia, has become a place for the development of traditional cities into modern cities with various factors that influence it [6]. Modern cities in Bali today, are heritage cities of the Hindu Empire that have developed since the Middle Bali (around the XVII century). According to [11][16], the spatial layout of these heritage cities generally adapted the concept of the catuspatha (crossroads that have sacred values) of the Majapahit Palace. Catuspatha was initially applied in the Royal City of Samprangan and in its development was also applied in other royal cities in Bali [2][5][36]. The macro zoning of the palace is seen from its location towards the city center of Karangasem City (catuspatha). The palace which was once the center of government is considered as the main place according to the Hulu Teben (sacred-profane) concept, placed in the direction of the sacred wind, Kaja Kangin(Northeast). Karangasem City[18][38].

The spatial layout of Karangasem City on a coral scale is formed by the pattern of the catuspatha or Pempatan Agung which was adapted from the Majapahit Palace [18]. In this case, the Great Opportunity is a crossing of two main roads or intersections that are understood as symbols of the center of the universe and plays an important role as the center of the city and the center of various community activities. Pempatan Agung Kota Karangasem is located next to the kelod kauh (in this context it means southwest) Puri Agung Karangasem [6][27][34].
In general the palace is divided into three areas namely Jeroan, Jaba Tengah and Jaba Sisi. The Jeroan zone (Utama Mandala) is the Great Pamerajan building, Maskerdam building, Pemandesanan building, Pawaiinan building, London building, Betawi building, Yogya building, Ekalanga building. The main position of Mandala is in the northeastern part of Agung Karangasem Palace, with the central courtyard (natah) as the center of orientation. Dimensions and proportions are relatively wider, and dominate the area of the palace [5][27][36].

Jaba Tengah (Madya Mandala) is a yard built with dyke or called the Bale Kambang and Gedong Tua with the position of Madya Mandala located in the northwest of the Main Mandala Agung Karangasem Palace [1][2], with Gili building built on the central courtyard as an orientation center with dimensions and proportion, the area of Madya Mandala is relatively smaller, in the Old building, due to changes in the shape of the building and the influence of the use of new material. There is site processing, especially in the Gili building area, so that the shape of the building can be maximally exposed from the front of the Old building [36].

Jaba Sisi (Nista Mandala) consists of three spatial structures namely Bancingah, Kavula Roban, and Keramen in a position west of Agung Karangasem Palace, with a central courtyard (natah) in the form of a main entrance as the center of orientation [1][4][49][55]. The Nista Mandala region has the smallest dimensions and proportions. The existence of several variations of the shape of the palace building is a result of acculturation of Traditional Balinese Architecture with foreign cultures influences the shape of the mandala palace. Site processing, especially in this region, so that the shape of the building can be maximally exposed from the middle yard (natah)[1][27][45][46][47].

**Tri Hita Karana and Tri Angga Concept as Balinese Culture**

The construction of Agung Karangasem Palace around 1900 to 1920, continued by I Gusti Bagus Jelantik as the king who had the title of Anak Agung Agung Anglurah Ktut Karangasem, by taking architects from the Dutch and Chinese at Karangasem, but ideas and control they remained rests with the king as an architect. While the workers are taken from the artisans and capable of the Karangasem Bali community itself. This king was very interested in the problem of architectural innovation and was the first figure to adopt modern (European) structures and Chinese ornaments in Balinese architecture. People who work or carve decorative motifs at Agung Karangasem Palace are deliberately imported from China and the Netherlands [1][2][56][57][59].

**Tri Hita Karana** is a formative element in the Bhuana Agung (macro cosmos) and Bhuana Alit (micro cosmos). According to [11], on a macro scale, the elements included include, the soul/atam element is Pramaaatma (Almighty God), the Prana element is natural energy (hydroelectric, wind, geothermal energy, and The element Angga's is Panca Maha Bhuta. While in Bhuana Alit, Tri Hita Karana enters a series of scale contexts, namely the scale of the area (village), the scale of the building (banjar, house), and humans [3][11][16][51][58].

**Tri Hita Karana**, which has become a life reference for Hindus to achieve the highest level of happiness in life, applies to various sectors of life, one of which is in buildings. Three elements of Tri Hita Karana (Parhyangan, Pavongan, and Palemahan) are included in the construction concept by linking the function, atmosphere, and arrangement of space in these three elements. **Tri Angga** is a conception of the division of the body into three main parts, namely the head (main angga), the body (angga intermedia) and the legs (angga nista). However, unlike Tri Loka, Tri Angga not only applies to Bhuana Alit, but also applies to Bhuana Agung, in other words, Tri Angga participates in the division of the body of the Micro Cosmos to the Macro Cosmos [5][16][38][48].

The concept of **Tri Angga** and **Tri Hita Karana** is a concept contained in various aspects of human life. Both concepts are the practice of the concept of the cosmos with the environment by aligning the scale of the human individual with the environment [3][36]. **Tri Angga** in the palace appeared in the division of three areas of the palace, namely Jaba Sisi, Jaba Tengah and Jeroan. The three areas of the palace courtyard also contain each element in the **Tri Hita Karana** concept, namely Jaba Sisi as a container for Palemahan activities, Central Jaba as a container for Pavongan activities, and Jeroan as a container for prayer activities, from Parhyangan. Indirectly, **Tri Hita Karana** and **Tri Angga** are related to each other by being connected by the placement and meaning of the three areas of the palace [5][6][11][64].
The orientation of the Agung Karangasem Palace land axis can be seen on the west side, with the main entrance leading from the west (kauh) while Teben heads east (kangin) as *Hulu*. Agung Karangasem Palace is located on the south (sea) side (*Teben*) with an orientation towards the sacred Mount Agung, which is on the north side (*Hulu*) [18][36][60][61][63].

The religious axis at Agung Karangasem Palace is seen where the east side is considered the main side because the sun rises from the east. It applies to the opposite side, where the west side (*Kauh*) is considered the *Nista* side because the sun sets on the west side [2][27][62].

**Expression of Beauty Through Semic Code**

Chinese-style decoration motifs can be clearly found at the entrance of the Maskerdam building with specific characteristics as follows [36][40]: a) The shape is a relief with filigree carving techniques; b) Objects carved in the form of animals, plants, humans and cloud motifs; c) The composition of the field and its lines are completely symmetrical; d) The field is full of decorative motifs; e) The shape of the carved character reflects the state of China.

![Figure 2. Chinese Style Decoration Motifs on The Palace](source: Observation, 2019)

**The Grandeur of The Palace as A Symbolic Code of Integration**

The Agung Karangasem Palace as an architectural work has an important meaning, as follows: first, the realization of the integration of the nation or the state in this case the Kingdom of Karangasem with Chinese and Dutch; second, the realization of cultural integration between people of different cultures in Karangasem in particular; third, the realization of the integration of different groups of racial and cultural origins in Karangasem [2][37]. The existence and splendor of Agung Karangasem Palace may be a sign of good relations between the Dutch government and the royal government of Karangasem and has brought significant progress to the development of the palace economy or the people of Karangasem as a whole. The grandeur of the palace is also a sign of the king's good relations with the Chinese Karangasem merchants [40].
Figure 3. The Grandeur of Palace Architecture is Due to Integration with the Dutch and Chinese

Table 1. Semiotic the mandala of palace with the Roland Barthes theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier</th>
<th>Signified (1)</th>
<th>Signified (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karangasem Puri Agung</td>
<td>The involvement of a Dutch architect named Van der Heutz who worked with local construction workers. European influence is seen in the style of the main building with a large veranda.</td>
<td>A sign of an architectural style that has moved from traditional architectural styles to modern architectural styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The macro zoning of the palace is seen from its location towards the center of Karangasem City (Catus Patha).</td>
<td>the <em>Hulu Teben</em> concept is placed in the direction of the sacred wind, <em>Kaja Kangin</em>, Karangasem City.</td>
<td><em>Pempatan Agung</em>, is a crossing of two main roads or intersections that are understood as symbols of the center of the universe and plays an important role as the center of Karangasem City located next to the <em>kelod kauh</em> (Southwest) of the palace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandala puri is divided into three mandalas, namely <em>Jaba Sisi</em> (outer yard), <em>Jaba Tengah</em> (middle yard), and <em>Jeroan</em> (inner yard).</td>
<td>Dividing mandalas based on activities, <em>utama</em>/primary, <em>madya</em>/middle and <em>nista</em>/insulting.</td>
<td><em>Jaba Sisi</em> as a container for <em>Palemahan</em> activities, <em>Jaba Tengah</em> as a container for <em>Pawongan</em> activities, and <em>Jeroan</em> as a container for <em>Parhyangan</em> activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The layout of the palace stretches from north to south.</td>
<td>The palace is located on the south side (<em>Teben</em>) with an orientation facing Mount Agung which is on the north side (<em>Hulu</em>).</td>
<td>Orientation of buildings in the Mandala (<em>Jeroan</em>) zone. Buildings such as <em>Pelinggih</em> on <em>Jeroan Pamerajan Agung</em>, lined the east side (<em>Kangin</em>), following the religious orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The involvement of Chinese architects in collaboration with local builders.</td>
<td><em>Barong sai</em> ornaments as decoration for the door and main entrance of the palace use the pagoda shape.</td>
<td>Variation in the shape of the palace building due to acculturation of traditional Balinese architecture with foreign culture affects the shape of the palace mandala.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of the nation or state in this case the Kingdom of Karangasem with Chinese and Dutch.</td>
<td>the establishment of good relations between the Dutch government and the Karangasem kingdom and has brought economic progress.</td>
<td>The palace’s grandeur is also a sign of the king’s good relations with the Karangasem Chinese merchants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Observation, 2019

Table 1. Semiotic the mandala of palace with the Roland Barthes theory
Source: Questionnaire and Interview Survey, 2019

4. Conclusion

The process of revealing the meaning or message in a sign (decoding) with a structural semiotic approach is closely linked to the relationship or relationship between the signifier (marker) in the form of a concrete form with the meaning (signified) which is the concept of the sign. To see the relationship of the sign requires the existence of local references that have become an agreement and are applied in a community (social convention). The process of decoding cultural objects will involve issues related to ideology, social codes, knowledge of local communities, etc., that will influence the object of study. In principle, the use of semiotics to study cultural objects must first see the object as a series of signs that have a message and meaning.

From the results of the decomposition of the sign in the mandala of the Agung Karangasem Palace, it can be concluded that the Agung Karangasem Palace is no longer present in the traditional architectural style. This can be distinguished and formulated in postmodern architectural styles. The palace is located in the center of the city of Karangasem, once as a government center according to the concept of Hulu Teben, located in the direction of the holy winds, that is, the city of Karangasem from the northeast (Kaja Kangin). The palace divides the courtyard or mandala into three as in the Hindu sacred buildings (temples).

The first page is the core of the palace (Jeroan-Utama Mandala), the second page (Jaba Tengah-Madya Mandala) and the third page (Jaba Sisi-Nista Mandala). In the concept of Tri Hita Karana, that is, lateral jaba as a container for human activities with nature (Palemahan), Jaba Tengah as a container for human activities with humans (Pawongan), and Jeroan as a container for human activities with God (Parhyangan).

The religious axis at Agung Karangasem Palace is seen where the east side is considered the Main side because the sun rises from the east. It applies to the opposite side, where the west side (Kauh) is considered the Nista side because the sun sets on the west side. The Agung Karangasem Palace, as an architectural work, has an important meaning, as an accomplishment of the integration of the nation or state in this case, the Kingdom of Karangasem with Chinese and Dutch.

It is expected that the results of the research obtained when considering these aspects are the basis for the consideration and contribution to the process of preservation and structuring of the areas of cultural heritage in a city / region, as well as for the local regional government to be taken into consideration in the preparation of guides that are certainly different for each cultural heritage. So that it can produce the preservation of cultural heritage with a strong character and has its own characteristics that are different from each other. In this sense, and considering the existence of some artifacts in Puri Agung Karangasem as historical cultural heritage, they are in an alarming condition. There are several emphases that recommendations should be made as follows:

a. A strong legal basis is needed to protect ancient artifacts and buildings, especially in Puri Agung Karangasem, and appropriate conservation measures are needed for each of these artifacts / buildings.

b. It is necessary to make a regulation that regulates the authority of the Regional Government in the protection of artifacts / historical buildings that are owned by individuals. So that all changes made by the owner can be monitored and adjusted with guidelines on the Concept of Planning and Structuring of Historic Areas that have been prepared based on the results of related research.

c. It is necessary to determine which artifacts and historical buildings are protected by decree. Regent as the basis for the protection of other conservation measures. Arrangements are prepared based on the findings of the studies in the relevant location / region.

d. The concept of regional planning and structuring to be strengthened by the Law for the Karangasem Puri Agung area (in particular) and other castles in Bali, according to the potential and character of each region, is disseminated to the community at large.
References


