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Death and the Sacrifice of Signs: 'Measuring' the Dead in Tana Toraja

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ABSTRACT

Suggesting the existence of an intrinsic connection between sacrifice and embodiment, this article considers the meaning and symbolism of traditional mortuary rituals among the Sa'dan Toraja of Indonesia. Manifesting different ways of being, these rituals engender different ways of dying. Focusing on the sacrificial patterns of their engenderment, I discuss these differences and the way in which they are thought to 'emerge from the body'.

Starting with Mauss's (1979; orig. 1936) seminal article on 'body techniques' which, to echo Michel Feher, 'mingle physical capacities and mental mechanisms to form a body adapted to circumstances' (1989:11), much has been written about the relationship between embodiment and society – for instance, 'the body of a charismatic citizen or of a visionary monk, a mirror image of the world or a reflection of the spirit' (ibid.). Throughout this writing, however, although embodiment (i.e., the experience and/or perception of 'having', 'being in' or even 'being' a body) has been shown to be anything but constant or universal, the substantive foundation of the empirical human body has rarely been questioned. Beyond the relativity of embodiment, as Frank puts it, 'there is a flesh which is formed in the womb, transfigured (for better or worse) in its life, dies and decomposes' (1991:49). Thus, despite the adventures of its apperception, 'corporeality remains an obdurate fact' (ibid.).

Mirroring the irreducibility of this 'fact', indigenous theories of physiology (including the associated ritual technologies of birth, death, and curing) are mostly considered as contextually bound rationalizations which 'account satisfactorily for the facts that meet the eye' (Héritier-Augé 1989:160). Indeed, in 'the form of more or less elaborate theories of the person', they are thought to be aimed 'at presenting a coherent, well-ordered world image, fraught with meaning and able to account for its existence and reproduction' (ibid.). Hence, what is produced at the intersection of the universal obduracy of corporeality and the relativity of human perception is an analysis of the body's representations rather than the modes of its construction (see Feher 1989). The supposed universality of the natural body leads to an inevitable contrast between scientific theory and theories based on 'contextually bound

rationalizations', surreptitiously introducing the classic dichotomy of nature and culture. In other words, it obscures the exciting possibility that the body itself (i.e., its corporeality) 'may actually have a history' (Bynum 1989:171; cf. Laqueur 1990).

Bynum's suggestion, of course, is intimately linked with the particularities of her own research into female spirituality in the later Middle Ages, a spirituality characterized by bizarre bodily occurences like stigmata, incorruptibility of the cadaver in death, mystical lactations and pregnancies, strange visions, and so on. Although during my fieldwork among the Sa'dan Toraja[1] of South Sulawesi (Indonesia) I came across a multitude of stories about similar occurrences and their visible 'signs' (*tanda*), this article does not directly concern these narratives or their immediate implications. It is rather about death and the sacrifices of the mortuary ritual. For the Sa'dan Toraja, mortuary sacrifices are intimately linked with the body of the deceased. Like the bodily occurrences articulated in Bynum's argument, they can be seen as reflecting different forms of substantive embodiment and divergent somatic destinies. To phrase it somewhat differently, they themselves constitute 'bodily signs' (*tanda kale*) – that is, signs of distinct physiologies and dissimilar corporeal patterns.

The sacrificial articulation of these signs is the focus of this article. Using information from Buntao', a community in the eastern part of Tana Toraja,[2] I shall describe the ritual process, catalogue the major sequences of mortuary rites and explain the link between the different sacrificial imperatives and the body of the deceased. Rather than *ada' totemo* ('present-day customs'), it is important to emphasize, this information privileges what my Toraja friends called *ada' tongan* ('true customs'). Consisting of traditional narratives (*ossoran*) and long lists of oblatory practices (*aluk*), this truth was often portrayed as being in danger of disappearing. With the majority of the local population having converted to Christianity, many of the rituals I shall be discussing have been modified or abandoned. As in the rest of Tana Toraja (see Volkman 1985; Adams 1988), the growth of the Nation State and the continuous expansion of temporary migration have introduced new aspirations and new kinds of authority to the area of Buntao' – despite my interest in the 'old ways', the first persons I was sent to meet were a local school teacher and a Protestant priest! In a rather ironic twist, however, the growing popularity of Tana Toraja as a major tourist destination is starting to contribute to a re-discovery of the 'old ways' and their somewhat problematic re-packaging in terms of folkloric spectacle and authentic 'local colour' (cf. Acciaioli 1985).

In ethnographic terms, leaving aside the implications of these changes, my purpose is to provide a brief account of *aluk to mate* ('the rites for the dead'). *Aluk to mate* is an integral part of *aluk to dolo* ('the rites of the ancestors'), the traditional 'religion' of the Sa'dan Toraja. In the indigenous cosmological model, 'the rites for the dead' are inherited from the ancestors. In an endless process of repetition, the present should be but a replica of the past. In the accounts of *aluk to mate* I encountered, this need for replication was explicated in terms of an unchanging 'truth' (*tongan*). In trying to portray this truth, I have adopted the convention of the 'ethnographic present' – a convention which like this truth, rather than ignoring change, merely tries 'to bracket [it]' (*dirompo*). Of course, in its unavoidable evocation of a timeless and quintessential universe of being and meaning, this bracketing of change simply postpones the need to deal with discontinuity and fragmentation. Much more than that, to echo Michel Foucault, it 'diversifies the theme of continuity'; in other words, 'it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same' (1972:21). In partial defense of the ethnographic present and my adoption of it, I should emphasize that this diversification of the theme of continuity was also the strategy my informants appeared to adopt. The bracketing of change in their accounts of Toraja ritual and its eternal truth was their own attempt to rethink their history in the form of the same – a kind of 'cosmological present'.

The most important characteristic of this cosmological present and the truth in which it is manifested is a fascination with the notion of 'completeness'. According to my friends and informants, anything in progress was 'not good' (cf. Volkman 1985:15). Very often, com-

pleteness was seen as the absolute pre-condition of truth. In this respect, whether a particular sacrificial offering was described as a 'step', a 'branch' or a 'joint', its efficacy was always said to be embedded in the way it was combined with other offerings to form a specific sacrificial sequence, a 'ladder', a 'tree' or a 'frame'. In the same way, the truth of my friends' explication of *aluk to mate* depended on reproducing the ancestral ways in their completeness and right order – that is, from 'root' to 'tip'. My bracketing of change is simply an attempt to reproduce this completeness, so as to point out some of its consequences which would be much less clear without it. In any case, despite the growing importance of Christianity and *ada' totemo* ('present-day customs'), *aluk to mate* still forms an integral part of everyday life in Buntao'. Indeed, two of the 'highest' traditional funerals in living memory took place during my fieldwork. In a similar fashion, although their immediacy has diminished somewhat, most of the notions I shall be discussing (e.g., 'completeness', 'truth', 'hardness', 'softness', etc.) have retained their significance. In the case of ritual completeness, for example, there were disagreements between followers of *aluk to dolo* and Christian converts. Rather than the actual characteristics of this completeness, however, these disagreements concerned the rights and wrongs of its attribution to the sacrificial actions of particular people.

Nevertheless, by placing the emphasis on completeness, I may be accused of presenting a picture which fails to acknowledge one of the most intriguing aspects of ritual – that is, its polysemy or multivocality (see Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 202). Furthermore, to echo Leach's comment on the nature of ritual, by relying on the commentary of a few informants, it may be thought that I am turning 'a language of argument' into 'a chorus of harmony' (1954:278). However, following a number of ethnographic accounts of ritual (e.g., Fernandez 1965; Watson 1985), I would like to suggest that both of these problems are more apparent than real. Echoing Geertz's distinction between 'orthopraxy' and 'orthodoxy' (1973:177), *aluk to dolo* places the emphasis on practice. Rather than forming a dogma through a set of specific beliefs, it focuses on a number of sacrificial 'signs' which need to be arranged in specific ways. These **practical** arrangements place the emphasis on form, not content (cf. Watson 1985) – knowledge of which, even in the case of rituals which have been abandoned, survives the dramatic changes in the local religious landscape and is widely shared. Thus, although I came across a good deal of disagreement at the level of content (the 'meaning' of signs), there was considerable agreement at the level of form (the 'ways' in which these signs have to be arranged). This is an example of how 'a language of argument' and 'a chorus of harmony' can co-exist in mutual implication and entanglement. Indeed, to return to the point about polysemy or multivocality, the very ambiguity of these signs may be seen as integral to their overall efficacy and continuing relevance (cf. Fernandez 1965).

Throughout this article, then, the emphasis is placed on the 'ways' mortuary sacrifices are arranged in order to be completed from 'root' to 'tip'. This emphasis allows me to combine the voices of my main informants with a variety of other voices, both from the past and the present, bringing the experience and understanding of my 'conversations' with the people of Buntao' 'to the bar of discussion' (Gudeman & Rivera 1990:191).[3] In any case, as the territory of Buntao' remains one of the least studied areas in Tana Toraja, this discussion is also meant as a contribution to the ethnographic record of the Sa'dan Toraja and their tradition.

DEATH AND THE BODY

In Buntao', as throughout Tana Toraja, *aluk to dolo* is divided into two main domains: 'rites on the side of the rising sun' (*aluk rampe matallo*) and 'rites on the side of the setting sun' (*aluk rampe matampu'*). While *aluk rampe matallo* comprises the rites for the living and the deities, *aluk rampe matampu'* deals with the recently dead and the non-deified ancestors. Within both domains, the central element is sacrifice. Indeed, as Volkman notes, for the Sa'dan Toraja 'sacrifice is the essence of what we translate as "culture"' (1985:177n 7). By

sacrifice, following Valerio Valeri, I mean any action that 'includes the consecration of an "offering" to a deity' (1985:37; cf. 1996) – it is specific combinations of sacrificial offerings that make up particular *aluk*. My adoption of this definition should not be seen as a refusal to acknowledge the problems involved in defining the notion of sacrifice – both in the context of anthropological theory (see Valeri 1985:62-70) and the comparative ethnography of Indonesia (see Howell 1996). Rather than implying the possibility of an unambiguous theoretical perspective, placing the emphasis on 'offerings' amounts to nothing more than an attempt to reflect the indigenous understanding of what is involved. Echoing a number of classic works on sacrifice, this understanding creates an explicit link between sacrificing and offering (cf. Hubert and Mauss 1964; van Baal 1975; Tylor 1958), and treats the various combinations of offerings as iconic of the very thing a sacrifice aims to achieve (cf. Hocart 1970). Nevertheless, as I shall be suggesting in the conclusion to this article, there is much more involved.

In Buntao', the focus of a particular ritual (*aluk*) is described as *ma'pesung*, 'to make [the appropriate] offerings'. These 'offerings' (*pesung*) are usually composed of specific combinations of meat-morsels, tiny portions of rice, and betel-nut arranged on banana leaves. Offerings are always accompanied by 'prayers' (*pangimbo*) which, depending on the sacrificial domain, consecrate[4] them to specific deities (in the case of 'the rising sun') or ancestors (in the case of 'the setting sun'). Although the mortuary sacrifices form an integral part of *aluk rampe matampu'* and share this emphasis on offering, the term *ma'pesung* is never used in the context of death. Rather than *ma'pesung*, the action of making mortuary offerings is described as *ma'pakande to mate* ('to feed the dead'). Diffusing somewhat the danger which is associated with death and the dead (see Tsintjilonis 1993) by avoiding face to face contact, the difference between 'feeding' and 'offering' stems from the need not to look at the spirit of the dead person when you are feeding it. Instead, as one of the priests put it, the one who is doing the feeding and the one who is being fed must be standing 'back to back' (*siboko'*).

Despite these differences, however, *ma'pesung and ma'pakande* can be analysed as parts of 'a larger system – a reproductive system – in which the reproduction and regeneration of persons, objects, and relationships are integrated and encapsulated' (Weiner 1980:71). Within this system, death is absolutely paramount: it operates as the 'regulatory force' in the very constitution of these reproductive and regenerative cycles (cf. Weiner 1980:80-3). Although the mortuary sacrifices form an integral part of *aluk rampe matampu'*, death is only a stage in a much larger process of transition and initiation into the other world and beyond. This process is inextricably interwoven with the way the human body is perceived. Thus, framing my discussion in terms of the indigenous exegesis, I start with a brief exploration of the links between death and the body of the deceased.

It is the specificity of shared substance that distinguishes one's family or kindred from all others. As this substance is depicted in terms of 'blood/bone' (*rarabuku*), the essence of family is described as 'one blood, one bone'. Blood is inherited from the mother and bone from the father. Although blood is the 'origin' (*oto'*) of an individual life, it is explicitly associated with softness and needs to be 'given form' (*tampa*) by the hardness of bone (see Tsintjilonis 1995). As soon as this form has been solidified and consolidated, in the relative fixity of the skeleton, a newborn takes on the familiar human shape and starts to develop. Throughout this development, however, the substance of blood and bone manifests and supports a cluster of other immaterial components which are considered essential for life. The most important of these components is known as *deata* ('life-spirit'). Although absolutely essential for life, its connection with the rest of the body is rather tenous and all forms of immobility are explained by its absence. The difference between sleep, illness and death resides in the length of this absence.

Despite its importance for life, the overall contribution of *deata* is always dependent on the appropriate balance of hardness and softness. This balance itself emanates from the

proper combination of blood and bone. It is the fragmentation of this equilibrium which is perceived as death. This fragmentation, however, does not imply the annihilation of the various elements but their proper dispersion. The mortuary rites of the Toraja do not deal with the destruction of life but with its articulated fissure. Their explicit purpose is to facilitate 'the return [of each element] to its original form' (*sule lako tampa rapa'na*). With death and its ritual practice being seen as embodiment in reverse (see Tsintjilonis 1993), it is the regulation of this dispersion that takes place through the various sacrifices. The major dimension of this dis-embodiment is the separation of the life-spirit from the rest of the body. This separation underlies the initiation of the mortuary rites and the inevitability of death.

In most cases, the process of death is said to start with a particular kind of feverish illness. 'When a person draws his last breath the Toraja say, reasonably, that "his breath is no more", yet they do not speak of him as "dead"' (Volkman 1985:84). Instead, they describe him as *to makula'* ('the one who has fever'). The cause of this fever is always explained as *mallaimo deata* ('the life-spirit has fled'). Nevertheless, despite fleeing and wandering aimlessly, the life-spirit is thought to remain near and it may be coaxed into re-entering the body. Thus, although the fever may last for a long time, a *to makula'* is not seen as dead until the first sacrifice of the mortuary rites has taken place. This sacrifice is known as *ma'karu'dusan* ('to make fall') and, depending on the status of the one who is about to die, it involves a large sow or an old buffalo. As death is not a natural process of extinction, no one can die outside or without ritual. Until the time of *ma'karu'dusan,* one is not (and cannot be) dead but simply ill. During the illness, the body is kept in the southern room of the house and its condition is described in terms of sleep. The duration of this stage is not fixed and, provided that the material preparations are complete and the rice has been safely stored in the barns, the mortuary rites could start at any time. However, as the required sacrifices may involve considerable expense, it could last for a few years.[5]

Three nights before the sacrifice of *ma'karu'dusan* and the beginning of the death ritual, a *to makula'* is forced to enter the intermediate state of 'confusion' *(palimpuan).* On the first night, accompanied by a great deal of noise (e.g., shouting), a concerted effort is made to 'frighten the life-spirit away' and to turn the uncertainty of illness into the inevitability of death. Even though still seen as hot, people in the state of confusion are considered different from a *to makula'* in one important respect: they lack 'awareness' *(panoto).* They are confused and bewildered – not knowing east from west, right from left, and so on.

After three nights of confusion, the mortuary rites begin. With the sacrifice of *ma'karu'dusan* over, the life-spirit becomes autonomous and turns into a 'black shadow' *(bombo lotong).* As a black shadow, it is more distinct and certain people can see it. Although a successful funeral necessitates the effective separation of the various life elements and their return to the appropriate cosmic domains, most of the rites deal with the fate of the shadow, its transition into the other world and beyond. Through the various sacrificial offerings, it is gradually separated from the corpse and carefully guided south to Puya ('the village of the shadows'), where it is thought to arrive by the end of the mortuary rites. As part of the same process, the corpse is eventually entombed in a tomb hewn out of solid rock. As soon as the death ritual is over, the rites for the 'ancestors of the west' *(aluk to matua)* begin. At this stage, the shadow becomes 'old' *(matua),* which is another way of saying that it attains ancestorhood by leaving the village of the shadows and ascending to the western part of the sky, the place of the non-deified ancestors. Despite this transformation, the deceased's spirit retains its dark, shadowy form. After the completion of the rites for the ancestors of the west, a shadow undergoes the 'ritual of conversion' *(aluk pembalikan).* It involves two series of complicated sacrifices which attempt to purify and transform a shadow back into a 'life-spirit' *(deata).* During most of the conversion ritual, the ancestral spirit is seen as being in a transitional state between the realm of the west and the realm of the east. By the end of the conversion rites, however, it is totally associated with life and life-giving qualities and, in the poetic idiom of the traditional narratives, it is

depicted as 'golden coolness' *(ra'pak-ra'pak bulawanna).* Some time later, in order to be amassed and re-embodied, this coolness is 'called back' through the final set of sacrificial rites known as *aluk deata* ('life-spirit rites') (for a detailed description of the spirit's conversion and its overall transition see Tsintjilonis 2000).

In the case of Buntao', then, the efficacy of the mortuary rites is an integral part of a much larger ritual process which focuses on reproduction and regeneration. As an overall process of exchange, it manifests the co-operation of humans, ancestors and gods, and aims at the renewal and replenishment of the cosmos. By turning hotness and death into coolness and life, it regenerates the flow of life, creates new embodiments, and strengthens already existing ones (cf. Weiner 1980:71).

Different 'kinds' *(rupa)* of people, however, partake in this process of exchange and transformation to different degrees and in different ways -- for instance, not all shadows manage to become life-spirits. As Fox has put it, in the more comparative context of insular Southeast Asia, 'although there exists an ultimate ground of identity to all manifestations of life, the traditional point of view makes no assumption of identity or equality among particular manifestations' (1987:524). Exemplifying the lack of such an assumption by reproducing familiar Austronesian themes like spiritual differentiation and hierarchy (see ibid.:526), the mortuary rites of the Toraja and the eventual fate of the various shadows manifest human disparity and intrinsic inequality. Since there is not a notion of a uniform and evenly shared humanity, different people are thought to die in different ways: some fall like the setting sun, turn hazy like mist, or see their life-path folding; others go off like overripe fruit, wither like plants, or dissolve like dampened sugar. While falling like the setting sun is associated with hardness, withering like a plant is due to extreme softness. Apart from hardness and softness, a death may be explained in terms of wetness, diffuseness, emptiness, and so on.

Describing the 'state' *(a'ga)* of a particular corpse, the significance of these qualities stems from the way in which the fate of a particular shadow is thought to be determined by the amount and kind of sacrifices marking its initial transition from life to death, a transition in itself determined by the 'kind' of the deceased. In traditional terms, Toraja society is divided into two basic kinds of people: *tau tongan* ('true people') and *kaunan* (slaves) – true people being further subdivided into nobles (*to makaka matasak,* 'ripe elder siblings') and commoners (*to makaka,* 'elder siblings'). This division is meant to reflect the intrinsic inequality of different kinds of people. Explicating this inequality by linking the 'essence' *(bombong)* of different people with different substances, the notion of *tana'* ('stakes') is used: *tana' bulaan* ('golden stakes') for the nobles, *tana' bassi* ('iron stakes') for the commoners, and *tana' karurung* ('stakes from the hard core of the sugar palm') for the slaves. *Tana'* is inherited from one's mother and, in this way, the essential characteristics of all people are associated with gold, iron, or wood.[6]

Although, in a literal sense, *tana'* may designate anything from boundary markers to tethering posts (see Nooy-Palm 1979:35, 52), it is intimately linked with sacrifice. In its association with sacrifice, *tana'* stipulates disparate ritual responsibilities and links the essence of different people with different sacrificial requirements. Manifesting and embodying the tana' of the deceased, the death rites of the Sa'dan Toraja are meant to accomplish rather different things – for example, while a female of noble descent must be 'placed like a cooking pot', a male or female commoner should be 'raised like a rice barn' and a slave 'rubbed with chaff'. While *tana'* is the most important criterion, gender, age, or the 'extraordinary nature' of a particular deceased may also play a role. In some cases, like being struck by lightning or murdered, the actual cause of death becomes a major source of the sacrificial imperatives. Whatever the circumstances, however, there is one imperative which always overrides and condenses all others – namely, the need to 'harmonize' *(sitondon)* the funerary offerings with the deceased's body. In this sense, the most important function of the mortuary sacrifices is described as 'measuring the body' and displaying its 'measure-

ments' *(sukaran)*. It is in this fashion that the mortuary rites of the Toraja constitute bodily signs.

MODES OF DEATH AND TYPES OF BODY

The total number of sacrifices required by a particular type of funeral is described as its 'ritual articulation' *(lesoan aluk)*. The primary meaning of *lesoan* is 'joint' or 'node', as in *lesoan buku* ('bone joints') or *lesoan kayu* ('tree joints') (Tammu & van der Veen 1972:307-8). The notion of *lesoan aluk* is extremely important because a rich family of slave descent may be able to afford the sacrifice of (to pick a number at random) five buffaloes. The articulation of a slave ritual, however, cannot include more than two. In other words, only two of these buffaloes will have the proper sacrificial function of 'feeding' the deceased and following his or her shadow to the other world. In the same way, for a wealthy noble tens of buffaloes may be killed, but the actual articulation of the ritual cannot include more than eight. In most cases, a mortuary articulation takes its name from the number of buffaloes it requires. This is the number which corresponds with the sum total of ritual joints and is said to be the sign or measurement of the deceased's body. When the name of an articulation is not derived from the number of oblations involving buffaloes, it is either because such oblations are totally missing with the main offerings involving only the sacrifice of pigs[7] or because the fate of the deceased's shadow is partially determined through registers other than *tana'* (e.g., age or gender).

The connection between the number of ritual joints and the body of the deceased is explicated in the traditional narratives which chronicle the creation of the cosmos and its inhabitants. According to the most important of these narratives, known as *lalanna sukaran aluk* ('the path of the ritual measurements'), the creator-god (Puang Matua) of the Sa'dan Toraja 'forged' people twice. The first time, in creating the ancestor of the nobles, he used a combination of mud, stone, water and fire. The second time, in forging the ancestors of the slaves, he mixed only mud and stone. The patterns of this corporeal differentiation are not limited to a distant or mythical past. As maternal blood conveys the essence of the material originally used, in the form of *tana'*, each new birth replicates a particular type of corporeality and each kind of people is embodied in a different way. It is this difference that death and its ritual articulations instantiate and reproduce. In other words, *lesoan aluk* 'emerge from the body'.

In Buntao', the various death rituals and their corresponding articulations are divided into two major categories: rites for children ('those without teeth') and rites for adults ('those with teeth'). At the heart of this distinction lies what is perceived as the weight of a particular shadow. Starting with the logic of this distinction, I shall briefly describe the various articulations in order to highlight their connection with different types of body and distinct modes of death.

Soft Bodies, Light Shadows

Although differences in a life-spirit's weight may be related to anything from individual potency to material wealth, the idea of weight is intimately linked with the indigenous notion of what a complete ('round') body involves. If a newborn is to survive and start to develop, the initial softness of the maternal blood must be hardened with paternal bone. A 'round' *(kalebu)* body manifests the proper admixture of softness and hardness, and the first sign of such an accomplishment is the appearance of teeth. The procedure for dealing with the death of children, who die before cutting any teeth, is based upon the belief that their bodies are still soft and their shadows light. Deprived of their vigour and losing their vitality, such bodies decay in the fashion of a withering plant. In contrast to the rituals for adults which must both guide and carry the deceased's spirit to the other world, the shadows of

children can fly. However, a flying shadow does not travel south but is thought to ascend directly towards the western part of the sky. The funeral lasts only a night and the ritual articulation, known as *aluk to mentia*' ('rites for those who fly'), requires the sacrifice of a single pig and one cockerel (cf. Nooy-Palm 1986:183-4; Tangdilintin 1975:91-2).

Having been washed and 'given' a little cotton soaked in the mother's milk, the corpse is wrapped in a single length of white cloth and inserted in a piece of *solong* (the outer sheath of the areca nut). It is usually buried in a small cave ('the lair of the wild cat'), somewhere in the forest. Such a cave is always situated near a tall tree, so that the spirit of the child can climb up and fly away (in the neighbouring territory of Sangalla', for the same reason, dead children are placed in the hollow of a tree). The actual burial is concluded by late afternoon and, very early next morning, the various 'prohibitions' (*pemali*; mostly concerning what can or cannot be eaten) are lifted through a special meal for which the red cockerel is killed and cooked. The preparations for this meal are the responsibility of the parents and this food cannot be shared by anyone else. As soon as the meal is over, a child's shadow is automatically transformed into a life-spirit and enters the realm of the east.

Watery Bodies, Pure Spirits

The rites for 'those who fly' do not apply to all children. Stillborn babies, as well as those who die within three days of birth, are dealt with through the ritual articulation of 'buried with the umbilical cord' *(dipasitanan lolona)* (cf. Nooy-Palm 1986:183; Koubi 1982:256). The tiny corpse and the cord are wrapped by the mother in a single piece of white cloth and, after being placed in a small reed bag, are removed from the house by being attached to a length of rattan and lowered through a hole in the floor of the southern room. Once outside the house, they are 'planted' by the father on the eastern side of the backyard, or amongst the house pillars. The articulation for this type of ritual involves only the preparation of a single pot of rice and there is a strong prohibition against the killing of any animals. Known as *bo'bo' bannang* ('thread of boiled rice'), this meal is prepared inside the house and shared by whoever is present.

Although such children are buried, their life-spirits do not turn into shadows and are said to ascend directly to the eastern part of the sky. Their bodies are seen as watery and lacking a kernel. Their extreme softness is associated with a complete lack of bone and their death is likened to the way sugar or salt dissolves when it is dampened. The fate of their spirits is usually explained in terms of purity – they lack both the material and mystical debts that are incurred in life. I was never told, however, that such children return to the realm of the unborn. Indeed, according to some information, their life-spirit remains affixed to the hearth. Whatever their final destination may be, the spirits of children who are stillborn or die before they cut any teeth are not considered hot or dangerous. Their initial transition from life to death is not linked with illness and the dissolution of their bodies is not structured through the early stages of fever and confusion. Once the life-spirit starts to flee, the process of death is deemed irreversible and there is no need to wait.

Hard Bodies, Heavy Shadows

Unlike the rites for children, the usual process of death for adults is mainly associated with a specific kind of hardness. The initial fever makes the body hard and dry 'like a stone'. It is this hardness which makes the shadow of an adult heavy and 'unable to walk by itself'. Accordingly, the required funerary sacrifices and the way they are combined to form specific articulations will not simply direct a shadow to the other world, they will also propel it by 'giving it wings'. The exact weight of a particular shadow is determined by one's *tana'*. Along these lines, the 'rites for those with teeth' are further subdivided into two categories: 'rites for true people' *(aluk tau tongan)* and 'rites for slaves' *(aluk kaunan)*. Herein, it is the

ultimate fate of a shadow that is at stake. In the case of true people (nobles and commoners), a shadow will advance beyond the realm of the west; in the case of the slaves, it will not.

Within the rites for true people, there are two possible ritual articulations: *dipa'pitu* ('offered seven') for nobles and *dipabendan alang* ('raised like a rice barn') for commoners. While the former involves the combined sacrifice of eight buffaloes, twenty-two pigs, three hens and two dogs, the latter requires only four buffaloes, sixteen pigs and two hens. Both terms derive from the number of buffaloes sacrificed. The golden *tana'* of nobles demands the sacrifice of eight buffaloes (although, as the name implies, one is not actually killed until later on in the ritual process) because their bodies are thought to be composed of eight parts. Although the first time human life was created by Puang Matua only four substances were used, the sum total of four was deemed inadequate and each element was multiplied by two in order to 'complete the number' *(napaganna' bilanganna/napasanda ia'na)*. Replicating the body of the first human being (Datu Laukku'), who is also their original ancestor, the bodies of nobles comprise eight parts and demand eight sacrificial joints. In fact, the idea of eight parts is embedded in the very notion of *leso[an]* – *leso* ('to joint') means to divide something (usually a ricefield or the carcass of an animal) into eight parts (Tammu & van der Veen 1972:307). In the case of commoners, as the original ingredients were not doubled, their bodies are composed of only four parts and their *tana'* demands the sacrifice of only four buffaloes.

Although for both commoners and nobles *ma'karu'dusan* involves a large buffalo, the actual process of death is seen as slightly different. As a noble 'falls like the setting sun' or 'rolls like the face [of the setting] moon', this is a death that involves the community as a whole. In the intensity of its potency and the force of its weight, a noble shadow can cause further confusion and illness by attracting other life-spirits and 'piling up' more deaths. It can also influence other domains exposing to misfortune the growth of all 'three siblings' (humans, animals, plants). On the contrary, commoners die because their 'breath has finished' or their 'path has folded'. Centred on the fate of specific bodies, this is a death which can be contained and dealt with much more easily. Nevertheless, despite this disparity, both articulations support a shadow on its journey to the other world and beyond. There is, however, one important difference.

In the context of *dipa'pitu*, the transformation from west to east is dependent upon the successful acquisition of a human head. As soon as the shadow is considered to have gained ancestorhood, the ritual is interrupted for roughly a year, during which time a headhunting expedition is launched and a head hopefully secured.[8] Before the head can be introduced into the ritual proceedings, the ancestors must be 'fed' through a series of sacrificial offerings known as *ma'nene'*. At this point, the obligations arising from the death ritual converge with the debt towards the ancestors of the west. The central sacrifice of *ma'nene'* (a large buffalo) is still considered a part of the mortuary offerings. Thus, although the ritual articulation of *dipa'pitu* is said to comprise only seven buffaloes, there is always an eighth which is saved until the time of *ma'nene'*. Three nights after the completion of the *ma'nene'* rites, the head can be utilized and the ancestral spirit can be converted into *deata.*

For those who are buried according to the strictures of *dipabendan alang* the situation is rather different. As soon as the spirit of the deceased is thought to have reached the western part of the sky, the ritual is not interrupted and the shadow can be immediately converted into *deata.* A commoner's shadow does not require a head in order to pass from west to east. Hence, in the case of a commoner, all the buffaloes of the mortuary ritual are slaughtered before the entombment, the rites are not interrupted, *ma'nene'* is not undertaken and a newly taken head is not required.

In the context of a noble ritual only, an important distinction is made between *aluk muane* ('rites for males') and *aluk baine* ('rites for females'). Although the number of major sacrifices remains the same, the shadow of a female should not be brought into contact with

the hardness associated with headhunters or the dangerous powers of a newly taken head. This female articulation is known as *dipatonang* ('placed like a cooking pot') and differs substantially from both *dipa'pitu* and *dipabendan*. Retaining some of the qualities of *deata*, this shadow requires the construction of a bamboo effigy *(tau-tau lampa)* as its temporary receptacle. Such a shadow is described as being 'nearer' both to the cosmic sources of life and the 'first people' (the ancestors who founded the various communities). As a result, the death of a noble female offers an opportunity to feed these ancestors (she becomes, as it were, 'the cooking pot') through a series of offerings characteristic only of *dipatonang*.

Despite the differences between them, each of the ritual articulations which make up the rites for true people enables a shadow to progress beyond the western edge of the sky and to join the realm of the east. Some shadows are heavier than others and the acquisition of ancestorhood is organized and achieved through different combinations of mortuary offerings but, as all shadows can be transformed into *deata*, these ritual articulations manifest and embody different degrees of a similar kind of potency. In contrast, the rites for slaves, although also comprising a number of sacrificial alternatives, do not allow a shadow to advance beyond the western part of the sky. Furthermore, the successful conclusion of a slave ritual depends upon the co-operation of the deceased's *puang* ('owner') – the relationship between slaves and their ancestors is mediated by their 'owners'. Embodying and manifesting these differences, rather than a buffalo, the rite of *ma'karu'dusan* involves only a large sow.

In this context, there are two major ritual articulations: *dirandukan ongan* ('sheltered'), demanding the sacrifice of two buffaloes and eleven pigs, and *dipasiilang ta'pian* ('rubbed with chaff'), requiring a single buffalo and three pigs. Once again, the actual terms are intimately linked with the number of buffaloes sacrificed and, at least in the case of *dirandukan ongan,* with the number of parts a slave body is thought to comprise. Puang Matua created the ancestors of slaves from the mixture of two elements: mud and stone. Having multiplied the sum total of these substances by four in order to 'complete the number' (i.e., make it an eight), he went on to create the 'original slaves'. Since four people emerged from the divine bellows, however, each body is said to comprise only two parts and to demand the sacrifice of only two buffaloes. In *dirandukan ongan*, the deceased is further described as 'holding with both hands': with the left he or she feeds the ancestors on the mother's side, with the right the ancestors on the father's side. Although I was unable to pinpoint a particular danger, the implication seems to be that in the presence of the ancestors, a slave should be protected ('sheltered'). In the case of *dipasiilang ta'pian*, the deceased is likened to a buffalo which rubs itself against a rock or the trunk of a tree. Unless it refers to some kind of symbolic 'winnowing' *(ta'pian)*, though, the exact connection between rubbing and chaff remains unclear. Furthermore, I am unable to offer an explanation as to why a single buffalo is considered enough.

When two buffaloes are sacrificed, the corpse is entombed two nights after *ma'karu'dusan*, six nights later the various prohibitions are lifted and the shadow is seen as being well on its way to the western part of the sky. In common with the previous articulations, it takes three more nights for the shadow to arrive at the place of the ancestors of the west. Once there, as its transformation into a life-spirit is not possible, the journey is considered to have been concluded and there is no need for a conversion ritual. In *dipasiillang ta'pian,* although entombment takes place after only one night and the various prohibitions are fully lifted after four nights, the fate of the shadow remains the same. In cases where a family cannot afford to sacrifice any buffaloes, there is a variation of the last articulation which requires only four pigs *(dibai a'pa')*. Still poorer families can undertake the smallest ritual possible which demands the sacrifice of a single pig *(ditallang tungga')*. However, such a sacrifice 'cannot walk by itself' and its essence is unable to follow the shadow to the other world; hence, rituals of this sort are considered incomplete and the death journey is described as 'lonely'. A shadow without the proper sacrifices cannot enter Puya and its fate

is described as one of continuous wandering. In this state, it is intensely feared and the family of the deceased are especially at risk.

In traditional terms, these types of ritual constitute the major sacrificial combinations and apply to most cases.[9] The people of Buntao' do not place special emphasis on the distinction between bad and good deaths, widespread in Indonesia (see Sell 1955). Of course, described as resulting in 'real confusion' *(malimpu tongan)*, there are violent or unexpected deaths. However, with a single exception which I shall not discuss here,[10] they do not require any special rites. As such deaths usually occur outside the house, the only additional requirements revolve around the need to recover the body.

Contrary to Hertz's (1960:34) suggestion, then, Buntao' ideas concerning the fate of the 'soul' are not vague and indefinite. Almost always, informants were quite clear about the route of a shadow's journey and its eventual fate. To briefly recapitulate: apart from stillborn babies (or those dying within three days of birth) and the partial exception of 'those without teeth', the spirit of a deceased travels south and descends to the 'bottom of the river'; by 'crossing the river', it enters the other world and starts its ascent towards the western part of the sky. From there, if the deceased was a true human, it travels eastwards in order to join the realm of the *deata*; if the deceased was a slave, it remains in the west overseeing and protecting the fate of the living.

Rotting Bodies, Pure Spirits

There are three cases, however, in which the shadow of an adult does not travel south or west but ascends directly to the eastern part of the sky (cf. Nooy-Palm 1986:116-20). These ritual articulations are known as 'rites for those who are like life-spirits' *(aluk to madeata)* and are meant to facilitate the entombment of a *to burake* (a priest who is described as 'half man, half woman'), a *to menani* (a type of rice priest), and a *to nasiok kila'* ('someone struck by lightning').

In Buntao', the last *to burake* died in the early 1920s and the funeral of the last *to menani* took place in the mid 1960s. I know of no local cases involving people struck by lightning and the idea may have been introduced from other areas. All the dead who fall into these categories must be 'feasted like life-spirits' because, in a fashion reminiscent of stillborn babies, their *deata* does not turn into *bombo* when they die. Rather than dampness, however, their death is thought to be due to overripeness: being 'ripe' *(matasak)* results in rotting (like fruit) and the excessive production of liquid ('water/juice') which, through wetness, leads to the disintegration of the body and death. This type of funeral is not linked with either the south or the west and is similar to the sacrifices which deal with life on 'the side of the rising sun': the death priest cannot attend, food associated with death cannot be used, black clothing cannot be worn, and the spirit of the deceased is not considered angry or dangerous. The most dramatic difference between these rites and other funerals is the fact that the corpse cannot be taken out of the house through the door. Instead, the northern wall of the front room is cut open to provide an exit through which the corpse can be removed. As a house always faces north, the spirit of the deceased is said to move 'up river', towards the 'head of the earth'. From there, it travels directly eastwards in order to enter the realm of the east.

In the case of the two priests, the justification for this practice is as follows. Through their 'extraordinary nature', embodied and manifested in the rituals they oversee during their lifetime, they ensure the fertility of the gardens and the rice fields, as well as the successful reproduction of humans and animals. While they are alive, the essence of their ritual responsibilities is to 'buy the health' of the 'three siblings' (plants, humans, animals). Their death is their final contribution to the cosmic growth of which they are both parts and significant sources. In their case, the ritual articulation is meant to ensure the immediate return of their spirit to the realm of life and the rising sun. Being pure, 'like rice', they should never

be brought into contact with Puya and the west. The case of those who die struck by lightning is explained in rather different terms. The people of Buntao' distinguish two kinds of fire: the 'fire of the First Human' (*apinna* Pong Mulatau) and that of the 'Roaring Thunder' (Kila' Rondon). While the former is associated with human activities (such as cooking) and their spirit guardians, the latter is seen as originating wholly in the sky and as revealing one of the original gods (La'te Mamara, 'Dry Lightning'). Thus, when someone is killed by 'fire from the sky', it is said that he or she is 'pulled' by the deities and, because of this, must take the 'path of the rising sun'.

CONCLUSION

Thus, whatever the specific sacrificial combinations may be, the notion of articulation does not simply correspond to unequal ritual requirements. Through their intrinsic connection with diverse patterns of bodily dispersion and disparate states of death, the imperatives embedded in *le'soan aluk* manifest and engender fundamentally different ways of dying: young children die because of softness or dampness, adults because of dryness or overripeness, and the hardness of 'those with teeth' is associated with different kinds of potency and reflects an unequal number of body parts. Furthermore, each type of death contributes distinctive qualities to the actual condition of the deceased's spirit – for instance, while a soft body gives rise to a light shadow, a hard body indicates a heavy *bombo*. Such qualities imply and inform variously structured forms of transition to the other world and beyond. The exact path of the shadow depends on the status of the deceased as well as the way in which he or she dies. Whatever the particular register of differentiation might be, however, its major dimensions are always traced back to the state and kind of particular bodies. In this sense, the ritual multiplicity of mortuary practices should be treated as substantive: people die in different ways because they are substantially different.

In their diversity, mortuary oblations are always body-signs – iconic indications of the deceased's true kind and state. Furthermore, as they are thought to emerge from the body, such signs do not amount to a set of simple representations or symbols. In so far as they are unequivocal measurements, they both represent and 'actualize' (cf. Clay 1977:3) the significant attributes of particular bodies. In a way highly reminiscent of Melanesian ethnography, before a corpse can be entombed and the death-journey can begin, the deceased's nature must be replicated and sacrificially transcribed. In many Massim societies, for instance, 'it is at death that the multiple constitution of the socially active person during his or her lifetime is displayed, then deconstituted and taken apart' (Strathern 1988:291; cf. Battaglia 1990). In a similar fashion, for the Melpa and the Wiru, 'when the person dies a last recognition, or else a re-creation of those "parts" which he or she demonstrated while active, must be put in hand' (A. Strathern 1981:219). Above all, as in the case of the 'Are'are, the mortuary sacrifices of the Toraja can be said to reproduce, in tangible form, the 'image' of the deceased (Barraud et al. 1994:42).

Despite a shared emphasis on 'actualizing' rather than simply representing the attributes of the deceased, however, there is an important difference between the Sa'dan Toraja and the focus of most Melanesian ethnographies. In the case of the latter, as Marilyn Strathern puts it, it is useful

> to regard 'the person' as an objectification ('personification') of relationships. In so far as people turn one set of relationships into another, they act (as individual subjects) to turn themselves into persons (objects) in the regard of others. They objectify themselves, one might say. And this is indeed the point of making themselves active agents; this is their destiny. Life is not imagined to be without supports: one acts to create the supports. (1988:313-4)

First and foremost, in other words, the Melanesian world is one of relationships. Of course, different Melanesianists perceive and analyse these relationships in different ways. For example, there is a clear difference between de Coppet's or Iteanu's 'cosmomorphic' societies (see Barraud et al 1994:118-20) and Marilyn Strathern's 'societies which do not name themselves' (1988:318-25). Nevertheless, by placing the emphasis on relationships, they all treat the Melanesian person as a manifestation of social or cosmic relations. Furthermore, they all remain imprisoned in the dialectic of 'subjects' (partible, relational, or otherwise).

On the contrary, in the case of the Toraja, the indigenous commentary on human diversity is characterized by a ubiquitous essentialism which, renouncing relationships as being derivative, strives to define human nature in terms of absolute and irreducible difference. Indeed, as I have noted elsewhere (1997:151-2), 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), predates the formation of the cosmos (i.e., relations) as such. According to the Toraja, one of the most important loci and foci of this difference is the human body. Furthermore, as this difference is always perceived in terms of embodied substance (gold, iron, etc.), the essential attributes of the Toraja person seem to echo Marriot's descriptions of India and the fashion in which the appropriate codes of action and conduct 'are thought to be naturally embodied' (1976:109-10).

Thus, rather than an instantiation of relations, the Toraja person is firstly a 'body' *(kale)*; rather than being an agent acting 'to create [life's] supports', as in Marilyn Strathern's argument, *kale* is a support or a bearer of life itself – a 'body-person' (see Tsintjilonis 1997:269-70). From this point of view, Toraja life and death are not states of persons or subjects (however they may be construed), but ritual practices which actualize and replenish the universe. In this respect, life and death may be seen as pure activities. They are pure activities not because they have no 'meaning or goal', in the way that Staal (1979:19) has suggested of ritual, but because they are without a constitutive subject. As Lash puts it, utilizing Nietzsche's distinctions, 'we should be able to understand events as activities without subjects; we should be able to think of "flashing lightning" without thinking "lightning flashes"' (1991:272). Along these lines, I have sought to further the understanding of death in Tana Toraja by discussing dying and living bodies, not because bodies themselves are doing the living and dying, but because they are what is constituted in and through the pure activities of life and death.

To borrow Sissa's expression, then, the mortuary ritual 'tells of the body' (1989:144). But, through the embodied nature of difference, each body 'tells its own story' (ibid.). In its overall efficacy, *aluk to dolo* replenishes and regenerates the universe. This process of replenishment and regeneration is bound up with the reproduction and multiplication of bodies. In replenishing the cosmos, the sacrificial rites of the Toraja concatenate the imperatives of embodiment and disembodiment through the sacrificial articulations of successive rites of passage (especially birth and death). Within these articulations, to partially echo Mopsik's work on the Jewish tradition, *kale* itself may be thought of as a 'body of passage': 'Like the eye of the needle, it allows the thread' of cosmogonic becoming 'to move through time and weave its fabric' (1989:61). Indeed, framed in terms of fabric, if *kale* is the eye of the needle, ritual is the needle itself. Nevertheless, within this fabric, there are different kinds of thread. Using the rites of death, I tried to describe their difference and multiplicity. Different funerary sacrifices articulate different deaths, and different deaths manifest the dispersal of different bodies. It is in this sense that bodies can be seen as telling their own story, a story of substantive divergence and irreducible disparity: gold, iron, wood, different principles of embodiment, the multiformity of corporeality, and so on.

Although it may be far-fetched to imply the existence of any direct connections between the ancestral practices of the Sa'dan Toraja and Brahmanic formulae like *puruso vai vajnah* ('[i]n truth, the sacrifice is a man [or is Man]; see Malamoud 1989:96), it is cer-

tainly possible to suggest that the obsequies of the Sa'dan derive their 'form and intelligibility from the metaphor of the body' (ibid.). The mortuary ritual of the Toraja may be seen as a process of transmogrification which converts the invisible architecture of the deceased's body into a visible sacrificial mould. By transmuting the subject of the sacrifier into an objective sacrificial form and by treating this form as a set of bodily signs, this transmogrification brings to mind the notions of sacrifice as 'objectivation' (Hubert and Mauss 1964; cf. Valeri 1985:65) and 'efficacious representation' (Hocart 1970; cf. Valeri 1985:67). In other words, a specific combination of mortuary offerings (in the sense of *lesoan aluk*) is both 'the subject in an objective form' (Hubert and Mauss) and 'an icon' (Hocart) of the first part of its regenerative journey through the Toraja universe. Rather than a theory of objectivation or representation, however, the way *lesoan aluk* are thought to emerge from the body seems to suggest the need for a theory of embodiment – that is, a theory which concentrates on explicating the sacrificial efficacy of the fashion in which the qualities of the mortuary sacrificial combinations (e.g., the eight buffaloes of *dipa'pitu*) are thought to embody and manifest the qualities attributed to the body of the deceased. In this sense, rather than the obsequies of the Sa'dan deriving their 'form and intelligibility from the metaphor of the body', it would be the bodies of the Sa'dan that derive their form and intelligibility from the ritual metaphor of *lesoan aluk.*

Gaining its being in this kind of metaphor, to return to Bynum's work and the way I introduced this discussion, the Toraja body would have more than **a** history. Indeed, it would be **only** history – a history of sacrificial offerings. An oblatory history which, rather than exhausting itself in the obduracy of corporeality, would dramatize the adventures of the sacrificial signs that sustain, contain and destroy it.

Of course, in the explication of this history, the safety of my 'ethnographic present' and the intellectual ambience of ancestral worlds will have to be abandoned. Emphasizing partiality and fragmentation, the 'truth' I have tried to portray in this article will have to be seen as one among many in the modern Toraja world. The 'cosmological present' of the friends who haunt these pages will have to be removed from their **cosmos** and placed in the context of their **world**. A world of Christians and Moslems, colonial encounters, Nation-States, tourists, travellers, and 'well informed' anthropologists. Nevertheless, as Ne' Baru put it, it may well be only 'its face' *(lindona)* that changes.[11]

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NOTES

1. The Sa'dan Toraja number approximately 350,000 and are primarily wet-rice farmers whose homeland comprises the administrative region (*kabupaten*) of Tana Toraja, located in the northern highlands of South Sulawesi, Indonesia.
2. At the time of my fieldwork, the community of Buntao' was divided into two 'villages' (*desa*), Buntao' (with a population of about 3,500) and Buntu Dengen (with about 4,000 people). According to local estimates, around thirty per cent of the population still adhered to the old religion. Apart from attending as many ritual ceremonies as I could, my main sources of information were some of the traditional ritual functionaries and an array of older people, known as *gora-gora tongkon* ('the ones who speak while seated') and traditionally responsible for advising the ritual authorities.

3. I never carried out any formal interviews or surveys. My usual method concentrated on informal but lengthy discussions of the various sacrifices as well as the collection of invocations and a few longer litanies. My 'conversations' involved both members of *aluk to dolo* and Christians — indeed, some of the most knowledgeable people (including nearly all of the *gora-gora tongkon*) had converted to Christianity. In addition, as many of the local priests were of slave descent, access to the 'truth' I am about to describe was not limited by rank or status.

4. The consecration which is effected through these 'prayers' should not be seen as implying a distinction between a 'sacred' and a 'profane' realm. As one of the anonymous reviewers rightly pointed out, the Sa'dan Toraja emphasis on *sumanga'* (a kind of constantly creative energy which permeates and animates the universe) makes this type of distinction impossible to make (for a detailed discussion of *sumanga'* see Tsintjilonis 1999). By creating an explicit connection between a set of offerings and a deity or an ancestor (as soon as the appropriate 'words' have been uttered, the offerings 'belong' to them), a *pangimbo* brings to the fore the way in which humans, ancestors, and deities depend on each other. Thus, rather than separating the world of the deities and the ancestors from the world of the humans, it embeds the one in the other.

5. My information about ritual and its over-riding importance leaves one important question unanswered — namely, during an epidemic or a war, was there a special rite which allowed the people of Buntao' to dispose of their dead quickly? Elsewhere in Tana Toraja, as one of the anonymous reviewers noted, there is the ritual alternative of *dididekan pangkung bai* ('the pigsty is struck') — perhaps promising that the appropriate sacrifices will take place some time in the future, the death priest strikes the deceased's pigsty three times with a piece of wood. In Buntao', however, 'the pigsty is struck' only for those who are so poor they cannot afford a single sacrifice (cf. Nooy-Palm 1986:184).

6. This differentiation does not belong to a distant past. As maternal blood carries the 'essence' of this material, each new birth replicates these distinctions. Thus, both the notion of *tana'* and the idea of 'truth' have retained their significance. For instance, although slavery has been officially abolished, persons 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 provision 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', but this dependence should be seen as a form of patronage involving access to jobs, cash loans, help with the cost of children's schooling, etc.

7. Thus it is only buffaloes which can follow the shadow to the other world. In fact, quite apart from being followed by the animal sacrifices which make up a specific articulation, a shadow will also take a variety of other foodstuff - for example, rice and fish. In addition, there will always be something to drink on the way and a burning torch to keep warm when it gets there.

8. Although there was some talk of headhunting having taken place around the end of the Second World War, the last expedition seems to have been organized over seventy years ago. However, even before the establishment of Dutch administration in the Toraja highlands (1908), a 'head' did not have to be a real head. Even then a kind of bamboo (*bulo*) or a single fragment of an old skull (*pakuli'*) could be used as a substitute. In this way, many of the rituals associated with the use of a head survived the prohibition of headhunting. For a detailed discussion of Toraja headhunting, see Tsintjilonis (2000).

9. Like elsewhere in Tana Toraja, rather than through *tana'*, one could become a slave through personal debts (see Nooy-Palm 1979:45). Depending on what his or her family could afford, any of the 'slave articulations' I have described could be carried out for such a *kaunan*. In this case, however, more sacrifices could be added later through a version of *ma'nene'*.

10. Homicide is the only type of sudden death which requires special sacrificial offerings (cf. Tangdilintin 1975:109-11). In general, such a death is seen as producing a kind of 'deep sorrow' (*barata*) which makes the world appear hazy and indistinct plunging everyone into confusion. This sorrow can be dealt with only through the articulation of *aluk to nakande bassi* ('the rites for those eaten by iron'). In traditional terms, this ritual was very closely associated with war and headhunting and required both the completion of *ma'nene'* and the taking of a human 'head' (see Tsintjilonis 1993:263-8; cf. Nooy-Palm 1980).

11. Trying to convert money earned through migration to the islands of Borneo and Irian Jaya into 'truth', for instance, descendants of slaves are increasingly financing sacrificial articulations traditionally belonging to 'true people'. That 'new' money is being spent on 'old pursuits', however, may be seen as manifesting the lasting importance of the traditional criteria. Of course, the possibility of outright rejection is always there. However, during my time in Buntao', I never came across anyone who simply refused to take part in the 'appropriate' sacrifices. Indeed, the problem was not paucity or reduction, but inflation. This inflation was accompanied by a war of words wherein different voices fought over access to 'traditional' signs. In essence, with descendants of slaves being able to afford more and more sacrifices, noble families and rich commoners are forced to increase their ritual 'stakes'. For instance, while I was there, instead of 'feeding' their dead (one male and one female) through the ritual articulations of *dipa'pitu* and *dipatonang*, two noble families opted for the ritual articulation of *dirapa'i* ('being rested') which demands the sacrifice of at least twelve buffaloes, fifty-one pigs, five hens, and seven dogs. Rather than being one of the indigenous articulations, however, *dira-*

pa'i was imported into the area of Buntao' from the neighbouring territories of Sangalla' and Kesu'.

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