

THE ECOSPIRITUALITY OF MAPPANGISO: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF BUGIS HEALING TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the spiritual relationship between humans and nature in Mappangiso healing practices in Soppeng Regency. The subjects of the study were Bugis sanro who were involved in healing rituals. With a qualitative approach and Starhawk's spiritual ecology theory, it was found that Mappangiso integrates natural elements and mantras as healing media. This tradition reflects ecospiritual awareness and local wisdom in maintaining ecological balance and health.

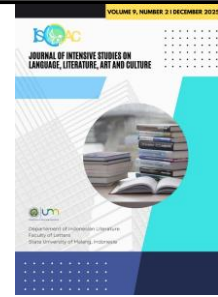
INTRODUCTION

Our ancestors, especially the Bugis people, have inherited rich traditions and beliefs, imbued with spiritual values and local wisdom. Although most have been eroded by the current of modernization, many still survive and are reflected in people's practices to this day. One of these legacies is the traditional Mappangiso medicine, a form of healing rooted in mystical beliefs and spiritual relations between humans and nature. For the younger generation, practices such as Mappangiso may sound foreign, even considered irrational in the eyes of modern science. However, for elders and the community who have experienced or witnessed this ritual firsthand, Mappangiso is not just a tradition but an important part

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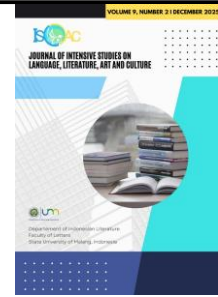


of the healing system and a means of self-protection against non-physical disturbances, such as spirits. Community testimonies, including the author's personal experience, show that this ritual can restore the condition of someone experiencing symptoms of cueq-cuereng or ampa-ampareng, namely conditions believed to be caused by disturbances from invisible creatures.

Culturally, Mappangiso originated from the Bugis people's belief that disease is not only caused by biological factors but also by disturbances from spirits or spiritual imbalances within a person. Therefore, healing is not enough with just physical medicine; it must also involve a healing ritual that involves communication with the supernatural world. This ritual is usually performed by an expert who has knowledge of the Mappangiso mantra from his ancestors (hereditary inheritance) as well as the procedures for communicating with spiritual entities. This makes Mappangiso an intangible cultural heritage rich in local values and the cosmological understanding of the Bugis people.

In this tradition, nature, including elements such as water, earth, plants, and fire, is seen as a living entity with spirits and the power to heal. This aligns with the spiritual ecological view, which holds that nature is an integral part of human life and possesses spiritual agency. Starhawk (2004), in his spiritual ecological theory, emphasizes that nature is not a passive object but an entity with consciousness and spirit that can interact with humans. In this case, Mappangiso reflects the sacred relationship between humans and nature, where healing is carried out not only with natural materials but also through spiritual communication, rituals, and mantras.

It is important to examine more deeply how Mappangiso practices can reflect local understandings of the relationship between humans and nature. The question is how this traditional medicine integrates ecological and spiritual elements into its healing practices. This question is crucial, given that, amid the rise of modern medical practices, many traditional medicines are increasingly marginalized and considered irrational. In fact, locally based medicine such as Mappangiso holds important values related to the human-nature relationship, offering new insights into health and environmental conservation.

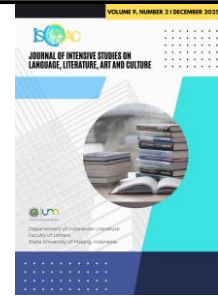


Therefore, this study aims to identify the natural elements in the lyrics and structure of the mantra and to understand the ecological meaning contained therein by using Starhawk's spiritual ecology theory to analyze the healing process in this tradition.

In ecocritical studies, practices such as Mappangiso are often seen as a form of ecological awareness intertwined with local spirituality. However, in previous studies, the relationship between traditional medicine and ecological spirituality has not been discussed in depth, especially through an ecological spiritual approach that prioritizes the connection between humans and nature as a living entity. Existing studies, such as those by Nasrullah (2021), show that in traditional Bugis medicine, mantras serve not only as a medium for physical healing but also as a means of communicating with the supernatural world and the universe. However, not many have discussed the ecological significance of the natural elements used in Mappangiso medicine.

This study was conducted to address a gap in ecocritical scholarship, particularly regarding the integration of spiritual dimensions into local cultural practices. By combining Starhawk's spiritual ecology theory, this study analyzes the lyrics of the Mappangiso mantra as an expression of the ecological and spiritual relationship between humans and nature in the Bugis tradition. With this approach, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of ecocritical studies, particularly in understanding local ways of building sacred relationships with nature. The main contribution of this study is to introduce a spiritual ecocritical approach as an interpretive lens to local cultural texts and practices that contain traditional healing values. In addition, this study enriches our understanding of the Bugis people's view of nature as a spiritual entity with active agency in the healing process.

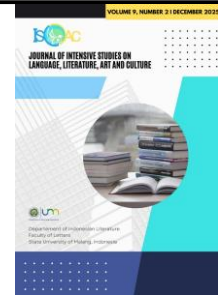
Spiritual ecocriticism is a branch of ecocriticism that highlights the sacred relationship between humans and nature. Unlike ecocriticism, which focuses more on ecological problems and environmental damage, spiritual ecocriticism sees nature as a living subject with spiritual power that can interact with humans. Starhawk (2004), a major figure in spiritual ecology theory, states that the earth is not only a place for humans



to live but also a living creature with consciousness and spirit. In Starhawk's view, environmental damage occurs when humans spiritually separate from nature, and ecological healing must involve this reconnection. Therefore, nature is not only seen as a natural resource to be exploited, but also as an entity to be understood and respected in a spiritual context. This concept is highly relevant to the practice of traditional Mappangiso medicine, where nature is considered a living entity with the power to heal.

In historical development, traditional medicine such as Mappangiso in Soppeng Regency is a synthesis of local spirituality and ecological knowledge. Abdullah (2020) noted that the Bugis people, like many other cultures, have ways of interacting with nature through rituals and spells believed to possess supernatural powers. This traditional medicine uses natural elements such as plants, water, and soil, which are believed to have healing properties. Although this practice has become part of everyday life, documentation and research on its ecological and spiritual influences remain very limited.

Previous studies, such as those by Nasrullah (2021), have shown that in traditional Bugis medicine, mantras not only influence the physical world but also connect individuals to the spiritual world. Similar research by Arsana et al. (2020) showed that the traditional healing system is carried out holistically, uniting physical, psychological, and spiritual elements in the healing process. Disease is seen not just as a biological disorder, but as an imbalance between *shtula sarira* (body), *suksma sarira* (soul), and *antahkarana sarira* (spiritual consciousness). To restore this balance, treatment involves mantras, herbal concoctions, and rituals to summon supernatural powers. Then, research by Aminah and Manda (2023) directly examined the practice of Mappangiso in Cilellang Village. They found that people's belief in this treatment is not only based on its effectiveness in healing, but also on the cultural and spiritual values contained in its practice. This aligns with the findings of Rizma Aulia Umsyani et al. (2021), who state that mantras in Bugis society serve an ecological function closely related to environmental ethics, including the principles of responsibility for nature, compassion for plants, and respect for the life cycles of living things. These four studies show that many traditional



cultures view nature as an integral part of the healing process. However, not many have connected this to spiritual ecology theory, which positions nature as a living subject, a major gap in the existing literature.

Therefore, the main focus of this study is to identify the natural elements contained in the lyrics and structure of the mantra and to understand the ecological meaning contained therein by using Starhawk's spiritual ecology theory framework.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to deeply understand the lyrics of the Mappangiso mantra, a form of traditional healing practiced by the Bugis people in Soppeng Regency. This method was chosen because it is well-suited to exploring the meanings, experiences, and beliefs associated with mystical traditions in healing disease. Qualitative research also allows researchers to explore the cultural values and spiritual relationships between humans and nature embedded in the Mappangiso practice (Moleong, 2018).

In this study, information was collected through interviews with sanro (traditional figures or people who are considered to have special abilities in traditional healing, especially in Bugis society) who were directly involved in the ritual. The interviews were conducted by expert assistants specifically assigned by the researcher. These assistants received a list of questions from the researcher and delivered them directly to the sources in the field.

Data were collected in the form of answers or stories from informants about the Mappangiso process, who does it, how it works, and their views on the relationship between humans and nature in the context of healing. Interviews were conducted directly at the informant's residence or place of practice, and most used local languages to make communication smoother.

After the data were collected, the researcher read and recorded all the information, then organized it into key themes related to the meaning of Mappangiso's lyrics. This



technique is known as thematic analysis, which is grouping information based on similarities in content or meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this method, researchers can find general patterns that explain how people interpret the healing process.

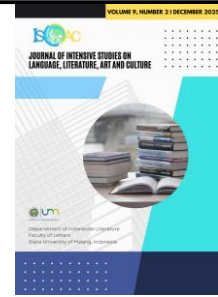
This study is expected to provide a more complete picture of how the Bugis community in Soppeng continues to maintain a spiritual relationship with nature through healing traditions passed down from generation to generation. Using a qualitative approach, this study not only records facts but also highlights the cultural values and beliefs that shape society.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aims to reveal the meaning and structure of the Mappangiso practice, a traditional healing practice of the Bugis people in Soppeng Regency, integrating ritual procedures, natural elements, and spiritual beliefs. Based on interviews with informants who are direct heirs to this tradition, particularly a sanro named Muannase (commonly called Aunt Anna), the findings show that Mappangiso is not merely an alternative healing method but a structured cultural practice embedded in the Bugis cosmological system. The interview results indicate that Mappangiso is performed only under specific conditions, particularly when individuals experience symptoms locally referred to as *cueq-cuereng* or *ampa-ampareng*, characterized by severe dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. These symptoms are culturally understood as resulting from disturbances by spirits, especially those associated with unnatural death. The identification of the illness is conducted by a ritual practitioner who inherits ancestral knowledge, after which the preparation of ritual media begins.

The ritual employs natural elements readily available in the surrounding environment, including clean water, seven grains of rice, three cayenne peppers, white paper, matches, an iron basin (*katoang bess*), and *fakkola*, a traditional rice-measuring



tool. The findings show that no artificial or excessive materials are used; instead, the ritual relies on simple elements drawn directly from nature.

One of the central ritual processes involves burning paper and placing it on a plate of water. If the water is observed to diminish rapidly or be “absorbed,” practitioners interpret this as confirmation of spiritual disturbance. Water, in this context, functions as a medium for detection and as a container for the disturbance. Following this process, mantras and prayers are recited in accordance with the patient’s condition.

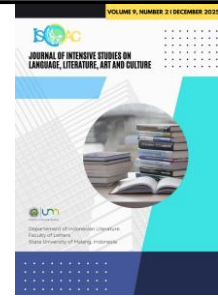
The findings further reveal that rice functions as a symbol of life and purity, with the use of seven grains reflecting the spiritual significance of odd numbers in Bugis belief. Cayenne peppers are used for their perceived ability to repel spiritual disturbances, while the iron basin is believed to serve as an energy container. Fire is used to burn ritual media and is believed to eliminate negative energy.

Healing may be conducted across distance, as the informant reported performing a ritual in Soppeng for a patient in Parepare. In such cases, the water used in the ritual reportedly disappeared entirely, coinciding with the patient’s recovery. The ritual typically lasts 15 to 30 minutes, and physical reactions, such as vomiting, are commonly interpreted as signs of successful healing. The practice does not involve a fixed fee and is performed based on mutual assistance. Practitioners consistently state that healing power does not originate from themselves but occurs only with divine permission. Overall, the findings show that Mappangiso is a communal healing system involving the patient, the practitioner, and the natural environment in an integrated ritual process.

Discussion

Ritual Structure and Natural Elements in Mappangiso Practice

The practice of Mappangiso in Soppeng Regency is a form of traditional medicine performed according to a unique, structured procedure. Based on the results of an interview with a source named Muannase or familiarly called Tante Anna who is a sanro and direct heir to this tradition, it is known that Mappangiso is not carried out at any time



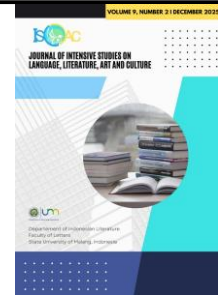
or condition, but when someone shows certain symptoms which in Bugis society are called *cueq-cuereng*, a condition in which someone experiences severe dizziness accompanied by nausea and vomiting, which in the local belief system is associated with disturbances from spirits or the spirits of people who died unnaturally.

The initial step of this ritual is the ritual practitioner's identification of the disease, usually a woman who has inherited knowledge from her ancestors. After it is believed that the patient is experiencing a non-physical disorder, various ritual media are prepared. The media used consist of clean water, seven grains of rice, three cayenne peppers, a piece of white paper, matches, an iron basin (*katoang bess*), and *fakkola* (a traditional rice measuring tool). There are no excessive or artificial ingredients; all are simple and come from the surrounding nature.

One interesting process is how paper is burned and placed on water in a plate. If the fire produces smoke that is quickly absorbed or the water in the plate quickly “runs out, then it is believed that a disturbance by spirits is indeed occurring. This action is believed to be a spiritual reaction by the disturbing entity to the ritual energy summoned through natural media. In this case, water does not only function as a liquid but also as a spiritual indicator of the “presence” of spirits and as a means of healing.

After the successful “water suction” process, the ritual continues with the recitation of mantras and prayers tailored to the patient’s condition. Uniquely, each stage of this ritual focuses on energy communication among humans, ritual media, and the universe. In this practice, media such as water and chilies are not merely aids but part of a relational system with spiritual beings. This is where Starhawk’s ecological spiritual approach becomes particularly relevant, as the Mappangiso ritual embodies the principle that nature is a conscious, sacred living being.

Rice, in this case, is not only considered a staple food but a symbol of life and purity. The seven grains of rice used show that odd numbers have their own spiritual meaning, often associated with the balance between the supernatural and nature. Chili is used not for its direct medical properties, but because it is believed to ward off evil spirits due to its



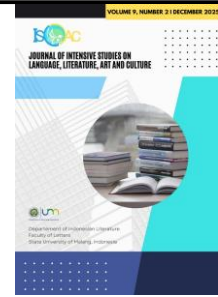
hot, pungent nature. This is also a form of understanding the natural properties of food as a manifestation of spiritual energy.

Iron basins or katoang besi function as energy containers. In the spiritual cosmology of the Bugis people, metal is believed to be able to accommodate certain energies and become a link between the human and spirit worlds. Even the water used in the basin is believed to be able to absorb the "contents" of the patient, whether spiritual illness or external evil influences. Therefore, the success of treatment is measured by the reaction of water and other ritual media to the patient's body, rather than solely by medical observation.

In the ritual performed by Aunt Anna, it is mentioned that the water on the plate can disappear in less than a minute, even when performed from a distance. This shows that spiritual healing in this tradition is not limited to physical space. In this condition, Aunt Anna told a case that she had just done the day before this interview process. She said she had just performed the healing ritual on her grandson in Parepare, while she herself had performed it from Soppeng. As a result, the grandson was cured, and the water on the plate disappeared completely. This phenomenon is proof of people's belief in the presence of spiritual energy across space.

The next step is to prepare a substitute medium in the form of water and chili, which is then stirred and applied to the patient's body, or sometimes drunk in certain doses. This is a stage of purification and re-protection, to ensure that the disturbing creature does not return. All of these stages are carried out with full concentration, without joking, and in a quiet and solemn atmosphere. Even when this ritual is performed on children, the sacred atmosphere is maintained.

It is important to note that Mappangiso practitioners never claim that the healing power comes from themselves. In an interview, Aunt Anna mentioned that she was only a "mediator" and all results depended on God's permission. This shows that in local beliefs, even spiritual processes are inseparable from religious values that acknowledge the existence of a higher divine power. In terms of spiritual ecocriticism, this is evidence that



people not only respect nature but also place it in a belief system that is integral to transcendent spiritual values.

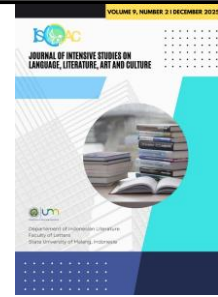
There is also the use of fire, symbolically burning and “destroy” negative energy. In the ritual, fire is used to burn paper inscribed with a mantra. The smoke from the burning is considered a channel of messages to the supernatural world, a form of non-verbal communication that allows nature and spirits to hear human intentions. In Starhawk’s view (2004), this is a form of returning energy to the earth and sky as part of the spiritual cycle.

In terms of duration, this process is not long, only about 15 to 30 minutes. However, the effects can be felt immediately by the patient. In some cases, after the ritual is complete, the patient immediately vomits and feels his body is lighter. The source (Aunt Anna) explained that the vomiting was not only due to a physical reaction but also because evil energy or spiritual influence emerged from the patient's body through the medium of water, chili, and prayers recited. Physical and spiritual reactions are united in one holistic healing process.

This ritual can be repeated if it is not successful on the first try. However, usually once is enough if the energy of intention, the materials used, and the patient's belief are all in harmony. In its implementation, there is no specified fee. This practice is carried out with the intention of mutual assistance and devotion, although the community sometimes gives "pocket money" voluntarily as a form of gratitude.

Mappangiso practice reflects a healing system that is not individualistic, but communal. The patient, the ritual practitioner, and the surrounding environment are all involved in a social and spiritual process. The relationship between humans and nature is not exploitative, but cooperative. Nature is not exploited unilaterally, but is made a partner in the healing process. This is in accordance with the core of Starhawk's theory, that the spiritual relationship between humans and nature must be reciprocal and rooted in respect.

From the whole process, it can be concluded that the structure of the Mappangiso



ritual is not only a healing act, but also a spiritual narrative that reflects the ecological values of the Bugis people. The natural elements in this practice are not just tools; they are part of a complex healing cosmology. By positioning natural media as spiritual intermediaries, the Bugis people have shown they have a local knowledge system that sees nature as part of its own soul, an insight now being revived through a spiritual ecocritical approach.

The Meaning of Mantras and Local Spirituality in Mappangiso Practice

In the traditional healing system of the Bugis Mappangiso community, mantras play a central role, inseparable from the structure of the healing ritual. It is not just a string of words, but is the main medium that connects the ritual practitioners with the spiritual world and natural forces. Based on the results of interviews with the source Muannase (Aunt Anna), it is known that the mantras in Mappangiso consist of a combination of Islamic religious readings, such as Surah Al-Fatiha and the Prophet's prayers, as well as traditional prayers in the Bugis language that have been passed down from the ancestors of the ritual practitioners. This shows that mantras are a form of local knowledge, syncretic in nature, combining elements of local spirituality and Islamic beliefs into a complete healing system.

The resource person explained that before reciting a prayer or mantra, he first mentioned the patient's full name and clearly conveyed the purpose of the ritual. This indicates that the mantra in Mappangiso is personal and directed at individuals in a spiritually unbalanced condition. For example, here is an excerpt of a mantra in the Bugis language delivered by the resource person, as presented in Table 1 below:

<i>"u niakengngi pangiso ibecce/labaco sinenna tau laoo e mate ri temba e, mate malemme'e ku salo e, mate maddara e jokka maneng ki miso i ibecce/labaco (teppu asenna)"</i>

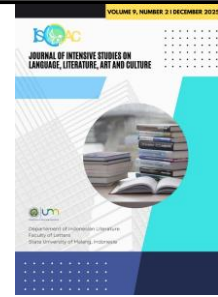


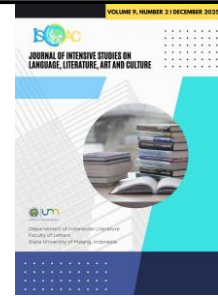
Table 1 *Mappangiso* Healing Mantra

This prayer contains a request that all spirits or disturbances from people who died unnaturally, whether by drowning, being killed, or dying at night, leave the patient's body and return to their natural state. Here, the mantra serves as a means of spiritual communication, not only to God but also to spirits believed to be present and causing imbalance. This mantra is not just a verbal reading; it is believed to have an energy vibration that can influence non-physical entities. In Starhawk's (1997) spiritual ecological theory, words have the power to shape energy, move nature, and connect living beings with the spirits of the earth. By reciting mantras addressed to spirits and natural elements, Mappangiso ritual practitioners seek to align the energy between humans and their spiritual environment. Mantras become a bridge between the visible and invisible worlds, between humans and natural beings, between the body and ecological consciousness.

During the interview about the meaning of the Mappangiso mantra, Aunt Anna refused to translate it into Indonesian. The reason was not that she did not know, but that she felt the mantra had a sacredness that would be lost if expressed openly or translated into another language. For her, prayers in the Bugis language are a "legacy of the soul" that not only consists of the meaning of the words, but also of the tone, rhythm, vibration, and intention that are strongly attached to it. She said that "prayer cannot be translated carelessly, because its efficacy lies in its sound and belief when reading it. Aunt Anna's refusal to translate the Mappangiso mantra into Indonesian was not without reason. The refusal was rooted in the Bugis people's cultural awareness of the sacredness of language in oral texts, especially those related to spiritual practices and healing. In the interview, Aunt Anna stated that if a prayer or mantra were translated literally, then "its soul would be lost" and its spiritual power could be weakened. She was also concerned that a misinterpretation of the literal meaning could undermine the prayer's purpose.

This view aligns with the findings of Sirtjo Koolhof (1999), who explained that in Bugis

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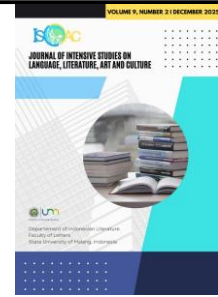


society, not all forms of knowledge can or may be written or explained clearly, especially to just anyone. Some knowledge is considered too sacred, and if written, it must be with a special ritual, such as wetting the paper with chicken blood (maccéraq), as mentioned in Matthes' notes. Even in certain cases, oral delivery must be done carefully, as the knowledge can backfire and harm the recipient if not delivered properly.

Mantras in traditions such as Mappangiso are not only considered as a composition of words, but also as a spiritual entity in itself. Therefore, separating meaning from its sound through translation is considered to disrupt the balance between prayer, nature, and spirits that are the objects of communication. In this case, the spiritual practice of the Bugis people recognizes the performative power of language, namely that words do not simply convey messages, but also create real spiritual effects. This view is in line with Starhawk's (2004) ecological spiritual approach, which states that language is the main tool for building spiritual relations between humans and nature.

In many cases, Mappangiso practitioners never write down their mantras in text form. This knowledge is oral, lives in memory, and is only passed down to descendants who are considered worthy. The informant admitted that he himself could not write down his prayers because they had become part of his instincts since childhood. This tradition of inheritance contains values of reciprocity and spiritual responsibility, where a practitioner not only inherits texts or practices, but also values and ethics in treating sacred knowledge. In practice, mantras are also recited at certain times, such as when burning paper, when water is poured, or when chili peppers are sprinkled on the patient's body. These moments are chosen intuitively based on the practitioner's experience and inner connection with nature and the patient's condition. This reinforces the idea that mantras cannot be separated from the context of the ritual and the practitioner's emotional connection with the patient and the environment.

The function of the mantra in Mappangiso is also psychologically therapeutic. Many patients who, after listening to the prayer, feel calmer, lighter in body, and in some cases experience vomiting or discharge from the body. For the community, this is a sign that the



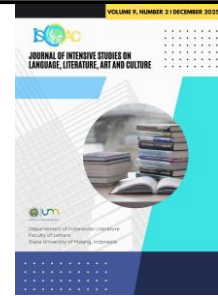
disturbance has come out or "moved" from the body to the ritual medium. In this case, the mantra acts as a trigger for the release of negative energy, a concept known in cultural psychology as emotional discharge.

From an ecological spiritual perspective, reciting mantras while interacting with the natural elements (water, fire, rice, and chili) rekindles the cosmic relationship between humans and nature. Mantras not only guide energy, but also awaken ecological awareness that the human body and the natural elements are in one spiritual system that influences each other. In this ritual, water absorbs illness, fire destroys disturbances, and chili repels evil spirits, all working through the power of words and intentions.

In the Bugis community value system, people who are able to recite mantras well are considered individuals who have inner knowledge and spiritual closeness to nature and God. Therefore, not everyone is allowed or able to recite this mantra. Even incorrect recitation, or one not accompanied by the right intention, is believed to cause healing failure or even endanger the doer. This is in line with Starhawk's principle that a correct ritual is born from harmony between intention, action, and spiritual energy.

In the midst of modern progress, preserving mantras is a challenge in itself. The informant revealed that his children are not necessarily able to continue this practice because not all are interested in learning and understanding the "contents of the prayer". Most only know that Mappangiso is powerful, but do not understand how mantras work. Thus, there is a threat of losing spiritual knowledge if it is not actively passed on. In fact, as emphasized in many ecocritical literatures, local wisdom is an important fortress in preserving the sacred relationship between humans and nature.

As a conclusion to this point, it can be emphasized that the mantra in Mappangiso cannot be separated from the ecological and spiritual structure of the Bugis people. It is an active element in the healing system that functions language as energy, not just as a medium of communication. By exploring the meaning and function of this mantra, we learn not only about the text and tradition but also about how the community interprets its existence as part of a living and spiritual universe.

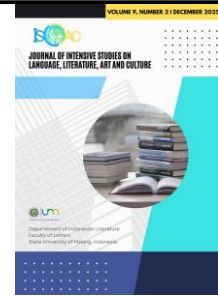


The Relationship between Humans and Nature in the Healing Cosmology of the Bugis Community

The practice of Mappangiso is not merely a medical or physical treatment, but rather part of the cosmological system of the Bugis people that establishes a close relationship between humans and nature as living entities. Based on interviews with informants, Aunt Anna, it is clear that in the view of the local community, natural elements are never considered as inanimate objects, but as part of a force that can be invited to work together in the healing process. Water, soil, chilies, and fire are not used solely because of their physical properties, but because they are believed to have spiritual energy that can be summoned and directed through mantras. The relationship between humans and nature in this context is spiritual and interactive. Water, for example, not only functions as an intermediary in the process of detecting disease, but is believed to have the ability to “absorb” or “contain” negative energy originating from disturbances by spirits. In Starhawk’s (1997) spiritual ecology theory, nature is a conscious entity, has a soul, and can build relationships with humans directly. In the practice of Mappangiso, this relationship is present in a real way: humans call, nature responds, and the results are seen through signs such as absorbed water or changes in the patient’s behavior.

Aunt Anna explained that when the water in the plate is “sucked” out in less than a minute, it means that the spirit has left the patient’s body and entered the water medium. This is not merely superstition, but rather a form of ecospiritual expression that sees that illness is not only caused by an imbalance in the body, but also by an imbalance in the relationship between humans and the universe and the creatures in it. In this context, the healing process becomes a way to restore harmony between humans, nature, and the supernatural world.

This relationship is not one-way. Humans do not “control” nature, but rather show



respect and care in using it. In Mappangiso practice, every object used is chosen with intention, used in a certain way, and returned to nature when finished. Chilies, for example, are not simply thrown away after use, but are buried or thrown away in a place believed to be spiritually neutral. This shows the existence of a local ecological ethic that treats nature as a partner, not an object of exploitation.

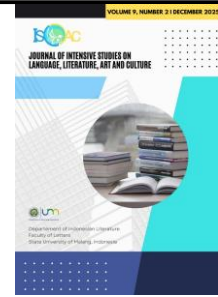
Even in the use of mantras, this spiritual relationship is strictly maintained. The prayers recited do not command or order the spirits, but rather beg and invite them to leave the patient's body. This shows that the relationship between humans and nature (including spiritual entities) is built on the basis of equality, ethics, and respect. In the spiritual ecological framework, this reflects the sacred reconnection between humans and nature as a way to maintain the balance of life.

Thus, Mappangiso is not only a traditional healing practice, but also a projection of the cosmology of the Bugis people, who understand that humans live side by side with spirits, energies, and elements of nature that are interconnected. Disease is seen as a sign of disruption of this harmony, and healing becomes a ritual to repair it.

Cultural Values, Preservation, and Contemporary Challenges

As a form of local wisdom, Mappangiso contains high cultural values. It not only reflects a system of medicine, but also a system of beliefs, spiritual values, and the way people view the body, spirit, and environment. These values are maintained through oral practices, intergenerational inheritance, and deep appreciation of the relationship between humans and nature. However, in the midst of modernization, these values are beginning to face major challenges.

The informant revealed that this practice is still carried out, especially in family environments that uphold tradition. However, the younger generation tends not to understand the structure, meaning, and procedures of Mappangiso. Some of them only become patients or witnesses, without knowing the prayers, the layout of ritual objects, and the philosophical reasons behind them. Even in some cases, this practice is rejected because



it is considered contrary to religious teachings or is labeled as a legacy of "irrational mysticism.

Aunt Anna asserts that everything she does is done “with the permission of Allah, and the prayers used are mostly from the Quran. She feels that the stigma attached to Mappangiso arises from the ignorance and lack of understanding of the essence of the practice by modern society. She also expressed her intention to pass on this knowledge to her grandchildren as part of her “mana’ massossoreng” (inheritance of the soul), although not all of her children and grandchildren have shown interest in learning.

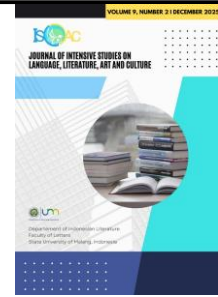
The challenge of preservation is even greater because this knowledge is oral and only passed down to certain people. Not everyone is considered worthy of receiving it, and not everyone who receives it can maintain its sacredness. In the study of Bugis oral literature, as explained by Koolhof (1999), there are indeed forms of knowledge that should not be written or explained openly, in order to maintain its spiritual balance. This shows that the preservation of Mappangiso cannot be done with ordinary documentation methods, but rather through an ethnographic approach and spiritual involvement.

Nevertheless, Mappangiso practices remain relevant to study, not only as a cultural heritage, but also as a form of ecological awareness and local spirituality. In the midst of the ecological crisis and the dominance of medical technology, traditions like this become an epistemological alternative that teaches the ethics of relationships with nature, the value of respect for spirits, and the holistic meaning of the body. Therefore, preserving Mappangiso is not only about preserving tradition, but also about maintaining a way of life that is rooted in harmony between humans and nature.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study demonstrates that Mappangiso is more than a mystical healing ritual; it is a cultural expression of the Bugis cosmology in which humans, nature, and spiritual beings are interconnected. By examining the ritual through Starhawk’s spiritual

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ecocriticism, the research reveals that the natural elements involved, water, rice, chili, fire, and metal, are not passive materials but are perceived as spiritual agents that participate actively in the healing process. These elements embody ecological meanings that mirror the community's belief in nature as a living and responsive entity.

The analysis of the mantras shows that language functions not merely as a verbal utterance but as spiritual energy capable of transforming relationships between humans and the unseen world. The refusal of the practitioner to translate the mantra underscores its sacredness and affirms that its power lies in sound, rhythm, intention, and the spiritual ethics surrounding its use. This supports the core premise of spiritual ecology, which recognizes the sacred interconnectedness of words, nature, and healing.

Overall, the findings address the research gap identified in the introduction, demonstrating that Mappangiso embodies a form of ecospirituality that integrates ecological awareness, cultural values, and spiritual ethics. In the face of modernization, the continued practice of Mappangiso highlights the resilience of local knowledge systems and their potential contribution to contemporary discourses on environmental care and holistic healing. Preserving this tradition, therefore, becomes not only a cultural effort but also an ecological and spiritual necessity.

The researcher suggests that Mappangiso practices continue to be documented ethnographically while maintaining their sacred ethics, so that future generations can understand the local values contained therein. In addition, it is important to conduct inter-scientific dialogue between modern science and local traditions in order to build a new, more inclusive understanding in the fields of health and cultural ecology. Further research can be directed at exploring the comparison between Mappangiso and other traditional healing practices in the archipelago that have similar spiritual ecological structures.

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