

Diversity in Unity: Multiple Strategies of a Unifying Rhetoric. The Case of Resemanticisation of Toraja Rituals: From ‘Wasteful Pagan Feasts’ into ‘Modern Auctions’¹

Aurora Donzelli

(University of Milan)

Abstrak

Tulisan ini menggambarkan sebuah eksplorasi etnografis di Tana Toraja pada masa kini, mengenai retorika nasional ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ (unity in diversity) yang diartikulasi secara lokal melalui ideologi pembangunan. Penulis menunjukkan bahwa di daerah Toraja retorika nasional mengenai pembangunan pada masa setelah penjajahan (poskolonial) berawal dari masa prakemerdekaan dan terkait dengan sejarah penyebaran agama (missionarisasi). Penulis memberikan analisis tentang pemaknaan ulang ritual Toraja sepanjang era penjajahan Belanda dan masa setelah penjajahan. Ritual yang pada masa Belanda dianggap salah satu contoh ‘pemborosan kafir’ diubah menjadi ‘lelang moderen’.

Praktik penyelenggaraan penggalangan dana melalui lelang dalam upacara/ritual adat yang diperkenalkan oleh Belanda pada awal abad ke-20, memiliki peran yang amat penting dalam proyek penyebaran agama dan, pada masa poskolonial. Hal ini menjadi salah satu strategi untuk memasukkan daerah adat Toraja ke dalam negara Indonesia yang dalam retorika nasional digambarkan sebagai ‘moderen dan bersatu’. Dalam usaha memahami Toraja masa kini, analisis terhadap proses dimana wacana kolonialisme Belanda—dan yang baru-baru ini—ideologi nasionalis, telah memanipulasi praktik, dan makna dari sistem ritual Toraja tidak bisa dilepaskan.

Ritus pembagian daging dan ideologi modernis nasional seharusnya dapat dimengerti sebagai kedua-duanya terkait dengan dua bentuk kesadaran sejarah (historical consciousness) yang saling bertentangan. Penulis memberi perhatian secara khusus pada isu temporalitas. Menurut penulis, isu ini sering dilupakan dalam studi nasionalisme Indonesia. Sebagian dari efektifitas retorik dari slogan ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ tersampaikan karena slogan tersebut sejalan dengan konstruksi antitesis antara ‘modernitas’ dan ‘tradisi’. Dalam sebuah kerangka diskursif yang menyamakan ‘perbedaan’ dengan ‘tradisi’, dan ‘modernitas’ dengan ‘kesatuan’, tradisi lokal diakui hanya sejauh hal tersebut dikonseptualisasikan sebagai tahap awal dari modernitas yang bersatu.

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For many years, both in the Indonesian political discourse and in the scholarly analyses of this discourse, the nation-state's rhetoric has been summarised in three words: *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* ('Unity in Diversity'). This sharp and effective motto easily conveys the illusion of a homogeneous set of corresponding practices on the level of cultural policy. However, a closer ethnographic analysis of how nationalistic rhetoric takes shape on the local level, reveals that the Indonesian nation-state's unifying project has been pursued through multiple practices of control that draw on local discursive repertoires and traditions, and are deeply intertwined with local histories of power relations. In fact, by transforming the national motto 'Unity in Diversity' into 'Diversity in Unity' this article's title provocatively suggests that denial of multiplicity within Indonesian national project has not been total. Despite

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scholars' insistence on New Order rhetoric of national 'unity' and their criticism on its lack of actual recognition of local cultures' diversity, plurality, I argue, ironically survives within the multiple state-sponsored practices of control. With this perspective, the nation-state's self-constructing process should not be conceived as a single centripetal pull, but as a complex ensemble of locally differentiated strategies.

For over half a century, the discourse of unity in diversity has undoubtedly played a crucial role in the Indonesian nation-state's² self-constructing project. As it has been argued by Saskia Sassen in a recent essay (2000:215), despite their claims, 'modern nation-states[...] never achieved spatiotemporal unity'. Therefore, if it is not an intrinsic quality of theirs, they need narratives capable of creating such a 'unified spatiotemporality'. The ideology of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, as I understand it, is a powerful discursive means through which the Indonesian nation-state represents itself as a 'container', corresponding to a 'unified spatiotemporality'. Although the spatial dimension is much more evident (and explicit) in the national slogan, I argue that its 'subtext' implies a specific sense of temporality that it is important to take into account if we want to achieve a better understanding of both Indo-

² As it has been clearly pointed out by Benedict Anderson (1983:477), it is important to bear in mind that, despite the recurrent usage of the expression 'nation-state' in contemporary social sciences literature, this "tiny hyphen links two very different entities with distinct histories, constituents and "interests"". The state as an institution and the 'imagined community' of the nation mutually need and constitute each other. However, Anderson argues, this is not always the case. Since this paper is not concerned with exploring overlaps and disjunctures between the nation and the state in contemporary Indonesia, I am not differentiating between the two. For an articulated account of the differences in the relationship between nation and state during the *Orde Baru* and *Orde Lama* periods, see Anderson (1983).

nesian nationalism and also of many other peripheral and localised cultural processes. In my reading, thus, the rhetoric of unity in diversity attempts not only to convey the idea of a unified spatiality (which can be synoptically grasped from the cabin lift in *Taman Mini*'s landscaped geographical reproduction of Indonesia),³ but it also aims at creating a temporal unity through the use of two powerful discursive categories, endowed with deep temporal connotation: those of 'modernity' and 'tradition'. The discourse of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, thus, creates a spatial order, which is hierarchically organised through the inclusion of local differences within the national framework. Besides this, by its being temporally oriented, it tries to erase or, at least, to hide the plurality of temporalities by reducing them to a process of linear and irreversible transition from a 'traditional past' to a 'developed future'.

In the following pages, drawing on the argument made by scholars such as Saskia Sassen (2000) and Arjun Appadurai (1997) who have pointed out how the local and the national are two mutually constituting dimensions and not two separated levels, I explore Indonesian national ideology from the ethnographic angle provided by the historical shifts occurring in Toraja ritual system.

Anthropologists, missionaries, Indonesian nation-state and the Toraja

The Sa'dan Toraja are undoubtedly one of the most studied groups in the Indonesian ar-

chipelago. Several succeeding generations of anthropologists, intrigued by their mortuary rituals and their gift exchange practices,⁴ came to the highlands of South Sulawesi, producing an extensive corpus of ethnographic literature.

The Toraja ritual system has a dualistic structure; one half is constituted by mortuary rites—'smoke descending rituals' (*aluk rambu solo*)—while the other is made up of rituals promoting fertility and prosperity—'smoke ascending rituals' (*aluk rambu tuka*). The influence of the church and colonial government during the first part of the 20th century has altered the balance between the two spheres of Toraja ritual system, subsequently producing a hypertrophy of mortuary rituals and a parallel decline of the fertility ones. The complexity of *rambu tuka* rituals has been progressively simplified and absorbed into the umbrella category of *pengucapan syukur* 'thanks-giving rituals', to such an extent that nowadays only rites celebrating the completion of house building or rebuilding, still retain some importance (cf. Waterson 1993:75).⁵

⁴ Reference to the Toraja gift exchange system is even found in Marcel Mauss's seminal 'Essay on the Gift' (1990). Mauss had indirect knowledge of Toraja ritual exchange practices from the reading of the works by Kruyt, who, however, was mostly concerned with the Bare' speaking or West Toraja, nowadays known as 'To Pamona', dwelling in the lake Poso area. As it has been pointed out by Thompson (2000), however, the term 'gift' is not completely appropriate for referring to Sa'dan Toraja ritual exchanges of livestock, which are better understood as a system of loans and borrowings. In fact, animals 'contributed by affines and sometimes friends, are not gifts in the sense that they are given away. Instead they are on loan (*diindan*). [...] they remain the property of the lender [...]' (Thompson 2000:45).

⁵ For a detailed historical account of the process of ritual change due to the influence of GZB (*Gereformeerde Zendingbond*), the Dutch Reformed Alliance, a Mission Institute that was autonomous and differed a great deal from the Indies Protestant Church, the officially supported church of the Nederlands East Indies administration (see Bigalke 1981).

³ Taman Mini is a cultural village theme park built in the 70's in the outskirts of Jakarta. The project, developed by Yayasan Harapan Kita (Our Hope Foundation) under the supervision of Mrs Tien Soeharto's—President Soeharto's wife—is aimed at celebrating the national motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. The huge park comprises a collection of traditional houses and objects displayed in 27 pavilions, one for every province. On *Taman Mini* see also Pemberton (1994), Hitchcock (1998), Hellman (1998).

As I have mentioned above, the ethnographic literature concerning Toraja highlanders reveals the stratification of various theoretical schools and paradigms. Earlier ethnographic accounts concerning Toraja rituals were written according to traditional ethnographic criteria: being permeated by the spirit of salvage anthropology, they aimed at documenting the fading 'traditional' sociocultural system. On the other hand, articles and books written in the last three decades have been marked by more up to date theoretical concerns: one of the privileged objects of inquiry of this new generation of ethnographic accounts has undoubtedly been ritual change. Several American, Australian and European ethnographers have provided illuminating accounts of the sociocultural change taking place in the highlands in the last decades due to the incorporation of the region into the Indonesian nation-state, the conversion to Christianity of large part of the population, and tourism.

Arriving in Tana Toraja after reading this body of literature, I had the impression that nothing else could be said on the topic. However, some months spent in the field revealed that there is in fact a level of ritual change that has been actually undertheorised and underanalysed: this being the symbolic and practical changes produced by the impact of colonial and postcolonial development ideologies into ritual discourse. No attempt to understand contemporary Toraja can escape an analysis of the processes through which Dutch colonial discourse, and, more recently, nationalist ideology, have manipulated practices and meanings of Toraja ritual system. I argue that a crucial point, not adequately developed by previous ethnographers, is constituted by the issue of temporality. My analysis will be concerned with ritual practices of meat distribution and local narratives of 'modernity' and 'tra-

dition' as two privileged sites where it is possible to track the unravelling of the forms of historical consciousness that both determine and are determined by ritual change. The Toraja ethnographic case is of particular interest for me since is strictly connected to one of the features I have previously identified as characterising the ideology of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*: the production of a unified sense of temporality endorsed by nationalistic rhetoric.

In the next two sections I focus on two examples of the occurrence of development ideologies in the context of ritual: the former, more connected to the level of practices, is provided by the case of the introduction of the 'meat auction' whose genealogy I will give a brief historical outline;⁶ the latter, more concerned with the dimension of explicit ideological pronouncements, consists of an excerpt from my transcriptions of political speeches about national loyalty performed by government or army officials during ritual occasions.

'Wasteful pagan feasts' versus 'modern auctions to promote development'

The first time I came across *lelang* was in the summer of 2000. At that time I was on an exploratory trip to Toraja. My friend Aras had invited me to attend with him a harvest thanks-

⁶ The historical sources I have used comprise, along with first hand interviews I have made in the Toraja area, letters and reports written by missionaries and colonial administrators during the first half of the 20th century. These documents belong to GZB Archive, to the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) Mission Archive in Oegstgeest, and to the GZB monthly magazine: *Alle den Volcke*. Thom van den End (1994) has gathered and translated these documents from Dutch to Indonesian. In quoting the sources, I refer to van den End's collection where each document has been assigned a number. In citing excerpts from the documents, I have left the Indonesian version, since it seemed to me that submitting the texts to a third translation into English would have been excessive.

giving ceremony (*pengucapan syukur*) held in his village, Batutumonga. After a couple of hours spent driving northwards, in the direction of Mount Sesean, we reached our destination. The service had already finished and people, coming out from the half-constructed Church were about to sit underneath the shade of some leafy branches stuck into the grassy soil of the village plaza just in front of the Church. After meal and coffee had been served, a man holding the megaphone with his right hand started a long speech, concerning the necessity and importance of development (*pembangunan*). When the orator had finished, somebody set several cuts of pork meat on a bed of big leaves in the middle of the plaza. Another man (the *to ma'lelang*, whom I later identified as the auctioneer) stepped forward and walked to the middle of the plaza holding the same megaphone and assisted by another man, who was in charge of holding up the pieces of meat that the first man with the megaphone was auctioning. The auctioneer was shouting aloud few incomprehensible but recurrent words in Toraja; at times some of the participants sitting along the borders of the plaza shouted something back: numbers, I guessed. The auctioneer's assistant was then distributing the cuts of meat, collecting money in exchange. A woman sitting nearby was meticulously taking note of every single piece of meat and of the money offered for it. I asked Aras and Daud what was going on. They answered that was the *lelang*, a word I did not know. Luckily, somebody added in English: 'it is an auction!' After all the pieces were sold, there started the ritual kick-fighting, called *sisemba*, of which I had often heard of and seen pictures in the ethnographies I had read. But my mind was stuck on the auction and on the oration about development I had just seen and heard. That summer day, my perspective

on a century of ethnographic literature about Toraja was radically changed.

I quickly understood that the scene I had seen in Batutumonga was far from being an extraordinary event. During my prolonged stay in Toraja, *lelang* became a familiar event: I realised that every ritual event included an auction. Be it a funeral, a wedding or a harvest thanks-giving feast, at a certain point a man would always walk to the middle of the ritual field holding a megaphone and he would start auctioning cuts of meat, usually assisted by another man in charge of holding them while the participants sitting at the borders would make their offers.

Why, then, despite its omnipresence, has *lelang* been shrouded by a complete ethnographic silence? Ethnographic representations tend to differentiate between ethnographic objects and what may be called their 'phenomenic background'. This distinction seems to be the very condition of possibility for any process of ethnographic writing. The attribution of what constitutes the ethnographic level and what is merely phenomenic shifts remarkably according to the theoretical paradigm employed. A good example of how *lelang* has been often relegated in the 'phenomenic background' is provided by Adams (1997:271) who in her article chooses to mention it in a quotation from her field notes: 'following the **meat auction** (my emphasis), the emcee announced that the *ma'badong* dancers were to begin shortly [...] we were greeted by the hosts and ushered to our seats on the sitting platform of one of the rice barns. As people conversed softly and pigs squealed in the background, we were served syrupy coffee and sweet rice cakes'. The introduction, during the colonial period, of a meat auction (to which Toraja commonly refer with the Indonesian word: *lelang*) into the local system of reciprocal ceremonial exchanges is

both underanalysed by scholars and hypocognitived by local actors. Interestingly enough, although in the Toraja ethnographic literature we find some hasty reference to fundraising auctions performed at ritual occasions (cf. Adams 1997:271; Crystal 1971:95; Waterson 1993:84), these have not been explored ethnographically or made object of a deep analysis. In a similar fashion, my intention of carrying out some ethnographical and historical research on this issue perplexes my Toraja interlocutors who often argue that it is a very trivial matter, not worth being studied. However, despite the fact that while I was writing this paper I have often found myself imagining that some of my Toraja friends would be disappointed in discovering that my article is concerned with *lelang*, thus failing to fulfil their expectations of me documenting the fading original Toraja culture, I still think that *lelang* deserves to be investigated in order to understand some historical and semantic shifts in the place of rituals.

A prominent feature of Toraja funeral ceremonies is provided by the exchange and slaughter of buffaloes and pigs, and the subsequent division and distribution of their meat according to rank distinctions. *Inaluk to dolo*⁷ high ranking funerals, the meat is divided into pieces, then distributed to both present and absent big men according to specific classifications of their status; the names of the important functionaries and notables to whom the cuts are given are called out loud in turn from the *bala' kaan* (*orbala' kayan*), a wooden platform, several meters high which is erected in the *rante*, the ritual field. These traditional ritual

⁷ *Aluk to dolo*, 'the way of the ancestors', with this term Toraja started calling their system of religious practices and believes since the 50's. In 1969 *aluk to dolo* was granted the status of a religion by the Indonesian government, but such recognition was justified only by assimilating it to Balinese Hinduism.

exchanges⁸ of animals and meat distribution often contain a competitive element, which some ethnographers have been tempted to compare to the classic case of Kwakiutl potlatch⁹ (Nooy-Palm 1979:28; Waterson 1993:83; Thompson 2000:42). In the following pages, though, I will leave aside the critical analysis of the comparison between Kwakiutl and Toraja ritual exchange systems, and focus on the Dutch missionaries' perceptions and reactions to Toraja ritual slaughtering.

Colonial control on the Toraja highlands only started at the beginning of the 20th century, thus corresponding to the proclamation of the Dutch ethical colonial policy in 1901 (cf. Henley 1995; Anderson 1983).¹⁰ Shortly after

⁸ For thorough accounts of the web of affinal and consanguineal ties at play in funeral and house ceremonies, see Waterson (1993) and Thompson (2000). While contributions from the affines (*to rampean*), are either cancelling or creating a debt (*indan*), which the recipient is expected to pay off at a future funeral where he will come as a guest; those provided by the other category of guests constituted by consanguineal relatives (*pa' rapuan*)—belonging to the same family branch (*rapu*) of the deceased—are called *petuaran* ('a pouring out') and 'are not considered crudely as debts, although in the long term they are expected to be repaid' (Waterson 1993:82).

⁹ "Potlatch" is a Chinook term meaning "to give away" that has been applied to a variety of gift exchanges systems on the Northwest Coast' (Masco 1994:42). As it has been pointed out by Masco, 'since Boas began field work on the Northwest Coast, [...] [potlatch] has proven to be irresistible to the anthropological imagination' (Masco 1995:41), this holds true for Toraja feasting as well, which has always been given great attention by ethnographers. Roxana Waterson (1993:83), though, invites to be cautious in comparing Toraja and Kwakiutl ritual exchanges and suggests that the term 'feasts of merit' is more appropriate to refer to Toraja 'emphasis on ceremonial expenditure' (Waterson 1993:83). Besides, in her article (1993), Waterson provides a concise but effective outline of commonalities and differences between Kwakiutl and Toraja ritual institutions.

¹⁰ It is important to bear in mind that, as it has been pointed out by several historians and scholars (cf. Anderson 1983; Henley 1995), during the 'Ethical

the colonial administration was in place, Dutch missionaries were sent to Toraja. In fact, Christianising the area was believed to be of strategic importance in order to create a Christian 'buffer' to counter Islamic expansion from the Bugis lowlands (cf. Bigalke 1981). Although, the first to arrive were missionaries from the Protestant Dutch Reformed Church, it was the Dutch Reformed Alliance (GZB), locally referred to as Zending, a Calvinist Mission Institute, which played the leading role in the Christianisation of Tana Toraja. Since the time Zending missionaries started their proselytising activities in the Toraja area in 1913, as it has happened in other contexts (cf. Peel 1995), much effort has been made to determine, or I should rather say impose, a distinction between the secular (*adat*) and sacred (*aluk*) within Toraja practices and beliefs.¹¹ In 1923 Zending missionaries set up an *adat* Commission that was supposed to provide a regulation in the

Policy' period 'there was a huge extension of the state apparatus deep into native society and a proliferation of its functions. [...] Education, religion, irrigation, agricultural improvements, hygiene, mineral exploitations, political surveillance—all increasingly became the business of a rapidly expanding officialdom, which unfolded more according to its inner impulses than in response to any organised extrastate demands' (Anderson 1983:479).

¹¹ This concern for separating the secular (*adat*) from the sacred (*aluk*) has its roots in Kruyt's missiology—'the theory as to how the mission should be done' (Peel 1995:395)—which conceived conversion as a process of enculturation of Christianity. Besides, the idea that evangelisation should resemble a 'pouring new wine into old skins' (Bigalke 1981:145), might have originated from the missionaries' belief that it was the very culture of Toraja—stereotyped in their preferences for pork meat, palm wine and gambling—that had prevented them from converting to Islam, thus providing utilitarian reasons for partially preserving 'traditional' cultural values (see Dok. 23:100 - Belksma's 1916 report, and Dok. 76:262 - Belksma's 1928 diary). For an excellent study of the intellectual *milieu* and sociocultural assumptions with which Zending was imbued, see Schrauwers's doctoral dissertation (1995).

matter of ritual practices.¹² As it emerges from the documents of the Zending period, categorising something as '*aluk*' or as '*adat*' became crucial in determining what was prohibited and what was allowed. In fact, this conceptual distinction between the domain of the customary (pertaining the sphere of *adat*) and that of the religious (pertaining the sphere of *aluk*) corresponded to and justified a parallel distinction between the permissible *adat* (because it meant only 'traditional culture') and the impermissible *aluk* (equated with paganism). It is interesting to note that the Commission's regulating activity was not only concerned with prohibiting certain practices that were regarded as pertaining the sphere of *aluk*, but also with authorising certain others that were forbidden by Toraja religion; thus explicitly contesting some traditional *pemali* (taboos), such as those concerned with the prohibition for the family of the deceased to eat rice for a certain period of time (cf. Dok. 33:124; Dok. 58:188–192; Dok. 75:244). The importance of this positive side, parallel to its negative one, of the Commission's regulating activity emerges in many accounts of the reasons for converting to Christianity I have collected from elder people, who tend to stress that they embraced Christianity because it is *lebih praktis* ('more practical') in being less restrictive concerning food taboos. The most significant of these accounts was told me by my adoptive uncle Pak Barung Batara. He re-

¹² As it emerges from the related documents, rules were not set once and for all. In fact, this Commission was organised on the basis of periodical meetings (*konferensi*) where teachers, village chiefs, and Zending missionaries gathered to debate about *adat*-related issues and to provide regulation (*peraturan*) to which the Christian converts had to conform. The 1923 Konferensi held in Barana' and Sangalla' was followed by several others: 1925 in Angin-Angin, 1928 in Barana', and more in 1929, 1932, 1933 (cf. Dok. 58, 59, 75, 78). See also Bigalke (1981:221–224).

counted to me the amazement of one of his elder brothers once he was visited by a Dutch missionary. Pak Batara's brother asked the Dutch missionary who was encouraging him to convert, what does Christianity means. The Dutch answered: *'artinya tidak ada lagi pemali'* ('it means there are no longer taboos').

It is not surprising that the Calvinist form of Christianity proposed by the proselytising work of the Zending, considered ritual animal sacrifices and mortuary meat division as wasteful extravagances. H. Van der Veen, a linguist sent to Tana Toraja by the Dutch Bible Society (*Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap*) who worked for almost forty years (1916–1955) in strict co-operation with GZB, in a letter from the field dated 26th of June 1917 describes the ruinous effects of local mortuary rituals that cause destruction of livestock and maximise economic inequalities:

Upacara-upacara itu harus diselenggarakan semarak-semaraknya dan kerbau dan babi haruslah dipotong sebanyak-banyaknya. Dengan demikian sebagian ternak dimusnahkan, dan bila orang tidak mempunyai ternak maka sawah-sawahnya digadaikan. Maka dengan demikian sejumlah besar pemilik tanah yang kecil menjadi orang-orang yang tak bertanah, dan dengan jalan ini pemilikan tanah luas oleh beberapa orang berkembang dan memuncak secara mengkhawatirkan (Dok. 31:119).

In another report written only few months later (Dok. 34:130–131) he reports of how Zending was urging the government to impose some restrictions on funeral slaughtering in order to:

memperbaiki ekonomi, karena pesta kematian merupakan penghalang besar untuk ekonomi.

But van der Veen was not the only one to criticise the destructive funerals that entailed such high costs that many people were compelled to mortgage their sawahs, in 1920

zendingling P. Zijstra (Dok. 45:158–159) describes Toraja funerals as characterised by a 'crazy obsession for honour':

Dan betapa megahnya pesta-pesta untuk orang mati, berikut segala macam upacara yang menyertainya. Sungguh mengherankan menyaksikan betapa besarnya pesta-pesta tersebut diselenggarakan untuk memuaskan rasa bangga dan semangat pamer keunggulan di antara sesama orang kaya. Karena di dalamnya 'gila hormat' memainkan peranan yang begitu besar maka adat-kebiasaan itu akan lebih sulit dilenyapkan.

The list of quotations could go on for many pages, but what is interesting to notice here is that what horrified most the Dutch missionaries about Toraja mortuary rituals was precisely their being supposedly wasteful performances, exclusively motivated by a vain competition for prestige.

Whether or not Toraja rituals are actually wasteful, is an interesting point. As it has been shown by Thompson (2000), buffaloes in Toraja mediate all symbolic, economic and social exchanges. Thus, if understood in the complex system of investments and circulation of wealth connected to funerals, ritual slaughtering reveals itself to be something very different from what the Dutch considered a reckless waste of resources. However, 'wastefulness' seems to be an unavoidable topic of discussion in Tana Toraja. As I have often noticed, outsiders' objections to their lavish death ceremonies prompt many Toraja to engage in elaborate attempts at 'cultural translation' in order to make their practices look reasonable to the outsider's gaze. It should be noticed that these justificatory accounts generally tend to deny that funeral sacrifices constitute a kind of vain status competition. On the contrary, they turn the criticism upside down, and using the same economic lexicon employed by their critics, they argue that, far from being a waste of money, ritual

slaughtering is either a moral obligation to pay back all the meat received during previous rituals, a means to maintain the prestige accumulated through a long history of family ritual participation, or a source of wealth *tout-court*. For instance, once my friend Yatim Sucipto pointed out to me the fact that Toraja rituals constitute a *warisan* (a heritage) left to present generation by benevolent ancestors. It was obvious that Yatim's choice of the term *warisan* was not intended to be metaphoric or to refer to a cultural heritage, since he was explicitly referring to the money provided by Western tourism. A culture that attracts Western capital has undoubtedly to be considered a source of wealth and not of waste (see Waterson 1993:87 for some examples of similar accounts). It seems to me that these responses to the criticisms made about their 'faulty economy' where resources are recklessly wasted instead of being used to promote local development constitute a set of counter-hegemonic discourses pertaining to the level of self-conscious debate.

Leaving Dutch perceptions of Toraja rituals aside for a moment let me move on to what I consider a related issue, that of Zending's funding policies. Despite the fact that the major part of the money for funding the activities of Zending and Gereja Toraja (which became officially autonomous in 1947) 'continued to come from Holland throughout the 50's' (Bigalke 1981:430), since the beginning of its evangelising work in Toraja, the Mission had encouraged grassroots forms of funding. In a letter dated 1923, Belksma (Dok. 58:185) explains how teachers' and parish evangelists' salaries should be paid not by the Zending funds, but with the money collected from the local dwellers' donations and taxes. In fact, as early as 1928 the Zending's executive board decided that the construction of church buildings as well as houses for the Zending teachers and evangelists should be under the responsibility

of the newly converted (cf. Van den End 1994:23–26). A guideline issued in 1940 by Zending (Dok. 141:478), declares that each parish (*jemaat*) should be responsible for providing at least part of its priest's salary.

It is in these ideological and material premises that we might locate the first emergence of the use of holding fundraising auctions during rituals. Although I have not found any document which testifies when and how the first auction took place in Toraja, some indirect reference to this might be found in a report from 1917 concerning the murder of van der Loosdrecht written by the Assistant-Resident of Luwu, E. A. J. Nobe (Tana Toraja was, during colonial administration, an *onderafdeeling*, under the *afdeeling* of Luwu). As it is clear in the related documents (Dok. 32, 33, 34, 35) the tension between the Government and the Mission reached a dramatic peak following the assassination of the Zending missionary van der Loosdrecht in his house in Bori'.¹³ The event caused a heated debate between the colonial government and Zending, which mutually blamed each other. In his report, Nobe, claiming that Zending's proselytising activities had been too harsh in urging the local population to abandon their customary practices (Dok. 33:124), lists seven reasons that had caused disappointment among local people and may have been one of the causes of the killing of van der Loosdrecht and of the subsequent rebellion. Along with the more usual issues concerning prohibitions to perform cock-fighting, suspension of the habitual Sunday market, compulsory schooling, restrictions on funerals rites, and taxes on the slaughtering of animals, Nobe mentions the obligation to set aside some pigs and buffaloes from the funerals that, instead of being traditionally sacri-

¹³ On the complex relation between the government and the Mission, see also Bigalke (1984).

ficed, have to be offered as a contribution in order to be sold to collect donations for building schools and other infrastructures. Although, no explicit mention is made of whether the animals would have been auctioned or simply sold, I believe that this form of donation is strictly related to the fundraising auctions that are nowadays performed at any kind of ritual throughout Toraja. In fact, this confirms the accounts of several elders I have interviewed about this, who claimed that *lelang* had been introduced by the missionaries.

In the missionaries' view, *lelang* may have been conceived as a device through which lavish death ceremonies could be turned into ways of promoting social and religious change, thus, at least partially, limiting the waste of wealth and resources caused by Toraja funerals, which would be better off if used for more constructive goals.

Moreover, *lelang*, far from being a meaningless appendix, engenders several symbolic shifts both on the significance attached to ritual slaughtering and to the practices of meat division and distribution.

As I mentioned above, funeral meat distribution is a crucial device of cultural reproduction, in fact, not only does it play a role in maintaining patron-client relations, but it is also strategic in preserving and enhancing status. As it has been pointed out by Waterson (1993:78), 'the establishing and maintenance of status is dependant upon the size and quality of cuts of meat received'. Contrary to traditional patterns, *lelang* entails a radically different modality of meat distribution. While in the *bala' kaan* distribution is the status which determines to whom the cuts of meat should be given, the kind of meat distribution performed through *lelang* runs through a completely different pattern, here meat is obtained through the payment of a certain sum: each participant is virtu-

ally entitled to get the meat, provided that he has enough money to compete with other bidders. Whoever wishes to get a piece of meat and is capable of paying enough money to beat the other bidders, is entitled to do so. Compared to the *bala' kaan* distribution, *lelang* clearly endorses the prominence of economic power and individual agency, thus constituting a practice that embodies the egalitarian ideologies through which Dutch missionaries criticised the hierarchically ranked Toraja society.

According to *to minaa* Tato' Dena' (the highest ranking ritual specialist of *aluk to dolo*), the introduction of the meat auction has deeply subverted the symbolic system underlying ritual slaughtering. In fact, *aluk to dolo* entails strict ritual requirements concerning the number and the characteristics of the buffaloes slaughtered for the ritual to be complete and effective. This prescribes that according to the rank of the deceased the funeral has to be accompanied by the correct number and type of buffaloes according to colour, marking and horn shape. *Lelang*, complains Tato' Dena', by subtracting some buffaloes from the ritual circuit in order to be sold, undermines ritual completeness and contravenes the *pemali* (taboo) which prescribes that meat from the sacrificed animals should be distributed, but, never ever, sold.

Besides, *aluk to dolo*'s emphasis on the uselessness of buffaloes that can never be employed for agriculture labour and should be virgins when sacrificed—thus ensuring they are 'the embodiment of supreme symbolic and sacred value' (Thompson 2000:48)—is subverted by the utilitarian logic of *lelang*.

Although, my genealogy of this recent 'ritual institution' may be interpreted as one of the many stories of the invention of traditions, I consider *lelang* not so much as an invented tradition¹⁴, but rather as a context where it is

possible to have a privileged perspective on the embeddedness of the old and the new and of their dynamic interplay. The introduction of a meat auction in traditional Toraja rituals has not been invented out of the blue, but presumes a mimetic attitude on the part of the missionaries, who grasped the importance of meat distribution in the ritual event, from which they 'invented' a copycat version, endowed with a different meaning. With this perspective, my use of the term 'resemanticisation' should not be understood as entailing a dichotomy between authentic precolonial rituals and colonial-determined change, or as implying a unidirectional and irreversible process; rather it refers to one of the discursive processes through which specific actors (e.g. Dutch missionaries, local priests, government officials, or local administrators) try to manipulate practices and establish meanings in the ritual context.

Lelang plays a crucial role in the symbolic contest, being one of the major vehicles of these attempts at resemanticising ritual.¹⁵ Development is not the only discourse evoked

¹⁴See Lindstrom and White's (1997) for a critique of the theoretical implications underlying the 'invention of tradition' approach, which in their view is similar to those anthropological models, which 'struggling to represent pure indigenous types on the one hand and sociopolitical change on the other, have generally failed to represent the interpenetration of these forms.' (Lindstrom and White 1997:11). See also Dirks's (1990) critique of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983).

¹⁵Roxana Waterson warns me not to overestimate the role of *lelang* in the process of ritual change. In my perspective, however, the process of resemanticisation does not mean that the discursive context evoked by the staging of *lelang* is so powerful to imply that 'the ritual as a whole has been recast in a new idiom' (Waterson's personal communication). The Dutch missionaries' habit of holding meat auctions during rituals, I argue, should be conceived as an act of power through which they attempted to control the meaning of ritual practices and their interpretation. The outcomes of these resemanticisation processes, though, are not certain or given once and for all.

whenever a meat auction is performed, however. In fact, as I have observed several times, *lelang* is not always used by social actors to make charitable donations to the Church. Frequently, during these fundraising occasions, donors are seen refusing to collect what they have bid for and bought, or offered exorbitant amounts of money for cuts of meat of little value, thus perpetuating the supposedly ostentatious and depleting practices, which the auction (with its rhetoric against wasting wealth and resources) was aimed at eradicating. These attitudes, locally labelled 'showing off' (*mempertlihatkan diri*) that tend to transform a fund-raising activity into an issue of rank and prestige, are an interesting example of how *lelang* can become a performative context of status display.

At the beginning of this section, I mentioned how *lelang* in scholarly as well as native representation of Toraja rituals has often been neglected as a superfluous appendix, not really deserving of a deep analysis. My Toraja interlocutors' skepticism towards the relevance of *lelang* for my research, several times made me conclude that this fundraising auction actually does not play an important role in ritual general 'economy' (both in the metaphorical and material sense of the term). However, I guess that my ethnographic and historical understanding of it, has drawn me to believe that the scarce interest of the natives in the institution of *lelang* partly derives from its being a powerful ideological device through which ritual is resemanticised, and thus it is hidden from the native awareness. Besides, as I have mentioned earlier, local objections to my choice of auction as an object of study, have started interesting debates and discussions among my Toraja assistants and myself, which deserve to be interpreted. My interlocutors' insistence on leaving *lelang* on the phenomenical background, seemed to me mostly motivated by their con-

sideration of the meat auction as an hybrid and parasitic practice which should for this very reason be neglected. Locals' disagreement with my interest in *lelang* is partly explained by the fact that, the study of this 'spurious' ritual form, in their eyes is a way of playing the enemy's game. A Toraja friend of mine, reading and commenting on an earlier version of my paper warned me that I had better be careful. If I did not want to sound aligned with the Dutch Calvinist criticism on ritual wastefulness, I should have avoided quoting so many excerpt from missionaries' comments and I should have not given *lelang* an analytic prominence. I should have instead devoted my research to documenting authentic Toraja culture. I disappointingly replied that my analysis of Dutch missionaries' and colonisers' viewpoint was aimed at providing a cultural critique, my own stance on ritual slaughtering not at all coinciding with theirs. However, now I retrospectively understand that my friend's comment could be interpreted as a form of reflexive counterdiscourse on cultural purity. Denial of cultural change and neglect of the hybridisation outcomes of the colonial encounter is not just a descriptive strategy pursued by Western ethnographers that were aiming at constructing in their writings fictitiously pure cultural forms (cf. Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986). My Toraja friend's advice is, in fact, an eloquent example of how the ideology of 'cultural pureness' can be locally appropriated in order to provide a self-portrait in which the Dutch missionaries are somehow left out of the picture.

Finally, what is relevant about *lelang* is that, contrary to other similar measures taken during the Dutch period to rationalise ritual expenditure and to finalise it to promote 'development', *lelang* is the only one that happens **during the ritual event**. In fact, compared to other fund-raising activities¹⁶, which prolif-

erated during colonial times and were aimed at gathering resources through money collection and livestock donations to be used for social service, the peculiarity of *lelang* consists of the fact that it is embedded in ritual. Since *lelang* was introduced, it has become customary that the unrolling of ritual script is interrupted at some point to make way to the meat auction. This is not irrelevant. In my reading, the meat auction becomes a rite in itself, sharing many commonalities with what Tennekoon (1988) has defined 'rituals of development'. *Lelang* constitutes a form of ritual practice through which development is evoked, enacted and symbolised. *Lelang*, thus, should be understood as a form of 'metacultural ritual', that is, a ritual 'signifying culture' (Tennekoon 1988:302), where the actual ritual practice refers to, and even symbolises, the narrative of modernity that in postcolonial times have been appropriated by national rhetoric. In fact, as it has been argued by Ariel Heryanto (1988:16), in New Order ideology, modernity has become almost synonymous with development (*pembangunan*) conceived as the process of building, of 'creating something which was formerly non-existent'. The current understanding of development thus, 'refers to the reliance on a conscious human will.' In its coincidence with this idea of development, modernity in Indonesia is not conceptualised, as in the Western ingenuous historical consciousness, as a stage, a condition, an era in which we live, and which is acquired once and for all. Rather it is perceived as the wager at stake, or as a goal that has to be volutaristically pursued through the continuous effort of our wills. With

¹⁶Such as the institution of a 'school fund' (*dana sekolah*) to support the construction of schools through the money collected from taxation of death feasts (Bigalke 1981:178), and the institution in the 30's of 'burial funds' (Bigalke 1981:288–289).

this perspective, *lelang* and its related fund-raising and development-promoting activities constitute a metaphor of the never-ending struggle in which the nation is engaged to continuously reaffirm modernity.

As it is well known among Indonesianists, the discourse of development (*pembangunan*) has been undoubtedly New-Order's central ideology. However, I argue that not sufficient attention has been so far devoted to analyse the way in which the voluntaristic element of Indonesian development rhetoric is combined with a particular form of temporality. Heryanto (1988), in his outline of the semantic and social history of the word 'pembangunan', has pointed out how the word, which derives from the nominalisation of the root-word 'bangun' (that has both a transitive and intransitive meaning), has gone through a drastic semantic shift. During the years of the growth of Indonesian nationalist thinking it primarily corresponded to the idea of nation-building and it referred to the intransitive voice of the verb bangun 'to wake up' (conveying the idea of the awakening of national consciousness). However, it progressively changed its meaning during the 60's, ending up acquiring a transitive connotation very close to the meaning of the verb 'menciptakan'—'to create, to make exist, to invent' (Heryanto 1988:10). According to Heryanto (1988:16), the reason for the greater fortune in New-Order rhetoric of the term 'pembangunan' over the alternative and pre-existing term 'perkembangan', is due to the fact that while the latter is a nominalisation from the root 'kembang' and refers to the intransitive verb 'berkembang' ('to grow', or 'to spread') conveying the idea of a 'natural' and 'continuous' 'process of change' or growth, which comes 'from within' and is 'outside our control'; the former, by having radicalised its transitive polarity, and becoming strictly connected to the process of building, stresses the

role of free will and is thus more suitable to New-Order's voluntaristic rhetoric of development. If something can be added to Heryanto's illuminating analysis of these semantic differences, it seems to me that these two terms differ in one further respect, which is concerned with two different senses of temporality implied by 'pembangunan' and 'perkembangan'. In fact, while the word 'perkembangan' allows the inclusion of different temporalities, the rhetoric of 'pembangunan' implies a univocal sense of temporality.

From Protestant ethic to modernisation ideology

In the previous section, I have attempted to show, how the missionaries' discourse was strictly intertwined with the rhetoric of modernisation. This may depend on the fact that missionaries represented conversion to Christianity as a temporal reorganisation.¹⁷ Missionaries' letters and reports from the Zending period are filled with allusions to a temporal scheme in which Christianity is represented as the inevitable and predetermined outcome of Toraja local history. In these documents not only do we find plenty of examples of how the Toraja system of practice and beliefs was allochronically (Fabian 1983) labelled as *pikiran kekafirannya yang lama* (old pagan thoughts) (Belksma, Dok. 38:144), or, more mildly, *adat lama* (old tradition) (van der Veen, Dok. 34:131), *agama lama* (old religion) (Belksma, Dok. 76:261), as opposed to the 'new religion' (*agama baru*) (van der Veen, Dok. 34:132); but we can also come across more articulate narratives. I quote extensively from an excerpt from one of Belksma's reports (dated

¹⁷ In fact, Toraja situation seems to share many commonalities with the Yoruba case illustrated by Peel (1995:602) where missionaries represented 'the spiritual regeneration of Africa as if it should be linked to, and supported by, secular processes of development.

1921) which is particularly striking for its being imbued with the meanest colonial racism:

Sudah terdapat beberapa orang yang mulai insyafakan makna pendidikan sekolah. Lama-lama hilanglah angan-angan yang dipegang selama ini, yaitu bahwa waktu singkat atau lama pemerintahan Belanda akan hilang dengan sendirinya atau karena pelawanan. Orang semakin menghargai ucapan-ucapan dan mimpi-mimpi kaum leluhur, yaitu bahwa pada suatu waktu kelak akan datanglah ras orang kulit putih, yang akan menegakkan tatanan yang baru yang sama sekali lain. Memang tidak mungkin untuk terus mengingkari segala berkat yang telah dibawa oleh zaman baru ini (Dok. 46:162).

Therefore it is thanks to missionaries' discourses that—paraphrasing Peel (1995:606)—‘developmentalism has taken hold of the Toraja imagination and historical consciousness’. In this section I explore how the nationalistic discourse in Toraja seems to have borrowed this temporal representation from missionaries' rhetoric concerned with conversion, and directed it to a nation-building project.

My second ethnographic example regards a speech delivered¹⁸ during a wedding ceremony by a soldier.¹⁹ After having talked for a while about problems of social security and having pointed out to the audience the urgent need of their getting engaged in corvee labour to promote ‘development’, the soldier decides to conclude his speech with this particular piece of advice to the newly weds:

¹⁸Since it is not my aim here to provide a linguistic analysis of the material, I present this text without the usual morphosyntactical gloss. The numbers refer to the lines of the original transcription. I maintain the original version of the speech, which was delivered in Torajanese.

¹⁹That rituals become context for political speeches and rallies by government and army officials is a common occurrence in contemporary Toraja.

220.

yanna ben bati' na beng komi to tu mampa'ta sola dua

If you have your children given by the one who created us (the Lord) to you together

221.

komi yatu toninna da' mi tanan dio la' pek banua.

Do not plant the placenta at the side of the house

222.

*Ba' tu da' mi tanan dioi pollo' banua
Nor plant (it) in the back of the house*

223.

tae' na sang maneku manna Rube' yate sola duai

Not only to my friend Rube', them (the newly weds) both

224.

sangadinna mintu' tu to lakianak pa' yatu to lakianak pa'

But also to all of those who will have children, that is, those who will have children

225.

*yatu to toninna da' mi tanan dioi pollo' banua
ba'tu dio la'pek banua.*

So the placenta do not plant (it) at the back of the house nor at the side of the house

226.

*Sangadinna lami tanan dioya tingo banua
But you will plant it in front of the house*

227.

sa ba' den pengalaman napokadanna' sola-ku to Jawa

Because I have an experience told me by a friend of mine, a Javanese,

228.

patangngia yate ada' Jawa

this is not the Javanese tradition

229.

yatongku pendidikan dio Jawa.

It was when I was being educated in Jawa

230.

Ku-male ma' Gereja na kua to Jawa tamaki Gereja Toraja.

I would go to the Church and the Javanese said let's go to the Toraja Church

231.

Ponno-mo dio boko' lulakoki muka eh...kosong ya pale'

It was full at the back, we went to the front eh... it was empty

232.

*kukumai apa sebabnya to nakua itu pusatnya
pa' jangan*

And I ask what is the reason (for that) he said:
(the placenta) do not
233.

*ditanam di samping atau ditanam di belakang,
jadi tatananan dio muka banua*

plant it on the side or (do not) plant (it) in the
back, so we plant (it) at the front of the house
234.

*na barani tampil tu anakta susiri susinna to
(so that) our children (will) dare to show up
(emerge) it should be like that
235.*

*jadi barani tampil dio muka umum tu mai bati'ta
ke tatanan dioi lu tingo banua*

So our children will dare to emerge in public if
we plant (the placenta) in front of the house

The soldier was here referring to the local tradition of burying the placenta of a newborn baby in the proximity of the house. However, this speech, far from being concerned with advising the newly weds (lines 220–223) and the whole audience (223–224) in a placenta-burying matter, it provides a narrative about the relation between modernity and tradition and implies a scheme for how Toraja should project themselves over time. The reason provided by the Javanese friend of why Toraja do not dare to sit in the front during the service (read: are not as developed as the Javanese) derives from the traditional custom of burying the placenta on the side or at the rear of the house. Only if the Toraja people will bury the placenta in the front, will the future generation be inclined to develop and not be backward as they have always been. The metaphor underlying the soldier's speech is more sophisticated than what it may seem at first sight. Tradition (the customary use of burying the placenta on the side or at the rear of the house) is pictured as something that impede development and at the same time as what could (provided that some slight changes are made: burying the placenta in the front) promote it.²⁰ Tradition is ambigu-

ously portrayed both as an obstacle to and as the foundation of development. Although the sense of the metaphor could sound opaque or even self-contradictory, it seems to me that it is perfectly in line with wider New-Order ideologies concerning the relation between tradition and development. As in the soldier's speech, New-Order discourse was marked by the same ambiguous attitude toward tradition and combined an all-encompassing development propaganda with sugary rhetoric about the importance of preserving and maintaining local traditions. The contradiction, thus, is only apparent, since it is undone in the temporal orientation underlying the national motto. In fact, Bhineka Tunggal Ika ('Unity in Diversity') implies a temporal perspective in which tradition is placed in a temporal scheme that points to modernity as its eventual destiny.²¹ It should be noticed how this speech bears a striking resemblance to Soeharto's oration delivered at the dedication of Taman Mini in 1975, concern-

²⁰ As it has been pointed out by Roxana Waterson (personal communication), there are some inconsistencies in the soldier's speech. In fact, while 'there were reasons within the traditional Toraja cosmology for 'planting' the placenta on the east side of the house—because that is the side associated with life, the rising sun and the deities etc. and opposed to death and the end of the life cycle, nobody would dream of planting it in the south either, since that's the direction of the afterlife.' However, it is likely that traditional cosmology and its symbolic association with compass points is somehow bracketed in the soldier's speech in favour of a narrative aimed at establishing a correspondence between the front of the house and the 'forwardness' of the Toraja new-generation.

²¹ It seems to me that my analysis here differs from Pemberton's (1994). In Pemberton's interpretation (1994) the sense of temporality and historical consciousness endorsed by the New-Order rhetoric is marked by 'an obsession with connecting the past and the future in the form of a present', which, as it is clearly exemplified in Taman Mini's 'special ahistoricism', has been pursued through an effort to erase 'the difference between past, present, and future, and thus flatten time' (Pemberton 1994:245-46).

ing the two kinds of material (materiil) and spiritual (spirituil) development.²² In New-Order 'highly articulate rhetoric of culture' (Pemberton 1994:244) cultural differences are transformed into a 'cultural heritage', whose heterogeneity is homogenised through being inserted in a temporal framework that represents them as the basis and foundation of a modern unified future. Notice that in this perspective, tradition is not so much something that is handed down through history, but a crystallised foundation of the material development. Tradition, in fact, does not impede development, provided that it is dehistoricised, and reduced to a mere spatial dimension.²³ Labelling something as traditional, thus, pushes it backwards in the past and sets the ground for the next discursive step that consists in turning tradition into the preliminary phase of a modernisation narrative.

It seems to me that the scholarly analyses concerning the selective essentialisation of local traditions—variously labelled as 'folklorisation of culture' (Picard 1997), 'culture editing' Volkman (1990), 'aestheticisation' and 'dedoxafication' (Acciaioli 1985)—engendered by the incorporation of local cultures in the Indonesian nation-state, have tended to focus primarily on the spatial dimension of control, thus failing to give enough attention to the sense of temporality constructed by national-

istic discourse.

Conclusions

Lelang, in my interpretation, thus, offers a vantage point to reconstruct the genealogy of conceptual and practical normalising strategies to control rituals, and to trace links between Dutch missionaries' discourse and postcolonial New-Order ideologies of development and modernisation. The rhetoric of development and modernisation in contemporary Toraja has one of its major historical antecedents in missionaries' fundraising activities (of which *lelang* is the most emblematic example) aimed at the construction of schools, streets, and government buildings. These are not simply considered infrastructures, but by being inserted in an insistent rhetoric of modernisation, have become to be perceived as the material symbols of development. During my stay in Toraja, I started being more and more aware that my way of perceiving signs of Western technology in the landscape was very different from that of my Toraja friends. What I simply saw as a paved street or a Church made of concrete, to my friends' eyes was not just a path covered with asphalt or a building made of cement, but the tangible embodiment of the temporality of development.

The soldier's speech analysed above demonstrates how, in contemporary Toraja, ritual is a context where nationalistic rhetoric unfolds through the discourse of tradition and development. This speech, clearly imbued with a metanarrative of modernity as convergence,²⁴ discloses an interesting form of historical con-

²² For an account of how the postulation of this duality of development is a fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalism, see Chatterjee (1993:6). On this respect, see also Tennekoon (1988:301) for an ethnographic example from Sri Lanka.

²³ This is consistent with what Dirks (1990:27–28) has noticed about the mutual construction of the categories of modernity and of tradition and relative treatment of the latter in colonial discourse: 'the terms have taken their meanings in relation to each other. The modern not only invented tradition, it depends upon it. The modern has liberated us from tradition and constantly conceives itself in relation to it. But under colonialism tradition was consigned not just to a past but to a place'.

²⁴ Thus conveying a clear example of what Taylor (1999) has defined 'acultural theories of modernity'. According to him: 'The view that modernity arises through the dissipation of certain unsupported religious and metaphysical beliefs seems to imply that the paths of different civilisations are bound to converge. [...] this outlook projects a future in which we

sciousness.

In the previous pages, I have shown some interesting historical continuities between colonial and postcolonial strategies of controlling rituals in the Toraja highlands of South Sulawesi. This ethnographic analysis was aimed at revealing the temporal implications hidden in the national rhetoric of 'Unity in Diversity'. The spatial structure engendered by the national conceptualisation of Indonesian cultural territory as one of unity in diversity is paralleled by the construction of a peculiar, but less explicit, sense of temporality based on the antithesis between 'modernity' and 'tradi-

tion' to which national ideology owes much of its rhetorical effectiveness. Acquiring a critical awareness of the temporal subtext of postcolonial national rhetoric is nowadays of crucial importance in post-Soeharto Indonesia. No attempts at building a new frame of reference for thinking and coping with plurality and differences in contemporary Indonesia could be effective if it does not comprise a preliminary understanding of the subtle implications hidden in the national ideology of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*.

all emerge together into a single, homogenous world culture. In our traditional societies, we were very different from each other. But once these earlier horizons have been lost, we shall all be the same' (Taylor 1999:161).

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