

# The Social and Cultural Context Underlying The Creation of The Song Lyrics *Tarek Rawai* By Mak Dara (A Study on Symbolic Interactionism)

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**Abstract.** Tarek Rawai's song lyrics as an artistic product are certainly inseparable from the surrounding social and cultural context. Mak Dara as the creator cannot be separated from this situation, therefore the researcher formulated the problem of this research is how the social and cultural context underlies Mak Dara in the creation of Tarek Rawai's song lyrics. The method used in this research is a qualitative research method using Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism approach. The purpose of this research is to reveal the social and cultural context that underlies the process of creating Tarek Rawai's song by using simultaneous combined data collection techniques, namely a combination of data in the form of interview results and the original Tarek Rawai song lyrics that Mak Dara wrote during the interview process. The data obtained were then analyzed using the premises of meaning, interaction and interpretation of Herbert Blumer. The result is that the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai as an artistic product, cannot be separated from the two social and cultural contexts around it, firstly the livelihood system of the Riau Islands people in ancient times was fishermen who used longlines as fishing tools. Secondly Mak Dara's involvement in both social and cultural contexts around her, such as how she inherited the knowledge of fishing using longlines as fishing tools and how she was involved in the rapid development of the art of Joget Dangkung at that time. Social and Cultural Context, Lyrics of Tarek Rawai's Song, Mak Dara

**Keywords:** Social and Cultural Context, Symbolic Interactionism, Song Lyrics Creation

## 1. Introduction

The Riau Islands are inherently a maritime region with a long maritime history, resulting in a diverse array of cultural products, including livelihood systems, equipment systems, and arts systems passed down from generation to generation. As a maritime region, the livelihoods of its people are generally linked to their geographic location. One example is the use of longlines as traditional fishing gear. In addition to their livelihood as fishermen and their use of longlines, they also enjoy socializing through music and dance, which have shaped their artistic systems. One example is the traditional art form, Joget Dangkung, which they generally use as a form of entertainment to relieve stress and express their gratitude for the bounty of the catch they receive when they go to sea [1], [2].

The long maritime history that shaped the cultural system of its people which they then passed down to their children and grandchildren, this is an important situation for Mak Daras an artist and fisherman who is directly involved in it. As an artist and fisherman who uses longlines as a fishing tool, Mak Dara combines the two activities into his musical work which he titled the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai where, this song he uses as a way to express his deep memories of the past, his identity and his lineage as a fisherman who uses longlines as a fishing tool [1]. As a way to express his memories, his identity and his lineage as a fisherman who uses longlines in making a living.

Lyrics as a cultural product are certainly formed through the socio-cultural context that exists around them. This has a correlation with the characteristics of the study of symbolic interactionism that connects a cultural product, (in this case the lyrics of Tarek Rawai's song) with the social and cultural context around it [2], [3]. With the theoretical basis, namely how cultural products have a relationship with the social and cultural context around them, the researcher formulated the problem in this study is how the social and cultural context underlies Mak Dara in the creation of Rawai's song lyrics and the purpose of this study is to reveal the things that underlie the process of creating the song which then the researcher analyzed using the premise of meaning, interaction and interpretation of Herbert Blumer[3].

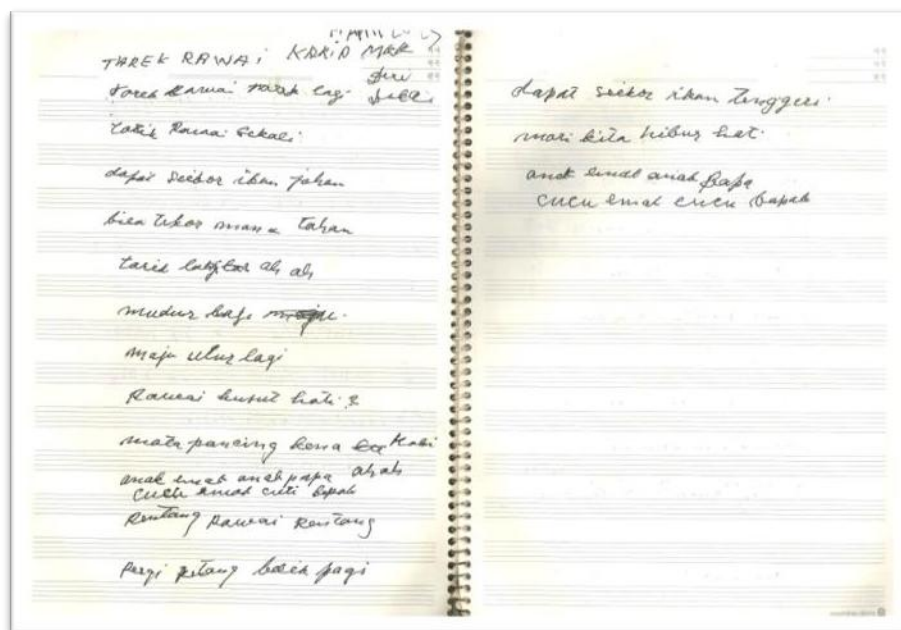
## **2. Research Methods**

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative research method using Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism approach. The basis for using qualitative methods in this study is because research conducted in qualitative research has the characteristic of examining natural, interpretive and constructive conditions, as well as how to view social reality as something holistic, complex, dynamic, full of meaning and interactive [4]. With its nature of examining natural, interpretive, constructive conditions and similar social realities, this is certainly a relevant reason related to the research topic, namely making the social and cultural context a research topic.

The data collection technique used in this study was a simultaneous combined data collection technique, combining interview results with the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai, which Mak Dara wrote during the interview process. Furthermore, the data analysis technique used in this study was an interview technique and text analysis techniques. The data obtained was identified by observing the keywords or important phrases that appeared in the data, then the researcher grouped them into related literature on how the symbolic interactionism approach reveals that social context can underlie the creation of cultural products which the researcher then analyzed descriptively using the premises of meaning, interaction and interpretation of Herbert Blumer [3].

The song Tarek Rawai is the only song that Mak Dara created after she married Pak Odong, a skilled violinist in the Joget group that she led. Previously, this song was only kept in her memory in the form of fragments of lyrics. After she married Pak Odong, the lyrics that were previously only kept in her memory were then poured into the form of a song which was then accompanied by Pak Odong using the violin. In the arts stage in the Riau Islands, the use of titles related to merawai activities is not the only title used by Mak Dara but has existed long before Mak Dara created the song Tarek Rawai and some are even used in dance forms, such as the Merawai dance on Lipan Daik Lingga Island and the Susu Rawai dance of the Duano people in Malaysia[1], [2], [5]. Although the title existed long before Mak Dara used it. In this study, the researchers focused on Mak Dara's version of Tarek Rawai, a song she created based on a combination of her own profound and meaningful life experiences. The following is the original text of Tarek Rawai, written by Mak Dara during the interview:

(Source: Mak Dara 2025)



The lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai as an artistic product, of course Mak Dara as the creator has been involved in the social and cultural context around her, because art is an element of culture that cannot be separated from the social and cultural situation of the surrounding community[2]. Therefore, in this section, the researcher wants to explore how the social and cultural context underlies Mak Dara in the creation of the song Tarek Rawai? In conducting the researcher's research related to the social and cultural context that underlies the creation of the song Tarek Rawai, the researcher used an interview technique in which the researcher asked Mak Dara directly as the creator. She said that:

*“Orang dulu itu rata-rata kerjanya melaut dan bapak aku sebenarnya adalah seorang*

*pelaut, jadi karena aku hobi dengan laut, jadi aku sering ikut bantu dia kerja laut, seperti merawai, datang sampan dan lain-lainnya”, “kalau dipikir-pikir Joget Dangkung sudah ada ketika aku masih kecil. Rumah aku kan dekat laut Jadi kalau pemain joget mau masuk ke kampung ini, Dari laut mereka sudah pukul gendang dari atas sampan, Ketika mendengar itu langsung berlari dan bersorak menyambut mereka”*

*“Kalau lagu tarek rawai aku terinspirasi dari kerjaan aku merawai, aku membayangkan kerja rawai bagaimana, aku dayung sampan dan tarek rawai ulur rawai. Kalau di bagian “anak emak anak bapak”, itu karena aku memang keturunan Orang Melayu kerja melaut. Dulu aku pernah waktu dayung sampan sendiri tiba-tiba angin ribut datang, makannya telinga aku pekak (Tuli) garagara karam terus air masuk ke telinga aku. Lagu ini satu-satunya kenang-kenangan aku ketika nanti aku di atas”*

Translate in English:

“People in the past mostly worked at sea and my father was actually a sailor, so because I have a hobby of the sea, so I often helped him with sea work, such as fishing, datang sampan and others”, “if I think about it, Joget Dangkung has been around since I was little. My house is near the sea So if the dancers want to enter this village, from the sea they already beat the drums from the top of the sampan, When they hear that, they immediately run and cheer to welcome them”

“The song Tarek Rawai was inspired by my work as a rower. I imagined what it was like to row a boat and the rower would do it. The part about “anak ibu anak ayah” (mother's child), that's because I'm of Malay descent who works at sea. Once, I was rowing a boat alone when a strong wind suddenly came, and my ears went deaf because I sank and water got into my ears. This song is my only memory for when I'm up there.”

Based on the statement from Mak Dara's statement above, the researcher underlines two important things or socio-cultural contexts that underlie Mak Dara in creating the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai, First, her expression is related to people in the past who generally worked as fishermen and their passion for sea activities made her the chosen child of her parents to help her parents go to sea such as rowing a boat, pulling and pulling longlines, assembling fishing hooks, rolling longlines and teaching how to catch and other marine products using traditional methods at that time. This is an important situation that underlies the creation of the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai, where the Riau Islands are a maritime area that has a long history of sea activities, one of which is the livelihood system of its people as fishermen and using longlines as a fishing tool that they inherited from generation to generation to their children and grandchildren which then influenced the art system so that it formed the color and choice of music that they poured into their works, one of which is Mak Dara who poured longlines activities as inspiration for her musical work which she entitled the song Tarek Rawai [1], [2].

Then the second important thing or socio-cultural context that underlies Mak Dara in creating the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai based on Mak Dara's expression is when she remembers how the position of her house is not far from the coast of the Riau Islands so that the position becomes an access point for the Joget Dangkung group who want to enter the village and the surrounding islands, so that makes her run to greet their arrival at the beach, This is a situation where in the late 70s, it was an era where Joget Dangkung experienced rapid development, Joget Dangkung became an art of connecting social interaction and solidarity that was commonly played from fishing villages and surrounding islands, as a form of entertainment for Malay people when they finished fishing and a form of gratitude for the gift of sea catch which is usually played together with the sea semah ritual. Related to her expression, how she formed memories when Joget Dangkung entered her village and the situation where the community made Joget Dangkung a social art, meaning that this is the socio-cultural context that underlies Mak Dara in creating the song Tarek Rawai [1], [6]

From both social and cultural contexts related to how the Malay people's livelihood system in the past used longlines as fishing gear which they then passed down to their children and grandchildren and how they made the traditional art of Joget Dangkung as a social art so that this context underlies Mak Dara in creating the song Tarek Rawai. In this section, the researcher specifically wants to analyze the phenomenon using a symbolic interactionism approach with the assumption that humans besides acting on the basis of reality or something real, humans also act on the basis of meaning or symbols that represent themselves. To describe the sociological phenomenon in the socio-cultural context that underlies Mak Dara in creating the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai, specifically the researcher wants to use Herbert Blumer's premise, where humans act on something or meaning that is considered important to them then the meaning does not appear immediately but experiences an interaction process which then the meanings are modified when the interaction process takes place.

The results of the analysis are that the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai as an artistic product, of course, cannot be separated from the symbols that have meaning in it. Mak Dara uses language as a discursive resource to describe his activities as a fisherman who catches fish using longlines which are full of risks, his identity as a Malay, and his lineage as the son of a fisherman. These symbols do not appear just like that but through the process of interaction behind it, such as when he inherited the experience of fishing from his parents and how his memories when he heard joget players who would play music to his village so he ran to the beach to watch them [3], [7].

After experiencing a long interaction in her past, she then reflected on her experience personally, namely by composing words that she kept in her memory, namely how her past with her parents, how she made the sea her hobby, how she first heard a joget player come to her village and how difficult it was to make a living at sea. Then after she married Pak Odong, all the deep memories that she had previously only kept in her memory, then she poured out to Pak Odong

while being accompanied by her violin. This of course has a correlation with Herbert Blumer's first premise, namely meaning, where humans act towards something that is considered important to them, which then the meaning arises through a long process of interaction which she then interprets personally so that it becomes an inspiration and a fundamental thing when the process of creating the lyrics of the song Tarek Rawai takes place [3]

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