



Tembang in *Dolalak* Performance Art: Structure, Meaning, and Deconstruction

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ABSTRACT

Dolalak is a type of folk performance art popular in the Purworejo Regency, Central Java Province. Its existence is often associated with another folk performance art called *Angguk*. Both forms of performance arts influence each other. Based on a study on a book written in 1938 by Th. Pigeaud with title on *Jawaanse Volksvertoningen* (Javanese Folk Performance Arts), the name *Angguk* had been recorded at that time while *Dolalak* had not. Purworejo's *Dolalak* was initially popularized by three *santris* (religious students) named Rejotaruno, Duliya, and Ronodimejo. One of the popular elements of *Dolalak* performance is *tembang*. These *tembangs* are a form of sung folk poetry. It takes form in the oral language, using the Javanese language and containing elements. Up to 2010, found 210 *Dolalak* successful song lyric documented in writing. Besides poetry, the other elements of the song is a song. *Dolalak* song has a number of variations of the songs are quite unique and interesting when sang his poems. Discussion of the above problems, used an umbrella approach to Performance Studies (Art Studies appearance), was the study of the use of the song in the show *Dolalak* used models of Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction. Special analysis of linguistic elements used *Dolalak* song lyric theory proposed formula Albert B. Lord. Analysis begins with the deconstruction reveal pre-existing construction, namely the assertion that *Dolalak* the nuances of Islamic arts, especially seen from the use *tembangnya*. Starting from the existing construction, it found *kontradiksi* of actual reality. Such contradictions give rise to ideas or a new offer in the way of understanding of *Dolalak* seen from the song and use. This research has resulted in findings that means a new understanding of *Dolalak* as folk performances seen from the use of poetry *tembangnya*, namely that *Dolalak* an art form that is simple, straightforward, uncomplicated, irregular, choose words that are popular, easily understood, and choose the theme of daily life. Song lyrics *Dolalak* more concerned with sound rather than sense or meaning. This condition reflects populist *Dolalak* as performance art.

INTRODUCTION

This research discusses one of humans' cultural products in the form of art, specifically folk art performance. Art, as one of the cultural products of the people of Indonesia, must be explored, preserved, and developed, as an endeavor to awaken Indonesian people's awareness of the importance of maintaining the values of their nation. Indonesian culture consists of various regional cultures. This diversity does not only create difference and variants, but also enriches and strengthens the nation's culture.

One of the cultural products in the form of traditional performance art is *Dolalak*ⁱ, which developed in the Purworejo Regency, Central Java. This form of performance art shares many similarities with another performance art named *Angguk*ⁱⁱ. Both are particular in a way that they contain Islamic themes, which is especially obvious in one of the performances' supporting elements that is religious singing.

The problem examined from this artistic object is the existence of the elements of the *tembangs*. The songs sung to accompany the dance and performance in *Dolalak* became popular by the name of *Dolalak's tembangs*. *Dolalak's tembangs* refer to the lyrics sung to accompany *Dolalak* performance.ⁱⁱⁱ

The definitions of the word '*tembang*' are (1) lyrics accompanied by music (to be sung), singing, (2) poems (KBBI, 2008: 1430). Based on these definitions of 'singing' or '*tembang*', the word '*tembang*' is more accurate than the word 'singing'. Therefore, the term *Dolalak's tembang* means the lyrics sung during *Dolalak* performances.^{iv}

The existence of *Dolalak's tembangs* has its own certain role, function, and meaning in the performance, one of which is related to the movements of the dances, the means of summoning *indang*^v 'holy spirit'

in the *trance* segment, the delivery of messages, etc.

Tembang is a form of poetry that is sung. The aesthetic power of a *tembang* when it is performed does not only lie in the spoken lyrics but also in the aspect of musicality, which is the intonation of the tunes in which the lyrics is sung. The combination of both aspects becomes more beautiful in the performance when the singing is accompanied by certain musical instruments.

The existence of *tembang* in a performance art serves to stimulate and influence the feelings of the listeners or audience. The lyrics can be used to convey certain messages while the melody and rhythm can create a sense of aesthetics for those who are listening. The element of *tembang* in a performance art sometimes does not exist independently, but it often accompanies other forms of performance arts, such as *Wayang*, *Ketoprak*, *Ludruk*, *Jathilan*, *Kuda Lumping*, *Kuda Kepang*, *Angguk*, *Dolalak*, etc. One of the folk performances in the form of a folk dance using the element of *tembang* as its main supporting element is the *Dolalak* performance in Purworejo. This kind of *tembang* eventually became well-known in its own rights by the name *Dolalak's tembang*.

In the form of *Dolalak's tembang* there are characteristics that can also be seen in the tradition of religious singing, especially in Islamic singing, such as *Perjanjen*, *Berjanjen*, or *Slawatan*. These art forms had been popular in the Bagelen region, Purworejo (Th. Pigeaud, 1938). The similar characteristics can be seen in the linguistic aspect, namely the words used to worship God and Prophet Muhammad PBUH, as well as the words adapted from the Arabic language. In the aspect of musicality, these *tembangs* have almost similar intonations and tunes.

Another significance characteristic shared by *Dolalak's tembang* with the

previous Islamic singings is in the use of musical instruments to accompany the *tembangs*, namely *rebana* or *terbang*. According to R.M. Soedarsono, works of art with an Islamic touch came from a similar tradition, which is spreading the Islamic teachings or *da'wah*. Its origin is the *Slawatan*, whose characteristic is the use of *rebana* (or *terbang*), singing praises especially for Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his followers (R.M. Soedarono, 1976 dan 1994: 4).

Dolalak's tembangs are an interested subject to study because the study can examine the form of the *tembangs* from the linguistic and musicality aspects. This study is also important in finding the existence and aesthetics in folk performances. Another interesting subject to study is the system in which *tembangs* is inherited from generations to generations by the society in which it exists. Moreover, since *Dolalak's tembangs* exists as an oral tradition, the process in which they are inherited is unique.

Based on the background discussed above, through the concept of deconstructive analysis, the following problems are formulated as the subject discussed and disclosed in this research:

- (1) How is structure of *Dolalak* song lyrics?
- (2) What kind of linguistic aspects and meaning that song lyrics used in a *Dolalak* performance?
- (3) How do the initial construction, contradictions, and new construction *Dolalak's* song lyrics?

2. Theoretical Framework and Method of Research

In order to answer the aforementioned research questions, a set of relevant theories and an appropriate methods are employed in this research. The following are the theories and method that are used in this research.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The object of this research is an artistic phenomenon in the form of a performance art; therefore, the main approach used in this research is that of performance studies. Artistic activities are a cultural product that can be related to the conditions of the society at the era. The analysis on *Dolalak's tembang* conducted in this research uses the deconstructive approach. The concept of deconstruction appeared in the postmodernism era, in late 20th century as a respond to and resistance against modernism.

The deconstructive perspective is used in the endeavor to find meanings other than those that are usually found in a text. It is does not ruin the existing orders, but it tries to break away from them, as well as finds new centers where meanings could possibly be hidden still. Signification of a text, according to Jacques Derrida, is marked with its spread over a timeline, which means that meaning cannot be limited only in a certain context, but it must be dynamic, so that it allows the way for new meanings in accordance with their contexts (Easthope, 1991: 113 in Faruk H.T., 1999:150).

Before the analysis is conducted in order to answer the main question, discussion on the supporting problems is conducted using relevant approaches and theories.

Analysis on the construction of structure of *Dolalak's tembangs* is conducted using Milman Parry's theory of Formula, which was further developed by his student, Albert B. Lord. References on the theory of formula in this research are taken from the formulations expressed by Albert B. Lord (Lord, 1981:30).

Dolalak's tembangs can be considered as sung folk poetry, which means that a study of folk poetry is a study in the field of literature, specifically oral literature. Studies on sung folk poetry in Europe and other parts of the world have been conducted by Parry and Lord. Their

research materials concerned folk epic sung by a story teller in Yugoslavia.

The terms formula and formulaic are originated from a study on Greek poems, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* written by Homer. Written traditions did not exist at the times of the creations of those poems. The alphabet system itself was yet to be invented. Homer managed to create these poems by memorizing, because even if these poems were written, Homer, being a blind man, would not be able to read them. In the following eras, these poems became popular. Therefore, the theory of 'memorizing' poetry was broken, which is why the theory of language formula emerged. The formulaic language became a characteristic of poetry or oral songs (Teeuw, 1994:2).

The following citation explains the theory of formula according to Albert B. Lord as written in the first paragraph of the third chapter of his book (Lord, 1981:30):

"The Formula as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea"...

The word 'metrical', according to Teeuw, can be defined as a metrum or an unchanging rhythm, which means any transformation has been determined in accordance with a certain pattern (Teeuw, 1994, 3). On the other hand, Jan Van Luxemburg states that a metrum is a basic rhythmic pattern in a verse. It takes forms as the distribution of stress or prolongation of syllables or sound (rhyme, vocal similarity, alliteration, etc.) in lines or schematic collections of lines (Luxemburg, 1991:100).

In order to strengthen the framework discussed above, other supporting theories are also employed in this research. Since the lyrics of *Dolalak's tembangs* are constructed of language, especially language in the form of poetry, therefore a theory approaching the focus of the problem is used. This is Micheal Riffaterre's semiotics theory. This theory is used to discuss the linguistic

aspects in the lyrics of *Dolalak's tembangs*. The understanding and meaning formulation of works in the forms of poetry, song lyrics, or incantations can be conducted in four methods, namely (1) revealing the indirectness of meaning; (2) heuristic and hermeneutic reading; (3) the use of matrix, models, and variants; and (3) the hypogram (Michael Riffaterre, 1978, 2-5 dan 19-23).

The hypogram can be used to elicit meaning by observing the background of the creation of the text that had happened in the past. The hypogram can also be used to reveal the cause of the emergence of a new text based on the transformations of the previous text. In this study, the language structure of poetry, lyrics, tembangs, incantations, etc. is used to reveal an integrated meaning in its entirety. Two forms of the results of the hypogram are the one that is actually visible in previous texts and the potential hypogram, which is only implied, in the form of connotation, and resistance Michael Riffaterre, 1978: 23.

2.2 Method of Research

This report is written in an ethnographic method. This method is selected because it allows for the descriptions of the patterns of communities of ethnic groups, especially in the context of Indonesian ethnic groups, each of which possessing a different perspective from the others.

The sequence in which this research is conducted starts with collecting written data obtained from written sources such as books, the results of previously conducted researches, archive, scientific journal articles, website, and other sources. The second step is collecting data from the field and oral sources.

The third step is converting notes from oral data into a narrative form. The fourth step is analyzing the data conducted by sorting and classifying the collected data based on certain categories. Interpretation is used to formulate selected facts in order to construct a conclusion out of the verity of the results of the study.

The fifth and last stage of the research is writing a report of the results of the study of the topic. This report is written and summarized in accordance with the issues found in the discussion.

DISCUSSION

1. The Origin of Purworejo's *Dolalak* Performance Art

Reputedly, *Dolalak* was invented by three *santris* (religious students), who were also brothers, named Rejotaruno, Duliya, and Ronodimejo. In around 1915-1925, these three *santris* and the people who had worked in Dutch soldiers barracks created movements that were performed together by several people by mimicking the movements of the Dutch soldiers in the barracks. The most mimicked movements were those performed by the soldiers during physical exercises, marching, and dancing. The mimicking of these movements were performed repeatedly in certain occasions.^{vi}

These movements that are performed in a group became the embryo of the performance art called *Dolalak*.^{vii} In the beginning, the performance was not accompanied by musical instruments. It was only accompanied by the vocals alternately sung by the dancers. In its development, the society began liking this art form. Therefore, in order to blend it into the local cultural background, the performance was combined with several other forms of existing performance art in the society, such as *Slawatan*, *Kuda Kepang*, *Jathilan*, Javanese Dances, etc., and Javanese *tembangs*, especially *Slawatan* singing, were assigned to accompany it.

Based on the idea of these three brothers and the support of local people, the origin of "*Dolalak*"^{viii} art group were initiated. In the beginning, this group serves as a means for the youths of Sejiwan Village, Loano District, to assemble and channel their talents by singing and dancing in movements similar with those of *Slawatan*. As the time went by, this group

managed to develop the form of its art performance by adding musical instruments such as *rebana*, *jidur* (small *bedug*), and *kendang* as its characteristic, which will accompany the performance while they dance. This is the beginning or the origin of *Dolalak* performance art.

1. The Affiliation of *Dolalak* Performance Art with *Angguk* Performance Art

The appellation *Dolalak* for this type of performance art has existed since 1915 (Prihatini, 2007:8). More studies need to be conducted on that subject, because regarding this matter, there has not been any written source, either. Even the claim that the appellation *Dolalak* for this type of performance art existed in 1938 cannot be supported with a written source.

However, this research employs two ways of supporting such claims. The first one is based on a book written by Th. Pigeaud on *Javaanse Volksvertoningen* (Javanese Folk Performance Art). The second one uses the hypogram model.

Based on written sources, discussions on the origins of folk art performances in Java at the beginning of the 20th century in an accurate written source can be found in a book written in 1938 by Theodoor Gautier Thomas Pigeaud entitled *Javaanse Volksvertoningen* (Javanese Folk Performance Art) (Th. Pigeaud, 1938). This book contains comprehensive descriptions of folk performance art in Java within the aforementioned period of time. Victoria M. Clara (1985) wrote for Th. G. Th. Pigeauds *Javaanse Volksvertoningen en Latere Studies* (1817—1995), which especially contains discussions on writings concerning Javanese folk art performance and its literary study.

The existence of Javanese folk art in the southern part of the island, especially in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Bagelen, Purworejo, Banyumas, and their surroundings, was written in the background of the Javanese War or Dipanegara War. One of the forms of folk are associated with

the areas of Bagelen, Purworejo, and their surroundings during the period is Barangan Topeng, which is an artistic assemblage formed of dancers and several *gamelan* players. The dancers wear masks, and the *gamelan* players handle a set of instruments such as *kendang batangan*, *gong*, *kenong*, etc. (Pigeaud, 1938, 90-92).

In Banyumas and its surroundings, including in Bagelen, there is also a folk performance named Ebeg, which is a *barongan* dance accompanied by *bonang*, *kendang*, *gong*, and *slompret* (a type of woodwind instrument). Another type of folk performance art in Bagelen and its surrounding during the period is *Kuda Kepang*, which is very similar to *Reog* in western Java Pigeaud, 1938, 177, 241, 277).

Other eminent types of folk performance in the Bagelen until Kedu area are *Perjanjen* dan *Berjanji* (Pigeaud, 1938: 278). These performances consist of singing praises containing *da'wah* or messages of Islam, and are accompanied by *rebana* or *terbang*. These performance arts are also popular by the name of *Slawatan*, which contains lyrics that are similar to Arabic, and is performed in *Slametan* rituals, which are organized to find welfare in life. Folk performance influenced by Islam in southern Java is *Angguk* (Pigeaud, 193: 103). It is a form of performance art strongly influenced by the target to spread Islam similar with what the *Wali Sanga* did.

Evidence found in written sources as explained above proves that the name *Angguk* used in a folk performance art existed before *Dolalak*. The name *Dolalak* itself did not appear before mid-20th century. Based on chronological observation, the name '*Dolalak*' used as a name of a performance emerged in the 1950s. Initially, this performance art was still referred to as '*Angguk*' in Purworejo. It was also referred to as '*Bangilun*' and '*Jidur*'.

Along with the popularity of *Kuda Lumping* and *Jaranan* in the Purworejo society at that time, the characters in '*Angguk*' performance in Purworejo inserted

elements of *Kuda Lumping* and *Jaranan* performances into the segments of the performance, especially the trance (*kesurupan*) segment. The trance segment of the performance increased the popularity of *Angguk*, especially when compared to other folk performance arts.

The popularity of '*Angguk*' from Purworejo triggered the emergence of the initiative in creating a new name for this form of performance art. This is how the name '*Do-la-la*' was created. The name was taken from two diatonic notes *do* = 1 and *la* = 6 because both of these 'notes' are the dominant ones in the sound of the music and *tembang* in the performance.

3. Form of *Dolalak's Tembangs*

Every nation in the world has a unique characteristic in its arts. For the people of Indonesia, traditional performances are one of the parts of the society that cannot be separated from the history and development of the nation. The existence of a folk performance art named *Dolalak* in Purworejo can contribute to the richness of the nation in the form of arts and culture.

The dance in *Dolalak* performance is often called as lyrical dance because every title of the lyrics of *Dolalak's tembang* is made of the name of every type of movement. The *tembangs* sung in *Dolalak* performances are strongly influenced by the singing in *Slawatan* performances, including the intonation. This kind of singing contains some kind of incantation of prayers, hopes, and praises for Allah and the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. The lyrics of the *tembangs* uses the Javanese language by inserting words adapted from Indonesian, Arabic and Malayan languages.

Tembangs are a form of art that uses words as a medium for expression, and is delivered in tunes during the performance. *Dolalak's tembangs* exist not in a written form, but in an oral form. The basic concept of oral form is spoken discourses including

those that are expressed orally with no scripts, and non-script discourse systems.

Dolalak's tembangs play an important role in *Dolalak* performances in Purworejo. Every *Dolalak's tembang* sung in the performance signifies a certain type of dance performed by the dancers (Primaniar, 2011:40). Therefore, the type of dance performed is also indicated by the titles of *Dolalak's tembangs*, such as *Atas Daun Pisang*, *Kupu-Kupu*, *Ikan Cucut*, *Ambil Kain*, *Markhaban*, *Pagi-Pagi*, *Jalan Ganda*, etc.

Based on the form and content, *Dolalak's tembangs* are alike to *pantun* (verse) and lyrics in Indonesian literature. The difference between them lies in the content of the *sampiran* (the first two lines of *pantun*). While *sampiran* in a *pantun* serves as the introduction to the message it is trying to convey, lyrics do not have *sampiran*, and every line has a message and meaning. Therefore, every line of the lyrics of a *Dolalak's tembang* conveys meaning and a message to its listeners.

The pioneer of putting *Dolalak's tembangs* into written records in Purworejo is R. Tjiptosiswojo. Starting from his concerns over the extinction of *Dolalak's tembangs*, he began writing these *tembangs*. This figure started documenting *Dolalak's tembangs* in the 1900s. He managed to document *tembangs* written in 1970s, and even prior to the period.

4. Study of *Dolalak's Tembangs*

a. Population

Documentation of the existence of *Dolalak's tembangs* since the emergence of this form of performance art is difficult to obtain, because it is an oral form of cultural tradition. A figure who takes a great deal of interest in this matter is R. Tjipto Siswojo, a senior figure in the field of *Dolalak* in Purworejo who has deeply contemplated the sustainability of this art form in the future, especially regarding the existence of its *tembangs*.

Until 2010, he managed to document 210 titles of *Dolalak's tembangs*. These titles are compiled in four handwritten books. The first book contains 36 titles, the second contains 47 titles, the third contains 61 titles, and the fourth one contains 66 titles. These books reflect four variants of *Dolalak* performance packages.

Equipped with the data resulting from the documentation of these 210 titles of *tembang*, the study of *Dolalak's tembangs* is conducted by deconstructing its structure or construction. The following is the summary of the analysis on the linguistics, aesthetics, musicality, and application aspects.

b. Linguistic Aspects

When a creator creates a work of art in the form of a *Dolalak's tembang*, the language is used in terms of its emotive function. In the resulting work of art in the form of a *Dolalak's tembang*, there are four types of language functions, namely the referential, poetic, phatic, and metalingual functions. When a work of art arrives at the hand of its audience, in this case when the listeners receive a *Dolalak's tembang*, the function of language in force is the connotative function.

The process of creating a *Dolalak's tembang* is divided into two parts. The first one is the physically visible influence, including language structure, formulaic language, style of writing, and other physical characteristics. The non-physical influence is defined as the influence appearing in the content of the *tembangs*, especially in the themes. In addition, of course, the time and place settings of the creation influences the process of creating the lyrics.

Physical influence on the creation of *Dolalak's tembangs* is marked by the appearance of words adapted from languages other than Javanese language, for example words from Indonesian language, Malayan language, Arabic language, etc. The wording of the titles or content of the

lyrics demonstrate that the lyrics of these *tembangs* were created in the period after the independence. This assumption is supported by the absence of words adapted from Dutch and Japanese languages.

Words adapted from Arabic languages are still widely used in order to maintain the Islamic religious nuance. This evidence also shows the close relationship between *Dolalak* performance and other performance arts with Islamic nuance. In addition to its function to maintain Islamic religious touch, lyrics containing words adapted from Arabic language serves to emphasize the function of the *tembangs* as a means of *da'wah* (preaching of Islam) and giving advice for a better life.

Javanese language that dominates *Dolalak's* texts cannot be separated from the Javanese cultural background affecting the creator and the location in which a *tembang* is created. A reason for this is that it the *tembangs* would be easier to be accepted in an environment with a similar cultural background. Therefore, words from Javanese language are taken because they possess a strong aesthetic power that is closely related to its audience. The tunes and impression of Javanese words are considered suitable to convey a message containing advice for a better life.

Words adapted from other languages such as Malayan, Betawi, and Javanese language in the Eastern Java vernacular, etc. appear in the text of *Dolalak's tembangs* because they are based on the creators' life experience. On the other hand, the influence of the texts of songs from genres such as *Campursari*, *Keroncong*, *Langgam*, popular music, *Dangdut*, etc. appears merely because its popularity. The popularity of these genres makes it easier to attract the audience's attention during the performance.

c. Thematic Aspect

Other than the physically visible influence on the process of creation discussed above, the non-physical influence on the process of creation appears in the themes that the *tembangs* deal with. Most of

the themes of *Dolalak's tembangs* are didactic, meaning life advice based on the background of Javanese cultural environment.

Dolalak's tembangs are dynamic because their themes, diction, and language can change in accordance with the conditions of the period in which they are created. Furthermore, this dynamic nature is hoped to result a more communicative atmosphere for the listeners and audience. In addition, *Dolalak's tembangs* can be performed at random regardless of the sequence of the existing standard. Generally, the lyrics sung in a *Dolalak* performance take the form of a *pantun*, which contains advice. In its further development, the content of the lyrics is adjusted to suit the prevailing conditions and the necessities of the stage.

Every title of *Dolalak's tembang* has its own objectives in terms of the message it is trying to convey to its listeners. *Dolalak's tembangs* contain words arranged like a *pantun* with an attractive style of language by its creator. The lyrics are sung with the beautiful voices of the singers and instrumentalists. The lyrics of the *tembangs* are a form of expression of the surrounding situations seen, heard, and experienced by their creators.

The themes discussed in *Dolalak's tembangs* include religion and spirituality, which concern the relationship between humans and their God. Themes concerning life advice talks about guidance in social interactions, the meaning of life, marriage life, etc. Other themes include romanticism, humor, satire, and propaganda. These themes were initially used as a means of spreading Islam, or *da'wah*, but in its development, the function of these themes was switched into providing life lessons in various aspects for humans.

d. Function and Meaning

When first created, a performance art always possesses a function or a use. In general, these functions can be categorized into three, namely art for ritual purposes, art

for aesthetic purposes, and art for entertainment purposes. B. Malinowski argues that the main basis of a function is strongly related with needs, especially basic needs that are individual in nature, namely biological and psychological needs (Malinowski, 1961 via Ahimsa-Putra, 2008:4). The function and meaning of themes such as religion, life advice, romanticism, humor, satire, and togetherness encourage humans to live their lives to the fullest, for both life in this world and in the after-life.

5. The Aesthetic and Musicality of *Dolalak's Tembangs*

The structure of *Dolalak's tembangs* is not only formed by its linguistic aspects, but also by the aesthetic and musicality aspects. Monroe Beardsley, an expert in modern aesthetics from the 20th century explained the definition of aesthetics. He argues that a work of art is created out of three aesthetic values, which define its quality and beauty. The first one is Unity, which means that an artistic and aesthetic work is well-structured in terms of content, orderliness, and harmony of its various elements, such as shape, color, look, and composition. The second value is the Complexity, in which a work of art is not a simple work, but it has certain complexities contained in it, especially regarding the conflicts between the elements in the work. The third value is the Intensity, which is strongly related with quality, referring to a work of art with certain distinct qualities. The extent of these qualities is a very subjective matter, but the values can be measured by the sincerity in expressing emotions (Beardsley, 1958).

The musicality aspect is an element formed in its relation with music. On the other hand, music is understood as an artistic activity of arranging tunes or sounds in certain arrangements, combinations and tempo in order to generate a unity and harmony in sound combination (KBBI, 2008: 942-943). The musicality aspect of

Dolalak's tembangs include their musicality comprising of tunes, tempo, sound and rhythm.

6. Development of *Dolalak's Tembangs* from Time to Time

Initially, *Dolalak's tembangs* were strongly influenced by the *tembangs* or singing featured in Slawatan. In the text of *Dolalak's tembangs*, there are words describing the greatness of Allah S.W.T. and praises for the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H., as well as incantations of Islamic prayers and such. Words adapted from Arabi language are rather dominant although in the pronunciation is adjusted to the Javanese tongue.

In the following period, before 1950, *tembangs* containing Islamic praises decreased in number because of the condition in the period. Under the pressure of Dutch and Japanese colonialism, reputedly there were texts of *Dolalak's tembangs* adapting words from Dutch and Japanese languages, which have been naturalized into Javanese or Indonesian languages.

Tembangs such as mentioned above were performed in a *Dolalak* performance in Purworejo's square at the order of the Dutch government in order to celebrate the wedding of Queen Juliana from the Netherlands.^{ix} Based on information obtained from informants, there were also texts of *Dolalak's tembangs'* lyrics that adapted words from Japanese language in the period of Japanese colonialism in Indonesia between 1942-1945.

In the period during 1950 until 1970, texts of *Dolalak's tembangs* started bringing new styles although they still carried a mission to spread Islam. Words adapted from foreign languages decreased. Lyrics used in the *tembangs* were in Javanese and Indonesian languages. Nevertheless, words adapted from Arabic and Malayan languages were still used. The themes brought up during this period were regarding human life, Islamic religion, humor, and life advice.

In 1970 until 1999, *Dolalak's tembangs* reached the peak of its popularity, along with the increasing popularity of *Dolalak* performance art. The expression transmitted in the creation of the *tembangs* began to vary. During this period, certain unique themes appeared, such as themes of development, Pancasila, and P4 (Guidelines of Pancasila Implementation) program, KB (Family Planning), and PEMILU (Five-Year Election). These themes emerged in relation with the government's appeal to disseminate the aforementioned programs in the society.

Aside from the new themes in *Dolalak's tembangs*, lyrics of older *tembangs* were still in circulation during this period. The words used in this period were mostly adapted from Indonesian language because it would be easier for the listener to understand and because people's understanding of Javanese language had decreased. Some people considered the use of Javanese language old-fashioned or traditional.

In the period after the year 2000, the function of *Dolalak* performance art shifted from a traditional activity to a commercial activity. This was also caused by the vast exchange of information. The popularity of pop songs, *dangdut*, *campursari*, etc. built through electronic media was also influential in the creation of new lyrics for *Dolalak's tembangs*.

7. *Dolalak's Tembang* in the Performance of Trance

The performing of *trance*^x in traditional performance art cannot be separated from the history of traditional theater since the pre-Hinduism era, when animism and dynamism were the dominant beliefs. Performance art were more commonly used as part of a ritual for the interest of public wellbeing (healing diseases, inducing rain, driving away ghosts, etc.) as well as ancestor worship, or worship at creatures assumed to have magical powers (Bandem and Sal Murgiyanto, 1996:19-20). Such belief is known as sympathetic magic, which means a belief

that when a person desires for something, they are obliged to make the desire reality. An example proposed by I Made Bandem dan Sal Murgiyanto is that when traditional hunters wish to catch the animal they are hunting, for instance a deer, they will perform a ritual by imitating the movements of a deer before the hunt commences.

The term *trance* in the context of Javanese culture, especially in the performance art business, is often defined as a phenomenon where a person is possessed by a spirit, or *kesurupan*, and in Javanese language this phenomenon is called *mendem*, *ndadi* 'possessed by a spirit of somebody who has died' (Prawiroatmodjo, 1980: 353). the word *mendem* (Jw.) is defined as being drunk, feeling the happiest, and yearning to be respected. *Ndadi* from the word *dadi* + (N), in high (*krama*) Javanese becomes *dados*, which is understood as finished, if *ndadi* means something is finished. In his list of words, there is the word *dadra* (N), which becomes *ndadra* and its meaning is to worsen.

Trance is a performance art is defined broadly, which means that the phenomenon happens when an art performer, especially a dancer, is possessed by a spirit so that s/he loses control over his/her movements and behavior. This phenomenon can happen to somebody after a process of sound transmission, which is received by the brain, and it affects the behavior of the listener (Becker, 2004).

Trance performed by female dancers can be seen in *Dolalak* performance art. In *Dolalak*, this phenomenon is called *mendem* (be possessed by the spirit of a human that has died). A popular word used to refer to this 'spirit' in the *Dolalak* community is *indang*.

In order to perform a *trance* segment in a performance, usually the dance is performed in a very lengthy duration, sometimes it goes on all night long, or at least 3-4 hours of continuous performance. The distinction of the *trance* phenomenon in *Dolalak* performance is the special

relationship between a *Dolalak* art group with a family of *Indang* (spirit). The form of this 'relationship' is similar to brotherhood in a family. Therefore, the point is a *Dolalak* group only associate with one family of *Indang*. When a *Dolalak* group's performance features a trance, the spirit (*Indang*) summoned is a member of the *Indang* family that has a relationship with the *Dolalak* group.

One of the examples of *tembangs* used to summon and escort the *indangs* home used by the *Dolalak* group of Kaliharjo Village, Kaligesing District, is as follows:

Summoning and Escorting Song^{xi}

1. *Raden Sasra ing sun timbale 2x*
Dasar bagus Raden Sasra
kepara nyata
2. *Raden Bagus ing sun timabali 2x*
Dasar bagus Radeb Bagus
kepara nyata
3. *Raden Ayu Rara Anggraeni 2x*
Dasar ayu Raden Ayu kepara
nyata

(Raden Sasra I summon 2X
Raden Sasra's beauty is indeed
obvious
Raden Bagus I summon 2X
Raden Bagus' beauty is indeed
obvious
Raden Ayu Anggraeni 2X
Raden Ayu's beauty is indeed
obvious)

8. Succession of *Dolalak's Tembangs*

The traditional transmission (succession) process often taken in maintaining the existence of traditional performance art has been discussed by James R. Brandon. He states that one manner in which somebody who wants to learn from another person (figure) who is considered celebrated or expert in his/her field in the traditional performance art group setting can do it is by performing *nyantrik*.

Nyantrik means following all activities of the figure from which one wishes to learn in fulfilling the learning process. This is even performed by living together with the figure and imitating his/her activities in everyday life.

The efforts to transmit *Dolalak's tembangs* in Purworejo are taken by traditional art groups, dance schools, the government, and the society themselves. Activities supporting this cause include trainings, regular show performance, documentation of the *tembangs* from their oral forms into a written form, and the traditional method of emulating seniors of experts.

9. Analysis on the Aesthetics of *Dolalak's Tembangs*

Art is something that insinuates beauty (aesthetics) and is a cultural product of human civilization, the face of human refinement and civilization. Monroe Beardsley, an expert in modern aesthetics from the 20th century explained the definition of aesthetics. He argues that a work of art is created out of three aesthetic values, which define its quality and beauty. The first one is Unity, which means that an artistic and aesthetic work is well-structured in terms of content, orderliness, and harmony of its various elements, such as shape, color, look, and composition. The second value is the Complexity, in which a work of art is not a simple work, but it has certain complexities contained in it, especially regarding the conflicts between the elements in the work. The third value is the Intensity, which is strongly related with quality, referring to a work of art with certain distinct qualities. The extent of these qualities is a very subjective matter, but the values can be measured by the sincerity in expressing emotions (Beardsley, 1958).

The deconstructive approach is a concept of the postmodern era developed by Jacques Derrida with a basic assumption that there are conflicts between oral and written traditions in terms of their linguistic aspect. According to Derrida, reading

deconstructively means reading strategically. Therefore, every text must be read with strategies used to find another “meaning” different from the “meaning” that has been traditionally attached to it.

A deconstructive study does not only targets the written text, but also every cultural statement found in the text, because in the entirety of the statement in a text discourse lie the values, ideology, alternative truth, and certain purposes (Derrida, 1983: 18-32).

As a form of folk art, *Dolalak* displays similar characteristics with those of other forms of folk performance art. These similar characteristics are the fact that they have social functions, do not involve storylines, contain magical elements in the trance segment, and that they are performed in a group using simple movements and catchy rhythms, and spontaneous in nature. On the other hand, *Dolalak* was created by the society with other missions and vision, especially as a mode of expression as well as self-representation concerning the situation they are facing in real life.

CONCLUSION

Dolalak art performance is a traditional art performance popular in Purworejo Regency, Central Java Province. In 2010, according to the data obtained from the Department of Tourism, Art, and Culture of Purworejo Regency, there are 132 *Dolalak* groups, some of which are actively performing at certain times. The existence of *Dolalak* performance art continues to exist until today.

The popularity of *Dolalak* performance art outside of the Purworejo area, even in the national level, is evidenced by its being the top 10 in the Folk Arts Festival 1995. In order to maintain *Dolalak*'s existence as a cultural identity of Purworejo, the Local Government of Purworejo Regency registered *Dolalak* in the Intellectual Property Law Department and Human Rights Department in 2007 as a

cultural product of the Purworejo community.

The existence of this art form originated from the existence of an older performance art form named *Angguk*. This statement is supported by written and oral sources. The written source is taken from Th. Pigeaud's book on *Javaanse Volksvertoningen* (Javanese Folk Performance Arts) published in 1938.

The aesthetics of *Dolalak* is created as a form of minor tradition or folk tradition's cultural products. This conclusion is proven by the fact that *Dolalak* is performed in a simple, straightforward, and uncomplicated form which emphasizes its entertainment function in order to create communal enjoyment. The simplicity of *Dolalak*'s aesthetics can be seen in the elements of the *tembangs*, and clearly observable from the aspects of the *tembangs*' formation and the supporting aspects of their creation, namely the linguistic, musicality and application aspects.

The linguistic aspect of *Dolalak*'s *tembangs* is formed out of free wordplay that disregards meaning, pattern and regulation, which adapt words from various languages without considering certain meaning or connotation. The musicality aspect of *Dolalak*'s *tembangs* is also characterized by its simplicity and lack of complexity. The form of *Dolalak*'s *tembangs*' musicality strongly relies on variations in tempo, incorporating fast, medium, slow tempo. The music accompanying the *tembangs* is created in a simple form which does not require many musical instruments. Additionally, the sound of this music is also monotonous and simple.

The application aspect of *Dolalak*'s *tembangs* employed in order to support other elements during the performance is also manifested in a simple form free of regulations which is carefree or situational in nature. It can be concluded that there is no strict regulation in the relationship

between *tembangs* and the variety of dance movements, trance performance, music accompaniment, costumes, accessories and other elements of the show. Nevertheless, these elements are supportive of each other, and together they are constructed in order to create a harmony in the whole performance.

Dolalak as a form of folk performance art represents the expression of the society's freedom of creating arts. *Dolalak's tembangs* are created to create amusement for the listeners or audience. The characteristic of their creation is that they are made to be simple, straightforward, uncomplicated, and containing hardly any regulation.

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- Name : R. Tjipto Siswojo (74 years old); Mbah Amat ' Sero ' Dimedjo (94 years old); Tono (64); F. Untariningsih (50); Tono (64); Saryono (50); Muji (57); Jono (55); Paryono (55), dan Sukesi (34).

ⁱThe spelling of the word 'Dolalak' in this research is in accordance with the regulations of *Pedoman Ejaan Bahasa Jawa Huruf Latin yang disempurnakan*, Tim Balai Bahasa Yogyakarta, (Yogyakarta: Balai Bahasa Yogyakarta, 2010). Although the word 'Dolalak' cannot be found in various Javanese Language Dictionaries, this word definitely exists in the scope of Javanese cultural products. In the research data, both written and oral, the word 'Dolalak' is sometimes written as 'ndolalak', 'dholalak', 'ndholalak' and 'Ndolalak'. The consonant [n] and [N] appearing at the beginning of the word only functions as a sonorant consonant instead of a nasal consonant.

ⁱⁱ *Angguk* performance art today has developed and spread in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, especially in Kulonprogo Regency, western Sleman Regency, and western Bantul Regency.

ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'Dolalak's Tembang' is selected to describe a work of art in the form of poems that are sung. The word 'tembang' is considered more appropriate for this research in order to convey the Javanese language and cultural background.

^{iv} The term 'Lyrics of Dolalak's Tembang' is selected to distinguish between lyrics in the form of poems that are not sung, although the difference is very little. The word 'tembang' is considered more appropriate for this research in order to convey the Javanese language and cultural background.

^v In the environment of Dolalak performing groups, the word 'Indang' means a holy spirit of a person who has died. It is considered a holy spirit because it is believed that the spirit is not of just anyone, but it is the spirit of a respectable person in the past. R. Tjipto Siswojo as an informant explains that the spirit who possesses the body of a Dolalak dancer during the trance is not just some random spirit, but the holy spirit of the figure who owns the performing group. This figure also affirms that it is not to be called *Dhanyang*, or guardian spirit, because a *dhanyang* can be a human spirit or an animal spirit.

^{vi} Information is given by R. Tjipto Siswojo in an interview in March 2010.

^{vii} Almost all informants (March 2013 – November 2011) explain that it is unknown whether at the early years of Dolalak the society called it Dolalak or another term. None of the written sources provides an enlightenment regarding this subject, either.

^{viii} The quotation mark on the word *Dolalak* ('Dolalak') is meant to signify that the name of the performance art is 'alike' to today's *Dolalak* performance.

^{ix} Information from R. Tjipto Siswojo et. al., as well as from [http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juliana_dari_Beland a](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juliana_dari_Beland_a), which mention that Queen Juliana of the Netherlands married Bernhard of Germany on January 7, 1937.

^x In the context of a segment of a performance art, this term is understood in the

sense of being possessed by a spirit of humans
(or animal) that have died.