

Glass Painting: Symbolic Power Relationship in Cultural Production and Adaptation Strategies on Cultural Involution

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Abstract—Glass painting has become the cultural icon of Cirebon. However, today Glass painting fails to maintain a balance of the development and more complicates deeply. This study intends to release glass paintings from involuntary conditions. The purpose of the research is to interpret the aesthetic codes of glass painting in the conditions of cultural involution, symbolic power relations in cultural production and strategies for interpreting cultural involution. A qualitative approach was used with Phenomenology as the research type. Data collection was done by the depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation checks. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, simultaneous verification, and conclusions. The result of the study shows that the strong tendency of the reproductive works with artificial visual aspects processing; The symbolic power has owned by the glass painters because of the strength of symbolic capital and social capital by giving up their work to be reproduced; and glass painting involution occurs because of the weak ownership of capital, habitus reconciles as a structure that structures the actions of painters who have the legitimacy with their epigones, and habitus reproduces the aesthetic code of the predecessor's work as a structured structure in order to compete for cultural capital in the domain of cultural production. It can be concluded that glass-painting involution occurs due to the crisis of agent creativity, the choices of complicating into artificially, permissive cultural habitus and the weak of fighting ethos to obtain the capital in the domain of cultural production of glass painting.

Keywords— *glass painting, cultural, symbolic*

I. INTRODUCTION

Glass painting is a type of traditional art that becomes a cultural icon of Cirebon. The tradition of painting from the behind of clear glass surface is influenced by European traditions that enter through the Middle East, China, Japan and then to the archipelago. In Europe, the glass paintings prevailed from the 16th to the 19th centuries and experience a period of low tide in the mid-19th century, except that they are still living in Central European rural communities (Elsass, Switzerland, Bavaria, Tyrol, Bohemia) [1]. China has known the glass painting since the early decades of the seventeenth century through Jesuit missionaries [2]. The entry of glass paintings into Indonesia occurs in the early 19th century and experiences a peak development in 1930-1950s [2] [1] [3].

At first, glass painting is more used for religious-magical purposes [4]. Islam is very influential on the birth of religious themed glass paintings and the accessibility of the glass as a material for making glass paintings [2]. Cirebon as one of the central regions of the spread of Islam in Java then has a culture of making glass paintings as a form of fulfilling the special and unique aesthetic needs. Therefore, the glass painting works from Cirebon have the different forms of visual expression than glass paintings that develop in other parts of Indonesia, such as Yogyakarta, Muntilan, Pasuruan, or Nagasepaha Buleleng-Bali [5].

Painting on the glass media is originally considered as an art form of the urban elite because glass media at that time is considered as an expensive medium that has its own prestige for rural Cirebon people [6]. As explained by Jerome Samuel that glass painting in Indonesia in its heyday generally shows many visualizations of themes from the puppet (Mahabarata-Ramayana), pictograph calligraphy, mosque building images, heroic historical stories and folklore that developed in the community [2]. The development of Cirebon glass painting in its heyday also shows the visualization of the puppet themes because in general there is a dual role of the culprit, in addition, to painting the glass with the puppet themes as well as a puppeteer such as Ki DalangSudarga or Ki Lesek [3] or the poster painters "Barikan " like Ki Sitisawan (1865-1948) (Gegesik) [7].

In the Cirebon Palace, appears the glass painters by processing the main theme of pictographic calligraphy from *Thariqah* themes and puppet as a symbol of personification to bring up the glass painters: Elang Yusuf Dendabrata, ElangAruna, ElangMadina, Elang Karta and Raden Saleh Djuwahir [2]. Glass painting with the puppet theme in Cirebon is originally only the "*Ijen*" puppet, namely the description of a particular puppet character with the intention not only to fulfilling the aesthetic needs and cultural integration, but also as a "symbol of personification" of the collector. Glass painting with the theme of calligraphy in Cirebon is originally in the form of pictograph calligraphy in the form of "*petarekatan*" symbols that is known as "*Srabad*", such as SrabadMacan Ali, BantengWindu, Sayidina Ali, Ganesa, InsanKamil, and other various of Srabad. Besides that, the development also in the forms of mosque images from the Islamic cultural

treasures that allegedly appear from the reproductions of souvenir hajj posters in the form of Masjidil Haram, Nabawi Mosque, and even *Buroq* objects that have happened to pros and cons. It seems that the development of the stronger glass painting is only a glass painting with leather puppets and pictograph calligraphy.

The development of glass painting in the early independence days experience a period of receding due to the political turmoil and insignificant economic growth. However, it does not mean the development of glasspaint stops. The rebirth of Cirebon glass painting occurs when the politics of the New Order government emphasizes the importance of cultural identity in an area. In the 1970s, thanks to the services of Jop Ave, a Minister of Post Tourism and Telecommunication and HaryadiSuadi, the lecturer of FSRD ITB, found Rastika (1942) as a glass painter from Gegesik (Cirebon Regency) and later becomes a Maestro of Cirebon glass painting with his work that has penetrated the prestigious Indonesian art painting. Rastika becomes a lighter of growth and development of Cirebon glass painting based on strengthening the tradition. On the other hand appears Raden Sugro Hudayat, in Trusmi Village, pursuing a glass painting armed with his appreciation of the glass painting by Raden Saleh Djuwahir. The appearance of Toto Sunu in Cirebon is marked by a number of technical and thematic innovations and achievement of the economic value of glass painting, makes the domain of Cirebon glass painting more dynamic with a very valuable market explosion. After that appears the young painters who joined to the studios such as Studio Noerjati in Kemlaka (with Raffan Hasyim), Bahendi, Bahenda (Langen Sejati Studio at Gegesik), Astika, Kasnan, and Eryudi (Trusmi), in Gunungjati (Salim), and Adjib Studio [3]

After the 1990s Cirebon glass painting experiences the instability of development. The slump of the work and markets quality that is not sufficient to give Cirebon glass painting enters in the era of cultural involution, a concept of anthropology that first introduced by Alexander Goldenweiser and reinforced by Clifford Geertz. Cultural evolution is characterized by "inward growth" rather than blooming out, thus it fails to sustain its development. In this era, Cirebon glass painting dwells on the old and visual themes of works that are stagnant, even if there is the development, it is only an artificial. In addition, the dominance of the painters who have legitimacy (Rastika and Toto Sunu) have had the symbolic power with the power of capital (cultural, social, symbolic, and economic) [8], very dominating the domain of cultural production of glass paintings which later gives the birth to the rise of epigonism.

Today's Cirebon glass paintings experience on the stagnation of development, but that does not mean death. It continues to live as a work of art born from the Cirebon culture and is deliberately created to be appreciated [9]. As a cultural product, glass painting has a system of knowledge, a system of symbols and a system of symbolic adaptation strategies that are used to fulfill the aesthetic needs of Cirebon cultural support communities. Triyanto [10] states that culture becomes the setting for a normative of society, including in terms of art, and therefore the culture produces a unique lifestyle through social institutions that saves a set of knowledge models, symbol systems and the provision of

ideal visions that formed. Art, including the glass painting, besides as a guide and adaptive strategy, art is also a symbol, namely a symbol of expression in which there are meanings, ideas, abstractions, opinions, considerations, desires, beliefs, experiences that are understood and shared by the community [11].

The cultural production of glass paintings in the involutive era cannot be separated from the cultural system. In every of glass painting work, there are symbols with visualization of certain aesthetic codes, born from a choice of strategies which are constructed by the relation between habitus, the capital in the domain [12]. Therefore, the aim of this research is to understand the aesthetic codes of glass painting, symbolic power relations in the cultural production of glass paintings and adaptation strategies facing the cultural involution.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach to the type of phenomenology [13]. The research was interdisciplinary in the study of art, sociology, education, and anthropology [14]. The data was taken using observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation checks. Data analysis was performed by using interactive analysis starting from data reduction, data display, verification and conclusions followed by the theoretical substance analysis [15].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. *Aesthetic Code of Cirebon Glass Painting in the Era of Cultural Involution*

The involution era of Cirebon glass painting happens after the 1990s until now, marked by the development progress not by producing the new texts. The cultural production of glass paintings is more likely not to develop out, but tends to "complicate inward", there is no aesthetic and thematic exploration. Making glass paintings revolves around of the old themes and even if there is creativity, then creativity is only artistic and does not give a sense of novelty. This is in line with Clifford Geertz's theory about the agricultural involution that is, in the end, give the birth to the efforts of complicating inward. The achievements of the predecessor painters in the heyday of Cirebon glass painting such as carried out by Siti Siwan, Sudarga puppeteer, Maruna puppeteer, Elang Aruna, Raden Saleh, and the period of rebirth the characters of Rastika, Raden Sugro, and Toto Sunu and also followed by the generation of Bahendi, Bahenda (Gegesik), Salim (Gunungjati), Raffan Hasyim (Kemlaka), it seems that currently there is no new road.

Cirebon glass painter in the era of cultural involution is faced by the condition of the sluggishness of the glass painting market. Nevertheless, the young generation of glass painters is still persevering to make paintings from behind this glass. Their works generally only reproduce the old works from the maestro painters. Intraestically, Cirebon glass painting in the 1990s did not offer a new aesthetic code and only "complicated inward" which was marked by: (1) processing the background of the object painting with various media and techniques to give a different impression and "fear of emptiness", *horror paque*; (2) using the rich color (full color); and (3) using the aesthetic elements or

ornamental motifs (*mega-mendung*, *wadasan*, “*lemahan*” and other flora motifs); and d) choicing of works that are produced generally revolves around old themes, namely puppet (“*ijen*” puppet, “*jejer*” puppet), calligraphy (pictograph calligraphy and “*khat*” calligraphy), and a decorative Trusmian style landscape. Extraesthetically, a strong impression is that the glass painting that is more pursuing to the decorative functions, the function of glass painting as an aesthetic element, with rich and bold color choices (free from grip). This can be seen in the reproduction of the works of pictorial calligraphy born from the *Thariqat* tradition; it seems that there is a value reduction, a reduction in symbolic meaning and a reduction in the magical aura as in the original work..

B. A Symbolic Power Relationships with Cultural Production of Glass Painting in the Era of Cultural Involution

The domain of cultural production of Cirebon glass painting seems to be a fight for the capital to gain the symbolic power [16]. The cultural production domain of Cirebon glass painting still belongs to Rastika (with an enrichment of tradition base) and Toto Sunu (with the technical innovations and aesthetic codes). Both the glass painters are still as the patron of the young painter. Rastika has strong cultural capital (dual role as engraver, puppet player and gamelan puppet musician), the closeness with the royal family who often order the glass paintings “*Srabad*”, raised by Jop Ave as Minister of Tourism and Haryadi Suadi as FSRD ITB academics, has a close relationship with TIM and TMII (social capital), his work that full of orders (economic capital), and recognition as a maestro of Cirebon glass painters (symbolic capital).

Likewise with Toto Sunu, he has the ability to innovate very creatively in the creation of glass paintings and has a creative abilities driven by the mixing of three aesthetic codes, namely the traditional Cirebon aesthetic code, the Banyumasan tradition and modern traditions (cultural capital), the closeness with the political figures and government, gallery and media (social capital), the high prices of works (economic capital), and recognition as a reformer of Cirebon glass painting (symbolic capital). Toto Sunu's creativity was born because of the success in “conception into” of the various cultures that shape it.

Both Rastika and Toto Sunu are the two of Cirebon glass painters who still dominates. The dominance lies in the aesthetic code that is pushed, as well as extra aesthetic aspects, including when talking about the marketing strategy of glass painting. Domination is very soft, almost unnoticed, and therefore there is symbolic power built with sociocultural relations [17] [18].

The practice of cultural production of glass paintings by Rastika and Toto Sunu with its symbolic power has given a series of habitus, a kind of disposition to work for young painters in this involution era. Rastika and Toto Sunu show the practice of domination [19] structuring the structures of aesthetic codes and glass painting techniques, including their marketing strategies, although in different ways. The young painters continue to explore and work endlessly as a form of fostering the cultural capital, achieving social capital. On the other hand, Toto Sunu allows his works to be reproduced by young painters, both in full, and only

borrowed the aesthetically in part, or traced his innovative techniques, is a form of struggle to strengthen the symbolic capital that will strengthen his recognition [20]. Likewise, with Rastika, he allows young painters to reproduce the aesthetic codes of his traditional work and will have an effect on strengthening the symbolic capital which can also be exchanged as economic capital through the purchase of his original works by collectors. Thus, epigonism culture occurs because of the omission, permissive culture, something that is forgiven, as if nothing is wrong because for the painters who have symbolic power it will increase the symbolic capital [21] and economic capital.

The domain of Cirebon glass painting is marked by the cultural production of “reproductive” glass paintings. At least there are two major genres that characterize its development. The first genre is a genre that binds itself with habitus and capital that comes from the traditional flow with Rastika patrons. This genre chooses “*pakem*” in making the glass painting objects, especially those with puppet themes, although with a shift in aesthetic codes. The second genre is a genre that binds itself to habitus and capital that comes from the flow of new technical innovations and aesthetic codes (Toto Sunu). The domain of cultural production of Cirebon glass painting is not only dominated by the two major genres. Always more specific genre variants that fight the capital each other in the cultural domain of Cirebon glass painting. At the beginning what happens in the domain is the ideological (the struggle between tradition and innovation), but later develops into a battle to foster economic capital and legitimacy (symbolic capital) through the expansion of market networks.

Habitus make the glass paintings in the era of involution can be assumed as a mechanism to form the social practices [22], which is characterized by the structured dispositions of cultural production of glass paintings that sell well in the market, many are ordered by the collectors; remember themselves to the style of maestro's work, and neglect values and the symbolic meanings..

C. Symbolic Adaptation Strategy of Cirebon Glass Painters towards Cultural Involution

Glass paintings continue to be produced by the young painters from Cirebon. They carry out symbolic adaptation strategies with various variants of creation strategy patterns. From the intraesthetic aspect, they carry out a mimetic creation strategy, a complicated inward strategy, and an analogy strategy.

The Mimetic strategy is done by exactly imitating the works of maestro painters through plagiarism of designs made on tracing paper or oilpaper. The imitation is carried out in total with the intention of reaching as close as possible to the predecessor glass painter who has had the legitimacy. This imitation is done as a form of cultural integration process [11], understanding the glass painting technique that started from the design (“*plek*”) that can be made by imitating the work of other painters is a structured habitus as a personal experience [23], finalized and realized [24] among young glass painters. The use of *Plek* to make glass paintings in this context is clearly an indication of weak cultural capital. Therefore, this technique is not carried out by Rastika or Toto Sunu who have strong cultural capital and symbolic capital.

The strategy of "complicate inward" is carried out by still linking themselves to themes and visualization of old glass paintings that provides personal "new interpretations". The inspiration that moves it is to continue to give the credit to the work of predecessors who have legitimacy. Giving the new interpretations of old works is done with an awareness of market orientation and digested habitus and cultural capital from the modern glass painters genre, in addition to the tendency of fighting for economic capital in the domain of Cirebon glass painting production.

The analogy strategy is done by using visualization patterns of legitimate glass paintings to be developed by changing the presence of characters in different narratives. But overall the visual patterns are aligned (for example Scene of Kresna advances to the battlefield by riding the train then brings up Srikandi's glass painting advancing to the battlefield by riding a train). This analogy strategy is done with cultural capital and adequate habitus. In addition, this strategy is chosen to be able to enter the domain of glass paintings where the senior painters master and have the symbolic power.

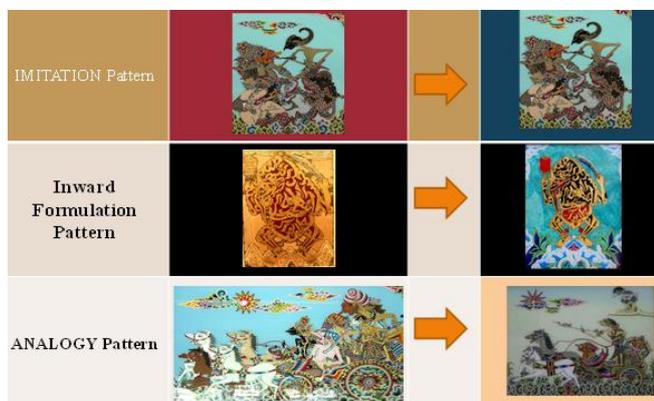


Fig. 1. Creation of pattern strategy for Cirebon glass painting in the era of cultural involution

From the extra aesthetic aspect they do: a) specific creation strategies (creation of glass paintings by paying attention to "pitungan", a kind of Feng shui); b) elitist creation strategy, namely creation based on the special orders (high quality, large size and expensive prices); and c) creation strategies for affordable markets. Symbolic adaptation strategy in preserving the culture in order to deal with the era of cultural involution is carried out with symbolic investment strategies and successive strategies. A symbolic investment strategy is carried out to preserve and enhance social recognition, legitimacy as a glass painter. While the successive strategies are carried out through the transmission, it is by continuing the efforts of parents to make glass paintings

IV. CONCLUSION

Cirebon glass painting has a history of brilliant development, especially when compared to the tradition of glass painting in other regions in Indonesia, such as Yogyakarta, Solo, Muntilan, or Nagasepaha-Buleleng-Bali. However, today Cirebon glass painting experiences to the condition of cultural involution which is characterized by complicating inward, not blooming out and fails to sustain its own economic life, but Cirebon glass painting continues

to grow even though it does not show the significant development.

Cirebon glass paintings in the era of cultural involution have an aesthetic code that complicates inwardly by being marked: still using the old themes from the world of puppet and pictograph calligraphy, fear of emptiness, processing of background objects of painting with various techniques and media, the reduction of symbolic meanings and more pursuing intraesthetic aspects freely.

The glass painters who have adequate capital (cultural, symbolic, and social capital) own symbolic dominance in Cirebon glass painting. There are two genres of symbolic domination that later becomes the symbolic power, namely genres that bind themselves to the traditional values and genres that chooses the path of innovation by reducing the "pakem-pakem" tradition. Glass painters with symbolic mastery let their work to be reproduced by young painters as a form of generosity, but in fact, it is an effort to foster the symbolic capital, recognition, and legitimacy.

The cultural production strategy of glass painting is carried out in the era of cultural involution by making imitation patterns, complicates inwardly and analogy patterns. The creation of glass paintings is carried out for specific, elitist, and economic affordability. Symbolic and successive investment strategies are chosen for the maintenance of glass paintings in the era of involution.

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