

## **PARADOX AND HIBRIDITY IN ‘CREATIVE CONCEPT’ ON VISUALIZATION OF TRADITION SYMBOL IN BALI**

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### **Abstract**

Understanding the concept of symbols visualization in Bali will be able to prevent the misuse of its primary function, because if not properly understood then it can lead to problems that have broad impact. However, another opinion said that it is a concept of paradox and hybridity, not an act of harassment against symbols. The intended hybridity is a term that refers to the creation of new transcultural forms. Hybridization is not only understood narrowly as in horticulture, but can occur in various forms, such as linguistics, culture, politics, race, and so on (Ashcroft, 2001:118). A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory (opposite) with public opinion or the truth but in fact contain elements of truth.

Effort in understanding the phenomenon of cultural ‘change’ is the result of a process of shifting, reduction and addition of the cultural system elements because of an adjustment in order to interact with the environment. Assumption of the phenomenon is the existence of a ‘creative concept’ outside ‘the context of the self’ in communicating a message visually through the role of a visual communication media. Understanding in interpretative manner a pattern of communication that has an identity, where the ‘value’ will be ‘read’ from the visual representation of a symbol, would be very useful for communicators in an effort to convey a message visually to the communicant.

**Keywords** : Paradox, Hybridity, Symbol Visualization, Tradition, Creative Concept

### **1. Introduction**

Balinese culture that is characterized by diversity of *yadnya*, is able to generate Balinese who behave friendly with typical devotion and guidance in order mannered and has a strong relationship with philosophy of *tattwa–susila–upakara* (Hindu). The integration between the abundance of ceremonies, arts and green scenery describes the characteristics of archaic culture of Bali. The abundance of ritual activities and art of the Balinese according to Mead and Bateson (Picard, 2006) should be seen as a phenomenon that must be discussed in psychological and cultural terms. In the empirical experience of daily life, the relationship between the Hindu religion and culture of Bali has become a guide for the attitude and behavior of the Balinese. The relationship between Balinese people with their nature through the religious spirit in the frame of *yadnya* has created an amazing harmony of life so Bali deserved to be object of ‘gratification’ of modern human tastes especially with a variety of issues related to the ‘needs’ of tourism.

According to Piliang (2005:1), in the era of economic globalization, information and cultural today, a condition of attraction occur between local culture with the challenge and influence of globalization.

Therefore, on the one hand, globalization is considered as an opportunity for development of self potential, while on the other hand globalization is seen as a threat to the existence of local culture including local designs and sustainability of the local culture itself. The results of the study by experts showed that each culture is constantly changing (Ember, 1980:34) Changes in culture (cultural change) is a process of shifting, reduction and addition of elements of the cultural system due to adjustments in order to deal with environmental problems. Culture was changed because it is adaptive. There are adjustments to the physical geographical environment, socio-cultural environment and adjustments in terms of physiological needs (Ember, 1980:28-29). In addition, there is a cultural change that is driven by factors from within (internal factors) and some are caused by external factors (external factors). External factors often lead to a very real and fast changes. Internal factors happened because of the rapid rate of population, innovation, conflict and the accumulation of knowledge (Linton, 1984:238-239).

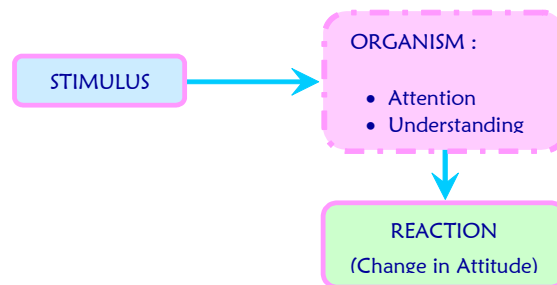
### **1.1 Balinese Culture and Symbol 'Communication'**

Bali is an island filled with cultural values, where in the process of communicating through visual form almost vary, yet have the concept and meaning can be said to be almost the same. The process of communicating messages in Bali visualized through symbols. Hindu religion in Bali is very rich with various symbol, its form is very beautiful, and attract the hearts of every person who see it. For Hindus, the symbols gives a value and encouragement to try to understand the meaning behind the symbols. Every religious activity can not be separated from those symbols. Even those symbols is used as a medium for Hindus to 'get closer' to the Creator, hold a 'dialogue' with the Almighty, and 'begged' protection and *Wara Nugraha* Ida Sang Hyang Wasa Widhi (Titib, 2003: 1). Symbols in Hindu religion is very relevant and can not be separated with the teachings of divinity (theology Hindu), because those symbols is a human expression to get closer to the Supreme God. Symbol - the shaped of the symbols are statue or *pratimā* for Gods – Goddess, *vāhana devatā* or the vehicle of Gods – Goddess, and sacred buildings such as *padmasana* as *sthana* to worship Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, the *devatā* or sacred ancestral spirits. Other symbols in the form of *mantra*, *mudrā*, *yantra*, *rarajahan*, *letters* or *holy script*, and sacred offering in the form of *sesajen* or *banten* in various shapes. Each symbol has a specific meaning, so that with the understanding of the meaning, the Hindus develop appreciation toward those symbols, which in turn can increase *śraddhā* and *bhakti* of the Hindus. It will be guiding the behavior of the Hindus in their daily life. People understanding towards the symbols would be able to prevent or avoid the misuse of the function of the symbols, because if it is not well understood, then it may trigger other peoples offense, because the abuse

of the symbols can be interpreted as an act of harassment against a sacred symbols of the religion.

## 1.2 Communication ‘Process’ in Symbol Visualization

To analyze communication method of a symbol visualization through visual communication media, if seeing the symbol assumption as a media that were absorbed so that symbol as a source of information become a stimulus for one’s organism which will provide the response from the stimulus received as a benchmarks, so, to understand symbol visualization is more appropriate using the theory of S-O-R (*Stimulus-Organism-Response*). In other words, the theory of S-O-R focuses on the cause of the change in attitude, but depending on the quality of the stimulus that communicates with the organism, so that characteristics of the communicator (the messenger) determine the success of attitude change of communicant (receiver of the message). According to Hovland, the process of change in attitude is similar to the process of learning (Mar'at, 1984:26).



**Figure 1.** Learning Process Based on Theory of S–O–R

Based on the above scheme, the conceptual understanding in interpretative manner can be noted that symbol visualization is the stimulus that are captured by organisms. Communication will take place if there is a concern of the communicant. The next process is the communicant can understand the message delivered. The Ability of the communicant that continue the next process. After communicant process and accept it then there was a willingness to change attitudes. In this case, a change in attitude occurs when the communicant has a desire to interact with a symbol that can be seen in the media of visual communication in public spaces. Mar'at (1984:34) argues that the stimulus were much influenced by the experience and ability. For the success in changing the attitude, the communicator needs to provide additional stimulus (reinforcement) so that the recipient of the information would change the attitude.

## 1.3 ‘Understanding’ of Paradox and Hybridity in Symbol Visualization

The paradox comes from the Greek which means the concept of someone who has the belief that ‘something special’ is a fact that truly exist in the form of an idea or design object. Conceptually it is ‘looked’ like against public opinion that considered correct. Thereby, it is clear that a designer wants to prove something that can not be accepted by the public, although contradictory, confrontational, impossible and unreasonable, but it is true and have the noble values.

The paradox is always looking for loopholes of possibilities about something that is forgotten by society, something that is opposite and contradictory. Paradox as a channel of designer's creativity provides flexibility, wide space, and their liberating is their limiting, his weakness is his strength, gain is his loss, in order to build you must not build. The concept of today and tomorrow is the power possessed by the paradox, between one and the other are inseparable and complementary. In the paradox there is contradiction with itself, but may contain a truth. A designer must have the courage to face the challenge of opinions, because paradox route as a channel of creativity is an element of confrontation that could potentially invite fray, societal chaos, objection and tends to be a hot debate (controversial). Designers must often conduct advocacy, in order to get support from community, to create ‘new world’, invite them to get to know the whole territory of the wandering and exploration of visual communication designers. Designers must be familiar with the concepts of paradox, such as: 1) The presence of absence or the absence of presence, 2) To construct is to de-construct, 3) To compose is to de-compose. Hybrid derived from crosses or incorporation of the best elements of different culture, either between the present culture with the past culture (diachronic), or cross-cultural of the present (synchronic). Hybrid can be said to accept the use of plural references that is cross-cultural and historical. Wealth of meaning is created through manipulation of codes reference that has been well established and combine or merge codes references that have been manipulated into a design. According to Jencks (1978), that the hybrid is a method to create something with old fashioned patterns (history), but with new materials and techniques (Ikhwanuddin 2005). In other words, combining traditional forms with modern techniques. Hybrid method is done through the stages of quotation, elements manipulation and unification or incorporation. Hybrid method is to think from the elements or a section toward the overall.

## **2. Methods**

This study used a qualitative approach, which is based on assumptions about reality or social phenomena that are unique and complex. In this phenomena there is a certain regularity or pattern, but full of variety or diversity (Bungin, 2003:53). It means data is collected not in the form of numbers but the data derived from the interview manuscripts, field notes, personal documents, notes, memos and other official documents. So that the goal of this qualitative study was to describe the empirical reality behind the phenomenon in depth, detailed and thoroughly. With this qualitative approach, the researcher is the key instrument. Data was collected on a

consolidated basis, the data analysis is inductive and the results of a qualitative research more emphasis on meaning rather than generalizations. Therefore the use of a qualitative approach in this research is to match the empirical reality of the prevailing theories using descriptive methods (Moleong, 2004: 131). According to Whitney in Nazir (2003:16) that the descriptive method is the fact-finding with proper interpretation. Descriptive research studied the problems in society, and ordinances in force in the community, as well as certain situations, relationships, activities, attitudes, views, ongoing process and the influences of a phenomenon.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of arranging the order of the data, organized into a pattern, category and description of the basic unit (Moleong, 2004:103). The research recorded all the data objectively and it is in accordance with observations and interviews. After the field data collected, then researcher process and analyze the data using qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative descriptive analysis is a technique which describes and interpret the meaning of the data that has been collected by giving attention and record as many as possible the aspect of a situation that is being researched in order to obtain a general and comprehensive overview of the actual situation. According to Nazir (2003:16), that this descriptive purpose is to create a description, picture or painting systematically, factual and accurate about the facts, the nature, and relationship between the phenomena that is being investigated. The most important thing is that researcher looked at the culture not merely as a product but a process. This is in line with the concept of Marvin Harris (1992:19) that the culture will be related to values, motives, ethics and moral role and its meaning as a social system. So this study will about the nature of culture as knowledge acquired that people use to interpret experience and create social behavior. In general, this study try to understand the scope of the problems studied, concerning the area of understanding cultural phenomenon, in this case the value of interaction on visualization concept of symbol of the Hindu tradition as an identity of Balinese culture which is manifested through the media of visual communication. This study was chosen to describe the problem of symptoms of social cultural changes in Balinese people in the present time, so it can be concluded interpretatively.

### **3. Results**

#### **'Reinterpretation' of Paradox and Hybridity towards 'Creative Concept'**

The phenomenon occurs in the introduction above can not be separated from the role of a visual communication designer, because in delivering information or messages through visual form of the design will be able to construct a new 'mindset'. The presence of 'local genius' can not be separated from natural instincts (scientific instinct) which is pure, where it is owned by the 'local' designers in the 'creation' process of their design work. 'Local Genius' is meant here is the ability of visual communication designer to develop their potential in an environment where they lived and had to 'give birth' the idea that contains the concept of 'creative'. 'Reinterpretation' can be defined as the process of re-interpret 'creative mindset' of a young designer in understanding the development of the science of visual communication design and visual form of the design towards 'creative concept'.



**Figure 2.** 'Reinterpretation' Process Against Concept of 'Paradox'

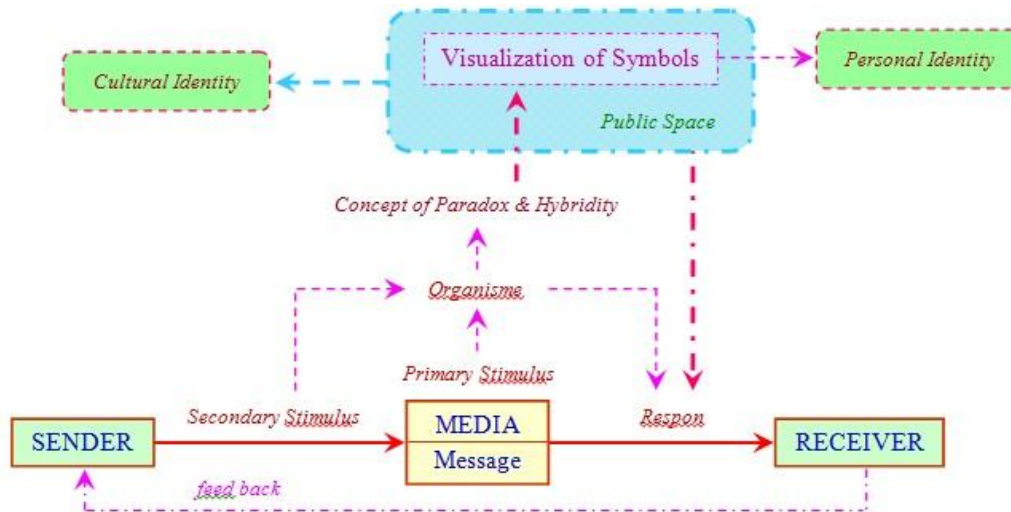
Understanding figure 2, can be stated that paradox offers that something is controversial, but it makes a designer feel happy and comfortable to experiment to do 'think more buildless' (thinking a lot about the concept of something that does not have to be built), presenting its nonexistence or negate the presence (the presence of absence or the absence of presence), and build by not having to build it, dismantling and destroying it first (in order to build, you must not build and to construct is to deconstruct). Experimental Concepts (idea) like that is beneficial to enrich the inner and spiritual experience of the designers through exploratory and contemplative approaches without targeting that the object will be realized or not. Based on the history of paradox, it has been developed as a meaning to criticize and to describe a critical point which suggests an alternative way in doing something. It is defined as an ironic levels which contains humor and when the subject becomes worldly, often like seeking God. For designers who make mistakes in understanding and use of paradox as a channel of their creativity, it could lead to a judgment, isolation and ostracism, even humiliation of the public group. Therefore, the fundamental errors must be avoided by a designer.

Right use of paradox must be done through a process of reflection in advance to seek the understanding the depth of its meaning (deep-inside), full of accuracy and prudence, many requirements (a very demanding route to creativity) based on prejudice or presumption of the right thing and sublime to gain immortality and eternity (a channel to immortality). A designer must have an innovative idea with the sharpening of meaning (articulatness), talent and education, hardwork and continuous perseverance (persistence).



**Figure 3.** 'Reinterpretation' Process Against Concept of 'Hybridity'

Understanding scheme 3, hybridity concept has several stages, namely : 1) An eclectic or quotation, means to explore and choose the treasury of shape and design elements of the past and considered potential to be reappointed. Eclectic design makes the past as the starting point, not as an ideal model or as a model of design that has been undergoing a process of stylization. Basic assumptions regarding the use of the past symbol is a result of the established codes and meanings which are received and understood by the public. On the other hand, *quotation* is citing element or part of a design work that has already existed before. 2) Manipulation and modification, the element or quotation results are then manipulated or modified in a way that can shift, change or distort the existing meaning. 3) Merging (combination or unification) is the union of some elements that have been manipulated or modified into a design that has been predetermined the concept of its visualization design. Hybrid concept aimed to construct a meaning from the codes that have been well established and manipulated in such a way that its meaning can be changed or shifted from its original meaning. Hybrid method enables the creation of a rich meaning because it comes from some code that has been well established. Codes that have an established meaning are codes that is derived from the history and tradition that its meaning has been understood by community. Code of present time related to the life of present time. Code is the form with character, rules or certain patterns. If the code is changed its character, its form of rules or patterns while still maintaining its essence, so the codes have undergone a shift in meaning. However, if visual change alter the essence then its meaning will be blurred, so it is not easy to be understood. To better understand the process of understanding the concept of paradox and hybridity on visualization of Hindu tradition symbol as identity of Balinese culture through visual communication media, it can be seen in the following scheme.



**Scheme 4.** The Relation Between Communication And Media : Visualization of Symbol (Design) As An Instrument of Interaction And Communication

#### 4. Conclusion

Understanding of the concept as well as giving the meaning of a symbol visualization (design work) is said to contain elements of paradox and hybridity, seem highly subjective. It is influenced by the differences and similarities of 'thinking space' between the designer (communicator) with the audience (communicant) in a communication discourse. But the most important thing is lied in experience of the mental representation of an audience. From the designer, the concept may be born but did not rule that may not have occurred at all. Designers is a subject that has its own mental representation that is not always the same as the readers. So it can be stated that the process of understanding the concept of hybridity and paradox of a visualization of the symbol is 'negotiation' between mental representations of the doer of representation and mental representations of the 'readers' or 'connoisseurs' of the visual symbols. The relation between communication and media, where visualization symbols as a form of design (concept design) as an instrument of interaction and communication, resulted in construction of a stimulus which the author stated as the primary stimulus. That is because a new stimulus actually occurred at the time the design of visual communication media has been realized, not when the design is 'conceptualized' or at the time of a design concept that will be visualized, in this case is the visualization of tradition symbol in a visual communication media.

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This paper is a basic idea of symbolic interaction to be developed into an advanced research. Process of describing in detail and more depth in the research to be conducted, is expected to understand the value of communication interaction on visualization concept of Hindu's symbols as an identity of Balinese culture as well as be able in understanding the pattern or characteristics of Balinese people in communicating the message through a symbol (design concept) into the media of visual communication design. Images that are used for reference analysis obtained from the internet and the selection of images based on a reflection of reality. Thanks to the families who have given the spirit and motivation to the author to keep working and thinking critically to the development of the science of visual communication design. Thanks also to all my friends and lecturers from IHDN and UNHI for any information provided during the discussion, although seemed relaxed but there has been a discussion on the scope of tradition symbol in depth.