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The Equality of Material and Non-Material Culture in Reconstructing Muarajambi Temple as Center of Education

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Abstract: Archaeological research in various parts of Indonesia has helped the construction of local and national identities as a unifying narrative of the nation. The results of archaeological research on the Srivijaya Kingdoms have been used as a historical basis for building Indonesia's identity as a maritime and agrarian nation spread across the archipelago. Archaeological research has grown rapidly since the 1800s and focuses on material culture such as artifacts and features without seeing other non-material objects around them. This paradigm produces a limited narrative that only views humans as the solo actors in the process of cultural formation in civilization, while non-material objects such as the natural environment have been marginalized from the process of identity reconstruction. This phenomenon raises the question of what approach can accommodate material and non-material culture used in one whole perspective in reconstructing identity. This article is theoretical with a desk study of Witmore's thoughts. From the review, it is known that the symmetrical archaeology approach places material and non-material culture as equal data in interpreting the past which produces a more in-depth narrative with various perspectives. Symmetrical archaeology is also able to see the role of non-material culture such as the environment, and thought as active actors in the process of cultural formation. Symmetrical archaeology bridges the connectivity between identities in comprehensive narrative.

Keywords: Symmetrical archaeology, identity, material culture, Non-Material.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research in Indonesia has been ongoing since the European colonial period, in both the Dutch East Indies and Great Britain. Started from an association of amateur archaeologists and antique collectors, then developed into an official institution of the Dutch East Indies through Decree No. 62 on June 14, 1913, under the name "*Oudhedikundige Dienst in Nederlandsch - Indie*". N.J. Kroom was appointed as the head and actively served from 1913 to

1916, then replaced by F.D.K Bosch for twenty years until 1936, and ended under the leadership of Stutterheim during the Japanese occupation in 1942 (Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1992).

After Independence, the Jawatan Purbakala changed its name to "*Jawatan Urusan Barang-Barang Purbakala*" with Amin Soendoro in charge, who had been involved since the Japanese occupation. During the military aggression, the Dutch East Indies government wanted to take back the Antiquities Ministry or "*Oudhedikundige Dienst in Nederlandsch - Indie*" led by I.R VR. Van Romondt, but was unsuccessful and eventually opened a new office in Makassar. The Dutch government clearly showed that archaeological institutions have an important role in building unity and nationalism, so they need to be prevented and taken over (Soejono, 1987).

The government's efforts in strengthening archaeological research were carried out by opening archaeology departments in several universities, starting with the University of Indonesia in 1954, then continued at Gadjah Mada University in 1962 (<https://arkeologi.fib.ugm.ac.id/profile/sejarah>).

Outside Java the archaeology department was opened at Udayana University - Bali in 1962 (<https://www.unud.ac.id/in/prodi72-Arkeologi.html>), then at Hasanuddin University in 1984 (<https://arkeologi.unhas.ac.id/departemen-arkeologi/>). The process of equalization continued until in 2013 it was opened at Halu Oleo University - Kendari, and in 2014 it was opened at Jambi University so now 6 archaeology departments in Indonesia have produced human resources in archaeological research and cultural heritage preservation.

Archaeology departments at six universities are actively developing methods and theories, as an effort to reconstruct the process of cultural history and past social behavior with various paradigms and approaches. Slowly, Indonesian archaeology is trying to place itself on the map of global archaeological studies with paradigms and approaches with Indonesian characteristics, not only on study topics such as the Sriwijaya kingdom, not limited to maritime kingdoms but also re-articulating the Indonesian identity as an intellectual nation (Sadzali, 2019, 2020).

Tanudirjo (1995) in his research placed the development of archaeology into 5 periods; a) the early period of emergence, (1800 to 1812), b) the exploration period (1822 to 1900) where experts and observers began to conduct searches, and studies including the discovery of *Pithecanthropus erectus* fossils, c) the synthesis period (1900 to 1945), the start of official archaeological institutions under the support of the colonial government in charge of conducting prehistoric archaeological studies, classical archaeology and epigraphy, d) the period of nationalization of archaeology (1945-1992) the start of an official archaeological institution under the support of the colonial government in charge of conducting prehistoric archaeological studies, classical archaeology and epigraphy research in various regions; Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi to compile a narrative of national identity. On the other hand, the development of theory in this era, especially from 1960 to the 1990s, tends to be stagnant and underdeveloped. e) The period of the formation of archaeology with an Indonesian character (1992 to the present) archaeologists, and academics in the field of archaeology began to open up and collaborate with other sciences to reconstruct the past and develop a distinctive Indonesian archaeological paradigm, to contribute to the progress of the nation (Tanudirjo, 1995).

At the period of the formation of character archaeology Indonesian, archaeologists began to focus on drawing origins, national diaspora, networks and collaboration between ethnic groups in the archipelago, diversity and harmony, democracy and humanity, environmental views, and populist economy, to build an Indonesian paradigm. Several new approaches have developed such as; the landscape biography approach, microarchaeology, and symmetrical archaeology which are considered important in the study of identity reconstruction. This academic phenomenon is the background of this research, which tries to analyze the conceptual framework and method of

applying the "symmetrical archaeology" approach in identity research in the case study of ancient Sriwijaya civilization in the lower Batanghari watershed, as well as seeing opportunities for the symmetrical archaeology approach in future archaeological research.

Literature Review

The development of the global archaeological paradigm has influenced archaeology in Indonesia both directly and indirectly. Directly, it can be seen from the tendency to follow a certain paradigm as a researcher's patron to the paradigm of "new archaeology" or processual archaeology developed by many archaeological researchers in America, or post-processual archaeology developed by many European researchers. Thus, there is a certain paradigm tendency; processual archaeology or post-processual in the archaeological research approach carried out. These two paradigms since their emergence until now have certain adherents who apply them conceptually and methodically (Schiffer, 1985).

The "New Archaeology" paradigm, also known as processual archaeology, emphasizes the scientific approach to reconstructing the past of material culture objects. Including absolute dating analysis with carbon, or uranium techniques. Two important figures in this paradigm are Binford, and David Clarke in his view that archaeology will be credible if it uses laboratory-based natural science methods and tends to look for certain patterns and view culture as predictable in general (Magetsari, 2016).

In the research process, the view of processual archaeology tends to refer to the philosophy of positivism. The early development of processual archaeology studies revealed the role of nature and the environment in the formation and development of human culture. This is in line with the reference to the theories used which are positivistic as in natural science with a model that aims to "explain" the process of nature and the environment influencing culture and material cultural objects created by humans (Magetsari, 2011, 2016).

In the development of the processual archaeology paradigm, several theories are commonly used to analyze the problem of reconstructing the past, among others: structuralism theory, systems theory, evolutionary theory, and subsistence theory. Systems theory is closely related to the concept of culture, which is defined as a system consisting of technological subsystems, social subsystems, and ideological subsystems that work to adapt to the environment (Dyson, 1993; K. R. Dark, 1995).

Evolutionary theory is used on processual to show that natural selection is a functional determinant in cultural characteristics. In addition, the theories of structuralism, especially Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, are also used in this paradigm because both structuralism and processualism believe in the existence of general laws or rules. The use of structuralist theories gave birth to the subfield of structural archaeology as part of processual archaeology (Greene, 2010).

The processual archaeological paradigm with a positivistic view is seen by some archaeologists as incompatible with the facts and empirical data of archaeological excavation findings that reflect diversity and are unique and special. In contrast to the processual view that views culture as a system that is patterned and predictable with the same model that applies in other locations and cultures. Miller and Tilley begin their critique of processual archaeology with several points. The main criticism from the initiators of the post-processual paradigm is based on the nature of processual archaeology which is seen as too rational and does not "humanize" archaeology (Hodder, 1985).

The processual archaeology paradigm is influenced by positivistic philosophy, which is predictive and makes past cultures seem measurable, and it seems that the main goal of archaeology is quantified data. This paradigm was widely questioned, especially by Ian Hodder (1991) who then introduced a new paradigm in archaeological studies influenced by post-structuralist thought. Hodder called this paradigm contextual archaeology due to its emphasis on historical, social, and environmental contexts as well as changes that occur in the context as a whole archaeological data. This paradigm tries to bring to life the data or objects of study of related cultural objects, and archaeologists so that this paradigm focuses more on meaning which views archaeological data as texts that are multi-interpreted (Hodder, 1991).

In contrast to processual archaeology methods, the post-processual archaeology paradigm is more likely to apply methods that aim to dig deeper into past information by looking at the context of various archaeological remains that are not narrow and even broad. Adherents of the post-processual school see this as an important step forward from the processual archaeological paradigm. Moreover, the conceptual basis of post-processual archaeology is strongly based on the points of; sensitivity to the research site, more diverse data interpretation, the use of a multidisciplinary-multi-perspective approach, and an open-ended interpretation model (Shacke & Little, 1992).

The difference in methods between processual and post-processual archaeology is not only based on philosophical views but also on laboratory and experimental testing which is considered not always relevant to the study of archaeological social phenomena. Social archaeology emphasizes the importance of data formation as a result of human interaction as individuals against other individuals or their groups. Social archaeology theory seeks to place "society" as part of archaeology, with the conceptual view that events in history are inseparable from memory, and the sustainability of the social cycle of the supporting community. Meanwhile, cultural materials in this theory are positioned as social structuring efforts that occur in society. Cultural material is seen as related to the form of fulfilling the need for resources, fulfilling the need for symbols, the result of political relations, and the result of ideological manipulation (Hodder, 2007)

Another challenge in national identity research lies in the number of archaeological sites that are sometimes separated by a considerable distance but are basically in one context, such as between classical period temples in the Upper and Lower Batanghari which have tended to be seen separately to reveal the identity of the ancient Malay period in the Batanghari watershed. Departing from the post-processual paradigm, Sadazali (2022) tried to reveal the archaeological identity in the Hulu and Hilir areas of the Batanghari watershed with a symmetrical archaeological approach. The data objects used are in the form of material culture and non-material objects such as the site environment, rivers, knowledge, traditions, and artifacts found on site or that have been moved to the museum. The symmetrical archaeological approach carried out in the Batanghari watershed produces preliminary information that archaeological data in the upstream and downstream areas of the Batanghari watershed have links, similarities, as well as differences, especially in terms of function, and religious ideological background (Sadzali, 2022).

The symmetrical archaeological approach develops from a critical view of processual archaeology that is positivistic and views all cultures as having certain patterns and also applying in other cultural locations, and tends to negate a broader context. Symmetrical archaeology epistemologically has a critical and contextual view in looking at data, including not closing to present conditions that are seen as still connected to the past. This includes minimizing the space for pseudo-interpretations raised by practitioners without the support of material and non-material data that can be ascertained. So symmetrical archaeology departs from the collection of material,

and non-material data of the past and even the present which is considered symmetrical or a reflection of the relationship with the object (Witmore, 2018) The symmetrical archaeological approach also emphasizes the point of "balance" between data that are considered equal and have the same potential to reveal the past. This is different from other approaches that tend to see data with different classes such as primary sources, secondary or supporting sources.

Generally, archaeological research only uses data on artifacts found at excavated sites and then tries to build interpretations of the found data without looking at previous data found at other sites that are still in the context of space and time. Therefore, Witmore (2007) views that the basic principle of the symmetrical archaeological approach is to depart from the placement of various data, both human, non-human, object or non-object as an inseparable unit, and not distinguish it in the placement of type classification but see it equally according to the nature of the data itself (Witmore, 2007).

METHOD

The symmetrical archaeological approach in archaeological research is part of the reconstruction of cultural history, and the process of cultural change to later become a reference for identity reconstruction. The symmetrical archaeological approach is not a formulation of specific research methods but provides a conceptual framework outlined in the principles of symmetrical archaeology. On the other hand, symmetrical archaeology is also open to the views of other relevant scientific methodologies to be adopted to reconstruct the past in depth and contextually. Therefore, Witmore (2007, 2018) then provides an overview of the concept of symmetrical archaeology as "the multiple fields", or various points of view towards a complete narrative of interpretation, as in the chart below (Witmore, 2007, 2018).

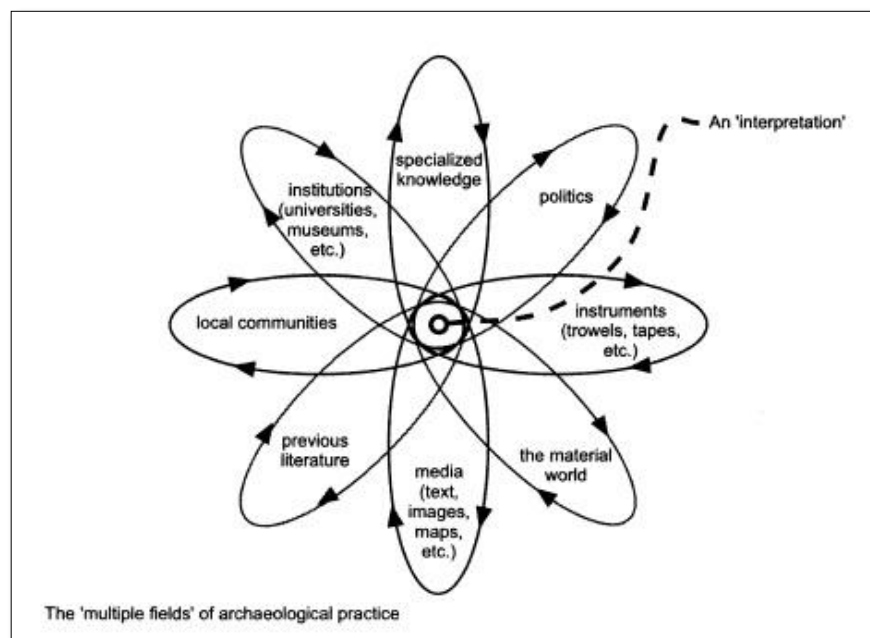


Chart 1. "Multiple Field" method source; (Witmore, 2007)

The conceptual framework of this symmetrical archaeological approach provides the empirical view of data used as the material is not always material objects from the past excavated at archaeological sites, but other sources of knowledge such as local community knowledge, related institutions or institutions, specific information, and special knowledge, field research instruments, media, images, photo, maps, ancient manuscripts, even politics are also data equivalent to material cultural objects which for archaeology are seen as the main data. Whereas in symmetrical archaeology all data has the same position, the same potential position in providing information about the past.

Therefore, this research applies methods based on the principle of multiple fields or various points of view. Systematically, the basic reference of the method used refers to the work of K. R. Dark (1995), that all data used in research can provide information related to its existence even though the data is not archaeological. However, all data can become archaeological evidence when used within the framework of interpretation. Dark also emphasizes that the importance of the distinction between data and archaeological evidence can be seen in the context of the site where the archaeological remains (artifacts, features, ecofacts) were found and their relationship with other artifacts (K. R. Dark, 1995). Dark's procedural framework is outlined in the following chart.



Chart 2. Research Workflow K. Dark (K. R. Dark, 1995).

In applying the symmetrical archaeological approach to Dark's framework, which is considered to be in line, the component indicators of each step of the method are determined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Indicator component of research work step K Dark.

No	Data source	Data	Evidence/bukti arkeologi	Arah interpretation
1	Literature/text; contents of inscriptions, ancient manuscripts, travel notes, archives, sketches, maps, drawings, research reports, scientific articles, books, regulatory documents	Social, cultural, political information,	Muarajambi temple area	The identity of the Sriwijaya Kingdom in the context of the cultural landscape
2	Geographical; Environment, geographic location, contour, landscape	Environmental information, and geopolitical and geoeconomics	Location of the Muarajambi temple area downstream of Batanghari	The identity of the Sriwijaya Kingdom in a geographical locational context

3	individual – group; Collective memory, traditions, local knowledge	Social, cultural, and continuous of traditional information	Ancient Malay society, modern Malay.	
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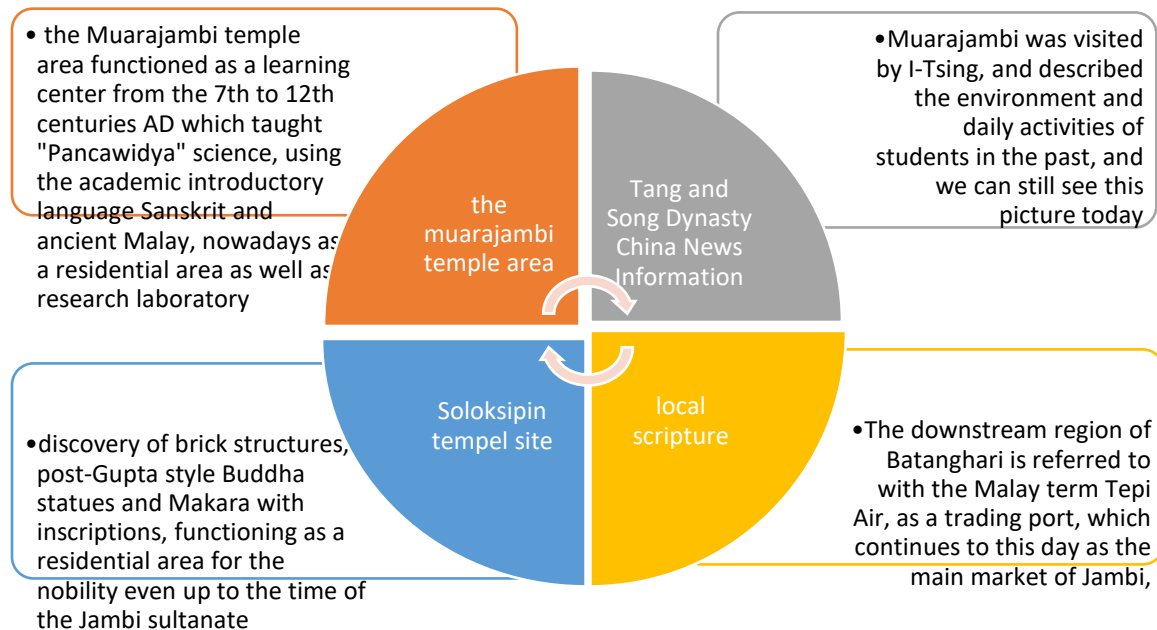
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of symmetrical archaeology, which departs from David Blor's (1991) thoughts in the book *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, is a reflection to question the efforts of social reconstruction of the past based on positivistic research (Bloor, 1991). On this basis, symmetrical archaeology begins research with questions that are epistemological in nature. In its application to the case study of research on the identity of the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed in the classical period, the answers to the questions; how does the identity of the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed refer to previous research, and how is the identity of the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed with a symmetrical archaeological approach.

Based on the research results, it refers to the conceptual framework of a symmetrical archaeological approach that is open to all sources of data and information related to the research subject; objects, structures, sites, features, ecofacts, collective memory, local knowledge, the surrounding natural environment, geographical location both micro and macro, geopolitical conditions of the past that are read in a contextual, comprehensive, equal/equal manner in building a complete narrative of epistemological and autological understanding (Shanks, 2007).

Based on the Data Source - Data - Evidence, Interpretation, the identity of the downstream Batanghari watershed can be found as follows;

Chart 3. Identity of Lower Batanghari Symmetrical Archaeological Approach



The symmetrical archaeological approach in its analysis based on the concept of "symmetry" analyzes data at the same level in each entity. In the data analysis stage, it does not distinguish or group artifact data with artifacts and vice versa, non-artifact data analysis is analyzed with non-artifacts. This does not mean that symmetrical archaeology equates humans with non-humans, but

in this case sees everything as past data formed from the attachment of "depend" and closeness, between one another trying to see the past in-depth and open to various aspects that influence the past (Shanks, 2007; Witmore, 2007). So chart 4 shows how several site locations are used continuously (Solok Sipin Site and Angso Duo market - Jambi) and (Muarajambi temple) from learning centers now remain a center of learning and educational recreation in a different level of sacredness and context. Likewise, the Solok Sipin Temple site is thought to be a noble settlement that continued until the burning of the palace of the Jambi sultanate's chosen land by the Dutch in 1836 AD, and then the defensive landscape was designed.

In terms of language and akasra, based on the findings of inscriptions on statues or metal plates inscribed with palawa script, with Sanskrit and ancient Malay languages, provide information that the academic language used is Sanskrit because many teaching books at that time were in Sanskrit, while the ancient Malay language was partly absorbed and used in trade and daily life.

Archaeological research efforts to reveal the identity of the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed have been carried out previously with different approaches, including research by Utomo (1994, 2016) which saw that the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed once functioned as the capital of the ancient Malay Kingdom before the rise of Srivijaya as the leader of the Datu in the Malay Land of Swarnadwipa island between the 7th century and the 12th century AD, and Muarajambi temple has existed since the time of Ancient Malay rule (Utomo, 1994, 2016).

Meanwhile, Sadzali (2019, 2020, 2022) sees the downstream of the Batanghari watershed as a center of trade and learning represented by each site (Soloksipin and Muarajambi Temple) and experienced a decline in the 12th century AD due to the attack of Rajendra Cola (Sadzali, 2019, 2020, 2022). From the perspective of historical studies, Zulqayyim (2019) sees that the downstream area, namely Jambi City during the sultanate era 1850-1940s, experienced transformation as a sacred sultanate center that turned into a profane trade center after the collapse of the Jambi Sultanate (Zulqaiyyim, 2019).

Discussion

Previous research tended to look at the lower reaches of the Batanghari watershed separately, per site and interpreted singularly regardless of the context of other data outside the site. This has resulted in the narrative interpretation of the lower Batanghari watershed never being completed and answered in more depth. Even this conceptual study research has not been able to describe identity in detail and in-depth in a broad context. However, the symmetrical archaeological approach that has only been developed since 2005-2007 in America, and has not yet been applied in Indonesia, is important to be applied more comprehensively and in-depth with more abundant data.

In terms of achievement goals, the symmetrical archaeological approach is considered capable of reconstructing cultural history and past identities in depth from various perspectives so that the narrative of civilization that has tended to be opaque can be seen clearly and deeply. It can even embrace a variety of data and approaches, including ancient manuscripts that many local communities keep which other archaeological approaches consider not comprehensive and less authentic. In this approach, the manuscript is seen as part of collective memory that can be proven with other data as evidence. So this approach can summarize all the data that so far cannot be used in one academic narrative stage.

CONCLUSION

The symmetrical archaeological approach in archaeological research in the world has not been widely practiced, even in Indonesia. The paradigm of post-processual archaeology as the umbrella of symmetrical archaeology, has opened up space to process all data, both material and non-material, which are considered part of the process of forming past cultures with their respective information contained therein.

Previous archaeological approaches tend to see the Batanghari downstream in the framework of each site and separate from each other, so that the resulting narrative is also still fragmentary or fragments, such as previous researchers seeing the downstream Batanghari watershed in the point of view as the ancient Malay capital before being moved to Dhaamasraya, as a trade center, and as a center of sacred sultanate activities. All three can be true, or false, but in symmetrical archaeology, the research conclusions refer to the combined narrative of all data and data interpretation; that is, Hilir Das Batanghari may have an identity as a center of government as well as a center of learning at different site locations but still in the context of the downstream Batanghari watershed.

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