

## FUNCTION AND MEANING OF SYMBOLIC FASHION IN RAMBU SOLO' CEREMONY

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### ABSTRACT

There is local knowledge of the Toraja tribe about the function and symbolic meaning of clothing at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. Socially and culturally, the Toraja live in three stages of life namely, aesthetic, ethical and religious. That way Toraja people can interact with each other in their community and build kinship through tongkonan values and are bound by a belief called *Aluk Todolo*. The research method uses descriptive qualitative. Data collection uses observation, interview, and documentation techniques. While the data processing techniques in this study are data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. The results showed that the function of the clothes at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, always adapted to two processions, namely 1) clothing at the funeral procession used by the performers of the ritual dance *Pa'randing*, *Tominaa*, the nuclear family, relatives and conveyors of property. 2) clothing in the art procession used by ritual performers of *Ma'katia*, *Ma'papangan*, and *Ma'badong*. The symbolic meaning of clothes in the two processions is that clothing is always associated with mythology and the origin of people who died, especially for the Toraja tribe who have high social stratification (*tana 'bulaan*).

**Keywords:** Clothing, Meaning of Symbols, Social Stratification, Rambu Solo''

### INTRODUCTION

In general, the Toraja tribe as a cultural community that lives in aesthetic, ethical and religious activities, are not much different from other tribes in Indonesia. With this basic view of togetherness, of course there are arguably the unique differences possessed by the Toraja tribe namely the festivity of the death ceremony (*Rambu Solo'*) which was held on a large scale with a very large cost.

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony 'is carried out in two processions namely the funeral procession and the arts procession which is usually carried out by families of the aristocratic group (*Toraja = Tana'*) who died. The procedure for practice in carrying out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony 'depends on the level of social stratification of the deceased. In the Toraja tribe there are four levels of *tana'*, namely *Bulaan*, *Bassi*, *Karurung*, and *Kua-kua*, each of which has different terms of practice (Tangdilintin, 1978: 154). The majority who carry out the ceremony *Rambu Solo'* which is festive memorable usually carried out by a group of nobles from among the *Tana' Bulaan* (the highest nobility in the Toraja tribe). Kobong (1983: 2) says that "Toraja Man" is empirically a human being who is born-alive-then dies and death is a transition from empirical reality to the mythic-transcendent, while birth is a transition from the mythic-transcendent to the empirical- practical.

Another uniqueness that is in the Toraja tribe is that there are a variety of ritual clothing that is often displayed at the *Rambu Solo* ceremony, both in the funeral procession and in the art procession. Clothing that is used in the two processions, looks integrated and patterned when used by actors in the procession (*Toraja language = Ma'rombongan*) mourners entering the area of the ceremony (*Toraja language = rante*) and performers of dances when witnessing the type of dance. The pattern of the perpetrators in the procession, sorted from the actions of several people who performed the Pa'randing dance, and followed by other actors namely *To Minaa* (prayer leader), the nuclear family, relatives, and some people as an introduction to property (buffalo). While the pattern of actors in the art procession is seen when witnessing a type of ritual dance based on the contents of the *Rambu Solo* ceremony 'such as, the presence of *Ma'papangan*, *Ma'katia* and *Ma'badong*.

Of the two witnessing patterns as mentioned above, it is a form of Toraja awareness in *Aluk To dolo* belief, in uniting three stages of life (stadia), that is, the unity of the aesthetic elements of fashion at each ritual moment, which is then integrated into an action (ethics), which totally tolerates fashion aesthetics by witnessing a type of ritual dance into the religious system between the funeral procession and the arts procession.

The patterns of behavior, and tardisi carried out as mentioned above is a form of cultural manifestation of the Toraja tribe to carry out social life. Berkhofe (1971) states that, cultural manifestations are objects created by humans as cultured creatures, in the form of behaviors and objects that are tangible, for example patterns of behavior, traditions, language, living equipment, social organizations, religion, art and others, all of which are intended to assist humans in carrying out community life.

Thus, the embodiment of culture in an actualized community in clothing used at the *Rambu Solo* ritual ceremony 'in the Toraja tribe through two processions, can be seen as tangible behaviors and used to help the community in carrying out life. In Strauss's (2009) view, the embodiment of such objects can be considered a form of language and can be used to build social relationships. In the syntagmatic and paradoxical approach in Levi Strauss's theory, the patterns of action are language structures in the non-verbal category and can at the same time trigger meaning through horizontal and vertical search by utilizing mythological guidance and the origin of the Toraja tribe.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will explain the differences with previous research and as a comparison about fashion, among others: Petrenko (2015) states that, basically fashion has become a conversation, the desire of many people who become consumers. Brydges and Hrac (2018), in the world of clothing, there is a literary-clothing model that reflects differences, identities and values. Godart (2018), clothing from an area is very easy to read and recognize because it reflects the characteristics of the area. Thornquist (2018), fashion style is symbolically a self-expression. Zancu, Rodgers and Enea (2019), clothing as body image.

Marques, et all (2019), it is necessary to recycle used clothing to become a new product. Lewis, Kerr, Burgess (2019), fashion as a tourism media because it displays the uniqueness of the area. Faria, Cunha, and Providencia (2019), the fashion industry must pay attention to the emotions and perspective of the subject or customer. Wagner, et all (2019), clothing models have shifted and symbolically reflect environmentally friendly models. Yuana and

Shen (2019), retailers, tenants and the entire system in the clothing industry are more easily integrated when joined in groups or communities.

Choia and Yanyan (2019), fashion brand advertising symbolically was able to lift the brand name to worldwide. Kawaf, and Istanbuluoglu (2019), online clothing shopping can show symbolic reality, namely increasing individuality and lack of sociality. Sundstroma, Lidholma, and Radon (2019), online clothing shopping symbolically occurs because of price stimuli, easy access and free shipping. Choia and Liu (2019) said that basically advertising really contributes to marketing brands and fashion styles.

Sebald and Jacob (2020), stylist fashion style is very important in online clothing promotion. Legerea and Kang (2020), fashion has a holistic and philosophical meaning. Lang, Li and Zhao (2020), symbolically, renting clothes or clothing is a new strategy in reducing clothing production. Bockholdt, Kemper, and Brettel (2020), that the price game in the market greatly affects the fashion industry in a sustainable manner. Blasi, Brigato, Sedita (2020), in the world of fashion there are keywords that make clothes very popular, namely fashion, glamor and style.

By looking at and studying previous studies, this study focuses on the complexity of the Toraja tribe's local knowledge about the function and symbolic meaning of clothes at the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony', which tends to place the supporting community only on the objectively implementing boundaries, without looking at it in a subjective perspective. Correspondingly, three questions can be formulated: a) how to practice the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony 'for the Toraja people. b) what is the form of local knowledge about the function of the *Rambu Solo*' ritual clothing ', b) what is the symbolic meaning contained in the ritual clothing at the *Rambu Solo* ceremony'.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive study using a cultural phenomenology approach. To find the function and symbolic meaning of clothing used in the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, the researcher used a syntagmatic and paradigmatic system. Data collection was carried out using the direct observation method in the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, interviews were conducted on four key informants in order to obtain primary data, and supported by supporting data and other references in the form of audio-visual data that are documents found at the study site.

The process of collecting data is carried out in three stages according to the type of qualitative research, namely: 1) a preliminary study / observation with the data found is a sample of the research location and several people who are considered to be key informants. 2) interviews with several sources that are considered possible to support research namely; information finding through traditional leaders at each place where the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony is held, information finding from the nuclear family (the organizer of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony), as well as data sourced from people who work formally such as teachers and employees. 3) documentation is also carried out in stages in accordance with the stages of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony procession, namely some of the documentation carried out at the funeral (a photo of clothing in a mourning procession / *ma'rombongan*), and documentation carried out during the implementation of the art procession (photo of clothing used in ritual dance acts).

The three stages used in the collection of research data as mentioned above, are then processed in triangulation with the intention of matching the data that has different sources of

information, so that the data collected can be used as conclusion material that has a high level of validity. Therefore, triangulation is used as a way to combine different measurement procedures to increase validity in this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The habit of carrying out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony in the Toraja community is a form of community construction that has such meaning that is essential for the survival of the community. The habit of carrying out life cycle ceremonies such as the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is carried out on the basis of a deep awareness of the understanding of the mythic world that relates to the origin and glory of past cultural actors which are well-illustrated and neatly arranged in mythologies regarding supernatural issues as part of tribal culture. Toraja which is full of symbolic reality. Geertz in (Sani: 2014: 23), culture is a system of symbolic meaning, a semiotic system that contains symbols that function to communicate the meaning of one's mind to the thoughts of others.

Symbolically, the activities of the *Rambu Solo* life cycle ceremony 'carried out by the Toraja community is a reflection of the awareness of the Toraja cultural stakeholders who are unable to naturally understand the dimensions of the macrocosm as *aluk* and that is their limitations as human beings. Thus to deal with and evaluate these conditions, the Toraja people try to bring their understanding about themselves (subjective) and their world (objective) and to give meaning to their lives through interpretations based on mythological and empirical / practical views. This means how Torajans think and experience the origin and purpose of life and practice it in the behavior and attitudes of daily life that are applied to every ceremonial activity (Kobong, 1983: 1).

Essentially, the local knowledge of the Toraja people about the use of clothing in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is guided by the belief in *Aluk Todolo* and the mythology of the origin of the Toraja tribe. *Aluk* literally means "rule / religion", *To Dolo* means "ancestor", so *Aluk To Dolo* means "ancestral religion", or ancient religion "(Lestari, 2012: 12). The functioning of the clothes is clearly evident during the implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, namely through a funeral procession and an art procession. The two processions in the series of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony are the stages of the ritual that must be passed by the nuclear family carrying out the ceremony.

The *Rambu Solo* ceremony is a concept of the Toraja tribe about life and death, which is a continuation of life from the mortal to the realm of spirits according to the teachings of *Aluk Todolo'*. In *Aluk Todolo'* belief that life in the world is a golden bridge that is used to reach the supernatural, which in this case means that the spirit is still related to human life. The results of an interview with Tarra (2018) inform that the understanding of the Toraja tribe in general, about people who died, both biological parents (mothers), grandparents who gave birth to our parents, when it was not there or had left the fanatical nature towards the supernatural (*puya*), it is still considered a person who is still sick. To complete his death, of course his descendants are obliged to carry out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony.

The implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is identical to the use of such a large amount of cost, so that in the ritual stages it is lively and the prominence of social stratification in the Toraja tribe. But on the other hand, the implementation of the ceremony is so tightly regulated by customary rules, but there are still points of tolerance in the implementation of these customary rules, as informed by the Puang Layuk (2018) who serves

as the traditional leader of *Kete' Kesu'* in his interview stating that; there are fundamental differences about the implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. The difference is seen in the level of stratification in the Toraja community who are carrying out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, especially in the level of participation of families and relatives who have died. But in some traditional areas which provide relief not to burden the almahrum family in terms of the rules set out in “*adat*” (customary) about the amount of property (buffalo) sacrificed.

In the Toraja tribe four social stratifications and funeral procedures can be distinguished, namely 1) the Toraja from the *Tana' Kua-kua* (the lowest aristocrats) can carry out a funeral by burying people who die during the afternoon sun and at night, and the stipulation that the person who died must not be kept at home and is usually called *Disillik*. 2) the *Tana' Karurung* (Toraja tribe in general / independent people), can hold a funeral for one night and the animals that are sacrificed are four pigs or a maximum of one buffalo and commonly called *Dipasambongi*. 3) the *tana' Bulaan* (high-ranking aristocrats who are less fortunate), can carry out burial ceremonies for three nights and the animals sacrificed are at least 7 buffaloes and several pigs and are commonly called *Didoya*. 4) *Tana' Bulaan* (high nobility who are financially capable), can hold a funeral service for 7 nights and the animals that are sacrificed are a minimum of 11 animals and added a number of pigs and this ceremony is called *Dirapai* or *Rapasan*.

Over time and technological developments, funeral ceremonies in the Toraja tribe called *Rambu Solo'*, mostly carried out by the Toraja tribe from high bagsawan (*Tana' Bulaan* who are financially capable), and usually this big ceremony is held in December, together with holiday season and post-harvest in the Toraja tribe. From some of the main bases in the implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, as described earlier, the function and meaning of clothing in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, the Toraja tribe is distinguished in two processions namely the function and symbolic meaning of the clothes in the funeral procession by presenting a *pa'randing* dance costume, *Tominaa*, the nuclear family, relatives and bearers of treasure and the arts procession presented the *Ma'papangan*, *Ma'katia* and *Ma'badong* dance costumes. All types of clothing used have symbolic meaning in accordance with the context of the two processions which contained aesthetic values and creativity in them. Peursen (1988: 18) states, human creativity can break through and break immanence and distort the direction of culture toward transcendence power, making humans able to act and evaluate and evaluate nature in the surrounding environment through three essential traits of high human powers namely mythic, ontological, and functional.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

*Rambu Solo'* Ceremony is a funeral ceremony from the Toraja tribe whose implementation always coincides with the falling of the sun towards the western horizon ie from noon to night. In the Toraja language, *Rambu* is interpreted as smoke and *solo* is eaten as descending. This knowledge is based on micro and macro understanding, that the Toraja tribe in carrying out ritual ceremonies, especially *Rambu Solo'* are still associated with the four cardinal directions namely East-West is believed to be life leading to death, North-south is believed to be devotion to *Puang Matua* (The Creator).

The implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony by the Toraja people is very important in the eyes of their supporters, because in their belief *Aluk Todolo* is still understood that when one of the Toraja families who dies, is still considered ill and to achieve the perfection of his death, a ceremony must be *Rambu Solo'*. Some of the levels required in the ceremonial

procedure are still in effect, but in the customary agreement, there is a tolerance value of the requirement by adjusting the ability of those who carry out the *Rambu Solo* ' ceremony.

Because the *Rambu Solo* ceremony is synonymous with so much funding and the one implementing it is from a group of high-ranking aristocrats who are capable (*Tana' Bulaan*), each ritual ceremony is memorable and shows the protrusion of social stratification identity, including the use of special ritual clothing for funeral processions and processions art. While the ritual clothing displayed at the funeral procession is a dance dress witnessed by a group of men with war dance clothing with the majority in red, the clothing used by prayer leaders (*tominaa*) accentuates their identity by using white, the clothes of the nuclear families by displaying various ornaments and clothing properties such as headdress (*sa'pi*), neck decoration (*kandaure*), shoulder decoration (*ambero*), and waist decoration (*gayang*). Furthermore, there are also clothes that are used by relatives such as sarong clothing (clothing using *sarong* property / head covering), and this clothing is only used by female relatives, and there is also clothing that is used by people who are assigned to deliver property (buffalo), which consists of a woven cloth headband, clothes are equipped with a sarong that is slung and occasionally tied at the waist.

While the clothing in the art procession that is, *Ma'papangan* dance clothing by displaying various properties and not much different from the clothing used by the nuclear family. Similarly, the clothing used in the *Ma'katia* dance, but the difference is that there are some new creations in the use of *sa'pi* (headdresses) for *Ma'katia* dancers nowadays, namely the existence of *sa'pi* using paper material. Regarding *Ma'badong* dance attire in the art procession, there is no necessity in uniform uniformity, but each participant is required to recite prayers and poems about the history of the person who died during his lifetime.

The symbolic meaning contained in the clothing used in the two processions, which is syntagmatically always associated with social stratification and paradigmatically fashion as a cultural element is always associated with a ritual system based on aluk and mythology of the origin of the *Toraja tribe*, namely between clothing understood through upper, middle, and lower structure by referring to the cosmological understanding system of the *Toraja tribe* with a micro fashion that refers to the *Toraja tribe* understanding that the upper world is sacred / religious, middle is the human / ethical axis, and the underworld is a support in supporting human life including fashion as an aesthetic element.

The occurrence of propositions that legitimize the use of clothing and ornaments in the *Toraja* community, of course, is strongly influenced by the validity of the social stratification system that constructs the *Toraja* culture ideally. The intended social stratifications are (1), *Tana' Kua-kua*: the lowest social stratification of the *Toraja* people (2) *Tana' Karurun*: social stratification of ordinary people, (3) *Tana' Bassi*: intermediate social stratification of the *Toraja* people and (4 ) *Tana' Bulawan*: the highest social stratification of the *Toraja* people (Hasanuddin, 2003). Of the four social stratifications as mentioned above, it is the main door to explain and interpret the reality descriptively about the use of clothing and ornaments at the *Rambu Solo* ' ceremony in the *Toraja* community. Brown (1980: xix) in Wahyudi (2012: 21) also said that social stratification can be considered as a cultural structure because there are relations between elements on the basis of differences as in community institutions.

In Calude Levi-Strauss's view that structure is a model that is used to understand and explain various cultural phenomena, even though the social structure built with these models has no connection with the phenomenon or empirical reality of culture itself. The models built by

Levi are relations that are interconnected, mutually influencing which are the regularities of mechanisms that are not realized by their users (Baal, 1988: 118-119).

Based on the reality at the research location, there is a structure that binds the use of clothing and ornaments in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. The use of clothing and ornaments are seen positioned in two subcontracts in the same context, namely (1) the use of clothing and ornaments in the subcontract of carrying out the funeral and funeral rites as well as the arts attractions in the form of dance in the context of the *Rambu Solo'* and (2) the use of clothing and ornaments positioned on sub-content in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, namely the use of clothing and ornaments on *Tau-Tau*.

The habit of using clothes and ornaments for the Toraja people, seen at the time of the reception procession (mourners), especially in the procession of guests (*pa'romobongan*) entered the ceremony arena that had been prepared by the family of the deceased. The existence of clothes and ornaments in the procession such as special clothing for the leader of the ceremony (*to minawa*), *pa'randing* dance performers (war dance), clothing for the family of deceased (*sarong*), clothing used by actors who act as an agent of property, and clothing worn by public mourners (relatives), is a form of identity for the executors of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. In addition to the clothes and ornaments mentioned above, there are also other forms of identity, including clothing used by dance performers in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, such as clothing for *ma'manna* performers, *ma'badong* clothing, *ma'katian* clothing, clothing *pa'pangngan*, and clothing for actors who act as drummers or ceremonial gongs.

The use of clothing and ornaments by the Toraja people, of course, does not necessarily present as clothing and ornaments used in funeral processions or in the art procession at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, but rather the people already have trust concepts that are understood together and regulated in *aluk* and *ada'* (customary), and is always integrated with knowledge that has been passed down before, as the use of *sarong* and *sarong* traditional clothing that is always present and used by people with high social stratification status, as well as various other clothes that appear in the stages of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony (procession funeral and artistic procession). Embodiments of clothing and ornaments are always staged in the form of a procession of mourners (*Toraja = pa'romobongan*), performers of ceremonies and dances, and *tau-tau* (wooden sculptures as the identity and symbol of the ritual's rapture).

Based on the embodiment of the use of clothing and ornamentation in the Toraja community through the categorization as mentioned above, it is appropriate for the shamans to use clothing and ornaments in order to obtain an ideal understanding of the function and symbolic meaning of clothing and ornaments at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony. Inheritance of an ideal understanding of the function and symbolic meaning of clothing and ornaments at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is one way, so that the Toraja people and subsequent generations, retain values in local culture and avoid excessive cultural commodification systems.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In general, the concept of knowledge of the Toraja tribe about life and death is illustrated in the ways of performing 2 (two) types of large-scale traditional ceremonies namely *Rambu Tuka'* and *Rambu Solo'*. Both types of large traditional ceremonies are continuity from the mortal to the spirits according to *Aluk Todolo*. The knowledge of the Toraja tribe, is a system which always always presents the structural forming elements, which are socially cultural, are arranged through a mythology and modified humanistically into a community status structure

called social stratification (Toraja language = *Tana'*). With this basis, it is used by the Toraja community in carrying out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony.

In the local knowledge of the Toraja tribe, the clothing that is used and displayed in a patterned / orderly manner in the procession is an aesthetic combination that remains integrated with traditional adat rules which are oriented to the understanding of *Aluk Todolo*. In addition to clothing, ornaments used in funeral processions, also found the use of clothing in the art procession. This outfit is displayed through a number of dancers' actions which, according to the Toraja tribe, are dances that are staged to pick up invited guests, such as the *Ma'Pangan* dance, *Ma'Katia* dance, *Ma'Badong* dance. All types of dances that are staged have their respective functions according to the context of the ceremony.

Therefore, the clothes in the *Aluk Todolo* ceremony have symbolic meanings that accumulate in three stages of life (stadia) namely religious, aesthetic and ethical. The functioning of fashion in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is certainly inseparable from belief in the understanding of *Aluk Todolo*, so that its use is always followed by symbolic meaning through the structures of some fashion-forming elements, namely the structure of the upper (holy), middle (human activities) and the bottom (spirit). The division of fashion structure based on its constituent elements, refers to the most basic understanding of *Aluk Todolo* beliefs, namely the concepts of the Toraja cosmology.

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