

## ENCHANTED BODIES: WYSIWYG IN TANA TORAJA

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### *Introduction*

IN a brief contribution to a recent issue of *JASO* (Vol. XXV, no. 3 (1994), pp. 255–62), Peter Rivière suggests that ‘the native people of Amazonia live in a highly transformational world where What You See Is Not Necessarily What You Get’ (p. 256). Discussing the connection between appearance and reality, he insists that ‘appearances are deceptive, in the sense that they may be put on and taken off like clothes that hide the underlying reality’ (ibid.). Indeed, if you are an Amazonian Indian, ‘it is never entirely safe to believe the evidence of your own eyes’ (p. 261). Such evidence can involve anything from the human body (which, *in reality*, may only be a ‘dress’ for the soul) to a jaguar descending a tree with a monkey in its jaws (which, *in reality*, may not be an animal at all but a shaman in the form of a jaguar).

In almost total contrast to the peoples of Amazonia, the people of Tana Toraja<sup>1</sup> live in a world where What You See Is What You Get—hence the subtitle

1. The Toraja (more precisely, 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. Fieldwork on which this article is based was conducted between July 1988 and March 1990, mostly in Buntao’, a community in the eastern part of the region. I am grateful to the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) and the Universitas Hasanuddin (UNHAS) for sponsoring my research. I am also indebted to R. Needham and R. Barnes for their assistance and guidance, and to M. J. Lloyd for her comments and advice.

of this essay. According to the Toraja, far from hiding some underlying reality, appearances are a constituent part of existence—not in the sense of portraying or mirroring it, but in the sense of being embedded in and growing out of it. Even when appearances are delineated as covering or enveloping, they are, to echo the *Soliloquies* of George Santayana, ‘like shells, no less integral parts of nature than are the substances they cover’ (1922: 131).

While emphasizing that there is no gap between ‘seeing’ and ‘knowing’, what I intend to do is examine a few examples concerning the relation between appearance and reality. I am especially interested in the way the human body is traditionally perceived and articulated. The Toraja, matching a central aspect of Amazonian ethnography (see Rivière 1994: 261), make a clear distinction between an inside and an outside bodily domain. However, the outside is not seen as an outer covering which mediates between some inner self and society. Human bodies are separate and distinct from each other not because they are closed (or covered) on the outside, but because they are turned in on their own centre.

Of course, much has changed in Tana Toraja over the last fifty years (see Volkman 1985). For one thing, at least according to official census data, the majority of the population has converted to Christianity. In this respect, it is certainly true that many of the ritual practices which both gave rise to and expressed most of the notions I am interested in have been abandoned or modified. Nevertheless, apart from the question of how much of the traditional framework remains intact, I do not think the essence of what I am about to describe has changed. Whether belonging to the old religion (*aluk to dolo*, ‘ways of the ancestors’) or having converted to Christianity, a Toraja will still look at the way something appears (i.e. ‘its face’) as a ‘measurement’ (*sukaran*) of what it is.

As most of my information originated in the community of Buntao,<sup>2</sup> the term ‘Toraja’ will mostly be used in this paper to refer to this community. However, despite considerable regional variation, there is a great deal of similarity between the various Toraja communities, and in this sense, much of the ethnographic material incorporated in the following discussion is meant to extend and support existing ethnographies.

2. In terms of present-day administrative patterns, the community of Buntao’ is 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 adhere to the old religion. At the time of my fieldwork, the traditional ritual organization (with the major exception of the ‘death priest’, who died while I was there) was still intact. My main sources of information were the various functionaries and an array of older people who are known as *gora-gora tongkon* (‘the ones who speak while seated’). The latter would traditionally act as advisors to the ritual authorities, and in many cases their knowledge of traditional custom surpassed that of the various functionaries.

### *Seeing and Knowing*

The people of Tana Toraja, both in everyday life and within ritual contexts, 'reveal a fascination with the surface of living things' (Zerner 1981: 101). From interpreting the configuration of speckles on the hides of water buffaloes to registering the direction of veins on banana leaves, this fascination both manifests and embodies a specific mode of knowing—knowing which beings 'match each other', what their intrinsic sacrificial value is, how or when they can be used and, above all, where they fit in the pre-ordained pattern of the cosmos as a whole or, to put it another way, what their true 'kind/nature' (*rupa*) is.

Although a black-and-white buffalo, to give but one example, is much more valuable than an all-black or an all-white one, it is the exact configuration of the colour patches that both embodies and manifests its kind. The more this configuration resembles a spiral, especially one which appears to move from right to left, the more valuable a particular buffalo is said to be. If such a configuration is combined further with similar patterns in the hair (especially near or on the forehead), it is thought highly propitious and its value increases accordingly. Beyond being propitious, such an animal is also described as true and good/beautiful. Its truth and its beauty have to be matched both in terms of ownership (not everyone can own one) and sacrificial use (the sacrificer must be of noble descent). Its truth and its beauty, like its value, are embodied and manifested in the configurations of colour and hair on its hide.<sup>3</sup>

Through an effusion of such 'signs' (*tanda*), life proclaims its variety and discloses its arrangements. In a fashion partly reminiscent of Peirce's explication of 'indexical signs' (1955), *tanda* are existentially rooted in the very things they signify—beyond mere contiguity, they actually inhere in the things they describe. Transcending signficatory indices based on simple proximity, they constitute 'marks' (also *tanda*) of material implication. Rather than bearing the impress of what they signify, they are im-pressed on it. In this way, the essential attributes of life are revealed in the actual appearance of its instances. Although beauty, virtue and truth, as well as sacrificial value and use, are grasped in terms of their signs, they are not in the eye of the beholder but embedded in what is beheld.

The notion of *rupa*, being both appearance and reality, conflates 'the real' and the way it is perceived. Bridging the gap between what Lévi-Strauss has distinguished as 'lived in' and 'thought of' orders (see de Heusch 1985: 2), it presents an example of what Geertz has construed as 'enchanted worlds' (see Errington 1989: 295 n. 1). As the interpretation of reality (i.e. the recognition of true nature) is grounded in non-arbitrary signs which both manifest and embody it, morality itself stems from the way things *are*, rather than how they should be—the ethos of Toraja culture is itself part of nature. From veins on banana

3. The size and shape of a buffalo's horns are also important. For a more detailed discussion of the ways in which water buffaloes are classified and valued, as well as their importance in ritual and myth, see Nooy-Palm 1979: 184-205; Tangdilintin 1975: 219-25.

leaves or speckles on buffalo hides to the *pamor* on the blades of ancestral knives or the nodes on the branches of a tree, the ciphers of enchantment reside in the very nature of things. Thus, whether dealing with beauty, value or truth, 'rather than being neutral or purely aesthetic, these configurations on the surface of the things of the natural world...are laden with meaning, and used by the Toraja in making sense of the world' (Zerner 1981: 101).

Human beings themselves are not exempt from this hermeneutics. Pimples, spots, birthmarks, warts, furrows, lines, wrinkles, hair, veins and cuticles are all signs. With its unsullied or blemished surfaces, the human body is as marked as the rest of the universe. Indeed, 'the Toraja use the same term, *ura*', to note the patterns of *pamor* on the blades [of ancestral knives], the furrows and lines on human hands, the veins on human bodies, and the veins on the leaves of plants' (ibid.). While signs which present themselves in a linear form (furrows and lines on hands, face wrinkles, veins, etc.) are examined in terms of breadth and continuity, signs which form curves or resemble circles (hair, birthmarks, pimples, etc.) are scrutinized with respect to direction and focus.

In general, long and unbroken lines as well as circular patterns, which appear to stem from a definite epicentre and to move 'from right to left' (*liling kanan*), embody and manifest good fortune and health. Conversely, discontinuity or movement 'from left to right' (*liling kairi*) foretell and instantiate misfortune and illness (cf. Forth 1985: 104–7; Barnes 1974: *passim*; Howe 1981: 228). Sometimes, as with the spots of smallpox, colour and diffuseness are all-important; described as similar to grains of rice or stars in the sky, they are thought to herald an abundance of children and material wealth. On other occasions, as with patches of ringworm near the joints, location is all that matters.

As with health, wealth and fortune, truth, goodness and beauty can also be detected on the surface of the human body. Especially truthful bodies are thought to be hard and relatively impenetrable. Their hardness, mostly manifested in what is described as a 'lack of gaps', is perceived as a lack of blemishes. Implying solidity and cohesiveness, this hardness is explicitly associated with truth and goodness: the harder a body is, the more truth it embodies; the more truth it embodies, the better it is. Thus those at the top of the traditional hierarchy<sup>4</sup> are not simply harder than those at the bottom, they are also better and truer. At the very top, the traditional priest-leaders of the Toraja are the very emblems of this goodness and truth. In the cogency of their speech, the sagacity of their wisdom,

4. Toraja society is traditionally divided into nobles, commoners, and slaves. In the community of Buntao', the nobles are designated to *makaka matasak* ('ripe elder siblings'), the commoners to *makaka* ('elder siblings'), and the slaves *kaunan*. The essence of this division is described in terms of *tana* ('stakes'). Three different kinds of 'stakes' are used to equate the value of people with the value (and intrinsic qualities) of different material substances: *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. In the area of Buntao', *tana'* is always inherited from one's mother and, at least in the 'ways of the ancestors', it finds its most important expression in distinct ritual rights and duties.

the efficacy of their potency and the subtlety of their actions, they are 'the true ones' (*tau tongan*).

*Beauty* is a further dimension of the same configuration—to be truthful is also to be beautiful. Everyday activities like grooming, bathing and applying coconut oil are not attempts to embellish or transfigure one's body but to accentuate what is always already there. Clothes and jewellery themselves must match the true nature of the body. By not doing so, a Toraja risks more than ugliness or bad taste. For instance, if a woman of slave descent was to adorn herself with a pair of golden earrings or a golden bracelet, she would become ill and might die.<sup>5</sup> As gold is extremely potent and powerful ('hard'), such an illness would arise from the fact that her body and the substance of gold did not match each other. Being much more than a simple accoutrement, a piece of gold jewellery is viewed as a sign similar to the colour patches on a buffalo or the vein patterns on a blade. In a parallel fashion, when, in traditional stories and some ritual practices, a man (as it usually is) wants to remain anonymous and avoid detection, rather than using clothes to change or mask his appearance, he undresses. This action makes 'his path' nearly invisible and difficult to follow. Like jewellery, clothes instantiate and delineate reality, they do not hide it.

Echoing the idea of enchanted worlds, truth, goodness, beauty and fortune may be described as appurtenances. Like arms or legs, they form an integral part of one's bodily configuration. Within this configuration, reality and appearance are integral parts of a single existential register. This is not to say that everything which is knowable is visible and vice versa, but to insist on the importance of seeing as the fundamental mode of knowing.<sup>6</sup> This mode of knowing extends beyond the particularities of human embodiment implicating itself in the workings of the universe as a whole. Signs such as speckles on the hides of water buffaloes, veins on banana leaves, patterns on blades, birthmarks, pieces of jewellery and so on constitute both material instances of what knowledge is and manifestations of how it can be attained. Rather than having meaning because they are signs, they are signs because they have meaning. Inscribed in the true 'kind/nature' of the very things they signify, they confront each other in the reality of the world, not in the way it may be hidden, falsely represented or modified.

The Toraja fascination with the surface of living things is based on the assumed intermingling of two different aspects of existence. Although neither can

5. Although slavery has been abolished, persons of slave descent form a large part of the population in Buntao'. In the past, as Nooy-Palm notes, 'slaves were forbidden to wear ornaments of precious metal or brass; female slaves, moreover, were not allowed to adorn themselves with armlets made of shell' (1979: 46). Although these regulations have been abandoned today, descendants of *kaunan* 'behave with caution. Heirlooms and regalia are only put on by those who belong to traditionally pre-eminent families in Toraja society' (ibid.).

6. However, as the patterns of their overall arrangement can be complicated, recognizing and explaining the various signs may require the knowledge of specialists (*to mentiro* 'those who see').

be reduced to the other's terms, all living things are seen as having an outside and an inside domain. It is the relationship between these two domains that endows signs with their significance and introduces the possibility of true knowledge or accurate exegesis. Much more than providing a transitory or illusory manifestation of it, signs can be seen as crystallizations of the way in which the inside and the outside intersect, overlap and articulate each other.

In the remaining sections of this essay, by focusing on the indigenous notion of the human body, I shall briefly examine this articulation in order to emphasize two related points: first, rather than occluding each other, the connection between the two domains is one of reticulation; and secondly, embodied and manifested in signs, this reticulation is not a relation between external appearance and internal reality but a material configuration between the life-giving qualities of an invisible centre and the life-sustaining qualities of its visible periphery. In other words, rather than enveloping or hiding its essence, appearances form an integral part of the production and reproduction of life.

### *Seeing and Being*

The Toraja word for body is *kale*. A body has an outside and an inside: in the former context, it is called *batang* ('trunk') and is thought to include the bones, hair and skin; in the latter context, it is known as *ba'tang* ('pith') and is said to be formed of those constituents which are fleshy, juicy and pliant (for further details, see Tsintjilonis 1993). In addition, at the very centre of the pith-body there is a small spherical stone ('inner kernel') which is intimately linked with life, speech, thought and potency. With their sources arranged around this inner kernel (from right to left), the domains of inside and outside are not meant to delineate immutable dimensions of being but a flexible process of interaction and mutual constitution.

Described as soft, moist and throbbing, the inside is the locus of life itself and is thought to originate in the maternal contribution to the reproductive process, i.e. blood. Although its major dimension is co-extensive with the element of flesh, its embodied articulation is said to include everything apart from bones, skin and hair. Secretions of all kinds (tears, saliva, sweat, etc.) are thought to have their sources on the inside and to manifest, in their emergence, its perpetual wetness and pliancy. In fact, in its softness and moistness, it is often likened to egg yolk or mud. In clear contrast to this softness and moistness, the outside is described as hard and dry. Being like a stone, its articulation indicates fixity and solidity rather than fluidity or pliancy. In its major manifestation, it is equated with the skeleton

and is said to originate in the paternal contribution to the reproductive process, i.e. bone.<sup>7</sup>

In the configuration of their embodied relationship, the domains of inside and outside (like the substances of blood and bone) are seen as 'forming a pair' (*simuane*) or, in a parallel expression, as 'adhering to each other' (*silopak*). Their apposition, which may be interpreted as involving both complementarity and opposition, is usually explained in terms of 'intrinsic connections' (*kasiumpuran*) and is thought to be analogous to the affinity between 'the two halves of a split bamboo'. The 'connexity', to echo Needham (1987: 85), between inside and outside is meant to reflect the fact that they necessarily belong together. But what exactly does this connexity involve and how is it related to the realm of the signs?

According to the Toraja, blood is the essence of life. As a substance, it is extremely efficacious because it carries the vitality which gives rise to life itself. In its life-giving capacity, it is described as 'full of riches' and is considered 'the source of increase'. Seen as both the base and origin of human embodiment, it is often depicted as the 'source of the path' (*to' lalan*). Beyond the possibility of simple somatic growth and development, if it remains untangled this is the path that may lead to long life, fortune and abundance. In order to remain untangled, however, blood itself must be organized (*masseke*, 'fastened') through the hardness of bone. If, for some reason, this does not happen, a human offspring will dissolve and the prospective mother will have a miscarriage or stillbirth. Lacking in firmness and density, misembodiments of this kind are said to resemble sago. However, as soon as the arrangement of the blood substance has been consolidated in the form of the skeleton, an embryo takes on the familiar human shape and starts to develop.

The proper axis of this development is embedded in the notion of a trunk. Like a tree which is 'leaning east', the human body should grow upwards ('from root to tip') and face east. In this way, the vitality of the soft domain may be seen as directed and ordered through the determinacy of its hard frame. Nevertheless, although it could be argued that this vitality will ebb away unless it is enclosed, the notion of *masseke* implies closeness and intimate contiguity rather than definite closure. For instance, in the context of everyday life a buffalo is usually described as *masseke* ('being close') when it is tethered to a stake by a short rope. In a similar fashion, the softness of the blood is kept 'close' by being tethered rather than bounded. Furthermore, as a buffalo is tethered to a stake, so the substance of life is tethered to the innermost part of the body, i.e. the inner kernel. In this sense the human skeleton can be seen as resembling a short rope.

Thus, despite the possible implications of the actual designations, the conjunction between the outside and the inside should not be construed as a

7. In relation to 'blood and bone', my own information is quite different from that contained in some other ethnographies. For instance, according to Waterson: 'no idea exists among the Toraja such as is reported in a number of New Guinea societies, where bones are considered a male element and blood a female one' (1986: 103).

relation between the deceptive appearance of a conspicuous surface and the reality of an inconspicuous depth. The contiguity of the two domains does not imply a definite closure in which one delimits, circumscribes or conceals the other. On the contrary, instead of existing as an opaque boundary or an illusory mask, the outside transverses and arranges the inside. Although the human body can be distinguished as a relatively separate entity, in a way reminiscent of ancient Greece, 'it is not shut up on itself, closed, isolated or cut off from the outside, like an empire within an empire' (Vernant 1989: 29). Remaining essentially open, it reveals its reality in a manner neither exterior nor anterior to the way it appears. To phrase it somewhat differently, being seen is an integral part of being.

Indeed, beyond the specificity of any particular sign or as the sum total of all of them, the body as a whole is thought to constitute a manifestation of 'being in determinate ways' (*tampa rapa*) and an embodiment of 'true nature' (*rupa tongan*); while the former accounts for the similarities between people, the latter engenders and expresses the differences between them. In both contexts, however, being and appearing interlock and arrange themselves in relation to each other. Signs, rather than hiding or masking reality, articulate and reveal it.

### *Being Seen*

In the indigenous commentary, the proper balance of softness and hardness, the arrangement of their sources around a centre and the tethering of the life substance to the inner kernel are all parts of *tampa rapa* ('being in determinate ways' or, perhaps, 'determinate form'). The possibility of proper growth (that is, life as the Toraja understand it; see Tsintjilonis 1993) is established, embodied and manifested in the determinacy of its organization. The result of indeterminate (i.e. disorganized) growth is likened to the remains of an early miscarriage: it is 'soft and without a kernel'. Misembodiments of this kind are described as lacking roots, and their frames are said to be reversed with their 'beginning' up and their 'end' down. If life is to be successfully embodied and reproduced, it must be organized according to the dictates of *tampa rapa*. Embodying and manifesting this organization, signs are linked together and articulated according to patterns intrinsic to the production and reproduction, rather than representation, of life itself. In its visible attributes, the configuration of the human body signifies because it is, and it is because it appears. Its appearance unfolds itself as an enactment of *tampa rapa*.

Reflecting this enactment, the Toraja concept of 'bodiliness' (*pa'kalean*) conflates the notions of being and appearing. Signs are said to be 'rooted in' and 'to emerge from' the body. For instance, with no obfuscation intervening between the sign and its content, an absence of blemishes on the surface of the body both embodies and manifests the proper intermingling of softness and hardness. In a

similar fashion, untangled lines and focused spirals embody and manifest the way in which a body is organized and centred (i.e. from root to tip, around the inner kernel, having a front and a back, an inside and an outside, a left and a right, etc.). 'Bodiliness', in this sense, embodies and manifests proper growth. Its power of signification stems from the lack of arbitrariness characteristic of growth and, to this extent, is shared by *everybody*.

However, the most important of the imperatives associated with determinate growth is the need to pair different substances properly. In this context, the emblematic pair is that of blood and bone. For instance, the blood of a noble mother should not be paired with the bone of a slave father. If it were, the tethering of the life substance would fail and, as the inside and outside of the resulting offspring would not mesh, death or extreme ugliness/untruth would result. Depending on descent, blood may be more or less 'ripe' (*matasak*).<sup>8</sup> People with a great concentration of ripe blood (the nobles) are thought to be extremely powerful and potent. Material wealth is itself seen as a dimension of this potency, a potency that is the locus and sign of supernatural power (*ma'karra*, 'hardness', usually rendered in Indonesian as *kesaktian*; see Volkman 1985: 180–1 n. 4). It is this potency rather than the hardness stemming from the substance of bone that renders a body solid and relatively impenetrable (cf. Rivière 1994: 259–60). The more solid a body is, the more truthful, beautiful and fortune-laden it is considered to be. A body's true nature is a reflection of its potency, and its potency is a reflection of the successful pairing of blood and bone.

In the sense of true nature, people are different—they may be more or less beautiful, poorer or richer, harder or softer, more or less truthful, and so on. Whatever these differences may amount to, however, they are thought to embody and manifest different degrees of potency. This is the potency that clothes and bodily ornaments have to match. This potency cannot be hidden or masked. Turning a body into *somebody*, it gives rise to more specific dimensions of 'bodiliness' by constituting and pervading one's actions, words and thoughts. In fact, like pimples and spots, thoughts, actions and words are not only rooted in and emergent from the body, they are also arranged and organized like the body, i.e. from root to tip, around a centre. Furthermore, as this centre coincides with the corporeal centre of the body, their emergence is an integral part of being and of the way this is articulated with appearing.

Positioned at the very centre of the pith-body and depicted as a tiny stone, it is the inner kernel which is considered to be the embodied source of this potency and seen as the 'essence' (*bombong*) of one's body. Implying different degrees of potency, this essence may be described further as made of gold, iron or wood (see Tsintjilonis 1993). However, in transcending the materiality of its substantive core and the fixity of its definite emplacement, the 'inside stone' (*batu ba'tang*) is said to give rise to a flow of energy which pervades the body as a whole. The pattern

8. In some Toraja communities, blood is said to exhibit different degrees of purity (*rara masero*, 'pure blood') instead of ripeness (see Nooy-Palm 1979: 154; Volkman 1985: 60).

of this flow is understood as continuous movement around its source and, in its inception, is attributed to the ability of the actual stone to rotate, from right to left, around its own axis. This pattern is said to be similar to the shape of an 'inwardly moving spiral' (*ma'suale lu tama*). In this way, the inner kernel imparts movement to the body and focuses its various dimensions in the form of a centripetal spiral.

Although there is some disagreement as to the exact moment of its onset,<sup>9</sup> it is the configuration of this flow which constitutes the 'life spirit' (*deata*) of a particular human and, at the most basic level, it is manifested in the throbbing of the pulse and the blinking of the eyes. In its actual flow, it replicates the arrangement of the corporeal body and gradually becomes its double. In its overall arrangement around the body, the life spirit is said to follow the veins and to enable a particular embodiment to remain untangled, full, round and complete—that is, alive.

The rotation of the inner kernel is further linked with thinking, speaking and acting. In this respect, its quintessential mode, common to both humans and gods, is often described as bringing 'their innermost being into movement' or 'the kernel of their inwardness into action' (van der Veen 1965: 67). For instance, thoughts are said to be generated in this way and to leave the body finally in the form of words. In fact, the truth of the resulting discourse depends on the ability of the speaker to retain and reinforce the original motion (*ullisu kada*, 'rotate the words'). In addition, rotating the words also imposes a specific order: there is always a beginning, a middle, and an end, and a story must be told from root to tip. As it can cause illness and death, mixing the order would be risking more than incomprehension. Like words, actions manifest and embody the rotation of the inner kernel; if an undertaking is to be completed, the necessary actions must be carried out from root to tip, around a centre.

As with pimples and spots, words, actions and thoughts are rooted in, and emerge from, the body. Rather than concealing or masking its reality, they constitute signs of material implication and correlation, indices which both signify the corporality of a particular body and are inscribed in its materiality. Within this framework, to borrow Frank's expression, a human does not so much 'have' a soul (according to Christians, the correct translation of *deata*) or certain thoughts as 'produces these in the medium of the body' (1991: 46; cf. Feher 1989: 14–15; Bourdieu 1977: 87–95). The reality of this production does not present itself in a series of arbitrary signs: it is these signs. In the relation between thinking and speaking, for instance, one's words manifest and embody one's thoughts; and, in their turn, one's thoughts are manifestations and embodiments of the inner kernel and its rotating action.

Even the soul, to borrow from Tazi's discussion (1989: 536) of Tertullian and his implicit adherence to the Stoic doctrine (*Nihil enim si non corpus*), 'does not

9. According to some information, it is the wind, in the form of 'breath', which initiates the rotating action of the inner kernel as soon as it enters the body for the first time.

juxtapose itself to the body, but rather appears as a kind of double that adapts itself to its container and retains its qualities in every part of the body it occupies'. As in archaic Greece, Toraja corporality 'does not acknowledge a body/soul distinction, nor does it establish a radical break between the natural and the supernatural' (Vernant 1989: 21). Like one's actions or thoughts, the life spirit is attributed to, and embedded in, the material arrangement of one's body.

Thus, to return to the initial theme of this essay, although the Toraja, like the peoples of Amazonia, separate the domains of inside and outside, they do not perceive this separation as an antithesis between reality and appearance. There is no dichotomy between being and appearing. Indeed, in all of its attributes, appearance is a bearer of being. Signs are endowed with significance because they are endowed with life. Rooted in and emerging from the body, they reveal its foundation, document its arrangement, and render its potency visible. Rather than providing 'a means for expressing the varieties and intricacies of human nature' (Rivière 1994: 261), clothes and coverings, just like words and actions, or wrinkles and furrows, form an integral part of it. Rather than simply 'expressing', they both manifest and embody it.

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