

A Phenomenological Investigation Through Amandari Contemporary Resort in Ubud, Bali

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary resorts dubbed to have a modernity influence and induce a visual statement instead of some kind of experience that stimulate human senses. The respond of the contemporary design of the resort might be losing the dialogue between the architecture form and the depth of tradition and the responsiveness to the surroundings, including environment and landscape. The phenomenology of the environment will be used to investigate the genius loci of Amandari resort in Ubud Bali. The Balinese cosmological culture combine with the imagination, consciousness and memory of the user plays an important role in the research. There is a similar philosophy in between phenomenology and Balinese cosmology culture with regards to the universe as the findings of this research. From the investigation, Amandari can be concluded that the genius loci of the place can be achieved through phenomenology.

Keywords: *Amandari, Bali, Genius loci, Phenomenology, Resort*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global phenomenon in developing country actively promotes international tourism as a generator of foreign exchange income [1]. The economic growth attracts investors all over the worlds to invest in the tourism-related business, which in this case accommodation as one of the pillar foundation of tourism. The increment is resulting in a dramatic increase in that sector throughout the globe, specifically in Bali, one of the well-known tourist destination in the world. In addition, the influence of science and technology related to the “future” have shaped the architecture of the accommodation to some extent [2]. The growth of cultural tourism since the 1990s marked the expansion of notion culture leads to the growing desire of tourist for a new experience and focus the attention on the role of intangible culture of tourism. Tourist prefers having “phenomenology” of living like a local as a touch of authenticity [3], which can be linked to the accommodation factor in tourism in the form of the resort. The tourist will live, experience and re-imagine [4] in the space created in the resort as the resort will be a bridge that is combining tangible and intangible factors that create their own space and time which is called heterotopia [5]. The resort is expected to serve as recreational facilities, relaxation, giving a unique

experience towards the user [6]. The design of the building usually reflects the pressure of fashion, the interest of developers’ or imperative technology [7]. The resort has to respond to the new influence of modernity without losing the dialogue between culture in its present form and the depths of tradition that can be felt through senses.

The problem has been arising in architecture where resort considered as a modern contemporary architecture, which most likely to introduce visual statement instead of an experience that can stimulate human senses [8, 9]. As architecture is a product of emotional, religious, culture, sociological components within the realms of space and time, the combination of all senses will create the perception of space by the user [10]. The modern architecture emerging in resort design, combined with all the factors implied, the occurrence that addresses the present reality and related to human senses, the goal orientation of a resort is not only based on form but more to the primordial sense that constitutes of space. The sense of space created is not limited to science but will gradually evolve into the domain of subjectivity that consist perception, qualities, imagination, fantasy and feeling [11].

The resort should be categorized as a revelation of primary transcendental reality that connected to space and time, which be based on the consciousness of the user when it comes to experiencing and sensing. Time

will be one of the fundamental aspects in seeing things as the essence of space matters depends on the rate and the pattern of men (tourist) - environment interaction, which in this sense the life-perspective of men rooted in time perspective [12]. Tourist served as the receptive subject of the space will create an image, with a poetic, primitive or real image, in accordance with their imagination, memory and consciousness to feel the wholeness of the space resort design and the essence that contained. The memory that pops out through men's mind will be distinguished as experience; they are dealing with their past related to space and connect as metaphysics event. The consciousness of men will bring out the present-ness as the quality of conscious experience will make them human [9]. Imagination will describe a process that related to primordial of awareness that operates transcendental projection of the original meanings of men's world by having a metaphysic projection of the space experience in their future which will be expressed beyond reality. He also believed that imagination removes the connection between the past and present as it will face the future [4, 12].

The past, present and future through the perception of space of Amandari will be analyzed through phenomenology. This architectural research parallel with phenomenology research in order to uncover the truth of space and time that is experienced through the interpersonal process of men's memory, consciousness and imagination as an essential aspect of space and place experience.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Exploring the relationship between physical and emotional issues faced by the user using phenomenology. Phenomenology describing phenomena, the user will use the descriptive concept, as it is a fundamental process to develop architecture understanding. Phenomenology used is the phenomenology of the environment which investigate the experience factor of the environment relating to the interaction between man-environment [13]. The objective itself is to understand the essence of the context of the environment. The classification system of space can help to intrigue the relationship in between men and environment: pragmatic space, integration of men and environment; perceptual space, awaking the personal identity; existential space, relating to the culture and social as a whole; cognitive space, thinking about space; and logical space, to describe another type of space [14]. When all the system of space is called subjective nature, compelled with subjective experience. To gather all the relevant experience with regards to the investigation at the resort, the user will practice *epoche* before starting to collect data. User's experience towards the phenomenon will be described using his senses [15, 16]. The significant statements will be

developing becoming clusters of meaning by describing the setting or context that influence him to experience the phenomenon. From the descriptions, the user can conclude the findings and essence of the phenomenon related to Balinese cosmology.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on Balinese cosmology, there are two big concepts in Balinese culture consisting of the following [17, 18, 19]:

- *Bhuana Agung*
Bhuana means world or universe and *Agung* means big. *Bhuana Agung* means the universe/mother nature, macro cosmos. In Balinese Hindu, five fundamental elements formed the universe; they call it *Panca Maha Bhuta*: *apah* (liquid), *teja* (light), *bayu* (air), *pertiwi* (a solid substance) and *akasa* (space). They believe that there are layers that are protecting the earth made from those substances: *bhurloka*, *bhuwahloka swahloka*, *mahaloka*, *janaloka*, *tapaloka* and *satyaloka*.
- *Bhuana Alit* that related to the men or user of the men-made place called microcosmos.

Both *Bhuana Agung* and *Bhuana Alit* are inseparable factors as they harmoniously complement each other. To create a space and place, the culture of Bali has to adapt *Asta kosala kosali*, to bring the balance between *Bhuana Agung* and *Bhuana Alit* which based in Hindu philosophy, *Tri Hita Karana*. *Tri Hita Karana* brings out the balance in between God and men (*Parahyangan*), God and environment (*Pawongan*) and men and environment (*Palemahan*) (Figure 1) [20].

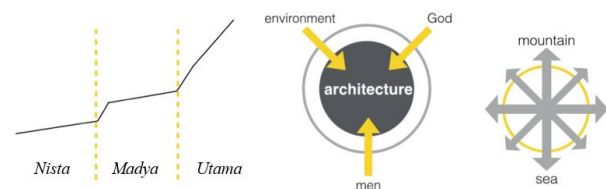


Figure 1 Balinese Traditional Spatial Concept (left to right) *Tri Loka/Tri Angga* Concept, *Manik Ring Cecupu* Concept, *Nawa Singa/Singa Mandala* Concept
Source: Redrawn from Architectural conservation in Bali [21]

The philosophy of *Asta Kosala Kosali* consist these following; (1) Cosmology balance (*Menik Ring Cecupu/Tri Hita Karana*); (2) The value of Hierarchy (*Tri Loka/Tri Angga/Arga Segara*); (3) Cosmology Orientation (*Sanga Mandala*); (4) Open Space (*Natah*); (5) Proportionate and Scale; (6) Building Construction Ceremony and chronology; and (7) Material Usage which leads to tectonic.

4. DISCUSSION

One of the most expensive resorts located in the art and culture capital of Bali, Ubud. The location of the resort adjacent with the existing Balinese village that makes the resort blend in with the surroundings without evoking visual perception from afar. A small signboard on the main road directs us towards a single straight small alley surrounded with traditional houses and trees on both sides of the alley, which formed as an enlightening path that leads into a sacred place. The path as if represent movement and concretise the dimension of time, going further and further deserting and leaving all the bustle of the main road to the enlighten consisting a time revelation that bringing up the past, noticing the present or being in the future. Enigmatic and secluded, are the appropriate words that can describe the location of Amandari that surrounded by magnificent nature in the heart of Ubud (Figure 2).



Figure 2 The Entrance & pathway leading to the resort, the alleyway at the lobby
Source: Authors, 2019

The local stone-paved passageway, the thatch roof, bamboo element, palm post, natural stone carvings, floor and wall finishes, teak beam pavilions with straps and joint instead of nails fascinate Amandari from vernacular factors. The strength of Amandari arises distinguish by the contrast of the man-made place with natural material combining with the contrast between earth and sky. The character of its public building reflecting the simplicity of Hindu-Balinese philosophy of *Tri Buana* and *Tri Angga* concept of head-body-feet with the major opening towards the view. The regular geometrical shape like triangle-shaped roof and hexagon shape column does not only reflect the vernacular adaptation for tropical climate but also to achieve the balance, harmony and represent the mutual triangle relationship between God-man-environment and *Trimurti*, the triple deity in supreme divinity in Hinduism (*Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva*) (Figure 3).



Figure 3 *Natah* in Amandari
Source: Authors, 2019

The entrance of the resort located at the central part of the site form the East (*Kangin*), the entire mass and the view facing the West (*Kauh*) and the villa settlement segregated in the North (*Kaja*) and South (*Kangin*). The lobby represents the openness of the entire mass; the openness space is favourable towards all the public area. The *Natah* (open space) that adjacent to the lobby not mere a flux of phenomena. The structures and meanings are given rise to the mythologies. The stone statue of mythical beast covered with *Rwa bhineda* fabric, the chessboard-like black and white pattern shares a similar concept with *yin-yang* in Taoism, located at the centre of *natah*. *Natah* has a cosmological meaning to bring the balance equilibrium to the universe, the essential emptiness to balance off the crowded microcosmos. A metaphorical bridge connecting from one cosmic zone to another conceived by three steps down was provided to go to *natah* from the common alleyway, represent Bali Arya's architecture knowledge: *shundaram* (happiness), *siwam* (obedience) and *satwam* (the truth). At the same time, it teaches the cosmic implication of emptiness that can be felt in the absence of *satwam*, *siwam* and *shundaram*. Another *natah* provided at the inner part of Amandari adjacent to the swimming pool.

The vegetation, from native hibiscus, frangipani, guava, calathea and even bougainvillea is spreading throughout the resorts that make a kind of tropical feeling. A big tree located at the centre of the *natah* that looks huge and frightening but based on primitive believe, the trees grows and alive that rise up from the ground (the earth) uniting with the sky (heaven) that bring up the memories of the past that re-enacts the very process of creation. Some of the other trees that spread out through Amandari located at randomly with no pattern as they are preserved from the existing site as the trees will give the spatial sense that connects men to God through the environment (*Tri Hita Karana*). The man-made swimming pool makes a fundamental environmental force that brings out the water surface to the horizon by having a hidden gutter over the edge. The water reflects the tropical sky; the effects are tranquil beauty which enhanced by pavilion-like by the pool as if the lake-temple relationship.

The microcosmos plays its role right presenting the magnificent view towards the mountain across the water entity. Based on the visual perception the interaction of water-vegetation-mountain-sky brings out the feeling of infinite/continuity of cosmic extension that brings calm and peaceful atmosphere, similar to their resort name "*Aman*" which means peace in the Sanskrit language. The classical landscape is the term for the environment in Amandari; the combination of each character of the landscape creates a total integration. The majestic view

that facing the West (*Kauh*) is a great place for sunset (Figure 4).

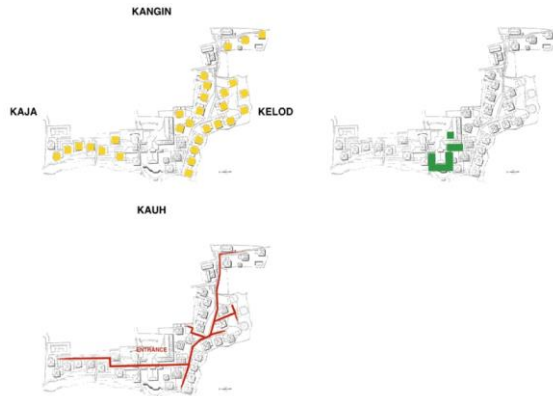


Figure 4 Villa (settlement) massing plan, linear concept approach, location of *Natah* in Amandari
Source: Redrawn and Reinterpret from Amandari Ubud, Bali [22]

The light will be evenly distributed and illuminate all microcosmos and environment area without losing its concrete presence, including the public area and the villas. With romantic topological context, the surface relief accentuated by having a difference in height mitigated by having a flight of staircase from the entrance going to the small temple which located on the far West (*Kauh*) and the ramp provided to go to the clusters of the villa. The *Sanga Mandala* Concept does not suitable to be implemented in Amandari because of the site condition that having the combination of linear and *Catus Patha* patten as cosmology orientations dominate the spatial arrangement (Figure 5).

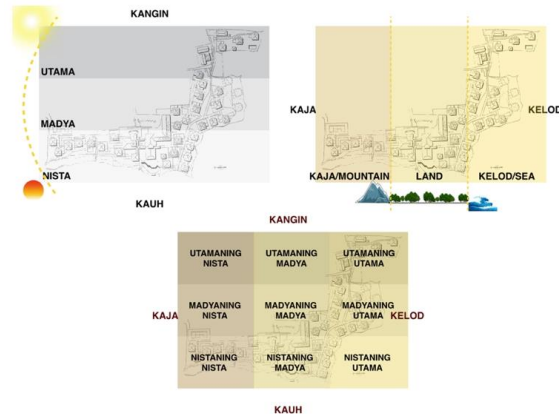


Figure 5 *Tri Angga* Concept, *Kaja Kelod* Concept, *Sanga Mandala* Concept superimposed with Amandari site plan
Source: Redrawn and Reinterpret from Amandari Ubud, Bali [22]

The public area: lobby, swimming pool and restaurant located at the centre and vertical space spreading from the North to the South filled with villas as the settlement widely spread throughout the maximum of the site view. They express a deep understanding of the natural situation. The environment is simple and strong, determining the general character of Ubud precinct.

The villa that being observed was the Ayung Villa, which was a duplex unit. The typical entrance of villa represents the “gate” of traditional Balinese house. The villa will be treated as a settlement, a home, where memories stay and the daydreaming place. Integration of thought rushing in when entering the premises; the past, the present and the future stimulating each other by feeling the space inside. The daydreaming bed was directly placed perpendicular to the entrance and the other one on the opposite side. Less solid wall and more opening defined as sliding door and window to extend the view towards the swimming pool-majestic jungle-mountain, most of the simple geometrical shape being used inside the villa. The square shape villa with a round-shaped spiral staircase going up to the attic. The local marble stone, plaster and painted wall with teak wood realm all over the villa offering a cold and warm feeling at the same time. The attic, served as an entire bedroom with study table at the side, create an interdimensional intimacy, the warmth of the space and the dark teak timber used create spookiness, a demonstration of primitive imaginary elements. A four-poster bed with traditional paintings and carving for the post becoming a magnetic force to the eyes. The Great image behind the bed that represent history and culture and a blend of memory and myth, *Omkara* symbol crafted on top of the bed, the traditional wooden carving at the four-post concealing the past (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Ayung Villa, Amandari
Source: Authors, 2019

Amandari's character can only be defined by taking the natural environment and not only the perception that plays a significant role, but the memory that related to historical circumstances might add a particular identity. The forests, the mountain, the distant Ayung River bring the primordial forces of nature into presence. The particular character not only defines by the greatness of the landscape but the culture, the architectonic, the building and the cosmology that experienced at the same time. The elements of vernacular gathered and unified together as one when the primary local architecture and articulation become universal, and the foreign adapted to the place. The basic spatial structure has been fixed and gathered from the very beginning correspondence with the environmental character. The "new function" of Balinese village adapted to the local situation and the natural environment, with technology becoming a more comprehensive context. Amandari has covered all the past, the present and the future through its genius loci.

5. CONCLUSION

The phenomenology of environment and Balinese cosmology turns out having philosophy and circumstances regarding the placeness and the view towards the universe at the same frequency. There are more than just concrete things that are pleasing the eyes, but constitute the interrelated in a complex and contradictory way. Some phenomena form an environment for others. Amandari has an extensive cosmic quality that can only be realized through phenomenology and the deep understanding of Balinese culture. Imagination might play an important role, as it is meaningless to imagine the phenomena without reference to a locality, as a place and culture are an integral part of the existence. Amandari doesn't have to explain the genius loci of the place, as it is all self-explanatory by taking a walk around the resort by enjoying the restraint and fresh elegance composition of adapted Balinese traditional village in fecundity and luxuriance. The same method (phenomenology) might be the appropriate way to determine the genius loci of the other resort in Bali.

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