

An Analysis of the Interpretation of Dream in *Demi Ucok* Movie

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Abstract

Dreams are constructed narratives and visuals by our imaginations. This article discusses an Indonesian movie about Batak culture in, especially their unique tradition when it comes to marriage. In this scientific article, the author aims to analyze how the characters in Demi Ucok movie interpret their dreams, especially in finding out a companion such as a life partner. In order to help the author doing this analysis, Mise En Scene approach from Manon de Reeper and Theory of Interpretation of Dream from Sigmund Freud are used for this study. The result of this study indicates that this film represents Batak people's dream and wishes of seeing their children getting married with Batak people because Batak culture is quite strict about marriage. In Batak tradition, getting married to the same tribe is their life philosophy; Hagabeon, Hamoroan, and Hasangapon, and every Bataknese are trying to get married to the same tribe along with a certain cultural practice

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ABSTRACT

Mimpi merupakan konstruksi dari naratif dan visual yang dibentuk oleh imajinasi kita. Artikel ini mendiskusikan mengenai sebuah film Indonesia mengenai budaya Batak, terutama tradisi uniknyanya perihal pernikahan. Dalam artikel saintifik ini, penulis bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana karakter di film Demi Ucok menginterpretasikan mimpi atau keinginan, terutama dalam mencari pendamping seperti pasangan hidup. Untuk membantu penulis dalam analisisnya, pendekatan *Mise en Scene* dari Manon de Reeper dan teori *Interpretasi Mimpi* dari Sigmund Freud digunakan dalam studi ini. Hasil dari dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa film tersebut merepresentasikan mimpi dan harapan orang Batak untuk melihat anaknya menikah dengan sesame orang batak, karena adat orang Batak cukup ketat perihal pernikahan. Dalam tradisi Batak, menikah dengan sesame suku merupakan merupakan filosopi hidup: *Hagabeon, Hamoroan, and Hasangapon*, dan setiap orang batak berusaha untuk menikah dengan sesame orang Batak berikut dengan upacara adat pernikahannya.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Batak is one of Indonesia's distinct ethnicities. Their uniqueness is demonstrated through their history, wedding ceremony, relationship structure, and interactions with other tribes. *Dalihan Na Tolu*, sometimes referred to as "Tungku Nan Tiga," is the Batak people's way of life. We need to comprehend three facets of the kinship system in *Dalihan Na Tolu (Partuturan)*. *Dongan Tubu* (clan-related family), *Hula hula* (wife's family), and Boru (family from our son-in-law). They are the three facets of the familial bond. *Dalihan Na Tolu's* work provides a person's status, rights, and obligations, or organizes and directs one's behavior or the social interactions of groups in traditional life (Naibaho, 2019).

Moreover, Naibaho noted that *Partuturan* (etiquette) is a fundamental principle of their rule. Additionally, customary law is an unwritten rule that exists in society, flourishes, and develops. The community's customs vary by area. These customs never cease to exist but instead continue to evolve. For the Batak, traditions are more than regulations or social order; they embrace all facets of physical and spiritual life, both present and future, as well as relationships

with others and with "the Creator." Human existence is governed by customs, which each individual follows. A "custom" is a noun that relates to an individual's behavior or habits. When many people follow a particular practice consistently, it becomes conventional. When a custom is violated, society and government respond by enforcing the custom's regulation (Naibaho, 2019)

In Batak custom, there is one of interesting rules that makes the author interested in analyzing their custom. It is the interpretation of Batak people's dream in finding out a companion. Batak people especially the elderly expect to see their children get married with other Batak people. They hope their children can inherit their culture. Furthermore, when Batak people want to get married with other Batak people, they need to see three Batak concepts; *Hagabeon*, *Hamoroan*, and *Hasangapon*.

Cultural value of Batak people focuses on the importance of family relationship. The critical criterion for classifying the line descendants (*hagabeon*) qualified to inherit the clan name is prosperity. Even if one possesses many belongings, without the offspring produced by his marriage, the worth of all property becomes insipid. In Batak tradition, the presence of children in a household is a necessary condition for achieving gabe or prosperity. In a narrower sense, the existence of a son in a family is critical since the Batak believe that only the patrilineal son can carry on the lineage or clan (Simangunsong, 2013).

The second prerequisite to be categorized prosperity is *hamoraon* or wealth. *Takas ma jabu sahat, takasan ma jabu bona takas ma na maduma, umangkas ma na mamora* is Batak term describes how the value of possessing stuff and accomplishing *hamoraon*. Independently, the expression can mean 'it is evident who is wealthy, but it is clearer who is' rich.' The expression contains trust that God would grant further wealth to each family.

The third need for being classified as prosperous is *hasangapon*. This stage is attained if the preceding conditions are fulfilled, i.e., *hagabeon* and *hamoraon* contain the sense of respectable or honorable in right smack in the middle of civilization. Indeed, honor is given to the presence of male members of the family. Therefore, *Hasangapon* is achievable only when the family has many children, and some of them must be a male present. Someone who possessed the preceding two conditions obtains recognition, honors, awe, and admiration from other neighbors externally, in the broader social context of primary family (Simangunsong, 2013).

Those three Batak concepts are depicted in *Demi Ucok*. The characters in the movie especially the portraits of parents attempt to show that they dream to have Batak inheritance. Batak people are believed to have the same concepts of life.

Sammaria Simanjuntak's film *Demi Ucok* (For Ucok) depicts the narrative of a mother-daughter relationship — a subject that frequently elicits eye-rolling and moans from many women and girls. Nevertheless, it does it without resorting to histrionic wails or any other unneeded drama that is so prevalent in, well, plays (Indrasafitri, 2012).

Demi Ucok, on the other hand, is spiced up with matter-of-fact bluntness, endearing characters, and insights into both local traditions and contemporary tendencies. Gloria Sinaga is a filmmaker who is confronted with the prospect of leaping forward in her career. Her first film, released four years ago, was a moderate success, but she believes it was unprofessional, and she has lofty ambitions for her second effort to be more professionally produced, more sincere, and so on. As big as those goals may be, time is running out, and she is confronted with the difficult challenge of raising funds necessary to make them a reality. Her mother, Mak Gondut does offer financial assistance, but as Gloria points out, a mother's love is not unconditional. In this scenario, the mother believes that her own life will soon end and that she must see her daughter marry a man from the Batak tribe — the same tribe to which their family belongs.

On the other hand, Gloria recoils at the prospect of a crowded and protracted Batak-style wedding, when the bride and groom frequently have no idea what is happening or whose hands they are shaking. In addition, she worries about the prospect of having to abandon her aspirations and becoming like her mother — a socialite who appears to be everywhere but never arrives.

The intergenerational struggle begins, and both mother and daughter resort to various measures to obtain what they desire, ranging from Internet fundraising to soliciting contributions from a dubious politician. Not to mention Mak Gondut's plans to connect Gloria with several single Batak males. Mak Gondut's witty comments, devilish smiles, and, most importantly, natural reactions make him a standout in several scenarios. Her character, which the director's mother performs, is especially crucial for those familiar with the Batak culture. Geraldine's performance, on the other hand, is far from overshadowed. She conveys Gloria's character with all its flaws — at times self-centered, immature, and even resentful — as well as her positive characteristics and, ultimately, her love for her mother.

To support the analysis, the author used *Mise en Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper to see how the camera works and the dialogue contributes to this film and theory of Interpretation of Dream from Sigmund Freud to interpret Batak dreams depicted in *Demi Ucok* movie. Everything in a film or television show is constructed to fit on the screen. The creators meticulously consider every detail in the scenario; nothing is coincidental. The word "Mise en Scène" refers to the director's vision for the scene and film. The author can influence the audience's cognition by determining what is presented within the constraints of that screen (Reeper, 2016). The *Mise en Scène* can be used as dialogue and story to convey meaning to the spectator. It is crucial for media and film studies analysis because it teaches how to recognize pertinent visual codes and how some may have been used to construct meaning (The Media Insider, 2020).

Furthermore, Reeper stated that in order to aid in the study and interpretation of a scene, we must analyze not only who and what is present, but also their relative locations - we must also consider makeup, expressions, wardrobe, setting, look, visuals, sounds, and lighting. Numerous factors can be combined into a study of the film. They are divided into three categories: editing, camera, and lighting. Editing is a process that condenses time and location into a logical sequence of photographs. Then, when analyzing a film, one of the most critical elements to consider is the camera. It includes details about the photos taken and the camera angles employed. The last is lighting. It is crucial for defining the tone and setting the scene for a film. Remarkably, even lighting can contribute to a film's meaning building. Full-facial lighting attracts the viewer's attention to the subject's face and may create an air of transparency and sincerity. Moreover, as The Media Insider (2017) notes, there are additional techniques to understanding cinematography. Among them is to set the scene for the shot. By attributing meaning to a shot, we may determine how the film intends to communicate a notion, a message, or a meaning through the lens.

To interpret Batak people's dream depicted in *Demi Ucok* movie, the author applied the theory of Interpretation of Dream from Sigmund Freud. In his book "The Interpretation of Dreams," Sigmund Freud (1990) stated that the content of dreams is related to wish fulfillment. According to Freud, the apparent content of a dream, or the actual images and actions of the dream, worked to conceal the hidden meanings or the dreamer's unconscious desires. Furthermore, Freud described four components of this process, which he called "dream work". First, condensation. Within the confines of a single dream, numerous thoughts and concepts are portrayed. Condensed information is information that has been condensed into a single notion or image. Second, displacement. This dream work feature conceals the hidden information's emotional significance by confounding the dream's significant and trivial elements. Third, symbolization. This process also serves to censor the dream's suppressed concepts by inserting objects that are supposed to signify the dream's latent meaning. The last, secondary revision. Freud proposed that at this final stage of the dreaming process, the odd aspects of the dream are reorganized to create the dream's manifest content.

2. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method such as observation and literature review is used as the method in this study. This research analyzed the interpretation of dream depicted in *Demi Ucok* movie. *Mise*

En Scene approach from Manon de Reeper and the theory of Interpretation of Dream from Sigmund Freud were used for this study. To figure out how interpretation of Batak people's dream represented in this movie, the author analyzed it by applying several stages.

First, the author analyzed *Demi Ucok* movie using the film elements, *Mise En Scene*. The author analyzed the scenes, angles, camera, and editing on the movie. Second, the author connected the movie elements with the interpretation of Batak people's dreams using the theory of Interpretation of Dream from Sigmund Freud. The last, the author concluded the whole observation of the interpretation of dream depicted in *Demi Ucok* movie.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to fully understand the result of this research, firstly, the author observed the elements of the movie in *Demi Ucok* scenes, angles, shots, lighting, editing, etc. This observation would be beneficial as it could help the author know how the interpretation of Batak people's dreams depicted in this movie.

First, to see how the interpretation of dream in this movie, I started my observation from scene on minutes 3:54 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mak Gondut gave surprised to Glo

In this scene, we will see an elder woman named Mak Gondut holding a birthday cake and singing a birthday song for her daughter named Gloria Sinaga. She sang, "Happy birthday and I wish you get a partner soon." When she sang and made a wish for her daughter, the camera shots the cake closely and shows that Glo, Gloria's nickname is getting old as she is turning 29. Another interesting moment from this scene is that her mother sang a happy birthday song with Bataknese accent.

In a closer observation, I view that her mother doesn't only hope to see her daughter has a partner but also wants her daughter get a Bataknese man as her mate. I see that her mother is depicted as a Bataknese woman who strictly believes in her Batak custom. In a closer context, Batak people are highly recommended by their custom to have a special relationship with other Batak people. Hence, this scene tries to construct the dream of Batak people that hope to see their kids get married with the ones with the same tribe, Batak.

The next observation goes to the scene on minutes 14:33 to 15:00 (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Mak Gondut's dream towards her daughter, Glo.

In this scene, the shot focuses on Glo and her mother with some dialogues. Her mother said, “The doctor said that my life is no longer. Before I leave you, I have a big dream for you, Glo. I want you to get married soon.” “Get married? I even don’t have a boyfriend,” said Glo unexcitedly. Then, she continued, “Find him out then.” Hearing what Glo said, it makes her mother, Mak Gondut awake from her bed. She added, “What types of man do you prefer? Let me help you.”

From those dialogues, it can be understood that in one hand, her mother is sad because her life is no longer and it makes her not able to see her daughter married. On the other hand, her mother is happy because finally Glo asks her mother to find a mate. In my point of view, this scene attempts to show Mak Gondut’s dream towards her daughter. She dreams to see her daughter married soon especially with a Batak man. Aside from that, I view that Mak Gondut is depicted as a parent that feels happy as her daughter let her find a man based on Mak Gondut’s criterion. This scene attempts to express that by agreeing to Batak parents, it directs that their kids could follow the Batak custom. In this case, Batak family could run the three concepts that they highly inherit; *Hagabeon*, *Hamoroan*, and *Hasangapon*.

Based on the external research, the cultural structure of *Dalihan na Tolu* that the Batak people exhibit has a high level of obedience in social relationships. It is viewed as a means of obtaining life. The Batak people have a life objective that can be summed up in three words, namely wealth (*hamoraon*), numerous descendants or offspring (*hagabeon*), and esteem (*hasangapon*) (Armawi, 2008).

The order in which the three words appear “*Molo naeng ho is customary advice. Molo naeng ho gabe, somba maho mamora, elek ma ho marboru, molo naeng ho gabe marhula-hula, sangap manta ma ho mardongan molo naeng ho tubu*”. If Batak people wish to be wealthy, they must treat the recipient’s wife or boru with respect. Then, if Batak people wish to have children, they must kneel to relatives, and if they wish to be respected, they must exercise caution with family members. According to this advice, Batak people are expected to behave usefully and with concern for their relatives under the traditional system of *dalihan na tolu* (Pasaribu, 2004).

My next observation then continued to the scene on minutes 15:19-15:24 (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Mak Gondut met her friend on the church

In this scene, the shot focuses on two elder women, Mak Gondut and her friend with some dialogues in the church while their daughter just sit and ignore what their parents said. Those elder women have the same dream which is finding out a mate for their daughter. They share each other about their daughter. Mak Gondut said that her daughter, Glo is a talented woman that likes to make movies. Mak Gondut’s friend said that her daughter just graduated from California. The mothers there are seeking for couples for their daughter. They believe that the church is the best place to build relationship as it is always visited by many people to pray. As a result, Mak Gondut comes to the church five times a day. The small dialogue can be understood that church is one of the best places to build a new relationship especially for Batak people who are seeking for a mate. Besides that, I think this scene attempts to show that church is the most visited place. The people who come to the church are the ones who have the same religion and the same purpose. It means by interacting with the people who have the same religion, purpose, and dream, it will be easy for everyone to build a relationship.

To get further detail in knowing the interpretation of Batak people's dream, I continued observing to the scene on minutes 28:25 to 28:45 (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Having lunch in the restaurant

In this scene, we will see four characters are having lunch in the restaurant. There are Mak Gondut with her daughter, Glo and Mak Gondut's eda (uncle's daughter) with her brother named Tumpal. They introduce each other. There is one moment when Mak Gondut's eda asks Glo to have some beef. Yet, Glo refuses it as she doesn't eat meat. Glo's mother said that her daughter is vegetarian. She is a movie director. Then, the camera focuses on Mak Gondut's eda who said, "Oh you are a movie director. I see. You match with my bother then as he is responsible for promoting products like an advertisement. Anyway, back then he had a girlfriend, but she is boru (clan) Padang. His Mom doesn't agree." Then, Tumpal said, "I have promised to my mom that I will marry Batak woman before she passes away." Mak Gondut said, "Wow, you are matching then. Come on Glo." From these dialogues, I think it can be understood that Tumpal and Glo's mother have the same point of view that Batak people have to get married with Batak people. In this scene, I think this scene attempts to depict the characters of Batak people that respect and do the practice of Batak custom. Customary law is always obeyed by Batak people that represented by Mak Gondut and Tumpal's mom. Thus, they dream their son or daughter gets married with Batak people.

The last observation goes to the scene on minutes 47:53 to 48:39 (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Tumpal and Glo's dream

In this scene, the shot focuses on Glo and Tumpal with some dialogues. Glo realizes that Tumpal doesn't like her. Tumpal wants to marry her just because of his mother. He wants to make his mother happy seeing his son married a Batak woman. Hence, Glo explains more about Tumpal's position. "If we just follow what people say, when we will be happy? We need to follow our heart. Live by your passion!" said Glo. Then, the camera shots Tumpal's sadness. Glo continued saying, "That's ok. If you marry me, you have to pay Sinamot 2 million rupiahs per kilo. Meanwhile, when you marry Padangnese woman, you are bought by her. Money matters". Through the dialogues, I view that there are some issues that want to be revealed. First, the characters have the same problem. All of their mothers ask them to marry Batak people. However, they actually disagree with the custom and that point of view. Second, Glo is depicted as the character who strongly disagrees with the custom and her mother's point of view while Tumpal is depicted as the character who feels problematic with two conditions he faces. In one hand, he loves his Padangnese girlfriend. On the other hand, his mother disagrees and wants to

see him married Batak woman. He doesn't want to make his mother sad before she leaves him. The last issue that this scene attempts to show is the difference of two cultures in bonding a relationship. It is between Batak and Padang custom. In the dialogues, Glo said "If you marry me, you have to pay Sinamot 2 million rupiahs per kilo. Meanwhile, when you marry a Padangnese woman, you are bought by her. Money matters". It means, it is so expensive to marry a Batak woman as the man has to pay for the Sinamot.

In a closer context, Sinamot is a symbol of respect presented by the male (paranak) to the woman (parboru) before the marriage. Sinamot is a requirement that cannot be waived in a series of ethnic Toba Batak weddings. In general, if the Sinamot asked by the woman cannot be fulfilled, this can threaten the marriage. Sinamot is given by the men and received by the women. The bride is no longer dependent on her father because her rights have been handed over to the groom. Since then, the bride has to follow her husband's clan, be entirely dependent on her husband, and follow the customs in her husband's family (Febriyeni & Pasaribu, 2020). Initially, the gift was not in cash but rather in the form of significant goods. Sinamot is frequently used to enhance the value of valuable animals such as buffalo, cows, and horses. The quantity is determined by the men's or women's desires and their ability to comply. Over time, the sinamot concept can be recorded as an expense. It contains a negotiation transaction between the involved individuals during marhata sinamot, a traditional event that must take place before the wedding (Banjarnahor et al., 2019). Now, *Sinamot* is always determined by social status aspects, such as the level of education attained by women and the family economy of women and men. Where the economic status of the woman's family is high, the woman's family naturally requests a high number of *Sinamot*, as women's families do not wish to be considered inferior by the Toba Batak people in their environment, where the number of *Sinamot* is always a proxy for family self-esteem, particularly for women's families (Pardosi, 2008). Through the dialogues, the character also compares the marriage custom from Padang, West Sumatera. Glo said, "... when you marry a Padangnese woman, you are bought by her." The dialogue "you are bought" is identically with Padangnese marriage custom. In a closer context, that condition is called *Bajapuik*. *Bajapuik* is the tradition carried out by the Pariaman people. *Bajapuik* is viewed as a responsibility on the woman's family to pay her prospective husband an amount proportionate to the social man's rank before carrying out the marriage contract (Silalahi Giro, 1993).

4. CONCLUSION

In general, the tradition in Batak culture are rich and quite complicated to understand. In conclusion, some scenes and dialogues showed how Batak people interpret their dreams. Mak Gondut and Tumpal's mother represent the Batak people who believe that Batak people must marry Batak people in order to reach the concept of life; wealth (*hamoraon*), numerous descendants or offspring (*hagabeon*), and respect (*hasangapon*). Thus, I view that this movie attempts to show the interpretation of Batak people's dream in getting a companion.

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