

# **Talking to God**

**On argument, agency and articulation in Bali**

**For the second symposium on**

**How Indonesians Argue**

Deddington, Oxfordshire

25-26<sup>th</sup>. July 2016

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Among the kinds of discussion that take place in Balinese society, one raises interesting issues. It is conversations with beings who are invisible (*niskala*), but held nonetheless to be present. Conventionally such dialogues take place through an intermediary, who is thought to *nadi*, to ‘become’ somebody else, or to be *katapak*, ‘impressed upon’ by some other consciousness. The instance that I outline concerns how an irrigation society in Tengahpadang set about ascertaining who should become the new priest of its temple, the Pura Mascèti. I examine the discussion with the deity, the Batara Mascèti, conducted through a well-regarded temple priest from another village, as well as conversations with many of the key figures subsequently. My interest is in how people judged the argument put forward by the temple deity; what they said and did as afterwards; and what this might tell us about argument in Bali.

## Background

Tengahpadang in Northern Gianyar was (and is) a *désa adat*, a ‘customary village’ with a set of temples, Kahyangan Tiga. It would seem that the settlement spread out over the last thousand years from its original centre, Pisangkaja,<sup>1</sup> to form one further ward to the north and five along a ridge to the east. So the main *désa* temples are in Pisangkaja. As happens elsewhere, the Pura Puseh is combined with the Pura Balé Agung into a single Pura Désa. The third temple is located to the south of the settlement and is known as Pura Dalem Kauh (the Western Pura Dalem), because there is a second one that serves the five eastern wards. In addition, two further temples are relevant here. The first, the Pura Mascèti, serves a large, local irrigation society, Subak Langkih, and abuts the Pura Désa to the east. The second, the Pura Geriya, lies immediately to the south of the Pura Dalem Kauh. Now this last is peculiar to Pisangkaja; and one of the shrines contains a statue, *pratima*, of a *Padanda*, a Brahmana High Priest.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, this *Padanda niskala* (invisible High Priest) officiates over most rites in Tengahpadang’s temples to the point that not only is inviting an outside High Priest unnecessary, but also potentially dangerous.

By convention and because the duties were not unduly onerous, responsibility for the Pura Mascèti had fallen to the priest of the Pura Désa, the Jèro Mangku Désa. By 1988, at the age of 80, he was feeling

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<sup>1</sup> At the request of the villagers, I use pseudonyms for local place names, but retain the personal names of individuals. For non-Balinese specialists, the Kahyangan Tiga are the three temples which, according to the ideal, are supposed to be present in a village in some form. They comprise a Pura Puseh, a temple to the founding figures who first settled the land; a Pura Balé Agung, a temple with a large meeting pavilion for full *désa* members to meet; and a Pura Dalem, often called a ‘death temple’, because it lies beside the graveyard and cremation ground. Strictly it would be better glossed as the Temple of the Insider (Dalem), Batari Durga, who is so terrifying that it is dangerous even to invoke her name. So she is referred to by an honorific. Although it is known as the Pura Dalem Kauh, in fact the temple houses two quite separate deities. The second set comprises the Batara Panca Pandawa, conventionally the five Pandawa brothers from the Mahabharata. So, unusually, the temple has a temple festival, *piodalan*, every three months, alternately to Batara Dalem and the Batara Panca Pandawa. This latter set of deities is, however, little known about outside Pisangkaja and Gagah, the two western wards which look after the temple. Village membership is of two kinds: heirs to compounds within the traditional boundaries of the village, *karang désa*, and non-inheriting sons, *pengempian*, who have the right of residence.

I would like to thank Richard Fox for a host of valuable comments and suggestions on this piece.

<sup>2</sup> This latter was built in 1960, at a time of extreme political tension between the PNI (Nationalist Party) and PKI (Communist Party), on the site of a dilapidated shrine and was constructed in the space of a few weeks by the entire community. Villagers’ subsequent descriptions made it sound close to a state of ecstatic solidarity, which is not unfamiliar in Bali. Perhaps more interesting is that Tengahpadang in general, and Pisangkaja in particular, has a reputation for being exceptionally dangerous for Brahmana. *Padanda* who have officiated at rites in the past have often fallen ill and the last one who tried to reside in Pisangkaja went mad. He was known as the *Padanda malahung*, because he ended up wandering around the village stark naked, muttering to himself. That the settlement is inclement especially to Brahmana, but more generally to high castes, *Triwangsa*, suggests that this part of Bali may have been a Buddhist stronghold for some time after surrounding areas had moved to some form of Hinduism. Local accounts underwrote such a conclusion, for example a temple on the northern boundary of Pisangkaja was thought to be the seat of Buddha in Bali. The clear separation of Hinduism from Buddhism is in large part an official government distinction, which does not reflect the intricate mixtures of belief and practice. My mentor in matters Balinese, Christiaan Hooykaas, preferred to write of Balinese religion as Agama Tirtha, the religion of Holy Water, or, if pushed, Hindu-Buddhism. The novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer in *Arok Dedes* wrote of Vaisnavites, Saivites, Buddhists and so on.

too frail to officiate at both temples and wished to step down from serving at the Pura Mascèti and planned in due course to do so from the Pura Désa. The immediate impetus for this change was that the *Bendésa* (customary village head of Tengahpadang) had been kept waiting for a long time when the ward, *banjar*, to which he belonged was preparing to take offerings to the sea. The irrigation association, the *subak*, had a series of meetings at which they agreed to find a successor. The problem was how to decide upon a replacement. Congregations sometimes simply choose the former priest's son. However so doing smacks of potential nepotism (especially if, as here, the right to the yield from substantial rice lands,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a hectare, was at stake). And the new incumbent is less likely to encounter opposition if there is a more impartial and authoritative means of deciding. In this instance, the old priest had two sons: I Wéda who was heir, and his elder brother, I Suja. The *subak* had decided therefore to inquire about the rightful successor through a recognized medium at a distant temple. Their concern was to minimize the risk of the medium being familiar with local background and so manufacturing a convincing-sounding, but dubious, verdict.

Inevitably matters became more complicated both because mediums' pronouncements are often unclear and because, later, various other parties decided to take an interest. The *subak* agreed to go first to Blahbatu in Eastern Gianyar, but found the speech too garbled to yield a usable result. So a delegation went to Pura Tirta Arum in Bangli. The medium there, an old temple priest, speaking as the God of Pura Mascèti, pronounced the rightful successor to the priesthood as I Musti. On their return to Tengahpadang the heads of the *subak* called a meeting to discuss the outcome. The problem was that there was no one in Tengahpadang called I Musti. There was a certain I Mustika,<sup>3</sup> who was a relative of the old priest; there was also a high caste man, Déwa Putu Mustika. The Jéro Mangku Désa said that he was fearful of taking responsibility for approving either.

At this point the local representative of the Parisada Hindu Dharma (the Supreme Council of Balinese Hinduism) stepped in and proposed that they resolve the matter by establishing the provision that the priesthood should be decided by burning sticks wrapped in cotton with both names attached to see which died first. The *subak* was unimpressed with the suggestion and decided to start afresh by inviting someone to act as intermediary in the Pura Mascèti. Several candidates were suggested. There were two young women who were temple priests in Batubulan, but they never left their compound. Another candidate was a *balian* from Lantang Hidung (see *Beyond words*), but she was rejected as she was used for speaking to the dead, so too low and likely to be possessed by *tonyo* or *kala*.<sup>4</sup> The *subak* also considered inviting the priest from Pura Tirta Arum again, but he was rejected as being too old. He also spoke in a gruff, semi-incomprehensible voice and what he said had been confusing when previously asked. Finally, one of the *pakasèh* (see below) had had a good experience when he visited a high caste temple priest from Selokadan in East Gianyar. So the *subak* agreed to invite to visit Pura Mascèti to *nyanjan*, to request Divinity to speak.

A decision of this kind involves a great deal of discussion. Subak Langkih had five sections, each of which had meetings, then meetings of the heads (*pakasèh*) of each on behalf of the *subak* as a whole. Apart from the temple priest, *pamangku*, of the Pura Désa, the *pamangkus* of the other main temples were concerned about the procedure and outcome. With the progressive state bureaucratization of Balinese social life, various other organizations claimed an interest from the various *banjar* of Tengahpadang to the *kecamatan* (government district) to the local aristocratic courts to the Parisada Hindu Dharma. In other

<sup>3</sup> *Musti* (from Sanskrit *muṣṭi*) is also a unit of measurement: a clenched fist with thumb extended. *Mustika* (from Sanskrit *muṣṭika*) is a jewel or talisman.

<sup>4</sup> *Tonyo* are those who have died from falling into ravines. Rather than proceeding to rebirth, they join invisible villages with other such unfortunates. They quite often have dealings with humans, may aid or hinder them and even engage in sexual liaisons. *Gamang* are thought to be rather like *tonyo*. *Kala* are low beings often categorized together with *buta* as *buta-kala*. The term is sometimes translated as demonic forces. Balinese often speak of them as the inferior followers of deities. A singularly elegant anthropological account of how to think about séances with non-manifest beings, which steers clear of multiple kinds of ethnocentrism is in Vitebsky 1993.

words, discussion—and argument, both as argumentation and disagreement—was going on in several different places with different groups of participants, deploying rather different styles of reasoning, criteria of judgement and grounds for claiming relevance. A curious feature of anthropological writing is that the role of meetings and the ensuing arguments tend to be greatly downplayed, despite how much time is taken up with official or informal meetings, let alone people chatting and gossiping about what is going on. Social life, certainly in somewhere like Bali, is often argumentative, although this is not always obvious because much is not face-to-face. It is dialogic, in Bakhtin's sense of utterances responding to previous utterances and often anticipating subsequent replies (Morson & Emerson 1990: 49-62). Such arguments are distributed, rather than focused. That is discussion involves all sorts of different participants and takes place on a wide variety of occasions, few of which are formal. Indeed, as happens elsewhere, often the most important exchanges when the real decisions are made happen quietly, even secretly. I would not even wish to hazard a guess at how many hundreds of hours were taken up with talking about Mascèti matters over the course of several weeks.<sup>5</sup> If we choose to ignore what comprises much daily social practice, then it is hardly surprising that we fail to appreciate the importance of how, when and about what people discuss and argue. We also condemn ourselves to concentrate on those carefully pre-articulated moments of performance that anthropologists call 'structure'.

Considered as argument, a number of moments around the *nyanjan* are germane, because they introduced ambiguity and uncertainty. Some centred around the authenticity of the source who spoke through the intermediary. Because, if the séance is not faked, this source is notionally non-manifest (*niskala*), and so not subject to empirical modes of verification. It might, for instance, be some lowly consciousness masquerading as a deity. Another problem is whether the intermediary is simply conscious, but speaking as if a deity. Now the risk of this latter can be rather effectively minimized by subjecting the intermediary to a test (*kapintonin*) once she or he has supposedly *nadi*. In Tengahpadang accepted practice is for someone trustworthy to apply a red-hot coconut shell (*kau bulu kaborbor*) to the cheek of the medium. If the medium does not flinch and there is no mark left, then the congregation usually assumes that they are not faking.<sup>6</sup> According to the Jèro Mangku Désa, when the *subak* heads visited Selokadan,

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<sup>5</sup> As the main events happened fairly shortly after I arrived, I missed the inquiries made at Blahbatu and Tirtha Arum, as well as many of the preliminary meetings of the *subak*. I was also not party to whatever discussion took place in the local courts, the Camat's office or in the Parisada. I was however present at the *nyanjan* and had a long discussion afterwards with the Jèro Mangku Désa and others about what happened. I also recorded the main meeting of the five section heads of Subak Langkih to agree the invitation to the Jèro Mangku Selokadan and the subsequent discussion afterwards. Neither of these proved particularly informative, as the proposal to invite the *pamangku* had already been taken quietly elsewhere (as far as I could gather, this was between the Jèro Mangku Désa and the heads of the *subak*, doubtless with a few others present). So the meetings were mainly so that members could let off steam and argue at length over exactly what offerings should be made, who should pay for them and who attend the *nyanjan*. Significantly the meeting did not discuss whether the Jèro Mangku Selokadan should be *kapintonin*, subject to a test of whether he had truly 'become'. As we shall see, the crucial decision over whether or not to accept the outcome of the *nyanjan* took place in public shortly after the event.

<sup>6</sup> I outlined an example of what may happen elsewhere (1979: 597). It bears repeating.

*The authenticity of trance in the Pura Geriya, Pisangkaja*

There are two priests belonging to the Pura Geriya, somewhat unusually. The junior is a *balian*; the other is not. During a temple festival this latter fell into trance and began to talk about local politics. The priest of the western temple of the dead (Jèro Mangku Pura Dalem Kauh) happened to be nearby at the time. In order to test whether the state was genuine he called for a burning coconut husk in a loud voice. At this the entranced man shuddered and promptly returned to consciousness.

It is worth noting that the English term 'trance' covers several different Balinese terms, which imply different kinds or degrees of agency. For example, *kapanggluh* is strikingly passive and also violent, when some foreign consciousness imposes itself upon a person without their agreement or awareness, unexpectedly and sometimes dramatically, so they may throw themselves around or defy the conventions of normal human behaviour. *Katapak* is when a person is 'impressed upon' by such a consciousness, but often in a relatively controlled manner, as when a medium has prepared and has invited such intervention. The prefix 'ka-' implies being acted upon. By contrast, *nadi*, becoming someone else, the term used for this *nyanjan*, is active and suggests the agency is more complex (see also Footnote 34).

they had forgotten to ask whether he agreed to be *kapintonin*.<sup>7</sup> Another obvious source of confusion or lack of clarity stems from the pronouncement itself. It may be inaudible, difficult to decipher or, while clear, its argument fails to make sense, fails to fit the circumstances or is considered contradictory. Each possibility requires discussion over how to treat the pronouncement and what to do.<sup>8</sup> Even when the outcome is clear, often there is much further debate about what happened and its implications.

### The nyanjan

On 24<sup>th</sup> December 1988 (Purnama Kapitu, the full moon of the seventh month in the Balinese solar-lunar calendar) hundreds of villagers thronged into the Pura Mascèti and neighbouring Pura Désa to witness what would happen. As a preamble, while a delegation went to escort Jèro Mangku Selokadan to Tengahpadang, offerings (*daksina pejati*) were made at the Pura Désa, both Pura Dalem and two special temples, Pura Duur Bingin and the Pura Geriya. A long list of public figures attended.<sup>9</sup> The *subak* were ordered to turn up for 9 a.m. However only the head of the *subak*, the *klian pakasèh*, was there, the rest rolling up, as usual, shortly before 10 a.m. when the Jèro Mangku Selokadan was due to arrive. Prayers were then said for the massed congregation. When the Mangku turned up, he went straight to the Pura Mascèti and, after a very brief conversation with the senior *pamangku*, he prepared for the *nyanjan*. A villager, I Wayan Arka, who was a senior local figure, a recognized orator and skilled in different registers of Balinese, was asked to sit with the *pamangkus* as witness. It was their memory of what was said that

<sup>7</sup> So the issue was only raised when the Jèro Mangku Selokadan had already arrived in the Pura Mascèti. He replied that he had never been *kapintonin* before and suggested that, if there were any doubt, then the *subak* should invite him again to ask the Batara Mascèti to address any ambiguity.

<sup>8</sup> *Nadi* and *katapak* as seeking orders, advice or information from kinds of unseen agency are two of several ways of reaching decisions. They are appropriate when dealing with non-manifest beings of great potential power, especially where failure to consult entails risks. Such consultation however does not in itself resolve the matter, because questions usually remain about how precisely to interpret and implement pronouncements. Modes of decision-making in Bali would require a study of their own. Briefly, there seems to be a broad separation between matters *prima facie* involving *niskala* as against the mundane world of *banjar*, *désa*, *subak* and other local groups. However, jurisdiction is rarely unambiguous, both because many groups have associated temples and because spheres of interest may overlap. In any event, the issue of how to implement decisions offers scope for finessing. My impression is that, beginning in the 1980s in Tengahpadang at least, through its local representatives, central government attempts to muscle in on local decision-making, as is suggested in this instance by the number of bigwigs who found an excuse to attend.

<sup>9</sup> Besides the *pamangkus* of all the main temples, these included all the main *désa* functionaries: the *bendésa* and *klian désa* (government and customary village head) as well as the government head, *klian dinas*, of each ward. Representatives of the main royal courts were also there, as was the *perbekel*, the head of the government administrative village which included a couple of other hamlets beside the settlement of Tengahpadang itself. A representative of the Camat and three other figures on behalf of the Parisada Hindu Dharma turned up, as did the head of the irrigation network for the region as well as the Agricultural Field Officer, although neither had been invited. The notes from my diary make quite amusing reading. I add square parentheses to clarify terms and references.

Saturday 24.12.88. Arrived at Pura Mascèti at 9.15 when only Nyoman Kawi (the *subak* head) and a few *saya* [assistants] around. Sat down in the Balé Paselang. Chatted amiably and offered to give a copy of the tape and any photos to the *subak* at the same time as confirming that it was OK for me to record these. (They referred to these as *dokumen bukti/ngawiaktiang kawèntenan* [documents by way of proof/to confirm what had happened].) Then Anak Agung Aji, Puri Sarèn Kauh [head of the most powerful court in Tengahpadang] arrived and silence fell on the few people there. He was very curt when I greeted him and replied briefly in Indonesian. As he didn't seem sociable, I requested permission to start writing out notes and did so, apparently to his slight irritation, as my impression is that he really wanted everyone to be put out by him. Shortly after Anak Agung Bendésa arrived and sat in almost similar silence. Then Cokorda Putera (*Perbekel* [head of the court in Pisangkaja]) turned up with a copy of Bali Pos [the provincial newspaper] and after a muttered word or two to the others, he began quietly, but quite ostentatiously to read it. Then the Bendésa borrowed it and finally Anak Agung Sarèn Kauh. More and more people started to filter in, but the degree of quiet was a sort of caricature of Worsley's and Vickers's work on paintings of the *ramé* [crowded, noisy, animated, bustling] of the *jaba* [ordinary people, lower castes] (here outside in the *jaban* Pura) compared to the artificial calm in the Balé Gong. On inquiry it turned out that all three aristocrats detested one another, mostly for complicated historical reasons. The dislike of the *Bendésa* however stemmed from him being what was locally a relatively low Satriya, a Déwa, who insisted on calling himself Anak Agung.

By way of background, briefly, in Gianyar, the Cokorda Sukawati, who had previously been kings, had been displaced by a family of Pradéwa from Manggis in East Gianyar, upon which they had taken the title Anak Agung (Supreme Person). As Pradéwa was a fairly common title however, it was questionable whether other lineages were entitled to the elevation.

constituted the official outcome.<sup>10</sup> Beforehand I had gone to some lengths to ask both the priests and other village functionaries whether I might photograph and tape-record proceedings. Everyone was happy for me to do so, not least because, appreciating the fallibility of human memory, they wanted an accurate record of what was said. However, no sooner had the Jèro Mangku Selokadan finished his opening mantras and begun to speak as the Batara Mascèti than my tape recorder jammed. Treating this as a sign that it might be wise not to try to record or photograph during the séance, I stopped using my camera until afterwards. So, in the end, everyone had to rely on the orators' memories.<sup>11</sup>

The *nyanjan* itself was fairly brief, as was the follow-up.<sup>12</sup>

Jèro Mangku Selokadan pronounced mantras. Immediately afterwards he started to speak with the words of Batara Mascèti:

*Batara:* Why have the Mangkus (of the Kahyangan Tiga) been stupid and have been running here and there asking for advice? (They had gone to temples in Tirta Arum and Blahbatu to *mapinunas*). Don't you know about the Pura Dalem (Kauh), where you pay homage to the Ratu Panca Pandawa?<sup>13</sup>

What is not here already? (It is not necessary to go elsewhere). You shouldn't go as far as having to run around. Have the Mangkus here never thought of asking advice here (in the Pura Dalem Kauh) when there is an *odalan* here (in the Pura Mascèti)? There is something you haven't done. Why haven't you done it?

Have the Mangkus ever *Mamendak Kakuluh*? To the Batara Panca Pandawa (in the Pura Dalem Kauh)?<sup>14</sup>

*Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh:* My apologies. We have never done so, because we were never told to. Please continue speaking.

*Batara:* You, Mangku (to the Mangku Pura Désa), what is all this about? You have had it in mind to prevent your son becoming Mangku. Why? (What are you up to?)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> As soon as he was seated, I Wayan Arka beckoned to one of my informants, I Ketut Kacir, to join him so that there would be a second person skilled in language to try to recall the exact words uttered, and so minimize the likelihood of important error. Another source of potential confusion was whose version would be the official account? Was it the two orators', the *pamangkus*', or both? On this occasion, the issue did not arise.

<sup>11</sup> Given the reputation of Balinese for placing great emphasis on signs from the non-manifest world (*niskala*), I had expected the tape recorder's malfunction to be enthusiastically greeted as evidence of divine presence and displeasure with being recorded. However, the response of priests and laity alike were downbeat and matter of fact. Indeed, the priests were disappointed that they did not have a record that they could have used for future reference. This was an example of the anthropologist over-interpreting. Even my protestations that it must be a sign because the Sony professional cassette recorder never caused a moment's trouble before or after (it worked again when I checked about five minutes after the *nyanjan*) elicited only muted interest.

<sup>12</sup> The text agreed between Wayan Arka and the *pamangkus* together with my translation is given in Appendix A. Text in parentheses is clarification suggested by the commentators (see below) with whom I worked through the speech.

<sup>13</sup> Why go outside Pisangkaja when you could and should have *nunas ica* here (literally 'to request the grace or a gift', to ask for blessings)? It is left unclear from where they should have invited a medium.

<sup>14</sup> The Batara Mascèti asks at this point, what is it that you have not yet done? Why have you not *Mamendak Kakuluh*, that is to request holy water, *tirtha*, from a particular temple with which to greet the Gods? The Batara Mascèti tells them to request *tirtha* from the Panca Pandawa in Pura Dalem Kauh.) They have never *nunas ica* to other temples in the Kahyangan Tiga here (they have only *maturan kéwanten* (*sakadi ngejot suci asoroh*, offering food when one is going to eat oneself). The *subak* does *mamendak* to Batur and Apuh and Besakih for the *piodalan* in Pura Mascèti, in connection with agriculture to Batur and Apuh especially. Every *piodalan* the Désa of Tengahpadang *mamendak kakuluh* to the great temple in *Besakih* and to the water temple in *Batur*. However, it has never been done within the Kahyangan Tiga. The God is asking for every *odalan* in the Pura Mascèti to include *mamendak kakuluh* to the Batara Panca Pandawa in the Pura Dalem Kauh. At leisure afterwards the *pamangkus*, *pakasèh* and *bendésa* would have to meet to discuss how to handle the injunction.

<sup>15</sup> Public opinion was that it would have been best had the Mangku Désa's son, I Suja, been invited by the *subak* to become *pamangku*. As it was, the Mangku Désa was undertaking the duties for both temples and so was often late in completing important rites. His stated grounds for objecting to his elder son becoming Mangku was that those who were envious would say he was greedy. However, there may well have been internal family issues. The Mangku Désa was rumoured to have wanted the position for I Mustika, the grandson of I Geningan, who was closely related to the Mangku. Some villagers inferred that the Mangku did not get on well with his son, because the latter had a separate kitchen in the compound. Now this would be normal, as he was the

Now you want advice about the incumbent priest of the temple. There is already someone here in the Désa,<sup>16</sup> you do not need to look further. Have the family of the Mangkus forgotten (their history)? It was your great-grandfather who first served here. Now you are going to block (your son). What do you want? What are you thinking of? Are you asking for your descendants to be eradicated?<sup>17</sup>

*Jèro Mangku Désa (crying):* My apologies, My Lord. I would not dare to oppose your Majesty.

*Batara:* Do you want destruction so that your whole family line will be wiped out, if I let loose My Minister, the Tiger?<sup>18</sup> Were there not once Satriya used as officiants here? Do you think it did not end badly? The rice fields never yielded any harvest.<sup>19</sup> Now what? You won't allow your son (to become priest)? If you don't, what are you going to do?

If you are inviting the Batara Panca Pandawa to release Bimanyu, what are you thinking of?<sup>20</sup> The one who should properly become My officiant is I Suja.

There are two. It can be whichever one: I Suja, I Wéda. The Pura Mascèti was originally sited in the Pura Désa so that the Mangku could then look after both temples. The Mangku could serve the Pura Désa.

If originally the Mangku here in the Pura Mascèti was your forefather, if you are going to go all over the place asking *balian tetakson*, you'll get nothing, there is already someone here.

There is no *balian* here, if there is an *odalan* in the Pura Dalem. Have you ever invited a *Padanda*? (Anticipates the reply of 'No'.)<sup>21</sup>

Startled reply by Jèro Mangku Dalem and others: No!

*Batara:* There is already someone. (A *Padanda niskala*. There is a *pratima* of a *Padanda* in the shrine to Ratu Ngarurah.) If the Mangku wants to ask for *pengègèr* or *pengasih*,<sup>22</sup> you can in the Pura Dalem. Why should you not succeed? Previously when the Mangku (Dalem) ran into

elder (and so not inheriting) son, but it was more usual to set up a new kitchen when his younger brother married, which he had not yet. The point of the Batara Mascèti telling off the Mangku was that domestic disagreements should not be allowed to interfere with matters of worship (mundane, here and now—that is *sakala*—issues should not be introduced into what is *niskala*). Also it was the Mangku's fault for allowing things to develop to this point.

<sup>16</sup> There was some ambiguity because *natar duwé*, the territory of the deity, could be either Pisangkaja, where the temple was situated or the whole *Désa* of Tengahpadang.

<sup>17</sup> The Batara Mascèti was making several points. You are not thinking about the welfare of your family. Do you really want me to be angry with you? A multiple threat was implied here: Do you want to stop being Mangku? Do you want to prevent your children becoming Mangkus? Do you want you and your family to remain safe and sound? Or do you wish me to kill off your descendants? The Jèro Mangku Désa presumably got the point, because he started to cry.

<sup>18</sup> This is no ordinary (*sakala*) tiger, but one that is *sekedap sekaton*, now visible, now not, which would kill by making the family members ill then die of causes that could not be medicated.

<sup>19</sup> An Anak Agung family in Pèjèngaji had previously been *pamangkus* in Pura Mascèti, but the last one had died young and no one from the family succeeded him. Only the *bajra* (priest's bell) survived and was being used by the present Mangku Désa.

<sup>20</sup> Commentators considered this a direct threat. Bimanyu probably refers to Abimanyu, the son of Arjuna, who was celebrated for his prowess in war. Some listeners thought it was Bima. In any event, it is an extraordinary dangerous adversary, depicted as one of the epic Pandawa family.

<sup>21</sup> The Pura Dalem Kauh has such a powerful *Padanda niskala* that neither a human *Padanda* or a *balian* should be involved in the ceremony.

<sup>22</sup> *Pengègèr* is a way to make people do what you want, as *pengasih* is a way to make everyone like you. Both are techniques of coercing others against their will that might be called 'magical' and are usually shrouded in secrecy. Here the reference is complicated and ambiguous because, at least in Tengahpadang, it is not something that *pamangkus* should be involved in, nor does one request it at a temple through a *pamangku*, but one goes alone to pray clandestinely. Here the Batara Mascèti might have been advising the *pamangkus* in general, or the Jèro Mangku Désa in particular, not to have truck with such practices. This section however appears to be addressed specifically to the Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh, who was generally thought to dabble in potentially dangerous forms of power (*sakti*). So it is possible it was an indirect warning (*sesimbing*) to him to desist, *inter alia* because it involves risks. Such an interpretation is supported two sentences later by a direct reference to some kind of danger he had faced. However, we should be cautious about over-interpreting.

danger, Lord Bayu was promptly on hand, had this not been so, he would have been in real trouble. Do you recall, Mangku?<sup>23</sup>

Remember now to make an offering of *Tebasan Guru Piduka*. This has not been done for a very long time. I am angry.<sup>24</sup> You planned to make your son *pamangku*, then blocked it and offered the land belonging to the temple (to someone else to undertake the responsibilities). Who said you could hand it over? So you're ashamed in the here and now, isn't that so? But you do not feel ashamed towards the unseen world.<sup>25</sup>

*Jèro Mangku Désa*: My apologies. This is because I felt embarrassed in front of the community, if my son was chosen to be Mangku.<sup>26</sup>

The Batara laughed.

*Batara*: Mangkus shouldn't be embarrassed like that. In the visible world, the Mangku is embarrassed, but in the non-manifest world, he is brave? Is that it? (He is quite prepared to stand up and defy the gods.)

*I Wayan Arka*: My Lord. So that what you have said about this is clear, please explain to your humble subjects, because they are very stupid. About what you have just said: I Suja is suitable, I Wéda is suitable. May I beg of you to clarify which temple it is your pleasure to bestow upon each of them?

Jèro Mangku Selokadan came out of trance for a moment, then resumed.

*Batara*: Do remember to make the offering of *Tebasan Guru Piduka*! If the odalan is here, *Mendak Kakuluh* to the Lords Panca Pandawa. If you do not, you will get no harvests in the rice fields. Now it is the heirs of the Mangku who should become officiants here.

*Jèro Mangku Désa*: Because there are two, can they both become priests? Is that not like twins?

*Batara*: That is unimportant, because the land comprises a single unit. You have permission

*Jèro Mangku Désa*: If that is so, I would not dare question what my Lord has said. Just so it is clear which is which. I shall follow whatever.

*Batara*: Remember this...

The Jèro Mangku Selokadan ceased to *nadi*.

Those sitting closest remarked afterwards that the ground under the Mangku seemed to move, as if a person was leaving.

## The nyanjan

### The speech

Without preamble, the deity launched into a series of questions (Why have you been stupid, running around asking for advice?) which were scolding in tone, rather as if telling off thoughtless children. They

<sup>23</sup> No one knew if or when the Mangku Pura Dalem Kauh had experienced such danger.

<sup>24</sup> The responsibility for approving and paying for this offering is not the responsibility of the *pamangku*, but the *klian pakasèh*, the head of Subak Langkih in this instance.

<sup>25</sup> The gossip going around was that the *pamangku* had offered the proceeds from the temple lands (*laba*) to the *klian pakasèh* in return for the latter performing the monthly offerings, *rerainan bulanan*, and other outgoings that should have been covered by the income from the land.

The Batara Mascèti's point was that the *pamangku* should not have carried his concerns about his reputation in the community into the non-manifest world. If the Batara Mascèti wants the Jèro Mangku Désa's son as *pamangku*, it is not up to the Mangku to question it. He is *lek di sakala* but not in *niskala*. Why so? Properly, when the *pamangku* felt unable to cope with the demands, he should have spoken to the assembled *subak* members about his difficulties and requested that they seek advice from the Batara Mascèti as to what It wished and who should succeed the present Mangku.

<sup>26</sup> Although the Batara Mascèti berated the Jèro Mangku Désa, in fact, until there was *nunas baos*, it would not have been appropriate or looked good to push his own son forward.



have wasted time and energy by going to the wrong places.<sup>27</sup> These questions seemed to be addressed to all the *pamangkus*, because the next question (about paying homage to the Panca Pandawa in the Pura Dalem Kauh) assumed that this was something the *pamangkus* should know, but not necessarily ordinary villagers. The intended addressees were confirmed in the next set of questions, which was about *numas baos* (asking divine guidance) in the Pura Dalem Kauh. The theme, repeated later, was that Tengahpadang was largely self-sufficient in terms of its spiritual resources and should draw upon these. The reference to the Panca Pandawa in the Pura Dalem and the invisible *Padanda* in the Pura Geriya were important in establishing the deity's familiarity with highly specific local knowledge, which served to reinforce the idea that it was not the conscious Jèro Mangku Selokadan who was speaking.<sup>28</sup> The inquiry as to whether they have ever sought a particular kind of *tirtha*, holy water, from the Panca Pandawa during temple festivals at Pura Mascèti is a familiar kind of request on such occasions. Balinese local society is built up in no small part of many such particularities. It was the Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh who replied, as he was the officiant at the temple in question.

The speech then turned to the Jèro Mangku Désa and became admonitory, then threatening. As repeatedly during the speech, the deity exhibited knowledge, sometimes intimate (You have had it in mind to prevent your son becoming Mangku), that an outsider could not be expected to know, which was a vital consideration in the congregation's evaluation of the authenticity of the source of the speech. This access to local shared knowledge was reaffirmed a couple of sentences later (It was your great-grandfather who first served here) coupled with a wiggling (Have the family of the Mangkus forgotten their history?). Then came a formidable threat (Are you asking for your descendants to be eradicated?). The threat was then repeated and given flesh (so to speak) by specifying the unleashing of a *niskala* tiger. There is little worse in Bali than having your entire family line wiped out, not least because there would be no one to conduct the required rites after death. Matters, however, were not quite as straightforward as the speech suggests. It was widely thought that, had the Jèro Mangku Désa proposed his own son, he would have been open to charges of nepotism. So the status and purpose of the threat was somewhat double-edged. It had an impact though on the Jèro Mangku Désa.

The sentences immediately after the threat of the tiger are interesting because they returned to local knowledge, both directly and indirectly. Yet again the speech showed knowledge of ancient local history. The priests of the Pura Mascèti were Anak Agung from Pisangkaja, but their line died out some hundred years ago. Now I outlined above the circumstances under which the great-grandfather of the present Jèro Mangku Désa assumed the mantle which were known to some of the older and better informed villagers. In subsequent discussion, the veracity of the central event of the use of the mango tree as a dam became crucial. It was however never mentioned in the *nyanjan*.

After delivering yet another blood-curdling threat (this time no less a figure than Abhimanyu from the Mahabharata), the speech moved to the nub—the one who should properly become *pamangku* is I Suja. By contrast to the often muddled, ambiguous or even inaudible responses that mediums give, this

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<sup>27</sup> The phrase *kemu mai* reminds me of the English phrase 'like headless chickens'. There is a popular Balinese distinction between *bayu* (energy), *sabda* (speech) and *idep* (thought), which implies that they have not thought carefully first and so have expended needless energy and speech to little effect.

A fascinating question is how Balinese articulate Divinity in different contexts. Any description, invocation or imitation requires a style and genre. The point was made nicely by Bloom (1990) in *The book of J*, about the supposed author of the first books of the biblical Old Testament. After trying out various narrative styles for God, J finally hit upon a winning formula: 'Yahweh behaves like a headstrong, petulant boy', which enables the author narratively to treat Him 'with a maternal indulgence tempered by irony' Kermode (1990). For Bali we might ask what is at issue in the various imaginings of Gods, kings and mythological figures that feature in *nyanjan*, theatre and elsewhere.

<sup>28</sup> Knowing that the *subak* had been to other temples is less surprising, as it is perfectly possible that the *pakasèh* had mentioned it when they went there. One reason that it is wise to invite a *pamangku* along is that they are more skilled than most both in phrasing questions and ensuring that the terms of any visit are fully laid out. The failure to ask about putting the Jèro Mangku Selokadan to the test is an example.

was admirably clear. However, the next sentence seemed to throw matters into confusion again, by naming both brothers and saying that either could become *pamangku*. The ostensible justification was slightly intricate. Again it returned to history: this time conjectural, as no one present could confirm that the Pura Désa and Pura Mascèti were situated side by side in order that a single priest could look after both. That did not, however, clarify the issue of which brother should become *pamangku* of the Pura Mascèti.

The speech then made a detour by raising a question about a *balian tetakson*, which was not really followed up, because there was a seeming curious reference to ‘there is already someone here’, followed by an inquiry as to whether they ever invited a High Priest to conduct the festival in the Pura Dalem Kauh. I was slightly puzzled as to why the *pamangkus* seemed so surprised, to be told that this was because it was unthinkable for the reason that the speech then referred to obliquely (There is already someone). Although the reference was indirect and so open to extending interpretation to fit, in this instance the existence of a *Padanda niskala* was known to some. What is more interesting is the reference to the Pura Dalem Kauh being a suitable place to engage in certain kinds of *pangiwa*, left-hand or black magic, which the speech promptly clarified as *pengègèr* or *pengasih*. Although Pura Dalem in general, being associated with the goddess Durga and death, are often loci of the dark arts, this particular temple had the reputation of having an unusually high success rate. The reference to the present *pamangku* being rescued from danger was a fairly safe bet, because the nature of the trouble was unspecified.

Next the Batara requested a particular offering to assuage Its anger, which It attributed to the Jèro Mangku Désa messing about, then offering the yield of the rice land tied to the temple to someone else (the *klian pakasèh*) to organize the offerings. Then came a neat play between *sakala* and *niskala*, the manifest world of ordinary human activity and the non-manifest world of deities and other unseen forces. In wishing to avoid unfavourable village gossip, the Jèro Mangku was quite willing to defy the will of the Gods. The same point was promptly repeated, so emphasizing that the proper order of the world has been reversed, with the implication that, because *niskala* is unseen, humans easily forget its supremacy.

At that point, Wayan Arka intervened neatly to seek clarification over the two names given by the Batara and which temple was for which. In so doing, he reframed the speech’s ambiguity by suggesting that each person was fit to become a *pamangku*: it was a matter of which temple for whom? Interestingly the Jèro Mangku Selokadan appeared to revert to his normal state before speaking again as the Batara, but failed immediately to answer the question. Whether this was a refusal to engage in direct dialogue or not, I am not sure. However, after issuing a couple of instructions as to what It wanted, the next sentence explicitly stated that the two heirs (there were only two) should become priests of the two temples. When the Jèro Mangku Désa asked whether they could both serve as *pamangku*, the reply was direct and explained the grounds on which they could. With the single word *wenang* (*kawi*: *wènan*), here ‘to have permission’, the Batara majestically brought the key issue to a close. With the Jèro Mangku Désa stating his subservience to the Batara’s will, the *nyanjan* concluded with an unfinalized ‘remember this...’<sup>29</sup>

### *The aftermath*

Straight after the *nyanjan*, the Jèro Mangku Selokadan then stood up and moved to a nearby pavilion, where he was joined by the *pamangkus* and the heads of the *subak* sections. The discussion that followed was brief.

The head of Subak Langkih asked, in view of the Batara’s pronouncements, what the various *pekasèh* and the other *subak* members thought. Wayan Arka added that, as the Jèro Mangku Selokadan was still there, what arrangements he would recommend for the purification of the two future officiants mentioned? The Mangku replied that in Selokadan it would take place on the day of the temple festival

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<sup>29</sup> When speaking public, it is considered modest to break off and not to complete the sentence or paragraph. Whether that was what was at issue here, I do not know.

in the future *pamangku*'s temple. At that point the *klian dinas* (government head) from one ward, who had been seated far back and could not hear properly, proposed that the Batara's pronouncements be repeated so that everyone heard. (His aim was to avoid the risk of the speech being considered empty (*gabeng*) because two names had been given, so that it would be clear which person was to be *pamangku* in which temple.) The *Bendésa* agreed, upon which Wayan Arka said that what he had heard, as the person deputized to 'catch the speech' (*nata baos*), was that the Batara had announced that the *pamangku* for Pura Mascèti should only be I Suja. His younger brother, I Wéda, should become *pamangku* in the Pura Désa at such a future time as the present *pamangku* could no longer serve. This summary was then repeated to the congregation by the head of Subak Langkih. Did the members of the *subak* agree or not? There was a loud chorus of agreement, which ended the discussion and the meeting ended.

### Commentary

At the first opportunity, few days later, I had a lengthy discussion with the Jèro Mangku Désa, I Ketut Kacir (who had assisted Wayan Arka), Anak Agung Oka (a well know actor) and Déwa Pekak Balung, an impoverished but highly intelligent high caste man. As I avoided direct questioning whenever possible, the conversation inevitably wandered all over the place. So here is my paraphrasing of what I took to be the relevant parts.

The Jèro Mangku Désa was clear that he thought the *nyanjan* was very good and much clearer than at Tirtha Arum. There was however an obvious issue because the Mangku Selokadan had not been *kapintonin*. However, he, the Mangku Désa believed a bit (*pracaya akidik*)<sup>30</sup> because the speech included reference to the Batara Panca Pandawa. He was emphatic that these deities had not been mentioned, nor had the detail about never inviting a *Padanda* to the Pura Dalem Kauh. Also it was true that the Mangku's great-grandfather had been the first priest in the present line.<sup>31</sup> At that point the discussion opened up. What emerged was that, in their view, the older people around trusted what was said during the *nyanjan* for two sets of reasons. The first was those given by the Mangku. The second was that they all knew the story of how the forefather of the present incumbent became the priest. There were endless plagues of pests which had destroyed much of successive harvests. And the dam that fed water to Subak Langkih had broken. The Mangku's ancestor had gone up there with a team from the village in search of a large tree to replace the existing one which had rotted. A local man had a fine mango tree and told them that, if they could move the tree there and then, they could have it. They had no axes or other suitable equipment. So, after making and putting bamboo ropes round the tree trunk, the Mangku's ancestor placed *benang tridatu*<sup>32</sup> round the trunk. When the men pulled, the mango tree fell and they dragged it into place in the river. Not long before the *nyanjan*, repairs to the dam had been needed and, when they dug down to the foundations, they found the tree still there in good condition, which in their view confirmed the story.

The conversation came round to whether the Mangku's two sons were twins, here not biological twins, but sharing a single status. They were not, the Mangku said, because I Wéda was the heir and a full landowning member of the *désa*, while I Suja merely *ngempi*, was a lodger without rights. What was important was that there must be superior (*singguh*) and inferior (*sor*), which there was. The question then arose as to whether someone who *ngempi* could be a *pamangku*. Again the Jèro Mangku Désa was clear. There was no problem in I Suja being *pamangku* of the Pura Mascèti, because the business of the Pura Mascèti was with irrigation and rice fields. So his *désa* status was irrelevant.<sup>33</sup> I Suja could, however, not have become *pamangku* of the Pura Désa, because he was not owner of *désa* land.

Déwa Pekak Balung, who had family in the Triwangsa ward in Tengahpadang, said that there had been much discussion there about the *nyanjan*. The general view was that it was very clear (*wiakti pisan*). The

<sup>30</sup> Balinese distinguish between two words translated by the English 'believe'. *Pracaya* is to have faith in something being the case without solid evidence. *Ngega* (*ngugu* in low Balinese) is to believe something to be the case because you have empirical or textual evidence that it is probably so, or if you trust someone.

<sup>31</sup> An important element in the *nyanjan*'s credibility was evidence of knowing what could not be known outside a very restricted circle, a point which the Mangku Désa stressed in his evaluation.

<sup>32</sup> This is thread with three colours: red, white and black, used widely in rites.

<sup>33</sup> The *subak* is an entirely separate corporate group, membership of which attaches to working rice land irrigated by the *subak*. So, as I Suja worked rice fields in the *subak*, his *désa* status was immaterial.

issue of twins would only arise were it one temple and two *pamangkus*. There was no need to invite the Jèro Mangku Selokadan again, as he was *suci* and was impressed upon (*katapak*) by Ida Sang Hyang Widhi.<sup>34</sup> Had he been an ordinary *balian*, then people would have suspected some kind of low (*sor*) being, such as a *gamang* or *kala*. The Batara's pronouncements are likely to be true because they fit the known history of the present Jèro Mangku Désa. His father died when he was very young and before he could teach his son. However, the latter had still managed to *mawéda* (recite the required mantras) without instruction and, being born long before schooling was available, was otherwise illiterate.

This brief account should provide enough material for the purposes of analysis.

### The *nyanjan* as argument

My present concern is what we can learn from the *nyanjan* about how Balinese use and judge argument. Evidently there are all sorts of linguistic and para-linguistic features that bear on how people evaluated the whole event. For example, as is common, the Batara Mascèti's speech was in low Balinese (*Basa Biasa*) with the exception of technical terms for offerings and the occasional use of *kawi*<sup>35</sup> (e.g. *Nira, wěnan*), when referring to Itself. As a deity, the Batara would normally use ordinary Balinese and expect to be addressed in refined language, as happens when aristocrats speak to commoners. Despite uttering several threats, the voice was even rather than angry, rather like a parent telling off an erring child. The Jèro Mangku Selokadan's voice changed when he spoke as the Batara using a tone that the Balinese present recognized as familiar when a deity speaks.<sup>36</sup> As I understood it, there was nothing unusual in the language the Batara used. The respondents spoke in pretty basic *Basa Singgih* (high Balinese). Only Wayan Arka was more elegant in his question. With one important exception, what was said was so clear and unambiguous that people could concentrate on the argument put forward.

There are two different aspects of the speech and commentaries that I wish to examine. How did villagers evaluate what was said? And what criteria did they bring to bear and what, considered critically, were their strengths and weaknesses?

Assessing the validity, and so potential usefulness, of what is said during a *nyanjan* like this creates specific problems for Balinese, which emerged during discussion. How are the petitioners to know whether it is the medium speaking more or less consciously, or whether he or she is acting as an authentic intermediary to some quite different consciousness? Even if the latter, how are they to tell whether it is the being who was invited or an interloper in disguise? If both conditions are satisfied, by what criteria are petitioners to judge whether what is said is both valid and sound? In this instance, what exactly was the argument? And what was the function of the ambiguity?

The speech comprised almost as many questions as it did statements. While many of these questions were what we would call rhetorical, they served a number of distinct ends. Some were refined ways of indicating the Batara's intimate knowledge: 'Have the family of the Mangkus forgotten their history?'; 'Were there not once Satriya used as officiants here?'; (to the Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh) 'he would have been in real trouble. Do you recall, Mangku?'. Some highlighted failings, almost like a barrister in court,

<sup>34</sup> The term is from Sanskrit *śuci*, pure. Its connotations in Balinese are more complex though. Not only does the term have many antitheses dealing with different kinds of dirt, foulness, impurity and so on, but it often someone or something which is set apart and with unusual powers. At that point in the discussion, the commentators became interested in what the differences were between terms widely used for deities communicating with humans through intermediaries. Besides *katapak*, to be impressed upon, there was also *karangsukang*, to be entered, to be possessed. Both verb forms are passive and suggest being the patient of some agent or force; the latter often violent and by some lowly being. By contrast, two other terms *ngalinggihin*, to sit upon, or *nyaksinin*, to become a witness for, are both *singgih* Balinese, in the active mood (insofar as European grammatical categories hold) and imply a more consensual relationship.

<sup>35</sup> *Kawi* is the broad term Balinese use to refer to the language used in Old Javanese literature, but it is also a register of Balinese used on such occasions, in theatre and so on.

<sup>36</sup> As my tape recorder was not working, as I was concentrating on what the Mangku said, rather than the intonation and style, and as this was many years ago, I would not be rash enough to try to describe the Batara's voice.

or held the addressee to account: ‘In the visible world, the Mangku is embarrassed, but in the non-manifest world, he is brave?’; ‘You won’t allow your son (to become priest)? If you don’t, what are you going to do?’. Some seemed like direct interrogation: (to the Mangku Pura Désa: ‘You, Mangku what is all this about?’). Some were chiding: ‘Why have the Mangkus been stupid and have been running here and there asking for advice?’; ‘Who said you could hand over the temple land?’. Others took the form of a direct threat: ‘What are you thinking of? Are you asking for your descendants to be eradicated?’; ‘Do you want destruction so that your whole family line will be wiped out, if I let loose My Minister, the Tiger?’. Yet others involved giving orders: ‘Have the Mangkus ever Mamendak Kakuluh?’. This was followed up later with a warning of what would happen if they failed to comply: ‘If you do not, you will get no harvests in the rice fields’. By phrasing issues as questions, the speech came across not as a monologue comprising a series of statements and orders, but as a much subtler dialogue, which engaged both the priests and the congregation at large as the subjects addressed.

Another striking feature of the *nyanjan* was that, while many questions and statements were clear, others were ambiguous. The assertion ‘You have had it in mind to prevent your son becoming Mangku’ is univocal. Even if someone’s intention is hard to verify, the speech made explicit what most people had already inferred. Similarly, ‘There is something you haven’t done’ followed by specifying this as *Mamendak Kakuluh* is hard to fault. That this is not a commonplace rite, and so it would be a good guess that it had not been done, is not pertinent to the question of ambiguity. The accuracy of some asseverations disguised the unverifiability of the consequent. ‘The Pura Mascèti was originally sited in the Pura Désa so that the Mangku could then look after both temples’. The temples were situated as stated (which was clearly visible to the Jèro Mangku Selokadan anyway. As the temples had been built long before living memory, the reason was unascertainable. Other statements however—for example, ‘What is not here already?’—might appear to refer to almost anything. As the speech had already specified the context as the *désa* temples of Tengahpadang, it would seem reasonable for the audience to infer that this was still the case.<sup>37</sup>

The glaring instance of ambiguity was though over the crucial issue of naming which of the Jèro Mangku Désa’s two sons should be the future incumbent. First the speech was specific. ‘The one who should properly become My officiant is I Suja.’ The next pronouncement confused matters: ‘There are two. It can be whichever one: I Suja, I Wéda’. Coincidentally or otherwise, when Wayan Arka pressed the Batara Mascèti to be explicit, Jèro Mangku Selokadan ceased momentarily to *nadi*. Thereafter the speech disambiguated the pronouncement in part: ‘Now it is the heirs of the Mangku who should become officiants here’. It also left it open for each son to become *pamangku* of one of the two temples. What could fit Gellner’s strictures about ambiguity better? However, something altogether different may be at issue, namely: who, or what, is the agent here? At first sight, it is the Batara Mascèti with the Jèro Mangku

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<sup>37</sup> My English rendering of the Balinese of the original *nyanjan* contains many parentheses, which were broadly agreed by the various different commentators with whom I worked. I take the act of representing as involving representing something to someone *as* something else on some occasion for some purpose with some proposed outcome, an approach which applies equally not just to interpreting, but also to what we conventionally call ‘translation’. Two points are germane here. First, translating utterances from one language to another, like representing, involves someone doing something rather complicated and uncertain under particular circumstances. The idea that it is some definitive, or even precise, ‘carrying across’ of meaning or reference disguises an assemblage of practices, which include paraphrasing, elaborating, explicating, trying to give the sense of something in a quite different context, divining and guessing. Add to that the translator’s concern with the representation being acceptable, laudable, remunerable or whatever and translating becomes more open and unfinalizable than might seem the case. Second, when I work with interlocutors trying to understand what happened or was said, then their concerns and understanding of my aims are crucial in how they inflect what they say (for a fuller discussion, see Hobart 1996). It follows therefore that I have grown to be less interested in interpretations or translations that meet my expectations than with when, how and about what my interlocutors agree, disagree or take something as self-evident or axiomatic (which I suspect is what is meant by ‘collective representations’), become animated, angry, bored or indifferent about. That is one reason that I find thought-provoking the Cultural Studies argument that culture is best understood as moments of struggle.

Selokadan as Its instrument and the *subak* and assembled congregation as the patients.<sup>38</sup> A moment's reflection suggests that this is to fail to appreciate the context of the *nyanjan*. It is an event in a series of events or, perhaps better, an articulation in an open series of articulations. However forceful the recommendation, be it wrapped up in threats or whatever, in the end the Batara Mascèti did not decide who became priest. That was decided—and conventionally is on such occasions—by the petitioners.<sup>39</sup> Groups are curious entities. As even the most skilled chairperson knows, they can be difficult to predict, especially in meetings, when the context, the mood of the meeting and how people present and respond to arguments, all come into play. It would have been perfectly possible, as did Br. Pisangkaja over the decision of where to place the shrine in the *bencingah*, to ignore expert advice and recommendations.

Finally, does the argument fit the particular circumstances of inquiry? And is it usable? In the discussion following the *nyanjan*, leading to the *subak* accepting the speech, whether it was the Batara Mascèti who had spoken was not publicly mooted at the time. Discussion centred on whether what was said was valid and sound. The nub was Wayan Arka giving the gist of the speech out loud, so that the *subak* members could all hear. So doing was not a simple repetition. As it was public and audible (at the request of the *Bendésa*) and as its accuracy was not questioned, it became the formal recommendation. While respect for the Jèro Mangku Selokadan may have played a part in the first two questions not being voiced publicly, the first in particular featured prominently in various informal discussions taking place afterwards in Tengahpadang.

The terms of the *nyanjan* breached one of the recognized local conditions: that the medium should be tested to minimize the risks of fakery and falsity. Over the years, many supposed moments of mediumship had been exposed by just proposing the application of a burning brand. It did not guarantee that the desired being was speaking, but it did weed out pretenders. Faced with inevitable uncertainty over the authenticity of the speech, the villagers placed stress on what someone foreign to the community would be most unlikely to know; and on whether the proposed solution made sense. Now it would have been possible for an outsider to ascertain some information, such as the festival to the Panca Pandawa, the presence of a *Padanda niskala*, or the names of the Mangku Désa's sons. Indeed, people tend to keep a sharp eye out for outsiders turning up before a *nyanjan* and who ask for such detailed local information. It is impossible to know how much the Jèro Mangku Selokadan knew. It is ultimately imponderable. This is why, I think, the Jèro Mangku Désa said that he *pracaya akidik*, believed a little.

So far I have approached events as far as possible in terms of Balinese criteria. It is quite interesting though to review the discussions in terms of European categories of logic and rhetoric, in particular informal fallacies which are widely used in argumentation, but are invalid. On the whole, villagers avoided these rather successfully. There was however one notable exception. Insofar as people in Br. Triwangsa

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<sup>38</sup> I have developed the notion of complex agency from Collingwood (1942: 130-147, elaborated by Inden 1990). In my usage, an agent is that which claims to have decided upon, or responsibility for an action or event. Only in the limiting case is this unproblematically identifiable with an individual, because decision-making is usually a complex process involving more than one person or group, and may well change during the course of events. Also different participants often attribute agency differently depending on their rival interests. An instrument is that which an agent authorizes to carry out the action and a patient is that on which the action is carried out. Here, as the term medium implies, the Jèro Mangku Selokadan as intermediary is notionally purely an instrument; but when involved in decision-making is part-agent. Needless to say, matters are more complicated, because to the extent that a medium is conscious, they may deliberately steer the direction of what is said. More broadly, people who are notionally instruments, such as brokers, emissaries or civil servants, may well take it upon themselves to act as, or to pretend to be, agents.

<sup>39</sup> This point emerged in the analysis of the speech of the Balian Lantang Hidung (Beyond words, endnote 3, p 41). Over-specifying may well make an injunction or recommendation unpalatable or unworkable under the circumstances in question. The Batara had named the two sons, but had I Suja been declared *pamangku* of the Pura Désa and I Wèda of the Pura Mascèti, then the *nyanjan* would have been effectively void, because the former did not own a *désa* compound and so was *prima facie* ineligible. In short, a workable pronouncement requires a degree of flexibility in how to make it work in practice. Imposing philosophical criteria of propositional coherence here would be like driving a car through traffic by reading The Road Traffic Act.

considered the *nyanjan* genuine because the Mangku was *suci*, they appealed to false authority, a version of *argumentum ab auctoritate* (if he is *suci*, what he says is necessarily true). No one else I spoke to however took that line of argument. There was no obvious appeal to tradition (*argumentum ad antiquitatem*). That the priesthood had passed down from the Jéro Mangku Désa's great-grandfather was not in itself a justification. Rather the stress was on accurate knowledge of the past comprising a test of likely veracity: the less the information was in the public domain, the more credible it was likely to be in the *nyanjan*. The Jéro Mangku Désa gave precisely these grounds for inclining in favour.<sup>40</sup> Another fallacy that people avoided was that of composition—assuming that, if part were true, the whole must also be. The discussions I heard tended towards forensic examination of each individual elements of the speech. However, Gellner's argument (1973: 30-31) that, under these kind of circumstances, listeners invoke a principle of charity, by extending context until it makes sense of a statement may, however, have some bearing. The Batara's speech made no reference to the particular circumstances under which the present Mangku's forebear became priest. The story of the mango tree is the kind of event which appeals to Balinese imagination. That it was not mentioned explicitly was not thought a defect, as the great and good do not spell things out in pedantic detail.

So far I have dealt with only one aspect of the speech: how far it was *wiakti* (*kawi*: (*sa*)*wyakti*, true, evident, demonstrable) or *beneh* (correct, corresponding with reliable sources). However, people's interest in the *nyanjan* was not that of analytical philosophers trying to determine whether certain stated propositions were generally true or false. Their concern was to minimize the chances of being fed false information because this would undermine the reliability of the corresponding injunctions to action. So a quite separate strand of thinking ran through discussions. Did the instructions on who should become priest(s) make sense in the context of the known history of Tengahpadang, the *subak*, the temple and its priests? Were the proposals sound and workable in terms of local social practice? If they deviated (which they did not), what would be the implications? What would be the consequences of adopting them? And, crucially, what could go wrong? And who would be held to account were it to do so? That accounts for the Jéro Mangku Désa asking whether it would be like twins if both his sons became *pamangku*. And the question received a direct reply with a stated ground, followed by an explicit authorization. The Mangku Désa was inquiring in a particular frame of reference and was promptly answered in the same frame. What made sense to almost everyone, including the Mangku Désa, was that the instruction that both I Suja and I Wéda were suited to become priests was that it was easily translatable into practice. I Suja, not being a *kerama désa* (owner of a *désa* compound), was disqualified from becoming the priest in the temple for the assembled *désa* land owners. However, as a farmer in Subak Langkih, there was no impediment to him being its temple priest. That left I Wéda as the future *pamangku* of the Pura Désa, so neatly tidying up several issues at once. What is more, the present *pamangku* had done nothing to disqualify his descendants from taking office; nor were the reputations of either such as to give *subak* or *désa* members reason to doubt their suitability or raise pertinent objections. In sum, there was nothing particular to call the authenticity of the *nyanjan* into question. The injunctions were usable: the choice of who should become the new priest was hardly unexpected and the solution was eminently workable. It also neatly addressed the future incumbency of the priesthood of the Pura Désa, without making any firm commitment, so that the *désa* members could always review this subsequently, if questions arose.

## Analysis

One obvious issue remains to be discussed. I have tried to remain neutral and agnostic about who or what spoke during the *nyanjan* and propose to continue to do so. There are strong grounds for considering it a distraction which is not germane to an analysis of Balinese styles of argument. Quine famously

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<sup>40</sup> Other people thought it unlikely the Jéro Mangku Désa would have offered the priest from Selokadan the information. Such underhand dealings not only risked violent reprisal from the Batara Mascèti, but the Mangku did not get favour his elder son.

asserted that, epistemologically, physical objects and Homer's Gods are both posits, which differ in degree not kind (1953: 44). Each is part of a broader assemblage of mutually defined ideas that, if pushed, form a closed, self-validating system.<sup>41</sup> The point was made elegantly by Peter Winch in his analysis of Evans-Pritchard's defence of the coherence of Zande ideas about the effectiveness of oracles in ascertaining whether witchcraft was at work and the identity of the perpetrator. Winch noted that Evans-Pritchard took it that Western science was ultimately true and the Azande wrong. He took a passage in Evans-Pritchard's account and reversed Azande and European with devastating effect.

Europeans observe the action of the poison oracle just as Azande observe it, but their observations are always subordinated to their beliefs and are incorporated into their beliefs and made to explain them and justify them. Let a Zande consider any argument that would utterly refute all European scepticism about the power of the oracle. If it were translated into European modes of thought it would serve to support their entire structure of belief. For their scientific notions are eminently coherent, being interrelated by a network of logical ties, and are so ordered that they never too crudely contradict mystical experience but, instead, experience seems to justify them. The European is immersed in a sea of scientific notions, and if he speaks about the Zande poison oracle he must speak in a scientific idiom (1964: 312-13).

However, I am not concerned with generalizations about Balinese belief, because I think that such articulations, whether by Balinese or others, are not only misleading but wrong. They fail to consider the myriad different circumstances under which people make decisions and how these are subsequently articulated by different interest groups for different purposes. I suggest that these generalizations are myths, much in the sense that Barthes wrote about *Myth Today* (1973), and should be analyzed as such.

It should be clear, as the quotations above suggest, that I am proposing a pragmatist and contextualist approach (Pepper 1942: 232-279). Apart from my philosophical inclination, such an approach offers a way of thinking about Balinese society that chimes with the tenor of how Balinese often talk and act in daily life. In the present context though what I mean by pragmatism needs some specifying. For example, in his *The will to believe*, James mentions Pascal's famous wager about the existence of God.

Weigh what your gains and your losses would be if you should stake all you have on heads, or God's existence: if you win in such case, you gain eternal beatitude; if you lose, you lose nothing at all. If there were an infinity of chances, and only one for God in this wager, still you ought to stake your all on God; for though you surely risk a finite loss by this procedure, any finite loss is reasonable, even a certain one is reasonable, if there is but the possibility of infinite gain... At bottom, what have you to lose? (2009: 10).

James also applies a similar argument to natural scientific method.

A chemist finds an hypothesis live enough to spend a year in its verification: he believes in it to that extent. But if his experiments prove inconclusive either way, he is quit for his loss of time, no vital harm being done (2009: 10).

As the ruminations about the validity of the *nyanjan* suggest, Balinese are aware of the risk of ignoring *niskala*, of not checking what being is supposed to speak on such occasions and of not paying careful attention to what is said. Nor is it the case that 'no vital harm is done' if their judgement is wrong.

Another consideration when making important decisions is by no means confined to Balinese or the use of mediums. It is about covering yourself in the event of something going wrong or someone blaming you. Many years ago, a senior British civil servant told me about the in-house rule at the Home Office: 'A memorandum is written not to inform the recipient, but to protect the sender'. Robert Bloch's dictum expresses a related concern: 'The man who smiles when things go wrong has thought of someone to

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<sup>41</sup> I hope my phrasing makes clear that I wish to avoid smuggling in totality, as in the idea of a 'conceptual scheme'. I take it that coherence is a function of particular acts of articulation on particular occasions. For all his sophistication, Quine assumes conceptual schemes to comprise something resembling totalities. In discussion, Richard Fox has argued that other very distinguished scholars more or less implicitly make similar presuppositions.



blame it on'. The highly public nature of the event entailed that a large congregation had heard and were indirect party to a decision agreed by *subak* members. A problem with most rationalist approaches is that they do not take into account that, in the lived world, knowledge is almost always for a purpose. This is the more surprising in that scholars in their working academic lives would be hard pressed to survive were not versed in deploying such practical and highly contextual knowledge.

By contrast to the idea of argument being driven by the general need to establish the truth of certain propositions, the whole train of events was sparked off by a problem: the priest of the Pura Désa had become too old to carry out all his duties. The immediate incident that highlighted the issue was the *Bendésa* being inconvenienced. It is reminiscent of Deleuze's analysis of the circumstances under which a problem is recognized and which frame how it should be addressed (*Of Popes and soaps* 15).

Sense is located in the problem itself. Sense is constituted in the complex theme, but the complex theme is that set of problems and questions in relation to which the propositions serve as elements of response and cases of solution... Problems are of the order of events—not only because cases of solution emerge like real events, but because the conditions of a problem themselves imply events such as sections, ablations, adjunctions (1994: 157).

Making sense of the *nyanjan* in the Pura Mascèti requires a remarkable knowledge of context—social, cultural, historical and linguistic. I could not have laid out my argument here without it. To evaluate whether the argument put forward by the Batara Mascèti made sense and was to be trusted, people made use of all kinds of experience, knowledge, understanding, familiarity with previous instances, styles of inference and critical judgement. However, something making sense and being trustworthy are not identical. It would be little consolation had the injunctions made sense, but led to serious consequences. *Pace* Sperber and Wilson's use (1982, 1986) of Grice's theory of conversational implicature (1975), the idea that you can make sense of the Batara Mascèti's speech and what people said without recourse to knowledge of context, however variably distributed, is fatuous.<sup>42</sup> Even in its own narrow terms, the theory conflates knowing that with knowing how (Ryle 1971), as well as knowing when (Cohen 1993), who and so on. Such a theory could only be proposed by scholars with scant experience of extensive ethnography and equally scant appreciation of the implications. It makes you long for an approach that does not ultimately leave the subjects and objects of inquiry as unrecognizable lumps of bloody gristle on the floor of the pathology laboratory.

It may be more useful to consider the *nyanjan* as part of a performance, in which the Batara Mascèti and the Jèro Mangku Selokadan were treated with the greatest respect and deference, while leaving something else as the effective decision-maker. It was a complex agent comprising the *pamangkus*, the *Klian Pakasèh*, the *Bendésa*, I Wayan Arka and, in varying degree, other village officials and *subak* members as part of a complex agent, which included the Jèro Mangku Selokadan as the priest involved in deciding the terms of the *nyanjan*. On this account, the Batara Mascèti resembled a powerful instrument to be treated with respect and caution. This makes sense of the ambiguity. Far from being muddled, the Batara first indicated I Suja as the future priest, but then extended the field to ensure his brother, who was senior, was not excluded. So doing achieved three things. First, it left a degree of elasticity, should the meeting be unhappy with the recommendation. Second, it potentially settled who would become Mangku

<sup>42</sup> My diary entries for the evening before the *nyanjan*, when I was learning about the background, and when writing up notes after the event the next day are interesting. I quote verbatim.

23. 12. 88. Whatever Dan Sperber says about relevance, almost everything which seems clear when one understands the language, becomes obscure when one starts to learn about the background. Usually things make a certain sense on first inspection, but when one comes to think about it and starts to ask questions, it becomes clear that people understand things here on different levels.

24. 12. 88. [Of the Batara Mascèti's speech] Although it was not *raos wayah* [mature speech, where there is an ostensible meaning, but a covert meaning that requires unravelling by the more thoughtful], it was striking just how much background one had to know: the particular context of the use of words, and the context of previous events to make sense of what was said. It kept running through my head that this was a good case against Sperber and Wilson. Whether it is mutual knowledge, shared context or whatever, it certainly ain't couched in a propositional form which permits the kind of inference they draw.

Désa in a way that left it open to subsequent review. Third, it finessed what was likely to be a fraught relationship between the two siblings.

There is also a dialogic element. The onus was upon the congregation to request clarification of the ambiguous pronouncement. Whereas the original delegation to Selokadan had failed to discuss whether the *pamangku* should be tested or not, here I Wayan Arka made sure publicly to seek specification. Considered dialogically, the Batara Mascèti might be treated as part of the complex agent that decided upon the new *pamangku*. Judgements about agency different in crucial ways from the truth conditions of propositions, which are supposed to hold independent of language, context and any other circumstances.<sup>43</sup> A difficulty with agency is that it is not some objective measurable state, disposition or mode of determination, but is inextricable from the discursive conditions under which it is enunciated, claimed or questioned. Considered this way, agency always tends to be dialogic and open to rival articulations and understandings. Broadly some group or persons assert or presuppose something to be the case in response to, or anticipating, others engaging in counter-articulating. A close scrutiny of actual practice has wider implications. One is that concepts like society or culture depend on what I might call a stratospheric approach. Events must be viewed from such a distance that the articulatory practices that constitute them fade into insignificance, so permitting the analyst to draw grand, if questionable, conclusions. Another, perhaps less obvious, implication is that the innumerable uncertainties, confusions, arguments, disagreements and conflicts that are a feature of most social life disappear—like the Cheshire Cat, leaving only a vague smile—so permitting a vision of society or culture as coherent, integrated or even comprising some sort of totality.<sup>44</sup>

While some acts of articulating are momentous and public, others are quotidian or barely noticeable, but are arguments nonetheless. An instance was the use of language before and after the *nyanjan* itself. When the Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh addressed the Jèro Mangku Selokadan, he referred to him simply as ‘Jèro Mangku’. There was a difference of opinion here as to whether this is the proper mode of address, as other people I talked to thought that the latter, who is a Pradéwa, should be addressed as Déwa Aji Mangku, or Dané Déwa Aji Mangku. It is customary in Tengahpadang to address the *pamangku* of the Pura Dur Bingin as Gusti Aji Mangku, because he is a Gusti (high caste, but lower than Pradéwa). The Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh also used relatively low language when speaking to high castes, which implied that the role of Mangku superseded caste (*wangsa*) and ranked as superior because a *pamangku* has been through rites of purification. The counter-argument is that one should still use the full title *mangda uning ring runtutan wangsa*, so that people can know about the caste order. This touches on further complexities of the notion of *suci*. Is caste hierarchy about difference in how *suci*, broadly pure, members of different castes are? Or is about relative status or nobility, *singgih*? Senior aristocrats such as the late Cokorda Agung Suyasa from Ubud said that no *jaba* could ever be as *suci* as any *triwangsa*. The terse counter to this was: how *suci* was a *triwangsa* who was a thief?<sup>45</sup> In short, evaluative and even descriptive terms may enshrine argument by virtue of multiple reference or connotation, which emerges in use.

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<sup>43</sup> The limiting possibility of context-free propositions is that of rigid designators in modal logic where some state of affairs is necessarily true and ideally true in all possible worlds (Kripke 1980). Such an idea stands in stark contrast to the argument that I am putting forward for Bali, where designations are not always true for a single society or even a given community on all occasions, let alone for a single world.

<sup>44</sup> Such an approach also involves an implicit epistemological metaphor of knowledge as spatial or visual (Rorty 1979; Salmund 1982). This has the effect of freezing action into an accessible tableau. An alternative account which stresses the dialogic nature of such events not only brings out the extent to which they are under-determined, but also makes accessible to inquiry the rival opinions and disagreements going on. (1983; 1990).

<sup>45</sup> Matters in Bali are rarely quite so simple though, on at least two different grounds. First, a highly successful thief who consistently evades detection and capture may be set apart and considered *sakti*, possessed of unusual powers. Such a judgement has literary antecedents, for example in the Old Javanese Pararaton (The Book of Kings), Ken Arok, the founder of the kingdom of Singhasari was a thief and criminal in his youth. Second, terms like *sakti* and *suci* are used in daily life by Balinese without much apparent confusion in a variety of ways that defy Europeans’ desires for clear-cut denotations or connotations.

In such instances, the usefulness of trying to distinguish where argumentation ends and disagreement begins is questionable. Gellner made the point neatly with a play on the ambiguities of an invented term ‘boble’, the original referent of which is obvious.

Assume that in the language of a given society, there is a word *boble* which is applied to characterise people. Research reveals that *bobleness* or *bobility* is attributed to people under *either* of the following conditions: (a) a person who antecedently displays certain characteristics in his conduct, say uprightness, courage and generosity, is called *boble*, (b) any person holding a certain office, or a certain social position, is also ipso facto described as *boble*. One is tempted to say that bobility (a) is a descriptive term whose operational definition consists of tests for the possession of certain attributes (and might consist of seeing how large a portion of his income he distributed as largesse, how he behaved in danger, etc.), whereas (b) is simply an ascription, depending on the will or whim of those in authority, or on the social situation, but not in any reasonably direct or identifiable way dependent on the characteristics of the person in question. But the point is: the society in question does not distinguish *two concepts*, boble (a) and boble (b). It only uses one word, boble *tout court*; and again its theories about bobility, expressed in proverbs, legends or even disquisitions of wise elders, only know bobility, one and indivisible. As a first and simplified approximation, the logic of bobility is not an unrecognisable model, perhaps, of some familiar concepts in our own languages (1973: 38-9).

On the first definition, whether someone is *suci* can be ascertained either descriptively by a person having undergone certain rites or evaluatively by acting in a certain manner. On the second, it is an ascription to an entire category of people. To go beyond Gellner, all this raises the question of who made such an enunciation. People articulate and counter-articulate as a matter of course when they speak and act towards one another. Whether it is useful to call such moments argumentation or disagreement presumably depends not only on the analyst’s interests, but on whether those concerned (choose to) recognize them as one, the other, both or neither.

### Performance

Attempting to ascertain, let alone assert, a single unchallengeable truth behind the *nyanjan* seems a singularly pointless exercise. Different groups and different people had different interests and understandings of what happened at different stages. And the *nyanjan* and the discussion that followed were, by Balinese standards, remarkably clear and determinate. The questions that I raised earlier dealt not only with who was speaking and its reliability, but whether the results were valid, sound, fitting and usable. So, any determination is momentary, open, unfinalized, subject to rival articulations and revised or forgotten as other events supersede them in people’s attention or memories. What stands out to me is another aspect, namely the *nyanjan* as a performance. Balinese are very good at staging spectacles from temple festivals and cremations to theatrical occasions, and comparably skilled at judging such events using complex criteria (e.g. Vickers 1991). So, perhaps the question to ask is: was this was a convincing performance? The occasion was very well attended, everyone who was anyone was there (and a few more besides), the *nyanjan* itself went smoothly, the speech was clear, properly announced publicly afterwards and the group concerned, the *subak*, agreed with the recommendation. The broad consensus afterwards was that it was a successful and well-managed event. Everyone I knew went away happy. The only fly in the ointment—the failure to test the *pamangku*—was countered by how elegant and satisfactory the speech was.<sup>46</sup> Anthropologists often downplay performance as a criterion in evaluating social action (cf. Turner 1982). This is slightly curious as more academic professional life than one might care to mention involves theatrical elements from lecturing to public seminars. Read a certain way, reviews, articles and

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<sup>46</sup> Performance is a complex notion, as I have argued elsewhere (2013). For present purposes, I am using the term in two senses. The first is English: ‘The accomplishment, execution, carrying out, working out of anything ordered or undertaken... The performing of a play, of music, of gymnastic or conjuring feats, or the like, as a definite act or series of acts done at an appointed place and time; a public exhibition or entertainment’ (OED). The second is my understanding of what Balinese consider to comprise the successful execution of a large-scale public event.

books are equally performances. Many years ago at SOAS, when I was walking towards the lecture theatres with my old friend John Middleton, he put his arm around my shoulder and said: ‘Welcome, young Hobart, to the society of ham actors’. If we are to learn anything from the *nyanjan* in the Pura Mascèti, perhaps it is that:

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

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## Speech of Ida Batara Mascèti during nyanjan

<p>Jèro Mangku Selokadan <i>mamantra</i>.</p> <p><i>Kènkèn Mangku dadi belog, kemu mai dadi<sup>1</sup> Mangku matakon? Mangku sing nawang di Pura Dalem. Mangku kadèn nyungsung Ratu Panca Pandawa?</i></p> <p><i>Apa sing ada dini? Sing ja kanti kemu mai. Mangku lakar nunasang yèn odalan dini, kènkèn? Dadi ada ané tondèn jalanang dini. Dadi sing jalanang kènkèn?</i></p> <p><i>Taèn Mangku Mamendak Kakuluh? Ring Ida Batara Panca Pandawa?</i></p> <p>Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh: <i>Nawegang. Nènten naanin, seantukan nènten naanin wènten baos. Ainggih ngararis sampun mabaos dumun.</i></p> <p><i>Eni Mangku, kènkèn? Adi ada bayun Mangku ngelidang sentanan Mangku. Kènkèn?</i></p>	<p>Mantras by Jèro Mangku Selokadan</p> <p>Immediately afterwards he started to speak with the words of Batara Mascèti:</p> <p>Why have the Mangkus (of the Kahyangan Tiga) been stupid and have been running here and there asking for advice? (They had gone to temples in Tirta Arum and Belahbatu to <i>mapinunas</i>). Don't you know about the Pura Dalem (Kauh), where you pay homage to the Ratu Panca Pandawa?</p> <p>What is not here already? (It is not necessary to go elsewhere). You shouldn't go as far as having to run around. Have the Mangkus here never thought of asking advice here (in the Pura Dalem Kauh) when there is an <i>odalán</i> here (in the Pura Mascèti)? There is something you haven't done. Why haven't you done it?</p> <p>Have the Mangkus ever <i>Mamendak Kakuluh</i>? To the Batara Panca Pandawa (in the Pura Dalem Kauh)?</p> <p>Jèro Mangku Dalem Kauh: My apologies. We have never done so, because we were never told to. Please continue speaking.</p> <p>You, Mangku (to the Mangku Pura Désa), what is all this about? You have had it in mind to prevent your son becoming Mangku. Why? (What are you up to?)</p>
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<sup>1</sup> *Dadi* here may be a mistake because it does not have its usual sense of 'become'. It makes more sense as *adi*, which colloquially means 'why'. *Kènkèn adi* is a familiar strong form of question. *Adi* as marking a question occurs slightly later when the Batara asks: '*Adi ada*', in a sentence which is ostensibly a statement, but carries an implicit question (Do you have it in mind?).

*Eni jani lakar nunasang jan banggul<sup>2</sup>. Anak suba ada di natar duwéné dini, sing ngalih kija buin. Parisentanan Mangku-Mangku sing inget? Kompiang Mangkuné kawit pengawit pengayah dini. Jani Mangku lakar ngelidang. Lakar ketagihan? Kènkèn kenehé? Ketagihan nyamput?*

*Jèro Mangku Désa: Nawegang Ratu Batara, titiang nènten purun ring Paduka Batara.*

*Makita uug, apang nyamput yèn Nira-Nira ngamedalang Pramanca Macané? Ané pidan kadèn suba taèn Satriya kaanggon pengogong dini? Kadèn uug? Di cariké sing taèn mupu apa. Jani kènkèn? Sing lakar baang panaké? Yèn sing, baang kènkèn?*

*Kaagihan yèn Nira Batara Panca Pandawa ngamedalang Bimanyu lakar ngènkèn? Eni dané pantes jan banggul Nira I Suja.*

*Ada lakar dadua, ené encènan dadi, I Suja, I Wéda. Eni pengawité maluan rajeg Pura Mascètiné tekèn Pura Désané sangkalé dadi Mangkuné ngangkep. Dadi Mangku ngatur ngayah ditu di Pura Désa ditu. Yèn pengawit malu dini Mangku ring Mascèti lingsir Mangkué, yèn kal nakonan mai ka balian ketakson sing maan, dini Mangku anak suba maduwé.*

Now you want advice about the incumbent priest of the temple. There is already someone here in the Désa; you do not need to look further. Have the family of the Mangkus forgotten (their history)? It was your great-grandfather who first served here. Now you are going to block (your son). What do you want? What are you thinking of? Are you asking for your descendants to be eradicated?

Jèro Mangku Désa (crying): My apologies, My Lord. I would not dare to oppose your Majesty.

Do you want destruction so that your whole family line will be wiped out, if I let loose My Minister, the Tiger? Were there not once Satriya used as officiants here? Do you think it did not end badly? The rice fields never yielded any harvest. Now what? You won't allow your son (to become priest)? If you don't, what are you going to do?

If you are inviting the Batara Panca Pandawa to release Abimanyu, what are you thinking of? The one who should properly become My officiant is I Suja.

There are two. It can be whichever one: I Suja, I Wéda. The Pura Mascèti was originally sited in the Pura Désa so that the Mangku could then look after both temples. The Mangku could serve the Pura Désa.

If originally the Mangku here in the Pura Mascèti was your forefather, if you are going to go all over the place asking *balian ketakson*, you'll get nothing, there is already someone here.

<sup>2</sup> The expression *Jan banggul* (literally: ladder + bamboo ladder comprising a single pole with horizontal slats cut through) resembles a European metonym, as it denotes the person authorized to climb up to the shrines in a temple and so a temple priest.

<p><i>Sing ada dini balian, yèn odalan di Pura Dalem. Kènkèn taèn nuur anak lingsir?</i></p>	<p>There is no <i>balian</i> here, if there is an <i>odalan</i> in the Pura Dalem. Have you ever invited a Padanda? (Anticipates the reply of no.)</p>
<p>Mangkus reply: No.</p>	<p>Startled reply by Jèro Mangku Dalem and others: No!</p>
<p><i>Anak suba ada. Yèn Mangku kal nunas pengègèr nunas pengasih. Nyidang di Pura Dalem. Ngudiang sing? Pidan Mangku taèn lakar kena kasengkalaan gelis rauh Ida Batara Bayu. Yèn sing kèto sengkala. Merasa Mangku?</i></p>	<p>There is already someone. (A Padanda <i>niskala</i>. There is a <i>pratima</i> of a Padanda in the shrine to Ratu Ngarurah.) If the Mangku wants to ask for <i>pengègèr</i> or <i>pengasih</i>, you can in the Pura Dalem. Why should you not succeed? Previously when the Mangku (Dalem) ran into danger, Lord Bayu was promptly on hand, had this not been so, he would have been in real trouble. Do you recall, Mangku?</p>
<p><i>Ingetang jani ngaturang tebasan Guru Piduka. Eni suba uli makelo pisan. Nira duka. Mangku suba ada paitungan lakar ngaturang sentanané dadi jan banggul, buin ngelidang jeg nyerahang Raja duwèn Batara. Nyèn ngorahin dadi jeg serahang? Lek ati sakalané, kèto? Yèn di niskala sing ada leklekan.</i></p>	<p>Remember now to make an offering of Tebasan Guru Piduka. This has not been done for a very long time. I am angry. You planned to make your son <i>pamangku</i>, then blocked it and offered the land belonging to the temple (to someone else to undertake the responsibilities). Who said you could hand it over? So you're ashamed in the here and now, isn't that so? But you do not feel ashamed towards the unseen world.</p>
<p>Jèro Mangku Désa: <i>Nawegang. Titiang puniki seantukan titiang nyalit ring puniki ring sakalané.</i></p>	<p>Jèro Mangku Désa: My apologies. This is because I felt embarrassed in front of the community, if my son was chosen to be Mangku.</p>
<p>Ica Ida Batara:</p>	<p>Batara laughs</p>
<p><i>Mangku sing dadi lek kèto. Disakalané Mangku lek, diniskalané Mangku bani, keto?</i></p>	<p>Mangkus shouldn't be embarrassed like that. In the visible world, the Mangku is embarrassed, but in the non-manifest world, he is brave? Is that it? (He is quite prepared to stand up and defy the gods.)</p>
<p>I Wayan Arka: <i>Ainggih. Ratu Batara. Mangda becik-becik, mapica baos ringpanjak dué, santukan puniki</i></p>	<p>I Wayan Arka: My Lord. So that what you have said about this is clear, please explain to your humble subjects, because they are very stupid. About what you have just said: I Suja</p>



*panjang dué kalintang nambet-nambet. Becik sampunmapica baos dumun. Ainggih puniki sekadi baos Batara sané wau kabaos puniki I Suja dados, I Wéda dados, puniki pinunas titiang mangda suang-suang puniki lédang Paduka Batara ngicang pangogong.*

*Mangku ngalesu ajebos.*

*Ingetang nyèn ngaturang tebasan Guru Piduka. Yèning odalan dini, mendak nyèn kakuluh ring Ratu Panca Pandawa. Yèn sing kèto, sing mupu apa di cariké. Eni anak mula sentanan Mangku ané patut dadi jan banggul dini.*

*Jèro Mangku Désa: Niki santukan titiang puniki kakalih, raris dados Mangku, ten kembar puniki?*

*Sing kènken apan natah tunggal. Wenang.*

*Jèro Mangku Désa: Ainggih. Yèning asapunika, titiang ten purun ring baos Batara, sakéwanten mangda asiki-asikié, titiang ngiring sampun.*

*Ingetang nyèn...*

*Jèro Mangku Selokadan ngalesu.*

is suitable, I Wéda is suitable. May I beg of you to clarify which temple it is your pleasure to bestow upon each of them?

Jèro Mangku Selokadan came out of trance for a moment, then resumed.

Do remember to make the offering of *Tebasan Guru Piduka*! If the odalan is here, *Mendak Kakuluh* to the Lords Panca Pandawa. If you do not, you will get no harvests in the rice fields. Now it is the heirs of the Mangku who should become officiants here.

Jèro Mangku Désa: Because there are two, can they both become priests? Is that not like twins?

That is unimportant, because the land comprises a single unit. You have permission.

Jèro Mangku Désa: If that is so, I would not dare question what my Lord has said. Just so it is clear which is which. I shall follow whatever.

Remember this...

Mangku Selokadan awakes.