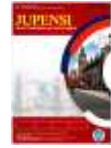




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THE MEANING ON MAIMUN PALACE ORNAMENTS: SEMIOTIC STUDY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is how the writer found shape and meaning in the ornament in Maimun palace. The writer applied the theory of Semiotics proposed by Peirce (1978). The method is a qualitative research method, which is directly analyzes the facts found in the field. The writer obtained the data by conducting observations and interviews directly to the field, as well as getting information from several books and websites. The result showed that it was found some types of ornaments at the Maimun Palace. Then the writer compiled and described them based on the shape, namely ornament in the form of plant motifs, ornaments in the form of animal motifs, ornaments in the form of natural motifs, and ornaments in the form of calligraphy motifs. Then the writer explained the ornament based on its meaning contained in the Maimun Palace based on semiotic approach. The average function of the ornaments in the Maimun Palace is as decoration on the walls and the Sultan's Throne.

Keywords: Malay Ornament, Maimun Palace, Semiotics

1. INTRODUCTION

The Malays are one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia. Generally, these tribal people live on the islands of South, West Sumatra, and Kalimantan Island. This tribe is also still famous for its friendly community character and excellent manners. In terms of religion, the majority of Malay people have embraced Islam since the 13th century AD (Nainggolan, 2017).

For the Malay community, Islam is the link. This is expressed in the following expression "A person is called Malay if he is Muslim, speaks everyday Malay and has Malay customs" (Sinar, 2003).

The writer analyzes what ornaments can be found in Maimun Palace and then analyze the meaning of the ornaments using semiotic studies. Etymologically semiotics comes from the Greek word *simeon* meaning "sign". Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide array of objects, events of entire culture as signs. Van Zoest (Sobur, 2001) articulates semiotics as " the science of signs and everything related to them: the way they function, their relationship to other words, their sending, and their receipt by those who use them".

Apart from the significance of function in cultural life, ornament art in Malay culture has educational, moral, spiritual, ethical, and psychological meanings. Many ornamental arts created by ethnic cultures serve not only as decorative elements, but also as symbols of symbolism, sacral ritualization, and social artifacts (sosifack) that sustain it. Ornament art may help the Malay community raise public knowledge of human emotions and the worth of life as an expression of the Malay soul.

Many experts argue that the term ornament derives from the Latin word *Ornare*, which means "to decorate". The ornament is any geometric style decoration or something else; Ornament is made in a basic form of handicrafts (furniture, clothing, etc.) and architecture. Ethnic Malay ornaments, for example, are widely applied to buildings such as palaces, Malay community house buildings, and craft objects such as woven, metal, weapons, and traditional (Encyclopedia of Indonesia, p. 1017).

With the above definition of ornament, the writer chose the researcher, a study of meaning that is reviewed in terms of semiotics and centered on the decoration of Maimun Palace in Medan City. Ornaments are decorative elements that enhance the appearance of an object's target. A building that combines cross-cultural architectural styles such as European and Persian is one of the depictions of the Maimun Palace building.

Maimun Palace is a relic of the Kingdom of Deli or Sultanate of Deli during the time of sultan Ma'moen Al Rashid. The architecture of the building is also magnificent Moghul style, Middle Eastern, Dutch, Indian, Spanish, and Malay. The influence of Dutch architecture is in the wide and high shape of doors and windows, but several doors show Spanish influence. The influence of Islam is in the existence of arches (arcades) on the roof. The height of the arch is

5-8 meters and the shape of this arch is very popular in the Middle East, India, and Turkey (Ciputra : 2022).

Sultan Ma'mun Perkasa Alamsyah built Maimun Palace starting in 1888 and completed in 1891. Maimun's name itself is taken from the sultan's consort named Siti Maimunah. The word Maimun comes from Arabic which means "blessing". Maimun Palace is very thick with Malay patterns, this palace is built on an area of 2,772 m², with a building area of 772 m² located in Sungai Mati village, Aur Subdistrict, Medan Maimun Village, Medan (Ciputra : 2022).

Maimun Palace is now a historical tourist destination. This is not only because of its old age but also because its unique interior design bequeaths elements of Malay culture combined with Islamic Culture, Spain, India, and Italy. One of the characteristics of Maimun Palace is the existence of a porch with a line of pillars on the front. The pillars are connected to the raised arch. This element is called *riwaq*. *Riwaq* serves as a transition space for air and light, considering that Islam is in hot temperatures.

Based on the background, the purpose of this research is to dig more deeply the meaning of the ornaments of the Maimun Palace which provides much historical value and show the existence of the Malay ethnic. It is also hoped that it can spread cultural knowledge to people like millennials in Indonesia and foreign people so that the ornaments can still be preserved properly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Semiotics

This research used semiotic study to analysis the ornament of Maimun Palace. Semiotics (or semiology is better known in Europe) comes from the Greek Semion meaning sign. Semiotics is a general study of signs as an essential part of cultural life and communication. According to semiotics, we can only know the cultural life and communication. (Saussure, 2005) According to semiotics, we can only know culture and reality through signs, through the process of marking.

The semiotic analysis attempts to find the meaning of signs including the things hidden behind a sign (text, advertising, news). Because the sign system is very contextual and depends on the user of the sign. The thought of the sign user is the result of the influence of the various

social constructions in which the user of the sign is located. For example, What is the social meaning of song lyrics? Why does news use certain phrases or sentences when describing a particular group? And so on.

Peirce (Zoest, 1978) says semiotics is any idea that is a sign. Peirce proposed the triangle meaning theory which consists of 3 main elements, namely signs, objects, and interpretants. A sign is something of a physical form that can be captured by the five senses of man and is something that refers to something else beyond the meaning of the sign itself. The sign according to Peirce consists of symbols. While the reference to this sign is called an object.

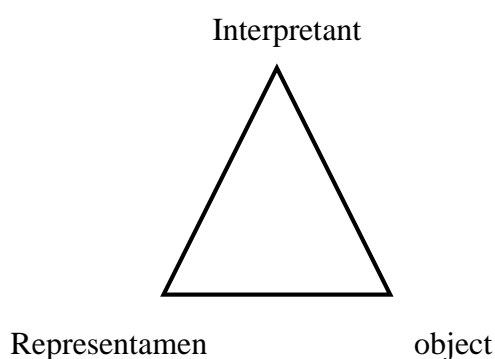
Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics is often called the "Grand Theory" because the idea is thorough, a structural description of all markings, Peirce wanted to identify the basic particles of the sign and recombine (Wibowo, 2011).

Charles Sanders Peirce is known for his triadic model and trichotomy concept which consists of the following:

1. A representamen is a form accepted by a sign or serves as a sign.
2. An object is something that refers to a sign. Something represented by a representative relating to the reference.
3. An interpretant is a sign that exists in one's mind about the object to which a sign refers.

Clarify the triadic model of Charles Sanders Peirce can be seen in the following figure

:



(Picture 2.1 Triadic model)

Based on the above explanation, the writer used symbols as analytical tools to study ornaments in the Maimun Palace. Just as Malay ornament has a symbol meaning, symbols are one part of the relationship of the sign with its reference, which is a relationship that will explain the meaning of a particular referral. Researchers used Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis theory to find out the meaning of ornaments in Maimun Palace, researchers analyzed based on Object, Representament (Icon, Index, Symbol), Interpretant to make it easier for

researchers to find the meaning of the message on the ornament., so that this research does not go off track.

2.2 Semiotic Meaning

According to Ullman (1972), meaning occurs when one considers the meaning of one's words as well as references, or vice versa. As a result, the meaning is a mix of meaning and term. This is because the word alias does not always have the same meaning. In Sudaryat (2009), Hornby defines meaning as "what we mean or mean by us." Meaning, according to Dajasudarma (1999), is a relationship between the elements of language. Purwadarminto clarified that meaning is meaning or meaning is meaning.

Meaning is meaningful information generated by a system that is subject to constraints when receiving external information that has a relationship with constraints. Meaning is formed from the relationship that exists between the information received and the limitations of the system (Menant, 2020).

Etymologically semiotics comes from the Greek word *simeon* meaning "sign". Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide array of objects, events of entire culture as signs. Van Zoest (in Sobur, 2001, p. 96) articulates semiotics as " the science of signs and everything related to them: the way they function, their relationship to other words, their sending, and their receipt by those who use them".

According to Tinarbuko (2008), semiotics is a science that studies signs in order to know how they function and produce meaning. Meanwhile, according to Christomy and Yuwono (2004), argue that semiotics is the study of signs, the function of signs, and the production of signs. In this case, the sign in question can later indicate to the meaning or something else hidden behind the sign itself. In other words, the existence of this sign will later represent a thing related to a certain object. Such objects can carry information and communicate it in the form of signs.

2.3 Ornament

Ornaments are ornamental patterns created by drawing, sculpting, and printing, to support the increasing quality and value of an object or work of art. Ornament is also a matter that will accompany the field of drawing (painting or other types of works) as part of the structure inside. (Susanto, 2003). The main function of ornament as an element of increasing the aesthetic value of a work of art is also said by Sitorus and Atmojo (2012) ornament is the

addition of decoration by decorating, with the influence of efforts to give certain motifs in factors that are empty into shapes.

Understanding ornaments with decoration in many ways there are similarities because decoration also has the meaning of decorating. However, there are still significant differences, because the decoration in many ways emphasizes more special applications, such as interior decoration, and stage decoration. In response to the problem, it may become more open to our thinking if we realize that ornaments can be elements or elements of decoration, but not the other way decoration is not an element of ornament. (Gustami,1980).

2.4 Maimun Palace

Maimun Palace is a historical heritage site of the Malay community in Medan. Maimun Palace was built by Sultan Ma'moen Al Rasyid Perkasa Alamsyah, the IXth Sultan of Deli who ruled from 1873-1924. The construction of this Palace started in 1888-1891. The palace was later named "Agoeng Palace of Maimun City". And in those days, this Palace was made into the State Palace, but now it is the Palace of Dwelling.



Picture 2.2 Maimun Palace Front View
(Picture, Maura Annisa, August 16, 2022, 1.29 PM)

Well-developed goals will significantly contribute to the increase in regional income and national foreign exchange. Based on this positive impact, the local government will be committed to supporting the management and preservation of city attractions realizing that there are still many cultural objects and historical sites that are not managed properly. The richness and beauty of cultural history sites in Medan will attract more visitors if they are optimally developed by the local government.

Maimun Palace is a good example of a well-developed historical site in Medan. The local government has done well and associated the palace with interesting historical values. The palace has now been well known and recorded as one of the most important sites of the Deli kingdom.

3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research be conducted by using qualitative research method used Peirce's theory to analysis the meaning of ornament that exist in Maimun Palace. The choice of qualitative research methods in this study is based on two reasons. First, the problem study in this study is about the ornamentation of the Maimun Palace which requires several field data that is actual and contextual in nature. Secondly, the selection of this method or approach is based on the interrelationship of the problem study with several data.

The data in this study are all information about the symbols on the Maimun Palace ornaments. Futhermore, this research includes data collection and data analysis. To find out the data the writer make observations in the field, look for at least 3 informants who understand and can explain the topics to be discussed, then conduct interview sessions with informants by recording conversations between the writer and the informant and also writing the data. The following steps that were required in data analysis as followed: (1) Compiling questions and answers from the speakers and the literature, and checking again whether the analysis materials are complete or not in the notes, (2) Collecting all data sourced from literature and the field-collected into one by the writer, (3) Analyzing data based on the data taken using semiotic theory which is descriptive and explanatory, (4) Concluding verifying to determine the truth and meaning. The meaning formulated in the data must first be tested regarding its correctness, its suitability, and robustness, and the data found are interpreted according to the views of informants not solely the views of the researcher.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Analysis

To find out the results of the documentation from the data studied about ornamentation, and the meaning on the Maimun Palace. All data is collected in the form of recordings, images, then analyzed by the method used.

Based on the results of the study, the types of ornaments found in Maimun Palace, namely: Plant-Shaped Patterned Ornament, Animal-Shaped Patterned Ornament, Nature-Shaped Patterned Ornament, and Calligraphy-Shaped Patterned Ornament.

4.1.1 Plant-Shaped Patterned Ornament

Plant motifs are ornaments depicting plants. For example, tendrils, leaves and flowers are combined and then depicted in a style that highlights their beauty. The depiction of plant motifs in ornamental art is carried out in various ways both natural and stylized according to the wishes of the artist.

Data 1. *Bunga Cengkih* Ornament



Picture 4.1 *Bunga Cengkih* Ornament
(Picture, Maura Annisa, August 16, 2022, 1.41 PM)

Representamen, In figure 4.1 which is on the floor of the main room of Maimun Palace. **Qualisign** in this ornament is an ornament that is given a yellow color which means glory which symbolizes the nature of the king.

Visualization: **Icon**, in figure 4.1 in the form of an ornament image of a *Bunga Cengkih* found in the main room of Maimun Palace.

Index, *Bunga Cengkih* is a plant that grows at the end of the twig, its petals are shaped like a funnel, and the crown is like a star. This ornament is decorated with yellow, a very dominant color used by the Malay community. *Bunga Cengkih* generally symbolize splendor.

Symbol, from existing icons and verbal signs, the *Bunga Cengkih* generally symbolizes splendor, which is meant to describe the grandeur of the Maimun Palace building.

The material used to make this ornament is by painting using lime, and the dye uses natural materials, such as red using coral, black using shells, and blue using telang leaves,

yellow using turmeric. The function of this ornament is as a decoration in the floor of the main room of Maimun Palace.

Interpretant (dicisign), the meaning of the ornament to be conveyed in figure 4.1 is to describe the splendor, which means to describe the splendor of the Maimun Palace, so that this ornament has the potential to be developed as an effort in preserving Malay cultural relics.

4.1.2 Animal-Shaped Patterned Ornaments

In Medan, there are not many people who use animal motifs. Some animal forms as the motive for the detailed depiction of animal daari are not clear. The animal motifs used are animals that are considered "good" and contain some kind of meaning for the people in their area. Here are some animal-patterned ornaments, namely :

Data 1. *Itik Sekawan* Ornament



Picture. 4.2 *Itik Sekawan* Ornament
(Picture, Maura Annisa, August 16, 2022, 1.36 PM)

Representamen, In figure 4.2 which is in the Main Hall room at Maimun Palace. Qualisign in this Ornament is an Ornament given a blue color commonly known as loyalty to peace, and yellow which is a characteristic Malay color that symbolizes the glory of the King.

Visualization: **Icon**, in figure 4.4 is an ornament of the *Itik Sekawan* contained in the Main Hall room at Maimun Palace.

Index, The *Itik Sekawan* Ornament is also known as the *Itik Pulang Petang*, this ornament is basically in the shape of the letter "S" which is to be continued. The letter "S" it can be made upright or italicized. In the middle, it is given variations in the form of leaves, flowers, and so on. It is the letter "S" that looks like a duck.

Symbol, from existing icons and verbal signs, this ornament symbolizes harmony and order.

This ornament is usually made by carving or in the shape with a saw and knife, but in Maimun Palace this ornament is made by drawing with natural dyes, namely the blue color of the telang leaves, the yellow color of turmeric. The Sekawan Duck ornament is usually used as

decoration in an elongated plane, such as door frames, wall lessons, door lessons, and windows, poles, and so on. The function of this ornament is as a decoration in the main hall of Maimun Palace.

Interpretant (dicisign), the *Itik Sekawan* ornament symbolizes harmony and order, because basically the ducks will always go home simultaneously to the drums at dusk, and always simultaneously go out in the morning haari. This is a good example for man, to be equal in the search for life.

4.1.3 Natural-Shape Patterned Ornament

Ornaments in the form of Nature or also known as cosmos motifs are ornaments whose motifs are inspired by nature such as mountains, water, clouds, rocks and others. This ornament is usually transformed in such a way that it becomes a motif with a certain character. Here are the ornaments patterned with natural forms, namely:

Data 1. *Awan Larat* Ornament



Picture 4.3 *Awan Larat* Ornament
(Picture, Maura Annisa, August 16, 2022, 1.39 PM)

Representamen, In figure 4.3 which is located on the wall of the main Hall room in Maimun Palace. **Qualisign** in this ornament is an ornament that is given a golden color that symbolizes treasure and wealth.

Visualization: **Icon**, in figure 4.8 is an *Awan Larat* ornament contained on the wall of the main Hall room in Maimun Palace.

Index, *Awan Larat* ornament is not shaped like a cloud, but because its use can be placed in a place that is no matter what its shape is (not bound by a plane), and most of its base is a limp line, it is called a *Awan Larat*. The decoration is in the form of leaves, flowers, and florets. Generally, this ornament is almost the same as *kaluk*, the meaning of *Awan Larat* is gentleness in association, and can be placed anywhere, and can enter anywhere.

Symbol, from existing verbal icons and signs, the meaning of *Awan Larat* is a gentleness in the association, and can be placed anywhere, and can enter anywhere.

The *Awan Larat* Ornament is made of metal or shell material with translucent sculptures, then in saws or cut with knives or saws according to the shape already in the "mall" with pencils or kitchen charcoal. Then this ornament is colored with natural dyes. The function of this ornament is as a decoration in the wall of the main hall in Maimun Palace.

Interpretant (dicisign), The meaning of the *Awan Larat* Ornament is a gentle meekness in association, and can be placed anywhere, and can enter anywhere. This ornament does not affect the room where it is placed, but troubles itself with the place where it is located.

4.1.4 Calligraphy-Shaped Patterned Ornament

The form of calligraphy is Arabic letters made in various variations. These writings are the sentences contained in the holy book of the Qur'an. The interweaving of the letters was formed to resemble birds, people and so on. The verses that are commonly used are the Qursi, Fatihah, Surah Ikhlas, Allah, Muhammad, Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Allahu Akbar, and other verses that are short-lived.

Data 1. Calligraphy Ornament



Picture 4.4 Calligraphy Ornament
(Picture, Maura Annisa, August 16, 2022, 1.51 PM)

Representamen, In figure 4.4 which is on the wall of the main Hall room in Maimun Palace, it is placed on top and parallel to *Groot Rijkswapen ornament*. The qualisign in this Ornament is given a yellow color that depicts the glory of the king .

Visualization: **Icon**, in figure 4.10 is a calligraphy ornament found on the wall of the main Hall room in Maimun Palace, placed on top and parallel to the *Groot Rijkswapen ornament*.

Index, This ornament is a Calligraphy ornament with bare Arabic inscriptions whose reading is "*Seripaduka Sultan Deli*". **Symbol**, From the existing icons and verbal signs, the

meaning of this ornament is a sign that in the past the position of the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies with Tuanku Sultan Amaluddin Sani Perkasa Alamsyah was the same.

This ornament is made by painting with a natural dye, and yellow color using turmeric. The function of this ornament is as a decoration on the wall of the main room in Maimun Palace.

Interpretant (decision), The meaning of this ornament is a sign that in the past the position of the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies with Tuanku Sultan Amaluddin Sani Perkasa Alamsyah was the same, even though in the past the Maimun Palace was under the shadow of the Dutch East Indies people. This is why this Ornament is placed on top and parallel to the Groot Rijkswapen ornament or also known as the Great Emblem of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is the symbol of the Dutch monarchy.

4.2 Findings

Some of the ornaments found in Maimun Palace only serve as decorations for Maimun Palace and have no special meaning.

The average function of the ornaments in the Maimun Palace is as decoration on the walls and the Sultan's Throne.

The motifs used in Maimun Palace mostly use the motifs of plants or flower petals, while for animals, nature, and calligraphy, only a few or rarely found.

In addition to the yellow and green colors that are characteristic colors of Malay, other colors adorn the ornaments found in the Maimun palace, namely: Red, Blue, white, and black.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The shape of the ornament which has the meaning contained in the Maimun Palace is 4 Ornaments, namely ornaments of plants, animals, nature, and calligraphy. The ornaments found in Maimun Palace are *Bunga Cengkih*, *Itik Sekawan*, *Awan Larat*, and Calligraphy Ornament. The meanings of these ornaments aim to expect Maimun's palace to become a palace that is expected to not only have a good meaning but also be realized for the palace family and society. These ornamental forms fill the entire room in the Maimun palace so that it adds to the beauty of the room. In addition to ornament motifs, the room is filled with various unique interior designs, furniture and furniture ornaments such as cupboards, chairs, and European-style crystal chandeliers.

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