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Section: Original Article

Study of Symbol for the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace through the Spradley Ethnography Approach

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ABSTRACT

Hadiningrat said that the Kasunanan Surakarta was a fraction of Islamic Mataram when the Giyanti Agreement was approved. Historically, since the transfer movement of the capital Islamic Mataram Kingdom from Kartasura to Surakarta, the name of Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat was turn up. This incident can be used as a benchmark for the presence of the palace symbol from the running of the government. Ethnography does not only study about society, but also learns from society (Spradley, 1980: 2). In this research, the theoretical approach that used to interpret and analyze the pattern of the Kasunanan Surakarta symbol is through the six ethnographic levels of James P. Spradley.

Keywords: Symbol, Palace, Surakarta, Ethnography, Spradley.



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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the journey of Javanese culture, The city of Surakarta has a long history. As the "old city" which was founded on the day of *Rêbo Pahing*, 17 Sura, in the year *Jé* 1670 (17 February 1745) by Sultan Paku Buwana II of the Mataram Dynasty is the city of kings or the royal capital of the Surakarta Palace. At first, it was a replacement for the Kartasura Mataram Palace which was damaged by the Sunan Kuning (Sunan Mas) rebellion. The Kartasura Palace was relocated to Sala and given the name "Surakarta Hadiningrat" after Paku Buwana II successfully reclaimed his throne (Raffles, 2014: 575; Projomartono, 1984: 1; and Lombard, 1996: 46).

The Kasunanan Surakarta was called Hadiningrat as a fraction of Islamic Mataram when the Giyanti Agreement was signed on February 13, 1755 which shared its territory with the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. Surakarta was later designated as the capital of the Residency in 1755 when it was subject to the Dutch Colonial government. The Salatiga agreement in 1757 diminished the power of the Kasunanan Surakarta palace when it was forced to share land with a small kingdom called Pura Mangkunegaran. (Simuh, 1988: 14-16; Lombard, 1996-Vol.1: 63; Gustami, 2007: 278; and see Kartodirdjo, 2014: 266-275).

In the ethics of power, an area hereinafter referred to as a kingdom, empire, or state; always has the "symbol" or "the symbol of the state". It is a symbol of a region's power in relation to other areas of authority. The 'sign of power' contains the ideological meanings that are built or will be built by the



government. Likewise, the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace has its own royal sign, named as "Radya Laksana". The symbol of Radya Laksana was created by Paku Buwono X, in his words: "The fame of the nation lies in the nobility of culture) (https://engineear.co/2010/04/27/radya-laksana). It is definitely difficult to trace since the symbol was created and officially ratified as a symbol of the kingdom. Besides, from period to period, its reign underwent several changes in some parts of the symbol to what we see today.

Historically, since the Islamic Mataram Kingdom was relocated from Kartasura to Surakarta and given the name Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat, the government should have had an symbol. In 1747, due to the Dutch VOC conspiracy, the palace was split into two, namely the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace and the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace in the Giyanti agreement. Since the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace also has its own royal sign, namely *Praja Cihna*, after the separation into two kingdoms, it can be considered the starting point for the formation of the Kasunanan Surakarta royal symbol named Radya Laksana.

2. METHODOLOGY

Javanese people in the anthropological context and Javanese society in a sociological view are ethnic groups with a rich mythology and symbols. Most of its cultural artifacts have a mythological underpinning and are replete with symbols or symbols that represent diverse concepts, purposes, meanings, and values. Some of these works have been passed down as traditional works from generation to generation. As the concept of power in the form of a "royal sign" was passed down, it came with ideological descriptions brimming with meaning. In an anthropological context, it encompasses thoughts, models of perception, peer bonding, and power.

Ethnography is a discipline that not only studies but also learns from society (Spradley, 1980: 2). The theoretical approach used to interpret the "pattern of symbols" in the symbol of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace is through the six levels of ethnography from James P. Spradley (1980: 162-165), namely:

- a) Level 1: Universal Statements (statements that are universal), to examine the most common trends about the conception of the symbol in a macro context.
- b) Level 2: Cross-Cultural Descriptive Statements (descriptive statements about cultural interactions), to explore the tendency of the conception of the symbol towards assimilative conceptions and adaptations of various understandings of immigrants from other cultural areas.
- c) Level 3: General Statements about a Society or Cultural Group (general statements about a society or cultural group), to understand the meaningful signs that are usually used as symbols, and then interpret various visual signs that are structured as symbols in the symbol.
- d) Level 4: General Statements about a Specific Cultural Scene (general statements about specific cultural behavior), to determine the pattern of interpreting a specific sign or symbol phenomenon that is formed based on normative and special behavior, resulting in a 'cultural decision' which is represented in the form of a royal symbol.
- e) Level 5: Specific Statements about a Cultural Domain (specific statements about the locus of cultural authority), to examine the specific conception contained in the symbol as a value decision that the community can understand as an ideology of power.
- f) Level 6: Specific Incident Statements (statements about special events), expressions of "meaningful concepts" that can integrate all ideologies in the form of "unique values" not found in other cultural areas.

3. DISCUSSION 1: THE SHAPE AND MEANING OF THE SYMBOL OF THE KASUNANAN SURAKARTA PALACE

The Radya Laksana symbol was first worn as a gold brooch or pin by the monarch, his relatives or royal family, and prominent officials of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan. It was then used as a type of official marker of the Keraton government's power in many media, including reliefs on the gates (kori) of vital roadways around the palace, city boundary gates, royal chariots, and carved on the surface of the kris container (pendhok).

Radya Laksana comes from the Sanskrit language, namely *Radya* which means kingdom or state, while *laksana* means character, identity or symbol. When combined, it means 'royal symbol'. The basic form of the symbol is an oval circle. In detail, the pictures in the circle mean:



Figure 1: The Symbol of the Kingdom of Sri Radya Laksana Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace

(Source: Suropati van Babirong, 2016, https://kratonsoloblog.wordpress.com/2016/04/30/sri-radya-laksana-)

- 1. The crown is based on three layers of gold, the top is red with golden borders.
 - The crown at the top of the royal symbol means that the king is in power over all.
 - The color red can signify a strong and extremely huge power; it alludes to the bang-bingtulu (red, white, yellow, and black) concept of color in Javanese philosophy, where red signifies the essence of anger, which means strength.
 - The golden yellow, basis of the crown, is based on the concept of *bang-bingtulu*, which states that yellow is a sign of *lauwamah* or *aluamah*, which indicates power.
 - The *triloka-tribuwana*, or three world layers: the Upper World, the Middle World, and the Human World, are symbolized by the three layers at the base of the crown (Sumardjo, 2013: 9). It represents the monarch's ability to 1) rule the human world, or *sayidin pranatagama*, 2) serve as the Gung Binathara (the great king incarnate of the Gods) (Subagya, 1981: 56-57), and 3) serve as God's representative on earth, with the title *kalifatullah*.
- 2. An oval circle with a golden circle border, which has a picture of:
 - The globe and the spikes stuck in the upper pole in the denotative form are nails and the earth which has a broader meaning, "pakubuwana.", emphasized by pictures of the moon, stars and sun, all of which are golden yellow, representing the meaning of the universe or buwana. This is in accordance with the title that is carried by every king of the Surakarta Palace, namely Pakubuwana, and even remains to this day.
 - The golden sun with sixteen rays of light in blue and light blue stripes signifies that the king has the power to illuminate life in all directions.
- 3. The cotton plant, which has eight growing cotton pods, represents the king's ability to deliver prosperity to the eight directions of the wind, or to all of his people, with all of his power.



- 4. The clumps of rice with eight strands of rice grains mean that the king is able to give prosperity to the eight directions of the wind or to all his people.
- 5. A long red and white ribbon that binds the base of the cotton and rice stalks. At first glance, it can be interpreted as a red and white National flag, but the meaning is contradictory because it can be interpreted that the one who provides prosperity is the Republic of Indonesia. This is understandable after Indonesia's independence. However, in the context of royal authority, red and white do not refer to the Indonesian flag, but a symbol of power based on the white color, namely *supiah* in the context of *bang-bintulu* which means wisdom. Thus, the red and white ribbon that ties the cotton stalks and rice represents wisdom-based strength that may bring prosperity to its people.

4. DISCUSSION 2: ETHNOGRAPHIC POTENTIAL OF RADYA LAKSANA SYMBOL

According to Koentjaraningrat, the cultural value system is the most abstract level of *adat* in a particular cultural area, consisting of the conceptions that live in the minds of most of the citizens of the community, and of things that they should consider very valuable in life. The system acts as the most authoritative guideline for human behavior (Koentjaraningrat, 1994: 25). These achievements are enshrined and attempted to be passed on to the next generation in various forms of tradition, such scripts, songs, mantras, magical images, symbols of power, ritual processions, and so on. Likewise with the royal symbol of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace, its existence is important in addition to being a symbol of power from the Islamic Mataram dynasty in Surakarta, it also reflects the conceptual notion of the most basic system of governance or rulers. Where the symbol of power is positioned highest by 'undertaking' the representation of the universe (*buwana*). This is understandable because one of the strategies for getting the kingdom's people to obey it is to tell a mythological story, even if it does not always make sense. The portrayal of religious mythology is one of the links of loyalty of the Javanese (*Mitologi dan Toleransi Orang Jawa*) (Anderson's book Mythology and Tolerance of the Javanese (*Mitologi dan Toleransi Orang Jawa*) (Anderson, 2008: 10).

According to Franz Magnis-Suseno, the essence of the Javanese is to seek "harmony" and that life ethics are characterized by a sense of harmony, order, and lack of conflict. He did, however, imply that ethics is wrapped in a "hierarchical order" (Magnis-Suseno, 1995: 71-74). The conception of the depiction of a crown with a three-tiered base, which is further suspected as a symbol of the *trilokatribuwana*: an adaptation of Hindu-Buddhist philosophy (India). The Javanese people can easily adopt and adapt the newcomers' ideology to become a complementary part of Javanese philosophy itself to achieve harmony.

Javanese civilization has produced many symbols and developed many myths over its long journey, but the clearest and most direct understanding is Javanese values and the Javanese mentality, which is closely tied to the metaphysical dimension (Geertz, 1973: 129-132). The order of the formation of symbols that can be described as "visual language" is the symbolic structure of the meaningful forms that exist in Radya Laksana, where the image of the crown at the top position, shading the sun, stars, moon, and earth is a representation of the philosophical contained in the word "Pakubuwana". Likewise, the image of cotton on the left of the oval circle and the image of rice on the right is a hierarchical order where the meaning of "clothing" (welfare) is the first priority, and the meaning of "food" (prosperity) is the next stage.

Jean-Paul Sartre in the book The Psychology of Imagination, stated that:

imagination has a "surpassing and nullifying power" which enables individuals to escape being "swallowed up in the existent", frees them from given reality, and allows them to be other than what they are made (Sartre, 1972:273).

The symbol or symbol of an institution, particularly a huge empire, is a sign that serves as more than a status symbol. It is the accumulation of all ideological accumulation based on historical context,

existence, orientation, and all of their virtues. The reign of the kings of Kasunanan Surakarta, like Radya Laksana's, was not merely a sign that could be read meaningfully from period to period; the symbol was also imagined as a 'magical image' of a vast power over the 'cosmic order' on the island of Java, and even the entire universe (*buana*). More than that, the symbol has also arrived as a "sacred symbol", where its existence as an image has undergone a metamorphosis into a visual performance that is respected and even feared, especially during the heyday of the kingdom.

5. CONCLUSION

As a result of its anthropological and sociological journey, Javanese culture's world of symbols spans a wide range, from subtle satire to parables, phenomena of meaningful signs, signs as references, symbol phenomena, symbols as references, and symbols. The symbol itself is divided into numerous types, including magic symbols, banners, symbols, power symbols, and sacred symbols.

Radya Laksana is the symbol of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace's monarchy. It is a symbol for recognizing the kingdom's territorial power specifications. It has evolved into more than merely a symbol in its cultural context. Radya Laksana is the greatness of a power, the dynasty's mythology, and the belief that it can transform into self-esteem, social standing, and even the spirit of the mighty throne

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IF Bambang Sulistyono as writer, data collector, A. Purwasito as data analysis, Warto as data analysis, TS Pitana as data collector.

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There are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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