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**TITLE: more than an ethnic marker: Toraja art as identity negotiator**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

In this article I suggest that art can be more than a passive ethnic marker. Focusing on the architecturally based carvings of the Toraja of Indonesia, I argue that artistic forms are sites for the assertion, articulation, and negotiation of various hierarchical identities and relationships. I trace the contested transformation of Toraja architectural symbols of elite authority into generalized icons of Toraja ethnic identity. As I chronicle these shifts I also illustrate how Toraja architectural carvings serve as vehicles for the rearticulation of assorted sets of rank, ethnic, regional, and political relationships. A key objective in this article is to highlight the complicated and often ironic relations between material culture, identity negotiation, and human agency. Drawing on Scott (1985, 1990), I suggest that while art may serve as a weapon of the weak, it can also be a weak weapon. [identity, art, ethnicity, tourism, agency, Indonesia, Toraja]

#### **EARLY IMAGES OF TORAJA IDENTITY**

In the first decade of this century, a British adventurer named J. MacMillan Brown traveled through the Dutch East Indies. His voyage included several weeks in Celebes (Sulawesi), where he hoped to encounter the highland Toraja people or, as he dubbed them, "the Pacific wild men." Brown's disappointment with the "tame and Christianized specimens" of Torajas he encountered in the Lake Poso region of Sulawesi is evident in his account of his travels, where he bemoans the extensive influence of missionaries and Chinese and Arab traders and laments that "the old head-hunting and banquets on an enemy's blood and brains are mere traditions" (Brown 1914:118). Brown also chronicles how, when he conveyed his disenchantment to the colonial governor in Makassar (Ujung Pandang), he received a tantalizing invitation to travel up the Gulf of Boni, where the governor promised that "his Toradja, pacified only four years ago, and head-hunters up til then, were quite different from the domesticated specimens of Posso" (Brown 1914:118). As Brown recounts, the Dutch administrator assured him that "they had real wild men up in their mountains, with their villages perched on precipices" (Brown 1914:118). Unfortunately, Brown could not fit this voyage into his schedule. As consolation, the colonial governor took him to the Bugis raja's palace in Makassar, which doubled as a museum. At the palace museum, Brown was shown models of elaborately carved Toraja houses, which he describes at length in his account of his travels:

Their storehouses were, like the Maori pataka, most richly carved, with conventionalized designs, some of them spiral scrolls: and though there were none of them on these models, many of their large community houses have monstrous carved images of the human form as decorations, as in the Maori carved house. Some of the struts and supports were long bird-necks, with heads like that of the cassowary, a bird that is found only in Ceram, westward of New Guinea. [Brown 1914:120]

Brown closes his description of these Maori-like Toraja decorative motifs by declaring his captivation with the carvings of these "wild artists." While Brown's voyage to the Celebes took place almost one hundred years ago under very different conditions from those experienced by today's jumbo jet tourists, some themes in his narrative resonate with the contemporary politics of art and ethnicity in Indonesia.

Brown's experience, an initial, indirect encounter with Torajas through their art, is not unique. Today, most travelers to Indonesia (and Indonesians as well) are exposed to Toraja arts, even if they never set foot in the Toraja homeland. Toraja material culture has a long history of display in the world's cabinets of curiosity. As J. MacMillan Brown's report indicates, as early as 1914 Torajas were being museumized by non-Torajas, their identity showcased through their arts. Moreover, in this early account we already glimpse how Toraja arts can evoke compelling imagery of ethnic and even pan-Pacific islander identity. For Brown, viewing Toraja carvings conjured up images of Torajas as "wild artists" and prompted visions of pan-Pacific communities of spirited tribal carvers from the New Zealand Maori to the highland Sulawesi Toraja.

In this article I explore the ways in which artistically embellished objects are entwined with identity politics, highlighting in particular the role of art in negotiating hegemonic relations. Traditionally, researchers concerned with material culture and identity have tended to approach art as a mirror of intergroup relations rather than recognizing that people actively use art to articulate or reframe such relations. Historically, the dominant trend was to delineate art's passive function as an ethnic marker or to trace its evolution from a set of sacred icons to ethnic or national symbols.(FN1) It is only recently that some writers have begun to suggest that art may play a more active role in intergroup sensibilities (Appadurai 1986; Graburn 1976; Marcus and Myers 1995; Thomas 1991). Building on this work, this article makes the argument that the arts provide a particularly apt arena for negotiating, reaffirming, and at times challenging asymmetrical identities.

In contending that art is an active ingredient in identity politics, it is not my intention to suggest that power resides in art as an immanent force. Rather, I advocate an understanding of material objects as vehicles for discourse about "we"/"they" identities. Ward Keeler (1987:17) has suggested that approaching shadow puppet performances as constituting a series of relationships (among performers, spectators, sponsors, and other categorical groups) permits an integration of art form with other types of relationships among members of that culture. I believe that such an approach can be productively applied to the analysis of material culture, particularly when the relationships under consideration are expanded beyond the local arena to encompass interethnic, colonial, and even transnational relations; the last group includes those relations that are embodied in touristic contemplations of Toraja art. Such an emphasis on the relationships constituted in artistic displays promises to move us toward more nuanced understandings of art's role in negotiating, challenging, or reaffirming intergroup relations and hegemonies.

Clarification of the notion of "identity negotiation" is important here. Recent writers share a concept of identity as a dynamic, ongoing process that is "politically contested and historically unfinished" (Clifford 1988:9). Older construals of identity (particularly ethnicity) as inert, primordial inheritances constructed in isolation have come to be replaced by more dynamic conceptions stressing the conceptual processes of contrast through which identities take form (Kipp 1993; Norton 1988). As Kipp elaborates, "the

contrasts mark not merely differences, but hierarchies of value and power" (Kipp 1993:5-6). Appadurai's recent observations are equally relevant: he notes that although emerging perspectives on identity come close to older so-called instrumental conceptions of ethnicity (see Barth 1969; Southall 1976), they are distinctive in that the activation of criteria of group difference is not always motivated solely by the pursuit of sources of economic, political, or emotional value (Appadurai 1996:14). As Appadurai suggests, "the mobilization of markers of group difference may itself be part of a contestation of values about difference, as distinct from the consequences of difference for wealth, security or power" (Appadurai 1996:14). My use of the expression "identity negotiation" emerges from these and other recent reformulations of concepts such as "ethnicity," "person," "class," and so forth by Nagata (1981), Clifford (1988), Linnekin (1983, 1990, 1992), White (1991), Keesing (1989), and others. I employ the term negotiation, in turn, for the social processes whereby identities are articulated, asserted, challenged, suppressed, realigned, and co-opted in both verbal and nonverbal arenas. Given these understandings, I am arguing here that art is an underexplored yet important site for identity negotiation.

One of my objectives in exploring art's role in negotiating identities and relationships is to highlight the complicated and often ironic relations between material culture and human agency. As Hardin and Arnoldi have recently observed in their discussion of African material culture, surprisingly little attention has been devoted to the process whereby "objects, when coupled with human agency, become powerful allies in the construction of identity, meaning, and culture itself" (Hardin and Arnoldi 1996:16). Using the case of Toraja wood carvings to reflect on the interrelations among material culture, identity negotiation, and human agency, I build on James Scott's now classic ideas concerning the arts of resistance (Scott 1985, 1990). In some ways, Toraja carvings can be conceptualized as "hidden transcripts" offering a surreptitious critique of established ethnic, colonial, or political hierarchies and operating as "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985, 1990). In other ways, however, these carvings also embody what Ortner has termed the "ambivalences and ambiguities of resistance itself" (Ortner 1995:191). There is an almost constant struggle over the meaning of Toraja carvings, as different actors and groups with different projects, apprehensions, memories, and yearnings create, replicate, and engage with these material images. In short, in this article I argue for a conception of Toraja architecturally based carving as a complex arena embodying contending discourses concerning identity and hierarchies of authority and power.

The organization of this article is as follows. I begin by placing the Sa'dan Toraja in historic context, with reference to Indonesian cultural politics and regional polemics. Next, I provide background on the multiple meanings of Toraja architectural carvings to Torajas residing in Tana Toraja.(FN2) Here I am concerned with illustrating the intimate connections between Toraja house carvings and elite identity and power. In this section I also explore the ways in which lower-ranking Torajas are currently engaged in reconceptualizing and rearticulating the meaning of these carvings. After delineating these internal contests of meaning embodied in Toraja architectural motifs, I address ethnic encounters in the carvings and chronicle the--for some Toraja aristocrats--ambivalent transformation of the carved Toraja house from a symbol of elite power into an icon of Toraja ethnicity. Next I chronicle current efforts by some Toraja tourist carvers

to redefine their architecturally inspired work as "art" and to use their productions as "political secret weapons" vis-à-vis groups perceived as exploiting Toraja villagers. The final portion of this article explores the emergence of Toraja motifs in the Bugis-Makassarese provincial capital and suggests that Toraja carvings in this context become surreptitious ethnic weapons, making subtle claims to a newly emerging Toraja symbolic preeminence over rival Sulawesi groups. In this section I also discuss the current struggle for control over the meaning of these carved images, as the state and other groups appropriate them for their own purposes. Through these varied examples I aim to show the multiple and competing dimensions of identity struggles embodied in and negotiated through Toraja arts.

### **THE TORAJA IN PERSPECTIVE**

In recent years the Sa'dan Toraja of highland Sulawesi have experienced burgeoning anthropological and touristic celebrity (see Adams 1984, 1997a; Crystal 1977, 1994; Tangdilintin 1981; Volkman 1985, 1990; Yamashita 1994). Numbering approximately 350,000, the Sa'dan Toraja are a minority group in the multiethnic archipelago nation of Indonesia. Torajas are marginalized not only by their relatively small numbers, but by island geography and religion as well. The majority of Torajas are Christian, and their religious identity has become an important dimension of their ethnic identity in predominantly Muslim Indonesia.(FN3) For many Torajas, Christian identity is a source not only of pride but of vulnerability, particularly in recent years as television news reports of urban church burnings have become disturbingly frequent.

The Sa'dan Toraja's closest neighbors are the Islamicized Bugis and Makassarese peoples, the dominant ethnic groups of the region.(FN4) In contrast to the elaborate kingdoms of these neighboring peoples, the Toraja never formed a single centralized political unit. Traditionally, they lived in scattered mountaintop households, maintaining social ties through an elaborate system of ritual exchanges and occasionally engaging in intervillage warfare as local nobles vied for control of adjacent areas (see Bigalke 1981; Koubi 1982; Nooy-Palm 1979, 1986). It was not until Dutch colonial forces arrived in 1906 that the Toraja were united under a single political authority. In the 1910s, Calvinist missionaries began to arrive and mount proselytizing activities, prompting Torajas to develop new notions of their shared identity and place in the world (Bigalke 1981, 1984). Before the Dutch colonial incursion, however, these highlanders' relations with outsiders were sporadic and uneven. While occasional cooperation, intermarriage, and trade occurred between highland and lowland elites, there were also terrifying periods of Bugis-Makassarese slave raiding and invasion. Bigalke (1981, 1983) is careful to underscore that the relationship between these two groups was much more subtle than simply one of lowlander exploitation of highlanders, demonstrating that the coffee and slave trades were often based on collaboration between lowland and highland elites. Many contemporary Torajas, however, view Muslim lowlander groups as the historic raiders and the Torajas as the prey. Such conceptualizations were probably cemented in the early years of Indonesian independence when a Muslim guerrilla rebellion was waged in South Sulawesi between 1952-65.(FN5) The resulting violence and unrest in the province greatly intensified Toraja fear and suspicion of all lowlander Muslims.

More recently, the Toraja homeland has been invaded by a new wave of outsiders, prompting new reflections on local history and identity. Beginning in the 1970s, domestic and international tourists began journeying to the Toraja highlands, lured by the prospect

of witnessing pageantry-filled Toraja funeral rituals, and touring "traditional" villages with elaborately carved houses (tongkonan) and hanging graves. Today the Toraja are hardly an isolated people: In 1994 alone, approximately 53,700 foreign tourists and 205,000 domestic tourists visited the area.(FN6) Tana Toraja Regency's booming popularity has prompted many Torajas to rethink their identity and their relationships to other Indonesians (Adams 1988, 1995, 1997d; Coville 1989; Volkman 1984, 1990). I will elaborate on this phenomenon as it relates to the arts shortly.

A brief mention of economic transformations and internal organization is necessary before proceeding to a discussion of Toraja carvings. Beginning in the 1960s, shortages of arable land (resulting from population growth) and a lack of local economic opportunities prompted many Torajas to seek wage labor away from the homeland (Volkman 1985). Today one encounters Toraja teachers, bureaucrats, hotel maids, medical practitioners, truck drivers, domestic servants, loggers, and miners throughout the archipelago.(FN7) In addition to sending remittances to kin at home, many of these migrants and their children return to the Toraja highlands for combined touristic and family visits. Although most Torajas remaining in Tana Toraja Regency still make their living from wet rice agriculture, coffee plantings, and small garden plots, the rapid growth of tourism has opened up new employment opportunities in the homeland. A growing number of young Torajas attend recently established high schools for training in local tourism, with the hope of acquiring jobs as guides or hotel staff members. Still other rural village youths who are unable to complete school take up tourist carving to supplement their family's agricultural income. As a result of such transformations, a new generation of Torajas are growing up well versed in the marketable dimensions of their ancestral culture.

#### **INTRA-TORAJA PERSPECTIVES ON ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS: CONTESTED IMAGES OF RANK AND SPIRITUAL IDENTITY**

Like that of the adventurer J. MacMillan Brown, my first indirect encounter with the Toraja was through their arts. As I boarded the bus to the Toraja highlands in the Bugis port city of Ujung Pandang, I spotted a miniature carving of a Toraja tongkonan dangling from the bus's rearview mirror. As I was to learn, this embellishment on the Toraja-owned bus embodied key themes in contemporary Toraja identity, themes that form the core of this article. For visitors versed in tourist literature, the miniature tongkonan swaying in the bus's windshield invariably conjures up images of Toraja houses embellished with elaborate geometric motifs and arched, sweeping roofs of layered bamboo (Figure 1). It also brings to mind the elegantly carved rice barns that complement many Toraja homes. Enticed by such images, I began my research by focusing on Toraja tongkonan carvings. This section provides background on Toraja architectural motifs and Toraja debates concerning their linkages to dimensions of rank and spiritual identity.

During my first two years of fieldwork, Torajas offered me a variety of interpretations of the carved motifs decorating tongkonan houses, rice barns, and graves. Carvers to whom I was apprenticed outlined a repertoire of approximately 70 different geometric designs and noted that each motif had its own unique name and meaning. Today, aside from some carvers and respected elders, few people were familiar with the names and meanings of more than a half-dozen motifs. I was unable to ascertain whether this was always so or whether the knowledge was being lost.(FN8)

After studying individual motifs and photodocumenting dozens of tongkonans, I came

to recognize that certain designs tended to appear on particular parts of the tongkonan's facade. Was there not, perhaps, some underlying "grammar" to the ordering of the motifs? Might there not be mythological explanations for this ordering? When queried about this, Toraja friends and acquaintances presented several hypotheses. Some elders speculated that, viewed in their totality, the house carvings conveyed lessons about the prescribed relations among gods, nobles, and their dependents. As one 70-year-old aristocratic leader declared to me, "All of Toraja philosophy can be read in the carvings of a tongkonan." Pointing to the carved pair of roosters at the apex of the facade of his ancestral tongkonan, he noted that the rooster awakens us, calling us to life. Several of his noble friends were sitting with us at the time and they nodded in agreement as their friend elaborated that the rooster motif was a symbol of life and the life force given by the deities. Next, my mentor noted that each rooster was perched atop a sunburst motif known as pa'barre allo, another motif tied to the life force. Below the sunburst design one often finds a carved pattern of betel leaves (pa' daun bolu). As these elderly aristocrats explained, traditional ritual priests use betel leaves as an offering to the gods: betel leaves are mediums of contact with the deities. One of my companions then pointed out a nearby design representing swallows (pa' kalumpini') and reminded me of a myth in which swallows served as the creator god's messengers. According to these aristocrats, when taken together the carvings on the upper third of the tongkonan thus symbolized ritual obligations to the gods.

Moving down to middle tier of the tongkonan, my mentor asserted that the motifs generally found in this section heralded the status and solidarity of the noble family. He noted that carved here are designs such as pa' tedong, the water buffalo motif, which is a mark of noble wealth in the Toraja highlands. Also found in this central section is the banyan tree motif (pa' barana'), which, one elder noted, is an emblem of the noble family's strength. He elaborated, "The banyan tree is the sturdiest of trees, the king of trees. Even the Javanese know its importance--a banyan tree always stands in the heart of Javanese rajas' palace compounds--it is where Javanese leaders hold their meetings." Another member of the group then chimed in to remind me that in Toraja funeral chants a celebrated noble is sometimes called "a banyan in the village" (barana' lan tondok), a further indicator of the banyan's close association with noble power and authority.

Finally, one of the elders in the party moved us on to the motifs chiseled on the bottom third of the tongkonan. Gesturing to the plant and animal designs that predominate in this section, such as the rooster feather motif (pa' bulu londong) and the fern frond pattern (pa' lulun paku), he suggested that the motifs embellishing the lowest tier of the tongkonan allude to the activities of peasants and slaves.(FN9) As he elaborated, these motifs relate to the harvesting or gathering of essential foods, the snaring of wild birds, or the tending of domesticated animals, tasks consigned to those dependent on the aristocracy. My Toraja mentor then summarized his view that, when taken together, the carvings on the tongkonan facade symbolized the noble family's twofold roles and responsibilities: nobles have responsibilities (such as that of making ritual offerings) both upward toward the deities and downward toward their dependents (peasants and slaves). In order to maintain prestige and a central position in society, a noble must fulfill obligations to both the gods above and the peasants below. If this is done, there will be harmony among the three tiers of society. Nodding in agreement, one of the other elites in our party commented that the tongkonan's carved facade attested to the aristocracy's central

position in society.

About a month later one of these noblemen presented this interpretation of the overall meaning of tongkonan carvings at a training workshop for aspiring local guides. His explanation touched off a heated debate amongst the listeners. Many of the young nonnoble workshop participants emotionally declared that they would not present this "incorrect" interpretation of the carvings to tourists. The aristocratic presenter, in turn, was distressed by the rejection of his exegesis and later told me of his concern that these young guides would later confuse tourists with their "made-up" explanations. Tacitly, it seemed, we both understood that the bigger issue for him was not the risk of tourist confusion but the loss of elite control over the meaning of these carvings, given the predominance of nonnobles among the guides.

When I interviewed these younger nonnoble guides, a number of them posed alternative analyses of the carvings' significance. Some told me that the message underlying the motifs' distribution concerned Torajas' traditional harmonious relationship with nature. In a similar vein, Waterson (1988:54) reports one informant's interpretation of the carvings as a hope for renewal of the earth's fertility, particularly of rice. For rice is essential not only to life but to the ritual cycle that links the living with gods and ancestors. The exegeses of some younger Toraja guides speak more directly to the preoccupations of Western tourists: as one young Toraja guide declared to me with a grin, "These carvings of nature show that we were conservationists before there was such a thing as conservation!" Newer religious orientations are also frequently invoked by these younger guides. For example, during the time I resided in a much-visited "traditional Toraja village," I often overheard local guides interpret the ubiquitous cross motif (pa' doti) found on both houses and women's coffins as a Christian emblem. When I subsequently commented that this motif was used long before the arrival of Christian missionaries, several Torajas declared it was further evidence of their ancestors' intuitive proximity to Christianity. In a sense, such statements can be read not only as rejections of the rank-affirming symbolism proposed by some older nobles but also as embodying acts of sly one-upmanship over the Western tourists and anthropologists gazing at these artistically embellished structures: for example, the Toraja invented conservation on their own, long before it became popular in the Western world. Moreover, the Toraja did not need Dutch missionaries to bring them Christianity as they had embraced the essence of Christian philosophy for centuries. In this way, we can see some Torajas using their carvings as an arena for renegotiating a variety of contemporary and historical hierarchical relationships.

#### **ETHNIC ENCOUNTERS IN THE CARVINGS**

Some of the relationships embodied in the carvings are of an ethnic nature. In a manner that recalls Julius Lips's fascinating book *The Savage Hits Back* (1937), a select few of these carvings provide commentary on Torajas' ambivalent relationships with the Dutch who arrived in the highlands in 1906, and the Japanese, who occupied their lands in the early 1940s. These subversive carvings are not routine, and, when they are found, they tend to be discretely located under the eaves of rice barns, in places where only those sitting on the rice-barn platform can contemplate them.

One such sequence of carvings involves a Dutch woman, a soldier beating a Toraja child, and the child's flight to his mother's arms (Figure 2-3). The owner of the rice barn offered a vague scenario to explain these carvings, which he dated to the colonial period.

He explained that they depicted a "fussy" Dutch woman who was irked by a naughty Toraja child. Her relationship to the young child is unclear: possibly he worked as a servant in her household or perhaps he resided in an adjacent village and was prone to dallying outside the Dutch colonialists' home (which would have been an object of Toraja children's curiosity). Although the owner of the rice barn could not illuminate what the child may have done to annoy the colonial woman, the painful consequences of angering a Dutch woman are clear: in the next frame we see that she ordered a Dutch soldier to beat the child. In the final frames, the child is shown seeking the comforting embrace of his mother. Initially stern, the boy's mother scoops her son into her arms upon learning his version of the events precipitating his beating. In this series of carvings we catch a glimpse of the colonial terror of an earlier era, a terror that is recalled each time the carvings are viewed.

Moreover, in these carvings we also witness Torajas surreptitiously "talking back" to colonialists. In a sense, they can be approached as "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990), reframing the colonial ordering of "weak" and "strong." Although these carvings are simply executed, the haughty depiction of the Dutch woman contrasts sharply with the nurturing portrayal of the child's Toraja mother. The Dutch woman's darkened face is held high, aloof; her finely coiffed hair and low-cut, ruffled dress bespeak vanity, particularly when compared to the modest inconspicuousness of the Toraja woman's attire. The representation of the Toraja woman cradling her sobbing son conveys Toraja compassion, maternal care, and devotion to kin. This contrasts markedly with the portrayal of the self-indulgent Dutch woman: she is represented not only as fussy and without patience for a naughty child but also as alone and without kin.(FN10) Moreover, she commands the beating of a child, behavior considered savage by most Torajas. Embedded in these carvings, then, are Toraja statements about the brutality of the so-called civilizing forces.

Another panel depicts Darul Islam troops shooting at a Toraja man as he flees through scattering livestock (Figure 4).(FN11) This scene conveys Torajas' fear and vulnerability in the 1950s, shortly after Indonesian independence. At this time lowland Bugis and Makassar led armed rebellions in South Sulawesi in the hopes of establishing Indonesia as a Muslim state. The largely un-Islamicized Torajas were frequent targets of these Islamic guerrilla bands. Toraja villages were burned, and thefts, abductions, and killings were rampant (Bigalke 1981). The Darul Islam movement in South Sulawesi lasted from 1952-65, when Kahar Muzakkar, the leader of the Sulawesi rebellions, was shot by Republican forces. Toraja carvings thus sometimes serve as expressions of ethnic vulnerability.

Nevertheless, one cannot fully appreciate the dynamic role of Toraja carvings in interethnic relations without considering the cultural significance of the buildings they adorn. While Toraja motifs appear on rice barns, coffins, graves, betel nut containers, and other utensils, for insiders and outsiders alike they are most closely identified with the ancestral house (tongkonan). In the following section I review the cultural significance of the carved house and attempt to contextualize historically the recent transformations in its meaning.

#### **RANK AND THE CARVED TONGKONAN**

For the Toraja the tongkonan is more than just a shelter; it is the visual embodiment of one's descent. The tongkonan is a ramage house established by a common ancestor. As

Sa'dan Toraja kinship is bilateral, a given tongkonan "belongs" to all male and female descendants of its founding ancestor. Thus all Torajas can trace their ancestry to multiple tongkonans. As many Torajas whispered to me, a quick glance at a tongkonan bespeaks the rank of its members. Fully carved tongkonans adorned with intricate motifs were associated with the nobility (Tangdilintin 1983:59).(FN12) Commoners (tana's bassi) were restricted to carving small, specified sections of their tongkonans. Slaves were strictly forbidden to decorate their lineage houses with carved motifs. The elaborately carved tongkonan was in many ways a material symbol of the nobles' power and prestige. Such taboos on the use of architectural carvings by nonnobles meant that slaves could not overtly carve out scenes of resistance to external forces such as those described in the previous section. Only the aristocrats (via their hired carvers) could give full rein to the artistic rearticulation of their relationships with threatening political forces. Even as these images surreptitiously opposed colonial and Muslim powers, the structures they embellished reinforced indigenous rank hierarchies. Here it is perhaps appropriate to underscore the observations of Foucault (1978:95-96) and Abu-Lughod (1990:42-43) concerning the complicated and often conflicting structures of power: rather than to romanticize resistance, it pays to recognize that where there is resistance there is also power.

Today, for noble Torajas the tongkonan remains fundamentally entwined with Toraja identity, rank, and ritual activity. Torajas derive pride from having kin ties to a renowned tongkonan (tongkonan layuk). Those whose tongkonans have been neglected and unfeted may attempt to regain their prestige by sponsoring a tongkonan "thanksgiving" ritual (mangrara banua). Not only are tongkonan carvings an arena for the renegotiation of relationships; so, too, are tongkonan rituals.(FN13) For example, the Toraja family I lived with was painfully aware that its prestige in the community had eroded with the 1986 death of the father, a respected traditional leader and politician. In 1989 its members devised a detailed strategy to regain their position of authority in the community. Central to the plan was the ancestral tongkonan, which, to the family's embarrassment, had not been feted for many decades. In January 1990 the family staged a seven-day, pageantry-filled tongkonan consecration ritual (mangrara banua). The ritual drew thousands of guests. Relatives came from as far away as Jakarta and Australia to assert their ties to the tongkonan by bringing offerings of whimsically decorated live pigs to the mangrara ritual. Widely publicized, the event drew busloads of Indonesian tourists, dignitaries, and foreign travelers. Even Indonesians who did not attend the celebration watched it on the television news or read about it in the nation's premier newspaper Kompas (where it received three pages of coverage replete with enormous color photos). My Toraja "brothers" reported that the event was a wild success: through their tongkonan ritual, the family reclaimed its place of respect in the community.

#### **SHIFTING EXTERNAL VIEWS OF THE TONGKONAN**

Having briefly reviewed the significance of the carved tongkonan within Toraja society, I turn now to provide general background on outsiders' shifting conceptions of the tongkonan. One of my objectives in this section is to illustrate how these outsider perceptions have at times entered the Toraja discourse concerning the relationship of this material object to various dimensions of Toraja identity. While the tongkonan has long been a key symbol of an individual's identity and status within Toraja society, the national Indonesian government and the Dutch Reformed Church once adopted different

views. During the late 1950s and 1960s, before Tana Toraja became a touristic gold mine, Sulawesi highlanders were frequently derided as embarrassing primitives. For Java-based government officials, one of the most visible symbols of Toraja "backwardness" was the traditional house. In the 1960s the government launched an active campaign to urge Torajas to abandon their tongkonans and erect modern cinderblock homes (Eric Crystal, personal communication, May 8, 1986).

Similarly, certain factions in the Protestant Toraja Church disdained the tongkonan as a symbol of unenlightened backwardness. For Dutch-trained Protestant priests, the tongkonan was a threatening emblem of traditional religious and cultural orientations. Likening the tongkonan's interior darkness to spiritual darkness, they urged their followers to "seek enlightenment"--to abandon their tongkonans in favor of modern Western-styled dwellings. Torajas, many of whom had already converted to Christianity, did not take these declarations lightly. During this period some devoutly Christian families felt compelled to destroy their ancestral tongkonans, prompting tremendous strife, anguish, and anger within the kin groups associated with these structures. Some Christian Torajas found other solutions to the dilemmas posed by the church's linkage of the carved tongkonan to pagan orientations. By the 1960s some Torajas had begun to Christianize their tongkonan motifs. For example, one family hung a metal portrait of Jesus at the apex of its tongkonan's facade. More frequently, Christmas tree designs or carved candles symbolizing Christian orientations were incorporated into the embellishments.(FN14) The candle motifs, in particular, were almost always prominently situated at or near the honored pinnacle position. In some cases these candles replaced the rooster and sunburst motifs,(FN15) while in others they were inserted alongside the more traditional designs in the upper tier of the tongkonan facade.

Some of the elders I interviewed reported that the candle motif also represented the Indonesian Christian Party (PARKINDO), which was the dominant political party in Tana Toraja Regency in the 1960s (although it was a minority party in Indonesia). By the 1970s and early 1980s, as the Indonesian Christian Party and subsequently the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) lost ground in Tana Toraja,(FN16) distinctively carved miniature banyan trees began to appear on tongkonan and rice-barn facades. This motif is the emblem of Indonesia's ruling government party, Golongan Karya (GOLKAR). The artistic incorporation of these political emblems not only communicates newer allegiances extending beyond the local to the national frontier but also subtly recasts these once denigrated structures of Toraja traditionalism as vessels for contemporary national concerns. Moreover, these newer carvings transformed the traditional buildings they adorned into sites for contests about emergent dimensions of identity. In one village I frequented, candle motifs and carved banyan trees embellished adjacent rice barns belonging to families aligned with rival political parties. These carvings hosted a silent political battle.

The 1970s and 1980s brought a reversal of government and church policy toward the tongkonan. What had been scorned as an embarrassment now began to enjoy the status of an asset. During this period a number of new churches designed to resemble tongkonans began to appear on the Toraja landscape. The interiors of many older churches were outfitted with tongkonan-patterned trim, and needlepointed tapestries depicting tongkonan motifs decorated a number of pulpits. More revealingly, Christian Torajas increasingly came to call the Protestant Toraja Church the "Big Tongkonan," reflecting

both the persistence of the tongkonan as a key identity motif and the contemporary emphasis on integrating Christian and Toraja identities. I believe that this shift in church attitudes toward the tongkonan emerged in part out of the changes in Toraja Church leadership during this period. By the early 1980s, only a few Dutch clergy remained in positions of authority, as a growing number of nonnoble Toraja pastors had assumed leadership roles in the church. Many of the clergymen and women I interviewed at the 1984 Toraja Church Synod earnestly embraced the notion of equality before God and were anxious to both eradicate Toraja practices that reinforced rank hierarchies and "Torajanize" the church. In spurring the church's appropriation of tongkonan motifs, these predominantly nonnoble pastors were not only using art to assert Toraja control over what had been a Dutch-controlled institution but were also taking the carved tongkonan out of the exclusive control of the elite. Once again we see art conscripted to renegotiate hierarchical relations.

A second factor in this shift in attitude toward the tongkonan is the New Order government's move to begin more actively celebrating regional diversity as a cornerstone of Indonesian national identity. As Acciaioli (1985), Bruner (1979), and others have observed, central to contemporary Indonesian nation-building is a process of aestheticization of indigenous societies' traditions. In this context, not only traditional dances and costume but also--especially--indigenous architecture took on tremendous rhetorical importance. To borrow Webb Keane's terms, in architectural differences the state found "exemplary token[s] of safe ethnic difference" (Keane 1995:109).(FN17)

Yet another important dimension of this shift in attitude toward the tongkonan can be traced to the emergence of tourism in 1972, and the government's new-found appreciation of the touristic value of the structures. With tourism, promoters began to highlight the most striking aspects of Toraja culture: elaborate funeral rituals, effigies of the dead, and carved Toraja tongkonans. These once-exclusive embodiments of noble power and dominance were held up to outsiders as general symbols of Toraja ethnic identity, associated with all Torajas, regardless of rank. Thus began the proliferation of the tongkonan image. Tongkonan statues sprung up at major intersections, tongkonan-shaped topiaries were planted in gardens in Makale and Rantepao, a gateway arch bedecked with a tongkonan was erected at the entrance to the Regency, and a Tongkonan pub opened in downtown Rantepao (Figure 5). Souvenir stores were well-stocked with tongkonan T-shirts, three-dimensional model tongkonans, tongkonan wall plaques, and delicate tongkonan necklaces cast in silver. Moreover, Indonesian schoolbooks addressing the nation's ethnic diversity began to illustrate their descriptions of the Toraja with sketches of carved tongkonans. This marriage of carved tongkonans to Toraja ethnic identity is not confined to Indonesia; in Netherlands grocery stores one can buy "Toraja Chips" in packaging featuring a grand tongkonan logo.

Tourism legislation in Tana Toraja Regency further codifies the new association of tongkonans with pan-Toraja identity. For instance, a 1985 statute required that new homes along the main roads be embellished with "typical Toraja motifs." Consequently, in a bizarre twist of events, families of low birth who were previously barred by custom from incorporating tongkonan motifs into their architecture were suddenly being ordered to do so by the government. While in the Sulawesi highlands, I frequently saw Torajas shaking their heads in awe at the rapid proliferation of carved tongkonans and decorative tongkonan motifs.(FN18) Today the Regency's official seal features a carved tongkonan

and local government headquarters have been remodeled to resemble tongkonans. Tongkonan mania reached what seemed to be an apex in the summer of 1989, when bamboo gateway arches featuring gigantic, colorful paintings of carved tongkonans were erected in front of most of the homes in northern Tana Toraja Regency. Simpler, unadorned versions of these archways are normally constructed throughout South Sulawesi for the annual activities of Pembinaan Kesejahtera Keluarga (PKK) (a government agency devoted to family and community enhancement). In that particular year, however, local Toraja officials decided to embellish the standard constructions with this now ubiquitous symbol (Figure 6). The overall Toraja enchantment with tongkonans still shows no sign of abatement. Today, young Torajas proudly sport tailor-made shirts and dresses embellished with tongkonan designs, and tongkonan carvings once marketed to tourists now decorate most Toraja homes.(FN19) In short, the tongkonan has become virtually synonymous with Toraja ethnic identity.(FN20)

Although many older Toraja aristocrats continue to manipulate and interpret the carved tongkonan as an embodiment of elite authority, younger Torajas raised in times of eroding rank distinctions have digested the ubiquitous touristic imagery and embrace these images as their own ethnic markers, symbols of the entire group's power. Here I wish to emphasize that I am not arguing that tourism alone germinated the efflorescence of the tongkonan. Although tourism, in tandem with shifting government and church policy, facilitated these symbolic transformations, the whole range of extensive socioeconomic changes in Tana Toraja over the past 20 years must be taken into account. As I noted earlier, the land shortages of the 1960s prompted descendants of commoners and slaves to leave the homeland for cash-paying jobs in other regions. Their wages were sent back to the homeland and used to educate siblings and acquire previously inaccessible "traditional" symbols of prestige and power.(FN21) In addition, the new tourism-related employment opportunities for lower-ranking Torajas that blossomed in the homeland in the 1990s further reinforced these trends.

Having chronicled the carved tongkonan's transformation from an exclusive emblem of elite identity into a broader association with pan-Toraja ethnic identity and having outlined how the tongkonan has served as a site for renegotiating local identity hierarchies, in the remaining sections I turn to examine the role of Toraja tongkonan carvings in regional interethnic relations and in national politics.

### **CONTESTING NATIONAL POLITICS: TORAJA TOURIST ARTS AS "WEAPONS"**

When I returned to the field in late 1996, several carvers I had been studying with since 1984 were devoting their energies to developing new genres of tourist art inspired by tongkonan motifs. Encrypted in these new highly self-conscious creations are a variety of political messages as well as critiques of political corruption in Jakarta.(FN22) To the unschooled eye, these carvings appear to be upscale variations on the older tourist wall plaques depicting carved village scenes and tongkonan motifs. Generally, in contrast to the more generic tourist wall plaques, these new carvings are sparsely painted, the wood surfaces shellacked, and the carved tongkonan motifs finely executed. Moreover, they--as well as some of the more "traditional" carvings--now sport frames. As one of the carvers explained to me,

Usually Balinese carvings get the label "art" (*kesenian*), but Toraja carvings just get dismissed as "handicrafts" (*kerajinan tangan*) or "ornaments" (*hiasan*). We are putting

frames around our carvings so people won't just see Toraja things as ornaments, but rather as art or paintings (lukisan) suitable for the rich.

I nodded in agreement, reflecting on the ramifications of his revelation for this article. Clearly, through the addition of frames, these carves were striving to renegotiate the position of their ethnic group's productions (and by extension their ethnic group) in the hierarchy of Indonesian tourist arts. As I mused about these developments, the carver gestured to one of his new framed carvings and, with seeming clairvoyance, declared, "We Torajas have to make our productions into weapons."

He then urged me to write about his new carved "paintings," as this would lend further power to his arsenal. While I can only discuss one of his paintings in detail here, all his work addresses variations on the theme of the tragic ramifications of greed and vanity, be it Toraja aristocratic vanity or the greed of corrupt politicians in Jakarta. One carved painting (Figure 7) features an image of a formidable Toraja structure, known as an *ampang bilik*, superimposed on a large wooden bowl (*dulang*) traditionally used by Torajas in leadership positions (and therefore a symbol of one who plays a political role). The *ampang bilik*, as the artist reminded me, is a carved, ladderlike structure found inside certain prestigious *tongkonans* that have celebrated the *bua'* feast; it is a symbol of aristocratic prestige. Slithering down this structure is a large, voracious snake, which, he noted, was not merely an old *tongkonan* motif but, in this instance, the biblical symbol of Satan. The underlying message here, he explained, is a critique of people who use their political offices to garner prestige and feed their personal ambitions instead of fulfilling their responsibilities to the masses. Two gluttonous pigs with enormous bellies embellish one of the lower struts of the *ampang bilik*, further underscoring the imagery of greed.

At the base of the carved painting is a troughlike rice huller and two water buffalo locked in combat. Noting that the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) is symbolized by the steer's head, he told me that he had substituted water buffalo for PDI steers, since there are no steers in Tana Toraja. This portion of the painting represented factions in the underdog PDI party battling one another for the few grains of rice in the rice pounder. At the time this painting was created, the Indonesian government (that is, the GOLKAR party) had intervened in the leadership of the PDI, removing the tremendously popular PDI leader Megawati Sukarnoputri from office and replacing her with their own hand-selected PDI leader. This action prompted riots in Jakarta in late June of 1996 and spurred many PDI loyalists to abstain from the 1997 presidential election. Moreover, it caused rifts within the party, greatly weakening its ability to challenge GOLKAR. As the artist summarized, the two PDI water buffalo shown in the painting are being played off against each other while greedy profiteers take the spoils. Also at the base of the carved painting, just above the battling PDI water buffalo, is the sunburst motif (*pa' barre allo*) that normally appears at the apex of *tongkonan* facades. The carver explained that this positioning was deliberate, "for we, the little people, never see the brightness of day, as everything is orchestrated by the greedy ones at the top [where the sun should be]. It is as if the sun has been shackled ... and the future looks increasingly dark."

After completing his explication of this carved painting, my informant thoughtfully observed,

I am a Toraja without a lane for protest, because I am just a villager. Others have lanes for their protest. For example, Rendra [a famed Indonesian writer], when he screams about something in his poetry, people hear him. But there is no way I'll get to Jakarta, I am obliged to remain local [in Tana Toraja]. But now my protests are painted and my soul is satisfied. I will laugh if my painting is purchased by the people I am critiquing. If they only want to pay 20,000 rupia [roughly \$8 in early 1997] for it, or even if they ask for it for free, I'd give it to them, because my protest would have arrived at its destination.

This man's conception of Toraja art as an avenue for stealthily voicing political dissent remained vividly in my memory. In reframing carved tongkonan motifs and jostling "traditional" design orderings, he was clearly and self-consciously shaping a "secret weapon" (his term) against groups perceived as exploiting Toraja and other Indonesian villagers. Listening to him explaining his work, I was captivated not only by his attempts at resistance but also by his perceptions of the potential power of the artistic voice. I was also struck by the fact that it was Torajas' touristic popularity that made it possible for him to imagine his artistic protest hitting its target. Having a workshop in a region frequently toured by Jakartan political officials and cabinet ministers lends his art a certain degree of visibility. It is entirely possible that this artist's carved painting could one day capture the fancy of an unsuspecting Jakarta-based politician. Although this carver recognizes that he is disadvantaged by not working in Jakarta, his identity as a Toraja residing in a tourist destination gives him and his creations a certain degree of power and prominence, particularly in comparison to the situation of other Indonesians in more remote corners of the archipelago. As a "simple villager" he can hope to resist and challenge the established political order through his creations precisely because tourism has lent his group a certain degree of preeminence.

#### **FROM RAIDED TO RAIDER: TONGKONANS AND CARVINGS IN UJUNG PANDANG**

While this carver self-consciously used his carved paintings to intimate a critique of those in power and to reframe political hierarchies, sometimes, even without deliberate strategizing, Toraja art can be the catalyst for a subtle renegotiation of established hierarchies. In recent years, Toraja carvings appear to be playing such a role with regards to ethnic relations in the province of South Sulawesi. In this section I discuss the role of Toraja tongkonan carvings in recrafting ethnic relations.

As I have already noted, highland Torajas and the Islamicized lowland groups (Bugis and Makassarese) have a lengthy history of tense relations. During my first two years of fieldwork in the 1980s, Toraja villagers' comments about the Bugis-Makassarese port city of Ujung Pandang often reflected this ambivalence. Each time I prepared to leave the highlands to renew research permits in Ujung Pandang, Toraja friends cautioned me to be wary of the tempestuous Bugis, warning that Bugis pedicab drivers carried knives and would greedily stab visitors for pocket change. Moreover, Toraja accounts of their own visits to the city often conveyed their sense of vulnerability: some spoke of fears that Bugis and Makassarese merchants would attempt to cheat them, while others commented more generally on the alienation they experienced as country villagers in a big, bustling city dominated by rival ethnic groups.

In the early 1980s, tourism developers began to hail Ujung Pandang as the "Gateway to Tana Toraja." Shortly thereafter the luxurious Golden Makassar Hotel was constructed overlooking the sea on one of Ujung Pandang's most popular pedestrian avenues.

Architecturally, the most prominent end of the hotel was designed to resemble a grand pair of carved Toraja tongkonans of three times the usual size (Figure 8). In the same year, a new bank building with a row of large tongkonan patterns on its facade was erected on a busy downtown Ujung Pandang street. And when the time came to give the Ujung Pandang airport a facelift in the late 1980s, it too was lavishly adorned with Toraja carved motifs. Moreover, a 10-foot-tall, 3-dimensional tongkonan was implanted on the main airport landing strip, so that tourists arriving from Bali and Java would know that they were on the trail to Toraja. By the early 1990s, tongkonan carvings had also crept into many Ujung Pandang government offices, businesses, restaurants, and hotels.

The Torajaization of this Bugis-Makassarese port city has not gone unnoticed by Torajas. By 1989, a number of Torajas were beginning to express changing views of the city. On my prior trips to Toraja, few of my villager friends were interested in accompanying me to Ujung Pandang: As one friend once told me, "It's not just that it is hot and dusty there, but that your head aches from always being on your guard." On my 1989 visit, however, my Toraja village friends expressed a new desire to travel with me to Ujung Pandang. Increasingly, carvers I knew from the village had been finding themselves "called" to Ujung Pandang to carve tongkonan motifs on new public buildings and hotels. In addition, Toraja migrants residing in Ujung Pandang were now erecting carved rice barns in front of their urban homes. While some migrant Torajas had long ago installed such tributes to their homeland, in the late 1980s and 1990s there was a great surge in the number of Ujung Pandang homes embellished with carved Toraja structures. The sprinkling of Toraja artistic motifs in Ujung Pandang appeared to be symbolically transforming what was once dangerous alien territory into something akin to a Toraja outpost. In a sense, the Toraja artistic motifs in Ujung Pandang are renegotiating the traditional relationship between Bugis and Torajas: that of raider and prey. In a new twist, it is now the Bugis homeland that is being invaded by the Toraja artistic army.

While I do not wish to propagate the false impression that every street post in Ujung Pandang is now embellished with Toraja motifs, I do believe that the presence of Toraja art in this Bugis-Makassarese city is encouraging changes in ethnic sensibilities. Some Torajas consciously react to the growing presence of their motifs in the city as a minor ethnic triumph, symbolizing a shift in the balance of power among South Sulawesi ethnic groups for which they had long hoped. As one Toraja friend triumphantly declared when we drove past a newly erected Toraja-style building in Ujung Pandang: "They can ignore us no longer." Toraja carvers I know boast about the carvings they made for various Ujung Pandang offices and hotels, proudly proclaiming that these are the first things tourists and dignitaries see when they come to Sulawesi. And my Toraja friends chuckled with delight upon learning that a newly arrived Western tourist had asked me if Ujung Pandang was part of Torajaland.

Although I have not systematically interviewed Bugis and Makassarese concerning their reactions to the outcroppings of Toraja architecture in their city, there is some evidence that these motifs are prompting vague ethnic malaise. For instance, when I was meeting with Bugis and Makassarese friends at an Ujung Pandang hotel in 1989, one Bugis friend studied the Toraja motifs decorating the lobby and commented that he could not understand why there were no hotels built in the style of Bugis palaces. A few Bugis have also expressed their misgivings about the remodeled Ujung Pandang airport, complaining that it now looks more like Toraja than the airport of a major Bugis-

Makassarese city. Significantly, by 1995 the Ujung Pandang airport had been remodeled once again, this time to resemble a grand Bugis or Makassarese platform house. With this remodeling, the remaining Toraja motifs have been overshadowed by Bugis-Makassarese themes. In these shifts we can see the waging of an architectural battle for symbolic preeminence.

#### **THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER TORAJA ARTISTIC IMAGES: WEAPONS OF THE WEAK OR WEAK WEAPONS?**

Not every Toraja takes such delight in the growing presence of Toraja motifs in Ujung Pandang. One Toraja woman who makes her living selling carvings in her natal highland village expressed her concern that the more of "Toraja" tourists can see in Ujung Pandang, the weaker the incentive they will have to travel the eight hours to the highlands to spend their money. "Those Bugis," she lamented, "the next thing you know, they'll be making Toraja carvings and dancing our traditional dances for the tourists." In fact, her predictions were not so far off the mark: in the 1980s, Ujung Pandang tourist shops added a new line of Bugis-made wall plaques decorated with tongkonans.(FN23) In addition, Bugis silversmiths began making fine silver filigree miniature tongkonans and tongkonan necklaces. Not only are these necklaces sold in Ujung Pandang shops, they are also being marketed in tourist shops in Tana Toraja. So, ironically, the Bugis artistic army, masked in Toraja garb, is now invading Tana Toraja regency once again. For many Toraja carvers, however, the most distressing incident occurred in 1995, when a Chinese Ujung Pandanger reportedly obtained a preliminary patent on Toraja carving patterns. As one Toraja carver told me with indignation, "He wanted us to pay him royalties each time we carved our own carvings!" Outraged Torajas rallied, circulated a petition, and delivered it to the Ujung Pandang judge who had granted the preliminary patent. According to the Toraja carvers with whom I spoke, the man ended up being obliged to withdraw his patent request and apologize.

Incidents such as this reveal an ironic dimension of the role of art in renegotiating hierarchical relations. In achieving touristic preeminence, Toraja art has become increasingly vulnerable to appropriation and manipulation by other groups. Prompted by touristic interest in Toraja, not only are Chinese, Bugis, and Makassarese entrepreneurs brandishing Toraja carving imagery for their own aims, but so is the Indonesian government. This pattern of "state cannibalism" is not unique to Indonesia. Just as images of a majestic Aztec past are appropriated by the Mexican government to advance its own legitimation project, Toraja carvings and tongkonans are drawn upon by the Indonesian government, in part to demonstrate that its authority is rooted in a multiplicity of ancient traditions. Thus, for the 1990 Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade, the Indonesian government entered a rose-embedded float depicting a carved Toraja funeral bier embellished with Toraja motifs.(FN24) Moreover, the Indonesian government issued tongkonan-embellished postage stamps and, in 1980, the 5,000-rupia currency note began to feature three majestically carved tongkonans (Figure 9).(FN25) Just as they reveled in their international Rose Bowl fame, the association of money and power was not lost on Torajas. While they still felt they ranked lower than the Javanese in the Indonesian hierarchy of ethnic groups, for some Torajas the appearance of their carvings on national currency represented a newly achieved modicum of ethnic legitimacy. Perhaps somewhat ironically, the Indonesian appropriation of Toraja ethnic symbols also serves to integrate them still further into the nation.

One should note that while Torajas may view the presence of their carvings on Indonesian currency as a tribute to their rich heritage, other Indonesians have different interpretations. In 1983, when I first arrived in Java and expressed my delight at discovering tongkonans on an Indonesian bill, my Javanese companion commented, "Oh yeah, that's there because it's a tourist area." This was said in much the same unreflective fashion that one might expect from an American dismissing the treasury building appearing on a five-dollar bill. Because of the ambiguous quality of material culture, these carved ethnic symbols may be simultaneously potent for some Torajas and neutral for other Indonesian ethnic groups. That is, because of their multivalent quality, the arts are well positioned as a means by which people negotiate identities and relationships. By their very ability to maintain ambiguity, the arts may surreptitiously effect changes in intergroup perceptions. As I have attempted to demonstrate, in South Sulawesi the arts, in tandem with tourism, provide an arena for subtly shifting historical perceptions of ethnic hegemony and local hierarchy.

I have argued here that Toraja art is more than a passive ethnic marker. Carved Toraja embellishments are sites for the assertion, articulation, and negotiation of a variety of identities and relationships, among them noble/commoner, Toraja/Bugis/Makassarese, colonialist/villager, and GOLKAR politician/Indonesian villager. When viewed in this light, the miniature tongkonan dangling on the Toraja bus running between the Bugis capital and the Toraja highlands becomes more than a decoration: it becomes a claim to ethnic group power. Still, it should be stressed that Toraja symbolic dominance does not necessarily come hand-in-hand with political dominance. The miniature carved tongkonan does, however, bring to the fore and make visible Torajas' question: "Why don't we have more political power?" Returning to Scott's (1985) terminology, we can treat Toraja art as a "weapon of the weak." Because of art's capacity for embodying multiple messages, the very efflorescence of Toraja carvings may stealthily challenge Torajas' traditional position as underdogs. But the weapons of the weak are sometimes weak weapons. As we have seen, the multivalent quality of artistic emblems of identity that lends them their strength also makes them vulnerable to appropriation by other groups for other purposes. On some level, the potentially controversial political messages embodied in Toraja arts become domesticated by their inclusion in the national repertoire of "Indonesian" icons.

ADDED MATERIAL

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Figure 1. Carved tongkonan in Tana Toraja Regency, Indonesia.

Figure 2. Detail on eaves of a rice barn: Dutch woman, soldier, and Toraja child being beaten by the soldier.

Figure 3. Detail on eaves of rice barn: The child's flight to the arms of his mother.

Figure 4. Detail on the eaves of a rice barn: Darul Islam troops shooting at a fleeing Toraja through scattering livestock.

Figure 5. Tongkonan pub.

Figure 6. Bamboo archways featuring painted tongkonans such as this were erected in front of homes in parts of Tana Toraja Regency in the late 1980s. This was part of a government-sponsored PKK competition.

Figure 7. New-genre carved painting that draws on tongkonan motifs to make encrypted political statements.

Figure 8. Tongkonans are incorporated into the architecture of the Golden Makassar Hotel in Ujung Pandang.

Figure 9. 5,000-rupia note featuring a row of carved Toraja tongkonans.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. My use of the term icon is best clarified by Michael Silverstein's definition: "Icons are those signs where the perceivable properties of the sign vehicle itself have isomorphism to (up to identity with) those of the entity signaled. That is, the entities are 'likenesses' in some sense (Silverstein 1976:27; see also Houser and Kloesel 1992:226).

2. In spotlighting architecturally based motifs, I wish to acknowledge yet differentiate my project from the work emerging in the impressive new literature on houses and house societies in Southeast Asia (See Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Waterson 1990). These pioneering works have, for the most part, focused on critically exploring the relevance of Lévi-Strauss's (1979, 1987) notion of "house societies" for a variety of Austronesian and other cultures. In other cases, they have sensitively chronicled how autochthonous Southeast Asian architecture is entwined with local worldviews, ritual, and kinship, exploring how ancient house traditions are carried out in new mediums in the contemporary context.

3. In 1993, over 84 percent of Torajas identified themselves as Christians (Kantor Statistik and BAPPEDA 1993). Only about 12.7 percent of the Sa'dan Toraja continue to practice the traditional "Ways of the Ancestors" (Aluk to Dolo), which involve the veneration of spirits, gods, and ancestors.

4. Although census figures do not include breakdowns for ethnic groups, the Bugis population in South Sulawesi is currently estimated at 3,310,000. Not all Bugis reside on

Sulawesi: Bugis have a long seafaring tradition and are spread throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

5. For more on this rebellion, consult Harvey 1974, 1977.

6. Government tourism officials calculated these figures by comparing the number of tourist ticket sales at the most popular tourist sites with occupancy rates and guest logs at local hotels, inns, and home stays (Rombelayuk, personal communication, August 15, 1995).

7. According to a 1985 Toraja Church calculation, 230,000 Toraja lived outside the homeland of Tana Toraja.

8. In 1984 and 1985 when I surveyed elementary, junior high, and high school students concerning their knowledge of the different carved motifs, few knew the names of more than one or two motifs. Several of the teachers who were present while I conducted these surveys subsequently chided their students for their lack of knowledge, telling them that they should all go back to their grandparents' villages on the weekends and learn about their "carving heritage" or they would be put to shame by the anthropologists and tourists who knew more than they did. Ten years later, on my 1995 trip to the Toraja highlands, I learned that schools were now incorporating lessons on the most celebrated carved motifs into their curricula. Many of the students and teachers interviewed reported that such lessons were important, given the touristic context in which they now lived. As one student observed, "Before I had lessons about the carvings, I'd always feel stupid that I couldn't answer tourists when they asked me questions about the carvings. Now I can tell them what I know."

9. In precolonial times, there were essentially three social strata in the Sa'dan Toraja highlands: the aristocracy, commoners, and slaves. Status was determined by birth, although financial success or failure allowed some individuals to cross the barriers of rank. Slavery is now illegal in Indonesia and the topic of rank is particularly sensitive. Nevertheless, a number of older aristocrats remain committed to rank identities and strive to shore up these eroding hierarchies. Several adolescent acquaintances from elite Toraja families recounted how their parents had angrily thwarted their budding romances with lower-ranking teenagers, although some of their elite classmates from more "modern" families had been allowed to date commoners. For more details on rank in contemporary Tana Toraja, see Adams 1997b and Volkman 1985.

10. For the Toraja, heavy webs of kinship are considered essential to being human. One who neglects kinship obligations is thought to be less than human. Moreover, to be without kin, particularly children, is considered tragic (see Hollan and Wellenkamp 1996).

11. Darul Islam roughly translates as "Abode of Islam," from the Arabic dar al-Islam.

12. Results of my 1985 two-village survey in the Kesu area indicated that aristocrats tend to count membership in more tongkonans than do Torajas of lower rank. Waterson makes similar observations for the Rembon area of Tana Toraja where she based her research. As she surmises,

Whereas the aristocracy are able to trace back their genealogies many generations, maintaining links with distant houses of origin through participation in ceremonies, ordinary people were able to name at most only their great-grandparents, and had not the means to indulge in an elaborate ceremonial life. [1981:31]

13. Not only does the tongkonan reflect one's position in society, but it is the locus of ritual action in Tana Toraja. This aspect of the tongkonan's function is reflected in its

etymology. The word tongkonan derives from the verb tongkon, "to sit," especially "to sit in a ritual context" (cf. Tammu and van der Veen 1972). A tongkonan, then, is both the seat of ritual activity and a mark of one's seat in society. A further meaning of the verb ma'tongkon is "to attend a funeral," indicating both the importance of the tongkonan as the ritual locale and the critical link tongkonan rites provide with one's deceased ancestry and, by extension, with the past. For example, the traditional tongkonan consecration ritual (Passomba Tedong [see van der Veen 1965]) begins with a lengthy chant invoking the spirits of the tongkonan's founding ancestors. Accompanying this is a detailed account of the tongkonan's history. Embodied in tongkonan rites, then, is the ramage's shared history, which can be identified and drawn upon in the elaboration of contemporary identities.

14. Although certain earlier writers such as Kadang (1960) created the impression that the Toraja repertoire of tongkonan motifs is finite and unchanging, as these new motifs illustrate there is in fact some degree of flexibility about what may be incorporated into the system.

15. Possibly Torajas replaced the rooster and sunburst patterns for fear that these would be construed as pagan elements, given that, of all the prominently situated motifs, they are the least geometrical.

16. When the Indonesian government reorganized Indonesian political parties in 1973, the PDI replaced PARKINDO and several other such parties.

17. Keane's comment meshes with Rita Kipp's observation that the Indonesian cultural policy of encouraging ethnic pride serves to mask the imbalances of wealth and power in Indonesia, imbalances that pose a threat to national integration (Kipp 1993).

18. Interestingly, new-genre tongkonans are becoming increasingly common in Tana Toraja Regency, with modern cinder block and glass first stories and "traditional" second stories. When reproached by tourism officials, the Toraja owners of these modern tongkonans retored, "These tongkonans are just as authentic as the old ones--they show what it is to be Toraja: both modern and true to our traditions."

19. It is noteworthy that although Torajas, Javanese, and foreign tourists purchase Toraja carvings as gifts, relatively few Bugis buy Toraja arts. When I lived in a much-visited Toraja village, local souvenir sellers often expressed disappointment to learn that arriving tourist vans carried Bugis tourists, for it meant that sales would be minimal. Although Bugis students buy trinkets to bring home to their friends (in the Indonesian tradition of presenting friends with travel mementos, known as *oleh-oleh*), according to Toraja vendors I knew Bugis adults rarely make large purchases. Toraja carvings are not particularly popular with this group. I once ignorantly presented some Bugis friends with a gift bundle of carved Toraja wall plaques. Despite their polite responses, it was clear that my presents were not a success. I later learned that they considered the carvings "unrefined" (*kasar*). Given Javanese and Sumatran interest in the carvings, the Bugis's relative lack of interest in Toraja art merits further exploration. I suspect that on some subconscious level the general Bugis aesthetic distaste for things Toraja is a response to their history of ethnic rivalry with the Torajas. This history of uneasy relations with Torajas makes them unlikely to hang icons of Toraja identity in their homes. For the Javanese, on the other hand, the carvings are not tinged with ethnic rivalries. As more distant neighbors, they are perhaps freer to be intrigued by these Toraja carvings.

20. My interviews with Toraja elementary schoolchildren further illustrate how deeply

these notions have penetrated. When I asked them to "draw Toraja" they produced colorful sketches of tongkonans and mountainous scenery framed with tongkonan motifs.

21. For more detailed discussions of this period see Crystal 1970 or Volkman 1985.

22. This was at a point in Indonesian history when overt verbal critiques were still extremely risky.

23. In addition, in the summer of 1991 a Miniature South Sulawesi Park opened on the outskirts of Ujung Pandang, replete with carved tongkonans and rice barns. On the occasion of the park's opening, the Governor of South Sulawesi declared that "it wouldn't be the least bit astonishing if Miniature Sulawesi Park one day becomes the most interesting tourist object in all of eastern Indonesia" (Pedoman Rakyat 1991:10). For many Torajas this appeared to be yet another disturbing lowlander attempt to profit from appropriated material images of Toraja identity. For a more detailed discussion of the ethnic politics of this park, see Adams 1997a.

24. This prizewinning entry was a favorite topic of discussion in Tana Toraja Regency. Eventually a cement statue of the float was erected in the main square of Makale (the capital of Tana Toraja Regency). On my 1997 visit, Toraja friends proudly took me on a detour so that I could see the statue of the "winning Toraja float." For a fuller analysis of Toraja monumental displays and the articulation of local and national identities, see Adams 1997c.

25. Recently the tongkonan image has been replaced with images of Danau Kelimutu (a three-colored set of lakes on Flores) and the Rotinese traditional musical instrument known as the sasando.

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