

Herman Delago's Representation in Singing The Batak Song "Butet"

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ABSTRACT : This study aims to find out how an Austrian national, namely Herman Delago, represents the song "Butet" from North Sumatra. He is a musician from Austria who has an interest in Batak music. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The data is collected to be processed and analyzed through data presentation, verification and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that Herman Delago's representation of the song "Butet" is the result of personal experiences formed and the values and uniqueness of the Batak people. Even though there are differences in cultural background, Herman believes that Toba Batak music has similarities with music in their home country. In addition to cultural differences, there are gender differences where Herman must express the sadness and strength of Batak women contained in the lyrics of the song "Butet". This process gave birth to Herman's appreciation and representation of the lyrics of the song "Butet".

KEYWORDS -representative, batak songs, butet

I. INTRODUCTION

The presentation of an art depends on how one interprets the work and the ways in which it is conveyed. The meaning of something to be conveyed in its own way is usually referred to as representation. Representation aims to re-describe a story or event in order to convey a message (Giovani, 2019). Representation becomes an essential thing in interpreting something. Representation is a process of interpreting something that has meaning in its own language. The meaning and meaning is influenced by the cultural background that is owned by a person. Therefore, representation can become an identity about a work that is performed.

The way a person represents a work is influenced by the habits or culture that develop in his life. Culture certainly produces aspects that develop in society, such as language, religion, race, art, and so on. culture has universal nature. Culture that develops in society can support people's lives to show the character, identity and integrity of the Indonesian nation. (Setyaningrum, 2018). This is in accordance with the culture that exists throughout the world, where a culture is the result of habits and community deliberations in showing the identity of a nation. Therefore, these habits certainly can affect someone when they know or learn a new culture, such as race, religion, language, dialect, and art.

Culture can give birth to an art, one of which is the art of music. Butet's song is one of the millions of works that originate from a culture, namely the culture of the Batak people. The art of music in Batak society itself is divided into two parts, namely vocal music (*ende*) and instrumental music (*gondang*) (Hugo & Situmeang, 2017).

The song "Butet" is one of the vocal music or traditional songs of the Batak people, but it is not yet known who composed it. Based on the type of Batak vocals, Butet's song belongs to the andung song type, which is a song about the history of someone who has died. The song "Butet" contains expressions of sadness of

Batak mothers to their daughters about the struggles of their husbands who fought against the colonialists in the past. Therefore, this song is actually sung by a mother to her daughter because her father had died in the battlefield against the invaders.

This research will explain how Herman Delago's process of interpreting and representing the song "Butet". Herman Delago is someone who comes from Austria, where he first set foot in Indonesia, namely in the city of Bali in 1996. At that time, Herman Delago heard someone sing a song that made him interested in learning it. Then, he asked a Balinese man to teach the song. The man then taught Herman Delago the song "Butet" and "Sinanggartulo". Furthermore, wherever Herman explored the villages in Indonesia, he always sang the song "Butet" thus making his listeners amazed. The people who listened were astonished and many of them knew the song "Butet". Through this phenomenon, Herman is increasingly interested in exploring Batak culture where the song "Butet" originate. Then Herman left for Samosir to explore Batak culture and music.

In 2012, Herman arranged the song "Butet" with a Batak musician named Vicky Sianipar. Until finally, they have participated in the Cultural Festival on Samosir several times, held music concerts with the theme of Batak songs, and made an album containing Batak songs entitled "Tobatak". Apart from making albums, Herman Delago also arranges Batak songs, and performs them at music concerts in Europe (Sasongko, 2012). Herman's concerts held in Europe also brought Batak songs including the song "Butet". Based on the results of the interview, Herman only tried to arrange the song into an orchestra. At that time, Herman did not really know the meaning of the song "Butet". In 2010, then Herman began to find out and examine the meaning and significance of the song "Butet".

"Butet" song tells about the atmosphere of struggle during the colonial period in Indonesia. Based on the translation of the lyrics, this song is a story of a mother to her daughter named Butet. Term "Butet" in the Batak people, it is known as a nickname for girls. Her mother advised her to be patient while waiting for her father to come home from the war and grow up to be a brave daughter, so that she can help the fighters become red cross. "Butet" song can be performed with a fast pace and strong expression in the middle of feeling sad due to the abandonment of a father to go to war. Representation is an important part of a process of meaning and exchange between cultures (Istiqomah, 2021). "Butet" song of course it has Batak cultural values contained in it. This research will also discuss the interrelationships of Herman's cultural differences. This is very interesting to study, how are the differences in cultural background and knowledge of Herman Delago in interpreting the song "Butet", so that he can represent the song in every performance.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design, while the type of research used is descriptive which aims to find out Herman Delago's representative in rendition of the song "Butet". (Abubakar, 2021) argues that "meaning is of essential to the qualitative approach". That is, qualitative research will focus on the meaning of the observed data. The research data is in the form of an online dialogue with Herman Delago to answer how Herman Delago represents the song "Butet". The data source for this research is an in-depth interview with Herman Delago which was obtained directly through long-distance communication media.



Figure 1. The first interview with Herman Delago on January 29, 2023

The first interview was conducted online on Sunday, January 29, 2023 using video call by application WhatsApp on android. The interview discussed Herman Delago's background, his early interest in Batak music, the process of getting to know Batak culture, as well as his experience playing music by performing Batak songs. During the interview, the researcher found out that there was a phase where Herman performed the "Butet" before he understood the meaning of the song.



Figure 2. The second interview with Herman Delago on February 1, 2023

Furthermore, the researcher conducted a second interview on Wednesday, 1 February 2023 via the same electronic media. In the second interview, the researcher discussed more about Herman's process of interpreting the lyrics of the song "Butet". The researcher collected data related to her knowledge of Batak culture, such as the characteristics of tough Batak mothers, the inner strength of a Batak mother for her child, and Herman's background, who is also the son of a soldier. From the results of the interview, the researcher knows how Herman expresses the song "Butet" when singing.

In addition to interviews with informants, the data sources obtained came from documentation/electronic media and literature studies related to Herman Delago's background and the musical process he performs in Batak songs. The data analysis technique used in this study consisted of four stages, reduction, display/ data presentation, and data analysis procedures and conclusions. The data obtained is then collected and reduced. In this process, data that focuses on Herman Delago's representations are collected into one. The next stage is the data collected will be displayed and made into a conclusion.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Herman Delago's musical experience

The results and discussion answer the formulation of the problem which shows how Herman Delago's process understands the meaning and significance of the song "Butet" and represents it in every performance. (Christina & Yudhi, 2017) argues that a sign can reconstruct meaning (reference) in a certain way to human consciousness through the senses, emotions and intelligence which are manifested intentionally in physical form (representation). Herman is originally from Tyrol, Austria where the area is surrounded by mountains. Herman felt the same way when he visited Samosir Island and Lake Toba. Geographically, Samosir Island is similar to Tyrol Province where Herman saw the mountains that surround it (Analisa, 2014). Apart from feeling geographical similarities, the first time Herman heard Batak songs in Bali, he felt musical signs that were similar to music in Austria. The rhythms of Batak songs are similar to the rhythms of music in their country of origin, such as feelings of joy, being sung together with joy. It can also be like a marching rhythm. In fact, after visiting Samosir in person and studying Batak music, he was of the opinion that some Batak songs had a rhythmic impression. waltz.

Herman's musical experience in his home country makes an assumption that Batak music can be arranged like Austrian music. This is in line with the opinion (Matanari et al., 2019) that music has various roles, one of which is as self-identity both individually and as a group. Herman argues that Batak music has rhythmic similarities to Austrian music, such as marching rhythms. This event gave rise to the idea for Herman to arrange Batak songs, including the song "Butet". In "Butet" arranged into an orchestra, in a medium-fast beat. In 2014, there were "Tobatak Concert" which was held on Samosir Island (Pos, 2014) At the concert, Herman and his music team performed the song "Butet" at the-medley with the song "Sinanggartulo". Both songs are

sung with the same rhythm and tempo. The audience was seen singing and dancing along with Herman. However, at that time Herman did not know the true meaning of the song "Butet".

As time went on, Herman learned more and more about the Batak language through the Batak people he met and the internet. Until finally he understood the meaning of the song "Butet". According to Herman's understanding, "Butet" itself means daughter. Meanwhile, the song "Butet" turns out to be a story about sadness during the colonial era or war. After knowing this, Herman felt embarrassed because he had ever arranged and performed the song "Butet" in a joyful rhythm. After the incident, Herman planned to change the musical arrangement that had previously been made.

In 2013, Herman collaborated with a Batak musician named Viky Sianipar. They held a Batak music concert entitled "Tobatak Live". At the concert, they performed various Batak songs. In addition, they also arranged and performed the song "Butet" at a slow tempo. Herman sang the song accompanied by an ensemble of conventional musical instruments and combined with a Batak flute.

Herman Delago's process of interpreting the song "Butet"

Herman's understanding of the meaning of the song "Butet" became the cornerstone of expression when singing the song. The first stanza of the song "Butet" tells about the atmosphere in the evacuation during the colonial war in Indonesia. The expression of a mother's heart to her child "Butet" during the guerrilla war. "Butet" song which describes the atmosphere of war is understood by Herman as an expression of deep sadness because there is a poem "I doge doge doge I dogei doge doge". "Doge" means "ouch". This sentence is an expression of sadness or heartache in the Batak language. The word "ouch" in the translation of the poem means surprise or complaint. An unexpected and expected situation occurred.

In the second stanza, there is a poem that reads "Paima tona manang surat ale Butet" which means Butet is looking forward to a letter from her father. Herman has a background as a soldier's son as well. His father used to be a soldier, so Herman can feel how sad it is to be left by a father to go to war. If nowadays it's so easy for people to send and reply to messages, Herman feels how difficult it was in ancient times to send messages. It can take days or even months for messages to be returned. Through this personal experience, Herman expressed his sadness when singing the song "Butet". How does it feel to miss a child who is waiting for his father to return from war. In the long wait, the only hope is that his father can return home safely.

In the third stanza, the lyrics of the song contain, "Butet. Sotung sumolsol roha muna ale, Butet. Musunta i ikkon saut do talu ale, Butet". The poem contains messages or advice to defeat the enemy. What is meant by the enemy at that time was the invaders. This poem means the motivation of a mother to her child not to dissolve in sadness, but rather the spirit to defend against the invaders.

In the fourth stanza, there is a verse that reads "Haru patibu ma magodang ale Butet. Asa adong da palang merah ale Butet. Da palang merah ni negara ale Butet". The poem is meaningful about a mother's wish for Butet to quickly grow up and become a member of the *Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI)*. According to Herman, the song shows that there is a close relationship between a Batak mother and her child. In the midst of difficult circumstances, the mother still sees hope and a bright future for her child.

Herman Delago's representation in singing the song Butet

Representative speech acts are related to the truth/belief of what the speakers say (Lutfiana & Sari, 2021). Herman believes that Batak mothers have their own strengths. Moreover, the song "Butet" tells about the condition of a mother who is worried because she has to fend for herself to raise and care for her child. The different backgrounds required Herman to learn and explore Batak language and culture. Herman is interested in learning Batak culture through his exploration of Samosir, as well as his visit to a typical Batak tavern (*Lapo Tuak*). This process resulted in his understanding of the Batak language, until he knew the meaning of the word "Butet".

In the musical process he was in, there was a condition where Herman arranged the song "Butet" with a rather fast medium tempo in his show at "Tobatak Concert". He arranged the song like a marching rhythm so that he invited the audience to dance happily together. This is of course different from how the original Batak

people sing the song “*Butet*”. The song that tells of a mother's lamentation is usually sung with a slow tempo and intonations of seductive sadness. The discrepancy was based on Herman's lack of understanding at the time of the meaning of the song “*Butet*”.

As time went on and he increasingly understood the Batak language, Herman arrived at the condition that the song arrangement “*Butet*” what he did was not quite right. This means that the arrangement does not support the sad atmosphere or feelings contained in the song. The results of these arrangements are shown in a concert with a sad expression, such as closing your eyes and moving your hands slowly and slightly looking up.

The expression that was born by Herman Delago in singing the song “*Butet*” obtained from personal experiences during life. First, his father was a soldier. He really understood how sad it was to part with his father when his father was about to go to war. Not just sad because of parting for a moment, but also feelings of anxiety. Bad possibilities could happen to his father, such as being physically injured, even being killed on the battlefield. Second, her experience with mothers in the Batak ethnic community. He believes that there is an inner strength that exists between mother and child. How great is the hope of a mother for her child, even in difficult conditions. A mother keeps motivating her child to keep fighting in life so she doesn't feel a protracted sadness.

Personal experiences are used by Herman to represent the character of a Batak mother who remains strong and strong even though she is in a state of suffering. (Gumelar & Mukhroman, 2015) conducted research which explained that tattooed women make tattoos as a form of representation in expressing their ideas and ideology without harming others. If tattoos are used to represent an idea, then Herman represents the meaning of the “*Butet*” song into a dejected yet determined expression. This is in accordance with the theory of representative speech acts, namely narratives that state what is felt (Lutfiana & Sari, 2021). Say “*I doge*” which is said repeatedly shows that the sadness is felt very deeply and heartbreakingly.

Gender representation is done by Herman to express and convince his listeners about the sad feelings of a Batak mother. Despite having different cultural and gender backgrounds, Herman also wanted to show the character of a Batak mother who is strong, remains strong and fights together with her daughter. Keep encouraging their children to reach their dreams of becoming the *Palang Merah Indonesia* (PMI). Become a helper for other people as well as the homeland and the nation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Representation can be done when someone can interpret according to his experience and knowledge. The song *Butet* not only tells about sadness, but also the strong and tough character of a Batak mother. The meaning must be marked and adjusted with the right expression when singing the song.

Herman represents these characters based on his experiences. He got a sad representation while imagining his previous experience when he parted ways with his father who was going to war. Even though he is an Austrian national, he sees that there is a very strong inner strength between Batak mothers and their daughters. This was obtained from the lyrics of the song “*Butet*” especially the second verse. A mother's hope for her child remains even in difficult conditions.

This phenomenon proves that cultural and gender differences do not rule out the possibility of someone representing a particular community's traditional music. It needs a process to understand the language, culture, and values contained therein. This process will minimize differences in perception or meaning so that the messages or cultural values contained can be conveyed to listeners. Thus, the good values contained in the Batak people are maintained and even accepted by the wider community to become a global culture.

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