

Stylation of Women's Batik Crafters in *Mbok Semok* Motif as a Visual Idioms of Javanese Cultural Change

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Keywords: Cultural Change, Girilayu, Javanese, *Mbok Semok*, Visual Idioms.

Abstract: Javanese people has a special character in conveying their feelings which makes majority of their cultural products related to philosophically meaningful codes and symbols. Abstraction of Javanese's mindset and paradigm is visualized on their daily life supporting objects. Stylized female figures is regarded as novelty since most batik motifs with classic characters display patterns and contents (isen-isen) in stylation forms of flora, fauna, and natural elements such as water, clouds, wind, fire and mountains. Stylation of batik women crafter on *Mbok Semok* batik motif is a cultural change symptom in Girilayu. This study aims to: (1) find out the background of batik motif realization as a visual idiom of Javanese in Girilayu; (2) describe the meaning of visual idioms from Javanese philosophical perspective on *Mbok Semok* batik motif; and (3) analyze cultural changes which occur in Girilayu community from *Mbok Semok* batik motifs visualization. Change is a dynamically happening and flowing necessity which finds its shape in Javanese today. The emergence of batik women crafter figure stylation in Girilayu on *Mbok Semok* motif is an abstraction of space recognition on women authority as well as their domestic territory. *Mbok Semok* for Girilayu community is a symbol of strength and fertility.

1 INTRODUCTION

Image visualization or image embodiment currently reaches the peak of its meaning. Image or visual language is universal. The image of a mountain is agreed as a mountain by all inhabitants of the world, and it is only distinguished by the way of mentioning or naming it based on differences in language sound. Social media has deconstructed the order of the society in virtual and aesthetic zones, and given space for dissemination without any barriers. Ethics is controlled directly by lay users who are agree to be called *netizens* (cyber or internet users) by using norms, values, and understandings from various perspectives and schools; sometimes it seems too vulgar regardless of the context and competence. Expressions, symbolization, criticisms, idioms, speeches, figures of speech that were initially limited to an imagination, writing, and oral expression; are currently able to be implemented in image or visual language as a visual idiom (Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport, 2016: 3-33, 505). Defining and interpreting visual idioms lead to any possibility of multi-interpretations. Thus, it stimulates the

emergence of conflict in varying degrees depending on its emerging intensity. All visualization forms have similar purpose to convey messages and meaningful expressions without words (Allison & Blair, 2000: 256-300).

Javanese people have long understood visual idioms in symbolic systems and in the world of complex layered symbols from their cultural perspective and interpretation. The Javanese's subtle inner character and attitude have formed language as a tool of communication which is full parables and analogy. Visual idioms become appropriate form as a medium of expression which is right on target and without patronizing. The highest level is the visualization of *ma'rifa* (*makrifat*) level since the meaning is multi-interpretations, but there is an agreement in scientific texts as a guide for academic discussion.

Western researchers have conducted many studies in the reading of Javanese community visual symbols in sociological, anthropological, and philosophical perspectives. Then it is described broadly using semiotic, semantic, and holistic approach. The novelty substance is always found even only from one classical sign and symbol of Javanese community.

Form consistency makes it easier if it is repeatedly done as is rich in references. On the contrary a sacred form is difficult to dig due to its minimal data sources. This is a real evidence that the system of Javanese thought goes beyond the times. Thus, the definition remains relevant to the era change and phenomena.

Cultural change in Javanese community can be viewed from simple aspects. One of them is through the way people produce, reproduce, explore and conserve cultural products. Sign and symbols as visual idioms are found in Javanese community artifacts; such as *keris* (wavy dagger) ornaments, *wayang* (puppets), house buildings, clothing and *batik*. The latest one is specifically independent and is not always included in the category of clothing. Instead it is included into artwork of *wastra* (traditional cloth) with implicit and explicit meaning. In addition, *batik* has a transcendent region as a functional contemplative medium. Besides, batik artists (makers) understand the process of putting the wax using *canting* (special tool to make handmade batik) on *mori* (cotton cloth used in making *batik*) cloth is not merely about drawing dots and lines for economic and commercial needs, but also a heart and mind balancing activity against any fast, temporary, and false things.

Conveying meaning indirectly by using a rotating language pattern leads to a small talk and impractical character impression. The Javanese's perspective views this as a polite attitude of a karmic norm. Conveying an intention in frontal and vulgar manners is considered as impolite and a norm violation. Idioms specifically stimulate language creativity and expressive power. Moreover, visual realm bridges the embodiment of idioms into an interesting study. The form of visual idioms is influenced by character, norms, values, culture, and even geographical conditions. The vocabulary of coastal communities will be different from those who live in the mountains when they refer to 'sights'. Coastal communities will refer to the blue sea as a sight; while the mountain people will refer it to green forest. In addition, Javanese idioms are mostly from the palace as a center for culture and social institutions. A commoner is not permitted to speak by directly looking at the king's face and conveying his intentions using direct language. Thus, idiom functions to soften in conveying one's intention and as an attitude mirror of educated and culture men.

Javanese people categorize *culture area* to emphasize men's characters based on their living areas, i.e. *pepesisiran* (coastal people) and *wong nggunung* (mountainous people). Coastal and mountainous areas form contrastive characters and

different economic support systems. The livelihood for coastal area community is fishing (being fishermen) and farming for mountainous community. Coastal community's character which is open influences the way they think. They possess a habit of studying and discussing. The atmosphere of the sea as a destination for visitors from other islands and continents (when air transportation is not yet available) influences their attitudes and makes it easy for coastal community to accept new dynamic values and culture. Coastal people often call themselves as suburban (*wong pinggir*) community or *saminism* which refers to a group of less civilized community. Mountainous people, on the other hand, tend to be quiet, reflective and contemplative. This contemplative atmosphere may be created due to the cold and calm climate conditions. The presence of strangers is so carefully addressed that sometimes the visitors will be associated with good or bad omens. The visitors are usually the distant messengers who convey information from the king or kingdom as the center of administration. A popular term in mountainous Javanese community emerges from this phenomenon, i.e. '*adoh queen cedak watu*' (far from the king, close to the rock) which means they live far away from the ruler but close to the mountain (nature) (Endraswara, 2005: 17-19).

It is interesting and significant to study the way or the attitude of Javanese coastal and mountainous communities in responding to the development and sophistication of technology, especially for *wong gunung* (mountainous people). The regenerative movements of Javanese mountainous people are rarely detected because of their closed and selective characters. The way people visualize messages and express imaginative perspectives through visual idioms on their daily activities absorbed as traditions can be used as indicators of cultural change. Meanwhile, *batik* is an explorative object which is endlessly peeled and dug in multi-perspective corridors as the supporting components involved are massive and plural. The new form of motifs, patterns, and *wimba*(space or appearance) regeneration on batik is expected to open a new perspective on how community groups respond to the speed of the era through idiomatic visualization. One of the proper methods for exploring the perspective of motif development in community without intervention is visual ethnography. (Ida, 2016: 4-9). Speakers who are used as research subject are relevant to the data regarding the changes in Javanese culture through visual idioms on batik motifs occurring in Girilayu.

2 DISCUSSION

Cultural change of a community is a complex series composed of several supporting elements. This study observes this phenomenon from different aspects on a condition of cultural change in traditional community based on the phenomena existing in industrial revolution 4.0 era which rely on speed and technological progress, i.e. the power of images or visual as a means of expression. Previous studies' discussions and results mostly review the existence of forms, types, objectives, and concepts of visual idioms from social media, while changes in community from visual idiom aspects of *wastra* (traditional cloth) tradition have never been deeply studied.

Culture along with its all products and side effects always moves dynamically, spirally and repetitively. Static condition is merely the cause of unresistant and disappearing cultural forms. This is due to the fact that the perpetrators or regeneration move slowly and gets slower until they stop at an end point. This frequently occurs to traditional cultural products with standard rules and which are less permissive or intolerant to any change.

Javanese community has a dynamic and adaptive character. Besides, Javanese culture can still be found today even though only in a different presentation. Commerciality factor seems to influence format changes for tourism, entertainment, education and economic commodities. Adjustments to these changes which at least shape the new face of Javanese culture aims at sustainability, regeneration, and unbroken existence. Cultural representation which is continuously affirmed will conceptually permeate. Consequently, the spirit of values, norms and meanings will still be understood across generations.

2.1 Visual Idioms

Visual idiom is defined as images used to insinuate or criticize. The implied meaning is sometimes hidden and difficult for some to understand. Moreover, visual idioms are intended for specific (special) contexts and groups. This term has existed based on Greek culture to express messages aesthetically through works of art. Visual idioms wrap and present their true intentions using a better perspective, through form, color, material, and texture (Barasch, 1997: 27-29).

Art psychology likens visual idioms as a metaphorical figurative speech which is formed into such works of art as paintings, sculptures, and even moving images. There are two meanings of visual idioms in this case, namely idiomatic expressions and

language constituents as semantics. The metaphor expressed is deeply and philosophically meaningful. Visual idioms psychologically reveal and describe a person's character and mental state (spiritual) as well as represent the occurring conditions and atmosphere in a community, group, or even society. Manifested visualization is guided by messages conveyed in idioms containing metaphors (Cacciari & Glucksberg, 1995: 284-286).

Artwork is a language practice representation of ideas through new expressions. The message and meaning conveyed by the language in the artwork will be understood through intense observation and appreciated as an aesthetic moment. An artwork in this context is a manifestation of ideas through any personal style as an expressive physical language manifestation of messages, ideas, feelings, and anxiety. Visual idioms in this case are simple languages of a broad metaphor (Mariantio, 2014: 224-225, 238-240).

The process of forming visual idioms is related to the way of a designer, artist, and creator thinking. The order of designing, stimulating ideas, and imagining process is then accommodated with a series of equipment supporting visualization. Differences usually appear in the goals to be conveyed and in the final manifestation form. All possess similar moral responsibility to build intimate interactions and functions with the appreciators and users (Lawson, 2007: 25-27).

Visual language is the closest term to visual idioms. Form or visual is simpler and universal than words. In addition, different meanings can be interpreted from one word by adjusting the context, concept, atmosphere, the way in conveying, intonation, and competence of the speaker or the addresser; while form (visual) is simpler since one form encapsulates various words. Binary opposition is an appropriate relationship to analogize words and forms. These two things are opposite yet complementary and are able to stand alone but depend on each other (Tabrani, 2012: 29). The universality of visual language in its development is not effective and precise in its meaning when using particular perspectives regarding culture and habits of a community which are formed sociologically (Tabrani, 2002: 55-56).

2.2 Cultural Change

The word change actually becomes part of its own cultural meaning. Culture is a complex series of community's activities results which continuously repeats through time. Flexibility nature of a culture

allows it to grow and change according to the conditions of the community. Cultural diversity is formed due to various factors and conditions. According to Bakker the term culture originates from Sanskrit *abhyudaya* which means good results, progress, and prosperity. Edward Tylor defines culture as a whole complex which is formed from knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, and habits (Uhi, 2017: 3-4).

Culture changes due to collisions, conflicts, and problems. The problem mentioned here does not always mean something negative, yet it is a condition which requires the best format due to the existing strong influence and dominance of a product. Moreover, the cause of this occurrence is the nature of 'move' in the culture itself internally, for example an advance in technology leads to the emergence of its derivative variables such as social media (as already mentioned in the introduction). The definition of change itself is something referring to transition and exchange activities.

There are three possibilities if a cultural change occurs, i.e. there are components which will be maintained as they are still relevant and strong, some are side by side with the new one (acculturation), and some will be replaced or adopting the new value (assimilation, adaptation, accommodation) (Liliweri, 2018: 266- 273). Acculturation itself is a mechanism (defense or resistance system) of cultural changes which raises several problems, including additions, syncretism (fusion), substitution (replacement), deculturation (emergence), and rejection (refusal) (Kodiran, 1998: 87 -91).

Cultural change can be defined as an alternative when the condition faces two or more similarly valuable and materially beneficial choices. The choice is free and the logical consequences are the responsibility of the perpetrator. When changes occur based on these alternatives, a series of norms in the community indirectly contribute to take part in supervision (Bakker, 1990: 54). The choices made by the community will form classifications, strata, and class. In addition, this classification is formed and determined internally for social supervision. The community will give different treatment in responding anyone who speaks using fast or slow intonation (Bourdieu, 2010: ix).

2.3 Characters of Javanese Community

Java, to limit the elaboration in this discussion, refers to Central Java. Based on the history of the discovery of the largest Javanese fossil along the Bengawan Solo River, Java is referred to *Homo Soloensis*. A

brief description of Javanese community views the Javanese as people who are subtle in speech and attitude, keeping their intention by using layered speech delivery. However, when their self-esteem is disturbed, they will be able to beat back the opponent without degrading or underestimating. *Semar* character in *Mahabharata* story is a description of Javanese community. *Semar* which is derived from 'samar' which means pseudo, vague, and unclear; is a representative of the Javanese character whose way of communicating or conveying their intentions by being veiled or hidden, and preferring to not being forthright.

Javanese community relies on their feeling and knowledge of *titen* (remembering), so it is not appropriate to call them as lack in logic since they are too reliant on feelings. The knowledge of *titen* uses calculations based on seasonal cycles and natural conditions, so that Javanese people also use scientific and quantitative thinking concept. *Pranatamangsa* (calculation of seasons) and *weton primbon* (birth-based calculations) are currently still used in agriculture even though the climate condition has changed due to global warming. Moreover, people still use these calculations before holding some life cycle ceremonies such as marriage, birth and death to determine good days and to avoid *naga dina* (bad days) and calamity or disaster, even though there are also assumptions and beliefs of some people believing that all days are good and it depends on the purpose and effort in its implementation (Endraswara, 2005: 7-31, 115-130).

Life cycle ceremony in Javanese community has a noble goal as a reinforcement of sustainable cultural values and norms. The current commodification of traditional ceremonies for commercial and entertainment purposes must be considered from educational glasses as a way to support the community in maintaining its sustainability since living traditions are those which sustain or in Javanese terms it is popularly called *urip iku kudu urup* (life must be alive, life must be give advantages to others) which means living a life, one must work (work, make an effort, try) (Purwadi, 2005: 1-3).

2.3.1 Modern Javanese Community

The development of technology, globalization, and information has reconstructed all life aspects. Changes occur especially in community's attitudes to adapt (adaptation) and follow the offer of continuing progress and sophistication. Javanese community now faces some choices in positioning themselves and building personal images. The alternatives

include three styles, i.e. old, middle (medium, combination of modern), and modern. Each certainly has its own advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, these three styles live side by side in Javanese community today and complement each other's shortcomings.

Old Javanese consists of *sepepuh* (the elders) and community leaders who still apply traditional Javanese values along with its normative rules. Middle Javanese is a generation which combines the values of conventional traditions and moderate mindsets. Modern Javanese is the latest generation born in the millennial era. Javanese blood is only genetically understood and recognized by their generation of modern Javanese as their origin. However, they do not strictly apply normative Javanese rules. Middle Javanese usually acts as a mediator of conflicts between the old and modern Javanese. Often the old Javanese people refer to the generation of modern Javanese as people who are not *njawani* (do not behave like Javanese) as they tend to be expressive and almost without symbols. On the contrary, modern Javanese will consider old Javanese as a conservative and insensitive (to global era) community group.

Javanese world empirically is a transcendental region of typical Eastern thinking; not only black and white, but hidden in gray areas (middle world, *liyan*) which is seen not to balance or it is often referred to as *madya* (middle, in between). The middle or *madya* philosophy puts the mind and soul of Javanese in balance, no more or less. *Madya* (middle) is between the beginning (*purwa*) and the end (*wusana*) ((Endraswara, 2005: 4-5, 54-55). Today's Javanese is the result of concoctions from various cultures which were present in the past, like pots which is used to mix various kinds of ingredients and seasonings. Javanese mentality is thinking before acting, acting with feeling (taste), and self-control is a true teacher. The principle of harmony is used by Javanese community to absorb and interpret modernity with consistent mental qualities (Permanadeli, 2015: 95). Javanese is *Suwung* (empty); a condition described by the Javanese spiritualist as the peak of calm, tranquility and peace. The reality merges in the dimensions of space, time, and can be felt. In addition, the Javanese who have reached the conditions of being *suwung* will turn into a soul who will never be (are not easily) caught up in the life dynamics which are full of ambition, obsession, and conflict. KGPAA Mangkunegara IV describes it at *Serat Wedhatama* in *Pupuh Pangkur* (first) 13th verse, as the ultimate reality which can be understood when exploring ourselves, the attitude of a meditative soul and

connected with a contemplative atmosphere (Dewantoro, 2017: 9-20).

2.3.2 The Position of Today's Javanese Woman

Javanese women are *kanca wingking* (sleeping partner) and passive, obedient, and submissive to husband (men). This opinion is spoken frontally by a layman who is fascinated by the history of the past social institutions in Javanese community. In kingdom era, the role of Javanese women was very vital in helping formulate decisions and policies, even give influence on when the right time to launch an attack to the enemy. One of the stories telling the greatness of Javanese women is based on the greatness of Matah Ati (the empress of KGPAA Mangkunegara I) who became warlord of *estri* (female) army in the early guerrilla era during the initial establishment of the Mangkunegaran Praja (Mangkunegaran Kingdom) (Carey & Houben, 2018: 37-43, 63). The position of Javanese women is currently changing, not only by dint of R. A. Kartini who promoted emancipation, but external and internal factors in Javanese community also contribute to social reconstruction in Javanese women's daily role and in the development of the wider community.

The ideal concept of Javanese women in the past and present is significantly different. In the past, attractive women are those who can run 3M, namely *macak* (make up), *manak* (give birth), *masak* (cook) or are good at dressing up, giving birth to healthy and good children (fertile), and cooking. The domestic areas of past Javanese women were kitchen, wells and bed. The position of the weak, minority, and without choice appears from the area of activities provided for them. Sophisticated technology, international egalitarian human rights agreements for women, adequate facilities, and supportive information flows have changed the position of women to be equally with men. Awareness to be educated and schooled changes the insights and horizons of Javanese women to give more contribution to the community without leaving their natural role. The ideal concept of Javanese women today is to be highly educated and still be able to play the role of mother and wife for the family, as well as the citizens and servants for the community.

Women are recognized as a key component of sustainability. The nature of women meant here is reproductive function to give birth to children as regeneration and as a balancing axis of masculinity. The nature of *asah* (giving mental education), *asih*

(fulfilling emotional need), *asuh* (giving medical and health need) in women naturally functions as a school to prepare a better generation in the future. The peak of Javanese women idealization is when they become mothers, have passed beyond hormonal and emotional fluctuations for 270 days (9 months), feel the pain which is equivalent to 20 bones broken together during childbirth, and give all the soul, body, and time during breastfeeding without other intake for 6 months and it continues until the child ages 2 years old. This *laku* (the way/right behavior) or natural processes confirms women as strong beings in their roles. Javanese community adopts the value of women's strength and verbally visualizes it as *simbok* or *mbok* (mother). Daily life is a functional area of Javanese women. Thus, the term *mbok-mboken* (homesick) emerges which refers to feeling close to mother to assume a feeling of longing to return home or when returning home means to feel mother's love again. Once a Javanese woman was an object, but now Javanese woman has turned into a subject. Nevertheless, Javanese women still need a stronger figure naturally to protect and guard, men, beyond their power and portion of domestic responsibility to emancipatively conduct their ideal social role (Permanadeli, 2015: 231-245).

2.4 Batik and Girilayu Community

The function of batik was originally known as clothing with special motifs which were used by the royal family and nobles. Certain batik motifs are called *larangan* (means prohibitions) since they may only be worn by kings, officials, and nobles with certain positions; and commoners (ordinary people) are not allowed to wear such motifs. Batik in Javanese is called *seratan*, which is derived from the word *serat*, which means writing, because the entire batik process initially used *canting* (special tool to make batik) as a substitute for pen with liquid wax ink. Motifs are made on a sheet of cloth as writing on a paper. *Seratan* is assigned to reveal the beauty and display implied messages through ornamental meaningful patterns. Batik skills possessed by Javanese community are based on hereditary stories about the story of the king of Jenggala Kingdom named Lembu Amiluhur who married a noble daughter of Coromandel Peninsula (a region around India today). The queen learned to make *batik*, weave, and paint from the palace masters while waiting for the king who was wandering and hunting (Adnyani, 2017: 21-52). The use of batik cloth as clothing was also written in Raffles' notes which were completed into a collection of writings in 1813 (2014: 58-59).

Wastra (traditional cloth) covered by wax dyeing using *canting* is described as a medium of symbolic narration to express their soul from a certain point of view and visual ideology (Situngkir, 2016: 22-23).

The varying characters in each batik enclave show the attitudes and guidelines of the community. In addition, geographical indications influence the way to interpret cultural activities and create identities. Coastal batik is rich in color and dynamic as the characters representative of dynamic, open and expressive community. Outback and palace batik (classic, *larangan motifs*) are otherwise; abstract, stilative, and dominated by firm color tones such as black, white, cream, dark brown, and dark blue (*sogan* nuances; batik motifs with brown color dominance); character representative of a community who are introvert, careful in behaving, and having a layered system in conveying messages. This study focuses on observations in Girilayu; an administrative village area with a contemplative aura applying visual idioms to the work of *wastra* (batik) as a form of mental expression (Tabrani, 2012: 100-102). Girilayu, a fertile village at the foot of the Lawu mountain, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, has developed into a batik area with a far from commercial impression. The cool atmosphere of mountain air, surrounded by forests and open productive plantation land causes the movement, style and rhythm of the community's activities to run slowly and modestly.

At the beginning of the guerrilla struggle led by *Pangeran* (Prince) Sambernyawa (KGPAA Mangkunegara I), Girilayu became a place of *tetirah* (rest), a place which was designed to be alone (seclude to get quiet), rest, and meditate. The location of this *tetirah* was chosen by Prince Sambernyawa as his eternal resting place based on the hints or *wangsit* (divine inspiration) he received on one of the night during his hermitage. This place is known as Astana Mangadeg. Girilayu is now still visited by various groups for pilgrimages, academics to trace Prince Sambernyawa glorious track record from political, social, historical, economic and cultural aspects, as well as biodiversity experts who make this place to identify the preserved and well protected pristine natural biodiversity.

Dynamic cultural changes occurring in Girilayu community can be characterized through several things. One indication of this change is in the visualization of batik motifs as an idiomatic expression of the community. From 2015 to 2016 new batik motifs emerged which still retained classical elements in terms of patterns, colors, and themes. Batik makers previously only made batik motif by

orders and became *sanggan* (*canting* workers) from well-known batik companies from Solo, Central Java. The persistence of Girilayu community in maintaining hereditary traditions unconsciously forms the work of idiomatic *wastra* to be an interesting subject to study. *Mbok Semok* batik motif is a work of *wastra* with strong visualization featuring visual idioms. The stylization of batik motif called *Mbok Semok* (as well as the name of the motif) raises a strong character of Girilayu community on one hand. On the other hand, this leads to a changing culture of Javanese community in repositioning women in social strata.

2.5 Visual Idioms of *Mbok Semok* Batik Motif and Cultural Change of Girilayu Community



Figure 1: *Mbok Semok* batik Motif.

Activities of making Batik have become the daily life of Girilayu women. Applying wax using *canting* on a piece of cloth was originally a means of contemplative recreation. The scent of the hot wax and the curvy lines and dots on the white *mori* (cotton cloth to make batik) are collective visual memory which accumulates across Girilayu generations. *Canting* breed has genetically flown in Girilayu women. The fertile area at the foot of the Lawu Mountain was originally built as a *tetirah* (retreat) for Prince Sambernyawa (KGPAA Mangkunegara I). It was then continued to be the eternal resting place for the Mangkunegaran rulers. There are currently three large tombs in Girilayu region, i.e. Astana Mangadeg (KGPAA Mangkunegara I, II, and III tombs), Astana Girilayu (KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, V VII and VIII tombs), and Astana Giribangun (the grave of the family of second President of Indonesia; HM Soeharto. Mrs. Tien Soeharto was a descendant of KGPAA Mangkunegara IV and thus she had the right to build a family tomb in this area). The correlation between the existence of the tomb and the activity of

making batik is very strong. Girilayu batik is a descendant of the caretaker of the three large tombs. Batik women existing in Girilayu were originally the wives of the tomb's caretaker. They were batik makers of Mangkunegaran palace who accompanied their husbands' duties as caretakers and keeper of the tombs in Mangadeg and Girilayu. The king gave them land to be cultivated into productive plantations as a side activity. The products of the farm are partly consumed by themselves and the excess is sold to meet their daily needs. Their salaries were earned from selling the crops; because the trust of the Mangkunegaran palace as the caretaker was the greatest asset they had and this significantly formed loyalty in serving as *abdi dalem* (royal servants).

Tirakat (spiritual self abstinence or calmness used by Javanese as a medium of communication to God), *laku of* being apprehensive, and fasting are to be a ritual done by the tombs' caretakers and their descendants, as inner and sense workings, and lust controller. They continued the tradition of *tetirah* carried out by Prince Sambernyawa in that place. The climate and geographical conditions which are cool and quiet definitely support such activities of soul balancing in the Javanese perspective. Controlled lust makes Girilayu community, including batik makers, become sensitive to the surrounding environment. Their sense becomes sensitively trained to read and capture the signals sounded by the nature, for example they will know that there is an upcoming distress and disaster know from natural signs. Like a mother and their children, the nature is the mother and Girilayu community is the children. They avoid conducting bad behaviour and destroying the nature in order not to make the mother of the earth get angry since the life of Girilayu people depends on the earth and its natural products.

Girilayu's past history as a *praja* (an administrative authority under kingdom or as provincial level) region of Mangkunegaran, or it precisely belongs to Matesih (it is currently a sub district and Girilayu is a village in Karanganyar Regency, Central Java) has left traces of values and norms of *Tri Dharma* teachings from KGPAA Mangkunegara I (Prince Sambernyawa), which it now continues to be a guideline for the life of the people living in the community. *Tri Dharmawhich* contains wise and philosophical advice including *rumangsa melu handarbeni* (sense of having ownership), *wajib melu hangrungkepi* (must participate in maintaining, preserving, caring for), and *mulat sarira hangrasa wani* (always do introspection or self correction) is currently being used as a life motto particularly in Karanganyar

Regency area. This teaching is deeply rooted in the subconscious of Girilayu community, although it is not orally expressed and taught. The enthusiasm for continuing batik tradition as well as working with contemplative feeling is the reality of the *Tri Dharma* teachings, especially at the point of *wajib melu hangrungkepi* which means people must participate in maintaining, preserving, caring for the culture. Conservative and sustainable nature is deeply implied in this teaching.

A group of batik women in 2016 took the initiative to create a typical Girilayu batik motif. Since the first generation of Girilayu batik, batik makers in Girilayu have never created a batik motif specifically showing the identity and character of Girilayu. Then, several motifs were created with the idea of basic superior potentials of Girilayu such as fruit, vegetables, tourist sites, typical village markers, and flora-fauna as the richness of village biodiversity. *Mbok Semok* batik motif becomes a point of interest among others (see Figure 1). This is the only batik motif displaying human stylistic figures in the style of classical batik. This motif takes geometric pattern elements of *parang* motif which are replaced by aesthetic compositions of *canting* deformations. In addition, *sido* motif is replaced by batik women stylization. Then, it is also completed with *Tri Dharma* monuments and circular shields from *canting* deformations like *ceplok* motif character.



Figure 2: Stylization of batik women figure in *Mbok Semok* Batik Motif

Two attractive forms appear in *Mbok Semok* representing the unconscious ideology of art in the idiom of batik motif pattern, i.e. motif stylization of batik women and *Tri Dharma* monuments. Stylization of batik women gives a distinctive atmosphere and dominates the entire batik motif. Meanwhile, the inspiration for *Mbok Semok* motif's name comes from the female batik makers (see Figure 2). This term is agreed to represent a group of female batik artists (batik women) in Girilayu whose big (fat) body. In

the Javanese perspective, big body in women is a representation of fertility and strength (sacrifice). Big posture of women who have given birth is due to their lack of time to take care of themselves and pay more attention to high quality food intake and because their top priority is their family (husband, children, and household duties). Woman stylization on *Mbok Semok* motif is a visual idiom of shouting expression from batik women to show their identity and existence. Female stylization figure is a new thing in Surakarta style batik. This motif can be categorized to Surakarta batik style as the color and tone of the line and the pattern tends to Surakarta batik style. Besides, this character is formed since Girilayu batik artists are hereditary working on classical Surakarta style batik motifs and also because their ancestors are especially Pura Mangkunegaran batik artists.



Figure 3: *Tri Dharma* monument.

Mbok Semok is a visual idiom to show the power of women (batik artists) in Girilayu. Beautiful and charming women for Girilayu community are a source of life by being mothers (married, giving birth to children) or *mbok* from the word *simbok*, a term to call mothers in Javanese; and a support by becoming batik artists (help supporting family economy). Cultural change can be seen from the way of the whole Girilayu community, especially men, agrees female figures to come forth. Women originally played a role as *kanca wingking* (sleeping partner) who ought to obey their husbands, all their movements and behavior must be careful in order not to defame the family, especially husbands. *Mbok Semok* motif is agreed to be a distinctive Girilayu motif. This means that the community acknowledges

the existence of batik women and women as individuals who are able to contribute for community welfare.

Tri Dharma Monument is the second visual idiom emerged in *Mbok Semok* batik motif. The monument located in Astana Mangadeg tomb area is described as approaching its original shape with a little stylation, especially by removing the base of the monument in the form of basic building or a square and terraced base. Small sized monument stylation colored with the basic color of the cloth (white) is a representation of purity and normative teaching abstraction which has become life guideline of Girilayu community. The monument symbolically represents the form of *phallus* (male genitals), as a representation that men in Girilayu do not dominate but as supporters and still have a respected position in the social strata; the existence of batik women somehow begins with *abdi daem* (kingdom's servants) and tomb caretakers who are predominantly men inviting their wives to serve in Girilayuland.

3 CONCLUSION

Visual idiom in batik motifs for batik women in Girilayu is the arena of expression constellation to reveal their existence and strength. Women in Javanese community nowadays get open space in a position and are counted as a driver of the economy. The image of a beautiful and empowered woman for Girilayu community is not just a physical appearance, but the one who can give life power by creations and art works. Traditional Javanese community have their own way to keep up with technology, not by being part of speed and viral but by counterbalancing that speed by slowing down and being contemplative through symbols which are implemented in cultural products. Cultural Changes in the community in positioning women is still being controlled by values and norms. Batik for Girilayu people is an idiomatic visual medium which is elegantly and aesthetically capable of being the entrance to influences, values, and all novelty forms.

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