



METAPHOR SYMBOLS IN MA'PANDAN RITUAL: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF ROLAND BARTHES

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Abstract: The ma'pandan ritual is a traditional funeral ceremony in Sumarorong district, Mamasa regency. This ritual is one of the religious rituals of the adherents of the *aluktodolo* belief. The communication system heavily utilizes metaphorical symbols and contains myths. These metaphorical symbols are believed to hold sacred value by their adherents and are strictly prohibited from being violated. In the process, these symbols play a crucial role in establishing the order of ritual actions. This study aims to analyze and explain the system of linguistic signs and the construction of myths in metaphorical symbols derived from the ideology of the *aluktodolo* belief. This research is qualitative, using Barthes' semiotic approach and participatory data collection techniques. The results of the study found that the procedure for analyzing the sign system to uncover the myths behind these metaphorical symbols goes through three stages of constructing the attributes of the sign system, namely, the attributes of signifier and signified at the denotative level, the connotative level and on the mythological level. In addition, the ideological myths constructed in these metaphorical symbols are derived from the beliefs of *aluktodolo* and the obedience of *aluktodolo* adherents to the existence of *puang matua* as the creator of the universe and life, the existence of *deata* as the protector of the cosmos and life, and humans themselves as the inhabitants of the cosmos. Conclusion: Barthes' semiotic theory can analyze and explain the meanings of the myth of the metaphorical symbols used in the *ma'pandan* ritual.

Keywords: ma'pandan; semiotics; symbol; myth; ideological myth.

INTRODUCTION

The ma'pandan ritual is a traditional burial ceremony for the deceased performed by a small part of the community in the Sumarorong sub-district. This burial tradition is more commonly known as *rambu solo'* among the Toraja people. *Rambu solo* is funeral ceremony based on belief of *aluktodolo*, Pantan, *et al.* (2024). The implementation of rituals in the *aluktodolo* belief is divided into two groups based on cardinal directions and time, 'rites of the east or *aluk rampe matallo*, and rites of the west or *aluk rampe matampu'* (Waterson, R, 2009). Rituals performed in the morning leading up to noon (06:00-12:00 a.m.) must leads in the east, and rituals performed in the afternoon leading to evening (13:00-18:00 p.m.) must leads in west. This division of time groups cannot be interchanged (*pemali* = prohibition). The highlight of the joyful rituals must be carried out in the morning before noon and

the the death ritual *rambu solo* must be carried out at noon before night, (Waterson, R. 2009). The *ma'pandan* ritual can be said to be the process of the deceased's spirit transitioning from the physical world to the spirit realm, and this ritual is one form of worship of ancestral spirits. Adherents of *aluktodolo* believe that the process of soul transition is important to ensure the well-being of the spirit when residing in the spirit realm, Lafon (2024). This belief gives profound meaning to funeral ceremonies, which are far more than just mourning rituals. They are celebrations of the soul's transition to the afterlife, an important aspect to ensure the welfare of the living community. The belief in *aluktodolo* comes from the meeting of gods and goddesses who then gave birth to humans and inhabited the earth with the rules and beliefs called *aluktodolo*, Bustan (2023).

The *aluktodolo* belief recognizes three figures of authority, namely *puang matua* (creator), *deata*

(gods/goddess), and *todolo* (ancestors). The *deata* figure that governs the atmosphere is called *deata tangngana langi'*, the *deata* that has power over everything on the ground is called *deata kapadanganna*, and the *deata* that governs underground is called *deata tangngana padang* (Kombongkila, 2023). Literally, *aluktodolo* means the path of ancestors; this belief encompasses moral, spiritual rules, and a system of obedience to the cosmos (Farid, 2024). The system of order in the beliefs of *aluktodolo* is reflected in how to order community life, respect for the cosmos, understanding the ways of worship, adhering to the ways of living, understanding the procedures for carving houses, understanding the functions and roles of buffaloes, and understanding how to carry out rituals in funeral ceremonies, (Gillan, 2023).

In building a religious life and harmonious human relationships, adherents of the *aluktodolo* belief recognize two types of *aluk* (rules), namely *aluk sandapitunna* and *aluk sandasaratu*. *Aluk sandapitunna* teaches about the relationship with *puang matua* (the creator) and *aluk sandasaratu* provides rules that guide interactions among human beings, (Wiryadinata, 2024). This belief system does not have doctrines or statements of faith (creeds), it does not have sacred texts or permanent places of worship like other religions (Elliot, 2018), but in every customary activity and ritual, adherents of this belief system adhere to all collective decisions made in a house or hall called *tongkonan*. [...] "rituals related to this traditional house are very important in the spiritual life of the Toraja tribe, (Aldana & Sunarmi, 2021). In general, the traditional house of the Toraja people is called *Tongkonan*, which serves multiple functions and has hereditary rules within the Toraja community (Baan, 2022). The belief in *aluk todolo* falls under one of the teachings of animism, which emphasizes the importance of the cosmos as a part of human life. This belief holds that the cosmos plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance of human life with its environment, as long as humans remain obedient in maintaining the cosmos (Janowski, 2015). Additionally, the belief in *aluk todolo* strongly upholds the harmony of relationships among humans, nature, and ancestral spirits (Sumiati, 2023). Wiryadinata (2024) states that *aluk todolo* is a belief that originates from the sky. 'The center of this belief revolves around the house, where a *Tongkonan* serves as a shared home between the living and the dead' (Darius & Eli, Z. S., 2023).

In 2016, this belief was recognized and received legitimacy from the government through MPR decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016.

One of the ritual cultures of *aluktodolo* that is still preserved by its followers to this day is the *ma'pandan* ritual. The *ma'pandan* ritual culture is a funeral ceremony that is only performed by the community in the Sumarorong district, Mamasa regency. The ritual involves ritual performers and is attended by the entire family clan, the relatives of the deceased, and the local community. This ritual is not only viewed as a cultural act, but its implementation utilizes ritual communication procedures in carrying out the entire series of ritual processes.

The term *ma'pandan* is defined as a cultural action in the form of worship towards the deceased. Zakaria (2022) mentioned that the *ma'pandan* ritual has three main levels, *duangpitu*, *duakkassera*, and *tallukkassera*. Each level in this ceremony requires the sacrifice of a buffalo. The researcher assumes the use of these three terms is based on the number of buffalo sacrificed during the ritual. The *duangpitu* ritual requires 7-8 buffalo, the *duakkassera* ritual requires 9-12 buffalo, and the *tallukkassera* ceremony requires 13-15 buffalo. The role and function of the buffalo that are sacrificed at the peak of the ceremony are believed to serve as provisions for the souls in the afterlife called *puya*. [...] "bringing with it all of the wealth and livestock sacrificed at the funeral." (Kathleen, 1993). The sacrifice of buffalo in large numbers is not due to the need for meat but rather social status within the family, (Haloho, 2024).

Kusno (2022) said that not only the reasons of social status and the number of buffaloes to be slaughtered, but also due to the shame and tranquility that will envelop the family. In the *ma'pandan* ritual, one of the mandatory rituals is the slaughter of several pigs to perfect the prosperity of the spirits when they have entered the *puya*. The Toraja people believe that the sacrificial pig in the funeral ceremony is a way for the soul to reach *puya* and will also bring prosperity to the ancestors in the realm of *puya*, (Allo, 2024). The death for the Toraja people is seen as a process of transition from the world to the spirit realm (*puya*) to undergo a long rest, (Lumbaa, 2023). The concept of life in *puya* according to *aluktodolo* beliefs is similar to life in the world in fulfilling basic needs. Sandarupa (2015) states that the spirit of the deceased is called *bombo*, appearing black and frightening. This spirit will undergo a transformation process to the realm of *puya* and become *bombo mendeatanna* who resides above

the sky, and subsequently its status will change to to *membali puang*. The path to *puya* must go through the event of death, and death is not the end of life but a return to meet the ancestors (Patora, 2021).

In the implementation of the *ma'pandan* ritual, many metaphoric symbols are also used; these metaphoric symbols have become part of the perfection of the *aluk todolo* belief system, especially in the implementation of the *ma'pandan* customary funeral. Metaphoric symbols arise from the perspective of the speaker who subjectively compares something to the characteristics of another object (Zakaria, 2022). Metaphor is a habit of a group or society in depicting the relationship between humans and nature (El Refaie & Thatcher, 2025). Metaphors will effectively maintain social reality with their strengths and weaknesses, and can even give birth to something new through the presence of different perspectives (Biscaro, 2025). [...] "today metaphore is no longer one figure among others but the figure of figures [...]", (Culler, 1981). The process of creating metaphorical symbols is not only born from the language experience and emotions of the speaker but can also arise from the traditions and culture of a community.

Yang (2025) states that culture also plays an important role in inspiring the creation of metaphorical meaning concepts. Metaphorical symbols are not merely a way to express language but an act of focusing thoughts in understanding something else, (Wang & Sun, 2024). The metaphorical symbols used in the *ma'padan* ritual contain myths. These myths have functions and purposes in building the religious belief system of *aluktodolo* in the implementation of the ritual sequences from start to finish. Research on the metaphorical symbol myths in the *ma'padan* ritual was conducted by several authors as part of their dissertation writing in 2021. The research focuses on the analysis of myths in the *ma'padan* ritual that are contained in the symbols of accessories and animals that are part of the *ma'padan* ritual.

Research on myths in the culture of the Toraja tribe has been conducted by several other researchers, such as Hetty Nooy-Palm in 1979 with the title *The Sa'dan-Toraja: A Study of Their Social Life and Religion*. The myth study conducted by Nooy-Palm involves folktales such as the story of the origin of the Toraja people, the names of several areas in Tana Toraja, types of animals, and the traditional house called *Tongkonan*. Kathleen M. Adams (1993) *The discourse of souls in tana toraja (indonesia):*

indigenous nations and christian conceptions. A study on myths was also conducted by Sunarto Triyanto in 2017, *Embodiment, Myth, and Characters' Value Sculpture of Tau Tau at Toraja in South Sulawesi*. This research examines the symbol of Tau-Tau (replica of the deceased), and a folktale about the concept of worship in the belief of *aluk todolo*. Further research on myths was also conducted by Rita Tanduk and colleagues in 2021, *Myths and Ideology in Customary Ritual of Ma'tammu Tedong for the Life of Toraja People*. This research examines the myth of buffaloes based on their type and quality used in *rambu solo*'.

This research uses a semiotic approach, just like the three previous researchers, but there are differences with those three previous studies. The first objective of this research is to compare the operational procedures of Saussure's semiotic sign system with Barthes' semiotics. Second, how the operational procedures of Barthes' semiotic sign system work in interpreting metaphorical symbols. Third, to analyze the process and motives behind the creation of ideological myths in metaphorical symbols. The term of semiotics comes from the Greek word *simeon*, which means sign, and in English it becomes semiotics. Semiotics according to Saussure in the Encyclopædia Britannica is 'the study of sign and sign-using behavior. Broadly speaking, the study of signs and meanings, (Radermacher, 2024). Saussure also stated that semiotics should be broader than linguistics. Semiotics not only encompasses linguistic sign systems but also includes signs used in social institutions, such as ritual signs, signs of politeness rules, writing system signs, the alphabet used by the deaf, and signs in the military, (Paskaleva, 2024).

In terms of linguistic sign systems, Saussure argued that every language has three attributes: sign, signifier, and signified. The attribute sign includes linguistic and non-linguistic signs. Signs may be linguistic or non-linguistic, (Ulusoy & Onur, 2023), Sign as a dyad composed of the signifier and the signified,' (Grunfe & Gomes, 2024). The signifier is concrete, can be seen and heard, while the signified is abstract, that is, a meaningful concept (Zakaria, 2024). The attributes of the signifier refer to the physical sound of the sign, and the attributes of the signified are abstract concepts or meanings that are attached to the sign and the signifier (Parveen & Radhakrishnan, 2024). Yi (2024) states that the signifier represents a sound pattern, it focuses on the psychological aspect of sound, and the signified refers to the concept or meaning. According to Saussure, the

relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, there is no natural relationship between the physical shape of the object (signifier) and the concept it refers to (Kramsch, 1998). The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary...I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary" (Danesi, M. 2022).

Saussure's semiotic theory of signs was then developed further by Barthes on the grounds that Saussure's semiotic system only exists on the surface. According to Barthes, Saussure's semiotics explains the significance of the relationship between signifier and signified at the level of denotative meaning, which refers to meanings that are explicitly related to reality; however, this significance does not fully explain meaning, unlike the significance of connotation and myth where meaning can be thoroughly explained (Güzel, 2023). In Barthes' view, the attributes of signifier and signified will continuously move to produce new meanings. The attributes of signs can be expanded to a higher level, namely to the level of connotative meaning due to the influence of the context and culture of the speaker.

The sign attributes are present literally and directly but can experience an expansion of meaning linearly, (Barthes, 2018). Barthes views the relationship between signifier and signified in myths as significance, which is meaning in totality. According to Barthes, the attributes of the signifier and signified are not absolute but dynamic along with the presence of context and the culture of the speakers. The original meaning of a sign is never completely lost but re-emerges time and again in the creation of new mythological forms, (Divyadharshini & Thamayanthi, 2022). Barthes' critique of the concept of signs in Saussure's semiotics is elaborated in the book titled Elements of Semiology in 1964 and the book titled Mythologies in 1957. Barthes' semiology distinguishes between denotative and connotative meanings. The following scheme illustrates the dimensions of the construction of the system of denotative, connotative, and mythological significance according to Barthes:

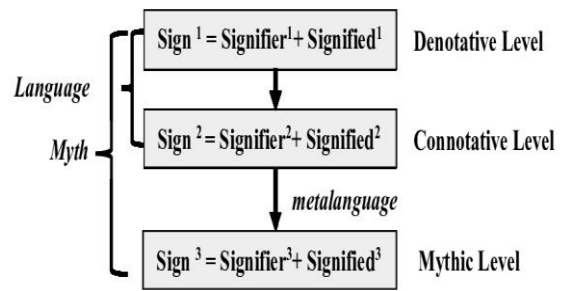


Figure 1. Sign construction level of denotative, connotative, and mythic scheme

Ideology in the construction of myths can stem from experiences, values, and culture within society, and metalanguage is a tool in constructing the concept of ideology. The role of metalanguage is crucial in driving the meaning in symbols depending on where that meaning is desired, starting from first-level meaning to second-level meaning, "a metalanguage is a second-order system of signification which acts on a first-order system of signification" (Al-Kadi & Alzoubi, 2023). Ideology, in general understanding, is not only found within structure and language but is something that constructs a binary opposition between language and the world (Truan & Jahns, 2024). However, ideology within myths is the myth itself. Ideology in myths is assumed to be a series of meanings, values, and fundamental beliefs contained within the myth that represent a symbol or object. Ideology in myths has roles and functions in building dominant values concerning the myth. The presence of ideological myths occurs when the myth provides roles and functions in justifying those dominant values. Below illustrates how the system of signification produces myths through cultural factors:

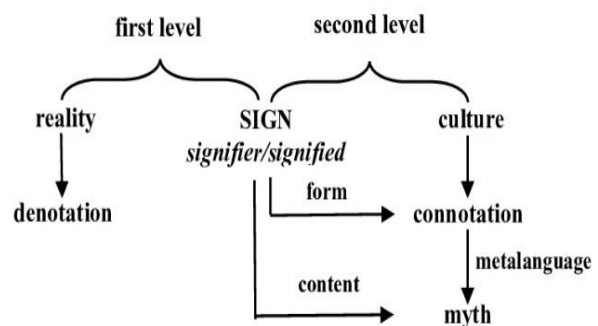


Figure 2. How the system of signification produces myths through cultural factors

The image above shows that the meaning of first-level signification (denotation) is the literal meaning, describing the meaning of a sign that is fixed. The construction of second-order

signification (connotation) is associative meaning, meaning that arises from the construction of values in society and culture. It is in this connotation that myths arise due to the meta-language within myths. Meta-language in myths allows the previous meaning to diverge and disappear to construct new meanings. Barthes sees that the meaning of everything is not in a natural and ordinary state but is filled with ideological interventions for the benefit of one party; therefore, myth is a means of communication that contains a message. According to Barthes, a myth is not an idea or concept but a way of giving meaning or a mode of representation. Myths are one of the elements of linguistic signs. Myths are the result of inner experiences of several past events used as a reference for future actions and behavior. Steen (2022) states, *“a sign becomes a myth when society believes it to represent a universal truth.”* Myths are human thoughts represented through actions in a social context (Pillai & Kaushal, 2021). Myths contain values and beliefs; therefore, myths can influence a person's mindset and behavior.

Myth comes from the Greek word *mythos* which means tale, legend, or saga. (Hasan, 2023). The working process of myth according to Blumenberg in Keum is a dense narrative that is symbolic in significance, modernity that continues to narrate old stories into new forms, (Keum, T., 2024). Myths are thoughts that are no longer valid and are sometimes considered more primitive than our own thinking, (Vattimo, & Snyder, 2024). The function of myths is not only to be understood but can also help individuals and communities in navigating life in this world, (Adhikari, 2024). [...] *“myths or metaphors contains a means to transcendence as it relates to experience and meaning”* (Knight, 2023). Myths are derived from history and culture and are naturally transformed into a system of universal signs (Al-Kadi & Alzoubi, 2023). Myths become real when humans directly interact with them (Matthews, 2022). According to Barthes, myths are cultural instruments; they are means of conveying objects, imagination, or language in terms of concepts or symbolic values. He states that myths are concrete, whether in the form of objects, imagination, or language that we receive as something meaningful (Whitwort, 2023). Myths do not have a definitive concept of meaning; therefore, the semiological system of myths can develop their meanings openly. Barthes mentions that myths function as a distortion of the relationship between signifier/sign and the second-level sign (sign), but do not eliminate it.

METHOD

This type of research is qualitative research, aimed at examining social phenomena, natural behaviors, perceptions, and motivations holistically, and then presented descriptively (Hadi, Asrori & Rusman, 2021). This research is inductive, meaning it uses a method oriented towards an existing theory in analyzing and presenting research results. The theory used is Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. This research also employs participant observation methods, where the researcher directly engages in observation and interviews with informants as sources of primary data and information. The technique for obtaining field data is conducted through interviews with informants who understand the object and purpose of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal several data symbols and icons used in the *ma' pandan* ritual. These symbols and icons are utilized from the beginning of the ritual to the end. The symbols and icons obtained by the researchers are divided into three categories: accessory symbols, places, and animals as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. *Symbols and icons in ma'pandan ritual*

Symbols	Icons	English
tawabongi		food for dinner
pendioran		a river for taking a bath
gandang pasarro		drums
issong		mortar
paya		bamboo hall
lantang bulawan		luxury cottage
paladura		moutuary
dulang		plate made of wood
tanggo'		stilt wooden house
bombo		ghost

tedong		buffalo
baidoko		sow
asu		dog
barana'		banyan tree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The construction of myth of tawabongi

The *tawabongi* ritual (food for dinner) is conducted in the evening before nightfall when family and relatives gather for a dinner feast. The term *tawabongi* is specifically reserved for the deceased, meaning that the deceased must also be served food just like family and relatives. The general public does not believe that the dead can still eat, but in the belief of *aluktodolo*, the deceased are still considered alive and deserving of food. The deceased are treated like someone who is sick, thus they must be provided with food and drink (Lumbaa, 2023). The significance of the *tawabongi* symbol is as follows:

Denotation: the general concept of the meaning of *tawabongi* is dinner, held in the evening before night.

Connotation: during dinner, the *bombodeata* (the spirit of the deceased) must also be fed because it is still alive. Myth: the *bombodeata* is still alive, it is located to the west of the house although it appears as a *bombo*, and it must be fed dinner like a human.

Myth: the *bombodeata* is still alive, it is located to the west of the house, and although it takes the form of a *bombo*, it must be fed dinner like a human.

The construction of myth of pendioran

The ritual of *pendioran* means a bathing place, carried out in a river by the entire immediate family and led by *toma'kada*. The first sign of *pendioran* generally means bathing, physically cleaning oneself. Then this word received an expansion of meaning so that the second sign means physical and spiritual recovery to return to ordinary life. The symbolic myth construction of *pendioran* is as follows.

Denotation :the term of *pendioran* refers to a bath or bathing place in common understanding.

Connotation : the term of *pendioran* refers to the restoration of well-being, both spiritually and physically after a period of mourning.

Myth:after passed the mourning period all the family must be restored to enter into everyday life.

The construction of myth of gandang pasarro

The *gandang pasarro* means big drum, it is used as a way of communication in regulating ritual actions. The *gandang pasarro* is hung on the *tanggo* (terrace) of the house. When this instrument is hung above the *tanggo* of a stilt house, it signifies a high-level *ma'pandan* ritual, and if it is hung below the terrace of the house, it indicates a low-level ritual. *Gandang pasarro* is a type of percussion musical instrument to serve the complete of harmony of sounds in a musical performance or orchestra. The construction of the symbolic significance of the *pasarro* drum is as follows:

Denotation :the all people known that the *gandang passarro* is a type of percussion musical instrument.

Connotation :the *gandang pasarro* is a sign that informs about a mourning event and also determines the type of ritual that will be performed.

Myth :the sound was produced by *gandang passarro* confirms to what the plan of ceremonies will be held. The sound of *gandang passarro* will determine the level of the *ma'pandan* ritual.

The construction of myth of issong

The *issong* is used when the ritual will be held, it is first ritual. *Issong* is laid down in an inverted position then the corpse is sitted on the *issong*. The construction of the significance of symbol of *issong* symbol is as follows:

Denotation:the meaning of *issong* generally refers to a mortar (a rice pounding tool), which is made from a hollow round piece of wood.

Connotation:the inverted *issong*, which is occupied by the corpse symbolizes that the corpse is represented as alive.

Myth: the *issong* signifies that the status of the corpse is still alive, not dead but rather sick. The people of Toraja well known that death-one is consider the deceased as sick people, (Satyam & Ranjan, 2024). The construction of myth of *issong* is mythologized by the status of the corpse, where the corpse is considered not dead but in a state of illness.

The construction of myth of paya

The belief in *aluktodolo* uses the *paya* vehicle as a sacred medium in the ritual of *pebabaran*. This medium can only be occupied by certain individuals or honored people, namely the ritual performers (*toma'kada*) and the family lineage conducting the *ma'pandan* ceremony. The significance of the *paya* symbol is as follows:

Denotation :*paya* means high platforms in general understanding.

Connotation:*paya* is a unique, sacred, and honored place in the deological belief of *aluktodolo*.

Myth:the ones who is above the *paya* are respected persons, namely the ritual *toma'kada* and also family group that undergoes the *ma'pandan* ritual.

The construction of myth of lantang bulawan

Lantang bulawan is a place. The shape and construction materials are very simple and seem shabby, yet on the other hand, this place is adorned with sacred colored ornaments such as red, black, and golden yellow, while at the top, several *keris* (kind of knife) are displayed that enhance the beauty of *lantang bulawan*. The significance of the *lantang bulawan* symbol is as follows.

Donotasi:generally, *lantang bulawan* refers to a hut or baruga.

Connotation:*lantang bulawan* is a hut or sacred place where the deceased are honored.

Myth: the honored deceased must be placed in a sacred place, namely in *lantang*

bulawan because the spirit of the deceased will become a deity.

7. The construction myth of *pala'dura*

Pala'dura is a coffin made of wood used to lay the body wrapped in a round red cloth. The significance of the *pala'dura* symbol is as follows:

Denotation: *pala'dura* is a coffin that is understood in general terms.

Connotation: *pala'dura* holds sacred value in the view of adherents of the *aluktodolo* belief. Because it is sacred, it must be adorned with magnificent ornaments.

Myth: *pala'dura* is a sacred coffin and must be respected because lying on the coffin is a figure who will become a god.

*The construction of myth of *dulang**

The ideology of the followers of the *aluktodolo* belief that *dulang* is sacred and respected. The significance of the *dulang* symbol is as follows:

Denotation: *dulang* in general understanding is a bowl or plate.

Connotation: *dulang* is a sacred eating vessel that holds an esteemed value in Toraja societies.

Myth: *dulang* in the *ma'pandan* ritual is a plate for *bombo deata*, therefore it should not be used arbitrarily.

*The construction of myth of *tanggo**

Tanggo (terrace) is closely related to the role and function of *gandang pasarro* which concerns the position and layout of *gandang pasarro*. The position of this object must be on stilts so that *gandang pasarro* has meaning. The significance of the *tanggo* symbol is as follows:

Denotation: *tanggo* is the terrace of a house in general understanding.

Connotation: *tanggo* is an indicator of the position to hang the *gandang pasarro*.

Myth: if *duangpitu* ritual is performed, *gandang pasarro* must be hung below the *tanggo*. If *duakkasera* and *tallukkasera* rituals are performed, it must be hung above the *tanggo*.

*The construction of myth of *bombo**

Bombo is the spirit of the deceased. In the belief of *aluktodolo*, the figure of *bombo* is interpreted as a deity and must be respected. According to Elliot (2018), at the time of death, the spirit of the deceased transforms into *bombo*, they live and resemble the face of the deceased. "[...] *soul after*

death becomes a divinity" (Nooy-Palm, 1979). The *bombo* will undertake a journey to *puya* through a tunnel in the earth. The significance of the symbol of *bombo* is as follows:

Denotation: *bombo* in general understanding is a ghost, demon, and/or a frightening figure.

Connotation: *bombo* is a potential god that is still in this world.

Myth: The figure of *bombo* according to *aluktodolo* will reincarnate to be *bombodeata* when bestowed in the *puya* so why it must be respected.

*The construction of myth of *tedong**

The *tedong* (buffalo) in the Toraja society is generally used for sacrificial offerings in funeral ceremonies, (Kathleen, 1993) refers to buffalo as wealth and livestock. The symbolic significance of the *tedong* is as follows:

Denotation: *tedong* in general understanding is a consumption animal and is used for plowing in the fields.

Connotation: the *tedong* in the context of the *ma'pandan* ritual is symbolize to serves as a material provision, prosperity and welfare for the spirit of the deceased in the *puya*.

Myth: the life of spirits in the *puya* is no different from life in the world; the spirits require material provisions in the *puya*, hence the buffalo sacrificed in *ma'pandan* ritual will determine the level of prosperity for the spirit in the *puya*.

*The construction of myth of *baidoko**

The researchers' assumption about the the animal of *baidoko* in the *ma'pandan* ritual is related to the genetic status of the corpse. Since the status of the *baidoko* is a parent and meant not a virgin, the status of the corpse is a married person, whether referred to *nene'* (she or he), grandmother or a grandfather. The term *nene'* in the Toraja language has dual meanings of *nene'*, applicable to both men and women. The significance of the *baidoko* metaphorical symbol is explained as follows:

Denotation: *baidoko* refers to the female pig in general meaning.

Connotation: *baidoko* is paralleled with the genetic status of the deceased.

Myth: *baidoko* is a parent who already had a family and descendants, whether she or he.

The construction of myth of asu

The *asu* (dog) is a sacrificial animal that is slaughtered at the start of a ritual, and the type of dog must have black fur. After it is cut, it is then buried in a specific place, and a *nabara* tree (banyan tree) is planted on its burial site. The banyan tree must not be pruned or cut down but left to grow forever. The role and function of the dog in the *ma'pandan* ritual is as a medium of information. Because this animal has the ability to run fast, the belief of *aluktodolo* holds that it can carry messages faster to the realm of *puya*. Udechukwu (2019) states, “*the dog...symbolizes the messenger who should have brought news of immortality or resurrection.*” A similar statement was made by Nooy-Palm (1979), “*the important role as messenger and intermediary which the dog fulfills in the mythical stories of manaek and polopadang...the dog plays a leading part, sometimes not a very praiseworthy one, as in the myth of tulangdidi, yet sometimes as the savior of the protagonist, as in the myth of bulu pala*”. The significant symbols of the dog are as follows:

Denotation: In common understanding, dog refers to a domestic animal.

Connotation: dog is associated with being the fastest information bearer in delivering sad news.

Myth: dog has physical abilities to run, allowing it to quickly relay news of death.

The construction of myth of barana'

Barana' (the banyan tree) is a type of large tree that grows densely, has strong roots, and some people believe that this tree is sacred (holy). For adherents of the *aluktodolo* belief, this tree is usually used to bury infants by carving a hole in the trunk of the tree. The function of this tree in the *ma'pandan* ritual is a sign that the ritual has begun, where a black dog is cut and then buried along with this tree around the mourning house. The significance of the metaphorical symbol of *barana'* is explained as follows:

Denotation: *barana* is the name of a type of tree in common understanding.

Connotation: *barana* is a blessed tree and symbolizes eternal life.

Myth: the *barana* tree symbolizes the representation of the lives of the dead yet it will continue to grow.

CONCLUSION

Saussure's semiotic theory forms the basis for Barthes' semiotic leap. Saussure's semiotic interprets signs at the first level of meaning (first-

order signification), which refers to denotative meanings, literal meanings, general meanings, and those with a high level of convention. Barthes' critique of Saussure's signification system comes from the fact that denotative signification cannot operate on metaphorical signs, associative meanings, or second order of meanings. This led Barthes to propose a second order signification which is connotation (second-level signification). Signs at the second level contain myths that stem from ideologies (dominant goals) taken from society and culture, where myths convey messages rather than literal meanings. Myths are not concepts but rather ways of conveying a meaning. The meaning within myths will continue to evolve according to the subjective desires of the speakers; thus, the significance at the level of connotation is able to fulfill meaning perfectly.

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Metaphor symbols in Ma'pandan ritual: A semiotic study of Roland Barthes