

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Central Java has many traditions that still exist until now, among others, in Brebes as one of the regencies in the northwestern part of Central Java there is a small town named Jatibarang. Jatibarang is one of the sub-districts in Brebes which is bordering on the north sub-district of Brebes, the west sub-district of Songgom, and Tegal regency in the south and east. Jatibarang has an interesting ritual that is held once in a year named *Manten Tebu*, *Temanten Tebu*, *Penganten Glepung* or *Cembengan ritual*. *Manten Tebu* (translate as sugarcane wedding), is a ritual from a sugar factory which is held before the sugar factory begins its work. The purpose of *Manten Tebu* ritual is to ask for some blessings and guidance from God, i.e. welfare and good production of sugar, and to notify everyone that the sugar factory will start producing sugar.

Brebes has three Sugar factories; there are Banjaratma Sugar Factory in Banjaratma, Kersana Sugar Factory in Kersana, and Jatibarang Sugar Factory in Jatibarang. However, Banjaratma Sugar Factory and Kersana Sugar Factory have ceased the operation because the Sugar Factory became bankrupt. Therefore, the activities of collecting resources, production, and working are concentrated in Jatibarang sugar factory. Thus, *Manten Tebu* ritual is always held within Jatibarang sugar factory which is still operating until present time.

Based on the writer's knowledge about *Manten Tebu* in general, *Manten Tebu* is a ritual from a sugar factory with a purposeful meaning. The meaning of celebrates *Manten Tebu* ritual is a pray to God, so the sugar factory's operation will succeed without any accident. In every *Manten Tebu* ritual, the front liners are people who bring a doll couple which symbolize a groom and bride. The dolls are usually paraded from the field division to the sugar factory. People around the sugar factory can only look at the ritual parade because *Manten Tebu* ritual itself can only be seen by the invited people and the workers in Jatibarang sugar factory. There is another event from the sugar factory, named *Metikan*. *Metikan* is also a part of *Manten Tebu* ritual. *Metikan* will be held before *Manten Tebu* ritual.

*Metikan* is a night market. In *Metikan*, people can find many cheap products, carousels and traditional snacks. *Metikan* is usually held two weeks before *Manten Tebu* ritual. When *Metikan* has done, then *Manten Tebu* will be held in the next morning.

*Manten Tebu* ritual is always held in the morning around 06:00 a.m. *Manten Tebu* ritual takes place between April and May which has become the first time for Jatibarang sugar factory to operate the machines in that year. Operation time depends on how much sugar canes are produced and the condition of the factory. Jatibarang Sugar Factory only operates for 6 months. It starts between April and May, and ends in October or November. But recently, the Jatibarang Sugar Factory only operates for 4 to 5 months due to the sugarcane field that are not as much as in the past. Thus, the operation of Jatibarang sugar factory only operates in mean time even the machines are old.

Although the operation is not really successful, the writer is interested in this topic because *Manten Tebu* ritual is still unfamiliar to people nowadays. *Manten Tebu* is one of the unique rituals in Indonesia. Its uniqueness comes from the material that is used in this ritual especially a doll couple as the bride and groom for the *Manten Tebu*. However, as an Indonesian, people should preserve the ritual that still exists until now because the ritual is a part of Indonesian culture.

The writer of this study is a person who has seen *Manten Tebu* ritual for 12 times. The writer began to watch *Manten Tebu* ritual when she was in kindergarten. Her kindergarten is owned by Jatibarang sugar factory so, when *Manten Tebu* was held, she always watched with her friends from the kindergarten school. When she saw the *Manten Tebu* ritual for the first time, she was really excited. In elementary school, she always watched it while she was jogging with her father. Then, when she was in junior high school, either she watched it from the school or she watched it while she was going to the school because the parade of *Manten Tebu* passed her school. After that time, she never watched it again until she was already in senior high school because her school is far away from Jatibarang sugar factory. Then, she watched *Manten Tebu* again when she was doing an observation in May, 2017.

When she saw *Manten Tebu* ritual, she thought that the ritual was really unique. Because of the doll and the parade were always interesting for her. Therefore, she wanted to know further about it. At first, when she was in kindergarten, she had questions about *Manten Tebu* ritual. The things that made her curious were about the *Manten Tebu* dolls and why it should be paraded. Year by year, she saw *Manten Tebu* ritual and the questions were increasing slowly. The questions were about the

meaning of *Manten Tebu* itself, the reason why only the invited person can see *Manten Tebu* ritual, the reason why the dolls and the sugar cane should be paraded, and so on. Thus, at the end when the writer was in her last semester in Soegijapranata Catholic University, she remembered about *Manten Tebu* ritual and she thought it will become an interesting topic if she writes about *Manten Tebu* ritual.

The writer's family members are a part of *Manten Tebu* ritual. The family members are her two grandfathers, her uncle, and her father. They really know about *Manten Tebu* ritual because they have ever worked in Jatibarang sugar factory and become the committee in *Manten Tebu* ritual. Especially for her grandfathers that told her about the history of *Manten Tebu* ritual. Thus, from her family, she knows and learns more about *Manten Tebu* ritual like the material of the ritual, how *Manten Tebu* is done, and how important *Manten Tebu* ritual is for the Sugar Factory, and the differences of *Manten Tebu* ritual between the first time Jatibarang sugar factory established and nowadays.

The theory that becomes the basis of this research study was from Dowell's journal article entitled "The Semiotic of *Kamsa* Ritual Language" (1983). To complete this research study, the writer needs a deep observation of the ritual. Not only observation, but the writer also interviewed some people who really know about *Manten Tebu* ritual. For the observation, the writer follows the entire ritual to get the accurate answer and result for the research questions.

The objective of this study is to find out what the characteristics of *Manten Tebu* ritual are. Then, the second objective of this study is how Jat ibarang people celebrate the *Manten Tebu* ritual by taking into consideration by John McDowell's

(1983) three ritual elements, namely accessibility, formalization, and efficacy. Based on some books and articles that the writer has read, the writer concluded that formalization is an analyzing technique to give a formal status by the clothes or the appearance and the language used. Accessibility is the element that describes the wide range of people who can attend the ritual. Efficacy is the element that describes the effectiveness of the ritual and what becomes the result of the ritual.

There are two people who have done research about ritual in sugar factory. The first one is based on Yuliani's thesis (2015) entitled "The Function of Doing *Pengantin Glepung* Tradition in Sragi Sugar Factory for Society" in 2015. In her research, she described how *Penganten Glepung* tradition has been done in Sragi sugar factory. She also finds out the function of doing *Penganten Glepung* tradition for the society in Sragi, Pekalongan. The second one is based on Pramono (2009) entitled "The Meaning of *Cembengan* Ritual Symbols in Madukismo, Bantul". In this research; he explained about the history and the background of *Cembengan* ritual in Madukismo sugar factory that are still exist until now. He also described the symbolic meaning contained in the *Cembengan* ritual. The symbolic meaning is a symbol which is considered as (like the dolls of *Manten Tebu* ritual, sugar cane, coconut leaf (janur)) meaning from *Manten Tebu* ritual. He described it in detailed. The difference of this study from the two previous studies in this study focuses on the three ritual elements that are present in the *Manten Tebu* ritual. In one of the elements, the writer mentions the symbolic meaning in *Manten Tebu* ritual but only in a brief description.

## **1.2 Field of the Study**

The field of the study is Literature, specifically in Ritual study that is in

Folklore.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is on the ritual elements of *Manten Tebu*: Accessibility, Formalization, and Efficacy.

### **1.4 Problem Formulation**

1. What are the characteristics of *Manten Tebu* ritual?
2. How do Jatibarang people celebrate the *Manten Tebu* ritual by taking into consideration of McDowell's (1983) three ritual elements?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

There are two objectives in this study, they are;

1. To find out what the characteristics of *Manten Tebu* ritual are
2. To find out how Jatibarang people celebrate the *Manten Tebu* ritual by taking into consideration of McDowell's (1983) three ritual elements, namely accessibility, formalization, and efficacy

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Through this study the writer hopes that people will know more about *Manten Tebu* ritual. The writer expects this study could help people in understanding about what is *Manten Tebu* ritual and how the ritual has done. The writer also hopes through this study, *Manten Tebu* ritual will be better known and preserved by Indonesian people.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

1. Ritual

“A ritual is a particular type of tradition that many folklorists study as a distinct category of folklore. Rituals are repeated, habitual actions, but they are more purposeful than custom; rituals are frequently highly organized and controlled, often meant to indicate or announce membership in a group.”  
(Sims & Stephens, 2005, p. 95)

2. *Manten*

The word *Manten* is from the Javanese Language that means the bride and the groom.

3. *Metikan*

The word *Metikan* is from Javanese Language that is *Metik*. *Metik* in English means harvest.

