



COMMODIFICATION AND AUTHENTICITY OF TRADITIONAL PANJI BOBUNG MASK ART IN PUTAT TOURISM VILLAGE, PATUK, GUNUNG KIDUL, YOGYAKARTA

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A B S T R A C T

Panji has evolved into a well-known folklore and an art form that provides a source of income for its conservationists. The purpose of this research is to examine the commodification and authenticity of Topeng Panji art in Bobung as an effort to face the era of globalization and localize the nation's cultural arts. The research was conducted in Bobung, Putat, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a single case strategy. Data is sourced from informants, venues and documents/archives collected with in-depth interview techniques, participatory observations, and content analysis. The validity of the data is tested by source triangulation techniques and informant reviews. Data analysis is conducted with interactive analysis models with data reduction, data display, and verification procedures. The results of this study show that the Commodification of Topeng Panji is based on the increasing and complex needs of the community where the source of income from agriculture and plantations is not enough. The authenticity or art of Topeng Panji tradition in Bobung is maintained by the community by introducing it to the younger generation from an early age.

A. Introduction

Panji is an indigenous Javanese folklore that is believed to be older than Java's Ramayana and Mahabharata legends. According to Nurcahyo (2009), the Panji story is a collection of stories from the Hindu-Buddhist period in Java that revolve on the love story of Panji Asmoro Bangun and Princess Candrakirana (Dewi Sekartaji), which is filled with adventure until finally ruling in the Kingdom of Kediri (Nurcahyo, 2022). The Panji manuscript (*serat*) has spread throughout the archipelago, including Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and surrounding places. According to Manuaba et al. (2013: 53), the Panji story is a classic which is widely recognized by the Javanese community as well as the people of Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Manuaba et al., 2013).

This Panji story extended throughout the world, transforming into diverse works of art and performances. Wayang Beber Pacitan, Topeng Malang, Topeng Bobung of Gunung Kidul, Reog Ponorogo, Topeng Cirebon, Balinese Gambuh, and other art forms are inspired by the story of *serat Panji*. Indeed, each location has its own distinct set of stories and arts, however there are some commonalities. This indicates that the Javanese society was a great civilization at the time, with the arts being very popular and influential in surrounding countries.

Bobung is a hamlet in Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia. Since 2005, Putat village has been recognized as a tourism community centered on batik based mask making (Aqmar & Widiyastuti, 2018). Topeng Panji is a type of

theater dance performance, often known as a sendratari or wayang Topeng Panji. Traditionally, the wayang mask was a religious performance that could not be performed by just anyone and was only performed at particular times. In addition to the performance, the mask-making process was also sacred because it had to be preceded by certain rituals such as fasting, meditation, and so forth. According to Kamal (2010), the mask is featured in religious ceremonial rites, therefore there is a special grip from both the mask and the performance. According to tradition, the Panji mask can only be crafted by the mask master, and its inheritance can only be passed down to the Master's own generation. Masks are made in a constrained environment where other people's eyes cannot see them. The sacredness of this art is also exhibited by the dancers who should undertake particular rituals in order for the spirit of the mask to be performed to permeate the Mask Dancer. Before performing the mask performance, the wayang mask dancers must give up their personal character and commitment to worldly affairs, as well as perform prayers, rituals, and offerings (Kieven, 2020).

Along with the changing trends of the times, the Panji Mask in Bobung has undergone additions and reductions in both appearance and function. The Bobung Panji mask has recently been commodified in both form and function. However, the Bobung people are still working to preserve the authenticity of the Panji Mask art, whether through art, dance, drama, or music, so that it does not become extinct and can be passed down to future generations. This paper attempts to reveal the version of commodification and authenticity of the Panji Mask in Bobung, Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, DI Yogyakarta, which will be explained in this paper. The study in this paper consists of two parts: first, the process of commodifying the traditional art of Mask in Bobung, Putat, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, and second, how the authenticity of the traditional art of Topeng Panji in Bobung, Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, DI Yogyakarta is maintained by the community and craftsmen in the Bobung village.

The theoretical foundations for this study are commodification and authenticity. Commodification refers to the process of transforming goods and services and their use values into a commodity with market value. (Rustandi, 2019). Initially, a good or service is only seen in terms of how it functions, with the commodification of other values, namely the

economy. This is consistent with Yasir's (2015) view of commodification as a process of transforming or changing use value into economic exchange value (Yasir, 2015). Furthermore, Mosco (2009: 30) emphasizes that with commodification, commodities are no longer determined by needs but rather by market place sales features (Mosco, 2009). Kamala (2021) has also conducted research on the commodification of mask dances, which demonstrates that commodification is linked to form, time, stages, and desacralization. Tourism packaging factors influence changes in the performing arts of Mak Yong masks while maintaining the meaning and function of this art as a source of community identity. This effort is made as an artistic response to the function of performing arts as cultural tourism (Ntan Era Komala, 2021). The concept of commodification is centered on economic value. While the concept of authenticity is that everything that is seen as authentic varies from group to group or from individual to individual (Mehmetoglu & Olsen, 2008). Authenticity implies that everything is truly original in a context of space and time, without being mixed with other things from the outside.

The objective of this paper is to explain the background of the commodification of Panji mask art and the extent to which the process of commodification of the traditional mask art in Bobung, Putat, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, as well as to explain the extent of the authenticity or authenticity of the traditional art of the Panji Mask in Bobung, Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Special Region that is still being maintained. This study is beneficial in both practical and theoretical aspects. Practically, this paper is useful for expanding one's knowledge of art and tourism, as well as a reference for the most recent reading, particularly on the commodification and authenticity of the traditional art of the Panji Mask. Theoretically, this paper could contribute to the community's love and pride in local cultural arts, which has the potential to be developed further.

The study analysis results can be used as a guideline to broaden and enrich the insights of anthropological studies, particularly art anthropology, in an effort to reaffirm the founding principles or authenticity of indigenous local art in order that it remains sustainable, while also providing space for transformation in the form of commodification of a work of art. The results also seek to show the success of preserving an art

work in the analysis of commodification and authenticity of an art work.

B. METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research method with a case study in Panji mask-making hamlet located in Bobung, Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Special Region. Primary data, such as informants, places, and events, and secondary data, including documents or archives, were used to collect research data. The population of this study are mask craftsmen, mask art activists and village government officials. Purposive sampling was used to select informants and research subjects, namely craftsmen and conservationists of the Panji Mask art in Bobung. Four respondents were chosen for interviews: (1) Sujiman; Panji mask craftsmen, (2) Marsilan; Panji mask dancer, (3) Wahyu; village officials, and (4) Purwanto; Panji mask art activist.

There are more sources of places and events, as well as events in the Panji Mask art in Bobung, both in person and online. Videos, photos, notes, and other relevant literature are examples of document or archive sources. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis (Sutopo, 2006). Observations were made at the Panji Mask's manufacturing location and performed both online and offline. Document analysis is also performed on videos, photos, notes, and other types of literature, such as books, journals, and others. The data's validity was examined using two methods: source triangulation and informant review (Sutopo, 2006). The triangulation used in this study is source triangulation, or data from informant sources (Sutopo, 2006). The data is used in the analysis technique, which employs interactive model analysis techniques with data reduction procedures, data presentation, and verification or conclusions.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Commodification of the Panji Mask Bobung Tradition

Commodification has grown in popularity in the modern era of globalization, partly due to free trade and economics. In general, culture is one of the most important aspects of globalization because of its subtle yet pervasive effects on the fortresses of cultural authenticity. On an economic level, culture is systematically commodified as heterogeneous, homogeneous,

or hybrid forms for sale in galleries, museums, and tourist attractions (Qazi, 2021). Commodification is a globalization-related process that undermines authenticity.

Initially, the Panji Mask was a performance-based traditional art form whose survival was sacred to the community and mask craftsmen of Bobung. Classical mask art is usually only seen during traditional ceremonies or religious ritual celebrations (Hapsari, 2013). Mask dances are typically performed at ruwatan events such as village clean-ups, weddings, and births. A Panji Mask cannot be manufactured and danced by just anyone. Before wearing and dancing with masks, mask dancers must perform certain rituals. The dancers are also not allowed to see the face of the mask directly because the real dancers are only acting as an intermediary for the spirit of the mask being danced.

As time passed, the craftsmen and performers of the Panji Mask art in the Bobung hamlet, Gunungkidul Yogyakarta developed a new paradigm of the value and function of the Panji Mask art. Yogyakarta special area, which is well-known for its natural and cultural tourism, can entice tourists from both domestic and foreign countries to visit Yogyakarta and its surroundings. The presence of tourists has the potential to shift a new paradigm in how traditional cultural arts are packaged into something valuable in order to meet the economic needs of the craftsmen. According to Johnson (2002), the tourist context can transform a level of meaning that was previously part of ritual performances into part of an economy that is primarily driven by the tourist dollar. However, according to the traditional role, capitalism has not completely replaced it. Thus, even though the traditional art of the Panji Mask has been modified for commercial reasons, its presence as a traditional art that has maintained its authenticity is still preserved (Johnson, 2002).

The presence of tourists has indirectly influenced the art of Panji Masks towards industrialization. "Initially, the idea of modification emerged because I saw many tourists who were interested in the Panji mask dance but did not get souvenirs when they came home to enjoy the Panji mask dance," the craftsman and art activist explained. "From there, the desire to make souvenirs from the Panji masks emerged." The statement of the craftsman demonstrates that the concept of commodification emerged with the phenomenon of tourists and the desire of the craftsmen themselves.

The presence of the Panji mask industry has both advantages and drawbacks. This industrialization will undoubtedly alter the socio-cultural and economic conditions of art activists, craftsmen, and local communities (Wahyudi & Kusdarini, 2020). The presence of a mask-making workshop, the existence of a mask-making tour package, and changes in the form and function of the Panji mask are some real examples of Panji mask art industrialization that are closely related to commodification. Craftsmen and art activists have already relied on the art of Panji masks for their economic needs; this undoubtedly encourages the craftsmen's creativity in seeking opportunities for income sources from the Panji masks, so that the commodification process will continue as the craftsmen's creativity develops.

Figure 1. Commodification of Panji masks as souvenirs



The residents of Bobung, Putat Village, Patuk District, Gunung Kidul, and Yogyakarta Special Region have turned the Panji Mask into a tourist attraction based on local arts and culture. Furthermore, the Topeng Panji property, which was originally used to cover the faces of dancers, has now been developed into economically valuable souvenir goods in the form of wooden batik masks. Panji masks have become commodified in response to the community's economic needs. Commodification is the process of converting goods and services and their use values into a commodity with market value (Rustandi, 2019). The masks have been developed and modified into a variety of products, including sitting clocks, wall clocks, key pendulums, cellphone stands, nameplates, and various indoor and outdoor decorations, all in the nuances of masks and batik. Furthermore, to meet market demand, the Bobung community produces wooden batik products for household use such as bowls, plates, glasses, tissue holders, fruit containers, snack containers, and many more. They combine the potential of local culture to be commodified into superior products

that sell well in the market, such as a touch of batik decoration that coats the wood surface, which becomes an artistic value that adds to the aesthetics of the commodified Panji mask.

Mask modification ideas do not appear out of nowhere, but there are several sources of inspiration. Craftsmen usually get their inspiration from their daily activities or experiences. One example is the creation of a peacock mask, which was inspired by a peacock dance performed at a wedding ceremony. "I first saw a peacock dance performance at an event, and from there I got the idea to make a Panji mask out of a combination of peacocks." It is not an easy process to convert classic masks into souvenir masks. There are both internal and external barriers. The first external impediment came from academics who forbade craftspeople from modifying masks into souvenirs. Academics believe that commodification will devalue the artistic value and authenticity of Panji mask art. However, the Panji mask art will be preserved if the Panji mask artists continue to preserve it so that the commodification process cannot be avoided because commodification is part of the process of preserving the Panji mask art. (Agusta et al., 2017).

After several years, art activists and Panji mask craftsmen began to recognize the success of commodification. This is evidenced by the growing market share of wooden batik masks, which have spread to various regions such as Yogyakarta, Java, and beyond. According to Maryono (2019), craftsmen have a market share of 75% in the Yogyakarta area, 45% in areas outside Yogyakarta on the island of Java, and 25% in markets outside Java. (Maryono & Subiyantoro, 2019). Furthermore, the wooden batik mask craft from Bobung has been marketed to various countries. The results of the Bobung community's wooden batik handicraft industry have penetrated the export market to ASEAN member countries, namely Singapore and Malaysia, as well as other countries such as America, Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, India, Japan, and New Zealand (Pratiwi et al., 2013). This data shows that the Panji Mask, which was once a sacred traditional art, has now been transformed into an economic commodity that can meet the Bobung people's basic needs and encouraging regional income.

In addition to products from around the world, Bobung Tourism Village, which has been open since 2005, has received visitors from various circles, regions, and even foreign visitors. Two things have become tourist attractions in this

village: the craft of wooden batik masks and the art of the Panji Mask Performance. Although masks have been developed into economic products in this village, the community still preserves the traditional art of Mask Dance, which is considered to be authentic. Panji mask dance performances are still performed at certain events, but only for entertainment purposes. Sacredness is still prevalent, but not as strongly as it once was. Mask dancers are community members, both young and old, who have joined a mask dance group. Dancers occasionally perform special performances requested by tourists, but it is not free; there must be a substitute for the exhausted money.

Tourists come from all walks of life, including the general public, students, university students, and even academics. Many visitors come to Bobung to witness the process of making batik masks and to watch the Panji Mask dance performances. Many students from Yogyakarta and even from outside the island come to see and participate in the creation of masks and dancing masks. Students are exposed to local culture at a young age in order to develop awareness, love, and pride in their own culture. Students come from a variety of universities in Indonesia and around the world. They come to conduct research, deliver field lectures, or simply to take a vacation.

Academics from various universities also contributed to the transformation of Bobung into a tourist village with regionally renowned products and culture. Many foreign tourists visit Bobung to learn how to make masks and to learn about the Panji mask show. Tourists prefer cultural tourism that has not been commodified and preserves its charm. This is in line with Abdallah and Hannam's (2019) assertion that "customers want to see something different and authentic." Tourists can experience cultural sensations that they would not normally experience in their home country (Abdallah et al., 2019). Therefore, cultural tourism in Bobung Village offers a distinct cultural experience on their tourist attraction.

Figure 2: Foreign tourists visiting Bobung, a tourist village



The success of the commodification of the Bobung mask is inextricably linked to the government's and academics' support for the commodification of the Panji Mask art. The government provides various tools required to modernize mask-making equipment. The type of equipment that is aided is defined as equipment that can encourage the acceleration of the manufacturing process. On the other hand, the government facilitates low-interest capital loans to craftsmen in order to increase the sales capacity of various souvenir masks produced through the commodification of Panji masks. Furthermore, academics play a larger role in helping craftsmen in diversifying mask products that are appealing and meet market demands.

The increasing economic needs of the community have contributed in the commodification of Panji masks in Bobung, Putat, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, and Yogyakarta. The production of various souvenirs with Panji mask nuances for industrial purposes is a form of rational economic action for souvenir industry business actors as a means of earning income. Cultural objects are used for their aesthetic value in order to be wrapped as commodities in a more modern form as a form of value-oriented action. As a form of affective action for business actors, consumer desires, on the other hand, can be fulfilled without distressing the sacredness of the original Panji mask. Through the creation of variants of new souvenir items to be consumed as a type of traditional action that is typically carried out by industry players, particularly those involved in the tourism industry in Bobung hamlet (Vibriyanti, 2015).

People do not always rely on seasonal agriculture and plantations, such as the rainy season. When the dry season arrives, people must seek alternative sources of income because

people's needs are becoming increasingly complex, requiring more than just clothing, food, and shelter. School fees, vehicles, internet, water, and other necessities have all become inevitable. One approach is to capitalize on the potential of local culture, which has been passed down from generation to generation. People use creative capital and a strong entrepreneurial spirit to commodify Panji Masks and combine them with batik motifs to create commodities of economic value.

2. The Authentic Art of the Panji Bobung Mask Tradition.

Apart from being commodified into a product with market economic value, the Bobung community and local government are also seeking to preserve its authenticity. The term authenticity or authenticity is frequently used in the subject of cultural arts heritage studies and related fields such as tourism studies and philosophy (Wood, 2020). Academics and heritage practitioners frequently debate the concept of authenticity because it is subjective (MacDonald et al., 2006).

Authenticity is everything that is perceived to be genuine, which varies from group to group or from individual to individual (Mehmetoglu & Olsen, 2008). Panji masks are not only found in the Bobung area, Gunung Kidul, but also in Malang, Cirebon, and other locations. Even though the background of the Panji story is the same, the nuances of the masks from each area differ. Panji Masks from different regions have distinct characteristics that are not shared. The traditional art of Panji Masks has evolved over time, influencing changes in patterns, standards, forms, and even functions (Subiyantoro et al., 2021).

Figure 3. Bobung Panji Mask, Malang Panji Mask, and Cirebon Panji Mask



Source: google.com

From the figures above, it is clear that the Bobung Panji mask has its own artistic authenticity when compared to other areas. The mask crown ornament is the most noticeable feature that distinguishes Panji Masks from other regions. Malang Panji Mask ornaments are typically more luxurious and decorated than Bobung Panji Mask ornaments. Cirebon masks, on the other hand, usually lack a crown and are only hair and plain. Mask dance performances are still held on occasion, and Panji Bobung masks are still made with such specialties. Mask dancers are local villagers, including mask craftsmen from the Bobung mask dance group. This mask dance strives for authenticity, but some elements are reduced or even eliminated. Masks could previously only be made and danced by certain people under specific conditions, but now anyone can make and dance the Panji Masks. There is still a sacred treatment, but it is becoming less popular as people become more interested in the Panji Mask as a dance performance art form (*sendratari*).

Training young people and children to recognize, make, and dance masks is one of the efforts to maintain the authenticity and authenticity of the Panji Mask in Bobung. Since childhood, their generation has been introduced to the Panji Mask, beginning with the story, characters, and each figure's individual character. Their generation was also taught how to properly dance the Panji Mask according to cultural rules. The community established a training studio to teach children and adults the Topeng Panji dance. The study of the Panji Mask *sendratari* usually begins with the antagonist, and then develops to the protagonist (Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji). The most difficult dances are the Panji and Sekartaji, not because of their simple movements, but because of the way they dance, which requires strength and patience (Yuhanda, 2019). The protagonist's mask dance is softer, smoother, and slower, in contrast to the antagonist's mask dance, which is fast and energetic. This mask dance lesson is sometimes taught at home by parents as well as in the studio. Panji mask dance is also taught in schools as part of arts and culture classes.

Figure 4. Children are practicing dancing

Generations of their descendants are taught techniques for making Panji Masks in the family, studio, or school environment. They are taught how to make globes, details, smooth, as well as batik and painting techniques. Initially, they were only taught in theory, but over time, they were given the opportunity to make it directly. Because producing masks requires sharp equipment (sharp objects), the age criterion is sometimes used to determine whether a child is allowed to make a mask or not. Children or their descendants are frequently asked for help from their parents in making masks in the family environment. They directly observe their parents making masks, which children subconsciously record and process as a mask-making experience.

The procedure outlined above is carried out so that future generations can continue, preserve, and develop the art of Panji Masks, both traditional and creative. People are concerned because today's youth prefer and are interested in everything that would seem modern and trendy. It is feared that the Topeng Panji art will be overlooked, despite the fact that it is essential to the identity of Bobung in particular and Indonesia in general. This identity can then

be developed into a brand that tourists can identify and distinguish.

The commodification and authenticity that occurs in the Panji mask in the context of art anthropology is authentic evidence for the study of art anthropology in the context of preservation that maintaining a work of art cannot simply be accomplished by maintaining originality, but space for change or commodification of art must be provided. Authenticity seeks to strengthen and preserve the authenticity of works of art, whereas commodification serves to accommodate human creativity, which continues to develop and innovate, so that, in the end, the concepts of commodification and authenticity can work together to preserve the value of the art work.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The process of turning the Panji Mask, which used to function as a sacred ritual performance, into an economic commodity in the form of wooden batik crafts and the development of tourist villages in Bobung, Putat, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, and Yogyakarta can be seen. The commodification of the Panji Mask is based on the community's increasing and complex needs, where income from agriculture and plantations is totally inadequate. The authenticity or traditional art of the Panji Mask is preserved in Bobung by introducing it to the younger generation at a young age. They were introduced to the art of Topeng Panji dance and how to make batik masks through their families, studios, and schools. Bobung has its own peculiarities and the people try to use the Panji Bobung mask as their identity that characterizes authenticity.

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