

Symbolic Values in Mandala Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan

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ABSTRACT

Bali is well known for its art and culture, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Bali, art and culture have developed very rapidly, including painting. In the 1930s, a new Balinese painting emerged whose subject matter was people in everyday life. For example, ritual activities in temples, rice harvesting scenes, traditional festival processions, crowded market scenes, and animal life became the central themes of Balinese painters' artworks. However, the issue of art, especially painting in Bali, is not widely studied academically by artists, especially by naturalist artists. In fact, the main painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan contains many symbolic values, both religious symbols and cultural symbols, especially Hindu religion and culture. The problem is why paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan are said to contain high symbolic value? Then how is the visualization of symbolic values in the works of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, and what are the implications for social, cultural, religious life, and for the life of art itself.

This research uses a qualitative approach with qualitative-interpretative analysis techniques. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. The results obtained, namely there are several factors that cause mandala painting art by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan to be said to contain high symbolic value, such as philosophical factors, ideological factors, theological factors, and the use of symbols in religious and cultural life. Then the forms of visualization of symbolic values in the painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan are visualization in the form of the puppet world, flora and fauna, and visualization in the form of a round mandala. The content of these symbolic values has implications for social life, culture, religion, and the life of art itself. Interesting findings obtained in this study are factually this study found that the mandala painting art by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan has advantages, namely the content of symbolic values, in its presentation there is an integration pattern between internal factors called *taksu* with environmental factors. This can be seen from the genes passed down by his grandfather I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, who was also a painter, and then supported by the environment where Pengosekan Village is a center for painting crafts that shape the personality of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan as a painter with character. Meanwhile, the theoretical findings affirm aesthetic theory, semiotic theory, and value theory in the sense that the three theories also seem to apply in this research location.

Keywords: Mandala painting, religious symbols, cultural symbols, and taksu.

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence of painting in Bali is highly regarded, both at the national and international levels. Bali is known to have a variety of traditional painting styles, such as Kamasan wayang painting, Ubud painting, Batuan painting, Sanur, Penestanan, Pengosekan (Flora-Fauna painting), and Keliki painting which is often called post-card painting. The existence of various styles of painting above is a special attraction for tourists who come to Bali, thus encouraging Balinese people to pursue the

world of painting more intensively. In certain villages that are already known as painting centers, it is certain that most (90%) of the residents pursue work as painters. The works produced seem to be mass products, because the results of the work at first glance look the same. However, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that the impact caused by the attractiveness of painting itself can give birth to various types of employment, such as art workers or painters, both amateur and professional painters, as distributors, as sellers by opening art shops or

galleries.

In the 1930s, a new Balinese painting emerged whose subject matter was people in everyday life. For example, ritual activities in temples, the atmosphere of rice harvesting, traditional festival processions, the atmosphere of market crowds, and animal life became the central themes of Balinese paintings (Adnyana, 2018: 1). The development of traditional Balinese painting began in the Ubud area. Anak Agung Gede Sobrat is recorded as the first painter to start the renewal from Ubud, precisely Banjar Dinas Padang Tegal. Another painter who came from the Ubud area was I Gusti Ketut Kobot from Pengosekan who since the 1930s has been recorded as a famous painter, so that Pengosekan until now is known as the village of painters or the village of artists. Some of the painters who studied with I Gusti Ketut Kobot include I Dewa Putu Mokoh, I Nyoman Sumantra, I Dewa Putu Sugi, and I Dewa Nyoman Batuan (Dermawan, 1999: 53, 167, 254, 259). The painters trained by Kobot plus several other painters later gave birth to a painting masab known as the Pengosekan painting masab.

The characteristic of Pengosekan painting is flora-fauna painting with the subject matter or main theme being animals and plants mixed in such a way, which has a realist-naturalist style, bright colors, beautiful and

attractive, and the decorative element is very high. In the book “Mandalas in Life: Painting-Writing, Writing-Painting” (tt:234) Dewa Batuan said that the emergence of Pengosekan painting/flora-fauna painting art was the result of his own ideas with some of his fellow painters. Around the 1970s, after returning from exhibitions held in various places abroad, Dewa Nyoman Batuan called several painter friends to come to his house to discuss paintings that sold well in the market. During the meeting, he said that from his observations during exhibitions abroad, realist paintings are still very dominant among the general public and art lovers. In the midst of the rise of flora and fauna painting, I Dewa Nyoman Batuan as the originator of the idea of the birth of this genre chose another path to find himself as a painter. Dewa Nyoman Batuan did not get involved in the frenetic art market of this genre. From this attitude, he is seen as a painter who has strong principles, character, and identity.

Flora-fauna painting prioritizes the appearance of animal and plant objects in realist form, made in detail with bright, bright, striking colors, and its embodiment is made with a close-up pattern (a term in photographic techniques). Below are two examples of flora and fauna paintings by famous painters, I Dewa Nyoman Laba and I Dewa Putu Sena.



Figure 1 Title: Lovebirds
By: I Dewa Nyoman Laba
(Doc: I Made Ruta)



Figure 2 Title: Parrots
By: I Dewa Putu Sena
(Doc: I Made Ruta)

The works of Dewa Batuan presented above can be ascertained that the individual element is very prominent. There are no communal values in these works, which are usually found in traditional Balinese paintings in general. The style, pattern and manner of composing are always packaged in the form of a circle called a round mandala. Similarly, the forms and thematics raised are not general in nature. Dewa Batuan prefers something personal, expressing his life experiences and views on the social conditions experienced, as well as Hindu philosophical views visualized in symbolic forms, such as his works entitled "*Mandala Windu*", "*Mandala Rwa Bhineda*", "*Mandala Tat Twam Asi*", "*Mandala Catus Pata*", "*Mandala Lingga Yoni*", and others.

Based on the description of the background of the problem, three main problems can be formulated, namely as follows. (1) Why is the art of mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan said to have a very high symbolic value? (2) How is the visualization of symbolic values in the art of mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan? and (3) What are the implications of symbolic values contained in the art of mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan for the social, cultural, and religious life of the Pengosekan community? Furthermore, the purpose of this research is to explore and deeply understand the symbolic values in the mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan. This is important because by deeply examining the symbolic values implied in a work of painting, it can be understood that the work was made, not only to express the aesthetic values that exist in the minds of the painters, but also religiously intended to be offered to God Almighty, to the Gods or to their ancestors. In addition, this research also has the following benefits, namely to be able to enrich the repertoire of knowledge about fine art, especially painting created by an artist, in addition to being a medium for expressing all forms of emotions of the artists.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is designed to examine the symbolic values contained in mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan through qualitative research. According to Taylor (1975:5), qualitative research is research that produces descriptions in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. This observation is directed at the setting and the individual holistically (whole). In order to collect data, researchers used three types of techniques, namely observation techniques, in-depth interviews and document studies. Primary data sources in this study are in the form of people who are hereinafter referred to as informants, they are appointed purposively by considering their affirmation of the problem being examined. The use of qualitative methods in this research is a mechanism for finding truth through religious and cultural perspectives. Therefore, the point of view used is the scientific point of view of religion and culture which is strengthened by the use of the interpretative paradigm. The interpretive paradigm according to Habermas in (Fakih, 2003: 26) is knowledge, especially in the social sciences and social research intended to truly understand the phenomenon under investigation.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to examine research problems, literature review is very important, both in the context of criticizing the findings and ideas obtained by previous researchers. This is intended to position research findings in existing knowledge, which also means avoiding duplication. Therefore, it is important to map the results of research conducted by previous researchers that are related to this research. Through qualitative research, it is hoped that the state of the art of a process of interpreting the symbols used in painting can be thoroughly revealed. Then based on the results of tracing some of the results of studies conducted by previous researchers related to the existence of painting, several study results were found that

have to do with this research, which can be used as a reference in the discussion of further research. The results of the research in question are as follows.

Rai Kalam (1992) with the research title “Pita Maha Painting as a New Pattern in the Beginning of Modern Balinese Painting”. This research places Pita Maha painting as a new beginning of modern Balinese painting. Balinese artists, in particular, Pita Maha artists, according to Rai Kalam are very open and tolerant in accepting techniques, materials, as well as notions or schools of art from the Western world. The openness of Balinese artists has led to various art creations, especially painting, both communal and individual. Individually, many painting artists have emerged with their own style and style, although the way they express it is still in the traditional order. Then Murdana (2002) also conducted research on modern Balinese painting for his thesis at the ITB Megister Program. His research was on “Aesthetic Values of Modern Balinese Painting 1930-1980”. In his research, Murdana determined that the period of modern Balinese painting began when Bali received Western influence. The result of his research is that the attitude of Balinese artists is very open and adaptive in accepting Western aesthetics that can enrich their Balinese identity. The influence of Western aesthetics, not only resulted in the renewal of style and the emergence of personal identity, but also a change in the attitude of Balinese artists in their work.

The results of the research of the two people mentioned above, both Rai Kalam and Murdana, illustrate that the influence of Western art aesthetics that was accepted openly and adaptively by Balinese painters had a huge impact on the development of further painting, resulting in various styles and creations and attitudes of Balinese artists in creating works of art. The changes highlighted by these two researchers are only changes that occur in aesthetics which are still communal. Whereas the research that the author conducted was looking at one painter's work, namely I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, who analyzed symbolic values in mandala painting. The theoretical framework

used to analyze this research problem is (1) aesthetic theory; (2) semiotic theory; and value theory.

Theoretically speaking about aesthetics, Bercker (1982: 131) in the book *Art Word* states that aesthetics is a study of premises and reasons or arguments used to justify or provide an assessment of activities related to matters of beauty, artistic, good art or bad art, and so on. Meanwhile, Toole (1995: 5) in the *Dictionary of Philosophy* explains aesthetics/esthetics (in Greek, *aesthetikos*), meaning someone who perceives something through the means of his senses, feelings, and intuition. Aesthesis means primary elementary sensations. First, the study of beauty and related concepts, such as sublime, tragic, ugly, humorous, and drab. Second, the analysis of the values, tastes, attitudes, standards involved in the experience and judgment of everything made by man or found in nature that is beautiful.

Briefly, beautiful things can be classified into two parts, namely (1) natural beauty that is not made by humans, and (2) beauty made by humans, which is generally referred to as art. In general, what is called beautiful in the soul is everything that can cause a sense of pleasure, satisfaction, comfort, and happiness. If the feeling is very strong, then someone will feel transfixed, moved, fascinated, and cause a desire to re-experience the feeling even though it has been enjoyed many times, which in Balinese is called *kelangen* (Djelantik, 1999: 34). Likewise, when a person has strong feelings and can cause feelings of being moved, fascinated, and generate a desire to enjoy repeatedly the values contained in a work of painting, it can be said that the painting has high aesthetic value (beauty value).

Another figure, the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), stated that art is the expression of impressions. The expression takes the form of various imagery, such as: color, line, shape, and texture. The process of expression takes place entirely in the mind of the artist. Therefore, the artwork produced by a person is only a kind of memorandum, copy, or reproduction of something that the artist experiences within himself (Gie, 1996: 33).

Similarly, the mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is also a reproduction of something experienced by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan as an artist. Therefore, with the contextual theory developed by John Dewey, the theory of form with its figures Clive Bell and Roger Fry, and the theory of disclosure by Leo Tolostoi, various symbolic meanings contained behind the mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan will be explored, thus revealing why the mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan are said to contain high philosophical value.

By using John Dewey's contextualist theory, the researcher will try to reveal the relationship between the value of art and the environment in which it grows and develops. In the painting "Mandala Tiga Garis Sakti", three types of lines are clearly visible, namely straight lines (white color), curved lines (red color), and angled lines (black color) as the main object tied with circular lines, made to resemble white light sparks, as well as functioning as a background with light ochre and dark colors. Therefore, from the perspective of contextualist theory, the shapes of lines, such as straight lines, curved lines, and angled lines symbolically mean that the existence or presence of these three lines in every work produced by Dewa Batuan is equated with the existence and presence of God in every creation including the universe, both *bhuana agung* and *bhuana alit*. Likewise, the use of colors such as red, black and white means the three manifestations of *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa*, namely *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*, each of which has a role as creator, maintainer, and smelter.

Furthermore, in this study, the term semiotics refers to the inauguration by the Association for Semiotic Studies in 1974 at its first congress. Semiotics became the term for all the old terminology of semiology and semiotics. Semiotics gives a large portion to the discussion of symbols, signs, and symbols. In addition, semiotics also seeks to give meaning to all signs, symbols, and symbols based on shared understanding and theoretical aspects in the literature. Furthermore, in this study, the term semiotics refers to the inauguration by the

Association for Semiotic Studies in 1974 at its first congress. Semiotics became the term for all the old terminology of semiology and semiotics. Semiotics gives a large portion to the discussion of symbols, signs, and symbols. In addition, semiotics also seeks to give meaning to all signs, symbols, and symbols based on shared understanding and theoretical aspects in the literature. Likewise, the signs or symbols used in I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's mandala paintings theoretically all contain meaning. For example, in terms of the arrangement or composition of objects and forms displayed tend to be in abstract patterns, although those depicted in detail are still easy to read as general symbols. Dewa Batuan has indeed abandoned the general characteristics of Ubud style paintings (Dermawan, 2006: 53). Value theory is then the name, along with axiology, for the field of philosophy, which investigates the nature of value and evaluation (estimation, view of value). In general, theories of value can be divided into theories that relate value to "interest" or "importance" and presuppose that values have an objective aspect and are recognized by intuition. But there are other distinctions that extend the framework of the above division. Depending on the theory, values are seen as cognitive or non-cognitive, objective or subjective, absolute or relative, natural or non-natural, essentialistic or existentialistic.

3.1 Several factors that cause paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan to have high symbolic value

3.1.1 Philosophical Factors

According to Pandey (in <https://www.gramedia.com/literasi/pengertian-filosofi>) philosophy is a belief in a theoretical construct about humans and is presented as a basis for one's belief in a phenomenon. (accessed, January 6, 2025). There is also another view that says that philosophy is a radical and comprehensive way of thinking, in the sense of a way of thinking to explore something in depth (Suriasumantri, 2003: 4). In the context of this research, what is meant by philosophical factors is an effort to reveal in

depth and holistically the causes of mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan said to have a very high symbolic value. In looking at a work, especially a work of art, whether it contains symbolic values or not, of course there are several perspectives that can be used as a guide (basis for thinking), one of which is an aesthetic perspective. As Bercker said (in his book *Art Word*, 1982: 131) that aesthetics is a study of premises and reasons or arguments used to justify or provide an assessment of activities related to matters of beauty, artistic, good art, or bad art, and so on. By referring to Barcker (1982:131), with an aesthetic perspective one can understand symbolically the value of beauty, artistic value, or artistic value contained in a painting, including mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan.

3.1.2 Ideological Factors

For Althusser as quoted by Bagus Takwin (in *Introduction to a Book on Ideology*, 1984: xviii) that ideology moves in an unreal relation, but as if it were real, accepting the apparent as real, and the ephemeral as eternal.

Meanwhile, O'neil (in Atmadja, 2010a: 133) asserts that "...ideology is a system of values or beliefs accepted as fact or truth by certain groups". A similar view is also expressed by Thomson (2003:17) that "...ideology is a system of thought, a system of beliefs, and symbolic practices related to social and political action". With reference to some terminology about ideology as stated by several experts above and if it is related to the factors that cause mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan to be said to have high symbolic value, the terminology put forward by O'nil and Thomson seems suitable to be used to describe the reality that exists in the material object of the research being conducted. The reason is that connoisseurs of painting art by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan believe that the figure of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is a legendary painting artist who is able to translate the values of Hindu life in Bali into a work of painting as an expression of artistic, cultural and religious values. As shown in the following two artworks by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan.



Figure 3 "Mandala Rwa Bhineda"
By: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan
(Doc: I Made Ruta)

In Figure 3 by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan above, there are rigid strokes that contain a very deep ideological meaning, namely the ideology of rwa bhineda. In the picture there are two types of strokes that are in opposite positions, namely in the form of strokes with straight lines and strokes with curved lines. In terms of coloring,



Figure 4 "Tat Twam Asi"
By: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan
(Doc: I Made Ruta)

there are also similar things, namely there are bright colors and dark colors. According to I Dewa Nyoman Batuan in his book entitled "*Mandala dalam Hidup Melukis-Menulis, Menulis Melukis*" (t.t: 64) that paintings are created because of differences in direction and color, such as the colors of the rainbow are

created because there are differences in the biasan of white light into various colors. Similarly, a beautiful song is created by the difference in sound in each supporting instrument that emits a different sound.

Then in Figure 4, the painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan above reflects the ideology of *tat twam asi*, which is a moral teaching that is based on Hinduism. *Tat twam asi* is actually a Hindu philosophy that teaches about morality without limits. That is, the *tat twam asi* ideology contains a teaching that teaches a philosophy of life, namely “he is you, I am you, and all beings are the same.” In addition, the concept of *tat twam asi* also guides human beings on this earth to have a social spirit and a desire to help each other. This kind of concept is rooted in a philosophy of life that considers that helping others is the same as helping oneself, and vice versa, hurting others also means hurting oneself (Sumarni and Raharjo, 2015: 20 / in <https://disbud.bulelengkab.go.id/informasi/detail/articles/97-tat-twam-asi>) accessed, January 7, 2025.

3.1.3 Theological Factors

The artworks of Balinese artists, such as sculpture, dance, and painting, are often associated with the religious and cultural life of the Balinese people, especially Hindu religion and culture. It is often associated with the religious and cultural life of Balinese people, especially Hindu religion and culture. Likewise, many paintings are related to Hindu cultural and religious life. Related to this, it is not excessive if the mandala paintings produced by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan are associated with symbolic values, especially symbols of Hindu religion and culture. This becomes very logical if it is associated with the essence of humans as animal symbolicum. This designation originates from the human ability to use symbols. For example, humans have the ability to speak and write, where language and writing are symbols. This certainly cannot be separated from one of the privileges of humans as creatures that God has given advantages in the form of gifts called intellect. From the existence of such a gift, humans also have the ability to think abstractly

and conceptually, so that he is given the nickname *homo sapiens*. By Aristotle (in Rindjin, 1987:1) it is called the animal that reason.

From this special gift and with the intellect that exists in humans, humans honor this gift in the form of devotion and prostration to Him. In the context of religious life, this sense of gratitude and devotion to God is called theology, which then becomes one of the factors that cause Balinese people to always offer all the results of their work to God Almighty. Thus, it is quite reasonable, if all the works produced by Balinese people are always intended for offerings or as a manifestation of human devotion to God Almighty who has bestowed various privileges on him. The theological concept in the context of this study refers to the interpretation of the existence of God or divinity based on literary texts that are interpreted intelligently based on speculative-philosophical thinking. This means that the interpretation is not done in order to undermine the value of the text, but on the contrary, it is intended to glorify the value of the text itself. That is why every human work, especially works of art, besides being intended to foster a sense of beauty (aesthetics), is also intended to make holy offerings to the Creator.

3.1.4 Symbol Utilization Factors in Religious and Cultural Life

According to Triguna (2011:7) from a cultural perspective, the creation of symbols is a human response to the challenge, which is the natural situation that surrounds them. To gain a deeper understanding of symbols, it is better to adopt Cassier's idea that distinguishes between the notion of sign and symbol. According to him, a sign is part of the “physical world” that functions as an operator and has substance, while a symbol is part of the world of human meaning that functions as a designator. With reference to the views of the two experts above, the use of religious and cultural symbols in this context can be traced through these conceptions. For example, why the mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is said to have a very high symbolic value. This certainly cannot be

separated from the local wisdom of the Balinese people in their religious and cultural traditions that always utilize symbols, both religious symbols and cultural symbols in carrying out various lives in society. Therefore, even though symbols do not have physical reality, but only have functions, but in the practice of daily life, especially among Hindu communities in Bali, symbols are always present as cognitive constructs and tend to be emotive. Based on this narrative, it is reasonable that the use of religious and cultural symbols in the daily lives of Balinese people is a strong reason for connoisseurs of mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan to judge that his works contain very high symbolic value. Indeed, not all human actions can be said to be symbolic in the frame

of religion and culture. However, some special or special actions taken by humans can be categorized as symbolic actions. Such as human actions in making various means of religious ceremonies, most of which have symbolic value, as well as in making various art goods, such as sculptures and paintings.

One example is the form of worship by using upakara means in the form of daksina, this is a symbol of *Sang Hyang Widhi's* sthana called *Siwa Lingga*). During religious ceremonies, Hindus make daksina as a symbol (*nyasa*) that symbolizes the place or sthana of the gods who have just descended from heaven, as shown in the picture below.



Figure 5 Daksina as a symbol of Shiva Lingga
(Doc. https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=6a5bfd6bcf3535ca&q=gambar+daksina&udm)

Another example is when Hindus want to apologize for making a mistake and they want to repent, and will not repeat their mistakes, then they will offer *banten sesayut guru piduka* as a symbol of apology to God Almighty, as shown in the following picture.



Figure 6 Banten Sesayut Guru Piduka
(Doc. https://www.google.com/search?q=gambar+banten+sesayut+guru+piduka&sca_esv)

The philosophical basis of all his actions in the use of symbols of ceremonial means in offerings is solely due to the inability of humans to communicate directly with their Creator. All this is because God is unthinkable (*Acintya*), intangible (ImpersonalGod), very sublime (*Transcendent*), and permeates everything in this entire universe (*Wyapi Wiyapaka Nerwikara*). The form of worship using such *upakara* means, in Hinduism can be seen in Bagavadgita IX. 26 which states as follows

*pattraṁ puspam phalam toyam yo me
bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakti-upahṛtam aśnāmi
prayātmanah*

Translation:

If one offers a leaf, flower, fruit, or water with devotional love, I will accept it. (Prabhupāda, 1971:471)

Departing from the contents of the sloka, an understanding can be built that Hindus in carrying out religious practices, especially in Bali, always use religious symbols as a representation of their inability to communicate directly with God Almighty (*Ida Hyang Widhi Wasa*). In addition to religious symbols, humans in living their lives in this world also often use cultural symbols.

3.2 Forms of Visualization of Symbolic Values in Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan

3.2.1 Form of Visualization in the Form of Pewayangan World

According to The Liang Gie (1996: 97) painting is a two-dimensional work that has elements of color, line, space, light, shadow, texture, meaning, theme, and symbol. Departing from this definition, it can be narrated that painting is a form of expression that is identical

to the symbols and meanings implied in it. Or in other languages, it can be expressed that paintings are art texts that use symbolic strategies as a way of expressing various social, cultural and humanitarian behaviors. Departing from this narrative, as a text, art must be understood through the method of interpretation (Saidi, 2008: 36). Therefore, the symbols found in paintings, including mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, are generally personal in accordance with the creativity and experience of the artist. Related to the symbolic value contained in paintings, the artists can visualize it in various forms of life activities as a representation of the ideas and ideas of the artists themselves. Thus, a painting can be said to contain symbolic value because the artist's emotional experience is expressed through the expression of line, color, shape, and composition. By referring to this reality, it can be said that the symbolism contained in the painting is actually the reality and subjectivity of the artist's mind.

Based on this idea, it can be understood that the symbolic values contained in the paintings of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan have a lot to do with religious values and Hindu cultural values. This is because I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is an artist who is also a Hindu and lives in a Hindu cultural community, so subjectively his experiences and emotions are much influenced by Hindu religious and cultural values where they grow and develop. Thus, it is not surprising that his works are said to contain symbolic values that are full of Hindu religious and cultural values. One of them is visualizing the values of the natural life of the puppet world, as shown in some of his works below.



**Figure 7 Mandala Rama
(Doc. I Dewa Nyoman Batuan)**

Figure 7 above is a puppet picture that shows the distinctiveness of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's work, which is influenced by his own emotional experience which is then expressed through the expression of lines, colors, shapes, and composition. This means that the paintings in the form of puppet pictures by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan have their own characteristics that are not found in puppet pictures by other painters. In addition, regarding the expression of lines, shapes, and compositions, the viewers cannot translate directly through the appearance of the painting, but people (viewers) will only understand the theme of the painting after it is complemented by writing as an artist's effort to give meaning to the symbols he painted. Therefore, the two paintings of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan above have their own characteristics, so they are said to be individualistic. Then related to the theme of the painting is taken from the Ramayana epic whose existence has been worldwide. In addition, the Ramayana epic is often referred to as an allegory of the principles of yogic life (Bhavanani, 1993). For literary scholars, the story of Sri Rama as an enforcer of truth or enforcer of *satya* seems to be very well understood (familiar). Then by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, this is visualized in the form of paintings called mandala paintings which contain many symbolic values, such as the value of truth (*siwam*), the value of loyalty (*satyam*), and the value of beauty (*sundaram*).

Figure 8, titled "*Mandala Sita Mesatya*", is also taken from the Ramayana, where Sita, Rama's wife, is kidnapped by Rahwana, the giant king of the kingdom of Alengka. In the story,



**Figure 8 Mandala Sita Mesatya
(Dokc I Dewa Nyoman Batuan)**

Dewi Sita was forced and seduced to become Rahwana's wife, but because Dewi Sita was a very loyal wife to her husband Rama, all of Rahwana's seduction and coercion was rejected. Long story short, after Rama won the battle against Ravana and Sita was regained, but unfortunately Rama doubted the chastity of Sita as his wife, because she was taken away by Ravana. To answer Rama's doubts about Sita's purity, Sita then told Rama to make a fireplace (bonfire) to prove that she was still pure. As proof of Sita's loyalty to Sang Rama, Sita finally threw herself into the blazing fire. Because Dewa Agni knew the loyalty of Dewi Sita, Dewi Sita was not burned by the flames, which finally made Rama fully believe in Dewi Sita's confession about her purity.

3.2.2 Visualization in the Form of Flora and Fauna

In addition to the form of puppets, mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan were often visualized in the form of flora and fauna. Speaking of flora and fauna paintings, the process of its development cannot be separated from the emergence of the 'Pita Maha' organization in 1937. The emergence of the organization as a forum to accommodate the works of painting artists in Ubud, especially in Pengosekan Village at that time, had positive implications for the development of art in Bali. By referring to the narrative, it can be described that the development in question involves changes to the realm of daily life. In the sense that Pengosekan painting is one of the many

traditional paintings in Ubud that experienced thematic and technical developments.

Based on the search for several references, it can be understood that Pengosekan flora and fauna painting is the only traditional Balinese painting style that has experienced progressive development. One of them is Hurlock (1976:2) who asserts that this development began to occur since the 1980s which was born from the creativity of the painter himself as a result of experimentation and a

series of progressive changes that occurred qualitatively, as a result of the process of maturity and experience. The changes that occurred were not only technical, but also thematic. As shown in the following images.



Figure 9 Flora and Fauna Painting with Theme Flowers and Balinese Starlings

Doc. [https://www.google.com/search?q=gambar+flora+
dan+fauna+gaya+pengosekan+burung+jalak+bali&sca_esv](https://www.google.com/search?q=gambar+flora+dan+fauna+gaya+pengosekan+burung+jalak+bali&sca_esv)

Pengosekan Village as a center of flora and fauna painting artists has one of the driving figures in the development of flora and fauna painting, namely I Dewa Nyoman Batuan who in 1970 successfully pioneered the establishment of an organization called Community of Pengosekan Artist. The purpose of the organization was to accommodate and motivate all artists in Pengosekan Village to develop flora and fauna paintings with Pengosekan characteristics. One of the characteristics of the flora and fauna paintings developed in Pengosekan is that the themes are taken from Balinese folk tales, which are accumulated in *tantri* stories.

3.2.3 Form of Visualization in the Form of a Round Mandala

One form of visualization of symbolic value in the work of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is the 'round mandala' which is based on the belief

that everything in this world comes from small spheres. In the sense that all that exists in this universe is derived from dots in the form of a circle which means there is no beginning, no end, no end and no base. If interpreted more deeply about the meaning of 'round mandala' is that everything that exists in this world, there is no beginning and no end, such as the example of the existence of the day there is no beginning and no end, because there is yesterday, today, and tomorrow (*atita, nagata, and wartamana*). If this context is related to the cycle of human life, then there will never be an end to the rotation (cycle) of the life of creatures in this world, namely birth, life, and death or *utpeti, stiti, and pralina* (Batuan, t.t.: 18).

By referring to Dewa Nyoman Batuan's view, it can be understood that the symbolic values contained in his 'round mandala' painting are that the life cycle of all creatures in this world will never stop unless willed by the

Creator. Another example is that the earth, moon, and sun are all round in shape, and revolve around something round as well. The term round in the context of the sentence above contains a deep meaning, namely the existence of something in this universe that no one knows for sure when it started and when it will end. If analyzed more deeply based on a semiotic approach, the concept of roundness in the painting 'round mandala' by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan actually contains a very high symbolic meaning. This is because the creation that occurs continuously in this universe, no one knows exactly when it began and when it will end. Continuous creation so that there is an endless life can only be done by God, who in the Hindu concept is called *Brahman*

3.3 Implication of Symbolic Values in Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan

3.3.1 Implications for Social Life

The social life referred to in this study is about the relationship between humans and other humans. According to Van Baal (1988:2), humans as social creatures always live in a certain place and never live alone. Referring to this idea, it can be narrated that humans instinctively tend to want to live together and always want to relate to other humans. This cannot be separated from the essence of humans as homo socius creatures, namely humans as social creatures who always want to make friends, groups, and interact with other humans. This is also in line with what Nugroho (2013:1) said that it is through these activities of gathering together and grouping that humans obtain their happiness.

3.3.2 Implications for Cultural Life

Speaking of culture, Koentjaraningrat (1984:2) said there are at least seven universal elements of a culture, namely (1) Religious system and religious ceremonies; (2) Community system and organization; (3) Knowledge system; (4) Language; (5) Arts; (6) Livelihood system; and (7) Technology and equipment system. By referring to Koentjaraningrat above, it can be explained that the culture of a particular nation or ethnic group

contains various elements, such as elements of value, reason, culture, morals, behavior, goals to be achieved, and so on. In order to provide a more operational description of cultural life, Koentjaraningrat in the same source then categorizes culture into three forms, namely (1) culture as a complex of ideas, ideas, values, norms, rules, and so on; (2) the form of culture as a complex of patterned behavioral activities of humans in society; and (3) is a form of culture in the form of artepak or objects of human work.

Based on Koentjaraningrat's idea of the three forms of culture, and if it is related to the implications of symbolic values in mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, the implications can be narrated as follows. Symbolic values, especially values related to Balinese cultural symbols contained in mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, can at least preserve public knowledge about various cultural symbols, such as the *ongkara* symbol, *tat twam asi* symbol, *tri murti* symbol, and various other cultural symbols. This is visualized and perpetuated by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan in various mandala painting artworks such as, in the painting of the three sakti lines mandala, in the round mandala, *tat twam asi* mandala, mosaic mandala, and flora and fauna mandala, most of which themes are taken from *tantri* stories. *Ceritra tantri* in Bali is a *hikayat* or fairy tale that takes many themes from animal life which contains moral and ethical education. Similarly, the mandala paintings made by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan contain a lot of symbolic content that visualizes Balinese cultural symbols. The interpretation of such cultural symbols can have implications for the knowledge of the audience, regarding the existence of values contained in Balinese culture.

3.3.3 Implications for Religious Life

Talking about religious life in this context leads to the issue of the relationship between religion and society in a sociological context. Sociologically, religion always influences and is influenced by social structures, norms, values and practices in a society. Religious experience of God's existence, religious rites and patterned religious practices,

and religious institutions are socio-religious areas (Conolly, 2011: 271).

Departing from this idea, it can be said that religion is something that is very essential for human life. This can be seen clearly from the practices of religious life, especially Hindus, where religious practices can be seen from the time of conception in a mother's womb, until humans return to their origin, they are never separated from religious ceremonial practices. Related to this, Wiradnyana (2024: 414) said that religion is a source of culture and is the basis of social progress. This means that religion contains a view of the nature of the universe (macrocosmos) and human nature (microcosmos), which is always used as an orientation for human life on this earth.

3.3.4 Implications for Art Life

One form of culture according to Koentjaraningrat (1984:2) is the objects of human work that are often called *artepak* that can be seen with the eyes directly. Likewise, the work in the form of painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan can also be said to be a form of culture. Therefore, the preservation of culture in which there is also an element of art can be seen, observed, and felt its existence directly by humans themselves. It is common knowledge that in its essence art, including painting, is a knowledge that can be created, learned, and passed on from one generation to the next. Art is the result of human creation, taste, and creativity that can evoke feelings of pleasure, happiness, emotion, and admiration for anyone who sees it. Because art is the result of human creation, taste, and creativity, it can essentially influence character building and at the same time develop various potentials that exist in humans themselves, both individually and in groups.

Related to the essence of art that can influence the formation of human character, the mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, either directly or indirectly, can also influence or have implications for the life of art itself, in addition to social, cultural, economic and religious life. It is a common realization that art as a result of human creativity is a symbolic process to interpret a reality. Departing from this

terminology, it can be easily understood that the art that develops in the life of society, including Balinese society, will always be influenced by the social dynamics that are happening around it, including the dynamics in artistic life.

IV CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the description in the previous chapters, several conclusions can be drawn, among others, as follows. First, some of the factors that cause mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan to be said to have symbolic values are as follows. (1) Philosophical factors, philosophical views on the content of symbolic values in a work of art can be assisted by using an aesthetic approach; (2) Ideological factors, which mean that the mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan symbolically illustrate the rhythm of human life on this earth which is always built by two different things, where both always show opposite positions, but complement each other called the concept of *rwa-bhineda*; (3) Theological factors, meaning that mandala painting has a lot to do with the cultural and religious life of Hindus; (4) Utilization of religious and cultural symbols in everyday life, such as the use of *daksina* as a phallus of *Batara Siwa*, and *banten sesayut* as a symbol of apology; and (5) Humans as animal symbolicum, meaning that some of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's works can be symbolically interpreted, both horizontally -*imanen*, and vertically -*trasenden*.

Second, there are several forms of visualization of symbolic values in paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, which are as follows. (1) Visualization in the form of the puppet world, such as mandala paintings taken from the Ramayana epic, such as the image of Sri Rama as a symbol of truth, and the image of Dewi Sita plunging into the flames as a symbol of loyalty; (2) Visualization in the form of flora and fauna, this work carries the theme of Balinese folk tales, which are accumulated in *tantri* stories; (3) Visualization in the form of Balinese social life, which at the time of the artist's life, was colored by the values of peasant life. Thus the character of the symbolization expressed in the painting is the values of the life of the farming community;

(4) visualization in the form of a mosaic mandala, meaning that in living his life I Dewa Nyoman Batuan adheres to the principle of “mosaic mandala” which means flowing like water; (5) Visualization in the form of a round mandala, which implies that everything that exists in this world, has no beginning and no end, like a sphere; (6) Visualization in the form of social, cultural and religious life depicted in the form of a circle in which there is a rectangle and in the middle of the rectangle there is a triangle symbolically containing the meaning of creation.

Third, the content of symbolic values in mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan has implications for several aspects of life as follows. (1) Implications for social life, meaning that the content of symbolic values in the works of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan has a significant effect on the strengthening of a sense of unity and integrity based on a high sense of solidarity; (2) Implications for cultural life, meaning that the content of symbolic values in the works of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is at least able to preserve the various cultural knowledge contained therein for future generations; (3) Implications for economic life, in the sense that the content of symbolic values in the work of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan can at least attract the interest of his fans to buy the work, thus having implications for the economic life of the family and the economy of the Pengosekan Village community in general; (4) Implications for religious life show that the content of religious and cultural symbols in the work of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, in religious sociology can provide inspiration, motivation, and arouse the religious emotions of Balinese people, especially for Hindus who enjoy the work; (5) Implications for artistic life, meaning that art as a result of human creativity is a symbolic process to interpret a reality.

4.2 Research Findings

Factually, this research found several findings, which are as follows. First, the art of mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan has several advantages, especially the content of symbolic values, both religious symbols and cultural symbols. Because in its presentation there is a pattern of integration between internal

factors called *taksu* with environmental factors. This can be seen from the genes passed down by his grandfather I Dewa Nyoman Batuan who was also a painting artist and then supported by the environment where Pengosekan Village is a center for painting crafts that shape the personality of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan as a painter with character.

Secondly, the paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan besides containing symbolic values also contain the values of local wisdom of the Balinese people, namely the concept of *rwa-bhineda* which philosophically means that everything in this universe is inseparable from the *rwa-bhineda* philosophy. *Rwa-bhineda*, which in the context of the modern world is called duality, is two things that are different but complement and balance each other. For example, the energy of masculinity and the energy of feminism are two opposing entities that are needed to create life. This is visualized by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan in the form of a color composition with a light-dark pattern. The concept of light and darkness contains a very high philosophical value, which is a necessity to realize and be able to accept differences in life called the concept of *rwa-bhineda*.

Third, I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's painting creativity is not solely based on the motivation to gain economic benefits, but also based on the concept of *ngayah* and *bhakti*. This can be seen from the composition of his paintings which are colored by the content of religious symbols and cultural symbols as a representation of the attitude of sincere prostration and devotion to *Ida Hyang Widhi Wasa*. Because by making strokes of religious symbols and cultural symbols into a work of painting, it can perpetuate the cognitive aspects of a cultural system in the form of a complexity of ideas, values, and religious norms in a more tangible form.

Then theoretically, this research found several findings which, in general, strengthen pre-existing theories. First, the aesthetic theory developed by Bercker (1982: 131) which states that aesthetics is the study of premises, using arguments to justify or provide an assessment of activities related to issues of beauty, artistic,

good art or bad art, and so on. The patterns of argument developed by Barcker are in line with the basic concept of painting done by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, which is always oriented towards two dimensions, namely good-bad, high-low, day-night, and so on. It's just that Barcker's concept of thought is based on scientific reseach, while the actions taken by Dewa Nyoman Batuan are more based on intuition, so it is more rooted in the issue of *taksu* (innate).

Second, according to Sander Peirce, a philosopher and logician, human reasoning is always done through signs, meaning that humans can only reason through the signs used. In his mind, logic is the same as semiotics, which can be applied to all kinds of signs. Likewise, the signs or symbols used in I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's mandala paintings theoretically all contain meaning. It's just that Dewa Batuan in his works no longer expresses conventional things, such as painting about everyday life, such as the atmosphere of rice harvesting in rice fields, dances, festivals celebrating religious holy days, and others that are usually painted by Pengosekan painters and Ubud painters in general. However, Dewa Batuan chose his own path, so that he was able to create his own style. Thus it can be said that the findings in this study can largely affirm Sander Pearce's semiotic theory, but there are slight differences.

Third, the existence of value for Plato is essences, which are recognized by intuition, and contained in a hierarchical natural atmosphere. In the modern period, which is characterized by the growing interest of scientists in axiological issues, W.M. Urban followed in Plato's footsteps. His assumption is that values are objective aspects of an intelligent world. While Nietzsche, who accepts the need for a "transaction of values", seems to think that values are both constructed and determined by judgments of good and bad. So according to Nitzsche, values arise in a state of anger and power, but are capable of creating change. Related to some expert views on value, and if it is associated with the symbolic values contained in the paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, there also appears to be harmony, namely the

values contained in Dewa Batuan's works also refer to two dimensions, namely good vs. bad, male vs. female, day vs. night, and others which are represented in the concept of *rwa-bhineda*. So the findings of this study corroborate the value theory developed by several previous experts.

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