

# Life Values in Gapura Bajangratu

Katrin Nur Nafi'ah Ismoyo<sup>1,\*</sup> Hadjar Pamadhi <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graduate School of Arts Education, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Languages and Arts, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author. Email: [katrinkkni@gmail.com](mailto:katrinkkni@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

This study employed the qualitative research method with Hans-George Gadamer's semiotic approach and analysis based on Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality. According to Gadamer, truth can be obtained not through methods, but dialectics, where more questions may be proposed, which is referred to as practical philosophy. Meanwhile, Jean Baudrillard argues that "We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning ...". This paper discusses the life values of Gapura Bajang Ratu in its essence, as well as life values in the age of hyperreality.

**Keywords:** Gapura Bajangratu, life values, hyperreality, semiotics

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gapura Bajangratu (Bajangratu Temple) is a heritage site of the Majapahit Kingdom which is located in Dukuh Kraton, Temon Village, Trowulan District, Mojokerto Regency, East Java. Gapura Bajangratu or the Bajangratu Gate is estimated to have been built in the 13-14th century. The site was completely restored and inaugurated in 1992 by the Director General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The Bajangratu Gate is a type of Paduraksa Gate (Kori Agung) which is an adaptation of the "Gopuram" building (gate) in Hindu-Buddhist architecture in the archipelago. Paduraksa gate is a form of building that resembles a roof, where the right and left sides of the gate are joined by a roof. Buildings like the Paduraksa Gate established in the 8-9th century in Central Java, can be found in the Prambanan Temple complex, Plaosan Temple, or the Ratu Boko Complex Gate.

Gapura Bajangratu was established to honor the second king of Majapahit, namely Jayanegara who had the title of Sri Maharaja Wiralandagopala Sri Sundarapandya Dewa Adhiswara, the son of Dara Petak and Raden Wijaya (the first king and founder of the Majapahit Kingdom). Evidence regarding this is based on the discovery of the Sri Tanjung relief at the foot of the gate depicting the peruwatan story. There is also evidence or references on other sites that further strengthen the theory, namely the discovery of a relief at Surawana Temple which was allegedly built due to the

death of Bhre Wengker (end 7th century). There is another opinion regarding the history of the Bajangratu Gate which believe it to be one of the gates of the Majapahit Palace, due to the location of the gate which is not far from the center of the Majapahit Kingdom. This notion provides historical information that the Gapura gate is an important entrance to a respectable area [1]. Every history and its legacy have life values that have been passed down from generation to generation, whether tangible (material) or not, the values are an important element for a civilization which complete living beings according to their essence [2].

Life values in the small history of the Majapahit Empire is explored using Hans Georg Gadamer's semiotics. Gadamer was a German philosopher who propose the historical and dialectical concept of "experience" [3]. This concept can be used as a reference for further examining the life values of the Bajangratu Gate in the era of "hyperreality". Hyperreality is proposed by the most important Post-Structural theorist, Jean Baudrillard from France. Jean Baudrillard in his book says the following: "We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning ..." [5]. From this quote, it can be concluded that hyperreality is a time or a place where every living being either hides from or hides an unwanted reality and creates an illusion or fantasy. The Indonesian archipelago has many historical relics that can be studied by the next generation of this nation. It is therefore hoped that this paper can provide additional literature for the next generation.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Gapura Bajangratu

The Bajangratu gate is made of red bricks, founded in the 13-14 century as a form of respect for the people to its king, namely Jayanegara with the title Sri Maharaja Wiralandagopala Sri Sundarapandya Dewa Adhiswara. When Jayanegara ruled, several rebellions occurred and created heated political conditions in Majapahit. Based on this history, Jayanegara was given the nickname Kalagemet which means “evil” or “weak”. At the time, rituals were performed on a person with bad luck to prevent bad luck. In relation to this, the relief of Sri Tanjung depicts a tale of the purification ritual in relation to the story of Jayanegara, who faced many rebellions during his reign and gave a lot of sorrow for Majapahit. The relief is located at the foot of the gate. Jayanegara was the second king of the Majapahit Kingdom, the son of Dara Petak and Raden Wijaya. The name Bajangratu is taken from the word “Bujang” or “Bajang” which means “dwarf”, and “Ratu” which means “leader.” According to the story of the Pararaton Literature and folklores, Jayanegara was crowned king when he was still a *bajang* (a child). He was nicknamed Ratu Bajang by the people, and the name Bajang Ratu became associated with him [1].



**Figure 1** Gapura Bajangratu (Bajangratu Temple) from the Front [6]

There are other theories which state that Gapura Bajangratu was the entrance gate to the Majapahit Kingdom because of the location of the gate that was close to the Majapahit area. Gapura Bajangratu has the style of Gapura Paduraksa in which the right and left sides are connected by a roof [1]. This can be commonly found in various temple sites in Central Java from the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century which resemble the gate, as seen in Prambanan Temple, Plaosan Temple, or Ratu Boko Complex.



**Figure 2** Gapura Bajangratu in the Prambanan Temple Complex [7]



**Figure 3** Gapura Bajangratu in the North Side of the Plaosan Temple Complex [8]



**Figure 4** Gapura (gate) in the Ratu Boko Complex [9]

### 2.2. Life Values

Values, based on the online Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, refer to the characteristics (elements) that are important or useful for humanity; something which completes humans in accordance with their essence, worth, or quality. Meanwhile, “life” is in the same dictionary is defined as “living, state, thing.” Therefore, life values can be defined as the important or useful conditions or things in human life, which can complete humans in accordance with their essence [2].

### 2.3. Hans Georg Gadamer’s Semiotics

In regard to the details of Gapura Bajangratu, Hans Georg Gadamer’s semiotics is discussed. According to

Gadamer, truth can be obtained not through methods, but dialectics, where more questions may be proposed, which is referred to as practical philosophy. Gadamer proposes the concept of historical and dialectical “experience” in which knowledge is a not a mere biased perspective, but an event, an occurrence, a meeting. Historical experience is supported with dialectics and the activity of interpreting texts as the results of occurrences, events or meetings. Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, becomes the focus in Gadamer’s semiotics in relation to history and knowledge. There are two concepts of hermeneutics according to Gadamer, namely 1) the study on knowledge, and 2) the source and essence of knowledge. According to Gadamer, “... the history or sociality of a society is the medium for all the knowledge systems. History itself is a journey of tradition aimed to build the vision and horizon of life in the future. In history, each person develops the way they understand each other. They combine various meanings into one system with a general meaning ...” [3].

#### 2.4. Jean Baudrillard’s Hyperreality

Hyperreality was proposed by the most important Post-Structural theorist, namely Jean Baudrillard from France. In his book, Jean Baudrillard argues that “We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning ...” [4]. From this, it can be concluded that hyperreality is the time or place where each living creature can either hide the reality or hide from the reality and create their own illusion or fantasy.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used the qualitative research method, which according to Creswell: 2008 in *Qualitative Research Method* by J. R. Raco is “... an approach or research to explore and understand a central symptom/phenomenon” [5]. On the other hand, the approach employed Hans-Georg Gadamer’s semiotics. Abdullah explains Hans-Georg Gadamer semiotics as follows:

“... Gadamer affirms that understanding is an ontological problem Gadamer does not consider hermeneutics, which is a part of philosophy, as a method, because for Gadamer, the right understanding is one that is oriented toward the ontological, not the methodological level. This means that the truth can be obtained not through methods, but dialectics, where more questions may be proposed, which is referred to as practical philosophy.”

Gadamer proposes the concept of historical and dialectical “experience” in which knowledge is a not a mere biased perspective, but an event, an occurrence, a meeting. [4]. The research findings using Gadamer’s

semiotics were then developed further using the hyperreality theory by Jean Baudrillard. Hyperreality is the time or place where each living creature can either hide reality or hide from unwanted illusions. To support the analysis, the data collection was done on primary and secondary data, namely Gapura Bajangratu, and books, videos, journals, and the national literary website, respectively.

## 4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

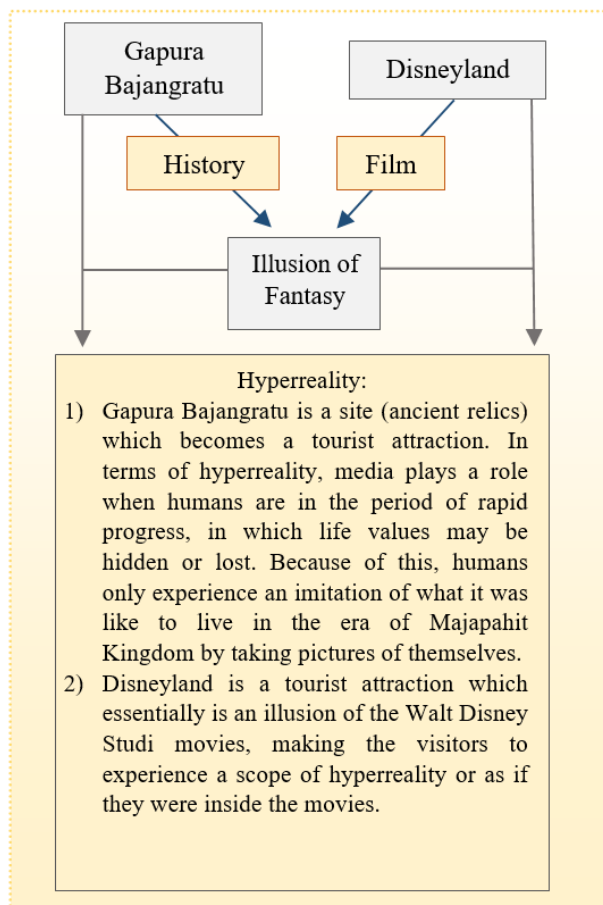
### 4.1. Results

The result of research with qualitative method on the life values of Bajangratu using Hans Georg Gadamer’s semiotics (interpreting by considering the history, texts, or experience) is that Gapura Bajangratu has life values which indicate the existence of the ancient kingdom of Majapahit. The life values of Gapura Bajangratu can be seen in the existence of the gate itself, which has the architectural design of Gapura Paduraksa, and the historic function as a legacy, a manifestation of an era and the history of the leader that is immortalized in the form of an artefact and reliefs on the walls of the temples or gates.

### 4.2. Discussion

The research results suggest that humans are unable to leave behind their peers, whether those admired or even those despised, which prompts them toward creation and to immortalize their creations. Humans constantly aim to establish their existence by building a civilization, indicating a sign with the history immortalized in the literatures. Humans are creatures with moral and culture, as shown by the way they work together to build history. They are also social creatures who cannot live without other beings. Humans are God’s creation who passes down legacies which later becomes artefacts or culture. This is all in accordance with the essence of life values, which is to complete humans according to their essence.

By examining the life values in Gapura Bajangratu using Gadamer’s semiotics, it can be learned that humans cannot be separated from the development of time. As Gadamer points out, “... the truth can be obtained not through methods, but dialectics, where more questions may be proposed, which is referred to as practical philosophy.” Dialectics invite humans to go through and conduct practical philosophy [3], which can develop into a hyperreality circle as proposed by Jean Baudrillard. The following is an illustration on the hyperreality of history (Gapura Bajangratu) accompanied by the media (film):



**Chart 1** Hyperreality of Gapura Bajangratu and Disneyland

In addition to the chart, there are other findings on Gapura Bajangratu in the form of Paduraksa in the age of hyperreality.

**Table 1** Reality & Hyperreality of Gapura Paduraksa using one of Jean Baudrillard's quote of "... Less and less meaning".

" ... Less and less meaning"	
Reality	Hyperreality
To honor the king	To signify or mark the border between regions
Consists of a lot of profound meanings, such as purification, as seen in the carvings on temples or gates	No deeper meaning as the gate is built to imitate the form and philosophy without understanding the "real" meaning
Become the entrance gate of a sacred region	No longer serves as the entrance gate for a sacred region, as all regions are the same
Built with skills and sincerity as a form of	As a business, not as a genuine service

service to the king	
---------------------	--

From the above findings, it can be understood that human will continuously develop and advance forward so that they will not be left behind by the civilization that their kind builds. The civilization prompts humans to change and forget the real meaning of an event, so that they create an illusion or fantasy to hide from the true reality, from a meaning, as described in the above chart. Humans have become creatures which exist within the scope of hyperreality. The lost meaning of the gate is not something to worry about among today's society. The making of the gate is no longer a sacred thing to understand profoundly, nor something majestic. Gates can be widely found today in various regions and mainly serve to mark the border between regions. Those with hermeneutics may forget with the real meaning when building a gate. There is no question of "What is the true purpose of the gate?"

Moreover, the Paduraksa gate with reliefs in great details and beauty is merely a result of illusion or fantasy to meet the needs of civilization. The progress of time has made it easy for people to enter the hyperreality world. Therefore, "... Less and less meaning" is a fitting phrase to depict the life values in the age of hyperreality.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Indonesia, with its many islands, rich resources and culture cannot be separated from the history of the Majapahit kingdom. Majapahit delivers many messages to future generations, one of which is that dispute over power can destroy a great kingdom.

Majapahit also leaves many messages through its legacies, such as the literatures about Majapahit written by the Empu (masters) at that time. Gapura Bajangratu (Bajangratu Temple), Segaran Pool, and the Kunitir Site were discovered in 2019 and excavated in 2020. This study used qualitative research methods and used Hans Georg Gadamer's semiotic approach to explore more deeply the hyperreality of the Bajangratu Gate. Science and history push humans to continue developing and advancing so as not to be left behind by the civilization created by their own people. The civilization forces humans to change and make them forget the real meaning of an event, so that they create illusions or fantasy to hide from the reality, hiding from meaning.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Indonesia, Perpustakaan Nasional Republik. *Candi Bajangratu (Jawa Timur) [Bajangratu Temple (East Java)]*. 2014. URL: <https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-jawa-timur-candi-bajangratu>

- [2] BPPB. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian Dictionary]*. 2016. URL: <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>
- [3] Talib, Abdullah. *Filsafat Hermeneutika dan Semiotika [Philosophy of Hermeneutics and Semiotics]*. Sulawesi Tengah: LPP-Mitra Edukasi, 2018.
- [4] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. The University of Michigan Press, 1981.
- [5] Raco, Jozef. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Jenis, Karakteristik, Keunggulan) [Qualitative Research Methods (Types, Characteristics, Advantages)]*. Jakarta: Grasindo, 2010.
- [6] Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia. (n.d.-a). *Gapura Bajangratu (Bajangratu Temple) from the Front* [Photograph]. Kepustakaan Candi. [https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-jawa\\_timur-candi\\_bajangratu](https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-jawa_timur-candi_bajangratu)
- [7] Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia. (n.d.-b). *Gapura Bajangratu in the Prambanan Temple Complex* [Photograph]. <https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-yogyakarta-candi prambanan 8>
- [8] Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia. (n.d.-b). *Gapura Bajangratu in the North Side of the Plaosan Temple Complex* [Photograph]. Kepustakaan Candi. [https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-jawa\\_tengah-candi\\_plaosan](https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-jawa_tengah-candi_plaosan)
- [9] Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia. (n.d.-d). *Gapura (gate) in the Ratu Boko Complex* [Photograph]. Kepustakaan Candi. [https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-yogyakarta-candi\\_ratu\\_baka](https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples/deskripsi-yogyakarta-candi_ratu_baka)