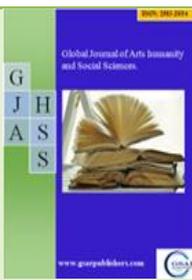


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RATOK KINCIA TUO: AN AESTHETIC ACCIDENT IN THE MINANGKABAU DENDANG TRADITION OF INDONESIA - A MUSICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

By

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Abstract

Ratok Kincia Tuo: An Aesthetic Accident in the Minangkabau Dendang Tradition of Indonesia from a Musicological Analysis refers to the phenomenon of shifts, distortions, and tensions in aesthetic values within the practice of Minangkabau *Ratok dendang*. The term “*aesthetic accident*” refers to instances where musical structure, vocal delivery, and ritual purpose undergo changes that are not fully aligned with the aesthetic reasoning and traditional cosmology of Minangkabau culture. This study aims to examine the musical structure of *Dendang Ratok Kincia Tuo*, identify the aesthetic changes that have occurred, and elucidate the musicological implications of these shifts for the meaning and function of the dendang tradition. The research adopts a qualitative approach using musicological analysis, including melodic transcription, rhythmic analysis, vocal contour examination, phrase structure analysis, and the relationship between text and music. The findings indicate that *Ratok Kincia Tuo* has undergone an aesthetic accident manifested in tempo standardization, simplification of vocal ornamentation, and a shift in expressive orientation from sacred lamentation toward artistic spectacle. From a musicological perspective, these findings affirm that Minangkabau dendang aesthetics are significantly influenced by the contextual relationship among sound, text, and adat (customary law).

Keywords: *Ratok Kincia Tuo*; aesthetic accident; dendang tradition; Minangkabau music; musicological analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The oral tradition in Minangkabau society encompasses a variety of musical expressions that function not only as entertainment, but also as an institutionalized system of cultural communication, a builder of collective identity, and a medium for conveying moral and social values. A notable form of expressions in this context is *Ratok*, a vocal lamentation tradition performed in the context of death, loss, and collective grief. Instead of conveying personal grief, *Ratok* functions as a communal reflection space where collective memory, social ethics, and emotional cohesion are negotiated and reaffirmed (Amir, 2011; Navis, 1984). Through its text, vocal techniques, and performative intensity, *Ratok* presents an emotional experience that fosters empathy and solidarity within the Minangkabau community.

From a musicological perspective, *Ratok* is characterized by non-metric and semi-improvisatory melodic structures, flexible slow

tempos, and dense and expressive vocal ornamentation. This musical configuration constructs a contemplative and quasi-sacred soundscape, enabling collective emotional immersion between the singer and participants. However, in the contemporary context, this aesthetic order is increasingly under pressure. Intergenerational transmission is weakening, the ritual context is shifting to public and commercial performance spaces, while digital mediation is accelerating the standardization, circulation, and commodification of traditional musical practices (Sastra, 2017; Sedyawati, 2006).

In this evolving environment, various revitalization efforts have emerged through the reformulation of traditional aspects into new artistic forms. One example is Eri Gumanti's song "Ratok Kincia Tuo," which rearticulates the aesthetics of Minangkabau lament within a modern musical framework. The work's presence not only represents a strategy of adaptation but also reveals a fundamental tension between symbolic continuity and musical transformation.



This research conceptualizes this tension as an aesthetic accident, a condition where the transformation of musical form disrupts the coherence between sound structure, ritual function, and affective meaning that have been established within tradition.

This phenomenon of aesthetic accident is manifested through distinctly recognizable musical changes, such as the acceleration of tempo, simplification of vocal ornamentation, and the addition of instrumental accompaniment (not present in traditional Ratok practice). These modifications not only reshape the sonic structure, but also recalibrate the audience's perception of the meaning of Ratok, shifting the experience from ritual-communal lamentation to aestheticized and entertainment-oriented musical consumption (Becker, 2004; Nettle, 2005). In this context, the term "Ratok" is retained as a symbol of tradition, while the musical character that is the core of the expression of lamentation actually undergoes a notable transformation.

The analytical importance of this research resides in a crucial engagement with aesthetic disruption as an inherent dimension of cultural transformation. Without rigorous musicological study, adaptation practices risk being uncritically celebrated as a form of revitalization, while in fact potentially simplifying aesthetic complexity and shifting the social function of tradition. Therefore, this study positions ethnomusicology as a critical analytical framework for examining the relationship between musical structure, social function, and cultural change (Kartomi, 1990; Merriam, 1964), by viewing tradition not as a static legacy, but as an aesthetic domain that is perpetually being negotiated.

Although numerous studies have addressed the transformation and revitalization of traditional Minangkabau music in the context of modernization, these studies typically highlight adaptation, hybridization, or cultural preservation strategies, with a tendency to frame change as a sign of creativity and continuity. There is limited research that critically examines the impact of these changes on aesthetic integrity and ritual function through the analysis of concrete musical parameters. In the context of Ratok, limited research explores how changes in melodic structure, tempo, vocal ornamentation, and accompaniment systems trigger tensions between the meaning of the text and the musical character. This gap is the focus of this research.

Thus, this study seeks to examine how the transformation of Ratok into the song Ratok Kincia Tuo results in an aesthetic accident, identify the musical and non-musical elements contributing to it, and assess its implications for the aesthetic integrity and social function of the Minangkabau lament tradition. By positioning this phenomenon within the broader discourse of ethnomusicology and cross-cultural music studies, this study contributes to the debate on the relationship between tradition, modernity, and aesthetic disruption in oral music culture, while also highlighting the vulnerability of the lament tradition to distortion in contemporary cultural regimes.

METHOD

This research employs a multidisciplinary qualitative approach to understand the song Ratok Kincia Tuo as an expression of Minangkabau culture that serves not only as a musical work, but also as a means of ritual, symbolism, and traditional aesthetics. Within the framework of aesthetic accident analysis, this study highlights the shifts in aesthetics and the function of tradition that occur due to modernization, performance adaptation, and cultural commodification.

This research approach integrates musical, socio-cultural, historical, and performative dimensions, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the Ratok Kincia Tuo transformation phenomenon. In practice, data was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with musicians, traditional practitioners, audiences, and traditional leaders, as well as field documentation in the form of audio-visual recordings and ethnographic notes.

The analysis was conducted using four complementary approaches.

1. Ethnomusicological Approach

The ethnomusicological approach was employed to contextualize the song "Ratok Kincia Tuo" within the cultural of the Minangkabau people. This approach is based on the ethnomusicological paradigm, which perceives music as a cultural practice inseparable from the social structure, value systems, and collective experiences of its supporting community (Merriam, 1964; Rice, 2014). The analysis focused not only on musical elements—such as rhythm, melody, harmony, and texture—but also on social functions, symbolic meanings, and performance practices.

Data gathering was conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews with traditional practitioners, musicians, audiences, and traditional figures, as well as field documentation in the form of audio-visual recordings and ethnographic notes. This approach allows for an understanding of how the community interprets the Ratok Kincia Tuo song and how aesthetic shifts are perceived as a form of change, even as an aesthetic accident, when the aesthetic values and initial functions of the tradition undergo a shift due to modernization and cultural commodification (Sedyawati, 2006).

2. Structural-Musicological Analysis

Structural-musicological analysis is employed to dissect the internal organization of the Ratok Kincia Tuo song, drawing on the tradition of music analysis that emphasizes the relationship between sound structure and its expressive role (Nettl, 2005) and (Kartomi, 1990). The analysis centers on: (1) melodic motifs and recurring formulaic patterns; (2) the rhythmic system and its relationship to the narrative and expressive structure of Ratok (lamentation); (3) the timbre of the instruments—particularly the sound of the kincia—as a marker of the core aesthetic identity; and (4) the interplay between vocal and instrumental elements that signifies the link between traditional aesthetics and aspects of contemporary improvisation and arrangement

This analysis seeks to recognize both continuities and transformations in musical form, while also uncovering structural modifications that signify an aesthetic accident, specifically when changes in musical form trigger a shift in the aesthetic orientation and function of tradition.

3. Music Hermeneutics Approach

A music hermeneutics approach is applied to interpret the meanings contained in musical texts and performative practices. This approach draws on the hermeneutical tradition in music studies, which emphasizes the relationship between musical structure, social context, and the experience of meaning (Gadamer, 2004) and (Kramer, 2002). Considering that Ratok traditionally serves as a manifestation of grief and communal solidarity, this approach aims to understand how these meanings are reshaped in the context of contemporary performance.

This research utilizes hermeneutics to explore the layers of meaning that emerge from transformations in form and function, including the possible blurring, shifting, or reconfiguration of the symbolic and affective meanings of tradition in modern performance spaces.

4. Critical Aesthetic Approach

This research deploys a critical aesthetic approach rooted in the traditions of critical art theory and cultural studies to evaluatively explore the phenomenon of aesthetic accidents. This approach relies mainly on Theodor W. Adorno's thinking on the relationship between changes in aesthetic form, rationalization, and the commodification of art (Adorno, 1970), as well as Walter Benjamin's concepts about the diminishing aura due to changing contexts and modern reproduction (Benjamin, 2008).

Additionally, this analysis utilizes Pierre Bourdieu's perspective on the cultural field and the legitimacy of aesthetic preferences (Bourdieu, 1894), as well as a postcolonial aesthetic approach to interpret the relations of power and ideology in the transformation of traditional art. Through this framework, aesthetic change in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo is understood not merely as artistic innovation, but as a cultural process fraught with negotiations of values, power, and cultural economics.

This study constructs an integrated analytical framework for understanding the phenomenon of aesthetic accident in Ratok Kincia Tuo by integrating ethnomusicological approaches, structural-musicological analysis, musical hermeneutics, and critical aesthetics. The analysis not only outlines changes in sound and performance form but also reveals the accompanying symbolic, social, and ideological dimensions. Through this approach, the research is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between traditional aesthetics and the dynamics of modernity in Minangkabau musical culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Rhythm and Tempo Mismatch

Minangkabau traditional music is a form of cultural expression imbued with aesthetic values, philosophy, and local wisdom. A representation of the community's emotional expression is found in

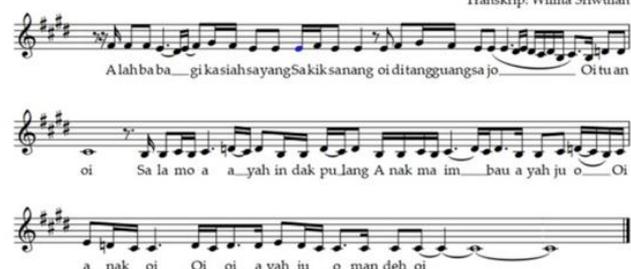
the song "Ratok Kincia Tuo." Etymologically, "Ratok" means lamenting or mourning, while "kincia" (waterwheel) represents the continuous cycle of existence, and "tuo" signifies aged or used, which in the Minangkabau cultural context refers to old age and human mortality. This musical tradition is characterized by its free tempo (tending to be slow), repetitive rhythms, and sorrowful nuances filled with symbols of life reflection and deep sadness

The song Ratok Kincia Tuo originates from the Ratok Baenar tradition that lives and develops in the Solok community as part of the expression of collective lamentation in the Minangkabau socio-cultural context (Nettl, 2005; Zainal, 2010). This song was created by Eri Gumanti, an artist from Koto Anau, Solok Regency, West Sumatra Province, by referring to the musical idiom and emotional expression of Ratok Baenar as its aesthetic foundation. Thematically, Ratok Baenar depicts the story of a mother's lamentation over the departure of her husband (father), accompanied by the child's longing for the father figure, while the mother accepts the separation as part of tibo di badan (destiny that befalls her). The sorrow is conveyed in a restrained and repetitive manner, in harmony with the musical character of Ratok Baenar which is free in tempo, improvisational, yet contemplative, thus fostering an ambiance of collective emotional reflection (Zainal, 2010). The following is the Ratok Baenar notation transcribed from YouTube audiovisual documentation with the singer Misramolai.

Ratok Baenar

(Sumber: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEMMiciW43w>)

Pendatang: Misramolai
Transkrip: Wilma Sriwulan



A lah ba ba gi kasiahsayang Sakik sanang oi ditanguangsa jo Oi tu an
oi Sa la mo a a yah in dak pu lang A nak ma im bau a yah ju Oi
a nah oi Oi oi a yah ju o man deh oi

Notasi 1.

Ratok Baenar dengan pendatang Misramolai

(Sumber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEMMiciW43w&list=RDNEMMiciW43w&start_radio=1)

In fact, the Ratok Baenar notation above is not intended as a fully accurate transcription of the sound. The melodic structure is non-diatonic, with many notes falling between Western tonal systems and containing microtone intervals that are difficult to represent precisely using staff notation. This limitation is inevitable, considering that up to this point there has been no notation system that can fully capture the flexibility of the tones and expressive character of Ratok Baenar. Therefore, staff notation in this research is utilized as an analytical instrument for reading the tendencies of musical structure, not as an absolute representation of sound or as an attempt to standardize traditional musical practices.



Figure 1.

Ratok Baenar is saluang classic performed by the singer Misramolai, who became base creation song Ratok Kincia Tuo.

(Sumber:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEMMiciW43w&list=RDNEMMiciW43w&start_radio=1)

When analyzed within a cross-cultural aesthetic framework, the expressive character of Ratok Baenar demonstrates conceptual parallels with the aesthetic principles of Renaissance vocal music in Europe, even though the two traditions emerged from entirely different social, historical, and cosmological contexts. This comparison is meant not to imply a historical link or direct impact, but instead to emphasize the common aesthetic principles in the management and expression of emotions—especially grief—through the musical form.

Vocal music from the Renaissance, including the early motet and madrigal, prioritized textual clarity, balanced phrasing, and measured emotional expression as the key elements of musical aesthetics (Apel, 1972; Fallows, 2001). Grief is expressed not through intense emotional displays, but through smooth melodic sequences, relatively close intervals, and reflective reiteration of phrases. These aesthetic principles demonstrate a harmony with Ratok Baenar practice, where lamentation is articulated in a subdued, repetitive, and prolonged manner, creating a contemplative mood that enables the audience to gradually encounter emotional depth.

This aesthetic parallel is likewise apparent in the management of musical timing. In the Renaissance, tempo was perceived via the idea of *tactus*, a fairly steady, physically experienced fundamental pulse, often comparable to the human heartbeat (Burkholder et al., 2014). This concept resonates with the tradition of Ratok Baenar, where the musical progression maintains a consistent temporal stability, devoid of sudden rhythmic emphases. This stability does not generate dramatic tension but instead creates a space for calm and sustained emotional reflection.

Thus, Ratok Baenar and Renaissance vocal music represent two culturally unique traditions that reveal aesthetic parallels in their use of music as a means for emotional control, the appreciation of texts, and the creation of contemplative spaces. This resemblance confirms that certain aesthetic principles are cross-cultural,

emerging in response to the human need to meaningfully manage affective experiences through musical structures

Moreover, just as Renaissance vocal music prioritized the balance between musical structure and textual meaning, Ratok Baenar similarly centers the connection between text and melody in its expressive qualities. The vocal ornamentation that emerges is not intended as a showcase for virtuosity, but rather as a means of refining the articulation of feeling and deepening the meaning of the words. Thus, Ratok Baenar can be understood not merely as an expression of local lamentation, but as a musical practice that aesthetically aligns with the Renaissance vocal tradition, particularly in how it manages emotion, maintains structural simplicity, and prioritizes the depth of textual meaning (Fallows, 2001).

The creation of the Ratok Kincia Tuo song is firmly rooted in the aforementioned Ratok Baenar tradition, particularly in its thematic aspects, emotional expression, and musical idiom. However, the Ratok Kincia Tuo song does not entirely replicate the traditional musical structure of Ratok Baenar. In its creative process, this song underwent significant structural transformation, particularly in the processing of the temporal aspect. In contrast to Ratok Baenar, which is tempo-free and highly dependent on the singer's expressive intuition, the Ratok Kincia Tuo song has used a more regular metric framework with a Moderato tempo (± 94 BPM) (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zBKw-0zrY8&list=RD4zBKw-0zrY8&start_radio=1). The application of this measured tempo does not necessarily eliminate the character of lamentation, but rather presents a more structured and communicative form of expression of sadness, thus allowing the Ratok Kincia Tuo song to adapt to the performance context and reach a wider audience without losing its aesthetic roots as traditional lamentation music.

While the text or lyrics convey a subtle sense of profound sadness regarding *parasaan hiduik* (life suffering), the music that accompanies the song Ratok Kincia Tuo displays a distinctly opposing expressive quality. The recurrence of basic motifs, a fairly bright melodic line, a jaged rhythm that doesn't fully match the lyrical mood, and the implementation of strong harmony create a distinctive layer of musical expression that contrasts with the *pantun*'s content. The distinction between the musical arrangement and the text's meaning is what makes the song Ratok Kincia Tuo intriguing to analyze, as it demonstrates how music and lyrics not only enhance one another, but also create a dynamic tension of meaning within a single work.

Ratok Kincia Tuo
 (Sumber: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zBKw-0zrY8>) Vocal : Sri Fayola
 Song & Lyric : Eri Gumant
 Arr & Mixing : Vandy Satriai
 Transkrip : Wilma Sriwidan



Notation2.

Song melody Ratok Kincia Tuo with vocalist Sri Fayola
 (Sumber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zBKw-0zrY8&list=RD4zBKw-0zrY8&start_radio=1)

From a musicological perspective, the discordance in rhythm and tempo within the Ratok Kincia Tuo song indicates a shift from the original Ratok form, which is characterized by a slow tempo and repetitive rhythms with a lamenting nuance. This change is often frequently shaped by the demands of modern performances, commercialization, and media adaptation, leading to versions with faster tempos and rhythmic patterns that deviate from the original character. As a result, the emotional expression of sadness and reflection on life, which are the core of the aesthetics of this tradition, is reduced. This generates an “aesthetic accident” in the inheritance of oral traditions (Kartomi, 1990; Nettle, 2005; Sastra, 2019). However, in recent trends, there is a phenomenon of inconsistency between the original rhythm and tempo, exemplified by the Ratok Kincia Tuo song, which has been altered into modern performance styles. This change gives rise to aesthetic problems which some academics call a form of “aesthetic accident” (Sastra, 2019), namely a condition where the essence of traditional musicals experiences distortion due to external intervention, whether due to commercialization, stage needs, or adaptation to popular media.

Musically, Ratok is characterized by its adoption of a slow tempo that tends toward largo or adagio. This tempo functions not only as a musical aspect but also as a medium for emotional expression, representing lamentation or crying. Its repetitive rhythm, with its simple pattern and typical Minangkabau melodic ornamentation, emphasizes the nuances of sadness and contemplation. The authenticity of this rhythm and tempo is crucial in oral traditions. According to (Nettl, 2005), rhythm in traditional music is not merely a time pattern, but rather a semantic device that binds social, emotional, and ritual meanings. In the context of the song Ratok Kincia Tuo, the slow rhythm symbolizes the patient passage of time, an awareness of mortality, and resignation to fate. (Kartomi, 1990) emphasizes that in Southeast Asian traditional music, small changes in rhythm can significantly alter performative meaning. Therefore, preserving the original tempo and rhythm of

Ratok Kincia Tuo songs is crucial for the aesthetic integrity and philosophy they contain.

The disparity of rhythm and tempo in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo has a significant aesthetic impact in three main aspects. First, there is a reduction in emotional meaning, because the accelerated tempo hinders the formation of collective expressions of grief that should be built slowly and deeply. Second, there is a shift in social function, from a medium for reflection on life and lamentation in the context of grief to a form of performance oriented towards entertainment. Third, there is a degradation of philosophical values, especially the values of patience, resignation, and awareness of the cycle of life that are basic principles in Minangkabau culture. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of invention of tradition (Hobsbawm & T., 1983), where traditions undergo adjustments in function to meet social demands in a modern context.

In contemporary practice, Ratok Kincia Tuo songs frequently undergo tempo increases and rhythmic changes, particularly during live shows and adaptations for electronic media like recordings and television. The incorporation of contemporary instruments like keyboards speeds up the musical flow and alters its rhythmic framework. This alteration disrupts the connection between slow tempo and the reflective space that formerly enabled audiences to grasp the significance of every line of poetry. The rhythm, initially repetitive as a stylistic means of mourning, transforms to become more diverse, yet it sacrifices its emotional richness. (Feld, 1984) refers to this phenomenon as the aesthetics of change, which involves the modification of traditional music to meet new societal needs, frequently resulting in the erosion of its original significance. In this context, the aesthetics of grief in Ratok Kincia Tuo songs transforms into a focus on entertainment

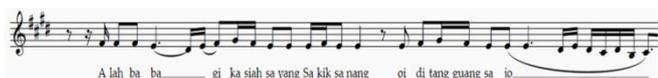
This phenomenon can be understood as a form of aesthetic accident, specifically a condition where the aesthetic value and cultural meaning of a musical tradition are distorted due to changes that are not in harmony with its original context (Sastra, 2019). In the context of ethnomusicology, this matter is not merely a technical musical issue, but relates to the preservation of cultural significance. (Rice, 2014) underscores that traditional music should be comprehended in a holistic manner as a musical text, social context, and emotional experience. Notable shifts in rhythm and tempo result in a disruption of these three dimensions, leading the music to persist as a form while losing the depth of its social and emotional meaning. Consequently, while change in traditional music is inevitable, as noted (Nettl, 2005), preservation demands a balance between evolution and stability. In the context of the song Ratok Kincia Tuo, maintaining the original rhythm and tempo is essential for the aesthetic and philosophical sustainability of Minangkabau mourning.



2. Loss of Microtonal Nuances and Local Intonation

One of the fundamental unique features of traditional Ratok lies in the use of distinctive Minangkabau intonation, that extends the Western diatonic system. The high pitch of the voice, intermediate notes (microtonals), and intonational flexibility are the main markers of the expression of lament. These elements create an atmosphere of profound sorrow while embodying a complexity of emotion that cannot be fully accommodated by the standard tuning system.

In the Ratok Baenar tradition and other Ratok traditions in Minangkabau, microtonality emerges through: (1) gliding tones between two main notes; (2) sliding tones that do not stop precisely on diatonic notes; and (3) mathematical imprecision that actually enhances the expression of lament. The singer is free to shift pitch according to the emotional content of the text and the performance situation. This practice is known as fluid intonation (Hood, 1971).



Notation 3.

Fragmented melody Ratok Baenar This indeed contains microtonality intervals, so that singer free shift pitch (*fluid intonation*)

The melody fragment of Ratok Baenar in the notation above illustrates the microtonal techniques characteristic of the Minangkabau Ratok tradition. This microtonality is apparent in the vocal pitch curves between the two primary notes in many of the notations above, like between fis and e (the third and fourth notes); then e and dis; e and fis; and across most intervals in the melody. Likewise, the sliding notes do not end exactly within the diatonic framework, and the lack of pitch precision actually enriches the expression of this traditional Ratok

However, the microtonal character that is the core of the traditional Ratok aesthetic is no longer apparent in the Ratok Kincia Tuo song. This song is a product of modern Minangkabau music constructed through a contemporary arrangement approach using standard-tuned instruments, such as keyboards, electric guitars, and other digital devices that adhere to the equal temper system (A = 440 Hz). Consequently, the vocals must adhere to Western harmony and "align with chords," thus preventing the pitch curves or intonational flexibility common in traditional Ratok practice.

Musically, the melodic structure of Ratok Kincia Tuo no longer echoes the nuances of traditional lamentations, but instead fully adheres to the chord the chord sequences and consistent, rhythmic beats of Minang dance. The adherence to fixed harmonic and beat patterns keeps the melody within a fixed tonal path, thus restricting the scope for microtonal exploration. This contrasts sharply with traditional Ratok, which is relatively free from the constraints of fixed scales and metrical beats, allowing considerable space for the singer's self-expression.

Microtonality, in the context of traditional music, denotes the use of pitch intervals smaller than a semitone in the Western tempera system. In Minangkabau traditional Ratok, microtonality serves as a medium for emotional expression, such as sadness, longing, and resignation. . The singer's local intonation is adaptable and situational, shaped by the emotional environment, the connection to the song's text or lyrics, and the social context of the performance. This approach frequently appears in the form of sliding tones, embellishments in melody, and imprecise mathematical elements that carry deep expressive significance. In the context of ethnomusicology, this occurrence is referred to as fluid intonation (Hood, 1971).



Notation 4.

Piece song Ratok Kincia Tuo transcribed with tempo and time signatures Western music , according to with melody on the source video.

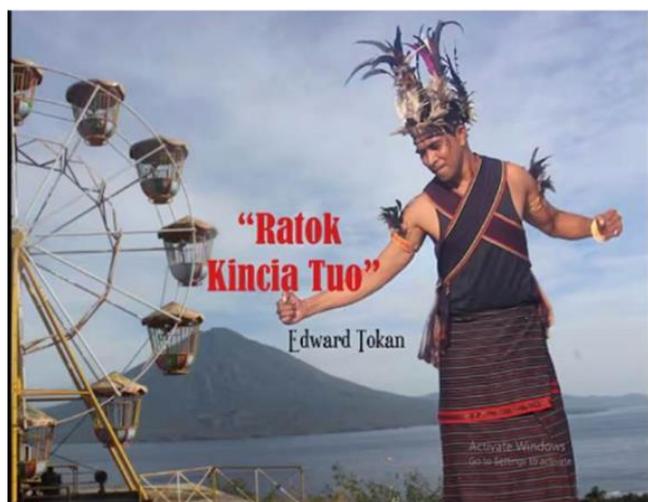
In the development of contemporary music, Ratok has undergone a standardization of intonation, especially when recorded or played with fixed-tuning Western instruments. The processes of studio recording, the employment of digital instruments, and the aesthetic expectations of contemporary performances have led to a reduction of local intonation flexibility to predetermined intervals. This phenomenon is reinforced by commercial orientation and mass media, where singers tend to be directed to adhere to diatonic intonation standards in order to sound "neat" and easily accepted by urban audiences. According to Bruno (Nettl, 2005), this situation can be seen as a type of musical acculturation, whereby local musical systems interact with the prevailing global system, frequently leading to the dominance of local traditional values.

The absence of local microtonality and intonation in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo carries considerable aesthetic and philosophical consequences. Initially, emotional expression diminishes as the subtleties of sadness and reflection that are typically conveyed through microtonality become one-dimensional and lack richness. Secondly, local musical identity is deteriorating, as Ratok loses its unique Minangkabau sound and increasingly blends with global

popular music. Third, there is a change in philosophical significance, as in Minangkabau culture, the adaptability of intonation signifies a perspective on life that embraces uncertainty, acceptance of destiny, and the intricacies of human connections with nature and the Creator. (Feld, 1984) highlighted that sound in traditional music is not only technical but also embodies social and cosmological significances

In this context, the absence of local intonation can be understood as a form of aesthetic accident, namely a condition where the aesthetic value of traditional music is distorted due to changes in the musical system. According to (Rice, 2014), traditional music must be comprehended as musical text, social practice, and emotional experience. When local intonation is lost, the dimensions of emotional experience and the social meaning of music are also reduced. In line with the view (Hobsbawm & T., 1983), this phenomenon can also be interpreted as a type of invented tradition, where historical customs are reshaped to fit contemporary requirements, but at the expense of their aesthetic authenticity.

Thus, the song Ratok Kincia Tuo demonstrates how the modernization of Minang music has brought fundamental changes to the musical structure of Ratok. Although the term "Ratok" remains in use, the intonation and microtonality that are at the heart of traditional Ratok expression have vanished from its musical form. This situation is crucial for understanding the dynamics of traditional music transformation amidst globalization and modern aesthetic standardization.



Picture 3 .

Cover Album Song Minang "Ratok Kincia Tuo" which is also sung by Edward Tokan singer from East Nusa Tenggara (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS4FucDpK70&list=RDsS4FucDpK70&start_radio=1)

3. Disruption of the Relationship between Text and Music

In its original form, traditional Ratok presents a natural cohesion between text (verse) and music. Expressions of grief, loss, and longing are conveyed through a spacious musical space,

characterized by slow tempos, long vocal phrases, flexible rhythms, and fluid intonation that allow the words to "breathe" emotionally. The relationship between text and melody is not rigid, but rather adapts intuitively to each other. This flexibility makes Ratok an intimate and personal expression of the soul, rather than merely conveying text (lyrics) through sound.

However, in modern versions of Ratok practice, such as in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo, this organic relationship experiences a structural narrowing. The originally free-flowing lyrics are often condensed or simplified to fit the chord progressions, fixed rhythms, and verse-chorus patterns typical of popular music. When Ratok is accompanied by modern instruments such as guitar, keyboard, and drums, the previously flexible text must adhere to standard beat durations and time signatures. As a result, the symbiotic relationship between text and music is broken. As emphasized (Sumarsam, 2003), traditional music produces not only sound but also meaning, born from the close relationship between text, context, and musical form. When this relationship weakens, Ratok loses its expressive depth and shifts into a mournful song without strong reflective power.



Notation 5.

In Ratok Kincia Tuo, poetry Ratok simplified to align with structure modern patterned music still.

This phenomenon is evident in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo, which was formatted as a popular music product. The song stems from the composer's personal memories in West Pasaman—an emotional space that naturally opened up opportunities for traditional Ratok expression through long phrases, flexible intonation, and deep appreciation. In the widely accepted version, the contemporary Minang remix format featuring set chord progressions, dance beats, and common song structures caused the lyrics to become less adaptable. The existence of a vocalist with solid skills certainly propelled this song into the national music scene, but this achievement also highlighted the recontextualization of Ratok: from a heartfelt organic expression to a well-structured musical product. Ratok is now seen not as a meditative practice, but instead as a melancholic pop song that resonates with people of all ages.

The distortion in the connection between music and text is also apparent in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo. Symbolically, the title

contains a powerful metaphor about an old water mill—something once useful and meaningful, but now neglected. This metaphor represents the journey of human life, from empowerment to oblivion. In traditional Ratok, such a powerful symbol is usually given a contemplative musical space, with a slow tempo and reflective vocal expression. However, in its modern version, the song Ratok Kincia Tuo is instead enveloped in a fast, steady, and repetitive Minang joget rhythm. This rhythmic flow does not provide space for deep emotional contemplation, so that the metaphor about the transience of life is reduced to sad text (lyrics) over cheerful music. This shift from a contemplative aesthetic to a joget aesthetic highlights the disturbance of the text-music connection in the modernization of Ratok.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, the relationship between text and music is interdependent. (Rice, 2014) asserts that music gives emotional life to text, while text gives music meaningful direction. In traditional Ratok, this symbiosis is maintained through slow tempos, meditative repetitive rhythms, microtonal intonation, and flexible vocal improvisation. Conversely, in the modern version of Ratok Kincia Tuo, this relationship is unsettled by accelerated tempo, standardized intonation, reduced improvisation, and an orientation toward entertainment and commercialization. (Feld, 1984) refers to this condition as the loss of “sound icons,” namely sonic elements that convey the social and emotional meaning of a tradition.

This disruption to the connection between text and music carries important aesthetic and philosophical implications. First, there is a loss of emotional depth, as the lamentation lyrics are no longer supported by a musical space that allows for appreciation. Second, there is a shift in the social function of Ratok, from a medium for collective reflection in the context of grief and contemplation to a popular festival or stage entertainment. Third, Minangkabau philosophical values—such as resignation, patience, and awareness of the cycle of life—are no longer fully conveyed. Fourth, the relationship between text and music as markers of Minangkabau musical identity is weakened, so that what is reduced is not only aesthetics, but also cultural identity.

In this context, the disruption of the connection between text and music in the Ratok Kincia Tuo song can be perceived as a type of aesthetic mishap, specifically a situation where the balance of aesthetic components in oral tradition is compromised by the influence of modernization. (Nettl, 2005) highlights that the primary issue of traditional music lies not only in its preservation in form but also in upholding the natural connection between musical structure, significance, and social role. The situation with the Ratok Kincia Tuo song demonstrates that when this connection is severed, the tradition stays alive in name but diminishes in its aesthetic value.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the transformation of the Ratok Kincia Tuo song from a traditional lamentation practice to a contemporary Minangkabau song form has given rise to a phenomenon that can be understood as an aesthetic accident. In this context, an aesthetic

accident is not defined as a mere artistic error, but rather as a condition where changes in musical form result in a lack of synchronicity between the sound structure, the meaning of the text, and the social function that have historically been institutionalized in the Minangkabau Ratok tradition.

Musicologically, the Ratok Kincia Tuo song originates from Ratok Baenar, which is characterized by a free and slow tempo, non-metric rhythm, fluid intonation with microtonal tendencies, and improvisatory vocal ornamentation that allows for a profound expression of collective grief. However, in its contemporary form, the Ratok Kincia Tuo song has undergone significant transformations, particularly through the implementation of a measured *moderato* tempo, a joget rhythmic pattern, standardization of diatonic intonation, and an arrangement structure that follows the logic of popular music. These changes create tension between the musical character that tends to be bright and stable and the lyric text that continues to convey sadness and reflection on life.

The examination reveals that the aesthetic accident in the song Ratok Kincia Tuo is manifested through three main aspects. First, the mismatch of rhythm and tempo, which reduces the contemplative space and shifts Ratok from a medium of ritual reflection to a performative presentation. Second, the loss of microtonal nuances and local intonation, which impacts the degradation of Minangkabau musical identity and the narrowing of the spectrum of emotional expression. Third, the disruption of the organic relationship between text and music, so that the lamentation lyrics are no longer supported by a soundscape that is both affectively and symbolically equivalent.

Within an ethnomusicological framework, these findings emphasize that musical change cannot be perceived neutrally or merely as artistic innovation. The transformation of the Ratok Kincia Tuo song demonstrates how modernization, commodification, and digital mediation influence the reorientation of aesthetic values and social roles in tradition. By retaining the term “Ratok” as a cultural identifier, the new musical form has the potential to obscure the ritual, spiritual, and philosophical values that underpins the Minangkabau lamentation tradition.

The key contribution of this study is the introduction of the idea of aesthetic accident as a pivotal analytical framework in examining traditional music. This concept allows for a more problematic reading of cultural transformation, by positioning aesthetic change as a field of negotiation of values, power, and cultural economy, rather than simply as a sign of continuity or revitalization. Thus, this research highlights that the preservation of traditional music is not merely about the continuity of form and name, but requires a thorough focus on the integrity of the relationship between musical structure, symbolic meaning, and social function.

Through an examination of the song Ratok Kincia Tuo, this research demonstrates the vulnerability of the Minangkabau lament tradition to aesthetic distortions within contemporary cultural regimes, while also opening up a space for reflection on adaptation practices that are more sensitive to local aesthetic and



philosophical values. These findings are expected to enrich the discourse on traditional musicology and provide a critical foundation for further research on the transformation of oral arts in Indonesia.

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