Aesthetic Values of Cocohan or Coblosan Motifs on Tuban Gedhog Handmade Batik

Bramantijo1, M. Junaidi Hidayat2 and Mufi Mubaroh1

1Sekolah Tinggi Kesenian Wilwatikta Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
2Institut Teknologi Adhi Tama Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

Abstract: This paper discusses about the relationship between the cosmological view of society and aesthetic values of "Cocohan or Coblosan" motif on Tuban Gedhog handmade batik. "Cocohan or Coblosan" motif is one of the typical characteristics of traditional handmade batik that is different from the other handmade batiks in Indonesia. The produced colorful dots on the background of Gedhog handmade batik cloth from coloring process by means of punching the waxed cloth on Gedhog handmade batik motif is related to the cosmological view of society in Kerek district, Tuban regency. This study uses ethnography method in order to know the cosmological view of society and visual morphology method in order to reveal the aesthetic values on Gedhog handmade batik through visual elements in the form of motif and motif background. The finding of this study can explain that Cocohan or Coblosan motif on Gedhog handmade batik is only found in motifs having plant stilation element not in geometric ones. The aesthetic values on Gedhog handmade batik with “Cocohan or Coblosan” background have meaning related to the cosmological concept of human being life cycle from birth to death or to the end of life.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gedhog handmade Batik is made traditionally on Gedhog woven cloth, a woven cloth made by women of Kerek area, Tuban Regency, starting from ngantih (spinning cotton) into lawe (thread) then stringing thread using traditional loom into rough textured woven cloth. The produced Gedhog woven cloth will be motif or plain. A motif woven is made with pattern that may guide the Pembatik (maker of batik) to arrange batik motif consisting of cecekan (dots) using geometric composition to compose Satriyan, KijingMiring, Caken, or Krompol motifs. Such woven cloth can be vertical and horizontal pinstripe or the meeting of both lines to be KedeleKecer, JanganMenir, Tutul Bang motifs or parallel lines in the form of Galaran, UlerGaling motifs and other various motifs.

Plain Gedhog woven or without motif is used by Pembatik to make various typical motifs of Gedhog batik having geometric pattern or flora and fauna motif. Generally, Gedhog handmade uses the background (basic color) of putihan (whitish pattern), biruan (bluish pattern), laseman (yellowish brown pattern), bang biron (red and blue patterns), bang tegeran (red pattern) or ireengan (blackish pattern) (Djumena, 2005: 5). On putihan, biron, laseman, bang biron, bang tegeran patterns with flora and fauna motif we can find Cocohan or Coblosan motif (colored fine dots), while ireengan pattern is usually used for geometric motif. This Cocohan or Coblosan is one of the differentiators of varuous motifs of batik from other regions. The process of making batik using Cocohan or Coblosan technique is relatively complicated than the other general techniques of making Batik. The proses of mencocoh or mencoblos (punching) is the technique of making batik by punching the covered batik cloth (a cloth covered by lilin batik/ wax) using thorn or needle on the whole surface of cloth in order to allow the color entered into punched cloth at the time of coloring process. The colored dots from Cocohan or Coblosan (punching) which is integrated with ren-renan (sharp pointed leave or thorny) motif and Hong bird, Sri Gunting bird, Empritbird motif or stilation of other flora and fauna add the exotism on Gedhog handmade batik.

Be advised that papers in a technically unsuitable form will be returned for retyping. After returned the manuscript must be appropriately modified.
Some motifs of Gedhog handmade batik using Cocohan or Coblosan (punching) as the background of motifs are Gedhang Secengkeh, Kembang Kluwih, Kembang Waluh, Ganggeng, and Kolorambat. The traditional cloth motifs of Gedhog handmade batik generally is related to the tradition of Kerek people as agricultural society. According to Sutarto (2008: 1), on agricultural – traditional society that can be found in the most of Indonesian people, tradition and myth will dominantly take part of their daily life. Their traditional ceremonies or art products have the relationship with the success of harvest and the worship of some supernatural powers: The kind of agricultural art showing grateful upon good and abundant harvest will be in the form of flora and fauna, season and water, threat and protection from various supernatural powers to be believed to bring prosperity or destruction to the farmer’s life.

The weaving tradition using Gedhog loom and making batik on woven cloth have been existed for a long time ago for Kerek people in Tuban Regency. From generation to generation Gedhog handmade batik cloth is taken as important component to perform various ritual ceremonies which is deemed as sacred by local society, such as customary activities of the birth, marriage and also the death in undergoing the life cycle. Woven cloth and Batik cloth according to Kerek people’s view have relationship with cosmological view of society of such cloth maker (Heringa, 2010).

2 METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted to reveal the relationship of aesthetic values of Cocohan or Coblosan (punching) motif on Gedhog handmade batik according to the cosmological view of society of creator and user of Gedhog handmade batik in Kerek, Tuban Regency. This study is ethnographic meaning that the researchers interact directly with the object and subject of research, conduct observation, interview, take a note and make documentation to the society social interaction, thoughts and its cultural behavior. According to Putra (2010), Morphology method can be interpreted as a method to see the form and structure of an object or in other descriptive, morphology is a composition and relationship between parts of an object. In this study, visual morphology method is used to explain the meaning contained in Gedhog handmade batik cloth through research to the visual elements owned, such as: motif, decoration, composition and color.

3 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Cotton and NiniThowok Myth

People in Kerek area has tradition of weaving and making batik for a long time ago. The skill of weaving using Gedhog loom and making batik on rough textured Gedhog woven cloth becomes an activity for Kerek’s women in spending their time when they don’t go to the farm or at the time of waiting for planting season. The life of Kerek people is very depended to the farming activities by planting corn, peanut and cotton. The rainfall in Kerek area is relatively low, so the rice plant can only be planted on one season, at the time of rainy season.

The work of processing soil in the farm will be the responsibility of a man, and the woman will assist when they are needed. The tradition of weaving and making batik is very closely related to the agricultural life of Kerek people, especially planting cotton. Cotton is a vital material to make lawe (woven thread), so cotton plant is special treated, starting from processing the soil, planting and harvesting cotton. There are two types of cotton produced by Kerek area, white cotton and brown cotton. The two types of this cotton will be processed by Kerek’s women to be thread as the material of weaving.

Planting cotton is an important part of Kerek’s people tradition, moreover it is covered by myths that are told from generation to generation. Planting cotton is mainly performed by a man, starting from processing the field of cotton up to harvesting. The characteristic of field land in Kerek area is not loose soil, it is clay mixed, so it will be hard in dry season and clayey in rainy season. Cotton plant is planted in the beginning of dry season, when the soil in the field is quite hard and clayey. The cotton seed is inserted into the hole with 6-8 cm deep, the result of Naju process (making the hole by plugging in pointed wooden stick). Naju is conducted by a man, since plugging in pointed wooden stick in the soil needs a
strong power. Then the cotton seed is inserted to the hole with 1 or 2 step of a man or it is known as icir. Inserting the cotton seed to the hole is also conducted by a man, sometimes by a woman, further the land is covered by loose soil mixed with manure, the process of covering is known as hurug.

Figure 2: The process of Naju before inserting the cotton seed into the land (Source of document: Bramantijo, 2019).

Land is identical with a woman and wooden stick called as taju is identical with a man. Naju and icir are the responsibility of a man. Punching the hole in the land by taju is a symbol of lumpang and alu (Javanese pestle). Punching the hole in the land by plugging in taju is like to start the ritual of fertility. Planting cotton is a tradition symbolizing ritual of fertility cycle (the meeting between man and woman). Punching the holes in the land through Naju process is believed by older Pembatik (the informant of study) is closely related to Cocohan or Coblosan (colored fine dots) on the background (basic color) and Gedhog Batik pattern of corakputihan (whitish pattern), corakbiron (bluish pattern), corak bang biron (red and blue patterns), and corak bang tegeran (red pattern). Cocohan or Coblosan (red, blue or blackish blue dots) on Gedhog Batik background have philosophy meaning based on Gedhog Batik allotment in Kerek’s people tradition, namely device in tradition of birth, marriage and death.

For Kerek’s people, cotton as clothing material in the form of woven and batik has important role to the ritual tradition and myths of Kerek’s people life. There is a legend in Kerek’s people told by their ancestor that Kerek has very wide field of cotton, white cotton is seen glittering likes the sky in the night decorated by stars. When the full moon, in the surface of the moon there is an old lady, namely NiniThowok (a sunken eye and cheek old lady) working with her spinning tool. NiniThowok twisted her spinning tool gently and sent the spuned cotton thread to the earth in the form of moonlight.

NiniThowok that is also called as NiniDhiwut or frizzy hair grandma is described as dissident and disobedient figures. Therefore, the corpse of NiniThowok is unaccepted to be buried in the earth and needs jambe tree (Areca catechu), the wood of which can be used as a material of certain part of spinning tool. Further, it is told that NiniDhiwut flew fastly shouting to call the moon. It is believed up to the present time that NiniThowok still live in the moon and maintain her cotton field in the sky. NiniThowok is called “the moonlight” and it is believed as guiding and protecting spirit for Kerek’s people when they find difficulty in spinning. So that before spinning, Kerek’s women in the past time made gift to her as a part of Hindu-Javanese ritual known as BagendoNgalih or “Your Majesty changed form” (Heringa, 2010: 40).

According to Soedarso (1991: 35) for traditional farmer, soil fertility is not adequate achieved by improving the new agricultural system, but by invisible powers. Therefore, it can be interpreted that agricultural people in order to fertile their rice field, besides making an effort by logical methods, making contact with supranatural powers (adikodrati) in the form of ceremony or salvation is required. The meaning of the legend of NiniThowok becomes the idea of cloth system creation in Kerek area. This does not stand alone, but constitute a part of the very complex systems that is related each other to many aspects of life in society.

3.2 Cocohan or Coblosan Pattern and Motif on Gedhog Handmade Batik in Ritual Tradition

Gedhog handmade Batik cloth with Cocohan or Coblosan motif all this time becomes an important competent of performing ritual ceremony that is sacred by Kerek’s people, such as ritual of birth, marriage and death. The relationship of Gedhog woven batik cloth and ritual tradition of Kerek’s people can be seen through the events as here under.

On Birth ritual, the baby is usually wrapped by putihanGedhog cloth with blue flora and fauna Cocohan or Coblosan motif, it is believed that the birth of baby in the world is in a holy condition, and based on the faith of Kerek’s people, white symbolizes birth and holy.
On marriage ritual, Gedhog woven cloth and Gedhog batik is used as the dowry, the use of Gedhog woven batik has criteria as follows:

(i) on the ceiling (the upper part) of aisle is installed lelangit cloth with Rengganis motif dominated with cecekkan (dots) and kitiran patterns (white stripe forming rotating propeller) and biron (bluish background) meaning angel in heaven. This cloth symbolizes a permit request to the ancestors (Heringa, 2010: 57).

(ii) At the time of sacred marriage ritual procession, the bride and bridegroom wear Gedhog batik cloth with Ganggeng motif symbolizing unity. It is interpreted by Kerek’s people that the couple will be united in a married life forever.

Further, after performing Salinan (changing the cloth) ceremony, the bride and bridegroom will seat on the aisle and meet the guests, in this procession, the couple wears laseman batik cloth with bang tegaran (red pattern) color combination and blooming flowers and opened flew away birds. This motif symbolizes that after a marriage, a woman will become the new family member of a man and enter to the man’s house (Heringa, 2010: 54). The bridegroom wears kelambirasukan constituting formal wear with BolongBuntuPotongInten motif symbolizing honor and majesty, gringsing trousers with KembangManggar motif (gringsing in Javanese means fight the disease) that is interpreted by Kerek’s people as protection for the user. Overall, this suit is symbolized as couple’s loyalty in undergoing the lifecycle (Heringa, 2010:57).

Death is a very sacred ritual for Kerek’s people. Woven batik cloth with irengan (dark blue) pattern and geometric motif is worn by almost all the Kerek’s people, which is related to the end of lifecycle by society and located in the north. The clothes are dipped in the mud for the last time as analogue of planting the human body in the land.
the casket, then 3 different colorsayut cloth (bagrod, pipitan, and irengan) will be put in different directions on the previous cloth. After completing buried ceremony, the cloth will be brought home to be saved as a heirloom that will be given to the female child as the marriage gift, therefore such cloth will be owned from generation to generation (Heringa, 2010: 68).

3.3 Aesthetic Value on Gedhog Handmade Batik and Cosmological Concept for Kerek’s People

The beauty of Gedhog handmade batik is not only seen from the pattern and motif composition spreading in sheet of cloth materially, but also from the full philosophy meaning. According to Heringa, (2010: 42) the developed Gedhog woven and batik in Kerek area have aesthetic values which is related to the cosmological view of Lifecycle. From the aspect of visual morphology, Gedhog batik is an artefact in a culture which each element represents the value and meaning of a culture through visual as presented. An aesthetic value of this Gedhog batik from Kerek by Heringa (2010; 43) is also illustrated having relation with the concept of wind direction that is believed that the age of human being and his life is like cycle moving clockwise, with North symbolizes a complete, East symbolizes a hope of fertility. Using such criteria, a woman expecting her first child will wrap her body tightly with white bengkung in order to have power to protect her child when reaching seven month pregnancy, and to support the mother’s back because it is wrapped tightly from the hip up to chest, like a corset. When the baby was born, he/ she will be wrapped with whitish Gedhog batik cloth. White color based on their knowledge symbolizes the beginning of life where human is born in a clean and holy condition.

When a girl reaching akilbalik age, an age that is deemed ready to be married off by old people will announce her status by wearing sayut cloth with bright red pattern and fine red dots Cocohan or Coblosan background. This stage is symbolized with East direction. At the time of marriage, the bride will wear lurikkembangan or batik with red Ganggeng(algae/ seaweed) on the white surface. For a married woman but having no children yet will wear jarit blush background (biron) and red sayut pattern. When becoming a mother, a woman will wear blue red pattern scarf with blue Cocohan or Coblosan background symbolizing two descendants who live side by side (Ciptandi, et al., 2016: 270-271). The color of red and blue is believed as a color symbolizing fertility and life. This stage is symbolized by South direction. The pattern of red and blue with dark blue Cocohan or Coblosan background symbolizes the age and unfertile age, it is symbolized by West direction. In the end of life, a woman will wear blakish cloth with geometric motifs as a symbol of the end of life cycle, it is symbolized by North direction.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Gedhog handmade batik is an artefact of traditional culture covered by cosmological view and aesthetic values. Starting from the process of planting cotton as the main material of making lawe (thread), creating...
pattern and motif up to the use are close related to the myths and ritual tradition of its society. Gedhog hand writing batik is a reference and expression of cosmological concept and firm aesthetic for Kerek’s people in the past, as well as the typical identity that must be preserved so the agricultural life’s view can be maintained. Gedhog batik with Cocohan or Coblosan background is one of the elements in cosmological concept that is expressed on a sheet of cloth, the existence of which is started to be forgotten because of the efficiency factor of production process, therefore it must be preserved as the integral part of Gedhog handmade batik motif.

REFERENCES


Putra, Darma. 2010. Pengolahan Citra Digital, Penerbit Andi, Yogyakarta
