

## Reading Ponoragan Visual Culture on The Visual Development Phenomenon of Dhadhak Merak Reyog Ponorogo

Romzi Akram Al Naufal<sup>1)\*</sup>, Djuli Djatiprambudi<sup>2)</sup>, Setyo Yanuartuti<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1), 2), 3)</sup> Art and Culture Education Master's Program, Faculty Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author

Email : [romzi.21016@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:romzi.21016@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

**How to cite:** Naufal, R. A. A., Djatiprambudi, D., & Yanuartuti, S. (2024). Reading Ponoragan Visual Culture on The Visual Development Phenomenon of Dhadhak Merak Reyog Ponorogo. *Gondang: Jurnal Seni dan Budaya*, 8(1): 194-204. <https://doi.org/10.24114/gondang.v8i1.57629>

**Article History :** Received: Apr 27, 2024. Revised: Jul 20, 2024. Accepted: Jul 24, 2024

### ABSTRACT

*The dhadhak merak is an iconic mask in Reyog Ponorogo. Over a very long period of time, the dhadhak merak has visually evolved into the form that is often seen today. The visual phenomenon then forms an image of Ponoragan visual culture that is interesting to explore in greater depth. This is what attracts the author's attention to focus on reviewing: 1) The phenomenon of visual development of dhadhak merak over time and 2) Reading Ponoragan visual culture in dhadhak merak. This research is a descriptive qualitative research, with data collection techniques using literature studies and archival documentation. In the process of reading the visual culture of dhadhak merak, the author conducted a review from several aspects, namely: visual structure, function, value, and meaning. The results of this study are 1) The dhadhak merak has undergone seven phases of development starting from its simple dhadhak to the form that is commonly found today. 2) The visual structure, function, historical value, and meaning of the dhadhak merak are constructed on the culture of the people of Ponorogo itself starting from the era of animism-dynamism, Hindu-Buddhism, Islam, to the present era. From that, the Ponoragan culture as a very strong identity marker can be reflected in the dhadhak merak visual culture artifact.*

### KEYWORDS

Visual Culture  
Ponoragan  
Dhadhak Merak  
Reyog Ponorogo

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license



### INTRODUCTION

Visual culture is a form of scientific interdisciplinarity that combines cultural anthropology and visual arts. To understand visual culture, we can refer to two concepts, namely the concepts of "culture" and "visual". "Culture" is all the results of creation, taste, intention, and the work of society both in the form of materials that can be seen, touched, and felt, as well as non-materials that are abstract and more difficult to understand (Soemardjan in Ranjabar, 2006:21). Furthermore, the word "visual" can be interpreted as everything that can be observed with the sense of sight and can be produced, interpreted, and constructed by humans and has functional, communicative, and aesthetic values (Barnard in Rogoff, 1998:3). So, from these two concepts, visual culture can be interpreted as a form of visual phenomena from the creation, taste, and intention of a society which then shapes their civilization. Another opinion, according to Kelli Fuery (in Rio, 2011:5) explains that visual culture is actually a relationship between three elements: image, culture, and spectator. Visual culture as a study basically discusses topics ranging from visual analysis to interpretation of an object or visual phenomenon (Duncum, 2003:19-25).

Visual culture is a form of interdisciplinarity of science that combines cultural anthropology and fine arts. To understand visual culture, we can refer to two concepts, namely the concepts of "culture" and "visual". Culture is all the creations, tastes, karsa, and works of society, both in the form of materials that can be seen and felt, as well as non-materials that are abstract and more difficult to

understand (Soemardjan in Ranjabar, 2006:21). Furthermore, the word "visual" can be interpreted as everything that can be observed with the sense of sight and can be produced, interpreted, and constructed by humans and has functional, communicative, and aesthetic value (Barnard in Rogoff, 1998:3). So, from these two concepts, visual culture can be interpreted as a manifestation of visual phenomena from the creation and taste of a society that then shapes their civilization.

Many experts have opinions about the definition of visual culture, including: According to Smith (2008:7) visual culture is an academic discipline, a cross-disciplinary research topic, a field or sub-field of cultural studies, a field of media studies, a part of communication science, a part of art history, and a part of aesthetics. According to Jenks (1995:16) visual culture is a term that is conventionally used to refer to works of fine art such as paintings, sculptures, designs, and architecture as well as all cultural artifacts that place visual appearance as the main feature. Meanwhile, according to Kelli Fuery (in Rio, 2011:5) explained that visual culture is actually a relationship between three elements, namely *image* (image or image), culture, and *spectator* (connoisseurs or spectators). Visual culture as a study, basically discusses topics ranging from visual analysis to interpretation of a visual object or phenomenon (Duncum, 2003: 19-25).

Discussing visual culture is certainly very broad and complex. Based on its form, according to Stolley (2005:15) visual culture can be divided into two, namely tangible visual culture (physically visible) and intangible (not physically visible but in the form of thoughts, language, values, beliefs, behaviors related to visuals. Visual culture has a very wide scope. This field of study is currently widely used to uncover cultural constructions in art and visual media in everyday life (Dikovitskaya, 2006:3). Visual culture is very closely related to daily life. This is because visual culture is the result of imagination or thoughts and reflections of people's culture which is then manifested in the form of visual phenomena (Mirzoeff, 2002:4).

In this discussion, the author will conduct a visual culture study of one of the cultural products of the Ponorogo community which is then called "Ponorogan Visual Culture". The word "Ponorogan" is a designation for one of the cultural regions in East Java. The East Java Provincial Government together with cultural experts Ayu Sutarto and Setya Yuwana in a book entitled "Cultural Mapping in East Java Province: An Attempt to Find Positive Values" published in 2008, has mapped East Java into ten cultural areas which include: Arek, Samin, Tengger, Osing (Using), Pandalungan, Madura Island, Madura Bawean, and Madura Kengean, Mataraman, and Ponorogan cultural regions (Sutarto, 2008:3). The Ponorogan cultural region is geographically located west of Mount Wilis to the east of Mount Lawu or more specifically in Ponorogo Regency. Ponorogan culture was created from the synthesis of pre-existing cultures, namely the influence of Javanese culture from the Mataram kingdom, Hindu-Buddhism from the Majapahit Kingdom, and the local culture of the people on the slopes of Mount Wilis (formerly called the Wengker region) which then formed a Ponorogan cultural identity (Sugianto, 2016:2). From the previous reviews, Ponorogan visual culture can be defined as a variety of visual phenomena created from the creation, taste, and intention of the people of Ponorogo which then form their identity.

One of the visual phenomena that has become iconically attached to the culture of the Ponorogo community is the *dhadhak merak* of Reyog Ponorogo. *Dhadhak merak* is the name for a mask used by the *pembarong* (dancer who plays the character *Singobarong*) in the Reyog Ponorogo dance. The *dhadhak merak* mask is iconic because of its shape and size, which is very large, reaching 2m-2.5m and weighing approximately 65kg. With the mastery of certain dance techniques, a narrators is able to play and twirl the *dhadhak merak* in accordance with the rhythm of the Reyog gamelan. This mask with the embodiment of a tiger and a peacock can be said to be one of the largest masks in the world.

The *dhadhak merak* mask that is often encountered does not suddenly exist in this form. *Dhadhak merak* has experienced visual development in a long history from the beginning of its appearance to the present. This phenomenon then attracts the author's attention to explore it further in the perspective of visual culture studies. The phenomenon of *dhadhak merak* visual development over time is a form of aesthetic awareness of the Ponorogo community which then forms the Ponorogan cultural identity. From this phenomenon, there are actually many things that are not visually revealed that are interesting to explore and know. This is what the author will focus on in this discussion regarding: 1) The phenomenon of visual development of *dhadhak merak* over time, 2) Reading Ponorogan's visual culture in *dhadhak merak*.

## METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative research using visual culture studies approach. The data used in this research is collected based on literature studies and documentation archives in the form of photos, videos, journal articles, books related to dhadhak merak of Reyog Ponorogo. The visual culture study process that will be carried out is by using the theory of reading visual culture proposed by Sachari (2007:18-22), namely reviewing visual structure, function, value, and meaning. In the process of revealing meaning, the author will use the theory of Iconography (Panofsky, 1955:11) to reveal the meaning behind a dhadhak merak

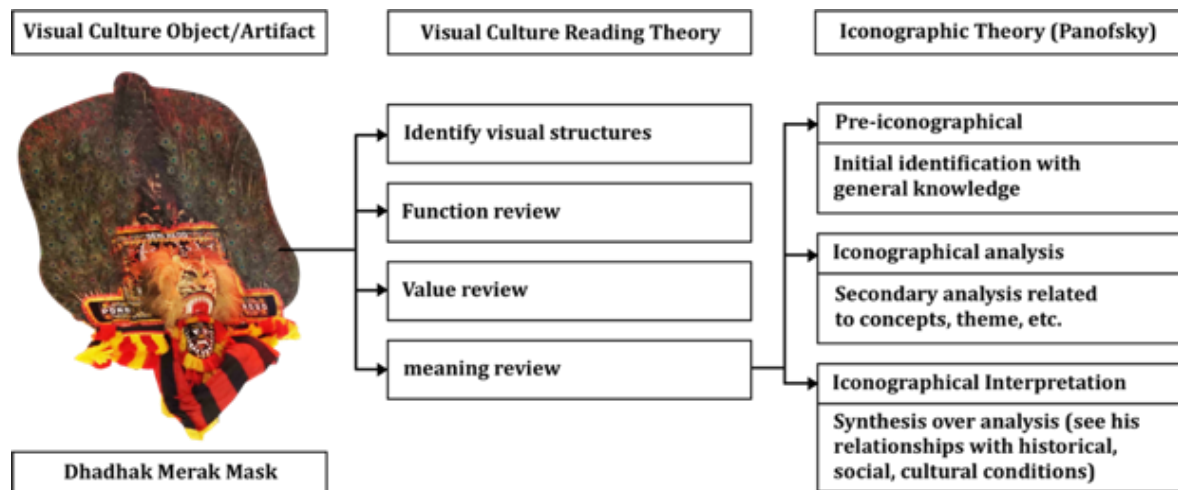


Figure 1. Teoritical Framework

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Visual Development Phenomenon of Dhadhak Merak Reyog Ponorogo

Since the development of modern technology brought by colonial invaders, portraits of folk art that was then called "Rejog" (old spelling) have been spatially documented in several different places and periods of time. The author has collected sources in the form of photographs related to Reyog from the Reyog Ponorogo Archive Agency and several accessible sources of previous research. Although in fact, there is no clear and specific source that can be used as a reference, it can at least provide an overview of how the phenomenon of the visual development of dhadhak merak over time. The following is the development of the Dhahak Merak mask form.



**Figure 2.** The Visual Development Phenomena of Dhadhak Merak Reyog Ponorogo

The 1900s era, refers to photo documentation of reyog Ponorogo from the Tropen Museum collection in the Netherlands in 1920. From the photo it can be seen that in this year's era the dhadhak merak was still played by two people, one person as the controller of the mask and the other behind it (referred to as "jego!"). The shape of the caplokan (tiger head) whose mouth can be moved up and down which can sound "thik... thik...". The tiger mask sculpture looks very simple. The shape of the mask is not accompanied by hair as it is currently developed. The shape of the rengkek (peacock) is also very simple. The peacock feathers are arranged in a semicircle with a diameter of approximately 1 m. The arrangement of the peacock feathers is made tenuous. There is also a cloth to decorate the rengkek which is arranged in a semicircle (three tiers). The cloth can then be identified as the initial form of krakab that can be found at that time. The covering cloth or what is referred to as "keruduk" appears to be made extending backwards measuring approximately 2-2.5 m which serves to cover the jegol or the back of the dancer. Kruduk at this time still represents the body shape of a tiger as a four-legged animal should.

In the 1910s, photo documentation was found that showed the dhadhak merak mask was still played by two people and some had begun to eliminate the "jego!" back player. Dhadhak merak with two players does not seem to exist anymore and is mostly played by one person only. Visually, the obvious change is the addition of the peacock's body that began to appear in this year's era. This is to add to the aesthetic impression of the peacock's tail which had previously been made elongated from the rengkek (semicircular) shape. At the bottom of the caplokan, decoration in the form of a semi-circular cloth with red and yellow thread decoration has also been added, which is currently referred to as embong. In addition, it can be seen that the decoration in the form of a shawl cloth placed on top of the krakab has begun to appear.

In the 1939s, there were developments from the previous era. The shape of the dhadhak merak began to undergo significant changes in the rengkek and caplokan parts. The shape of the caplokan can no longer be moved up or down. The shape of the tiger's head is made unrealistic like a tiger. There is a process of deformation of the tiger mask shape. The front part of the face is made flat with a wide mouth and fangs like Butha Kala in kayon wayang kulit. The tiger hair also began to appear on the caplokan to create the impression that Singobarong is an antagonist character. In addition,



there is also a slight change in the shape of the rengkek. Initially, the shape of the rengkek was simple and only formed a semicircle. But in this era, the shape of the peacock's feathers began to be extended in the tail. So that in the centre of the rengkek there appears to be a little arrangement of peacock feathers that are longer than the main part of the rengkek. The process of arranging the peacock's feathers is also getting closer together, this is different from the previous era where the arrangement of peacock feathers still looks loose. Changes to the krakab are also starting to be seen in this year's dhadhak merak era. Although the shape is still in the form of a semicircle, it has been made intact with decorations from curled cloth. Basically, in the 1939s era, people's aesthetic awareness of the visual form of the dhadhak merak had begun to emerge.

In the 1956s, a significant development was the addition of accessories in the form of party symbols. The background of this event was because at that time Reyog Ponorogo was used as a campaign medium by the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) to attract the masses, so many party symbols were attached to the dhadhak merak. In addition, from the photo documentation found, it can be observed that the shape of the rengkek has begun to eliminate the peacock tail arrangement that extends upwards. The shape of the rengkek visually also no longer looks semicircular, but is symmetrically curved at the bottom and centred upwards with a curve as well. The diameter of the rengkek has also been made larger at approximately 1.5 m. In the caplokan section, there are no significant changes, except that the tiger-stripe pattern is more organised and clearer.

In the 1970s-1980s there was a significant change in the visual form of the dhadhak merak. The shape in this year's era already resembles the shape that we often encounter in the current era. However, in the 1970s-1980s the form can be said to be still simple unlike the current one. This can be seen in the visual of the peacock dhadhak krakap, which still lacks ornamentation. In this era, krakab shapes that were not only semi-circular became popular. Instead, it is rectangular with additional rectangles on the right and left of the dhadhak. The words "pono" on the right and "rogo" on the left also began to appear. In this era, the state symbol, the Pancasila Garuda bird, began to appear on the krakab dhadhak merak. This is a form of community nationalism and at the same time to eliminate the impression of communism inherent in the previous era. The simple ornaments on this krakab are made using beads with embroidery techniques. The ornaments include stilted forms of tigers or lions, peacocks, and floral ornaments such as flowers and leaves. The embong shape has also begun to appear not only at the bottom of the caplokan, but also on the right and left sides of the rengkek. The shape of the krakab has also been nobly made into one unit with a symmetrical curved shape. In the current era, the use of real tiger skins applied to the caplokan is still rampant. Although this has begun to be banned.

The 1990s-now is the form of dhadhak merak that is still maintained today. This happened because of the local government's awareness to standardise the visual form of dhadhak merak which has been recorded in a book entitled "Basic Guidelines for Reyog Ponorogo Art in the National Cultural Performance" which is then known by the public as the "Yellow Book". The following are details of the standardisation of the dhadhak merak visual form. 1) A tiger's head made of rattan, wood and cowhide painted with patterns resembling tiger stripes. 2) The rengkek, which is made of bamboo linked together with thread. On the rengkek, peacock feathers are arranged neatly. 3) There is a krakap made of velvet cloth with a rectangular shape above the caplokan and on its left and right sides. On the krakap there are flora and fauna ornaments in the form of beads sewn on the bluduru cloth. In addition, there must also be the state symbol Garuda Pancasila and the name of the reyog group. 4) The pembarong's outfit is dominated by red and yellow colours. Wearing a mori belt and embong.

In the 2000-now, basically the development of the dhadhak merak form is still in accordance with the existing standard. However, in this era, many reyog craftsmen and artists began to create the shape of the dhadhak merak according to their own ideals. Some make the caplokan with a deep black colour that resembles a panther. Some vary the peacock feathers used with white colour obtained from albino peacocks. Some make the rengkek shaped like a fan. There are also those who make the size of the dhadhak merak larger than the existing standard form. These developments are reasonable and allowed to be done. It is as far as it remains to pay attention and consider its use. Such forms are reasonable to use for entertainment only. However, they cannot be used during performances at reyog festivals where there are already binding rules (pakem).

## Reading The Ponoragan Visual Culture of Dhadhak Merak

### 1. Identifying the Visual Structure of Dhadhak Merak

Dhadhak merak as an artefact is arguably the largest mask in the world. This mask is made with a giant size ranging from 40kg-60kg, and with size variations of small (1.5m-2m high), Normal/Standard (2.3m-2.5m), extra large/above normal (more than 2.5m-3m). The following are the components of the dhadhak merak.



**Figure 3.** The Visual Development Phenomena of Dhadhak Merak Reyog Ponorogo

- Rengkek is a bamboo frame composed of bamboo slats made in such a way as a base for arranging peacock feathers.
- Krakab is a cloth arranged to decorate the bottom of the rengkek. Krakab can also be referred to as a link between the caplokkan and the rengkek that has been arranged with peacock feathers. This part is usually made of black velvet cloth and decorated with ornaments from monte that add to the aesthetic impression of dhadhak merak. The ornaments are in the form of flora and fauna decorations, the Pancasila Garuda bird symbol, and the name of the group/agency/institution/community that made it.
- Cohong is the name for the body of the peacock mounted in the centre of the rengkek (above the krakab). The cohong used varies, some use real peacock bodies that have died and been preserved, some replace them with chicken bodies modified to resemble peacocks, and some use artificial peacocks made of cloth filled with cotton (resembling dolls).
- Lar or peacock feathers are the dominant part of the dhadhak merak, namely peacock feathers. In the classification there are two types of lar peacock shapes used, namely lar plong (peacock feather eyes), and lar cawang (peacock feathers whose ends are not perfectly eye-shaped).
- Wiru is a red and yellow thread which is an additional accessory part that tassels and is located at the bottom (right and left) of the rengkek. This part is composed of wool threads arranged with alternating colours between red and yellow.
- Caplokkan is the name for the head of the Singobarong (tiger symbol) on the dhadhak merak mask in Reyog Ponorogo. This caplokkan is made of inlaid wood, rattan, ox skin painted to resemble a tiger pattern, and ox tail as hair.
- Embong is an accessory that is installed under the caplokkan. The embong is made of velvet cloth with beaded decoration with kala ornament, and decorated with red-yellow interspersed thread tassel.
- Kruduk or blanket is a caplokkan head cover on the back as a symbol of the tiger's body. Kruduk in the current era is cultivated with variations of red colour only, some are black only, and some combine red and black patterns.

### 2. Overview of Dhadhak Merak Function

Like other art objects, the dhadhak merak can then be analysed as having two functions: applied function and fine art function. The applied function of the dhadhak merak is as a property in the art

of reyog Ponorogo. A performer will bite the cakotan and rest on the strength of the shoulders, then move the mask in accordance with the rhythm of the reyog gamelan. In addition to this applied function, later in its development the dhadhak merak can also have a pure function as an heirloom. The meaning of heirloom in this case on is as a collection object that is cared for and used as a display only. The average dhadhak merak collected as an heirloom is an old dhadhak merak or it can also be a dhadhak merak that has its own historical value for the collector.

### 3. Overview of Historical Values in Dhadhak Merak

Dhadhak merak as a visual cultural artefact has inherent historical values. Discussing the dhadhak merak is of course closely related to Reyog Ponorogo. Many studies on Reyog have been conducted, but none have revealed the history of Reyog scientifically. This is because it always collides with the problem of facts and data, which is only able to reveal it through oral information and some writings that end up with multi-interpretation conclusions and various versions. This diversity of versions can actually enrich local wisdom in the community and can be used for complementary studies. The following are some versions of Reyog Ponorogo's history that are popular among the public (Kurnianto, 2017: 19-35).

First version, Reyog Ponorogo as a Traditional Ceremony to Reject Bad Luck. Some sources say that this version of Reyog Ponorogo was born from the socio-cultural conditions of the people of Ponorogo at that time who still embraced the original beliefs of animism-dynamism. People believed that they lived side by side with the spirits of local rulers who were able to protect, provide peace, and even bring danger. At that time, tigers and peacocks were animals that were abundant in the forests in the Ponorogo region. The people of Ponorogo then believed the two animals to be the "Gods" of the forest. As a form of respect for the two animals, the community then created a symbol in the form of a tiger mask with a peacock on top. The symbol is a medium to bring in the tiger spirit and the peacock spirit. The tiger spirit is strongly believed to be the most powerful spirit and able to provide protection and peace of life. While the peacock spirit is believed to be the spirit capable of bringing sustainability. From this version, Reyog Ponorogo is believed to have been born from the tradition of ceremonies to ward off danger, disease, and evil spirits. In its development, the traditional ceremony using tiger and peacock masks was then packaged in the form of dances.

Second version, Old Version of Reyog Ponorogo. This version is believed to be a development of the previous version. Reyog in this version is then popularly referred to as "Reyog Tempo Dulu" whose performances consist of: Barongan (dhadhak merak), Gendruwon, Jaranan Kepang (Jatilan), and punokawan figures such as: Penthul and Tembem (Timoer 1978:83), Portojoyo and Prototholo, and Gembyong and Tutul (Kartomi 1976:143). The gamelan instruments consist of: Seruling/slompret, Kethuk, Kenong, Kempul, Angklung, Gong, Ketipung, and Kendang, all made of bamboo. Dhadhak Merak dancers in this version number two people with the composition of one person acting as the main player wearing a dhadhak merak mask, the other person acts as a jegol behind the main player (like a lion dance). According to Soemarto [12] (2014:3), this Reyog performance lasted until the 1940s. After 1940 this Reyog performance was no longer visible, because some roles that were considered minor such as: jegol, and punokawan characters were no longer appearing.

Third version, Reyog Ponorogo as the Imagination of Past Artists. This version of Reyog Ponorogo is believed to have been born from the painting of ideas or imaginations of an artist of his time. This view stems from the context of a cultural artist, who is likely to be modelling life against the backdrop of wilderness life. The sign of the times will usually be a serious concern for artists to be expressed in an idea in various forms of visual and written symbols. The packaging of dhadhak merak with a combination of tiger and peacock heads is also very likely the result of the creation of a cultural artist of his era, where the idea arose from the context of the society that surrounded him at that time with the background of wilderness life. Over time, the artist's imagination developed and became a folk art.

Fourth version, Suryongalam Version of Reyog Ponorogo (as a political satire). In this version, the art of Reyog Ponorogo was born and formed due to political satire by Demang Suryongalam (Ki Ageng Kutu) from Surukubeng or Wengker against the reign of King Brawijaya V who did not reflect

the firmness of a king. At that time, Suryongalam, who had been a subordinate in the Majapahit Kingdom, chose to go into exile to the Wengker region because he saw King Brawijaya V as being driven by his consort, Putri of Campa. The form of satire made by Suryonyalam is to make a tiger head mask symbolising King Brawijaya V and a peacock on the tiger's head symbolising Princess Campa. The combination of the two creates a philosophical meaning, that the King is controlled by his consort in all government policies. In addition, Suryongalam also features horsemen dancers (currently referred to as Jathil) with boys dressed in women's clothing (kebaya), crowned with the headdress of Srikandi (a female puppet character of Arjuna's wife), and with gentle dance movements resembling women. This is meant to illustrate the character of King Brawijaya V and the Majapahit troops who resembled "sissies". In the performance stage, this version of Reyog Ponorogo is played by only two characters, namely Barongan and Jatilan. In its development, this version of Reyog art added Ganongan or Pujangganong dancers with movements that symbolise someone making fun of Barongan, with the intention of satirising King Brawijaya V of the Majapahit kingdom.

Fifth version, Bathoro Katong Version of Reyog Ponorogo (as a medium for Islamic propagation). This version of Reyog Ponorogo art is closely related to the history of Islamisation carried out by Bathoro Katong in Ponorogo. This period is the time as the period of Suryongalam or Ki Ageng Kutu. The existing Reyog Ponorogo dance (created by Suryongalam) was then modified and utilised by Bathoro Katong as a medium for spreading Islam. During the reign of Bathoro Katong, the dynamics of Reyog Ponorogo dance towards a very thick Islamic nuance. Some of the changes that occurred were: hanging beads were added to the beak of the peacock. The beads are meant to symbolise that humans always remember the Almighty. In addition, the peacock's legs are also made to grab the tiger's head. This is a symbol of the success in the propagation of Islam over Hindu-Buddhism. In the era of Bathoro Katong, Reyog's musical accompaniment was also recreated from the nuances that originally fuelled the spirit of battle to the nuances of joy and the spirit of "peace". In this era various terms reyog ponorogo device associated with Islamic terms and meanings so that it can be a medium of da'wah.

Sixth version, Bantarangin Version of Reyog Ponorogo. This version of Reyog's history can be regarded as a fictionalised version or legend. In detail, the history of Reyog Ponorogo from this legendary perspective was written by the elder warok of Ponorogo, Ki Kasni Gunopati (Mbah Wo Kucing) in his writing entitled "The Story of Wengker and the Genesis of Reyog Ponorogo". In the context of this legend, the art of Reyog Ponorogo is associated with the existence of the Bantarangin kingdom located in the Wengker area (people believe it is in the area of Somoroto Village, Kauman District, Ponorogo). The time setting is around the 12th century (the heyday of the Kediri or Daha Kingdom). This story begins with the story of a king from the Bantarangin kingdom, Prabu Klonosewandono, who wants to marry Dewi Songgolangit, the daughter of the Kediri kingdom. Dewi Songgolangit made an offer to all kings who wanted to marry her to fulfil the requirements that had been proposed. That is to build an underground tunnel to Kediri, accompanied by 144 horsemen, art that has never existed, and two-headed animals. Not only Klonosewandono, the King of Lodoyo Forest (believed to refer to a forest in Blitar Regency), Singobarong, also participated in the competition. Long story short, there was a fight between Klonosewandono and Singobarong. Singobarong was conquered and with his magic, Klonosewandono was able to unite Singobarong with a peacock that always lurked nearby. This was then utilised by Klonosewandono to complete the requirements to marry Dewi Songgolangit. In addition, his journey in defeating Singobarong was made into a new art form that had never existed, which was later referred to as Reyog Ponorogo. The ending of this version also varies: 1) According to Hartono (1980:34) in a book entitled History of Reyog Ponorogo. Klonosewandono never completed the competition, as he died while building a tunnel as one of the requirements. 2) According to Kasni Gunopati written in a manuscript entitled "The Wengker Story and the Genesis of Reyog Ponorogo" (Simatupang, 2019:119-120). The ending of this bantarangin version of the story is that the marriage between Klonosewandono and Dewi Songgolangit did not take place. Klonosewandono chose to undo his intention to marry Songgolangit in order to receive a boon from the Gods that made the Bantarangin kingdom an eternal, respected, and famous kingdom. 3) According to Purwowidjoyo (1985:23-25) in the book Crita Rakyat Reyog Ponorogo. He believes that the marriage between Klonosewandono and Dewi Songgolangit did not



happen because Dewi Songgolangit denied it. Klonosewandono was then disappointed and cursed her to become Batu. 4) According to Fauzannafi (2005:80), in a book entitled Reyog Ponorogo Dancing Between Domination and Religion. Mentioned that prabu Kelanasewardana still proposed to Dewi Sanggalangit.

#### 4. Overview of Meanings in Dhadhak Merak

First stage is pre-iconographical. This stage is the process of searching for visual cultural objects based on common knowledge. From the visual cultural object of dhadhak merak, the general public knows it as a mask that is created in such a way that it becomes a dance property in the Reyog Ponorogo dance. Dhadhak merak is a very iconic mask and has always been attached to the Reyog Ponorogo folk art from time to time.

Second stage is iconographical analysis. This stage is carried out by looking from various other perspectives such as themes, concepts, functions, historical values attached to visual cultural objects. Concepts and themes are closely related to the functions and historical values that have been described in the previous discussion. Dhadhak merak is the embodiment of the tiger and peacock fauna. The tiger is a wild animal that lives in the wilderness. The tiger's savage nature can be identified from its character as a meat-eater (prey of other animals), with sharp canine teeth, sharp nails that can pounce and tear the body of its prey. Meanwhile, peacocks are animals that have beautiful tail feathers. The feathers will be flapped like a fan as a form to attract the attention of the female during the mating period. Peacocks are not wild animals like tigers. That is because this bird species is a fruit and plant eater only. Both of these animals are indicated to be abundant in the Ponorogo region which at that time was a wilderness, so it is possible that the meaning of dhadhak merak is not far from the nature of the existing tiger and peacock fauna.

Third stage is iconographical interpretation. This stage is a synthesis process of analysis with the dhadhak merak actually formed due to the interrelationship between visual objects and the socio-cultural conditions of society. Dhadhak merak has experienced the phenomenon of visual development from time to time starting from the animism-dynamism era, Hindu-Buddhism, Islam, and until now. From this phenomenon, there is a connection between the development of visual structure, function, historical value and then constructs various meanings of dhadhak merak. The following are some interpretations of the meaning of dhadhak merak that developed in the community.

- The meaning of dhadhak merak in Reyog version as a traditional ceremony (animism-dynamism era). Caplokan is a symbol of the tiger spirit and dhadhak is a symbol of the peacock spirit. Both animals are guardians of the wilderness, which at that time the Ponorogo region was still a wilderness. In this version, the dhadhak merak is interpreted by the community as a guardian figure who must be respected in order to protect the community from any misfortune or disaster.
- The meaning of dhadhak merak in the old Reyog version. Dhadhak merak is interpreted as a symbol of the natural landscape at that time. Caplokan with the form of a tiger's head is interpreted as the preservation of animals at that time. Meanwhile, the dense and green of dhadhak merak was interpreted as the preservation of the wilderness in the Ponorogo region at that time. The existence of the dhadhak merak is then interpreted as a natural balance that must always be maintained.
- The meaning of dhadhak merak in the Reyog Suryongalam version. As a whole, dhadhak merak is a symbol of resistance to the reign of Brawijaya V, which is seen as always being subservient to his empress, the princess of Champa. The tiger head symbolises the figure of King Brawijaya V and the peacock symbolises the figure of Princess Champa. The peacock perched on the tiger's head means that the ruler is subject to the beauty of a woman.
- The meaning of dhadhak merak in the Reyog Bathoro Katong version. In this era, reyog, which was originally a symbol of resistance (Suryongalam's version), was then transformed by Raden Bathoro Katong into a medium for preaching. Reyog is said to come from the word Riyauqun

which means beauty, admirable goodness, so that the existence of reyog can be interpreted as a medium to admire the greatness of God.

- The meaning of dhadhak merak in Bantarangin version. Dhadhak merak version is interpreted as a symbolisation of a character, namely the king Singobarong ruler of the Lodoyo forest who has an antagonistic character in the Bantarangin version of the Reyog Ponorogo story.

## CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of the visual development of dhadhak merak, actually there is no clear and specific source that can be used as a reference. However, from the results of past documentation photos that are spatially in different periods and places, at least can provide an overview of how the phenomenon of the visual development of the dhadhak merak over time. From the fragments of these photos, it can be seen that the dhadhak merak has undergone seven phases of development starting from the 1910 era where the dhadhak was still semicircular and played by two people, then developing in the 1920, 1939, 1956, 1980, 1990, 2000 eras, and arriving at the form commonly found today.

Dhadak merak as a visual cultural artefact of Ponoragan can certainly be read by reviewing it from various other aspects that are interrelated with the artefact. The process of reading the dhadhak merak visual cultural artefact is done by reviewing its visual structure, function, value and meaning. The visual structure of dhadhak merak consists of rengkek, krakab, cohung, peacock feathers, wiru (red and yellow threads), caplokan, embong, and kruduk (blanket cover). In terms of function, dhadhak merak has two functions, namely applied function as dance property and pure function as heirloom (collection). From a value perspective, the diverse historical values have become its own inherent local wisdom. There are at least six versions of the origin of the dhadhak merak that developed in the community. In terms of meaning, the dhadhak merak actually has various interpretations of meaning. This is due to the relationship between the visual structure, function, historical values that construct it and the influence of the culture of the Ponorogo community which also coloured the long journey of the phenomenon of visual development of dhadhak merak starting from the era of animism-dynamism, Hindu-Buddhism, Islam, to the present era. From this phenomenon, it is not surprising that the people of Ponorogo have a very strong identity that is reflected in the dhadhak merak of Reyog Ponorogo.

## REFERENCES

- Dikovitskaya, Margaret. (2006). *Visual Culture: The Study of Visual After Cultural Turn*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Duncum, Paul. (2003). The Theories and Practices of Visual Culture in Art Education, Arts Education Policy Review. *Jurnal Art Education Policy Review*, 105(2), 19-25, <https://www.researchgate.net/-publication/249038312>
- Fauzannafi, M. Zamzam. (2005). *Reog Ponorogo Menari Diantara Dominasi dan Keberagaman*. Yogyakarta: Kepel Press
- Hartono. (1980). *Reyog Ponorogo*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan
- Jenks, Chris. (1995). *The Centrality of the Eye in Western Culture: An Introduction Visual Culture*. London dan New York: Routledge.
- Kartomi, Margaret J. (1976). Performance, Music, and Meaning of Reyog Ponorogo. *Journal of South East Asian Studies*, 25 (1) (141-171). <http://www.journal.southeast-asian-studies.com>
- Kurnianto, Rido. (2017). *Seni Reyog Ponorogo: Sejarah, Nilai, dan Dinamika Dari Waktu ke Waktu*. Yogyakarta: Buku Litera
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. (2002). *The Visual Culture Reader*. London: Psychology Press
- Panofsky, Erwin. (1939). *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Prastiawan, I., Suroso, P., Widiastuti, U., Nugrahaningsih, R. H. D., & Satria, T. D. (2021). Pendampingan Kelompok Seniman Jawa Deli dalam Mengelola Instrumen Musik Dodok pada Pertunjukan Seni Reog. *Gondang*, 5(2), 235-240.

- 
- Purwowidjoyo (1985). *Cerita Rakyat Reyog Ponorogo*. Ponorogo: Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Ponorogo
- Ranjabar, Jacobus. (2006). *Sistem Sosial Budaya Indonesia: Suatu Pengantar*. Bogor: GHalia Indonesia
- Rio, Adde Oriza. (2011). Kajian Budaya Visual dalam Ilmu Komunikasi: Posisi dan Metode Penelitian. *Jurnal Sociae Polites*, 3(2), 1-15. <https://ejournal.uki.ac.id/jurnal-sociae-polites>
- Rogoff, Irit. (1998). *Studying Visual Culture*. London: Routledge
- Sachari, Agus. (2007). *Budaya Visual Indonesia*. Jakarta: Erlangga
- Simatupang, G.R. Lono. (2019). *Play and Display: Dua Moda Pergelaran Reyog Ponorogo di Jawa Timur*. Yogyakarta: UGM Press
- Smith, Marquard. (2008). *Visual Culture Studies*. London: Sage Publication
- Soemarto, 2014. *Menelusuri Perjalanan Reyog Ponorogo*, Ponorogo: Kotareog Media.
- Stolley, Kathy.S. (2005). *The Basics Study of Visual Culture*. London: Greenwood Press
- Sugianto, A. (2016). Kebudayaan Masyarakat Jawa Etnik Panaragan. *Jurnal ARISTO*, 1(3), 45-52, <https://journal.umpo.ac.id/1686976811339992>
- Sutarto, Ayu dan Setya Yuwana Sudikan. (2008). *Pemetaan Kebudayaan Di Provinsi Jawa Timur: Sebuah Upaya Pencarian Nilai - Nilai Positif*. Jember: Kompaswidya dan Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Timur
- Timoer, Sunarto. (1978). *Reog Di Jawa Timur*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan