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The Existence of Female Dancers in the Development of Dolalak Art in Purworejo Central Java

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Abetract

Dolalak is a traditional dance that appeared and developed in Purworejo, Central Java. In the beginning of its appearance, this dance was performed by men. In the 1970s, the government intervened to promote the art as a regional asset. Soepanto Regent's initiative, which encouraged women to be able to dance Dolalak, received positive support from society. Dolalak is considered more attractive and has greater marketing potential by women. So, 1970 became the first stage of Dolalak's rapid development. At the same time with the presence of Dolalak Putri or Female Dancer of Dolalak, the male Dolalak dancer began to be less desirable and even forgotten. This research will analyze the existence of female dancers in Dolalak art with a modern Sociology approach using the theory of Phenomenology from Peter L. Berger. This analysis is based on Berger's formulation of the interrelationship between objective social reality and subjective knowledge based on reality and social interaction in daily life. The existence of Ambarwati's case as a Dolalak preservationist figure with high popularity with her predicate as "Ratu Dolalak". Ambarwati's popularity as a Dolalak dancer is not only utilized on her body but also accompanied by experience and knowledge from art education that makes her role in the performance more interesting. This makes Ambarwati's presence idolized.

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INTRODUCTION

Dolalak art in Purworejo was created in 1915 by three students from Sejiwan Village, Loano Sub-District, Purworejo Regency, named Rejo Taruno, Duliyat, and Ronodimejo by imitating the movements of Dutch soldiers (Jono, 2022). Dolalak art depicts the activities of Dutch soldiers while practicing marching, martial arts, singing, and dance parties at a resting place or barracks. The word Dolalak comes from the pronunciation of "do" (1), "la" (6), and "la"(6), the division of solfeggio diatonic tones sung by Dutch soldiers in the barracks 'army headquarters'. At that time, the three students with the people of Purworejo and its surroundings who had been Dutch soldiers imitated it into Dolalak art. This art is a combination of elements of Islamic art with elements of traditional folk art. The elements of Islamic art are not intended to change the overall form of the dance, but rather to formalize Islamic values in the face of traditional art to preach through the lyrics of its songs.

In 1970, the government began to intervene in efforts to promote art as a regional asset. The efforts of Regent Soepanto, who encouraged women to be able to dance Dolalak, received positive support from the community. By being danced by women, Dolalak art was considered more interesting and had greater marketing potential. 1970 was the starting point for Dolalak art to develop quite rapidly. Along with the presence of Dolalak Putri, Dolalak male art began to be less popular and even forgotten.

The popularity of Dolalak female art cannot be separated from the central role of female dancers since the concept of gender which began to pay attention to the role of women in all fields, during the New Order government was launched. Entering 1974, the Dolalak dance was already danced by women. The process of spreading the Dolalak female dance is relatively fast because, in a short time, it has spread to the entire Purworejo area and surrounding areas such as Banyumas, Kebumen, Banjarnegara, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

Since the emergence of the Dolalak Putri dance, there has slowly been a change in the interpretation of this art into women's art. Gradually, this art has of clothing, developed in terms offerings, movements, musica1 accompaniment, and even song lyrics which are a special attraction for the Dolalak art. The change in the presentation of the Dolalak dance, which was originally danced by men to women. It is a symptom of a paradigmatic change where the change is not only for variation but also becomes a new form of presentation.

This change also influences the development of socio-cultural Purworejo community. The function of this dance has slowly developed into entertainment, which has increased the public's interest in responding to this art in social events. With the increasing popularity of the Dolalak Putri art, conflicts in society arise, especially in rural communities. They consider that Dolalak Putri art has begun to deviate from the tradition of Slawatan art as a medium of preaching. The form of presentation of Dolalak Putri has been separated from the characteristics of the type of Slawatan art. The dance movements are even dominated by sensual hip movements, costumes using short pants, and accompanied by songs in the style of "ndangdhut" so that they are increasingly dynamic, making Dolakalak a spectacle that is especially popular with men. This art is no longer an art as a medium of preaching the spread of religion that contains messages and advice through song lyrics, but rather an art that is entertaining.

The art of Dolalak putri is slowly gaining a place in the hearts of the people, even recognized as an icon of Purworejo Sub-district. This has also given birth to prima donna dancers. One of the Dolalak dancers who is the prima donna of the Purworejo community is Ambarwati (26 years old) who has been working as a Dolalak dancer since she was in elementary school. Although her profession often gets negative views from the community due to the *saweran*

phenomenon, Ambarwati's existence as a prima donna is undeniable.

As a prima donna dancer, Ambarwati's income from this art is enough to support her life and family. The saweran that Ambarwati gets in one performance starts from IDR 500,000,- and has even reached IDR 2,000,000,-. In one month, Ambarwati can perform up to ten times. From the income she gets, Ambarwati can meet her family's daily needs, and even buy a car.

The analysis of existence, namely the presence of an individual in society, will be analyzed based on Berger's view. Berger's formulation of the reciprocal relationship between objective social reality and subjective knowledge is based on reality and social interaction in everyday life. Berger defines social reality as something whose presence does not depend on the will of each individual. In addition, Berger acknowledges that reality has various forms. In his writing with Luckmann, it is explained that what is most important for sociological analysis is the reality of everyday life, namely the reality faced or experienced by individuals in their daily lives (Hanneman Samuel, 2012).

The social reality of everyday life cannot be separated from the interactions that individuals have with each other. Because of the sense with other people, individuals experience the social reality of everyday life, where other people themselves are also social realities for the individual. In the role theory put forward by Berger, if the role is followed up to produce logical conclusions, it gives us sociological anthropology, namely, a view of humans based on their existence in society (Peter L. Berger, 1985).

This article examines the role of Ambarwati as an individual, and the Purworejo community as a social reality that produces everyday reality in Ambarwati's social interactions in her role as a member of society and a Dolalak dancer, concluding that Ambarwati has an existence through the role she plays.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative, so the basis used for its analysis is data, the presence of data sources must be placed as a totality (Soedarsono: 2001). Research as a scientific study requires an approach to solving and understanding phenomena in a problem. To facilitate understanding of the object to be studied, a descriptive qualitative method is used. Qualitative research provides a description as accurately as possible of a particular situation or group. By describing the factors that influence the existence of female dancers in the development of Dolalak Art, the development of Dolalak art will be explained holistically without any manipulative elements.

The existence of female dancers in Dolalak art will currently be studied using a sociological approach with the theory of Peter L. Berger. According to Berger, existence is built by its role and function in society. Therefore, this study will trace the role and function of female dancers in the life of Dolalak dance. To strengthen this problem, the view of the charm of women in performing arts is used. The theory of fundamental dialectics of society will be used to analyze the dialectics of Dolalak art with the behavior of Purworejo society with social implications, habitualization, culture, and new values.

This research used a qualitative descriptive with a case study strategy. The case study strategy, according to Yin (Robert K. Yin, 1996) is one of the social science research methods in general and is a strategy that is suitable for answering the questions of why and how. Qualitative research methods are research methods that use natural settings with the intention of interpreting something that happens and is done by involving various existing methods. Researchers use this method because the technique of collecting data, both written and oral from research subjects is then analyzed and expressed through descriptive writing. The data obtained in qualitative research is not in the form of numbers. The verbal data from the research results are relatively large, so they can be arranged, criticized, and clarified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Profile of Ambarwati, the prima donna

Ambarwati was born on March 13, 1998, in Dudukulon Village, Grabag Sub-District, Purworejo Regency, from a husband and wife, Mr. Minto who is a puppeteer, and Mrs. Waginem, *pesinden* in the "Dwija Laras" art group led by her husband. Ambarwati is the second child of two siblings. When she was 8 years old, she began to enter the world of dance. Her predicate as a Dolalak dancer has been attached to her since she was in Elementary School. She first learned to dance at the Ketawang Art Studio trained by Dalwan.

To hone her skills in dancing Dolalak, Ambarwati also studied with her teacher from the Dolalak group in Mlaran Village. Since joining this Dolalak arts group, her ability to dance Dolalak has become more proficient. Ambarwati is a child who is quick to memorize various kinds of dances. Entering Junior High School, she studied with Dolalak figure Eko Marsono. After graduating from SMP, Ambarwati continued her education at SMK 8 Surakarta (SMKI Surakarta) following her older brother named Sunarpo Guna Prayitno who had previously attended this vocational arts school.

After graduating from vocational arts school, her older brother decided not to continue his studies because he often replaced his father as a puppeteer in the Dwija Laras group in Grabag Sub-District, Purworejo Regency. Meanwhile, Ambarwati continued her studies at Institut Seni Indonesia in Surakarta majoring in Dance, and graduated in 2023. During her stay in Surakarta, Ambarwati was active in the arts to hone her skills. such as actively participating in the Omah Seni Prabudiningrat Studio located in Baluwarti Village, Pasar Kliwon Sub-District, Surakarta City, Central Java. After graduating, Ambarwati returned to Purworejo and continued her profession as a Dolalak dancer and pesinden until now.

From the education and experience she has gone through, Ambarwati has become different. She can dance with good movement techniques, master various dance styles from types of ethnic groups in the archipelago, and her ability to understand Javanese gendhing. Another gift for Ambarwati is that she also has a golden voice and the ability to sing Javanese songs with a distinctive cengkok. The dancing talent and golden voice possessed by Ambarwati are talents and talents as gifts from God Almighty which are always trained, and developed by Ambarwati until they reach an aesthetic quality that is impressive for Dolalak lovers. Ambarwati Finasty, as the Purworejo community calls her, has become a prima donna Dolalak dancer among the community, especially for those who love Dolalak art.



Figure 1. Ambarwati singing in a Dolalak art performance (Source: Ambarwati's Personal Collection)

Ambarwati's Daily Reality

Her experience as a Dolalak dancer makes Ambarwati a role model for other dancers, especially for the younger generation. As an artist who persistently maintains art as part of her life, Ambarwati is worthy of being a role model for other dancers. She already has the title of 'Queen of Dolalak'. The main capital of a Dolalak dancer is indeed to have dancing or njoget skills, but these skills will not develop if they are not supported by enthusiasm, selfconfidence, and a strong desire to develop these skills so that they are useful for her life. With strong determination and persistence in honing her njoget skills, she successfully became a prima donna of Dolalak art.

Great experience in dance arts did not make her someone big-headed. She remains the Ambarwati who is known. A Dolalak dancer must be able to carry herself in the environment in which she lives and must be able to place herself in all circles where she is. The mental burden of a female Dolalak dancer is also high because the life of a female Dolalak dancer is sometimes looked down upon, and seen as a less than good profession. Although the good or bad views return to the individual of each of the dancers, Ambarwati realizes that every behavior that is carried out, especially unpleasant behavior, will be linked to her profession, and become the spotlight of society.

Ambarwati's figure in everyday life is a humble person. Socially, Ambarwati can blend in and adapt to the environment easily. This happens because Ambarwati is used to living with many people and is known by many people. It is undeniable that there are also negative views that she sometimes receives, being seen less well by society because she often comes home late when practicing and performing. As a female Dolalak dancer, she must maintain herself in the Dolalak arena and everyday life. To ward off these negative views, Ambarwati always tries to be polite to all residents. In addition, she actively participates in positive activities in her village. Outside of artistic activities, Ambarwati still lives her life like other



Figure 2. Several YouTube channels that highlight Ambarwati (Source: YouTube).

The Role of Female Dancers in the Development of Dolalak Art

In the development of Dolalak art, female dancers are required to attract the audience by exploring single movements (trance). The role of female dancers in Dolalak art can survive to the peak of popularity because there are several factors. The driving factors in question are internal factors and external factors.

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Internal Factors:		Explanation:
a.	Gender	Dolalak is danced
	Equality	by women. The
		dance movements
		do not change the
		rules but create a
		more energetic
		presentation to give
		the impression of
		being dashing,
		agile, and
	0.1	flirtatious.
b.	Culture	Dolalak dancers
		have known and
		studied this art since
		childhood.
		Awareness of art has been instilled in
		since an early age. In formal
		education, Dolalak
		art is an
		extracurricular
		dance program and
		in non-formal
		education, this art is
		used as dance
		material in dance
		studios.
c.	Educational	Educational
	Background	background can be
		one of the factors for
		women to exist as
		Dolalak artists. This
		is because the
		knowledge and
		scope of art have
		been obtained
		through formal and
		non-formal
		education.
d.	Eonomy	Family economic
		factors, where the
		husband's income
		or family
		circumstances are
		unable to cover the

family's needs, then encourage women to participate in finding additional money, for example, being part of the Dolalak dancers. Every time, they perform they will get wages or payment.

External Factors:

a. Audience appreciation

The audience who came to watch this performance consisted of several groups, namely the elderly, young, and children. Mr. Jono said that there were several things that attracted the public and were able to satisfy the audience, one of which was movements performed by the female dancers were very energetic, the dancers were still teenagers and beautiful.

b. Appreciation from the owner of the event

The owner of the the event plays important role in terms of existence because with the presence of the owner, the Dolalak arts group, especially Dolalak Putri, had the opportunity to hold performances amid the community. Therefore, female dancers are very famous until now.

c. Government support

One of the factors that continues to exist for these female dancers is also because of the support from the that government Regent Soepanto who encouraged women to become dancers. This Dolalak art received a positive response.

Existence of Female Dancers

The female Dolalak dancers currently appear to have been warmly and even enthusiastically welcomed by the community. The high enthusiasm given to the female Dolalak dancers has made these dancers new idols and at the same time the most interesting icons in a Dolalak Purworeio art performance. The popularity achieved by these female Dolalak dancers is concrete evidence of the high interest of the public. It can be seen through the various social media used, which are a space for these female Dolalak dancers to share activities and express themselves, which are welcomed by the great attention and interest of the public.

On the Instagram social media managed by these Dolalak women, for example, it appears that they have tens to hundreds of thousands of followers from various circles who loyally follow their online activities. The popularity achieved by these female Dolalak dancers on social appears to be interconnected with the public's interest which culminates in forms of appreciation for the female Dolalak dancers. The statement above generally agrees with the pattern of discriminatory and exploitative treatment directed at female Dolalak dancers. Based on Asmani who said that the Dolalak Putri costume exposed her thighs too much. Then, there is the term Dolalak Putri dancers now popular alias pupune diler (thighs are opened or showing off thighs) (Asmani, 2022). This

also seems to confirm an indication that the permissive attitude of society towards female Dolalak dancers still tends to be closed and does not indicate good acceptance.

Interestingly, the facts found in the field show different symptoms. The female Dolalak dancers currently appear to have been warmly and even enthusiastically welcomed by the community. Through a search on Instagram social media, an account named @ambarfinasty1303 which is known as 'queen of Dolalak' has more than 22,500 followers. Followed by the account @anis_genis917 with 42,200 @diajengerlita has been followers, followed by 45,500 followers and @evi monichi has reached 29,600 followers. In addition, various accounts that specifically upload the activities of the Dolalak (fanbase) are also not short of enthusiasts and have even been followed by tens to hundreds of thousands of followers, such as the @dolalak purworejo account which has been followed by tens of thousands of followers. The achievements of the Dolalak female dancers and the Dolalak fanbase account gaining enormous attention seem to increasingly indicate that the Dolalak women have been accepted and are in great demand by the public.

Besides Instagram social media, YouTube has become a contestation arena for these Dolalak female dancers. On YouTube social media, various groups have come down and tried to capture sides of these Dolalak female dancers through uploads, both taken from the activities of the Dolalak dancers when dancing live, as well as activities outside the show such as interviews or other activities. Various videos are widely circulated regarding the activities of the Dolalak women that are rarely missed by the audience, which are seen in YouTube uploads with the keyword "Dolalak Purworejo".

The popularity achieved by the Dolalak female dancers on social media seems closely interconnected with the public's interest which leads to forms of appreciation for the Dolalak female

dancers. This is because the Dolalak female dancers have already been popular among the public (fans) which is accompanied by the progress of the number of followers on social media which then through social media they represent a certain self-image to captivate the hearts of their audience. This process makes the Dolalak female dancers able to be known more widely by people from various regions and circles, become idols, and have fans whose quantity is increasing day by day, not only among art lovers but has penetrated very widely.

The fame achieved by these female Dolalak dancers also seems to have gained the right momentum so that their existence is also taken into account in the political field. This is proven by several female Dolalak dancers who are members of the Dolalak Purworejo association being involved in the 2019 Purworejo election campaign. In an event called "Election Socialization" organized by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Purworejo Regency which raised the "Through Cultural theme Performances Building Sovereign Voters to Make the 2019 Simultaneous Election a Success" (Yandip, 2019).

This fame can also be seen in the Dolalak Putri statue in the yard of the Sarwo Edhie Wibowo arts building and on the edge of Purworejo square, even photos of female Dolalak dancers are also widely used as background images for buses and trucks owned by Purworejo residents. It indicates how female Dolalak dancers have succeeded in becoming new idols loved by the people of Purworejo and also means that the development of figures into women is also a manifestation of government intervention.



Figure 3. Dolalak Statue in the Purworejo Regency Square (Source: Eni Yulianti, April 1, 2024)

The warm welcome for the female Dolalak dancers from the community is currently more appreciative in the form of responses of acceptance and appreciation, even to the point of 'idolizing' figures from these circles. The logical consequence of this shift in attitude is the increasing popularity of female Dolalak dancers, accompanied by a widening response of acceptance from various sectors and levels of society. A simple case example that can be observed is the widening acceptance of female Dolalak dancers when these women are invited to agendas from various circles and levels of society. Not only presented by the abangan community who are indeed art and culture enthusiasts, but also reaching academic circles in schools. Another example that can be observed in this case is the practice of 'taking pictures together' with female Dolalak dancers. Taking selfies with female Dolalak dancers seems to be an act that is 'considered' to be proud. This has created a new trend, that people are currently competing to take photos together with the female Dolalak dancers, which in turn has implications for making every art performance that includes these female dancers never empty of spectators and fans.

The dance and the sexy and seductive presented by the female dancers have 'intoxicated' the men who are the majority of the connoisseurs of this art. Although the movements of these women are full of eroticism that invites certain desires, they can control it well and even refuse any actions such as touching, poking, or *njawil*.

Based on this, what these female dancers do, can not only get material benefits, but more broadly they have implemented a clever strategy by utilizing their bodies and control over them to maintain their existence so as not to be displaced. This is based on the indication that what is obtained by female Dolalak dancers today is not only public acceptance but also soaring popularity.

Several sources agree that 1970 was the beginning of government intervention, direction, and promotion of regional arts as tourism assets. Thus, the efforts of Regent Soepanto (1975), who encouraged women to be able to dance Dolalak received positive support from the community. In that year, Dolalak Art began to be danced by female dancers. By being danced by women, Dolalak Art was considered more interesting and had greater marketing potential. Although there was a demonstration from students and religious figures for female dancers, it did not become a significant obstacle and women continued to dance. There are many reasons behind this change, including the growing awareness of women's human rights to dance and the difficulty of finding male dancers. The reluctance of men to become dancers is motivated by shame, perhaps a kind of 'prestige'.

The popularity of the female Dolalak dancers is undeniably a representation of the attitude of acceptance of society which is gradually moving towards a more open direction. As previously explained, the transition from the male Dolalak dancer character to the female Dolalak has many pros and cons. The attitude that tends to be closed accompanied by negative views directed at the female Dolalak dancers seems to have become an open secret circulating in society.

The situation of women in the entertainment world who tend to experience a 'rude' social view, is not only experienced by female Dolalak dancers. Karin Van Nieuwkerk had long been anxious about why women who work as entertainers are vulnerable to various

curses and insults from society. By looking at female Egyptian singers and dancers, Nieuwkerk questioned the reputation of female entertainers as 'dishonorable' professions, whether it was based on the fact that entertainment is indeed a dishonorable profession or whether the profession only becomes dishonorable if women play a role in it (Karin Van Nieuwkerk, 1995).



Figure 4. Fans asking for a photo together with their idol dancers (Source: Facebook)

CONCLUSION

The results of this study are summarized in several points. First, the female Dolalak dancers were initially the result of the development of previous dancers, namely male dancers. The development of female dancers in the Dolalak performance initially received pros and cons which led to an attitude of rejection from the community, especially religious leaders in Purworejo because of the negative image attached to these women. This image is an implication of the behavior of Dolalak women who often prioritize seductive, erotic, and vulgar styles. In recent developments, Dolalak women have been warmly welcomed by the community as seen from the many fans, becoming the most interesting icons and famous.

Second, the popularity of Dolalak art is inseparable from the role of its female dancers. The role of female dancers in Dolalak art can survive to the peak of popularity because there are several factors. The driving factors in question are internal and external. The internal factors are gender equality, culture, educational background, and economy. In addition, the external factors are audience appreciation, appreciation from the owner of the event, and government support.

Third, to achieve their popularity, female Dolalak dancers do not only rely on their bodies, such as Ambarwati who met popularity as a Dolalak dancer not only relying on her body. However, she has skills in other arts such as vocals, and has experience and knowledge in her education to make her dance more interesting and varied in improvisation. In addition, the strategy of female Dolalak dancers to maintain their existence is by applying patterns of rejection. The patterns chosen by female Dolalak dancers include silence, indifference (don't care), and flexibility (adjusting to taste).

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