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LEISURE & TOURISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Kriya Bebali in Bali: Its essence, symbolic, and aesthetic

I Ketut Sunarya^{1*}

Abstract: In Bali, *kriya* is classified into three, *wali*, *bebali*, and *balih-balihan*. The classification is based on the nature of the sacred and profane. The sacred nature is reflected in the *kriya wali* and *bebali*. This article is focusing on *kriya bebali*, which is a vein of the community in carrying out their religion; simultaneously, religion is the main driver of the creation of *kriya bebali* because the perfection of *kriya bebali* lies in its usefulness in a religious ceremony. Balinese people call it *kriya becik*, which means complete, beautiful, and sacred. In the next developments, the role of the *kriya bebali* began to be needed outside its main function. On the one hand, *kriya bebali* meets the needs of religion that reflects the culture of tradition. On the other hand, *kriya bebali* is present outside religious needs, which are an important part of the economic system in Indonesia. The existence of development is inseparable from various influencing factors, such as social, political, and economic. The journey ultimately produces a new value, namely the value of the industry, a birth that is appreciated by the Balinese people as a symbol of mutual awareness towards *jagadhita*.

Subjects: *kriya*; *kriya bebali* in Bali; symbol;; aesthetic; essence; Balinese Hinduism; Balinese culture

Keywords: *kriya*; *kriya bebali*; essence; symbol; aesthetic; Bali Island



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. I Ketut Sunarya, M. Sn. was born in Pekutatan, Bali, Indonesia. His *kriya* vocational education was at Gianyar, Bali. His undergraduate education was at Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta. His master's education took the creation of *kriya* in the Postgraduate Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta. He holds a doctorate from Gadjah Mada University. He often conducts research that is self-funded, as well as funded by the university, the government, or other institutions. He also served the community by teaching them about *kriya*. His writings on *kriya* have been widely published in national journals in Indonesia and internationally. He is a teaching staff at Yogyakarta State University about visual art, his focus is *kriya*. His research is on *kriya* and *kriya* education.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

When the Hindu community in Bali realizes that offerings or ceremonial equipment are *kriya bebali*, which is symbolic and beautiful in its adequate function, they recognize the importance of *kriya bebali* in life. Along with the tourism in Bali, *kriya bebali* is no longer just meeting the needs of religion but was also created to meet the needs of life outside of religion. There are doubts in the society that there is a distortion in the value of *kriya bebali*; on one hand, the main role is to fill the concept of *ajeg* Bali with various ceremonial equipment and, on the other hand, as a commodity for economic purposes. This development should not be interpreted as something negative, but the opposite, because its presence is intact in people's lives as a vehicle for achieving common welfare towards *jagadhita*.

1. Introduction

Kriya is the root of visual art; it has an important role in shaping the identity and culture in Indonesia. *Kriya* is a visual artwork, which is distinctive, is full of meaning, and is the result of a combination of expression, design, and high skill. It is created because it is needed in human life. *Kriya bebal* in Bali in the title of the article is describing the text and context. The text is the function and nature of the rituals of the artwork. Meanwhile, the context of this article is the location of the artwork, which is Bali Island. The nature of the term *bebal* is in binary opposition between the term *wali* (the most sacred ritual) and *balih-balihan* (entertainment), i.e., crafts or artworks for economic purposes (Bandem & deBoer, 2004, p. 225; Picard, 2006, p. 237). The words *wali*, *bebal*, and *banten* have the same meaning, i.e., an offering, something specially made with full consideration for the sacred, noble, and the above-all things (Warna et al., 1990, pp. 55, 789; Zoetmulder & Robson, 1995, p. 101).

In the development, the offering for purity is not only vertical to God but also fellow human beings. According to Soethama (2004, p. 178), the vertical meaning or for sake of the Almighty is the key to *kriya bebal* to be ritual in nature. *Kriya bebal* is an artwork that is present in religious ceremonies and its application always occupies a sacred area. *Kriya bebal* is also mentioned as *kriyantara*, which means all areas of rites and ceremonies or all equipment in Hindu religious ceremonial activities (Zoetmulder & Robson, 1995, p. 520).

Kriya bebal in Bali is a unique, attractive, and *nglangeni* (unforgettable) artwork. Its uniqueness radiates at the level of the concept of creation, which is related to the understanding of Balinese customary rules about the *desa* (place), *kala* (time), and *patra* (circumstances). The uniqueness of *kriya bebal* is also closely related to the endless benefits it brings to the community's religious ceremonial activities. It is an island with theater stages everywhere and an abundance of ceremonies that is inseparable from art (Picard, 2006, p. 46; Geertz, 2000, p. 21). The island is full of charm with its natural beauty and preservation, which makes Powell (an American journalist), declare Bali Island as the last heaven (Picard, 2006, p. 36), likewise stated by Covarrubias (1946, p. 392). Indirectly, these qualities make *kriya bebal* in Bali attractive and *nglangeni*.

The relationship between Hinduism and *kriya bebal* as equipment for religious ceremonies is based on the Balinese customary rules in *rwa bhineda* philosophy, thus making the *kriya bebal* adequate and beautiful. The presence of *kriya bebal* in its task naturally brings aesthetic idioms that are in line with religious values and beliefs. Hence, as an aesthetic symbol, *kriya bebal* does not only make something that is occupied to be beautiful but also come alive (Patra, 1980, p. 13). According to Eiseman and Fred (1988, p. 227), the life cycle of Balinese Hinduism believes that Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (God) is *butha ia*, *dewa ia*. God is good in the context of gods and also evil in the context of Satan. So, it is not wrong if Picard (2006, p. 46) stated that Bali is the Island of the Gods as well as the Island of Satan. This island shows a combination of contrasts such as good-bad, day-night, high-low, and so on to become harmonious, as the basis to build Bali that is *jagadhita* (physical and spiritual happiness).

However, in the development of Bali Island as a tourist destination, people have doubts about *kriya bebal* in Bali. They think that *kriya bebal* have lost the *taksu* and have gone out of their main function, which is ritual (spiritual needs), shifting to meet the needs of the economy. To dispel this doubt, this paper focuses on the study of *kriya bebal* from its essence, symbolic, and aesthetic approaches.

2. Methods

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive data type. Then, the data collection was done through observation, documentation, interviews, and literature review. Also, the key instrument in this study is the researcher himself who is equipped with various tools.

3. The significance and novelty of the paper

This paper contributes to filling the void in the literature about the nature of *kriya bebal* on the island of Bali regarding its essence, symbolism, and aesthetic. This paper also describes *kriya bebal*

as evidence of the inseparable relationship between the Balinese Hindu community, local customs, culture, and religion. This paper also describes how *kriya bebal* is a reflection of Hinduism in Bali in fulfilling spiritual and physical needs. In addition, this paper is expected to be able to provide understanding locally, regionally, and internationally. Given the fact that *kriya bebal* is an *adhiluhung* cultural heritage of Indonesia and a national identity that must be preserved.

4. Results

4.1. The essence of *kriya bebal* in Bali

The essence or real goal of the Balinese Hindu community to create *kriya bebal* is to equip Hindu religious rituals. It exists in the concept of the sublime, and sublime arouses people's curiosity and evokes reflection on what humans have not been contemplating for so far (On the Sublime 1.4 in Suryajaya, 2016, p. 103). It stems from the struggle of the soul, that is, whether it is good-bad, happy-sad, and so on, and then, it is displayed in such a way. Since God is the only one that can read a human's soul. This feature makes the *kriya bebal* offerings sublime, and its main requirements are *sukla* (pure or clean) and sincerity. So, the essence of *kriya bebal* lies in its function for religion.

The *kriya bebal* offerings are also a form of *bakti* action (Davies, 2007, p. 23). *Bakti* means saying thank you with high respect or devotion. The attitude of the Balinese people towards the art of devotion (offering) is not to express a personal self-concept but to do what people can learn. If many people need that artwork, then artwork is an adequate and quality artwork (Djelantik, 1995, pp. 7–8). *Bebali kriya* offerings are sacred in nature, and they are inseparable from the daily ritual activities of Hinduism, the joint activities of the Balinese Hindu community towards a *jagadhita* life. It is at the intersection where religious orders and socio-cultural values meet and exist in complementary ways. Here there is a harmonious blend of religious life but also socio-economic life with moral values (Hayleyesus, 2019, p. 23), as seen in Figure 1. So, *kriya bebal* is called beautiful because its beauty is manifested by the social actions of human beings in doing consistent good deeds (Suryajaya, 2016, p. 83).

The movement of Bali towards *jagadhita* is not only based on the ability of creative human resources but also the potential of natural and cultural resources. If properly managed, these various sources of wealth will become the assets towards *jagadhita*. Therefore, the author agrees with Doffana's statement (Doffana, 2019, p. 13), which states that sacred natural sites are very

Figure 1. *Kriya bebal* offerings in the form of *bakti* to purify *desa* (place), *kala* (time), and *patra* (circumstances) (Gede, 1979, p. 31) and offerings that are sold in the market (Kangin, 2012).



important in supporting nature protection and also strengthening local traditions and institutions in sustainable coexistence. *Jagadhita* Bali is a dynamically developed Balinese community, will not lose its identity, and is smart in facing various challenges. Also, it is stated as prosperous Bali that does not run out or lose all sources of wealth (Putra, 2004, p. x). Sacred natural sites provide a link between the past and present, the ancestors and their descendants, the surrounding nature, and the culture that surrounds them, so that the conservation of biodiversity is important and positive (Doda, 2019, p. 14). With the strong creativity of Balinese people, plus sustainable nature that is well cultivated, they will reprocess any cultural influences that enter Bali and turn them into unique Balinese art.

In Bali, Hinduism is a moral basis in people's lives, and art is the enlightenment of life, while the *adat* is the regulator of life. In this context, the life activities of the Balinese Hindu community are constantly evolving and full of passion without stopping. Ceremonial activities that are full of beauty have made all Balinese people referred to as artists by many outsiders. Art is in the blood of Balinese people because whatever is born from their hands cannot be separated from art (Covarrubias, 1946, p. 160). Reaffirmed by Davies (2007, p. 27), as follows:

His [Covarrubias] claim does not strike me as ludicrously exaggerated, however. Few Balinese are professional artists, of course, but an extraordinary number are involved in the arts one way or another, especially when one counts among the arts silverwork, weaving, basketwork, and the creation of elaborate food and floral offerings, as well as traditional forms such as the shadow puppet play.

Does the Balinese Hindu community carry out religious ceremonies so that they become artists? The answer is no. Religious ceremonies are a form of offering or conveying thanks to God. Because the Balinese Hindu community dedicates it to God, everything is made carefully, beautifully, and holy.

According to Bandem and deBoer (2004, p. 209), in the 1930s, new creations and adaptations emerged in traditional art forms in response to the tourism market. Art stalls began to appear selling various art productions. The demand for imitations of sacred objects has increased and has become widely available in sales places. The inclusion of Bali Island as a world tourist spot deserves a warm welcome, but it is also worth anticipating. The openness of Bali as a tourist area also demands a variety of tourism products, such as the *kriya* that has been attached to the needs of religion, which is full of Balinese customary rules, so to meet the needs of tourism must give up these rules. *Kriya* has switched to *kriya*, which adhered to the laws of economics. In line with the opinion of Agarwal and Jones (2018, pp. 129–130) as follows:

Ganesa has become commonly known and increasingly popular in Thailand through the mass production of Ganesa images and iconography embodied in statues, both large and small. Ganesa serves as both an active subject and passive object. Ganesa as a religious deity is an active subject able to embody different forms and engage in various positive deeds as needed by the consumer. Ganesa is simultaneously a passive object in the marketplace where the deity is commodified in numerous manners. Ganesa serves an economic objective and is a source of inspiration while providing both spiritual and materialistic guidance.

The openness of the concept of *kriya bebal*, of course, is in line with the goal of life in Balinese Hindu society, namely towards *jagatdhita*, happiness both physically and mentally. Hinduism is the inner power or energy for its followers in facing the various challenges of life (Mantra & Agastia, 1995, p. 18). In certain situations and with their creativity, Kayam (Soedarsono, 1972, p. 227) stated that Bali will create "*seni dalam rangka*" or art in order. The flood of tourists who enter Bali also generates art orders that the community creates. There are also art markets that sell a variety of beautiful ceremonial equipment. The target buyers are no longer only foreign domestic tourists, but also many Balinese Hindus. Easily all ceremonial equipment is available in the markets of every

village in Bali, although many *kriya bebal* makers do not understand the concepts of making *kriya bebal*. In this case, the ritual of *kriya bebal* blazes cheerfully in an empty soul. Slowly the excessive economic flows erode its ritual nature. In providing *kriya* for foreign tourists, the Balinese Hindu community considers this situation normal. But what about the Balinese Hindu community, who are now starting to buy a lot of various offerings for the sake of religious ceremonial activities?

Ida Pandita Jaya Acarya Nanda (Suyatra, 2018) stated that the lifestyle of Balinese (Hindu) people has changed from a traditional society to an instant modern society. He further explained as follows:

Due to the busy activities, there is no harm in buying the instant ready-use *kriya bebal* (offerings), as long as it is created by Hinduism customary rules. Also, being the creator of *kriya bebal* (offerings) is not simple, there are *mawinten* ceremonies and special training. The making of *kriya bebal* (offerings) is not only a matter of the beauty of its shape, but also of its meaningful completeness. Admittedly, there is a somewhat different feeling when *kriya bebal* (offerings) is made by yourself compared to being purchased in finished form. The community does not fully absorb the meaning of the *kriya bebal* (offerings). Especially with the proliferation of *kriya bebal* (offerings) traders in every market, even many lined up on the side of the road. He gave an example, according to Hindu teachings, people who make ceremonial equipment should not be *cuntaka* (dirty). For that, we have to buy *kriya bebal* (offerings) from those who pursue this profession. Because those who are indeed *kriya bebal* (offerings) creators know, which ones are allowed and which are not, down to the details. This means that we should not buy *kriya bebal* (offerings) carelessly.

The creation of *kriya bebal* that does not pay attention to customary rules will result in a distortion of the value and without the meaning of it, as expressed by Geriya (2000, pp. 195–196) as follows:

On the one hand, after the fact that happened in the development of Balinese culture (*kriya bebal*), it has gained a powerful force in intercultural dialogue and communication, especially in the life of Balinese Hindus. On the other hand, the *kriya bebal* is powerless in communication with other fields, such as tourism, trade, and politics. In this case, people reduce the status of culture into objects of commodities, commercialization, and distortion. These objects have only limited value and meaning and are limited to material forms.

The downturn that Geriya is worried about is reasonable, but otherwise, this will not happen, if the Balinese people themselves are consistent with the quality of art that they present for foreign and domestic tourists. Aside this, cultural tourism has proven to have the potential to enhance understanding among cultures of the globe and a tool for not only in preserving heritage but also maintaining peaceful coexistence in different cultural areas of the country (Ezenagu, 2020, pp. 11–12). The Balinese people must welcome the excitement of Bali Island tourism with the various unique *kriya bebal*. They can make *kriya bebal* a part of Balinese cultural arts that have a high bargaining value. For that, they need to maintain and improve the quality of *kriya bebal*. Quality will bring the bargaining value of *kriya bebal* into account in the eyes of the world. To provide *kriya bebal* for economic goals, the imitation process (mimesis) is important (Suryajaya, 2016, p. 182). The quality of imitation lies in how far the maker can make it like the original, from the creating process, the selection of raw materials, even the purification procession of the maker. Not by deceiving the customer and not by carelessly making it just for profit. However, *kriya bebal* in Bali is an artwork, an ethical expression of human freedom that is inseparable from the foundation of religion.

4.2. *Kriya bebal* from a symbolic perspective

As a result of human creation, *kriya bebal* is an artwork that is humane in nature as well as a symbol. This art has a distinctive existence that differentiates it from other artworks. In *kriya bebal*, there are external and internal aspects. It has a double existence, in the sensory world and the non-empirical world of consciousness. First, the human senses can capture the aspect of its existence, which means the artwork that has beautiful and attractive forms through the

combination of various shapes and colors. Secondly, the harmonious appearance of the artworks that contain meaning. This display is related to the non-empirical aspect called symbols.

Kriya bebal as ceremonial equipment comes in various variations depicting certain symbols that appear in religious ceremonies. Symbols that are inseparable from beauty are expressions of Balinese Hindus to get closer to God (Titib, 2001, p. 1). Because in a civilized society, people always want to be intimate and worship God with interesting and beautiful things (Sachari, 1989, p. 45). Religion is one of the sources in the creation of artworks, including *kriya bebal*. In this case, Hinduism is the inspirational drive and to foster innovative ideas in the lives of Balinese people (Murdowo, 1963, p. 18).

Kriya bebal in Bali is a symbolic art in the form of ceremonial equipment, which is a steady move from the Hindu community in Bali to connect with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. It is the art of offering and expressing humans' gratitude to God. According to Ramsey (2002, p. 137),

The sacrifice in Bali is by no means pure magic. They give or offer something back for what they get. By giving these offerings, the Balinese show gratitude for the things they have obtained. Offering in the Balinese sense is *offerre* (Lat.), to give, to offer, and not *operari* (Lat.), to sacrifice something.

Kriya bebal is also a kind of religious art, a true art, which functions as a means in religious ceremonies. The Balinese Hindu community also recognizes that *kriya bebal* is a medium for conveying the requests or expressions of the heart to God. Therefore, it is not surprising that *kriya bebal* contains moral values with aesthetic, ethical, and religious characteristics. The aesthetic existence of the *kriya bebal* is a pleasure principle governed by the *adat* (Balinese customary rules). Then, the ethical existence of the *kriya bebal* is the principles of moral values adhered to by the environment of the maker. Meanwhile, the religious existence of the *kriya bebal* is that *kriya bebal* itself is inseparable from the symbolic value, which shows the awareness of human life as a subject that exists in divine reality following the teachings of the religion adopted (Abidin, 2000, pp. 134–136). The Balinese Hindu community also believes that *kriya bebal* is an art that opens the door to religious rituals. Since it is a religious symbol that has functions to open the door to the hidden level of reality (Tillich, 2002, p. 62). Thus, society, art, and Hinduism in Bali form a complete and inseparable unity (Covarrubias, 1946, p. 400).

The function of *kriya bebal* is different from *kriya wali*, especially *kriya balih-balihan*, *kriya wali* is *kriya* as a symbol of god (*pratima*), which is very sacred in the Balinese Hindu community. The *wali* in this *kriya* is permanent, which means it will not be displaced due to location, time, and circumstances. In contrast to *kriya bebal*, because it is a tool in the ceremony, it is a symbol with its sacred character that can change according to the needs of the ceremony. The Balinese Hindu community sanctifies both *kriya wali* and *kriya bebal*. Meanwhile, *kriya balih-balihan* is an art for entertainment that is not bound by customary rules because its main purpose is only to meet economic needs.

As a cultural product, the *kriya bebal* is a part of the *kriya*, it developed in the area of social concepts as equipment in religious ceremonies. Rohidi (2000, p. 33) emphasized that art is of good quality if the society can enjoy it and it is part of life. Also, art is a special product of human behavior and is a creative use of the human imagination to explain, understand, and enjoy life (Haviland, 1995, p. 224). Therefore, art must relate to humans, that is, to relate to find, explore, and create the structures of life. In the life of the Balinese Hindu community, various *kriya* decorates from small fixtures to sacred buildings such as Kori Agung, Padmasana, Bale Kulkul, and so on with high complexity. Geertz (1992, p. 40) stated as follows:

This situation is the form and nature of Balinese customs as a make-up tribe, a society that is thirsty for beauty and this method is also the dominant motive in the life of the Hindu community in Bali.

As an aesthetic symbol, *kriya bebal* represents something that is not itself, such as its appearance in decorating a temple. It appears sweet, manly, and sometimes creepy, terrifying with glaring eyes, gaping mouth, and sharp fangs and teeth, an appearance that has the opposite meaning of protecting and soothing the soul. Therefore, it is not wrong if Soedarso (2008, p. 99) pointed out that art is a mystery. Humans create art into existence because of general needs and social needs (Feldman, 1967, p. 40).

According to Joedawinata (2000, p. 187), the role of *kriya* (including *kriya bebal*) has a unique position in shaping the identity of Indonesian society and culture. *Kriya* is an aesthetic symbol that plays a dual role in the life of society and the country. On the one hand, *kriya* appears as a guardian of traditional culture, and on the other hand, *kriya* is the result of the processing of various cultures that have entered into a new *kriya* that is uniquely Bali. Then, *kriya* represents the pattern of life of traditional and modern societies, which unites into the values and norms of new life.

Kriya bebal in Bali appears in accordance with the Balinese *adat* and thus makes it radiate a light, which means it is holy in its function. These characteristics serve as the basic function of the *kriya bebal* as a symbol that the Balinese Hindu community believes in. The Balinese Hindu community believes that symbols exist for unity. Because *kriya bebal* is a result of the collective consciousness of the Balinese Hindu community, so other symbols cannot replace it. Each *kriya bebal* appearance is not only an expression of experience but also of harmony. With this understanding, the Balinese Hindu community makes the process of creating *kriya bebal* as a symbol in a holy place into a joint activity to increase the collective spirit of unity of life towards *jagadhita* (physical and spiritual happiness).

Kriya bebal is also known as the visualization of *tri hita karana* concept. In 1969, I Gusti Ketut Kaler was the first to bring up this concept in a seminar on *desa adat* (traditional villages) in Bali. The seminar was related to the form of spatial planning and activity in traditional villages regarding *Paryangan suci* (God), *pawongan* (human), and *palemahan* (natural). This concept emphasizes building happiness by realizing a harmonious attitude in life between devotion to God, serving fellow humans, and loving the natural environment (Wiana, 2004, p. 265). Considering that humans cannot live alone, they always need others and also the environment outside themselves. This concept is also called the "triangle of harmony", which is a form of absolute balance between humans, nature, and God (Gustami, 2007, p. 93).

The presence of *kriya bebal* in Hindu ceremonial activities in Bali is not only presenting a unique form but *kriya bebal* as a symbol of opening the door to enter and have meetings and dialogue with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. This activity is what is meant by maintaining a good relationship with God. Because the Balinese Hindu community can use symbols to read and inspire their hearts to always remember and abide by the content that God has outlined. In the life of the Balinese Hindu community, presenting *kriya bebal* is not enough just a beautiful appearance, but there is another procession that must be done, namely *panguripan* (symbolically enlivening) the *kriya* with certain ceremonies. The purpose of *panguripan* is to make *kriya* to be alive and *metaksu* or *ketakson* (Mantra, 1992, p. 19), so it becomes *tenget* and sacred. [*Metaksu* or] *taksu* refers to spiritual inspiration and energy within (Herbst, 1997, p. 128), it also means power or magical inspiration (Bandem & deBoer, 2004, p. 245). They believe that this situation always occurs during *pidalan* ceremony (a big ceremony at the temple).

When the ceremony at the temple becomes solemn and all people heard are growls like a tiger and a loud pounding as well as mystical shouts, the Balinese Hindu community calls the person

wearing the *barong metaksu* mask is *kepingit*, *karauhan*, or *ketakson*. When such a situation occurs, those who attend the ceremony will bow in fear and do not dare to speak out, let alone stare at the face of the *barong metaksu* mask, which the community considers as pure. All that sounded low was only holy prayers accompanied by a loud ringing of the *genta* (bell) of the *pemangku* (the leader of the ceremony). The procession of dialogue between the *pemangku* and the “supernatural spirit” who possesses a person through the *kriya barong* media takes place in solemn. The public listens carefully, after an agreement is made, the awakening (removing the supernatural spirit) from the human body is carried out. Accompanied by the prayers of the *pemangku* at the same time sprinkling *tirta suci* (holy water), the *ketakson* will wake up and return to their normal consciousness. The author’s own experience is aware of the *ketakson* when there is a splash of holy water flowing on the head. When he opened his eyes he was surrounded by many friends, and they explained that he had just *kepingit barong*. They stated that he was running so fast after a passing motorbike, slammed into one of them, and was prone on top of it. When he was in the *barong*, the author could not feel the situation well, let alone control the forces that pushed the writer to run. This is the author’s personal experience contracting the supernatural powers of the sacred and *barong metaksu* mask.

Processions like this in Balinese Hindu ceremonies at temples are a common thing. The people felt relieved, said their gratitude because they believed that the ceremonial activity had been visited by their patron god. The spirit of sacred *kriya Barong* in Bali is believed to have magical qualities that can protect and repel reinforcements or disease outbreaks. The Balinese Hindu community believes in *kriya barong* as the protector of the village (Bandem & deBoer, 2004, p. 186) so that the community paraded it around the village as seen in Figure 2. The hair on the *barong* often looks short not because it falls out, but is taken by the public as a protective bracelet accessory.

Because this *kriya barong* is so sacred and important, its creation requires serious creation, estimation, and calculation. Starting from the maker that must be purified first, the selection of materials for the *kriya*, the time of creation, the place of creation, and there are many more details that must be followed according to local customary rules. According to the narrative of the Punggawa (village head) of Srongga, Gianyar Regency, he asked Cokorda Gede Api to make a new *kriya barong* in the form of Banaspati raja (Raja Rimba). But Cokorda Gede Api didn’t

Figure 2. *Kriya be Bali Barong Ket* is sacred to the people (Bali Tribune, 2018).



know what it's looked like, then Punggawa of Srongga stated if you want to know the shape, you have to come to Pura Dalem (Death Temple) at midnight, you will meet it. To carry out his duties, the *barong* maker came at midnight and sat in the temple courtyard waiting for what would happen. Suddenly, a light appeared from the southwest of the temple, getting closer to turning into a very scary form accompanied by a powerful air. In the dark of the night, Cokorde Gede Api's mind opened up, "oh this is the form of the *barong* mask meant by the Punggawa." With great composure, the mask makers began making sketches to be used as prototypes for the retainer. Seeing the *barong* prototype, the Punggawa felt satisfied and proud of the way Cokorde Gede Api worked. This method is a form of testing the strength and inner purity of the artist in addition to his skill abilities (Bandem & deBoer, 2004, p. 187).

The *kriya barong* created by Cokorde Gede Api above is a *kriya bebali* that has *wali* characteristics. *Kriya wali* is dedicated to God, as a symbol of the god or stepping stone to go to God. The concept of *kriya wali*, which is a ritual art, is carried out through traditional processions that are equipped with certain ceremonies. The sequence of this ceremony begins with *ngutpeti*, which is to animate. This step is done in three levels, namely *prayascita* and *melaspas*; *ngantep* and *masupati*; *masuci* and *ngerehin*. After the three processions are carried out, then the *kriya* is considered holy, sacred, and *tenget* (hieratic). *Kriya metaksu* is specially made to be purified, which is also called *kriya metaksu* or *ketakson* which is an exotic and sensational culture full of rituals that characterize the life of the Hindu community in Bali.

The *kriya bebali* is a beautiful symbol with infinite meaning and is a mirror image of the universe. This sacred *kriya bebali* is a form of a symbol that can connect humans with the oneness of God. Symbols in the ritual theme, which are manifested in various forms, will also form communication between human beings. Also, these symbols warn people of the existence of the highest essence, which they adore. Furthermore, Geertz (1973, p. 250) stated that the symbol system that humans create conventionally and use regularly will provide a framework for humans to orient to others.

The meaning of *kriya bebali* lies in its precise function in its distinctive appearance. It shows a meaningful novelty. *Kriya bebali* is an *adhiluhung* cultural heritage of Indonesia, which is so rich in variety (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009, p. 13). It is the crystallization of values, attitudes, and belief systems or treatment of nature in the framework of preservation and benefit for religious survival. Barbato (2019, p. 336) emphasized that in Bali, religion nurtures art (*kriya bebali*). Since the Hindu community in Bali believes that religion, in this case, Hinduism will guide them to physical and spiritual happiness.

Another function of *kriya bebali* is to make religious ceremonial full of festive atmosphere, in addition to being a record of the times and coloring of the times. Because symbols and religion are inseparable in the life of the Hindu community in Bali. This statement reflects human nature as the potential for religion (faith, theological beliefs), thinking (empirical knowledge), and cultivating feelings (aesthetic instincts of beauty). All three are an integral unit in every human being (Salad, 2000, p. 11). Furthermore, Geertz (1973, p. 127) stated that in the concept of Balinese Hinduism, symbols strengthen the relationship between humans and God. It is because, between humans and the Sacred, there is a need to strengthen the bonds between the two in a more planned, clear, and critical way through the form of art. Thus, *kriya bebali* is a symbol (Tillich, 2002, p. 66). It is a symbol that expresses the soul.

The creation of *kriya bebali* also means creating value because every *kriya bebali* is inseparable from the values that exist and develop in society. In the creation, the *kriya bebali* undoubtedly represents a constantly evolving and dynamic environment. Then, these changes will bring new value based on existing developments. Thus, the change will create various *kriya bebali* in Bali as a distinctive Balinese cultural wealth.

4.3. *Kriya bebal* from an aesthetic perspective

In examining the aesthetics of *kriya bebal* in this article, the author adhered to the Summa Theologica theory (Suryajaya, 2016, p. 191), which states that something can be called beautiful if it meets the conditions, namely wholeness, harmony, and brilliance. First, wholeness (*integritas*; *perfectio*) can be interpreted in two senses, namely the unity between the parts, so a damaged item does not meet these requirements (Beardsley, 1966, p. 103). Next is the unity between the forms and the purpose of that something. A damaged item does not meet these requirements because the shape is not suitable for the item (Haldane, 2009, p. 146). Second, harmony (*consonantia*; *proportio*) can also be interpreted by two meanings, namely the combination of harmonious parts and harmony between imitations and models (Suryajaya, 2016, p. 192). Third, the brilliance (*claritas*) is interpreted by anchoring the symbolism of divine light that appears (Beardsley, 1966, p. 104). However, in the further content of this research, considering that these three conditions are a complementary unit, these three conditions are not used for individual analysis but analysis as a whole.

Kriya bebal in Bali is a reflection of the religious behavior and character or sacred space that is perpetuated. Traditional society believes that sacred space has a spirit that should be respected and preserved. A life that presents the soul of the place creates the spirit and truth of the place and shows adherence to tradition in order to pass down local geniuses from generation to generation (Marlina, 2020, pp. 15–16). In this case, Hinduism as the religion of the community is inseparable from the fulfillment of community life, that is, as a guide to meet psychological and social needs. In terms of psychological functions, religion is a means for the people of Bali to improve them from the challenging worldly life. In achieving this goal, the main requisite is *sukla* (mentally clean) to achieve serenity. In terms of social functions, religion has power and group norms, including moral sanctions on individual behavior, which are the basis of common goals and values. The common goals and values are the basis for the balance of society in togetherness. This situation is what is meant by wholeness in togetherness to achieve *jagadhita* life.

The characteristic of *kriya bebal* lies not only in the uniqueness of the display but also in that it has many meanings that are easily understood by the Hindu community in Bali. It appears in a beautiful, attractive form and always calls and touches through logic and soothing language, such as the presence of *kriya bebal* in its function of beautifying the temple. It appears to be full of passionate spirit based on the Balinese customary rules. The role of *kriya bebal* in this case, in addition to beautifying, also strengthens the power of chastity of the *sthana* of God (the place where God resides). The pure and harmonious splendor makes a beautiful temple-like heaven. Also, the intention of the Balinese Hindu community in the beautification of the temple is as a form of the sacred bond between them with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa.

Hadi (2000, p. 315) stated that *kaendahan seni meniko damel raos bingah lan nikmat* (the beauty of art is what makes people feel happy and joyful). The beauty here is something that can cause pleasure, serenity, and comfort because these conditions can create peace. Furthermore, Luches (2011, p. 191) emphasized that everything that the community poured out in the form of artworks in the holy place is an expression of respect, obedience, loyalty, and a form of devotion to those whom they respect or worship. Driyarkara (1980, p. 25) stated as follows:

Religion can only exist if humans face and surrender themselves to God, both through the holy artworks that they offer and their sincerity. Because the beauty and holiness of the works of offerings are brilliant beauties, artworks that can bring people to the realm of religion and connect humans with God.

An interesting *kriya bebal* is in Pura Dalem (the temple where Dewi Durga resides), it is a *kriya bebal metaksuas* seen in Figure 3. The scary *kriya* is the queen of *leak* (devil), so the community placed this *kriya bebal* in the area of the temple where it is somewhat hidden and free from the passing of the community. While the *kriya bebal* rajah Rangda appears unique and beautiful, this

is ritual equipment for the *mecaru umat* (village cleaning). Both *kriya bebal* came from the concept of a god of the exterminator, also known as the symbols of demons or evil gods. In their task to remind humans that life cannot be separated from these characteristics, so humans must always be vigilant.

The whole life of the Balinese Hindu community with the *kriya bebal* as ceremonial equipment reinforces the community's belief in the religion they profess. In life, the main goal of the Balinese Hindu community is to achieve happiness through a harmonious life. And the functioning of *kriya bebal* Semara-Ratih shows such a condition. This *kriya bebal* of eternal happiness is depicted in the form of a combination of Dewa Asmara and Dewi Ratih. The Balinese Hindu community believes that rubbing the face of the bride and groom with *raja* Semara-Ratih during the wedding

Figure 3. *Kriya bebal* raja Rangda (Hooykaas, 1980, p. 319) and *Kriya bebal* Dewi Durga (Author's document, 1990).



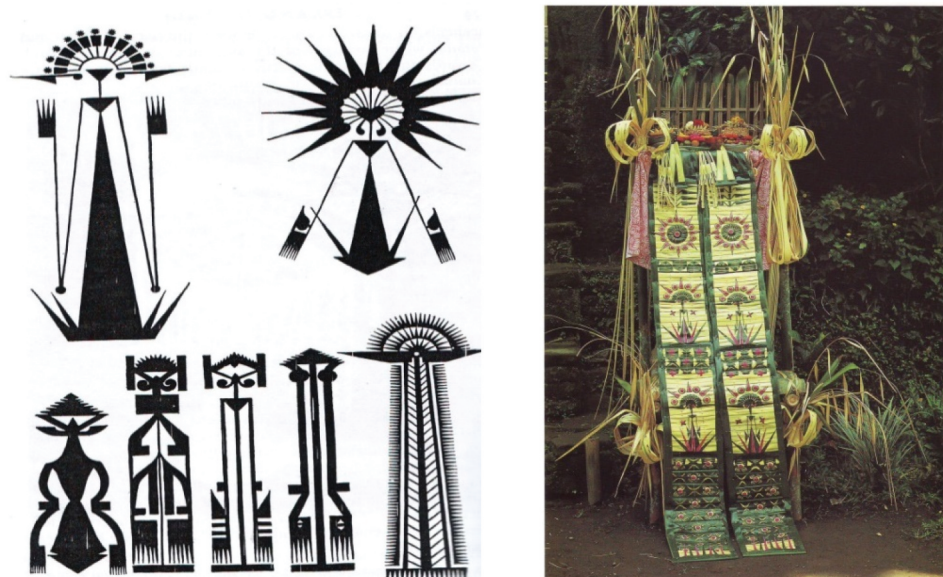
Figure 4. *Kriya bebal* Raja Semara-Ratih (Balitaksuu_rerajahan, 2019) and *Kriya bebal* Raja Semara-Ratih in wedding (Author's document, 1990).



ceremony procession can make the wedding *selulut* (unified) for life as seen in Figure 4. Because the functioning of *kriya bebal* Semara-Ratih in Bali is very adequate, so it is beautiful.

Another unique and attractive *kriya bebal* is *kriya bebal lelamakan* in the symbolic form of Cili Dewi Sri or Dewi Padi with the appearance of a graceful girl with *payas gede* (magnificent decoration) as seen in Figure 5. It is a girl with a gold diamond flower crown that seemed to move so beautifully. *Kriya bebal* in the form of Cili is the symbol of Dewi Sri or Dewi Padi, which shows the awareness of the Balinese Hindus that the owner of the rice fields is the Goddess of Rice, Dewi Cili. Therefore, humans must respect the Goddess (Hobart et al., 2001, p. 47). In religious ceremonies, the Balinese Hindu community uses *kriya bebal* with *Cili* pattern on *lelamakan* to decorate *sanggah* (the holy place or place of worship). In this function, the *kriya bebal lelamakan* blends with nature and makes it *bhuta hita* (Sarasamuccaya, 2012, p. 163), which is to beautify and prosper or fertilize nature.

Figure 5. *Kriya bebal lelamakan*. (Covarrubias, 1946, p. 175) and (Author's document, 1990).



Kriya bebal in Bali is artwork under the guidance of religious rituals, whose presence is beautiful, calm, and holy in the sense of being clean physically and mentally. The existence of *kriya bebal* as symbolic artworks is a guide for the Balinese Hindu community to browse the unique and beautiful appearance. In Balinese Hindu religious life, *wiracarita* (folk tales) became an interesting theme, as seen in the form of *sarad Padmasana* in the picture. The theme of this *sarad Padmasana* is the turning of Mount Mandara Giri as seen in Figure 6. The Balinese Hindu community makes the *sarad padmasana* from twisted flour, and then, they arrange it in the form of *Padmasana*, where the shrine of Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa.

The *kriya bebal sarad* above is also a reflection of the combination of *rwa bhineda* and *tri hita karana*. It is harmony in maintaining a harmonious relationship with the three realms, namely the realm of life, the world of *butha* (devil), and the realm of the gods. The Balinese Hindu community creates *kriya bebal sarad Padmasana* for major ceremonies, such as ceremonies at Pura Besakih, Pura Batur, and so on.

Furthermore, one of the popular *kriya bebal* that seems to integrate into the life of the Balinese Hindu community is *karang Bhoma*. *Karang Bhoma* is closely related to *kakawin Bhomantaka*, the story of Dewa Wisnu meeting Mother Earth, Dewi Basundari. The origin of this story is *Lontar*

Figure 6. *Kriya bebali sarad*
Mount Mandara Giri (Author's
document, 1990).



Korawasramaparwa, which tells the story of when Dewa Wisnu entered the ground, and then suddenly met Dewi Basundari. At the meeting, they both got attracted to each other and got married. After that, they had a son, but the child never met his father, so he kept on asking. He was angry and raged to meet his father; hence, his name is Bhoma. According to Zoetmulder and Robson (1995, p. 102), the name comes from the word *bhama* (Sanskrit), which means extreme anger. Bhoma's outburst of anger reflects his longing or desire to know and meet his father. Other than that, Bhoma's story also comes from the story of the meeting of Waraha Awatara Wisnu and Dewi Pertiwi or Dewi Basundari, which is a meeting between water and land that suggests the birth of life in the universe.

In another story, according to Poerbatjaraka and Hadidjaja (1957, pp. 24–25), Bhoma's anger in his longing for Krishna, the *awatara* (incarnation) of Dewa Wisnu, was the reason for the fierce battle. In the end, Bhoma got defeated, his body got destroyed, and his head fell into the sea, sunk to the bottom of the earth on his mother's lap, Dewi Basundari. Realizing this, her heart was broken, and then she quickly reported to Dewa Wisnu, the father of Bhoma. Knowing this, Dewa Wisnu felt sad and used *tirta amrta* (the water of life) to resurrect him. Unfortunately, Bhoma's destroyed body cannot be restored as before, so Bhoma is only in the form of head. Then, Bhoma promised to serve his life for humanity.

Meanwhile, Zoetmulder and Robson (1995, p. 395) in their book entitled *Kalangwan, Sastra Jawa Kuno Selayang Pandang* explained the battle between Bhoma and Krishna. At first, Bhoma was against King Druma, King of Kimpurusha. Since Bhoma is a *naranatha*, the son of Dewi Bhumi and Dewa Wisnu, he is a very powerful giant. Also, Dewa Brahma rewarded him with *Wijayamala jayasatru* (invincibility). So, Bhoma used this power to destroy the kingdom of Kimpurusha under the rule of King Druma. In his panic, the king heard the sentence from the sky mentioning that only the King of Dwarawati, Krishna, could defeat Bhoma, so he hurried towards Dwarawati. Then, Krishna welcomed him respectfully and agreed to provide protection. Eventually, there was a fierce battle between Krishna and the giant Bhoma. In the end, Krishna appeared as Dewa Wisnu, in his thousand-headed form, rode a very large Garuda bird. Seeing that, Bhoma was angry and did not want to lose, so he wore his supernatural crown of *Wijayamala jayasatru* of the same magnitude. As fast as lightning, Dewa Wisnu hit the body of Bhoma and the crown fell off, and then the Garuda bird took it. Consequently, without *Wijayamala jayasatru*, Bhoma could not do anything, so

his body got destroyed; his head fell into the sea, and entered the *patala* (earth) on his mother's lap.

These stories have inspired the *undagi* (traditional Balinese artists) to manifest it again into *kriya beballi karang Bhoma*. The form of *kekarangan* or the result of the creative imagination *ngarang* (making up stories) is fabricating the story about the powerful Bhoma. The son of Dewa Wisnu and Dewi Bhumi was a very powerful giant and promised to serve human life. At the same time, *karang Bhoma* also symbolizes a big tree, in its responsibility of protecting water as a source of life. It is also called *karang Kala* or *butha Kala*, which means space and time that are *somya* (Wiana, 2004, p. 266). In the Old Javanese-Indonesian Dictionary, *somya* is gentle and calm that is full of virtue (Zoetmulder & Robson, 1995, p. 1114). Behind this scary appearance, it also reflects a gentleness and calmness that is full of virtue. Its task is to remind humans to always be aware of time, as well as think, speak, and behave positively because human life in the universe is short.

The Balinese Hindu community believes that *kriya beballi karang Bhoma* is *kriya beballi metaksu*. They place this *kriya beballi* in the holy area, precisely on top of the Kori Agung (the main entrance of the temple) as seen in Figure 7. The Balinese Hindu community only uses Kori Agung during *pidalan*, so in addition to beautifying the temple, the essence of *kriya beballi karang Bhoma* also symbolizes the *penglukatan* (cleansing) of people during religious ceremonies. The characteristics of *karang Bhoma* are round eyes, a large nose, flat teeth, curved fangs, a wide-open mouth, and the palms spread out beside the ears. Also, it has many variations with various forms of vines and also very dense floral motifs. In its harmonious appearance and blends with another *kriya*, the temple looks beautiful like heaven.

Apart from the *kriya beballi* described above, another magnificent *kriya beballi* is the *kriya beballi* that exists in the Jagatnatha Temple in Jembrana, Bali. According to Purwa (1972, p. 1), the Gadjah Mada governor in 1350 appointed Arya Melel Tjengkrong as the first ruler of Jembrana. At that time, Arya Melel Tjengkrong and his followers entered a vast forest or *jembarwana* (Sanskrit). The forest was very fertile with *cangak* (storks) and very large snakes, and residents called them the dragon kings. In the next development, the presence of the flora and fauna in the area became the name of some villages. First, the vast forest of *jembarwana* (Sanskrit) became Jembrana, the

Figure 7. *Kriya beballi karang Bhoma* (Wijaya, 2019, p. 139) and the main entrance of the temple or Kori Agung (Sunarya, 2011, p. 386).



regency of West Bali. Secondly, *cangak* became Pecangakan, the village is the location of the castle of Arya Melel Tjengkrong. Lastly, the name of the dragon king (*naga raja*) became the regency capital of Jembrana, Nagara. Inspired by this story, *undagi* then created *kriya bebali* Candi Laras Kampid Cangak as the entrance to the Jagatnatha Temple in Jembrana, Bali.

Kriya bebali Candi Laras Kampid Cangak as the entrance to the temple has the shape of two bird wings standing upright in a row and the top curving inward as seen in Figure 8. Outside, the two giants of Gopala stand and carry a club. Then, on the outermost side, there are two large winged dragon kings. This *kriya bebali* has a very important meaning and is related to its location. A pair of wings symbolizes the power of the upper world (air), which also means working hard for life and loyalty to the leader of the Jembrana community. At the same time, two dragon kings symbolize water, guarding the fertility and welfare of the Jembrana community. Jagatnatha Temple is a sacred place for worshipping; it symbolizes the storage of the *tirta amrita* (the water of life). Thus, the task of the garuda and the dragon kings is guarding the source of life or both the power of air and water protects it (Sunarya, 2011, p. 414).

Figure 8. *Kriya bebali* Candi Laras Kampid Cangak at Jagatnatha Temple, Jembrana, Bali. (Sunarya, 2011, p. 235).



Other than that, *kriya bebali* Candi Laras Kampid Cangak is also a depiction of the glory of the Jembrana region in the book entitled “*Sejarah Jembrana dan Lahirnya Ibu Kota Negara* [The History of Jembrana and the Birth of Negara Capital City]” (Pemda Jembrana, 1997, p. 28). In 1478 under I Gusti Ngurah Pancoran’s government, Pecangakan Jembrana reached its heyday and became the economic center in West Bali. The existence of this *kriya bebali* is inseparable from its responsibilities. It symbolizes the glorious economic development of the people of West Bali, which makes other parts of Bali consider this region. Because of its very adequate functions, the *kriya bebali* Candi Laras Kampid Cangak is a beautiful symbolic artwork.

5. Conclusion

Kriya bebali is ceremonial equipment that is inseparable from the life of the Hindu community in Bali. It is also a beautiful symbolic art form. Besides, it is the crystallization of community values, attitudes, and belief systems in the life of the Balinese Hindu community. It is not understood as a stand-alone ritual activity but also an expression of life together. It exists as a collective expression based on the concept of *tri hita karana* and *rwa bhineda*.

The concept of *tri hita karana* is a concept that reflects a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. *Kriya bebali* is a reminder to humans that they

cannot live alone, so they must maintain a good relationship with the three of them. Meanwhile, the concept of *rwa bhineda* is reflected in the contrast and opposition of life to achieve balance in life. *Kriya bebal* in Bali is an *adhiluhung* culture that is so rich in variations.

The Balinese Hindu community believes that the shift in the function of *kriya bebal* to meet needs outside of religion will not diminish the essence of this *kriya* because indeed the beauty it emits is to achieve a prosperous life together. *Kriya bebal* is a combination of ritual and the social environment, a vehicle to build the island of Bali, which is *jagadhita* in the future.

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