

Mappacci Ritual Objects and Symbolism in Sarawak's Bugis Wedding Tradition

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ABSTRACT

The Bugis tribe in Sarawak practices *mappabotting*, a marriage ritual that holds considerable importance within their cultural framework. Nevertheless, certain individuals within the Bugis community have ceased their involvement in these rituals because of the transition towards Sarawak Malay culture. This study analyses the various objects utilised in the *mappacci* wedding ceremony, such as pillows, sarongs, banana leaves, jackfruit leaves, candles, henna leaves, metal, rice, water, coconut oil, betel leaves, and cigarettes. The research employs a qualitative approach, incorporating direct interviews with informed Bugis participants and observations of the ceremony. This approach incorporates secondary sources to collect pertinent information related to Carl G. Jung's theory, especially in relation to archetypes and symbolic objects. Academicians, researchers, curators, and museum departments can leverage this research to gain deeper insights into the *mappacci* ritual objects and the symbolism inherent in Bugis wedding traditions in Sarawak.

Keywords: *Bugis, Mappacci, Ritual, Symbolic, Wedding*

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic perspective regards marriage as a legal and sacred union, which is vital to maintaining a healthy community and familial connections. Muslim communities worldwide may adopt regional traditions during wedding ceremonies however, Islam emphasises the safety and welfare of couples in matrimony. While the religion permits certain cultural practices and embraces diversity, its laws stipulate that these should not contravene the principles of Islam. In the Bugis language, the wedding ceremony is

referred to as *mappabotting*, while the marital bond is termed *siala*, which directly translates to mutual assent. The term "*sianbbineng*" denotes marriage, originating from the Bugis word "bine," meaning "rice seed." When combined with the prefix "ma," it forms "mabbine," which translates to "seed planting" (Badruzzaman, 2007). The terms "bine" or "mabbine" are synonymous with "baine" (wife), while "mabbaine" conveys a more affectionate connotation of "wifey." In the context of marriage, *siabbineng* signifies the act of sowing seeds in everyday life. Marriage is a sacred union between a husband and wife, serving as a ritual that consolidates and expands familial connections. The Bugis referred to this ceremony as *mappasideppe mabelae*, signifying the act of bringing individuals from distant locations. The Bugis community engages in endogamy, or patronage, by choosing partners primarily from within the same group due to shared rituals and practices.

Symbols, both natural and man-made, have multiple meanings in Bugis traditional wedding decor. According to Jung (2014), a culture's symbols can be anything from deities to animals, plants, humans, or even hybrids of these elements. Their archetypes would give rise to their symbolic substance, and objects representing symbols would take on a life of their own. However, note that the interpretation of a symbol may vary among individuals within a larger group. According to Jung's theory, traditional wedding arrangements in Bugis are all about aesthetics, history, and tradition. Traditional Bugis practices make use of many commonplace objects and symbols, such as sarongs, candles, henna leaves, banana and jackfruit leaves, metal, rice, water, coconut oil, betel leaves, and cigarettes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The values of traditional ceremonies, includes (Mafthuka's, 2018) study of the Ngalaksa ceremony in the (Baduy Tribe, Passandaran's, 2019) semiotic analysis of wedding ceremonies in West Sumatra, and the investigation by (Muhajir et al., 2019) regarding the Tappareng Ceremony in Buginese society. This study investigates the traditional wedding ritual of the Buginese community, particularly the *mappacci* ceremony. Numerous symbols within this cultural tradition are subject to analysis. This study seeks to identify the symbols and their meanings utilised in the *mappacci* ceremony of the traditional Buginese wedding. Individuals continue to uphold their cultural beliefs, manifested through symbols in traditional rites. Consequently, examining these principles to save and protect cultural heritage is essential.

This research is to the link between *mappacci* ritual objects and Carl G Jung theories in Sarawak. The author hopes to consolidate this information as knowledge and deploy it imaginatively in the pursuit of new ideas.

Symbols

Peirce defines a symbol as an element of a sign. He asserted that the sign comprised indices, icons, and symbols. A symbol denotes a consensus. An icon serves as a symbol derived from a physical representation, whereas an index functions as a sign resulting from a causal relationship. Pierce's semiotic framework consists of three fundamental components, known as the triangle of meaning (Fike & Littlejohn, cited in Kriyantono (2006). Copley and Jansz (1991) assert that Peirce's fundamental categories of signs include icons, indices, and symbols. An icon serves as a representation designed to resemble, imitate, or replicate its referent in various ways (Sebeok, 2001). An index signifies the existence of an entity, its temporal or spatial position, or its relationship with another entity (Sebeok, 2001). Copley and Jansz (1999) argue that a symbol exhibits increased complexity. A symbol is a conventional sign that represents its referent (Sebeok, 2001).

***Mappacci* as a Traditional Ceremony of the Bugis Society**

Mappacci derives from the term for henna leaves (*pacci*), which can be read as "*paccing*," meaning "clean" in Buginese. Consequently, the *mappacci* procession signifies cleanliness (*mappaccing*), performed by both parties (male and female). Historically, the *mappacci* ritual among nobles was observed over three consecutive nights; however, it is currently celebrated for only one night, specifically the evening before the wedding ceremony. The *mappacci* procession, once exclusively conducted by the nobles, is now predominantly performed by the common Bugis populace. The *mappacci* ceremony comprises a sequence of matrimonial festivities among the Bugis community, who continue to uphold their traditions. The *mappacci* procession employs symbols rich in significance, representing the Buginese community. These symbols are intended to cleanse and purify individuals from negativity, representing the bride's heart's purity.

Archetypal Symbol

The study of symbolism is an important factor to establish how life might have prevailed in the past, and to reveal the religious and cultural developments of a society. In his book *Man and His Symbols*, Jung argues that there are two sorts of symbols: 'natural' and 'cultural'. The 'Natural' symbols "are derived from the unconscious contents of the psyche, and they therefore represent an enormous number of variations on the essential archetypal images" (Jung, 1964). 'Natural' symbols are encountered in individual persons' dreams, fantasies etc., and go back to archaic times. 'Cultural' symbols "are those that have been used to express 'eternal truths,' and that are still used in many religions". 'Cultural' symbols change according to the times and when they are lost or repressed they disappear into the unconscious, at times with unwanted repercussions. 'Cultural' symbols bear also a personal and emotional connotation for many individuals of a given culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

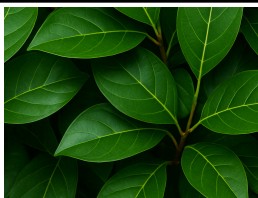
This study utilised a qualitative methodology that incorporated both primary and secondary data collection and analysis. The research was conducted in Kampung Muhibbah Ladang 3, Miri, Sarawak, a Bugis village situated in Sarawak. This village continues to uphold the Bugis marriage tradition, specifically the *mappacci* custom. It is a purification ritual for the bridal couple, utilising henna or *pacci* leaves. The data was gathered through interviews with five respondents, Bugis individuals knowledgeable in *mappacci* and Bugis culture, aged fifty and older, utilising application, voice recording, and observation methods. The author gathered data derived from interviews conducted with Bugis individuals. Three questions exist. Which *mappacci* objects are typically utilised in the wedding ceremony of the Sarawak Bugis? What is the precise significance of these objects? What does the *mappacci* ceremony symbolise in Bugis society? This study employs Carl G. Jung's archetypes and symbolic theory to analyse each twelve *mappacci* objects at the Bugis wedding.

FINDINGS

The *mappacci* ritual constitutes a component of the traditional Bugis matrimonial customs in Sarawak. It is a significant ceremony replete with cultural symbolism. *Mappacci*, derived from the term *pacci*, signifying holy and pure, seeks to purify the bride and groom physically, emotionally, and spiritually before commencing their married life. This ceremony employs several objects, including pillows, candles, henna leaves, and betel leaves, each with distinct meanings that symbolise aspirations and prayers for

favours. *Mappacci*, a custom passed down through generations, embodies Bugis values such as purity, harmony, and abundance while reinforcing familial and communal bonds. This rite illustrates the importance of tradition in preserving the Bugis cultural identity amid contemporary pressures. *Mappacci* exemplifies the intimate connection among individuals, culture, and spirituality throughout Bugis society.

Table 1. Mappacci Bugis Wedding Tradition – Mappacci Objects

Item	Mappacci Ritual Objects	Jung's Theory	Description
Pillow	 Figure 1. Pillow (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	In Bugis wedding ceremonies in Sarawak, an existing pillow or a slightly elevated mat is used to facilitate the positioning of the hands parallel to the centre. This pillow serves as a more efficient headrest for human rest. Human consciousness and cognition create pillows for comfort.
Sarong	 Figure 2. Sarong (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	A <i>sarong</i> is used as if covering the <i>aurat</i> or human body, which should not be seen. Human experiences and thoughts make a sarong or cloth that covers the body.
Banana leaf	 Figure 3. Banana leaf (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	The Bugis people utilise leaves in their daily lives, believing they offer numerous benefits. Banana leaves are also used not only in the <i>mappacci</i> ceremony but also in wrapping traditional foods such as <i>sokko</i> and <i>burasak</i> .
Jackfruit leaf	 Figure 4. Jackfruit leaf (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	During the <i>mappacci</i> ceremony, jackfruit leaves serves the same purpose as banana leaves: it is inserted into the hand. It represents aspiration and optimism in equal measure.

Candle	 Figure 5. Candle (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Archetypes	Candles symbolize divine direction for the bride-to-be as she embarks on her journey into the future, always under the guidance of Allah SWT. Before the advent of candles, specifically <i>taibani</i> or <i>patti</i> , which are derived from bees and used for illumination.
Henna leaf	 Figure 6. Henna leaf (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Archetypes	This important element in the <i>mappacci</i> ceremony can also be found around the Bugis community housing. The bride and groom's hands will be ringed with the henna. Henna leaves provide many benefits, namely for health and for nails.
Metal	 Figure 7. Metal (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	The Bugis people have a heritage that dates back to their ancestors. The circle is potentially the universal symbol that most truly reflects the entirety of the human psyche. It represents all that exists, including the natural world and our existence. All cultures, religious beliefs, mythologies, and dreams use the sign of the circle symbolically throughout art history.
Rice	 Figure 8. Rice (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	Rice symbolises the potential for the bride and groom to thrive and establish a harmonious and prosperous household rooted in love. The bride and groom are expected to be the preferred option and to understand and apply the philosophy of rice, which suggests that the more one is filled, the more one should be humble.
Water	 Figure 9. Water (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	There is a religious significance to water because it is a symbol of purity and cleanliness, which are attributes that Allah SWT bestows upon it.

Coconut oil	 Figure 10. Coconut oil (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	Oil is symbolically associated with a strong belief and the anticipation of receiving nourishment and benefits from Allah SWT. Oil and coconut also symbolise sustenance and hold great religious significance in the traditional <i>mappacci</i> rite at Bugis marriages.
Betel leaves	 Figure 11. Betel leaves (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Archetypes	Betel leaves and areca nut hold certain functions and symbolic implications, particularly in communication concerning interactions with supernatural beings and individuals within society and between men and women.
Cigarette	 Figure 12. Cigarette (Source: Researcher, 2023)	Symbolism	The act of presenting betel pinang or consuming smoking confections demonstrates respect. This object illustrates a deep respect for the practices of offering and consuming betel nut, as well as the use of smoking substances.

The *mappacci* ceremony is a traditional Bugis marriage ritual rich in symbolism and cultural significance. During this ceremony, the Bugis employ diverse artistic instruments, each possessing distinct significance and embodying their aspirations and supplications for a blissful and prosperous marital existence. Pillows, sarongs, banana leaves, jackfruit leaves, candles, henna leaves, metal, rice, water, cigarettes, coconut oil, and betel leaves constitute twelve essential *mappacci* items that are significant in the cultural symbolism of the region. Each instrument embodies the principles of Bugis life, symbolising distinct life values. These values encompass protection, strength, purity, nutritional abundance, fertility, and fraternity. This tradition not only fortifies the cultural identity of the Bugis people but also unites communities through their collective activities. This tradition fosters unity and upholds conventions; it also imparts fundamental values to the younger generation. The Bugis people possess a profound connection to the symbolism inherent in their traditions, as evidenced by these utensils. Tradition embodies the essential needs and ambitions of a life that remains pertinent in the endeavour of building a harmonious society.

CONCLUSION

Each culture devised by humans embodies principles that function as frameworks for communal endeavours. The *mappacci* ceremonial practice in the Sarawak District exemplifies the traditions that forebears continue to uphold and transmit through the generations. The *mappacci* tradition stands as a significant cultural emblem within the rich heritage of the Bugis community, notably among those

residing in Sarawak. It serves as a representation of self-purification and familial blessings during the wedding ceremony, while also embodying fundamental values such as respect, spiritual purity, and strong familial connections. Nevertheless, the significant impact of modelling and the ever-evolving demands of contemporary life pose a risk to the preservation of this tradition, especially among the youth. The younger generation is pivotal in preserving heritage like *mappacci*, ensuring it remains a vibrant and integral part of cultural expression rather than a mere infrequent display. Disregard for or unawareness of one's cultural heritage may result in a diminished sense of communal identity. Therefore, it is essential for Bugis youth in Sarawak to receive a comprehensive understanding of the meaning, symbolism, and significance of this ceremony from the earliest stages of their education, as well as through community initiatives. Preserving and fostering the *mappacci* tradition within the Bugis community in Sarawak is a collective duty, yet it is the younger generation that serves as the cornerstone of this ongoing legacy. In the absence of their participation, the tradition risks existing merely as a nominal concept. With profound insight, *mappacci* can persist as a vital cultural force that enhances the life and identity of the nation.

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