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Shamanic Rituals and Funerals of the Wana People of  
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**Healing the Individual, Healing the Community**  
Shamanic Rituals and Funerals of the Wana People of Morowali

**Giorgio Scalici**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**Department of Theology and Religion**

**Durham University**

**2018**



This thesis is dedicated to the memory of

Nanju (d. 2013)

Indo n'Tibe (d. 2014)

Indo n'Pino (d. 2016)

Indo Jaka (d. 2016)

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## Glossary

- Adat* (BI): Tradition and system of traditional laws
- Agama* (BI): Religion
- Bahasa Indonesia* (BI): Indonesian language
- Bahasa Taa*: Wana language
- Banua*: House
- Banua mate*: Grave
- Baraka*: Mythical power.
- Belanda*: Netherlands
- Chaptikus*: Palm wine
- Diodio*: Small rattle tied to the machete of a warrior to attract women
- Do'a*: Spell
- Dumbaru*: Ritual hut of the kayori
- Eo*: Sun
- Ganda*: Drum
- Geso*: Spike fiddle
- Gunung* (BI): Mountain or hill
- Joe n' tana*: The edge of the world where the Tau Baraka live
- Kasintuwu*: Sense of community
- Katuntu*: Mythological tales
- Kayori*: Funerary ritual
- Kayu*: Wood
- Kayu paramba*: Money tree
- Kepala suku* (BI): Village chief
- Kios*: Shop, stall
- Koro*: Soul
- Jampu*: Invisibility
- Langu*: Ritual tray
- Lengke*: Shadow
- Linga-linga*: Song
- Mandeki*: The ritualized expression of pain and sorrow during a funeral
- Mankoni*: To eat
- Malae*: To go to the momago

*Mata*: Rattan thread with 16 or 18 knots tied in it. It is used to keep track of the days of the kayori

*Mate*: Death, dead or to die

*Mea*: Shyness

*Measa*: Demon

*Miskin* (BI): Poor

*Moapu*: To cook

*Molawo*: Esoteric shamanic ritual

*Momago*: Main shamanic ritual

*Motaro*: Male shamanic dance

*Patoe*: Shamanic chant

*Pitu*: Seven

*Poloisong*: Wana mythical hero and trickster

*Pompolonzu*: Ritual cloth used during the momago

*Pongas*: Rice wine

*Popondo*: Chest resonator

*Pue*: Wana god

*Rando*: Decoration

*Salia*: The biggest shamanic ritual, usually hold during the harvest festival. Also known as masalia and padunku.

*Salonde*: Female shamanic dance

*Setan*: Demon

*Siu*: Comb

*Soga*: A torch used during the kayori to let the spirit of the deceased seeing the human world

*Soo*: Sound, musical note

*Sopu*: Blowpipe

*Suruga*: Heaven

*Tana*: Land, territory

*Tana Taa*: Wana land

*Tanuana*: Dream agent

*Tau*: Person

*Tau Baraka*: People of the mythical era

*Tau Rumbi*: Giant

*Tau Walia*: Shaman

*Tempo*: Time

*Togo*: Three

*Tulali*: Flute

*Tunda'n tana*: navel of the world and mythical mountain

*Uba*: Wana bag, but also the funeral bag that during the funeral represent the deceased.

*Urat*: Hand nerves that indicate the spiritual and moral inclinations of a person.

*Vaiansivangu*: The sacred vine that connected the earth to the sky.

*Walia*: Spirit

*Wuri*: Night

*Yoku*: Funerary bracelet

## Introduction

This thesis is the product of research lasting from 2011 to 2018. It aims to explore, discuss and analyse the rituals of the Wana people and the values that these rituals carry. It will examine how a small community reinforces relationships among its members through the healing ritual, the *momago*, and the funeral, the *kayori*. Reinforcing these relationships contributes to the survival of an endangered community that has been constantly under political demands from the Indonesian government and from the pressures of conversion to Christianity.

### Research questions

While approaching and discovering Wana culture, I tried to cope with the culture shock arising of contact with this new world and to look for reasons, meanings and aims behind the rituals I was observing. Of course, the intricate intertwinement of rituality, mythology and mundane life made it necessary to employ a holistic approach that took into consideration various elements of Wana life. It meant focusing part of my efforts on seeing connections between many different situations, from the watching of television to funeral mourning.

My aim is to uncover the key values of Wana life through the analysis of the two most important rituals. At the same time, it is to see how Wana people use these values, and the rituals that reinforce them, to maintain what I will call the “density” of their community and to cope with the pain and the wretchedness they believe are central parts of their existence. The Wana describe themselves as *miskin* (poor) people, but the word refers to far more than economic status. In attempt to summarise all of the different meanings Wana people invoke with the word *miskin*, the term “wretched” will be used in this thesis. There are several reasons behind this decision. First, it literally means “low quality.” According to Wana people I met, their life and status are both inferior in quality to those of other people (especially Christians). They have also been treated as lower quality human beings since the arrival of the Indians who sold them as slaves. Another reason behind the choice of the term “wretched” is its etymology; the term derives from the old English *wrecca*, meaning “exile,” “to drive out,” or “to punish” (Online Etymology Dictionary). This etymology reflects the situation of the Wana people, in that they see themselves as ‘exiled’ from the golden era, albeit as a result of mythical time leaving them rather than the other way around. They are damned to live a wretched life while in exile from the golden

era. Finally, the term seems appropriate in connecting the Wana situation to key work in post-colonial studies, particularly *Les Damnés de la Terre* by Franz Fanon (1961), translated into English with the title *The Wretched of the Earth*. The original term used by Fanon was “*damnés*” and this word comes from the opening lyrics of *L'Internationale: Debout, les damnés de la terre* (Stand up, damned of the Earth) (Pottier: 1871). The term *damnés* derives from the Latin *damnum* (loss), and this can be related to the Wana people’s loss of primordial power along with dissolution of mythical density, and it is also linked with the act of cursing. Wana people are damned to be poor and to exist at the bottom of the social ladder until the return of the *Tau Baraka* and the restoration of the golden era.

Moreover, I have decided to use the term “density” instead of “unity” to stress the spatial and physical qualities of the event. As explained in detail in the final chapter, this is one of the key terms I employ to understand Wana culture.

Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyse how Wana people view the world they live in, and to uncover the coping methods put into action during the rituals. These methods are not only about dealing with a life considered full of pain, but they are also about transforming the negative energies resulting from the illness or death of a member of the community into a powerful and playful positive energy that protects individuals and the community as a whole.

### **Reasons behind this research**

My initial plan was to study the ritual music of Wana main shamanic ritual, the *momago*. Once on the field, my interest moved to the coping methods of Wana people, and their ability to transform the negative events into playful events that reinforce the sense of community (*kasintuwu*) and emotionally heal the entire community. Alongside these personal interests, there is the urge to document and study an endangered community that will soon drastically change and that is, in fact, already losing some of its defining cultural characteristics. Considering that in 2011 collecting and recording Wana traditional music already required a great effort and that I could not find many musical instruments or people able to play them, it would not be a surprise if this traditional music were to disappear altogether, or at least to become deeply impoverished, within the next 20 years. The Wana people have never received a great deal of attention from academic researchers, especially in comparison with other communities on the island of Sulawesi. The Toraja people, for instance, are a cultural group known both to academics and others, and are a great curiosity

to tourists in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> They live less than 400 kilometres from the *Tana Taa* (Wana land), and there are many studies with a range of interests, from ethnomusicology (Rappoport 2004), to textiles (Maria Christou 1999), to emotions (Roxana Waterson 2018) that have produced dozens of books, articles and recordings. It is not clear, on the other hand, why the Wana people have never attracted so much attention. Published works about them will be discussed in Chapter II but they hardly exceed a dozen in number. Furthermore, half of this work is produced by one person, the US anthropologist Jane Monnig Atkinson.

One of the factors behind my research, therefore, is the desire to bring knowledge of this culture to a wider audience, not because the Wana people need in any way to become famous (and there are countless examples of traditional communities being damaged by superficial images of them being presented by outsiders). It is a culture that I consider truly fascinating and that could potentially reveal much about how people can effectively manage emotions and foster coherent communities – perhaps providing hints regarding how other societies (such as our own) may effectively address this address. I have faith in the role of anthropological research in preserving memory and recording testimonies of a culture. I do not, however, desire to put Wana people “under a glass dome.” Instead, I note a quotation attributed to the composer Gustav Mahler:<sup>2</sup> “Tradition ist nicht die Anbetung der Asche, sondern die Weitergabe des Feuers” (Tradition is not to preserve the ashes but to pass on the flame). I strongly believe that one of the duties of anthropology is to serve as an archive and museum for information about different cultures. I intend for my work to offer a source of information and a record of the state of Wana rituality between 2011 and 2016, especially for the benefit of Wana people themselves. The photos, description, video and audio files will preserve a testimony of a religion, culture and musical art that are all changing. My great interest in visual anthropology means that photos will have an important role in this thesis. They are not used exclusively as a visual aid and as an opportunity to show the Wana world, but they will also be integrated into the analysis and analysed themselves. Moreover, the interaction between the many ritual participants, the importance of the visible and the invisible in Wana culture, and difficulties in giving a clear and complete description of the complexity of Wana rituality has forced me to “rethink certain categories of anthropological knowledge in the light of understandings that may be accessible only by non-verbal means” (Sweetman 2009: 491). As stated by Cox

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<sup>1</sup> Tana Toraja is one of the top ten tourist attractions in Indonesia on many travel websites, including *planetware.com*, *touropia.com*, *theculturetrip.com*, and *thecrazytourist.com*.

<sup>2</sup> The source of this quotation is unknown and it has also been attributed to Thomas Morus and Benjamin Franklin. For this reason, I am unable to give a bibliographic reference for it.

and Wright “visual media are appropriate for the production and dissemination of anthropological knowledge because they can convey distinct forms of knowledge that writing cannot and they provide a means to experience and understand ethnographic complexity, richness and depth” (Cox and Wright 2012: 21). The written media has its limits and words alone are not sufficient to describe a culture (Prosser and Loxley 2008), especially a geographically and culturally distant reality such as the Wana one. This is an even more important considering that the Wana people in Taronggo are planning to build a *rumah adat* (house of traditions) that will preserve and display their artefacts and culture, and the data and material collected could help them in preserving their culture. With this in mind, in the field, I tried to record and observe as many expressions of Wana culture as possible, from hunting to weddings. This was challenging at the beginning, but it later revealed to be fundamental in developing approaches that allowed me to recognise connections between elements of Wana life that, at a first glance, seemed unrelated.

### **Disciplined subjectivity and biases**

It is widely accepted by now that objectivity is an illusion that anthropology should not accept or aspire to anymore (Bollig & Finke 2014, Spiro 1986). In anthropological studies of subjectivity, many works have explored how subjectivity itself is deeply intersubjective (Biehl et al. 2007; Hollan 2001; Lurhmann 2006). First, then, it is necessary to situate myself as a product of cultural, historical and economic factors, in a similar way to that in which scholars situate the cultures they study. The aim of this is not to reach any kind of objectivity but instead to find an intellectual honesty through which to communicate. I took inspiration from *Bias in the Biography: Bias and Subjectivity in Ethnographic Research* by Margaret D. LeCompte (1987) and decided to practise “disciplined subjectivity” myself (Ibid). Outlining my geographic, cultural and academic background may reveal something about the conscious or unconscious drivers of my research. Rather than a separation between the person and the research as a modern-day Janus monster, I aspire to the total unification of these two aspects. For this reason, I am well aware that some of my agenda, biases and desires will influence my writing, just as they influence my field research and my wider life. Moreover, Part of my argument is that anthropologists' own 'civilized' nature remains obscure. This is because the anthropologist's professional task depends on overcoming the immediate responses to difference by an act of will and intellect. We cleave to a cultural relativism which turns our attention away from our deepest emotional responses to the radically different 'other', and also limits the cultural understanding to which we are

so committed. As anthropologists, we welcome difference but respond as its cool interpreters rather than as interlopers at the site of struggle at the cultural frontier (97-98)

I arrived among Wana people in 2011 through a series of fortuitous circumstances. Since my undergraduate studies in the disciplines of music, I had been fascinated by shamanism and the relationship between music and trance; for this reason, I wrote my bachelor's degree thesis on the role of the drum in Siberian shamanism. Following the idea to conduct fieldwork in Siberia with the purpose of studying shamanism there first hand, I moved to Rome to study ethnomusicology. The department was more internationally focused than my previous university,<sup>3</sup> with experts in Southeast Asian (Professor Giovanni Giuriati) and East Africa music (Professor Francesco Giannattasio). During my studies, with a mind to writing my master's degree dissertation on Siberian shamanism, I became a gamelan player in the group called Gong Wisnu Wara at the Indonesian Embassy at the Holy See. Thanks to this opportunity, I obtained the Indonesian government's Darmasiswa Scholarship, enabling me to study Indonesian, also locally known as *Bahasa*<sup>4</sup> *Indonesia*, at the university Sebelas Maret in Solo. Even though my first plan was to go to Siberia, I took this opportunity to visit a new country and to get in touch with a new culture.

I was also aware that the scholarship provided a great opportunity to do fieldwork for my master's degree dissertation. It was in the month before travelling that I had to prepare a bibliography for the module "Methods in Ethnomusicology Research," and while searching for research on shamanism, I found in my university's library *The Art and Politics of Wana Shamanism* by Jane Monnig Atkinson (1989). This was a book that changed my life forever; it was the first book I had ever read in English, and it opened up to me the shamanic reality of the Wana people. My intentions immediately shifted towards travelling to Morowali to study the music of the shamanic ritual called *momago*. This ritual is discussed in depth by Atkinson, but she did not offer much information about music. In 2011, after contacting Jabar Lahadji, founder of the Friends of Morowali association, I carried out my first spell of fieldwork, living for six months among Wana people.

During my first period of fieldwork, my ideas on research methodologies changed constantly. I was worried by the state of traditional music and struck by the discovery of the funeral ritual, the *kayori*, and the esoteric shamanic ritual, the *molawo*, since neither had been studied or documented before. I therefore expanded the aim of my research to

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<sup>3</sup> The Music department at the University of Palermo was focusing exclusively on Sicilian or, in some rarer cases, mediterranean musical culture.

<sup>4</sup> *Bahasa* means "language" in Indonesian and *Bahasa Indonesia* is the local name of the Indonesian language. For this reason, the term *bahasa* will be used to refer to the local languages.

include gathering data on how instruments are made, and recording and transcribing music for a basic analysis of the musical life of Wana people. The master's degree thesis that followed discussed the uses and characteristics of this music in the three rituals I observed (the *momago*, the *kayori* and the *molawo*), plus the organology and repertoire of Wana leisure music. That experience changed my life forever and made me understand that I truly wanted to become a researcher.

Students may often have a romantic vision of ethnographic research. Usually this impression is supported by the study of old books that may not provide description of the struggles of the task, or by the reports written by post-fieldwork students during fieldwork training given by some British universities (Pollard 2009: 15). In my initial training, I never encountered any studies that acknowledged the solitude one is apt to feel during fieldwork, although it is a common feeling (Pollard 2009: 4); excessive amounts of this state were the biggest problem I faced, even though I have rarely been as happy as during that first period of fieldwork. Only later did I discover *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* by Malinowski, which contains realistic accounts of his fieldwork experiences. Malinowski, in fact, deliberately looked for opportunities to be alone, noting times when "I sought solitude" (1989: 283) and had a "need for real solitude" (Ibid.: 186). He reported feeling "content with the stagnation and solitude" (Ibid.: 191), while I was still learning to cope with it. By the time I was in my second period of fieldwork, I too found myself in need for solitude; I enjoyed spending nights by myself, watching a movie or playing a video-game on my phone, actions that I could not share with my local friends and informants without becoming the centre of attention. While this desire for a break from active research could be considered quite normal, this thirst for solitude became unusually strong while I was outside the jungle and I started to actively avoid almost any human contact. In the time spent in Kolonodale or Palu I had almost no desire to have social interaction with Indonesians. The reason was a kind of culture shock within a cultural shock. While among the Wana I was just Jojo, the local name given to me because it was more readily pronounced than Giorgio, outside the jungle I was a *buleh*<sup>5</sup> in an even stronger way than I might have been as a tourist in a big city. I was possibly the only *buleh* for kilometres around, so people screamed at me, took pictures of me while I was eating, touched me and so on. This situation made the time spent outside the forest quite frustrating, and during both my fieldwork periods I spent these days in my room by myself,

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<sup>5</sup> *Buleh* is an Indonesian word derived from the Javanese word for "albino" and used nowadays to refer to white people. Its basic meaning is not negative but it often expresses a mono-dimensional view of all white people being like rich Australians, carrying U.S. dollars and speaking English.

going out only when I had to eat. The time spent alone was divided into work (organising the data collected) and leisure (reading comic books, playing old videogames and reading).

In Italy, the fields of ethnomusicology, anthropology and religious studies (called history of religion) are extensively interconnected. With histories dating to the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth centuries, they established themselves as modern fields of research after the Second World War and the end of fascism. At that time, the major figures in these fields were Ernesto De Martino and Diego Carpitella, who worked together on major research on the phenomenon of *taranta*.<sup>6</sup> De Martino was a key figure in both the fields of anthropology and religious studies in Italy, while Carpitella held the first ethnomusicology professorship in the country. Collaborating with Alan Lomax for many years, particularly in research on Italian music from 1953 to 1954, Carpitella taught a generation of Italian ethnomusicologists, including my former supervisor Giovanni Giuriati. Both he and De Martino were members of the Communist Party, and Italian intelligentsia more generally had strong connections with left-wing ideology. The ideas of Antonio Gramsci, the General Secretary of the Italian Communist party from 1926 until 1927, were particularly influential, as were various theories that experienced revivals in the 1950s and 1960s after suppression from fascism. These political concerns are still partially present in Italian scholarship.

Among the ideas in Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (2014), written during 20 years of detention by the fascists, perhaps most useful in anthropology is the concept of hegemony. Hegemony is a form of social order based on a combination of coercion and consent. But while hegemony is totalising in intent, this is never fully realised in practical situations, where repressed entities are not passive, and they demand some negotiation with the sources of power. Gramsci rejects the division of the world into a passive base and a powerful and controlling structure, but affirms that there is a constant dialogue between the different levels. This idea is particularly important when applied to Wana reality. This is a small "powerless" community that is constantly negotiating its position in relation to the Indonesian government and the world religions. Gramsci recognises that cultural activities and products have a key role in the maintenance and reproduction of a social order and in the relationship between powers. With this divergence from Marxist theories, he places topics of concern to anthropologists, such as arts, language, religion, ethnicity and so on, at the centre of understanding power and political relationships. Consideration of factors such

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<sup>6</sup> Also known as "tarantism", it refers to a dancing mania that used to be common in Salento, Puglia. This mania usually affects women and its treatment requires long musical sessions.

as gender, race, religion and ethnicity casts a new light on the community relationships that are a central theme of the present study.

Following Gramsci, the Italian school of humanities studies (including ethnomusicology and religious studies<sup>7</sup>) shows deep connections with the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano), and the aims and the agenda of these fields became interconnected with communist ideologies. De Martino and Carpitella were both members of the Communist Party. Italian anthropology was not born of a colonialist mentality, but instead emerges from a particular attention to the ‘problem’ of the South of Italy. This area was thought of by Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century as “le Indie di quaggiù”<sup>8</sup> (the Indias of down here) (Sciannameo 2006). Until De Martino, the *Meridione* (the south)<sup>9</sup> was usually only addressed from an economic point of view. De Martino’s motivation was to fill a void in the understanding of the unique and complex cultures and worldviews of Southern farmers, breeders, artisans, fishermen and workers in general. These elements made Italian anthropology very different from the anthropology of countries with a strong colonial past and present. Regarding the anthropology studies in countries like Australia, Coleman warns us that she believes “that anthropology contributed to the normalisation of Aborigines’ lowly social position by emphasising, explaining and defending their cultural difference,” (2018: 44) something completely different from the Italian reality.

According to De Martino the *miseria culturale* (cultural poverty) of the *Meridione* is the representation of a psychological misery produced by historical-social-economic conditions imposed by a regime and created by a relation of plurisecular subalternity. For him, the religious folklore of the *Meridione* was a reflection of the “non-history” of the South and its continuous repression. Although I would never use the term “cultural misery,” the reality described by De Martino is very similar to Wana realities. This is a small community that has always been in a position of subalternity and that has culture and rituality shaped by this subalternity.

De Martino and Carpitella impacted upon my personal formation as a researcher on many levels. First, they represent a truly interdisciplinary vision of research. They both took part in one of the most important research expeditions in Italian scholarship, one that produced one of its most significant books, *La terra del rimorso. Contributo a una storia*

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<sup>7</sup> In UK, anthropology is considered a social science, while ethnomusicology and religious studies are classed among the humanities; in Italy the three fields are seen as more closely connected, and are all part of the humanities denomination.

<sup>8</sup> It can help in understanding the situation of the *Meridione* knowing malaria was eradicated in Italy in 1962, less than sixty years ago (Snowden 2005).

<sup>9</sup> It is also worth noting that I come from Sicily, a part of that *Meridione* studied by the Italian scholars. It could also be called the birthplace of Italian ethnomusicology, with the publication in 1907 of Alberto Favara’s (1863-1923) *Canti della terra e del mare di Sicilia* (Songs of the land and the sea of Sicily).

*religiosa del Sud* (The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism). The cultural impact of this 1959 book and the project behind it was immense in Italy. Interdisciplinarity is a term that seem to have been rediscovered<sup>10</sup> only recently by UK academia. As well as De Martino (anthropologist) and Carpitella (ethnomusicologist), there was Giovanni Jervis (psychiatrist), Letizia Jervis-Comba (psychologist), Amalia Signorelli (cultural anthropologist), Franco Pinna (photographer) and Sergio Bettini (medical researcher). The lesson that many cultural phenomena are too complex to be approached from a single point of view is crucial in my decision to use many different sources and theories, and to observe Wana rituality with a holistic approach. My own identity as a researcher with training in ethnomusicology, based in a Religious Studies department and carrying out an anthropological project stresses the futility of separating these fields. De Martino not only worked on the relationship between music and trance, but he also wrote one of the first major books on death in the Mediterranean area: *Morte e pianto rituale. Dal lamento funebre antico al pianto di Maria* (1958).<sup>11</sup> In this work, he observes that when someone dies there follows a “crisis of condolences” that can lead to existential collapse. There then emerges the necessity to culturally process mourning inside the socially codified form of the rite. In doing so, the consolation offered by religious beliefs brings the dramatic charge of mourning back to bearable forms. For Wana people, who live a life that they consider wretched, the moral support of their religion and grieving tradition becomes an irreplaceable element for their survival. The coping methods of Wana people are some of the key cultural traits that this thesis explores.

Having completed my master’s degree, I decided to proceed with my academic career and to apply for a PhD. My choice ended up as Durham University, where, even though I am an ethnomusicologist, I have found the Theology and Religion department to be a perfect environment for my research. Durham was able to offer something that no other university could offer me, the guidance and the support of two experts on the two main

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<sup>10</sup> The Cambridge Torres Strait expedition in 1898 was a turning point in the history of the British anthropology for its interdisciplinarity and for the important role of fieldwork (Hart 2009). The members of this pioneering expedition were William Halse Rivers, Charles Myers and William McDougall (all psychologists), Alfred Haddon (anthropologist), Sidney Ray (linguist), Anthony Wilkin (photographer) and Charles Seligman (medical pathologist) (Haddon 1935: xi-xiii). Sadly, according to anthropologist Keith Hart, the destiny of this expedition was very different from the almost mythological status that De Martino’s expedition acquired among Italian scholars. In the lecture during the conference ‘Anthropology and psychology: the legacy of the Torres Strait expedition, 1898-1998’, which was held in St. John’s College, Cambridge, 10-12 August 1998, Hart stated: «If Victorian anthropology was largely conducted from the armchair, this event, above all, marked a turn to fieldwork in Britain. But if we ask what impact its participants have made on professional anthropologists and their students today, the answer is likely to be nil or negligible» (2009). He went on: «The only reason for taking up the cudgels on Rivers’s behalf is that his contribution has been all but eliminated from the collective memory of the discipline» (2009)

<sup>11</sup> This book has never been translated into English.

topics of my PhD: shamanism and death. After the discovery of the *kayori*, I decided to go back to an old passion of mine, thanatology (my dream job as teenager), and to find a way to bring together studies of shamanism and death in my current project. That was possible thanks to Professor Douglas Davies, an expert on death studies with training in anthropology, and Dr. Simon Mills, an expert on Korean shamanism and music. My engagement with them brought my thesis into the new areas of emotions and community. These were topics that already existed in my thinking but that I did not have the maturity to conceive them as the central part of this work.

### **From MA to Phd: Improvements, changes and reflections**

Although this PhD research is ostensibly a continuation of my MA research, the work is much more than a simple expansion and forms an independent investigation in its own right. In 2011, I was 24 years old and I had no experience of fieldwork. My only information regarding the Wana people was a book based on 40-year-old research, and my initial aim was to carry out an ethnomusicological study on Wana shamanic music and on what it could contribute to wider discussions on music and trance. Five years later, in 2016, I was a much more experienced researcher, with a wide knowledge of Wana culture and rituality and with different aims: I had an MA in Ethnomusicology and now turned towards PhD work in Religious Studies, and I was now most interested in the intricate relationship between emotion, religion and music as a cultural tool.

Indeed, in the five years separating the two periods of fieldwork, my ideas developed as I processed the large amounts of data I collected in 2011 and reflected on my fieldwork strategies and directions. One key factor was that, during the earlier period in the field, I was an ethnomusicology student with only very basic knowledge of religious studies and even more limited English. While the former deficiency forced me to focus on the musical side of my research, the latter ruled out the most recent studies and articles. Improving those language skills in the meantime, though, allowed me access to a wider and more recent pool of research, especially on the topics of emotions (Beatty 2005, 2010; 2014), death studies (Magowan 2001; 2007), shamanism (Winkelman 1990; 2010), and music (Wolf 2001; 2006).

An additional issue emerged in the fieldwork process itself. As I have already noted, the first time I went to the jungle I did so without training or a clear idea of what I would find living among the Wana people. More importantly, the fieldwork was tainted by the uncertainty about my own destiny as a researcher: would it be my first and only fieldwork experience?

Pushed by the urgency of the task, I worked in a “bulimic” way, trying to collect the greatest amount of data possible, not only about Wana music but also regarding almost any aspect of the community’s life. Moreover, having to work alone, I had to learn how to take videos, audio recordings and photographs and to conduct interviews – all at the same time, in the case of during rituals.

In the five years before returning in 2016, I had time to reflect on my experience and on the data collected, and I had the opportunity to organize a work-plan for my next period of fieldwork. In 2011, I dealt with culture shock and the shock of finding my research field far larger and more complex than I had expected. Studying Atkinson’s book, I knew about the main Wana ritual, the *momago*, but much more was waiting for me. I discovered a funerary ritual, the *kayori*, which had never been documented before. There was also another shamanic ritual, the *molawo*, and a complex religion and an endangered musical tradition. This all left me feeling overwhelmed by the amount of new information I was learning back in 2011. During my second fieldwork trip, on the other hand, I had the knowledge and the maturity to conduct my research with a clear focus and specific interests. I was no longer jumping from place to place but a researcher returning to the field with a clear mind and considered aims.

These aims involved expanding on some of the limitations of my MA dissertation. The dissertation had a very narrow focus: the ritual and traditional music of the Wana people. The main reason was its position in the field of ethnomusicology, but also my desire to collect a catalogue of Wana music and organology before the disappearance of this culture. This task eventually gave rise to the part of the present thesis dedicated to musical instruments, but this turned out to be only a relatively minor section, as the musicology and organology of Wana music gave up space in my thinking to Wana cultural concepts of music and connections with the spiritual world.

Indeed, the thesis is evidence of research that expanded to explore gender relationships, mythology, emotions and much more besides music. In the five years between the two fieldwork periods, I came to the conclusion the only possible path for success in this research was interdisciplinarity: to look at Wana culture in its totality instead of extracting a single element. Of course, in pursuing this I was also helped by an increased knowledge of English and the positive impact of an international environment that kept me up to date with the most recent research and with theories relevant to what I was observing. Thus, while my MA dissertation tackled just a small piece of Wana culture, this thesis attempts to illuminate connections between different elements of Wana life: music, gender, emotion, death and so on, to offer a more exhaustive study of this culture and world.

During my period of fieldwork, in 2011 and 2016 combined, I collected more than 800 GB of data, in the form of videos, photos and audio recordings. While in 2011 my recording skills were very underdeveloped and my videos lacked technical and aesthetic quality, I gradually improved with experience. Later videos were smoother, there was less camera shake, and I learned the best places to place the camera to obtain the optimal shot for research purposes. Nonetheless, light conditions were always a problem. The Morowali reserve is directly on the equator and the darkness of the houses contrasted with the intense light coming from the outside, making good photography relatively easy and good video very difficult. In fact, the night rituals were impossible to film with the camera I had in 2011, and only the night-vision settings of my new equipment for 2016 opened up this possibility.

In 2011, I used a low budget video camera with DV cassettes, a compact Olympus still camera and a ZOOM H4N audio recorder. In 2016, an important upgrade was an HD video camera with SD-card storage. Being able to transfer video to a laptop computer meant that I was free to shoot far more video; previously, I collected and carried around with me a total of 46 DV cassettes. My still camera was also slightly updated; the Olympus Tough tg-4 was again a compact camera, but this time equipped to work in the jungle, being waterproof, shockproof, crushproof and incorporating a GPS system. These features allowed me to worry less about the camera during my work and while crossing rivers and in similar dangerous situations, while also recording – thanks to the GPS – my position and the position of the villages. There is no precise map that shows the positions of Wana villages, partly because entire villages are often moved to new locations, and with the GPD information I obtained, I was able to pinpoint the exact position of each village on the maps I worked with (Map 5). I continued to use the same ZOOM H4N for audio recording. All of this data gathering relied on a solar panel charger.

My Wana contacts were all extremely happy to have me photographing and recording their ritual and daily life. In 2011, I avoided filming people crying at funerals, but gradually came to understand that this ethical barrier was entirely of my own construction, and that to do so was not a problem for anyone else present. In this thesis, I draw upon recordings and other data collected in both 2011 and 2016, and I have indicated that in this work when possible, especially in regards the interviews with my informers. The ability to call upon data from 2011 meant that I had access to photos, video and audio that was useful in clarifying various points, even if the subject matter was not a primary focus of the main fieldwork for the PhD project in 2016. The decision to include data from 2011 was also based on the unique value of some that I was able to collect on that trip; in 2011 I was able, for instance, to record a *salonde* (female shamanic dance) and a *molawo* (a shorter

shamanic ritual), both of which I did not encounter again in 2016 due to the rarity of these events in the area studied.

Material I recorded proved to be important in developing good relations with those I worked with in the field. I showed the videos I made to all those who wanted to see them, and I edited together a video to leave behind in each of the two main places of my fieldwork, Marisa and Taronggo, with both villages owning a television set and a DVD player. I also left photos and short videos of daily life that members of the community had shot while borrowing my Olympus Tough tg-4 camera.

## **Method**

In 2016 I returned to Morowali for a second period of fieldwork, again lasting six months. Without hiring a guide for the first days of research, I decided to contact my old informants directly and to resume our collaboration. The day before I was due to enter the jungle, Indo Jaka (daughter-in-law of Apa Rahu, the Marisa village chief, a former shaman and my dear friend) died and I found myself in the middle of arrangements being made for her funeral. This occasion provided an opportunity to observe funeral preparations that I had never seen before. The funerals I observed so far were always in places far from where I was based, thus I had previously travelled to the place of the funeral with other people on the last two days. Despite the sombre mood, Apa Rahu welcomed me as warmly as five years earlier and offered me an empty house in his village. Wana people have a semi-nomadic culture so it is common for many houses to remain empty for months at a time. That these houses are opened to travellers already starts to reveal the characteristic sharing that will be a theme of this thesis. After two weeks in Marisa, I went back to Kilo Sembilan for the funeral of Indo Jaka, and then moved with Apa Reilin (Indo Jaka's brother-in-law) to Taronggo. As in 2011, I spent my time between the villages of Marisa, Kilo Sembilan, where my informants from Kaju Poli (including Apa Ingus, a powerful and respected shaman and musician) moved, and Taronggo (hosted by Apa Reilin, son of Apa Rahu), a small town just outside the jungle. To move between these places, I joined people already making those journeys. In 2011, travel between villages was a necessity to collect the data I needed about Wana traditional music. In fact, players, instrument makers and the materials they require were all in different parts of the jungle, and it required some effort to bring the three elements together. I decided to stay and work with the same people as I had done in 2011, and also to pay a visit of a week to the village of Lambentana to meet its village chief and to record some mythological tales.

During the five years that separated my two spells in the field, I had ample time to study and review the data gathered in 2011. Following Gupta and Ferguson's (1997) discussion on the definition of "the field," I would consider these six years to constitute a continuation of the fieldwork period. The field is not always a simple geographical place but it can be any place or activity related to the research, such as a library or the review of one's own notes (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). This previous experience gave me a clear idea of the direction of my research, the needed physical and mental preparation for life in the jungle, and a wider experience of the technical elements of the research (audio-visual recording and the basics of visual anthropology).

Having already gained a vivid idea of Wana rituality, in my second period in the field I was able to focus my energies on observing specific elements more than the previous general vision of the ritual. A good example is the time and energy spent in the collection of Wana mythology. My initial approach to this task produced quite disappointing results as the elders of the Marisa area did not remember many tales. Instead, they pointed to Apa Kode, Lambentana's chief, as a knowledgeable man. For this reason, I decided to travel to Lambentana with the help of my guide Lando. The village is one of the most isolated in the Wana territory and its inhabitants speak a dialect of the Wana language not comprehensible to all others around. Here I found a very different lifestyle in comparison to that I was used to observing. Residents of Lambentana are well known to all Wana people as the most traditional and isolated, and I was able to make useful comparisons between their lives and those of Wana people on the borders of the jungle. Aware of the constant comparisons drawn between humans and plants in Wana rituality, mythology and leisure music, I also collected data on Wana botanic knowledge, producing a small catalogue of photographs of plants with their local names and traditional uses.

To transcribe the Wana language I follow the conventions used by Atkinson, whose useful phonetic table is the basis for much of the following (1989: xvii). When a vowel is lengthened, I write it with double letters (*Taa*). In Wana language, the sound *n* often precedes names, so *Indo Pino* is pronounced *Indo n'Pino*, and I choose to omit this sound in transcription. However, this means it is possible that the name I write as *Ndara* is actually *Dara* with the sound *n* added; when in doubt I transcribe the word as I heard it.

The field research was conducted in several languages. The majority, especially in the villages near the border of the reserve, used *Bahasa Indonesia* (BI) with some brief discussions in *Bahasa Taa* (BT). While in Lambentana, all the interviews were conducted in the only language known by the inhabitants of that village: *Bahasa Tokaju*, also called *Bahasa Maranka*. Knowing only *Bahasa Indonesia* and *Bahasa Taa*, I relied upon a guide to help me with the interviews during time spent in Lambentana. All interviews I

conducted in Lambentana were recorded; my guide translated my questions and, depending on the length of the answer, summarised or translated the replies of my informants. I needed a translator only for the few days I spent in Lambentana while I was collecting information on the local mythology.

It is also worth noting that while Atkinson and I transcribe the term “tau” with a final “u”, Grumbly writes the term with a final “w”: “taw”. Beyond this, there are no major differences between my transcriptions and those of previous scholars working with Wana people.

My four main field sites (Marisa, Kaju Poli, Taronggo and Lambentana) offered different realities and informants and gave me a multifaceted representation of Wana reality. A common thread was my collaboration with members of Apa Rahu’s family, whom I found spread out in Marisa, Kaju Poli and Taronggo. As already mentioned, in Marisa I lived by myself, but shared meals with Apa Rahu’s family. Marisa is a village thought of as close to the town of Kolonodale (although it takes at least three hours to make the journey by canoe), and here Muslim and Wana people live together peacefully. One resident of the village is Om Mangi, who was one of my main informants and who worked with the U. S. anthropologist Michael Alvard in the 1990s. Thanks to this experience, Om Manggi was perhaps the only Wana person that truly understood the reason for my presence there; it is not easy to explain the concepts of universities and PhDs to people who, in some cases, have never seen a school of any kind. Om Manggi was a valuable informant and friend, and this work owes much to his knowledge and help.

The village of Kaju Poli is very small, with less than two dozen people living there, and its Christian Wana residents favour becoming an independent Christian village. Apa Jaka lived in the village, but after the death of his wife decided to move to Marisa with his two small children and parents-in-law, to build a new house and to start the process of training up towards the possible goal of becoming the new village chief. In Taronggo, I lived with Apa Reilin, the son of Apa Rahu, who lives with his wife, two teenage daughters, and a new-born baby. In Taronggo, Christians, Muslims and a few Wana people live together in a particularly interesting social reality. Apa Reilin still follows the Wana religion, but his daughters, who attend a Christian school, have converted to Christianity.

Some people perceived me as a rich, white, “mythical” Westerner,<sup>12</sup> and this status was not a problem in general. Being a Westerner meant that I had the benefit of the mythical power that the *tau Baraka* (the mythical people) brought to the West at the end of the

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<sup>12</sup> As it will be explained in detail later, the concept of West is not a geographical but a mythological. The West is not the place to the west of the Wana land but the place *outside* of the Wana land, the place where the people of myth went at the end of the mythical era.

golden era. For Wana people, we all live in mythical space-time. I tried to repay my hosts with gifts (including money) rather than by paying a regular rent. I fixed and bought new parts for Apa Reilin's scooter and his chainsaw, a piece of equipment that brought his main source of income through his work as a woodcutter. I also bought "festive" or less common food for his family (chicken, eggs, vegetables, sweets and so on) and gave gifts to his wife and daughters. While in Marisa, I always paid for the petrol when travelling with others to Kolonadale, and there I bought gifts or offered food to my friends and informants. I never got the feeling, however, that anybody sought after my money; this was especially true of Apa Reilin, and it helped in us forming a bond of friendship rather than one of researcher-informant. While I felt the need to pull my weight and to help my friends as much as possible, they never took advantage of that. Rarely have I felt as part of a family as I did among my Wana friends.

Anna Grumbly, another anthropologist that I met during my first period of fieldwork, reports that the family hosting her sometimes experienced "jealous neighbours" (2016: 38). Personally, I never noted anything similar during my fieldwork. I presented myself as a Christian even though I am agnostic, because being known as a person without religion would make fieldwork very complicated, if not impossible. In Indonesia, not having a religion makes someone an anomaly and is usually taken as a serious negative. Even so, I made it clear that although I was born Christian, I do not practise; presenting myself as a kind of "in pause" Christian gave me a label acceptable in Indonesian culture. I often made the point to people around me that I admired the Wana religion over Christianity, and that I strongly supported their culture. In fact, the idea that somebody had travelled from the mythical West to the *Tana Taa* (Wana Land) to study their life, religion and music was a source of pride, and it spread some curiosity among the younger generations. A pride and curiosity that pushed some Wana to follow my research and rediscover their traditional music, but this desire did not last long. Although considered beneath the level of a Wana child in my abilities with some common tasks, such as handling a machete (as I discuss more below), generally I was accepted warmly and felt well respected. I like to think that the people around me felt my great love for them and their culture and recognised my desire to help and support them as much as possible. This was the basis of what, in some ways, became a relationship between friends. Despite my position of power (as a rich, white Westerner) I consider myself indebted to the Wana people I knew, and I tried to communicate my gratitude whenever possible.

The interviews I conducted were very open, and resembled friendly chats more than structured interviews. I opted for this approach for many reasons; first, my interlocutors would get bored very easily if I tried to engage them with a list of questions. I was

reminded of Geertz' warning researchers about "tormenting intelligent people with stupid questions" (Geertz 1987: 40). Moreover, "*dari pertama*" (from the beginning) was an answer that I encountered many times while working with Wana people. This is the perfect answer for anything regarding the past that they do not know, or as the reason behind a particular ritual action. To really obtain information, I had to enter into their minds, to truly understand their ways of thinking and relating with the world. In 2011, I had already discovered that direct questions were often useless; once when I asked why traditional songs are just four lines long they replied: "because with three lines it would be too short and with five too long."<sup>13</sup> This is a reasonable reply for what was perceived as a futile question. As a response, I developed ideas of "lateral questioning,"<sup>14</sup> a method meant to unearth insights that sometimes even the informant is not consciously aware of. I tried to obtain information not by asking directly, but by talking around the topic and looking for alternative ways to obtain information. Moreover, considering these difficulties and being aware of the difference between what people do and what they think, I have tried to apply other research method, such as "situated listening" and "speech-in-action participant-observation" (1990: 233),

Working in villages where the majority of people share the same values and live in harmony allowed me to avoid many of the problems encountered by Grumbles in Taronggo. Here she found that "a number of interviews came to an abrupt halt when an uninvited guest came along and, often unintentionally, disturbed the intimacy of the interview with his presence as an other-religious or simply other-ethnic person" (2016: 40). I generally tried to observe people as much as possible and to learn by observation, as children do, asking some questions but accepting that it was a shot in the dark and that I was unlikely to strike gold. Moreover, I tried to chat with as many people as possible, finding this the real way to obtain information. I then asked specific questions and gained deeper insights from my major informants, especially Om Manggi, who was already used to this kind of research. As Barker states: "Where social ties are dense and privacy is not a priority [...] almost all interviews are likely to be group interviews of one sort or another" (Barker 2012: 56). Indeed, it was not always possible to have one-to-one sessions, and many of my interviews or chats were with groups of people who came to see the novelty of the situation.

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<sup>13</sup> From an interview with Om Suma in 2011.

<sup>14</sup> "Lateral thinking" is an indirect approach to a problem. Looking at a problem from different angles instead trying a direct approach. While a direct question involves the use of Western logic, lateral questioning seeks alternative points of view.

## People of interest

To help with navigation among the great number of names mentioned in this work, I now offer a list of the main informants that helped me during my two periods of fieldwork. Having discussed the ethical issues regarding participation in my research and gained their permission, I use their real names or teknonyms. No one of my informants ever raised any issue regarding their participation in this work. For them it is a reason for pride having a westerner interested in their culture. Moreover, Wana conception of privacy and ownership are very different from ours. Wana are almost never alone, if not actively avoiding being alone, so many of their life is public. At the same time, at the base of this culture there is a desire to share with the others and to help each other whenever possible. Often, my informants were chosen by chance; they were people I shared a journey with or met while bathing in the river. Others I chose according to their social position (elders, shamans, head chiefs). In the case of Apa Kode, the chief of Lambentana, for example, I was recommended to visit him because of his reputation as an important figure in local life. It is highly noticeable that the majority of my informants are male. This was not intentional, but my own gender simply tended to place me more often in situations shared with men rather than women. On top of this, there is the shyness that characterises Wana women, something I will discuss in detail later. Nevertheless, I managed to create friendship bonds with the wives of several of my informants. This was partly through time spent looking after their children (bringing medicines, sweets and toys, and playing with them while the adults were in the field). It was also partly as a result of my peculiar position within the Wana divisions of the world. As I have already mentioned, my status was lower than that of a child when it came to using a machete; this is a tool used by everybody from a very young age but it was forbidden to me because of my lack of previous skills. Indeed, the limits of my practical knowledge regarding hunting, farming, building houses or similar tasks placed me at the same level as the children, who were still learning basic skills in these areas. In this respect, I joined the realm of the women that often demonstrated a great patience in showing me their daily duties. Moreover, not drinking alcohol also made me a kind of “honorary woman.”

When I talk about the Wana people in this thesis, then, I am not simply referring to men.<sup>15</sup> Although I did spend more time with men, the people who take the role of elders of the culture and hold power among Wana people, my interest is in the entire community. I engage with

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<sup>15</sup> I am indebted to Helen Limon for a comment on one of my conference presentations that pushed me to rethink my position on gender in my research.

the roles of gender in Wana culture in the last chapter. The Wana community first acts and reacts as a single being, and only later divides and categorises reality into male and female. The exact age of each of my informants is unknown.



Apa Ingus: Powerful shaman and skilful harmonica and *popondo* (chest resonator) player. In 2011, he was living in Kaju Poli, but in 2016 I found him in Kilo Sembilan and planning to move to Marisa. He lives with his daughter Ingus and her family. They live a modest life. Apa Ingus was one of my main interlocutors, because of both his shamanic knowledge and his musical skill. He was also used to working with researchers having already hosted the French documentarists Nugarol and Journet (2005, 2007, 2011). A very humorous person, Apa Ingus enjoyed singing badly while I was recording.



Apa Rahu: Village head of Marisa and former shaman. I lived in his house during my first period of fieldwork and I continued to work with him during my second visit. An extremely knowledgeable person, he is one of the few shamans to know the *molawo* ritual, and he is one of the best *geso* (one string spike fiddle) players in the area. I often spent my nights listening to his *geso* playing and singing. We frequently discussed Wana traditions and their value. A very wise man, he was one of my main informants and closer friends. He was always very patient and worked in the past with the French documentarists Nugarol and Journet. He lives with his wife, and his daughters and grandchildren live in the village.



Apa Reilin: The son of Apa Rahu, he lives in Taronggo village. I stayed in his house each time I visited Taronggo. He was always ready to help me with my research and he taught me about Wana botanic knowledge during exploration in the jungle. He also lent me his scooter for the one-hour ride to the nearest village with phone signal, so I could contact loved ones. He lives with his Wana wife, and they have a new-born baby and two teenage daughters, who are converts to Christianity.



Om Manggi: A Muslim Wana living in Marisa. In 2016 he lived with Apa Rahu and his family. An extremely knowledgeable person, he showed great passion and patience in helping me and answering my questions. Perhaps his previous experiences with the U.S. anthropologist Michael Alvard (2000) contributed to making him a particularly communicative informant. He taught me about Wana

botanic knowledge, and we spent many days talking about the Wana people and the world outside the forest while I was treating his injured leg.<sup>16</sup>



Om Suma: One of the most interesting people I met during fieldwork. The son of a Muslim shaman and of royal blood, Om Suma lives alone in a large house that he built himself near the big lake. Very respectful of Wana traditions, and perhaps the most knowledgeable and interested person in matters of Wana culture that I met among the younger generation. Extremely skilled guitar player, he has a great love of music and a wide knowledge of Wana songs and music. Having been educated at school, he wrote down for me the texts of many Wana songs and their translations in Bahasa Indonesia.



Apa Kode: Village chief of Lambentana. I worked with him briefly during my week in this village. He welcomed me and spent a few evenings recounting all of the *katuntu* he knew with patience and joy. He was very pleased by my presence in Lambentana, and about my curiosity about Wana culture.



Apa n'Tongi: Formerly one of the most powerful shamans, who was reportedly even able to walk in the sky, he was starting to convert to Christianity by the time of my fieldwork. He lived in Kayu Poli with his sister Indo Pino during my first period of study. Alongside his religious knowledge, he was also a skilled player of music and a fine musical instrument maker. He made me a beautiful *geso*.



Indo Pino: A highly respected and powerful female shaman, the only female shaman I had the opportunity to meet. A unique character, she lived with her brother. I worked a lot with her during my first fieldwork trip, partly due to her skills as a flute player. She died in 2015 but features prominently in the documentary film made by Nougazol and Journet.



Apa Sudin: My host in Marisa in 2011, I spent a great amount of time with him while the younger people were out working in the

though I do not have any medical training, even in the most basic matters, the Wana trusted my medicines and I knew how to use the medicine I brought with me.

fields. We talked especially about Wana leisure music, and he made many of the instruments that I brought back.



Apa Main: A powerful shaman living in the Taronggo area. I worked with him in 2011 and met him again in 2016, but by then he was too ill to work extensively. During my first fieldwork period, he was a crucial source of information regarding Wana shamanism and I saw him many times during the *momago*.



Jango: Jango is actually his nickname, meaning ‘beard’ in Bahasa Wana. He is considered to be one of the wise elders of Marisa. I spent a few nights listening to him telling *katuntu* (mythological stories).



Apa n'Te: Village chief of Taronggo. Always very kind to me, a knowledge person but not a shaman.

### **Kruyt, Atkinson, Grumblies and other Wana research**

Over the years, Morowali has primarily attracted scholars of botany, zoology and agriculture rather than anthropologists. At the end of the 70s, the Drake Operation<sup>17</sup> visited the Morowali forest, writing a report about the animals and the plants of the forest (1981). Between 1995 and 1996, Michael Alvard continued research on the Wana swidden culture, focusing on the impact of this agricultural system on the ecological environment of the forest, affirming that the method was not so destructive as declared by the Indonesian government (2000). In 1999 the U.S. PhD student Cynthia Riccardi wrote a thesis on the indigenous swidden agriculture of Wana people. Finally, Jabar Lahadji, former director and founder of the now closed *Yayasan Sahabat Morowali* (Friends of Morowali) association and an employee of the local office of the forest department, wrote many

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<sup>17</sup> Operation Drake (1978–1980), named after Sir Francis Drake and supported by the Scientific Exploration Society, was a round-the-world voyage with the participation of an international members. It started in Plymouth In October 1978 the brigantine Eye of the Wind left Plymouth to return to England in December 1980. (Chapman 1982).

articles about Wana people, their life in the reserve and their relationship with the government.

Outside of academic fields, the French film-makers Gerald Journet and Martine Nougazol have made a series of films (2005, 2007, 2011) that cover many aspects of Wana culture and provide a rich insight into the life inside the Morowali reserve.

The first ethnographic information about Wana culture can be found in *De to Wana op Oost-Celebes* (1930) written by the Dutch missionary Albert C. Kruyt, who spent two months among Wana people. Fifty years later, the U.S. anthropologist Jane Monnig Atkinson arrived in the community. Between 1974 and 1976, she lived among the Wana in the Ue Bone area, in the northern part of the Morowali, studying how the *mabolong*, a shamanic healing ritual known as *momago* by my informants, establishes a political order within the community. She produced an analysis of the ritual lyrics in her book *The art and politics of Wana shamanism* (1989). In addition, Atkinson wrote a number of articles on other Wana-related themes, in particular the relationship between Wana and the other religious groups that reside inside the Morowali area (1983, 1987, 1992, 2003).

More recently (2011), the German anthropologist Anna Grumblied (a PhD student at the time of my first fieldwork) was in the field investigating the relationship between Wana people and the external world. Her research has since been published: *Being Wana, Becoming an "Indigenous People". Experimenting with Indigeneity in Central Sulawesi* (2013). Her essay discusses the concept of *adat* (tradition) and Wana strategies to preserve their independence.

Apart from the more nature-focused work of Riccardi and Operation Drake, the findings of all of the those mentioned above have offered a great amount of information and data that is used in this thesis. In various particular ways, due to the closeness of our research, I often rely on the testimonies of Atkinson and Grumblied. Although our work shares a number of key concerns, at the same time, it differs quite markedly and, with time, I have started seeing our work as mutually complementary, existing as a kind of trilogy. While Atkinson analysed thoroughly the political role of the words in the *momago*, she almost completely ignored not only the *kayori* ritual, a very important and unique funeral event, but also the role of music in Wana culture and rituality, and the use of music to get in contact with the invisible world. I have never had the opportunity to meet or talk to Atkinson, and so have not been able to find out the reason that Wana music is never discussed or explored in her book and articles. In *The Art and Politics of Wana Shamanism* (1989), only a few lines are devoted to music, even though it is a constant presence throughout the *mabolong* ritual. Moreover, her research is forty-two years old now and it was conducted in an area of Morowali that I never visited. This makes my

thesis partly a window onto how the ritual she studied, and Wana culture in general, has changed over this long period of time.

On the other hand, Grumblied and I met in 2011 while we were doing fieldwork. I was an MA student and she was a PhD student. I had access to her thesis and her articles and they were both very useful to me, but the focus of her research is different from mine. Her aim was to study the Wana conception of marginality and the people's resilient measures against external forces such as missionisation, government interventions and the work of the palm oil companies. Although I deeply appreciated her work, and especially her detailed demonstration of how Wana people have been marginalised by the government and the world religions, I do not agree with her central conclusions on Wana emic points of view regarding periphery, centre and marginality. In Chapter VI, I argue that Wana people have a conception of centre and periphery that is diametrically opposed to the Western one; they value the centre as a powerless place while all the power is concentrated at the periphery. For them, Jakarta is powerful because it is on the peripheries, located far away from the centre of the world, where they themselves are living.

I believe that the contrast between my conclusions and those of Grumblied is largely due to our fieldwork focusing on different Wana communities. She spent her entire fieldwork period outside the Morowali forest, in the village of Taronggo where Wana people live together with Christians and Muslims, go to school, have access to medicine and are more in contact with the periphery (the world outside the forest). I spent some time in Taronggo but my main research was done inside the forest. It is possible that, even though we both worked with Wana people, we are expressing two different points of view. I am reporting the point of view of the Wana people from the forest, the people that live in the powerless "centre" of the world and that define the world around them from this position. Grumblied, on the other hand, is reporting the point of view of people living outside of that centre, in a liminal place between the forest and the periphery of the Wana world, where Wana people are more strongly influenced and shaped by the point of view of the outside. In Taronggo, the government, schools and the world religions have a more important role in shaping Wana identity than in the jungle, and this produces differences in Wana culture.

Ultimately, I place myself in the middle between Atkinson and Grumblied, moving from the first and comparing with the latter. This thesis offers a deeper exploration of *momago* ritual elements that Atkinson only briefly touched upon and adds coverage of the *kayori* ritual, demonstrating its important role in Wana life. At the same time, I both complement and contest the work on marginality by Grumblied, exploring how forest-based Wana

people place themselves in the world, and how this shapes their power relationships (men-women, visible-invisible and centre-periphery).

### **Structure of the thesis**

During the long gestation of this thesis, its shape, aims and structure have changed many times. Initially, I planned a tripartite structure exploring the three Wana rituals, the *momago*, *kayori* and *molawo*. Gradually it became clear that the scope of this plan would have exceeded the possibilities of the dissertation, particularly considering my increasing interests in the roles of emotion, space and gender. Instead, I moved toward a binary division. The idea was to reflect in the structure of the thesis Wana divisions of the world according to dyads, and to underline the connection between apparently only loosely related elements with a final part in which I would briefly treat secondary topics of the research. The final structure, though, is to escort the readers through a journey of discovery of Wana rituality. Inspired by my own fieldwork experience and aware of the unlikelihood of readers having much or any knowledge of Wana people, I have decided to present the topic and its complexity gradually, in a manner resembling my own gradual discovery and understanding of Wana culture.

Beyond the Introduction and Chapter I, which contains a review of literature, this work has a tripartite structure; at the beginning, in Chapter II, I revisit my first fieldwork period, where there are struggles with culture shock and a great amount of new information emerges from this new reality. Then, in Chapters III and IV, the second fieldwork period provides the basis. Here I observe the rituals with the help of knowledge acquired previously, and pay attention to details that were obscured before when the task in early fieldwork was to understand the general picture. Finally, in Chapters V and VI, I present a more extended concluding analysis forged after returning home. This is a deeper consideration of the links between ritual and cultural values, gleaned from careful cross-comparison of all the materials previously collected. In Chapter II, I offer the basic tools the readers will need to move effectively in this new world. It covers the basic elements of Wana life in the forest, political organisation, history, economy and a little on religion. Once this context and prerequisite knowledge is covered, it is appropriate to introduce Wana rituality. Chapter III presents the main shamanic ritual, the *momago*. This addresses its basic purposes, Wana conceptions of illness, its structures and development. Chapter IV is similar in intent, this time focusing on the *kayori*. If the *momago* has already been studied in depth by Atkinson (1989), all the information about the *kayori* is new. This

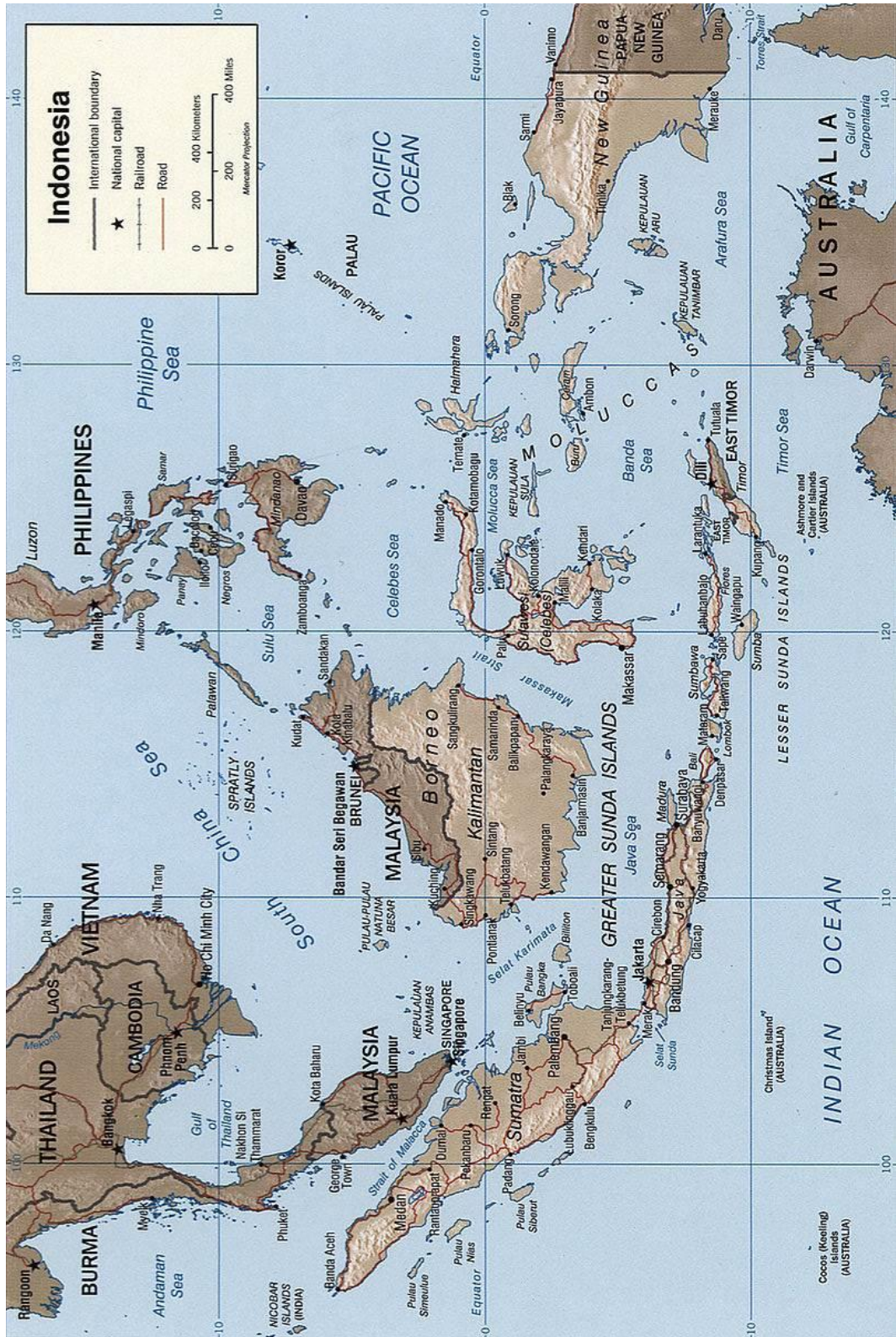
lengthy ritual, almost three weeks long, is described day by day, and some of the key moments are briefly analysed.

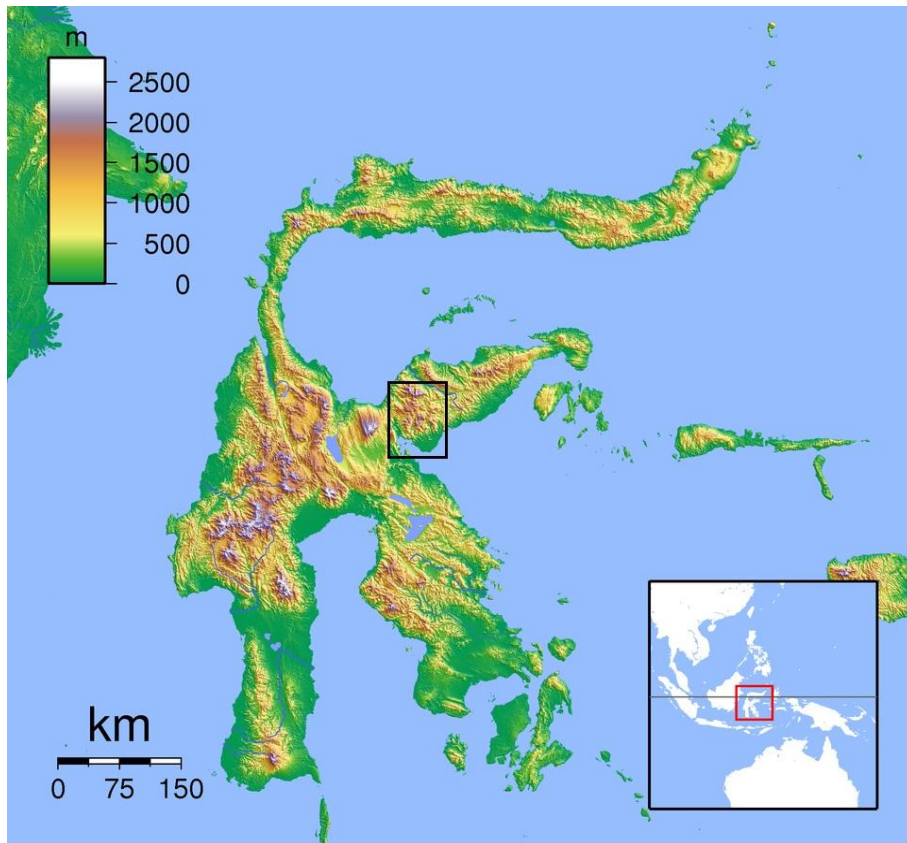
Chapter V is the point at which the field lines converge and the information from the previous chapters is used to build a wider picture of Wana rituality. Here, I analyse and discuss how the two rituals presented not only reinforce the main Wana values but are sustained by them, in a virtuous circle that allows the survival of Wana culture. Following the divisions of the world made by Wana people, I explore the main dyads of Wana reality: between Wana and others, the centre and the periphery, male and female, centrifugal and centripetal, the individual and the community, dreadfulness and playfulness. I show how the rituals are based upon and reinforce these groups of opposites.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I discuss two examples of failing rituals. While rituality is usually presented and studied as going according to expectations, I witnessed two situations in which the *kayori* partially failed. Through the examination of these two examples, I show how Wana rituality is changing, and I stress the necessity of following traditions to ensure ongoing social balance in the Wana community.

My hope is that, at the end of this work, the readers and I will be able to “riveder le stelle” (Dante 2005) (to re-behold the stars), ending this journey with a clear idea of the values of Wana culture and of how this small community bases its own survival on the principle of *kasintuwu* (sense of community).

# Maps

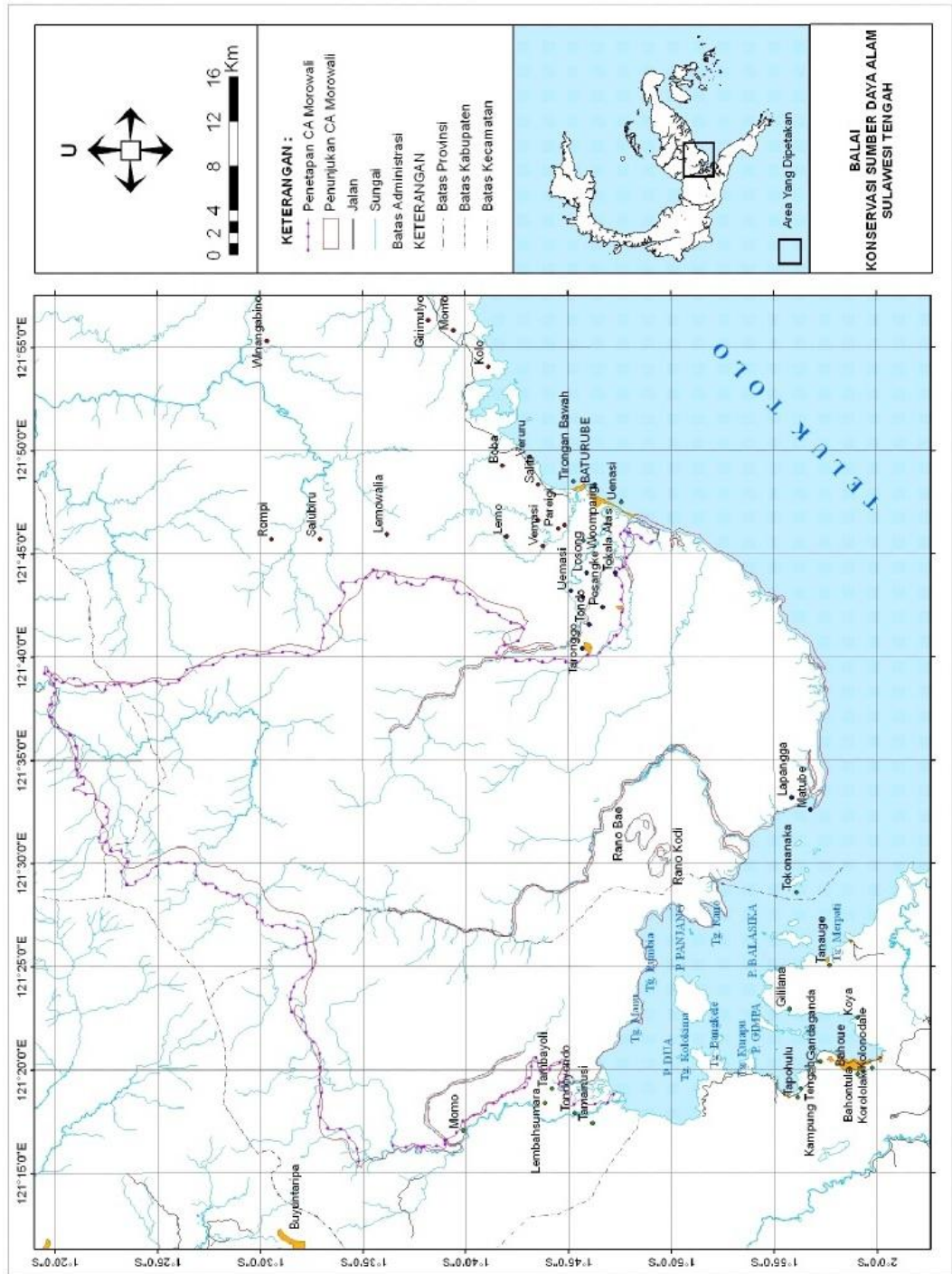




**Map 2:** Sulawesi Island. (Map created with GMT from publicly released SRTM data. Rearranged by Scalici)

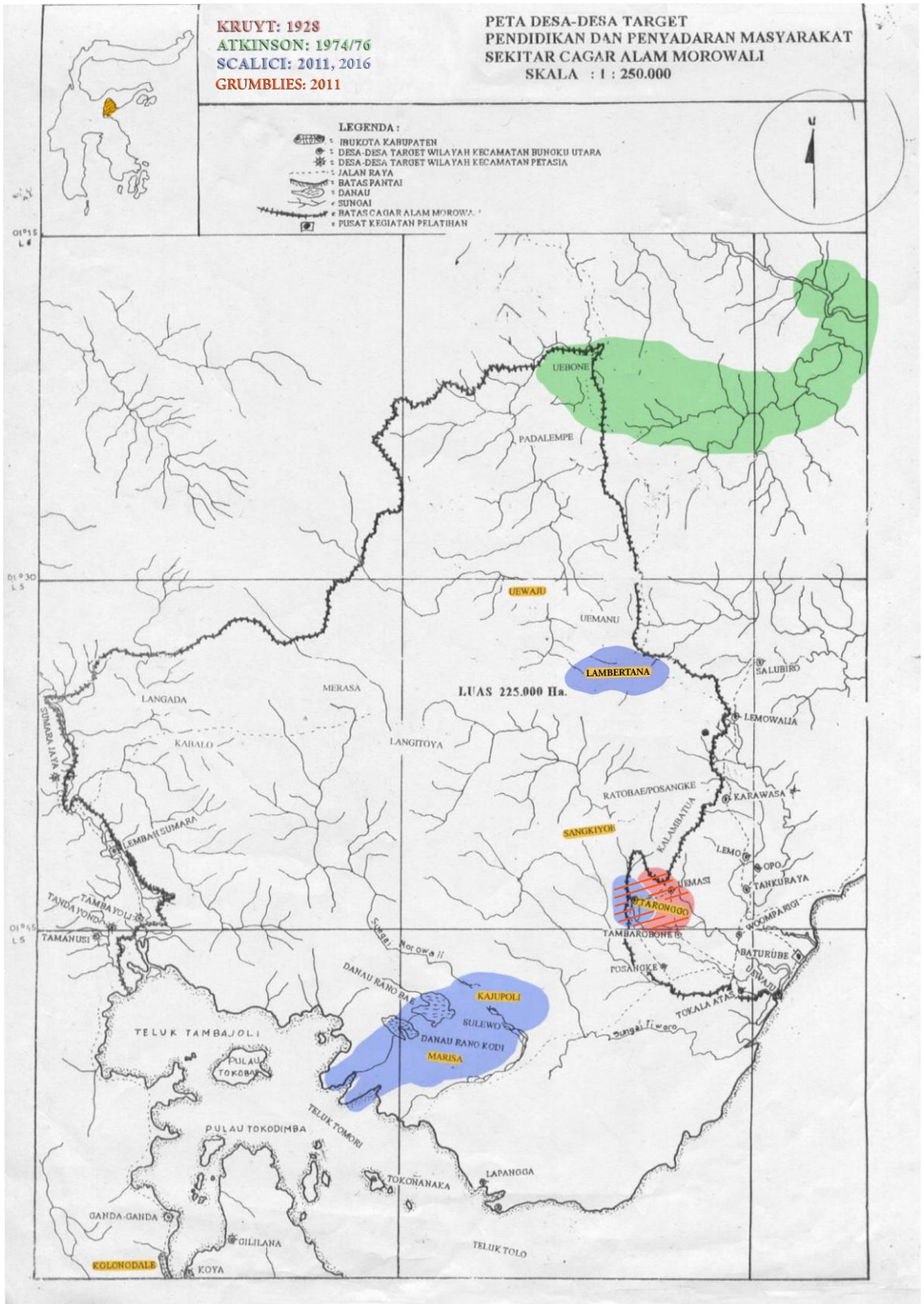


**Map 3:** Central Sulawesi (Source unknown. Rearranged by Scalici)





**Map 5:** Satellite view of Morowali forest with the main locations of my fieldwork pinpointed



**Map. 6:** Natural reserve of Morowali with the fieldwork localities explored by other key researchers of Wana culture highlighted (Source unknown. Rearranged by Scalici)

# I

## Literature review

The Wana people are at the ethnographic core of this work, and the thesis explores, in particular, their rituals as a window onto many important cultural elements, such as emotions, shamanism, death and the relationship between centre and periphery. In this chapter I will discuss past and recent theories on the topics underlying this entire research. Still, considering the vastness of the topic and the interdisciplinary nature of this work, this chapter will not cover all the theories used; a few smaller topics will be discussed at appropriate moments in the analysis where they might add more without interrupting the flow of these main chapters.

## Emotions

It is hard to offer any definitions concerning emotions that apply cross-culturally, let alone to take on the commitment necessary to understand the emotional world of people culturally distant from the researcher. It is particularly intriguing to consider how emotions can differ so much from culture to culture, and also how facets of culture such as music and religion can be so influential. Despite the difficulty of this task, my goal is not to understand what emotions are but how culture shapes their expression. Often in the course of ordinary life, there can be a schism between what we feel and what we can or want to externalise. Feeling emotions is a human ability, although work as early as Darwin's (1999 [1872]) already demonstrated that other animals also have the ability to feel emotions. For Darwin, emotions have a role in the survival of the individual; they were described as deeply related to and influenced by the environment, and as primarily used to signal intentions to others. The kinds of emotions we feel and how we express them is influenced by culture. Events that can arouse anger or fear in certain cultures can lead people to feel happiness or enthusiasm in others.

To study this parlous field, I will focus on the emotional and ritual life of Wana people. I choose rituals as an arena of study because they occur in situations of extreme emotions; as Geertz has noted: "we must know how we feel about things and to know how we feel about things we need the public images of sentiment that only ritual, myth and art can provide" (1973: 82). In these situations, there is not just a mixing of different feelings: fear, sadness and agitation bound up in the facing of death or illness, but there is also happiness

and exalting associated with wedding parties and the playfulness of the rituals. Magowan's account of an Australian Aboriginal funeral, in which a great range of emotions is shown, could easily be describing the *kayori* (Wana funeral):

the ritual structure provides a framework for creating community through ancestral song and dance [...] Although the funeral will give rise to a variety of inner emotions during different phases such as anger, fear, grief, longing, compassion, sympathy and feeling of illness or wellbeing amongst others, the phases of funeral performance are couched in strings of performative emotions which join participants together. (Magowan, 2007: 102)

Emotions are a powerful fuel for humankind but at the same time, if not properly orientated to the cultural setting, they can create cracks within a person and hence the community. Sometimes emotions can become so powerful that they cannot be controlled, and they may cause someone to become lost and no longer to be a productive member of the community, creating or widening a void with other members. The more dangerous being overcome by emotions is for the community, the more severe the cultural rules tend to be.

First of all, I want to clarify that in this work I will use the term "emotion" in full awareness of its limitations. The term is deeply culturally linked to a sphere of Latin-rooted languages and it is often impossible to translate it into other languages. For example, the Indonesian word *rasa* is usually used to translate the term "emotion" but it has a series of different meanings in Indonesia, such as "flavour" and "opinion". Rather than searching for a perfect definition, potentially only to see it become outdated a few years later, my approach is to acknowledge the limitations of my imperfect terminology and to focus my energies elsewhere. I will use the term emotions for convenience while acknowledging that it does not carry objective validity. Moreover "without a neutral scientific terminology, what justifies our beginning with the concept of *emotion* rather than *sentimiento* or *rasa* or *Gefühl*?" (Beatty 2005: 18, emphasis in the original). More importantly, I am not interested in what emotions are, "but how feelings are related in human lives with thinking and wanting, and also, with what happens in human bodies" (Wierzbicka 2009:10).

Until the 1980s, the most common approach to emotions was a materialist one. Emotions were seen mainly through the lens of externalised indicators: facial muscle movements, raised blood pressure, hormone levels and other bodily expression. For example, Ekman (1980) believed in the existence of a core of universal emotions (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, surprise and sadness) expressed universally with the same facial muscle movements. This mind-body dichotomy was clearly evident in the "two layers"

approach, where on one side there were pre-cultural emotions and on the other there were cultural emotions (Kleinman 1980; Lévy and Rosaldo 1983).

At the same time, researchers such as Crapanzano (1980) started exploring in more depth the implications of considering emotions to be shaped by socially constructed categories. This different approach to emotions stressed the role of the relationships between people in its study; the negotiation of emotions must be considered to involve not only the relations among the people scholars work with but also those between the researcher and the informants (Briggs 1970; Crapanzano 1980). By this time, emotions were seen as constantly mediated by language and culture. Researchers such as Lutz (1985) and Quinn and Holland (1987) were interested in how emotions vary in different cultures, and they considered emotions as more “socially validated judgment than an internal state” (Lutz and White 1986: 408). For this reason, they focused their efforts onto the translation of emotion concepts and related social processes.

In more recent years, ideas from Andrew Beatty (2005, 2010, 2012, 2014) about the narrative description of emotions are particularly interesting. Beatty suggests that a narrative approach is the best way to successfully describe, study and report the emotions of the people we work with:

emotions might be *third-person constructions*, a collective product, but they are *first-person experiences* and not reducible to any of their ingredients. [...] Unlike most other things that are in some sense culturally constructed – norms, values, cultural models – their *sine qua non* is their personal reference. [...] Emotions are particular or they are nothing (2014: 551).

I partially agree with Beatty, but I am also concerned about the emotional response of the community, looking beyond its single members. For this reason, in my research, I have tried not only to describe the individual’s emotional expression but also to give a sense of the wider history and the collective narrative behind it. In general, I have focused on the entire community precisely because I consider it an emotional being in itself; my main departure from this comes in the last chapter, where I briefly describe a specific case of an individual’s emotional response to the loss of a loved one. It is my intention in the future to extend this focused description to grasp the complexities behind the experience of that single Wana person. Indeed, various scholars believe that emotional work blurs the separation between the individual and the community (Leavitt 1996; Parkinson 1995; Svašek 2005 and Svašek & Skrbiš 2007).

While working with emotion, one of the biggest issues we face is our empathy and how this may or may not help in our work. How can a researcher really know or understand

someone else's emotion, especially if that person comes from a radically different background? Levitt states that "the problem with empathy is not that it involves feeling but that it assumes that first impressions are true" (1996: 530). But, although I agree that empathy brings many perils, there is also much to be said for the stance of Bonini Baraldi (2013) and also of Beatty (2019): "without it we have a very thin sort of understanding and no possibility of sharing lives" (263). Although Lynch rejects "empathy as a naïve and ethnocentric practice, a form of Western imperialism over the emotions of the Other" (Lynch 1990: 17), I argue that empathy, as the capacity to understand what another person is experiencing and to place ourselves in another person's position, could actually be an important foundation of anthropology. Beatty separates narrative empathy from intuitive or automatic empathy, defining the former as "correctly following the threads of an emotion episode, situating oneself, in fact or imagination, inside the hurly burly, the thick of it" (2019: 263).

In the Wana context, I will show that although people consider the violent "grief-exPELLING procedure" (Mills 2012: 154), called *mandeke*, that characterises their funerals a form of play and not a bodily enactment of real emotions felt by the actors (Harré 1991), behind these ritualised forms emotions are actually felt (Kapferer 1979: 153). Just as Durkheim explains with the idea of the *homo duplex* (1915), Wana people split their identity between expressing personal pain and social pain. According to the sociologist:

mourning is not the spontaneous expression of individual emotions [...] Mourning is not a natural movement of private feelings wounded by a cruel loss; it is a duty imposed by the group. One weeps, not simply because he is sad, but because he is forced to weep. It is a ritual attitude, which he is forced to adopt out of a respect for custom, but which is, in a large measure, independent of his affective state (Durkheim 1915: 397)

Indeed, in the last part of this work exploring the controlled violence during the *kayori*, ideas about surface and deep acting in the expression of emotions will be important; these come through strongly in Hoschschild's *The Managed Heart: The commercialization of human feeling* (1983). In this book, the author explores the performance of emotional labour, and the dissonance experienced by workers who have to display emotions in exchange for economic rewards. In the Wana context, there is no economic reward, but there is certainly a social obligation and opportunity associated with expressing certain emotions in ritualised and non-spontaneous ways. Moreover, as Wikan points out: "Sorrow is experienced and expressed in ways intricately linked with popular conceptions of health and sanity that are systematically inculcated in the young and receive persistent social backing" (1988: 455). Furthermore, according to this theory, social actors that adopt

surface acting (by just externalising an emotion and not really feeling it) experience more emotive dissonance, while those deeply acting an emotion experience only minor emotive dissonance.

We should not forget that avoiding the expression of strong feelings is a common trait in many Southeast Asian cultures. And this attitude to emotions can create the need for a ritualised expression of pain and sorrow. Indeed, Wana people believe that strong emotions can be dangerous for a person; it can lead to illness of the soul and the need for shamanic treatment. A similar attitude is found among the Toraja people of Sulawesi, who “believe that emotional upset has an adverse effect upon one’s health” (Wellenkamp 1988: 492).

## Death

It is particularly important for emotions to be controlled while people are coping with dangers related to the death of a member of a community. My work is based on the idea that emotions are natural but that their expression is closely controlled by culture, especially in situations when there is so much at stake as to risk emotional annihilation (Davies 2002). It is exactly to explore these issues that a large part of my study focuses on the *kayori*, the funeral ritual for Wana people, and I draw upon several of the most important works on death. Though it is commonly assumed that funerals are designed to honour the deceased, it is primarily the living that are targeted: to negotiate the non-meaning of death, to overcome it and to put it at the service of life and of the survivors. In the 1970s, Louis-Vincent Thomas, the founder of thanatology, asked: “Is it not topical to note that where the mourning is a general institutionalized and codified practice it is hard to find “pathological mourning”, contrary to what happens in the West where everything is being done to prevent it?” (Thomas 1976: 342).<sup>18</sup>

While exploring the need to balance the negativity of death with an excess of life, the work of Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, two of the most important scholars of death studies, will have an important role. There are many similarities between Wana funerals and those in Madagascar studied by Bloch (1971), where the round dance expresses the vitality needed to overcome the dangers of death. Moreover, the ideas behind Parry and Bloch’s edited volume on *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (1982) are at the base of my research. Here, funerals are approached as the occasion to reinforce the social relationships of a community through an extreme expression of life energies. While this is not a new idea, having also been explored by Huntington and Metcalf (1982), it is still poignant,

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<sup>18</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

especially now that Western culture seems to consider the role of playfulness as something antique or exotic, while it was something normal in a much closer past (De Martino 1958).

Although Rosaldo is right in pointing out that “the emotional force of a death, for example, derives less from an abstract brute fact than from a particular intimate relation’s permanent rupture” (1989: 1), a funeral is not only a way to help individuals face a loss, but it is above all a reaffirmation of the totality of those individuals, the community. Death is about solidarity, and Bloch’s ideas about the expression of solidarity during funeral rituals are crucial: “Death is the time when the solidarity of the local community should be most manifest” (1971: 139). For this the concept of *communitas* (Turner 1969) will also take a pivotal role in this thesis, especially since Wana people do not conceive of life outside of the community. Shamanism goes even further, fostering feelings of *communitas* to a point that the boundaries between the self and others are dissolved, and the individual becomes one with the community, achieving a level of transpersonality (Peters 1989). I agree with Wikan’s idea that because suffering is not individual but afflicts members of the community, emotional expression is too crucial to be left to an individual’s devices” (1988: 457). At the same time, I will follow Rosaldo’s advice: “Rather than speaking of death in general, one must consider the subject’s position within a field of social relations in order to grasp one’s emotional experience” (1989: 1) and I will explore the particular emotional experience of an individual Wana person in the last chapter.

The theories behind secondary burial, initially studied by Hertz (2004), but explored impressively by Metcalf and Huntington in *A Borneo Journey into Death. Berawan Eschatology from its Rituals* (1982) and *Celebrations of death. The anthropology of mortuary ritual* (2010), will also emerge in observations about the Wana funerary ritual. In fact, as testified in various places in the edited volume *Journey of the soul: Anthropological Studies of Death, Burial, and Reburial Practices in Borneo* (Wilder 2003), second burial is a common ritual in Indonesia and it brings the opportunity to make the death of a loved one a less abrupt event, giving mourners an emotional guide to successfully transforming a negative event into an opportunity to re-create the community and to promote fertility, both of the land and of the community. The relatively long mourning period helps the community to slowly accept the idea that one of its members is dead. The separation from a friend or a relative is not an immediate event but a slow assimilation of the idea that the person has passed away. Long mourning periods are widely present among many different cultures, for example in Mongolia where “the mourning period lasts seven, twenty-one, or forty-nine days” (Narsu and Stuart 1994: 99) and in Japanese culture, which presents some similarities with the *kayori*: “After the forty-ninth day service, the spirit of the deceased is expected to have arrived at the other world,

and this signals the end of the end of the initial mourning period” (Kim 2012: 246). Meanwhile, among the Temiar of Malaysia, with their culture closely resembling that of the Wana people, there is “a mourning period of a month or more during which musical activities have been prohibited” (Roseman 1984: 427). This long mourning period offers an opportunity to gradually accept the separation from a loved one, making death a less traumatic event.

It is no coincidence that the *kayori*, like the *momago*, is one of the occasions for expressing *kasintuwu*. As in the *momago*, it is the family alone that takes care of the expenses of the ritual, but friends and family help in the construction of the ritual hut, in the preparation of food, and also with their physical presence. They are there not only for themselves, enjoying the feast and saying goodbye to their friend or family member, but also so that the community can continue to live. This is because “the stability and continuity of the social structure depends on the strong solidarity of the local group” (Radcliffe- Brown 1965: 168). Funerals are, as Bloch (1971) and Parry (1994) note, an opportunity to reaffirm the values of a society. As Radcliffe-Brown points out: “the stability and continuity of the social structure depends on the strong solidarity of the local group” (Radcliffe- Brown 1965: 168), and without it the negative energies derived from death could impact on the core values and rules of a culture. The *kayori* is there to make sure that these values are reinforced and that the community works together to overcome death; as Durkheim states, “if the idea of society were extinguished in individual minds, and the beliefs, traditions and aspirations of the group were no longer felt and shared by the individuals, society would die” (Durkheim 1961: 149). As Davies points out:

Behaviour surrounding death is often exciting in the physiological sense that it intensifies the emotional dynamics of individuals and their communities, even if that excitement is prompted in people circling those who are immediately bereaved and in the opposite state of depression. A social group often comes alive as one of its members dies (Davies 2015: 37).

It is fascinating how similar this situation is to that in Madagascar described by Bloch:

Some of the men have perhaps already fortified themselves for the night with liquor. When they have all gathered there may be a short prayer and hymn singing led by a senior man or by a pastor if there is one present. Once this is over everybody settles for the night. The local family sit inside the house around the corpse and mourn. The women neighbours carry on with the preparation of the meal. The men sit all around the house but especially on the side where the windows and doors are, namely the west. There they pass the night playing dominoes or betting, or whiling away the time as best they can. From time to time they sing and generally have as good a time as possible.

Admittedly the songs are often Church hymns, but they are sung in a boisterous way which contrast with the way they are sung in church. Hymns are the accompaniment of all social gatherings (Bloch 1971: 141).

Clear commonalities are also evident in Wolf's account of funeral practices amongst the Kotas of India: "[The] sadness participants experience during a funeral, for example, is accompanied by ancillary feelings, transient modes of emotionality that include (in the Kota case) poignant joy, intoxicated abandon, reverence, and fortitude" (Wolf 2001: 380).

Among the Wana, this sadness is also expressed with a violent "grief-expelling procedure" (Mills 2012: 154) called *mandeke*. These episodes are reminiscent of "running amok syndrome," a phenomenon of Indonesian and Malaysian culture in which a person (often male) suddenly assaults people or objects with a weapon, usually a *kriss* or machete (Winzeler 1990). It may well be that there is a cultural commonality between this and the *mandeke*, especially given that, in both episodes, violence hides a lucid act; in the Wana context this is the expression of personal and community pain, and in running amok it is a desire to end one's life (through being killed by the police, considering that this takes place in a culture that stigmatises suicide) (Winzeler 1990). However, a key point of difference is the presence of an undercurrent of play in the Wana case; other Wana bystanders told me that those doing the *mandeke* were "playing," with the rest of the community also participating as active observers. Indeed, while the *mandekers* are acting like people possessed by their pain, the bystanders pretend that the actions of these individuals are dangerous for themselves and for others; in truth, everybody knows that it is a controlled expression of violence and that there is no actual danger. De Martino's observations about episodes of violence during funerals are pertinent here: "this behaviour is not only the ritualistic and symbolic equivalent of an attenuated pulse of total annihilation, but it also sets the measure to be observed in their execution"<sup>19</sup> (de Martino 2008: 186).

Although these tightly prescribed and controlled emotional contours might shock a Western audience, even in Western funerals, where well-mannered calmness, seriousness and undisguised sadness prevail, "mourning is not the spontaneous expression of individual emotions" (Davies 2002: 16). "Besides expressing sincere sorrow, crying during a funeral is perceived as a social obligation" (Guggino 2004: 350) because emotions are cultural artefacts and "affects [...] are no less cultural and no more private than beliefs" (Shweder 1984: 141).

In the control of this pain and the other emotions associated with it, humour plays a crucial role. As noted by Wikan, sadness is dangerous and it can be controlled with

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<sup>19</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

humour, because “the laughter pains, and it erodes self-respect and presumably also social respect” (1990: 97). If a member loses their self-control and expresses their emotions in a way not recognised by the community, the ritual risks failing in support of the idea of unity, and the “density” of the community is in danger (Gilsenan 1973: 170-175). For this reason, Wana people, who shun violence, use humour to control the behaviour of the community.

Indeed, like Wana people, the Balinese “naturally” link “laughter to sadness in a nearly spontaneous response of self-protection and self-value, and also a sane expression of compassion and care” (Ibid. 124). As I will show in the following chapters and in the photos presented in this work, Wana people cope with the wretchedness of their lives with humour and laughter. Moreover, laughing is not only contagious, like sadness, but it is release of aggression and anger, two common elements of grief among many cultures (Marris 1974; Osterweis, Solomon and Green 1984; Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson 1976).

In the end,

Comic events and trance behaviour in healing rituals are expressive of certain mental perspectives and emotional attitudes to realities created through ritual performance. As such they can be the means for the release of tensions produced by the social and psychological state of the individual. But such events set within the processional form of a ritual have transformative significance for the ritual form as a whole. (Kapferer 1979: 167)

This directly relates to Thomas’s observations regarding the underlying functions of funeral rituals: “The funeral rites, in fact, celebrate life [...] This is not to deny death, but to accept it as a condition of regeneration” (Thomas 1976: 473-474).<sup>20</sup>

### **Shamanism**

Shamanism has a strong connection with death, because as Praet states “There is no clear distinction between activities of curing and those of mourning” (2014: 137). The idea that the death-related rituals and the shamanic healing rituals are similar will be explored later in this work. It is clear, though, that both rituals aim to heal the entire community and to transform a negative event into a re-creative energy that might allow for survival not only of personal suffering but also of the entire community. Moreover, shamans have always had an important role in engaging with the therapeutic transformation of emotions (Walsh 1990). Thanks to their liminal status, they cover the role of mediator not only

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<sup>20</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

between the invisible and the visible worlds, but also between humans and their emotions. Walsh's declaration that shamans were the first to do so may be arguable, but their role is certainly important.

Another important theme of this work is the relationship between centre and periphery and the way Wana people's perceived powerless position has shaped their vision of the world. Wana people express their agency over the external powers that constantly pressurise them, forming a "counter hegemonic discourse" (hooks 1990: 341). For hooks, marginality is not something "one wishes to lose, to give up, or surrender as part of moving into the center, but rather as a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (hooks 1990: 341). Of course, marginality is derived from a theoretical hierarchy and power relationships that are extremely complex and express a multifaceted condition (Dennis 2007: 2763). In fact, if from the point of view of Indonesia more widely Wana people are marginal, from the Wana point of view they are at the centre of the world. Of course, they do not have great power in either position, but while being marginalised does not give them any particular hopes for a better future, seeing themselves as at the centre gives them the hope for coming rewards. Ultimately, the idea of marginality is "a material force as well as an ideological concept and a description of social reality" (Perlman 1976: 15).

Said's idea of the "Orient" as a mere projection emanating from the West (1978), and the power relationships contained in this delineation, will be particularly useful while exploring how Wana people characterise the West. It is a homogenised place that encompasses everything outside of the Wana Land, even places to the east.

In Winkelman's article *Shamans and Other "Magico-Religious" Healers: A Cross-Cultural Study of Their Origins, Nature, and Social Transformations*, the author tries to clearly define and distinguish between the diverse denominations used in academia: shaman, healer, medicine-man and medium (1990). Even with the assistance of his systematic tables in which he clearly labels each denomination and its characteristics (Winkelman 1990: 316-317), it is hard to place Wana shamans into a specific category.

There are a number of authors that have been particularly inspiring during my research and the writing of this thesis. Their ideas will not necessarily be discussed explicitly in this work, but their approaches have inspired and guided my own. First, Marina Roseman's work on the Temiar of Malaysia (1984, 1990, 1993, 1998, 2008) has fascinated me since my first research on the Wana people. The Temiar have many cultural similarities with the Wana people, and her attention to their music (1990) and her study of their emotional world in relation to their performance (1993) offers great insights.

The incredible research offered by Douglas Hollan (1988, 1994) and Jane Wellenkamp (1988, 1994) on the emotional world of the Toraja has offered a large amount of useful data for comparison between the two cultures. Their work on both death and emotions (Wellenkamp 1988) and the cultural regulation of emotions (Hollan 1988) has proved to be an extremely useful resource in studying a culture that is as closely related as Wana culture is. Avoiding strong emotions is a central topic in the Wana approach to life, and especially in their ways of expressing power even in a powerless situation. More importantly, Hollan and Wellenkamp's book *Contentment and Suffering* introduced me to the concepts of suffering, grieving and self from a psychological point of view. Combined with an excellent anthropological approach, this work pushed me towards exploring the role of the *mandeke* in Wana funerals.

Richard Wolf's research on the Kota in India (2001, 2006) has also had a profound influence on my work, even if its presence is not always clearly externalised. In particular, there is the relationship between centrifugal and centripetal forces, and between the village and the forest, and also the role of music as a unifying factor with central socio-religious value in bringing people together (Ibid. 141). Finally, there is Michael Winkelman's research (1990, 2010), which offers theoretical material that brings structure to reflecting on the role of the shaman among Wana people, and on their important links with the economic and ecological life of the community. This scholarship also introduced me to the world of medical ethnomusicology (2010) and pushed me to explore cultural conceptions of illness.

I am aware of the many scientific studies on music and healing (Panksepp and Trevarthen 2009; Vairle et al. 2005; Crowe 2004) and of Winkelman's fascination with the psychological implications of music and trance on shamans themselves. I move the focus, however, to the wider community. In fact, the shaman will not have a central position in this work, and I will not focus on trance and the role of music in inducing trance. I am more interested in exploring the cultural values and powers that Wana culture attaches to its ritual music. Rather than focusing on altered states of consciousness in shamans, I will consider the wider community, with a particular interest in how the community manages to shift from negative emotions to the playfulness of the ritual. Thus, I apply theories previously developed about shamans to understand the experience of the entire community. This approach is suitable here because Wana people themselves are more concerned with the community than with the individual member, and shamanic rituals and funerals do not only need shamans and patients but also the active participation of the community (Ohnuki-Tierney 1981: 171).

We should not forget, the striking idea from Winkelman's approach to shamanism, the idea that the power and success of a shaman is based on their ability to give hope. He calls this the "biology of hope" (2010: 185). This notion fits very effectively in discussions of Wana culture, where the community accepts the wretchedness of life because they have hope in a future reward. The shaman has the duty to keep this hope alive with a periodic taste of the power of mythical reality.

As Crapanzano notes regarding the Moroccan Hamadsha: "[Saints, jnun, and Baraka] are elements in which I would call the participational mode of explanation of illness and therapy. They may be considered *signs* of psychic states and *symbols* of socio-cultural processes" (1973: 213, emphasis in original). Moreover, Peters notes among the Tamang of Nepal that "the curing activities involved in shamanic healing are not exercises in the treatment of organic disease but attempts to treat disturbing emotional states and interpersonal relations" (Peters 1978: 65). The shamans grasp at the air, as if to catch and retrieve the escaped soul, and gesture to restore it to the owner's head. "Shamanic texts are best described as dramatic dances [...] in non-literate cultures religion is always a performing art, and the sacredness of religious stories or prayers resides not in the words of the texts as they have been or could be transcribed but in the power invested in them through performance" (Porterfield 1987: 726). Sometimes, the shaman's job is to reinsert the patient's lost soul. This process is also dramatized. The shamans grasp at the air, as if to catch and retrieve the escaped soul, and gesture to restore it to the owner's head. With their power and chants, the shamans bring back the lost golden age, the time when everything was possible and humans were complete. This return to the golden age has a beneficial effect on the patient; it is a return to the time when everything was possible and nobody was sick. Every myth is a quest for the mythical era (Lévi-Strauss 1958) and each ritual is the repetition of a myth. For example, Eliade refers to customs among Australian indigenous people saying how medicine-men restore the mythological temporarily using the 'bridge' between Heaven and Earth, which in the past was available to all humans (Eliade 1971: 57), or

being *real* and *sacred*, the myth becomes exemplary, and consequently *repeatable*, for it serves as a model, and by the same token as justification, for all human actions. In other words, a myth is a *true history* of what came to pass at the beginning of Time, and one which provides the pattern for human behaviour. In imitating the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time. (Eliade 1971: 18. Emphasis in the original).

The Wana rituals deal with the beliefs, traumas, culture and memories of patients, so shamans are working on a patient's psyche. Actually the shamanistic cure seems to be the exact counterpart to the psychoanalytic cure, but with an inversion of all the elements. Both cures aim at inducing an experience, and both succeed by recreating a myth which the patient has to live or relive. But in one case, the patient constructs an individual myth with elements drawn from his past; in the other case, the patient receives from the outside a social myth which does not correspond to a former personal state (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 199).

Some researchers, such as Sherzer (1983), have criticized the "talking-cure" analogy made by Lévi-Strauss, pointing out that the Kuna patient does not understand or hear all the words. In a similar way, Nathan Porath calls into question Atkinson herself and her description of the *momago* where she describes the songs of the shaman as "embellishments," just as during the *semanget* shamanic ritual among the Orang Sakai they are of "little therapeutic importance" (Porath 2013a: 12). I take issue with this stance, and argue that Atkinson was ethnomusicologically deaf to the incredible musical world of Wana people, giving almost no space in her work on the *momago* to the ritual music. Among the Wana, although they might describe them as "embellishments," the shamanic songs have a crucial role in healing the patient and in helping them understand their pain and illness. Dramatization is crucial for the success of the ritual; it helps the patient to understand what is happening to them, especially considering that people in this context do not have an extensive understanding of contemporary medical science. It is, in effect, making something frightening and incomprehensible simpler and relatable to the worldview of the people involved. Again, the example of the Tamang of Nepal illustrates the prevalence of this phenomenon in other traditional cultures:

there is also the influence of cultural expectations of disease and the belief in the efficacy of the puja. Through these elements, the illness is placed within a conceptual framework. The patient's symptoms and all the mysterious and chaotic feelings of distress were organized and their causes identified by the shaman during diagnosis, both prior to and at the time of this puja (Peters 1978: 82).

This process has been recognised by the psychiatrist Fuller-Torrey, who considers this "naming process" a "universal component of psychotherapy which is used by both witchdoctors and psycho-therapists alike." Fuller-Torrey believes that once the illness is put into a suitable cultural frame, the patient can empathise with other people previously cured of the same complaint, with identification helping to reduce anxiety and to put the patient in a more serene state of mind (1972: 16). A similar theory was expressed as early as 1944 by Kluckhohn and Evans-Pritchard (1944) who underline how the identification of

the illness helps the patient and their family to make order from the chaos created by a previously unlabelled complaint. As Peters explains,

the diagnostic process through which illness is identified makes a transformation from chaos to order in the eyes of the patient and those concerned for him, and that has therapeutic effectiveness (Peters: 1981: 135).

Of course, all this happens in the subconscious of the person, because ritual symbols may refer to extensive and complex ideas of value, structure, and transformation, whose verbal statement requires considerable time. Consequently, the symbolism of ritual is often obscure, since it refers to intentions and beliefs that are complex and, in part, unconscious (Wallace 1966: 237). The battle between the shaman and the illness is played out on a symbolic plane, where words, music and action build a powerful world around the patient. The shaman “holds a dialogue with the patient, not through the spoken word but in concrete actions, that is, genuine rites which penetrate the screen of consciousness and carry their message directly to the unconscious” (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 200).

Geertz not only underlines the power of the shaman to create meaning, but also the role of the chant in these processes: “a sing [sic] is mainly concerned with the presentation of a specific and concrete image of truly human, and so enduring, suffering powerful enough to resist the challenge of emotional meaninglessness raised by the existence of intense and unremovable brute pain” (Geertz 1973: 105) because “As a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make of physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat, or the helpless contemplation of others' agony something bearable, supportable—something, as we say, sufferable” (Geertz 1973: 104).

### **Music and Trance**

A study on shamanism also requires reflection on trance. These two phenomena are often studied together because shamans must enter a state commonly referred to as trance to travel between worlds and to contact their spirits. Indeed, trance is a highly complex term to explain. At the origin of the word *trance* is the Latin term *transpire*, which means “to die”, “to go beyond”, “to pass from one state to another”. In the shamanic context, this refers to moving from a physical reality to a spiritual one. Beyond the etymological explanation, though, this phenomenon does not carry a univocal definition covering the entire spectrum of phenomena encountered by researchers. These phenomena can go from

hypnosis to deep listening, passing through *the zone* spoken about in sport, and many others examples that could fall under the umbrella term.<sup>21</sup> Lambek (1989) and Hamayon (1993) note how the people studied by anthropologists usually do not have a homologous term for “trance,” but just as in the cases of “emotion” and “shaman,” they use their own terminologies and conceptual representations of the phenomenon.

The vastness of the phenomenon has prompted researchers from different disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, ethnomusicology, neurology and others, to study trance since the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite this multiplicity of approaches, the phenomenon is not yet completely explained. Shor (1959) described trance as a state of functional nonawareness, a separation from the common awareness that supports, interprets, and gives meaning to our experience. Ludwing considered trance “any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological manoeuvres or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness” (Ludwing 1968:79). Tart (1975) defined an altered state of consciousness, a more general term used instead of trance, as a qualitative alteration in the overall patterns of mental functioning so that the experience is felt to be radically different from ordinary functioning. More recently, Becker defines trance as “a bodily event characterized by strong emotion, intense focus, the loss of the strong sense of self, usually enveloped by amnesia and cessation of the inner language” (2004: 43). Finally Van Groenendael considers “trance as a mental state, induced by a variety of factors, which creates a distance between the person concerned and his surroundings and now renders him totally self-absorbed, now produces exceptional or abnormal behaviour, of which he would be incapable in his normal state and which gives him a sense of liberation” (van Groenendael 2008: 134).

I am attracted by two elements of Becker’s and Van Groenendael’s definitions: the “intense focus” and the “distance between the person concerned and his surroundings.” Observing Wana rituals, I started to understand it as that the trancer<sup>22</sup> is hyper-focusing on a specific element, and in a certain way is hyper-present in the ritual. At the same, though, they are absent and away from the ritual context. In Wana rituality, shamans leave their bodies to travel between worlds, leaving the void of a soul inside them. They focus their

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<sup>21</sup> Other trance-like experiences can be possession, Sufi dances, states of Nirvana, and so on.

<sup>22</sup> The term “trancer” is also used by Richard B. Lee (1968), among others.

attention upon one or a few objects or phenomena (such as the ritual cloth, the music or the smell of a plant) to help them enter trance, generating this hyper attention and making them seem absent when, actually, all his mental presence is concentrated on a different plain of existence, the spiritual one.

Some scholars, like Rouget (1985), tend to separate trance and ecstasy, placing these two phenomena at the two opposite poles of altered states of consciousness (ASC). Trance is described as a physical phenomenon and ecstasy as a mental one. Becker “prefers a generic category of ‘trance’ that includes meditative states, possession trance, shamanic trance, communal trance, aesthetic trance and isolated moments of transcendence” (2004: 45). I prefer to use the more general label “ASC” to avoid limiting the meanings evoked with the term *trance*. On the other hand, I recognise that “ASC” can be too generic, that the word *trance* already carries a strong connection with the shamanic world, and that (despite its imperfections) it is more indicative of the emotional, physical and mental situations that shamans face during their flights.

Cardena proposes labels for a range of possession experiences: (1) “transitional possession” with occasional changes in depth of involvement rather than a fixed state of consciousness, (2) “alternate identity possession” in which an alternate identity, human or otherwise, takes over the usual identity of the individual and there may be co-occurrence of the usual identity of the individual along with the alternate one and (3) “transcendent possession” in which the individual is totally immersed or “surrendered” and the individual does not perform the acts, songs, or movement but becomes “him/herself, the act, the song and movement” (1989). These labels, although highly useful in many respects, cannot cover all elements of trance. Trance is not only difficult to define but also to analyse phenomenologically, particular in regard to how states are obtained. Evidence from the Wana context suggest that trance states are not simply induced by a single factor and that they do not have an on/off switch; to enter trance, Wana shamans need different impetuses (darkness, ritual music, religious beliefs, memories and many others) that together allow them to leave this world and to return to mythical time. Of course, music often has a crucial role in instigating trance; it must be remembered that, above all, trance is a cultural phenomenon, and it therefore needs certain culturally specific triggers. If an Indonesian shaman were exposed to Siberian shamanic music, it would seem unlikely to expect the shaman to enter a trance, because that music does not possess the configuration of attributes that have become internally linked to the shamanic trance state through repeated experience over many years.

As early as the eighteenth century, Rousseau understood that “as long as we choose to consider sounds only through the commotion they stir in our nerves, we shall never have

the true principles of music and of its power over our hearts. Sounds in the melody do not act solely as sounds, but as *signs* of our affections” (Rousseau quoted in Rouget 1985: 168. Emphasis in the original.). Also, Rouget (1985) and Bastide agree that “It is not a stimulus [music] that determines trance [...] it is the total situation that acts, [...]it is the total situation that causes music to lead to trance” (Bastide 1976: 73). And Friedson clearly states that “The same basic music would sometimes elicit a wild and potentially violent spirit possession in a novice or layman and other times the controller, remembered divinatory trance of an *nchimi* [...] The change is in the healer’s relationship to the music (1996: 28).

I include social environment as one of the trance triggers because shamanic trance is always a social event. “The group acts as a unit. Ritual practitioners, patient (if there is one), trancer, musicians, onlookers, even hecklers in some situation become part of a larger, ongoing, largely predictably event.[...] Trancing, though experienced in a particular body, seems never to be bounded by that single body” (Becker 2004: 124). I saw among Wana people evidence to support Turner’s interpretation: “an increase in the level of social arousal, however produced, is capable of unlocking energy sources in individual participants” (1986: 43), energies that help not only the individual patient but the entire community to heal and re-generate stronger than before. As Friedson also writes, “Coming together in the musical experience creates a powerful source of cultural energy. [...] This form of musical *communitas* may have important healing properties” (1996: 125) that destroy the distance between the members and creates a “we-relation” (Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 63). Also, Kartomi writes:

the music serves primarily as a communication of mood (from musician to trance dancer) through the music’s associativeness and mesmeric continuity; not only does it assist a subject into a trance state but it lends colour to and is part of the traumatic experience itself. It builds up and sustains a state of undifferentiated emotional excitement. Music has become one with the ritual and is not a separate aesthetic category. For its purpose, Central Javanese trance music is highly potent and effective (1973: 166).

Becker (2004: 148) associates the profound emotional response to trance with “the production and release of certain hormones and monoamines” that lead trancers to “feel themselves to be in the presence of spirits.” It is fascinating how both Becker and Kartomi, but also Bourguignon (1979), underline the emotional element in trance events. Put simply, “trance behaviour may serve as a psychological safety valve; it affords occasions upon which it is unnecessary to control the passions” (Kartomi 1973: 165). It offers an opportunity to express extreme emotions or desires in a “safe” environment. In his

fieldworks during the 50s, Ernesto de Martino realized that trance is used by the most marginalised social groups in order to, at least for a short period of time, voice their frustration and suffering (1961: 243). Lewis (1971) arrived at similar conclusions around ten years later in his work on ecstatic religion.

Furthermore, as Wier intelligently notes, “trance restricts primitive chaos or chthonic energy and helps us to harness that energy.[...] In restraining the chaos, energy may be focused into creation. Trance, therefore, has something to do with energy utilization and the potentiation of creation” (Wier 1996: 23). When shamans enter trance, they are living in and, at the same time, creating mythical time, and by doing this they legitimise their power.

Many people ask if trance is genuine or faked, but this question is trivial. Often coming to mind is the image of magicians and con artists whose tricks are aimed at stealing money from people. In traditional cultures, shamans do not create a mythical world in order to cheat people; instead, they use a mythical world that has already been created and shared by the community to help people at their own expense. The life of the shaman is dangerous; it involves fighting demons, travelling between worlds and coming into contact with diseases, all with the purpose of helping the community and of ensuring its survival. In Wana society, all *tau walia* live normal lives; they have to work like everybody else, but they must also be ready to help others in exchange for very little reward.

Becker also writes that “the predictability of trancing and the stereotypicity of trancing, conforming to community expectations, is not, I am convinced, a result of fraudulence, of chicanery, but of skill. Trancers and deep listeners have more control over the activities of their minds and bodies than most of us. They are not “out-of-control” but, rather, more fully able to modulate and enhance what are normally autonomic bodily responses than most people. They are profoundly in control of themselves” (Becker 2004: 68). This control does not mean that they are “awake,” but just that they are able to be *clearly absent*.<sup>23</sup> When shamans enter trance, they are following a pattern; they cease to be normal members of the community and they take on the shaman’s role. “Even in trance, the individual holds strictly to the rules and expectations of his culture and his experience is as locally patterned as a marriage rite or an economical exchange (Benedict 1934: 77). “As a matter of fact, the shaman does nothing other *than respect the model of behaviour prescribed for his function*. He takes up his *role* as a shaman, a role that consists of portraying his contact with the spirits” (Hamayon 1993: 29. Emphasis in the original). This model to follow is possible because the members of the community are witness to trance

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<sup>23</sup> In this situation, “clearly” is used to indicate a mental clarity.

behaviour from childhood; this early experience encourages familiarity with, and acceptability of, dissociation, in turn making the transition into possession easier (Kiev 1961; Mischel and Mischel 1958; Pressel 1974). Indeed, as shamanic trance overlaps with dreams, “the power of a healer rests in this ability to gain access to, and maintain contact with, the invisible world of the spirits. To dream and to dance are essential to an *nchimi*’s healing art ” (Friedson 1996: 22), and equally important to the Wana healing art.

Ultimately, as for the study of emotion, we should not look for commonalities but for singularities: “Through comparative studies we may indeed find universal aspects of health care, but in the final analysis, all healing is local because it is personal” (Friedson 1996: 100).

### **Marginality**

The last key element important in understanding Wana culture is how people cope with their marginality regarding the world outside of the jungle. This is a world represented by the Indonesian government, the Christian missionaries, other communities and the few tourists visiting the Morowali forest. The power relationships important in the lives of Wana people are truly shaped by their geographical situation, particularly as the position of the community in relation to others has a crucial influence over their access to mythical power. From an external point of view, they occupy a peripheral position, but they experience and narrate this as an active choice that in fact places them at the centre of the world. This is an expression of power - perhaps the only one - that reverses the power relationship between the Wana people and those who are more typically understood as their more powerful neighbours. As Harms et al. point out, “remoteness is never fixed; it is not a predetermined and enduring place but a process situated in dynamic fields of power. The condition is always infused with the edgy feeling experienced by people living in a world where the relations of inside and outside, near and far, proximate and remote are always contested” (Harms et al. 2014: 364). It is clear that the concept of marginality is a complex one (Dennis 2007: 2763). The centre is generally understood as a realm with a dense concentration of power, while the periphery is where the energies, power and control of the centre is looser. Shils, in his *The Constitution of Society*, suggests that every society considers the centre to be a point of reference because it establishes “the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which govern the society” (1982: 93). He concludes that “It is the centre of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which governs the society. It is the centre because it is the ultimate and irreducible” (Shils 1982: 93). Shils seems to overlook the fact that for every centre there is a periphery. The field of mobilities will play a crucial

role in the analysis of Wana relationships of gender, space, power and movement, because “at the center of constellations of power” we find “the creation of identities and the microgeographies of everyday life” (Cresswell 2011: 551).

## **Myth**

Myth has been one of the key themes of the study of religion since its beginning; it has often been considered the “oral literature” of preliterate societies. For Tylor and Frazer, myth was an explanation of the world. For Tylor, myths were rational explanations for all the phenomena of the world (Tylor 1871), while Frazer relegated mythology to simply being explanations behind the practices in rituals (Frazer 1889). From this point of view, myths were considered true and “historical” events. Lévy-Bruhl (1985) believed that indigenous people (or, in his words, “primitive people”) rely on religion and myth to understand the world, while modern people have science. According to this view, mythology is not logical, as Tylor and Frazer believed, but an expression of a “primitive mentality” that contrasts with the mentality of the modern man. According to Lévy-Bruhl, for those with a "primitive mentality," mythology is used not to understand the world but to re-create the communion that indigenous people attribute to the golden era they describe in myths. For Bultmann (1985), myth is still an explanation of the world, like it was for Tylor, but it must be read symbolically and not literally; myth must be demythologized so that it stops being about worlds and becomes about the human experience of the world. In this way, it can become a universal experience:

The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially. (1985: 10)

Eliade, who attempted to affirm the compatibility of science and myth, states that

Every myth shows how a reality came into existence, whether it be the total reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment – an island, a species of plant, a human institution ... [it] becomes the paradigmatic model for all human activities (1987: 97-98).

For Eliade, a myth does far more than explain the reality around us, it regenerates it. And it is in this way that myth offers something that science cannot, having a simply explanatory and not a regenerative function.

In 1984, both Dundes and Bascom focused on the differentiation of mythology and folk tales. Dundes argued that “A myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form,” whereas sacred elements are absent in folktales (1). Bascom highlighted in particular the idea of truthfulness, which he saw as separating folklore from myth. The latter, he argued, are “considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past,” and this is in direct contrast to his concept of folklore, which he regarded as “fiction” (9).

Ninian Smart offers a definition that is particularly useful. Although it is incomplete, it covers what I consider to be one of the key characteristic of myth – identity – calling myth “A story which forms the identity of an individual, his/her fellows, and/or the cosmos in which they inhabit” (Smart 1981: 26). Indeed, I will go on to consider Wana mythology as part of the identities of these people. Developing from Smart’s formulation, Leeming also focuses on the ability of myth to define a person. In fact, for Leeming, a myth is “the expression of a social ethos” or the “basic assumptions that define a person, a family, or a culture – with the informing reality that resides at the centre of being” (1990: 4).

In Australia, scholars such as Cowlshaw (2010) have approached myth in a very particular way, expressing a desire to “explore the intense contention that is concealed behind a particular mythopoeia in everyday public life” (210). This project is strongly related to the colonial history of the country and the problematic elements linked to aboriginal culture and its political role in the nation. Although, extremely interesting, Cowlshaw’s approach is of limited use in this dissertation due to the deeply different history of Indonesia, its very different colonial past and its current situation.

Ultimately, it is important to remember that to study mythology is to study the stories of the other while being aware of their point of view. In this work, I use the term “myth” to refer to stories that may be considered either true or fictional by my informants; once again, the point of view that matters is that of the people we work with. Myths play a pivotal role in the meaning-making process of Wana people. Wana people differentiate fables from myths, but it is an impossible task to ascertain how many people actually consider their mythology to be true stories and how many do not. Aside from this issue, though, years of stories and rituals mean that mythology certainly has an important place in Wana cultural and emotional identity, and it helps them understand the world around them. Lévi-Strauss (1955) stated that what “we” call history is a myth by another name; although this may be a problematic statement in several respects, it is certainly an important issue if

we consider the real impact of history on the average citizen of a metropolis. One might ask: does history have an impact on the identity of a citizen of, say, Manchester, even if that person has no knowledge of Britain's colonial past?

### **Sacred and Profane**

In this thesis, the classic dichotomy of sacred-profane gives way to a more pertinent dichotomy of visible-invisible. The visible is the human world, a power-less world that might in some senses be equivalent to the profane sphere, while the invisible world is the power-full world, one linked to spirits and mythology, and thus aligned with what elsewhere has been called the sacred. Although I frame the issues in these different terms, elements of the sacred-profane relationship remain important and must be explored. First of all, I am aware that in general, drawing distinctions between the sacred and the profane is never an easy task (Bascom 1984: 12).

Durkheim (1964) was the first to propose the sacred-profane dichotomy as the central characteristic of religion: "religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to *sacred things*, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden" (47). According to the sociologist, sacred things have a unifying power, as they are represented collectively as things that transcend everyday life, while the profane encompasses all mundane individual concerns. Indeed, Durkheim suggests that this dichotomy might be universal. Goody criticised this stance in 1961, noting that many societies do not have words to translate terms such as "sacred" and "profane" and hence they must be products of European religious thought. On the other hand, even Evans-Pritchard (1956) argued that in Neur rituals cannot be found a sacred-profane dichotomy. If on one side it is true that translating specific terms into other languages is a problematic task, it is also true that even without directly equivalent language, ideas such as sacred and profane can still be present in different cultures, although they might carry different characteristics. For example, although Wana people divide the world into visible and invisible domains, this division overlaps to a large extent with the sacred-profane dichotomy.

For Mircea Eliade, sacred-profane distinctions were rigid, with the sacred being something that "does not belong to our world" (1987: 11). For Smith, who critically engaged with Eliade's theories, the sacred is a social construct, and the

sacred place is a place of clarification (a focusing lens) where men and gods are held to be transparent to one another. It is a place where, as in all forms of communication, static and noise (i.e., the accidental) are decreased so that the exchange of information can be increased [...]. The ordinary (which remains, to

the observer's eye, wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes sacred, simply by being there. It becomes sacred by having our attention directed to it in a special way (1980: 114-115).

With this approach, sacred and profane become situational categories and not inherent categories; they become categories of emplacement (Smith 1992: 104).

But in more recent times, the dichotomy of sacred-profane has more often been couched in the terms “sacred-secular,” or “religious-secular.” Scholars such as Asad argue that the secular

is neither continuous with the religious that supposedly preceded it (that is, it is not the latest phase of a sacred origin) nor a simple break from it (that is, it is not the opposite, an essence that excludes the sacred). I take the secular to be a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life (2003: 25).

Ultimately, I do not think it is possible to make a clear distinction between the sacred and the profane. These are qualities that are assigned by the subjects we observe, so something can be both sacred and profane at the same time, depending on the point of view. This became particularly clear to me when I considered my own status in the field. As someone from the West, I myself carried extra-ordinary, almost sacred, qualities for my Wana informants, but at the same time I struck them as extremely human in my clumsiness to adapt to life inside the jungle. For these reasons, in this work, I will focus more on the visible-invisible distinction, where the visible has human qualities and the invisible has spiritual ones, and where the shaman, as a liminal being existing between the two worlds, can have access to both.

## II

### **A cultural framework of the life and reality of the Wana people**

Indonesia in general, and the island of Sulawesi specifically, have attracted significant numbers of scholars from the fields of anthropology (Wellenkamp 1988; Geertz 1973; Belo 1960; Mead 1942) and ethnomusicology (Aragon 1996; Rappoport 2004; Kartomi 1973a), some of them became key figures in their respective fields. Unlike the Toraja and Bugis of Sulawesi or the Dayak of Borneo, the Wana people are not among the best-known cultural groups in Indonesia. Moreover, very little academic research exists on their cultural and religious life and the information regarding this community is not extensive or widely known.<sup>24</sup> To compensate for the reader's possible lack of existing knowledge about the Wana people, and to facilitate understanding of the rituals proposed in Chapters III and IV, the following discussion I present will provide an overview of some of the key topics arising in the present work: Wana social order, religion and cultural values. In doing so, I will also equip the readers with the tools that will guide them through the rest of this work. I will explain who the Wana are, how and where they live, before explaining their relationships with colonial empires and why this is important context for the research. I believe that a culture is shaped by and, at the same time, shapes the world around it. For this reason, I will offer a brief description of Wana history and economy, although little information exists about both. Many elements of Wana culture can be illuminated through understanding the past of this group of people, their modern situation, and their relationships with other cultures. In particular, I will reflect on key topics such as conceptions of time among the Wana people, their music and their religion.

#### **The Wana, people of the forest**

The Wana people are an indigenous community that lives inside the Morowali nature reserve in Sulawesi, Indonesia. In 1980, a World Wildlife Fund report estimated that there were about 5,000 Wana people living in Morowali (Lahadji 1999: 238). However, like many other ethnic groups that inhabit the Indonesian archipelago, they are not present in

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<sup>24</sup> It surprised me how the Toraja attracted so many scholars over the years (Christu 1999, Hollan 1988, Rappoport 2004, Wellenkamp1988 and Waterson 2018 just to name some of them) while the Wana, less than 500 km away from them, did not get the attention deserved; leaving rituals like the *kayori* undocumented until now. This raises few questions on the "everything has been already studied" myth and the role of trends in academic research. Reflection that has to wait for a more suitable space and time.

the 2003 census (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names 2003) or the 2010 census (Badan Pusat Statistik 2010). This is indicative of the Indonesian government's dismissive attitude to local ethnic minorities, as I discuss below.

The natural reserve of Morowali, with its 2250 km<sup>2</sup> of equatorial forest (Lahadji 1999: 238), has been home to the Wana people since the arrival of the Indian kingdoms (Alvard 2000: 59), and possibly even before. The Wana people speak their own language, called *Bahasa*<sup>25</sup> *Taa*, an Austronesian language that seems to be a dialect of the Pamona language (Noorduyn 1991:89). The Wana language itself is then divided in four dialects: *Bahasa Taa* (Marisa area), *Bahasa Untunue* (Uewaju area), *Bahasa Kasiala* (an area near Uewaju) and *Bahasa Tokaju* or *Maranka* (Lambentana area). The difference between these dialects can be so wide that a *Bahasa Taa* speaker could not understand somebody speaking *Bahasa Maranka* and vice versa, forcing me to hire a guide to go and visit the Lambentana village. The Morowali forest is in the central area of Sulawesi Island and it extends from the Kolonodale gulf to the Bongka Tojo bay (Map 3). On 24 November 1986, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry (MoFor) declared the forest a nature reserve due to its great diversity of flora and fauna. Twelve percent of the entire world's bird species can be found in the forest, and it has several rivers, the most important being that which gives its name to the reserve: the Morowali (Lahadji 1999: 238). The area is also characterised by its considerable number of caves, and this has an enormous influence on the mythical world of Wana people. While in the field, I heard many stories surrounding the caves, including one that identifies a particular cave as a passage to Mecca, one in which there is talking water, and another in which a cave hosts a mythical war drum (*kratu*) that was transformed into stone by the Wana gods. In the past, the Wana people used these caves as shelters and, up until a few years ago, Wana groups from the Lambentana area in the north of the forest hid in them when foreigners approached their villages.

### **Wana territory**

The Wana territory is divided into ten areas, each ruled by a community leader, called *kepala suku* (literally head-clan), who is chosen by the elders. There is no official information about the different areas, their leaders and economy; the following list is based on my personal knowledge of the areas I visited and on the information I managed to obtain from my informants.

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<sup>25</sup> *Bahasa* is the Indonesian word for "language". Considering that Indonesians call their own language *Bahasa* Indonesia and the Wana also use this term to refer to their own language, I have decided to use the term when referring to Indonesian or Wana language.

- ❖ The area around the Marisa village is ruled by Apa Rahu, and it is here that I spent the majority of my fieldwork period. It is located in the southern part of the reserve and due to its vicinity to the sea is the only area with a maritime tradition. The economy of this area relies on the trade of dammar gum, wood and rattan with the town of Kolonodale, which is situated outside of the forest (Map 6). Due to this active trade with the outside world, knowledge of the Indonesian language is widespread among inhabitants, and outsiders are accepted. In the area, there are both Muslims and Christian populations, the latter concentrated in the village of Kilo Sembilan.
- ❖ The Taronggo area is ruled by Apa n'Te. This area straddles the central-eastern border of the nature reserve. The village of Taronggo, which is outside the forest, is one of the largest in the whole Wana territory, and it has a church, a primary school and a medical centre. Families have electricity, running water and houses made of brick, and they come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The economy is based on the cultivation and trading of cocoa, coconuts and palm oil. Due to its position, knowledge of the Indonesian language is widespread among the inhabitants of this area too. Grumbles spent her entire fieldwork period in this village, so I will use her words to describe it:

Given the various religious affiliations found in Taronggo, the village is home to a Christian Protestant church – the largest building in the village – which belongs to the Central Sulawesi Christian church (*Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah*, BI), the main Christian church formation in Central Sulawesi. There is also a small mosque in the Southeastern entrance to Taronggo and a Pentecostal church building that is currently in expansion planning, although the Pentecostal community is marginal in numbers. Plans for the erection of a *rumah adat* (BI), a house for Wana local custom, are irregularly discussed but so far have not been realized. Taronggo is also home to an elementary school, the *sekolah dasar* (BI), also called SD, where the village's children, regardless of their religious profession, can go to school. For medical care, the government has erected a stationary medical center, a small house supposed to function as a home for a nurse. In case of medical need, people also turn to one of the three local kiosks to buy medication (2016: 30-31, emphasis in the original)

- ❖ Apa Kode rules the Lambentana area, which is located in the northern part of the forest. This area is considered by the Wana people to be the most “primitive” area of the territory. I heard stories of how, up until a few years ago, inhabitants did not have modern clothes and it was here that people used to hide in caves when foreigners approached their villages. My impression from visiting the area was that it is indeed very different from other parts of the territory, but that many of the

things I had heard about it were exaggerations; I was warmly welcomed and I did not notice any major differences from the other areas. The mountains that form the area isolate the villages from the outside world – almost nobody speaks *Bahasa Indonesia* – and the houses are built in the traditional style, on stilts and without walls, but with pits for fires on the side of the mountains. The area is famous for the great abundance of rice and for the bitter cold of the night. People here produce machetes to sell and they also breed pigs, animals that I did not see in other villages. In the Marisa area introduced above, wild pigs are hunted and eaten regardless of that fact that there are also Muslim inhabitants. However, that they are not bred here could possibly be due to the presence of Muslims.

- ❖ The Uewaju area is situated on the *Tunda n'tana* mountain, the mythical land said to have been placed on the primordial waters by *Pue*, the Wana god, and called the navel of the world. This area possesses a mythical aura, and almost all Wana people believe that their traditions are strong and well preserved here. The reality is perhaps more questionable, and the overriding perception may be due to an indigenous cultural bias that considers everything related with the mythical mountain as something extra-ordinary itself. Uewaju is also the biggest Wana village, with perhaps hundreds of inhabitants. They do not speak Indonesian and the economy is based on dammar gum<sup>26</sup> and the trading of handmade machetes and blowpipes.
- ❖ Posangke, which is ruled by Apa Dimes, is in the centre-north of the reserve. This area is considered poor but with plentiful rice, and people here collect and sell dammar resin and trade machetes and blowpipes.
- ❖ The Langada area is situated in the south-western part of the forest. Inhabitants trade with the outside world, walking to the Tambayoli village to sell dammar resin rather than using canoes.
- ❖ On the edge of the region, the Wuata area (ruled by Apa Jusi), the Lemo Walia area (ruled by Apa Jupi), the Uempanapa area (ruled by Koyu) and Solobiro (ruled by Apa Ida) are all outside the natural reserve and the majority of the population is Christian. They trade cocoa, coconut and rattan.

Wana villages can range in size from a dozen inhabitants, in the case of Kilo Sembilan, to hundreds, in the case of Uewaju. Although the Wana people have almost completely

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<sup>26</sup> Dammar, meaning resin in Malay, is a resin obtained from the shorea trees. The resin is used in foods, as a clouding or glazing agent, and in the production of incense and varnish (Bulbeck et al. 2016).

transitioned from a nomadic tradition to a settled culture, they still roam from village to village, meaning that the number of people living in one village varies constantly. Proof of this can be found in Atkinson's observation in the 1970s that "Wana typically reside in their rice fields, not in their kampung [village]" (Atkinson 1989: 2), while between 2011 and 2016 many Wana people were settled in villages, and considered the houses near the rice fields to be resting houses used during breaks from work. Sometimes, an entire village can move to another part of the forest, such as when, in 2016, the whole population of Lambentana moved away to escape the Christian mission in Uetuwu, a few hours away from where they were living. Due to this constant movement of people, it is common for individuals to have relatives and friends in different villages, or to be living in places far away from where they were born. The village chief of Marisa, Apa Rahu, was born in the Uewaju village, for example. The powerful shaman Indo Pino was born in Posangke, lived in Kaju Poli and eventually died in Kilo Sembilan, while Apa Ingus was also born in Uewaju but was living in Kilo Sembilan by 2016 and was planning to move to Marisa.

A remnant of their original nomadic culture, the Wana people still adopt a slash-and-burn method, meaning that after a few years of exploiting the land they move to another part of the forest. Just as in various other cultures (Hertz 2004; Metcalf 1991; Scarduelli 1992), following the death of a member of the community, entire villages used to move to new areas to avoid any contact with death and the polluted ground. Once they found land suitable for cultivation, the Wana people used to make sure that the spirits of the forest were in favour of them using it. For this reason, they would hold a chicken sacrifice in which the animal's blood was spread together with some rice onto the ground (Atkinson 1987: 345). During my fieldwork, however, I did not see any surviving rituals of this kind. The Wana people's slash-and-burn agriculture has led the Indonesian government to consider them "environmental vandals" (Lahadji 1999: 240). It might be argued, though, that these techniques have been used for many centuries and, furthermore, studies from the American anthropologist Michael Alvard suggest that this method does not have an excessively negative impact on the flora and fauna of the reserve (Alvard 2000: 438). To better understand the bias behind the position of the Indonesian government, we must consider that, as a whole, Indonesia is the world's second highest contributor of plastic waste to oceans (Jakarta Post 2015), the third for the emission of greenhouse gasses and, in 2007, it became the country with the highest rate of deforestation, surpassing Brazil (Vidal 2014). These unflattering records cast a light on the complicated relationship between the Indonesian government and indigenous cultural minorities.

From my base in the Marisa village, it took one hour by canoe to reach the sea. It is faster and more comfortable to travel by canoe when carrying the large amount of dammar

gum or wood that the Wana usually bring to Kolonodale. On arriving at the point where the Morowali River enters the sea, Wana travellers move to a larger canoe that is better adapted to these waters, and a further three hours in this vessel are needed to reach the Kolonodale town outside of the forest. Kolonodale is the principal town of the North Morowali Regency (which was established in 2013); while until 2004, it was the capital of the entire Morowali Regency. This town is a crossroads for local travellers, especially those who travel from the two major cities of the area, Luwuk and Palu, and its hospital is the only healthcare institution in the area. Kolonodale is one of the main trading centres for those living in the southern part of the Wana territory; here they cannot only buy everything they need, from televisions to sugar, but they also sell wood, rattan, dammar resin and cocoa.

Engagement with capitalist economic systems is changing Wana traditional life and disrupting patterns of ritual activity. In the large village of Taronggo, casual work in palm oil plantations has introduced a weekly work schedule that makes it harder for people to actively participate in rituals such as the two-day long *kayori*. Many people cannot be present any longer for the full two nights because of their work commitments. This “urban” settlement outside the forest contains new and expensive desires and needs: rent, electric light, television, motorbikes, furniture, clothes, new foods, and so on. The increasing consumer possibilities have amplified the reliance on money and work.

Life inside the reserve, on the other hand, is less economically demanding and more relaxed. People have the tough work of collecting rattan, dammar resin, coconut and similar materials, but the constant presence and support of the community brings a discrete autonomy and removes the necessity of working every day, and especially when sick. My friend and informant Om Manggi did not work for weeks due to an infection in his leg but, nevertheless, he knew that friends and family would support him during his convalescence. Moreover, in the jungle, the main basic needs are covered by the raw materials available there; unlike outside of the forest, people do not have to pay for housing, and there are no schools or motorbikes<sup>27</sup> to bring economic pressures.

Indeed, the Wana people have a particular conception of ‘need’ that it is useful to understand because it relates to a vision of themselves and the world that will be central in this work. A conversation that I had with Indo Rahu, the wife of Marisa’s village chief and

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<sup>27</sup> Actually, in 2016, a motorbike was present in the village of Marisa. This motorbike was used to go from the village to the working place of the owner, a lumberjack like many other Wana. The distance between the village and the place is easily covered on foot, especially for the Wana, and there are not many paths available to a motorbike. I believe that this, like the widespread presence of mobile phones or watches, is another evidence of Wana desire for a modern, or we could say Indonesian, life.

my host, while I was packing to go back to Italy in 2011, perfectly illustrates this approach to life:

G. S.: Do you need my tweezers?

Indo Rahu: Only if you give it to us, otherwise not<sup>28</sup>

This was not an isolated episode. I had similar discussions over other objects of common use and modest price, such as mirrors, pots and shoes. I will explain later how, in Wana culture, people consider themselves to be living in poverty and the need for something exists only when the object is already in their possession. People tend to adapt to what they have at hand and do not get frustrated by dwelling on things that they cannot obtain in their economic or wider lives.

The diet is also based on what the forest offers. Often plain rice is the only dish in a meal, only occasionally supplemented with wild pig meat, bats, biawak<sup>29</sup> or fish, mostly smoked to preserve it. More often, people add produce that is cultivated in their gardens or the plants that grow wild in the forest, such as tapioca, papaya (which is also used to treat malaria), bamboo and rattan (which has a taste similar to artichoke). An alternative to rice is the *gata*,<sup>30</sup> a food of gelatinous texture and white-grey colour that is derived from the processing of sago.<sup>31</sup> It does not have a strong taste and is eaten with meat or fish broth. Wana people can buy salt, dried fish or *kecap manis* (sweet soy sauce), crucial to enrich the taste of the plain rice or *gata*. In all Wana houses, coffee is always present, and it is served with a great quantity of sugar that is bought in from Kolonodale or extracted from the sugar canes that are present in the forest.

### **The Wana people and colonial empires**

Like Atkinson (1989) before me, I was struck by the widespread sense of inferiority that Wana people seemed to show during my time with them. More than once, I heard people call themselves or their ancestors *maskin* (poor) or other negative epithets<sup>32</sup>. Apa Rahu,

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<sup>28</sup> From a personal conversation with Indo Rahu, June 2011.

<sup>29</sup> A reptile belonging to the varanidae family, to which Komodo dragons also belong.

<sup>30</sup> This food is known as papeda in Maluku, linut in Malaysia and ambuyat in Brunei. It is made from sago starch, produced by the mixing of the sago flour with water, cooked until it coagulates.

<sup>31</sup> Sago is a starch extracted from the marrow of several species of palm belonging to the *Metroxylon*, *Cycas* and *Phoenix* genus. The sago is a staple food for the populations of New Guinea, Molucca and Sulawesi archipelago, where it is commonly called *sagu*. It is traditionally cooked and eaten in various forms, such as in balls, mixed with boiling water to form a paste, or as a pancake.

<sup>32</sup> Wana inferiority complex reminded me of the word of Aimé Césaire regarding the effects of colonialism: "I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, absement" (Quoted in Fanon 2008: 1).

who was around 65 at the time, told me that his grandfather fought in wars between tribes and that he was so *miskin* that he had to dress himself in leaves and coconuts.<sup>33</sup> In his words “We did not have clothes because we were *miskin*.”<sup>34</sup> Atkinson’s observations are strongly worded:

Wana are fully aware that they are at the bottom of an ethnic ladder, dominated and despised by their neighbors – Bugis, Mori, Pamona, Gorontalo, and others – who subscribe to one or another world religion. Wana represent themselves as poor and degraded (Atkinson 1990: 55).

It is possible that this tendency to deprecate themselves originates in a cultural predisposition related to the myth of the fall that is central to Wana mythology, combined with the effects of a subordinate power relationship with foreign powers such as Indian, Muslim and Dutch colonizers. The relationship between the Wana people and outsiders seems to have shaped their vision of themselves and their reality, and is possibly pivotal to this negative self-evaluation. This self-evaluation is, however, certainly one of the factors influencing people, when they marry someone of another religion, to undergo religious conversions to their spouse’s religion, and in an increasing trend for conversions to Christianity, a religion seen by many Wana people as superior because it is strongly related to the “powerful” West.

By the fifth century CE, commerce between Indians and the population of the Indonesian archipelago was already flourishing, although the Indians never obtained control of the hinterlands of the main islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Sulawesi (Scarduelli 1992: 42). It is likely, then, that the Wana people living in the hinterland mountains did not have much contact with the sultanates of Central Sulawesi, while it is documented that the Wana of the coastal settlements paid tributes to the sultans of Ternate and Bungku around 1257 (Alvard 2000: 59). The name Wana itself derives from Sanskrit and means “forest” (Ibid.), and this confirms that there was contact between this group of people and Indian culture. “The Wana may have taken as a name for themselves a term applied by outsiders to the inhabitants of the rugged forest interior” (Atkinson 1979: 5).

The indigenous name of the Wana is *Taa*, meaning “no” or “not”, and it is used rarely nowadays. In this work, I have decided to use the term Wana instead of *Taa* for three reasons: (1) it is the word used in the few existing academic works about this population;

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<sup>33</sup> Even the lack of cloths is considered a consequence of the exodus of the tau baraka. Atkinson reports that even sewing is considered a skill of the mythical time. Leaves, bark cloth and coconuts were “considered by the Wana to be grievously inferior to cotton cloth” (Atkinson 1979: 65) and another proof of their miserable life.

<sup>34</sup> Interview recorded in March 2011.

(2) it is the label used by Indonesians; (3) it is used more frequently than the term *Taa* by Wana people themselves. I will use the term *Taa* only when referring to the Wana land, because my informers exclusively call it *tana Taa*. Many other Wana words derive from India too, such as *suruga* (paradise), which seems to come from the Sanskrit *svarga* (Atkinson 1989: 38), or the term *naga* that is used instead of the Indonesian *ular* to refer to the snakes that inhabit the Morowali forest and Wana mythology.

Between the 15th and 17th century, the Kingdom of Luwuk of South Sulawesi extended its interests through Morowali and Poso regencies into Wana territory. Central Sulawesi was under the control of the kingdoms of Makassar, Mandar and Ternate (Sangaji 2007: 325). According to Atkinson, the influence of the latter was so important that Wana people consider the Raja of Tenerate their first king (Atkinson 1989: 335). Around the year 1450, Islamic traders started their expansions into Indonesia (Wagner 1960: 87) and many of these kingdoms began to transition from Hinduism to Islam.

Like the Hindus before them, these Muslims could not impose themselves on the hinterlands. The difficulties encountered into penetrating into inner areas (especially in the big islands: Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi) do not allow us to define the process in terms of conversion: what happened was a gradual absorption of Muslim religious principles, a partial and selective assimilation within the indigenous cultural context (Scarduelli 1992: 46). Li points out how “in economic and political matters the relationship between upland [internal] and lowland [costal] systems has long been marked by tension” (Li 1999: 8). The relationship between the costal kingdoms and the inner community was not egalitarian and the latter were considered “inferior and treated in a derogatory way” (Hauser-Schäublin 2013: 13).

Clear traces of these historical episodes can be found in many mythological stories, such as that which explains the good relations between Muslims and Wana as resulting from the fact that they are descendants of two brothers. In the story, the elder brother is Wana and the younger Muslim. The latter was unhappy because his brother liked to eat pork, so he went to *Pue* to complain, but the god found the complaint baseless. Atkinson noted how, on one side, many Wana converted to Islam, temporarily or permanently, while on the other side, Islam had a substantial influence on Wana culture (Atkinson 1991: 45). This continuous assimilation of cultural elements from external sources demonstrates that Wana religion “is not an ossified survival of a Palaeolithic past, but instead a dynamic system that has developed and adapted to cope with changing circumstances” (Atkinson 1991: 48). Indeed also the so called traditional cultures are flexible and idiosyncratic, facing conflicts and resolutions as part of their everyday social dynamic (Hiatt 1965; Myers 1986). An important question is: at what point has a culture adapted so much that it

becomes something else? While rituality seems to have remained more or less stable during the last forty years, the world around it has changed a lot, and so has the Wana relationship with the wider world. Atkinson's reports are perfect points of comparison in understanding how the *momago* has changed, and they reveal that although the rituals processes themselves have not altered drastically, clearly fewer people are now taking part in them, or taking part in them differently, as a result of work-related needs. New forms of entertainment are emerging that could soon replace the shamanic ritual as the main festive moment in the life of a Wana person. The Wana world is experiencing obvious changes and it is likely that the situation in forty years from now will be more different from the present day than what Atkinson found forty years ago is. As I show in the final chapters, rituals are starting to fail, and they do not have the same authority that they had in the past; I even saw Wana people confused about what the correct ritual procedure at any given moment was. In 2016 – much more so than in 1974 – the jungle is becoming less isolated day by day, with many people travelling outside the jungle each day, and televisions bringing representations of the outside world into their huts every night. It is likely that Wana daily and economic life will be impacted upon far more than their rituality is, but it is also possible that the Wana religion will eventually disappear, leaving behind just a few *scaramantic* gestures and fables. Ultimately, Wana culture, like all cultures, is definitely adapting to new circumstances. One day – perhaps not in the too distant future – this culture will have become something very different.

The first communities of Dutch missionaries started to populate the Morowali area around the two World Wars. Atkinson writes of a contact that ended in armed conflict between the Dutch and the Wana in 1942. The latter tried to evoke their mythical hero, *Pololoisong*,<sup>35</sup> to fight the invasion (Atkinson 2003: 145), but the hero did not show up and, with their rifles, the Dutch army easily won the battle. Relations with Christian missionaries, already recorded by the missionary Albert Kruyt in the 1920s, increased in 1979 with the arrival of the New Tribes Mission, an evangelical missionary group from the United States and Canada (Atkinson 1991: 45). Kruyt built a missionary school in Poso. The two aims of the mission, supported by the Dutch government, were “civilizing” the natives, transforming the savage head-hunters into people that could be accepted by Europeans, and countering the advance of Islam in the area (Coté 1996: 93). A new wave arrived in 2015, just before my second period of fieldwork.

While the presence of Hindu and Muslim cultural elements does not create any serious social conflict, and the relationship between Muslims and Wana is peaceful and friendly,

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<sup>35</sup> Kruyt describes Pololoisong either “man or god” (1930: 417)

the arrival of Christianity has created social division and clashes. In the area of Marisa, for example, Wana Christians living in Kilo Sembilan want to establish an independent Christian village. They are boycotting community rituals like the *kayori* (Wana funeral), undermining the *kasintuwu* (sense of community), and taking economic advantage of other local people by using their canoes for economic purposes without paying to hire them or giving owners money for maintenance or petrol. By doing so, they are taking advantage of the kindness and desire to help these other people. The situation is considered so problematic that, in 2016, some people came to me asking for advice. They were hoping that, due to my supposedly more extensive knowledge of the world, I would be able to advise them about the best way to manage the situation. Sadly, the only advice I was able to give was to be aware that the Christians are there to stay and perhaps to wipe out the Wana religion. Henceforth, they cannot simply go away and leave the land to them; rather, they have to stand up and make it clear that all religions are welcome, but that respect and support between each other are the base for a peaceful coexistence. Some communities in the north of Morowali have resolved to relocate to the inner part of the forest to avoid any contact with the Christians.

Considering that the evangelical Protestantism missionaries<sup>36</sup> (<https://blogs.ethnos360.org/bob-clark/about/>) themselves possess a mythical aura, as the West is considered a mythical place, they have a considered superior white skin and arrive by helicopter,<sup>37</sup> Wana people are facing an unbalanced confrontation. It is unclear to me how the Christian missionaries are allowed to land their helicopters inside this national nature reserve while I, for example, required the permit from the Indonesian government to conduct a research in Indonesia (permit that required nine months to obtain), the permit from the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry to live inside a natural reserve and the permit from the local office Kolonodale to enter inside the Morowali forest. They are, though, some of the few, if not the only, windows on to the outside world for local people. The impression of the outside world is, as might be expected, filtered through the agenda of the missionaries. This can give biased information to a community that has almost no knowledge of the life beyond their own situation. This was illustrated clearly to me once when talking with Apa Sudin:

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<sup>36</sup> The missionaries are part of the Ethnos360, formerly known as New Tribes Mission (NTM), and are part of an international, theologically evangelical Christian mission organization based in Sanford, Florida, United States. NTM has approximately 3,300 missionaries in more than 20 nations (<https://ethnos360.org/about>).

<sup>37</sup> Many people asked me how many helicopters I had at home. It was hard to explain that helicopter ownership does not represent ordinary lifestyles in the West, and that poverty exists in that part of the world too

Apa Sudin: All the people believe in the same Pue  
G. S.: Does everyone believe in the same Pue?  
Apa Sudin: Yes, everybody. Everybody except Israel.  
G. S.: How do you know about Israel?  
Apa Sudin: The missionaries told me about it.<sup>38</sup>

This and other similar experiences helped me to understand that the effect of the missionaries' proselytising is enhanced greatly by Christian and Western identities, the two being synonymous in some respects. For some Wana individuals, becoming Christian means to become somewhat Westernised, hence they can feel superior to others around them. Atkinson reports strong evidence of this complicated relationship between Wana people and Christianity already emerging in the 70s: "Some report having been told to their face that they lack the personal worth of a dog or a chicken because they have no religion" (Atkinson 1991: 46). I also experienced first-hand Wana Christians treating non-Christians as "savages," and looking down on them for still believing in spirits. In villages such as Taronggo, Wana Christians often show an attitude of superiority towards their relatives from the jungle, to the extent that the latter might be banished to an isolated space during a wedding feast. My guide Ajeran confirmed to me that this was exactly the case on one particular occasion I witnessed, and that the family was ashamed to have relatives commonly considered "primitives" by Wana converted to Christianity. In her thesis, Grumbles perfectly describes that event:

He [Apa Ele, the father of the bride] invited those guests who stand or sat close to the dining tables to the big buffet. Then he turned to his *keluarga dari gunung* (BI), his family from the mountain, and explained to everyone that there was not enough space for every guest to eat from the dining tables and not enough chairs. And because his mountain relatives were not comfortable with sitting in chairs or eating from plates, he invited them to take their meal in the nearby town hall around the corner, where they could sit on the floor and eat with their hands as they prefer to; instead of plates the food would be served in banana leaves. But the food, he insisted, would be the same, here and there; they would make no difference between people. Then he wished everyone a great celebration (2016: 168)

Thanks to this vivid narration, we see how the discriminations against the Wana are manifest. The "town" people take advantage of their position and, artfully, reserve for the Wana people a second-class service, writing it off as doing them the favour of allowing them to follow their usual "habits". Grumbles then corrects her statement about the same food being served to everybody:

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<sup>38</sup> Interviewed in March 2011.

[Wana] generally are believed to dislike beef (a fact that is simply not true; my interlocutors stated they indeed like beef, but they rarely get the chance to taste it). “They are happy with chicken, why should we serve them cow?”, one of my Christian interlocutors replied when I asked about this circumstance. Wana usually were not always aware of such acts or processes of (symbolic) violence as directed towards them. Some distinctions were internalized relations people were not actively recognizing as actions of differentiating (2016: 169)

In the documentary *Gods and Satans* (Journet and Gourdol 2004), there is another episode that is illustrative of the complexities of these relationships. In the Marisa village, the presence of a Wana Christian did not create any problems until he began to attempt to convert other people to his religion. This forced the village chief Apa Rahu to expel him as a way of defending the traditions of the village. I have already noted that, as early as the 1970s, when Atkinson was in the field, similar conflicts with the Christians were already occurring, while the relationship with Muslims was friendly. According to her, Islam accepts and permits Wana shamanistic practices, while Christians completely refuse them and consider them sinful. Christianity is considered a religion for powerful people and in the 70’s more than now, it gave access to western comforts (hospitals, schools and medicines). “Christianity puts a poor Wana in a bind, people say, for either one must sit by and watch loved ones die or one must commit a sin by calling on traditional forms of aid” (Atkinson 1988: 53). Nowadays the situation is slightly changed, with few schools, medical centres and pharmacies available to the Wana, but the power relationships did not changed. As Atkinson and I observed, the Christian identity is strongly interconnected with ideas of class and status. Atkinson follows up with a stark illustration: “People tell of being told [by the Christians] their necks will be cut like chickens, their genitals split open and rubbed with salt, for their human worth is less than that of dogs refusing religion” (Atkinson 1979: 32). Nowadays the situation is less violent but nonetheless tense. Christians and Wana remain two separate words, both culturally and socially, with the Christians in a position of power, due to their relation with the powerful West, and an intolerant or haughty attitude towards the Wana life, considered a shameful trace of the past. In the end, the following testimony from my time in the field seems to reinforce this idea of a sense of incompatibility between Wana and Christian belief systems:

Om Todi: I would like to convert to Christianity but then I will not be able to go to the shaman. Who could cure my “inner illness” if not a shaman? I also have a woman that I could marry, but she is Christian.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> From an interview in March 2011.

## The Wana people and their neighbours

As I have just discussed, the relationship between the Wana people and foreign powers has always been one where the former are in a role of inferiority and submission. A similar attitude is also present in their relationships with the other ethnic groups of the Morowali area, such as the Mori or the Bugis.

The Wana people have an ancient relationship with the Mori and, in the past, the two groups were firm rivals. Currently, there is active exchange between the two; weddings between members of these two ethnic groups, for instance, are very common. However, it is notable that it is usually the Wana partner that converts to the religion of the other, because the latter is invariably perceived as more economically and socially advanced. Usually they do not live in the forest, are assimilated into the great Indonesian culture and, more importantly, are Muslims or Christians. Many young adults look at the Mori as a model encouraging them to move away from Wana traditions. Apa Rahu once criticised this admiration to me in strong language:

You know how the Bugis dance, how the Mori speak, but you do not know what the Wana do. How can you say that you are a Wana?<sup>40</sup>

The Wana relationship with the Bugis is different, however. This group is also considered a kind of enemy, but they are looked down upon on moral grounds. They are believed to be people quick to anger and always ready to use their machetes. From the other perspective, though, the other inhabitants of the area generally seem to treat the Wana with indifference. I had a few opportunities to travel with Apa Rahu or other Wana people outside of the forest, and on these occasions they seemed to pass totally unnoticed, maybe because my presence changed the normal dynamics, or perhaps because they were considered strange people for still living in 'primitive' jungle conditions. Anyway, many people in Kolonodale hold friendly relationships with Wana people and treat them as peers. It was difficult, however, to find evidence of anything other than the kind reception typical of Indonesians more widely.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Chinese population in Kolonodale seems uninterested in the existence of the Wana people. The owner of a restaurant I often went to in Kolonodale, Mrs. Liang, once asked me:

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<sup>40</sup> From a personal conversation with Apa Rahu in June 2011.

Mrs. Liang: Who is that man without shoes?  
G. S.: He is Wana. His shoes must have split during his journey  
Mrs. Liang: Wana?<sup>41</sup>

While I was trying to explain who the Wana are and how they live, I noted Mrs Liang's blankness at discovering that an entire cultural group were living just on the other side of the bay without electricity.

### **The Wana people and the state**

I have already briefly outlined the relationship between the Wana people and the empires. At this point, it is important to note also that Wana spiritual life does not fit within the foundational philosophy of the Indonesian state, *Pancasila*, being considered *adat* (customs) rather than an *agama* (religion) (Schiller 1996). The use of the term *adat* underlines a certain ethnocentric, superficial and discriminating approach and a lack of proper understanding of Wana religion, which is often mistakenly considered by the government to be based on animism. Picard stresses how "today 'religion' [*agama*] tends to be countered to 'tradition' [*adat*] – particularly in those societies which have been Islamized or Christianized" (Picard 2011: 6).

The term *pancasila* derives from the combination of two Old Javanese words, themselves derived from Sanskrit, *panca* (five) and *sīla* (principles). The five principles that have been placed at the heart of the Indonesian state and of Indonesian life are: (1) belief in the one and only God, (2) a just and civilized humanity, (3) an unified Indonesia, (4) democracy, and (5) social justice for all (Prawiranegara 1984). The first and, therefore, most important principle is monotheism, a religious idea brought to Indonesia along with Islam. Religion among the Wana people might itself be considered monotheistic, and also one that is free of ethnic boundaries. Wana people believe that anyone can follow the Wana religion and become a shaman, and the existence of *Pue* (the Wana god) does not exclude the existence of other gods. The Indonesian government, however, uses the absence of a sacred text as a reason to exclude Wana practices and beliefs from religious regulation. In fact, in Indonesia six religions (Islam, Christianity, Protestantism, Buddhism, Balinese Hinduism<sup>42</sup> and, recently added, Confucianism) are recognised by the government. To join this list, three conditions must be fulfilled: (1) the religion must be

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<sup>41</sup> From a conversation that took place on April 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Indonesian Hinduism, called Agama Hindu Dharma Indonesia, has been modified, in order to fit the government definition of a legitimate religion, into a monotheistic religion, with revealed scriptures and moral rules. In the end, Balinese Hinduism is quite different from Hinduism in India. (McDaniel 2010)

monotheistic, and this casts aside all religions that cannot be reconnected with the one true God of Islam; (2) it must not have ethnic boundaries, thus keeping Judaism away from Indonesia;<sup>43</sup> (3) it must have a sacred text, another condition that recalls the Islamic religion, the centrality of the Quran,<sup>44</sup> and a cultural distinction between literate and illiterate religions and cultures (the latter represented by the Wana).

It might be argued that religious laws in Indonesia are discriminatory on many levels. An individual's religion is recorded on their ID card, and those without a religion are likely to encounter difficulties obtaining these identification documents. This can have serious knock-on effects and cause numerous problems in negotiating bureaucratic systems. Thus, the declaration of a person's religion can be a political statement in Indonesia. In the Wana context, "Religion, as an institution set apart from the rest of cultural life, appears to be an introduced idea" (Atkinson 1991: 47). Indeed, the Indonesian word *agama* (religion) cannot even be translated into the Wana language, and people directly use the Indonesian form when talking about other religions, those of the country's rulers. When interrogated on the matter, Wana people always replied to me that they do not have a religion; religion is a matter of the government, Islam, or Christian missionaries.

During my fieldwork, I witnessed a small clash between Wana people and the government. During district elections, a government unit came to the Marisa village to convince Wana residents to vote. After a long discussion, Apa Rahu pronounced the collective decision to abstain from voting due to continued indifference of the government towards their problems. Distaste for politics and politicians is so deep in Wana culture that it has found its place in mythology:

Apa Rahu: Abunawas<sup>45</sup> was smart, the first politician. He was not a good man<sup>46</sup>.

This problematic relationship with the government has led to the Wana people isolating themselves, under the motto: "no government, no religion, no village" (Lahadji 2008: 23).<sup>47</sup> This motto expresses a rejection of following the rules of a government that demands that they follow a recognised religion and embrace a sedentary culture. Indeed,

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<sup>43</sup> Relationships between Indonesia and Israel have been tense, especially in regards to Palestine, and the two nations do not have formal diplomatic relations. In 2010, while completing the documents for my Darmasiswa scholarship, I was told that the Israeli stamp on my passport could have been a good reason not to let me enter the country. Moreover, the number of publications on Hitler and Nazism that are on sale in any Indonesian bookshop is notable.

<sup>44</sup> The newly founded Ministry of Religion was unable to define religion outside its Islamic identity, giving Islamic theology a key role in «framing and shaping all the debates about religion» (Picard 2011: 13).

<sup>45</sup> Abunawas is a *tau baraka*, a human who lived during the mythical time and possessed great powers.

<sup>46</sup> From an interview with Apa Rahu, June 2011

<sup>47</sup> *Tare pamarentah, tare agama, tare kampung.*

this motto is truly representative of Wana ways of thinking that I encountered often; they consider themselves to be a group without religion, and this is an attitude that that can be dangerous in Indonesia, where atheism is not considered normal (Osman 2012).<sup>48</sup>

The Indonesian government considers the Wana people to be a “backward” (*terkebelakang*) community (Lahadji 1999: 243). Part of the focus of this idea is the problem of illiteracy and the sparse knowledge of the Indonesian language among Wana people. Porath explores a similar issue in his “*They have not progressed enough*”: *Development’s negated identities among two indigenous peoples (orang asli) in Indonesia and Thailand*, where he explores how the Sakai of Sumatra “wish to progress” to avoid being considered “wild people who did not wear clothes [...], living an unhygienic [...] life deep in the forest [...] and shunning the rest of the world through fear” (2010: 271).

Very few people are able to send their children to schools outside of the forest, relying on the hospitality of friends or relatives living in Kolonodale or Taronggo. Formalised learning is, though, having a strong negative impact on the survival of Wana culture; not only are the children sent to school in areas where the majority of people do not know Wana traditions, but a key feature of the national curriculum is *Pancasila* (Kuipers 2011). Missionaries have also translated the Bible into the Wana language, making it the only written text in this language, and so forcing anyone curious to read in their own language in this direction (Journet and Nougazol, 2005). Sachs’ warnings about the impact that alphabetism has on traditional societies is relevant here: “the backbones of a scriptless culture are tradition and memory; both vanish under the impact of general literacy, and with them fade the imagination and creativeness of uneducated performers. Literacy and folk art bloom in inverse ratio” (Sachs 1962: 46-47). I do not totally agree with Sachs and I do not wish to suggest that a traditional community should be forced to live in isolation for the benefit of Western scholars, but instead that the processes of formalising education can be detrimental if not properly controlled, especially if there are other religious and political groups ready to exert undue influence. There is much evidence of similarly problematic developments in other cultural contexts, such as the education of American Indians in missionary schools, where Native Americans were forced to accept the Christian belief (Denvens 1992).

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<sup>48</sup> «Atheism became a criminal offence, polytheism, too, was outlawed and between 1954 and 1982 the state conducted a rigorous campaign against the followers of tribal spirit religions during which the most stubborn pagans suffered imprisonment or worse» (Harper: 1997: 14).

## *Kasintuwu*

Possibly, in an attempt to contrast the negative and complicate relationship with the other cultural and religious groups, the Wana have placed the *kasintuwu* (sense of community) at the core of their culture. *Kasintuwu* is a concept key to understanding Wana culture, and it will be a constant theme throughout this thesis, especially in the discussions of rituals, and in the last chapter, where I will explore the values expressed in Wana rituals. Atkinson translates the term as “mutual support,” (1989) while I prefer the phrase “sense of community.” Regardless of the translation, *kasintuwu* permeates all aspects of Wana life. Many told me that without *kasintuwu* “it is impossible to wake up in the morning,” and that life outside of the community would be meaningless. Thus, I argue that *kasintuwu* stands for a lot more than mutual support; it is a constant expression of the awareness of living inside a community and of the precedence of the community over the life of any single member.<sup>49</sup> *Kasintuwu* is expressed through people supporting each other, but I conceptualise it not only as a relationship between members but also as a relationship between members and the totality itself, the community. It is a clear example of the “mechanical solidarity” theorised by Durkheim, but without the presence of a repressive law that controls the people (1997). Wana people do not rely excessively on rules; they have a more relaxed approach about what people can or cannot do. This approach could be the product of a lack of need, since I never saw a Wana person going against the rules. It could also be that the humour used to shape people’s behaviour is more than sufficient to control the community. One day, talking with Apa Reilin, I asked what the punishment was for a thief, and he told me that he had never seen anybody being punished for such a crime, or indeed for any other crime.

Atkinson says that the term *kasintuwu* comes from the word *tuwu* (to live) with the prefix *sin-* (together) (Atkinson 1989:26). I think rather that the term is composed from the words *kasi* (spinning top) (Img. 1) and *tuwu* (meaning both ‘to live’ and also ‘to spring’) with the *n* an oral addition, like in Wana names such as Apa *n*Tongi and many others. It is possible that this word derives from one of the many mythological tales that I heard and collected.

*At the beginning of time, there were two kasi, one made of gold and the other made of wood. On the top of each kasi there were 1000 people and the kasi were striking each other. At one point, the golden kasi broke and the people on top of*

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<sup>49</sup> *Kasintuwu* would appear to be similar to the Balinese *ikhlass*: “a value of sharing that which is dearest, of preparedness to surrender oneself to the collective good” (Wikan 1988: 452)

*it decided to go to the West. These people were the ancestors of the Dutch and of Western people as a whole, while the people of the wooden kasi were the poor Wana that remained in their land.*<sup>50</sup>



**Img. 1:** The traditional *kasi* game. The game is played in teams and one side has to hit the *kasi* of the other team. The game is still popular today.

My interpretation of the word *kasintuwu* is that it actually indicates the community formed of people sprung (*tuwu*) from the wooden spinning top (*kasi*). In this way, *kasintuwu* expresses a strong sense of unity and commonality. Thus, I believe that the best translation for the word is “sense of community” rather than “mutual support.” In the following section I will explore the concept of lost density or plenitude related to similar myths and to a re-creation of this primordial density (having 1000 people on a single spinning top).

Rituals such as the *momago* and the *kayori* are the most palpable expression of *kasintuwu*, but it can be found almost everywhere in Wana life, from the sharing of food to the nights spent watching television all together thanks to a single person offering the petrol to generate electric power. *Kasintuwu* will be the key used to understand Wana rituality and culture as this thesis unfolds, since it is expressed in almost all Wana actions.

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<sup>50</sup> From one of the stories Apa Rau told me.

## Primordial density

Related to *kasintuwu* and the myth of the spinning tops, each time Wana people officiate a ritual, they re-enact the primordial density of the golden era – a state of initial plenitude. A mythological background provides the foundations for the construction of a Wana person's identity, distinguishing them from all other people of the world. Earlier, I described the myth of the spinning tops, but a second myth also tells of Wana people being descended from the mythical couple, Santoto and Delemontu. This story might be at the heart of the “we are one family” idiom. Any further efforts to understand the origins of Wana kinship is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is certainly my intention to emphasise how unity among Wana people has these deep roots and a huge influence.

Wana mythology narrates how all Wana people come from the same place, either the mythical couple or the wooden spinning top, depending on the myth. Put differently, it might be said that Wana people all come from a very small space, the womb of a woman or the spinning top. From this point, like a cultural big bang, they spread and multiply in space, ending mythical time. According to the tales, the golden era ended after many big bangs, although it must be kept in mind that in mythological time, events do not follow a linear succession. There are five events that marked the end of the golden era and the loss of primordial density: 1) the fracture of the vine uniting the ground and the sky, 2) the breaking of the golden spinning top, 3) the dissemination of the holy land all over the water, creating the continents, 4) the departure of Poloisong with the *kayu paramba* (the money tree), and 5) the departure of the *tau Baraka* from *Tana Taa*. All of these events see a rupture and a centrifugal movement that either sends away mythical power from Wana people or scatters actual pieces of the Wana land away from where they are, decreasing both the density and power of their land. In the same way, when the soul leaves the body for too long, the owner loses its plenitude and gradually dies. In songs and mythological tales, Wana people often compare people to trees and plants, and likewise, it seems possible to compare the *Tana Taa* (Wana land) to a person who has lost their soul, and therefore their integrity and all of their power. This explosion or rupture is well represented by the destruction of the vine that connected heaven and earth, and by the destruction of the mythical spinning top. These two fractures began what Wana people see as the beginning of their life of wretchedness, and the division of the initial Wana community into clans and villages. This correspondence between unity and mythical power can be found again in the rituals.

More than unity, though, I suggest it is useful to talk about density. The high density of the beginnings is contrasted by the sparsity of current times, where even the people of

myth are at the edge of the world. To reaffirm and recreate density, the people of the village gather in a small hut to treat the illness of a single member. Hundreds of people gather for the death of a person, since a more serious crisis requires even greater density. In both rituals, a great quantity of people is forced for a night or two into a space that is not truly suitable for them all. These rituals do not only reaffirm the unity of the community and its power, but they also reaffirm the physical density that brings this power. They are a quest to bring back the perfection of the original state: a return not only to mythical time but to the mythical centre, one that is synonymous with power and regeneration

Moreover, the first Wana people lived together on a spinning top until the day it fractured and they moved all around the Wana land. With the passing of time and the increase in their number, they lost the mythical power of their ancestors. It is reasonable to note a direct connection between the unity or density of the mythical time and a loss of power related to the decrease of that original density, the dilutions of the state of perfection. There is perhaps a similarity in the Bible, where the life span of humans becomes shorter and shorter with the increasing distance of humans from Adam moving towards Noah.<sup>51</sup> In some ways, the fractures of the mythical vine and of the spinning top can be compared to the explosion of the big bang, which saw an originally dense mass expand and decrease in density, and a weakening of gravity. Wana society, despite being at the centre of the world, has lost all its mythical people, and those left behind consider themselves the poorest people in the world.

### **Wana religion**

As I have already suggested, atheism is not highly regarded in Indonesia, if not explicitly opposed. At the base of this attitude is the pivotal role that religion has in Indonesian culture and the common correlation between atheism and communism, which is now illegal.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, I had to pretend I was a Christian during all my permanence in Indonesia, otherwise it would have been extremely difficult obtaining permits or simply having a positive relationship with the people around me. Even if the Wana describe themselves as a people without religion, they have a complex and ancient system of

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<sup>51</sup> According to the Bible's book of Genesis, Adam lived 930 years, his son Set lived 912 years, Enos 905 years, Maalaleèl 895 years, Lamech 777 years. Terach, Abraham's father, lived 205 years, and so on.

<sup>52</sup> Communism, alongside Marxism-Leninism, was officially banned in Indonesia following the aftermath of the 30 September coup attempt and the subsequent anti-communist killings, by adoption of *TAP MPRS* no. 25/1966 in 1966 and *Undang Undang* no. 27/1999 in 1999, which are still in force. The law does not explicitly declare a ban on symbols of communism, but Indonesian police frequently use the law to arrest people displaying them.

beliefs, rituals and gods. They have been forced by history and power relationships to define their religion in contrast to the religion of the cultures that have set out to rule them: “Indeed, their concept of *agama* represents the transformation of a traditional religious system provoked by challenges from representatives of world religions” (Atkinson 1991: 48). They have come to the point of considering *agama* to refer only to the religion of the rulers and not to their own system of belief.

At the foundation of Wana religion is *Pue*, the creator god. Even if nowadays Wana religion presents itself as a monotheistic religion, there are various elements that testify to a gradual shift away from animism, or the veneration of the spirits of animals.

Apa nTongi: Once, when people went hunting, the shaman used to pray to *Pue Binatang* (Lord of animals) to avoid upsetting him.<sup>53</sup>

There are testimonies of a past belief in two principal divinities: *Pue Ri Arantana*, god of the underground and the benevolent dispenser of rewards and punishments, and *Pue Lamo*,<sup>54</sup> god of the sky and of lightning, with which he can transmit illnesses to humans. Om Suma once told me:

There is a *Pue* that lives in the underground. He is very benevolent and if we want something, he will give it to us, but if we behave badly he will punish us.

Atkinson offers a useful testimony about these two divine beings:

Like Kruyt, I was told of two beings, Lai and Ndara, who were siblings when the earth and sky were still connected by a vine. Also like Kruyt, I heard accounts of Lai and Ndara that included a third sibling, Koni (the name means “eat”), whom his siblings murdered for devouring people. Koni, I was told, was the first liver-eating demon (*measa*). When the vine holding heaven and earth together was severed (one of Kruyt’s accounts holds a mouse responsible for gnawing through the vine), Lai managed to grasp the vine and climb upward. Lai became the *pue ri wawo yangi*, the Owner above the Sky, while Ndara went down to become the *pue ara ntana*, the Owner beneath the Earth (1989:197-198, emphasis in the original).

During my residency, I also encountered *Koni* being referred to by another name, Inkoni (also meaning “to eat”), being called a giant (*tau rumbi*) or, according to other versions, a *measa* (demon) with many siblings: *Pauvumbagna*, *Indara* (Atkinson’s Ndara), *Inpide* and

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<sup>53</sup> Personal conversation in May 2011

<sup>54</sup> Hertz attests a god called Lamo among the Alfur people of Sulawesi (Hertz 1994: 147). Alfur people is a broad term used to refer to all of the non-Muslim, non-Christian peoples living in the interior areas of Sulawesi and Maluku.

*Ilai* (Lai). Myth characterises *Inkoni* as a man-eater, and his siblings despised him for this. One day, *Inkoni* tried to eat *Indova* but after a fight with *Inkoni* where the demon cut off one of her gluteal muscles, she managed to escape. Later, *Indara* killed *Inkoni* by slashing him from one shoulder to the opposite armpit.<sup>55</sup> This myth shows how *Lai*, *Ndara* and *Koni* are extraordinary beings that are also known in the area I researched, though with slightly changed names and having been downgraded from the status of gods to that of giants or demons. The “i” added to the beginning of the name by people in this area could simply be a difference of dialect.

The female shaman Indo Pino believed in three gods. The existence of these three gods (one of the sky, one of the earth and of the spirit world) could be indicative of an intermediate phase between belief in the *Pue Binatang* only and the ditheism involving both *Pue Lamo*a and *Pue Ri Arantana*. Nowadays, the most common idea is that Wana religion is monotheistic, and that it has just one *deus otiosus*, *Pue*, who dwells in the sky. As Atkinson observes:

Aspects of their cosmology assign roles to two lords, one above the earth and one below, and certain healing rites involve a vengeful lord of thunder. These dual roles are subsumed by the unmarked Wana term *Pue* (Owner or Lord), the creator and overseer of the world. It may very well be that *Pue* has assumed a more central place in Wana discourse as a result of contact with Muslims and Christians (Atkinson 1983: 691).

Of course, the structures described in these passages are not clear and definitive, and it is possible to find contradictory information that complicates interpretations. Indo Pino once told me about the existence of many small *pue*, the *pue* of rivers, animals and plants, and this clearly brings to mind the animist period.

Indo Pino: There is a small *Pue* in the river.  
G. S.: Is there a *Pue* in the trees?  
Indo Pino: There is a *Pue* in the trees and in animals too.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, the presence of divine beings who act as protectors of the natural elements is found in many other shamanic religions in which there is a “lord of animals” (Balzer 1997; Eliade 1951; Müller 1997). This kind of belief is typical of nomadic cultures that base their

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<sup>55</sup> The myth continues with the death of *Inkoni* on the shores of the Kolo Sea, which from that day becomes red like blood every time somebody gossips or swears. From that day if somebody says the word *inkoni* or *mankoni*, they will be eaten by the demon. Wana mythology is extremely fascinating, but the sources are few and often contradict one another. This dissertation is not the right place for a study of Wana mythology but I intend to focus on this topic in future work.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Indo Pino in June 2011.

survival on hunting and on the benevolence of nature. Of the young people I interviewed, none was willing to confirm the existence of these small *Pue*, and this leads me to suspect that belief in the spirits of natural elements is a remnant of an archaic state of the Wana religion. Indo Pino was already aged when I met her, and since she was born in one of the inner villages, Posangke, it is possible that her early education came from people who had experienced little contact with the Dutch, with modern influences and with world religions, and thus had maintained ancient beliefs.

To understand the Wana religious system, it is necessary here to present the basics of Wana mythology. During fieldwork, I tried to collect as many mythical tales as possible, including through meeting the village chief of Lambentana; Apa Kode, a man famous for his mythical and musical knowledge. I have since cross-referenced the stories recounted to me by Indo Pino, Apa Rahu, Jango and Apa Kode with scarce bibliographic sources on the topic. I have tried to organise the stories into a linear and sequential order, but this task is very hard when faced with the complex logic of the mythical. When not stated otherwise, the following stories are a mix of the different versions I have collected from my informants during my two fieldworks. For Wana people, mythological stories are something that must be told sparingly and almost never in a complete form since they believe that the narration of the entire mythology could bring the world to an end. Apa Rahu<sup>57</sup> and other shamans told me that the only way to avoid this danger would be to make a great sacrifice of chickens that would calm the spirits and *Pue*, allowing the complete telling of the mythology over seven days and seven nights. I will explore these ideas further at a later point, while discussing Wana ideas of space-time.

According to the stories I gathered, in the beginning there was only the sea, before one day *Pololoisong*, the Wana trickster, asked *Pue* to create the world. *Pue* placed the first land onto the world in the form of the holy mountain/axis mundi *Tunda n'tana*,<sup>58</sup> and continued his creation following the requests of *Pololoisong*.<sup>59</sup> *Tunda n'tana* was connected to the sky, *suruga*, through a vine called a *vaiansivangu*, but the *vaiansivangu* was gnawed at and severed by a mouse, causing the separation of the sky and the earth. This ended mythical time and signalled the definitive departure of *Pue* from humanity. It was also an event necessary for the survival of humanity, since the nearness of the sky to the ground made the temperature too high for life. The separation from the *suruga* and the

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Apa Rahu in March 2011.

<sup>58</sup> The sacred mountain is also known by Wana people under another name: Taman Sari, a Javanese word that means "beautiful garden."

<sup>59</sup> *Poloisong* has a younger brother: Adi Banggai. While *Poloisong*, as a Wana cultural hero, was illiterate, the younger brother was the first Muslim and he knew how to write.

subsequent end of mythical time is a pivotal idea in Wana culture; it marks the start of what they consider to be their wretched life. The myth of the broken vine or a more general *axis mundi* can be found in other cultures too (Eliade 1972; Geertz 1973). Since the end of mythical time, this link between the ground and the sky has remained accessible only to certain kinds of beings (spirits and shamans).

At the beginning of time there was no night. One day, due to the extreme heat, a man called *Pue Bunku*<sup>60</sup> struck the sun (*eo*) with his blowpipe (*sopu*), breaking the sun into thousands of pieces that became the moon and the stars. Finally, there was the night (*wuri*) and humankind could rest from the daily heat.

At the request of *Pololoisong*, *Pue* began to create the animals. First, he created chickens, and this led to no significant changes on Earth. Then he created pigs, which started rooting around and spreading earth into the water around *Tunda n'tana* and, while the mountain became smaller, landmasses and islands were created. On another day, *Pue* created trees when *Pololoisong* asked for something to help avoid the heat. Among the trees was the special *kayu paramba*, on which money grew instead of leaves. If the *kayu paramba* had been cut down in a proper manner, it would have brought riches to the Wana people. However, *Pololoisong* did not care about the money and did not follow *Pue's* instructions for feeling the tree. He did so wrongly, allowing it to fall into the sea. *Pololoisong* used the fallen tree as a canoe to travel with the money to the West, perhaps the Netherlands, while condemning the Wana people to a life of poverty<sup>61</sup>. Grumbles reports that one of her interlocutors commented on the presence of the *kayu paramba* in the West in this way: “[the West] where white and rich people live. If the tree had landed on the earth, maybe you would now be poor and Wana people would be rich” (2016: 102). This quote is particularly interesting in light of Aberle’s idea (1970) that the motivation behind millennial movements is not poverty per se but the awareness of having much less than other people.

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<sup>60</sup> *Pue Bunku* could actually be one of the many *tau Baraka* (people of the myth) that inhabited the mythical time. It is also possible that he was one of the many divine beings in the Wana ancient pantheon. Sadly, I was not able to obtain more information about it and I can only offer some reflections and speculations.

<sup>61</sup> This myth clearly recalls millenarian movements, which are present in Indonesia (Beatty 2012). Some of these movements, as in this case, are responses to colonial oppression and are aimed at overturning the relationship of power between the colonial empire and the indigenous community. They narrate a history in which the wealth of the West derives from the local land and thus one day must return to it (Worsley 1970). Worsley sees cargo cults like this one as a rational response to colonial oppression (Ibid.), and this is clearly pertinent in the Wana case. Moreover, ignorance of the real sources of Westerners’ power is something that the indigenous community needs to face and overcome (Burrige 1969:71), and the result is the local community creating stories and explanations for the condition of both themselves and the outsiders.

*Pololoisong* is also the creator of the first man, *Tau Santoto*. To put an end to the loneliness of *Tau Santoto*, Pue waited for the man to fall asleep then took a rib from which to create the first woman, *Delemontu*. The Islamic and Christian influences in this myth are extremely clear, but the Wana people managed to adapt it into one with highly local meanings. According to Wana thought, “women possess “enough” ribs, but men are missing two. Whereas women have a complete set, nine on a side, men have only eight on a side. For this reason, it is said, men strap on a knife” (Atkinson 1990: 81). Therefore, the missing rib means that men are in a state of lacking, while women are complete and therefore superior. Moreover, the number of ribs possessed by each gender plays a central role in the funeral ritual *kayori*, and this will be explored in Chapter IV. *Santoto* and *Delemontu* had 16 sons, eight male and eight female, each the archetype of a human action; they were the first farmer, the first hunter, and so on. Among them was also *Dungola*, the first musician, entertainer and shaman. These mythical children are called *tau Baraka* (the people of mythical time) and were so powerful that they could make anything appear in front of them just by closing an eye and pronouncing a spell: “Adi adi of mother and father, mine is the truest (knowledge); I just have to open my eyes...” (Atkinson 1989: 43). *Pololoisong*’s departure to the West ended this golden era in which these mythical people lived, as they also left to go to *Joe n’tana* (the place at the end of the world). One day, however, they will return to begin a new mythical era. This belief seems clearly linked to the myth of the eternal return, explained in detail by Eliade (1971), and found in many cultures.

### **Powerful numbers**

Based on the mythical tales and always present in Wana religious life and in all of the rituals are the powerful (because they are related to the power of myth) numbers three (*togo*) and seven (*pitu*). We will find them appearing often in descriptions and analyses of the rituals, and the reader should keep in mind that, due to their power their use in the rituals it is no coincidence. Three is a powerful number in many cultures, including Christianity (with the Trinity and Jesus being resurrected on the third day after his death), Judaism (with The Three Patriarchs and the Torah being divided into three parts), and Buddhism (with the Triple Bodhi and the three jewels). *Dungola*, the first shaman, was able to continue a healing ritual for three nights in a row, and Atkinson testifies to the fact that the largest shamanic ritual, which was celebrated together with the harvest festival, the

*salia* (also called the *masalia*), used to last three, or more rarely, seven nights.<sup>62</sup> Three is a number also present in the *molawo* ritual and in the *kayori*. Humans possess three souls, there are three mountains balancing the world (which Wana people believe to be flat), and there were three Wana gods at a certain point in time.

Likewise, seven is a powerful number present in many shamanic cultures, including for the Khanty, Tatars, and the Samoyedic people (Eliade 1971). The number seven is also present in Buddhism, where seven steps led the Buddha to the top of the cosmic world (Ibid.), and in Christianity, with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sacraments, while there are seven Great Holy Days in the Jewish year. Elsewhere, the traditional Menorah has seven branches.

For the Wana people, seven days are needed for a complete telling of the *katuntu* (mythology), and the same number of days spent in the jungle is needed for a new shaman to gain their powers. Similarly, a feast is organised for the deceased in the afterlife seven days after death. According to myth, seven springs created the two lakes near Marisa, there are seven worlds of spirits, and seven mythical chickens. Most importantly, the number seven symbolises the entire life span (Atkinson 1989: 160), and for this reason it has a central role in the *kayori*. In contrast, the successive numbers of eight and nine are often related to death.

It is not the aim of this section to offer an exhaustive list of all the times the numbers three and seven recur in Wana life and ritual, especially because they appear so ubiquitously and in aspects as diverse as medicine preparation and mythology. My intention is to make the readers aware of their importance and to prepare them to recognise the value of these numbers every time they arise as this thesis progresses.

## Time

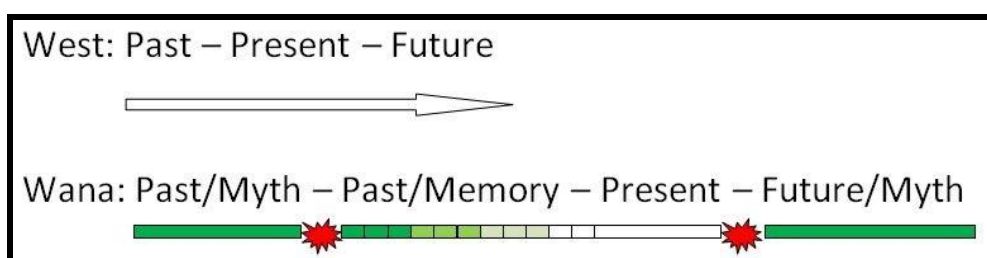
Another important element of Wana culture is time. It is strongly interrelated with mythology and the people's current state of perceived wretchedness, and it is an important factor to consider when seeking to understand Wana culture. In fact, for Wana people, the concept of time is a weak concept; they usually measure time with spatial terms, causing an overlapping of space and time. When asked about the time required to go from one

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<sup>62</sup> The *salia*, called *padunku* in the area in which I conducted my study, continues to the present day, although not annually because of change to the climate and the impact of the cultivation of rice. Nowadays, the ritual lasts just one night, during which a *momago* (the main shamanic ritual) is celebrated. It is possible that in the past, when the harvest was more abundant, the Wana people were able to celebrate for more days.

village to another, a Wana person might reply by listing the number of *gunung* (hills and mountains) and rivers there are between the two villages. Moreover, Wana people do not keep time; traditionally they do not have birthdays, years, months, weeks or names for days of the week. All of these are concepts that have been incorporated into Wana life recently. The term used as an equivalent for ‘time’ is clearly borrowed from the outside, and from the Christians in particular. Instead of the Indonesian term *waktu*, Wana people use the term *tempo* (from the Latin *tempus*). Understanding the way Wana people conceptualise time, especially mythical time, is central to understanding Wana worldviews.

In Western cultures, people usually think about time as a linear and measurable entity. This is illustrated by the arrow of time, which was developed by the British astronomer Arthur Eddington (1948). Time is depicted as an arrow in which the past moves to the future, passing through the present. In this way, an event can be clearly placed on the arrow, and the idea of cause-effect is clearly shown (Table. 2).



**Img. 2:** Western ideas of time can be represented by an arrow while Wana ideas are better represented by a change of status. The mythical era where everything is full of power ends with a breaking of the vine that unites earth and sky. Then there is the wretched present, and eventually the future, which is a restoration of mythical time after a cataclysm.

Wana time, on the other hand, is cyclical and past and myth often overlap. Wana time can be divided into mythical time, the present, and the return of mythical time. The golden era of mythical time ended with a traumatic event, the separation of the human and the spiritual worlds, and with the *tau Baraka* (the people of myth) leaving Wana land to go to the edge of the world. Since that moment, the Wana people have lived in an eternally wretched present, in which every day is the same, and years, weeks and months are not counted. There is no continuity between the present and the past or future. Even if there is a clear separation between the present and the mythical era, the past is gradually absorbed by it, and what is not directly witnessed anymore becomes an event of mythical time. For example, when researching the arrival of the gongs in the forest – musical instruments that are used prominently in several forms of ritual – my informants told me that they were present *dari pertama* (from the first time), even though it is much more likely that the gongs arrived in the forest only 100 years ago. After the end of mythical time, Wana

people started to live in the present, but it is a wretched present that will end only when another event occurs, the return of the *tau Baraka*, marked by a cataclysm that restores mythical time and closes the circle.

Alfred Gell affirms that for indigenous people profane time “is concrete, immanent and process-linked” (1992: 17), but this is completely untrue for Wana people. For them, profane time does not have any value and is not counted. Indeed, human-scale measures of time are not considered significant at all. As mentioned before, Wana people do not count years, and they do not have special time markers to distinguish normal days from special ones, such as annual festivals or birthdays. Women return to work on the same day that they give birth, as they are not inclined to attach particular value to that day, and recording a person’s age is quite a new practice, making it almost impossible to know the age of many of my interlocutors. When during our period in the field together, Grumblies and I celebrated her birthday, our Wana friends did not completely understand what we were doing and were puzzled by our practices. The only recurrent event in Wana life is the *patunku*, a harvest festival. Whether it is celebrated every year depends on how successful the harvest is, an element that could not happen for entire decades, and it is not held systematically in the same month. Combined with the fact that not all village areas celebrate the festival on any given year and in the same period of the year, this means that it is difficult to keep track of the passing of years in Wana life.

This all means that Wana people live in a kind of eternal present. It is important to consider that Morowali is located one parallel south of the equator so the sun rises at 6am every day throughout the year, and sets at 6pm. Days are essentially not distinguished in culture from others until that on which *tau Baraka* returns, thus restoring mythical time and closing the circle. I was reminded of how people used to say “*moviti ddocu*” (move on the spot) to mean “don’t move” in certain parts of Sicily. Wana people move because they get older and see new generations grow up, but nothing truly changes; history does not become part of their story. Ultimately, it is as if they are simply moving on the spot, occupying an eternal present. The situation seems to fit the fourth variant of time theorised by Gurvich: the cyclical time that has a “motionless” or “static” quality (1961: 21). According to Leach, a better definition would be “alternating time” instead of cyclical time (Leach 1961: 125). He observes that this kind of time is not a cycle but “a sequence of oscillations between polar opposites: night and day, winter and summer, drought and flood, age and youth, life and death” (Leach 1961: 125). Indeed, Leach’s idea is partially useful in describing the Wana situation. The alternation, through the rituals, of mythical and profane time creates this oscillation between polar opposites, an alternation that will end only when mythical time returns to the *Tana Wana*, its original and rightful place.

Ultimately, the situation seems to reflect a combination of cyclical and alternating ideas of time, with micro-reality (profane time) formed by a cyclical repetition of days, seasons and years, but interrupted by macro-reality (mythical time), and thus creating an alternation between the two.

The phrase *moviti ddocu* also raises the possibility that, for Wana people, the concept of time is actually more akin to Western ideas of space. Apa Kode told me that the French documentary makers Journet and Nougazol spoke the language of heaven, the same language that is spoken in mythical time, because that is where they live. In other words, mythical time has not ended but has been moved to a simultaneous existence somewhere else. This brings about the wretched time in which Wana people live nowadays, a time that seems almost coterminous with the *Tana Taa*, a spatial notion. The time experienced by Wana people is considered qualitatively different from the time experienced by people in the West; the latter are considered to be living in mythical time. They believe that due to the arrival there of the *kayu paramba* (money tree), all the people who live in the West are rich and free of problems. All the objects that I carried were considered special because they were possessions of someone from mythical time. For example, my phone was thought to have special functions and capabilities (being waterproof, unbreakable, usable in the forest and so on) because it was a possession of a mythical Westerner.

## Rituals

The Wana people have many religious rituals. Some of them are disappearing and have become rarer than others, and I attempt here to outline how they are organised. In doing so, I will compare Kruyt's data from the Taronggo area in 1928 with Atkinson's from the northern part of the jungle in 1979, and my own, from the Marisa, Taronggo and Lambentana areas in 2011 and 2016.

During his stay of just two months among the Wana people, Kruyt, a missionary from the Netherlands, was exposed to different expressions of shamanic power. He attempted to organise these expressions in order of their power and importance. The first was *walia mangepe*, which Atkinson calls "the lowest level" (Atkinson 1989: 207); this is a type of cure that I also encountered. In these small domestic rituals, the shaman extracts objects<sup>63</sup> of a size not visible to normal people from the bodies of patients, by sucking them out or

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<sup>63</sup> Porath reports that among the Riau of Indonesia "One of the classic examples in the performance of healing is the extraction of a material object from the patient's body" (2015: 369)

through cleaning the patient with the *pompolonzu* (the ritual cloth) while reciting one or more *do'a* (spell). Atkinson explains that Kruyt's next level is *walia mantende* (Atkinson 1989: 207), a ritual in which, through a long chant (*patoe*), the shaman requests *Pue Lamo* to remove the hooks (*mata mpea*) that are afflicting the patient but are invisible to normal people. While Atkinson knew this ritual by the same name, in the area in which I researched, it is called *molawo*. This is a dangerous and rare ritual that not all shamans are able to perform; Atkinson identifies this ritual by the name of *molawo maneo*, the "crooked" *molawo*. The term indicates a ritual in which the performer travelled to the place of *Pue Lamo*, while a journey to *Pue* (the benign god) was called *molawo manoto*, or "straight" *molawo* (Atkinson 1989: 199). The next ritual outlined by Kruyt is *walia moganda* (Atkinson 1989: 207), which Atkinson encountered as *mabolong* and I knew as *momago*. The term *momago* was used by the communities studied by Atkinson to refer to all shamanic rituals (Atkinson 1989: 211), while the ritual I explore in this thesis is *mabolong* or *moganda*. These three names all seem to describe the same ritual, which I will analyse in Chapter II. Finally,

At the top of Kruyt's hierarchy are *to walia mamparada woto ntongku*, "the priests who climb the mountain slopes (where the *walia*-spirits live) along a ladder." These priests thus do not await the arrival of the helping spirits, but seek them out in their habitat. Kruyt does not mention traveling to the Owner (*Pue NdA*). He goes on to explain that the spirit familiars let down a ladder for the shamans to use to reach them. This mediation takes place in the *mosalia*, a great ritual performed at most once a year to promote the health and well-being of a community (Atkinson 1989: 207).

Neither I nor the two scholars who came before me managed to see this ritual. The scheme that follows summarises the similarities and differences found by each of these three scholars at different periods in time and in different geographical areas:

<b>Kruyt (1928)</b>	<b>Atkinson (1974-76)</b>	<b>Scalici (2011; 2016)</b>	<b>Ritual</b>
<i>Walia mangepe</i>	<i>Walia mangepe</i>	<i>Walia mangepe</i>	The shaman, without recourse to the spirits, ejects objects" from the body of the patient
<i>Walia mantende</i>	<i>Walia mantende</i>	<i>Molawo</i>	Ritual in which the hooks, whose presence in the body is caused by <i>Pue Lamo</i> , are removed from the patient
<i>Walia moganda</i>	<i>Mabolong</i>	<i>Momago</i>	Shamanic night ritual, accompanied by the sound of the gongs and drum ( <i>ganda</i> )
<i>Walia momparada woto ntongku</i>	<i>Walia momparada woto ntongku</i>	N/A	Ritual over three or seven nights, during which shamans heal the whole community
N/A	<i>Molawo</i>	N/A	Mother of all of the rituals. A one-night ritual, during which the shaman travels directly to <i>Pue</i>
<i>Molawo</i>	N/A	N/A	Shamanic chanting during the <i>walia momparada woto ntongku</i>

**Table 1:** On the right there is the description of a Wana ritual while on the left, when applicable, the term used by each source to indicate that specific ritual is given.

## The *molawo*

One of the most intriguing details highlighted by Table 1 is that the term *molawo* is used to indicate a different occasion in each period of study and in each area studied. For Kruyt, it is simply a chant that is part of a larger ritual, and for Atkinson it is the mother of all of the rituals. For my own informants, it is a rare ritual, in which one shaman chants for a whole day (in keeping with Kruyt's observations), enacting a journey to *Pue Lamo*. This is considered the most powerful ritual of all and not all shamans know it; perhaps in this power, there a link to the mother-of-all-rituals status described by Atkinson. The *molawo* is quite a rare event; in a full year, I had the opportunity to attend this ritual just once, and even on that occasion, it was not complete. I have seen no indications that either Grumbliés (who carried out one year of fieldwork) or Journet and Nougazol (who have worked with Wana people for 20 years) ever managed to observe one. On the occasion that I did so, I was walking in the jungle with my guide and our friend, the shaman Apa Ingus, and was unprepared to record the entire ritual. Fortunately, though, the *molawo* consists of four repeated parts, and I was able to record at least one iteration of each of these four parts.

There are three reasons that make this ritual not as common as the *momago*. First, it is considered only as a last resource. It is only when the *momago* and the western medicine have failed that people organise a *molawo*. Second, not every shaman is able to officiate this ritual, but only the most knowledgeable, making it harder to find a shaman able to perform it. Finally, this ritual is dangerous. The shaman engages directly with the vengeful god *Pue Lamo*, and the illness of the patient could end up being transferred to one of the few participants, or to the shaman itself. The absence of instrumental music, playfulness, a large participation and food create a severe atmosphere unique among the Wana rituals. In fact, there were only eight people present on this occasion: the shaman Apa Danto, the patient, the chief-village Apa Ede, a woman and her child, my guide Ajeran, Apa Ingus, and I. This means that only five of the eight people present were actually expected at the ritual, and three of them were central participants, the shaman, the patient and the shaman's assistant. It is not only music that is forbidden during this ritual, but all loud noise is taboo, perhaps as it recalls the thunder sent by the vengeful god *Pue Lamo*, god of thunder. At the same time, music is not required because the core purpose of this ritual is not to call the spirits but instead to mediate between the shaman and *Pue Lamo*. During the *molawo*, the shaman meets *Pue Lamo* and asks the god to free the patient from the hooks that are pulling at his or her flesh. Disease is imagined as something concrete, as an "illness" that can be spat away or that takes the form of hooks that can be removed.

The *molawo* takes place during the day in small huts in the forest that are usually used to give refuge to travellers and workers in the paddy. Inside the hut on the occasion I witnessed it the sick person was lying on the floor – he had a respiratory problem – with the shaman, Apa Dende, on his right side and Apa Ede on the left assisting the shaman. Sitting close to the patient, the shaman held two tied green sugar canes perpendicular to the floor and began chanting while moving the sugar cane back and forth. Occasionally, he took a break to breathe again and to chew some betel leaf, while the other people chatted. The shaman seemed embarrassed to have me around, and the ill man seemed to be asleep, for he did not speak or open his eyes.

Once the first part of the ritual was complete, the shaman took a chicken, and spat into its anus to clean it. Sadly, I was not able to elicit an explanation for these actions. Meanwhile, the woman covered the patient with a long cloth, and the chicken was covered with a t-shirt (Img. 3). Any contact between the man and the chicken must be avoided as the ritual fails if the two touch; the purpose of the ritual is to move the illness from the patient to the ritual instruments, and any contact between the man and the animal breaks the flow of the disease from one being to the other. After the ritual, the chicken cannot be touched, killed or eaten because contact with it would infect others with the illness that has been extracted.

The shaman sat beside the patient, behind his back, passing the bird in circular motions over the patient's body while singing. During this ritual, the shaman sang the same chant three times while moving the animal from the patient's head to his feet and another three times while moving it from the feet to the head (Video 1). Near the end of the chant, the singing and the movement became slightly faster. When this part of the ritual finished, the chicken was put away and the length of cloth was removed from the patient's body.

The shaman, still sitting near the patient, began to pat the patient with the sugar canes, starting from the head and moving slowly down to the feet. He continued to sing while doing so and there was a clear connection between the rhythm of the song and the shaman's movements. A little more time was spent patting the feet before the shaman patted the canes on his own hand. This patting was repeated three times, going from the head to the feet, and another three times going from the feet to the head.



**Img. 3:** The shaman Apa Danto just before passing the chicken over the patient. This process will allow the passing of the illness from the person to the animal. Both beings are covered to avoid any contact that could make the ritual fail.

After these six passages, the shaman put away the cane and took out a piece of cloth. This was passed over the patient's body, the action accompanied by the shaman's chanting. He did this three times, each time starting from the head and finishing on the feet, and each time placing the used cloth inside a larger one and then picking this up to continue. Again, this action was repeated three times from the head to the feet and three times from the feet to the head. The movement from the head to feet and vice versa could be a representation of time; dramatizing the path of the sun could be a way of helping the shaman to obtain control over time and thus to restore mythical time. Likewise, the disposal of the ritual instruments at the end of the *molawo* is strongly linked to the sun and the sky; one sugar cane is buried pointing in the direction of the rising sun, while the other is placed on the patient's roof, pointing towards the setting sun. The cloths are placed on the roof, halfway between the patient (on the ground) and *Pue Lamo*a (in the sky).

Unlike in the *momago*, taboos and vows play an important role in the *molawo*. In the seven days that follow the ritual, the patient is not allowed to do certain things:

- 1) Leave the house. More generally, it is forbidden to touch the ground.
- 2) Touch metals. This is linked to the fact that metal attracts lightning, and *Pue Lamo*a is the god of lightning.
- 3) Eat meat.

4) Become exposed to loud noise, such as music or the sound of scooters. Apa Ede told me that loud noises are also connected with thunder, and also that during the ritual a loud noise could shock the patient.

5) Speak inappropriately – in other words, to gossip or swear

6) Work.

7) Touch fire or get too close to it. The heat can also be linked to lightning.

The shaman too must avoid certain actions and circumstances, depending on the type of disease that the sufferer was inflicted with. For example, in the case of rheumatism, the shaman cannot eat spicy food, and in the case of chickenpox or measles, they cannot eat food of a red colour. The *walia* (spirit) indicates what a shaman can or cannot do at the end of the ritual. It is clear how these prohibitions and vows are strongly related to the characteristics of the illness, becoming a perfect externalisation of the ideas behind the sympathetic magic theorised by Frazer (1889),<sup>64</sup> in which resembling or the symbolic association between object, events or people can be used to influence an event. This kind of thought will play an important role in exploring the relationships between the invisible and the spiritual world, and will be discussed in Chapter V.

## Music

Music will be another key topic of this work, reflecting its importance to the Wana people themselves. There is no ritual without instrumental (*momago*) or sung music (*molawo* and *kayori*), and due to its peculiarities, music is the perfect medium to control spirits and emotion. The relationship between music, spirits and emotions and how it intertwines with the visible and invisible will be explored in Chapter V. In this section, my aim is to lay out basic information of a music culture that has never been documented before, providing a basis for understanding the roles of music in Wana life and rituality.

Wana leisure music is experiencing a period of great crisis; currently traditional music is a matter for a few elders, who still own and use the few musical instruments in circulation. The young are great music lovers but are much more interested in Indonesian popular music. The passion for this music is so strong that they buy mobile phones just to listen to MP3 recordings of it, there being no telecommunications signal in the jungle; the phones are given to them by friends and relatives from outside the forest. Playing the guitar is very common among young people, and they mainly use the instrument to play pop hits.

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<sup>64</sup> In 1878, the German scholar Richard Andree already theorized sympathetic magic in his work *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*.

I received many requests for new strings from my trips to Palu. It seems that music is maintaining its importance in Wana society, even though the traditional forms are being replaced by modern mainstream ones. Indeed, after centuries of vitality and presence in the community, Wana traditional music seems to be approaching the end of its time, and documenting and safeguarding this treasure has been a major motivation for me.

It has not been easy to approach this tradition. This is not because of a lack of Wana interest in sharing their music with me, but because of the difficulty in finding and reconstructing musical instruments and, ultimately, finding players. Often, people do not dedicate much care towards their instruments; they are, in fact, placed in the corners of their houses or between roof inlets and are often abandoned there for years. Usually, an unusable instrument is not replaced (again reflecting the idea of that which is not needed also not being wanted), effectively reducing the number of specimens and the possibility of their discovery by new generations. During my stay, I found with difficulty only two *geso* (spike fiddles), two *popondo* (chest resonators), and three *tulali* (flutes); for the other instruments, I had to find people able to make them. Even if traditional music is disappearing, the strong cultural connection between music and the invisible is still strong and crucial to understand Wana rituality and human-spirit relationships. As Friedson notes “music makes translucent the boundary between human and spirit” (1996: 100). As we will see, a few of these instruments have a direct connection with the invisible world, and they are able to affect material, emotional and spiritual realities with their sounds.

Wana people have a great awareness of the sound quality that an instrument must possess and the choice of materials is always aimed at achieving the best possible result. Even when forced by the lack of materials, for instance by building resonance boxes from plastic containers, the Wana always want to obtain the desired sound. They are also very careful and critical about the musical instruments built by other people; I encountered some that had been built by people considered not up to the task, and these people were widely criticised for sloppy work.<sup>65</sup>

Many Wana people have great practical knowledge about music but do not possess a specific vocabulary; in fact, there are no words for “music” or “rhythm,” while they do clearly distinguish instrumental music (*krambangan*) from that for single voice or for voice and instrumental accompaniment (*linga-linga*). In addition, words do not distinguish clearly between the intensity and the pitch of a sound; the word *malangan* means both

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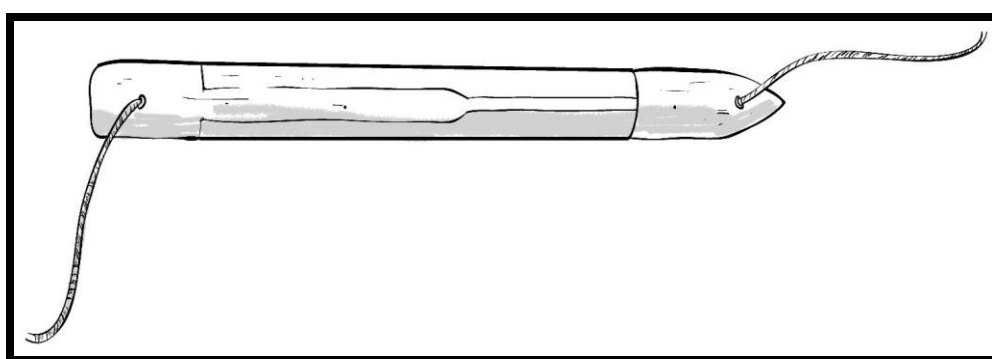
<sup>65</sup> When looking for somebody to make me instruments, I had trouble finding a volunteer, even if the work was paid. All of the instruments that I brought back from the field were all made especially for me and I paid for them all. Knowing the Wana approach towards replacing objects, I never took an instrument from a Wana owner.

“high-pitched” and “strong/intense,” while the term *rede* is used to indicate a low-pitched and a low intensity sound. Each note is simply called *soo* (sound).

The instruments present in Wana traditions are:

1) *Yori*

A mouth harp with a case made to carry it safely while travelling. The instrument is made from the palm of the *enau* tree; from the plant, they obtain a thin rectangle in which the *gila* (lamina) is obtained and this acts as a vibrating body. Small holes are made, through which two thin chords of bark are passed and fixed. These strings are used both to hold the instrument (with the left hand) and to make the blade vibrate (when the other is pulled with the right hand).



**Img. 4:** A *yori* (drawing by Santo D’Alia)

The rhythmic pulling of the string causes the vibration of the foil, and consequently the emission of the sound (Track 1). The case, called the *tonga yori*, has a tubular shape and is made of bamboo. Once the *yori* is stored in its case, strings are tied around the outside to secure it and to allow it to be safely transported.

Apa Sudin told me:

We played this when we did not have the guitar.

Although in the past this instrument was very widespread, the use of the *yori* now seems to have completely disappeared. Because of bad eyesight, the man who made the instrument for me had to be helped by his son, who had never seen the instrument before. As might be expected, the long period of obscurity for this instrument also meant that I could find no players. People I interviewed knew how to make the instrument sound, but they did not have the knowledge to play whole melodies.

## 2) *Tulalo*

This instrument is made of a single piece of bamboo on which two side openings are made, proceeding from the top to the handle (*konkonya*). There are two *soru* (small holes) that modulate the sound by being closed or opened with the fingers.

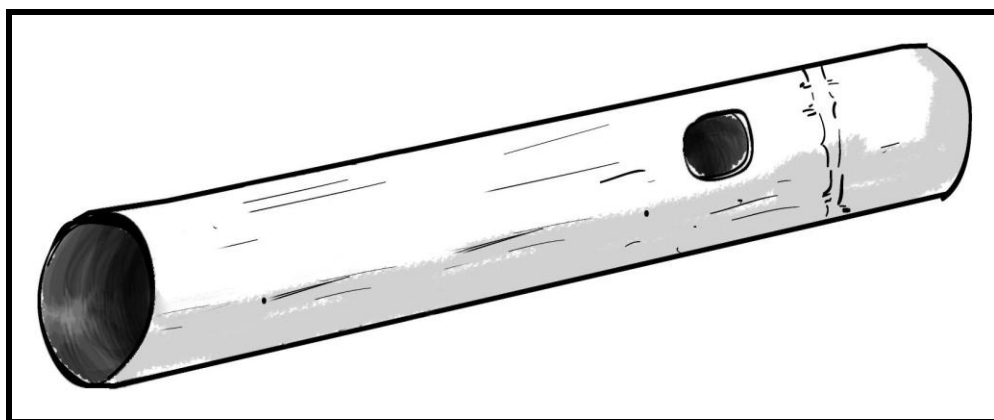


**Img. 5:** A *tulalo* (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

The sound (Track 2) is obtained by striking the instrument on the palm of the free hand, and my informants told me that the instrument was exclusively used to provide accompaniment. This instrument has almost disappeared and is no longer used.

## 2) *Balo Pombongo*

This instrument is a war horn made of bamboo. The end of the bamboo cane is cut off and, on the side, a *woro* (large hole) is made to act as a mouthpiece.

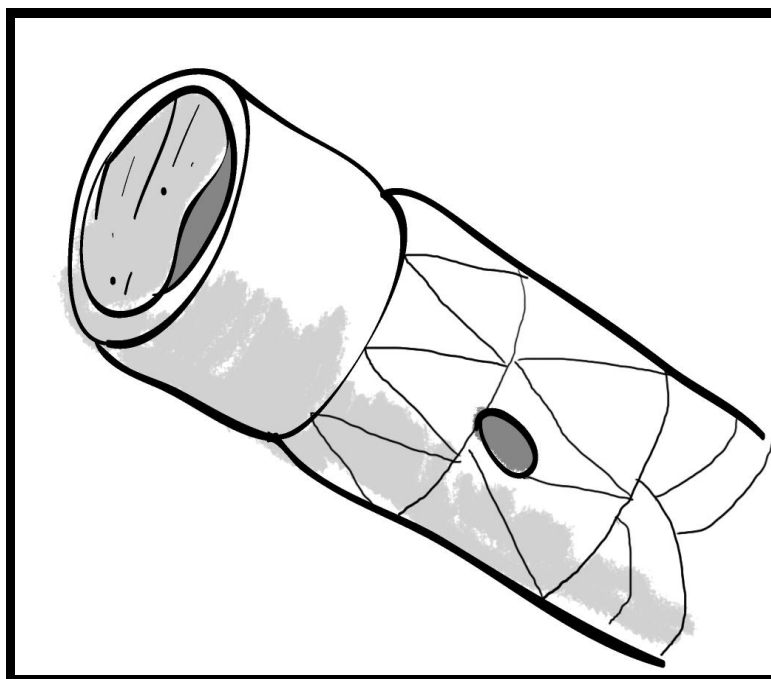


**Img. 6:** A *balo pombongu* (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

The instrument (Track 3) is not usually played outside of its war functions for fear of recalling war and other misfortunes. Wana people believe that the sound of something can recall whatever it signifies, so the act of playing war music outside of war times can bring about war.

### 3) *Tulali*

This is a bamboo flute with three holes and a mouth opening (*pagoma*) that is similar to that of a panpipe (Track 4).



**Img. 7:** Detail of a *tulali*'s mouth opening (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

It is considered a purely feminine instrument and it is closely connected to life and death; in fact, the instrument appears in the myth surrounding the funeral ritual along with its masculine counterpart, the *popondo*. It is also considered a powerful instrument of love, and it was mentioned to me several times that:

When you play the *tulali* men come to you.

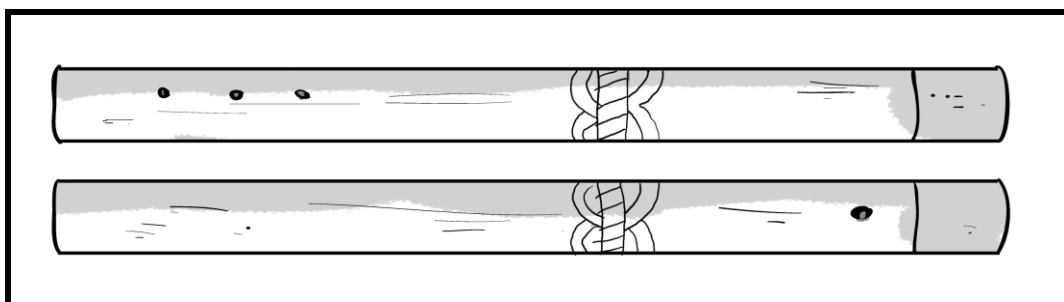
Indo Pino herself told me that:

Once I was playing the *tulali* in my house, and my husband came and he already knew what to do.

As Sachs notes, “Owing to its tubular shape, it represents the penis” (Sachs 1962: 95). This connection between flutes and sex is present in many cultures, although usually the flute is considered a masculine and not a feminine instrument, the flute seems to have charming powers everywhere. “Among American Indians, the flute belongs greatly to lovers and love [...] Among the Sioux, young men in love learn the flute so they may woo their girls in the proper way” (Sachs 1962: 95). Likewise, the Temiar of Malaysia use the instrument in courtship (Roseman 2008: 320).

Use of the *tulali* is disappearing among Wana people; only a few old women still know how to build and play it, but most no longer have the breath to play it fluently. However, one particular melody for this instrument seems to be well known. In fact, Indo Pino, who was considered the best Wana flute player, knew only one melody, although she told me that she played it differently on different flutes. This indicates that musical diversity is achieved more through articulating the individual tones of a melody differently on subsequent occasions rather than through adopting different melodies or structures.

*Tulali* can be decorated with *rando* (decorations) of geometric patterns. After engraving, they are coloured white with a powder derived from molluscs.

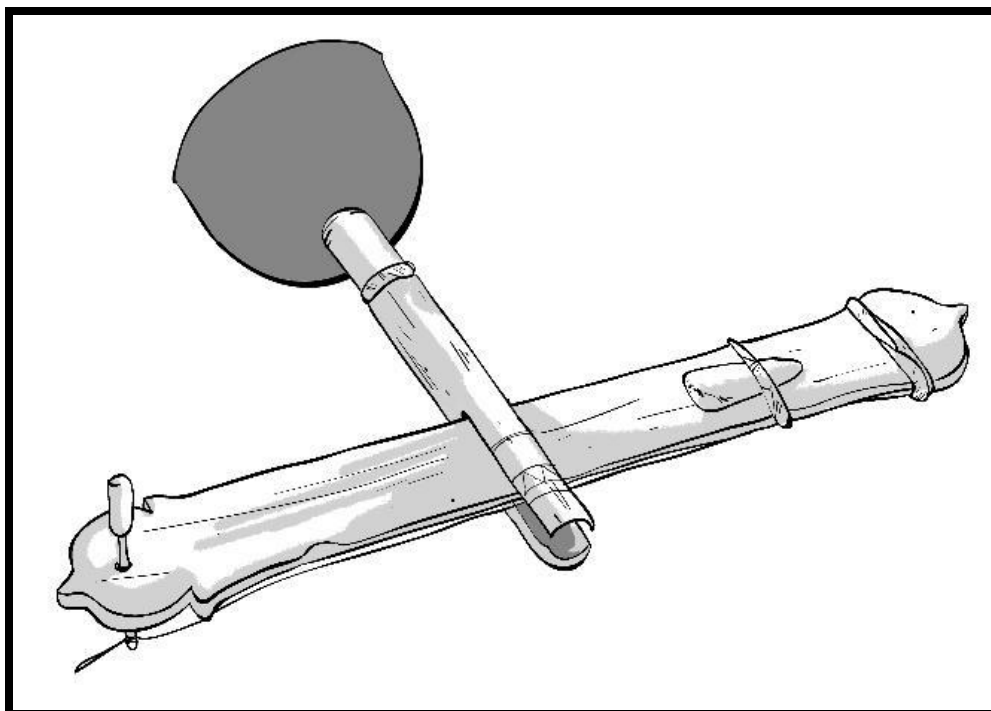


**Img. 8:** A *tulali* with typical decorations (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

Two other flutes and a clarinet are considered part of the same family as the *tulali*: the *lolove* (a three-hole spout flute that is played with the nose), the *polio* (a three-hole transverse flute) and the *kukua* (a three-hole clarinet). That it took four months before I learned of their existence indicates that these instruments have as good as disappeared. There are very few people who still know how to build these instruments, and those that were built for me were almost completely unplayable, except for a *kukua*. Even with a well-constructed instrument, it was an even greater obstacle to find anyone still capable of playing it.

#### 4) *Popondo*

This is a chest resonator, of which the tuning seems to vary between a quartertone below and a quartertone above F3 (Track 5). It consists of a sound box made of half a coconut that rests on the player's chest, a wooden part, parallel to the chest, on which one string is fixed, and a piece of bamboo that connects the coconut to the wood. In the past, the string was made from the *enau*, the same tree from which the *yori* is made.



**Img. 9:** A *popondo* (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

As in many other Wana musical compositions, melodies played on this instrument are limited in range to the interval of a fourth (F-B) and, like many other Wana compositions, the player alternates linear melodic intervals and repeated notes (the initial F and the final G). Similar melodic structures can be also found in the songs. The melodies of this instrument are very repetitive and, again, the timbre is the main feature of this instrument; in fact, it has a particularly evanescent sound (Track 5).

A masculine counterpart of the *tulali*, these two instruments are present in the founding myth of death and in courtship practices. Also, like the flutes, it can be decorated with the same geometric patterns that are meant to attract the attention of the opposite sex. In fact, these are the only two decorated instruments in the Wana tradition, and their uniqueness again points to a powerful love call. As Apa Ingus told me:

There is a woman in Taronggo who, caught in jealousy, has burned her husband's  
*popondo*.

Indo Pino added that:

When a man plays the *popondo* under a woman's house, she will know what the  
man wants to drink or eat.

Atkinson discusses how these instruments are connected to the world of spirits: "It is not uncommon for one who is skilled at playing a musical instrument such as flute or

stringed chest resonator to play haunting and plaintive songs to attract hidden beings” (Atkinson 1989: 54). There are strong connections between Wana music and the non-visible; ritual instruments recall the spirits, the *balo pombongo* evokes war, while the *tulali* and the *popondo* call up love.

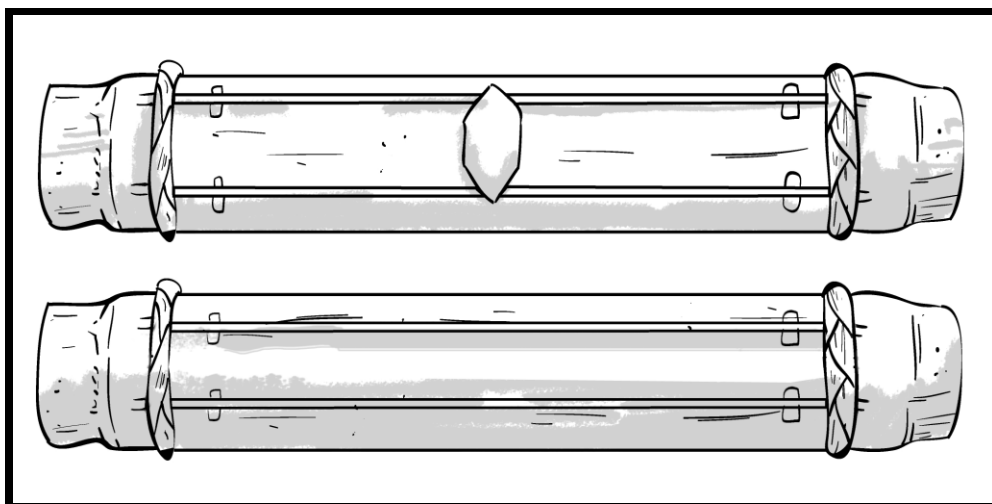
#### 5) *Tetebua*

This is a bamboo zither, like those present throughout Southeast Asia, including in Malaysia (Roseman 2008: 318) and Vietnam (Nguyễn 2008: 300). Before the arrival of the gongs, this was the shamanic instrument par excellence, and its use in shamanic rituals can still be found among the Temiar (Roseman 1993: 131). The connection between the bamboo zither and the gong can be found in many other Southeast Asian populations such as the Jarai of Vietnam: “The sophisticated Jarai version (gong) is played polyphonically to imitate the gong ensembles” (Nguyễn 2008: 300) and the Philippines (Canave-Dioquino, Santos and Maceda 2008: 433). Among the Wana people, the instrument is more closely linked to drums; in fact, Wana people talk about the *tetebua* as a drum and they use the word *tamburu* to refer to a slightly different version of this instrument.

Apa Ede told me:

With a big bamboo it sounds like a drum.

The instrument is made of bamboo, preferably a short and wide piece that is conducive to obtaining a strong and deep sound, although I saw a variety of shapes and sizes ranging from 30 to 100cm in length. On the bamboo there are four strings that are raised by placing small bridges under them. Between two of these strings a hole is made that is covered by a bamboo lamella. This lamella has its ends carved into the shape of a beak so that it can be hooked onto the two strings that support it. When struck, the lamella emits the same note as the two strings to which it is attached.



**Img. 10:** A tetebuga, showing the four strings and the central lamella (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

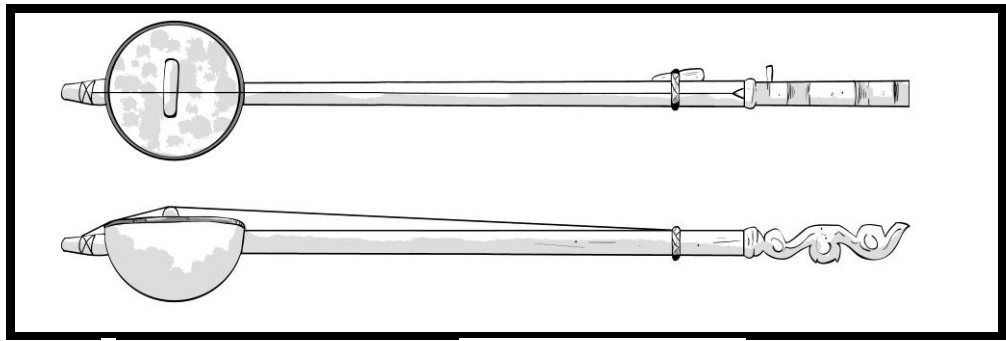
A side hole is engraved to improve the sound (Track 6), but it is also used to store the sticks when the instrument is not being played. These sticks are the *votu*, which is made of bamboo and used to play the two lower strings, and the *tumbai*, which is made of wood and used to beat the central lamella and the two strings to which it is attached. The instrument can be played by two people at the same time, each with two sticks, and it can also be played with the fingers in a pizzicato style.

In the northern area of Morowali, there is a variation called the *tamburu*, which has the two strings on which the lamella is fixed replaced by a single large band made from the same bamboo. The repertoire of this instrument is much more varied and broad compared to those of the other instruments, even if the melodies are composed of only two notes.

This instrument is tuned to reproduce two notes: C3 (the lamella and the two strings attached to it) and F3 (the other two strings). It is possible that this two-note tuning is due to its ancient shamanic function, with monotonous music apparently well suited to triggering a process of dissociation of the self.

#### 6) *Geso*

This is a single-string spike fiddle, generally tuned a quarter of a tone under C3 and almost certainly of Muslim derivation (Track 7). Many other stringed instruments in the Indo-Malaysian area, such as the *rebab*, are said to have been introduced in Malaysia with Islamization (Schaeffner 1978: 247). It consists of a coconut resonance box, covered with lizard (*kenbosu*) or snake skin. The wood of the *ba-a* tree is used for the handle, and much attention is paid to the decoration and personalisation of this part of the instrument.



**Img. 11:** The side and the front of a *geso* (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

In the past, the strings were made from the fibres of the *enau* palm, but now fishing line or wire is used. The bow is made from bamboo, while the strings are still made from the fibres of the *enau* palm, which are cooked before use in order to make them more resistant. A long time ago, the bow's strings were derived from the mane of a horse (*jaran*). A fundamental accessory for the *geso* is the dammar gum that is passed on the string of the bow to increase friction.

This instrument is used, in particular, to accompany the singing of the player. Songs called *linga-linga* are improvised on a fixed structure of four lines (*togonjaya*) that must all end with the same vowel.

The shape of these songs seems to have an Islamic influence, since the structure is very similar to that of the Malaysian *pantun*, which is of Arab derivation. The latter is a very common strophic form in the Indo-Malaysian area, formed by a rhymed quatrain (Matusky and Chopyak 2008: 234- 235). It seems that the documented example of *pantun* closest to that of the Wana area comes from the Bugis people: "After a day spent working at sea or in the fields, some Buginese and the Makassarese like to spend their evenings singing quatrains (*pantun*), sometimes improvising humorously in reply to each other's contributions. These performances are accompanied by a local zither (*kacapi*)" (Kartomi et al. 2008: 403). *Pantun* is usually of eight syllables (Matusky and Chopyak 2008: 242), and with some exceptions it seems that it also follows this poetic structure in the Wana context. Although the poetic form does not allow much freedom, the subject of these songs is extremely free and can range from love to mythology. In the past, they were used for marriage requests; in a continuous improvisation, the girl's suitor and parents argued about the possibility of a marriage.

Om Suma even composed a song about me:

U'ngka nja Italia	From Italy
Jelah re Indonesia	He came to Indonesia
Ratah re tana Marisa	In the village of Marisa
Damam pali linga-linga	To look for songs

Sometimes in the singing, vowels are added for decorative purposes (Track 8):

(E) <i>Togou</i> rapa Potaro	<i>Togou</i> is on the top of Mount Potaro
Matela Kayaku-yaku	There is a storm and I am waiting to go
(E)Huja matombo larau	It rains intensely in the sky
Dana sambenyi nakamu	Sure it started a night ago

A very common song (Track 9) is:

<i>Tongsi</i> re bumbu paseku	<i>Tongsi</i> in on the roof
Bunganya motendelero	Sings about his flower
Totamo kono kuendo	That he can't remember
<i>Nagama</i> tolulu eo	The snake follows the sun

The meaning of the text of the last song is as follows:

*Tongsi* sings a song of love (a marriage proposal) to a woman who says “no” because when he goes to another village he will forget about her, like the snake that follows the sun and never stops in a single place.

Unlike many Wana musical expressions, the songs for voice and *geso* seem to demonstrate greater inventiveness and freedom. The melodic range of these songs exceeds the limit of the interval of a fourth. Usually the same note opens the first and the third line, while another note begins the second and fourth line as well as closing all of the lines and so serving as a tonal reference point for the whole piece. The instrumental music and the voice follow the same melodic structure, but it is performed by the instrument at an octave above the voice. The instrumental music dominates the text and not vice versa; in fact, Wana music adapts, through vocalic additions, a potentially infinite number of texts to a finite number of instrumental bases.

## Conclusions

With this chapter, it has been my intention to emphasise that Wana culture is not an isolated unchanging entity but an ever-adapting reality that has been shaped by the ecology, history and the relationships with the other communities and the colonial empires; it has proved itself to be a highly active, fluid and resilient culture, with many distinctive elements enduring even in the face of the strongly oppositional stances imposed from outside by laws and world religion. For Wana people adaptability has become a necessity for survival in a life that they consider wretched, but that actually is rich in friendship and sense of community. Wana people often told me that they are “*satu keluarga*” (one family), indicating more than the literal kinship they have with the many relatives around them, they feel that all the members of the community are part of the same family: the Wana people.

At the same time, this chapter has sought to provide a cultural grounding as a foundation for understanding the two rituals which will be explored over the course of the next two chapters, the shamanic ritual *momago* and the funeral *kayori*. Mirroring my own first period of fieldwork, it has taken on the initial “culture shock” of encountering new ways of thinking and behaving, offering a general picture of Wana culture and guidelines for becoming orientated to Wana rituality. Wana people’s understanding of their own history, relationships with other groups, conceptions of time, understandings of numerical symbolism, and musical practices are key areas of concern in this work, since they deeply inform how the focal rituals unfold and the complex array of meanings communicated through them. With this knowledge, the rest of this work unfolds in much the same way as I experienced my second period of fieldwork – with a deeper level of awareness to focus on the details, to recognise focal points, and to see the connections between different elements.

### III

#### **The *momago***

The previous chapter gave the opportunity to the reader to encounter the world of Wana people and to obtain a basic knowledge that will make it possible to engage with the rituals but to start making a deeper reflection on them. This process will be similar to my second period of fieldwork, where I no longer had the shock of being immersed in a completely new environment, with little or no information at my disposal. In that second experience, I was more prepared for the rituals I was going to observe, and I had the maturity and the serenity to start focusing on the deeper level of Wana rituality and to see the powerful value of the details.

In this and the next chapter, I will describe and analyse the two most common Wana rituals: the *momago* (shamanic ritual) and the *kayori* (funeral). These two chapters add further information to the data given in the previous chapter, leading towards the final chapter, which will dig deeper into the data collected and reach a new level of understanding that will expose the links between Wana values and rituals.

At this stage, I will initially explore the role and the duties of Wana shamans (*tau walia*) and the indigenous conception of illness and what might be termed “inner illness.” Then, I will describe the *momago*, detailing its complex structure and examining its music. I will also explore the meanings and aims of this ritual, which go well beyond the straightforward healing of the patient. In doing so, I aim to reveal the dichotomy intrinsic to the ritual: the counterpoint between the negative energies derived from illness and the playfulness that characterises the occasion.

#### **Encountering the *momago***

The *momago* is the most common shamanic ritual among the Wana people. It is a night-long ritual during which a group of shamans enter into trance and travel between the human and the spiritual world to take care of the souls of their patients. The trance is made possible because of the ritual music, produced by two gongs<sup>66</sup> and a drum, which call the spirits and act as a bridge between the human and the spiritual/mythical world. The

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<sup>66</sup> «In many cultures, gong ensemble music in ritual is seen as the actual medium through which the human and spiritual worlds merge» (Pugh-Kitingan 2012: 149)

counterpoint between human and spiritual, conceived and expressed in opposing terms between visible and invisible, holds a special position in the Wana way of interpreting reality. The atmosphere of the *momago* is itself characterised by another duality, the continuous alternation of centrifugal and centripetal forces produced by the many shamanic journeys during which “the centrifugality of the patient’s vital elements is matched and conquered by the centrifugal path of the shaman and his familiar” (Atkinson 1989: 123)

These journeys are incorporated into a larger performance, during which the bystanders (both as observers and actors) enjoy the opportunity to stay, drink, and joke, contributing to the playful and chaotic atmosphere of the ritual. This dynamic, which is actually more organised than the “chaos” that I had initially seen it as, is marked by a counterpoint of opposite elements (dreadfulness vs. playfulness, centrifugal vs. centripetal, visible vs. invisible and individual vs. community) and the role of this ritual in the survival of the entire community will be a central topic that permeates this work.

The first record of the *momago* comes from the Dutch missionary Albertus Christiaan Kruyt (1930). After a long period of academic neglect, this culture was studied in depth by the U.S. anthropologist Jane Monnig Atkinson in the 1970s. Atkinson channelled her efforts into analysing the words of the shamanic chant of the *momago* ritual and its political role within the Wana community (1989). Reading her book *The art and politics of Wana shamanism* convinced me to undertake my first fieldwork among Wana people, looking at the relationship between shamanism and music. While reading her publications I was also surprised to notice a lack of interest in one important element that, I think, makes the *momago* ritual so important in the lives of Wana people: ritual music. The desire to fill this gap is one of the reasons behind this thesis. The present chapter examines how the *momago*, supported by ritual music and religious beliefs, helps the collective in directing its emotions towards the regeneration of the emotionally wounded community.

I had spent less than three weeks inside the Morowali forest when, in February 2011, I witnessed my first *momago*. Although I did not request it, the event was organised expressly for me with the supposed intention of helping me with my research. Actually, the Taronggo villagers saw an opportunity to have a party offered by the *buleh* (rich white Westerner). At the beginning, I was quite dubious about this ritual being organised, worried about the ethical implications of the “authenticity” of a ritual set up just for me, the researcher. Later, I understood that my moral dilemmas were products of this idea of “authenticity,” one based on the dichotomy between the original (a ritual made for the community) and the copy (a ritual made for the researcher/tourist) (Adams 1997; Hashimoto 2003). For the people I lived among, that dichotomy did not exist. They

considered me only as the person who was to pay for the ritual and not as its focal point; that first ritual was an authentic *momago*. I later discovered that if there is somebody eager or able to pay for the rite, any reason is a good one to throw a *momago*; the healing of a single member is just a pretext, an incentive to encourage somebody to spend the money on the ritual. On the contrary, the real aim is for there to be a playful event that will emotionally heal the entire community, truly a moment of re-creation. Atkinson had a similar experience before discovering that “Illness is only one excuse for a mabolong. Anticipation of misfortune, successful recoveries from previous illnesses, marriages, farming festivals, visits by prominent shamans, and a general desire to party, are all reasons to hold a mabolong” (1989: 6).

That first ritual quickly organised “for me” (in their words), proved very useful for my research and my fieldwork, showing me how a negative event like the sickness of a person could be transformed into a positive one. Throughout the night, people joked, danced and ate in an apparently chaotic manner, although gradually an order started to become discernible. Before this first experience in the field, due to my readings on the Siberian shamanism (Balzer 1997; Müller 2001), I had always imagined shamanic rituals to be extremely serious and solemn events in which an error could anger the spirits and cause the ritual to fail. Seeing and feeling the atmosphere that really characterises a *momago* turned out to be an intense emotional revelation for me. That experience and dynamic deeply fascinated me and opened my eyes to a new world. Moreover, the absence of a main patient started to cast a light on the marginal or sometimes even unnecessary role of a main patient in the *momago*, giving the first hints of the real protagonist of the ritual: the community. Already in the 70s, Atkinson underlined how “The role of the patient at a mabolong is passive and usually minor. In fact, the patient need not even be conscious or present for treatment to occur” (1989: 124). Due to the absence of a main patient on that first occasion, the shamans treated a series of adults and children for various minor issues. When there is a main patient, this individual is someone urgently in need of treatment and the most powerful shaman takes care of him or her.

The Wana people’s isolated rural circumstances mean that options for enjoying celebrations are limited, and the *momago* is perhaps their main form of festivity. Being an expensive event, however, it is usually only held for wedding celebrations, or when there is the necessity to cure somebody from “inner illness.” This necessity forces the sick person to become a patron, the person paying for the ritual not only for their sake but also the sake of the entire community. We start to see how *kasintuwu* (the sense of community) is at the base of the *momago*, showing how the community is more important than the single

member and how life has a meaning and a direction only inside the community; this idea is already present in the *momago* but it is pivotal in the *kayori* (funeral).

### Shamans and medicine

“Inner illness” is something that cannot be cured by doctors or by using indigenous medical knowledge, because it is an illness of the soul, not of the body. Desjarlais (1992) calls the illness caused by the absence of the soul the “loss of presence”. Shamans are often called medicine-men by many authors (Demetrio 1978; Eliade 1972; Lewis 1980; Miyazaki 2000; Wilkenman 1990) but this term is inappropriate when discussing Wana shamanism. Wana shamans do not have any more medical skills or knowledge than other members of the community, who ordinarily share a wide understanding of the medical plants growing inside the reserve and routinely use them to treat diarrhoea (*andolia*, *guampanha* and *gampu*), wounds (*koto*), colds (*umbu*), and lice and fleas (*kasiu* and *tambaole*). For more severe injuries, they resort to Western medicine, especially pills bought in small pharmacies outside the jungle,<sup>67</sup> and go to the local hospital in Kolonodale. The “inner illness” that shamans take care of refers to invisible problems that affect a patient’s soul; these problems include when the patient’s soul gets lost, escapes as a result of strong emotion, or is attacked by a *setan*. Nowadays, the term *setan* is used to refer to a wide range of different demons,<sup>68</sup> and is one of the many products of the influence of Christianity on Wana religion, which has provoked a simplification of their terminology.

In his monumental work on shamanism, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Eliade notes that “the Shaman is the great specialist in the human soul; he alone “sees” it, for he knows its “form” and its destiny” (Eliade 1972: 8). He continues: “And wherever the immediate fate of the soul is not at issue, wherever there is no question of sickness (= loss of the soul) or death, or of misfortune, or of a great sacrificial rite involving some ecstatic experience (mystical journey to the sky or the underworld), the shaman is not indispensable”. (Eliade 1972: 8). This description is consistent with the behaviour of Wana people, for whom shamanic services and presence are needed only to treat problems related to the soul. Rex L. Jones adds, “One might conclude that, wherever illness has nothing to do with the “soul”, shamans and shamanism will be conspicuously

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<sup>67</sup> It is important to underline that few Wana people use pills with caution. This habit, beyond the danger of an allergic attack, can be quite dangerous as it can lead to the inopportune, or overuse, of antibiotics and medicines.

<sup>68</sup> In the past, there were different kinds of demons like the liver-eater *measa* or *pongko*, the soul trader *tau tolo*, the *salibi*, which punished those who spoke badly, the *tabar*, which crossed the rainbow to hurt Wana people, and so on (Atkinson 1992: 48).

absent” (Jones 1968: 332-333). Wikan arrives to write that “when fright strikes, it is the spirit which is afflicted. For this reason, no medical doctor can effect a cure. Medical personnel can only aggravate the illness, perhaps beyond recall” (1989b: 33).

In my experience, even Wana shamans themselves use pills and other medicines to treat illnesses not related to the soul; once, Apa Tobi came to me asking for medicine for a toothache, while Apa Main asked me to buy some medicines from the pharmacy. Atkinson clarifies that “medicines, in contrast to names and spells, are not a requisite for shamanhood, nor is their use a part of shamanic performance, whereas without verbal magic a shaman is not a shaman” (Atkinson 1989: 74), considering the fact that “they treat not overt symptoms, but unseen causes” (ibid.: 75). All these affirmations are convincing, and I strongly support the idea that Wana shamanhood is strictly related to issues of the soul and not those of the body, in other words with the invisible and not the visible. However, I have to point out that I did also witness one incident suggesting that spells, in the present time at least, can be used to treat small ailments not related to the soul, such as fevers and headaches. Once, the grandson of Indo Pino, a powerful female shaman, got a fever which I personally recorded as 37.8 °C. He was clearly feeling terrible, shaking and complaining about the headache, until Indo Pino recited a *do'a* (spell) on the head of the child. He quickly felt better and went outside of the hut to play in the rain, without showing any adverse signs.

Nowadays, Wana culture is an agricultural one, and this already places their religious practices outside of the definition of pure shamanism given by Winkelman (1990), that requires a hunting and gathering environment. Moreover, while perfectly demonstrating all elements of a shaman/healer, agricultural and hunting magic is not performed anymore, and nor are animal spirits used. I prefer not to use the term “healer” or “medicine-man” because *tau walia* do not possess any special expertise in Wana medical culture beyond that which is shown by almost every member of the community. What characterises the Wana phenomenon is a complete absence of specific medical knowledge, but an extreme specialisation in matters of the spiritual/invisible world.

The illnesses related to the soul are invisible to common people. They are part of the spiritual reality, a world that in the past formed part of one single entity with the human realm, but which nowadays is not accessible by most humans. Only the shaman, sharing his or her status with the spirits, is able to shift from their human (visible) being to become a spiritual (invisible) being through the control of their soul. Like in many other shamanic cultures (Eliade 1972; Roseman 1993), Wana people commonly believe human beings possess three souls: *lengke* (the shadow), *koro uli* (the blood) and *tanuana* (the “agent of dreams”). While the *lengke* is always with his or her owner, and the *koro uli* is the soul that

goes to heaven once the person dies, the *tanuana* leaves its owner every night during sleep to wander around the worlds. Wana people believe that what we see in our dreams is what the *tanuana* sees and experiences in its night wanderings. “The *tanuana* is a tiny image of its owner, residing in the crown of the head at the fontanel. [...] When recounting a dream, a wana speaks of the dreamed self as “my *tanuana*”“ (Atkinson 1989: 106). In these excursions, it is possible for the *tanuana* to be abducted or wounded by *setans*, or to get lost in the spirit realm. An intense negative emotion, such as anger or jealousy, can make the soul escape or get sick; for this reason, Wana people tend to have a resigned reaction to the negative events in their lives, often coping with pain through humour. When the soul is wounded or separated from its vessel for a long period, the person falls sick and the shaman must venture into the spirit realm, accompanied by their spirits, to find out the cause of the illness and to facilitate the eventual recovery of the soul. Roseman describes the effect of the prolonged absence of the soul among the Temiar of Malaysia, a cultural community that shares many common traits with the Wana: “Soul loss is marked by weariness, excessive sleeping, and weeping, and may lead to coma, delirium, and death” (Roseman 1990: 232). The Wana, like the Temiar and the Sakai (Porath 2012: 8), also consider the head (specifically the area of the occipital bone)<sup>69</sup> to be the house of the soul, and they show similar symptoms when they have “inner illness.” Like for the Temiar, the *tanuana* moves in the jungle with the other spirits, but the Wana conception of jungle goes well beyond the material manifestation. For Wana people, the jungle is a special place belonging to the spirits; in fact, all that is outside of the human realm of the village falls within the realm of the spirits, including the forest, dreams, the afterlife and even in the place of *Pue*. The human-spirit duality and its geographical representation through the centre-periphery duality lies at the heart of Wana people’s understanding of the world, and it will be analysed in depth in Chapter V.

### **Liminality and overlapping**

To succeed in their task, it is crucial for shamans to possess a wide knowledge of the invisible world of the spirits, since traveling in the invisible realm is dangerous and they could get lost and die. “We should always keep in mind that shamanizing is not a spiritual nicety but an adventurous and, at times, arduous necessity fraught with dangers. At any time relations with spirits can go wrong” (Porath 2013b: 26).

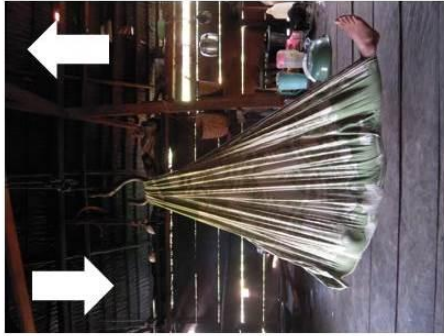
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<sup>69</sup> The occipital bone is the main bone of the back and lower part of the skull.

In Wana culture, dreams, the afterlife and the spirit world are strongly related to each other, even sometimes overlapping. While dreaming, a Wana person becomes able to travel among the different worlds and even into the afterlife. During this time as a pure soul separated from the body, they can do almost anything that was possible during mythical time; they return to that time when humans and spirits lived together. Wana people conceptualise dream time-space as something concrete in which the soul can become trapped forever. It is useful to note that “Shamans’ songs are likened to lullabies. (As one mother explained the difference, the former require magical spells and the latter do not)” (Atkinson 1989: 284). It is not the right place and time to successfully explore the relationship between trance, healing rituals, movement and sleep but I would like to offer a short but, I hope, fruitful, reflection. Plato, in his work *Laws*, discusses the role of music, exercise and dance in education offering an interesting testimony that stimulated my mind:

when mothers want their restless children to go to sleep they do not employ rest, but, on the contrary, motion-rocking them in their arms; nor do they give them silence, but they sing to them and lap them in sweet strains; and the Bacchic women are cured of their frenzy in the same manner but the use of the dance and of music (Plato 2005: 75).

While Plato’s intentions did not include discussing music and trance in shamanic rituals, I see a useful connection between Atkinson’s suggestions regarding lullabies and magic and Plato’s reasoning, especially considering the similarity between the male shamanic dance and the movement of Wana cots (Table 3). We will soon see how the *motaro*, the male shamanic dance, is composed of up and down movements, with *motaro* literally meaning “jumping up and down.” In the same way, Wana cots (a *sarong* on a hook placed on a horizontal wooden stick) are not swung (← →) like Western cribs, but rebounded (↑↓). Sometimes the hook is attached to a spring to increase the movement.



**Img. 12:** The vertical movement of the *motaro* has some similarity ( $\approx$ )<sup>70</sup> with the movement of Wana cribs.

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<sup>70</sup> We have geometrical similarity ( $\approx$ ) when two geometrical objects have the same shape. In this case, I used the similarity symbol to indicate a similar movement.

Moreover, the following testimony about a female shaman from the north highlights relationships between trance and dreaming:

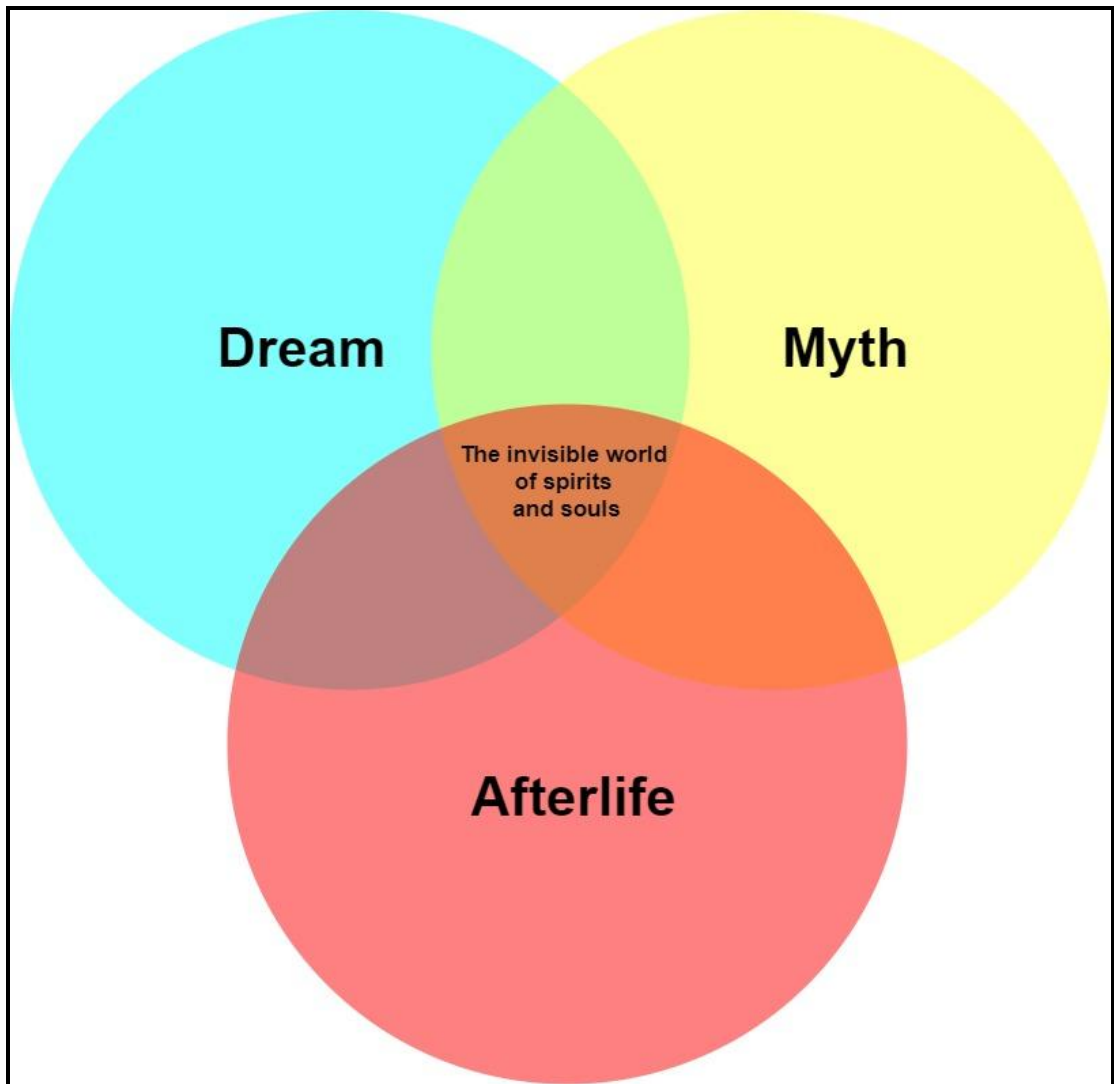
Indo Pino: “There’s a woman in Posangke called Mime. When she hears the music, she starts trembling. People cannot see them but there are spirits with her. And when she sings *she is dreaming* and the spirits speak for her”<sup>71</sup>

Moreover, Atkinson affirms that “Shamans see in waking states what others can see only in dreams. [...] People liken the experience of a performing shaman to “the state of a person dreaming” (*ewa kare’e tau mangipi*)” (Atkinson 1989: 92, emphasis in the original). Therefore, the trance of the shaman and the state of dreaming are similar experiences for Wana people. “Dreams – perceived through the agent of one’s *tanuana* – are most people’s only direct access to spirits and hidden realms of existence” (Atkinson 1989: 91). Like music, dreams act as a bridge between the visible and invisible realms. I am aware that drawing connections between the *motaro* and the movement of cots is based only on an intuition, but it does seem more than plausible considering the similarity between trance and dreaming states in Wana culture. As de Martino explains, the exploitation of the lability of the oneiric consciousness as a preparation to trance, or as a direct means of communicating with “spirits”, has a clear psychological motivation. He stresses how “oneiric events can have, for the magical consciousness and under given conditions, an equal (and sometimes greater) value in comparison with the events experienced by the waking consciousness” (de Martino 2011: 90).<sup>72</sup> More importantly, among Wana people, dreams are a gate on to mythical time, function as a liminal time-space where all wonders converge, and are the place where humans can embrace again the totality of the soul and the power of myth.

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<sup>71</sup> From an interview with Indo Pino, May 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Translation from Italian by the author.



**Img. 13:** The realms of dreaming, the afterlife and myth overlapping and converging in the spiritual realm. The *momago* opens a door to that realm, making a connection between humans and spirits.

Table 4 illustrates how three different space-times intersect and overlap at the invisible world of spirits and souls. Dreams, myths and the afterlife share the power of myth; they are extraordinary space-times where humans, separated from their bodies and their human limits, can fly, become rich and have everything they want.

Being the living connection between the invisible and the visible world is the key characteristic of a shaman; they are the living proof of the existence of mythical time, when humans and spirits lived together. They are a living *liminality*. The term used by Wana people to refer to a shaman is *tau walia*, which literally means “human spirit.” Since the end of mythical time, the shamans have been the only people able to abandon their humanity to access the spiritual realm. They are the point of conjunction between the visible (material world) and the invisible (spirit and emotional world), a conjunction available to everybody before the end of mythical time and today the exclusive prerogative of the *tau walia*. During the *momago*, which transforms ordinary time into ritual-mythical time (with the aid of music), shamans can intentionally separate their soul from their body

and become able to perform amazing wonders that are inaccessible to other members of the community, sharing their new status with the spirits.

### ***Tau walia: a life for the community***

Almost every Wana village hosts one or more shamans, although they do not operate in only one village or area but instead are a resource for all the Wana people of Morowali. As shown in one of the documentaries made by the French filmmakers Journet and Nougart (2007), *tau walia* are ready to help everybody, even those from far away; in the film, the shaman Indo Pino tries to cure a friend of the couple from France. Indeed, when I fell sick during my first fieldwork period, my friends and informants asked me if I wanted a *momago* to be organised; I rashly declined the offer, still regretting that decision after seven years. Moreover, it is not rare for a shaman, while travelling between villages, to stop to help or cure somebody in need. These services, the *walia mangepe* described by Kruyt, are not free but their cost, 10,000 Indonesian rupiah (IDR), is a trivial amount even by local standards (in 2016 the cost of one litre of petrol was 7,000 IDR). People do not become shamans for money or power, but to preserve the tradition and to benefit the community. Shamanism is not considered a job but a calling, and shamans still have to work in mainstream jobs to sustain themselves and their families. In fact, the strongest shamans I met (Apa Ingus, Indo Pino and Apa Main) were all less well-off than the average Wana person.

Obviously, shamanic treatments would not be possible without the trust and approval of the community, and this trust is based on a history of good outcomes from past rituals and on the religious and mythical systems that frame and give authority to the shamans' actions. According to myth, the first shaman was *Dungola*, son of the first human couple *Santoto* and *Delemontu*. He was so powerful that his rituals lasted three days and three nights. *Dungola* was also the first musician, revealing the relationship between music and the world of spirits, and he was the first entertainer, underlining the important role of playfulness in shamanic rituals. Therefore, the three main characteristics of Wana shamanism are ritual, music and entertainment. Among the shamans I met, Apa Ingus seemed the perfect incarnation of this "shamanism-music-playfulness" triad. He is a powerful shaman, respected by everyone; he is also a *geso* player and an extremely skilled *popondo* player, plus, to my great surprise, a harmonica player. Moreover, Apa Ingus is a remarkably "fun" person and he likes to make pranks and to joke with other people. He used to deliberately sing badly while I was recording him, laughing aloud at the humour of the situation. Apa Ingus' comic verve is also clear in his teknonymy. *Ingus* means "mucus"

in the Wana language and he gave this name to his first daughter knowing that from that moment on he would be called “Father of Mucus” (Apa Ingus). Indeed, when Ajeran, my guide, explained to me the meaning of the name, others present did not try to hide their fun or perplexity regarding the choice.

Just as in many other cultures, Wana shamans choose to undertake this path following a shamanic call. These calls usually happen in dreams, a space-time that, as has already been indicated, shares many characteristics with the invisible world. Unlike in many other cultures around the world, however, a call is not mandatory in Wana culture. Studies of Japanese, Siberian and North American shamanism testify that refusing the call can bring illness and death to the individual; for these people, not to engage in shamanic practice is to refuse to externalise a powerful energy that they have inside them and that, if not used, could hurt or even kill the owner. This phenomenon is commonly called “shamanic illness” and it ends only when the shaman accepts his or her call (Balzer 1997; Eliade 1972; Kho 1987; Müller 1997). Among the Wana, there are three ways in which the shamanic call can be received: in dreams, by eating a stone that gives powers, or by meeting a spirit. Om Suma, a Wana person of royal blood and the son of a shaman himself, has eaten a power stone and is considered to have the potential to become a powerful shaman. However, he does not want to begin his shamanic training, not wanting to deal with the responsibilities that this role involves.

G. S.: “Is it true that Om Suma could become a powerful shaman?”

Ajeran: “Yes, but he does not want to.”

G. S.: “Why?”

Ajeran: “He is afraid.”

G. S.: “Afraid of what? His job [felling trees without protective equipment] is very dangerous.”

Ajeran: “Om Suma is not afraid to hurt himself, he is afraid of the responsibilities.”<sup>73</sup>

To understand this choice, we must consider that the work of a shaman is dangerous, even more so than working without any protection in a palm oil plantation or felling trees with a chainsaw. The shaman travels in worlds populated by demons and spirits, and he or she must always be ready to help the community: “the desire to enter into contact with the sacred is counteracted by the fear of being obliged to renounce the simple human condition and become a more or less pliant instrument for some manifestation of the sacred (gods, spirits, ancestors, etc.)” (Eliade 1972: 23).

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<sup>73</sup> From an interview with Ajeran Donda in April 2011.

Theoretically, both men and women can be shamans, but of all the shamans I encountered during fieldwork just one was a woman. There are no rules that directly stop women from becoming shamans but Wana culture implicitly encourages males to pursue the role more than females. As Atkinson insightfully noted:

“Anyone” could become a shaman, a rice specialist, or a legal expert. That those “anyones” are predominantly male is treated as a fluke of fortune, rather than a categorical process of inclusion and exclusion. In this sense, Wana women represent the “everyman,” the majority, who because of lack of bravery, fortune, good memory, or inclination never come to excel at what it takes to be a political leader in a Wana community (Atkinson 1990: 88).

This gender differentiation is linked to the Wana conception of space and the cultural division between male and female space that will be discussed in Chapter V.

Here, though, I will briefly explain the link between space and power to give a general idea of why there are so few female shamans. Shamans work with spirits and the spirits dwell in the forest, a place where men travel daily while women rarely visit alone. The women’s space is the village, or more precisely, the house. For a woman to travel alone in the jungle means that she is unmarried, a widow, or that she does not display the same shyness (*mea*) that characterises Wana women. Indo Pino, a powerful female shaman and the only one in the Marisa and Taronggo area, was the personification of all these three characteristics. Until her death in 2016, she regularly travelled alone in the jungle and she had a charisma that I did not find in any other Wana female. She was respected and considered a powerful shaman and a wise woman by the entire Wana community, although this did not exempt her from sometimes being the subject of jokes. Being a shaman means being the centre of attention during rituals and under constant examination from the community, something that seems to clash with the shyness I noted among many Wana women.

After accepting the call, the future shaman goes into the jungle to meditate for seven days and seven nights. Many Wana people, including shaman Apa Oki, told me that, in fact, apprentice shamans rarely spend so many days in the jungle because the mosquitos there are unbearable.<sup>74</sup> It seems that this stage in the shamanic training is more a theme than a reality, and Atkinson attests that it is usually enough just to study with a master. However, considering the symbolic value the jungle (the place of the spirits) has for the Wana, it still seems necessary to maintain at least a formal link to the extra-village reality (Atkinson 1989: 282). However, even if it is a dangerous place of the spirits and it is

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with Apa Oki, March 2011.

outside the domain of humans, men have more familiarity with the jungle than women do; men travel alone more to work and hunt in the jungle, while women stay in the village or usually travel escorted by men. This is one of the reasons that a great majority of shamans are male.

Another way to become a shaman is to have a master and train with him or her. In this case, the family of the apprentice pays the master with money and gifts, such as food, *sarongs*, dishes and machetes. The identity of the master must remain secret and none of the shamans I interviewed revealed the name of their master. Likewise, the names of spirits must remain secret, since if a name becomes public another shaman could take control of that spirit and kidnap it. The duration of the training can vary, with the fee being different for each master and dependent on the relationship between the master and the pupil. The power of a shaman depends on the number of spirits they possess, the larger the number the more powerful. One of the most powerful shamans I met, Apa Main, affirmed to have twelve spirits. Sometimes the master donates some of his or her spirits to pupils to help them in their careers. Occasionally the shamanic tradition is passed from a parent to their offspring; in this case, the father becomes the son's master or at least offers extra teaching to the son or daughter in addition to the teaching of the master. An example is Apa Rau, who learnt the *molawo* from his father. Beyond the teaching of a master, due to their link with the invisible world, dreams have an important role in the life of the shaman, being, alongside meditation, one of the most common ways to learn about shamanhood.

### **Shamanic powers and links to the spiritual realm**

The ability to travel between the world of spirits and the human world, and their familiarity with both, places shamans almost on the same level as that of *walia* (spirits). This liminal status, between humans and spirits, is the key to their powers. The following is a list of the powers that a Wana shaman can possess:

- 1) Finding stolen objects. By casting a *do'a* (spell) and looking inside a glass of *pongas* (rice wine), they can see the object's thief. To accomplish this, it is necessary to know when the object was stolen.

- 2) Healing people remotely. The shaman requires an image of the patient, their name and their location. The shaman looks at the image and casts the *do'a*. This ritual is well documented in *Indo Pino*, a film by Journet and Nougari (2007), in which the shaman that gives the name to the film, Indo Pino, tries to cure a friend of the French filmmakers but she fails.

3) Walking in the sky. This occurs when a powerful shaman hears the music of the *momago* ritual and wishes to transport themselves to the ritual location quickly. If the music ends while the shaman is walking in the sky, they fall back down to earth. Many people told me that Apa nTongi, the brother of Indo Pino, was so powerful that he had this ability. Atkinson stresses the important overlaps and also the divergences in the abilities displayed by shamans and demons, noting that while both can travel through the air, the former does so by walking while the latter flies (Atkinson 1989: 97).

4) During the *momago*, the shaman can make objects appear in his or her hand, usually food requested by the *walia*. The shaman can also materialise the internal organs of a bystander in their hands, killing them on the spot.

5) Hypnotising (*doti*) people and forcing them to do what the shaman wants. The details of this process vary from shaman to shaman, but in each case, the name of the person being hypnotised is needed.

6) Communicating with the dead. The shaman can evoke an “*angin-merokok*” (wind-smoke) that assumes the shape of the deceased and speaks in the person’s voice.

7) Chiromancy. Wana people believe that shamans can find *urat* (nerves that push people to do evil actions, show someone’s predisposition to become a shaman, or reveal other information) in the palm of the hand. Om Doti told me that a shaman found in him an evil *urat* and extirpated it, telling him that doing so would save him from ending up fighting with his friends.<sup>75</sup>

9) Invisibility (*jampu*). Thanks to a *do’a*, the shaman can become invisible to normal people but not to powerful shamans.

10) Mastering fire. During a *momago*, I saw a shaman put a red-hot coal in his mouth and eat it.<sup>76</sup>

The majority of these powers are available during the *momago*, especially in the presence of ritual music. At these moments, ritual music transforms ordinary time into ritual time, a time that shares its power with myth. On these occasions, shamans that occupy a liminal space between the visible world and the invisible world of the spirits, between the everyday and the mythical, are able to perform wonders, to share their status with the spirits. Music acts as a bridge between the two worlds, a connection that the shaman can use to tap from the power of the mythical era. When *momago* is celebrated, the

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Apa Todi, April 2011.

<sup>76</sup> «Mastery over fire, insensibility to heat, and, hence, the “mystical heat” that renders both extreme cold and the temperature of burning coals supportable, is a magico-mystical virtue that, accompanied by no less marvellous qualities (ascent, magical flight, etc.) translates into sensible terms the fact that the shaman has passed beyond the human condition and already shares in the condition of “spirits”» (Eliade 1972: 335).

ritual music brings back into existence mythical time. It is not by chance that shamans can walk in the sky only in the presence of ritual music.

Among the shamanic powers mentioned above, invisibility seems to be the one that links the shamans most strongly to mythical time and their spiritual being. Atkinson describes the *bolag*, spirits of the forest, as also possessing the *jampu* (Atkinson 1989: 37); this similarity would place the shamans on the same plane of the existence of spirits while using that power. Moreover, among Wana people, invisibility is a necessary condition to express great power. One Wana myth tells of how the trickster *Langesong*<sup>77</sup> affirmed that the flight of the *tau Baraka* was impossible, and due to his words, some of them had fallen (Atkinson 1989: 45), because “to report on an extraordinary fact (in Wana terms, to *magagang*) is to cause it to fail [...]. Miracles can still happen, but only in secret”. (Atkinson 1989: 45, emphasis in the original). Atkinson clearly states that “A mabolong performer [the shaman] rejects those divisions [between humans and spirits] and re-establishes direct connections with Pue” (Atkinson 1989: 205-206). In the same way, a shaman would fall from the sky if another shaman saw him or her. The relationship between invisibility and the hidden world of emotions and spirits will be discussed in depth in Chapter V and it plays a pivotal role in Wana culture.

Eliade tells us: “[in] Sumatra the *dukun* complete their shamanic instruction in solitude, on a mountain; there they learn to become invisible and, at night, see the souls of the dead—which means that they *become* spirits, that they *are* dead” (Eliade 1972: 86, emphasis in the original). I believe that the same is true regarding the Wana; during the *momago*, the *tau walia* lose their human (*tau*) status to embrace their spirit (*walia*) status and use this new identity to perform wonders, to travel among realms and to serve the community. They do not act as if they were spirits; rather, they *are* spirits and, furthermore, they have the control of their soul during the *momago* – something that is impossible for the other members of the community. Atkinson again stresses the deep connection between shamanic trance and dreaming: “In contrast to a dreamer, however, the shaman is conscious, and instead of relying on a “dream agent,” or *tanuana* – a faculty possessed by everyone – he employs the agency of his spirit familiars” (1989: 92). Shamans, then, are not just vessels for souls, but they have control over them; the shaman can interact with them and be them, just as in mythical time. Of course, it is essential for a powerful and successful shaman to possess a deep knowledge of the invisible world, since venturing into the world of demons and spirits is a dangerous task that risks death. Usually these journeys are called “shamanic flights,” and sometimes the shaman even uses the drum as a mount

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<sup>77</sup> One of the many names used by Wana people to refer to their cultural hero.

(Balzer 1996; Desjarlais 1992; Eliade 1972; Kendal 2011; Langdon 2013). However, in the Wana context, it would be more correct to talk about the “shamanic walk” since shamans here walk in the sky, while flying is a *setan*’s prerogative.

### The organisation of the ritual

Shamans take care of “inner illness,” the sickness of the *tanuana* (dream agent). While we sleep, the soul leaves the body to explore the visible and invisible world. If during its journeys, the *tanuana* gets attacked by a *setan* or becomes lost, the vessel gets sick and there will be no choice but to organise a *momago*. Organising a ritual is not a complicated process and it can be achieved in one day.



**Img. 14:** A *langu*. We can see the different offers: cloths, betel, toothpaste, pongas, tobacco, wunga, rice (under the plate).

Unlike the *molawo* (the other Wana healing ritual), the *momago* is held inside the village, in the house of the organiser. To hold a successful ritual, the family must procure a large quantity of rice, alcohol and tobacco for the guests, some cloth and money as an offering for the shamans, and toothpaste, an egg, *wunga* (a plant that has a strong odour) and lemon leaves for the spirits. An essential element in a *momago* is the ensemble of ritual instruments: two gongs, one big and one small, and a wooden drum. A similar situation has been observed for the rituals of the Taman of Borneo, where the ritual music is played with drums, gongs and bowls (Bernstein 1997:89). These instruments are kept in

the house of the village chief or in that of a shaman. The keeper is not the owner of the instruments because they, like the shamans, are considered assets of the entire community. It caused a sensation when Indo Pino declared that she wished to be buried with the gongs and the drum on the day of her death. In 2016, when she died, she was buried without the instruments, and instead they were moved from the village of Kilo Sembilan to Marisa, and to the house there of the village chief Apa Rahu. The last element needed for a *momago* are the shamans. In fact, at least two shamans are required, so they can help each other in moments of need. Usually, however, the number is much higher, and in all the rituals I attended there were six or more present.

There is no formal invitation calling people to a ritual; as it is a small community, word of mouth is usually enough. Funerals, weddings and the *momago* are the only three occasions for enjoying a get-together and so the *momago* are highly anticipated, also drawing people from other villages. Nevertheless, in the rare case of there being someone who does not know about the ritual, the sound of the gongs means that they cannot avoid becoming aware as soon as it begins.

Moreover, to understand the centrality of the *momago* in the world of Wana entertainment, it is worth noting that a ritual is actually part of any major joyful community moment. The *momago* is considered an indispensable part of wedding and harvest festival celebrations, as well as itself being one of the main events of Wana life when it stands alone as a ritual. This connection between the healing ritual *momago* and festive events is also clear in the term *malae*, which is used both to say “going to the *momago*” and to refer to participation in any festive gathering. Funerals are the only major events that do not include the *momago*, and this is also because music is prohibited at funerals. For this reason, the *momago* ritual does not carry any negative connotation but rather is strongly connected with the celebration of life and with playfulness. Atkinson writes that “Apart from a mabolong, weddings, funerals, and four annual farming festivals, it is rare for co-residents of a swidden settlement to congregate as a group” (Atkinson 1989: 7) and the situation has not changed in the last forty years. The ritual is still perceived more as a party, a reason to congregate and to heal the entire community, than simply as about the healing of the main patient. Of course, the latter is still an important element, to the extent that it offers an excuse to organise the ritual. In fact, the healing is not limited to the individual; rather, the shaman treats all of the sick people presented to him or her. The ritual itself works as an emotional relief valve that allows the community to relax, to express frustration, and to regenerate itself – to have a re-creational time.

However, during the period of the ritual itself, the main patient is put to one side, both physically and metaphorically, with just one shaman paying attention to him or her, and the

attention of the many other people present lying elsewhere. The situation of the main patient during the *momago* exemplifies a main value of the Wana people, the aforementioned *kasintuwu*, where the individual is subordinate to the whole community. It seems that Wana people find meaning and purpose only when together. Similar phenomena can be found in Morocco, where “the patient is not necessarily the center of attention during ceremonies, although he is the manifest cause for the ceremony. Indeed, he is often almost completely ignored” (Crapanzano 1973: 217).

Atkinson, again, recognises the meaning of the ritual for Wana people: “A mabolong is a social event, [...] adults, they don new clothes, apply makeup, and affect new hairstyles before a performance” (Atkinson 1989: 284). She underlines these ideas further: “People go to mabolong to enjoy themselves, to receive treatment, and to demonstrate *kasintuwu*, “mutual support,” an important social value [...] Although the mabolong is the most popular of healing events, its popularity comes from the fact that it involves much more than healing” (Atkinson 1989: 26).

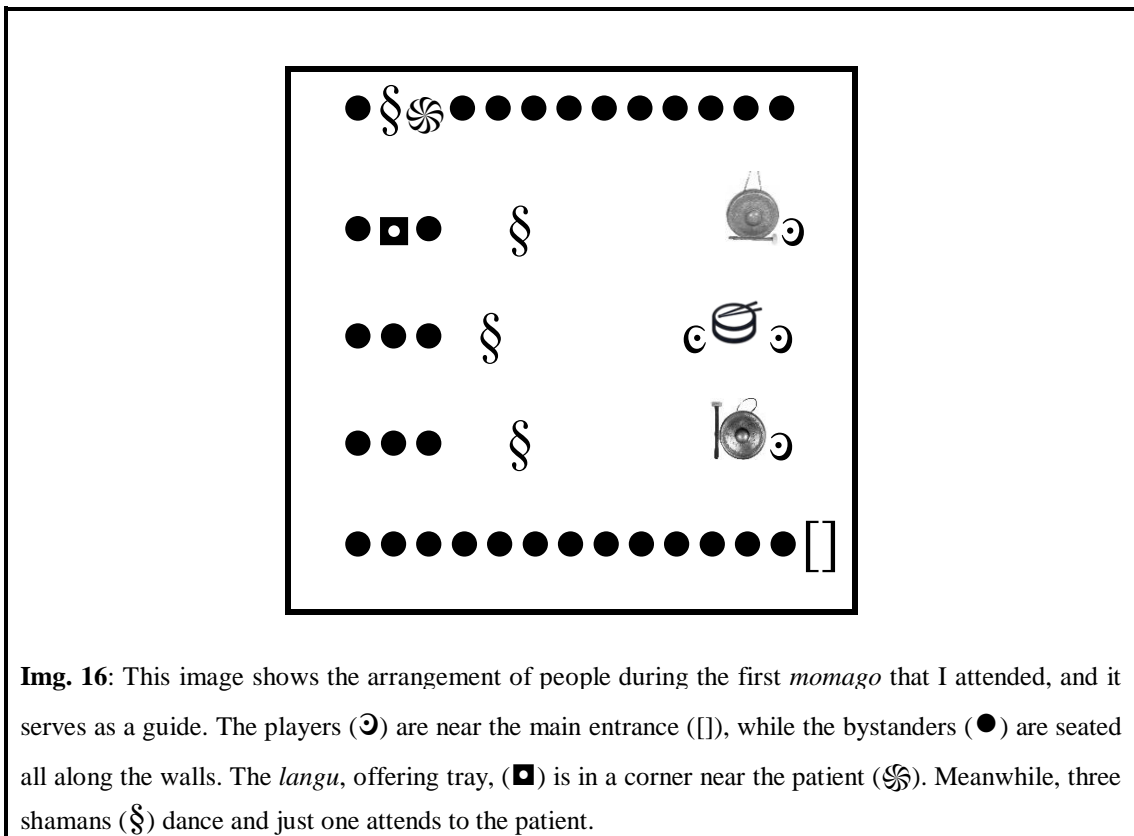
### **The ritual**

At the beginning of the *momago* ritual, dozens of people wait in the darkness of the hut where it will take place. Darkness is one of the key elements of the *momago*, and we will see later that while music attracts the spirits, light keeps them away. For this reason, the *momago* must end before dawn and any strong light in the hut must be shaded or turned off. Once, during a ritual I witnessed in the Taronggo village, the only available light was considered too strong and the patient had to be protected from it by a curtain (Img. 15).



**Img. 15:** At the centre sits the shaman, with a white cloth on his head, invoking his spirits in front of the ritual tray. At the back, wearing the white shirt, sits the patient while on the left we can see the pink curtain used to shade him from the light.

During this part of the procedure, people are still arriving and they take up places wherever they can find space; the ritual room becomes very crowded. The positions of people playing different roles usually follows a pattern. On one side, next to an entrance, there are the music players with the drum positioned between the two gongs; on the other side there is the patient who organised the ritual; the bystanders are spread all around the room, and the only prescription for them seems to be to leave some space in front of the instruments to allow the shamans to kneel and dance.



**Img. 16:** This image shows the arrangement of people during the first *momago* that I attended, and it serves as a guide. The players (☺) are near the main entrance (⌈]), while the bystanders (●) are seated all along the walls. The *langu*, offering tray, (■) is in a corner near the patient (⊗). Meanwhile, three shamans (§) dance and just one attends to the patient.

Of course, the positioning of the participants depends on the size and shape of the room, but it is common to find the musical instruments and the main patient/organiser at the edges of the room. The shamans are not positioned in front of an audience, as in a traditional staged performance. Rather, they are surrounded by the participants, who do not form a passive crowd but play an active part in the ritual. They help the shamans if they are in difficulty, are treated for minor ailments, influence the shamans' behaviour with jokes, or simply contribute to the playful atmosphere of the *momago*. Like Atkinson, I also do not agree with Roy Rappaport's claim that "dramas have audiences, rituals have congregations. An audience watches a drama, a congregation participates in a ritual" (1974: 8). First of all, Rappaport seems to forget how western theatre, especially after the happenings in the 50's,<sup>78</sup> aimed to transform the audience into actors. More importantly, I refuse a clear division between theatre and drama, especially knowing how the shamanic rituals and funerals are two of the few occasions the Wana have to organize a party. For these reasons, I will use the term "audience" to underline the performative elements of the *momago*, where "Wana shamans are performers who must attract – and can never presume – the interest, attention, and commitment of others in what they are doing" (Atkinson 1989: 219)

<sup>78</sup> An example is the "18 happenings in 6 Parts" by Allan Kaprow in the Reuben Gallery of New York in 1959.

While the main patient has the attention of one shaman, usually the most powerful, for the entire night, all those in the village suffering from ailments have the opportunity to be visited, and ideally cured, by the other shamans. It is not unusual for mothers to bring their children to the rituals, and many of them need treatment. Indeed, children are always present at Wana celebrations, be they weddings, funerals or the *momago*. The entire adult population of the village comes to a ritual and hence there is no one left at home to look after children; so the children come too, and they become one of the most important elements of the ritual.

The infant mortality rate is quite high in Wana society. Almost every family I met had lost at least one child at a very young age. As a result, people are so accustomed to infant mortality that until the first months of life have passed, they do not give children names but simply refer to them as *ponka* (for males) or *vea* (for females). If a child dies during the first week of life, no ritual is officiated for them, and the precariousness of young children's health makes them some of the most common patients for shamans. At the same time, children are a pure expression of life and vitality, balancing the negativity of sickness and contributing to the playfulness of the occasion. Moreover, they symbolise the continuity of the Wana community. Lastly, going to a ritual is the best way to learn about customs, beliefs, and ritual music. Wana children do not learn in formalised teaching contexts, but instead, through imitation, a learning method very common among non-western cultures (Baily 2001; Sanga 2009). Thus, rituals are valuable occasions to learn about Wana core values: religion, shamanism, *kasintuwu*, and especially ritual music.

Ritual music should never be played away from the ritual itself,<sup>79</sup> because it would attract the spirits outside of the controlled situation of the *momago*. The only way to learn how to play the ritual music is to listen to it and gain experience playing it during downtimes in a ritual, when the shamans are present and ready to intervene in case of need. In this context, playing means both “playing a game” and “playing a musical instrument.” Through the former kind of playing, children learn the latter, becoming accustomed to dealing with the instruments through incorporating them into their games. This playful learning process also contributes to the atmosphere that characterises the ritual and that contributes to the healing of the entire community. The presence of children is a reminder of life's energy and of the community's future. In the end, it is also important to note the possibility that assiduous participation in the rituals from a young age makes listening to the ritual music in later life trigger various memories and emotions linked to those times:

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<sup>79</sup> Wana people have a truly lax attitude regarding rules. Even if there are many things that should never be done (playing the war trumpet, playing ritual music outside the ritual, using red *pompolonzu* and so on), people do these things anyway.

“Music has become one with the ritual and is not a separate aesthetic category” (Kartomi 1973: 166).

On one side, those memories reinforce the trust in shamans and their healing power, while on the other they can help the shaman to enter into trance (Becker 1994; Sturm 2000). The relationships between memory, music and emotions will be explored in Chapter V, where we will see the role that MEAMs (music-evoked autobiographical memories) play during the *momago* and the *kayori* in enhancing the healing of the community and the playfulness of the rituals.

People’s presence at rituals from a young age also ensures that they become deeply sensitised to ritual stimuli, so that the music unfailingly triggers an emotional response, bringing them to healing, playfulness or into trance. Wana people grow up experiencing a *momago* almost every month from their first weeks of life, when their hearing is more developed than their vision and so is the main tool they use to understand their environment. It seems clear that a strong connection is created in the minds of infants between ritual music and playfulness (the sounds of people chatting and laughing). Other important elements, such as healing, rituality and trance, will be subsequently linked to the ritual music when other senses (especially sight) and conceptual understandings (the ideas of community, religion, ritual and so on) develop.

The children present at the ritual, like the adults, are also entertained by the unfolding of the ritual itself, which might be thought of as a dramatized description of the invisible world. Rituals that function as teaching and leisure occasions are not unusual; it has been noted, for instance, that in African Pentecostal communities “the church service has two unambiguous aims: to evangelize the gospel of salvation and to serve as a form of entertainment” (Manning 1976: 144). This should not be a surprise, since play and religion are overlapping entities in pre-industrial cultures and the pre-television world (Norbeck 1974:39). Moreover, playing means leaving the ordinary world to enter into an extraordinary one with different rules. In this way, it helps people to enter mythical worlds where the rules of daily life are transcended. Indeed, “play soars beyond ordinary boundaries and creates a world in which extraordinary things are possible, where the unthinkable is *thought* and the forbidden is performed as a commonplace” (Salamone 2009: 88, emphasis in the original).

Ultimately, the *momago* provides the children with learning and playing opportunities. Moreover, enabling the expression of *kasintuwu*, it reinforces existing relationships and creates new bonds among people. Overall, this atmosphere of playfulness, joyousness and communality is also a resource for the patients; they are influenced by the positive energies around them and feel part of something that transcends their own existence. It is worth

noting here more details of the nature of “inner illness.” It can be a symptom related to a physical illness such as cancer, or an issue of mental health, such as depression. “Inner illness” can also be caused by a strong emotion that is not tamed, such as an extreme sadness, anger or jealousy; all of these emotions are potentially threatening for the stability of the community. We find a similar situation in Bali, where “Fright, for instance, throws the spirit easily off balance and results in ‘soul loss’ (*kesamber /rurutan* )” and “‘bad emotions’ weaken the spirit and cause it to shiver and be frail”(Wikan 1988: 457, also 1989b). Wana people often told me that the main cause of inner illness is “speaking badly,” meaning gossiping or swearing – in other words, being upset or undermining the stability of the community. Atkinson contributes a very useful example. She tells of a boy that fell down onto the rocks while playing near the river. The shaman that treated this child concluded that the real cause of the accident was the ghost of the mother, who had died a few days before, and who pushed the child onto the rocks, driven by the desire to stay together (1989: 173-174). A more psychological interpretation could be that the child, still depressed from the mother’s departure, tried on a subconscious level to follow her destiny; desiring death is common after the death of a loved one. Young people require special support as they are not yet integrated and trained in the coping methods of the community, and this story highlights the role of shamans in finding resolutions to emotional problems by giving people ways to understand what is happening to them.

The final aim of the *momago* is not just to eliminate illness but also to restore a healthy emotional state to the individual and, in doing so, to the entire community. The shaman not only moves between the visible and the invisible world, but their mediation and narration makes visible (comprehensible) the invisible (incomprehensible), giving a shape and a materiality to the “inner illness.” As Crapanzano notes regarding the Moroccan Hamadsha: “[Saints, jnun, and Baraka] are elements in which I would call the participational mode of explanation of illness and therapy. They may be considered *signs* of psychic states and *symbols* of socio-cultural processes” (1973: 213, emphasis in original). Moreover, Peters notes among the Tamang of Nepal that “the curing activities involved in shamanic healing are not exercises in the treatment of organic disease but attempts to treat disturbing emotional states and interpersonal relations” (Peters 1978: 65).

In a society like that of the Wana, where people tend to support each other and where the community is more important than the individual, a conflict between two people can escalate and bring sickness to the community. The *momago* is an opportunity to dispel frustration and emotional stress. The ritual is an example of organised chaos that allows people a greater emotional freedom and, through alcohol, courtship and joking, to relax and resolve tensions inside the community. Like a carnival, social rules are looser; people

can let themselves go by drinking, flirting, joking and dancing, even if extreme behaviour is still prohibited. Drinking is also now becoming a common behaviour outside of rituals, partially diminishing the uniqueness of the event. It is, however, not considered a good habit by many people, especially by women.

### The structure

Having now analysed the main elements that make the *momago* so important to the Wana in a communal sense, we can examine the sequence of events that make up the ritual's structure. One of the most perplexing aspects of this ritual is ascertaining when it actually begins and ends. Wana people say that the ritual starts when the ritual music starts. This is understood as when the piece of music called *topo* (slapping) is played (Track 10), and the ritual is said to end when the same piece is played again much later. It might equally be said that the real start comes earlier, when the first guest arrives, or later, when people start to dance. The building of atmosphere and bonding that occurs before the music begins is certainly worthy of study too. Indeed, hours before the beginning of the music, people have already gathered to chat, eat and drink together, generating the playful energy that will make the ritual successful, and preparing the field and the mood for the healing part of the *momago*. This is not to imply that the music is unimportant. On the contrary, the recognition of the music as the marker of the beginning and the end of the ritual is the confirmation of the important role and of the power the Wana people attribute to it. Music has many roles in the *momago*; not only does it mark ritual time, but it also attracts the spirits, helps the shamans enter and maintain trance, triggers emotions and memories for the participants that support the healing of the patients and of the community and, ultimately, it influences the playfulness of the ritual. The happiness of the bystanders also contributes to the ritual; the entire community, and not just a single person, has to be healed from all the emotional frustration that can threaten the soundness of the community. Sharing playfulness in the community makes the ritual more powerful.

While people are relaxing and waiting for the beginning of the music, the shamans and some other people gather to prepare the offerings that will be presented to the *walia* (spirits). Several objects are placed onto the *langu*: a plate of rice (this rice will be cooked and offered to the shamans in the morning), toothpaste,<sup>80</sup> betel nuts, tobacco, alcohol,

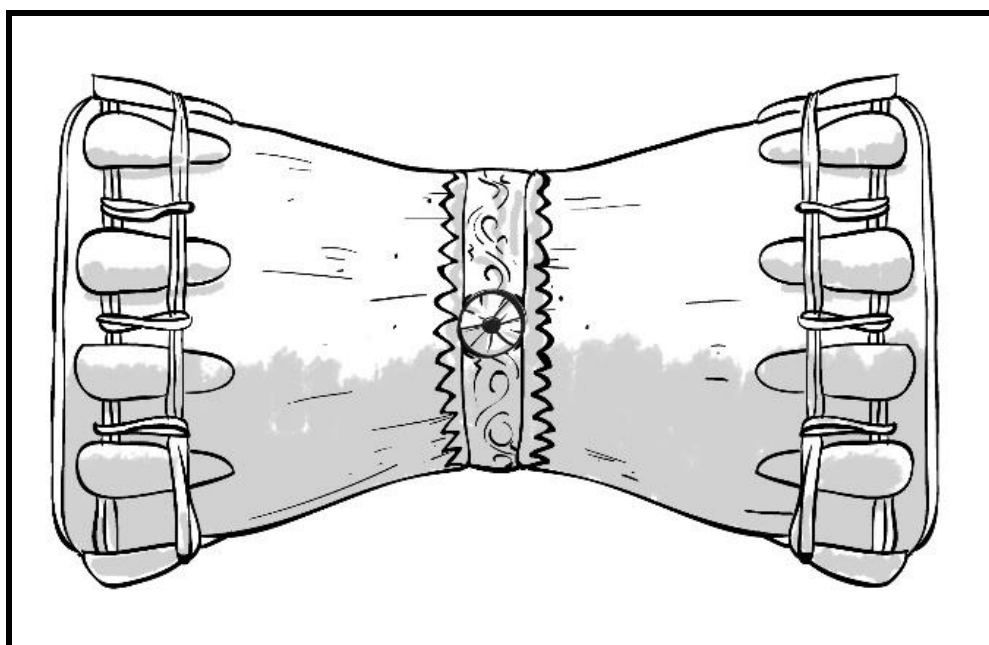
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<sup>80</sup> During my research, I was not able to discover why a tube of toothpaste was among the offerings to the spirits. It could be that as something introduced into this society quite recently from outside, perhaps by missionaries or the government, it is considered extraordinary and therefore valuable, despite its daily use.

pieces of cloth, eggs, *wunga* (a plant with the strong odour), lemon leaves, a machete and some money (the latter is hidden from view). During the ritual, shamans are free to take anything that they want from the *langu* as it is understood that when they do so, it is the *walia* acting through their bodies. Similar offerings are presented among the Tamang of Nepal where “for the offering to the gods (Ta: sagun), Bhirendra procured one egg, rice beer (Ta: chang), *raksi* (a strong liquor made of grains and sometimes fruit), and cigarettes. [...] the drinks and smokes were for the shaman and audience to consume during the ritual” (Peters 1978: 67). Of course, away from this tray of offerings there is also a separate supply of tobacco, food and drink for the ordinary participants. Atkinson explains that, in her area, shamans used to request food for the spirit familiae (*baku walia*) to the audience through riddles (1989: 176). I never saw anything similar during the rituals I observed, where the audience was ready to support and help the shaman but never gave any food.

### The music

Once the room is full and people have eaten, the atmosphere is set and the fall of darkness allows the *momago* to start. While the ritual structure is quite complicated – Atkinson describes it as “a circus with more than one ring” (Atkinson 1989: 246) – the musical structure is quite simple.



Img. 17: A *ganda* (drawing by Santo D'Alia)

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It may also be important that it is a substance related to the mouth; almost all the other offerings are food, beverages or things to be chewed.

A pair of gongs and a drum are the main instruments. The drum, called the *ganda*, is a double-skinned hourglass-shaped instrument of around 50cm in length. On one side there is reptile (lizard or snake) skin, and on the other there is mammal (cuscus, wild cat or deer) skin. During the *momago*, the *ganda* is suspended from the ceiling between the two gongs and played by two people positioned on either side of it. Atkinson affirms that “Typically, young men and boys play the drums, and young women and girls the gongs” (1989: 27), although I never noticed any particular division of roles between the genders.



**Img. 18:** The position of the ritual instruments: small gong on the left, *ganda* in the middle and large gong on the right.

The reptile skin is struck with a rattan strip knotted at the end, while the mammal skin is hit with two wooden sticks. In the area studied by Atkinson, the *momago* ritual is called *mabolong*, literally meaning “drumming.” She explains: “The ritual takes its name from the two-skinned *bolong* drum, which, along with a pair of bronze gongs, produces the insistent rhythms that summon both humans and spirits to the ritual and accompany shamans as they dance” (Atkinson 1989: 1). The ritual can be also called *walia moganda* (Atkinson 1989: 207), literally meaning “drumming the spirits” or “the spirits of the drum.” The fact that the ritual is named after the main musical instrument stresses the important role of music in the ritual.

The drum plays a very important role in the ritual: keeping the shaman safe. Any mistake made while playing the drum can hurt the shaman. A wrong beat or unexpectedly

stopping can cause a traumatic breaking of the bridge that links humans to the spirits and that allows the shaman to go into trance. These problems are called *ganda masala* (problems of/with the drum), and can cause shamans to convulse and become rigid in the limbs; when this happens, the audience has to be ready to help the shaman and to calm them or to stretch the affected limb.



**Img. 19:** A *tau walia* (lying on the floor) struck by *ganda masala*. A few bystanders and shamans (the man in the blue t-shirt) are trying to stretch his legs but they are stuck. Note how even in a situation like this the child in the background is laughing.

The ring at the centre of the drum's body is decorated and there is a hole of less than a centimetre in diameter for resonance. Inside the instrument there is also a grain of dry corn, which is believed to add to the volume of sound the drum produces; it may also be considered as serving the function of warding off harm. As Combarieu observes, instruments can bring together “particles of the whole natural kingdom: cane or bamboo, shell of some fruits, metal, hard wood, stone, animal skins, carapace, bones, hollow horns, silk, braided raffia, horsehair, guts; the instruments constitute a synthesis of the cosmos”<sup>81</sup> (Combarieu 1982: 325). I believe it is reasonable to say that the animal skins represent animals in general, with the reptiles being associated with fish and water life through their skin and their laying of eggs, while the mammals are connected with the land. Wood

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<sup>81</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

represents the plants of the forest, and corn is the cultural world of the village. Dried grains of corn are used as a unit of measurement indicating the amount a Wana person has to pay as compensation if a marriage is not lawful and, in the past, it was also put into a coconut shell and shaken as a musical instrument at a *kayori* (traditional funeral). Likewise, in other contexts of Wana life, a grain of corn used to be placed inside a small rattle called a *diodio*, which was tied to the machete of a warrior to attract women.

The smaller of the two gongs used during the ritual has an average diameter of 26cm, while the larger has a diameter of around 41cm. The instruments are not made locally; Apa Rahu and other people told me that the large gong of Marisa village was brought into the village of Kayu Poli around 30 years ago by a man called Nyole. The small gong in Taronggo was brought in 2010 by Anna Grumbliès, who had purchased the gong in Bali. The large gong in Taronggo village seems to have been present in the jungle for at least 40 years. Apa Main, one of the most powerful shamans in the Taronggo area, told me that the gong was already around when he was a child and that he does not have any idea of what could have been played during the *momago* before it arrived.

The introduction of these instruments into Wana ritual life seems to be a fairly recent event, perhaps occurring less than 100 years ago. With local Wana people not being able to build the instruments themselves, they told me that they had existed *dari pertama* (literally “from the first time”). After an investigation in which I interviewed people from more remote areas of Morowali, I arrived at the conclusion that the first gong was brought into the area by Javanese or Balinese settlers during one of the waves of the *transmigrasi* program.<sup>82</sup> It seems that Wana people were fascinated by their sound, shape (the circle is a great symbol of life and regeneration) and their mythical status (because of the fact they come from the largely unknown realm of outside the jungle), and they slowly replaced the old ritual instrument (a bamboo zither called the *tetebua*) with gongs. As mentioned in the previous chapter, similar instruments are common all around Southeast Asia and, as attested to by Marina Roseman regarding the Temiar of Malaysia (1990), some of them are used in shamanic rituals.

Every *momago* opens with a rhythm called *topo*, which is played by only one person on the drum, and this is followed by a fast rhythm called *pakoba manoto* or *majoli kajo* (Track 12), played three times. This leads into the rhythmic pattern that will be played all night long, called *tumba* or *malenyilenyi* (Track 11). The ritual is eventually closed by the

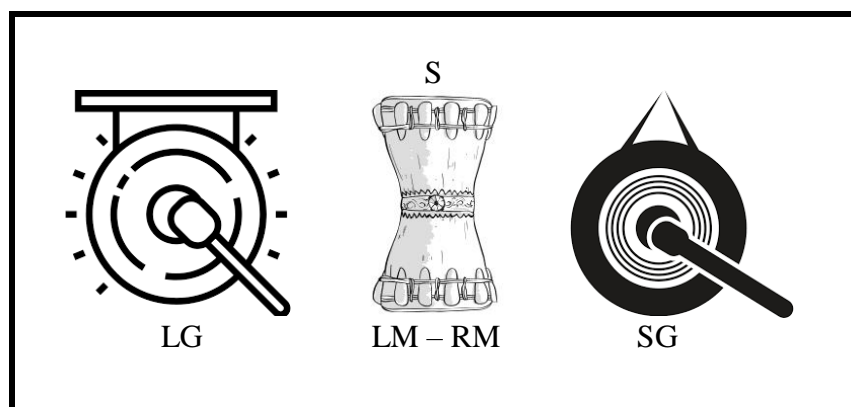
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<sup>82</sup> A programme in which the Dutch Government and the Indonesian Government moved landless people from densely populated areas of Indonesia (Java and Bali) to less populous areas (Papua, Kalimantan, Sumatra and Sulawesi). The aim of the programme was to reduce poverty and overpopulation but it raised many issues of the so-called “Javanization” and “Islamization” of these destination territories.

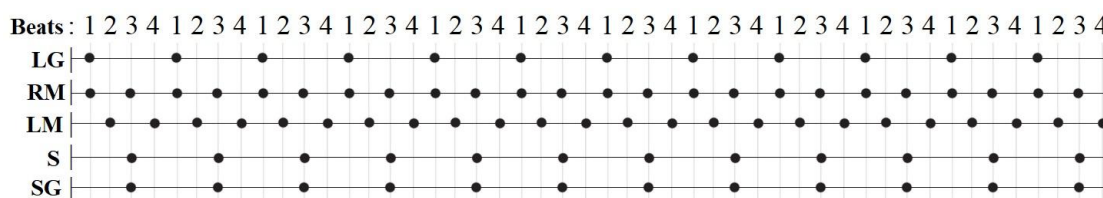
*pakoba manoto* being played again three times and, finally, with the *topo* being heard again. While the male shamans dance the *motaro*, literally “to jump up and down” (Video 2), the women dance the *salonde* (Video 3) “something beautiful” (Atkinson 1989, p. 94). For this courtship and shamanic dance there is a specific rhythm called *ngaya* or *tumba balanghe*.

The *salonde* has aesthetic appeal and can be done without implying that the dancer is embarked on a shamanic career. For a man to *motaro* suggests that he is attempting to engage spirit familiars; for a woman to *salonde* may suggest either that she has shaman aspirations or that she is simply showing off her skills as a graceful dancer. The equivocality of the interpretation placed on a woman’s dancing reveals a tacit but powerful assumption that Wana shamanism is largely a male game (Atkinson 1989: 94)

For the transcription of the *momago* music, I assign a time line to each instrument. The large gong part is labelled LG; RM indicates beats played by the right hand on the mammal skin of the drum, while LM indicates beats played by the left hand on the same head. S shows beats played on the reptile skin, and SG shows beats played on the small gong.



*Malenyilenyi*: 140bpm, 4/4 (Track 11)



This rhythm is characterised by a clear quaternary scan of the beats and the constant, perfect, repetition of the rhythmic nucleus.

*Pakoba Manoto*: 240bpm, 4/4 (Track 11)

Beats: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

This rhythm also has a quaternary rhythm, though the tempo is 100bpm faster than *malenyilenyi*. The left hand strikes the mammal skin twice in each rhythmic cycle, both of these coming in very quick succession between the third and fourth beats.

For women who dance the *salonde*, there is only one rhythm: the *ngaya*, which is played at roughly 185bpm (Track 13).

Beats: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 2 1 2 3 4

While the other rhythms are characterised by extreme synchronisation and precision, this rhythm is more fluid, with interlocking<sup>83</sup> an even more prominent feature than in the other rhythms. Only the LG and LM parts fall on the beat, while the RM, S, and SG parts anticipate or delay their entrance. When played at about 185bpm, a sense of fluidity results. The rhythm of the music evokes the fluid motion of the woman's arms when dancing the *salonde*, which contrasts with the simple "jumping up and down" of the *motaro*. The flowing movements of the arms and body – for its seductive purpose – requires more flexible music, giving more freedom of expression and space for inventiveness to the performer. This courtship dance, however, seems to be gradually disappearing. Wana women, in my experience, appear shy and the younger generation prefer not to be the centre of attention, instead staying on the sides of the room chatting, joking or playing the ritual music. They do not shun dancing altogether, however; women dance the *modero*, or *dero*, in groups at weddings. It is a circle dance that is spread widely around Sulawesi and is accompanied by Indonesian pop music. After the death of Indo

<sup>83</sup> «In interlocking music of this type, one musician's positive action of striking a note always coincides with a negative action, or "non-strike," of his fellow musician, who at that moment lifts his beater. The effect is such that both series of equally spaced notes seem to interlock like the teeth of a cogwheel. Each of the two musicians, however, feels his own series of notes as "on beat.» (<https://www.britannica.com/art/African-music/Musical-structure#ref519774>)

Pino in 2016, though, I was not able to see the *salonde* again. I was told that many women could dance the *salonde* in the Uewaju village, but this could be explained as wishful thinking related to the fact that Uewaju is located on the mythical mountain of *Tundan'Tana* and therefore has a mythical aura.

The sound of the gongs resonates well beyond the duration of the beat, amalgamating with the sound produced by the preceding beat, exacerbating the tension and encouraging trance. The ritual music is played for many hours, becoming a sound like a mantra that infiltrates into the listeners' minds and helps the shamans to dissociate themselves from the surrounding environment. The sound of the gongs and drum remained in my head for days after the ritual. It is also possible that this kind of sonic wall (clearly audible in the musical samples) influences the way of thinking of the audience, symbolically separating them from the profane time, but also distracting their mind from the profane way of thinking, increasing the pure sensation of the moment.

During one of the rituals I observed, I noted a woman who danced the *motaro* in a very particular way. She was an old woman and she had a rolled *sarong* around her chest that passed under her armpits and was tied at her back (Img. 20). Another person held the excess material at her back like a lead. It was explained to me that this woman was a rare kind of shaman, called a *walia muansang*, who breathe from their armpits while dancing the *motaro*, because “they are like fish that breathe from their gills.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> From an interview with Apa Ede, April 2016.



**Img. 20:** The sarong rolled around the chest of the *walia muansang*, covering her armpits.

Thus, if this woman's armpits had not been covered with the *sarong*, the air would have leaked from her system and she would have died. Moreover, this kind of shaman tends to have problems stretching their legs, and bystanders often have to step in to help. It is possible that the *walia muansang* are remnants of an ancient belief in different kinds of shamans being related to particular animals. The need to cover their armpits (as if they were gills) and the inability to stretch their legs could link these shamans to fish. I do not have enough data on this kind of shamanism but it could open the door to a shamanic shape-shifting rituality among the Wana people that has never been discussed before. In her in-depth work, Atkinson never mentions anything similar or cases in which female shamans perform the *motaro*.

Partly due to damage to the instruments, the sound of the gongs resonates well beyond the duration of the beat, running into the sound of the next beat, and this exacerbates the tension in the music and could encourage trance. The ritual music is played for many hours and becomes a mantra-like sound that infiltrates the listeners' minds and helps the shamans to dissociate themselves from the surrounding environment. After every ritual, the sound of the gongs and drum remained in my head for days. It is worth, at this point, listening to the tracks 11-13 for a few minutes and imagining the effect of the music after hours of listening. Music is always present when Wana people face moments of crisis, such as

illness or death. As Otto writes: “what is essential and great requires to be sung”<sup>85</sup> (1996: 125). During the rituals, the music transforms everyday time into mythical time and brings the power of the invisible world into the visible one. The music is the link to the invisible world, to myth, and it becomes a testimony of the presence of spirits.

Beyond helping the shamans to get into trance, ritual music has many functions and roles within the *momago*. First, it functions as a ritual and emotional marker. In a ritual with a complex structure like the *momago*, music is the only way to mark the start and end and to distinguish ritual time from ordinary time. *Momago* is a very common event, but it always brings the exceptionality associated with rituals and celebrations. The music also stresses the playfulness of the situation. It is the only Wana traditional music that people here dance to outside of funerals, and it is crucial in creating the sense that the *momago* is a party, and in defining its role as a moment of social re-creation.

Shamans sing to invoke their spirits and to describe their journeys in the realm of the spirits.

Here is a small extract (Video 4).<sup>86</sup>

Apa Main: *Oode dago, oh!*

*Tulungi makutu lo'ongi go bamago.*

*Tulungi le maku.*

Apa Main: Oh mercy oh!

Please play the gong for the ritual treatment

Please have mercy on me.

In this short extract, there is an exhortation for the player not to stop playing the gong. If the ritual music were to end, it would inhibit the *tau walia* in using their powers.

Although somewhat masked by the loud music and the chatting of the bystanders, the shamanic song is comprehensible to the people present,<sup>87</sup> and they often intervene with comments about what the *tau walia* says or sees during their journey. Indeed, I was told that it is essential for the song to be heard and understood by the patient, who has to remain

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<sup>85</sup> Translation from Italian by the author.

<sup>86</sup> For an in-depth and complete analysis of Wana shamanic lyrics please refer to the remarkable work of Atkinson in *The Art and Politics of Wana Shamanism* (1989); a great part of this work is dedicated to the study and translation of shamanic chants.

<sup>87</sup> As Atkinson notes, «Shamanic vocabulary borrows eclectically from other languages as well as from archaic and arcane ritual forms. Familiar Wana words are transformed by substitutions, contractions, and reduplications of sounds. [...] Shamans' songs are fully comprehensible to Wana audience» (Atkinson 1992: 16).

vigilant throughout the night. Although the music is very loud and often obscures the words, people listening are still able to take advantage of any errors to make jokes. I also witnessed girls trying to join in with the dancing for fun, and their clumsiness causing much laughter among the bystanders. In all of these shamanic flights, there is a continuous coming and going to and from the hidden world, and the different actions of the various shamans, combined with the alcohol, joking, chatting and music allow the event to proceed until the morning without people getting bored. The repeating of the *momago* also implies a renewal of its creative and generative force, thanks to the unique improvisations and interaction between shamans, musicians and participants on each occasion. It is ironic to note that in the midst of this organised chaos the sufferer almost disappears. They are downgraded to a mere pretext once the ritual's engine gives way to people's entertainment.

Singing, with its exceptionality and its lyrics, is one of the key elements in restoring mythical time. As Eliade states, by listening to the shamanic song "symbolically, the sick "goes backwards", he or she is made contemporary of Creation; he experiences again the initial state of fullness. The injured organism is not healed, it *is made anew*" (Eliade 1971: 47, emphasis in the original). In this way the patient revives the myth and becomes one with it.

This internal process is reinforced by the memories and emotions triggered by the song that he or she has listened to since childhood. Without this trust, it would seem impossible for the patient to be cured by the *tau walia*'s powers.

It is important to keep in mind that the *momago* is not just a healing ritual for the single person but a cathartic moment for all of the community. Like the *kayori*, the *momago* is an occasion to have a party, to spend time together drinking, joking and eating while the music and the shamans entertain the bystanders, who themselves take active roles in the ritual.

### **The circus**

The presence and participation of the public is always a very important factor in shamanic rituals, as we find documented in many sources. Shirokogoroff writes: "several shamans told [...] that they were unable to perform without an audience. "All people present," one of them told him, "helped me go to the lower world"" (Shirokogoroff 1935: 363), while Scarduelli states: "even though it was just one person to fall into a trance, the session was, indeed, a collective psychodrama"<sup>88</sup> (Scarduelli 2007: 154). The role of the community, the audience, is crucial in the correct and successful development of the

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<sup>88</sup> Translation from Italian by Scalici

shamanic ritual. Without an audience, the shaman would only partially fulfil his duty. Among the Wana, shamans need the community for many reasons: creating a playful atmosphere, recreating the primordial density when all the Wana were just on the top of a wooden spinning top and, most importantly, not only healing the single patient but recreating the entire community. Nobody is passive or useless, but everybody has a role and the power, and duty, to help the other. There is a constant interplay between all the members of the community, everybody is important, but only because part of the community, especially shamans.

I never saw as few as two shamans participating in a ritual, and often there were over five. The presence of numerous religious actors makes the ritual structure, at first glance, seem unclear and chaotic, particularly as they do not seem to be working directly together. There can be a shaman curing a patient while others are dancing and yet another is calling the spirits. Each follows an individual path during the ritual, but at the same time, an interaction between them is maintained. At any one moment, three shamans might be dancing together, while one could be lending their power to another, and so on. Indeed, the presence of so many actors makes downtimes in the ritual rare and causes the event to be quite unpredictable. However, some structural pattern is recognisable. In fact, the *momago* does not have a linear structure, since it is ““performed-centered”: governed less by liturgy and more by the action and inclinations of individual practitioners” (Atkinson 1989: 14). However, it is still worth attempting to outline the skeleton structure of the ritual and to describe all of the various alternatives. Atkinson divided the ritual into four steps: “summoning spirit familiars, treating patients, traveling up to the sky to negotiate with the Owner on behalf of the patient, and requesting foods for spirit familiars” (1989: 15). I partially agree with her interpretation of the ritual’s structure. However, I did not observe the final request of food during my time in the field, and therefore I consider the final part of the ritual to be the curing of the patient, with the lost soul placed back into the body. We must be aware that even considering this practical organisation, all of these parts are performed at different times by different shamans, except the dance, which is sometimes engaged in by more than one shaman at a time. It is worth noting that I never saw any of the shamans considered to be particularly powerful by the community dance with other shamans. These individuals always had “solo” performances, while less powerful shamans danced in groups. Each part, except for the initial kneeling, is repeated many times during the night.



**Img. 21:** Three shamans performing the *motaro* together. In the background is the shaman Apa Main (in the blue triangle) treating a patient laying on the floor, while the female shaman Indo Pino prays near the ritual tray (the arm of her blue top is just visible in the red circle).

Following this basic structure, then, I now describe the unfolding of a typical *momago*. As mentioned already, the event is understood to start when the introductory music, called *topo*, is played. At this point, the shamans are usually still seated, although occasionally they can start to sing while still sitting down. At a certain point, the main shaman stands up and kneels in front of the drum, having already covered his or her face with the *pompolonzu*<sup>89</sup> (ritual piece of cloth) to aid concentration. This cloth should be white to symbolise the shaman's pureness, but this rule is not always followed. It seems more important, though, to avoid red cloth because that colour represents evil in the heart. Sometimes the shaman can use the *pompolonzu* as a link between him/her and the musical instruments, placing one end of the cloth on his or her forehead and the other end on the instrument, creating a connection first with the drum, then with the small and larger gongs. Once in this position, the shaman starts to sing to evoke the spirits.

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<sup>89</sup> This prop is often fashioned from a t-shirt. The shaman Apa Ede told me that "the *pompolonzu* helps the shaman to see far." Usually, it is used to cover the shaman's face, to remove the illness from the sick patient, or to be a connection between a shaman and the other shamans, the spirits (Img. 22), or music instruments.



**Img. 22:** Apa Ede, chief of Taronggo and not a shaman, is seen borrowing shamanic power from a shaman. The white *pompolonzu* is acting as a link between the two.

After the invocation song, the shaman stands up and passes the cloth all over his or her body, to purify him or herself, before starting to dance the *motaro*. Again, the purpose of the shamanic dance is mostly to aid concentration:

“The *motaro* helps one to see more clearly”<sup>90</sup>

As I have noted before, the ability to see the invisible world is one of the main characteristics of Wana shamans, so the *pompolonzu* covering the physical eyes of the shaman helps him or her to enter into a dream-like state and to “see” the invisible world. In some cases, the trance achieved is so deep that the shaman is not able to stand or to stop dancing. In these cases, people are always on hand to support the shaman or to stop the *motaro* by physically blocking him or her. When the dance has ended, the shamans concentrate on the patient. The shamanic cure, whether in a *momago* or in a different context, consists of attempting to suck inner illness out of the body, often from the head or the back, and to cast it away. These actions are performed with the hands and the mouth, or with the help of the *pompolonzu*. The cloth is also used to “clean” the sickness, with the shaman spitting on the cloth and passing it over the patient’s body. This part of the ritual is

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Apa Ede, May 2011.

accompanied by shamanic chanting. The dramatization of the healing process through the sucking and spitting out of evil is not a factor seen only in Wana rituals but is, in fact, quite common in such diverse locations as California (Whiting 1950:40) and Nepal. In the latter, “ this process is known as jharnu, or to blow the illness away” (Peters 1978: 66).



**Img. 23:** The dramatization of the search for the illness (by examining the *pompolonzu*) and capturing it.

Particularly fascinating is an idea from Peters that “the underlying effect of all these exercises in Tamang healing puja is to transmute the patient's symptoms and behavior into socially useful channels. In accomplishing this purpose, the symbol serves, I believe, as a guide or vehicle for the reorganization of the emotions released during the traumatic cathartic experience” (1978: 85-86). As we will see in the next Chapter, the Wana wear a bracelet since the first day of mourning and it will be replaced twice during the key moments of the *kayori*. At the end, the last bracelet will eventually fall out symbolizing the end of the mourning period and all the emotional pain that wears off with time.

We should note that while the individual shamans are busy with their trance, all around them are shamans who are intent on dancing or treating people and bystanders who are chatting, joking and drinking. With myth, drama and performance, the *tau walia* create a frame that brings sense to the pain of the patient. For a community with almost no access to modern medicine, it is much more difficult to explain things like asthma or psychological problems than it is a broken bone or a skin wound, without reference to the hidden world. During the *momago* the illness is presented as a material object within the patient that the *tau walia* has to suck up and dispose of. This materialisation of the invisible makes sense of what otherwise could not be understood:

The care consists in making acceptable to the mind that pain that the body refuses to tolerate. That the shaman mythology does not correspond to an objective reality is a trivial fact: the sick believes, and s/he is a member of a society that believes in it. The guardian spirits and evil spirits, the supernatural monsters and magical animals, are part of a coherent system that bases the indigenous conception of the universe. The patient accepts them, or, more exactly, no one has ever questioned. What he does not accept is the pain, inconsistent and arbitrary, which, however, constitute a foreign element to his system, but that, by resorting to myth, are replaced by the shaman in a set in which everything has a reason for being (Levi-Strauss 1963: 221-222).

So, the shaman's role has two sides. One is to entertain bystanders and facilitate social interaction; the other is to cure the patient by giving them a way of understanding their pain. Through the interplay of pain and pleasure, illness and playfulness, Wana rituality is developed and valorised.

## Conclusions

In this chapter came the first encounter with the *momago*, a shamanic ritual that is, above all, one of the main occasions for a party among Wana people. The ritual not only brings together the community, but it clearly expresses several of the key values of Wana culture. First of all, it articulates the *kasintuwu*. This comes through not only from just one family paying for the entire ritual and giving all participants the opportunity to be healed by the shamans, but also through the presence of the community itself being necessary to cure the main patient. Having dozens of people together in a small hut or room recreates the primordial density that brought mythical power to Wana people, a power that was lost when the land of the Wana was scattered around the world. Secondly, the visible and invisible have a central part in the organisation of the ritual. Light keeps away the spirits, they cannot and should not be seen, while the music (invisible) calls them, creating a bridge between the human and the spirit worlds. The life of shamans is based on this liminal status; they are humans who share a few traits with the spirits and can act as a mediator between the two worlds thanks to their position.

The final important element is the playfulness that characterises Wana rituality. This positive energy is used to transform any negative situation, such as illness, into a positive event. It helps the community re-create itself – both enjoying the “recreation” of entertainment and undergoing regeneration. All these elements will also be present in the next chapter about the *kayori*, a ritual that in some ways is a larger-scale *momago*, and they will be analysed further in Chapter V.

## IV

### **The *kayori***

This chapter will explore how Wana people transform pain from the loss of a loved one into playful moments, through the *kayori* (funerary ritual). After passing through several explosions of controlled violence and an alternation of centripetal and centrifugal emotional forces, *kasintuwu* (sense of community) is reinforced and the emotional equilibrium of the family of the deceased and of the whole community is restored.

### **Rituality as a guide**

To succeed in safely overcoming the dangers related to the death of a community member, Wana people put in motion a series of small and large rituals that help to establish a rhythm and pace for the healing process. The rituals escort the deceased individual, together with the entire community, through all the emotions roused by death – a process that starts with the physical death, then continues with the transformation of the body into a corpse, the cultural death, and the arrival of the soul into *suruga* (heaven). These processes last between 16 and 18 days in total. During this mourning period, the deceased is not actually considered dead; although the corpse is already in its grave and the *koro uli*, one of the three Wana souls,<sup>91</sup> is separated from its body-vessel, the soul is still present amongst the living. For this reason, it is forbidden for the living to cry, except in the form of a ritualised expression of pain called *mandeke*, which occurs during certain moments of the ritual, especially in the two last days. Anyone who fails to respect the prohibition of crying becomes a victim of mockery from the whole community. This behaviour flows from the belief that a human is made up of a body and souls, and that both of these elements must receive a ritual send-off from the community before the person can be considered completely dead. For this reason, crying before the end of the ritual is considered a pointless action; it would be like mourning somebody still alive. Of course, controlling emotions is not always easy and I will show later in this work how pain and tears are hidden and disguised.

Avoiding the expression of strong feelings is a common trait in many Southeast Asian cultures. Wana people believe that strong emotions can be dangerous for a person; it can

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<sup>91</sup> For the discussion about Wana souls, please see the previous chapter.

lead to illness of the soul and the need for shamanic treatment. A similar attitude is found among the Toraja people of Sulawesi, who “believe that emotional upset has an adverse effect upon one’s health” (Wellenkamp 1988: 492).

Considering that the period being described lasts almost three weeks, I will offer a basic timeline of the Wana mourning for basic orientation:

Day 1: A person dies. The body is washed, the corpse is buried and the *uba* (a bag with offerings) is prepared.

Day 3: After collecting all the necessary materials (bamboo, wood, leaves for the roof, etc.), the family and friends start to build the *dumbaru* (ritual hut).

Day 9 for a dead man (henceforth m), and Day 10 for a dead woman (w): In the middle of the mourning period, the community gathers and renews the *uba*.

Day 14 (m), Day 16 (w): *Wuri moapu* (cooking night), the first night of the ritual takes place.

Day 15 (m), Day 17 (w): *Wuri mankon*i (eating night), the second night of the ritual.

Day 16 (m), Day 18 (w): *Mantabu uba njotanoa* (bringing the *uba* to the grave), the last day of *kayori*.

Day 17 (m), Day 19 (w): The last lunch and the disassembly of the *dumbaru*.

Wana people consider the end of the *kayori* to fall on either Day 16 or 18; at this point, two sets of either eight or nine days have passed – the significance of which will be detailed below. However, even though I was told that the ritual was finished after the *mantabu uba njotanoa* and it was clear that many people headed back home even before the end of that day, after many months of research I discovered that there is actually another final ritual day immediately following. This day is not considered part of the *kayori* since it does not involve the wider community, but it is nevertheless important for the family.

The following discussion will chart the *kayori*’s progress through these various stages.

Day 1	Day 3	Day 8/9	Day 13/15	Day 14/16	Day 15/17	Day 16/18	Day 17/19
Death Wash the body Comb Burial <i>Uba</i> 1° <i>yoku</i>	Start building the <i>dimbaru</i>	<i>Uba</i> 's modifications Comb 2° <i>yoku</i>	End building the <i>dimbaru</i>	<i>Mandeki</i> Preparation food (chicken, coconut, rice and vegetables) Pray to the rice's spirits <i>Dendelo</i> <i>Mokayori</i>	Funeral dinner Food for the spirits <i>Moayori</i>	<i>Mandeki</i> <i>Dendelo</i> <i>Mandeki</i> 3° <i>yoku</i> Visiting the grave End of the <i>kayori</i>	Dismantling the <i>dimbaru</i> Last lunch Final visit of the grave

**Table 2:** This table shows the timeline of the entire *kayori* and the day after it ends.

## The origin myth

As is often the case in oral cultures, the reasons behind many Wana practices can be explained through reference to mythical tales. Often when I asked people to explain why they did things in a certain way, their answer would begin with the words “*dari pertama*” (from the first time), and they would go on to recount a mythical story. Indeed, the reasons for conducting the *kayori* over this particular period of time – two sets of eight days for men and two sets of nine days for women – can be traced back to myth. I collected two tales about death. The first explains that in the golden era, humans did not know they could die; it is only when a *tau baraka* (a person from mythical time) sees that a fallen tree does not stand again that he discovers what it means to die:

*In those time, humans did not know anything about death. They did not know they could die. When struck by illness, age or a lethal wound, they would lie down and get up again shortly afterwards, without evidence of their wound or their health issues<sup>92</sup>. On one occasion, one of the people of mythical time saw a tree fall down and not get up again. In that moment, he understood that humans could die and he started to cry. From then on, people that lay down dead did not get up again.*

While this story tells us *why* people must die, the following story tells us *how* Wana people die in a cultural sense:

*At that time, when death did not exist, there was a man and a woman. They were walking while playing music. The man played the *popondo* (flatbar zither) (Img. 9) while the woman played the *tulali* (three-holed flute). They were so immersed in their music, as if in a trance, that they accidentally entered two separate holes in the ground, and there they each continued playing without food or water. After two sets of eight days, another man went to look for them. The man called out to the couple but the melody of the *tulali* was the only reply; it was in this moment that he realised the *popondo*-playing man must have already died. He returned the next day and listened to the *tulali* music again, and this was repeated the following day, two sets of nine days after the couple had gone missing. This time he did not hear the *tulali*, and the man understood that both had now died.<sup>93</sup> From*

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<sup>92</sup> «Stories also say that in the past death was a temporary state from which people returned in three days» (Atkinson 1992:46).

<sup>93</sup> Rappoport reports a similar myth among the Lamaholot: “He then let for the sea and cut a branch and tied the two inseparable [bamboo], hung his dance costume, and his bells to a post and leant back against

that day, the *kayori* has lasted two sets of eight days for men<sup>94</sup> and two sets of nine days for women.<sup>95</sup>



**Img. 24:** Indo n'Tibe playing the *tuali* (Video 6)



**Img. 25:** Apa Jupi playing the *popondo* (Video 5)

The number of days is also equal to the number of ribs Wana people think each gender possesses; they believe that men have two fewer ribs less than women, and hence are lacking. “Eight and nine are inauspicious numbers that follow the auspicious count from one to seven that spells out a full life” (Atkinson 1990: 81-82). These beliefs establish the Wana custom of waiting a certain period of time between the burial of the corpse and the end of the mourning period. In addition, the role of music in this story could be the motivation behind the prohibition of playing music during the two days of the main ritual. The presence of these two specific instruments in this foundation myth is also very important. These instruments have a special connection with sex and *eros* that none of the other Wana traditional instruments have. *Popondo* and *tulali* clearly have a strong connection with the hidden world of emotions and spirits – a connection that actually pervades the Wana understanding of all instruments and music in general. Atkinson explains that “it is not uncommon for one who is skilled at playing a musical instrument such as flute or stringed chest resonator [*popondo*] to play haunting and plaintive songs to

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it, then he climbed down into the hole, onto the coffin. He was playing the flute. [...] When the sound of the flute stopped, he was dead”. (2014: 234)

<sup>94</sup> The ritual power of the double eight is also present among the Taman of Borneo (Bernstein 1991; 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Apa Rau, March 2011.

attract hidden beings” (Atkinson 1989: 54). These testimonies reveal the strong connection that exists between Wana music and the non-visible world; ritual instruments recall spirits, the *balo pombongo* (war trumpet) recalls war, and the *popondo* and *tulali* control sexual attraction. In a similar way, ritual mourning song calls up and guides the emotions of people involved, marking the different moments of the soul’s journey to heaven and its slow transformation from being a live member of the community to taking the status of an ancestor.

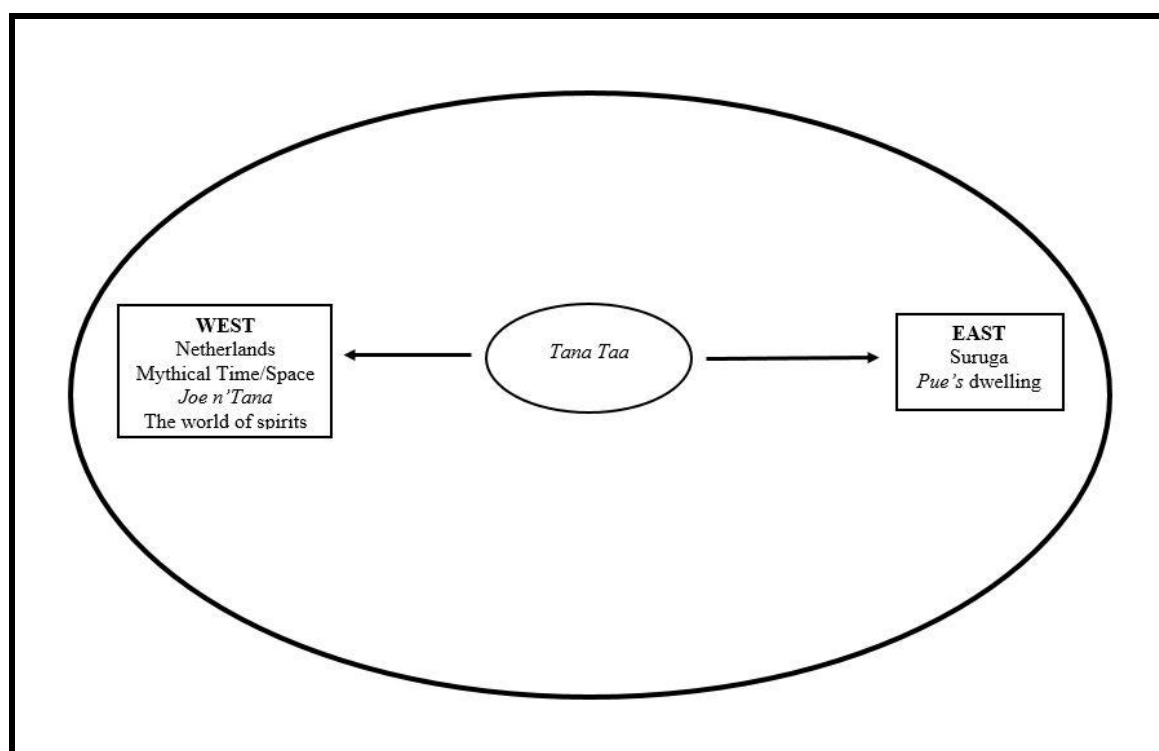
This link between erotic music and death stresses the juxtaposition between the negativity of death and the excess of life that Wana people actively explore during the *kayori*. Death casts a shadow threatening to undermine people’s faith in the meaning of their lives and of the community’s rules and conventions. To protect against the disintegration of the community at these moments of crisis, Wana people try to fill the hole created by death with an excess of life that reinforces the bond between community members, creates new bonds among people from different villages, makes the community’s physical and emotional presence felt, and guarantees that individuals and the Wana people as a whole will continue their journey. Similar rituals have been excellently explored in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, a book edited by Bloch and Parry (1982). According to them, many cultures consider life a limited good, and the rituals surrounding death are a source of life, an occasion to create new life. (Ibid.: 9). Any loss must be balanced by a gaining, the social structure must be constantly balanced to avoid the extinction of the community. In this way, the awareness of the limits of life is contrasted by the idea that the life of the community is “timeless”. Even if few members die, so far the community is able to replace them, through an excess of life, the community will always exist and death, and its negative energies and consequences, will be controlled and defeated. “It is evident, then, that individuality and unrepeatable time are problems which must be overcome if the social order is to be represented as eternal” (Ibid: 15).

### **Day 1: Dying**

When a death occurs in a village, the deceased is washed to purify the corpse of the pollution that is thought to arise from the process of dying. This belief is extraordinarily widespread across cultures, including in Tibet, where the corpse is washed with scented water (Sangay and Kilty 2011: 52), in Egypt, where soap is used in conjunction with water (el-Aswad 1987: 217), in Japan, where the *yukan* process is performed (Clark 1994: 129-131), in Ghana (Abasi 1995: 454) and in the Southeast Asian communities of Lombok (Telle 2000: 785). Among the Wana people, special care is reserved for the head and the

face of the deceased to make sure that they are presented as well as possible for their arrival into the afterlife.<sup>96</sup> Then, the corpse is wiped and dressed; the individual's best clothes are used and a machete is placed on the side of the corpse, on the left if the deceased is male and on the right if female. Machetes are objects that all Wana people possess from a young age; they are used for a great many actions, from peeling fruit to making canoes. Moreover, machetes are indispensable equipment for travelling in the jungle, both to open new paths and to protect oneself; it is almost unthinkable to travel in the jungle without one. I was unlucky enough to have a guide that did not bring a machete with him and when I told the story to my Wana friends they were all shocked by the irresponsibility of his actions. For this reason, it is realistic to believe that the machete is placed in the coffin to make sure that the deceased is able to safely undertake their journey to *suruga* (heaven). But since the machete performs so many important roles in Wana daily life, it is also there to make the deceased a cultural whole.

The body, both when being prepared at home and when buried in the grave, is placed with the feet pointing to the east, where *suruga* is thought to be located, and the head pointing to the west, towards the land of the spirits. The rationale is that, from this position, the dead person can easily stand up and start walking in the right direction, leaving the world of spirits behind them.



**Img. 26:** Organisation of Wana world: the West is the place of the myth while the East is the place of god and afterlife.

<sup>96</sup> From a conversation with Apa N'Te.

While seated on *lemu*, *pokae* and *arat* leaves, the village chief, or somebody else who knows the tradition, dips a comb in a mixture of water and coconut water and passes it three times (a powerful number), from the top to the bottom of the forehead of the dead person to keep positive memories and emotions inside the soul. At the midpoint of the mourning period, a similar action is performed on the living relatives and friends, although in the opposite direction and performing the opposite function – dispelling negative emotions and thoughts. The leaves on which the chief sits prevent the propagation of illness, illness being considered by Wana people a concrete object like a stone or fishing hooks.

At the end of this process, the corpse is placed inside a *sarong*<sup>97</sup> and put into a wooden coffin. *Sarongs* are used in everyday life as blankets and people tend to cover their whole bodies with them while sleeping. It could be that covering the corpse with a *sarong* is a way to represent the deceased as a sleeping person who will wake up again to start their journey in the afterlife. A *pokae* twig is passed over the corpse, starting from the feet and working up to the head, and is then thrown away. Another twig is then passed from the head to the feet and thrown away too. The same action is performed upon the grave itself once the coffin is buried. This action, very similar to that seen in the *molawo* ritual where plants and chickens are passed over the body of the patient to dispel illness, serves to indicate to the soul the path it must take to reach heaven (the movement from the head to the feet) and also to dispel the spirits, sending them away to their realm (the movement from the feet to the head).

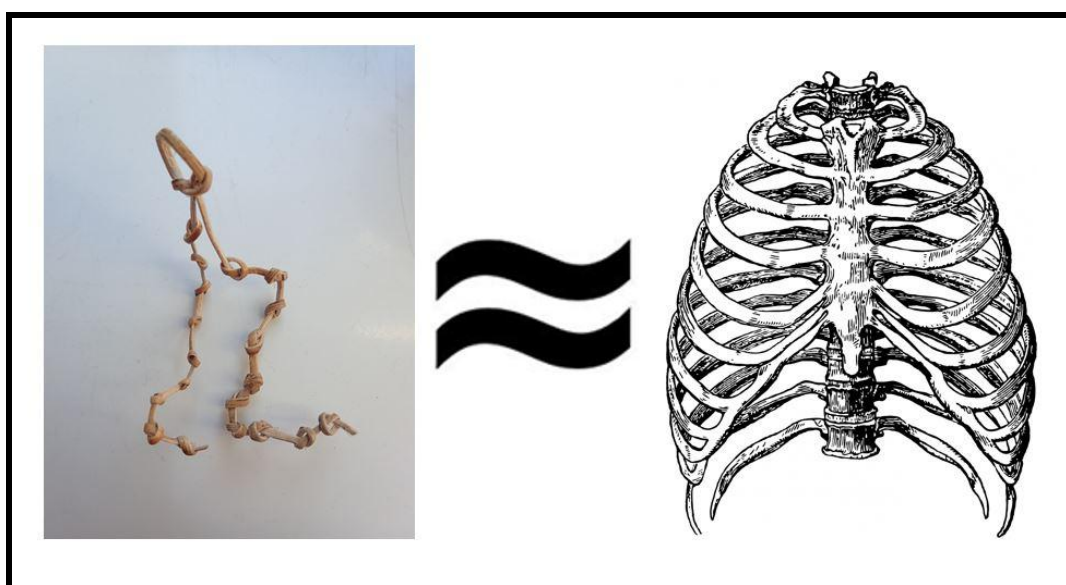
The burial can happen only during daylight. If somebody dies during the night (the time that belongs to the spirits), the coffin is kept closed inside the house. The dead are buried in their *banua mate* (house of the dead), a tomb dug outside the village, on which a roof made of palm leaves is built, and a place for the fire is allocated on one side.

After the burial, everyone who has touched the corpse washes to purify themselves of pollution; this action, like the duty to wash the corpse, is also related to the understanding of death as an infectious event. Nowadays, Wana people have an almost sedentary culture but, in the past, after a funeral they used to move entire villages to new uncontaminated places. Again, since Wana people believe that illness is a concrete object that can pass from person to person by contact, by washing they are making sure that the illness does not infect themselves or anyone else.

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<sup>97</sup> A *sarong* is a large tube or length of fabric often wrapped around the waist. It is a garment worn in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and on many Pacific islands.

Once at home, the family prepares the deceased person's *uba*, the traditional Wana travelling purse. In this case, the *uba* maintains the function of serving as a travelling bag, but it is changed in its material composition and shape. In fact, the funeral *uba* is not made of rattan and palm but is a sack made of fabric. Within it is placed a change of clothes for the dead, some betel nuts, *siri* (a plant usually eaten with betel) and *tiula* (a white powder derived from the tyломelania snail shell<sup>98</sup>), and a small case containing the *mata* (rattan thread with knots tied in it). The *mata* has 16 knots tied in it for a man and 18 for a woman. Each knot represents one mourning day and every day a knot is cut off and placed in the case. This daily action helps regulate the family's progression through the ritual period, giving a pace to their pain. Every day, the family members are obliged to conduct such actions, and these offer a constant behavioural guide that safely escorts them through the mourning period.



**Img. 27:** It is possible that the *mata* (left) is made to recall the rib cage, and that it is symbolically linked to the days needed to organise a *kayori*.

The same cloth that the *uba* is made from also provides the *yoku*, ritual arm bands for the close relatives and friends. Similarly, if the dead person is a man, his widow wears a band of this cloth around her chest from shoulder to shoulder, or if the dead person is a woman, her widower wears it around his head.

According to Atkinoson “at death, the betel bag of the deceased represents its owner’s continued social presence through the funeral observance until finally it is carried to the gravesite, thus signaling the departure of the dead from the community” (1989: 183). At the time of my fieldwork the traditional betel bag had been replaced with a bag made of

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<sup>98</sup> The shells of this animal are put inside a piece of bamboo and cooked for hours, reducing them to powder.

cloth and its role was more than signaling the social presence of the deceased. The *uba* has a threefold role: it is a travel bag for the dead, a passport<sup>99</sup> that allows the soul to enter heaven and, most importantly, it represents the dead during the *kayori*. Without the *uba*, the soul would not be able to enter heaven and it would become a ghost. Moreover, portions of food and alcohol are served daily to the *uba* both to make sure that the soul is happy and to ensure that it does not become a ghost. Sharing food with the *uba* brings an air of normality and makes separation from the loved one a slower process. The physical body is dead but the *koro uli* (soul) is still among the living and it dwells there until the end of the *kayori*, when a specific ritual song sanctions both its entrance into *suruga* and the transformation of its status.<sup>100</sup> The first day of the *kayori* is the only day during which close friends and relatives visit the family of the deceased to offer their condolences. During this time, they also discuss the organisation of the ritual, which is one of the largest events that ever takes place in this context and requires the work of dozens of people.

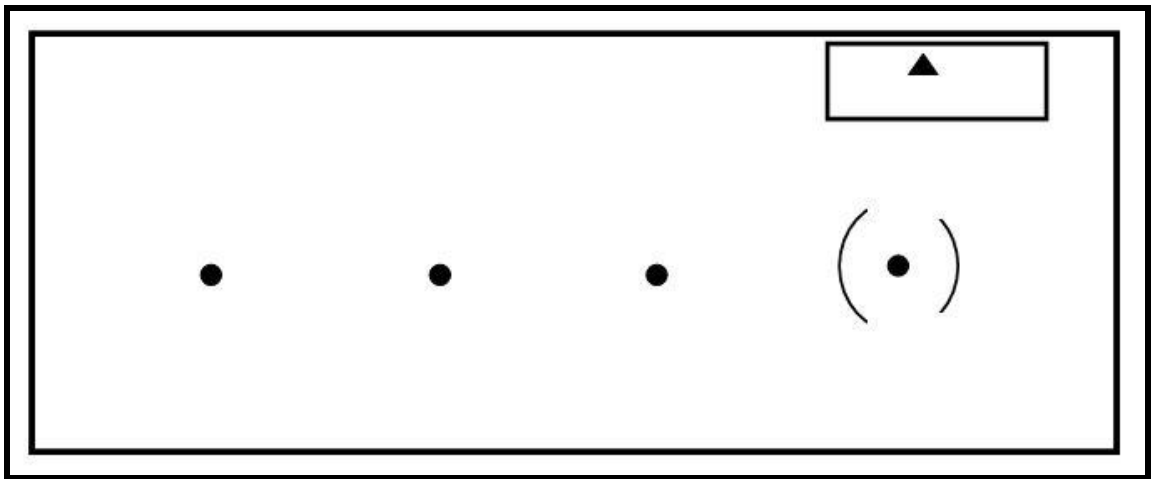
### **Day 3: The *dumbaru***

The building of the *dumbaru* ritual funerary hut begins on the morning of the third day of the *kayori*. Beyond the symbolic and mythological power of the number three, there is also a practical reason to start the building of the *dumbaru* on the third day. While the first day is dedicated to the dead, undertaking burial rituals and making other arrangements, the second day is the first available time to gather enough wood and bamboo for the building process, and so it is not possible to start the actual construction until the third day. Traditionally, the hut is built outside the village and isolated from other structures, but I also saw ritual huts built as an extension of the family's house. The walls of the hut consist of trunks and branches bound together, the floor is traditionally made of bark or bamboo (although nowadays the use of wooden boards is spreading), and the roof is made of palm leaves (although the use of tarpaulins is also becoming quite common). Four poles are planted in the hut, and the ritual song is later sung around the one nearest the *uba*.

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<sup>99</sup> It was described in this way to me by Om Manggi during a conversation on 18th May 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Also in Korean shamanism "the deceased's final entry into paradise and permanent separation from the world of the living is enacted through another deeply symbolic psychodrama" (Mills 2014: 150).



**Img. 28:** A simple diagram of the *dumbaru*: ▲ = *uba* – ● = pole – ( ) = people gathered around for singing the ritual song

Building a hut big enough to host hundreds of people is a task that requires a substantial workforce. The materials needed are collected in many different places; for example, the banana leaves required for the final ceremony are collected in the forest near Kolonodale, outside the reserve. There are similarities in Madagascar, where “some men chop wood, [and] others prepare the temporary house which will receive the guest” (Bloch 1971: 152).

This community effort clearly expresses a key Wana value: *kasintuwu* (sense of community). Like many other Indonesian and Malaysian groups, such as the Toraja (Hollan 1988: 55), Wana people place a high value on affiliation within the community and emphasise the importance of social harmony.

The *kayori* is one of the most expensive and time-consuming events that a Wana family ever experiences. Without the help of the community, both economically and as a work force, it would be impossible for a family to organise a *kayori*, stressing again the need for, and importance attached to, the individual existing as a member of the community.

Although death inflicts a deep wound upon the community, which must respond by reiterating the triumph of life, it also provides an opportunity to emphasise community values and internal cohesion. So, it is no coincidence that the *kayori*, like the *momago*, is one of the occasions where *kasintuwu* permeates much of the activity. As in the *momago*, it is just one family that takes care of the ritual’s costs, but friends and extended relations are there to help with the construction of the ritual hut, the preparation of food, and also with their physical presence and playfulness. They are there not only for themselves, to enjoy the feast and to say goodbye to a friend or family member, but also to communicate that they, and the community with them, are alive.

In larger and more fragmented or scattered communities, like those present in Western society, the death of a single member can pass unnoticed by people living even close by. In smaller communities, like those of Wana people, every single person is considered crucial

for the survival of the group, and the group is crucial for the survival of the single member. In this case, if a single person were to become lost in the pain caused by the death of a loved one, this negativity – the pollution of death – could become contagious and spread throughout the entire village. To avoid this ruinous occurrence, the presence of behavioural and emotional guides such as the *kayori* can be viewed as the key to the persistence of Wana culture.

Building the *dumbaru* takes some time but tradition decrees that the construction must be completed on the day before *wuri moapu* (the cooking night, day 14/16). The building process sees many people working together and the family visiting the grave daily. People spend a great amount of time cooperating during the day and then eating, joking and having fun after sunset. The period between day 3 and day 15-17 is characterised by particularly pronounced playfulness and *kasintuwu* and, in fact, it constitutes the only period of time during which Wana people gamble, playing dominos and a version of poker.<sup>101</sup> People here are aware that gambling is illegal in Indonesia, and for this reason they stake only small amounts of money (typically 1000IDR, corresponding to circa £0.05), or they use a system of forfeits, in which the loser of a bet might have to sit on pebbles or pin clothes pegs to their ears. During these days, split between daytime preparations and evening games and drinking, the mourning family is constantly surrounded by friends and family in an atmosphere of playfulness and vitality that drives away any sensation of loneliness.

### **Day 9-10: The midpoint**

On the ninth day for men, and the tenth day for women, the family focuses on a series of rituals that marks the midpoint of the mourning period and reaffirms the status of the deceased. The first ritual to be officiated is the passing of the comb. Close friends and relatives travel to a water source near the house, taking the *uba* with them. The village headman, or somebody else who knows the *adat*<sup>102</sup> (tradition), prepares a bowl with a mix of normal and coconut water. Into this mix he dips a comb (*siu*) while uttering some magic words. Then he passes the comb three times over the head of the close relatives and friends, just above the forehead, with a movement from the bottom to the top. This action both expels bad thoughts and feelings and protects people from them. These actions are

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<sup>101</sup> The presence of gambling behaviour during funerals is also reported by (Praet 2014: 118)

<sup>102</sup> Rappoport reports a similar ritual behaviour in Flores: “the beginning of each planting season, the final seat is depicted as a stone and a stake, at the top of which is a coconut (representing the washing of hair with coconut milk before death)” (2017: 471).

similar (apart from being in the opposite direction) to those carried out on the deceased during the first day of the *kayori*.

After a short break, people gather again inside the house to put raw rice inside four pieces of bamboo. The rice is placed on a tray – the same kind of tray used during the *momago* and also to sift rice in everyday life. In one of the rituals I saw, the widow then gave a signal for everyone present to start pounding the rice and to cry. This episode, which is repeated at the end of the *kayori*, is one of many spread across the ritual period in which people give themselves license to express and vent controlled violence against life, a kind of revenge against the loss of a loved one. Here, we must consider that rice is the principal and sometimes the only source of sustenance for Wana people, and that a failed harvest can mean death. Moreover, the harvest of the rice corresponds to its death (Friedberg 2011: 50), rice has a strong symbolic connection to both life and to death, and also to the sacrifice of the individual for the survival of the community. Rappoport, in her studies on rice songs of the Lamaholot of Eastern Flores, Indonesia (2011, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017), explains the widespread presence of death-related themes in these songs, and how the death of the plant could be related to the death of a person and provoke similar feelings: “When Lamaholot sing collectively about the rice maiden’s transformation, they are genuinely sad to have lost a sister; they connect this mythical loss with real human losses” (Rappoport 2016: 176). She goes on to suggest that the rice songs describe “how a human body is transformed into an edible plant, vital to the renewal of society. In the process of the cultivation of a crop, death is connected to fecundity” (Ibid.: 174), stressing the relationship between death and life and the necessary sacrifice of the individual to allow the entire society to thrive and continue as an endless being. Indeed, one of the songs she describes is the story of ‘The Lovers’ Flute’, in which “a violent death keeps the two lovers apart forever” (2014: 235). There are links here with the myth of the origin of death and the presence of the *tulali*, the flute that is connected to love in Wana culture. After this short episode of violence has passed, people put the rice inside four pieces of bamboo called *balo baili*, which have previously been cleaned and dried. Once filled with rice, a dried peel cob is put inside each of them to act as a stopper. Meanwhile, eight pieces of cloth (two larger and six smaller) are taken from inside the *uba*. The same cloth is then cut eight or nine times, depending upon the gender of the deceased. Then, two of the pieces of bamboo are closed with another peel cob tied with two *nilo* bark wires, and two more pieces of bamboo are closed with some pieces of cloth taken from the *uba* and tied with three wires made from *nilo* bark and a fourth made from the *uba* cloth.

Once the *balo baili* have been completed, people start making bracelets called *yoku* or *kamawu*. These bracelets, which are also made from the *uba* cloth, are to replace the *yoku*

made on the first day of the *kayori*. On the last day of the ritual, they are replaced with a third and last set of *yoku*, which are either cut off during the week following the *kayori* and brought to the grave or kept on until they wear out. It is clear that the *yoku* is a material representation of grief; wearing it from the day somebody dies and changing it throughout the mourning period represents the development of the grief, which progressively fades away with time.



**Img. 29:** Two *yoku*. It is clear that this person has had another loss recently.

After the preparation of the new *yoku*, the crowd prepares the *kadompe*. This is a bamboo holder to contain handmade cigarettes that are arranged in an alternating fashion – two groups of sixteen for men, and two groups of eighteen for women. The cigarettes are of the traditional Wana variety, made of tobacco and peel cob. Tobacco is widely present in Wana life, and almost all Wana people smoke.

Locks of hair are cut from the heads of friends and relatives by the village chief and tied to the *kadompe* with bark string. To ensure that the hair will grow back again, the village chief then blows on the spot that he has cut and says a spell. According to Leach, in a speculative essay (1958), the symbolism behind the hair locks are manifold. For example, he sees a phallic symbolism in them, suggesting that the male head is a phallus, and thus male hair represent the semen, while the female head represents the vagina and the hair of the vaginal extrusions. I do not think that Wana people make this strong connection

between hair and sexuality, and consider their cut a form of castration, but it is plausible that hair represents life and vitality, and that the cutting of hair therefore constitutes another expression of organised violence and self-harm. Hallpike lists a series of characteristics that make hair so unique and important: 1) It grows constantly 2) It can be cut painlessly 3) It grows in great quantity 4) Head hair is apparent on infants of both sexes at birth 5) Genital-anal hair appears at puberty in both sexes 6) Males develop facial hair after puberty 7) Hair on different parts of the body is of different texture 8) In old age, hair often turns white and/or falls out 9) Hair is a prominent feature of animals (1969: 257). Personally, more than a connection with the human sexuality, I would like to focus on the ability of hair to regrow, in an almost unlimited way. Like the construction, wearing, and cutting up of the *yoku*, the act of cutting a lock of hair and putting it in the *uba* can be regarded as a dramatization of loss; although something (the hair) is no longer part of us, that will not stop the rest of us (our remaining hair) from growing.<sup>103</sup> I believe the cut of locks of hair symbolizes the loss of the loved one, or a member of the community; a hole that we will feel but that with time will be refilled by new members and new hair. In the end, this and the other small rituals that form the *kayori*, help the Wana in understanding and making concrete something that it can be extremely difficult to understand with words: that death is unavoidable and the pain we feel is the prelude of a new life, and everything will just follow its natural and cultural path. Like the shaman extracting the “inner illness” during the *momago*, the invisible and untouchable pain caused by death is made it concrete and, in doing so, bearable.

### ***Wuri moapu: the cooking night***

With the approach of the *wuri moapu* (day 14 for men, day 16 for women), it is not only the mourners who come to the place of ritual but also sellers of various goods. The playful atmosphere of the *kayori* makes this event more similar to a fair than to a Western funeral and, being one of the largest meeting opportunities for Wana people, it becomes a major business opportunity for these sellers. The most common are those who sell sweets, alcohol and tobacco; usually they are Wana themselves and have spent the last few days preparing food and alcohol to sell. When the ritual is held in a place easy to reach by cars and scooters, sellers from other cultural groups (Bugis, Mori or Indonesians) often come to sell clothes, watches and other items.

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<sup>103</sup> I would like to have the opportunity to do more studies on the relationship between death and hair, but it is interesting to note that in *The Libation Bearers* (Χοηφόροι, *Choēphóroi*), Orestes offers a lock of hair as a sign of mourning (Cho. 4-7)



**Img. 30:** One of the many *kios* present at a funeral.

In this way, people that usually do not have the opportunity to buy certain kinds of goods because they live far away from towns can do some shopping during the ritual. Moreover, the ritual is usually held outside the village, which can isolate the participants and force them to stay under the roof of the ritual hut for two days and two nights, especially if the weather is bad. During the long nights in these conditions, people relish the opportunity to buy sweets for the children and cigarettes or alcohol for themselves. In this way, the dreadful occurrence of a death engenders a positive occasion for many others, yielding money for the sellers, leisure and sweets for the children, and new clothes for youngsters – none of which are plentiful in the jungle.

For children and teenagers, the *kayori* also provides an opportunity to stay up until late playing with friends and meeting new people from other villages, maybe even a future husband or wife. The *kayori* is also a positive event for the adults. Om Dobi told me that his father, Apa Rau, liked to go to as many *kayori* as possible, to spend time eating and drinking with old friends and new acquaintances. For Apa Rau, and indeed all Wana people, the *kayori* is only a partially negative event if the deceased was a close friend or relative; otherwise it is a two-night party for socialising and consuming.

#### **A gift to themselves**

The *kayori* is one of the two most expensive events in the life of Wana people, the other being weddings. The great difference between the two ceremonies is that, while the expenses of a wedding are provided entirely by the two families, the entire community contributes economically towards the *kayori*'s organisation. When arriving at the ritual hut, all the participants go to the organiser of the *kayori* and hand over their gifts (rice, *pongas* or *chaptikus*,<sup>104</sup> or chickens) while saying “*aku punya*,” which literally means “I have” although it can be translated in this context as “from me.”

The offering has many functions; first of all, it is a gift to the mourning family and a gesture of economic help that also expresses *kasintuwu*. Second, it stresses the necessity of living inside the community because, without these gifts, it would be impossible to organise the *kayori*. Third, it creates a bond and a debt; once one community member has helped another with a funeral, they expect that help to be repaid at the appropriate time. Ultimately, it makes sure that the participants enjoy themselves for several nights, and in so doing, this helps in the healing of the community. In this sense, one might even claim that the guests' gifts are, in the long term, gifts to themselves. Gregory makes a similar observation: “A gift is like a tennis ball with an elastic band attached to it. The owner of the ball may lose possession of it for a time, but the ball will spring back to the owner if the elastic band is given a jerk” (1980: 640).

One of the most important elements of the *kayori* is the banquet and, in the following paragraphs, I will show how this event is pivotal for the success of the *kayori*. Bringing food to the ritual is an act of generosity that reinforces a bond between community members and expresses *kasintuwu* but, at the same time, the guests are making sure that there is enough food, and especially alcohol to support a pleasant time for themselves. Again, we can see that the line between personal gain and communal gain is blurred in Wana culture, where the individual has meaning only as part of the community.

### **Playfulness and violence**

While there is usually more than enough food to satisfy the whole community, and what is left is often distributed among the participants after the *kayori*, there is never enough alcohol, and more and more is bought over the course of the ritual. Wana people often asked me for money to buy alcohol and, knowing my interest in ritual music, the village chief of Taronggo, Apa Ede, once told me:

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<sup>104</sup> While *pongas* is Wana rice wine, *chaptikus* is a common Indonesian palm wine, often made illegally.

“Alcohol makes people sing better. It will be better for you.”<sup>105</sup>

What at first might seem like a mischievous ploy to convince me to buy alcohol for everybody conceals a deeper meaning. It is true that without a playful atmosphere the ritual would not be successful, so people rely upon a copious amount of drink. It is no coincidence that some of the bystanders pour out wine for the singers all night long. The wine, either of made from rice or palm, is especially intended for the singers, to help keep them awake and strong all night. Apart from in the closest relatives, throughout the ritual I never perceived sadness. Rather, all of the activity is pervaded with enthusiasm – drunk people chatting and hugging, boys and girls flirting, playing and listening to music, and friends meeting again after a long time.

Whole families, with children in tow, continue to arrive until late evening, completely filling the interior of the hut. Only one area of the hut is left free, providing space for the *mokayori*, the dance of the *kayori* (Video 11). On this side of the hut there is a mat with the *uba* upon it. The latter is treated like the living representation of the dead, so people stay close to it, bring food and drink to it and chat nearby, so the spirit never feels alone. Near the *uba* there is also a torch, *soga*, which is lit at night. This torch is made of leaves and resin, *damar babi*, and it enables the soul to observe what it is happening at its funeral.



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<sup>105</sup> Conversation with Apa Ede, March 2011.

**Img. 31:** An *uba* with a rice offering. At the back is the *balo baili* and the *kadompe*



**Img. 32:** A traditional not death related *uba*.

At the *kayori* that I attended, at one point as people were still coming from all over the reserve to participate, something notable occurred. Although it is difficult to explain precisely, I (and presumably other participants) began to feel a sense that something was about to happen. Sure enough, near the ritual hut, some recent arrivals were experiencing a *mandeke*. They approached the *uba* and seemed to enter a trance state, articulating a violent explosion of pain with loud crying and screaming. There is evidently gender differentiation in the way people perform a *mandeke*, men swinging their machetes, stamping their feet and getting on their knees to cry, and women directly getting on their knees and starting to cry and scream. This episode is reminiscent of “running amok syndrome,” a phenomenon of Indonesian and Malaysian culture in which a person (often male) suddenly assaults people or objects with a weapon, usually a *kriss* or machete. This episode of controlled explosion gives the community members an opportunity to express their emotions in a safe time and place without having to suppress them during their daily life or express them in dangerous ways.

The *mandeke* affords men an opportunity to show their own strength – that they are able to do serious damage to a hut with their feet or with their machetes. Again, there is a strong

correlation between life and death, with funerals being an opportunity to foster new relationships, especially sexual relationships. For the women present, meanwhile, pain is more internalised and its expression is subtler. They tend to contract their bodies inwards in front of the *uba* and to express a centripetal movement of their pain, turning the violence inwards upon themselves. The men, on the other hand, tend to expand their bodies into the available space, evoking a centrifugal movement. This way of representing behaviour seems to apply more widely to everyday life too; women are linked to the village and the house, while men go out to travel between villages.

In many cultures, women have a special relationship with emotion. Parry, for example, observes that in Banaras it is women who cry and men who express their sexuality: “while the women wail, the young men dance in a burlesque of female sexuality – gyrating hips, upturned thumbs held in front of the chest to suggest breasts, and sometimes a woman’s shawl draped over the head and with mock allurements half across the face” (Parry 1994: 155). Bloch also alludes to the special connection between women and emotion: “the reason why it is important that women should touch them [the dead] is that women are the recognised vessels of kinship emotions” (Bloch 1971: 156). Ultimately, as Fischer and Manstead conclude from a cross-cultural survey, “women in all countries reported more intense emotions, and of a longer duration, and that they also expressed their emotions more overtly” (Fischer and Manstead 2000:88).

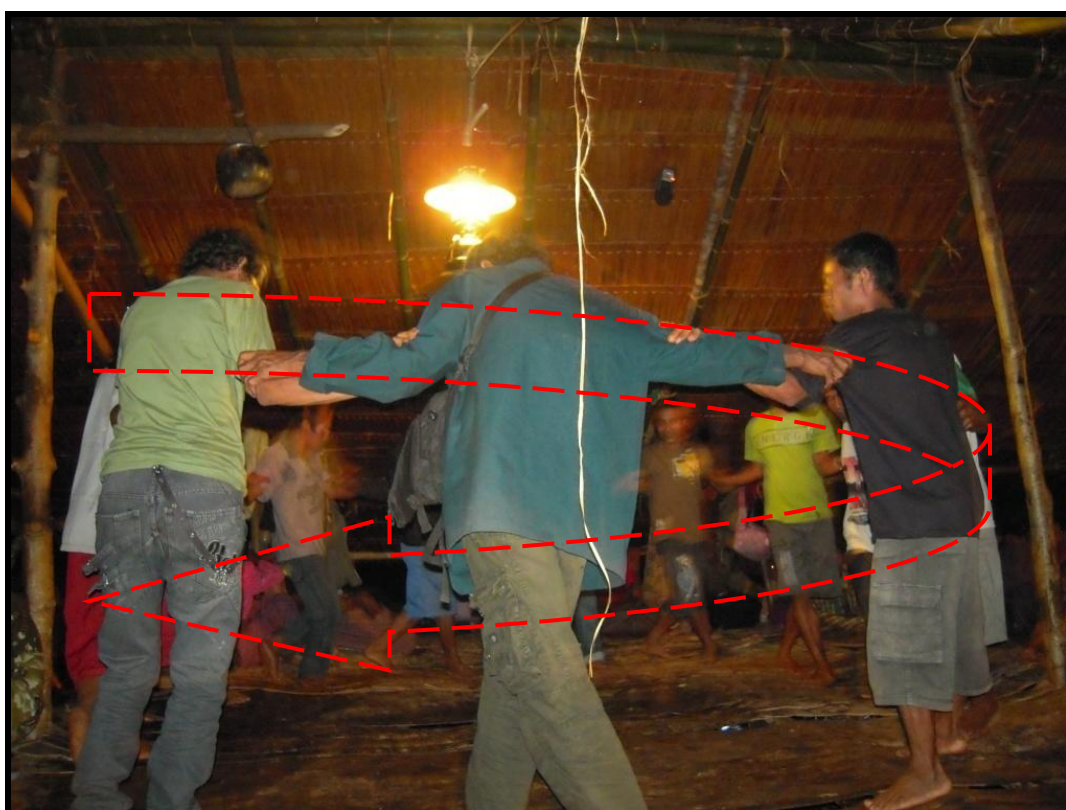
After the initial *mandeke* is concluded and the majority of the participants have arrived, the preparations for the ritual feast can begin. Here, again, there is clear gender differentiation regarding duties. While inside the hut the women prepare the *siri* leaves and clean vegetables and the banana leaves that will be needed to cook the rice, the men, both inside and outside the hut, cut long stretches of bamboo into pieces, within which the rice will later be cooked. This dish – rice wrapped in leaves and cooked in bamboo – is called *iranueki* and it is only ever cooked for the *kayori*. It is considered delicious due to the particular flavour the rice gains having been cooked inside the bamboo. Throughout all these proceedings, the hut clearly represents the wider village as a safe cultural space connected with women. In contrast, the space outside the hut represents the jungle as the dangerous realm of men and spirits. Meanwhile, those who are not busy preparing food spend the time talking and joking.

When night falls, somebody who knows the tradition approaches the sacks of rice that are placed around the pole closest to the *uba*, the same pole around which the *mokayori* will later be sung. This person places some *tiula*, *siri* and betel nut on a leaf that functions as a tray, lifts and puts his head under the sheet covering the sacks, and gives this offering to the rice spirits. They utter a few words beseeching the spirits to allow the participants to

eat the rice without falling sick or having stomach-ache. The person then opens up the sacks and, using a plastic bowl, puts three portions of rice on two trays that have been placed nearby. A few women then use these portions of rice to make 27 *iranueki*, which are placed in three pieces of bamboo, nine (three sets of three) in each. Once these three bamboo pieces have been prepared, the other women join in and, all together, they prepare enough *iranueki* for the whole throng – nine banana-leaf packages of rice in each piece of bamboo. While the women are occupied with this task, a group of men makes a circle around the pole and, holding each other's hands, starts singing and dancing the *dendelo* (Video 10).

### Many reasons to sing

The *dendelo* is performed three times over the two days: at the opening of the first night, and both at the beginning and end of the second night. Thus, the *dendelo* performances serve to open and close the ritual. Holding each other by the wrists, the men begin to move around the pole. They sway left and right, then perform a heavy and noisy step to the right.



Img. 33: The position of the arms and hands of the singers during the *dendelo*.

At first, both the movement and the singing are tentative, as though the men do not want to disturb the bystanders. As other people join the group, however, the singing grows louder, and movements become more determined. This is the start of the *dendelo*, the opening and closing song of the *mokayori*. They are sung by men only, and are always composed of the same stanza, which is repeated seven times because “Seven is associated with a full life span” (Atkinson 1989: 160).

When the *dendelo* ends, there is a short break and then another singing group is formed. This is a group of women and it tends to be rather smaller. There are no rules that prescribe who can join at this point; anyone is allowed to, even if they do not know the words. There are now two groups, one of men and one of women, and they form two semicircles around one of the poles of the *dumbaru*. These two groups, without touching each other, continue singing the *kayori* until dawn. The men place their right elbows on the shoulders of the men on their right and lay their heads on their own right hands. The women have their arms entwined. During the night, many people alternate in the singing, and there is much joking, helped by the alcohol poured by surrounding friends. As can be seen from the photos, although the *kayori* is a funeral and the singers have a pivotal role in escorting the soul to the afterlife, the atmosphere among them is relaxed and playful.



**Img. 34:** In this image we can see both groups of singers during the *mokayori*. It is important to notice that many of the singers are laughing.

For a total of twelve hours or more during the two nights, the funeral song guides the soul in its difficult and dangerous journey from the land of the living to *suruga*; without the indications provided by the song, the soul would get lost and become a ghost. Again, the destiny of the single Wana person is controlled by the community, in the afterlife as in life.

The funeral song describes a journey to paradise on board a large canoe. At the end of the first ritual night, this canoe is replaced by a smaller canoe that takes the soul to its destination, and perhaps this can be connected to the custom prevalent in Southeast Asia of the second burial, in which the journey to the afterlife is divided in more parts.

Moreover, the song also aims to reinforce *kasintuwu* and to reaffirm the cultural laws.

*Lagu mogombo serita  
Sesinjuyu linga-linga  
Atora rapasawiya  
Naka siwaju pey kit<sup>106</sup>*

*It is much better to tell stories (myths)  
Singing in the same direction  
The rule is confirmed  
We are together*

In these lines, there is clear affirmation of the values of unity and of belonging to the community. The first and the third lines focus on myth and law respectively as the basis of cultural behaviour, while the second and the last lines focus more on the Wana sense of community. The singing is performed through the alternation of a solo voice and a chorus, the collective unison singing serving to stress the importance of staying and acting together. Cook's observations about the singing of the national anthem in South Africa rings true for Wana group singing too: "Like all choral performance, from singing a hymn to chanting at a football match, it involves communal participation and interaction. Everybody has to listen to everyone else and move forward together. It doesn't just symbolize unity, it enacts it" (Cook 2000: 79-80). Collective song in the *kayori* may result from the need for the community to re-energise, both through physical contact between the singers and by the union of voices into a single entity, symbolising unity of the community. Wana people gather and sing together to face death together, and to act together as a single immortal being. The relationship between the single member and the community will be fully explored in the next chapter.

Moreover, the circular movement around the pole can be interpreted as a call to life. Not only does it represent the movement of the sun, and with it life itself, but it also recalls an Indonesian dance often performed at weddings: the *modero*.

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<sup>106</sup> These lyrics were told me by Apa Dheri in 2011.



**Img. 35:** This round dance around a pole was observed at a Mori wedding (it is possible to see the traditional cloths). Round dances related to weedings or fertility festivals are very common in Sulawesi.<sup>107</sup>

This dance is playful and has strong courtship traits. Like the *dendelo*, it consists of people circling a pole, but this time it sees men and women holding hands with each other. Circular dance as a symbol of life is not uncommon; for example, the Nevada Shoshoni perform a round dance that has the extra purpose of rainmaking and promoting crop fertility (Steward 1941: 265). Furthermore, in a culture where people do not hug or kiss in public, the presence of physical contact between males and females in controlled public contexts creates an opportunity for new relations. As Harris notes: “beyond courtship, the Round Dance helped produce social cohesion as it “wove a loose net of linkages”“ (Harris 1940: 55). As Durkheim notes in the context of religious ceremonies, such behaviour serves to bring “individuals together, multiplying contacts between them, and making these contacts more intimate” (1961: 586).

I agree with Wolf when he says that “music and dance [...] provide conventionalized categories through which sometimes subtle emotional modalities are given concrete representation; they act as “signposts” for what I will call the emotional texture or contour of a ceremony” (Wolf 2001: 380). In this context, the music and dance stress the importance of the community and contribute to the festive atmosphere: “In effect, at least

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<sup>107</sup> Roundances aorund poles are very commong among many native american culturlas groups, such as the Shoshone.

three layers of musical meaning are engaged in dynamic interaction: 1) music as an announcement, or label, for, in this case, an emotional state; 2) music as an active constituent of the emotional texture of a ceremony as it unfolds; 3) music as directly affecting the feelings of the ritual participants (whether or not the effect can be adequately described)” (Wolf 2001: 382).

Moreover, children are present in great numbers at the *momago*. This fact serves as another affirmation that it is an event orientated to life as much as to death. At the same time, having participated in the rituals from their earliest years, the children internalise the Wana values proclaimed by the ritual and learn by observation how to express their emotions in similar situations. In other words, the *kayori* becomes a school of social, religious and emotional behaviour. Yoder also recognises this essential characteristic of funerals: “As social ceremonies that bring together a relatively large group of family members and friends, funerals are important socialization experiences that help transmit the values of the culture from generation to generation” (Yoder 1986: 152). Moreover, there are many similarities with the Kota people’s funeral culture, as suggested by Wolf again: “in my estimation, about five people die in each Kota village every year. In such intimate surroundings, children become accustomed to viewing corpses virtually from the moment they are old enough to use their eyes. This process of socialization to death is also musical, for Kota experiences of death are mediated through sound” (Wolf 2001: 400-401).

### **Day 15/17: *Wuri mankoni*, the eating night**

The second day of communal activity begins with the preparation of food. Again, there is a gender-based differentiation of roles. Inside the hut, the women prepare the grated dry coconut used to flavour the meat and the vegetables that will be served in the *wuri mankoni*. Meanwhile, the men cut and cook the chicken, while also preparing the bamboo that will contain the *iranueki*. The *iranueki* are roasted outside the hut and the chicken pieces are boiled with the coconut and the vegetables to make a stew-like dish. Chicken is not common in Wana meals; although they breed chickens in their villages, the meat is only eaten during funerals. This saving of chicken for funerals happens for two reasons: firstly, Wana people do not feel the need to use something if it is not strictly necessary, and they save the few chickens in their possession for special occasions.

Secondly, chickens have a strong connection with Wana mythology; a hen is the pet of their god Pue and many stories within Wana mythology are about the seven mythological chickens that eat people. A chicken is also used for the dangerous healing ritual called *molawo* (briefly discussed in the first chapter), in which a patient's illness is passed into the bird. Until a few years ago, the chicken was the only animal to live inside Wana villages, attesting to its importance within their culture.

On another fire, the widower or widow cooks three smaller bamboos that are destined for the deceased. Meanwhile, in another spot, some women cut large banana leaves into squares. These squares are then roughly shaped into bowls and used to serve the food. Nowadays it is possible to see some "modern" plates, but there are never enough of them to serve the food to the hundreds of people present. In the meantime, the same person that earlier said the prayer to the rice spirits makes two small trays and places portions of food, alcohol, *tiula*, *siri*, tobacco and betel nut upon them. Once ready, this individual places the trays, covered with banana leaves, near the *uba*. These trays are offerings to the spirits of the jungle, recognising that, for Wana people, it is not only people who need to eat but also spirits. The trays are hung from two poles situated at opposite entrances of the camp. An invocation is recited to make sure that the spirits are happy and that they will make sure to guard the ritual and the people participating in it (Video 7). It is possible that this action recalls the mythical past when humans and non-humans are believed to have eaten together as peers. During all of these preparations, the atmosphere is joyful and relaxed; some people socialise while others make preparations, and there is no sense of soberness.

Once ready, the food is delivered to everyone attending the ritual, with each person receiving one or two *iranueki*. The most prestigious figures within the community are served their food first on bamboo trays; typically, these figures include powerful shamans, skilled village leaders and wise elders. Although they receive the same food as others, they are treated to some extra items – *siri*, *tiula* and betel nuts – which are also placed on their trays. Feeding these respected figures in a different manner demarcates and reaffirms existing hierarchies within the community, although it should be noted that these hierarchies are of very little significance in everyday life anymore; in almost all respects, shamans and village leaders are treated just like other people and, in fact, I noted that shamans tend to have relatively poor economic standing, even by Wana standards. Maybe these special trays are a way to thank these figures for the work they do for the community.

Before the beginning of the banquet, two of the elders approach the *uba* and pass each other an *iranueki* with their right hands and take another with their left. This ritual exchange between the two elders happens twice before the *iranueki* are placed on the roof

of the ritual hut – a symbolic offering to those who were not able to attend the *wuri mankoni*. Thomas explains the function and importance of the ritual feast, noting that it “is celebrated for him [the dead person, as] a farewell banquet, to allow the ancestors to accept him in their society [...] [T]his generalization of the phenomenon of death contributes effectively to making it less unusual and intolerable, and to show those who are grieving that what is happening is just a trivial fact”<sup>108</sup> (Thomas 1976: 474). Wana people believe that another banquet awaits the soul in heaven – another celebration to make this painful transition more “normal,” festive and acceptable. Funeral meals are an important feature in a great many cultures. Yoder, for example, points to traditions in Sri Lanka, Iran, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Romania, England, and the United States, and incisively articulates one of the meal’s main functions: “its purpose [is] to reunite all the surviving members of the group with each other, and sometimes also with the deceased, in the same way that a chain which has been broken by the disappearance of one of its links must be rejoined” (Yoder 1986: 149). He notes how the meal, as a common everyday experience, is a symbol that life will continue for the bereaved. The meal enables the bereaved to experience a new social role in a public setting. Although the bereaved has had some preliminary experience without the deceased in the events surrounding the wake, the service, and the burial or cremation, now the deceased’s body is no longer present. The bereaved is, thereby, given a new kind of opportunity to experience life without the deceased. The bereaved person has an opportunity to experiment, role-play as it were, in the context of the familiar, structured setting of a meal (Yoder 1986: 155). And again Yoder explains:

The meal can also serve to soften the abruptness of the change from much defined ritual surrounding the funeral to the emptiness and loneliness that are likely to occur in the days and weeks following the funeral. Often the funeral meal will involve a smaller group of persons than that which attended the funeral. These persons are often significant others in the life of the bereaved. If support can be provided at the time of the meal and/or planned for the future, it will serve an invaluable function in helping the bereaved deal with grief. Studies have shown that resolution of grief is helped by the presence of support systems in the period following the death, for example, a widow-to-widow group (Yoder 1986: 156).

### *Mandeki*

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<sup>108</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

Beyond the ritual banquet, this night (*wuri mankoni*) is full of significance at the end of the ritual. The end of the song and the moment of separation from the soul leads to an extraordinary explosion of pain among family members. This moment marks the soul's arrival into heaven and the complete cultural death of the person, and the close relatives begin to scream and cry. Again, there is a gender division that can be characterised by the opposite forces, centrifugal for men and centripetal for women. If the deceased person is a man, the women grieve by pulling out their hair, scratching their skin and beating down upon the earth, trashing the ritual hut in an intense self-destructive expression of pain. On the other hand, if the deceased person is a woman, the men wreck part of the hut with their machetes and feet, externalising their pain. This wild violence is all the more striking on account of the calm that immediately precedes it and the abruptness of the behavioural transformation. Those present accept these manifestations of pain, but with a degree of fear and disapproval. While some people try to prevent the afflicted from doing too much damage, others lose no opportunity to make fun of their behaviour.

Humour is present here not only because these violent explosions are considered to be almost a form of play, but also because humour is a part of wider Wana life. It is another essential tool to control the behaviour of the community and, in this specific case, to prevent the afflicted from losing control of their emotions. Wana people abhor negative emotions just as do those in many other Indonesian and Malaysian cultures (Hollan 1988: 4), believing that they lead to sickness. Humour helps them express their disapproval in a safe way, giving them a harmless means to control other members of the community and the excessive emotions that they show. Wana people tend to laugh at pain, be it emotional or physical. As in Bali, "to express 'good' (*buik*) emotions is a moral obligation. Add to this a presumption that expression nurtures feeling, and it should be clear why laughter and cheerfulness emerge as the sensible response to any kind of distress" (Wikan 1988: 457) With the They might laugh or smile as if to express that it is useless to become upset if one cannot control the situation. Social relationships are also controlled by jokes and laughter, with all unaccepted behaviours, small or large, being met with humour rather than punitive action. In this way, Wana people can control each other and express their resentment towards others in a safe way.

### **Day 16/18: *Mantabu uba njotanoa*, the last day of *kayori***

By the time calm has fallen over the night's activities, it is already morning and the singers close the *kayori* with a last *dendelo*. While the ritual participants relax after the long night, other non-participants are just waking up, and a peaceful calm prevails.

Everything remains calm until a group of close relatives gathers near the *uba* and starts to pound the rice in much the same violent manner as occurred during the midpoint rituals. After the pounding and some further damage is done to the hut (Video 15), the group goes to the tomb, reverting to calmness in a strikingly abrupt fashion as they make the journey – only to suddenly switch back into violent *mandeke* behaviour on arrival at the grave (Video 16). All this tightly prescribed rituality is required because funerals are not only a way to guarantee a good afterlife for the dead but also a primary means to heal the wounded community. Although it is commonly assumed that funerals are designed to honour the deceased, it is primarily the living that they target; to negotiate the meaning of death, to overcome it and to put it at the service of life and of the people left behind. Although it may seem contrived to an outside observer, this firm organisation of emotions helps Wana people deal with the destabilising event of death. Within the close-knit community, comprising hundreds of people all packed together under the same roof, different people perform different emotional roles. Music marks emotional time, and the sequence of actions guides the suffering individuals through the period of crisis and brings the whole community along with them.

#### **Day 17/19: The last lunch**

Only at the very end of my six months of fieldwork did I discover that the *kayori* is followed by another day dedicated to mourning. However, this extra day is not considered part of the *kayori*. At this point, the majority of people – counted in the hundreds, including all the sellers – have already gone home and it is only the close relatives and friends who meet to eat together and dismantle the hut. The atmosphere is suddenly quieter and more relaxed. While the men take apart the hut piece by piece, the women cook pieces of coconut trunk and chicken. In one corner, some people weep, but this time it is different – calm, soft and less ritualised. In the privacy of this day, the family can finally cry in a less demonstrative and performance-orientated fashion.

As Yoder points out, this type of post-funeral meal brings different values and emotions, serving as both a ritual expression of bereavement and as a means to soften the shift from the grieving period back into the everyday life of the village: “it often serves as a time where the immediate bereaved begins an emotional re-integration process. After the experience of intense emotions in the public settings of the wake, the service, and the burial, the meal provides an opportunity for the bereaved to establish some emotional bearing in a public setting. This can be reassuring for both the bereaved and the larger community as they begin to adjust to the loss. The meal can also serve to soften the

abruptness of the change from much defined ritual surrounding the funeral to the emptiness and loneliness that are likely to occur in the days and weeks following the funeral” (Yoder 1986: 155-156). Eating together has an important role in the rituality of the *kayori* and the re-creation of the community after a loss. As Mosko points out regarding the North Mekeo: “one of the stated purposes of mortuary feasts is to end the deceased’s clan’s mourning ordeals so they can return to ordinary village life. But this involves a reorganization of their relations and affiliations to the other clans of the endogamous tribe” (1989: 108). The chaos caused by the death of a member of the community first managed and then transformed in order through a specific rituality, marked by important events like eating together. The division of roles for the organisation of the meal and the presence of the community gives its members a new reinforced order to follow, and in which they can feel safe. After lunch, the group goes to the grave for the last time, to weep, tell stories about the dead, and thereby mark the end of the grieving period.



**Img. 36:** A family chat and smile on the grave of a loved one after the last visit.

### **Celebrating life**

As I mentioned previously, the first day of the *kayori* is characterised by the arrival of the guests and the preparations for the feast. In all the rituals I witnessed, the influx of people was always great, with some even travelling from quite distant villages. The ritual is as much representative of a fraternal feeling among them as it is also a trade opportunity. As I noted above, a large number of people selling various goods take the opportunity to

find good business here. It is important to note that the ritual is long and tiring; people have to spend two whole nights in a hut in close contact with other people, often unable to return home because of the distance or weather. The traders are, therefore, meeting a genuine need, especially that of the alcohol that flows copiously at the ritual, just as it does in all kinds of Wana meetings and celebrations.

The gathering of people, the party and the singing all contribute to making death easier to comprehend and to affirm the continuity of life. The response to the death of an individual must be considered a parenthesis in time that should not destabilise the normal course of events. What characterises the ritual is the fact that it is a public and collective action that has the power to bring about the adjustment of social relations and to induce individuals to conform to socially prescribed behaviours. This ultimately “reinforces the participants’ sense of belonging to the social body”<sup>109</sup> (Fabietti 1991: 23). That the *kayori* requires the active participation of a large community of people – from the construction of the hut to the preparation of the banquet – links it to *kasintuwu*. The group singing and the physical proximity with which people spend two nights together creates both a physical and an emotional communion in which each Wana person might feel part of a group that is perpetuated through the generations, despite the death of the individual.

The reaffirmation of life is linked to the circular dance that accompanies the singing throughout the nights. The circularity can be connected to the movement of the sun and the stars and may symbolise the continuity of life; as Apa Rau said: “Re eo, re Wana”,<sup>110</sup> literally translated as “If there is sun, there are Wana.”

This directly relates to Thomas’s observations regarding the underlying functions of funeral rituals: “The funeral rites, in fact, celebrate life [...] This is not to deny death, but to accept it as a condition of regeneration”<sup>111</sup> (Thomas 1976: 473-474).

It is important to underline the fact that I found Wana people generally to be pessimistic about their own lives, considering themselves to be living through an era of terrible hardship in comparison with the situation in mythical time, although they do acknowledge that their circumstances are better than those of their grandparents’ generation.<sup>112</sup> They face the challenges of their lives through looking ahead to the end of time as they know it and to the return of mythical time. Death and the afterlife in heaven have much in common for this yearning for mythical time; both bring the promise of better things and the

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<sup>109</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

<sup>110</sup> From a conversation with Apa Rau. May 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Translated from Italian by the author.

<sup>112</sup> Wana people often refer to people of the recent past as even poorer than themselves, since they only had coconuts and leaves as clothing.

fulfilment of all wishes. Heaven is also a reward for dealing with the difficulties of the current life: “Heaven is thus taken to be compensation for life on earth. For the Wana, who suffer so much in their mundane mortal existence, the afterlife offers deserved leisure and comfort” (Atkinson 1988:55).



**Img. 37:** A couple of friends hug each other during a *kayori*. These two friends met again after long time and at the moment this picture was taken they were drunk and were screaming: “we are best friends!”.

### Conclusions

Death is one of the greatest dangers a community can face. Not only does it produce great pain in the single members and the entire community, but it spreads a contagious and polluting sense of meaninglessness. The negative energies unleashed by death must be

tamed and culturally controlled to avoid the risk of a disintegration of the community. To avoid that fate, communities around the world tend to respond to the negativity of death with an excess of life, balancing the two forces and allowing the community to become “timeless.” Wana people employ a long funerary ritual, the *kayori*, that offers all members a guide for not getting lost in their pain, thanks to the smaller rituals that compose it. Each Wana person knows their role, that they are not alone, and that the community is there to help and support them.

This support is both invisible (spiritual and emotional) and visible (economic). Small actions, such as cutting off a lock of hair or counting the days with the *mata*, offer to the single members an emotional guide that makes them feel safe and tells them what, when, where and how to feel their pain. The *kayori* would be impossible to organise without the practical and economic help of community members, and this transmits the message that it is possible to die properly only when a person is part of a community taking care of them in life and after death. I have shown how Wana people make a clear distinction between natural death and cultural death. They forbid the non-ritualised expression of pain because this is meaningless considering that before the ritual is complete a person is not fully dead. In fact, cultural death arrives at the end of the *mokayori*, the ritual song that guides the soul into the afterlife, and only at the end of this do Wana people express their pain, in an extremely ritualised way. The *mandeke* allows the community to safely express their pain while also expressing sexual messages of physical strength. Indeed, the *kayori*, like the *momago*, is an occasion to reinforce the *kasintuwu* and create new bonds. In this way, the negativity of death can be transformed into a positive event that re-creates the community and guarantees its continuity.

## V

### **Wana dualities and the expression of cultural values in rituals**

In the previous chapters, I explored the cultural world of the Wana people, invoking a gradual immersion in Wana culture and rituality. In the third and fourth chapters, I presented and described the two major rituals, the *momago* and the *kayori*. It is now time to discuss the Wana values expressed in these rituals and to making more explicit the cultural connections between all of the elements introduced. My intention is now to present the bigger picture of the religious life of the Wana people.

Thus, this chapter analyses and explores the cultural values underlying that bigger picture of Wana people's worldviews. To discuss these values, I focus on the juxtaposition of elements on which they are founded. Several dualities are at the foundations of everyday life and, at the same time, are reinforced and expressed during rituals, in a continuing interplay between life and ritual. Dyads such as "Wana and others," "centre and periphery" and "visible and invisible" are just a few of the juxtapositions I will discuss in this chapter. I have already introduced all of these paired ideas during the introduction to Wana culture, and now the task is to show connections between them that may not yet be obvious.

#### **Wana and others**

As I noted in the second chapter, Wana people define themselves not only in relation to their own mythology (they consider themselves the offspring of mythical people) but also to their history and their power relationships with colonial empires (Indian, Arab and Dutch) and their neighbours (especially Mori and Bugis). The Wana people consider themselves inferior to other cultural groups, and a poor and cowardly community (Atkinson 1990). Moreover, they are often looked down upon by other groups in the area and by the Indonesian government. Perhaps for these reasons, the Wana people appear very united and supportive of each other, valuing peacefulness and serenity above everything else. It is also possible that their vision of themselves may be bound up with the fact that "in the regional game of headhunting, the Wana were quite often the heads"

(Atkinson 1990: 65). I consider Anthony Cohen's idea that community is a symbolic and contrastive construct and that it is shaped by the perception of boundaries marking off one social group from another (1985). It is reasonable to suggest that a sense of cultural inferiority and vulnerability in battle could have played an important role in creating the profound sense of community I have observed in the expression of *kasintuwu* permeating daily life. Together Wana people are stronger and can face the perceived difficulties and sufferings of their lives more successfully.

Wana people's idea of community goes well beyond the concept of "community as the structure of relationships through which a localised population meets its daily requirements" (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012: 294). It is also more than "the common life of beings who are guided essentially from within, actively, spontaneously, and freely [...] relating themselves to one another, weaving for themselves a complex web of social unity" (MacIver 1917:34). Instead, it becomes a form of kinship that ties together all Wana people. Very often, people told me:

*Kami satu keluarga* (we are one family).

This assertion expresses a kind of nurtured kinship (Schneider 1984), where the sense of affiliation is looser and includes relationships not exclusively based on blood and marriage. As far back as in 1889, William Smith in his *Lectures on The Religion of the Semites* discussed an idea of kinship not based on blood, but on social relationships. What tied people together in bonds of mutual obligation often involved food and drink (Smith 1889: 265), and this seems to ring true in the Wana context too. Beyond the fact that Wana people believe themselves all to be descended from common mythical ancestors, there is a more concrete sense in which they all share some kind of direct kinship, linked to the fact that the community has only around 5,000 members. I constantly heard people telling me "I have relatives in that [other] village" and then listing all of the distant relatives living there to emphasise to me their connection to that place. I interpret this as expressing a deep sense of *kasintuwu*, a bond that goes beyond direct blood ties. Part of this, too, is surely connected to their precarious life in the jungle, where selfish acts or orientations could have dangerous consequences. Almost everything is shared with others, and there is a moral imperative to pay back generosity whenever possible, rather than taking advantage of it. In any village, it is possible for people to ask for food or help from other members. While, of course, there are richer and poorer people, and society is certainly not organised on the basis that everything is in common ownership, the basic needs of housing and food are guaranteed by the community and by a sense of friendship and kinship that pushes

people to support each other. When a hunter comes back with a wild pig, the meat is shared around the community; some people might decide to sell part of their share of the meat in another village, while others simply consume it by themselves. It is clear, though, how the efforts of a single member can benefit the entire community.

Being that Wana people are quick to share their goods with others, taking advantage of this generosity is not well received. I discussed in the second chapter how the behaviour of Wana Christians, in expecting to use canoes from the Marisa village without payment, has created many social issues. They have been known to commandeer the vessels as part of their business trading with the town of Kolonodale without compensating the owners in any way. In fact, it is very common for canoe owners to offer to take people from Marisa to Kolonodale. However, in this case there is a clear sense of exploitation and that their efforts and expenses are not taken into proper consideration; it is extremely heavy work to transport the Christians' large quantities of wood, rattan and resin, plus there is the need to buy fuel and make repairs to propellers broken in low tide. It is not a coincidence that the Wana Christians wish to become independent and to cut relations with the core community; they simply do not want to be involved in *kasintuwu*, and wish to avoid supporting others in daily and ritual life. Wana Christians do not take part in Wana funerals or healing rituals.

This example involving Wana Christians illustrates an “us and them” mentality. Wana people take the passive “them” role in this separation, rather than themselves actively rejecting other groups. While Wana culture is very inclusive,<sup>113</sup> it is other groups of people that they come into contact with (Christians, the Indonesian government, Bugis, Moris, and so on) who seem minded to isolate them, being influenced by a negative representation of indigenous cultures and religion deeply rooted in Indonesian culture. Wana people have experienced an unfavourable history of relations with the other inhabitants of Sulawesi, as described in chapter II.

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<sup>113</sup> Wana hospitality was illustrated very clearly to me when I told Om Manggi that my homeland Italy also had poor people. Previously imagining only riches in this distant land, he told me that all of the Italian poor would be welcome in Morowali and would have land to work.

Table 3 summarises some of the major dichotomies shaping Wana culture.

Male	Female
Jungle	Village
West	Tana Wana
Periphery	Centre
Nomadic	Settlers
Spirit	Human
Nature	Culture
Centrifugal	Centripetal
Brave	Shy
Outside	Inside

**Table 3:** Major dichotomies in Wana culture.

### **Individual and Community**

This representation of Wana community as a large family has an impact on how the single members of the community relate to each other and the community itself. The desire to help and support each other is expressed in both daily life, through the sharing of resources and support, and also in ritual life. An example regarding mundane life happened during the time of my first fieldwork in 2011; a single person in the village of Marisa regularly paid for the petrol needed to power the electricity generator giving all inhabitants of the village the opportunity to watch movies and to charge their phones. This is particularly remarkable in a culture that does not miss an opportunity to define itself as poor and wretched; despite this, single members can be relied upon to share their hard-earned possessions to benefit the entire community. Accordingly, the *momago* is a healing ritual for the entire community that is possible only thanks to the effort and money of a single family or family member, who offers the opportunity to be treated by the shaman for free to all those in need. The emotional and spiritual health of the entire community is supported by the economic efforts of a single family that decides to organize the ritual. The single member or family sacrifices something personal (usually money) to benefit the

entire community, he or she alone becomes the starting point for the re-creation of the entire community. It is not just a single person giving to the community but all the members of the community that gives and takes from each other, each one according to their own possibilities. The organizer of the ritual covers all the expenses of the shamanic services, services that benefit everyone present. The result is an increase in power, derived from the re-enactment of the primordial density, that will be used to heal the main patient. The shamans themselves put the community in front of their own lives, being always available to help others in exchange for miserable economic rewards, safe in the knowledge that they contribute to the inestimable wellness of the community.

*Kasintuwu* is expressed during all parts of the rituals; both the *momago* and the *kayori*. This reinforces the message that the life of the individual only has meaning inside the community. I believe that the main aim of these rituals is not to take care of the sick or dead person, both almost completely ignored by the participants of the rituals, but that it is actually the reaffirmation of the primacy of the community over the individual, and of the power generated by this coming together. Chapple and Coon (1942) stepped beyond Van Gennep's theory of "rites of passage" (1909) by beginning to use the term "rites of intensification." While rites of passage are focused on the single member, rites of intensification relate to crises of the entire community and intensify the power of the community. Both of these kinds of rite are useful when describing the *momago* and the *kayori*. Both act as rites of passage (from illness to wellness and from life to death) and of intensification (placing the community at their centre). However, I propose taking a further step in understanding them to take into consideration the specifics of Wana culture. I define the rituals as "rites of densification." Their major aim and justification lies in the reacquiring of lost plenitude (Traube 1989); this is both the aim of the rituals and their source of power. Through this re-creation of the primordial plenitude, or density, they can at the same time reaffirm the rules of the community (as in rites of intensification) and also allow for the change of status of a single member or of the entire community (as in rites of passage). Just as "it is well known how every myth is a quest for the golden era" (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 229, ed. or. 1958), so every rite is a representation of myth, and the primordial density occupies a crucial position in Wana culture.

When someone gets sick or dies, the individual, and with them the community, loses their plenitude, their density. These rituals have the aim of recalling the community into a common space to establish again and increase that endangered density. I use the word "density" instead of "plenitude" or other similar terms because this is the best term to describe the primordial state when, according to myth, the whole world was condensed in a single spot (the first land). Moreover, taking into consideration the important role of

centrifugal and centripetal forces for Wana people that I have already discussed, there is a constant alternation of concentration (centripetal) and dissipation (centrifugal) states, coinciding with phases of wellness and weakness.

In the third chapter, I outlined the structure of the *momago* and suggested that the participation of the community is a core element, along with the presence of the shamans and of the musical instruments which are, indeed, owned by the community and not by individuals. The *patudu* is a simpler and cheaper version of the *momago* in which the community does not take part to the same extent. As I noted in the third chapter, the *patudu* is considered a basic version of the *momago* for emergency situations in which a lack of money, ritual instruments or something else means a full *mamogu* cannot be arranged. It involves just two shamans and a single family for the treatment of a single patient. For people who consider themselves poor, it might seem advantageous to fulfil the aim of curing an ill person through expending the fewest resources possible in this way. Nevertheless, Wana people still prefer to invest time, money and energy organising the *momago*. How, then, can this preference be explained? The answer needs to consider that the main aim of a shamanic ritual like the *momago* is not, in fact, to cure a single person. It is actually to renovate and heal the community and to bring about the dense concentration of people that evokes the mythical time when the community was one. In fact, the *momago* would be impossible without the presence of the community, it would be a different ritual. It seems that the community's presence brings something more than simply playfulness and participation.

A similar situation is also true regarding the *kayori*. The entire ritual seems to have as its main message that the right death, like the right life, is only possible inside the community. First, the construction of the *dumbaru* (ritual hut) is possible only thanks to the help of friends and relatives. Even if this preliminary work could be achieved with a small group of people, the main part of the ritual, the two final days, would be impossible to organise without the help of the entire community. In Chapter IV, I noted that the only way to feed the hundred people or more who come for the ritual is for each of them to bring and share something. Bringing food to a ritual secures the reciprocal support of others when the next family is bereaved; this is a clear manifestation of the mutual support, or *kasintuwu*, which creates indissoluble relations in both life and in death. The community is necessary for the life of its members but also for their death.

Funerals are very expensive events, and it would be impossible for a single family to cover all the expenses; unlike in the case of the *momago*, there is no cheaper version. As a result, attending a funeral gives the sense that entering heaven would be impossible without the support of the community. The wider group not only pays for the funeral, and

brings food and alcohol, but it actively helps with the organisation of the event, with building the ritual hut, cooking and serving food, and most importantly, with singing. The singing is a communal activity, and the song is crucial in allowing the soul to reach the afterlife. That is, without the community's singing, the soul would get lost and become a ghost. In this way, being part of a community becomes a necessity that gives sense to life as a whole. Moreover, from a more physical point of view, during the night of the ritual, the individual member can physically feel the presence of the community and the density of the situation. Hundreds of people have to sleep in a big hut, leaving almost no space to walk around. For the ritual, Wana people come together in a single place from all parts of the jungle. This place becomes the centre of the world, symbolised by the pole around which the *kayori* will be sung. People return not only geographically but also temporally to the primordial status of powerfulness, when all Wana people shared the same space (the womb or the spinning top).

At the same time, the community is both the starting and the ending point of Wana life and rituality. The *momago* and the *kayori* would not be possible without the participation and presence of the community and, at the same time, they are needed to reinforce the community itself, in a circle of mutual reliance. The everyday life of Wana people is full of perils, pain and frustration, and mustering the energy needed to control constantly the negative emotions that could lead to sickness requires a great psychological effort. From the Wana point of view, a person's illness and related death is caused by the absence of the soul. This loss of density is due to a centrifugal force (a strong emotion) that pushes away the soul from its body (centre); leaving it wretched and destined to die if a centripetal force (the shaman) will not restore the natural and cultural density. To restore the lost density and, more importantly, to avoid the spread of negative emotional states that are interpreted as caused by the escape of the soul, Wana people organise these rituals to heal the entire community and to offer a release valve for all of the frustration of life.

Among Wana people, the life of a single member is incomplete outside the community and the crucial moments in life are characterised by the community's role. While in other societies it might be possible (if a little unusual) for there to be only a very small group of guests at a wedding, funeral or a baptism, in Wana society this is not an option. Life is organised in such a way that the community becomes necessary to fulfil successfully all the key tasks of a life (weddings, healing rituals, harvest rituals and funeral). In general, Wana people are very independent, often working, hunting and building houses alone, and they are highly self-sufficient in demanding daily tasks that arise when living in the forest. This signifies that the tasks are considered straightforward and that they do not carry particularly strong social value. Moving to the key moments of life (illness, marriage and

death), however, Wana people need the community to complete their tasks. An exception to this comes when a child is born, and it reveals that birth is not necessarily to be thought of as such an important event. Although usually there is the help of an older woman acting as midwife, giving birth is a private experience. Om Dobi and his wife were very proud to tell me she gave birth to her second child entirely alone. Beyond, such neutral events (childbirth, building a house and other “daily” tasks), the community has a role in all occasions.

Regarding the absence of the community at a ritual, at the end of this chapter I will discuss the last *kayori* I saw in 2016, the funeral of Apa Dheri. Although academic work often focuses on successful rituals, it should not be forgotten that failure plays an important role in ritual organisation, not least because many precautions are taken to avoid this eventuality. Thus, failure is a shadow that is constantly present in all ritual, albeit that it is sometimes hidden.

### **Centre and Periphery**

I have shown that the rituals are aimed at restoring the primordial density that vanished with the dispersal of mythical people, land and power outwards from the centre of the world, *Tana Taa* (Wana land). Considering the important role that the juxtaposition of centre and periphery plays in Wana reality, I will now explore this relationship with the intention of understanding how Wana people categorise space and place themselves in it. The division of space in patterns of concentric circles has an impact not only on the way Wana people interact with the world, but also on how they understand themselves and their emotions. These concentric circles have different degrees of mythical power, and access to each space is limited to different categories of beings: humans, shamans, men, women, *tau Baraka*, and so on.

Before beginning the main discussion, it is worth pointing out again that one scholar has already deeply explored the relationship between centre and periphery and the marginality of the Wana people. The German anthropologist Anna Grumblies wrote her PhD thesis on marginality and the relationship between Wana people and the wider world, most importantly the Indonesian government, palm oil companies, and the Christian groups of the area. She explored not only how Wana people are marginal to the spheres dominated by the Indonesian government and other powers, but also how they deal with and react to this state of affairs. She explains that her thesis is:

about people who are described as marginal and who consider themselves marginal. But it is also about people who have developed their very own understanding of their marginality and who have recently started to use their marginal position as a powerful tool to counteract marginalization processes directed towards them (2016: 6).

While this is necessary and valuable work, I must again point out a crucial difference in our two approaches. When Grumbles labels the centre and the peripheral, she does so from a point of view that is more etic than emic, accepting that the Indonesian government represents a natural “centre.” In many ways, her reflections are quite justified, not least because even the Wana people themselves have internalised this sense of their own isolation and marginalisation (meaning that they recognise having been forced into a position of powerlessness). I argue, however, that taking an emic point of view, the whole idea and the characteristics of the centre and the periphery are completely inverted.

Wana people, however, conceive of a world in which the centre is a place that used to have a high concentration of power but that is now powerless, while the periphery now has real power but only because it took it from the centre. Moreover, Grumbles affirms that “Wana see their land as the navel of the world, *pusen tana*. This land is furthermore, the source of *baraka* (power), *kasugi* (wealth) and *pagansani* (knowledge)” (2016: 103, emphasis in the original). Therefore, the very idea of being marginalised or peripheral is turned on its head; Wana people are aware that they are powerless due to mythological and historical reasons, but their powerlessness derives from their central position, not from their place on the periphery. After all, as scholars such as Tsing (1993), Li (2000) and Hussain (2009) have all explored, centre and periphery are social constructions and vary culture by culture.

Considering the important role that mythology has in traditional culture (Lévi-Strauss 2001), and that mythology is still one of the few sources of information about the world outside the jungle, to understand the cultural background of the Wana world it is important to start with mythological stories. According to the myths I heard and collected during fieldwork, at the beginning of time, the Wana land was the first that Pue placed on the water; it was a dense mass of land that formed the sacred mountain Tundantana, and the mountain was the centre of the world. Once created, pigs started rooting around the mountain soil, spreading the land around the world and creating the continents. This event, along with various others, began the erosion of the power of the Wana land and the diffusion of its power around the world. The original land lost its density and became less powerful. After that event, the people of myth also left the Wana land, spreading to the West, especially the Netherlands, and the edge of the world (*Joe n’Tana*). This signalled

the end of mythical time and the beginning of the Wana people's unprosperous life. Atkinson claims that "over time, [...]Wana have grown smaller and weaker. Time, by the Wana equation, spells degeneration" (1989: 49). I agree with Atkinson but I would say that space, and not time, spells degeneration. According to my observation of Wana culture and conception of time, it is not time that creates a degeneration, because time is something Wana do not consider, but it is the distance from the mythical space/time, something concrete that it is not temporally far away but spatially. The mythical West is not happening in the past but it happening now, along with Wana reality and time, almost parallel to it. The myth is in another space more than another time, and the power of the Wana is directly proportional to the proximity of the mythical reality.

This lack of "density" and the dispersal of mythical power from the Wana land towards the West has a deep influence on how Wana people divide the world and interact with it. Looking at Wana people's division of the world, there is the village at the centre; this is the place of the human. The village is the place of culture, but no power from mythical time remains here. Outside there is the jungle, the place of the spirits. The jungle is where people go to look for knowledge and to become shamans. It is generally considered a dangerous place, but Wana men travel and even sleep in the jungle without any fear. I have already clarified that the concept of the centre is subjective and locally constructed; each village is the centre for the people who live there, but at the same time, on a more universal level, the religious centre of the Wana land and the world in general is the *Tundantana* mountain and the village located there, Uewaju. Therefore, on one hand the real centre of the world is the sacred mountain, but on the other hand, in daily life it is one's own village. From each village, each inhabitant's life spreads into outside realms.

Following Shields' (1991) idea that each space has a specific rank in relation with other spaces, I will now try to describe the ways in which Wana people rank their geography based on distance from the "centre." The world outside the villages and the jungle is divided into areas. The closest to the Wana land is Indonesia, a liminal place hovering between them and the mythical West. Apa Rau dreams of and talks about Jakarta as a "heavenly city," but it is also a world that is known to Wana people, since they go there to trade goods and to buy objects such as TVs, movies and t-shirts, all of which have an origin that is mysterious to them. Beyond Indonesia there is the West, or the Netherlands.<sup>114</sup> That Indonesia is a former Dutch colony means that these two concepts

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<sup>114</sup> Indonesia was a Dutch colony from 1602 until 1949. For many years, Dutch people were the only non-Asians that Wana people ever met. Still now many footpaths inside the Morowali reserve are called "*jalan Belanda*" (literally Dutch streets) because they were made by the Dutch.

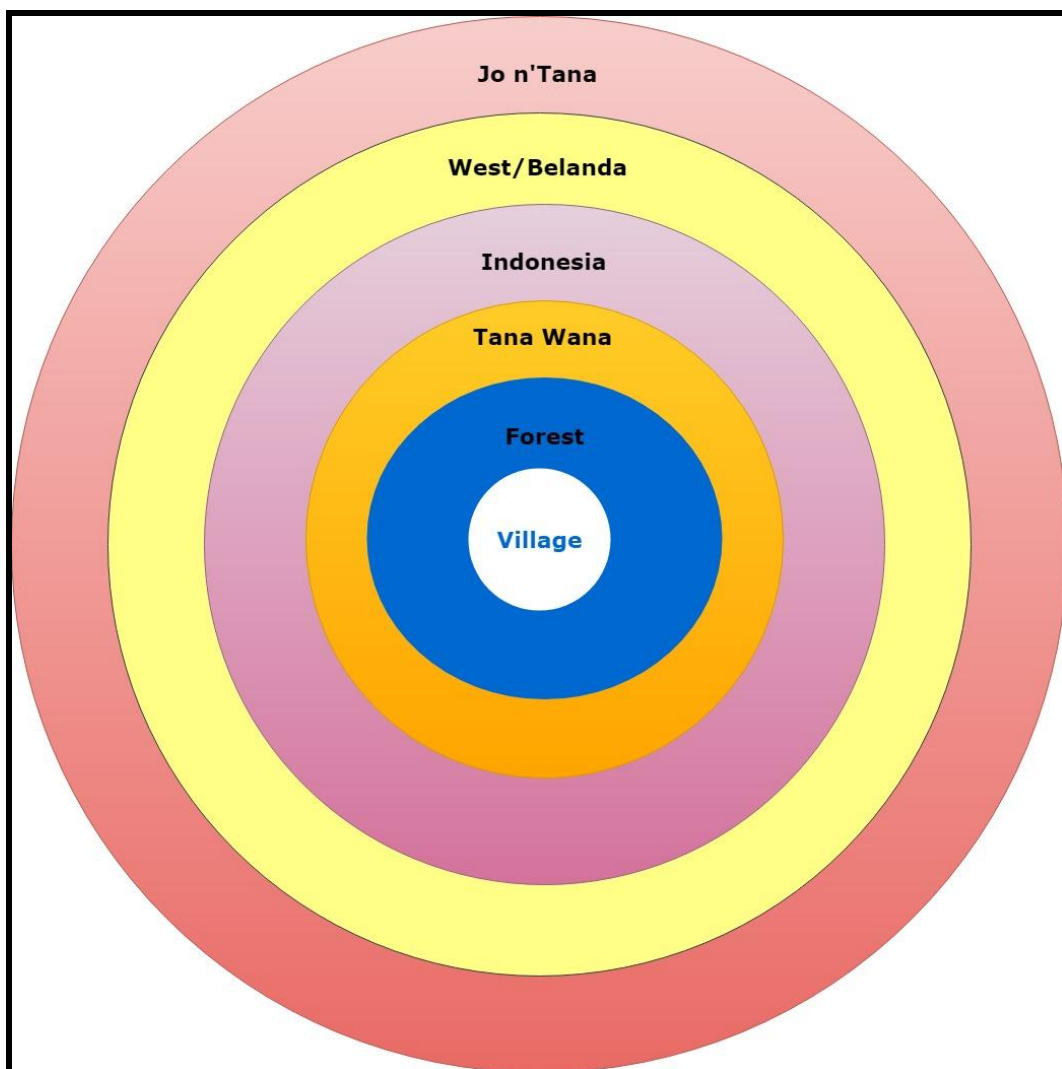
often overlap, and the term *Belanda*, the Indonesian word for the Netherlands, is used as a general one to refer to the West and to the world beyond Indonesia more widely.

It is important to clarify the understanding of the difference between East and West when explaining the Wana division of the world. Even considering that, in Wana culture, the West is thought of as the place of the spirits and of wealth, in opposition to the East, which is the place of the afterlife, this division is not something grounded in geographical reality. Instead, it is a categorisation made on the basis of the perceived movement of the sun; Wana people believe that the earth is flat and that the sun goes around it. The East is the place where the sun rises, and it represents life and power; it is not a coincidence that the dead are buried with their feet aiming to the east to be ready to stand up and move in the right direction. At the same time, the West is not only the new dwelling of mythical power but, due to it being the place where the sun disappears, it is also related to the dangerous world of the spirits. The dichotomy of East and West is based on categories of, for instance, light and dark, more than on directions. The West is a category and not a direction; everywhere outside of the Wana land, no matter in which compass direction it lies, is considered the West and a mythical place. Indeed, the mythical character of the West is manifest in the wealth of all of its inhabitants, that its streets are made of gold, and that everything is full of power. During fieldwork, even I was considered almost a mythical person; people wanted to touch me, and my belongings were considered extraordinary.

It is for these reasons that I represent how Wana people categorise the geographical world as a series of concentric circles (Img. 38). At the edge of the world there is the *Jo n'Tana* where mythical people dwell. Again, according to myth, mythical people that once moved from the Tana Wana to the edge of the world will one day come back to the Wana land, bringing back Wana people's lost power and prosperity, and re-establishing the integrity and density that was lost with their departure.

A criticism of this concentric circle model is that it only takes into consideration horizontal space and does not incorporate the vertical plain of Wana reality. This verticality is a feature of the world as it is in relation to the sky over the *Tunda'n tana*. In this world there is Pue and the afterlife, while the underground, even if in the past it was considered a separate realm with its own god, is nowadays almost ignored by Wana people. My reasons for focusing on the horizontal is that, in the Wana case, there is no reason to consider vertical and horizontal as opposites. Instead, I imagine the Wana world as a series of concentric spheres, with the Wana land at the core, and the *Jo n'Tana* at the outer border, and in between there is the West and the afterlife. In Wana culture the West and Pue have the same "mythical grade." Wana people move in horizontal plains, but shamans can move both vertically, to visit the afterlife, and horizontally, to the West. Even

the dead, who follow the pole in the *dumbaru* to reach the afterlife, are usually described as travelling eastwards. The key to this apparent contradiction is that Wana people do not give the same value and sense to cardinal directions when talking about power, and that these issues are more matters of distance than direction.



**Img. 38:** Representation of how Wana people conceptualise the geographical world.

I see, then, all of Wana reality and rituality as constructed upon this juxtaposition between centre-powerless and periphery-powerful and the constant movement between spaces. Each day, Wana men move from their house to the jungle to work (collecting rattan or resin), to hunt (bats, monitor lizards, wild pigs) or, in the case of some from the villages closer to the borders of the jungle, to travel to the outside to trade. They then return to the village. On the other side, Wana women stay in their homes or villages, or go to their gardens, which are considered part of the village. Here it is evident that Wana culture

divides space between genders.<sup>115</sup> In her essay ‘Gender in Wana Society’ Atkinson offers a fascinating discussion of the role and value that women and men have in this society, and she often underlines how “Although men and women may be the same sort of beings going about their tasks in Wana communities, men gain something extra by travelling farther in the realms of both the wilderness and the state” (Atkinson 1990: 80).

Travelling far is what actually differentiates male and female among Wana people. While it might seem obvious to point out gender differentiation in sex and procreation, actually “the participation of men and women in the process is conceptualized not as complementary, but as identical. Both sexes menstruate, both become pregnant, and both are the “source” of humanity” (Atkinson 1990: 77). Men and women are culturally considered equal, but space and labour are nonetheless clearly divided by gender. Men are linked to the space outside the village, where they hunt, work or simply travel. That space (the forest, Indonesia or even the West) is the place of spirits and knowledge; it is here that a shaman goes to learn about the world. Women are tied to the village; they almost never travel alone, and their tasks almost always concern life in the home. The crucial point is that there is no rule that forbids women from behaving in the same ways as men, but women simply do not do so. Often humour and jokes are used to control people’s behaviour, but I never saw a woman patently blocked from covering a task usually performed by men. On the contrary, it seems that through education and cultural training Wana culture creates unconscious blocks that prevent women from reaching positions of power, such as shaman or village chief. As we saw in Chapter II, in her analysis of gender relationships among Wana people, Atkinson states:

“Anyone” could become a shaman, a rice specialist, or a legal expert. That those “anyones” are predominantly male is treated as a fluke of fortune, rather than a categorical process of inclusion and exclusion. In this sense, Wana women represent the “everyman,” the majority, who because of lack of bravery, fortune, good memory, or inclination never come to excel at what it takes to be a political leader in a Wana community (Atkinson 1990: 88).

I think that “inclination” is the key word; without specific rules blocking women from power, why are women not inclined to become shamans or a village chief? A simple

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<sup>115</sup> Wana people have terms for male and female, and they are aware of homosexuality. I never encountered any homosexual couples, although it is possible this was a matter of homosexually not being expressed openly. Outside the forest, I met gay men, a lesbian couple living together and a transgender person. These people are accepted and not considered negatively at all, but I never witnessed open homosexuality among Wana people. Atkinson writes about women who transition to becoming men but not of men becoming women, and these passages were complete, considering that one of the examples had a wooden penis and a wife (Atkinson 1990).

answer might be that they are shy. Culture undoubtedly plays a crucial role in shaping the desires of people and how individuals interact with the world around them. For this reason, it is strongly possible that the shyness that characterises Wana women is a cultural tool that has been used by Wana society to control access to power. It effectively bars women from positions of power without the need for any form of physical strength to be used. Violence goes against one of the most important cultural values of Wana people, that strong emotions are dangerous and must be avoided.

It has been suggested by Ortner (1996) that females are viewed as closer to nature and males as closer to culture. I take issue with this formulation in the Wana context. For Wana people, the village is a safe place of culture, while the jungle is a dangerous place of spirits and nature. If women are confined to their villages, it is because “nature” is considered too dangerous or, even more importantly, too powerful for them to be allowed to get close. Rather than there being an opposition between nature and culture, among Wana people, the real opposition is between humans and spirits. In this binary, men are closer to spirits than women. It is perhaps not a coincidence that nowadays the closest people to the spirits are shamans, and the great majority of them are male.

Finally, it is also important to note that the central position, characterised by living in the jungle and remaining poor, is also a choice for Wana people. Grumbly explains how “If the millennial promise shall fulfil one day, bringing them a new Golden Era, Wana need to remain *masi yasi*, pitiful, poor, dumb, in other words: marginal” (2016: 123). The Wana transformed an imposed social and economic subalternity into a position of power. They inverted the periphery-centre power relationship, self-positioning at the centre of the world. Even in their immobility, Wana manage to respond to the attacks from the world and to obtain, in the future, the power that will free them. Since space, time and power overlap in Wana culture, physical and economic immobility is crucial if Wana people are to be ready for the return of the *tau baraka* and the restoration of the golden era. In this section, I have tried to show, though, that the word “marginal” in Grumbly’s understanding here might be replaced with “central.”

[Wana] claim that Muslims live their heaven here on earth, as demonstrated by their comparative wealth and preoccupation with purity. In the Muslim section of heaven [...] people live in filth (pointedly portrayed as pig excrement) and they are so hungry that their souls take the form of wild boar that root through Wana gardens in search of food. As for Christian souls, they have only scraps of clouds to eat (an apparent reference to Bible school pictures of Jesus and angels floating about on cumulus banquettes) (Atkinson 1992: 691).

This report from Atkinson shows how Wana believe that the return of the golden era will be the reward for everything they are presently suffering, while Christians and Muslims already live in paradise. Following this reasoning, only the Wana people who remain *miskin* (poor) and at the centre of the world will be in place for the restoration of the *tana Wana* (Wana Land) as the renewed power core of the world. In other words: “Wana, in millennial fashion, foresee a time when their now-despised religion will be accorded proper honors. If history is to be a succession of eras, as the dominant culture asserts, then it is only right that [...] history should end where it began – the first, who are now last, shall be first again” (Atkinson 1982: 692) or

Breaking out of this current marginalized standing by becoming powerful, educated and rich due to their new empowerment will make them no longer suitable for their spiritual friends, the *taw*<sup>116</sup> *baraka*. They would no longer fit the bill of the pitiful marginal people; a picture that they needed to attend. Thus, some of my interlocutors expressed fears that once they would experience empowerment they would no longer be proper candidates for the *taw baraka* (Grumbles 2016: 280, emphasis in the original).

### Centrifugal and centripetal

The movements between centre and periphery raise a constant juxtaposition between centrifugal and centripetal forces. I now explore this contrast and its impacts upon mundane and ritual life. Every day, Wana men travel from their village to the jungle or to other villages to trade or work, and then come back. At night, their souls leave their bodies to wander around the world before returning to their bodies, if, that is, they are not kidnapped by a *setan* first. This movement is constantly evident during rituals too. Atkinson has already noted that *momago* is a dramatization of these two forces; during the ritual, the shamans leave their bodies to travel among the realms as spirits, looking for the lost soul so they can bring it back.

During the *kayori*, the soul of the deceased is sent away through the chanting. The movement of the singers itself gives a sensation of centrifugal energy; they swing three times before falling heavily on one side. In a more physical sense, the acts involved in organising the *kayori* require constant movement from the village to the forest and back, as people look for and bring the materials needed. There is also movement from other villages to the place of the *kayori*, as people come to mourn and then return to their villages. The movement from the hut to the tomb also enacts a similar centrifugal phenomenon. Initially

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<sup>116</sup> Grumbles spells the word *tau* differently from Atkinson and myself.

daily, and then during the moments of the ritual, close friends and relatives leave the *dumbaru* to visit the tomb, in an act that recalls leaving the place of humans (the hut) to venture into the place of spirits (the tomb).

When somebody gets inner illness, it is because their soul has got lost or wounded, this making the person less “dense” and sick. To remedy this state of lower density, the shaman must venture into the world of spirits, leaving the safe village to wander on the world’s periphery, before coming back to the village once he or she has found the lost soul. Even more significant here than the village is the house in which the ritual is held. During the *momago*, this hut becomes the temporary centre of the world, the *Tunda’n tana* and the axis mundi that, thanks to the music, allows for the transition from the human world to the spiritual world. Moreover, the rituals and the music bring back to the land of Wana the power of the myth, dragging this power from the edge of space and time to the centre of the cultural world, the house of the ritual. This is a centripetal movement in opposition to the centrifugal movement of the shaman. To reproduce mythical time and harness its power again requires the replication of the mythical condition, in which everything is dense and concentrated into one point. It is for this reason that hundreds of people gather together in the hut; they recreate, on a much smaller scale, the density of the beginning whose power allowed humans to achieve fantastic feats and to be complete. The *momago* ritual acts as a gravitational centre that attracts and concentrates everything around it. Thus, during the night, in a normal village house, the community, the spirits and mythical time all converge to regenerate the community, to make it anew and heal all of its sick people.

Of course, with only one sick person, the threat to the community is small, and so there is only a small reunion. However, the *momago* can be understood as a kind of pre-*kayori*; its role is to take care of the sick, equivalent to that of the *kayori* as taking care of the dead, which is a much greater danger to the collective and one requiring a much larger response to save the community and allow for its regeneration. In the end, the main aim of both rituals is the re-creation of the community through the densification of it. A bigger emotional wound, the death of a loved one, needs a bigger power to be healed. To obtain that power, a larger number of Wana people take part in a *kayori*, possibly ten times the number who take part in a *momago*, generating a stronger densification of the community and with it a stronger power.

Much more than the *momago*, though, the *kayori* is reliant upon recalling the density of mythical time. When a person dies, their soul leaves the body but is kept by the centripetal forces of the community inside the human world of the village. Every friend and relative brings a gift and interacts with the soul to keep it happy and connected to the world of

humans, before the journey begins that brings it to the edge of the spiritual world, the *suruga*. At the same time, the men go outside of the village to look for the material needed to build the hut and come back with it, as if it were mythical power itself, to build the hut. Once the preparations are over, hundreds of people gather from all over the jungle and even further afield to participate in the ritual, recalling the return of the mythical people from the edge of the world and their reuniting in a single point, the *dumabaru*. During the ritual, the *dumbaru* becomes the centre of the world; in this case it is not the musical instrument that plays the role of the axis mundi but rather the pole around which the people sing, indicating the path to heaven that the soul will climb to reach the afterlife. Death represents a greater danger for the community than illness, so a larger body of people has to gather. In a sense, the people who do gather represent the entire Wana community, since people come from all villages, and those who do not make the journey are stood in for by the exchange of the *irnueki* between elders. In this way, the whole community can be restored and regenerated through the density that is found again. Hundreds of people gather under the same roof, in a hut that is not big enough to host everybody, and this forces them to stay physically close to each other. In this way, the power of myth is recalled and the original integrity is reaffirmed, in preparation for the explosion of the final violence and the end of the ritual. At this point, a small group of people goes from the centre of the hut to the outside to visit the tomb, and finally comes back. The significance of going outside is that this is the place of spirits. It is not a coincidence that an elder places the offerings to the spirits at the borders of the village; the territory beyond this border belongs to the spirits. At the end of the ritual, people go back to their villages, decreasing the density of the community but restabilising the “normal” status that will prevail until the next *kayori* or until the final return of mythical people.

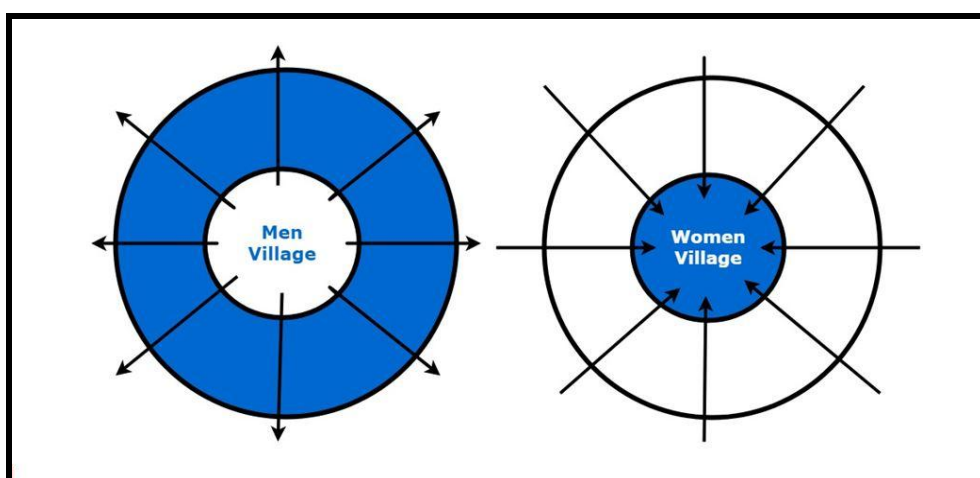
Similarly, men and women are trained to follow the duality between the centre and the periphery. During the organisation of the ritual, men always take care of business outside, they go to the jungle to look for building material and they cook outside the hut. Women, on the other hand, never leave the hut and cook or prepare what is needed while remaining inside the hut. The inside is the world of women, while the outside is the world of men. Men and women also follow this dichotomy when expressing emotion. As we can see in video 9 and 13, during the *mandeke* explosions, men tend to expand physically in the space, destroying the hut with their machetes, both externalising their virility and their freedom of movement. Only after this do they return to becoming smaller and dense.

In this other video (15), even when expressing rage against life (pounding the rice), their body stance is small and closed into themselves. Also, at the midpoint of the *kayori*, a group of women pounds the rice. This dichotomy between men’s destruction of the hut and

women’s pounding of the rice, again, is consistent with the differences between the genders in Wana daily life. Men travel around the jungle almost daily with the machete that is a necessity while travelling, and they use it to cut down trees or clear paths. Women take care of paddy fields and gardens, which are located outside of the village but are still considered part of it. In life, then, as in death, they take care of rice, the main source of nutrition. The whole process involved in cultivating and preparing rice is taken care of by women, from the paddy field, to cooking and draining. Even if reflective of a position of less freedom, women have great power inside the home; controlling everything to do with rice means controlling the life of the family and its food. If, though, women usually do not tend to cover roles that are considered male domains, men on the other hand do sometimes “invade” the sphere of women. Men cook, work in the paddy field, garden and do some work inside the hut of the *kayori*. It seems that men have a wider mobility than women do, moving not only outside the village but also within it. In the second video (15), women briefly try to wreck the hut but this is more a symbolic act than a real intention.

### Male and female

Even if, in terms of status, Wana people are fixed in their position of powerless centrality, in an everyday sense, they do move from the centre (the village) to external parts of their geography and return to the centre. I understand this as a constant combination of centrifugal and centripetal forces (Img. 39). These movements are reproduced in Wana rituality and in the different expression of emotions for men and women.



**Img. 39:** While the Wana men are the embodiment of the centrifugal energies, women embody the centripetal energies. Men have the freedom to go outside the village into the non-human world and obtain knowledge and power while women are kept at core of the powerless centre by their cultural training.

Atkinson briefly discusses similar issues, when she identifies as a central idea in Wana culture the movement forwards and backwards from different realms: “Wana associate the most valued forms of cultural knowledge with distance from their own settlements” (1990: 72).

The alternation of centrifugal and centripetal energies that characterises Wana reality is found easily not only in the *momago*, but also in the *kayori* and in all of Wana mythology. Centrifugal movements usually accompany a loss of density (the soul leaving the body renders the owner sick), while centripetal energies signal a return of that density (the return of mythical people bringing new power to the Wana people). Taking Atkinson’s intuition as my starting point, I will explore this relationship between movement, space and power. This takes me towards thinking of movement in space as related to the ways men and women express their emotions during the *kayori*, that these behaviours embody the Wana categorisation of space.

Atkinson (1989) explains that the *momago* is built upon constant centrifugal and centripetal movements, with shamans travelling with their souls among the different realms and then coming back, repeating this almost all night long. In her essay on gender among Wana people (1990), she notes that there is no rule prohibiting women from becoming shamans, but instead that men make shamans more easily because they are more commonly seen travelling outside of the village and into the dangerous place of the spirits. The same happens during the *momago*. It seems no coincidence that the ritual is held in a house and not in the jungle like the *molawo*. The shamans travel from the safe place of the house to explore the space outside the village, and at the same time outside of the human world itself, into the realm of spirits. This dangerous task is considered a male one because women are enculturated to be more reticent and shy. The conception of the world as divided into female and male spaces is important in the *momago*.

Similar processes and conceptions are evident in the *kayori*. Here, the number of days needed for a man’s and a woman’s funeral is different, because women are thought of as travelling more slowly than men, both in real life and during the journey to the afterlife. This is usually because they carry children, and so travel is more dangerous for them. In addition, there is a centripetal and centrifugal movement involved in people going from their villages to the house of the ritual and then back to their village. Likewise, the soul travels from the house of the dead to the afterlife. In particular, though, it seems useful to draw a connection between these centrifugal (male) and centripetal (female) movements and the expression of emotion.

It is not a coincidence that Wana women are characterised by their “shyness,” something that is recognised both by men and women. This shyness was noted by Atkinson in the 1970s and presented itself to me as a key feature of Wana culture and the gender differentiation in 2016 too. As Grumbly also notes “The “timidity” is still an important point of self-reference and is deeply connected to a self-marginalization process [...] in which Wana often portray themselves as “stupid,” “poor” and “helpless”” (2016: 226). This shyness or timidity, therefore, affects the whole Wana community and its vision of itself, but is particularly strong among women. To reconnect this trait to the lack of female shamans, it is worth mentioning that I never saw a woman under the age of 60 dance in a *momago*, and they explained this as being down to their shyness. This shyness among Wana women has the effect of keeping women outside of the spheres of power. It is interesting to notice how young Wana are not shy when dancing in other celebrations, such as weddings.

During the *momago*, the shamans move backwards and forwards from the house to the place of the spirits and, at the same time, the spirits come to the human world and return to their spirit world. In everyday life, men move from the house, the place of women, to the forest, the place of spirits, or sometimes to the villages outside of the forest to trade and then back again. The funeral has a similar structure, with the soul moving from the land of humans to the afterlife, following the *tunda'n tana*. On top of all this, emotional expression follows a similar pattern. While men tend to expand in the space while expressing themselves during funerals, women tend to simulate their daily space, the house. They are more introverted, just as their shyness means they rarely dance during shamanic rituals.

In ‘Gender in Wana Society’, Atkinson discusses some elements of gender division among Wana people and concludes that “Wana underscore the fundamental likeness of the sexes and the complementary nature of their work” (1990: 63). She also clearly describes how their world is organised by gender:

The world of a conjugal unit is divided into gendered tasks. Men clear brush, fell trees, and burn plots for planting; women are primarily responsible for planting, weeding, and harvesting, although the last of these three tasks is in fact one in which both sexes freely participate. In addition, men hunt and both sexes forage for riverine and forest food. Men build houses and granaries; women make items like mats, baskets, and clothing. And, importantly, men travel long distances to coastal markets to trade Wana products like rice, resin, and in some areas, rattan, for cloth, salt, and metal implements (Atkinson 1990: 69).

The complementarity of the two genders is reflected in their daily tasks (cooking, working in the paddy, taking care of children and so on), some of which are shared by both

sexes. The most important difference between the two genders is the relationship with the space around them: “Whereas women tend to be “settled” (rodo), men go off to distant places from which come both danger and power” (Atkinson 1990: 71). More importantly,

Wana identify both women and men as life-givers. Asserting a fundamental likeness between the sexes, however, Wana culture celebrates powers removed by space and time from human settlements and defines access to these powers in a manner befitting men’s, not women’s, activities (Atkinson 1990: 79).

Watching the video (8, 15), during the *mandeke*, the controlled explosion of grief, women tend to become smaller. They become an embodiment of the centripetal energies that control their lives, while men move more expansively in the space before calming down and closing their bodies on themselves like the women. Looking at Atkinson’s research, it seems that similar contrasting behaviours were present 40 years ago: “men appropriately express their grief through displays of anger; women, by contrast, wail” (Atkinson 1990: 68). In addition, male behaviour was heavily oriented towards the centrifugal forces that pushed them away from the village to safely express their emotions and pain: “men’s greater mobility and capacity for violence once offered them another outlet for their grief. I was told that in the past a man could *mantau kamawo nraya*, “carry out his grief,” by killing someone. As an act of mourning, he would don a white headscarf to wear until he had fulfilled his vow to take a life” (Atkinson 1990: 68). The headscarf described by Atkinson is still present nowadays and marks another gender difference in grieving.

After the death of her partner, the widow produces a band from the *uba* to place around her torso, from the shoulder to the opposite hip, like a sash worn inside the clothes. On the other hand, the men, as noted by Atkinson, wear a headscarf made from the *uba* as a mark of their grief. Of course, nowadays Wana people do not go to the forest looking to take a life to balance their loss, but instead express their pain through the *mandeke*. In both cases, the expression of controlled violence not only “safely” channels the pain out of the griever but also offers a safe environment for the community to express that pain. In a culture like this, where negative emotions are closely controlled and considered in a negative light, profound loss would be impossible just to ignore or laugh about. Like the *momago*, the *kayori* offers a safe space and time in which to express all of the frustration and pain, and an opportunity to regenerate the entire community through episodes of controlled violence and playfulness. Considering the role played by the two musical instruments linked to courtship, the *popondo* and the *tutali*, it is reasonable to think that the manhunt in the past

and the *mandeke* now are also opportunities for men to show off their masculinity to the women present at the rituals and to look for new partners. In fact, large events like the *kayori* provide significant opportunities to create new bonds and to reinforce the community; where one relationship ends another one can be born. In Wana culture, life has a meaning only if shared with other members; the *kayori*, like the *momago*, comes about as a result of a traumatic event, but more than anything else, it is a celebration of life. The relationship between wretchedness and playfulness in Wana rituality will be addressed later.



**Img. 40:** Indo Derhi asked for a photo of her with the *uba* of her husband. For her, this photograph is a kind of family portrait, because both her and her husband are present. It is possible to see a part of her mourning sash made with the same cloth of the *uba*, and the same material is also used for the *balo baili*.

## Crying

Just like the rest of the *mandeke*, the crying is also extremely ritualised. Listening to Wana people crying during the *mandeke* (Tracks 14-17), it is clear that the crying of each person is very similar and follows the same pattern. Indeed the ritualization could be linked to the fact that “Weeping appears to be involved in the reduction of stress, the relief of suffering, and the release of tension” (Christian, 2004: 47) and the excessive emotions have already been tamed and what is left is just a less powerful and dangerous residue of the emotional turmoil of a few weeks before.

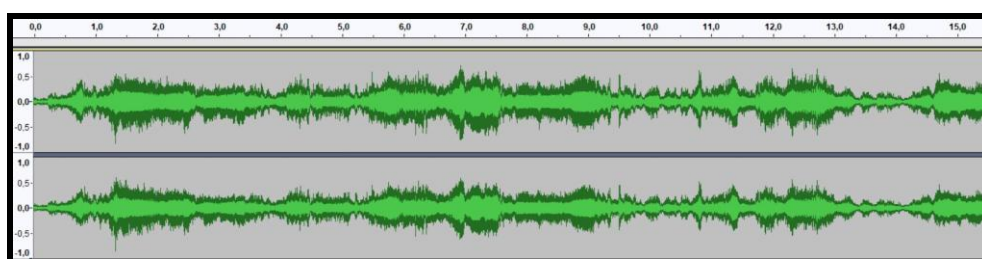
The four samples discussed here were recorded at three different moments. First (Track 14) is the crying of Ingus from when she arrives at the place of the funeral and cries in front of the *uba*. Then (Track 15), there is a group of women crying at the end of the *kayori* song, and another group of women crying at the end of the *kayori* before going to visit the tomb during the last morning of the ritual (Track 16). Finally, there is a group of people crying once they have arrived at the tomb (Track 17).

There are differences in the sounds in each of these recordings, and they result from the different sound environments, and reflect the timbres produced by people of different number and gender in each case. Aside from these differences, it seems that each sample of crying follows a similar melodic and rhythmic pattern to all the others. There is an initial melisma on a vowel, usually *e* or *u*, and then a high note is reached that descends to become a mumble whose words are hard to understand. Usually these words are of desperation, expressing some kind of negation of death, and reflecting Davies (2017: 4) theories on words that rage against death.

There are few studies on crying songs (Magowan 2001, Urban 1988 and Tolbert 1990), weeping as expression of cultural identity (Huang 2003), ritual crying (Gambo 1971), the psychological benefit of crying (Rottenberg, Bylsma and Vingerhoets 2008), and even if Ebersole stated that “our focus must be on “performative” tears (those shed in rituals

proper or in ritualized social situations that perform cultural work), as well as on the discursive activity that takes place around tears-as-signs” (2004: 187), I am not aware of any existing studies that offer an acoustic analysis of crying.<sup>117</sup> What follows, though, is my own reflection on what it is happening among Wana people. While my informants reported that *mandeke* and the other expressions of ritualized pain were a kind of play, there is certainly true pain here and the crying is tightly controlled by cultural training and it becomes a “sign vehicle” for an emotion (Urban 1988:387) that is expressed in front of the entire community.

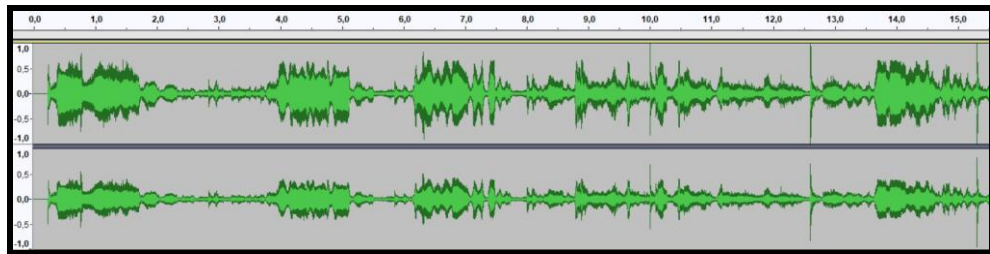
. It might be reasonable to expect that a random sample of people from the same cultural background would produce a lot of variety in the vowels, rhythm, melody and style of their crying. The Wana people involved in the funerals here, though, seem to show a very standardised way of expressing pain. Beyond that, once the *kayori* ends, and only the close friends and relatives remain to dismantle the ritual hut, I heard a very different form of crying. In 2011 I decided not to record the Wana during the *mandeke*. In 2016, I understood that the problem was only on my side and the Wana had no issue with being recorded while screaming, crying or destroying the hut because for them it was a play. Once I discovered the existence of a private day after the end of the *kayori* I had the occasion to observe a different kind of weeping, a weeping that once again placed an ethical dilemma. In the end, I have decided to respect the privacy of my informants because I understood the different quality of that weeping and its spontaneity and intimacy. I noted that on this day after the *kayori* there is no screaming and that the crying is softer, gentler and more private. Usually people cry alone or when they are slightly isolated from the group. The public (visible) and private (almost non-visible) expressions are very different and exist almost at the two opposite ends of a spectrum of emotional externalisation.



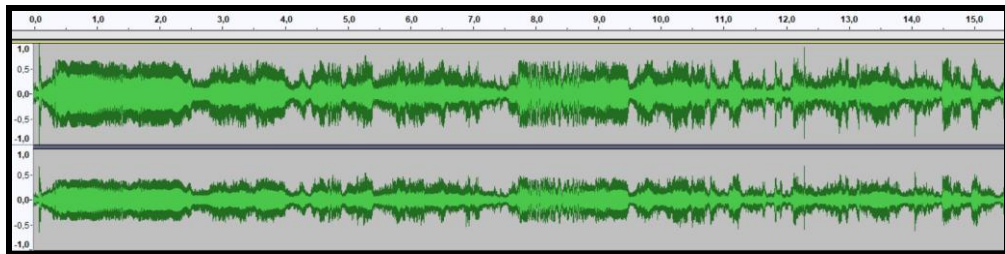
**Img. 41:** Sonogram of a crying at the arrival to the *dumbaru*. (Track 14)

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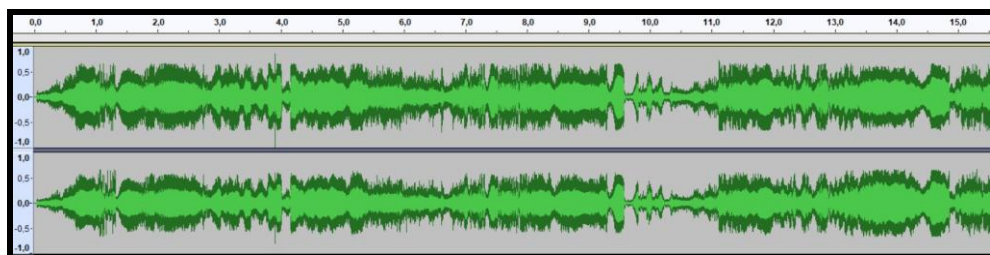
<sup>117</sup> In my experience of death studies conferences I had the impression that showing or listening to people crying was almost a taboo. I am well aware of the emotional discomfort in hearing somebody crying but I think that this is also an important part of our work as death scholars.



**Img. 42:** Sonogram of a crying at the end of the *mokayori*. (Track 15),



**Img. 43:** Sonogram of a crying before the visit to the grave. (Track 16),



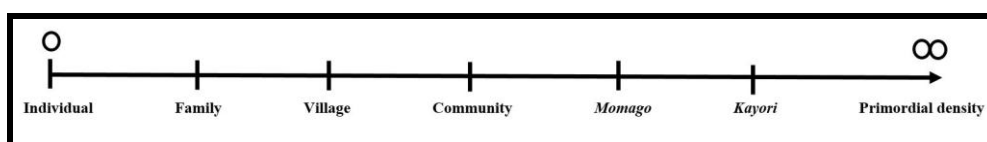
**Img. 44:** Sonogram of a crying at the grave. (Track 17),

On one side we have the instinctual and spontaneous pain felt by the members of the community, on the other side there is the requested social behaviour. During the *kayori* the “spontaneous” and private expression of emotions is forbidden, because cultural death has not occurred and also because this kind of behaviour should not be seen by other people. After the ritual has ended and the density has dissipated again it is possible to express pain in a more spontaneous way. There are precisely five moments when people cry during the *kayori*: 1) at the first day of the *kayori*, when people get the news of the death of a friend or relative (something that I did not witness, but I heard many stories of people hurting themselves performing the *mandeke* having found out about a loss) 2) When arriving at the *dumbaru* on the first day of the final stage of the ritual, and the crying person takes the centre of the scene in an empty space in front the *uba* 3) At the end of the song that escorts the soul to the afterlife, when the entire community knows what it is going to happen 4) Before the visit to the tomb, on the last morning of the ritual 5) Once arrived at the tomb. All these moments are highly ritualised and controlled by the community. There is no surprise and they are the key emotional moments of the ritual, ones that attract the interest of a large part of the audience and that are influenced by the audience’s gaze. On the other hand, the day after the *kayori* there is less control from the community. There are a few friends and relatives around, all sharing the same pain during the *kayori*, while the majority

of people are there to enjoy the party and to get drunk with their friends. However, on the day after the *kayori*, relatives are left largely alone and the social expectation on them to maintain controlled expression of emotions is relaxed. Now there is space for a more intimate support and understanding befitting close family relationships, and finally they have an opportunity to break free from the ritualised expression of grief.

The ritual is over and ritual time has given way to profane time, one that is less powerful and less dangerous, and where the density is close to zero. This status gives the mourners the freedom to express their emotions as they prefer.

A more minor energy needs a lesser density to control it, and this gives people the opportunity to safely express their emotions again, this time not in front the entire community (high density) but just in front a close circle of people (low density).



**Img 45:** The power increase with the increasing of the density. The grade zero is the individual, which by himself has no power and no meaning. The final grade is the primordial density, the reward and aspiration of any Wana; the apex of the power.

### Visible and Invisible

Related to the dichotomies between centre and periphery, it is crucial to explore the important role that the sense of sight has in Wana culture, and also the relationship between the visible and the invisible. This is especially pertinent considering that Indonesian traditional communities “are not marked by a division between sacred and profane. Rather, the critical line is between the sphere of man and that of ancestors/spirits, *the seen and unseen world*” (McVey 1999: 6, emphasis added). Atkinson often uses the term “hidden” when referring to the spiritual realm (“hidden realm”), the spirits (“hidden beings”) and inner illness (“hidden illness”). This stresses that spirit-related realities are not visible to normal people, only to shamans (1992, 1990). She elaborates that “We should distinguish the “ordinary” not from the “extraordinary,” but from the “hidden”” (Atkinson 1989: 40).<sup>118</sup> Moreover, “the Sakais conceptualize the world as either materially physical or materially non-physical. [...] The physical dimension is called the human dimension (*alap manusio*) and the non-physical dimension is most commonly called the

<sup>118</sup> Atkinson also use the term “unseen,” writing that shamans «treat not overt symptoms, but unseen causes» (1989: 75)

[...] spirit dimension” (Porath 2008: 650) I prefer the term “invisible”<sup>119</sup> to “hidden,” because I interpret this realm as not being actively concealed but instead as being simply not possible to see (from the Latin *in-“not”+visibilis*) for those grounded in the human world and divorced from mythical time. Spirits and demons are not hiding – their world often overlaps with the human world – but non-shamans cannot see them.

There are connections between, on the one hand, the near, visible and powerless, and, on the other, the far, invisible and powerful. For Wana people, what is near is powerless and, of course, can easily be seen, so contains no mystery. What is far away, on the other hand, is not visible but is full of power and mystery. Atkinson goes on to mention that even since the end of the mythical era “miracles can still happen, but only in secret” (1989: 46), meaning that they occur away from sight or are not spoken about. It is no coincidence that the place that shamans go to looking for spirits and knowledge is a place where visibility is minimal, the jungle (Img. 46). For Wana people, “forests were full of “people” (*tau*) who for some reason were not seen, people who lived and farmed like the people here but who kept themselves hidden from sight “ (Atkinson 1989: 37).



**Img. 46:** Indo n’Pino walking in the jungle. This photo shows the low visibility inside the jungle.

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<sup>119</sup> The term invisible is also preferred by Robert J. Barrett in his essay ‘Performance, effectiveness and the iban manang’ (1993), in an edited volume actually titled *The seen and the unseen: shamanism, mediumship and possession in Borneo*.

Grumblied's work is particularly effective in describing these aspects of the Wana world: "There is this world that everyone can see, and then there is this other [place] that only people can see like *taw walia* [shamans] during a *momago*, or when you are alone in the dark, in the forest, or sometimes when you do not expect anything" (2016: 96). The situations Grumblied talks about here as part of the *other place* have in common that there is low visibility. Even the last case, "when you do not expect anything" can be interpreted as "when you are not paying attention, when you are not really looking." In the *momago*, like in the forest or any other dark place, reality becomes thinner; the balance between the visible and the invisible realms favours the latter because people can no longer trust their sense of sight. In the jungle of the Morowali reserve, vegetation is sometimes so thick that it is impossible to see more than a few meters around. That which happens in the jungle is almost invisible; trees cover even the sky, and hearing takes over as the primary sense, particularly for detecting the presence of animals or rivers well before seeing them. While Atkinson states that "access to extraordinary experience is phrased in terms of sight, not hearing" (Atkinson 1989: 40), I do not totally agree, and I discuss here the role of hearing and music in the relationship with the invisible spiritual world.

The connections between the invisible and mythical power are expressed especially strongly during the *momago*. The ritual must take place during the night and end before the sunrise. Moreover, an almost pitch-black darkness is required for the ritual, because light pushes away the spirits (just as music attracts them). This darkness helps to set the atmosphere and it is in line with the idea that "miracles can still happen but only in secret"; great wonders (like the shaman's powers) can only happen in the dark, where the mystery can be preserved and where invisible beings dwell. Moreover, the shamans use the *pompolonzu* (ritual cloth) to cover their eyes when they are "seeing far." They close their human eyes to activate their spiritual sight: "there is no elaborated transition between "states." As they sing, shamans close their eyes and see the spirit world" (Atkinson 1989: 92) and "As he sings he uses "the eyes of his spirit familiars" to see hidden aspects of the world" (Atkinson 1989: 121). Despite Atkinson's suggestion that sight and not hearing is more central to the language of extraordinary experience (Atkinson 1989: 40), the music (the singing) is a constant presence when entering into contact with the invisible world. Thanks to their liminality, shamans can tap into mythical time and use their spiritual power to see the invisible world. This is a power that is not always active; if it were, shamans would be fully invisible beings rather than points of contact between humans and spirits. In fact "Shamans with such magic insist that they possess such vision only in the context of a shamanic ritual, whereas vampires use such vision at all times" (Atkinson 1989: 96). The

shamanic ritual is a context characterised by the presence of music and “music makes translucent the boundary between human and spirit”. (Friedson 1996: 100)

The same powers of the shaman are a connection between the invisible and the spiritual world. In Chapter III, I introduced these powers and underlined how most are available to the shaman only during the ritual or while hearing the ritual music. Among these powers, the most pertinent to this discussion is *jampu* (invisibility), a power that allows the shaman to take on the invisibility that is normally enjoyed only by the spirits. Atkinson describes the people who dwell in the forest as “*tau bolag* or *tau wuni* (“invisible people”)”. This group is considered “another “category” of people like the Wana themselves. Unlike the Wana, however, the Bolag are said to possess *jampu*, the power to become invisible. Using *jampu*, they conceal themselves from their Wana neighbours and allow themselves to be seen only when and if they choose” (1992: 37, emphasis in the original).

Building on these reflections about the opposition between visible and invisible, other elements of Wana life and rituality can also be categorised following this “visible-invisible” dichotomy (Table x).

Visible	Invisible
Humans	Spirits
Village	Spirit realm (Forest-West)
Body	Souls
Sight	Hearing
Wounds	Inner illness

**Table 4:** Elements of Wana life categorised according to visible-invisible dichotomy.

There is, however, an important element of Wana life that does not fit into this table: emotions. There is no obvious binary counterpart to emotions in this construction, but the control of emotions in particular ways plays an important role in Wana life, particularly through how people cope with the frustrations of living a “wretched” life. They are an invisible force that can bring great danger, and the control of emotions is crucial for the survival of the individual and the community. Despite their power, emotions share the invisibility that I have just discussed as an important shaper of Wana social life.

I would suggest that there is a direct connection between the use of music and communication with the invisible world. Following the theories of James Frazer (1889) on sympathetic magic, I see important connections between the invisibility of music and other

invisible elements of Wana life (spirits, emotions and so on). I understand music as a bridge and link between the visible and the invisible world.

Secrecy or invisibility (*jampu*) is the main characteristic of everything that is non-human and, hence, extraordinary. In Chapter III, I outlined how *jampu* is one of the main powers of shamans, and how this power is strongly related to their spiritual nature. Shamans, in Wana language *tau walia* (literally person spirit), are the living manifestation of liminality between the human and the spirit. As humans they have a body and they live and interact in the same reality as all other Wana people, but as half-spirits they also belong partially to the invisible world of the spirits. Indeed, spirits are not the only invisible element of Wana life that is visible to them; illness and emotions are also accessible to them.

Inner illness, by definition, is invisible to normal people, and only shamans can see and treat it. This kind of illness is caused by problems of the soul or wounds caused by *setan*, both of which are also invisible. It is the role of the shaman to make these illnesses “visible,” by describing them in their *do’a* or in songs, to help the patient in understanding and “materialising” the illness. In the *momago*, the illness is described as a rock that is thrown away, but also as something that can come in contact with other people and infect them. In the *molawo*, illnesses are fishing hooks that tear the flesh of the patient and that the shaman removes after having obtained permission from *Pue Lamo*, the vengeful god of lightning that is punishing the patient. For Wana people (along with many other peoples), that which is invisible is mysterious, and often dangerous. It seems likely that the jungle, as the place of spirits, is considered dangerous partly because of the difficulty in seeing more than a few meters around. The shaman acts as a mediator between the visible world of the humans and the invisible world of the spirits, helping Wana people in understanding what they cannot see and experience by themselves.

Emotions are also invisible, and Wana people are highly concerned with them. I have already shown how people put in motion a series of cultural rules and behavioural expectations to avoid strong emotion. It is not a coincidence that during the *kayori* sadness can be expressed only when covering the face, and this makes it impossible for the community to see somebody crying. Perhaps this is because crying openly could be contagious, or because catharsis cannot occur if the community is watching. Having in mind Atkinson’s statement that miracles can happen only if nobody is watching, being seen by the community prevents emotional catharsis while at the same time making sure that nothing extra-ordinary can happen during the *mandeke*. Another tool, used also to treat inner illness, is music. It cannot reasonably be only a coincidence that music, something invisible, is used to control emotions and to treat inner illness. In Wana culture, music

seems closely linked to these two invisible elements, emotions and spirits, forming a powerful triad that represents the invisible and mythical world.

Invisibility is crucial in Wana culture, and Atkinson discusses how this non-visibility is a necessary requirement for wonders to occur. As a result, the best way for people to communicate with the non-visible is through music. Music has power over the emotions, not least because, as I have already shown, it sets up the atmosphere of the room in the *momago*. Everyday instruments such as the *popondo* and the *tulali* have power over people's emotions and the *balo bombongo*, the war trumpet, has the power to actually unleash war on the world. Similarly, I discussed above that, in the *kayori*, music is a marker for emotions, because it guides people through the dangerous mourning period.

Ultimately, invisibility should be thought of as a special form of existence and, of course, shamans cannot simply interact with it using mundane language.

In this extract from Atkinson, the significance of *reporting* incredible occurrences is clear. In an illiterate culture such as that of the Wana people, this reporting implies experiencing something through sound and hearing. As she also affirms, the important *pangansani* “applies to the extraordinary and powerful knowledge of an earlier age and to a highly developed understanding of special knowledge obtained from hidden sources in the world today” (Atkinson 1979: 182). This power is expressed through *do'a*. Wana people take into great consideration the power of words, to the extent that simply the narration of mythological stories has the power to destroy the world. Words have a creative power that derives directly from their connection with the invisible world. To tell a *katuntu* means to *recreate* a mythical story, to physically bring the time of the myth into the realm of humans. This overlapping in a single space of two worlds that nowadays are distinct would destroy both. As I have previously noted, my experience is that Wana people are quite likely to ignore rules. Thus, I never encountered anyone showing concerns about telling a *katutuntu*. In fact, Apa Rahu and Apa Kode seemed to be very pleased to have somebody, especially a westerner, interested in it.

Atkinson continues, explaining that “It is not uncommon for one who is skilled at playing a musical instrument such as flute, tuning fork, or stringed chest resonator to play haunting and plaintive songs to attract hidden beings” (1989: 54). In the previous chapters, I showed that music is present during the entire *momago* and *kayori* rituals and that it takes a very important role. Moreover, non-ritual music also has a great power; the *popondo* and the *tulali* are two instruments with the power to greatly influence people's sexual desires. Atkinson herself even describes the *yori* (tuning fork) as an instrument able to attract the spirits, in a similar way to how the ritual music of the *momago* does so. At the other extreme, instrumental music is forbidden in the *kayori* because the aim of the ritual is not

to call the spirits (centripetal force), but actually to keep them away and to send away the soul of the deceased (centrifugal force). Music is thus used as way of calling the spirits, and as a tool for interacting with the invisible realm that is available not only to the shamans but to everyone. In addition, it is possible to draw a direct connection between the invisibility of emotions and of the spirits, and the invisibility of music. Following Frazer's theories about imitative magic

If we analyze the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed (1889: 11).

As noted previously, it is reasonable to conclude that Wana people see a connection between sound and the invisible world; this is evident considering the Wana belief that sounds produced by invisible people can be heard. The entire ritual of the *molawo* is based on imitative thinking and magic very much consistent with Frazer's theories. A particularly clear example is that loud noises are forbidden after a *molawo* because they recall the thunder sent by *Pue Lamo*. Another is the prohibitions that surround illness, such as that someone recently cured of smallpox should not eat red fruit. Sound on its own, however, is not enough to communicate with the invisible world; normal speech is too mundane for interacting with non-human beings, especially gods. For this reason, Wana people use music to communicate with the spirits and to control emotion. Even in situations where instrumental music is forbidden (the *molawo* and the *kayori*), people do not simply talk to *Pue Lamo* (*molawo*) or to the deceased (*kayori*) but they sing. A clear distinction must be drawn between the mundane plane and the ritual one, and this difference is perceptible in the soundscape of the ritual. As Rasmussen reports: "Songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices" (Rasmussen 1931:321). Music creates an atmosphere and sets the stage for wonders to happen. During the *momago*, it is the music that marks the beginning and the end of the ritual. Likewise, it is not darkness or not-seeing that separates mundane time and ritual time, but music. Taken in this light, music seems to take on a central role in the relationship between humans and the invisible people.

So, when Atkinson talks of extraordinary experiences being understood through sight not sound, she seems to underestimate the role of sound in Wana spirituality. It is music that actually connects mythical time and ritual time, and that allows shamans to cross the

boundary between humans and the invisible world, and to use the power derived from their invisible identity.

## Conclusions

This chapter has acted as a resume and final exploration of the findings of the two previous chapters. Here I have shown how the *momago* and the *kayori* actively express and address the key values of Wana people. Through understanding these rituals and Wana mythology, it is clear that, like in many other cultures, Wana people categorise the world in terms of centre and periphery. Unlike in many other cultures, however, they see themselves as existing at the powerless centre. The idea of a powerless centre and a powerful periphery is quite unusual in Western culture, but for Wana people it is the perfect exhibition of agency. In this way they express their awareness of being socially and economically subaltern, but they simultaneously express their position of power in respect to other cultures. This is power that originated with them and that one day will come back to them as the people that managed to stay in the physical, social and spiritual centre of the world.

In the same way, this division of power has an impact on the internal power relationships within the community. The individual is constantly placed in a situation of inferiority in respect to the collective, and they are made aware through the rituals that their life has a meaning only inside the group. Moreover, the individuality of a community member is clearly linked to a lack of power, because this is a state displaying low density. In Wana society, the larger the group the greater the power.

In *Img. 45*, we saw how the lowest level of density/power is found with the single member and the highest level comes with the primordial perfect density where everything was one. Between these two extremes, there are smaller kinds of density that mean that each larger collective has more power than the last: from the single member to the family, the village, the community, the *momago* and the *kayori*. Each step offers more *kasintuwu* and support, and an increased level of emotional, physical and spiritual health, not only for the individual but for the entire community.

Even if the community is at the centre of Wana life, this chapter has shown that the division of power in the space has a deep impact on gender relationships inside the group. Keeping the women away from the opportunity to move away from the centre and to have contact with the invisible world means keeping them away from mythical power. As I have

discussed, this relationship between the visible and the invisible is also pivotal in this culture, and there is a clear separation between these two worlds that is broken only by the shamans, due to their liminal nature between humans and spirits, and by music. It is music, which is in a certain way available to everybody, that acts as a bridge between the two worlds. This bridge is not exclusive to the shamans but open to everybody. Anyone can play an instrument and thus contact the invisible world, even though they may have less spiritual awareness and control than a shaman. It is possible that in the past Wana religion afforded more space to invisible experience for individuals than nowadays, when the community is always present when the division between the invisible and the visible world becomes thin.

Ultimately, Wana people transform their geographical and historical position into the idea of their culture being central. Thus, they show great ability in attaching positive meanings to a reality that it is not always kind to them.

## VI

### **Failing rituals and Wana culture in transition**

This short final chapter will engage with the possible future of the Wana and it will describe and explore two examples of failure in Wana rituality – rituals that did not go perfectly to plan or as expected. Anthropologists often describe rituals in such a way that implies that they always proceed smoothly and successfully, without unforeseen obstacles. In reality, many things can go wrong in a ritual and it is important to see how these anomalies materialise and how they influence the ritual's progress. Indeed, there is very little work about failing rituals, and almost all of it comes from the most recent two decades. A precursor of the topic, however, was Clifford Geertz's classic work from 1973 on the *Interpretation of Cultures*. In his essay 'Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example', which is about a funerary ritual, he explores ritual failure as representative of cultural transition. He calls his case study "a transitional society in which the traditional forms of rural living are being steadily dissolved and new forms steadily reconstructed" (1957: 38). Following and supporting this idea, I will briefly focus on the last *kayori* I saw during my fieldwork. It was the funeral of a good friend and informant of mine and was held the night before my return from fieldwork.

Initially, however, it is important to distinguish between a failed ritual and a failure within a ritual. The former case concerns rituals that fail to achieve their desired outcomes, and it is possible for rituals to fail even when performed perfectly according to procedural norms. The latter case involves a ritual action being performed wrongly or failing in its intent, but this does not necessarily imply the failure of the entire ritual.

The reasons behind a failed ritual or a failure in a ritual are potentially multiple. In the small existing literature on the topic the main reasons for a failure are: social change (Geertz 1973), an accident during the ritual (Emmrich 2007), mistakes in the performance

(Grimes 1985 and Schieffelin 1996), or problems with the organisation (Brosius 2007). It has also been observed that “most risks of failure revolve around two crucial issues: 1) infringing the rules of purity, and, closely associated with this, 2) disrespecting taboos, breaking rules of conduct, such as sexual relations” (Hauser-Schäublin 2013: 245). In the Wana situation that I describe now, the reason behind the failure was a harmless oversight that gave rise to unexpected consequences.

On that occasion, the deceased person was my friend, Apa Dheri, who died while I was in the mountains interviewing the village chief of Lambentana. The news arrived with me while I was on the way back to Taronggo, where Apa Dheri lived, and upon my arrival, I found preparation of the *dumbaru* (ritual hut) already in motion. The ritual hut was built as an extension of Apa Dheri’s house, something that I had already seen happen in smaller settlements. Inside a village as large as Taronggo, however, this decision had a totally different impact on the community’s energies. Indeed, often the ritual takes place outside of the village, and certainly this was usually the case in the past. In the recent past particularly, funerals were always held beyond village boundaries for two reasons. Officially, it is because here, just as in many other cultures (Bloch 1971; Kim 2012; Telle 2002; Shepard 2002; Terwiel 1979; Aggarwal 2001), death is considered contagious. Another reason, but one discussed less explicitly, is that a ritual’s geographical isolation helps to increase the sense of community. Without anywhere else nearby to go, people are forced to spend two nights together in this small space, and thus the physical foundations of community presence are strengthened. Most of the rituals I observed between 2011 and 2016 were held outside the village or in small villages of four houses or so.

Sometimes, though, the ritual moves to inside the village, as was the case on this occasion. This can bring about significant negative consequences and undermine the ritual’s core function of bringing people together to share space and time.

While the wider community helped Apa Dheri’s family in the normal way with organising the *kayori*, the nights of the funeral itself were totally different from what I was used to seeing. The ritual hut was almost empty for the majority of the time; people were there for the ritual banquet, an important moment for the ritual and for the strengthening of *kasintuwu*, but most then went home for the rest of the ritual. Close relatives and a few close friends remained both nights with the family of the deceased, but most others preferred to buy alcohol and to return home to drink it, continuing the festivities in a more comfortable setting. As a result, my assessment was that the community had failed in making its presence palpable to the mourning family.

In the *kayori* for Apa Dheri, I did not see any actual mistakes in the performance of the ritual, but instead a failure in expressing unity and reinforcing *kasintuwu*. The participants

were not all together under the same roof but were enjoying themselves while divided into smaller groups, spatially and emotionally separated from each other and from the mourning family. We can see in the following pictures how the space of the *kayori* is reclaimed by the crowd and how there was a spatial and emotional void in Apa Derhi's *kayori*. Although a group of people was there to sing the *kayori* on both nights, the large hut built for the occasion was almost empty (Img. 47). This led to a sense of desolation instead of the characteristic playfulness that is the pivotal element of this ritual, and it condemned the ritual to failure in healing the community and in fortifying the family against its loss.



**Img. 47:** On the left a successful funeral, while on the right we can see the lack of people, and therefore density, at the funeral of Apa Derhi. Apa Derhi's family could have not been re-generated by the presence of the community and the re-enactment of the primordial density.

The main aim of a funerary ritual is to assure the passage of the soul to heaven, and to make sure that the soul takes up its new status as an ancestor rather than as a ghost that has not found peace. In this respect, the *kayori* was successful; ritual chant was sung and Apa Dheri was understood to have reached his place in heaven. The *kayori* proceeded without issues and all rules were respected. Indeed, the family benefitted from the economic help of the anthropologist Anna Grumblyes, whom they had hosted during her fieldwork, and also a little from the financial help of myself and other Western friends. I suggest that the incident illustrates a shift in Wana culture from community orientation to a more divided system, where the motto “we are all one family” is starting to lose its meaning and validity.

I also highlight the geographical circumstances as a major part of the failure of this ritual. The fact that it took place inside a village made it possible for people to return home to enjoy their friends' company; it is understandable that this would be preferable to spending two nights sleeping in the cold on a wooden floor. Furthermore, this failed ritual is a symptom of cultural and economic changes that the current generations of Wana people in Taronggo are living through. Christians, Muslims and Wana people live together mainly in a peaceful way, but there are still issues of social tension. These are most striking

difference between Christian and Wana people, and involve the development of capitalistic economic systems. Many Wana people now work as casual labourers, and this brings with it an increased reliance on money, schools and electricity, plus newer forms of clothes, food and so on. Priorities are changing in life inside and outside the forest, and some people in Taronggo no longer wish to spend two nights celebrating a *kayori* as it is incompatible with their necessity to take formal work.

When describing the *kayori* and how emotion is strictly controlled and expressed, it may seem evident that a ritual has gone smoothly and that it has helped everyone present to deal with and accept their pain. The occasion I described above shows how people not extremely close to the dead person responded in a ritual that failed in the expression of *kasintuwu*, and preferred to spend the time of the ritual in different houses spread all around the village instead of being all-together. In this situation the Wana did not form a single powerful density but many disaggregated groups, that may have been able to offer an emotional support to the single groups but that failed in the supporting the grieving family and in acting as a single immortal being. Now, though, I move on to show how, for those very close to the dead person, this closeness itself can be part of serious difficulties in managing the emotions created by the loss of a loved one.

As long as the pain that Wana people witness or experience is not too acute they tend to laugh at it. The mix of laugh and bereavement can be also found among the Bali, where “laughter and cheerfulness fill the air while the bereaved are enjoined to contain their sorrow and may be made to feel they commit an injustice to others should they fail to abide by this demand” (Wikan 1988: 455) One particular episode I observed helps to explore this coping system. On this occasion, Apa Jaka asked me if he could watch the video I had made during the funeral of his wife, Indo Jaka. Indo Jaka was diagnosed with cancer, and not only was she treated by shamans, but she also went to hospital in Kolonodale. Due to the gravity of her illness, the doctors suggested moving her to a larger hospital in Palu (the provincial capital of Central Sulawesi) or Makassar (the provincial capital of South Sulawesi). Even though they had the financial support of the documentary makers Journet and Nougazol, her family decided that she would not make this journey, and that she should die at home, in the land of Wana. It is worth noting that these two cities, unknown to many Wana people are more than 12 hours away by minivan, a journey that is not at all easy for a sick person. A small group of people that included his sons, parents-in-law and friends joined Apa Jaka in watching the funeral video on the small screen of my netbook. I

was struck that, throughout most of the time they spent watching the video, they laughed.<sup>120</sup>



**Img. 48:** A group of Wana people watching the video of Indo Jaka's funeral with her husband Apa Jaka at the centre. The man laughing in the upper part of the image is Indo Jaka's father, while the woman on the right is her mother.

Certainly, all of these people had been deeply touched by Indo Jaka's death but, in that moment, seeing friends and relatives that live in other villages and the hilarity of drunken behaviour seemed to overpower any lingering memories of sadness and mourning. During the funeral itself, my attention had been drawn to Indo Jaka's father. His pain was obvious and he appeared to be distant from the playfulness of the ritual (Img. 48). I noticed how the man had seemed always on the verge of tears during the days leading up to the *kayori*, and that at the ritual he tended to stay by himself, simply observing the goings-on. During the second visit to the tomb that follows the end of the *kayori*, he isolated himself from the group. In Img. 49 below, the man is circled on the left of the shot, with a few children around him, while the main action of the elders and friends telling stories about the deceased is taking place on the right side of the tomb.

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<sup>120</sup> Rappoport had a completely opposite experience among the Toraja of Sulawesi; when she played her recordings people were deeply moved by the songs (2014: 221). Also Kaluli felt sadness while listening to Feld's recordings (1990: 222-223).



**Img 49:** During the visit to the tomb after the funeral. On the left is the father of Indo Jaka (encircled in red), in an isolated position away from the other adults and the action of the moment – people cleaning the tomb, telling stories about the deceased and placing the offering (this centre of action is highlighted with the blue square).

At times during the ritual activity, he could not manage to hold back his tears anymore; he covered his face, since it is not Wana custom for someone to let the community see them crying.



**Img. 50:** Indo Jaka's father near her *uba*



**Img. 51:** Apa Jaka and his second son near the *uba* of Indo Jaka.

If we observe the *Img. 50* and *Img. 51* we can see the striking difference between the two responses to the loss. Apa Jaka seems more relaxed, more guided by the mourning culture of the Wana that trained him in not expressing his pain at this point of the *kayori*.



**Img. 52:** We can see how Indo Jaka's father is completely indifferent to the *mandeki* that is happening just next to him.

Watching the scenes played back on video, however, a smile was now fixed on his face, especially during violent expressions of pain in the *mandeki*. It was as if the scenes brought back no painful memories to this man. Even in a small community like the one

here, although there is a strong sense that bereavement and coping takes on a codified and ritualised character, there is clearly real pain beneath the surface. Indo Jaka's father is the embodiment of a transition. He is a man trained by his culture in using certain ways of managing his emotions, but he now finds himself with a pain so overwhelming that every method seems futile. During the funeral, he seems to focus more on his own personal pain than on how the community is responding, as expressed in the *mandeke*.

A community might have conventions for reacting to certain situations in certain ways (such as laughing while watching the video of a loved-one's funeral), but these conventions are also brittle. Like those from any other culture, Wana people seem aware of the fragility of their reality and of their control over their emotions. It is exactly for these reasons that particular care is taken in the preparation and execution of important rituals such as the *kayori*. On the other hand, many centrifugal forces (modernity, conversion, "Indonesiation") are pushing Wana people away from the established pillars at the centre of their religion and culture, dissipating the power derived from the rituals. Perhaps this could be thought of as the Westernisation of Wana culture. Their movements away from their previous cultural centres does not bring new power, but increasing marginalisation and fractures in their reality. First, the community failed in showing *kasintuwu* at the funeral of Apa Dheri, preferring to this unity a fragmentation of the community into small groups, and a turn away from the practices that used to recreate the community's original density. Secondly, an old man who had seen the Wana world go through deep change over the last few decades showed both a respect for Wana traditions (he is, after all, embedded in them) but also an apathy to them, with his personal pain too overwhelming for him to take the *mandeke*'s dramatized expression of pain seriously. This is a man nearing the end of his life who has become part of a completely new world, and someone slowly moving away both from his past and his cultural background.

## Conclusions

In this thesis, I have explored Wana culture and values, two elements that are expressed deeply during their two main rituals, the *momago* and the *kayori*. Rituals have always played a crucial role in reinforcing community, through the coming together that they enable and the heightened emotional engagement that they inspire. For this reason, I decided to focus on the two main Wana rituals as a key to access and understand Wana culture. The aim was to see how they are helping the community to cope positively with what Wana people narrate as the “wretchedness” of life, while reinforcing social rules, and above all, stressing the importance of *kasintuwu*: the predominance of community over the single members.

In doing so, this thesis followed a structure, inspired by my own experience of two periods of fieldwork and an increasing experience and knowledge, starting at the beginning of a master’s degree and running through to the end of a PhD. The first chapters aimed in filling a knowledge gap regarding Wana life and rituals, replicating my early processes of discovery. There then came my analysis of the cultural values expressed in these two rituals, and of music’s role in transforming profane reality into that of myth. Moreover, central to this work, was the Wana categorisation of the world into centre and periphery, with the centre being visible and powerless and the periphery invisible and powerful. I discussed the relations between invisibility, power and the world of spirits, and how they make the use of music necessary in building a connection between the human and the spiritual world. This is a link embodied by the shaman themselves, the *tau walia*.

Wana reality and meaning-making is based on this contrast of opposite and frequent movements between the powerful outside and the powerless inside. In fact, the powerless position that they perceive themselves to occupy at the centre of the world is also the thing due to reward them when the end of the world comes. It is a position that is geographical but above all social and economic. The movement of Wana people in the world is not physical but also on a spiritual and social level. Those Wana people who travel, the great majority being male, obtain knowledge that translates into the power needed to become shamans, village chiefs or wise elders. Indeed, I only saw men being chosen as any of the four special guests at a funeral. In a similar way, the power of the periphery is brought back every time the community is in danger, and this is possible only thanks to the music. With its invisibility, music becomes the perfect tool to unify the entire community as a dense primordial mass, and to the spirits and power on a common goal: the survival of the community.

An important contribution of this work is that the majority of the data discussed concerns situations that have never been studied before, or not for a long time. For reasons possibly related to the power dynamics behind trends in academia, most of Wana culture has never been properly explored and the one major work on the culture is based on fieldwork done in between the 1974 and 75, 40 years ago (Atkinson 1989). It is fascinating to see how many cultural elements, such as gender relationships, the importance of community, and the relationship between music and the invisible world, have not changed drastically in the last four decades. On the other hand, there seems to have been an accelerated change in Wana culture in the last five years due to the arrival of television and an increase in influence from Indonesian culture. While the *momago* was studied by Atkinson (1989), she did not go into depth on some of its key facets, such as the role of music. Moreover, my research took place at the same time of Grumbliés, but while the difference with Atkinson were temporal, the difference with Grumbliés is spatial. We saw how researching the same culture but in two different geographical places produced two very different analyses of the marginality of the Wana people. While Grumbliés (2016) was observing the Wana that were already part of Wana periphery, even if still part of the Indonesian periphery too, the Wana of the forest inhabit the powerless centre of the Wana world, and looked at the world from their geographical, social and spiritual position of not completely welcome guests at weddings of the Taronggo people.

Even more significantly, the *kayori* has never been studied before at all, so my work on this ritual is meant to offer a brand new angle for understanding the role of playfulness in funerals and for the field of death studies in general. The *kayori* fits in the many studies on the second burial in Indonesia and the role of funerals as generators of fertility, but at the same time offers new data and interesting characteristics. First of all, the use of the music the escort the soul to the afterlife and mark the moment of the cultural death. Moreover, the contrast between the extremely ritualized expression of pain and the spontaneous weeping after the end of the ritual. Finally yet importantly, the positive attitude of the Wana towards all the negative events of life, and especially death, which help them surviving in an otherwise difficult environment that does not offer many rewards to them.

More importantly, the idea of the rite of densification, even if at the moment used only in regards of Wana culture, I believe could offer new ways to look at the rituals where large congregations get together to support each other and react to the negativity of life as a single powerful being.

Beyond the originality of the majority of data offered in this dissertation, some of the methodological and analytical directions I have explored are offered as original contributions to wider scholarship. Most significantly, this means reflections on the Wana

conception of time, and my ethnographic approach to the relationship between music, emotions and rituals. Moreover, I intend for my research to add to discussions on relationships between music and emotion, and on indigenous worldview. The insights on marginality might be particularly relevant in British academia due to colonial histories and its central position in the worlds of research and publication.

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of this thesis. First, space constraints meant that I could not deeply explore many of the topics touched on at various points. The role of time, the ways Wana people divide up the world, and the relationship between music and invisibility could easily have become the topics for entire chapters, or indeed an entire thesis. It was important, though, to sacrifice some of this space to give an all-round description and analysis of the Wana world, and consequently to discuss these themes in less detail. They will surely be important avenues of future research.

Another limitation in this work is the absence of information from other parts of the reserve, especially Uewaju, which is considered a mythical place. While, of course, this study benefits in many ways from having a well-defined geographical focus, this particular village nonetheless plays an important role as the centre of the Wana world. As such, it will be an important place for future visits, and I plan to investigate here whether the stories I heard about it are true and what points of view are held by the Wana people living at the precise centre of the world. Indeed, I found important differences between my research and that carried out by Grumbles, and they are largely attributable to our different field camps, one inside the forest and one outside. This is part of the reason that I expect even greater differences could be found with Uewaju as the main site. As it happened in this project, difficulties of language, time and weather ruled out adding this perspective, but it has remained in my mind that doing so may or may not have significantly changed the findings I have reported in this thesis.

There is also a lot of data in my possession that I did not examine in this thesis. In the near future, then, I intend to translate and explore the Wana mythology that I collected in 2016 through interviewing the last elders that still remember the *katuntu* (mythical stories), and to dedicate more space to the exploration of the Wana space/time and the relationship between the invisible and music. Another topic that I briefly discussed but that deserves a longer discussion is how the use of television passed from being a congregational ritual in 2011 to a divisional routine in 2016. In 2011, once a month, an individual of the community bought the petrol for the electric generator, allowing the entire village to get together under the same roof, there was only one television, to watch movies and charge their phones. This was an expression of *kasintuwu* and an opportunity to enjoy the density created by presence of the entire village in a single hut; in a very similar way to the

*momago*. In 2016, the televisions in Marisa became three and used every night. The community divided itself in three different groups, all three watching the same program. This is generating a minor grade of density in a way that recall the funeral of Apa Derhi.

This research, and my life in England, offered me the needed distance to start looking at my homeland in a different way. I love working and living with the Wana, but I started feeling the need to study my own culture and to show it to the world, as I wanted and still want to do with the Wana. I believe that anthropology should aim in creating awareness in regard the social and political situation of certain cultures, for this reason, in the future I would like to explore the impact of Christian missionaries on the role of *kasintuwu* of the Wana or explore how the history of Mafia and all the death related to it that happened in the last 30 years are shaping the life of the citizens of my hometown, Palermo.

Thanks to this research, I have created a small database on Wana culture that includes information on music, rituals, mythology, tradition and so on. One of my most significant motivations for this project was the suspicion that Wana culture could become radically changed or disappear in the next 20-30 years. I see my database as potentially playing an important role in preserving Wana culture. The younger generations are increasingly less interested in the Wana culture and even the adults are not educated in the tradition. Once at a funeral, the *dendelo* (the initial chant), began with no pole in the middle. The confusion among the celebrants was clear and I did not feel able to tell them how to do their ritual correctly. In the end, one of the elders arrived to guide them and moved to one of the poles of the *dumbaru*. I am afraid that soon the Wana will forget the reasons behind their ritual actions and will start to modify their rituals, an event not negative by itself but that could bring the disappearing of this culture if the Wana will simply adopt the traditions of their neighbours.

In this thesis, I have drawn on work from ethnomusicology (including its medical strands), cultural anthropology, history, death studies, music psychology, anthropology of time, post-colonial studies, gender studies and many other topics. As such, my aim has been for this study to be genuinely interdisciplinarity. It is well understood that the world is too multifaceted and complex to analyse taking in consideration only one single factor. I have tried to show how there are connections everywhere and that only a holistic approach allows the scholar to recognise and properly study them. I would like it, then, to add to a wake-up call for a rediscovery of true interdisciplinarity, something that is already at the base of both the Italian and British schools of anthropology and ethnomusicology. This is something required by the field itself and by a constant overlapping of multiple identities and socio-political factors that undermine definitions along any single religious, musical, gender or social-class line and point instead to an intricate intertwinement. To do this

successfully and overcome the limits of a single researcher we should make team-work a standard method in anthropology, ethnomusicology and religious studies. Maybe we should learn from our cousin hard sciences and value again the collaboration not only between researcher and informants but between researchers, with the common aims of describing and analysing reality at 360 degree. With the support of a team, this work could have reached a higher level of complexity and understanding of Wana culture.

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