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Introduction

Focusing on the traditional cosmology of the Sa'dan Toraja of Indonesia,¹ this article aims to contribute to the recent revival of the animism debate within anthropology (Descola 1992, 1996; Ingold 2000; Viveiros de Castro 1998; Bird-David 1999; Stringer 1999; Pedersen 2001) and to further our understanding of a particular Indonesian cosmos (see also Van der Veen 1965; Nooy-Palm 1979; Bigalke 1981). This is a cosmos which, as the local priests put it, was brought into being when 'the sovereign of the word' (*datunna kada*) died and decomposed. However, the demise of this primordial being did not create something out of nothing. Echoing the evocative ambivalence of the Greek term *arche* (beginning and principle), the same priests described the sovereign's death as *garonto' lalan* ('the beginning of the path'). In other words, they insisted that the potential for life was always already there. What the original death did was to 'open a path' – that is, force life to realize itself by moving or unfolding in a kind of 'flow' (also *lalan*). Moreover, as it had to reproduce the essential qualities of the life it forced to unfold, this path had to be oriented in a specific way – that is, from right to left (*lalan kanan*).

Thus, in the following discussion, the first question I shall be asking is whether this unfolding can be construed as animism. Furthermore, as this unfolding is thought to reproduce a number of qualities embedded in the 'essence' (*bombong*) of life itself, the second question with which I shall be concerned is whether this emphasis on *bombong* implies the existence of a preordained universe of essential qualities (unequally distributed in and

¹ The Sa'dan Toraja number roughly 350,000 and live in the northern highlands of South Sulawesi in an area known as Tana Toraja (Land of the Toraja).

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through the process of creation. Both questions, quite apart from placing the emphasis on the indigenous exegesis of the Toraja cosmos and the patterns of its creation, are meant to create an immediate link with the recent literature on animism. Within this literature, the incipience of life is considered as one of the fundamental characteristics of an animic ontology. In a parallel fashion, within the same literature, any cosmology which posits the origins of life in terms of essence is seen as antithetical to such an ontology. Accordingly, before introducing any of the ethnographic detail, I shall try to contextualize my discussion both within the recent literature on animism and the more comparative context of Southeast Asia.

From immanence to perspectivism

As Ingold (2000:113) puts it, 'life, in the animic ontology, is not an emanation but a generation of being, in a world that is not preordained but incipient, forever on the verge of the actual'. In the traditional cosmologies of insular Southeast Asia, this incipience is usually depicted in terms of a belief in the 'immanence of life'. To echo the way Fox (1987:524) has phrased it, in his brief comparative survey of traditional religions,

Virtually all of the traditional religions of the region are predicated on a belief in the immanence of life. [...] In traditional mythologies, creation did not occur *ex nihilo*: the cosmos was violently quickened into life and all that exists is thus part of a living cosmic whole. Life is evident everywhere in a multitude of forms whose manifestation can be complex, particularistic, but also transitory. There are many different classes of beings, including humans, whose origins may be identified in some mythological account but the system is inherently open and other classes of being may be recognized whose origin is unknown, even though their manifestation is evident.

Furthermore, throughout the region, this emphasis on the immanence of life is combined with the tendency 'to personalize whatever may be considered a manifestation of life. Included among such manifestations are the heavenly spheres [...]; points of geographical prominence [...]; places endowed with unusual significance [...]; and simpler iconic representations of life.' (Fox 1987:526.) In other words, anything from thunder or lightning to caves or amulets may be considered as a manifestation of life. Crucially, although there is no presumption of equality attached to any of these manifestations of life, there exists an ultimate ground of identity. 'The result is', as Fox (1987: 524) puts it, 'a general acceptance of a plurality of beings and at the same time [...], a recognition of the oneness of the individual with the whole in the commonality of life'. More often than not, this oneness is associated with the

idea of a single creative energy permeating and animating the universe as a whole – an idea extremely widespread throughout Southeast Asia (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:255, note 22). In most of the local ethnographic contexts, the terms given to this energy are close cognates of the Malay *sumangat* (life-force, vitality, life-principle).²

I do not think it takes an over-enthusiastic anthropologist to connect the Southeast Asian emphasis on the immanence of life with the ethnographic material at the heart of the 'brilliant and original account' (Lambek 2002:306) of Amerindian cosmology recently provided by Viveiros de Castro (1998) or with Descola's equally imaginative reworking (1992, 1996) of 'animism'. In fact, there has been a long and intimate relation between the ethnography of Southeast Asia and the concept of animism. From Skeat's work (1900; see also Annandale 1903, Wilkinson 1906) on Malay magic or A.C. Kruyt's quest (1906) for a 'soul substance' (*zielestof*) to Winstedt's exposition (1924) of 'potency' and Cuisinier's exploration (1951) of Oriental thought, the immanence of life which characterizes many of the traditional religions in the region has often been 'simplistically referred to as "animism"' (Fox 1978:524). Simplistically because, quite apart from specific ethnographic misunderstandings (Endicott 1970), all of these authors adopt variations of the classic Tylorian definition of animism (Tylor 1903:429) – a definition which emphasizes anthropomorphism and implies that all natural phenomena have souls. According to Skeat, for instance, an animistic world-view 'consists of two related ideas: anthropomorphic notions about non-human things, and a belief in the presence of souls throughout the natural world' (Endicott 1970:31; but see Stringer 1999 for a different interpretation of what Tylor meant). In addition, whether it is implied or clearly spelled out, this take on animism is always associated with the kind of evolutionism which made Tylor's definition untenable from the beginning.

Of course, quite apart from the early contributions I have mentioned, there have been more recent attempts to explicate Southeast Asian animism. In this respect, mention must be made of Endicott's (1972) and Benjamin's (1979) work. However, although they both try to reformulate 'animism' in ways which avoid the more obvious pitfalls of the classic Tylorian definition, they fail to move beyond their predecessors in one fundamental respect – namely, just like them, they place the emphasis on indigenous 'notions' or 'beliefs' (Tsintjilonis 1999). In this context, it makes no difference whether one juxtaposes 'magic' and 'religion' (as do Annandale, Winstedt and Skeat), 'primitive' and 'modern' (Cuisinier), 'traditional order' and 'structural model'

² See Endicott 1970 on the *sumangat* of the Malays, Anderson 1972 on the *semangat* of the Javanese, Errington 1983 on the *sumange'* of the Buginese, George 1996 on the *sumanga'* of the Pitu Ulunna Salu, Tsintjilonis 1999 on the *sumanga'* of the Sa'dan Toraja.

(Endicott), or 'egocentrality' and 'sociocentrality' (Benjamin). In all cases, the reality ascribed to the 'essence' (*sumangat* for the Malays, *sumanga'* for the Toraja, and so on) of animism is primarily that of a mental construct – be it an idea, a representation, or a percept; in other words, some kind of 'meaning'. Crucially, as Endicott (1970:8) puts it, this meaning 'is in the mind, and is manifested through its effect on a person's attitudes and actions'. Furthermore, as such 'meanings are frequently cultural', they depend on 'the classifications that cultures impose on the world' (Endicott 1970:8). In this way, rather than a 'way of being', Endicott and Benjamin (just like Skeat, Annandale, Cuisinier) frame their exploration of animism as an exploration of a 'way of seeing'. However, as Ingold (2000:95-6) emphasizes, the question is whether we can ground animism 'in the real experience of persons in a lifeworld rather than attributing them to some overarching cosmological schema for its imaginative understanding'. To phrase it slightly differently, can we avoid *The imagination of reality* (the very title of the edited volume in which Benjamin's essay on Southeast Asian animism appeared) in order to ground animism in reality itself?

In any case, as I have situated my ethnographic material in relation to this literature elsewhere (Tsintjilonis 1999; see also Waterson 2003), the aim of the present article is to focus on the recent work of Viveiros de Castro and Descola in order to reintroduce a concept of animism into the ethnography of insular Southeast Asia which is less simplistic and more aware both of the particularities of specific ethnographic contexts and the need to rethink some of the anthropological categories (for example, immanence and transcendence, body and mind, humanity and animality) which have traditionally underpinned its study (Viveiros de Castro 1998:469-70). With this in mind, the discussion that follows is limited to the one ethnographic context I know best: the indigenous cosmology of the Sa'dan Toraja. However, rather than (re)introducing yet another analytical category into the ethnography of Southeast Asia, my aim is to suggest that animism may be seen as an attribute of the Toraja reality itself. Furthermore, despite my enthusiasm for the work of Descola and especially Viveiros de Castro, my ambition is not to reproduce their argument but to use some of its elements in order to explicate certain aspects of the traditional Toraja world.³

Descola separates animism from totemism and naturalism. He depicts all three of them as 'modes of identification', that is, as modes of thought and (inter)action which 'define the boundaries between self and otherness as

³ Of course, Hallowell (1960) in his work on Ojibwa ontology anticipated much of the recent discussion on animism (Ingold 2000:90-110). However, as the contrast between the implications of Amazonian animism and the Toraja 'flow of life' is at the centre of my discussion, I may be forgiven for not paying explicit attention to it.

expressed in the treatment of humans and non-humans, thus giving shape to specific cosmologies and social topographies' (Descola 1996:87). He goes on to describe the difference between animism and totemism in the following way: 'While totemic classifications make use of empirically observable discontinuities between natural species to organise, conceptually, a segmentary order delimiting social units (Lévi-Strauss 1962), animism endows natural beings with human dispositions and social attributes' (Descola 1996:87). To echo the way Århem (1996:185) has expressed it, 'If totemic systems model society after nature, then animic systems model nature after society'. However, despite their differences, both imply an affinity between the domains of society and nature, 'In totemic systems non-humans are treated as signs, in animic systems they are treated as the term of a relation' (Descola 1996:88); in fact, according to Descola (1996:88), animism and totemism 'can very well be combined within a single society'. It is this affinity that naturalism, the third mode of identification, dispenses with: 'naturalism is simply the belief that nature does exist, that certain things owe their existence and development to a principle extraneous both to chance and to the effects of human will' (Descola 1996:88). From this point of view, while naturalism is considered as typical of Western cosmologies 'since Plato and Aristotle', totemic systems are thought to characterize social formations based on segmentary organization, while animist systems are to be found both in cognatic as well as in segmentary societies (see Descola 1996:88). Thus, for Descola (1996:87), animism, totemism, and naturalism may be regarded as alternative 'shemata of praxis', that is, as 'mental models which organize the social objectivation of non-humans'.

However, as Ingold (2000:107) emphasizes, 'This appeal to the language of mental models, to the idea of accommodating beings that are really non-human into schemes of representation that construct them as social and therefore human, belongs squarely within a naturalist ontology, and it is from this that the terms of the comparison are derived'. In other words, despite its promise, Descola's work preserves the ontological a priori of nature by rendering animism and totemism as imaginative and imaginary reconstructions of it.

For his part, recasting Descola's definition, Viveiros de Castro (1998:473) defines animism as 'an ontology which postulates the social character of relations between humans and non-humans: the space between nature and society is itself social'. In animism, in other words, "'nature" is part of an encompassing sociality'. By contrast, within the Western naturalist ontology, 'human society is one natural phenomenon amongst others'; in naturalism, that is, 'relations between society and nature are themselves natural' (Viveiros de Castro 1998:473). Furthermore, while animism and naturalism are 'hierarchical and metonymical structures', totemism 'is based on a metaphoric correla-

tion between equipollent opposites' (Viveiros de Castro 1998:473). By emphasizing the space between nature and society, rather than the endowment of natural beings with human dispositions and social attributes, Viveiros de Castro (1998:474) aims to avoid the pitfalls of a 'socio-centric' model of animism which, as he suggests, is implicit in definitions like *Århem's* (see above).

In any case, comparing and contrasting these ontologies, Viveiros de Castro weaves an extraordinary argument which, by refusing to contribute to the 'flourishing industry of criticisms of the Westernizing character of all dualisms' (a veritable postmodern industry devoted to 'things which do not exist'), posits a fundamental difference between Amazonian and Western cosmologies. As he puts it,

Where the latter are founded on the mutual implication of the unity of nature and the plurality of cultures – the first guaranteed by the objective universality of body and substance, the second generated by the subjective particularity of spirit and meaning – the Amerindian conception would suppose a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity. Here, culture or the subject would be the form of the universal, whilst nature or the object would be the form of the particular. (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470.)

Thus, while the Western conception is founded on the idea of one nature but many cultures ('multiculturalism'), Amerindian thought posits the existence of one culture but many natures ('multinaturalism'). Although Viveiros de Castro (1998:472) has expressed this contrast in a variety of ways, the most telling one involves his explication of the relation between humans and animals in the cosmologies of Amazonia: 'The original common condition of both humans and animals is not animality but rather humanity. [...] Humans are those who continue as they have always been: animals are ex-humans, not humans ex-animals.' Hence, humanity is not a species but a condition (see also Descola 1992:120). Indeed, as he goes on to suggest, this is the condition which is shared by all those beings to which Amazonian cosmologies attribute a will and intentionality treating them as Subjects: they are human. However, this does not mean that they all appear or are seen as human. Animals like jaguars or peccaries, for instance, having lost their human appearance, have come to acquire their own kinds of body through which they see those around them. This is what Viveiros de Castro calls 'perspectivism': every intentional being sees the world from its own bodily perspective; however, it perceives or experiences what it sees as human. Thus, to give but one example, jaguars see the blood of their prey as manioc beer because, despite appearances (that is, their jaguar bodies), they are human and manioc beer is what humans drink. I am emphasizing the implications of perspectivism, because the Toraja cosmology, despite its animist character, seems to connect 'being' and 'appearing' in a very different way.

However, before I deal with my own ethnography, I need to focus the discussion that follows by summarizing the main points I have made so far in the form of a few questions, questions which simply reframe and extend, in terms of the relevant literature, the ones I asked in the introduction. First, is the Toraja world 'incipient, forever on the verge of the actual' (Ingold)? In other words, how should we construe what Fox has called 'the immanence of life'? Second, do the Toraja 'endow natural beings with human dispositions' (Descola) and does this endowment reflect a universe of 'spiritual unity and corporeal diversity' (Viveiros de Castro)? And, last, can the 'perspectivism' (Viveiros de Castro) of Amazonia be applied to Tana Toraja? Or, to phrase it somewhat differently, what is the relation between 'being' and 'appearing'?

Clearly these questions cannot be answered without a closer look at the way in which the Toraja explain the creation of the cosmos and narrate the 'beginnings' (*oto*) of its inhabitants; it is with these beginnings that I start.

The cosmos and its creation

The creation narratives my Toraja friends and informants offered did not always agree on the specific patterns of creation or the exact manifestations of their efficacy. Although they did not provide a coherent cosmogony either, the brief account that follows privileges the kind of information which was offered by ritual specialists and is mostly contained in a number of invocations which accompany certain sacrificial rituals of the indigenous religion, *aluk to dolo* ('the way of the ancestors').⁴ Nevertheless, despite the inherent contradictions and lacunae, as Traube (1986:31) puts it, 'one can [...] assimilate

⁴ *Aluk*, in its broadest usage, refers to 'the way of doing'; it is synonymous with the Indonesian term *adat* ('custom') or, sometimes, *kebudayaan* ('culture'). In a more restricted sense, 'it denotes the "way", suggesting the specific and invariable design of a ritual's performance' (Crystal and Yamashita 1987:49). *Aluk to dolo* is organized through a set of oppositions, the most important of which is 'east' and 'west'. *Aluk rampe matallo* ('the rituals on the side of the rising sun') comprises the rites for the living, the gods, and the deified ancestors. *Aluk rampe matampu* ('the rituals on the side of the setting sun') includes the rites for the dying and the non-deified ancestors. Sometimes, the rites for the non-deified ancestors are put in a category of their own and they are known as 'middle *aluk*'; traditionally the most important part of this *aluk* was the rites associated with head-hunting (Tsintjilonis 2000a). The invocations which form the basis of this article belong to 'the rituals on the side of the rising sun'. For my purposes here, the most important of these invocations is one which is known as *lalanna sukaran aluk* ('the path of the ritual measurements') and is recited during *menani pare* ('to sing the rice'). I also utilize information from *ma'tangdo tedong* ('to laud the buffalo'), which is used during the sacrifice which combines 'three kinds of blood' and forms part of several rituals. However, it is important to emphasize that I encountered different versions of these narratives and that the description that follows combines information from more than one source. Among these sources, I include the commentary on invocations offered by a variety of people. I also rely on a number of legends, myths, and folk tales.

a set of recurrent themes and relationships'. One hears repeatedly of Heaven and Earth, Puang Matua ('The Old Lord'), 'paths from right to left', ascending, descending, umbilical cords which 'split into three', and so on. More than that, although the quest for a coherent narrative took up a lot of my time, I have come to realize that it is not that important. In the Toraja universe, life pertains less to the beings (human, divine, or otherwise) themselves than to the world in which they exist. In other words, rather than who or what, what matters is how. Indeed, in terms of *how*, there is no real difference between the accounts offered by ritual specialists and 'ordinary' people.

In addition, I also need to emphasize, the majority of ritual specialists and ordinary people whom I have the privilege to call 'my friends and informants' came from the territory of Buntao', in the eastern part of Tana Toraja, where I carried out most of my fieldwork.⁵ In this respect, what I have to say mostly reflects a particular 'adat community' and adopts the perspective of its ritual functionaries, a perspective they describe as stemming from 'the rites which manifest bravery/the regulations which show greatness' (*aluk ma'lalong-lalong/sangka' maka sea-sea*). To their minds, this bravery or greatness mirrors the prominence of the Buntao' people and manifests their special responsibilities; they are the guardians of the 'knife' (*pisu*) which allows the various sacrifices to take place in the right way. This knife was entrusted to their original ancestor (Parange') and was nothing more than the 'spade' (*pekali*) used by Puang Matua, the creator-god of the Toraja, while he was trying to dig his wife out of a 'hard stone'. Thus the 'path' of the Buntao' people, in the sense of their genealogy, is but a continuation and a repetition of the sacred patterns first established by Puang Matua and his immediate progeny. So, what was the path of Puang Matua? How was the cosmos created? And why animism? Or, rather, why the type of animism commentators like Viveiros de Castro, Descola and Ingold have in mind? Let me start with Ingold and his insistence on the 'incipience' of life.

Like most traditional mythologies of the region, the myths and legends of the Sa'dan Toraja describe a process of creation which, to repeat the way Fox (1987:524) has phrased it, 'did not occur *ex nihilo*: the cosmos was violently

⁵ Tana Toraja is split into a number of traditional territories (each one possessing its own *adat*, or system of customs). Buntao', known in traditional terms as a *patang penanian* (a combination of four communities which 'sing the rice' in succession), is one of them. It is a relatively small territory inhabited by about 8,000 people living in scattered settlements. I initially spent 21 months in the area in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, I have been back a number of times on much shorter visits, most recently in 2002. Most of the information I discuss in this article stems from my original fieldwork (Tsintjilonis 1993) and came from a variety of people – mostly traditional ritual functionaries or respected elders (known as *gora-gora tongkon* and responsible for advising the ritual authorities). Although I am indebted to all of them, special thanks are due to Sapan Pong Masak, Pong Ramme, Ne' Kuli', Ne' Baru, Ne' Sulili, Pong Babak, Ne' Bua', Ne' Nangko, and Ne' Dena' (from the area of Makale).

quicken into life and all that exists is thus part of a living cosmic whole'. In Buntao', as elsewhere in insular Southeast Asia, this quickening into life is intimately associated with death: 'A fundamental feature of the traditional religions is their recognition that life depends upon death, that creation derives from dissolution' (Fox 1987:525). It is the pattern of this dissolution that gives life its initial impetus by forcing it to unfold.

The initial emergence of life is coextensive with the fate of a rather mysterious being known as *datu* ('sovereign'). In its original state, as one of the local priests put it, the universe was nothing but 'darkness' and 'silence'. There were no plants and no animals, no gods and no humans. However, in the midst of this 'lack of everything', there existed a hermaphroditic being known as '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'). This cosmogonic act of speaking is depicted as embodying and manifesting the sovereign's intrinsic ability 'to rotate its innermost kernel' (*umbaliang batu ba'tangna*) from 'right to left'. The very first words were formed in this way and, described as having originated in the 'stomach', they were the following: 'let us construct our bodies by standing back to back' (*tagaragamo siboko' rinding batang dikaleta*).

Following in the 'path' of these words and reproducing the initial motion from right to left, the original goddess appeared (*datu baine*, 'princess'). She exited from the left side of the hermaphroditic body of the 'sovereign', thereby creating the original male god (*datu muane*, 'prince'). Having stood 'back to back' for a while, they decided to separate: while the princess 'descended', the prince 'ascended'. It was the divergence of their 'paths' that created the earth and the sky by forcing them to separate from each other, but they did not move completely apart. Nevertheless, according to other information, it was not their movement which gave the universe its initial form but the forceful growth of a sandalwood tree that appeared at the place of the sovereign's dissolution. By this account, while the prince went to the 'tip', the princess occupied the 'root'.

The two original deities, known also as Sapak Langi' (Sky Gap) and Bura-tana (Earth Foam), eventually reunited in the very first marriage. A set of male triplets emerged from this union: Puang Matua (Old Lord), Simbolong Padang (Earth Hair-Knot), and Tulakpadang (Earth Support). They were born at the very point where the earth and the sky were still touching and they stayed together, as parts of an integral whole ('a single rice-plant stem/a common umbilical cord'), until their growth was complete. As soon as their bodies 'grew big and strong', they separated and each went to his own place: Puang Matua entered 'the stomach of the sky', Simbolong Padang remained on the surface of the earth, and Tulakpadang entered 'the soft soil'. Through

their dispersal, the partition of the universe was fixed, but it is their original unity that is emphasized in the various legends; they are always described as 'the spirits which were planted together'.

Thus, echoing familiar Austronesian themes, Toraja view the present order of the world as the product of a lengthy temporal process which has its origins in the marriage of Heaven (*langi'*) and Earth (*lino*), or the spirits most closely associated with them. Like the Mambai of East Timor, for instance, 'At the trunk, base, or origin of things is the creation of the universe by the primordial male and female beings, Heaven and Earth. Their interactions [...] produce the world and its inhabitants, separate life from death, and generate perpetual tensions in the cosmos, to which [...] ritual responds.' (Traube 1986:15.) As I was told time after time, it was these interactions which initially configured the Toraja universe and brought it to life. Through their offspring ('the original deities') and the different responsibilities they allocated to each of them, Sapak Langi' and Buratana separated above from below, east from west, land from water, and so on.

Thus, to return to the notion of 'incipience', the Toraja universe was not created out of nothing. At the very beginning, the cosmos was simply formless and asleep. In fact, local priests described the condition of both the sovereign and the cosmos in terms of 'sleep'. In its most basic dimensions, the Toraja cosmos was not created. It was simply set in motion through the death of the sovereign and the dissolution of its body. This emphasis on motion is not simply a figure of speech. The Toraja associate all forms of life with *sumanga'* (life-force, vitality, soul). As an early commentator put it, 'there is something, they believe, that is neither matter nor force. Let us call it soul. It is this soul that makes all living things tick: men and women, beasts and fishes, flowers and trees. It exists in differing quantities or concentrations in different living things.' (Wilcox 1949:117.) As most of the priests suggested, *sumanga'* is the 'essence' (*bombong*) of all manifestations of life. However, if *sumanga'* is to be successfully embodied, it must be contained and the components of its container must be arranged in a specific fashion: from right to left, around a source of power ('inner kernel'). While the establishment and successful propagation of particular forms of life is coextensive with this arrangement (*lalan kanan*, 'the path [from the] right'), death is perceived as movement from the left (*lalan kairi*, 'the path [from the] left') and is seen as resulting in the dissolution of the body and the dispersion of its components. Nevertheless, as life involves 'ascent' ('the path of the rising sun') and death 'descent' ('the path of setting sun'), both types of movement are incorporated in a single anti-clockwise motion which manifests the overall flow of vitality and is known as *lalan sumanga'* ('the flow of vitality'). Through its words and the dissolution of its body, this is the path the 'sovereign' opened.

Now, as he was the one who created most of the beings who inhabit the

Toraja universe, let me turn to Puang Matua in order to delimit the differences and similarities between humans, animals, plants, and natural phenomena. Do the Toraja 'endow natural beings with human dispositions' (Descola)? Does the Toraja cosmology posit a universe of 'spiritual unity and corporeal diversity' (Viveiros de Castro)?

Once each one of the triplets was in his place, Puang Matua started 'searching' for people and, as there were none, he decided to create some. With 'the essence of the hard stone', he managed to form 'four sets of twins'. However, they all refused to get married and function as people. Eventually, they all acquired their own distinct cosmic function by choosing what they wanted to do: Indo' Saripinna became the sun, Indo' Sumanggala the moon, Pong Pirik-Pirik the rain, La'te Mamara turned into thunder, Puang Radeng became 'the holder of the water key', Pong Tulangdenna 'the guardian' of its distribution, Bille Inaa 'the tearer of thoughts', and Lalondong 'the master of the village of the dead'.

When Puang Matua complained to his brothers that he was tired of trying to create people, especially as he did not succeed, he was told his mistake was that he was not married. He therefore started searching for a wife. Eventually, he found one in the southern part of the universe, inside 'a hard stone'. Using a spade, he attempted to dig her out. No matter how much he tried, though, she refused to join him without the appropriate ritual. After Puang Matua, under the guidance of his mother, prepared the proper sacrificial offerings (consisting of millet, because rice did not exist yet), they married and built the first house in the very centre of the sky. The wood for this house came from the tree which was of 'the same age as sky and earth'; in other words, this was the sandalwood that appeared at the point of the sovereign's dissolution (its seeds were dispersed and gave rise to the first forest).

As soon as they were settled, Puang Matua went off again in search of gold. With this gold, he constructed a pair of bellows and a cauldron. By putting some hard stone 'to sleep' inside this cauldron, he managed to make a hoe. When this hoe was 'brought together' (*dipasirintik*) with some more hard stone, 'bright colour' (fire) was created. Using this fire, the cauldron, and the 'double bellows', the divine blacksmith went on to create the ancestors of some of the most important animals (for example, chicken, dog) and plants (for example, sugar palm, bamboo). Nevertheless, as there were still no people, he travelled to 'the centre of the sea' in search of more gold. With this gold and a mixture of hard stone and fire, he tried once again to create people. This time, Manturino (the ancestor of water buffaloes) and Golden Stem (the ancestor of rice) emerged from the cauldron. However, all of these ancestors were 'like people' and it was not until one or two generations later that the actual animals or plants, in their currently recognizable form, finally appeared. For instance, the various kinds of rice plants emerged only after

their ancestral progenitor (Golden Stem) entered into marriage with Soft Mud. Thus, it was through marriage that the various empirical plants and animals eventually came to life, 'grew and multiplied'.

Nevertheless, as there were still no people, the wife of Puang Matua complained that their marriage had no 'spine' (*buku boko*). So he went on 'to forge' Datu Laukku' (*ukku*' is the cry of a baby), the male ancestor of humanity. This time he used 'the egg of the yellow earth', 'hard stone', 'the prince of water', and 'the heat of the fire'. In fact, as he felt that the sum total of four elements was inadequate, Puang Matua doubled the quantity of each of the elements in order 'to complete the number'. At the centre of this mixture, he put a piece of gold which was left over from his previous attempt. Because of this gold, there is an intimate connection between Manturino, Golden Stem, and Datu Laukku'. In fact, in some of the legends I encountered, they are described as 'three pieces of the same umbilical cord' or as 'the triplets who were planted together'.

In any case, a connection like this can very easily be construed as the kind of similarity or continuity which is thought to constitute the very essence of animism. As Pedersen (2001:416) puts it, in his discussion of animism in North Asia, 'There are no radical discontinuities here, only continuous substitutions of Same becoming Other, and vice versa. The fundamental animist principle, I therefore propose, is one of analogous identification.' This is a kind of identification which, as he makes clear, involves 'the ability to imagine oneself in someone else's position, and the ability to imagine someone else in one's own position; the scope of which imagination is in the animist case extended to include nonhuman beings' (Pedersen 2001:416). Indeed, there are many legends which bear witness to this kind of imagination. Legends where buffaloes sympathize with the predicament of human heroes and come to their rescue. Legends where people transform themselves into rice in order to protect it from its tormentors.⁶ Of course, this does not mean that my friends and informants live their lives regarding themselves as water buffaloes or as rice plants. In fact, the Toraja cosmology seems to deny consciousness and subjectivity to post-mythical animals and plants. Empirical animals and plants are not spiritualized in a way that individuates them. It is their human-like original ancestors who are usually seen as bearers of individuated subjectivity and the efficacy that comes with it. These ancestors are thought of as the 'owners' (*puang*) of their particular domains. Like the spirit 'masters' of Amazonian ethnography, to echo the words of Viveiro de Castro (1998:471), it is these owners who are 'endowed with intentionality analogous to that of humans' and 'function as hypostases' of the species

⁶ For examples from throughout Tana Toraja, see Nooy-Palm 1979:133-230.

with which they are associated.⁷ This does not mean that empirical animals and plants do not possess 'life-spirits' (*deata*). They do possess 'life-spirits' but these 'life-spirits' do not reflect autonomous beings with distinct biographies. During harvest, for instance, the 'life-spirit' of the rice plants must be protected and guided to the rice barns. This 'life-spirit', however, is thought to be a manifestation of its ancestral progenitor rather than a reflection of a specific rice-being which can be associated with specific rice fields.⁸

Thus, natural beings are endowed with human dispositions. Furthermore, echoing Viveiros de Castro's rendering of humanity as a condition and not a species, Toraja differentiate between different kinds of beings but do not imprison them in mutually exclusive types of sociality (Hallowell 1960:43). Their difference stems from the diverse substances Puang Matua utilized in order to create them. For instance, while the ancestors of the sun and the moon were created from 'hard stone', Datu Laukku' emerged from a mixture of water, fire, stone, mud, and gold. Nevertheless, despite their different 'natures' (*rupa*), all living beings partake of a kind of sociality which weaves together people, animals, plants, natural phenomena, and the gods themselves. Within this sociality, the various ancestors talk to each other, disagree with each other, make their own choices, and, above all, desire rather similar things. With the partial exception of ancestors like those of the sun and the moon who did not want a family life, they all get married, procreate, age, and come to occupy their rightful places in the universe.

From this point of view, the Toraja cosmos can be construed as an example of 'multinaturalism', that is, one culture encompassing many natures. It is this encompassment which both allows and enables the kind of sociality I have tried to emphasize. This is not to say that absolutely everything is part of this sociality. To borrow the example Pedersen uses in his discussion of animism in North Asia, there is nothing in the legends or sacred narratives of the Toraja which suggests that 'a small grey stone' is alive or connected to anything else via this sociality (see also Hallowell 1960:24-5). As he puts it, 'Nature, as we know it, exists in North Asian animism, but not as a unified and unifying whole. Rather, the uniting factor is a super-sociality that weaves together persons of all sorts, be they humans, animals, or spirit entities.' (Pedersen 2001:416; see also Hallowell 1960:28.) Thus, just like its North Asian counterpart, the basic shape of Toraja animist cosmology 'is a whole

⁷ When people make offerings to animals or plants, they are always offered to their original ancestors. In a similar fashion, when a tree must be felled, the permission of its 'spirit-owner' must be sought and some payment proffered (Tsintjilonis 1999:638).

⁸ However, especially in the case of rice and buffaloes (and cats), there is a certain amount of ambiguity. Sometimes, people do refer to the 'spirits' of particular animals or plants as if they were autonomous beings possessing intentions and consciousness. Rather than ritual functionaries, this idea was much more common among ordinary people.

with holes in it'; quite apart from 'small grey stones', there are many instances of life which are not considered as parts of this 'super-sociality'. In fact, 'the emphasis seems to be on those species which perform a key symbolic and practical role' (Viveiros de Castro 1998:471) such as the water buffalo, rice, pig, chicken, bamboo, and so on.

Of course, in the Amerindian concept Viveiros de Castro describes as multinaturalism, corporeal diversity is associated with spiritual unity too. In fact, it is this spiritual unity that enables and guarantees the conditions of Subjecthood which is shared by the various beings. So, beyond the corporeal diversity I have already discussed, how is the condition of spiritual unity construed in the myths and legends of the Toraja? This is where the notion of *sumanga'* attains its full significance.

Most of the time my informants described the sources of life in two distinct, though intimately related, ways. First, in the sense of *deata* ('life-spirits'), they accounted for the vitality of those manifestations of life which are bound by particular and distinct bodies or, at least, can be said to enjoy a minimum degree of structuration, a structuration mostly depicted in terms of 'joints' and 'navels'. Second, in the more general sense of *sumanga'* ('life-force', 'vitality'), they accounted for the foundation of all forms of life, a foundation upon which particular embodiments (even those lacking a distinct or visible body) ultimately depend.

As I have shown elsewhere (Tsintjilonis 1999), the overall contrast between *deata* and *sumanga'* may be seen as quite similar to Johansen's explication (1954:85) of the relationship between the Maori concepts of *tupu* and *mana*: they both 'denote unfolding, activity, and life; but whereas *tupu* is an expression of the nature of things and human beings as enfolded from within, *mana* expresses something participated, an active fellowship which according to its nature is never inextricably bound up with any single thing or any single human being'. There is, however, an important difference. In the case of the Toraja, all activity and life is part of a single continuum, a single unfolding. To phrase it somewhat differently, all *deata* are nothing more than embodied *sumanga'*. Thus, in the sense of *sumanga'*, life can be construed as an immortal and continuous lineage that does not depend upon particular manifestations; on the contrary, particular manifestations depend upon it.⁹ In the case of Datu Laukku' or Manturino, for instance, Puang Matua placed at the very centre of their bodies (as their 'inner kernel') a piece of gold. Although it is

⁹ This lineage is described by Toraja as a 'river' (*salu*); indeed, it is said to be 'the river of creation' (*salu kadadianna*). From this point of view, all the people of Buntao' are thought to emerge from 'a common source' (*misa' ulunna*) (Tsintjilonis 1999:636-7). Furthermore, as *sumanga'* and the way it is embodied are thought to give rise to specific patterns of *siri'* ('honour', 'shame') and *pemali* ('taboos', 'prohibitions'), the significance of this lineage extends well beyond the inheritance of substance so as to include distinct modes of living and being (Tsintjilonis 1997:263-71).

relatively hard and impenetrable, gold is also cool and moist. In most of its qualities, it is identical to the life force which, according to the Toraja, animates and lends vigour to all forms of life. Indeed, gold may be seen as a particular concentration (or source) of *sumanga'*. In the form of an inner kernel, however, gold is said to give rise to a flow which partially individuates and concentrates *sumanga'* by turning it into a 'life-spirit' (*deata*). In this sense, both Manturino and Datu Laukku' were endowed with *deata*, but these *deata* were nothing more than embodied manifestations of *sumanga'*.

Thus, in so far as every manifestation of life is thought to embody and contain *sumanga'*, the Toraja universe is characterized by spiritual unity. Of course, to echo Pedersen's discussion (2001:414) of animism in North Asia, this does not mean that 'every entity is endowed with such an interior spiritual quality, nor is this quality necessarily present in a given entity at all times'. Furthermore, even where it exists, there might be multiple and contradictory conceptions of what exactly it is. For instance, in the case of a water buffalo or a rice plant, it is thought to be very similar to a human 'life-spirit' (*deata*); in the case of an ancestral house or some kind of a talisman, it may well be seen as one instance of a more abstract spiritual force (*sumanga'*) (see also Waterson 2003). Nevertheless, despite the heterogeneity of its perceptions, it always implies and instantiates a spiritual unity. As I have already emphasized, this unity is embedded in corporeal diversity, a diversity whose patterns are well narrated and explicated in the early stages of the creation narratives and the tribulations of Puang Matua's initial quest for people.

However, throughout these early stages, this diversity is not perceived in terms of absolute boundaries or irreversible discontinuities. And, in the creation narratives, this is what is about to change. It is in this change that the Toraja cosmogony differs from the ethnographic materials which lie at the heart of Viveiros de Castro's account of Amerindian animism and his emphasis on perspectivism. Indeed, it is the kind of change which challenges the very notion of animism. In fact, its implications could even be construed as totemism. So, what exactly does this change involve? Let me return to the creation narratives.

The cosmos and its regulation

As soon as he 'grew strong and big', Puang Matua put Datu Laukku' to sleep and removed one of his ribs. From this rib, he went on to create a wife for him (Lando Beluak, 'Long Hair'). Their marriage was arranged by Puang Matua, and every aspect of their life was regulated through a well-defined set of ritual practices (*aluk*). The sum total of these practices, described as 'the complete one hundred' (*sanda saratu*'), involved everything from the

cultivation of rice to building a house. In addition, each *aluk* was 'paired' with a set of 'prohibitions' (*pemali*), giving rise to a variety of ritual obligations and responsibilities. The sum total of these *aluk* and *pemali* is known as 'the great pledge/oath'. This pledge involved Datu Lakku', Lando Beluak, and their progeny taking responsibility for the regulation of the cosmos by promising to guard and protect it – guard and protect it by reproducing the appropriate ritual patterns and paying close attention to the various prohibitions. In fact, as Datu Laukku' and Lando Beluak had twelve children, Puang Matua divided the various *aluk* and *pemali* among them. However, he soon realized, there were more ritual obligations than people. Thus, he created four more people in order to complete the necessary number of ritual functionaries. The materials used, however, were rather different and the 'nature' (*rupa*) of the last four people was quite dissimilar to that of Datu Laukku' and his progeny.

This time, he employed only 'mud', 'the liver of the soil', and a piece of *karurung* (the hard core of the sugar palm); this piece of wood was placed at the very centre of the mixture as the source of 'life-spirit'. Those created in this way were not 'true people' (*tau tongan*), like Datu Laukku', but 'slaves' (*kaunan*). Furthermore, although I never came across a ritual invocation which mentioned it in an explicit way, many of my informants suggested that Puang Matua went on to create people a third time. Like Datu Laukku', these people were created with 'the egg of the yellow earth', 'hard stone', 'the prince of the water', and 'the heat of the fire'. This time, however, the ingredients were not doubled and, rather than gold, a piece of iron was placed at the very centre of their bodies.

One of Datu Laukku' and Lando Beluak's children, Pande Paulo (*pande*, 'expert'; Paulo, 'Paul' – echoes, perhaps, of Christian influence), became the overall 'guardian' of the various rituals. His two sons were the first people to descend to earth: Londong di Langi' (Sky-Cock) and Pong Mulatau (Human Beginning). Londong di Langi' married To Kombong Bura (Maker of Foam) and they gave birth to a single child, Mulatau. Mulatau married Tamussa and they had three sons: Tangdilino' (Cannot be Shaken), Pondan Padang (Earth Pineapple-Fibre), and Passontik (Pointed Tip). When they 'grew big and strong', having divided Tana Toraja into three areas, they left for their own places: Passontik went east, Pondan Padang went west, and Tangdilino' to 'the centre of the land'. There Tangdilino' married Buen Manik (Pale Bead) and had eight sons. Eventually each one of his children left for their own area, carrying a set of specific rituals and a particularly potent object. One of them reached the area of Buntao', where he built the first house, 'opened' the first rice field, and initiated the proper execution of the various sacrifices. His name was Parange' and the rituals he brought with him were 'the rites which manifest bravery/the regulations which show greatness'. His potent object

was 'a spade for weeding the rice fields/a knife for dividing the sacrificial meat', a knife often identified with the spade Puang Matua had first used in his attempt to dig his wife-to-be out of a hard stone.¹⁰

Of course, this is not where 'the story of the sky and the earth' ends. Parange' and his progeny went on to establish various settlements in the area of Buntao'. Generation by generation, their descendants 'grew and multiplied'. Their responsibilities, however, did not change. To this day, through the rituals manifesting bravery and greatness, they 'guard' and 'protect' the cosmos, a cosmos which, growing in diversity and multiplicity, is still unfolding. There are many legends and more formal invocations that narrate and celebrate this growth in diversity.

For my part, I would like to emphasize the implications of 'the great pledge'. This pledge and the creation of diverse 'kinds' (*rupa*) of people seem to introduce a different principal in the ontology and cosmogony of the Toraja, a principal of discontinuity and heterogeneity which does not allow for 'the ability to imagine oneself in someone else's position, and the ability to imagine someone else in one's own position'. In other words, the domain of people is cut up and subdivided into different 'natures' (also *rupa*). These natures give rise to social hierarchy and differentiation, what is known in Tana Toraja as *tana'* ('stakes'). In Buntao', three kinds of stakes 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'). What is meant to be reflected in the very terminology of *tana'* is the different substances which Puang Matua placed at the very centre of the human bodies he created.¹¹

The *tana'* differentiation corresponds to a three-tiered status system: *to makaka matasak* ('ripe elder sibling'; noble), *to makaka* ('elder sibling'; commoner), and *kaunan* (slave). Although in its traditional rigidity this system of social stratification is characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers (see also Crystal 1974), its practical importance is reminiscent of Hocart's work (1970) and his view of castes as organizations for the conduct of sacrifice. Entrusted by Puang Matua with particular sacrificial offerings, each *tana'* has its own rights and duties: only a slave can 'wrap' a corpse or 'feed' the death-spirit of those recently deceased; in a similar fashion, only a commoner can 'cleanse' such a spirit and initiate the sacrificial process which will remove it from the sphere of death and 'convert' it into life; how-

¹⁰ A knife/spade symbolizing the *pekali* Parange' brought to the area of Buntao' is meant to be kept in the rafters of all the houses. However, I never saw one.

¹¹ Although it stems from the way Puang Matua created the various ancestors, this corporeal differentiation is not limited to a distant past. From generation to generation, maternal blood is thought to convey the 'essence' (*bombong*) of the material originally used. In this way, all people are associated with gold, iron, or wood.

ever, only a noble 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.¹²

Beyond their different sacrificial duties, Datu Laukku' and his descendants are more potent ('harder') than other kinds of people because 'their body is more' (*la'bimo tu kalena*). Indeed, as differences in beauty, truth, and impenetrability 'stem from' (*ombo' ri*) the body, different kinds of people are thought to manifest quite different forms of embodiment (Tsintjilonis 1997). This difference is almost always associated with the purity of one's blood. In the most general terms, *tana' bulaan* people (nobles) 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 (Volkman 1985:60). Because of this purity, different *tana'* need to keep relatively apart. For instance, a person of noble descent will never eat with a slave from the same plate. Indeed, even the food may be quite different. In Buntao', for instance, nobles are not allowed to consume the flesh of dogs.

Thus, 'the great pledge' and the creation of *tana'* appear to introduce an essential differentiation in the ontology and cosmogony of the Toraja. The similarity or continuity which can be construed as 'analogous identification' starts being mediated and overdetermined by difference and discontinuity. As people cease to be similar to each other, they start being identified with different realms of the cosmos. For instance, while the descendants of Datu Laukku' still enjoy an intimate proximity to rice plants and cooked rice, slaves and their descendants enjoy a much closer connection with the chaff of newly husked rice. In a similar fashion, slaves are not like Manturino. Indeed, if they resemble a water buffalo at all, they are like Sokko Mebali, a buffalo with down-curving horns, 'a trait which the Toraja appraise as ugly' (Nooy-Palm 1979:162). In a suggestive rendering of the difference between the descendants of Datu Laukku' and the descendants of the original slaves, one of the local priests suggested that the former are like a sandalwood tree (*sendana*) and the latter like a *bilante* tree; while the red hardwood of the sandalwood tree is thought to resemble the blood which runs in the veins of humans and keeps them alive, the leaves of the *bilante* are boiled to produce the black dye which is associated with death and used during a mortuary ritual. More than that, via the substances which Puang Matua is thought to

¹² Although slavery has been abolished, persons of slave descent 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). They still depend on their traditional 'owners' (*puang*), but this dependence should be seen as a form of patronage involving access to jobs, cash loans, and so on.

have placed at the very centre of their original ancestors' bodies (that is, gold, iron, and wood), each *tana'* comes to be associated with different natural phenomena and qualities. In this way, it is not only people but the cosmos as a whole that is disjoined and partitioned.

Within these associations, the most important contrast is that between nobles and slaves. In a reflection of their purity, to give but a few examples, nobles are associated with the rising sun, the light of the day, and the eddies or surging flow of running water. In a parallel fashion, manifesting their relative lack of potency, slaves are associated with the setting sun, the dark of the night, and the torpor of stagnant water. While those belonging to *tana' bulaan* (nobles) are like the 'roots' of a tree, *tana' karurung* people (slaves) are like its 'leaves'. From the rising sun or the light of day to the setting sun and the dark of the night, the former are intimately related to increase and life, the latter to decrease and death. Hence, in terms of the traditional social organization, while the supreme priest-leader of the Buntao' community is always a noble, the death priest is a slave. In between the priest-leader and the death priest, traditionally the realm of headhunting (Tsintjilonis 2000a), one finds the war-chief, that is, the kind of potency associated with the 'sharpness' of knives and the 'hardness' of iron. In this way, by adhering to the various responsibilities and duties Puang Matua allocated to each of them, the various *tana'* safeguard and protect different aspects of the universe, a universe whose regulation depends on a variety of human natures. Thus, while the creation of the cosmos may be seen as animist, its regulation appears as totemist. To use Pedersen's terms, it is as if a cosmos of 'analogous identification' (animism) is gradually supplanted by a cosmos of 'homologous differentiation' (totemism).

Of course, ever since the convincing deconstruction by Lévi-Strauss, most anthropologists have kept well clear of the concept of totemism. As Pedersen (2001:417) puts it, 'Unlike "animism", which has remained acceptable, if not fashionable, within anthropology [but see Bird-David 1999], "totemism" is widely taken to be illusory as a concept of universal applicability, and therefore one misleading to employ' (see also Hiatt 1969; Ingold 1998; Kessler 1971). Nevertheless, following Pedersen's discussion of animism and totemism in North Asia, it would be possible to suggest that totemism is not illusory in Buntao', at least in the 'strictly formalist manner' of Lévi-Strauss.¹³ According to Lévi-Strauss (1962:77), 'it is not the resemblances, but the differences,

¹³ In relation to the usefulness of Lévi-Strauss's work on totemism, it is important to emphasize, other commentators take a different view. According to Ingold (2000:425), the way in which Lévi-Strauss (and Descola) conceives of totemism (that is, as a classificatory project) is of limited value – for instance, it cannot help us explicate the ethnographic context of Aboriginal Australia, 'where totemism is fundamentally about people's connection with the land'. I do not include ethnographic material from Aboriginal Australia in my discussion because the significance

which resemble each other [...]. The resemblance presupposed by so-called totemic representations is between [...] two systems of differences.' As Pedersen (2001:417) himself puts it, 'For Lévi-Strauss, then, it is not the possible (animist) identities between, say, Species A and Clan 1, or Species B and Clan 2, that matter [...] [but] the fact that the difference between Species A and Species B is similar to the difference between Clan 1 and Clan 2'. Indeed, placing the emphasis on 'systems of difference' and utilizing the work of Humphrey (1996) among the Daur Mongols, Pedersen (2001:418) goes on to suggest that the concept of totemism may well be used to describe a kind of cosmology wherein 'the specific powers and abilities of different social agents are symbolically and literally linked to the equally specialized properties of natural entities'. As he notes, such a perception differs from animism in important ways:

While the realm of sociality is still extended beyond humanity to include mountains, trees, animals, and the like as nonhuman persons, the realm of humanity is simultaneously cut up. [...] There is no unifying whole here. This is not a world laid out to perceive horizons and perhaps even go beyond them, a world devoid of boundaries and discontinuities. Rather, it is as if someone laid a grid over the world [...]. Consequently, there is little room for analogous identification [...]. Instead, what seems to be at play are two homologous differentiations; a given human's domain differs from those of other humans in the same way as a given nonhuman's domain differs from those of other nonhumans. (Pedersen 2001:418-9)

Thus, 'the great pledge' and the creation of *tana'* present us with a contradiction which needs to be resolved: not only do people of noble descent differ fundamentally from people of slave descent, their difference is analogous to the difference between the sandalwood and the *bilante*, the waning and the waxing moon, the rising and the setting sun, and so on. Either the cosmogony of the Toraja is not animist or, while the initial creation of the cosmos is animist, its eventual regulation is totemist. Obviously, having placed the emphasis on animism, it seems that only the second alternative is available. However, rather than attempting to conjoin the two principles, I would

of land in Buntao' is quite different (rather than land, the flow of *sumanga'* is associated with 'space'; see Tsintjilonis 1999). Focusing on the work of Descola, Viveiros de Castro (1998:473) has criticized the notion of totemism along similar lines, '[t]otemism [...] seems to me to be a heterogeneous phenomenon, primarily classificatory rather than cosmological: it is not a system of relations between nature and culture [...], but rather of purely logical and differential correlations'. Of course, as Descola (1996) premises his discussion on Lévi-Strauss's rendering of totemism, this criticism would also apply to Lévi-Strauss and, by extension, to my adoption of Lévi-Strauss's totemic 'logic'. However, rather than a system of 'purely logical and differential correlations', I show that totemism is an integral part of the way in which the flow of *sumanga'* is supported and oriented. In other words, there is nothing to stop us construing Lévi-Strauss's 'logical correlations' in a way which illuminates the Toraja ethnography.

like to suggest that what appears as difference is nothing more than a continuation of similarity – a continuation which, if it is to be grasped as such, demands a closer look at the way in which the Toraja perceive the connection between 'being' and 'appearing'. The easiest way to frame the discussion of this connection is through a contrast with Viveiros de Castro and his notion of perspectivism. The question becomes: can the perspectivism of Amazonia be applied to Tana Toraja?

Similarity versus difference

In the context of Amerindian cosmology, as I have already indicated, Viveiros de Castro (1998:470) associates animism with perspectivism, an indigenous theory according to which

humans see humans as humans, animals as animals, and spirits (if they see them) as spirits; however, animals (predators) and spirits see humans as animals (as prey) to the same extent that animals (as prey) see humans as spirits or as animals (predators). By the same token, animals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture.

Despite the existence of spiritual unity, I have been unable to find any examples of such perspectivism in Toraja ethnography. Of course, both in the area of Buntao' and elsewhere in Tana Toraja, there are many legends which narrate cooperation between specific 'kinds' of people and particular 'kinds' of animals, plants, and natural phenomena. In most of these stories, there is little qualitative difference between the agency of humans and nonhumans. Animals talk, offer help, and demand their rewards; plants and natural phenomena, like the sun or a mango tree, come to the rescue of human 'heroes'. There are even stories that narrate the way some animals metamorphose into humans. Perhaps, even more suggestively, some of the traditional ritual functionaries are thought to be able to 'change their form' in order to protect the realms with which they are associated.¹⁴ However, this does not amount to the kind of anthropomorphism Viveiros de Castro explicates and emphasizes. Buffaloes and rice plants do not 'see themselves' as human. There are

¹⁴ For instance, a *to menani*, the priest who is responsible for 'singing the rice', can transform himself into a *dena'* (rice-bird) or a *sulili* (small mouse). By turning himself into its tormentors, he is said to be able to protect and advise the 'spirit' of the rice. In a similar way, a *to burake* (a priest who is thought to be both male and female) is considered capable of becoming a cat; as a cat, s/he can safeguard the wealth of a family.

no stories which speak of water-buffalo villages or construe such villages as similar to human villages. Indeed, the Toraja material seems to be lacking the central idea underlying the notion of perspectivism. As Viveiros de Castro (1998:470) makes clear, 'Such a notion is virtually always associated with the idea that the manifest form of each species is a mere envelope (a "clothing") which conceals an internal human form'.

Of course the idea of body as 'clothing' is widespread throughout Amazonia and has been interpreted by anthropologists in a variety of ways. For instance, Rivière (1994:256) has suggested that 'the native people of Amazonia live in a highly transformational world where What You See Is Not Necessarily What You Get'. Discussing the connection between appearance and reality, he insists that 'appearances are deceptive, in the sense that they may be put on and taken off like clothes that hide the underlying reality' (Rivière 1994:256; see also Hallowell 1960:43). However, Viveiros de Castro (1998:482) insists that 'nothing could be further from the Indians' mind when they speak of bodies in terms of "clothing"'. In fact, as he puts it,

It is not so much that the body is clothing but rather that clothing is a body. [...] To put on mask-clothing is not so much to conceal a human essence beneath an animal appearance, but rather to activate the powers of a different body. [...] In short: there is no doubt that bodies are discardable and exchangeable and that 'behind' them lie subjectivities which are formally identical to humans. But the idea is not similar to our opposition between appearance and essence; it merely manifests the objective permutability of bodies which is based in the subjective equivalence of souls. (Viveiros de Castro 1998:482.)

It is this 'permutability' which does not apply to Buntao'. According to Toraja, far from hiding some underlying reality, appearances are a constituent part of existence – not in the sense of portraying, mirroring or, as Viveiros de Castro has it, activating it, but in the sense of being embedded in and growing out of it. Even when appearances are delineated as covering or enveloping, they are, to echo, the *Soliloquies* of George Santayana (1922:131), 'like shells, no less integral parts of nature than are the substances they cover'. Thus, although *sumanga'* is invisible, appearances can be used to delimit its flow and detect the potency of its source (see also Hallowell 1960).

As I have argued elsewhere (Tsintjilonis 1995) in much more detail, people in Tana Toraja 'reveal a fascination with the surface of living things' (Zerner 1981:101). From interpreting the configuration of speckles on the hide of water buffaloes to registering the direction of veins on banana leaves, this fascination both manifests and embodies a specific mode of knowing: knowing which beings 'match each other', what is their intrinsic potency, how or when they can be used and, above all, where they fit in the cosmos as a whole or, to put it another way, what is their true 'nature' (*rupa*).

Human beings themselves are not exempt from this hermeneutics. Pimples, spots, birthmarks, warts, furrows, lines, wrinkles, hair, veins, and cuticles are all signs. With its unsullied and blemished surfaces, the human body is as marked as the rest of the universe. In general, long unbroken lines, as well as circular patterns which appear to stem from a definite epicentre and to move 'from right to left', embody and manifest good fortune. Conversely, discontinuity or movement 'from left to right' foretell and instantiate misfortune and illness. Sometimes, as with spots of smallpox, colour and diffuseness are all-important: described as similar to grains of rice or stars in the sky, they are thought to herald an abundance of children and material wealth.

As with health, wealth and fortune, truth, goodness and beauty can also be detected on the surface of the human body. Especially truthful bodies are thought to be hard and relatively impenetrable. Their hardness, mostly manifested in what is described as a 'lack of gaps', is perceived as a lack of blemishes. Implying solidity and cohesiveness, this hardness is explicitly associated with truth and goodness: the harder a body is, the more truth it embodies; the more truth it embodies, the better it is. Thus, while *tana' bulaan* people (nobles) are more truthful than those belonging to *tana' bassi* (commoners), *karurung* people (slaves) are not even 'true' people. Beauty is a further dimension of the same configuration: to be truthful is also to be beautiful. Everyday activities like grooming, bathing, and applying coconut oil are not attempts to embellish or transfigure one's body but to accentuate what is already there. Clothes and jewellery themselves must match the true nature of the body. If they do not, a Toraja risks more than ugliness or bad taste. For instance, if a woman of slave descent was to adorn herself with a pair of golden earrings or a golden bracelet, she would become ill and might die. As gold is extremely potent and powerful ('hard'), such an illness would arise from the fact that her body and the substance of gold did not match each other. Being much more than a simple accoutrement, a piece of gold jewellery is viewed as a sign similar to the colour patches on a buffalo. In a parallel fashion, in traditional stories and some ritual practices, when a man (as it usually is) wants to remain anonymous and avoid detection, rather than using clothes to change or mask his appearance, he undresses. This action makes 'his path' nearly invisible and difficult to follow. Like jewellery, clothes instantiate and delineate reality, they do not hide or activate it. Thus, truth, goodness, beauty, and fortune may be described as appurtenances. Like arms or legs, they form an integral part of one's bodily configuration.

What needs to be emphasized is that, whatever the particular instance of life (a water buffalo, a rice plant, a human), a body is always constructed in the same way: around a centre, from right to left. For instance, drawing on the creation narratives, this is exactly how Puang Matua created Datu Laukku': the heat of the fire was placed as the 'source of the navel' (*to' posi'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 as the 'source of the tongue' (*to' lilana*). Furthermore, having started with the heat of the fire and moving from 'right to left' (*liling kanan*), Puang Matua placed the remainder of the elements in a circle around the navel. Having prepared the mixture, he added a fifth element. This particular ingredient, 'pure gold' (*bulaan tasak*), was fixed as the 'source of potency' (*to makarra'*) and became the 'essence' (*bombong*) of the body. Both in the case of Datu Laukku' and his descendants, 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') and, by revolving from right to left, gives rise to a flow of energy which constitutes the 'life-spirit' (*deata*) of a particular human being of noble descent. This flow of energy is supported by and manifested in a particular kind of living body. It is the way the various substances as a whole are fixed from right to left, around a centre, that enforces and safeguards the movement of life, that is, the movement of the inner kernel from right to left.

The body of every life-instance which is thought to possess a life-spirit (for example, slaves, water buffaloes, chickens, rice plants) is structured in the same way. It is structured in the same way because this is the way that ensures *sumanga'* will be focused and properly embodied. It is the way in which the cosmos was awakened (through the words of the sovereign) and the way in which Puang Matua created the various ancestors. Even in cases, like the sun or the moon, where only one ingredient was used (that is, hard stone), Puang Matua is said to have forged the bodies from right to left in the shape of an 'inwardly moving spiral' (*ma'suale lu tama*), the centre of which was formed by the 'essence' (*bombong*) of the ingredient used. This same spiral shape is thought to characterize those forms of life which, lacking an individuated life-spirit in the sense of *deata*, are considered as instances of *sumanga'* in a more abstract way (for instance, ancestral houses, knives, water, fire). Thus, everybody is structured in the same way; what differs from one 'kind' of body to another is the substance which is thought to constitute its inner essence and source of potency. It may be gold, iron, wood, hard stone, or some other substance. Of course, different inner kernels demand different kinds of bodily support. For example, the golden essence of a noble cannot be supported by or embodied in a body which is made from 'mud' and 'the liver of the soil'; 'mud' and 'the liver of the soil' can support and configure only a slave essence. In this way, although they themselves constitute the crucial difference, different sources of potency imply and demand substantially different bodily peripheries too.

Thus, to return to perspectivism, the Toraja fascination with the surface of living things is based on the assumed intermingling of two different aspects of existence. Although neither can be reduced to the other's terms, all living

things are seen as having an outside and an inside domain. However, rather than occluding (Rivière) or activating (Viveiros de Castro) each other, the connection between the two domains is one of reticulation. This reticulation is not a relation between external appearance and internal reality but a material configuration between the life-giving qualities of an invisible centre and the life-sustaining qualities of its periphery, a periphery which in itself must match the invisible centre. In other words, in Tana Toraja, bodies cannot possibly be discardable or exchangeable. Despite their spiritual unity, the various instances of life are indeed their bodies; and as bodies, depending on their 'nature', they match or do not match other bodies.

It is in this sense that the difference which could be construed as totemism is nothing more than a continuation of animism. While in Amazonia the various life-instances can be different because they are the same (that is, human), in Buntao' they can be the same (that is, instances of *sumanga'*) because they are different. It is their difference which is both embodied and manifested in their appearances, in their visible 'signs' (*tanda*). In a strange echo of Foucault's work (1974:17) on 'resemblance', which '[u]p to the end of the sixteenth century [...] played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture', these signs could easily be construed as 'signatures'. As he puts it, quoting Crolius,¹⁵ 'It is useless to go no further than the skin or bark of plants if you wish to know their nature; you must go straight to their marks – "[...] to their internal virtue, which has been given to them by heaven as a natural dowry, [...] a virtue, I say, that is to be recognized rather by its signature"' (Foucault 1974:26). Read potency for 'virtue' and this 'natural dowry' becomes very similar to the way in which Puang Matua endowed different kinds of life with different sources of inner potency. Furthermore, as Foucault (1974:26-7) emphasizes, this

system of signatures reverses the relation of the visible to the invisible. Resemblance was the invisible form of that which, from the depths of the world, made things visible; but in order that this form may be brought out into the light in its turn there must be a visible figure that will draw it out from its profound invisibility. This is why the face of the world is covered with blazons, with characters, with ciphers and obscure words [...].

Read veins on banana leaves or speckles on buffalo hides for 'characters', warts or furrows for 'ciphers', ritual obligations or duties for 'obscure words', and you have a summary of the affinity between 'being' and 'appearing' I have tried to describe: an affinity which 'draws out from its profound invisibility' the flow of *sumanga'*; an affinity which alludes to the homogeneity of life through the heterogeneity embedded in the 'signs' (*tanda*) of its various instances.

¹⁵ See O. Crolius, *Traité des signatures* (French translation Lyon, 1624, p. 4).

Conclusion

Through an effusion of such signs, Toraja life proclaims its variety and discloses its arrangements. In a fashion partly reminiscent of Peirce's explication (1955) of 'indexical signs', *tanda* are rooted in the very things they signify; beyond mere contiguity, they actually inhere in the things they describe. Although one's nature is grasped in terms of its signs, it is not in the eye of the beholder but embedded in what is beheld. The notion of *rupa* ('nature'), being both appearance and reality, conflates 'the real' and the way it is perceived. Bridging the gap between what Lévi-Strauss has distinguished as 'lived in' and 'thought of' orders (De Heusch 1985:2), it presents an example of what Geertz has construed as 'enchanted worlds' (see Errington 1989:295, note 1).

Clearly, despite the lack of perspectivism, this enchantment can be construed as animism. Of course, the implications of this animism do not exhaust themselves in the legends and creation narratives which I have discussed here. The main difference between the various *tana'* relates to their different ritual responsibilities. In other words, first and foremost, it is in terms of ritual that one's place in the flow of life ought to be delimited. However, this is something I have already done elsewhere (Tsintjilonis 2000a, 2000b); the purpose of the present article is different. Rather than (re)introducing yet another analytical category in the ethnographic material, my aim is to suggest that animism is an attribute of the Toraja cosmology itself. Furthermore, it is an attribute which forces us to appreciate what Toraja themselves emphasize in a myriad of ways: the importance of the body. From this point of view, we need to recognize that we are not dealing with a system of classification but with a register of embodiment, a register which utilizes difference to construct similarity (and not, as in the perspectivism of Amazonia, similarity to construct difference). In any case, rather than a way of seeing the world, it is a way of being in the world. Fastening the imagination to the body, the Toraja cosmology aims at its own incarnation by instigating and documenting the flow of life which moves through its instances in pursuit of its own trajectory. This very trajectory depends on the successful propagation of bodies, but bodies are not an attribute of life, they are life itself – a life which, rather than imagined, is lived.

Beyond the elucidation of the Buntao' cosmology and its contrast with Amazonian 'perspectivism', I would like to think that my discussion has contributed to the ongoing debate on animism in another way too, by suggesting that animism and totemism are compatible. However, their compatibility does not reflect Descola's insistence (1996:87) on 'mental models which organize the social objectivation of non-humans', but rather an 'understanding of being as immanent within the manifold appearances of the lifeworld' (Ingold 2000:130). For Ingold, of course, such an understanding is the essential characteristic of animism and, therefore, incompatible with totemism; as

he puts it, 'With a totemic ontology, the forms life takes are already given [...]. With an animic ontology, to the contrary, life is generative of form.' (Ingold 2000:112.) In other words, 'The totemic world is essential, the animic world is dialogical' (Ingold 2000:114). However, as I have tried to show, the beings which inhabit the Toraja cosmos are not only manifestations of life's immanence, they are also intrinsic parts of the way in which this immanence is articulated through the emergence and multiplication of bodies, bodies which, more than manifesting life, support and facilitate it. To use Ingold's terms, life is not simply 'generative of form' but also of the configuration such form will need to take: in the potentiality of its immanence, life is animic; in the actuality of its realization and its congealment, in particular 'kinds of being' (*rupa*), life is totemic. Thus, in the context of Buntao', if animism pertains to the force of life (*sumanga'*), totemism pertains to the way the manifestations of this life are embodied and related to each other.

However, in terms of my own ethnography, I do need to acknowledge that the creation story I tell here could have been rather different. My friends and informants often disagreed about the names of the various deities and even some stages of the creation as a whole. Some were more eloquent than others. Predictably, the traditional priests and ritual functionaries were much more knowledgeable than 'ordinary' people. Even the accounts within the ritual invocations I managed to record differed slightly from settlement to settlement. Nevertheless, despite such disagreements, they all spoke of Heaven and Earth, Puang Matua, the existence of different natures, and the potency of gold. More than that, they all emphasized the importance of movement from right to left and the significance of signs. In other words, although the creation story I have told could have been different, my argument would not have changed. Of course, this is not to suggest that in present-day Buntao' the cosmos of *aluk to dolo* is not challenged or reinterpreted. However, at least among those who still play a part in the 'old' religion, these challenges seem to concentrate on linking particular people to different origins or sources of life. To give but one example, what is questioned is not whether slaves exist, but whether one's mother was one of 'them'.¹⁶

¹⁶ Of course, the question of change deserves much closer attention. Following patterns of change well established throughout Tana Toraja (Volkman 1985; Adams 1988), although farming is still the principal means of subsistence, the development of the nation state (in all of its vicissitudes), the modern emphasis on compulsory education, and the growth of temporary migration have brought new professions and challenges to the area. In addition, with their exposure to the outside world increasing dramatically, the vast majority of the population have converted to Christianity, and many of the traditional practices have been abandoned, neglected, or modified. Nevertheless, reframed in terms of 'modernization' or 'ethnic identity', many of the 'old' imperatives and statuses still survive. Thus, from the nobles who monopolize the positions of authority in the local administration, to Christian descendants of slaves who contest the 'truth' of their status through 'traditional' sacrifices financed with money acquired in the islands of Borneo or Irian Jaya, the analysis of the Buntao' tradition I have attempted in this article needs to be complemented by a more explicit discussion of continuity and discontinuity.

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