



D. Tsintjilonis

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DIMITRI TSINTJILONIS<sup>\*</sup>

## Embodied Difference

### The 'Body-Person' of the Sa'dan Toraja

#### *Introduction*

In Tana Toraja<sup>1</sup>, as elsewhere in insular Southeast Asia (see Fox 1987:526), humankind is not believed to have a single origin or source of being. The indigenous notion of humanity comprises a multiplicity of heterogeneous manifestations. For instance, while some humans are described as ripe, others are depicted as raw, soft, wet, and even empty. Deeply embedded in myth and legend, epithets such as these are thought to encode disparate ways of being. This disparity, often expressed in terms of 'essence' (*bombong*), is largely seen as immutable. By outlining its major features and elucidating the reasons behind its acknowledged immutability, I shall try to chart the way it is perceived and explore some of its major implications.

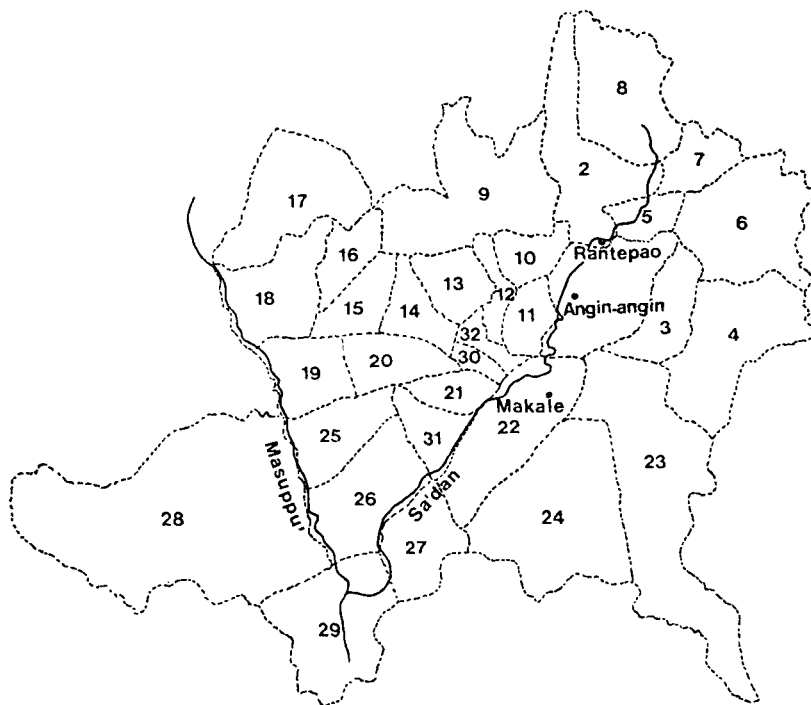
As the articulation of disparity is intimately linked with the Toraja ancestral religion (*aluk to dolo*, 'the ways of the ancestors') and the sacrificial practices embedded in it, this exploration of human diversity will focus on certain aspects of Toraja tradition and the configuration of disparate human natures derived from it. Since most of my information originates in the eastern community of Buntao' (see map, no. 3), the term Toraja will be used here mostly as an appellation for the people of Buntao'. Despite considerable regional variation, there is a great deal of similarity between the various communities, however, and in this sense, much of the following discussion is meant both to extend and to support the extant

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DIMITRI TSINTJILONIS took his Ph.D. degree at the University of Oxford and is currently a lecturer in social anthropology who takes a special interest in the anthropology of death and embodiment. Dr. Tsintjilonis may be contacted at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, Adam Ferguson Building, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LL, Scotland.



The division of Tana Toraja into districts coinciding with *adat* communities (as introduced during the colonial period)

1 Kesu'	12 Piongan	22 Ma'kale	} Tallulem- bangna
2 Tikala	13 Kurra'	23 Sangalla'	
3 Buntao'	14 Ulusalu	24 Mengkendek	
4 Rantebua'	15 Seseng	25 Mappa'	
5 Tondon	16 Bittuang	26 Buakayu	
6 Nanggala	17 Pali	27 Rano	
7 Balusu	18 Ratte	28 Simbuang	
8 Sa'dan	19 Balepe'	29 Bau	
9 Pangala'	20 Malimbong	30 Banga	
10 Dende'	21 Talion	31 Palesan	
11 Madandan		32 Tapparan	

(Adapted from Seinstra 1940, in Nooy-Palm 1979:5)

ethnographies. To facilitate this discussion, it is important first to describe a few aspects of the traditional organization of the community and to introduce Buntao' in more detail.

Although the existence of clearly specified socio-political entities has been a traditional feature of Tana Toraja (see Bigalke 1981:23-8), there is no indigenous word for polity. In this context, most of the ethnographic commentators use the term '*adat* community'. 'An *adat*-community denotes an autonomous political unit which inhabits a territory of its own and has its own *adat*, or system of customs' (Nooy-Palm 1979:59). The imperatives of custom which lie at the heart of this territorialization are concretely expressed in a particular ritual undertaken by each specific community as a whole. Associated with fertility and abundance, this ritual is known as *menani pare* ('to sing the rice'). Thus, the smallest *adat* community is coextensive with a *penanian*, that is, with the sum total of those people who come together 'to sing the rice'. In terms of 'singing the rice', the *adat* community of Buntao' is a federation of 'four' (*patang*) *penanian*: Issong Kalua' ('Great Rice Mortar'), Tongkonan Basse ('House of the Oaths'), Rinding Kila' ('Wall of Lightning'), and Rinding Daun Induk ('Wall of Palm Leaves') (see Nooy-Palm 1979:69-72).

Each *penanian* has its own priest-leader (*to parengnge*, 'the one who carries [the other people]'), war chief (*to takinan la'bo*, 'the one who girds on a knife'), rice priests (*to dolo*, 'those [who enter the rice field] first'), and invocation specialist (*to minaa*, 'the one who knows/speaks'). Although a *to minaa* can also participate in death rituals, these functionaries deal with matters related to life and are collectively known as *to rampe kanan* ('those on the right side'). In addition, it was often said that each *penanian* should have its own funerary specialist (*to mebalun*, 'the wrapper'), as well as a priest responsible for the ritual care of the ancestors (*to ma'koko*, 'the one who collects the mud'), namely 'those on the left side' (*to rampe kairi*) responsible for dealing with matters relating to death. However, to the best of my knowledge there has always been only one *to mebalun* and one *to ma'koko* for the federation of Buntao' as a whole. All of these functions constitute 'offices' associated with particular 'ancestral houses' (*tongkonan*) and are inherited through them.

As was already the case when Hetty Nooy-Palm visited the area nearly thirty years ago, these offices 'belong to the long-standing *adat*-system which at present only continues to function during ritual celebrations' (Nooy-Palm 1979:71). In terms of present-day administrative patterns, the community of Buntao' is divided into two 'villages' (Indonesian *desa*): Buntao' (comprising the *penanian* of Issong Kalua') and Buntu Dengen (subsuming the other three). Furthermore, following patterns of change well established throughout Tana Toraja (see Volkman 1985, Adams 1988), although farming is still the principal means of subsistence, the development of the Nation State, the modern emphasis on compulsory education, and the growth of temporary migration (*merantau*) have

brought new professions and challenges to the area. In addition, with their exposure to the outside world increasing dramatically, the majority of the population have converted to Christianity, and many of the traditional practices have been abandoned, neglected, or modified.

However, at least at the time of my fieldwork, the ritual organization was still largely intact. That is not to say that it functioned properly, but most of the required information was readily available. As in the rest of Tana Toraja, though, present-day ritual activity is largely confined to the sacrificial practices associated with death ('the side of the setting sun'). Under the impact of Christianity and the growing influence of the Toraja Church, many of the larger sacrifices which deal with life ('the side of the rising sun') have not been performed for many years. However, those life rituals which deal with rice and its cultivation still play a major role. In recording the various rituals and explaining their overall patterns, my main sources of information were the various functionaries, as well as an array of older people known as *gora-gora tongkon* ('those who speak while seated') – the latter would traditionally act as advisors to the ritual authorities, and in many cases their knowledge of traditional custom surpassed that of the functionaries. This information was further discussed with many ordinary people who either still adhered to the ancestral religion or knew 'the old ways'. Inasmuch as my point of departure was tradition, especially sacrificial ritual and the sacred narratives (invocations, incantations, litanies) embedded in it, these discussions were fairly focused. In effect, all these persons were asked to comment on the different sacrificial practices, explain their difference, and define what is articulated through this difference – first and foremost, the traditional imperative of sacrificer and sacrifice to 'match each other', the essence of the former being seen as embodied and manifested in the efficacy of the latter.

Thus, the focus of this article is but one aspect of 'the old ways'. Leaving aside most of the effects of 'modernization' and Christianity, it is an attempt to describe the roots of human diversity in ritual practice and ancestral legend, and to designate the traditional basis for that which – even today – constitutes the most important expression of that diversity, namely social hierarchy as *essential* differentiation.

#### *From Relations to Essence*

In its quintessential dimension, human diversity is coextensive with the range of *tana*' ('stakes'). Combining a variety of related notions, three kinds of stake are used to equate the value of different people with material substances: *tana' bulaan* ('golden stakes'), *tana' bassi* ('iron stakes'), and *tana' karurung* ('stakes from the hard core of the sugar palm'). In this way, the essence of all people is associated with gold, iron, or wood. The range of *tana*' may differ from place to place. For instance, in some communities, a fourth level is also recognized (see Volkman 1985:60) – described as *tana' gallang* ('bronze stakes'), it is said to come between

*tana' bulaan* and *tana' bassi*. Elsewhere, including the neighbouring territories of Bokin (Rantebua') and Kesu', I came across people who even spoke of *dambu* (Indonesian *jambu*) and *tallang* (bamboo) stakes.

Despite regional variations, unless the emphasis is placed on sacrifice, the reasons behind the use of the term *tana'* are rather difficult to explain. Literally meaning 'to drive in a stake or a peg', it is used as 'a metaphor for establishing a precedent for future actions' (Adams 1988:50). In its literal form, the expression itself is intimately linked to the notions of a fenced-in or clearly marked place, and may designate anything from boundary markers to tethering posts (see Nooy-Palm 1979:35, 52). However, at least in Buntao', the word can also be rendered as 'sacrificial post', that is, the wooden post to which special buffaloes are tied in order to be killed. In its association with sacrifice, *tana'* specifies distinct ritual responsibilities and connects the essence of different people with different sacrificial requirements. In relation to the rites of death, for instance, *tana' bulaan* necessitates the sacrifice of eight buffaloes, while *tana' bassi* demands only four, and for *tana' karurung* one is enough.

The sacrificial stakes of gold, iron, and wood correspond to a three-tiered status system, an extra tier being added in some of the southern and eastern territories of Tana Toraja. In Buntao', the terms *to makaka matasak* ('ripe elder sibling'; noble), *to makaka* ('elder sibling'; commoner), and *kaunan* (slave) embrace the three basic levels. In the light of most ethnographic reports, the association of *tana' karurung* with *kaunan* may seem problematic. Throughout Tana Toraja, their stakes are described as *kua-kua* (a common *sawah* plant, a kind of reed) (see Tammu and van der Veen 1972:607-8, Nooy-Palm 1979:53, Koubi 1982:20, Volkman 1985:60). In this respect, it is important to note, the people of Buntao' do acknowledge the existence of *tana' kua-kua* and recognize it as the lowest level. They insist, however, that it was never attributed to any of them. Associated with slaves who could be bought and sold, especially to the Buginese of the lowlands, *tana' kua-kua* were the stakes of those who remained outside society and its ritual articulation. During the death ritual of such strangers ('those whose [hearth] fire could not be seen'), for example, the sacrifice of a single pig was deemed sufficient.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, whatever the traditional attribution of the lowest stakes may have been, only nobles and commoners are described as 'true people' (*tau tongan*). In the case of slaves, what is perceived as human nature in a rudimentary form

<sup>2</sup> Although the attribution of the lowest stakes to outsiders may well reflect the sensitivity of the matter, or a fundamental change in local sensibilities, in terms of ritual patterns it is certainly true that *tana' kua-kua* (with its sacrificial value of one pig) is something of an anomaly. For instance, no-one in Buntao' (and this includes the *kaunan*) can have a proper funeral without the sacrifice of at least four pigs. For more information on *kaunan* death rituals see Tsintjilonis 1993:258-60.

(they are 'like children') is often portrayed as being *malolo* ('young/crude/raw') or *malutu* ('impure').

The appropriateness of the term 'slave' has been questioned by Bigalke, who points out that the 'system looks more like a grid of statuses ranging from a kind of exalted serf (*kaunan bulaan*) [...] to abject client of slave (*kaunan tai manuk*)' (Bigalke 1981:88). Although it is certainly true that the Toraja distinguish different kinds of *kaunan* (see Adams 1988:58-9), those 'who belong (or belonged) to the lowest order did render labour under compulsion in the past', so that in this sense, 'The designation slave is perhaps more appropriate than serf' (Nooy-Palm 1979:44). Although slavery has been abolished, persons of slave descent form a part of the population in Buntao'. Of course, under the combined influence of Indonesian government policy and Toraja Church doctrine, much has changed over the years. For one thing, bondage is clearly a thing of the past. In addition, with money earned through migration, 'descendants of slaves gained access to resources which allowed them to re-establish their position on the status hierarchy' (Adams 1988:63). Nowadays, people who in previous years would not have been able (or allowed) to undertake the performance of a major ritual are heavily involved in ritual exchange, financing feasts of the 'higher' order with money acquired in the islands of Borneo and Irian Jaya, where remunerative jobs are in plentiful supply (see Volkman 1979). The fact that the 'new' money is being spent on 'old pursuits' underlines the lasting importance of the traditional observances and criteria.

In Buntao', despite the importance of 'new' money, most people of slave descent find themselves in a situation similar to that encountered by Adams in the neighbouring territory of Kesu'. They are still described as *kaunan* and are 'frequently summoned to help carry provisions to rituals, grind freshly-roasted coffee beans, thresh rice and assist with general household chores' (Adams 1988:57). As most of the land is owned by a few noble families, they still depend on their traditional 'owners' (*puang*), but, rather than bondage, the relation between them should be seen as a form of patronage. As a good patron, their *puang* is expected to provide access to jobs, help with their children's schooling, and furnish cash loans in the event of unexpected difficulties (especially illness and the prospect of hospitalization), meat from ritual feasts, and so on.

However, the most important aspect of this relationship derives from traditional ritual and religion. In the framework of Toraja ancestral sacrificial practices, each *kaunan* has a specific role. The same is true of each and every *puang*. The essence of their relationship is embodied and manifested in ritual. During the rites associated with the birth of a *kaunan* child, for instance, it is the *puang* (or a male member of his family) who must set out the sacrificial offerings. In turn, if the *puang* (or a member of his family) dies, it is the father of this child who will act as 'the guardian' of the death ritual ('feeding' and 'bathing' the corpse, 'lighting' the way to

the grave, and so on) (see Tsintjilonis 1993:124-64). Today, as most *puang* (followed by their slaves) have converted to Christianity, sacrificial obligations play a smaller part in the patron-client relationship.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, especially in the case of *kaunan*, conversion to Christianity may be used as a way of avoiding such responsibilities. With the ancestral practices still surviving, however, the traditional stratification and the range of *tana*' form an integral part of everyday life.

Although in its traditional rigidity this system of social stratification is 'characterised by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers, sanctioned by custom, law or religion' (Webster quoted in Crystal 1974:122, n. 5), its practical importance is reminiscent of Hocart's work (1970), in particular his view of castes as organizations for the conduct of sacrifice. Traditionally entrusted with particular sacrificial offerings, each *tana*' has its own ritual rights and duties. In this fundamental respect, the traditional hierarchy has survived. To this day, at least amongst the adherents of the 'old' religion, the sacrificial responsibilities are divided according to ascription to one of the three stakes. For instance, only a *kaunan* can 'wrap' a corpse or 'feed' the death spirit ('black shadow') of those recently deceased. In a similar fashion, only a *to makaka* can 'cleanse' such a spirit and initiate the sacrificial process which will remove it from the sphere of death and 'convert' it into life. However, only a *to makaka matasak* can complete this conversion by performing the supreme sacrifice of *ma'tallu rarai* ('to sprinkle with three kinds of blood'), which is the only oblation necessitating the combined immolation of one cockerel, one pig, and one buffalo. Thus, in terms of the ritual organization as a whole, while the priest-leader is a *to makaka matasak* and the war chief a *to makaka*, the death priest is a *kaunan*.

Another way the Toraja speak of *tana*' is through the idiom of 'blood' (*rara*). Those ranked as *tana*' *bulaan* are said to have totally pure blood. This purity diminishes as one descends the social hierarchy, with the slaves at the bottom having no pure blood at all (see Volkman 1985:60). In this fashion, a member of the pure nobility in the southern part of Tana Toraja is called *puang masero* ('clean lord/master') and is believed to have *rara masero* ('clean/pure' or 'white blood'). Because of this purity, a *puang* is said to be 'sacral, consecrated' (Nooy-Palm 1979:154). Likewise in Buntao', although the term *masero* is not used in this context, a noble is said to possess 'ripe blood' (*rara matasak*).

Nobles are not simply purer or riper than the rest of the people, however.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the traditional ethos survives in Christian rituals. For instance, during the funeral of a noble, apart from washing and 'wrapping' the corpse, the responsibility for killing the various animals, preparing and cooking the food, carrying the firewood, lighting the fires, and so on, still lies with the descendants of his or her slaves. Of course, the extent to which such traditional obligations are still fulfilled depends on the success of the give-and-take that characterizes the 'modern' form of these relationships.



They are also better, more beautiful and, above all, more potent ('harder'). Due to their white or ripe blood, they are described as extremely hard. Material wealth itself is seen as a dimension of this potency, a potency that is the locus of supernatural power (*ma'karra*, 'hardness') (see Volkman 1985:180-1, n. 3). Indeed, in some respects nobles are said to be more similar than any other kind of human being to buffaloes or rice plants. Nonetheless, even the nobles are subdivided into 'Mothers' (*sindo*) and 'Fathers' (*siambe*), introducing additional distinctions in what at first glance seems to be a rather uniform human domain. Similar distinctions may also apply to the other two *tana*, augmenting the initial diversity even further.

Echoing familiar Austronesian themes, the differences that lie at the heart of this diversity could be discussed in terms of seniority and complementarity (see Errington 1990:47-51). Although it is certainly true that humankind is not believed to have just a single source of being, the various sources are seen as phases of a single cosmogonic process, a process wherein all sources of being (human and otherwise) can be traced back to a single point of origin which initially encompassed the foundational vitality of all life. From this point of view, the development of the Toraja universe and the diversity of its inhabitants are coextensive with the initial destruction of the unitary nature of the original vitality and its gradual fragmentation into a myriad of lesser sources.

In a cosmic narrative of ever-increasing fragmentation and decreasing inclusiveness, difference can be explained as distance from the original source, which, in turn, can be couched in terms of cosmic age. Thus, ripe people are harder than those who are raw *because* they are older (that is, nearer the original source of life). Furthermore, presenting complementarity in its paradigmatic form by bringing together seniority and gender, they are divided into Mothers and Fathers *because* they perfectly complement each other in their care of those who are 'like children' (that is, the slaves). However, although there is much to recommend this type of reasoning, the order of attribution is actually reversed. According to the Toraja, ripe people are not harder because they are older, they are older because they are harder. In a similar fashion, the relatively diverse natures of Mothers and Fathers are not complementary because their roles complement each other, but the other way round.

The indigenous commentary on human diversity is characterized by a pervasive essentialism which, eschewing the importance of relationships (indispensable to notions such as seniority and complementarity), purports to describe the foundation of human nature(s) in terms of absolute and irreducible difference, that is, difference which is always already there. In effect, it is difference that gives rise to relationships and, in the original form of *datu* ('sovereign', a hermaphroditic being, the dissolution of which

initiated the process of creation<sup>4</sup>), predates the formation of the cosmos as such. According to the Toraja, both the locus and focus of this difference is the human body. Nobles, for instance, are harder than other people because 'their body is more' (*la'bimo tu kalena*). Differences in beauty, truth, impenetrability, and so on, both 'emerge in' (*bu'tu lan*) and 'stem from' (*ombo' ri*) the body.

Each *tana* is explicitly associated with a distinct type of body. Within a highly elaborate ontology, bodies are thought to differ in the number of parts they comprise and/or the actual material they are made of. This set of differences is extremely important because, beyond corporeal diversity, it gives rise to distinct modes of action and transaction. It is as if different ways of being are transformed into different programmes for living, anchoring human agency (and the related notions of person and self) in the very difference they manifest and embody.

Thus, beyond simple disparity, this article attempts to describe human diversity in terms of embodied difference. It will also consider the effects of this difference on the way the pivotal notion of body should be construed and elucidated.

### *Engendering Diversity*

The indigenous word for body is *kale*. A body has an 'outside' (*salianan*) and an 'inside' (*lannalu*). In the former context, the body is called *batang* ('trunk') and is thought to include the bones, hair, and skin. In the latter, it is known as *ba'tang* ('pith') and is said to consist of those constituents which are fleshy, juicy, and pliant. The pith-body is the locus of life itself and is thought to originate in the maternal contribution to the reproductive process (blood). In contrast, the trunk-body is mainly equated with the skeleton and is said to arise from the paternal contribution (bone) to the same process.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In its original state, the universe is described as 'lack of everything'. In the midst of this void, though, there existed a hermaphroditic primordial being known as *datu* ('sovereign'). Although it lived in solitude, silence, and complete immobility, its 'sleep' was eventually terminated through the power of speech. Because it could speak, it is also known as *datunna kada* ('the sovereign of the word'). Its very first words were: 'let us separate our bodies by standing back to back' (*tagaragamo siboko' rinding batang dikaleta*). Following in the 'path' (*lalanna*) of these words and exiting from the left side of the hermaphroditic body, the original goddess (*datu baine*, 'princess') appeared, thereby creating the original male god (*datu muane*, 'prince') and initiating the creation of the cosmos. Eventually, they were married and gave birth to three sons. One of them (Puang Matua) is the creator-god of the Toraja. For more details on the creation and the various deities see Tsintjilonis 1993:51-64.

<sup>5</sup> In this respect my information is different from that contained in some of the other ethnographies. According to Waterson, for instance, 'No idea exists among the Toraja such as is reported in a number of New Guinea societies, where bones are considered a male element and blood a female one' (Waterson 1986:103). In Buntao, *tana*, the soft parts of one's body, particular sacrificial combinations, and the efficacy associated with certain ritual functionaries, amongst other things, are inherited from the

Being more important than bone, blood is considered as the 'origin' and 'base' (*garonto*) of all human life. However, as it is explicitly associated with softness, it must be 'organized' (*madenge*) and 'given form' (*tampa*) by the hardness of bone. As soon as this form has been solidified and consolidated, through the appropriate birth rituals, an infant takes on the familiar 'human shape' (*pa'kalean*) and starts to develop. A healthy and developing body is described as 'complete' (*ganna*), 'full' (*ponno*), 'round' (*kalebu*), and 'consummated' (*sundun*). Although the proper admixture of blood and bone is absolutely essential, these notions are relative and may be explained only in reference to the range of *tana*'. Different stakes imply and manifest different patterns of bodily impletion, indexing the major dimensions of human diversity in the most explicit way. Nevertheless, any attempt at charting the modes of this diversity will have to start with the concept of *ganna*'. Despite the apparent synonymy of these terms, *ganna*' has precedence and may be seen as constituting the most important pre-condition of successful embodiment – unless a particular body is complete, it cannot be full, round, or consummated.

The term *ganna*' has two basic meanings: even (as in a number) and complete (having all its parts, entire; but also concluded, executed, accomplished, or fulfilled). Although in certain exceptional contexts something which is even is complete and vice versa, the two usages are not synonymous. Even numbers are generally associated with dispersion, diffusion, or stasis; projects which 'have been accomplished', stories which 'have been concluded', and ancestral houses or mortuary effigies the construction of which has been properly 'evened', conversely, are complete in the sense of being focused and fused.<sup>6</sup>

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mother and 'pass through her blood' (*umpolalan rarana*). As the Toraja sum it up, one's life-path 'passes through the tip of her sarong' (*umpolalan pollo' dodona*), 'she is fixed at/as the source of life' (*to ma'tonnana*, from the root *oto*, 'source/base/origin'). I came across similar statements elsewhere. In Ma'kale, the last remaining 'rice singer' (Ne' Dena') explained the sources of 'blood and bone' by using the example of an egg – while the yolk was said to come from the mother, the white and the shell were described as originating in the father.

<sup>6</sup> Although there are many Indonesian examples of a correlation between particular series of numbers and life or death (see, e.g., Barnes 1974, 1982; Forth 1981), I would describe the Toraja contrast between even and odd as more similar to the 'numerical code' of the Mambai (East Timor). According to Elizabeth Traube, in calculating sacrificial offerings, the Mambai ascribe different types of efficacy to different numbers. For instance, while the number three is associated with 'rising', the number four is associated with 'falling' (see Traube 1986:174). In a similar fashion, I would suggest, the Toraja associate three with mobility, growth, and imminence, and four with immobility and fixity. In this sense, something which is 'alive' (that is, focused and growing) is always seen either as the sum total of its various parts (always an even number) *plus* its centre (e.g., as in the human body), or, exceptionally, as having only three parts (e.g., as in a hearth). Within the odd and even series, though, different numbers may be associated with different things – rather than immobility and fixity, for example, eight is linked to dispersion and diffusion. Thus, beyond any series, it may be more useful to think in terms of specific numbers.

Wherever it is applied, this process of completion is perceived in terms of 'addition and mixture' (*dipasita'pa*). For instance, the efficacy of a particular sacrificial offering usually depends upon the way different types of food (rice, meat, and so on) are combined. Such combinations are always determined by tradition, and their essential rules concentrate on the mixing and matching of different materials. Such precepts prescribe not only the kind, but also the exact amount of each component, as well as its position within a particular offering. In the same way, if an ancestral house is to be completed in the proper manner, specific types of wood must be used in specific ways and for specific sections. Furthermore, this process of mixing and matching is always organized in the same way. One starts with what is designated as the 'beginning/basis' (*garonto*) of the procedure as a whole and continues by placing everything else in a pre-determined relation to it.

The idea of *ganna*', whether it describes the entirety of an entity or a project in its entirety, is intimately linked with a cluster of concepts which index the major parameters of what might be loosely translated as 'integrated totality' or 'determinate whole' (see Needham 1987:91-2). In this connection it is important to note, however, that the kind and number, as well as the inter-relationship of the various parts, are contextually bound and cannot be inferred from the attributes embedded in the designation *ganna*'. The expressions 'complete' or 'having been completed' should always alert us in two ways: first, something which is described as *ganna*' is constituted as the sum total of a definite number and definite kinds of parts; second, these parts occupy specific positions, the pattern of which is intimately linked with both the function of each particular part and the survival of the overall connection between them. Understood in these terms, the concept of *ganna*' constitutes a convenient point of entry into the indigenous discourse concerning the major sources of specific human embodiments, their intrinsic patterns of corporeality, and their differentiation in terms of *tana*'.

To start with, there are two fundamentally dissimilar 'kinds' (*rupa*) of body: that of true people and that of slaves. Although both are regarded as being complete, they are made up of disparate materials and possess a dissimilar number of constituent parts. Moreover, in terms of their substantive materiality, they are associated with different sets of qualities and clearly distinguished modes of being. Bodies of the former kind are further subdivided into two mutually exclusive categories: that pertaining to people of noble descent and that appropriate to commoners. Here the essential 'difference' (*kasisengaran*), usually formulated in terms of *a'ga* (state) rather than *rupa* (nature, colour, kind), is construed as involving an unequal number of parts rather than a substantive (material) disparity. The basic dimensions of this corporeal differentiation are traced back to the beginning of the cosmos and, more particularly, to the way in which the very first humans were fashioned by Puang Matua ('Old Lord'), the

creator-god of the Toraja. The generative power of the creative process, usually described as forging (Zerner 1981:94), is regarded as involving the successful combination of diverse ingredients which were melted and mixed within a pair of bellows (see also Van der Veen 1965:89). In these bellows, different people were created from different materials.

Before I proceed to briefly describe this forging, I would note that most of the relevant information can be found in the traditional stories (*ossoran*) which chronicle the 'creation of earth and sky', as well as the genealogies of the inhabitants of these spheres. For the purposes of this article, I will refer to the most important of these stories, known as 'the path of the ritual measurements' (*lalanna sukaran aluk*). This is usually recited as part of the series of sacrifices known as *menani pare* ('to sing the rice'), which concentrate on increasing the fertility ('raising the fatness') of the earth. It is important to emphasize in this connection that access to the knowledge contained in such sacred narratives is not restricted or limited by one's *tana* – in fact, in the area of Buntao', most of those responsible for invoking the deities (including the priest who 'sings the rice') have always been *kaunan*. Nevertheless, these accounts are rather sketchy, and I have combined them with a variety of much less formalized statements which may include anything from 'made-up stories' (*ulelean digaraga*) to 'contemporary words' (*kada-kada totemo*).

By most accounts, Puang Matua created ('forged/gave birth to little by little') people twice. The first time he used the following: 'the egg of the yellow earth' (*tallo' maririna litak*), 'hard stone' (*batu laulung*), 'the prince of the water' (*datunna wai*), and 'the heat of the fire' (*malassunna api*). The second time he employed only 'mud' (*losso' pellangiran*) and 'the liver of the soil' (*atena litak*; stone). In both cases, the results were complete but dissimilar bodies. Although each component was fixed at a particular point and in a particular order, the resultant articulations embodied substantially different wholes, that is, both different material and a different number of parts. In fact, in the former context the sum total of four was deemed inadequate and the quantity of each of the elements was multiplied by two in order to 'complete the number' (*napaganna' bilanganna/napasanda ia'na*) and arrive at the appropriate sum. Thus, the body of the very first human being (Datu Laukku', the ancestor of the nobles) comprised eight parts. The bodies of the original slaves, in contrast, were each composed of only two. Elsewhere, including the neighbouring territory of Kesu', Datu Laukku' (*ukku'* is the cry of a newborn infant) is identified as female (see Nooy-Palm 1979:136). In Buntao', however, he is seen as male.

Datu Laukku' was forged in the following way: the heat of the fire was 'placed' (*dipatorro*) as the 'source of the navel' (*to' posti'na*), the egg of the yellow earth as the 'source of the flesh' (*to' duku'na*), the hard stone as the 'source of the bone' (*to' mabukunna*), and the prince of the water, finally, as the 'source of the tongue' (*to' lilana*). Whatever their particular

attributes may be, these ingredients are said to 'match each other' (*siayo-ayo*). However, the order of their combination cannot be reversed or altered. Both their initial apposition and their ultimate congruence are the result of the determinate nature of this particular combination. The explanation of the rationale behind this specific fixity involves a well-defined spatial dimension. It is said that the creator, having started with the heat of the fire and moving from 'right to left' (*liling kanan*), placed the remainder of the elements in a circle around the navel. While the source of the navel is thought to be at the 'centre of the body' (*posi'na kale*), the source of the flesh is on the left side and the source of the bone on the right. Beyond their position, the explanation for the actual connection between the four elements and the bodily dimensions of which they became the sources is mostly straightforward. Each of them is associated with a particular cosmic domain, manifests the spirit-guardians of that domain, and embodies its major qualities.

Although the term 'yellow earth' usually refers to soil of that colour which has dried and hardened, egg is meant to describe the substance which is to be found 'deep inside the ground', at the very centre of the earth. This centre is described as the 'liver of the earth' (*atena padang*) and is said to be yellow, moist, and soft. The egg of the yellow earth is intimately linked with the original female spirit (*datu baine*, 'princess') which, once separated from its male counterpart (*datu muane*, 'prince'), entered the earth and inhabited its very centre. In addition, it is this centre which is thought to constitute the source of the earth's fertility ('fatness'), and its spirit-guardian is closely associated with rice fields and gardens.

*Batu laulung* is meant to describe the kind of stones which are 'extremely hard' (*malia*) and cannot be easily smashed. They are supposed to be dark ('blue-black') in colour, with streaked ('veined') surfaces. In fact, both their colour and their veins are manifestations of their intrinsic hardness. Transformed into bone, this is the hardness which supports and shapes the soft parts of the human body. Indeed, in general, stones are said to be the bones of the earth. In the traditional stories, hard stones are usually the dwelling-places of spirits which were not created by the 'Old Lord' but simply existed. For instance, the wife of Puang Matua himself is said to have emerged from a hard stone. Such stones are associated with the 'head of the earth' and are to be found 'high up'.

Although the general pre-condition for health is coextensive with the quality of coolness, the heat of the fire is intimately linked with the concepts of growth and being alive. For instance, while a developing child is said to be 'alight' (*du'ku*), a dead person is described as having no flame. In this context, the human body is described as 'being like a hearth' (*ma'lalikan kalena*). The position of its various elements is seen as replicating the way in which the hearth stones are placed, from right to left, around the fire.

Unfortunately, as far as the fourth ingredient is concerned, I was unable

to discover a definite connection between the prince of the water and the tongue. The very term *datunna wai* is rather confusing, as there is no single spirit which can usefully be construed as being the overall guardian of the water domain. Besides localized water spirits which are regarded as the guardians of specific pools, springs, and so on, three major deities are associated with water: Punag Radeng ('Lord who sits comfortably [by leaning against something]'), Pong Tulangdenna, and Pong Pirik-pirik ('The Whirligig Lord'). In a more general way, Guttu' Wai ('Thundering Water') is sometimes referred to as the male ancestor of all water. However, as thunder is usually associated with La'te Mamara (although his name translates as 'Dry Lightning') and rain with Pirik-pirik, I hesitate to treat Guttu' Wai as the overall 'sovereign' (*datu*) of the water domain. Furthermore, in the context of the human body, *wai* has the more general connotation of juice or fluid (including anything from tears to sweat), and in this sense it is more closely linked with water that comes 'from down below' or 'from inside' than with rain which comes 'from above'.

Nevertheless, in the context of creation, it was suggested that *wai* should be understood as referring to saliva. In the traditional stories, salivating is usually associated with the craving of pregnant women for particular foods. This is combined with the idea that the exact nature of this craving depends upon the *tana*' of the mother-to-be and, as such food is intimately linked with the development of the embryo, that it reinforces the diversity of human embodiment. In fact, the more general notion of 'desire' (*panawa-nawa*) is often expressed in terms of salivating, and so it is possible that the source of the tongue may have to be construed as the seat, or at least as a particularly forceful manifestation, of desire.

Having prepared the two sets of four elements, the creator-god added a fifth ingredient (turning an even into an odd number) to the already articulated mixture. This particular ingredient, 'pure gold' (*bulaan tasak*), was not doubled before it was fixed as the 'source of potency' (*to' makarra*) and became the 'essence' (*bombong*) of the body. While the exact location of this spot is described as 'the most important and best hidden place' (*kasingkiranna*) inside the body, the actual piece of gold forms its *batu ba'tang* ('inside stone', 'inner kernel'). Pure gold is said to have originated in 'the centre of the [primordial] sea' or 'in the source of the foam'. Thus, although it is hard and impenetrable, it is also cool and moist. In most of its qualities, it is identical to the life force (*sumanga*) which, according to the Toraja, animates and lends vigour to all forms of life. Indeed, gold may be seen as a particularly pure concentration (or source) of *sumanga*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In another example from Indonesia Howell, discussing the value of things among the Lio (Flores), emphasizes the life-promoting qualities of gold as follows: 'Gold is thus not inanimate, it is imbued with life-force ...' (Howell 1989:430).

In the context of human life, gold may be intimately linked to anything from material fortune and riches to supernatural power and long life. It differs from the other ingredients, however, because it remains relatively separate and is never totally integrated in the body. In the form of the inner kernel, gold is said to give rise to a flow of energy which pervades the body as a whole. Although there is some disagreement, it is the configuration of this flow which constitutes the 'life spirit' (*deata*) of a particular human being and, at the most basic level, it is manifested in the blinking of the eyes and the throbbing of the pulse.

With all the ingredients properly measured and positioned, the mixture was melted ('put to sleep') inside the bellows, retaining the essence of each ingredient and giving rise to the very first human being. Thus the body of Datu Laukku', having been forged from four pairs of elements, is seen as having eight *integrated* parts. With the piece of gold added, the sum total of these parts is described as *ganna*' and the alignment of their sources is said to be in a circle. Hence the order of their original arrangement is retained. Furthermore, the crystallization of this disposition becomes the channel for the continuous flow of embodied *sumanga*' (*deata*). The pattern of this flow is said to be similar to the shape of an 'inwardly moving spiral' (*ma'suale lu tama*), the 'centre' (*palesu*<sup>8</sup>) of which is formed by the piece of pure gold. In this context it is depicted as a tiny stone which revolves, from right to left, upon its own axis. This is the source of individual potency which remains hidden in the innermost recesses of the body and is described as hardness. In the form of the revolving stone, it imparts movement to the embodied life force and concentrates the overall currents of the living body in the shape of a centripetal spiral.

Thus, the body of Datu Laukku' was completed and its various components ordered and fixed. However, he was still 'not awake' (*tang padiu-diu*). In fact, he did not speak or breathe until the creator-god 'dug a hole in the crown of his head' and forced 'the sovereign of the wind' to enter his body and form his 'breath' (*penaa*).

The forging of the first slaves was a much simpler affair. As I have already indicated, their bodies were made of 'mud' (*losso*' *pellangiran*) and 'stone' (*atena litak*). In the various stories which deal with the patterns of creation, there is no further information. As far as the original slaves are concerned, nothing is said about the derivation of life-giving and life-sustaining principles which, irrespective of *tana*', are thought to exist in all people. For instance, although heat and coolness are supposed to be

<sup>8</sup> In everyday life, *palesulpalisu* ('rotation centre', 'whirl') describes the point from which hair spirals out (e.g., on the crown of the human head or the hide of water buffaloes). As such centres may constitute 'signs' (*tanda*) of fortune and potency, they are considered extremely important. Their location, especially on the hide of water buffaloes, is always carefully examined and interpreted.



present even in slaves, there is no mention of their sources. Yet the forging process remains the same.

Once again, Puang Matua 'completed' the mixture of mud and stone, but this time he multiplied each ingredient by four. Since four people (Pong Kamboti, Kambuno Bongi', Pakkali, Pottokalembang) emerged from the bellows, however, each body is said to include only two parts, one of each ingredient. In accordance with the requirements implicit in the notion of *ganna*', each constituent was placed at the correct spot: mud – being soft, wet, mushy and pliant – was fixed as the source of flesh, and stone – being hard, dry, and firm – became the source of bone. As before, flesh is associated with the left and bone with the right. Although the configuration of the body is still seen as being similar to the arrangement of the hearth, the existence of a definite epicentre as well as the derivation of its inner kernel remain unclear. In fact, the necessary amount of life force was often thought to enter from outside rather than being generated inside the body.

As far as the commoners are concerned, the most frequent account of their corporeality is straightforward. Their bodies, although similar to that of Datu Laukku', are said to be composed of only four parts, because the necessary ingredients (fire, yellow earth, black stone, and water) were not doubled. A single portion of gold, though, is still considered as giving rise to their life spirit and as being the source of their essence. Thus the overall difference is one of quantity rather than quality.

Nevertheless, according to many informants the differentiation and hierarchization of the three *tana*' always reflect a qualitative difference as well. Following their argument, besides the different number and kind of constituent parts, each type of body has a specific kind of inner potency. Although in all three cases its source is described as an 'inner kernel' (*batu ba'tang*), it is believed to be made of different substances: gold for nobles, iron (or, sometimes, bronze) for commoners, and wood for slaves. This is meant to be reflected in the very terminology that applies to the range of *tana*', namely golden stakes, iron stakes, and wooden stakes. The basic idea is that these were the materials which Puang Matua inserted into the 'innermost recesses' of each type of body. However, I never came across a formalized version (an *ossoran*) of such a creation story.

It must also be said that, with one exception, the bodies I have described are all male – that is, the various ancestors were all men. Indeed, in the process of creation, physiological sexuality seems to have made little difference. For instance, although one of the four original slaves (Pottokalembang) was female, her body (its material constituents and the way they were put together) is considered to be no different from the other three. In fact, according to the various *ossoran* a particular type of female body is connected only with *tana*' *bulaan*. Of course this is not to say that there are no acknowledged differences (such as genitalia), but such differences do not seem to constitute signs of essential corporeal disparity.

The 'path of the ritual measurements', echoing perhaps the influence of the Christian legend of Adam and Eve, relates the creation of the first noble female as follows. As soon as Datu Laukku' came to life, he started looking for a wife but there was none. Puang Matua, after he put him to sleep, removed his 'short rib' and constructed with it the original female (Lando Beluak, 'Long Hair'). Although nothing else is included in the actual story, the difference between Datu Laukku' and Lando Beluak is widely acknowledged to be one of quantity rather than quality. Rather than eight, her body is thought to comprise only six parts. Even so, as I was unable to determine what was missing or what is the significance of the number six, I can add very little. Despite such lacunae, though, the overall emphasis always appears to be on similar things. In the traditional narratives, as well as the way in which they are remembered or elucidated, human diversity is both described and explained in terms of diverging corporeality.

To briefly sum up: different types of body are related to different *tana'*; the exact patterns of these differences are reflected in disparate combinations of particular materials; the dimensions of this disparity may include both qualitative and quantitative aspects; the intrinsic organization of these variations manifests a common dispositional order which expresses itself as movement from right to left and depends upon the fixity of a particular centre; lastly, this centre constitutes the inner kernel of particular embodiments and gives rise to varying degrees of potency and, perhaps, distinct types of essence.

### *From Bodies to Persons*

The corporeal differentiation I have tried to describe is not limited to a distant or mythical past. Its essential patterns are passed on from generation to generation, by means of blood (*umpolalan rarana*) – that is, from mother to daughter or son. Maternal blood conveys the essence of the material originally used, and in this sense each new birth replicates a particular kind of corporeality.

Like the Hebrew *bara* (Mopsik 1989:51), the Toraja verb *ma'dadi* (*dadi*, 'to be born/to come into being') means both 'to create' and 'to give birth to' (Tammu and van der Veen 1972:123-4). In the context of the formation of the cosmos and its original inhabitants, forging (the archetypal form of creation) is often synonymous with giving birth. Thus, to cite Mopsik on the Jewish tradition, 'The process of creation and the process of procreation, though different, are designated by the same vocable, which implies that the concept of human generation and filiation is rightfully inscribed within the divine creative movement, that procreation merely continues cosmogenesis, that it is a later stage of cosmogenesis' (Mopsik 1989:51). In other words, as the creator-god is the ultimate parent, every parent is a creator. Every act of proper procreation is a continuation of the original cosmogenic practice, an imitation of the initial process of engenderment.

Of course there is a great deal of difference between the omnipotent God of the Jewish tradition and the formative powers of Puang Matua. Nevertheless, it could be argued that, 'by reproducing, religious man imitates the divine work of the original organization of the cosmos and his procreative act is perhaps considered as the ritual re-enactment of cosmogony' (Mopsik 1989:53). Indeed, it is as an explicit part of such a re-enactment that some important features of the Toraja rites of birth (*aluk mellolo tau*, 'the ritual of securing human umbilical cords') may be viewed (placing the various offerings in a circle, moving from right to left, depicting a definite epicentre, combining hardness and softness, and so on).

Although I never had the opportunity of witnessing any of the sacrifices associated with birth, as an illustration of this re-enactment I shall briefly describe a few aspects of *aluk mellolo tau*, and especially of *ma'ku'ku'*, the most important of these sacrificial rites, as they were described to me. *Ma'ku'ku'*, 'to cut the hair [for the first time]', requires the killing of a large pig. If the infant is male, the rite takes place four nights after the birth. If the infant is female, three nights are considered enough. The preparations for the sacrifice start early in the morning. First the pig must be killed and the appropriate food prepared. Both the killing of the animal and the cooking of the food take place inside the house. If the infant is of noble descent this food must include, apart from pork and ordinary boiled rice, what is known as *kinande dirangga* ('food of all kinds'), mostly consisting of black, red, white, and yellow (coloured with turmeric) rice. This rice is wrapped in banana and palm leaves so as to form 'packets' of different shapes, colours, and sizes. As soon as everything is ready, by 'matching and mixing' the various kinds of food, two sets of sacrificial offerings are prepared and set out, *pesung deata* ('offerings for the [life] spirits': tiny morsels of food arranged on banana leaves) and *pesung pia* ('offerings for [the spirits of] the child': food morsels arranged on strips of palm tree bark). Featuring only in the rite of *ma'ku'ku'*, the latter set embodies and manifests an attempt to centre the body, balance its softness and hardness, and evoke its dispositional order by moving from right to left.

In the case of *pesung deata* (a set consisting of either three or four offerings<sup>9</sup>), although the actual size of the portions varies, each offering should include a little of everything. Only one of them, however, should be 'complete' (*kalebu*). Meant for the 'spirits of the sky', this particular offering is known as 'mother' (*indo*). It is said to be complete because its portion of pork contains a little bone and, in this sense, it is 'hard' enough

<sup>9</sup> This number depends on the infant's *aluk susu* ('milk ritual'). In the ethnographic literature, the 'milk ritual' is associated with death and is usually defined as '[the] ritual observed traditionally by the mother's side of the deceased's family' (Nooy-Palm 1986:224). In Buntao, however, the 'milk ritual' is not restricted to rites of death. Whenever one makes an offering, he or she must follow 'the path of the mother' by replicating the sacrificial patterns of the appropriate 'milk ritual'.

to 'stand by itself'. The other offerings in the set contain no bone and also differ from the 'mother' in other, less significant, ways. This differentiation of the *pesung deata* is not restricted to the ritual of *ma'ku'ku*. Whatever the ritual sacrifice may be, only one offering is complete and this completeness always involves the balance of softness (flesh, on the left part of the leaf) and hardness (bone, on the right). In the logic of sacrificial gifts, there is always one 'mother-offering', and this offering is always meant for the spirit which is described as the 'sovereign' of a particular domain or, sometimes, of the cosmos as a whole.

The set of offerings meant for the 'spirits of the child' constitutes the only exception to this rule. Although their exact number depends on the *tana* of the infant, they all require both bone and flesh. In addition, the size of the portions that make up the offerings is exactly the same. In an attempt to strengthen the body and ensure its well-being, each spirit receives an identical offering. The sacrificial combination of flesh and bone may be seen as being designed to embody and evoke the desired result. Furthermore, the pattern in which these offerings are set out reproduces the circular arrangement of the body as a whole. The infant, with its head pointing north, is 'put to sleep' on the floor of the northern room. As soon as three grains of rice, which must be whole and perfectly formed, are placed on its navel, the traditional midwife (*to ma'pakianak*) positions the offerings in a circle around the body, moving from right to left. Before a small amount of hair is cut, the forehead, the base of the throat, the hands, and the navel are 'bloodied' with blood from the sacrificial animal. With everything in place, the three grains of rice and the hair are tied together and attached to the edge of the baby's *tilan* ('diaper').

Three days after *ma'ku'ku*, the infant is brought outside for the first time and taken to the house of 'its suckling sibling' (*balisusunna*). This term refers to another child which was still being breast-fed at the time of the new birth. The mother of the 'suckling sibling' would have been present during the birth and would have been the first person (apart from the midwife) to handle the newborn baby and breast-feed it. On the way to the house of the 'suckling sibling', the mother, or a female matrilineal relative, is responsible for carrying out the last oblation of the birth ritual. It consists of a single rice offering known as *ma'palingka* ('to make walk' or 'to create the path') and is meant for the female spirit which controls the growth of humans, animals, and plants. As soon as the offering is placed on the ground, by the edge of the path, the infant is made 'to stand up', 'face east', and take its first step with its right foot. With the conclusion of *ma'palingka*, the birth rites are over (for a more detailed discussion see Tsintjilonis 1993:310-20; cf. Nooy-Palm 1986:109-13). After a few months, when the first tooth appears, the hair and the three grains of rice are carefully removed from the *tilan* and wrapped in a small bag (*pundi-pundi*) resembling those used by adults to hold the ingredients for betel nut chewing. The *pundi-pundi* is attached to a string and worn as an amulet.

Thus, in a fashion that mimics and re-enacts the forging of Datu Laukku' by Puang Matua, the sacrificial technique of *ma'ku'ku'* attempts to strengthen and raise the body. However, as with every other rite, the efficacy of the actual sacrifice reflects and manifests the *tana'* of the sacrificer. For instance, if the newborn baby is male and of noble descent, 'food of all kinds' must accompany the pork, and eight *pesung pia* must be set out (six if the baby is female); if the infant is of common descent, there is no *kinande dirangga*, and the *pesung pia* are only four; lastly, for a *kaunan* baby only a reddish hen is sacrificed, and there are no 'offerings for the child' or *ma'palingka*. Despite the need to strengthen the body, it is the requirements inherent in the notion of *tana'* that determine the patterns of human procreation and the efficacy of its ritual expression.

In the ethnographic context of Buntao', the essential rule of human procreation is unambiguous: a woman cannot marry, copulate or conceive beneath her prescriptive status (*tana'*). In the past, this prohibition was said to have been strictly enforced. Today, although many of the traditional rules are being re-interpreted and modified, it retains its ideological significance and provides the framework for much of the commentary about marriage or the appropriateness of certain unions.<sup>10</sup> As a particular body is inherited from the mother and embedded in the maternal blood, care should be taken to protect its proper dispersion and safeguard the degree of its purity. It is in this sense that different *tana'* are said to possess different amounts of white or ripe blood. Alongside particular kinds of essence (gold, iron, wood), one also inherits the soft parts of the body from the same (maternal) source. In contrast, the hard elements are associated with one's father and are seen as being embedded in the paternal contribution. In terms of the original material, while earth and water are associated with the mother, stone and fire are linked with the father. Filiation is inextricably linked with the dissemination of particular corporeal substances and the replication of determinate forms of engenderment.

Emphasizing this process of dissemination, the significance of filiation should be construed in a specific manner. As Lash notes in a discussion of Foucault's analysis of *Herkunft*<sup>11</sup>, 'Violence is not done to our common-

<sup>10</sup> I have no specific data on the present occurrence of inter-*tana'* marriages. Kathleen Adams, in her 1985 study of two hamlets in the adjacent territory of Kesu', surveyed 214 unions and found 36 cases (16.8%) of inter-rank marriage. However, out of these 36 cases, only 14 involved the combination of a higher *tana'* woman with a lower *tana'* man (Adams 1988:64). In fact, as she notes, 'changes in orientations towards rank encouraged by various institutions are surprisingly slow to manifest themselves in terms of the overall number of interclass marriages ...' (Adams 1988:64).

<sup>11</sup> The significance of *Herkunft* ('origin') is traced back to the work of Nietzsche. Foucault, however, attempts to re-interpret its significance by transforming the notion of origin into a process of genealogical inscription: '*Herkunft* is the equivalent of stock or *descent*' (Foucault 1977:145).

sense notion of genealogy, whether we conceive of “descent” in terms of a genealogy of morals, of things, or of attributes. Descombes’s [...] definition, as a search for antecedents, “with an eye to establishing the baseness or nobility of lineage”, could refer to any of these entities’ (Lash 1991:260).<sup>12</sup> Through its link with differential embodiment and the range of *tana*, Toraja filiation seems to suggest a genealogy not of morals, things, or attributes, but of bodies. That is not to say that morals, things, and attributes are of no significance. On the contrary, they are extremely important, but their importance is derived from the way in which they are inscribed in the materiality of various forms of human embodiment. To paraphrase Webster’s suggestion concerning the early Greeks (Webster 1954:19), Toraja genealogies are a way of ‘relating’ bodies, rather than simple ‘personifications’.

In the simplest terms: the nobles of Buntao’ are noble because they are *tana’ bulaan*; they are *tana’ bulaan* because their essence is, and derives from, gold; their essence is gold because it originated in a golden, so to speak, female (the mother); that female inherited her goldenness from her own mother; and so on, back to the sources of cosmic creation and the forging of Datu Laukku’. In addition, by inheriting this particular essence, they do not simply inherit the qualities of gold, but also a specific type of body – that is, a body with eight constituent parts. Similar processes of filiation and engenderment apply to commoners and to slaves. At the level of *tana*, the most significant instance of truly inalienable wealth is one’s familial body.

Beyond particular qualities (e.g., softness, hardness) and states (e.g., true, ripe), which I tried to describe in the previous section, the body also is the source of rights and duties, honour and shame. Apart from the ability to live, the way one *should* live is also inscribed in, and inherited through, the body. Indeed, the merging of bodily substance and conduct is highly reminiscent of Marriot’s sociological descriptions of India and the ethnographic reasons for his analytic emphasis on ‘monism’ – a ‘monism’, wherein

‘the assumption of the easy, proper separability of action from actor, of code from substance (similar to the assumption of the separability of law from nature, norm from behaviour, mind from body, spirit or energy from matter), that pervades both Western philosophy and Western common sense [...] is generally absent: code and substance [...] cannot have separate existences’ (Marriot 1976:110).

Although some of the excesses of Marriot and his Indianist colleagues have been convincingly documented (see Parry 1989), including the fact that the pervasive dualism of Western ideology is not as pervasive as they

<sup>12</sup> Lash is referring to V. Descombes, 1980, *Modern French Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press.

would have us believe (Parry 1989:512), the resonance of the idea involving the inseparability of code and substance, in my own material, cannot be overlooked. In effect, almost reversing Leenhardt's explanation of the Caledonian concept of *kamo* (Leenhardt 1979:154), it could be said that the 'social reality' of the Toraja is, first and foremost, *in* their body. Far from being a simple support for life, *kale* is a source of both identity and meaningful action.

This is not to refute the importance of relationships and the social derivation of meaning. Like a Canague, a Toraja '[...] knows himself only by the relationships he maintains with others. He exists only insofar as he acts his role in the course of his relationships' (Leenhardt 1979:153). However, as one's relationships are embodied and manifested in one's role, that role is embodied and manifested in one's body. Thus, as Comaroff puts it, 'The body mediates all action upon the world and simultaneously constitutes the self and the universe of social and natural relations of which it is a part' (Comaroff 1985:6-7). It is through this mediation that a body becomes a person.

Of course, the difficulties associated with any attempt to define the notions of person and personhood are notorious (see Lukes 1985:282). For this reason, rather than attempt to draw any definite distinctions, I shall simply try to show how, in inheriting a specific kind of body, one also inherits a specific set of obligations and values; or, to put it another way, how such obligations and values, by being inscribed in the corporeality of the human body, transform the differential logic of embodiment into social relationship and belief.<sup>13</sup>

### *Sociality as In(ner)scape*

Apart from its life spirit, each human embodiment has its own 'body spirits' (*deata kale*) – these are the spirits that are fed through the *pesung pia* during the ritual of *ma'ku'ku*. Each of these spirits is associated with a particular body component and is intimately linked with the cosmic domain in which the material for that component originated. In the case of nobles, for instance, the genealogy of the body's soft parts is traced all the way back to the egg of the yellow earth that Puang Matua positioned as source of the flesh and, through it, to the liver of the earth; as the liver of the earth is said to be guarded and inhabited by the 'earth-liver spirits' (*deata atena padang*), the body's soft parts are described as being guarded and inhabited by the 'spirits of the flesh' (*deata duku'na*). *Deata atena padang* and

<sup>13</sup> Foucault makes a similar point, in a much more powerful way: 'Finally, descent attaches itself to the body. It inscribes itself in the nervous system, in temperament, in the digestive apparatus; it appears in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the debilitated and prostrate body of those whose ancestors committed errors. [...] the body maintains, in life as in death, through its strength or weakness, the sanction of every truth and error, as it sustains, in an inverse manner, the origin-descent.' (Foucault 1977:147.)

*deata duku'na* are similar, if not identical, beings. They are golden yellow, soft, moist and, for some obscure reason, hard of hearing. Above all, they share the same kind of efficacy and possess a single sovereign (*datu baine*, 'princess'; the original goddess), also inhabiting the liver of the earth. In addition, as Puang Matua used two portions of egg, a noble body is endowed with two spirits of the flesh.

Through similar chains of reasoning and association, each material component of the body is intimately linked with a particular cosmic domain, a sovereign, and a type of efficacy. Via such particular linkages, *deata kale* are said to protect and guard a specific body. By maintaining the proper balance and combination of the various substances within the body, they maintain and guard the proper connections between particular forms of embodiment and the cosmos as a whole. In connection with this guardianship, the sum total (within each body) of *deata kale* is seen as comprising two interconnected realms of invisible agency, 'mother spirits' (*deata indo*) on the left side of the body, and 'father spirits' (*deata ambe*) on the right. Their combined contribution to a human's well-being is described as fencing the body, in the sense of protecting its *siri* (*deata masiri*, 'spirit guardians of *siri*').

*Siri* is a difficult term to translate. It can mean 'shy, humble, reluctant', but also 'embarrassed, ashamed', and 'degraded'. Knowing one's own status and recognizing that of others is also covered by the term *siri*. Generally, being conscious of *siri* is what distinguishes a human from animals. If, for instance, 'a child defecates in the yard or refuses to share food, he does not yet "know" *siri*', and to that extent is still an animal' (Hollan 1984:211). *Siri*, as a set of proscriptions and prescriptions, is above all linked to acting in accordance with the *pemali* regulations (prohibitions, taboos) which lie at the heart of Toraja tradition. The indigenous notion of transgression (*sala*, 'mistake') is always perceived and described as breaking one or other of these taboos. *Siri* is what orients one to his proper place in society and, in reflecting the necessary obedience to the various *pemali*, embodies the logic of action and appropriate conduct. Thus, as in the case of the people of Luwu (see Errington 1977) or the Makassarese (see Chabot 1960), as Volkman puts it, "'to know" one's *siri*' (*untandai siri'na*) is to know who one is' (Volkman 1985:73). However, as she rightly emphasizes, 'This is not a matter of inner subjectivity but of knowing one's "place", the recognition of self in relation to others [...]' (Volkman 1985:73-4).

Within this process of recognition, the important point is that *siri* is said 'to emerge in the body' (*bu'tu lan kale*). Like the *deata kale*, it is divided into right and left: being 'ashamed' or 'shy' (*masiri*) on the left is coextensive with having offended your mother and, by extension, your matrilineal relatives; ashamed on the right involves a similar problem on the side of your father and patrilineal relatives. While transgressions of the former kind (e.g., breaking food taboos or committing adultery) are said to



'pass through the blood' (*unnola rara*), those of the latter kind (e.g., cheating or avoiding the repayment of debts) are described as 'passing through the bone' (*unnola buku*). Such offences lead to serious illnesses which unbalance and distort the body, destroying its order and putting its structuration out of joint ('turning it upside-down', 'inside-out', and so on) (see also Hollan 1992:47).

Beyond right and left mistakes, there are also transgressions associated with the sky and the earth. To be ashamed towards the sky is to have offended someone of higher status than yourself. In the same way, to be ashamed towards the earth is to have offended someone of similar or lower status. As before, the former kind of mistake (e.g., slandering or malicious gossiping, not showing the proper respect) is said to pass through the bone (the sky is likened to the father), while the latter (e.g., failing to ensure the proper division of sacrificial meat, calling someone *kaunan* in his or her presence) is thought to pass through the blood (the earth is likened to the mother). Sky and earth mistakes are liable to cause, rather than twisted or unbalanced bodies, a terrible kind of cosmic punishment: *mabusung*, 'bloated' or 'distended' stomachs. In this connection, there is said to be '*busung* of [or deriving from] the sky/father' and '*busung* of the earth/mother'. This kind of swelling is greatly feared and is thought to lead to inevitable death. Nevertheless, swelling is not always a sign of illness. In certain situations, it may be regarded as a sign of extreme potency or supernatural presence (as, perhaps, in an inexplicable pregnancy).

Lastly, there is a kind of transgression associated with the east and the west. Here, mistakes are said to offend either 'the path on the side of the rising sun' (*lalan rampe matallo*) or 'the path on the side of the setting sun' (*lalan rampe matampu*). In the first case, one transgresses against the gods; in the second, against the non-deified ancestors. Such mistakes (e.g., failure to undertake or complete the appropriate sacrifices, mixing meat from a funeral with rice) also lead to *mabusung*, and this kind of *mabusung* is by far the most feared. Its catastrophic consequences may extend to all the members of one's family, one's possessions, both animate and inanimate, and the rest of the community. However, as the proper way of relating to the non-deified ancestors depends on the exact replication of the ritual technology associated with the ancestral house of one's mother, and is inherited from her (the so-called 'ritual of the milk'), transgressing against the ancestors is also associated with offending one's mother. In a similar way, transgressing against the deities is transgressing against the father. This last equivalence is explained as follows: although the sacrificial rites in connection with death and the non-deified ancestors *must* be carried out, how far one will reach inside the sacrificial complex of the east (in a process of deification which, if successful, will turn a non-deified ancestor into a deity) may well depend upon wealth and opportunity. The father is responsible for acquiring this wealth; in this sense, while the mother is described as 'receiving the [material] fortune' (*untarima*

*kinande*), the father is 'he who searches' for it (*to undaka*'). Once again, mistakes can be said to pass through the blood or the bone.

Hence, how one relates to one's relatives and one's fellow-villagers, as well as the gods and the ancestors, is *in* and *of* one's body. Stomach-swelling, for instance, is not only a symptom of *mabusung* but, above all, a visible sign and proof of transgression. In the same way, an unbalanced body is both the result of an illness and a sign of having committed a particular kind of offence. The interpretation of such signs (*tanda*) is the responsibility of traditional priests and usually involves some form of divination. In general, as soon as the mistake has been discovered and the offender identified, a series of appropriate offerings must be made in order to straighten the body and restore its order. Such offerings are part of what is known as *aluk suru' kale* ('rites for combing the body') and comprise twelve distinct sacrifices. Which should be performed depends both on the kind of mistake committed and the *tana*' of the offender.

What must be emphasized is that *siri*' does not simply emerge in the body, it also 'stems from the body' (*ombo' ri kale*). That is, in avoiding shame, what one guards and protects is also inscribed in, and derives from, the body. The *pemali* regulations themselves are said to stem from the body. In this sense, transgressions are not simply committed through the body, but against it. For instance, in offending the dead or the non-deified ancestors, one does not simply make a mistake which passes through the blood, but is actually 'someone who offends his own blood' (*to kasalan lako rarana*). Such an offence is possible because the treatment of one's ancestors is determined by one's *tana*', it is embedded in the essence of the body and inscribed in the relative purity of its blood.

Accordingly, apart from 'shy' and 'ashamed', *siri*' also means 'obligation' and 'responsibility'. It is in this sense that, beyond how one actually behaves, *siri*' manifests and embodies the way in which one should behave. Different *tana*' are implicated in different patterns of *siri*' because each type of body gives rise to different *pemali*. What is expected from a noble is quite different from what is expected from a slave, and what is expected from each of them is embedded in the materiality of their essences.

Thus, it could be suggested, the appropriate codes of action and conduct 'are thought to be naturally embodied' (Marriot 1976:109-10). From this point of view, by inheriting a specific kind of body, one also inherits a specific set of precepts. A set of precepts which connect each and every human with the rest of the universe.

#### *Conclusion: Bodies, Agents, Persons, and Selves*

It is through this complex interplay of prescription, proscription and avoidance that the logic of differential embodiment is transformed into action and transaction, turning the body into an agency, objectifying its obligations, and personifying its corporeality:

'The person is constructed from the vantage points of the relations that constitute him or her; she or he objectifies and is thus revealed in those relations. The agent is construed as the one who acts because of those relationships and is revealed in his or her actions. If a person is an agent seen from the point of view of her or his relations with others, the agent is the person who has taken action with those relations in view. In this, the agent constitutes a "self".' (Strathern 1988:273.)

Although there is an intimate relationship between body, social relationship and belief, it is the essential parameters of human embodiment that are crystallized as obligation and reciprocity through *siri*'. The determinacy of social action, whatever it may involve, is derived from and embedded in the human body. Beyond its useful delineation of interaction, Strathern's argument is applicable in Toraja society only insofar as one is prepared to accept the primacy of human embodiment – the fact that the person and the way in which other agents act upon it derive from its corporeality.

Through the imperatives of *siri*', the material entity which I have described as a body is transformed into practice and becomes a process. For instance, as the truth of true people (nobles and commoners) is manifested in the fulfilment of their traditional obligations (ritual or otherwise) and adherence to the proper *pemali*, their bodies are acted out – so to speak – in the ethos of specific patterns of *siri*'.

The logic of social and ritual action may be seen as a mechanism of extrapolation – an individual human is constructed as a person and an agent (as an instance of a particular ethos) in a fashion circumscribed by the body, and embedded in the substance thereof. The nature of the body dictates the rituals that can be performed upon it, and constitutes the range of appropriate and inappropriate action. One takes one's place in a network of *bodily* imperatives which, by definition, constitute relations both with other bodies and with the cosmos as a whole. In this sense, action (ritual or otherwise) becomes a technology of embodiment and an index of differential corporeality. In reproducing specific forms of conduct, *siri*' exemplifies the multiplicity of substances (gold, iron, and so on) and the variety of their arrangements. It is as if the principles of differential corporeality were gradually converted into patterns of action and eventually transfigured into different forms of sociality. In other words, the modes of life (different bodies) are transformed into programmes for living; and it is only within these programmes that persons, agents, or selves can be said to exist.

Thus, reversing Mary Douglas' famous dictum according to which 'The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived' (Douglas 1978:93), it is possible to suggest that society is determined by, and perceived through, the physical body. Not in the sense of truisms such as 'the ways humans are embodied (as opposed to, say, the way wasps are embodied) make human culture possible' (Errington 1990:11), but in the sense of asserting the primacy of embodiment and the pervasiveness of its organizational principles. Certainly, ever since Durkheim's declaration that

'all that represents society in us' is exactly that 'part of ourselves which is not placed in immediate dependence upon the organic factor' (Durkheim 1915:272), a great deal of attention has been paid to differential conditions of embodiment and the cultural relativity of its organizational principles. Much of the relevant writing, from Mauss' accentuation of 'body techniques' (Mauss 1979:95-113) to Bourdieu's emphasis on 'bodily practices' (1984), echoes the Durkheimian conviction that 'the world of representations in which social life passes is superimposed upon its material substratum, far from arising from it' (Durkheim 1915:272). In asserting the primacy of embodiment, however, we need to go beyond the legacy of Durkheim. Indeed, we need to generate a sociology of the body which 'understands embodiment not as residual to social organization, but rather understands social organization as being about the reproduction of embodiment' (Frank 1991:42).

In this respect, to borrow Elvin's translation of the Chinese concept *shen* (Elvin 1989:275), we should merge corporeality and personhood, and translate the Toraja *kale* not simply as body, but as 'body-person' – the carrier of corporeal attributes *and* the locus of *siri*'. By acting in the proper way and guarding against being *siri*' (shamed), one *lives* the substantive foundation of his or her body and is constituted as a subject through the transformation of corporeality into a programme for living (and dying). To put it another way, one's identity is derived from his or her actions but, insofar as the logic of such actions is already there (inscribed in the very essence of corporeality), it is always a body that is turned into *somebody*. The range of *tana*', being embedded in the Toraja tradition and the human diversity intrinsic to it, engenders social difference and constitutes the mechanism for attributing or managing it. From specific sacrificial responsibilities to distinct forms of *pemali*, disparate modes of living manifest and embody disparate modes of being.

Of course, to return to the importance of the changes I mentioned at the beginning of this article, the overall impact of Christianity and 'modernization' has certainly destroyed some of the neat correspondences I have detailed here. In many cases, 'wealth has come to overshadow birth, and the flourishing of the ceremonies now reflects shifts in economic resources, status relations, and group composition' (Volkman 1979:1). Through its emphasis on equality, Christianity has strengthened even further the status changes implicit in such shifts. 'New money' and Christian ethics have been testing and, sometimes, overriding many of the traditional *pemali* (see Volkman 1979:1). With some descendants of slaves behaving as if they were nobles and some of the nobles having to compete for the allocation of modern resources (e.g., government subsidies, electrification programmes, and so on), the current Buntao' picture is more complicated than I allowed for, and these complications deserve closer study. Tradition, however, as Ricoeur has remarked (albeit in rather a different context), 'is not a sealed package we pass from hand to hand, without ever opening,

but rather a treasure from which we draw by the handful and which by this very act is replenished' (Ricoeur 1974:27). In this sense, rather than being 'a sealed package' devoid of change, even the deceptive possibility of which is lacking in the ethnographic rendition of an *oral* tradition (like that of the Toraja), the focus of this essay was implicitly but one aspect of such a replenishment.

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