Meaning of ornament in architecture (Case study: Contemporary Architecture Batak Toba)

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Abstract. Ornaments have been an element in architectural design, since prehistoric times until now. This study aims to analyze the meaning of ornaments in architecture with a case study of the Toba Batak Contemporary Architecture with a semiotic approach. The population in this study is the entire Toba Batak Contemporary Architecture, and the research sample is 2 residential houses that use traditional ornament models, the first is a residential house in the Toba area as a place of origin (bona pasogit), and the second a houses in Medan as overseas areas (pangarantoon) Toba Batak community. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. Where ornamentation as a sign vehicle (signifier) to the cultural system (signified) is described in accordance with 3 categories of ornament functions from the results of literary studies, namely the prestige function, aesthetic functions and religious functions. As a result of this study to answer the ornamental function of what still exists from the two research samples and at the same time describe the meaning of ornaments in contemporary architecture.

1. Introduction
Ornaments are important elements to decorate an object that forms architectural style characters [1]. Ornaments are artistic expressions that are displayed on exterior surfaces and architectural interiors, which can be seen visually in terms of colors, patterns and tangible expressions but can also provide intangible essence such as symbolic, political, expression, aesthetics and so on. Ornaments have been an element in architectural design, since prehistoric times until now [2]. While Adolf Loose wrote an article entitled "Ornament and Crime" in 1908 with an analogy that exemplifies modern humans who consider Papuans who have tattoos with objects around them who are decorated as a society that is uncivilized and left behind [3]. Thus the notion of modern architecture has denounced ornaments as evil, with the slogan "less is more" modernism severed the connection between architecture and aesthetic art that has survived since the era of Vitruvius or even in previous eras.

After several decades, Modern Architecture led to resistance from the notion of Postmodern Architecture, which assumed that Modernism had eliminated the context of location, social, and local culture by imposing its understanding (univalence). The notion of Postmodernism returns to ornamentation because it considers that modern has no soul and is boring with the slogan "less is boring" [4]. Postmodern Architecture is present by looking for values and expressions in the use of building techniques, forms, references to old multivalent styles that are in stark contrast to modernism styles. In today’s contemporary era ornament are now increasing in architecture, that is supported by...
industrial technological advances. Even according to Antoine Picon, "Over the past 10 to 15 years, ornamental or ornamental practices have made spectacular changes in architecture" [5]. In contemporary architecture, this relationship that is essential, complex, and ambiguous is determined by the number of trends, design directions, and experiments into architecture. This paper investigates the configuration to assess the essence of what constitutes the formation of architectural ornament. Do ornament as a means of artistic expression specifically designed for architectural objects still have meaning and are relevant for the future?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Architecture Semiotics
Semiotics has been implicitly used since ancient times, but the first explicit reference to semiotics is a branch of philosophy that emerged in John Locke's essay entitled An Essay Concerning Human Understanding in 1690 [6]. Semiotics is the study of signs, where the sign conveys information that is communicative in nature, capable of replacing something else (stand for something else) that can be thought logically, which is general in nature that applies.

The modern era semiotics are developed with two patterns, namely the diadic models Saussure and triadic models Pierce's [7]. Furthermore, the Diadic models Saussure was developed by Barthes (1964) into 4 elements, namely Language and Speech (parole), Signified and Signifier, Syntax, and System than Denotation and Connotation. Architectural Semiotics is pioneered by the study of the discussion of language metaphors in architecture (the language of architecture). According to Nort (1955), there are at least 3 categories of sign analysis models in architectural semiotics, namely the Behavioristic Morris Model, the Dyadic Saussure Model developed as well as the Glossematic Hjelmslev Model, and the Triadic Sign Peirce Model [8].

Umberto Eco is one of the influential figures in using the Diadic models Saussure in architectural Semiotics. Answering architectural questions that present special cases because they are often intended to be functional and not to be communicative, Eco says that semiotics allows architecture to function as a form of mass communication. Eco states that the architecture of meaningful and meaningful functions, there are two categories, where it distinguishes between the main functions of architecture as utilitarian objects (denotations) and secondary functions of architecture as symbolic objects (connotations) [9]. Figure 1 shows the schematic of the development of architectural semiotics.

Figure 1. Schematic of the development of architectural semiotics. (Source: Author)

2.2. Ornament Architecture
2.2.1. Definition
Architectural ornaments are every detail of shapes, textures, and colors that are intentionally exploited or added to buildings that do not have utility functions but can form character styles, attract attention / visual enjoyment, can provide perceptions to the observer and partly intended to fulfill the demands of the soul. [10] [11] [12].

2.2.2. Function of ornaments
The ornament function according to Farshid Moussavi and Michael Kubo; means of representation, decoration [13]. According to Aryo Sunaryo, the ornamental function includes; Pure aesthetic function, religious / belief symbolic function [14]. Antoine Picon; function of pleasure and beauty, the function of prestige [15]. The function of representation mentioned by Moussavi is the same as showing the prestige function expressed by Picon; where the ornamental ornament works show the social ranking of the position of the owner (in the community). This prestige function is also a political arena to influence every observer of the building, where the ornament is located. These three experts - together revealed that architectural ornaments function aesthetically to give pleasure, and beauty in the building. According to Krier the fulfillment of aesthetic needs in architecture depends on the following factors namely proportion, material and color, and artistic interpretation [16]. The aesthetic sense of beauty in architecture is rooted in the human desire to smother everyday objects with poetic content that will convey the spirit of his era to the next generation. The symbolic function of religion is expressed by Sunaryo, where things related to symbolic religion show achievement in the religious field. According to Domenig (2014), almost all modern buildings are made in relation to religion, with 'sacred' and various rites relating to special rules, respect for the gods [17]. The description of the three ornamental functions can be seen in table 1.

| No | Variable         | Description                                    |
|----|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Prestige function| - Social status (rank)                          |
|    |                  | - Politics (influencing)                        |
| 2  | Aesthetic functions| - Pleasure                                     |
|    |                  | - Beauty (arrangement, color, proportion, material) |
|    |                  | - Artistic interpretation.                      |
| 3  | Religious functions| - Symbol of gods                               |
|    |                  | - Respect / Offering                           |
|    |                  | - Sacred, holy or sacred.                       |

Source: Author Interpretation

3. Method
This research uses descriptive qualitative methods intended to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation, action holistically and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a special natural context [18]. Qualitative approaches for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing and sampling aiming, open data collection, analysis of text or images, representation of information in images and tables, and making interpreters of the findings of findings [19]. Data collection methods used for this qualitative research are observation, interview, and document collection techniques [20] [21].

3.1. Observasi
This study uses a purposive sampling technique wherein as a research object selected from the Toba Batak Contemporary Architecture both functions as a residence or new function but still uses traditional Toba Batak ornaments, which were built in the 21st Century. The research sample is two
houses that use traditional ornament models, namely, the first residence in the Toba area as the area of origin (Bona Pasogit) and the two houses live in Medan as the overseas area (Pangarantoan). The selected building has at least 4 types of traditional ornaments.

3.2. Wawancara
Data collection techniques used are semi-structured interviews to open up problems more openly, where the interviewees are asked for their opinions and ideas [22]. In this study, the party interviewed (the respondent) is the owner or stakeholder of the building that is the object of research. In conducting this interview, research instruments have been prepared beforehand in the form of basic questions as interview guides, without providing alternative answers. This method is used to get deeper information about respondents' understanding, ideas or responsiveness to the object of research (in-depth interviews).

3.3. Document collection
Documents collected can be books, journals as primary sources. In addition to data (secondary) from magazines or newspapers, which discuss the culture and ornaments of the Toba Batak Contemporary Architecture.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Research Object 1
The first research object is a residential house built in 2018, located on Jalan dr. Bisuk Siahaan, Sosor Sihobuk Village, Parnakasian District, Tobasa Samosir Regency, North Sumatra Province (Figure 2). This house belongs to the family of J. Panjaitan and his wife B. Manalu, a Christian. The husband works as a private employee and his wife is a state civil apparatus. In the facade of this house there are ornaments (gorga) with types including; Ulu Paung, Dila Paung, Gaja Dompak, Jenggar-jenggar, Jorngom, Singasinga, Boraspati, Adop-adop, Simeol-eol, Hoda-hoda, Silintong, Simataniari, Desa Naualu, Sitagan, Simarogung-ogung, Hariara Sundung di Langit / Sangkamadeha (Figure 3).

Figure 2. The research object 1, residential houses in the Toba region, is an area of origin (Bona Pasogit) Batak Toba community. (source: survey, 2019)

The owner of this building revealed that the use of ornament in his home was his dream for a long time. As with the previous Batak kings, digging his house in the name of a king who has power, using this ornament (Gorga) can also arouse his charisma. The owner has a special understanding of Gorga in his home, where the Gorga has three colors namely red, white and black. Each color has its own meaning, namely red symbolizes science and intelligence which bear wisdom. The white color symbolizes sincerity and honesty that bear fruit. The black color symbolizes the kingdom and authority that bear fruit of leadership.
Figure 3. Ornament type (Gorga) on research object 1 (Source: survey, 2019)

Gorga forms such as the Ulupaung, Gaja Dompak, Singasinga, seem to be very eager to show the attitude of the knight, who is always responsible for every action. This responsibility is not only passed on to fellow human beings or the surrounding environment but also to the responsibility of the creator's god. While Gorga Boraspari starch is a picture of lizard as a symbol of tenacity in life, the spirit of unyielding to recognize all family members. What is conveyed by the owner can be summarized in table 2 below;

| No | Variable      | Description                                                                 |
|----|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Prestige function | - Showing identity as king                                                   |
|    |                | - To be respected by the surrounding community                               |
| 2  | Aesthetic functions | - A long-coveted pleasure                                                   |
|    |                | - Beauty, color of ornament shows good character. The red colour symbolizes  |
|    |                |   science and intelligence which bear wisdom. The white color symbolizes     |
|    |                |   sincerity and honesty that bear fruit. The black color symbolizes the      |
|    |                |   kingdom and authority that bear fruit of leadership                         |
|    |                | - Artistic interpretation, ornaments as a symbol of determination, honesty   |
|    |                |   and unyielding                                                             |
| 3  | Religious functions | - Symbol of gratitude                                                        |
|    |                | - Appreciation for god                                                       |

Source: Author

4.2. Research Object 2

The second research object is this house built-in 2007, located on Jalan Menteng 7, Gang Nasional No. 66, Medan City, North Sumatra Province (Figure 4). This house belongs to the family of K. Napitupulu and his wife M. Sinaga is Christian. Her husband works as a BUMN employee and his
wife is a teacher in a private school. In the facade of this house, there are ornaments with types, among others, Gorga Singasinga, Gorga Jormgom, Gorga Simeoleol, Gorga Simataniari (Figure 5).

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 4.** The research object 2, residential houses in Medan as overseas areas (Pangarantoan) Toba Batak community. (Source: survey, 2019)

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 5.** Ornament type (Gorga) on research object 2 (Source: survey, 2019)

Batak community, the owner feels successful by using the Batak Gorga, which is expected to give a different trend from the house to the appearance of his house. Despite being the pride of the owner himself does not understand the type or names of ornaments (Gorga) used in his house. But in general by using Gorga according to the owner the building becomes more beautiful and special.

They have their own interpretation of the ornament (Gorga) installed in his house, the first two Gorga lions on the pole, reminding them of his parents (father and mother). Gorga lions with small triangular carvings on the eyes of the Gorga Singasinga become a picture of the sun's glow. This glowing eye in their analogy with the sun that always shines on the earth becomes a picture of affection from parents who have never ended their children (figure 06). In the presence of Gorga Singasinga make the owner feel comfortable, calm and safe every time he responds home.
Figure 6. Gorga Singasinga on two pillars of a house terrace, interpreted as two old men with eyes glowing like the sun, radiating affection. (Source: survey, 2019)

The second interpretation is given to the ornament (Gorga) with carvings/grooves (Andor) which are continuous, they interpret it as a brotherhood of family members must continue. This rope of brotherhood includes the nuclear family, and the Batak community in general which is indicated by inter-clan Tarombo (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Gorga Simataniari, with continuous carving/grooves. (Source: survey, 2019)

What is conveyed by the owner can be summarized in table 3 below;

| No | Variable          | Description                                                                                                                                 |
|----|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Prestige function | Demonstrate the ability and willingness to preserve the Toba Batak culture. Showing identity/pride as part of the Batak community.         |
| 2  | Aesthetic functions | The color of ornament shows good character. The red colour symbolizes science and intelligence which bear wisdom. The white color symbolizes sincerity and honesty that bear fruit. The black color symbolizes the kingdom and authority that bear fruit of leadership. - Artistic interpretation, ornaments as a symbol of determination, honesty and unyielding |
| 3  | Religious functions | Existence of 2 Gorga Singasinga as a symbol of 2 parents (father and mother) - Gorga Simataniari, with carvings/grooves (Andor) that are continuous, the symbol of the rope. |

Source: Author
5. Conclusions

From the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the existence of ornament in contemporary architecture does not have a denotational function that is real utilitarian function or instrumental, but ornament has a connotation function consisting of prestige function, aesthetic function, and religious symbol-function. Overall, the architectural function of this ornament is the result of a growing cultural convention. But the existence of ornaments on architecture will continue, as agents fulfill human needs for psychological needs and self-fulfillment needs [23].

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