

Symbolic Meaning of Tortor Dalahi and Daboru Move in Simalungunese

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Abstract

Dance in the *Simalungun* tribe called *tortor*. *Tortor* had role as a communication media in the form of move to deliver or certain means and integral part by the dynamics of the socio-cultural life of its society. According to the actors, *tortor* was divided into two forms namely *tortor dalahi* (performed by male) and *tortor daboru* (performed by women). This division also showed differences in move techniques. There were six basic move on Simalungunese *tortor* for traditional ceremonies, either performed by both (*dalahi* and *daboru*) or just one of them. This basic move is: 'ondok', 'maminggung', 'sombah', 'sorpei' and 'mamasu-masu' performed by both, and 'lakah sitolu tolu' or 'lakah siubar-ubar' which performed by male (*dalahi*), and 'serser' performed by women (*daboru*).

Keywords: symbolic meaning, *tortor dalahi*, *tortor daboru*.

1. Introduction

Dance in Simalungunese is called '*tortor*'. Although, *tortor* could be interpreted as 'dance', but to call it '*tortor*' has deeper meaning and relevant to its culture, especially at the time of traditional ceremony. The use of *tortor* in performing traditional ceremony is a reflection of the life in society, related to customs and norms which is valid from generation to generation. The use of *tortor* in performing traditional ceremony is a reflection of the life society, related to customs and norms which is valid from generation to generation. Presence of *tortor* for the Simalungunese people is not only in the form of an aesthetic expression of individuals or groups, but rather concerning the continued existence and recognition of their identity as the Simalungunese tribe, which means the recognition of the wholeness of the reality of the social structure in society.

Tortor is a series of activities from Simalungunese culture that could not stand alone. The sustainability reach and closely related to aspects of community regulation patterns in the kinship system. Through the aesthetic experience of *manortor* (dancing) can be found the meaning of life of Simalungun society, which reflects the norms and ethics, as well as the pedagogical elements that developed in the community. The symbols that appear in the *tortor* are the cultural reflections of the Simalungunese. Each form of *tortor* Simalungunese move is the hallmark of its society, which brings the cultural message to be conveyed to its people. *Tortor* contains the principle of spirit of togetherness, a sense of brotherhood or solidarity for the common good in society.

Tortor cannot be separated from traditional ceremonies. The ceremonial includes *tortor* as an important and inseparable part. *Manortor* (dancing) is a 'rule' of culture, in which a person who is bound in a kinship system is obliged to attend and *manortor* in the ceremony. For the Simalungunese people, the *manortor* tradition (dancing) is a cultural expression. Milton Singer (1972) in *When A Great Tradition Modernizes* says:

Setiap tradisi memiliki muatan budaya. Muatan budaya tersebut hadir lewat media budaya khusus atau dalam diri masyarakat pendukungnya. Deskripsi dan pengamatan terhadap ciri-ciri muatan budaya yang ditata dan ditransformasikan pada kesempatan-kesempatan tertentu lewat media budaya khusus, dapat membantu kita memahami struktur budaya tradisi bersangkutan. (dalam Sal Murgiyanto, 1991: 14-15).

Tortor at Simalungunese ceremony has its own uniqueness, because in the process of execution, takes place the process of symbolic interaction between *tortor*'s actors and connoisseurs. As an aesthetic expression, besides to entertain, *tortor* also contains symbolic meanings that are full of teachings and noble. These symbols appear in the movements of the dancers, both male (*dalahi*) and female (*daboru*). These symbols are interpreted as a cultural manifestation of the Simalungunese people.

Symbolic interaction lays three basic human activities in socializing are: (a) individual nature, (b) interaction and, (c) interpretation. Its Substances include: (a) man's life in the environment of symbols, and responding to life with symbols as well, (b) through symbols, humans have the ability to stimulate others in different ways from the stimuli of others (c) through the communication of symbols can be learned the meaning and values, and hence can be learned also the ways of the actions of others, (d) symbols, meanings and values are always related to humans, then by humans is used to think as a whole and even broadly and complexly; and (e) thinking is a process of searching, possibly symbolic and useful for studying future actions, interpreting relative advantages and disadvantages according to individual achievement, to make choices. This paper aims to know, comprehend and explain the symbolic meaning of *tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* on Simalungunese

people.

2. Discussion: Symbolic Meaning

- Meaning is the means of speech or understanding given to a linguistic form (*Makna merupakan maksud pembicara atau pengertian yang diberikan kepada suatu bentuk kebahasaan (Depdikbud,2001)*).
- Symbols are everything (material things, things, actions, speeches, human movements) that mark or represent something else or anything that has been given a certain meaning (*Simbol adalah segala sesuatu (benda material, peristiwa, tindakan, ucapan, gerakan manusia) yang menandai atau mewakili sesuatu yang lain atau segala sesuatu yang telah diberi makna tertentu (Geertz dalam Kusumastuti, 2006)*).
- The symbol is also an indirect representation of the most important meaning. For example in religion, rituals and dances (Tunggal et al, 2010). While Symbolic is the use of symbols to express ideas such as literature and art (*Simbol juga merupakan representasi tidak langsung dari makna yang paling utama (penting). Misalnya dalam agama, ritual dan tarian (Tunggal dkk, 2010). Sementara Simbolik adalah perihal pemakaian simbol (lambang) untuk mengekspresikan ide-ide misalnya sastra dan seni (Sugono, 2008)*).
- The symbolic process occurs when humans create symbols by making an agreement about something to say something. Etymologically, the symbol is derived from the Greek word, symbols meaning sign or character that tells something to someone else, (*Secara etimologi, simbol berasal dari kata Yunani, symbolos yang berarti tanda atau ciri yang memberitahukan sesuatu hal kepada seseorang atau orang lain (Herusatoto 2003)*).
- Symbolic is the use or exposure of symbols in movement, (*Simbolis adalah pemakaian atau pengemukaan simbol-simbol dalam gerakan (Badudu, 1996)*).
- The meaning of the symbol can be through something like a sign of painting, sayings, badges and so forth, containing certain meanings, for example, white colour is purity, the image of rice as a symbol of prosperity, (*Memaknai simbol dapat melalui sesuatu seperti tanda lukisan, perkataan, rencana dan sebagainya, yang mengandung maksud tertentu, misalnya warna putih ialah lambang kesucian, gambar padi sebagai lambang kemakmuran (Herusatoto, 2003)*).

Symbols are used extensively in the arts to provide depth of artistic meaning, as are the symbols that are shaped in dance.

The symbolic process exists at all levels of human civilization from the simplest to the advanced, from the lowest society to the uppermost group. Symbols have meaning shared and comprehended together in community (Kusumastuti 2006). There are two kinds of symbols known to man (Bahtic in Rohidi & Rohen, 2000) namely:

- Constitutive symbols, is the symbols that are related between humans being as a creature of God
- Cognitive symbols, the symbols associated with human life to develop and advance, the relationship between human beings as a creature of God that is different from other creatures, forming values and rules and symbol expressions or feelings expressions that are symbols that the relationship between humans as emotional creatures.

Humans use certain symbols to communicate with other humans to understand and greet the heart, the meaning of symbols either in the form of movement or other signs, then communication will take place smoothly (Jazuli 2001). Understanding the symbolic meaning given by Geertz in Kusumastuti (2006) is used as the frame of mind in this paper. Selection of concepts given by Geertz, because has been given a deep explanation of the meaning of means as everything (actions, speech, movements and objects) that mark or represent something.

2. *Tortor Dalahi* (Male) and *tortor Daboru* (Female)

Simalungunese custom ceremonies always include a *tortor* performed according to the arrangement of the event, but still bounded by the kinship system as a guide the way of the ceremony. Based on *tortor* actors (*panortor*) the community divide it into two, namely *tortor dalahi* (performed by men) and *tortor daboru* (performed by women). Communities divide the *tortor* to make it easier to identify *tortor* according to their move techniques. The *tortor* movement at the Simalungunese custom ceremonies is simple movements, and denotes the move contained in every Simalungunese *tortor*. Here is the name of the move as well as the technique of performing by each actor.

- *Tortor Dalahi* (Male *Tortor*)

1. *Ondok*, is a swing of the body from the bottom up that the movement is bent and then straightened (not full). Therefore the position of the foot during the manortor (dancing) could not be perpendicular.



Figure 1. *Lakah sitolu-tolu* or *lakah siubar—ubar*, means walking three steps



Figure 2. *Lakah sitolu-tolu* or *lakah siubar—ubar*, means walking three steps

2. *Maminggung*, in Bahasa Indonesia means squatting, is the move slowly down to the position of squatting.



Figure 3

3. *Sorpei*, in bahasa Indonesia is called cross-legged, which is sitting on the floor with legs folded or sitting kneeling. The movements of both palms are above the thigh and pulled inward, followed by the back of the palm of the hand above the thigh and pulled out.



Figure 4

4. *Somba*, denotes worship, Can be done while standing or cross-legged. If, while cross-legged, then the movement of both hands tightly and above the head, the body leaning forward so that the elbows or hands touch the ground.



Figure 5

5. *Mamasu-masu*, giving prayers Move, *mamasu-masu* done with the position of standing feet or erect anything affected from the *hiou* and put it onto the requester's shoulder of *pasu-pasu* (prayer).



Figure 6

- *Tortor Daboru* (Female *Tortor*)
 1. *Ondok*, is the swing of the body from the bottom up caused by knee movement which bent and then straightened (not full). Therefore the position of the foot during the *manortor* (dancing) should not be perpendicular.



Figure 7

2. *Serser*, is a move to the right or left side of the foot forming the open 'V' and 'V' closed, begun with 'V' open. The left hand move is on the side of the body and is swung forward and the right hand in front of the chest, done alternately.



Figure 8

3. *Maminggung*, in Bahasa Indonesia means squatting, is the move slowly down to the position of squatting.



Figure 9

4. *Sorpei*, in Bahasa Indonesia is called cross-legged, which is sitting on the floor with legs folded or sitting kneeling. The movements of both palms are above the thigh and pulled inward, followed by the back of the palm of the hand above the thigh and pulled out.



Figure 10

5. *Somba*, is worship. Can be done while standing or cross-legged. If, while cross-legged, the move of both hands meet and are above the head, with the position of the body leaning forward but not touch the ground.



Figure 11

6. *Mamasu-masu*, giving prayers Move, *mamasu-masu* done with the position of standing feet or erect anything affected from the *hiou* and put it onto the requester's shoulder of *pasu-pasu* (prayer).



Figure 12

3. Symbolic Meaning

Like traditional dance tradition, *tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* also have meaning, because every movement comes from the thought of Simalungun society rooted in the elements of culture and customs of society, such as:

- *Ondok*, on *tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* has a symbolic meaning that the men and women of the Simalungunese people are always active in working to meet the needs of life. This move is based on the thinking of people who are generally located in mountainous areas where the land is uneven. When walking into the fields will look unstable, so symbolized in *ondok* move. Differences are seen at the time of doing this move, where the *ondok* on the *tortor daboru* is softer, because basically Simalungunese women have a much softer nature than male nature.
- *Maminggung*, on *tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* has the same symbolic meaning, namely sincere respect to the respected. High respect for others, manifested through the position below from the person he respects. The difference between the *dalahi* (male) and *daboru* (female) is seen from the way she does it, where in *daboru* is done by bowing his back more bent than *dalahi*, and knee *daboru* would touch the ground that would help *daboru* to keep his honor.
- *Sorpei*, on *tortor dalahi* dan *tortor daboru* has the same symbolic meaning, the cross-legged movement or *sorpei* is a move that has symbolic meaning as a form of perfection of respect. When it comes to paying homage to one must be earnest and sincere by first cleaning up the dirt on the hands. Before giving a sponge, the hands must be clean of all kinds of dirt.
- *Sombah* or *menyombah* is move which belonged by *tortor dalahi* and *daboru*. Move of *sombah* from *tortor dalahi* and *daboru* had the same symbolic meaning of honoring, yet having different movements. The stormy move of the *tortor dalahi* would drop and put both elbows on the ground while the *sombah* done by *tortor daboru* did not get to the ground or both hands do not touch the ground.
- *Mamasu-masu* is a move that had a symbolic meaning to give blessing to the lovers of *pasu-pasu* (blessing) to live a better life. Simalungunese people believe, if their *tolu sahundulan* pray by heartfelt, then he will get a good thing in every affairs. *Mamasu-masu* movement done by *daboru* and *dalahi* was same, by putting *ulos* on the back of the requester blessing.
- *Lakah sitolu-tolu*, which done by *dalahi* (laki-laki). It has a symbolic meaning to be more careful in its daily life in taking every decision. Stepped three times or *langkah sitolu-tolu* is rule by principle. *Tolu*

sahundulan (*tondong*, *sanina* dan *boru*), where every taking decision must be based on agreement of *tolu sahundulan*.

- *Serser*, denotes move for *daboru*. *Serser* move have a symbolic meaning that women Simalungunese should not open body excessively because it can harass Simalungunese women and not in accordance with customs. *Serser* movement which belonged by female Simalungunese showed that in every step of the Simalungunese women must remain orderly and polite. Although the Simalungunese people are descended from the father, Simalungunese society still maintained the dignity of women to avoid the things that harass them.

4. Conclusion

Move on *tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* used as a medium to convey a message on the implementation of traditional ceremonies Simalungunese people, as well as to perform the process of symbolic interaction between customary ceremonies. *Tortor dalahi* and *tortor daboru* had the same movement that is: *ondok* means hard work, *maminggung* means sincere respect, *sorpei* means improvement of respect, *mamasu-masu* means giving blessing and *sombah* means to give honourable. The only move performed by the *dalahi* was the cultivars of cautious meaning, and the move that was only done by *daboru* is the *serser* which means order and decency.

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