

Prophetic And Moral Values In The Folk Tale Of *Dodeng Lebonna*

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Abstract

This study explores the prophetic aspects and moral values in the folklore Dodeng Lebonna using Creswell's phenomenological method. This folklore is part of the oral tradition of the Tana Toraja community, rich in life values relevant to the socio-cultural context. The aim of this study is to understand the experiences and meanings perceived by individuals regarding the element of sacrifice in the story, conveyed through symbolism, narrative structure, and language choices. Through a phenomenological approach, this research delves into deep perceptions and interpretations of moral values such as honesty, sincerity, and social responsibility, embodied in the dialogues and actions of the main characters. The findings reveal that Dodeng Lebonna reflects sacrifice as a manifestation of prophetic and moral values. This study highlights the crucial role of folklore as a medium for moral education across generations amidst the tide of modern cultural changes.

Keywords: Dodeng Lebonna, prophetic, moral, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Folktales are cultural heritages rich in moral values, life lessons, and local wisdom, passed down from one generation to the next. Among the Toraja people of Indonesia, Dodeng Lebonna stands as a prominent example of such oral tradition. This narrative not only portrays a love story imbued with sacrifice but also reflects how social norms and customary values within Torajan

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society are transmitted through folkloric storytelling (Gusal, 2015; Sujarwo, 2014; Sulthoni & Silmi, 2015; Setiartin, 2016; Thohiroh et al., 2017).

This study focuses on the prophetic dimensions and moral values embedded in the folktale *Dodeng Lebonna*, examining its role as a medium that illustrates the relationship between personal sacrifice and adherence to societal norms. Through a narrative that integrates moral, cultural, and traditional elements, the story effectively highlights indigenous wisdom relevant to holistic human development. These findings support the view that folktales like *Dodeng Lebonna* serve not merely as entertainment but also as vital tools for preserving cultural values and reinforcing communal identity (Trianton, 2015; Qomariyah et al., 2019).

The theme of sacrifice has long been central to traditional storytelling, where characters frequently face dilemmas between personal desires and social obligations (Cohen, 2010). In *Dodeng Lebonna*, sacrifice is depicted not only in interpersonal relationships but also in the broader context of an individual's interaction with customary law and community. The tale conveys the richness of Torajan cultural values replete with moral messages and local wisdom through symbolic narratives about marital life and its interconnectedness with nature (Madeamin, 2021).

Natural phenomena featured in the story, such as the procession of caterpillars moving between the graves of *Lebonna* and *Paerengan*, function as profound symbols. Such imagery reflects the Torajan worldview emphasizing harmony between humans and nature, illustrating how natural signs are often interpreted as channels of communication between the physical and spiritual realms (Simega, 2024). Furthermore, the couple's burial in separate tombs symbolizes a violation of cultural norms, which dictate that spouses should remain united even in death. Symbolically, this conveys the idea that breaking sacred marital vows may disrupt social harmony and disturb the balance between humanity and the natural world (Simega, 2024; Madeamin, 2021).

Philosophically, the story reveals that Torajan culture remains deeply influenced by mystical beliefs, wherein natural phenomena are perceived as manifestations of divine will. This perspective contrasts with more rational ontological approaches to interpreting nature (Sermada et al., 2002). Thus, *Dodeng Lebonna* serves as a vehicle for understanding the Torajan cultural orientation, which emphasizes spirituality and environmental balance (Nur, 2020; Hafid, 2016).

As part of Torajan literature, *puama* a form of traditional oral narrative transcends mere entertainment. It functions as a medium for transmitting moral and cultural values across generations. Stories such as *Dodeng Lebonna* reflect the social realities and cultural dynamics of



Torajan society, making them living components of an evolving cultural heritage (Wellek & Warren, 1997; Kuntowijoyo, 1999).

Moral values conveyed through folktales play a crucial role in shaping individual character and maintaining social harmony. In Dodeng Lebonna, these values are embodied in the sacrifices made by the protagonists, expressing core Torajan principles such as love, honesty (kamalamburan), and balance (karapasan). These values serve not only as ethical guidelines for daily life but also represent the collective morality of Torajan society, which upholds unity and customary honor as foundational ideals (Panuntun, 2020; Hasanah, 2017).

This study employs a Literary Philosophical Approach to explore how language in Dodeng Lebonna functions as the primary medium for conveying moral and social values. By utilizing semiotics and pragmatics, this approach enables a deep analysis of symbols and hidden meanings within the text. Consequently, Dodeng Lebonna emerges not merely as a cultural narrative but also as a philosophical representation of sacrifice and morality in Torajan society (Muiz, 2021; Subhan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the story can be analyzed through the lens of prophetic literature, which emphasizes revelatory and ethical dimensions in literary expression. Dodeng Lebonna embodies prophetic ethics that reflect humanistic values such as self-sacrifice and compassion liberative values that depict the release of individuals from suffering through the protagonist's sacrifice, and transcendent values that connect human actions to belief in a higher power. The narrative technique also reflects the democratic nature of prophetic literature by incorporating diverse perspectives and cultural values of the Torajan people (Kuntowijoyo, 2005; Qomariyah et al., 2019).

This research is significant because Dodeng Lebonna not only represents the cultural richness of the Toraja people but also functions as an educational medium containing moral, social, and spiritual values. Through this analysis, it is hoped that such folktales can be preserved and revitalized as relevant components of cultural heritage, contributing to character formation and strengthening social cohesion in contemporary society.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Folktales

Folktales are a vital component of a community's cultural heritage, transmitted orally or in written form from one generation to the next. The concept of folktales can be elaborated through the following aspects:



a. Cultural Background: Folktales originating from rural areas often emphasize agricultural life and values of communal solidarity, whereas those from urban settings tend to reflect the complexities of modern social dynamics.

b. Function and Purpose: In traditional societies, folktales serve both didactic and entertainment functions. They are commonly used to instill social norms in younger generations and to strengthen communal bonds during gatherings or rituals.

c. Narrative Elements: Like all literary works, folktales possess a distinct narrative structure. They typically feature a simple plot with clearly defined characters, a developing conflict, and a resolution (Merdiyatna, 2019). Natural elements such as mountains, rivers, and forests are frequently portrayed as possessing magical or spiritual powers, reflecting animistic beliefs deeply rooted in local cosmology.

d. Modes of Transmission: Folktales are conveyed either orally by traditional storytellers including elders, shamans, or customary leaders or preserved in written forms such as storybooks, manuscripts, or scholarly articles.

e. Role in Education: Folktales play a significant educational role by transmitting moral values, social skills, and cultural knowledge to younger generations. Through symbolic narratives, they function as informal pedagogical tools that foster ethical awareness and cultural continuity.

Prophetic Literary

Values According to Kuntowijoyo (2019, p. 2), prophetic literature does not critique reality in isolation but operates as part of a collective intelligence. Its foundational principle is based on transcendental structuralist epistemology. As explained by Kuntowijoyo (2019, p. 3), this epistemology enables prophetic literature to transcend the limitations of human reason and access higher forms of knowledge. To achieve this, prophetic literature draws upon interpretations of sacred texts to understand and respond to socio-cultural realities.

a. Humanization

The term humanization originates from the Greek word *humanitas*, meaning "to make human." Syariati (1996, p. 30) defines humanization as the realization of divine values inherent within humans' values guided by religious teachings that shape culture and morality. In line with this, Kuntowijoyo (2001, pp. 364–365) describes humanization as the process of restoring humanity to its true essence: freeing individuals from materialism, dependency, violence, and hatred. This aligns with Richards' (2006, p. 6) view that humanization involves upholding human dignity through morally grounded decision-making, including respecting others' opinions, and



ensuring proportional justice. Boisard (2011, p. 51) further emphasizes that humanization cultivates inner goodness while remaining firmly rooted in faith in the Creator. Arif (2013, p. 279) adds that humanization elevates human dignity particularly before God and thus affirms the intrinsic worth of every individual.

b. Liberation

Roberts (2000, p. 45) defines liberation as a critical and dialogical engagement with real-world practices aimed at emancipating the oppressed and marginalized. In prophetic literary ethics, liberation derives from the Islamic concept of *nahi munkar* (forbidding evil). According to Kuntowijoyo (2001, p. 365), *nahi munkar* encompasses actions ranging from discouraging friends from using ecstasy, preventing violent feuds (*carok*), eradicating gambling and usury, to defending workers' rights and resisting colonialism. At its core, *nahi munkar* seeks to prevent immoral or harmful behavior. Chen (2002, p. 82) views liberation as humanity's authentic struggle to overcome repressive and exploitative social structures, driven by divine grace. Roqib (2011, p. 82) similarly explains liberation as an act of freeing individuals from oppressive constraints. Purnomo (2014, p. 42) interprets this as an effort focused on liberating marginalized people and restoring them to their original state (*fitrah*) that of free and dignified human beings.

c. Transcendence

Kuntowijoyo (2001, p. 365) links transcendence to the Qur'anic phrase *tu'minuna billah* (believing in God). Etymologically, the term comes from the Latin *transcendere*, meaning "to rise above," and the English verb to transcend, signifying "to surpass" or "go beyond." Thus, transcendence refers to a movement beyond the material world. Roqib (2011, p. 78) interprets transcendence as *hablum min Allah* the spiritual bond connecting humans with God expressed through prayer, remembrance (*dzikr*), and reliance solely on divine assistance. Heraty (2018, p. 7) describes transcendence as a dynamic mental or spiritual process that moves beyond empirical reality toward a realm beyond concrete existence. Kuntowijoyo (1999, p. 289) argues that the purpose of transcendence is to cultivate divine consciousness within culture, especially in response to the decline caused by hedonism, materialism, and decadent cultural trends. Garaudy (1984, p. 34) identifies three indicators of transcendence: (1) acknowledgment of human dependence on God; (2) recognition of the absolute distinction between God and humanity; and (3) acceptance of absolute divine norms that originate not from human reason, but from revelation.



Moral Values in Folktales

Moral messages embedded in literary works vary in type and form, shaped by the author's beliefs, desires, and ideological inclinations (Nurgiyantoro, 2013, p. 441). These moral values can be categorized into four primary dimensions:

1. Human-God Relationship

This dimension includes actions reflecting devotion to the divine, such as worship, prayer, fasting, and other religious practices. It emphasizes obedience to divine commands and trust in God's will.

2. Human-Self Relationship

This involves personal attitudes and inner character development, such as patience, self-love, self-acceptance, resilience, gratitude, and other positive psychological traits that contribute to emotional and spiritual well-being.

3. Human-Human Relationship

This refers to interpersonal interactions characterized by cooperation, mutual aid, empathy, respect, understanding, and shared values. It promotes social harmony, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

4. Human-Nature Relationship

This dimension highlights efforts to preserve and protect the natural environment, including gardening, tree planting, environmental stewardship, and sustainable use of natural resources. It reflects a worldview in which nature is seen as sacred and interconnected with human life. These moral dimensions are often interwoven in folktales, offering holistic guidance for ethical living and social cohesion.

Characters and Characterization

- a. Characters

According to Abrams (in Nurgiyantoro, 2013, p. 247), a character in narrative or dramatic works is an individual portrayed in the story whom readers interpret as possessing certain moral qualities and behavioral tendencies, as revealed through speech and action. Similarly, Baldic (in Nurgiyantoro, 2013, p. 247) defines a character as a fictional entity who plays an active role in the unfolding of a story.

- b. Characterization

Jones (in Nurgiyantoro, 2013, p. 247) defines characterization as the process of clearly depicting a figure within a narrative. Characterization refers to the techniques authors use to



present and develop characters in fiction or drama. It can be achieved directly (through explicit description) or indirectly (through dialogue, behavior, thoughts, and interactions). Effective characterization invites readers to evaluate a character's personality and moral stance based on observable actions and expressions. As Nurgiyantoro (2013, p. 248) notes, characterization encompasses both the methods used to construct characters and the artistic strategies employed to convey their complexity and evolution throughout the story.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach based on Creswell's framework to examine and analyze the lived experiences embedded in the Torajan folktale *Dodeng Lebonna*. This approach enables the researcher to explore and interpret the meanings associated with individual and collective experiences concerning moral values and sacrifice as portrayed in the narrative.

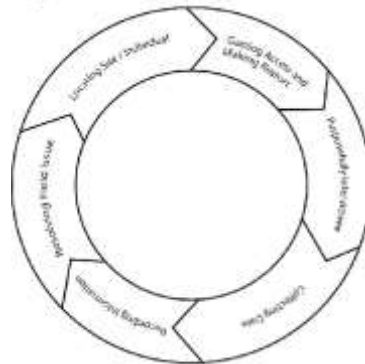
The initial phase of the research involved data collection through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and literature review. The primary informants were individuals possessing deep knowledge of the *Dodeng Lebonna* folktale, including Torajan customary leaders (*tokoh adat*) and cultural practitioners (*budayawan*). Data collected were analyzed using Creswell's phenomenological steps, which include:

1. Description of Experience: Gathering detailed accounts from informants to describe their personal and communal experiences related to the folktale.
2. Identification of Themes: Analyzing data to identify recurring themes that reveal the essence of moral values and sacrifice within the narrative.
3. Data Classification: Organizing data according to emerging thematic categories such as transcendence, humanism, and moral relevance to facilitate systematic interpretation.
4. Interpretation of Meaning: Interpreting the deeper significance of identified themes by referencing principles of philosophical linguistics, particularly how language constructs and conveys moral and ethical meaning.

Data analysis was conducted inductively to uncover patterns, relationships, and culturally relevant meanings within the socio-cultural context of the Toraja community. The study also investigates how language functions within the narrative of *Dodeng Lebonna* to convey moral messages and the value of sacrifice. The final stage involved compiling a comprehensive report that reflects the analytical outcomes, key findings, and the study's contribution to the broader discourse on moral values in folktales.



The material object of this research is the folktale Dodeng Lebonna itself, while the formal object is the philosophical linguistic analysis exploring the moral and sacrificial values embedded within the narrative. The overarching aim of this study is to uncover the essential moral values relevant to contemporary social life and to understand how language in folktales serves as a medium for transmitting these ethical messages.



Creswell, Phenomenology 1008

Figure 1: Phenomenological Stages Based on Creswell's Theory

DISCUSSION

Description of the Folktale Dodeng Lebonna

Synopsis

This folktale centers on Lebonna, a beautiful woman from Bau, Bonggakaradeng, whose beauty captivates many suitors. Yet, her heart belongs solely to Massudilalong Paerengan, a handsome, courageous, and spiritually powerful young man. Their love becomes the subject of public admiration and envy among both men and women in their community. They pledge eternal devotion: "Together in life, together in death." However, their path is fraught with obstacles. Before departing for war to defend his village, Paerengan entrusts Lebonna with a promise: to remain faithful until his return. Lebonna honors this vow steadfastly, despite persistent attempts by other men to sway her loyalty. During her prolonged wait, a traitor within Paerengan's ranks spreads false news of his death on the battlefield intending to win Lebonna's affection. Unmoved by deception or temptation, Lebonna remains loyal. Overwhelmed by grief, she makes a tragic decision: to end her own life, thereby fulfilling their sacred vow.

"Jika benar dia telah tiada, aku akan menyusulnya. Aku tak ingin hidup di dunia ini tanpa Paerengan."

When Paerengan returns victorious only to discover Lebonna's death, he is consumed by



profound sorrow. Unable to envision life without her, he chooses to join her in the afterlife a final act affirming their undying love.

"Lebonna, aku akan menemanimu, seperti janjiku bahwa kita akan bersama hingga akhir."

Ultimately, the couple is buried together in one tomb, honoring their mutual wish. Their timeless love story continues to be recounted among the people of Bau, Bonggakaradeng, as a symbol of eternal devotion.

Main Characters

1. Lebonna

Lebonna embodies unwavering fidelity, grace, and moral fortitude. Despite numerous admirers seeking to claim her heart, she remains steadfast in her commitment to Paerengan. Her sacrifice reflects a willingness to surrender everything including her life to uphold the sanctity of their shared vow. She stands as a cultural icon of loyalty and romantic constancy.

2. Massudilalong Paerengan

Paerengan is portrayed as a noble warrior handsome, brave, and endowed with spiritual strength. Revered as a protector of his village, he faces danger fearlessly for the sake of his people. Though preoccupied with warfare, his love for Lebonna remains pure and enduring. Upon learning of her death, he chooses to die himself not out of despair, but as an affirmation of their eternal bond.

Conflicts

1. Internal Conflict (Lebonna's Dilemma): Lebonna confronts a profound internal struggle upon receiving the fabricated report of Paerengan's death. Torn between grief and her solemn vow to remain united "in life and death," she ultimately opts for self-sacrifice as the only way to honor their pact.

2. External Conflict (Love Under Siege): Numerous suitors, envious of Lebonna and Paerengan's relationship, attempt to woo her through various means. This external pressure intensifies social tensions and places Lebonna in a precarious position, testing the resilience of her loyalty.

3. Conflict with the Traitor: The betrayal occurs when one of Paerengan's own comrades deliberately falsifies his death to manipulate Lebonna's emotions and seize her affection an act that triggers the central tragedy of the narrative.

4. Paerengan's Conflict with Fate Upon returning from battle, Paerengan must confront



the devastating truth of Lebonna's suicide. His subsequent decision to end his own life represents not defeat, but a conscious choice to fulfill their sacred promise a testament to his unwavering resolve.

Prophetic Analysis Prophetic Events or Actions Depicted

The central prophetic act in Dodeng Lebonna lies in the self-sacrificial choices made by both protagonists Lebonna and Paerengan who choose death over living apart, thereby fulfilling their vow of eternal togetherness.

1. Lebonna's Sacrifice

Data 1: (HCRT.1981:50)

<i>Naraqtaqmi Lebonna tamale mentuyo, nakua, "Apa gaiqku tuo, namatemo tu Massudilalong, muane kukaboroqi sia kukamalling." Malemi untokeq katena mentu, namate.</i>	Lebonna berkata kepada dirinya sendiri, 'Apa gunanya hidupku, jika aku tidak bisa bersama Massudilalong, tempat di mana hatiku berada.' Dan demikianlah akhirnya, dia memilih untuk mengakhiri hidupnya
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Lebonna's act exemplifies a profound love that transcends earthly existence, while simultaneously revealing the destructive consequences of false information. Within Torajan culture, this sacrifice embodies core customary values such as loyalty (setia) and honor (maradeka). Lebonna's decision to end her life becomes a symbolic representation of love and commitment that surpasses the boundaries of physical life. The story serves as a moral reminder to cherish genuine affection, uphold truthful communication, and avoid deception that can irreparably damage human relationships.

2. Paerengan's Sacrifice

Data 2: (HCRT.1981:50)

<i>E kamu mintuq paqrapuan Mairiq tomaqdio ren allo totemo Mangnga malingkomimani sola nasang, Pussakkomi sangnga mairiq . la te akunna, te kale misa-misangu rrialillin padang kutiro, mapattang kullaq kutingayo</i>	Hai kamu rumpun keluarga Semua yang hadir pada hari ini Kamu ini mungkin heran Rumpun keluarga bertanya-tanya Saya ini secara pribadi Gelaplah di sekelilingku, tiada harap lagi Kamu semua segera tahu, bagi yang hadir hari ini
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<i>Lamiissan nasang tau, mintuq to maqdio ren,</i> <i>Kumua, pura bassemoq Lebonna, mangka sibole-bole.</i> <i>Pada tuo, pada mate,</i> <i>pada sangrontaq inaya, pada ditambuttanai.</i> <i>Naia tu Lebonna, masai allomo manteqna,</i> <i>tontaq rondon tobatangna.</i> <i>Lamentiromoko tau, mengkita sandamairiq,</i> <i>Lamanteq todamoq aku, la sangrontaq inaamoq.</i>	Bahwa aku telah berjanji dengan Lebonna Sehidup semati dan sepenanggungan Satu lubang kami berdua Lebonna telah pergi Dia sudah mendahului Sekarang kamu menyaksikan, yang hadir jangan kaget Sekarang aku berangkat, menyusul dia yang lebih dahulu
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Analysis: Paerengan's action reflects a loyalty that transcends rationality choosing death not out of despair, but as a sacred fulfillment of his love vow to Lebonna. In Torajan cultural context, this act illustrates the deeply held values of fidelity, love, and sacrifice that extend beyond worldly life. His choice signifies that true love is not merely about shared happiness, but also encompasses the willingness to endure suffering as an expression of unwavering commitment. By following Lebonna into the afterlife, Paerengan affirms their mutual promise of eternal union, transforming personal grief into a collective moral lesson on devotion.

Socio-Cultural Context of Sacrifice in the Story

1. Social Context

In Dodeng Lebonna, romantic sacrifice is portrayed as the highest form of loyalty. The couple's vow to remain "together in life and death" reflects a cultural ideal that elevates true love as a symbol of unconditional devotion even beyond death. Their sacrifice stands as a model of sincere fidelity that transcends individual desires, reinforcing collective values such as integrity, responsibility, and communal honor. In traditional Torajan society, where social harmony is maintained through adherence to adat (customary law), such narratives function as normative guides for ethical behavior.



2. Cultural Context

In a culture that highly values honor and faithfulness, sacrificing one's life for love is regarded as a noble moral act. Lebonna and Paerengan's actions reflect wholehearted dedication, preservation of family dignity, and the fulfillment of a sacred marital vow. Dying together is interpreted as an eternal affirmation of loyalty a spiritual continuation of their bond that bridges earthly life and beliefs about the afterlife. This practice resonates with Toraja's animistic and ancestral worldview, where the boundary between life and death is permeable, and rituals serve to maintain cosmic balance.

Moral Values Embedded in Dodeng Lebonna

1. Loyalty in Love

Data 3: (HCRT.1981:50)

<i>Maqlondemi Massudilalong nakua, "Moi tallanna to batu, endekna bura- bura, tanglatallan ia maliq, mandaq, tabole-bole, matei rindu, pada ditambuttanakiq.</i>	Biar apa pun yang terjadi, angin topan dan banjir sekalipun, cintaku padamu tidak akan pudar.
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The story of Dodeng Lebonna emphasizes that loyalty is the cornerstone of true love. Despite being tested by time and adversity, both characters demonstrate unwavering commitment to one another. This message remains highly relevant in the modern era, where many relationships face challenges that test trust, fidelity, and emotional resilience.

2. Sacrifice and True Love

(Based on Data 1)

Lebonna's decision to sacrifice her life for Massudilalong illustrates that true love entails profound sacrifice. Her act reflects deep dedication and a willingness to give everything even life itself for the well-being and honor of the beloved. This teaches that genuine love is not conditional or self-serving, but rooted in selflessness, courage, and readiness to bear risks for the sake of loved ones.

3. Empathy and Compassion

Data 4: (Please insert original text if available)



<i>Maqlondemi Massudilalong nakua, Marassan tu Dodeng mangrambi pakalan denmi tu bating narangi siqdan-siqdan tongan sia memallo-mallo. Tialling lan talinganna Dodeng, den dirundunan tu sanganna Dodeng lan bating iato. la tonnaperangi Dodeng tu bating, nakanassaimi kumua iatu toumbating iamo tu Lebonna dikkaq. Mangka narangi nasang Dodeng tu batingna Lebonna, kadake tongan nasaqding Dodeng, tumangiqmi siqdan-siqdan. (HCRT.1981:50)</i>	Dodeng itu sedang memukul mayang itu tiba-tiba terdengarlah suara tchisak-hisak meratap dan menangis sangat menyedihkan. Dodeng sempat menangkap di dalam ratapan itu di mana menyebut-nyebut nama Dodeng. Ketika Dodeng mendengar baik- baik hisakan tangisan itu dia yakin bahwa yang menangis itu adalah Lebonna. Dodeng setelah mendengar suara itu lalu menangis tersedu-sedu karena sedih dan perih hatinya. Dodeng setelah mendengar suara itu lalu menangis tersedu-sedu karena sedih dan perih hatinya (HCRT.1981:57)
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The narrative highlights the importance of empathy and compassion toward others. The sorrow experienced by Dodeng (or other figures in the broader narrative context) demonstrates how empathy can inspire noble actions, even amidst personal grief. This value serves as a reminder to care for others especially during times of suffering and to prioritize solidarity, which strengthens human bonds and fosters communal harmony.

4. Promise and Responsibility

Data 5

<i>Masaito mengkilalami tu Massudilalong, namaqkada lako Dodeng nakua, "Damupokadai te apa tarangi dio toq liang, lako indoqku sia ambeqku sia lako minda-minda, daq mupokadalenni. la tu aku Dodeng manassa tongan salamoq lenduq masussanna penangku ungkilalai tu basseki sola Lebonna kumua, "Pada tuo, padamateq, namasaiallomo tu Lebonna mate, raqda pariamamo rontaq tondon toba-tangna." (HCRT.1981:52)</i>	Setelah Massudilalong sadar kembali dia berkata kepada Dodeng, "Saya berharap kiranya Dodeng merahasiakan apa yang kita dengar tadi di pinggir liang kuburan terutama kepada ayah dan ibuku." Massudilalong menyampaikan Dodeng bahwa memang saya ini sudah bersalah besar karena kami telah bersumpah dan mengikrarkan janji bahwa Dia dan saya adalah sehidup semati. Jadi saya sekarang ini Dodeng sudah mulai mendekat akar perpisahan kita." Dalam hal ini Dodeng selalu menyimpan dalam hatinya akan kata-kata Massudilalong (HCRT.1981:59)
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The tale conveys the moral imperative of honoring promises and fulfilling responsibilities. Massudilalong's deep sense of guilt upon failing to return before Lebonna's death underscores the sacredness of vows in Torajan culture. A promise is not merely a verbal agreement, but a binding commitment that upholds trust, dignity, and social integrity. Keeping one's word prevents conflict, sustains relationships, and reinforces ethical accountability within the community.

5. Courage in Facing Adversity

Data 6

Tiada berapa orang-orang yang pergi menyabung nyawa di medan perang kembalilah semua, demikian pula halnya dengan Massudilalong. Ketika Massudilalong mendengar bahwa Lebonna telah meninggal karena menggantung diri, sangatlah susah hatinya dan merataplah jiwanya. Massudilalong menjadi pedih dan kecewa karena kekasihnya sudah lebih dahulu pergi, lebih-lebih jika ia merenungkan janjinya dengan si buah hatinya yang telah mendahuluinya bahwa, akan sehidup semati, satu lubang mereka berdua. (HCRT.1981:57)

Massudilalong exemplifies courage in confronting painful realities. His response teaches that bravery is not limited to physical endurance in war, but also includes the emotional strength to face loss and existential grief. Confronting sorrow with dignity reflects inner resilience and moral fortitude. This form of courage encourages individuals to face hardship with integrity, continue forward despite pain, and maintain spiritual strength. Such a message is particularly relevant for those enduring profound trials, reminding us of that mental resilience and emotional strength are essential for healing and survival.

Relevance to Contemporary Life

Ontology, derived from the Greek "ontos" (being) and "logos" (study), refers to the philosophical study of the nature of existence. According to Bakker (1992), ontology examines the fundamental structure of reality in its most universal and absolute sense.

The folktale Dodeng Lebonna imparts enduring moral values that remain significant in modern society such as loyalty, sacrifice, trust, and true love. These values offer meaningful implications for contemporary life:

1. Loyalty in Relationships: Lebonna's steadfast devotion, even unto death, reminds us of the enduring importance of commitment in romantic relationships particularly in an age marked by fleeting connections, digital distractions, and emotional uncertainty. Sacrifice and



2. **Personal Responsibility:** While Lebonna's sacrifice highlights the depth of love, it also raises critical questions about healthy boundaries in relationships. Her act calls for reflection on balancing self-giving with self-preservation, emphasizing that meaningful sacrifice should not compromise personal well-being.
3. **Trust and Betrayal:** The false news of Paerengan's death serves as a cautionary lesson on the fragility of trust. It underscores the necessity of honesty and transparency in maintaining relational integrity and preventing irreversible harm caused by deception.
4. **True Love and Principle-Based Commitment:** The eternal bond between Lebonna and Paerengan affirms that lasting relationships are built not only on emotion, but on shared principles, mutual respect, and enduring promises values crucial even in modern partnerships.
5. **Coping with Loss and Death:** The story invites reflection on how contemporary societies often avoid or suppress discussions about death and grief. Lebonna's choice, while extreme, prompts dialogue on acceptance, mourning rituals, and emotional preparedness in facing mortality.
6. **Awareness of Sacrificial Limits:** The extreme nature of Lebonna's sacrifice serves as a critical reminder that while commitment is noble, it must be tempered with rationality and self-care. Blind sacrifice may lead to tragic outcomes, suggesting the need for ethical discernment in love and duty.

CONCLUSION

The story of Dodeng Lebonna portrays profound sacrifice through the character of Lebonna, who chooses to end her life to fulfill her vow of eternal union with Paerengan. The central moral values embedded in this narrative loyalty, sacrifice, integrity, and true love highlight the power of commitment that transcends even death. Through her ultimate act, Lebonna demonstrates that love, when grounded in principle and faithfulness, can overcome all obstacles. However, the tale also reveals the darker side of blind sacrifice, warning of its potential to cause irreversible tragedy for individuals and communities. Thus, while selfless devotion is admirable, it must be balanced with self-preservation and psychological well-being. True sacrifice should not erase the self but elevate both the individual and the relationship. Furthermore, this folktale makes a significant contribution to philosophical linguistics, particularly in understanding how language functions as a vehicle for moral meaning. Through symbolic expressions, metaphors, and dialogues, the narrative conveys deep ethical truths that resonate across generations. Language



in Dodeng Lebonna does not merely narrate events it constructs moral significance around concepts such as love, betrayal, promise, and sacrifice. Philosophical analysis of language thus becomes essential in uncovering how cultural narratives shape our understanding of human values within specific socio-cultural contexts. In sum, Dodeng Lebonna is more than a local legend it is a timeless ethical narrative that continues to inform, challenge, and inspire. By preserving and analyzing such stories, we not only honor cultural heritage but also enrich contemporary discourse on morality, identity, and the human condition.

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