

Chapter 7

Cabbages or kings? Balinese rulers as articulators of worlds.

‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
‘To talk of many things:
Of shoes – and ships – and sealing wax –
Of cabbages – and kings –
And why the sea is boiling hot –
And whether pigs have wings.’
(Through the Looking-Glass, Ch. 4.)

A magical state

In an East End market, in which the goods are of notoriously dubious provenance, some years ago I came by chance across a remarkable document. The work, apparently in the form of an intellectual diary, is anonymous but appears to be genuine, judging in part from the stains on many of the pages. As there are no independent sources, and indeed a check in the usual reference works failed unambiguously to identify the society in question, one cannot verify the account according to strict scientific standards. However, apart from some passages which suggest the author was distressed at the time, he or she gives every impression of being an accurate and careful, even pedantic, observer. If but a small part of the account be true, what the author describes must be one of the most primitive, idolatrous, superstitious and irrational societies ever documented.

Consider the following extracts:

[*page torn*]...strikes the traveller to *Taerg Niatirb* is that such a theocracy still survives. There are two Great Gods, *Etats* and *Tekram*, whom the nobles worship and before whom the populace are obliged to grovel. At the heart of the capital (a refuse-littered, disorderly city) stands the ancient and magnificent Great Temple of *Tnemailrap*. There the high priests of the cult of *Etats*, Who is Eternal and Whose Grace is known by the suspension of time, engage in interminable rites of surpassing bizarreness. The prosperity and the indissoluble unity of the realm, *Detinu Modgnik*, they asseverate,

depends crucially upon these elaborate devotions, although even to a casual eye the common people are wretchedly poor and the country perpetually on the brink of fragmenting. So fearful are they of this harmony being disrupted that it is customary for travellers to be searched for magical potions on arrival by the dreaded *smotsuc*, who are vested with powers to search, detain and punish anyone attempting to visit the realm...

Ranged on either side of a sacred bag of animal hair, the priests proceed, after appropriate liturgies, to the great act of divination, *etabed*. This is most startling to the unacquainted observer; for it consists in the antiphonal howling and hurling of abuse by the priests on each side of the bag at those on the other, often in states of evident frenzy. After hours or even days, matters are concluded abruptly by the high priests filing out in two columns, following which the Will of *Etats* is announced as mystically manifested. Thereupon faithful acolytes, or *Stsilanruoj*, rush off to promulgate the Will to the long-suffering populace, who hurry under pain of severe and unnatural punishments to present offerings, often called *sexat* to temples throughout the land, all of which redounds to the prestige and self-importance of the high priesthood.

In vain have I sought to establish some sense, some basis in fact or to comprehend how so whimsical a mode of deliberation is evidence of the infallibility of *Etats*. The sensible observer is struck by the lack of bearing of the proceedings upon the judgement. For whatever transpires, by cosmic decree those who sit on the right are always right, and those who sit to the left are left out: the association working in the native dialect of *hsilgne*, much as it does in our own tongue...(p. 72-3).

The diary suggests however that, for all its majesty and proclaimed infallibility, there is another figure before which the state high priests themselves seem to stand in fear and awe.

Even *Etats* cannot defy *Tekram*, the Omniscient and Omnipotent, the Creator-Destroyer, who possesses the most powerful known magic, *Nosaer*. The initiates of the sect of *Tekram* are among the wealthiest people in *Taerg Niatirb* and, with the irrationality of primitive races, they treat such riches as evidence of the God's bounty to his devoted and willing subjects, who in thanks brag of their riches. The power of the sect of *Tekram* cannot be exaggerated. To it is attributed the success of the crops, trading ventures, even the survival of their rudimentary, dilapidated industries. Fame and fortune accrue to the many seers and diviners who prey upon the simple ignorance of their peers and claim to be able to foretell the Will of *Tekram*. No matter

how often the folk of *Taerg Niatirb* are proven wrong, it merely serves to confirm the omnipotence of *Tekram*. For their observations are always subordinated to their beliefs and are incorporated into their beliefs to explain and justify them. All contradictions and failures are treated as a temporary failure of faith, *cigol*, and the ultimate beneficence (*ecnerhoc*) of the universe... (p. 89).¹

From reason to ritual

Forgive my imposing the Tsew on you again. The reason for doing so is that European and American academics take it that their own societies and polities are somehow peculiarly rational and the self-evident yardstick against which to judge the irrationality, incompetence and backwardness others. This bias is built into the ideas of progress, development, civil society and so forth to the point that historically particular ideas are naturalized. This vision of modernity is also secular. Indeed it is partly defined by contrast to previous religious world visions (Inden n.d.[b]). Such a rationalist account depicts religion as embodying the superstitious, irrational and emotional, which should be effectively confined to the domain of the citizen's private life, as a matter of personal choice. Even utopias are stripped of their original religious rationales and made immediate and immanent as part of the project of national development (Inden 1995). In this chapter, I wish to question received wisdom about 'the traditional state' in Bali, by reviewing some recent Balinese commentaries about the pre-colonial polity and its relevance to discussion about the contemporary Indonesian state. The

¹ Even the most despised rejects in this society seem to devote much time to imitating such revelations. Elsewhere our anonymous author writes of

the dark, dank, dirty and unheated cloisters in which these pariahs (*scimedaca*) posture and pretend to the grand sacerdotalism of their superiors. Their shabby surrogate deity is *Egdelwonk*, whom they regularly worship in the rite of the *ranimes*, in which one of their number, as ill-kempt as the rest, is possessed by a spirit and mumbles what is commonly gibberish for up to an hour or more. With one or two evidently deranged exceptions, the rest of these misguided creatures seem to find this as tedious as do I, and promptly fall fast asleep. When the possession eventually grinds to an end, what passes for the grandees of this motley crew in order of seniority chant at length and to little discernible purpose other than enjoyment of the sound of their own voices. When the crowd finally wakes up, they declare *Egdelwonk* to be greater than ever, the rite an enormous success and repair to such hostelries as still welcome them, where they talk endlessly and drink themselves stupid over cheap beverages... (p. 98).

The author evidently had a low opinion of *scimedaca*. Either he bore a particular grudge to this group, or they must have been a very sad and sorry lot.

problem is that, for all its purported scholarly impartiality, the best known work on the Balinese state is riddled with ethnocentric presuppositions about what a polity is, or should be, about. In particular, religion and ritual are a problem to be explained. So, if we are to avoid imposing prejudices in the name of scholarship, then we need to be critical of what may appear natural, familiar and self-evident. The play upon the Tsew above is aimed to show how odd, irrational and contingent a set of practices is involved in that well-known polity, Britain.²

I take it that idea that the modern nation state as a coherent concept, and the epitome and culmination of ‘western’ rational thought about the polity, was finally put out of its misery in 1977 by Tony Skillen in his aptly titled book, *Ruling illusions* (1977; see also Skillen 1985). Many scholars of course still take it for granted that the nation state as northern Europeans and Americans imagine it is desirable (or inevitable) and that their writings sufficiently accurately represent its workings that other polities may be adequately depicted using the same presuppositions (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). By contrast what interests me here is the elusive Other of the principle of Reason in terms of which, in retrospect, the nation state has been explained, if not indeed constituted, namely Ritual.

The rulers of secular, modern states have claimed that because the modern state is based on the scientifically determined principles of political economy it is different in kind from traditional states, those in which ‘religion’ played a prominent role. That difference rests on a fundamental opposition which many modernists draw between notions of reason, which they take as the basis of political economy, and of emotion, which they construe as the basis of religion. According to secularists, reason and political economy are properties of both the public and private spheres, while emotion and religion are confined to the private (Inden n.d.[b]: 4).

Ritual, consonant with its purported properties, has however proven far more impervious to the blandishments of reason than proponents of reason would like. What is more, it retains a capacity, virtually inexplicable to the rationalist thesis, to infiltrate, undermine and subvert the modern nation state itself. This, if nothing else, I take to be the significance of our refractory diarist’s account of Taerg Niatirb.

² If the reader is still puzzled by who the Tsew are, she should read all the words in italics backwards. I owe this technique of making the familiar seem alien to Miner (1956).

Mark Twain once retorted, on reading his obituary in a newspaper, that the report of his death was exaggerated. I suspect the reports of the death of ritual as a part of public life in Europe and the States are equally so. At any rate, scholars are anxious to assure us that mystical ideas and practices surrounding power are alive and well and thriving in the Third World. For instance, in Indonesia, Benedict Anderson has discovered Javanese ideas of *kasektèn* flourishing within the national polity (1990 [1972]). In so doing he engages in Orientalism by conflating two historically discrete complexes of political practices. Similarly

when Anderson makes the colonial and the New Order states in Indonesia equivalent to one another (1983), thus eliding historically distinct entities...and speaks of nationalism as an ‘imagined’ (rather than some historically documentable and analyzable) ‘community’ existing in eternal opposition to the state, he is in effect saying that Indonesia will not have proper ‘history’ until the nation has destroyed the historical state, although both are everywhere else interdependent constituents of the modern world and its history (Day 1986: 3-4).

Many European and American scholars remain determined to imagine other peoples as ineluctably caught up in ritual (Anderson calls it an ‘obsession’, 1990: 26). This goes along with a similar determination – I am inclined to say ‘obsession’ – with insisting they are timeless and without history (see Chapter 6 for an analysis of the implications of so doing).

Anderson’s is not the only account to do so. Indeed Anderson acknowledges Clifford Geertz’s ‘brilliant analysis of Balinese cultural tradition’ (1990: 18, fn. 4; citing Geertz 1973f) as his model. Geertz has written at length on the pre-colonial state in Bali, which is at once an exemplary instance of the ‘traditional’ South East Asian state, the starting point for understanding the grip of culture on Balinese – and other Indonesian – minds and, because it is so different, a paradigm case to contrast with ‘our’ ideas about power and the polity.³ Ritual attained its apotheosis in Bali in

³ Both Anderson and Geertz draw sharp and largely spurious contrasts between an imagined Java or Bali and an equally imaginary West, otherwise deictically ‘we’, ‘us’. Quite where this West or we begins and ends is delightfully unclear. I would suggest a primary purpose of such arguments is to give to the mythical beast of the West (which is the epitome of rationality and the starting point for two World Wars this century) a coherence and unity which it otherwise largely lacks.

a theatre state in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience. The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages, and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power... The whole structure was based...primarily on ceremony and prestige, and it became...the more fragile and tenuous in actual political dominance and subordination the higher up the pyramid one went; so the other simile which suggests itself is of an intricate house of card, built up rank upon rank to a most tremulous peak (1980: 13, 16).⁴

He concludes

That Balinese politics, like everyone else's, including ours, was symbolic action does not imply, therefore, that it was all in the mind or consisted entirely of dances and incense... The dramas of the theatre state, mimetic of themselves, were, in the end, neither illusions nor lies, neither sleight of hand nor make-believe. They were what there was (1980: 136).

The priorities and necessities of real political power are not so much sidelined, as denied altogether. Whereas other polities, like say Britain, use spectacle in the service of maintaining power, Balinese did the reverse – or so we are told.⁵ Such blatant embracing of ritual and refusal of reason could not, of course, last and, with magnificent hindsight, Geertz is able to explain how Balinese states were unable to stand up to political will and might of the modern Dutch. What there was was not enough to survive. (The argument does rather less well at explaining how Bali ran successful slaving and colonial polities, or withstood the Dutch for so long.)

⁴ Geertz has obviously not been stirred, still less shaken, in his vision because he repeats his own earlier writings (1973g: 335 [1967]) virtually verbatim. Nor does he view ritual as having disappeared as the driving force of Balinese public life (see e.g. 1973f: 398-411; 1983c: 62-64).

⁵ The argument rests more on the whirlwind of Geertz's prose than any sustained and critical analysis of the voluminous historical sources. For this reason, Geertz's account has been very vulnerable to subsequent, more scholarly studies (Wiener 1995a; Schulte Nordholt 1996).

Geertz's conclusion should not be taken to suggest that he is attempting to transcend the dichotomies of the expressive versus the instrumental, nor the symbolic versus the real. The book's structure moves, as Geertz's programme makes clear, from 'the hard surfaces of life – with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained' (1973c: 30) to what rests on them. The fulcrum by means of which Geertz proposes to shift our vision of the Balinese polity, the implicit criterion according to which he contrasts the traditional Balinese state to modern western polities (as if these shared a common essence) remains firmly reason. Just as they have literally become in the tourist trade, Balinese are reduced to waiters at the papal feast of reason and the flow of soul of what was once their lives.

On at least one Balinese account, 'ritual', if one must use the word, is a very effective means of articulating different and partly irreconcilable groups, interests and ideas about the nature and working of power in the world and beyond. The ruler, or better the court, was not the passive instantiation of a transcendental ideal, but a complex agent in the continual reworking of the polity (on complex agency, see Hobart 1990b; Inden 1990: 22-36). Far from being a timeless ideal world, in which anything that did not fit their closed vision had to be reinterpreted as part of the pattern, ignored, 'mystified' or drowned out through the voice of endlessly repeated ceremonial, ritual provided a frame of reference and action, through which rulers and their polities organized their lives, and addressed uncertainties and contingencies. I take it however that there is no single encompassing interpretation, to which all Balinese subscribed, but different, potentially contradictory accounts on different occasions. What interests me particularly is how the past is brought into service to comment on the present, here the New Order régime of President Soeharto. So I shall consider in some detail one theatre play, which is reasonably typical of what was being broadcast on local television and performed in theatre at the end of the 1980s, in part because the actors in question featured regularly. The play is interesting because it involves a discussion of the nature of the polity – actors imagining pre-colonial Bali as a commentary on contemporary Indonesia. The discussion also clearly indicated how Balinese ideas about ritual differ in kind from their western academic commentators. A central theme of the play was how kings, or courts, were agents of articulation through ritual.⁶

⁶ There is evidently a qualitative difference between what the Balinese actors were trying to do and the aims of anthropologists. Geertz is explicit that he is writing a

As articulation has a number of senses, let me clarify what I mean by that. As I indicated in the Introduction, I understand articulation as not simply being about uttering or bringing together, but about linking events, actions, relationships and ideas in certain ways under particular circumstances. To the extent that social action is not the mechanical reproduction of some abstract, essential entity, ‘society’ (Laclau 1990b), but rather society is the outcome of powerful or authoritative articulations, articulation becomes an important socially constitutive practice. Such practices however always take place in the context of previous, and often rival, articulations and are themselves subject to subsequent counter-articulation. Articulation, developed as a way of thinking about social action, requires us at once to specify and to cut across conventional analytical distinctions. Articulating as a practice is inevitably situated: an agent articulates some set of events or state of affairs *as* something to a particular audience on a given occasion for one or more purposes. Articulation is therefore specific. It is at once the process by which general categories and ideas are instantiated and also the means by which events and ideas are linked and made general.⁷ At the same time, articulation is, if you like, both a material and a mental practice. I would prefer though to avoid the dichotomy: any act of articulating takes place under specific material conditions and involves technological practices in an attempt to mediate and so transform what went before.⁸

Suddenly ritual and theatre attain a new significance. Ritual emerges as a key means to try to establish, reiterate or consolidate particular articulations as authoritative, or even as beyond question and challenge.

history of Bali for ‘us’, using second- or third-hand generalized accounts, which he reprocesses. Balinese, by contrast, are engaged in representing their past to themselves in the present for a present and future purpose, which raises questions about their uses of history.

⁷ Articulation therefore turns representation into a situated act. This develops further Goodman’s idea that representing is always an act of transforming, because you represent something *as* something else (1968), a point argued in Chapters 5 & 6. A problem of post-structuralist writing is that in stressing the contingent and situated, it might seem to give up any hope of explanation or addressing general issues. This need not be so, for Hallward (2000) has produced an interesting argument about the difference between being singular and being specific in contemporary theorizing. Articulation, I think, is a means of relating the situated and specific to the general.

⁸ Evidently some conservative articulations appear precisely to deny change by reiterating the continuity of the *status quo*. To claim things are unchanging in an under-determined and partly contingent world is however to engage in a negative transformation.

Theatre, by contrast, is the occasion when articulations may be rehearsed, but also thought about, interrogated and reviewed critically.⁹ It follows that talking about ritual and power in theatre becomes a particularly interesting commentative activity. ‘Traditional’ media, like theatre, contemporary media like television, the mix of the two as in televising theatre, and ritual are then not simply dismissible as entertainment and symbolic communication or some such respectively, but as crucial means by which articulations are made, questioned, revised and overthrown.

Among the most authoritative articulations are the public pronouncements of experts, especially in places where the subjects in question are often not in a position to enunciate about themselves, but must to some degree accept, or even act upon, enunciations made about them, however ill-conceived or ill-informed.¹⁰ The writings of few scholars have had as much impact both on a broad academic public and on the people being written about as Clifford Geertz’s writing on Indonesia, especially on Java and Bali. So, to return to the theme of this chapter, it is a matter of some seriousness that between Geertz’s image of Bali and Balinese representations of themselves to themselves there is a disjuncture. At issue is the question of who gets to articulate whom, on what grounds?

Geertz’s analysis, for all his disclaimers, presupposes a dichotomy between society (including economics and politics) working by means of ‘causal-functional integration’ and culture (including the ritual and symbolic) characterized by ‘logico-meaningful integration’ ([1957] 1973h: 145; on the pervasiveness of this dichotomy in Geertz’s writings on Bali, see Guermonprez 1990). More fundamentally, the narrative genre within which he is writing is secular. Geertz does not and cannot recognize, still less take seriously, the possibility that those he writes about do not treat power and its management as ultimately purely secular matters (nor for that matter, ultimately religious or ‘mystical’ either, the mistake which Anderson makes). As Margaret Wiener has cogently argued (1995a), Balinese distinguish the world for purposes of action into what is manifest, *sakala*, and so, in principle, more or less knowable, and what is not manifest, *niskala*. What one can know with any certainty about events which are *niskala* is limited. So, from the

⁹ The title of Victor Turner’s late book, *From ritual to theatre* (1982) reflecting on the shift in his interests from ritual to theatre, involves the recognition that ritual is never as closed an enunciation as its proponents would like to claim.

¹⁰ Drawing on the work of Ron Inden, I discuss some of the things which may be at issue in Chapter 5, *As they like it*.

point of view of humans, what is *niskala* commonly appears as contingent, in the sense that it irrupts in the manifest world at times in unexpected, unpredictable and partly uncontrollable ways. To the extent that religion provides a way of conceiving of powers and processes which humans incompletely understand (Burrige 1969), one way in which you can consider rites is as practices aimed at engaging such powers and processes.¹¹ There is precious little in common between Geertz's rendition of that timeless and imaginary unitary entity 'the traditional Balinese state' and Balinese understandings of their own past and present practices. Just how far must the analyst's interpretation directly contradict the understandings of the people in question before the interpretation becomes suspect?

Imagined communication

Let me briefly dispense with the notion of ritual as it is usually understood by anthropologists. Another distinguished anthropologist, Stanley Tambiah, some years ago invoked a notion of ritual (1985) which, whatever the disagreement over details, shares much in common with Clifford Geertz (1966) and yet another distinguished anthropologist, Maurice Bloch (1989). In the finest traditions of academic essentializing and hegemony, they all presume to give us a universal account of what ritual is and what it does, independent of all cultural or historically constituted differences and oblivious to the participants' commentaries on their own activities. It is not a promising way to start to fight one's way out of the paper bag of intellectual imperialism.

Tambiah's working definition of ritual is 'a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication' (1985: 128).¹² Further, ritual is '*conventionalized* action' and, as such

rituals are not designed or meant to express the intentions, emotions, and states of mind of individuals in a direct, spontaneous, and 'natural' way. Cultural elaboration of codes consists in the

¹¹ I avoid the word 'control' here, both for reasons discussed in Hobart (1990a), and because in this context it falls into the trap of seeing contingencies as something exclusively negative and dangerous to be contained, limited, bound, rather than as opportunities to achieve the otherwise impossible, something new, something different.

¹² As I argue in the Introduction, to define symbols, and so symbolic communication, as culturally constructed is largely tautologous, because culture is usually defined semiotically in the first place.

distancing from such spontaneous and intentional expressions because spontaneity and intentionality are, or can be, contingent, labile, circumstantial, even incoherent or disordered (1985: 132, emphasis in the original).

Like W.S. Gilbert's minstrel, it is

A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby. (The Mikado I.)

Tambiah's and similar accounts presume an ontology cluttered with essences: symbols, communication, intentions, emotions, states of mind, spontaneity, nature. The term 'ritual' itself is a fine example of an abstract substance, a distillation from practices, or bits of practices, for which the anthropologist can find no immediate instrumental rationale.¹³ Little wonder ritual emerges as a universal essence, designed performatively to essentialize the world around it by all manner of ingenious means (see e.g. Bloch 1974).

Anyway, how does Tambiah know what rituals are 'designed' or 'meant' to do?¹⁴ We are left to presume something to the effect that anonymous, long-forgotten persons in each society, 'abstract individuals', have decided that it shall be thus, or that some other transcendental agent – society, culture, structure, the mind – has been busy at work. Culture emerges as the sugar-coated, symbolic icing on 'the hard surfaces of life', or ritual as the straight-jacket on ordinary, pre-cultural human 'spontaneous' experience. It is a familiar and dreary tale.

¹³ The term 'ritual' is so overlaid with dubious connotations that I prefer to avoid it, except perhaps where it is specified as the English gloss of a vernacular commentative word or phrase. 'Rites' at least avoids imputing the existence of an abstract substance. Balinese, who eschew such substances, specify the purpose of the activity: *odalan* 'birthday' (often of a deity), *ngabèn* 'cremation' and so forth. The two more general terms they use, *karya* and *upacara*, do not apply exclusively to rites. In fact *karya* is the usual High Balinese for 'work', what should properly be done. The sense of both words is close to their Old Javanese homonyms. *Karya* is 'work to be done, duty, religious performance, feast; enterprise'; *upacara* is 'the proper conduct of rites, etiquette', and also 'requisites, accessories, paraphernalia, the proper adornments' (Zoetmulder 1983: 813, 2128). Both have strong practical overtones.

¹⁴ Tambiah attributes to rituals an essential intentionality, the intention of being indirectly intentional. It is designed to instantiate in actuality the dichotomies the writer draws analytically between the constructed (or coded) and the spontaneous, or between the ordered and the contingent.

Long before Tambiah conflated the world and discourse, Goodman had pointed out that he was not alone.

Philosophers sometimes mistake features of discourse for features of the subject of discourse...Coherence is a characteristic of descriptions, not of the world (1972: 24).

Disorder is no more an inherent property of reality than is order, spontaneity or naturalness (Collingwood 1945).

There are several problems of assuming that there is an essentially discriminable class of phenomena, ritual, and that this class is distinguished by a special mode of communication. For a start, it elevates one strand of a historically particular phase of western European discourse, Romanticism to the status of universal truth and ignores both that, as a theory of signification, it is a latecomer (Todorov 1982) and contested (e.g. Sperber 1975). The idea that rituals communicate tends to be circular. Communication is what communities ideally do, notably when their members engage in communion, which is a rite. Symbolic communication assumes people to share broadly similar attitudes to symbols. However they must also share not only a common subjectivity, but be able to communicate this intersubjectively. Quite how you establish the communicability of this subjectivity without a further circularity is unclear. The catch, of course, is that it is the analyst who determines what is symbolic as against practical communication, and what constitutes subjectivity in his or her own terms. As Wallace noted, not only does one not need to assume humans communicate meanings to one another, but that social interaction would be largely impossible if they did (1961: 29-44). As I am interested in how Balinese constitute themselves as subjects (for want of a better word), I cannot assume their subjectivity without both *petitio principii* and ethnocentrism.

The shreds and patches' nature of the argument become evident when it comes to the *ad hoc* explanations for the massive redundancy of treating ritual as essentially communicative. Much of the message gets lost each time due to 'noise'. Natives, believers and such like are so stupid that they have to tell themselves something endlessly each time before they miss the point anyway. You can never assert authority too often. Were we instead to consider what Balinese say, and imply, about the matter, the redundancy vanishes. And we are left with the serious question of what exactly it is that the performance of rites addresses and,

indeed, whether there is any one thing which such performances are about for all people at all times.

The entire analysis disinters a tired Cartesian dichotomy of body versus mind. Or else it reifies the Kantian distinction of hypothetical and categorical imperatives into an opposition between the instrumental versus expressive, the efficacious versus the symbolic, and so to spawn a seemingly endless series of dichotomies.¹⁵ The argument works by a continual deferment from one half of the dichotomy to the other and by suggesting a transitivity between oppositions of like ancestry. One does not have to accept Derrida's entire work to see that this looks something suspiciously like the workings of *différance*.

A Balinese representation of a rite

Rather than generalize about the nature of ritual in Bali, I propose to look at an actual set of practices. Instead of ignoring what Balinese said about their own practices, I shall consider how they represented a particular rite to themselves on one actual occasion. In Geertz's liturgy of the forms of court ceremonialism, he lists temple dedications and pilgrimages. I propose to look at what Balinese actually had to say in a play about the pilgrimage of the Prince of Nusa Penida, a small island off Bali. In the play the prince had gone around the temples of Bali praying for a son and heir. The play deals with the fulfilment of his vow to dedicate a temple when his prayer was answered. I do not assume that what was said and done in the piece exemplifies any essential set of concepts, beliefs, values or underlying meanings. On the contrary, I start from the position that interpretations are underdetermined by facts and that there are different ways in which Balinese explain and interpret their own practices. The degree and kind of similarity between different interpretive practices I take to be at least in part an empirical matter.¹⁶

¹⁵ Among these are: ordinary behaviour: ritual behaviour (Tambiah 1985: 132); symbol: reality; expression: instrumentality (communicative action: practical action, shades of Habermas 1984, 1987); convention : nature; spontaneity : distance (control); tradition : progress (and its alter (schizoid) ego authority : creativity, Bloch 1974).

¹⁶ I am not however suggesting that anthropology can, or should, consist simply of reporting peoples' acts and their commentaries on these acts. In translating the play, in selecting parts of the commentaries, in commenting critically on what happened, I am relating Balinese discursive practices to contemporary academic ones. What I consider incorrect is to confuse or conflate the two. They are, of course, related because, even though they live on an island, Balinese have not been isolated from the world. Nor is my account without conditions of, and consequences for, power. Not least is my

The obvious question arises of how I reach my own translation and interpretation of the play. Over several weeks I went through the original audio tape of the play, which I had recorded live, with a group of villagers, including two actors, all of whom had attended the performance.¹⁷ I then worked through the tape once more with different people. These consisted of the actress who played the prince; the actor who played the senior servant (the Panasar, the anchor role); a group of village males; and, separately, a group of women from the village. Evidently the translation and comments are mine but, unless indicated otherwise, they draw upon extended commentaries from these different Balinese sources.

With no more ado, let me turn to extracts from the play. It was performed on the night of 11-12th. March 1989 in the research village of Tengahpadang in South Central Bali, during a festival at a local temple, Pura Duru Bingin, one of its deities being famous for granting the boon of children to supplicants. A local prince had promised to pay for a performance of *Prèmbon*¹⁸, if his prayer for a son were answered. The performers were members of the local station of Indonesian State Radio and professional and well known actors. The plot centred around the Prince of Nusa Penida, Sri Aji Palaka, building a temple and organizing its dedication, to fulfil his own vow. The first extract is from the opening scene in which a court retainer, the Panasar and his younger brother, Wijil set the scene. It starts after the Panasar has explained how the island of Nusa Penida (here just Nusa) has thrived under its wise king. There is a deliberate, but implicit, comparison with the then President of Indonesia, Soeharto, which is not so much flattery as setting the standard by which all rulers are to be judged. Extracts 2 & 3 are from the next scene, when the two servants attend their prince and ask

privileged status as 'foreign scholar', which enabled me to elicit commentaries from audience and actors, and to write for a broad readership, not available to Balinese themselves. The writing itself poses dilemmas. As Johannes Fabian has pointed out, such theatre is a form of political criticism under conditions of censorship; and writing about it potentially exposes the performers to danger (1991b).

¹⁷ Transcription is, of course, itself a major interpretive act. The audio tape was transcribed by a school teacher, Wayan Suardana, who was working for me. All ensuing discussions however were based on listening to the tape, which resulted in successive modifications to the original transcript. Unsurprisingly, professional actors (both performers and members of the audience) were the most acute at hearing what was actually said.

¹⁸ *Prèmbon* is a genre of partly sung theatre by actor-dancers, some but not all of whom are masked. Otherwise it resembles romantic opera, *Arja* (for an account, see de Zoete & Spies 1938).

him to explain the importance of rites. Extracts 4 and 5 are from the penultimate and last scenes of the play, when the prince is making ready to oversee the rite. The Old Village Head in Extract 4 happens also to be the father of the prince's low caste wife (Luh Wedani).

Notes

The original performance was in Balinese, see the end notes. Where I have used the Balinese original, or a Balinese word, in the text, it is italicized. Words in bold type are *kawi* (or Old Javanese), a literary register of Balinese; Words underlined are Indonesian; Words both bold and italicized are from the special vocabulary of actors. Parentheses are mine. For ease of reading and explication I have cut out a few brief exchanges which do not bear directly on the matter under discussion. The excisions are indicated by [...]. Statements in quotation marks are where the servants speak on behalf of the king, as if using his words.

Extract 1: The purpose of rites¹

- Wijil:* Everyone who is ruled by Sri Aji Palaka in the land of Nusa is free to follow their own religion.
- Panasar:* What is right should be taught and broadcast to the whole of society.
- Wijil:* The basis of the religion we share is in ideas about reality. Having ideas about reality in itself doesn't produce results though. There should be a moral code to implement those ideas.¹⁹
- Panasar:* That's not yet enough.
- Wijil:* That's not yet all that's necessary. There should be art (here, theatre) and there's something else, which we call 'rites'.
- Panasar:* That's so.
- Wijil:* (*He starts a folk etymological analysis of the word 'upacara', ceremonies.*) What's the significance of 'upa'?

¹⁹ The word he uses, **tattwa**, tends these days to be glossed as 'philosophy', Indonesian filosofat. The commentators considered it here to be referring more specifically to the background to religious doctrine (**agama**). The word is from Sanskrit and *kawi*. **Tattwa** is "thatness", what makes something what it really is, being, reality; the essential, the actual (as contrasted with the apparent or incidental); the various categories of reality according to Samkhya doctrine; doctrine concerning reality, philosophy; the writings containing this doctrine' (Zoetmulder 1983: 1962-63).

- Panasar:* What does it mean?
Wijil: ‘*Upa*’ resembles what we call ‘energy’ (effort), ‘*cara*’ means ‘each to his own’. The ways we achieve it are different, but the aim for all of us is to serve the Almighty.²⁰
- Panasar:* Oh!
Wijil: This is the reason there are acts of worship (*yadnya*).²¹ That is what religion in Nusa is about. We are both astonished at – what’s the word? – at our Lord’s **organizing ability**. Acts of worship have their origin in the Three Obligations (**Tri Rena**).
- Panasar:* There are three debts.
Wijil: There are three. Gratitude is due because of God’s grace, which is why one can never be free of the debt. This is the Three Causes of Well-Being (**Tri Hita Karana**).
- Panasar:* These three should properly be articulated.
Wijil: Properly be articulated with one another.²²

The extract began with a clear statement that the ruler actively tolerates diversity of religious affiliation, a diversity which an able king can encompass and articulate.²³ Coming after a description of a well-ruled polity, the point was not accidental. As the village commentators stressed, it is difficult enough to rule fairly and well a people whose interests are basically congruous. How much harder then is it to rule justly a real country in which the interests and needs of different groups are almost invariably partly incompatible and at times antagonistic? The test is not whether a ruler can run a polity by favouring various interests, whether based on class, race, religion or whatever, at the expense of others. The criticism here, initially implicit later explicit, was that that is precisely what the New Order régime consistently did as the means of

²⁰ ‘Each to his own’ is gloss of the Balinese proverb: ‘*Bina paksa bina paksi*’, ‘different birds, different foods’. Its sense is similar to the French ‘*Chacun a son gout*’ (Each person has his own taste), or the German ‘*Jedes Tierchen sein Pläsirchen*’ (Every little animal its little pleasure).

²¹ *Yadnya*, which I have given as ‘acts of worship’ is a wide-ranging term.

²² *Wijil* is affirming (*ngawiaktiang*) the truth of what the *Panasar* has said. The Balinese word is *adung*, which connotes being compatible, commensurable, appropriately adapted. It is the root of a whole range of words for deliberate, discuss with the aim of reaching agreement, reconcile, accommodate, adjust, adapt, bring together into a single coherent entity or frame of reference. So its senses overlap with the notion of articulation.

²³ In the context of the play, it is also admonitory advice (*panglèmèk*) that the members of no religious group should have exclusive rights to worship, a reference to Balinese sensitivities to what they perceived as the encroachment of Islam.

staying in power.²⁴ The test of that rare personage, a good ruler, is whether he or she can address and balance fairly these antagonisms.²⁵

Wijil then turned the discussion explicitly to religion. Almost as if answering those western scholars who treat religion and ritual as some ‘cultural’ or semiotic superstructure divorced from, and precariously perched on top of ‘the hard surfaces of life’, he stressed that its basis is in what is real. One cannot separate the mental or symbolic from the material and practical. Religion consists in practices which produce tangible results. Theory without practice is vacuous (*gabeng*).²⁶ Wijil continued to discuss how one puts ideas into practice. Theatre is one form, **upacara** are another. He gives the etymology as the work of serving Divinity, each in his or her own way and to their own ends; such that rites provide a means of articulating the diverse, potentially incompatible, interests of different people and groups.

How anthropologists reach their interpretations of practices is often arcane, and rarely explained, as I note in the Introduction. My

²⁴ A repeated phrase in the play was ‘the temples in Nusa are finished’ (*Telah pura di Nusa*). In context it sounded at first as though the reference is to the prince having exhaustively visited all the temples to pray for an heir. This was the reading that the male commentators made. When I noted that the phrase was repeated several times and suggested a quite different interpretation, they agreed that it fitted, but doubted that was what the actors had intended. I discussed this subsequently with two of the actors, who immediately confirmed that they had indeed been referring to the run-down state of many of Bali’s great temples. They recognized that they were indicting government policy, which provided funds for religious purposes, in their view inappropriately discriminatory in favour of Islam and against Hinduism. These and other criticisms, notably discrimination against the poor, make it clear that the actors were developing a sustained critique of government by partiality.

²⁵ ‘Antagonism’ I use in a broad sense to refer to the underlying oppositions and contradictions, which are part of any polity. Following Laclau & Mouffe (1985: 93-148) and Laclau (1990a), my concern is to avoid being caught a Eurocentric dichotomy between opposition as a real relationship as against contradiction, which is logical. Theoretically, antagonisms are what prevent any social or political structure from working itself out to completion, and so are the limits of attempts to objectify any given structure. ‘Antagonism, as the negation of a given order is, quite simply, the limit of that order, and not the moment of a broader totality’ (Laclau & Mouffe 1995: 126). Every polity has its distinct antagonisms, which its intellectuals struggle to identify. What is significant here is that it is Balinese actors who are doing so to a large and mixed audience.

²⁶ Obviously, had I translated **tattwa** as ‘philosophy’ throughout, the actor might have appeared to be talking about the basis of religion being in philosophy. However that is a rather western academic conception of philosophy as properly about ideas independent of their objects. Not only is **tattwa** arguably about what is actual, but that is how the commentators certainly took it, as does the actor from his subsequent remarks.

interpretation of the king as organizer and articulator of diverse interests and groups in the manifest and non-manifest worlds rests not on an elaborate theory of ‘symbology’ (Geertz 1980: 104-20), but upon what, by almost any translation, Balinese themselves stated publicly. For Wijil promptly linked the diversity of acts of worship to the prince’s skill at organizing (*pikamkam*, on which more below). Fairly obviously, the ability to organize a great ceremony and bring it to a successful conclusion involves not just a command of resources and logistics. It requires the capacity to create trust in others, to foster a vision in which they can appreciate that they are a valuable part, and to get them actively to participate throughout. Finally, it requires that intangible quality: actually succeeding in doing what you set out to do. The contrast with ideas of management promulgated by the New Right could hardly be starker, as the actors expatiated as the play developed.

Wijil then linked three sets of dogmas, which had recently been promoted by the Parisada Hindu Dharma, the Administrative Council for Balinese Hinduism. The first, the **Tri Rena**, the Three Obligations, is the debt of our lives to Divinity, the debt of honour to our forefathers, and the debt of knowledge to teachers (*rsi*). Wijil then related these to the **Tri Hita Karana**, the Three Causes of Well Being, the three elements, which make possible the emergence of good. In humans these constitute spirit which enables humans to live; capacities in the form of *bayu sabda idep*, energy, speech and thought; and the body composed of the **pancamahabhuta**. In the universe these constitute **paramatma**, Divinity as pervading everything; energy in 1,001 forms (e.g. electricity, planetary motion, tides etc.); and the totality of matter (once again, the **pancamahabhuta**, the elements of which all matter is composed). The five kinds of acts of worship (*yadnya*, *kawi* & Sanskrit **yajna**) are the means of acknowledging, or repaying, the debts. They centre on three sites: temples, homes and humans themselves. Humans must constitute and look after each appropriately. In each case, a great deal of organization is required to direct effort to articulate diverse concerns, sites and subjects.

Already, on this account, ritual might be ‘conventionalized action’, in the sense that any practice is. However, to classify it simply as ‘a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication’ (as did Tambiah 1985: 128) is to overlook not only the complex ways in which Balinese now relate rites to their lives. The problem lies largely with anthropologists’ determination to find some essential, originary purpose or cause of rites, which conveniently determines their authentic

meaning. It is, I suggest, far more interesting to consider how people imagine, and what they do, with traces of previous practices.

Extract 2: the subjects of ritesⁱⁱ

- Prince:* (Sings.) Praise God. [...]
Wijil: (Paraphrasing the prince at length) ‘Don’t fool around when working. Don’t listen to idle speech (denigrating the importance of performing ceremonies). It is rites I am speaking of. You should never be finished with them. There is none other, as you mentioned earlier, than God.’ ... (There follows a detailed specification of rites appropriate to the dead, then to ghosts (*buta*) and spirits (*kala*).)
- Prince:* (Sings.) In the world, effort can bring about **good deeds**. The **manifest** and **non-manifest worlds** are really... (what is important and inseparable).
- Wijil:* Yes! There’s a lot to that. (Paraphrasing (*ngartiang*) the prince’s words.) ‘My dear chap, if you are going to perform rites to the unseen world, if you do not do so in this world first, you can’t succeed’.²⁷
- Panasar:* That’s so.
Wijil: Ceremonies (to) the unseen world require effort first. You require good deeds first.²⁸
- Prince:* So the world will be prosperous.
Wijil: Lord, Lord. Yes.
Panasar: That is why good actions in this world and the other (depend) of course **on the proper conduct of He who commands the world** (i.e. the king).

This extract begins with the appearance of the prince on stage. Significantly, throughout the play the servants do not translate the words of the prince (which are almost exclusively in *kawi*), but elaborate upon them. I have argued elsewhere (1990b) that it may well be mistaken to focus, as does for instance Geertz, on the figure of the king to the exclusion of the court, which acts as a complex, differentiated agent. It

²⁷ Rites are of this world, only their result is immaterial, **niskala**. It is not just the rite, which takes place in the manifest world, but also all the organization and agreement needed to complete a ceremony. If this is not properly attended to there are quarrels, which happens quite often.

²⁸ You cannot perform ceremonies without work first!

is not the prince alone who is the agent that organizes the dedication of the temple. As the play makes clear, it is never even conceived that the prince could do this without the dedicated activity of his wife, his close retainers and lesser local functionaries, here represented by a village head and an old villager. This last is from a lineage whose hereditary job it is to oversee and take on key tasks (*ngukuhin*, to make the work firm, solid). Similarly, in this play as in others, the servants are not mere mouthpieces of the prince, but are partly agents in their own right in elaborating and developing statements made by the prince. The puzzle is less about the strange nature of Balinese (and, by extension, other South East Asian and ‘oriental’ ideas) of leadership and power than it is about why anthropologists are so determined to foist a strange and distinctly ethnocentric idea of agency upon their subjects of study.²⁹

Just before the extract begins, the two servants asked the prince what they should do in order that their lives should not be wasted. He replied that they should praise God. Wijil took this as referring to two things. First, one should not to be dilatory when taking part in the work for religious festivals. Second, one should not listen to the sort of people who say that making a living is more important than performing rites. (From what I can judge, this is less a reference to any organized contemporary secularism in Bali than it is to the recognized danger of peoples’ effort going increasingly into making money with the massive growth of the tourist and art industries.) The centrality of God is absolute and the success of all activities hinges upon this. Besides devotion to Divinity, humans should perform acts of offering.³⁰ The prince referred to rites to demons or the elements, and to the dead. The *Panasar* and Wijil specified what this was using immediate examples, which had taken place during the previous week. The most important was Panca Wali Krama, a very large set of rites held in the ‘central temple’ of Besakih as a preamble to *déwayadnya* in the form of *Batara Turun Kabeh*, the Descent of all the Gods. Significantly the actors stated explicitly that this was for prosperity of whole country. In other

²⁹ The vision of the individual-as-agent has, of course, a long history of (ritual?) celebration, exemplified nicely by that most American of culture industries, Hollywood, where complex historical and social processes are reduced to, and identified with, the actions of heroes. The extraordinary closure and narrative simplification necessary to credit a single individual with agency over world-historical processes continues to permeate supposedly impartial academic judgement.

³⁰ Of the five kinds of *yadnya*, apart from those to Divinity (*déwayadnya*), there are also *resiyadnya*, rites for priests (not discussed here); *pitrayadnya*, rites for the dead; *butayadnya*, rites to demons or element(al)s; and lastly *manusayadnya*, rites for the living.

words, it was presented as neither some purely spiritual activity, nor exclusively for the well being of one religious community.

The actors also demonstrate the vacuity of the kinds of dualism popular in anthropological interpretations of Bali, notably here the dichotomy between the real (objective, practical, effective) and symbolic (subjective, cultural, imaginary, in need of explanation). A repeated theme of the play is that this does not fit Balinese practice, in which the reality and power of Divinity is crucial. So action in both the manifest (*sakala*) and non-manifest (*niskala*) worlds is inseparable, as the prince promptly spells out.³¹ For humans, as primarily part of the manifest world, action must start there. A major Balinese ceremony requires a vast range of activities, skills and people to be co-ordinated, which, as the Panasar points out, is why success depends upon the king.

Extract 3: Organizing the participantsⁱⁱⁱ

- Wijil:* When taking on such work, one needs to be **thoughtful**. To be efficacious (one must fit in with) the place, occasion and circumstance.
- Panasar:* Circumstances. [...]
- Prince:* **The high priests** also take part.
- Wijil:* That's as it should be.
- Panasar:* (*Sings.*) (If led effectively) **the populace** will be prepared to participate.
- Prince:* (*Sings but inaudibly.*)
- Wijil:* Well.
- Panasar:* How's that?
- Wijil:* My dear chap. If one performs rites, there are three (tasks), which are called **the Three Key Roles (Tri Manggalaning Yajna)** in ritual.
- Panasar:* Ah! **The Three Key Roles**. First?
- Wijil:* There is the person who does the work of organizing the ceremony, the person who makes the offering.
- Panasar:* Second?
- Wijil:* There is the person who takes responsibility for (the work), the offering expert and society working for the common good.

³¹ As I indicate in Chapter 3, the distinction between *niskala* and *sakala* is not a dichotomy, because the non-manifest permeates the manifest and what is manifest to one person (i.e. what they are thinking) is not manifest to another.

- Panasar:* Yes, and third?
- Wijil:* There is the **high priest**, who is known as **spiritual teacher**, upon whom it depends to bring the results about (**ngelarang phalasraya**), who completes the ceremony.³²
- Panasar:* There should be all three. Every time one carries out work, there should be the **Three Key Roles**.
- Wijil:* That is why Hinduism teaches there are steps. Even if there are high priests, even if there are offering specialists, (if) there are no people to take on the work, it still won't work out right.
- Panasar:* Whoever you talk it over with (will say the same). Isn't that so?
- Wijil:* Ask! That is why we ask. (So one can understand what lies behind performing rites.)
- Prince:* (*Sings.*) Don't run about aimlessly.
- Wijil:* Don't be confused.
- Panasar:* Don't go crashing about all over the place in confusion (but direct your thoughts to the practice of religion).

Just before this extract starts, the actors had listed the ranks of officials necessary to the execution of such an undertaking.³³ The servants then returned to the favourite theatrical theme of specifying the qualities required of a leader. First any leader should have *lokika* (or *pangunadika*) 'thoughtfulness'.³⁴ *Lokika* is a vital quality of a successful organizer, a theme upon which both commentators and actors waxed lyric. For villagers, it is being thoughtful about the future and about others. To invite people to work on your ricefields and not give them food and drink for hours is not to have (*pang*)*lokika*. If leaders are, or have, *lokika*, they fit the tasks to the people according to what they are good at and enjoy. A leader who is not fully familiar with the kinds and degrees of capability of those under his command, what must be done, the resources available, or who fails to consider possible courses

³² The village commentators, with whom I went through the play in detail, explained **phalasraya** to me as like making an electrical contact, here to the non-manifest (**niskala**).

³³ Compare what the actors said with Geertz's *ex cathedra* pronouncement (1980: 132): 'as there was virtually no staff there were virtually no officials'.

³⁴ The *kawi* term *lokika* (Sanskrit *laukika*) refers to 'worldly, belonging to ordinary life; ordinary men (opposed to the learned or initiated), the customary forms, how to behave, etiquette', Zoetmulder 1982: 1044). The more elegant term is *pangunadika* (or *pangunakika*, cf. *kawi unadhika* 'the pros and cons (of an action), what to do or what not to do', Zoetmulder 1982: 2119). In the play a synonym of this quality is *siksa* or *iksa* 'learning; skill; instruction'.

of action before deciding on the most appropriate, lacks *lokika*. So intelligently planned and co-ordinated action is likely to be botched and the outcome to be a mess.

Again the actors dwelt upon the issue of agency. *Panglokika* or *pangunadika* is the ability to appreciate and work with other people's capacities and limits for effective thought and action. The actors spelt out that the planning and execution of anything significant depend crucially on the circumstances. This is an account of leadership, which is very sensitive to the particularities of the context and the situation in question. But, as the actors often reiterated, above all it is sensitive to the complex motivations of people, even 'ordinary' Balinese. Instead of being dismissed as 'human resources' or the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience (Geertz 1980: 13), the undertaking is likely to be successful to the extent that every person is able actively to participate to the best, but within the confines, of their ability. That nothing happens if people don't want to do the work and the distractions to which people are prone are themes the play kept returning to.

The success of a rite cannot be achieved by organization alone. To deal with the non-manifest requires specialists who understand the right procedures. So only when kings are advised correctly by *brahmana* high priests – as the Panasar noted – will the populace be prepared to participate. The actors do not represent them as tokens to be ordered around, but as part agents who choose whether and how well to participate.³⁵ Wijil then outlined the Three Key Roles: the offering specialist (usually a woman), the prince and key members of society as witnesses, and the high priests.³⁶ Wijil though returned to a popular theme in theatre: even if all the required offices are fulfilled, without a willing labour force nothing will happen. All must concentrate their thoughts on the venture for it to go well.

In the course of the play, several different words were used to specify different aspects of organizing, which the commentators explained to me and added others. The main ones are:

³⁵ In the summer of 1992, the same local prince who paid for the play organized a cremation. The villagers objected to how he set about planning and inviting them to participate, so most refused to have anything to do with it. The result was a fiasco, which much of the village sat around and watched with amusement.

³⁶ In later discussion with the actor playing the Panasar, he said that properly the roles are: the officiating priest, the witness (the prince) and the offering expert. The act of witnessing is not passive, but suggests taking ultimately responsibility for what happens, see Hobart 1990b: 107-20.

1. *Ngadegin* is the task of a king, prince or senior person, in village society of local leaders. It is to take the initiative in planning and the overall responsibility for the entire execution of some major work, and being the aegis under which the work is undertaken. It is therefore not ‘managing’, but constituting the conditions for the realization of some enterprise. There is a link to the idea of ‘witnessing’. No major undertaking can occur without a senior or royal person being present. As I have argued elsewhere, the witness may be regarded as the agent of what happens and those who carry out the work his or her instruments (1990b: 107-14).³⁷
2. *Mapaitungan* is the discussion of the case for and against embarking on some undertaking, including questions of who is in favour, its advisability, as well as the main details of planning as to whom will be in principle responsible for what. The word is also used for deliberation, as when the Panasar and Wijil talk over things before waiting at court.
3. *Mapidabdab* is the more detailed planning of the resources, timing, the division of labour, work schedules etc.
4. *Niwakang* is giving of instructions to the personnel concerned as to what has to be done, after proper discussion with them of the organization of work.
5. *Madabdabang* is managing the actual execution of work on a day today basis, and for rites consists of two related tasks. These are:
6. *Ngétangang* is to be in charge or responsible for the organization and running of some public activity.
7. *Ngawasin* is supervising or over-viewing work, and is distinct from *ngétangang*, the two commonly requiring different people who must work closely together.³⁸ The vision that the actors and commentators present of the functions of kingship certainly involves rites, but not of ‘the immobility, the impassivity, and the placidity’ (Geertz, 1980: 130) of rulers as ‘divine kings’. Geertz confuses calm mastery with inactivity, ritual with ineffectiveness. The Balinese actors in this play do not concur.

³⁷ *Ngadegin* connotes to command (*magambel*) something and is often used with special reference to rites. *Adeg* in verb form connotes ‘to stand, exist, establish’, cf. *kawi adeg* ‘standing erect, being in function, reigning, being established’.

³⁸ For example, during temple festivals in Tengahpadang it is the *klian dinas*, the government-recognized ward head who is responsible for *ngawasin*, while the head of the ward as a religious group, the *klian désa* is said to *ngétangang* the work (*karya*).

Extract 4: Admonishing the prince^{iv}

Headman: (He addresses the prince.) Your old retainer begs your indulgence. I, the village head here in Nusa, am old only in years. I have been full of awe to see how my noble Lord has governed, together with my daughter, whom you have elevated. (He seeks implicit affirmation from the Panasar) Is that not so, my friend? I have heard news that your revered Majesty **who rules the country** is to fulfil your vow, **because** you have received a gift from the God in the Bat Cave. What are your actual plans? Should you be bantering with one another like this? Should you be playing around like this? It is time for the temple festival. Are you going to complete the task by fooling around with each other? It is important that this old man...³⁹

Panasar: Good Heavens! You are correct to mention this. My Lord, your minister has a reminder for you.

Prince: (Sings.) This is just the preamble.

Panasar: I say, old man!

Headman: What? What?

Panasar: (He paraphrases the prince's previous words.) 'Do not draw the wrong impression from my being here with my wife. You say we are just bantering, but that is not so. I have thought through the matter of paying off my debt, because I have succeeded in begetting an Heir.'

Prince: (Sings.) **Because** everything has been prepared.

Princess: Father, do not be sad. Everything has been made ready. I've done it all. What's more, I've planned it down to the last detail.

Headman: **I now understand, having heard what** (the prince) **said**, my friend. (Then to the prince.) I beg your indulgence, do not let your anger rise, my honourable Lord. I am old only in years. If these years (of experience) are worth anything, **may I be bold enough to indicate to you...**

Panasar: That's right.

Headman: ...Just that **humans are engulfed by passion and ignorance**. If they were all overcome by **goodness**, that would be fine. Just so long as they are not irrevocably overwhelmed by **desire and sloth** and forget their

³⁹ The job of reminding the high and mighty of their serious obligations is a well-established role of servants in life.

worship. People just say that they will do the work, but nothing gets done. Now, if **my turn** to help has come, if it is time to press ahead, I shall ask for assistance from my kith and kin.

Panasar: Yes!

Headman: All your subjects in Nusa should come and perform service.

Panasar: So that they may also participate **while it is the right moment** to complete the fulfilment of the vow.

Close to the end of the play, the old village head (*Bendésa*) of Nusa Penida, a low caste man but of some status, came on stage. After some obscene wordplay on the fact that he kept on missing his stroke when pounding his betel-nut mortar, he turned to address the prince. He spoke with great respect, in elegant high Balinese mixed with *kawi*, to his elevated son-in-law. His clear rebuke to the prince, and to his daughter, was less that of a parent castigating the young for carelessness than of a man whose standing permitted him, however courteously, to admonish them to stop playing around and attend to the work at hand. That his advice was timely was confirmed by the Panasar.

In theatre, ministers and close servants often correct and may even rebuke their lords in private or before audiences of family and close courtiers. I cannot say how far they did so in the pre-conquest period. There are of course no longer royal ministers, but I have heard closer personal servants reprimand their masters or mistresses, albeit using appropriately elevated language. From the play however it is evident that there is more to it than this. First, one should not confuse the elegance of form – what Geertz depicts as Balinese ‘ceremoniousness’ – with what people actually say or what the listener understands by what is said. Second, the officials and even servants remain partly agents, not just the instruments or subjects of their superiors’ commands. Most important the last two extracts make it abundantly clear that priests, ministers, personal servants and even the populace are, in varying and subordinate degree, co-agents in the performance of the rite. Western writing about Balinese polities tends to dwell on the person of the king, rather than on the court as the exclusive agent. A sustained theme of the play is the extent to which many people contribute differentially to a hierarchical and heterogeneous ‘complex agent’ on occasions such as decision-making or organizing rites. An still greater failing of much of

the anthropological literature⁴⁰ is to underestimate the importance of Divinity as the supreme agent, not just in performing rites – a point the actors repeatedly stress.

To return to the excerpt, the prince (more fully explicated by the Panasar) accepted the criticism and explained that all the preparations were complete. The reference to the preamble was that one should not proceed straight to work without discussion first. When starting on a major undertaking to which guests are invited, one does not proceed straight to the activity to hand, but one should chat, joke and offer food first. The old village head turned the discussion round to offer a warning (*panglèmèk*) to the audience about the dangers of empty words. The sort of people who profess to be religious (*maagama*) may be very lazy when it actually comes to doing anything.

Finally the old headman said that he would organize his kin and the prince's subjects. Here he acts as a subaltern in Gramsci's sense of the role peculiar to a sub-lieutenant, who is positioned between officers and lower ranks, and so by extension who mediates between the élite and the masses (1971: 14). However he does far more than just convey orders from the prince, or officials, to those who do the work. He has to explain to those under him what the rite is about and convince them of the desirability of participating actively. Equally he has to inform the court about the feelings of the political subjects. If the populace think the prince is fooling around, they are hardly likely to want to divert their labour and attention from, say, productive work enthusiastically to prop up what they take to be a layabout. Without detailed discussion nothing worthwhile can be achieved. However either words or actions by themselves, as the actors repeatedly reminded the audience, are not enough. Any major work requires co-ordinating people and projects in practice.

This is the simplest form of articulation. The notion however extends easily to more complex activities. In this sense, articulation is not so much about expressing ideas, whether about ritual, leadership or power. Nor is it simply the business of bringing people together, administering, still less managing them. As the play makes clear, minimally it involves the activity, classically assumed by rulers, of bringing together on particular occasions, resources, labour, expertise, experience, disparate

⁴⁰ There are notable exceptions of course. Most immediately the work of Linda Connor (e.g. 1982a, 1995; Connor, Asch & Asch 1986) and Margaret Wiener (1995a, 1995a, in press) comes to mind.

sections of society and competing interest groups to forge a common purpose and to ensure its successful completion. Doing so is not just an act of framing, but at once a public act of mind and practical action, which is far from easy to accomplish. Such an act is less theatrical spectacle, than the feat of linking the possible and ideal with the achievable and actual, where non-manifest Agency may always make mockery of the plans of mice and men.

Pulling off one of these great rites before a highly critical audience of Balinese exemplifies and instantiates – rather than expresses – the ruler’s capacity to make the manifest and non-manifest worlds work together successfully for a moment. In so doing however, rulers are not just engaging in a complicated feat of social mechanics. They are reiterating how they imagine the world should be and their role in making it as it should be. As circumstances are continually changing, and rulers and their experts interpreting what is necessary or appropriate differently, such articulations are never static. So, Geertz is way off the mark when he wrote that, in Bali,

the scale of things varied, and their brilliance, as well as the details of their immediate expression. But not, as far as I can see, between, say, 1343 and 1906, what they were all about (1980: 134)

How, after all, did Balinese themselves learn about such definitive articulations? Few participated directly in any given rite, most learned about them subsequently by word of mouth or by their re-enactment in readings and theatre⁴¹ – that is in subsequent articulations, which inevitably re-interpret events and ideas for different audiences.

Extract 5: Witnessing the rite^v

Elder: Come on and arrange to tell the assembled Ladies and Gentlemen.⁴² Come on, so we aren’t late.

⁴¹ A good example of the textual articulation of a rite is in Adrian Vickers’s 1991 study of the *Geguritan Padam Warak*, about the sacrifice of a rhinoceros at a great royal cremation. The text notably draws attention to the different ways in which different Balinese, including the author, understood what was going on.

⁴² This seems to be a multiple reference. Within the play, it suggests they are going to speak to members of the congregation. In the context of the performance, it indicates that they are nearing the end and, further, that it is time to tell the play’s audience that the vow has been fulfilled. The commentators thought that this was also an invitation

- Panasar:* (Sings an extract from a *kakawin*.) **Om. I offer homage to God and may it be witnessed by The Wise Ones in the Three Worlds.**⁴³
- Elder:* It's (already) crowded inside the temple, very crowded.
- Panasar:* (He continues singing from the *kakawin*.) **Outwardly and inwardly, your abject slave is faithful to (your Lordship) and there is nothing else.**⁴⁴
- Elder:* Let us concentrate our thoughts on God, now that we can be said to be ...(finished).
- Panasar:* In the visible and invisible worlds, I offer my homage, I hope that the redemption has been witnessed by our Lord (and by God).⁴⁵
- Elder:* Yes.
- Panasar:* Because it is fitting according to the promise.
- Elder:* **The Three Who Act as Witnesses. (Tri Pinaka Saksi).**
- Panasar:* Ah! The witness of fire.
- Elder:* The sun is **like** a great light (which illuminates the world).
- Panasar:* That's so!
- Elder:* Humans are witnesses in the form of society.
- Panasar:* Correct.
- Elder:* Demons witness the occasion (of the payment).
- Panasar:* It's so.
- Elder:* In that case, let's go.
- Panasar:* Indeed! That is all. For any omissions and commissions, we beg your forgiveness.⁴⁶

to the audience to prepare to worship, although most of them would have done so before the play, rather than afterwards.

⁴³ There was a difference between the Panasar's and the commentators' account of what **Trilokasarana** referred to. The commentators said they were only guessing, but they took it to be three worlds' (namely **swargaloka**, heaven (the place of souls, *burbuah, suah*); **mercapada**, the world of men, earth; and **kawah**, hell. The Panasar said that he understood **Trilokasarana** to be the Supreme Being (*Sang Ngawisésané*), protector of the three worlds, namely Divinity.

⁴⁴ The commentators' and the Panasar's explication of this passage coincided. A problem arose for the commentators however over how to gloss **tanana waneh**. They took it initially as referring to having no other master. When I discussed the passage with the village's recognized *kawi* expert, he parsed it as 'there is no other, there is nothing else,' in the sense of 'I have no other hidden feeling which I am not showing, my inside hides nothing not shown by my exterior'. The commentators agreed this seemed a better translation.

⁴⁵ Here the Panasar is paraphrasing the *kawi* in Balinese and also confirming (*nyekenang*) that the act has been fully witnessed both by those in this world and those beyond it.

Should the reader still doubt that such ceremonies hinge on the relationship between the manifest and non-manifest, the actors spelt it out once again at the end. The Panasar, as key figure in the play, then uttered the crucial phrase which followed: ‘because it is appropriate according to the promise’. The point is that the actors confirmed publicly to both the invisible (divine) and human audiences that the terms of the Prince of Nusa Penida’s promise – and the local prince’s vow – had indeed been met. Were this not done, the play and the redemption of the local prince’s vow would have been in vain. This is not about ‘expressing’ a world-view, but about getting something done and ensuring before witnesses that it has been made clear that it has been.

Accordingly, the play concluded with explicating precisely who these witnesses are. The actor playing the village elder produced an unusual triad. The commentators and the Panasar agreed that the Tri Pinaka Saksi in the manifest world is usually the work force, the leaders and the priests. In the immaterial world, they are fire, water and smoke (or air). The Panasar did not contradict him publicly on stage however. The Panasar then concluded with an apology (*pangaksama*) for any excesses or shortcomings. Once again, this is not yet more Balinese ceremonial ‘etiquette’, but the serious business of deflecting the spectators’ – and far more important – Divinity’s displeasure for any failings on the actors’ part. The play, itself a necessary part of such religious events (*aci*), is used to articulate ideas about reality (*tattwa*), art and ritual.

Conclusion

Writers and scholars on Bali – Clifford Geertz being the acme – have often presented Balinese as more or less ‘obsessed’ with rank and ritual, with ceremoniousness, grandeur and etiquette (1980: 102), with symbols more than their content. In all this, rulers engage in a ‘cultural megalomania’ (1980: 19) of pomp and pretension, leaving kings as prisoners of their own thespian extravaganzas, in a ‘paradox of active passivity’ (1980: 131). The king in Bali is reduced to ‘an icon’ (1980: 109), ‘a locked-in chess king, separated from the intricacies of power

⁴⁶ This is the second, and more formal *pangaksama*, apology. To be complete the actors among the commentators were insistent that the first part should properly be ‘*Wantah amunika ti(ti)ang nyidayang ngaturang ayah*’, ‘That is all that I am able to offer by way of service’.

mongering by the requirements of his own pretensions: a pure sign' (1980: 133). The presuppositions of Geertz's own argument drive him to the conclusion that

the state ceremonials of classical Bali were metaphysical theatre, theatre designed to express a view of the ultimate nature of reality (1980: 104).

Whose view? What reality?

The problem of such essentialized accounts is that they commonly extrapolate one interpretation – often of dubious provenance – from a changing and under-determined state of affairs, which are endlessly contested and subject to rival representations by different groups of people. Even in the moments of tight articulation and so closure, we are dealing with what is perhaps better imagined as an argument between protagonists. For most purposes however, even this overstates the degree of coherence and agreement about what is at issue, which 'argument' suggests. It also intimates that it is clear precisely who is entitled to articulate, enunciate or participate, and under what circumstances. This is not to suggest that pre-colonial Bali was a postmodernist free-for-all, but that the accounts we have are mostly aristocratic articulations of how Bali ought to be.⁴⁷ Even within the framework of a single play, matters are far more complicated. Above I only outlined a few sections dealing with rites and the role of leader. Other parts of the play advance quite different ways of understanding what was and is going on. That is such theatre is notably polyphonic (Hobart 2000).

Accounts like Geertz's rest upon an increasingly quaint-looking vision of society.

Against this essentialist vision we tend nowadays to accept the *infinitude of the social*, that is, the fact that any structural system is limited, that it is always surrounded by an 'excess of meaning' which it unable to master and that, consequently, 'society' as a unitary and

⁴⁷ Among the groups hierarchized or marginalized by aristocratic accounts – and also, interestingly, in the play, where they are treated as functionaries – rather obviously are Balinese Brahmins, a point made by Rubinstein (1991). The retrospective articulation of Bali – by the Dutch drawing upon British imaginings of India (Inden 1990) – as a caste society, neatly disposed of the problem of what other groups of intellectuals had an active interest in what was going on (cf. Connor 1982a on the crucial importance of peasant intellectuals).

intelligible object which grounds its own partial processes is an impossibility (Laclau: 1990: 90b).

Part of this rests, as Margaret Wiener has pointed out, on why there is extraordinary closure at work in such anthropological accounts.

Anthropologists have long been concerned with representations – with objects, images, tales and activities that are treated as symbolic of something else. At the base of many anthropologies, whether Durkheimian or Marxian in inspiration, is a Hegelian presupposition: namely, that the things people say or do or create are really objectifications of who they are, that most human activity is a process of self-representation. Just as Hegel regarded art and religion as expressions in disguised form of historically specific forms of consciousness, anthropologists have commonly treated what appear to Euro-Americans to be similar phenomena as ways groups express their social reality (as defined by the anthropologist) (1995b: 499, parentheses in the original).

We have no grounds for assuming identical criteria of representation inform the creative and critical thinking of the peoples anthropologists work with. Geertz's ideas of representation and theatre are plain Eurocentric. He also necessarily trivializes metaphysics, because a stronger account would undermine his entire approach, let alone argument.

Metaphysics, as I note in the Introduction, is too important and useful a notion to anthropologists to be dismissed as a simple synonym for the ultimate nature of things. As Collingwood noted, history and anthropology are singular disciplines, because they require not only analyzing their subject-matter using whatever the current academic frame of reference is. At the same time they depend upon understanding their object of study, using the presuppositions and practices of the people whose thinking it is, or was (Boucher 1992). The study of the presuppositions, which people actually use in their thinking, is what Collingwood meant by metaphysics (1940). Such a study goes in a diametrically opposite direction from the work of Geertz, which ends up being narcissism-by-proxy, as we have no grounds on which to impose our presuppositions upon our subjects of study.

In her study of the Great Door of the old court capital of Klungkung, Wiener neatly avoids the temptation of reducing her analysis to interpreting the door as a set of symbols in which Balinese depict their condition. She recognizes that there are many possible kinds of

articulations. Far from being reducible to Balinese representing themselves symbolically, instead she argues they may offer ‘a crack in ordinary reality’ (1995b: 500). Wiener is particularly interested in Balinese ideas about power. She suggests that the door may form

a pragmatic bridge to a place where ordinary perceptions and understandings dissolve, a place where new possibilities are assembled... For Balinese, such spaces are places of power (in the sense of potency), places that provide access to mastery over efficacy, to the capacity to make things happen through intent (1995b: 500).

Are the extracts from the play about power of this kind? In part I think they are. Certainly the play presupposes that mundane political power is dependent upon intangible potencies, which rulers must master if they are to be successful. In one sense, the extracts are about how to set about harnessing such potentialities. ‘Ritual’ is therefore not some symbolic spectacle or game but, granted the awesome power of the non-manifest, rites are among the most important kinds of action of all. However, as the actors kept reiterating, power is not just dependent on efficacious relations with the non-manifest world. An intertwined theme was the crucial part ordinary people play in sustaining the polity and the ruler. The image villagers used was of a lion without a forest. Such a beast is too vulnerable to survive long. Equally a forest without animals is a lifeless and incomplete place. They need each other. In another sense, the extracts, apparently paradoxically, use the example of an ostensibly feudal régime, to advance a demotic argument: the dependence of all rulers upon the wills and active participation of ordinary, able people. Kings are then not just nostalgic memories. Rather their actions set the standards by which presidents, ministers, generals, governors and local bosses should be judged and, if need be, found wanting.

It is however quite what it is a ruler is supposed to do, which shows up the difference in the presuppositions of Balinese and scholars like Geertz, who implicitly equates power and efficacy with action – as if rulers did not have all sorts of functionaries to do this for them. So Geertz is reduced to imagining the ideal ruler to be a sign, an icon, a ‘paradox of active passivity’ (1980: 131). As the play makes repeatedly clear, power is about articulation.⁴⁸ Lesser officials act as subalterns, while the ruler’s task is to articulate different worlds in two senses. First

⁴⁸ The actors also made a more theoretical point. Articulation is a material, economic and political act, not just a matter of fitting ideas together.

the ruler must bring together the manifest world of human action and the non-manifest world of power and thought. Second, the ruler must bring together all the different worlds, manifest and intangible, of his or her various subjects, conflicting and potentially incommensurable as they are.⁴⁹ There is another articulation, of which the actors were quite conscious – that is their own. Traditional and modern media have enormous articulatory potential. That is why the New Order régime has engaged in draconian censorship, not just of film and television, but of popular theatre. Under these circumstances then, it is hardly surprising that actors and film directors have been among the leading protagonists of reform in Indonesia. But you do not produce counter-articulations from thin air, but work with what there is that people know. So, according to the play at least, kings were not just ornamental cabbages.

⁴⁹ Evidently, although the play does not dwell on this, the worlds of potential allies and enemies are at least as important.

Endnotes

ⁱ Extract 1:

- Wijil:* Nénia pidabdab Ida Déwa Agung, Sri Aji Palaka, di tanah Nusa agamané kènkèn?
- Panasar:* Ento anak patut kapalajahin kalimbakang di masyarakat.
- Wijil:* Dasar iraga maagama abesik ada tattwa disubané ada tattwa sing masih ia mapikenoh. Ada lantes tata susila laksanakan nyen tattwané, totoa?
- Panasar:* Kondèn masih genep.
- Wijil:* Tondèn masih adung, apang nyak ada seni, ada ané madan buin abesik ané madan ‘upacara’.
- Panasar:* Nah!
- Wijil:* Apa ento artiné ‘upa’?
- Panasar:* Apa artiné?
- Wijil:* ‘Upa’ ané madan iraga maekin bayu, ‘cara’ ané madan jalan ‘Bina paksa bina paksi’. Jalané malénang tatujon iraga ngarastitiyang Ida Sang Hyang Widi.
- Panasar:* Uh!
- Wijil:* Mawinan ada yadnya ené suba agamané di Nusa bengongan icang beli tekèn apa adané, pikamkam Ida Déwa Agung yadnya wit sangkaning Tri Rena.
- Panasar:* Utangé ané tatelu ento.
- Wijil:* Tatelu ento. Rena wit sangkaning asung, mawinan sing dadi lepas anak suba Tri Hita Karana.
- Panasar:* Ané tatelu ento patut adung.
- Wijil:* Patut adung.

ⁱⁱ Extract 2:

- Sri A. Palaka:* Ngastawa Ida Sang Hyang Widi.
- Wijil:* Paman! Paman! Paman!
- Panasar:* Kènkèn? Kènkèn?
- Wijil:* Apa eda nyen paman salah ulat. Apang eda nyen paman ningeh ané tuara. Ené-ené yadnyané ané baosang, acé. Apang eda nyen paman suwud, sing nyen ada lèn, patuh cara raosé tunian ring Ida Sang Hyang Parama *Kawi*...
- Sri A. Palaka:* Sakalané kala angèrti. Sakala niskala sujati.
- Wijil:* Inggih! Madaging. ‘Paman. Paman. Yèn paman mayadnya niskala, yèn sing sakalané malu, sing nyidang nyen mayadnya.
- Panasar:* Aa.

Wijil: Yadnya niskala ‘dana punia’ ené anggo malu. Kèrtiyané anggo malu.
Sri A. Palaka: Jagat, mangda rahayu.
Wijil: Déwa Ratu, Déwa Ratu, Men? Men?
Panasar: Mawanan makèrti sakala niskala. Mula dharmaning Sang Angawa Rat.

ⁱⁱⁱ Extract 3:

Wijil: Di ngelah gaéné apang ngelah iraga siksa. Pangelah iraga sakti désa kala patra.
Panasar: Patra.
Sri A. Palaka: Sang Putus sareng miletin.
Wijil: Patut. Patut.
Panasar: Sang suta sida nyarengin.
Sri A. Palaka: (Inaudible.)
Wijil: Men.
Panasar: Kènken ento?
Wijil: Paman. Yèn mayadnya telu ané madan kabaos Tri Manggalaning Yadnya.
Panasar: Uh! Tri Manggalaning Yadnya. Abesik:
Wijil: Ada anak ngaé gaé yadnya mapidabdab, Sang Yajamana.
Panasar: Daduwa?
Wijil: Ada maan nyanggra tukang banten, masyarakat secara sosial.
Panasar: Aa, tatelu?
Wijil: Ada dang ané madan Brahmanacarya ané suba ngelarang palasraya.
Panasar: Apang buka tatelu ada, kasal anak nangun karya Tri Manggalaning Yadnya apang ada.
Wijil: Mawinan Agama Hindu ajaran berjenjang, api ada padanda, api ada tukang banten, anak ngelah gaé sing ada, sing masih pangus.
Panasar: Nyènja ajaka maitungan, sing kèto?
Wijil: Aduh ento mawinan matur.
Sri A. Palaka: Eda carat curut.
Wijil: Eda nyen paling.
Panasar: Apang sing pati kaplug paling.

^{iv} Extract 4:

Bendésa: Mamitang lugra, titiang parekan werda, titiang. Titiang I Bandésa Nusa tuaé tua tuwuh titiang ring Nusa. Bengong titiang ngantenang pidabdab anggana Palungguh I Ratu

kasarengin antuk pianak titiang, Wang Jeroné, Pan Cening. Miragi titiang orta anggana Palungguh Dalem merdhaning jagat jagi naur sasangi, dèning sampun paican Ida Batara Gua Lawah. Unteng kairing? Ené dadi macanda-canda? Ené dadi maplalian? Puraé suba bakal odalan. Ené gaéné pragat ben macanda dong kènten? Sarat Bapa tua...

Panasar: Aratu Déwagung! Patut nganika anaké. Cokor I Déwa wènten pawungu paman druwén.

Sri A. Palaka: Anggèn titiang panglengkara.

Panasar: Aduh! Bapa.

Bendésa: Men? Men?

Panasar: 'Eda nyen Bapa salah sengguh, adan tiangé dini ajak I Adi. Raosang Bapa macanda, sing ada kèto. Suba anaké tiang minehin lakar mayah penauration tiangé, sawirèh suba prasida tiang ngawetuwang preti santana.'

Sri A. Palaka: Dèning sami sampun puput.

Luh Wedani: Bapa, eda Bapa sebet. Anak suba pragat, ento baan tiang makejang. Apa buin, anak suba madabdab baan tiang.

Bendésa: Pan Cening, mamitang lugra, sampunang mungguh piduka anggana Palungguh Cokor I Déwa, titiyang, tua, tua tuwuh, yèn enyakja tua lingsir luwung, titiyang ten jaga rinungu mapainget,

Panasar: Patut.

Bendésa: Kéwanten manusa kaliput dèning rajah mwang tamah. Yèn nyakja satwamé ngaliput ia melah, apang eda kadung rajah tamah ngaliput engsap tekèn yadnya. Ngorang dogèn magagé sing bakat jemak. Nah! Yèn suba sangkaning sumedia, yèn suba sarat lautang, Bapa lakar madiolas tekèn nyama braya.

Panasar: Nah!

Bendésa: Apang enyak panjak Nusa sami buka onyang lakar aturang.

Panasar: Mangda nyarengin naler rimempeng jagi ngalaksanayang panauration puniki.

^v Extract 5:

Elder: Jalan dabdabang matur ring Ida Dané, jalan apang eda kasèp.

Panasar: Wong sembahning anatha tinghalana dé Trilokasarana.

Elder: Ento ramé di Jero, ramé.

Panasar: Wahya (a)dhiyatmika sembah ingulun ning jeng tanana waneh.

Elder: Pangacepé ring Ida Sang Hyang Widi Wasa, ané jani suba madan...

Panasar: Sakala niskala pangubaktin titiang, dumadak sampun kasaksinin panauran Ida Déwagung.

Elder: Aa.

Panasar: Duaning sampun manut kadi semayané.

Elder: Tri Pinaka Saksi

Panasar: Aa! Saksi geni.

Elder: Surya suba pinaka sinar agung.

Panasar: Nah!

Elder: Manusa masaksi suba masyarakat.

Panasar: Beneh.

Elder: Buta saksi galahé.

Panasar: Aa.

Elder: Yèning kèto, jalan.

Panasar: Ainggih! Wantah amunika. Kirang langkung nunas ampura.