

Study of the Function, Meaning, and Shape of Indonesian Batik From Time To Time

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ABSTRACT

Batik is an Indonesian heritage which is recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. As a cultural product that must be read to reveal the deconstruction of functions conceived in accordance with the space and time of the subject, as a logic of deconstruction in understanding the reality of the shift in the subject's understanding of objects that are seen as the reality of creation (production of construction) or recreated. The method used is qualitative with descriptive and interpretative analytical techniques using a humanistic approach. The results obtained from the research are that there are three, namely: (1) functional deconstruction of batik occurs due to traces of changes in meaning and batik in the global constellation. (2) the deconstruction of the function of batik can be understood through the life cycle and batik becomes fashion. (3) the deconstruction of the function of batik has two implications, namely: implications for the popularity of batik and implications for the socio-economic life of the Indonesian people. Batik is no longer only a cultural heritage but can be used as a means to raise the country's foreign exchange-producing economy, by improving batik not just a simple product but has become a fashion trend, where batik has use value and is able to become a national identity, has a high exchange value in the context of global economy and remains a national identity.

Keywords: batik, historical, function, deconstruction

1. INTRODUCTION

The oldest evidence of the use of batik is found in Egyptian culture. The legacy of Egyptian culture has left textiles drawn with the resist technique which is now better known as batik. Findings from ancient Egyptian culture in the 5th century AD, namely from wall paintings in ancient tombs or pyramids, it can be ascertained that these patterned fabrics have been used since 2,500 B.C. It is very likely that the textile motif technique which is now better known as batik was used in Egyptian culture long before the fifth century [47].

While the use of batik in China occurred in the third century as evidenced by the legacy of batik cloth. Relics of patterned cloth have been found in Lao-Lan, Khara Khoto and Kao Chang in the Taufan area. Four silk batik patches are believed to date back to the late Han dynasty in the third century AD [45].

In India, no evidence of batik remains was found, but the evidence found was in the form of paintings on the walls of the Ajanta cave depicting batik techniques, and it can be seen that the painting was from the V AD era [47].

There is no definite evidence when batik appeared in Indonesia, but it can be seen that the skills of the Javanese batik occurred before Java was influenced by Hindu culture [15]. The use of batik techniques at that time existed even though they did not use candles, in West Java people used black glutinous rice porridge to paint ornaments on the cloth, people gave the name batik simbut which meant blankets. During the era of the Tarumanegara kingdom around the fifth century, there were simbut artifacts using ingredients from glutinous rice porridge which were used as barriers [5] [7].

Historical evidence reveals that the oldest batik culture comes from Egypt, but this has been refuted. If batik comes from Egypt, of course Batik will develop in African countries, Persia and so on. The development of batik is also heading east if batik comes from Egypt, then Persian batik motifs and African batik motifs will be influenced by Egyptian ornaments as the place where the ornaments were taken [20].

Keller (1967) only doubts the opinion about the batik technique originating from Egypt. Keller did not mention the origin of batik from which country, Keller's opinion was also strengthened by the use of easy techniques such as batik in primitive cultures. This shows that simple knowledge does not have to come from big cultures such as Egypt, India and China [30].

The use of theory is very important to explain the phenomenon that is still confusing. Each theory will not apply forever but the debate about the origin of batik will end at UNESCO where UNESCO explains that the world's cultural heritage from Indonesia is batik in 2009 in the city of Dubai, United Arab Emirates [21][42][32] [29][2][43][11]. while the term batik comes from the Javanese language, namely the word "amba" which means painting and the word "tik" which means a small dot. Examples exist in other Javanese languages such as "Klitik" (small shop), "klitik" (small lice) and so on [53][47][56][20][41][22][26][18][17][58][13][36].

Deconstruction Had blocked any appeal to such naively "positivist" nation as truth, fact historical evidence, or present accountability for past action, including such action as having written certain texts in a certain set of historical and socio-political circumstances [10]. In terms of "construction", reality is a construction of a new reality as a result of the previous reality. That is, every deconstruction process must be followed by reconstruction or vice versa [59][27]. Deconstruction itself has three theoretical concepts, namely traces, present-absent and different [55][10].

To facilitate the research process, the work process in this study uses a cultural science approach, so the methods used in this research are qualitative analysis methods and descriptive and interpretative data analysis techniques that use a humanistic approach.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in Yogyakarta and Central Java, Indonesia. The purpose of the research is to study the facts of the past, and the present, about the changes that occurred in the batik culture. In the field of social science research, researchers apply qualitative research methods, as the main research tool. Qualitative research methods focus on interdisciplinary social phenomena, to better understand social conditions and social change. The use of interdisciplinary research methodologies that combine historical research, social sciences, semiotics and anthropology can help provide a broader and clearer perspective as a basis for understanding both current and future phenomena on issues surrounding the changing function of meaning and form in batik.

3. BATIK AND ITS FUNCTIONS

For Indonesians, clothing not only functions as a cloth covering the body, but clothes are the hopes or aspirations of life, even clothing also serves to show one's position or position [24]. People with low status wear their clothes to cover and protect them, while those with high status wear their clothes to decorate the body. So cloth is given based on social status so that there are rules for using clothes related to social status. This opinion is reinforced by the opinion of [31] which states that not only from the way of dressing, the type of cloth also shows social identity. Based on the inscription data, men's clothing is usually called *wadihan*. While the clothes for women are called cloth or *ken*. During the *sima* ceremony, at the beginning of the series of events the village leaders who received the *sima* gift from the king, distributed their wealth to members of the community who came from various social strata, one of which was distributed clothing.

Apart from being a marker of social status, clothing is used as a visual communication tool such as hopes or ideals as well as messages to be conveyed by the perpetrator through the language of images or ornaments on the clothes. In Javanese culture, the ornaments found on clothing are usually depicted through batik motifs.

Besides being a means of beautifying, batik also functions as a means of social communication.

Actually, batik ornaments can be used as a symbolic visual communication medium for batik users and their audience [40][19][25][46][33]. Moreover, batik is an art that originates from the eastern region, in eastern art culture which prioritizes meaning over form, because if we make a form it will be lower than its creator, it is better to hone the essence or nature of the main form [38]. This opinion is also supported by the opinion of other experts who state that the meaning and function contained in the batik ornament itself is because the aesthetics of the art object must be concerned with "form" and "content". The problem of form includes Batik ornaments as art objects that must be accompanied by a clear description of form, elements of form, composition and representation, imagination, symbolic, figurative meaning and others. The issue of "content" is about cognitive values, emotional intuitive values, the value of ideas, and the value of one's life [60][42].

Visually, batik decoration is an expression of the state of oneself and the environment of the creator. In traditional batik art the presence of each motif is related to the function of the clothes worn. This has meaning in certain contexts related to the use of batik and when it is worn [57]. While visually, classical batik is divided into two, namely geometric motifs and non-geometric motifs [46].

Evidence of the meaning or visual communication of batik itself can be known long ago. At the time of Majapahit, batik has functioned as a visual communication tool. In the 10th century, the Patih of Majapahit, Gajah Mada, must have worn a batik sarong with *Gringsing* ornaments when leading troops to 'war' because *gringsing* was a symbol of immunity [25][4].

In general, batik is divided into two, namely palace batik with *sogan* colors and coastal batik which tends to be colorful [23]. Palace batik is batik from the Solo and Yogyakarta palaces, while coastal batik is batik from outside the palace. Palace batik was created and developed based on the Javanese philosophy of life [23].

Pakubuwono IX said "wearing clothes and equipment signifies the outer and inner character of the wearer" [28]. This means that batik clothing is not only a cover for the human body (clothing) but something that is a reflection of the Javanese human view of life which is full of human understanding of the supernatural.

In human life in Java, batik is used as clothing in ceremonies related to customs [1]. In Kraton batik the wearer is classified into three, namely batik used for birth ceremonies, marriage and death ceremonies.

First, the ceremony related to birth, there are three sacred events that use batik as clothing that has a visual communication language, including *Mitoni*, *Brokoan* and *Puputan*. In the *mitoni* ceremony (seven months of pregnancy) the batik used is in the form of seven cloths that are used alternately. The seven cloths are *Sidomukti*, *Sidoluhur*, *Sidoasih*, *Sidomulyo*, *Sidodadi*, *Semen Rama*, *Wahyu Tumurun* and *Babon Angrem*. At the *Brokoan* ceremony (birth of a baby) the fabrics used include *Kawung*, *Parang*, *Truntum*, and *Cakar*. Meanwhile, at the *Puputan* ceremony (Planting the placenta into the ground) batik cloths from *Sidomukti*, *Sidoluhur*, *Semen Rama*, and *Wahyu Tumurun* [51].

The second is a ceremony related to marriage where there are two sacred events that use batik which are required to have a deep meaning, namely the *Midodareni* event and the Ijab Ceremony. In the *Midodareni* ceremony (the night before the wedding ceremony) the more batiks used are *Semen Rama*, *Satrio Wibowo*, *Wahyu Tumurun*, and *Turuntum*. Meanwhile, in the Ijab Qobul marriage ceremony, batik cloth from *Sidoluhur*, *Sidoasih*, *Sidomulyo* is used [16][6][51].

The three ceremonies related to death, the cloth used in the death ceremony includes *Kawung*, *Slobog*, or batik that the deceased loved during his life [[16][6][51].

Table 1. Batik Ornaments in Ceremony

	The Ceremony	Ornaments
Birth	Mitoni	<i>Sidomukti</i> , <i>Sidoluhur</i> , <i>Sidoasih</i> , <i>Sidomulyo</i> , <i>Sidodadi</i> , <i>Semen Rama</i> , <i>Wahyu Tumurun</i> , <i>Babon Angrem</i> .
	<i>Brokohan</i>	<i>Kawung</i> , <i>Parang</i> , <i>Truntum</i> , <i>Cakar</i>

	<i>Puput Puser</i>	<i>Sidomukti, Sidoluhur, Semen Rama, Wahyu Tumurun</i>
Marriage	<i>Midodareni</i>	<i>Semen Rama, Satrio Wibowo, Wahyu Tumurun, Truntum.</i>
	<i>Puput Puser</i>	<i>Sidomukti, Sidoluhur, Semen Rama, Wahyu Tumurun.</i>
Death		<i>Kawung, Slobog, or batik that the deceased loved during his life</i>

Rules regarding the use of batik are common because the palace in Java functions as an authority holding Javanese culture [27], in another expression describes the palace as a certain position as a determinant of taste and driving the improvement of batik art [52]. Even in 1769, 1784, 1790, with the decision of the King, it was known that some batiks were only allowed to be worn by the King, the King's family, and the nobility, namely *Sawat, Parang Rusak, Cumikiran and Udan Liris* batik which are commonly called prohibition batik. In its development in the 18th century, the Solo Palace increased the number of prohibited batik from 4 to 7 plus *Semen, Kawung, and Alas-alasan* batiks [28]. The emergence of this prohibition batik is due to the need for existence to show the power and authority of the palace towards the Javanese people [54].

In its development, batik techniques spread to batik outside the palace. Therefore, batik motifs can distinguish the social status of nobles and ordinary people [23]. The existence of foreign businessmen also influenced market tastes, batik was originally only for the royal palace which was sacred, but after the Diponegoro war (around 1830s) the Dutch used batik as a fabric for women's undergarments and men's casual clothes [14].

After the kingdom era ended in Indonesia, the kingdom lost its authority which made batik no longer determined by the kingdom, but batik has become a trading commodity [23]. The condition of the transformation from an agrarian society to an

industrial society is a process of cultural change that is related so that it demands the greatest production and results with the shortest possible process [50]. This makes batik entrepreneurs more daring to innovate [8]. At this time the beginning of the occurrence of batik into industry and trade [51]. Industry and trade are influenced by 4 factors:

1. Innovation of batik technique by using a "stamp" tool. (Susanto, 1973). The cap technique is able to increase production rates [23]
2. The innovation of coloring techniques using "synthetic" colors from Germany brought by Dutch traders [8].
3. The convenience of the "railway" transportation system so that sending batik out of Java is easier [23]
4. The development of the national market that affects to the interior of the island of Java [23]

The process of the batik industry in Indonesia is also influenced by the Dutch political economy strategy. For example, at the end of the 19th century, the *Nederlandsche Handels Maatschappij* (NHM, The Dutch Trading Society) had two missions, namely expanding the market for colonial production and Dutch products in Indonesia, as well as research to accelerate the batik process and increase the efficiency of labor in the batik process [8].

At the end of the 18th century, well-known foreign batik entrepreneurs emerged, three of whom were Godlieb with the Langendryan company, Jonas with the Jonasan company, and Carpentier with the Sekarpance company [51].

Politics also influence changes in the use of batik. Since proclaiming independence in 1945, the concept of a unitary state emerged that influenced the creation of batik [52]. The most striking change in meaning is also due to the influence of Indonesia's first president Sukarno to create "Indonesian batik" works in a new style of batik [23]. Ordered Go Tik Swan to make archipelago batik that combines coastal batik with palace batik. Where the *sogan* or brown palace motif by Go Tik Swan is colored by a coastal color, namely Green [23] so that the meaning of the batik becomes blurred. Even President Sukarno made batik as women's national dress [14].

The most striking change in function occurred in early 1978 where Ali Sadikin as Governor of Jakarta promoted batik as the official dress of state workers, this promotion apparently attracted the interest of

other regions so that batik became the uniform of government agencies [51]. The number of government agencies that use batik causes the state government to make batik shirts a national dress for men in Indonesia. Batik, which functioned as a subordinate cloth in the previous era, in this era was used as shirts, suits and others. The use of batik shirts is able to compete with modern culture that comes from the west because the New Order government has strong authority so that all its policies are obeyed by the community [23]. However, the New Order no longer made batik as a cultural commodity but as an economic commodity and became a trade object on a large scale [27]. The popularity of batik has become worldwide so that batik no longer needs to refer to traditional motifs [23].

Batik as an economic commodity makes batik just a fashion trend, amid the development of modern fashion, batik combines traditional motifs with contemporary motifs [12]. In this condition, people are increasingly being kept away from the real understanding of batik, both from the complicated manufacturing process that requires precision and patience, even to the implied meaning of batik itself.

Deconstruction is a way of rereading texts (objects) including cultural texts (cultural objects), in this case batik is a cultural text that must be reviewed according to the truth of space and time based on exposure and discussion analysis to answer three questions. The first is the deconstruction of the existing functions of batik as a result of industrial pressures and global modernity which makes batik as an economic commodity. Batik labeled as cultural heritage can be seen from the *sekar* universe motif, which includes all forms of bouquet or flower motifs in one sheet of cloth which causes meaning analysis to be lost, only aesthetic form. Second, there is a deconstruction of meaning from fine art (*adiluhung*) into cultural heritage from fine art to fashion. The three symbolic deconstructions of batik which have two applications, namely (1) increasing the popularity of batik as a tourism and fashion commodity in the context of the creative industry, can be seen from the use of batik cloth which is no longer only limited as subordinate cloth or sarongs and headbands, but batik motifs are starting to be used in objects anything. (2) Increasing the pride of the Indonesian nation as a cultural capital in economic development and forming community identity, this can be seen from the absence of rules for the use of batik and no more prohibition of batik

and the rule of batik color makes anyone can wear any batik motif so that no more batik *priyayi*, palace officials and people's batik. So that the ancient rules that were held in the past began to be ignored by the current generation.

4. CONCLUSION

For the government and the people of Indonesia, batik is no longer seen only as a noble cultural heritage or high culture as a superior product globally. Batik has now become a means or cultural capital that can be used to lift the country's foreign exchange-producing economy and as capital in economic development for the next generation to be able to continue to develop, especially in the field of creative economic development and tourism with the theme of culture. With the increase in batik, which is not just a simple product, but batik has become a fashion trend, so that its preservation and modification continue to go hand in hand and in balance. Batik is able to become a commodity that is able to have use value and is able to become a national identity that has a high exchange value in the context of the global economy and batik is still able to become a national identity.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

In this study, it is expected to be able to become the basis for making new batik motifs so that the batik that appears today is no longer just an image crossed on the fabric but the batik created still has the right meaning and function so that it remains a visual language for its users.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the batik craftsmen in the Yogyakarta and Central Java areas who have helped provide the information needed in this research, as well as the dean of the School of Creative Industry Management and Performing Art University North Malaysia and the Chancellor of the Islamic University Nahdlatul Ulama Jepara for their support and permission. which is given.

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