

Gestures and Their Meanings in the Artistic Movements of Batak Toba Dance

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Batak Toba dance serves as a medium of cultural expression, where gestures and movements convey profound symbolic meanings rooted in social, cultural, and spiritual values. This study aims to explore the semiotic meanings embedded in the gestures of Batak Toba dance, emphasizing their role in cultural preservation and communication. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the gestures in Batak Toba dance, utilizing a semiotic framework based on Charles Sanders Peirce's classification of gestures: iconic, deictic, metaphoric, and beat. Data were collected through video analysis of 10 traditional Batak Toba dance performances, focusing on movement patterns and their cultural interpretations. The findings reveal that iconic gestures visually represent cultural narratives, deictic gestures indicate spatial references, metaphoric gestures symbolize abstract concepts, and beat gestures synchronize with musical rhythms. This study highlights the significance of Batak Toba dance as a dynamic form of non-verbal communication, preserving cultural identity while adapting to modern influences. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of traditional dance as an evolving cultural heritage and its role in sustaining Batak Toba traditions in contemporary society

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a fundamental aspect of human civilization, encompassing beliefs, customs, arts, and social behaviors that define a community's identity. Rather than being a fixed entity, culture continuously evolves as societies adapt to historical, technological, and social changes. Matsumoto (2018) emphasizes that cultural expressions, including artistic movements and traditional performances, are shaped by both heritage and contemporary influences. He highlights how gestures in traditional dances function as a means of cultural transmission, preserving ancestral values while simultaneously reflecting modern interpretations. In the context of Batak Toba dance, specific movements carry deep symbolic meanings rooted in tradition, yet they also evolve in response to shifting artistic and societal dynamics. This interplay between preservation and adaptation illustrates how culture remains dynamic, allowing traditional practices to stay relevant in an ever-changing world. Studying the gestures in Batak Toba dance, therefore, provides valuable insights into the ways cultural heritage is continuously reshaped while maintaining its core identity.

The Batak Toba people, an indigenous ethnic group from North Sumatra, Indonesia, have a rich cultural heritage deeply embedded in their traditional practices, language, and artistic expressions. One of the most significant cultural expressions of the Batak Toba community is dance, which serves as a medium for storytelling, social interaction, and spiritual reflection. Each traditional dance carries unique cultural and philosophical meanings, reflecting the values and beliefs passed down through generations. Sinanggar Tulo Dance symbolizes resilience and communal harmony, performed during joyous occasions as a celebration of unity. Anakkon Hi Do Hamoraon di Au Dance expresses parental love and the belief that children are the greatest wealth of their parents, emphasizing the strong familial bonds in Batak Toba society. Sihutur Sanggul Dance represents the wisdom and dignity of Batak Toba women, often performed during marriage ceremonies to honor feminine virtues and the role of women in maintaining family honor. Tortor Horbo Paung Dance, inspired by buffalo movements, symbolizes strength, patience, and prosperity, reflecting the agrarian roots of the Batak Toba people. Tortor Sipitu Cawan Dance is a ritual dance signifying purification and blessing, performed in traditional ceremonies to invoke spiritual protection and guidance.

Tortor Tunggal Panaluan Dance is associated with Batak mysticism, representing the connection between humans and ancestral spirits, reinforcing the belief in supernatural forces. Lastly, Tortor Marsiolop-olopan Dance is performed during funeral ceremonies, serving as a dance of farewell and respect for the deceased, illustrating the community's deep reverence for their ancestors. Beyond their artistic and ceremonial significance, these dances also embody the principle of marsiadapari, a form of mutual cooperation that is fundamental to Batak Toba society. Sibarani (2018) explains that marsiadapari plays a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion, ensuring that communal values such as solidarity, respect, and collective identity are continuously reinforced through cultural practices. This principle is reflected in traditional dances, where synchronized movements and collective participation symbolize unity and

interdependence. As a result, Batak Toba dances are not merely artistic performances but also living representations of the community's enduring traditions, social structures, and spiritual beliefs.

Gestures in traditional dance play an essential role as a medium of non-verbal communication, conveying emotions, narratives, and cultural values. According to Purnomo et al. (2023), cross-cultural communication plays a crucial role in fostering harmonious relationships and mutual understanding among communities. In the context of Batak Toba dance, gestures are rich in symbolic meanings derived from ancestral traditions, religious beliefs, and communal values. For instance, hand movements often symbolize blessings, gratitude, or guidance from ancestors, while footwork and body postures reflect harmony, respect, and the social structure within the Batak community. The rhythmic interplay between gestures and music in these dances creates a dynamic cultural expression that goes beyond mere performance, embodying the spiritual and historical essence of the Batak people. This highlights the role of traditional dance as a medium for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage, ensuring that the values and narratives of the Batak Toba community continue to resonate across generations.

To analyze the meanings of gestures in Batak Toba dance, the iconicity principle can be applied, which suggests that certain signs resemble the objects or concepts they represent. In this context, many gestures in Batak Toba dance are iconic because they visually depict specific cultural narratives or natural elements. Recent studies, such as those by Streeck (2020), emphasize the role of gestures in conveying cultural identity and facilitating intergenerational communication. This perspective is particularly relevant for analyzing traditional dances like those of the Batak Toba, where gestures serve as a medium for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations.



Figure 1. Tor Tor Sinanggar Tulo

https://youtu.be/drzc_lJSBsY?si=9wOTvhhb-OgG5_Sbr

"Sinanggar tulo, sinanggar tulo, tupa ma ho di jolma na burju. Sinanggar tulo, sinanggar tulo, Tupa ma ho di jolma na burju. Ai do ho, ai do ho, ai do ho, Tupa ma ho di jolma na burju. Horas ma ho, horas ma ho, Tupa ma ho di jolma na burju." (*Sinanggar Tulo, Sinanggar Tulo, let yourself fall upon a good person. Let yourself fall upon a good person. Oh, it's you, oh, it's you, oh, it's you,*

Let yourself fall upon a good person. Be prosperous, be prosperous, Let yourself fall upon a good person)

Tor Tor Sinanggar Tulo is a traditional Batak dance that embodies the values of perseverance and communal unity. The dance is characterized by firm and repetitive hand movements, which symbolize the hard work and resilience of the Batak people. A defining gesture in this dance is the strong forward and sideways arm swings, representing the continuous struggle and determination in facing life's challenges. This movement falls under beat gestures, as it aligns with the rhythm of the music, reinforcing the energetic and persistent nature of the dance (McNeill, 2023). The lyrics further emphasize these values, depicting real-life struggles and the importance of effort in achieving success. The phrase "*tupa ma ho di jolma na burju*" conveys a message of striving for a better future by aligning oneself with good people and opportunities. Through its synchronized gestures and meaningful lyrics, Tor Tor Sinanggar Tulo serves as a dynamic expression of Batak cultural identity, encapsulating the community's fighting spirit and collective strength.

In the past five years, various studies have been conducted to understand the meaning of gestures in traditional Indonesian dance, particularly within the Batak Toba cultural context. Holler and Levinson (2020) investigated the relationship between co-speech gestures and speech performance in second-language communication, finding that iconic and metaphoric gestures contribute to meaning-making and discourse structuring. Brentari and Giannakidou (2021) explored the relationship between body movements and narratives across cultures, including traditional dances, showing how these movements function as a form of non-verbal communication. Kita et al. (2022) emphasized the use of iconic and metaphoric gestures in aiding comprehension and language production, especially in learning contexts. McNeill (2023) developed a classification of gestures into deictic, iconic, metaphoric, and beat categories, underscoring the significance of iconic and metaphoric gestures in cultural communication. Bahri et al. (2024) examined gestures in traditional Indonesian dances used to welcome guests, highlighting how movements reflect social and cultural values. Overall, these studies present diverse perspectives on the role of gestures in communication, encompassing both verbal discourse and traditional dance. While some focus on gesture classification and its relevance to language learning, others highlight its narrative and socio-cultural significance. Despite these differences, their findings align with the current study, which explores how gestures in Batak Toba traditional dance serve as a medium of cultural expression and communication.

Gestures are fundamental components of human expression, conveying meaning through movement rather than words. In the study of body language and non-verbal communication, gestures have been categorized into different types based on their function and meaning. Among these, four significant types of gestures, Iconic, Deictic, Metaphoric, and Beat, are widely recognized, particularly in performing arts such as traditional dance. The following sections elaborate on these gesture types, their definitions, and their applications in cultural performances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Iconic

Iconic gestures are movements that visually represent objects, actions, or concepts recognizably. These gestures maintain a clear resemblance to what they symbolize, making them an essential tool for conveying meaning in dance and performance. Iconic gestures allow performers to illustrate specific ideas, emotions, or stories without verbal explanation, making them accessible to a broad audience. In traditional dance, these gestures help express cultural themes and historical narratives.

Examples of Iconic Gestures in Dance:

- a) Extending arms outward and fluttering fingers to mimic the movement of a bird, symbolizing freedom or aspiration.
- b) Bringing hands together in a circular motion to represent the rising sun, signifying hope or a new beginning.
- c) Sweeping hands gracefully from side to side to depict waves in the ocean, symbolizing life's journey or a connection to nature.
- d) Placing one hand over the heart and extending the other outward, expressing sincerity, respect, or devotion.

In traditional dances such as Tortor Sinanggar Tulo, iconic gestures play a vital role in depicting cultural identity and daily life activities. Through these movements, dancers communicate stories of community, tradition, and heritage, making the performance more immersive and meaningful.

Deictic

Deictic gestures, often referred to as pointing gestures, are used to direct attention to specific objects, people, or locations. These gestures serve as spatial indicators, directing the viewer's focus to the most significant elements within a performance. In many traditional dances, deictic gestures help establish relationships between performers, audience members, and symbolic aspects of the choreography.

Examples of Deictic Gestures in Dance:

- a) Pointing to the sky to invoke spiritual guidance or divine presence.
- b) Gesturing toward a fellow dancer to highlight unity and collaboration.
- c) Extending an arm to indicate a direction, representing a journey or movement toward a goal.
- d) Using the index finger to outline a shape in the air symbolizes a boundary or an important figure in the story.

In Tortor Sinanggar Tulo, deictic gestures help convey respect for ancestors, interactions between dancers, and the spiritual connection between the people and their environment. These gestures enhance the audience's understanding of the ritualistic and communal aspects of the dance, reinforcing its deeper cultural significance.

Metaphoric

Metaphoric gestures are abstract movements that symbolize intangible concepts, emotions, or ideas. Unlike iconic gestures, which resemble physical objects, metaphoric gestures convey deeper meanings through symbolic representation. These gestures often express philosophical, emotional, or

spiritual messages within a performance, enriching the audience's interpretive experience.

Examples of Metaphoric Gestures in Dance:

- a) Crossing arms over the chest symbolizes protection, resilience, or introspection.
- b) Raising hands above the head and spreading fingers to signify enlightenment, wisdom, or divine blessings.
- c) Rotating the hands in a continuous circular motion to represent the cycle of life and the passage of time.
- d) Clasping both hands together and bowing slightly to express gratitude, humility, or devotion.

In Tortor Sinanggar Tulo, metaphoric gestures serve as powerful tools to convey cultural values, foster social unity, and articulate the philosophical worldview of the Batak Toba people. By incorporating these movements, the dance becomes more than just an artistic display – it becomes a reflection of life's deeper meanings and the collective wisdom of the community.

Beat

Beat gestures are rhythmic, repetitive movements that align with the tempo of speech, music, or dance. While they do not have a direct symbolic meaning, they serve to maintain rhythm, enhance performance dynamics, and emphasize key moments within a dance sequence. These gestures contribute to the overall aesthetic and emotional intensity of a performance.

Examples of Beat Gestures in Dance:

- a) Clapping hands in sync with the beat to create a sense of unity and engagement.
- b) Stomping feet in a steady rhythm to highlight transitions in the dance sequence.
- c) Swinging arms in coordination with drum beats to enhance the energy of the performance.
- d) Nodding the head or bouncing slightly in response to the music reinforces the connection between movement and sound.

In Tortor Sinanggar Tulo, beat gestures play a crucial role in synchronizing dancers with traditional Batak music, particularly the rhythmic patterns of the Gondang Sabangunan ensemble. These gestures ensure cohesion among performers, making the dance visually harmonious and emotionally engaging for the audience.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative method is used as the main method to understand the meaning and gesture in the context of the study. According to Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2018), qualitative research is interpretive and naturalistic, with a primary focus on exploration rather than quantitative data collection. This approach allows researchers to methodically examine social dynamics, perspectives, and experiences, resulting in a deeper understanding of the subject being studied. This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the intricate aspects of gestures in the Tor-Tor Batak Toba dance and the analysis of various Tor-Tor dance performances. To collect data,

the researcher gathered 10 videos of Tor-Tor Batak Toba dance from various online platforms (Sinanggar Tulo, Sipitu Sawan, Emma da tutu, kijong kijong, sapele sapele si ria ria, Alusi Au, Anakkonhi do hamoraon di au, Tor Tor ni Halak Batak). These videos serve as the primary source for analyzing how gestures are utilized in welcoming performances within Batak Toba culture. This study applies Charles Sanders Peirce's (1857–1914) semiotic theory to analyze the dance movements, beginning with an interpretation of their contextual meaning before classifying them into four main types of gestures: iconic, deictic, metaphoric, and beat gestures. From the 10 Tor-Tor dance videos collected, the researcher identified several gesture data, which were then systematically analyzed to understand how these gestures contribute to conveying cultural meaning and expression. Through this qualitative analysis, the study aims to provide deeper insights into the nonverbal communication embedded in the Tor-Tor Batak Toba dance and serve as a foundation for further research on gesture classification and cultural symbolism in traditional Indonesian dance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

No	Gestures	Amount	Percentage
1.	Iconic	15	35%
2.	Deictic	6	14%
3.	Metaphoric	15	35%
4.	Beat	7	16%
Total		33	100%

Iconic



Figure 2. Sipitu Sawan Dance (Pangurason)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVxcom01Rfs>

"Haholongi ma hamu, na marhitean; rohangmu diparsongon do angka aleang na saku. Pangurason do tarian na martangi, mangalean do rohata,

mandok do jolo ni angka hita. Manarumpang do hita, mardomu do tu jalan ni martikma dohot partondi." (*Purify yourself, full of wisdom; let your soul be cleansed by our sacred ancestors. Pangurason is the revered dance that uplifts our spirit and guards the path of our people. May we be united, and may our journey be guided by wisdom and compassion.*)

Sipitu Sawan, also known as Pangurason, is a sacred ritual dance of the Batak community that is rich in meanings of purification and spiritual cleansing. This dance is not merely a work of art, but a living embodiment of traditional beliefs passed down through generations, where every movement contains sacred symbols connecting humans with nature and their ancestors. In each step, the dancers express prayers and hopes, using standardized gestures to purify both the soul and the body from negative energy and inner impurities. One of the most prominent features of Sipitu Sawan is the iconic gesture of cupping the hands and mimicking the slow pouring of water over the body. This movement symbolizes the cleansing ritual – a metaphor in which water, as a sacred element, is believed to flow and wash away all burdens, erase negative energy, and open the way for renewal and spiritual healing. Every drop of water represented by this gesture carries profound meaning, as if it flows with divine blessings to heal and strengthen the soul. The lyrics that accompany this dance are equally significant; they form a series of prayers inviting protection, renewal, and wisdom from the spiritual realm. Each verse acts as a bridge between the human world and divine power, inviting the audience to experience the warmth and tranquility emanating from each movement. Thus, when the audience watches Sipitu Sawan, they are not merely observers but are invited to enter the sacred dimension of Batak tradition – a space where physical movement harmoniously merges with deep spiritual meaning, inspiring and soothing both heart and mind.



Figure 3. Emma Da Tutu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5DU4vy368A>

Emma da tutu, na martangi do rohmu; rohangmu diparsongon do angka aleang na saku. Tarian do Pangurason, martangi do rohata, mardomu do tu parhalaan na mandok. Manarumpang do hita, mangalean do roh ni hita, mardomu do tu jalan ni martikma dohot partondi. (*Emma da tutu, may your soul be purified; may your inner self be cleansed by our revered ancestors. The dance of*

Pangurason purifies the spirit and safeguards the sacred path. May we be united, may our spirit be enriched, and may we be guided along the path of truth and compassion.)

Emma Da Tutu is a traditional Batak dance that transcends mere performance to vividly portray the everyday life of its people, capturing both the rhythmic pulse of communal activities and the enduring spirit of agricultural labor. Central to this performance is an iconic gesture in which the dancers mimic the act of pounding rice or working the land – a symbolic representation of the physical labor that forms the backbone of Batak society's survival and prosperity. This deliberate and expressive movement serves as a metaphor for resilience, illustrating how hard work and perseverance are interwoven with the community's identity and continued growth. The accompanying lyrics further amplify this theme by celebrating diligence as a virtue, transforming every verse into an ode to the steadfast commitment of those who nurture the land and sustain their heritage. In enacting these powerful gestures, the dancers not only pay homage to the wisdom and traditions of their ancestors but also invite the audience to appreciate the profound and enduring connection between culture, labor, and identity in Batak society.

Deictic



Figure 4. Kijom-Kijom Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8VYh1UIWPw>

“Kijom-kijom naso na niroha, sijolojolo tu naso na niroha. Manortor ma hita sude, marsada do hita da.” *(Dance with joy, don't be sad. Let us all dance together, for we are united.)*

Kijom-Kijom is a vibrant Batak dance deeply rooted in communal traditions, often performed at celebrations, cultural ceremonies, and social gatherings. This dance is not merely an artistic expression but also a representation of Batak values, particularly unity, joy, and mutual respect. The choreography consists of structured yet fluid movements, where dancers engage in rhythmic steps and expressive gestures that reflect social interactions and shared emotions. A defining feature of Kijom-Kijom is its deictic gestures—dancers extend their hands in multiple directions, pointing toward the audience, fellow performers, and the surrounding space. This gesture symbolizes openness

and inclusivity, inviting everyone to participate and reinforcing the idea of collective celebration. Additionally, the synchronized movements of the dancers mirror the importance of cooperation and togetherness in Batak society. The lyrics further highlight this theme, encouraging joy and reinforcing the notion that dance is a communal activity rather than an individual performance. Through its lively rhythms, meaningful gestures, and unifying message, KijomKijom serves as both a cultural performance and a living embodiment of Batak identity, ensuring that the values of harmony and kinship continue to be passed down through generations.



Figure 5. Sapele Sapele Si Ria Ria Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfrJ72x3sLQ>

“Sapele sapele si ria ria, manang pe sapele sajojo. Sai gabe gembira hita sude.” (*Oh, the cheerful Sapele Sapele, just like the joyful Sajojo. Let us all be happy together.*)

Sapele Sapele Si Ria Ria is a spirited Batak dance that embodies the essence of joy, unity, and cultural pride. This dance is often performed at community gatherings, symbolizing the collective happiness and solidarity of the Batak people. The choreography consists of rhythmic footwork and expressive hand gestures, creating an energetic yet harmonious performance. One of the most distinctive aspects of this dance is its use of deictic gestures – dancers repeatedly point forward, toward their fellow performers or the audience, as if addressing them directly. This gesture is more than just a physical movement; it represents an invitation to participate, reinforcing the communal spirit that defines Batak traditions. The lyrics further enhance this sense of togetherness by portraying a lively and playful conversation, as if the dancers are calling out to one another in celebration. The reference to Sajojo, a well-known Papuan dance, in the lyrics also signifies cultural appreciation and the shared love for dance across different Indonesian communities. By blending rhythmic movements, symbolic gestures, and interactive storytelling, Sapele Sapele Si Ria Ria is not just a dance but a living tradition that continues to unite and uplift the Batak people. Through its performance, younger generations are encouraged to embrace their heritage, ensuring that the values of joy, kinship, and cultural identity remain alive.

Metaphoric



Figure 6. Alusi Au Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upD8kaa5uLg>

“Alusi au do na so huingoton, dang marhitean na so huingoton.” (*I still remember you, can't forget you.*)

Alusi Au is a traditional Batak Toba dance that expresses themes of longing and devotion. Rooted in the cultural and emotional fabric of the Batak people, this dance portrays the deep yearning of an individual waiting for a loved one. The performers gracefully execute a **metaphoric gesture**, a soft swaying motion of the hands, extended outward as if reaching for someone absent. This movement symbolizes the longing heart that remains steadfast despite time and distance. The lyrics reinforce this sentiment, speaking of unwavering love and emotional endurance. As the dancers enact this gesture, the audience is drawn into the profound sense of nostalgia that defines the dance, reflecting the Batak people's poetic expression of love and separation.



Figure 7. Anakkon Hi Do Hamoraon Di Au Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUSNI2LLtEo>

“Anakkon hi do hamoraon di au, sai sahat ma tu tangianghu. Mardongan ma hita tu bagus rohami.” (*My child is my most precious treasure, may you reach the prayers I have for you. Let us live in harmony within our home.*)

Anakkon Hi Do Hamoraon Di Au is a ceremonial Batak dance that honors the role of children as the most valuable legacy within a family. Deeply rooted in Batak culture, the dance symbolizes parental devotion, emphasizing that a family's prosperity is measured not by material wealth but by the success and virtue of its children. Traditionally performed at celebrations such as birth ceremonies and weddings, this dance serves as both a blessing and a reminder of the responsibilities that come with raising the next generation. The choreography incorporates slow, deliberate movements that reflect the solemn yet affectionate nature of parental guidance. One of the most striking elements of the dance is the use of metaphoric gestures, particularly the act of cradling the arms, symbolizing love, care, and protection. This gesture conveys the nurturing role of parents, who dedicate their lives to ensuring their children's well-being and future success. Another common movement is the act of extending both hands outward in a gentle, offering-like motion, signifying the transmission of wisdom and family values. These gestures, combined with the dance's solemn yet graceful pace, create a deeply emotional performance that resonates with both performers and the audience. The lyrics further reinforce these themes, expressing the hopes and prayers of parents for their children's future. The phrase *sai sahat ma tu tangianghu* (may you reach the prayers I have for you) reflects the Batak belief in destiny shaped by both hard work and divine blessing. Meanwhile, *mardongan ma hita tu bagas rohami* (let us live in harmony within our home) highlights the importance of maintaining peace and strong family bonds, ensuring that love and guidance are passed down through generations. Through this dance, the Batak people preserve and celebrate their ancestral values, reminding each generation of the sacred duty to nurture and guide their children. Anakkon Hi Do Hamoraon Di Au is not just a performance; it is a living expression of the Batak philosophy on family, love, and the enduring hope for a prosperous future.

Beat



Figure 8. Tor-Tor Ni Halak Batak

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epeE3J6FMD0>

“Tor tor ni halak Batak, tor tor na gogo.” (*The dance of the Batak people, an energetic dance.*)

Tor-Tor Ni Halak Batak is a powerful and rhythmic dance that serves as an expression of Batak identity and cultural pride. The performance is characterized by synchronized movements that align with the steady beat of the gondang (traditional Batak drum). One of its defining elements is the beat gesture, in which dancers repeatedly lift and lower their hands to match the drum's rhythm. This motion does not represent any specific object or concept but serves to emphasize the structure and tempo of the performance. The accompanying lyrics reinforce the celebratory nature of the dance, honoring the resilience and strength of the Batak people. As the audience watches, they are drawn into the energy of the performance, where movement and sound merge to create a powerful communal experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this research explores the intricate meanings embedded in the gestures of Batak Toba traditional dance, classifying them into Iconic, Metaphoric, Beat, and Deictic categories based on McNeill's framework. Through an in-depth analysis of 10 recorded performances, the study reveals a significant presence of Iconic and Metaphoric gestures (each comprising 35%), emphasizing their role in visually representing cultural narratives and abstract concepts. Beat gestures, accounting for 16%, contribute to rhythmic synchronization and enhance the expressive quality of the performance, while Deictic gestures, making up 14%, serve to indicate spatial references and direct attention within the dance. The examination of dances such as Sinanggar Tulo, Sipitu Sawan, Alusi Au, and Anakkon Hi Do Hamoraon Di Au highlights how these movements serve as a medium for storytelling, spiritual expression, and communal values within Batak Toba society.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how traditional dances function as a form of non-verbal communication, preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations. The discussion further elaborates on the symbolic significance of each gesture, illustrating their connection to Batak philosophy, social structures, and artistic expression. By integrating semiotic analysis, this study sheds light on the dynamic relationship between movement, meaning, and cultural identity, offering valuable insights for further research in dance studies, anthropology, and intercultural communication. Ultimately, this exploration enhances our appreciation of Batak Toba dance as a living representation of heritage, reinforcing its role in fostering cultural continuity and collective identity.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to conduct further research related to the topic of Gestures and Their Meanings in the Artistic Movements of Batak Toba Dance in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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