

ANALYSIS OF THE MEANING OF BORASPATI PHILOSOPHY AS A CULTURAL SYMBOL OF THE SIMALUNGUN BATAK SOCIETY (SEMIOTIC STUDY)

Meilina Siahaan¹, Jumaria Sirait², Vita Riahi Saragih³, Junifer Siregar⁴, Immanuel Doclas Belmondo Silitonga⁵

^a Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar

^b Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar

^c Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar

^d Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar

^e Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Pematangsiantar

Corresponden E-mail; melinasiahaan73@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk Analisis Makna Filosofi Boraspati Sebagai Simbol Budaya Masyarakat Batak Simalungun (Kajian Semiotika). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang telah dilakukan oleh peneliti mengenai simbol Boraspati dalam kebudayaan masyarakat Batak Simalungun yang ditinjau dari kajian semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce, dapat disimpulkan bahwa Boraspati merupakan simbol tradisional yang memiliki makna filosofis mendalam dan tidak sekadar berfungsi sebagai ornamen atau hiasan visual semata. Simbol Boraspati merepresentasikan pandangan hidup, sistem kepercayaan, serta struktur sosial masyarakat Simalungun yang sarat dengan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal. Melalui pendekatan semiotik, Boraspati dipahami sebagai tanda budaya yang mengandung pesan moral dan spiritual, yang menggambarkan hubungan harmonis antara manusia, alam, dan Sang Pencipta. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa setiap unsur simbolik pada Boraspati mencerminkan etika hidup, tatanan sosial, dan identitas kultural masyarakat Simalungun yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Influence, Learning Approach, Mathematics Realistic, Thinking Ability Critical

This study aims to determine the Analysis of the Philosophical Meaning of Boraspati as a Cultural Symbol of the Batak Simalungun Community (Semiotic Study). Based on the results of research conducted by researchers regarding the Boraspati symbol in the culture of the Batak Simalungun community reviewed from the semiotic study of Charles Sanders Peirce, it can be concluded that Boraspati is a traditional symbol that has a deep philosophical meaning and does not merely function as an ornament or visual decoration. The Boraspati symbol represents the outlook on life, belief system, and social structure of the Simalungun community which is full of local wisdom values. Through a semiotic approach, Boraspati is understood as a cultural sign that contains moral and spiritual messages, which depicts a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the Creator. The results of this study indicate that each symbolic element in Boraspati reflects the ethics of life, social order, and cultural identity of the Simalungun community which is passed down from generation to generation.



1. Introduction

As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia boasts a rich diversity of natural and cultural resources. It comprises 17,000 islands, with ethnic groups spread from Sabang to Merauke. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia recorded more than 1,300 ethnic groups as a result of the 2010 population census (Widiati & Permatasari, 2022). These findings indicate that Indonesia possesses extraordinary cultural richness within each ethnic group. The characteristics of each culture include unique cultural heritage, language, traditions, and lifestyles, resulting from its numerous and rapidly developing islands. Within this diversity of cultures and traditions lies a rich traditional heritage steeped in philosophical and symbolic values that serve as a national strength in preserving its identity. Each cultural diversity plays a crucial role not only in preserving national identity but also in strengthening social unity amidst diversity. Facing these challenges, it is crucial to build collective awareness and take concrete action from all parties, including the government, the younger generation, and the community, to wisely explore, preserve, and protect cultural diversity.

North Sumatra is a province in Indonesia with a multi-ethnic character and diverse ethnic groups. Some of the tribes inhabiting this region include Javanese, Malay, Nias, Chinese, Minangkabau, Acehnese, Banjar, and various other ethnic groups. The majority of the province's population is of Batak ethnicity, which collectively includes the Toba, Karo, Angkola, Mandailing, Simalungun, and Pakpak sub-tribes. Each of these sub-tribes has distinct cultural diversity, evident in their unique dialects, kinship systems, customs, and philosophies of life, yet they remain united by a common cultural identity. This ethnic diversity also contributes significantly to the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of their respective regions.

Culture is defined as a way of life passed down from generation to generation through various learning processes to create a particular way of life that best suits its environment. Culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group through problem-solving through external adaptation and internal integration (Rasyid & Sofyan, 2021). One of the currently diverse cultural riches, the Batak Simalungun culture, is a comprehensive system of values, norms, knowledge, arts, and customs passed down from generation to generation by the Batak Simalungun people who live in Simalungun Regency and its surroundings in North Sumatra. Therefore, the Batak Simalungun community can be understood as both an identity and a guideline for life that regulates social interactions, kinship relationships, and community behavior. All of these elements make Batak Simalungun culture a valuable heritage with strong historical, philosophical, and social value.

The Batak Simalungun people are often referred to as the eastern Batak people, this term exists because the geographical area is located east of the Batak area and adjacent to the eastern part of Lake Toba. According to Tideman, the number of Batak Simalungun people (Febrina Athylata Purba & Slamet, 2018) in 1920 was estimated at 69,852 people who lived spread out in a village (huta) with a relatively long distance so that this can also affect the mobility of the population. In the context of Batak culture, it has a social system that is characteristic of a culture in each division of the social system, each Batak culture has a different name that has become a legacy from the ancestors of the culture and is continued to the next generation. In the Batak Toba culture, it is called Dalihan na Tolu, while in the Batak Simalungun culture it is called Tolu Sahundulan Lima Saodoran, the social system consists of three functional groups that function and play a role in the entire life system of the Batak Simalungun community (Liliweri, 2021) .

The form of government system of the Simalungun people uses a government system held by kings and lords who have powers like kings too, this kind of government is hereditary which makes the son of the king's descendant who will become the next king born by puang bolon. This government structure also has powers that include the King, Partuanon, and Pangulu Huta. The government in a kingdom is led by a king, the king is seen as an absolute ruler who is the highest ruler because he does not submit to other rulers. Pangulu huta himself is the person who directly rules the people and above this government there are partuanons who are appointed directly by the king, with a government system that pays attention to positions, the social stratification of the Batak Simalungun is; 1) king, 2) partuanon, 3) paruma (ordinary people), 4) jabolon or slaves (Sembiring & Sinulingga, 2018) .

As described above, the Batak Simalungun sub-tribe has local wisdom and unique heritage, which is a symbol of the tribe's identity. One of the symbols of the Batak Simalungun cultural heritage that is a symbol of the community is the boraspati which is a form of identity of the Batak Simalungun tribe. This boraspati symbol is not just a decorative element found in the Bolon house building of the Batak Simalungun tribe, but contains deep philosophical messages as a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community itself (Tius, 2018) . In the Batak Simalungun cultural view, boraspati is a symbol that has the shape of a gecko that symbolizes the ability to adapt, resilience, and wisdom in facing change. This symbol is a manifestation of noble values upheld by the community, such as honesty, responsibility and mutual respect, and steadfastness (Ayuningtiyas, 2020) .

The philosophical values of Boraspati are closely related to the character and outlook on life of the Batak Simalungun people. This is reinforced by the leadership of the kings who became leaders in the Simalungun community, the nature of the gecko that is able to survive in various conditions illustrates the resilience of the Batak Simalungun people in facing social change and life's challenges. Its loyalty to its residence symbolizes a strong attachment to ancestral land and the importance of maintaining family relationships. Another figure who also takes the form of a gecko is Boraspati/Beraspati ni Tano, a support god responsible for soil fertility so that humans can be blessed with abundant harvests (Roduma Manalu, 2023) . This can be seen from the philosophy of sacrifice through the release of the tail reflecting the spirit of mutual cooperation and

willingness to sacrifice for the common good, as reflected in the Tolu Sahundulan philosophy. Its calm but alert movements reflect the habit of the Batak Simalungun people to always be careful in making important decisions. The simplicity of the gecko's life is in line with the value of humility which is still upheld even though it has the ability to adapt and develop (Siburian, 2017) .

In the Simalungun community, the presence of gecko ornaments in traditional houses indicates the importance of the connection between humans and nature and the spiritual world. Boraspati is believed to be a sign of the presence of ancestors or spirits who guard the house and its inhabitants, this symbol is used as a form of supernatural protection, a visual prayer for the house to avoid danger and remain blessed with sustenance and safety. Traditionally, Boraspati can also reflect the relationship of Batak people with nature, which is believed to have its own spirit and power (Chaer.A. & Liliana, 2014) . Therefore, geckos have an important role in creating collective knowledge of the Simalungun Batak community, including as icons and cultural heritage symbols, including in ornamental carvings of the Simalungun Bolon house which has high cultural value (Putra, Masri, Martisa, & Bilu, 2022) .

As time progresses, especially in the development of technology, many young people today are more interested in foreign and modern cultures. This can also be seen from the increasing number of foreign cultures entering and developing in the country, so this is one of the biggest reasons why local cultural heritage is considered old-fashioned, difficult to understand, and irrelevant to everyday life. Today's young generation only knows cultural heritage from the outside. This introduction can only be seen in the form of carvings, dances, and traditional houses without understanding the deeper meaning behind each cultural heritage. Thus, the understanding of the young generation towards the value of local wisdom in each cultural heritage is very minimal and its application in everyday life is lacking. The lack of interest in a deep understanding of cultural heritage that has implicit meanings results in many of the values contained in each cultural heritage being less known and understood by today's young generation. (Sinaga, Tampubolon, & Barus, 2024) .

One of the many cultural heritages of the Batak Simalungun can be seen from the gecko animal which is a cultural heritage that is believed to be a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community. It can be understood from the philosophy of the animal which has many implied meanings from each part related to the gecko animal so that from each meaning in the animal there are local wisdom values that need to be preserved as a cultural identity of the Batak Simalungun which will be known by many people (Febrina Athylata Purba & Slamet, 2019) .

Thus, this research will focus on the study of semiotics in the philosophical meaning of Boraspati as a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community with the aim of analyzing the meaning and relationships contained therein and how semiotic elements play a role in the form of Batak Simalungun cultural narratives towards Boraspati as a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community. This study is expected to provide broader insight into the meaning and value of the Boraspati symbol heritage as a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community and increase public understanding of the cultural heritage

that has many values contained within it. How does the younger generation understand the symbolic meanings that no longer deeply understand the philosophy and spirituality contained in the philosophy of Boraspati as a symbol of the Batak Simalungun community? (Putri, Nasution, & Apsela, 2022) .

With this research, it is hoped that it will not only increase academic understanding of the Boraspati symbol as a cultural symbol of the Batak Simalungun tribe as a legacy of local wisdom of the Batak Simalungun culture, but also encourage more concrete cultural preservation efforts. Cultural preservation is not only limited to the documentation and research process, but can also be done through revitalization through cultural education that plays a role in maintaining the cultural values of the Batak Simalungun. Thus, Boraspati will remain an inseparable part of the identity of the Batak Simalungun people and be passed down to the next generation as a symbol of cultural pride for them (FA Purba & Slamet, 2018) . Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in researching "Analysis of the Philosophical Meaning of Boraspati as a Cultural Symbol of the Batak Simalungun People (Semiotic Study)"

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research type with an interpretive method. Quoted from Moleong (Rahmadani & Erlinda, 2019) Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena in depth through the process of interpreting the meaning of actions, symbols, and social situations. According to Sugiyono (DL Saragih, 2003) Qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic research methods because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural settings), also called ethnographic methods because initially this method was used more for analytical research in the field of cultural anthropology, called qualitative methods, because the data collected is more qualitative. Thus, this study not only describes the form of the Boraspati symbol, but also interprets its philosophical meaning based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory which includes three elements: icons, indexes, and symbols in depth and digs up detailed information about the Batak Simalungun culture about "Analysis of the Philosophical Meaning of Boraspati as a Cultural Symbol of the Batak Simalungun Community (Semiotic Study).

This research was conducted in Pematang Purba Village, Purba District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province, Pematangsiantar City, because the location still maintains authentic Boraspati ornamentation, including Boraspati ornaments on the houses. These traditional houses represent a tangible representation of the Simalungun people's cultural values, which can be directly observed.

The subjects of this research were traditional figures, cultural figures, and local residents who understand the meaning of the Boraspati symbol in the Simalungun cultural environment. Informants were selected based on their in-depth knowledge of local customs and philosophy. (Damanik, 2017) . The object of the research is the Boraspati symbol found in the carvings of the traditional houses (Bolon Houses) of the Batak Simalungun people which will be analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory.

Data sources are information obtained by researchers to answer research questions. The data sources used by researchers come directly from the field and are divided into two types:

- a. Primary data, obtained directly through observation of Boraspati ornaments in traditional houses in Pematang Purba Village and also the Batak Simalungun Traditional House Museum in Pematangsiantar City and also through interviews with traditional figures, cultural academics, and the Simalungun community.
- b. Secondary data, obtained through literature studies from books, journals, scientific articles, and cultural documents relevant to symbolism.

According to Sugiyono (Ani Marlia et al., 2020) In qualitative research, the primary instrument is the researcher themselves. Researchers play a role in determining the research focus, selecting informants as data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions based on their findings. From the title "Analysis of the Philosophical Meaning of Boraspati as a Cultural Symbol of the Simalungun Batak Community (Semiotic Study).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Data Sources

Before presenting the data, the researcher first explains the data sources for the research that has been conducted and classifies them into semiotic studies. The data sources for this research are buildings that still contain *Pinar. Boraspati* (Gecko Ornament).

Data Source 1

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Place Name | : Pematang Purba Bolon House |
| Location | : Pematang Purba Village, Purba District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra |
| Characteristics of the House | : 1. The original building of the main ancient Bolon house has been...
renovated and has several modifications from the previous original building. |
| | a. The Bolon House, which was the main house of the king in the past, had a thatched roof, tepas (bamboo) walls and a floor made of bamboo tepas. |
| | b. All parts of the building have ornaments |
| | c. The rear building is in a collapsed condition |
| Founded in | : 1864 |

Research Data

Boraspati is one of the heritage symbols owned by the Batak Simalungun tribe . *Boraspati* is known as a symbol of the Simalungun people. *Boraspati* can be found in various buildings in North Sumatra, one of which is at the entrance and also the outer wall of the *Bolon House* in Pematang Raya Regency and also at the right and left entrances of the *Bolon Simalungun House Museum* located in Pematangsiantar City, Simalungun Regency. People in ancient times built or made carvings using hard and strong wood, bamboo, and stone, including *Boraspati* carvings (Akmal, Loebis, & Latiffani, 2022) . At present, the materials used in making a work of sculpture to be able to maintain its existence as a

cultural heritage are still using strong and hard stone or wood, for example *Appirabas wood*. The basic material for making *Boraspati carvings* itself is formed from wood which is then carved to resemble its real form, namely a gecko which is a symbol of the Batak Simalungun people who have the meaning of harmony (LV Saragih, 2024) .

The coloring of *Boraspati carvings* basically has 3 basic colors, namely white which signifies purity, red signifies courage, and black as the color of fortitude, the form of *Boraspati* which has this basic color is still widely used in every building in Simalungun Regency. In general, each *Boraspati* carving in each place has a different form without eliminating the philosophical meaning of *Boraspati* (Wartono, 2018) . Based on the results of observations that have been carried out by researchers, the following research data were obtained.

Research Data I

In this research data, researchers conducted research on the traditional house of the Batak Simalungun Kingdom, namely *the Bolon I house* located in Pematang Purba Village, Purba District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra. *The Bolon House* , which was the main house of the king in the past, had a thatched roof, *tepas* (bamboo) walls, and a floor made of bamboo *tepas*. The condition of the house has experienced a slight collapse due to the age of the building which is quite old. The front of the building has been rebuilt, now the floor is made of thick planks, while the rear has not been fully repaired because it still prioritizes construction on the front of the *Bolon house*. The Ancient *Bolon House* has 20 large carved wooden pillars, *the lopou* has 10 *halang* (galang) made of large wood.

Boraspati carvings on the main entrance. This also results in the loss of the distinctive features of the ancient *Bolon house* . However, *the Boraspati carvings* can be seen at the top, just below the buffalo head carving. The carvings are very small in shape, but the colors on the carvings are clearly visible, still using basic colors, namely white, red and black.

Based on the results of observations and also guidance from the local guards in the area of the Ancient *Bolon House* , *Boraspati carvings* can still be seen in several other buildings such as the *Balei Bolon building* in this building *Boraspati* carvings are found on the outer wall next to the entrance, namely on the left and right there are also on the left and right sides of the building and also on the back. This *Boraspati* carving can also be seen in the *Pattangan Puang Bolon building* on the front, right, and left of the building. The making of this *Boraspati* carving is formed using ropes resembling various forms with geckos by forming a cross then in each cavity in the rope shape is given a basic color of white, red, and black, the same as the *Boraspati* carvings in the *Pattangan Puang Bolon building* (Barus & Barus, 2019) .

With the presence of *Boraspati* carvings on every building in the area, *Boraspati* is a symbol of the Simalungun Cultural Community. This is also deepened based on the understanding through the guardian of the Ancient *Bolon House* area, namely Mr. Sarma Halim Saragih, who is also a member of the Simalungun Community. He also explained that *Boraspati* is a symbol of the Simalungun Community, where each *Boraspati* philosophy has a meaning that has long been used as a guideline for the life of the Simalungun Community.



Figure 1. Boraspati on the intact building



Figure 2. Boraspati at the main entrance



Figure 3. Boraspati at the main entrance on the left



Figure 4. Boraspati at the main entrance on the right

4. Results and Discussion

The results and discussions varied, with the first being a semiotic analysis, and the second being the philosophical meaning obtained from interviews with informants, which will be discussed as follows.

Results and Discussion of Research I

Based on the research data obtained by the researcher, the results and discussion on the *Bolon House building* located in Pematang Purba Village, Purba District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra were obtained by identifying the meaning of *the Boraspati ornaments* in a semiotic study as follows. (Banjarnahor, 2022).

Table 1. Results and Discussion of Research Data I

No.	<i>Boraspati</i> Body Parts	Icon	Index	Symbol
1.	Head	The shape of the gecko's head facing forward depicts the real appearance of the animal.	Indicates direction of gaze and focus, shows readiness and alertness.	Symbolizing the fertility, resilience, and sustainability of the Simalungun people, the forward-facing head symbolizes forward-looking vision and the spirit of preserving life.
2.	Eye	The large, protruding eyes resemble the shape of a real gecko's eyes.	Shows signs of awareness of the surrounding environment.	Signifying intelligence and sensitivity, it describes the nature of the Simalungun people who are careful and wise in making decisions.
3.	Mouth	The shape of the mouth resembles a gecko, it looks small but is open.	Demonstrates communication and expression functions.	Symbolizing gentleness in speech. Like the agile yet gentle gecko when hunting, the Simalungun people are depicted as gentle in speech and polite in communication.
4.	Body	The body is elongated and slender, resembling the physical form of a gecko.	Indicates flexibility in movement.	Symbolizing the flexibility of life and the ability to adapt, it reflects the character of the Simalungun people who are friendly and easy to adapt to various conditions.

No.	<i>Boraspati</i> Body Parts	Icon	Index	Symbol
5.	Tail	The real tail shape of a gecko.	The tail that can be broken off is a sign of sacrifice for safety.	Depicting sacrifice and regeneration, reflecting the values of caring and willingness to sacrifice for others.
6.	Foot	The shape of the feet gripping the wall, similar to a gecko.	Shows a slow but sure creeping motion.	Representing steadfastness and hard work, in line with the character of the Simalungun people who are diligent in farming and work with patience.
7.	Skin	The smooth and simple surface depicts actual lizard skin.	Signifies simplicity in form and color.	Symbolizing simplicity and humility, it reflects the honest, kind and humble nature of the Simalungun people.

Results and Discussion of Research III (Interview)

Different from the previous results and discussions. In this research data, the researcher conducted an interview with Prof. Dr. Hisarma Saragih, M.hum., who is a resource person in the academic field as he is a lecturer from Simalungun University Pematangsiantar, located at Jln. Siswomiharjo No. 11, Kel. Naga Pita, Kec. Siantar Martoba, Pematangsiantar City, North Sumatra Province.

Based on the results of interviews with him regarding a deep understanding of the philosophy of *boraspati* which is a symbol of the Simalungun community. from his explanation, he said that if seen from the context of the creation period of geckos, it is the sequence above before God created humans, this is what makes *boraspati* believed to have the meaning of protection that can provide blessings and harmony to the owner of the house, therefore the gecko animal called *boraspati* can be said to be mutually beneficial to live side by side with humans.

Geckos (*Boraspati*) can live side by side with humans because these geckos are the main predators of mosquitoes so that if the presence of a gecko is realized by the homeowner, the homeowner will not kill the gecko because its nature is not disturbing and is not disturbed by the presence of the gecko, this is proof that both are mutually beneficial to each other (Nararya & Laksana, 2022) . He also stated the philosophy of geckos as a form of protection that can be trusted from a story in ancient times which said that there was once a king who ran to save himself from being chased by an enemy, but when the king felt pressured, he made the king hide in a hut, then what made the king unknown was that there was a gecko that made a sound that made the enemy believe that there was no one in the hut and then the enemy left, and made the king safe from the enemy's pursuit.

From the historical story, it can be believed that the gecko animal called *boraspati* has a philosophy that makes the Simalungun people believe that the gecko is not just an ordinary animal but an animal that has a deep meaning in their lives. Furthermore, his explanation said that the philosophy of *boraspati* is related to the character of the Simalungun people, namely honesty which is also related to the philosophy of *Habonaron Do Bona* , the Simalungun people highly value honesty the same as the philosophy of

honesty in *boraspati* which also describes loyalty in guarding and inhabiting every house will feel safe, this can be seen from the sound coming from the gecko, the sound indicates that the house is inhabited (Siagian, 2021) .

Based on the results of understanding from other sources of boraspati philosophy, it can be seen from the position of the gecko crawling upside down on the ceiling of the house which has a philosophical meaning of life through the way the gecko processes climbing the wall with challenges to reach the desired goal in this philosophy it can be seen that the spirit of hard work and perseverance to achieve something desired is not easy this describes the character of the Simalungun people who are full of struggle to achieve a prosperous life. In the context of the spiritual realm, boraspati is believed to be a master who is present and comes to be able to provide a sign of a message that will possibly happen, this belief can be seen in the philosophy of the presence of the animal in the house, its presence means that God the Almighty Creator presents it to a place bringing a message to humans, in the past this philosophy was believed and believed so that the existence of boraspati carvings on the main entrance to the house is something that can be interpreted as a bearer of blessings so that through these carvings it is a preservation that until now is still believed and believed by the Simalungun people (Wulandari & Siregar, 2020) .

Based on a deep understanding of other body parts, boraspati is two large and prominent eyes that depict the philosophy of vigilance that symbolizes the character of a society that is careful and cautious in making decisions before acting in the culture of society, it is believed that people who are "sharp-eyed" are considered wise and not rash in judging, this philosophy also reminds people to always look with their conscience, and not just from the outer cover. He also explained the environment of the Simalungun land which is surrounded by jungle which is the residence of the Simalungun people in ancient times who prefer to isolate themselves from the crowd and prefer to live in the interior of a quiet forest, this is also related to the naming of the Simalungun tribe, namely "*lungun*" which means "missed" or "quiet" (Salsabila & Putri, 2022) .

Furthermore, the resource person explained that the connection between Boraspati and the environment of the Simalungun people, especially in terms of fertility in the land where they live, is a philosophy contained in the physical form of Boraspati which has the meaning of fertility so that it is believed to provide blessings to the people who live in the area. Therefore, the philosophy of the connection between nature and ancestors is closely related to the spiritual realm of the Simalungun people. In the historical context, based on a deep understanding of the resource person, it is said that since ancient times *Boraspati* has been believed to be often called "Tuan" which is called in full "*Boraspati Tuan Ni Tano*".

Elements of Culture in Boraspati's Philosophy

Boraspati has a meaning in every philosophy on its body part which is a guideline for the life of the Simalungun people so that *Boraspati* is not just an ornamental carving, but a symbol of the identity of the Simalungun people. Not only does it have symbolic meaning but also has cultural elements contained in each part of the Boraspati body such as the language system, knowledge system, social system, living equipment and

technology system, livelihood system, religious system, and art system. Based on the research data on *Boraspati* above, there are cultural elements in each part of the *Boraspati* body as follows. (Harnia, 2021) .

Head of *Boraspati*

Boraspati's head is also part of the symbolic language of Simalungun culture. In *the language of signs* , the head is always interpreted as the center of consciousness and the source of decisions. The community uses metaphorical terms such as "*mangandahon boraspati*" (think like *Boraspati*) to describe a wise and calm person. The visual language of *Boraspati's head* (large eyes, small mouth) represents an ethical message: see more, speak less. *The Boraspati* head holds the cosmological knowledge of the Simalungun people. Its large form and sharp eyes represent a high level of knowledge and awareness of the environment and natural signs.

Within the social structure, *the Boraspati head* represents a traditional leader with vision and moral responsibility for his community. The upward-pointing head indicates leadership oriented toward noble values, not material power.

Within the context of traditional technology, the *Boraspati* head carving demonstrates the high skill of Simalungun craftsmen. The well-proportioned head, with carved eyes, mouth, and small horns, is created with simple carving tools yet produces a powerful expression.

Boraspati's head also carries economic significance and work ethic. It symbolizes intelligence, alertness, and life strategy, just as a gecko uses its head and eyes to calculate distance and catch prey.

In the religious perspective of the Simalungun people, *Boraspati's* head is considered the center of spiritual awareness and the guardian of the home. From an artistic perspective, *Boraspati's* head is the aesthetic center and expressive symbol in the carvings of traditional houses (*Rumah Bolon*). The lines of the head, especially those around the eyes and jaw, display a harmony between strength and gentleness. These carvings not only enhance beauty but also bring to life the spiritual meaning of the building. For Simalungun artists, *Boraspati's* head is a sacred art form that combines visual beauty and life philosophy. It embodies the principle of "*raja ni seni, raja ni roha*" (art is the king of the heart), where beauty serves as a means of maintaining the balance between the human spirit and the cosmos.

Boraspati Eyes

The *Boraspati* Eye also has rich linguistic and symbolic dimensions. In *the language of signs* , the eye is often used as a metaphor for awareness and honesty. People say, "*mato ni boraspati*" (the *Boraspati* eye) to someone who is alert and honest. This language serves as a symbol of cultural communication, teaching that seeing with the heart is more important than simply seeing with the eyes (Sidabutar, Harahap, & Wuriyani, 2022) .

Boraspati's eyes are said to be a source of knowledge and moral awareness. His sharp gaze reflects the values of *hapantangon* (sharp thinking and wisdom).

Socially, *Boraspati's* eyes symbolize the role of watchdog and moral reminder within the community. In the Simalungun social system, every individual's actions are considered to be "seen" by *Boraspati*, meaning nothing is hidden from the ancestral

spirits' sight. This philosophy instills the social values of *marsombah* (mutual respect) and *martanggungjawab* (responsibility for one's actions).

From a cultural and technological perspective, the depiction of Boraspati's eyes in traditional carvings demonstrates the high skill and aesthetics of Simalungun craftsmen. The eyes are made prominent and perfectly circular using hand-carving techniques, signifying precision, focus, and balance.

In the traditional economic system, the Boraspati eye embodies the values of precision, accuracy, and vigilance in work. Like Boraspati, who always observes his prey before acting, people are taught to work with careful planning and observation.

In the traditional Simalungun belief system, Boraspati's eyes are seen as a symbol of a guardian spirit who always watches over and protects the house and its inhabitants.

From an artistic perspective, Boraspati's eyes are the center of aesthetic and spiritual expression in Simalungun carving. Their full, round, sparkling form symbolizes beauty combined with the meaning of life. In carving, Boraspati's eyes must be "alive"—that is, able to gaze with energy and meaning. The beauty of Boraspati's eyes is not merely ornamental, but rather a symbol of the visual balance between *habonaron* (truth) and *roha* (conscience).

Boraspati Mouth

Boraspati's mouth is directly related to the Simalungun language, the primary form of cultural communication. The Simalungun language is steeped in moral values, respect, and social structure. The philosophy of the mouth emphasizes the importance of good, correct, and polite language (*hapantunon*).

Boraspati's mouth also embodies the meaning of knowledge, particularly communication skills and local wisdom. The Simalungun people understand that knowledge is passed down through words, whether in the form of advice, proverbs, or fairy tales. The mouth here symbolizes the transmission of knowledge and cultural values between generations. Traditional knowledge such as farming methods, social ethics, or the meaning of life is passed down through oral tradition.

In the Simalungun social system, the mouth symbolizes the role of communication in maintaining social harmony. The philosophy of the Boraspati mouth suggests that speech holds great social power: it can create peace or conflict. Therefore, in social structures such as *the huta* (traditional village), traditional leaders, or *pangulu*, are required to possess the ability to speak wisely.

From a cultural-technological perspective, Boraspati's mouth is often depicted as a strong, firm, open shape. This symbolizes expressive power and the human ability to communicate thoughts openly. In the carving and architecture of the Simalungun traditional house (*Rumah Bolon*). Although seemingly remote from economic aspects, Boraspati's mouth retains a symbolic connection to the livelihoods of the Simalungun agrarian community. The mouth here is interpreted as a tool for invoking the harvest and expressing gratitude. In rituals before planting or harvesting, words spoken from the mouth are believed to carry positive energy that fosters soil fertility.

In the context of traditional Simalungun beliefs, Boraspati's mouth symbolizes prayers and mantras that invoke blessings from *Banua Gintang* (the upper realm). The

mouth is considered the source of sacred speech, possessing spiritual power to bring balance to life.

Boraspati's mouth also has aesthetic significance closely linked to Simalungun arts, such as traditional songs (*ende*, *tortor*, and *umpasa*). In this context, the mouth becomes the primary instrument in creating and expressing beauty.

Boraspati's body

In the linguistic system, Boraspati's body serves as a metaphor for the existence of Simalungun people, both in speech and in meaning. Many traditional expressions use body imagery to convey moral and social meanings, such as "*tubuh marhite roha*" (the body follows the heart). This demonstrates that the body is not merely physical, but also a symbol of communicating values.

Boraspati's body symbolizes knowledge of the anatomy of the cosmos and human life. In local Simalungun lore, the body is understood as a miniature of nature: the head represents the sky, the body the earth, and the feet/tail the waters or the underworld. This bodily philosophy embodies ecological knowledge that humans must live in harmony with their environment.

The Boraspati body, in a social context, represents the integrity and solidarity of the Simalungun people. Just as a body is composed of various organs but works as one, the Simalungun people believe that social harmony can be achieved if each individual fulfills their respective roles well.

Boraspati's body also reflects the traditional cultural technology of the Simalungun people, particularly in the carving and architecture of traditional houses (*Rumah Bolon*). The depiction of Boraspati's body on the walls of traditional houses displays precise geometric shapes, demonstrating the craftsmen's high skill in understanding proportion and balance.

For the Simalungun agrarian community, Boraspati's body is also associated with the prosperity and fertility of the land. A sturdy and upright body is considered a symbol of the earth's fertility, which provides abundant harvests. Boraspati's body symbolizes the cosmic balance between the upper world (*Banua Ginjang*), the middle world (*Banua Tonga*), and the underworld (*Banua Toru*). The body serves as a vessel for the life force (*tondong ni begu*) that maintains harmony between humans and the universe. The community believes that the body is a medium for the incarnation of spirits that guard fertility and prosperity. Thus, Boraspati's body parts reflect the religious principle that physical and spiritual integrity is a reflection of spiritual balance (Shannia, Djokosujatno, & Restoeningroem, 2021).

Boraspati's body is the center of artistic expression in Simalungun art and architecture. His body is often depicted as symmetrical, with spiral, line, and dot motifs depicting the flow of life energy. This body is not only visually beautiful but also rich in symbolic meanings of birth, life, and death—cycles believed to be the natural order of nature. In traditional arts such as *tortor* (ritual dance) and *ende* (traditional song), the human body serves as a medium of expression, depicting Boraspati's cosmic movement.

Boraspati Tail

In the context of language, the Boraspati's tail functions as a linguistic and metaphorical symbol, frequently appearing in traditional expressions and proverbs. For example, the Simalungun people often use the phrase "*roha ni ekor*" (heart that follows the right direction) to emphasize the importance of adherence to the values of truth. This symbolic language teaches that, just as the tail always follows the body, human words and actions must align with conscience and cultural values.

In the Simalungun belief system, the Boraspati's tail represents the ancestral power that continues to accompany human life. The tail is seen as an extension of the guardian spirit (*tondong ni begu*), which follows every human step to protect and guide them. In religious rituals, the tail symbolizes that every human action has consequences and must be directed toward spiritual balance.

Boraspati Skin

In Simalungun language and symbolism, the term "skin" (*kulit ni tondi*) is often used metaphorically to refer to outward behavior that reflects a person's inner feelings. Expressions such as "*kulitna malua, rohana haroan*" (his skin is soft, but his heart is hard) demonstrate a cultural awareness that language is used to describe a person's moral strata. In this context, Boraspati's skin becomes a symbol of ethical communication, implying that every word and action is a "skin" that reveals the inner content.

From a traditional perspective, the Simalungun people understand Boraspati skin as a symbol of knowledge about the balance between nature and humans. Skin serves as a "biological archive" that preserves signs of age, experience, and strength. In Simalungun culture, this reflects the system of Boraspati skin reflects the Simalungun people's belief in the concept of *Tondi* (the spirit of life), which must be maintained in balance. The protective skin is believed to function like a spiritual barrier that separates humans from evil forces or negative energies. In religious practice, the Boraspati skin symbol is often used in home protection rituals (*pagar ni tondi*), signifying the need for every human being to maintain their "spiritual skin" to prevent sin or arrogance. This demonstrates the Simalungun people's religious commitment to inner and outer purity.

From an aesthetic perspective, the patterns and textures of Boraspati leather depicted in Simalungun carvings demonstrate both beauty and strength. The carvings on Boraspati leather serve not only as visual ornaments but also symbolize the harmony between beauty and moral steadfastness. Every line and curve on Boraspati leather is an artistic manifestation of the values of politeness, honor, and harmony between humans and nature.

4. CONCLUSION

- a. Based on the results of research conducted by researchers on the Boraspati symbol in the culture of the Batak Simalungun community reviewed from the semiotic study of Charles Sanders Peirce, it can be concluded that Boraspati is a traditional symbol that has a deep philosophical meaning and does not merely function as an ornament or visual decoration. The Boraspati symbol represents the outlook on life, belief system, and social structure of the Simalungun community which is full of local wisdom values.

Through a semiotic approach, Boraspati is understood as a cultural sign that contains moral and spiritual messages, which depicts a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the Creator. The results of this study indicate that each symbolic element in Boraspati reflects the ethics of life, social order, and cultural identity of the Simalungun community which is passed down from generation to generation and obtains the following results:

- b. Each part of the Boraspati's body, such as *the head, eyes, mouth, body, tail, legs, and skin*, has a meaning in each philosophy that reflects the characteristics of the Simalungun people. Each part visually has a sign of each philosophy of the Batak Simalungun people, such as protection, harmony, cooperation, strength, and the spiritual connection between humans, nature, and ancestors. Therefore, the Boraspati, as a cultural heritage, can be used as a symbol of the identity of the Simalungun people.
- c. In general, the meaning of each mark on the body of the Boraspati remains significant to this day. Although the forms and styles of the carvings vary visually, the materials used to make the basic Boraspati shapes are a result of the creativity of the carvers, while still maintaining the meaning contained within. Boraspati remains understood not simply as ornamental decoration, but as a visual language of cultural heritage, possessing profound meaning and value.
- d. The characteristics of each part of the boraspati body philosophy reflect the self-identity of the Simalungun people, the meaning of which has been studied using semiotic studies so that each part of the boraspati philosophy is a guideline for the life of the Simalungun people.
- e. The cultural elements embodied in each of the Boraspati's philosophical body parts include spiritual protection, respect for ancestors, self-identity, and cultural symbols that provide strength and balance in life. This makes the Boraspati not only an ornamental carving and cultural symbol of the Simalungun people but also a local wisdom that must be passed down from generation to generation.
- f. To preserve and maintain the existence of the Boraspati symbol as a cultural heritage of the Simalungun people, concrete efforts are needed in the form of revitalizing its philosophical values and symbolic meanings through cultural education, documentation of Boraspati's semiotic forms and interpretations, and involvement of the younger generation in socialization activities and traditional arts training related to the symbol. In addition, support from local governments, cultural institutions, and traditional communities is also very important in efforts to preserve, develop, and promote Simalungun cultural values so that the philosophical meaning of Boraspati remains alive and relevant in the lives of modern society.

Suggestion

Based on the research conclusions, the researcher puts forward several suggestions that can be offered to readers, namely as follows:

- a. The Simalungun Regency government, along with cultural and educational institutions, is expected to integrate the preservation of *Boraspati symbols into local cultural and educational programs. This can be achieved through cultural festivals,*

traditional ornament exhibitions, traditional carving training, and local content curricula in schools that instill Boraspati's philosophical values in students. Thus, cultural preservation efforts are not only an individual responsibility but also part of regional policy.

- b. The younger generation of Simalungun should be more active and critical in recognizing, understanding, and internalizing the philosophical meaning of the *Boraspati symbol* as a legacy from their ancestors. Cultural learning is not limited to mere knowledge; it also needs to be implemented in everyday behavior and ways of thinking. Through an understanding of semiotics, the younger generation is expected to see that each cultural symbol carries a profound moral message and social values, reflecting the character of the Simalungun people.
- c. The Simalungun people are expected to continue preserving the local wisdom values embodied in the *Boraspati symbol* as part of their cultural identity. This preservation goes beyond preserving the physical form of the carvings or ornaments, but must also encompass an understanding of their philosophical and spiritual meanings, such as honesty, loyalty, harmony, and sacrifice. These values are crucial to continue to serve as guidelines in modern social life, ensuring that Simalungun culture remains alive and relevant amidst globalization.
- d. The results of this study can be used as contextual teaching materials in Indonesian language learning, particularly in the areas of descriptive text, explanatory text, and culture. Through the introduction of *Boraspati symbols*, students can learn to appreciate local values and improve their cultural and semantic literacy skills in the context of language learning.
- e. Comprehensive digitization and documentation of the Boraspati symbol is urgently needed as part of preserving the cultural heritage of the Simalungun people. Every form, motif, and philosophical meaning contained within the Boraspati symbol should be documented in various media such as books, photos, videos, and digital archives for wider public access. Developing digital platforms, such as interactive websites or applications based on Simalungun culture, can be both an educational tool and an effective promotional tool. This step not only serves to strengthen Simalungun cultural identity but also serves as an adaptive strategy for introducing Boraspati's philosophical values to a younger generation more familiar with digital technology.

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