

***Basa Bapak-Bapak* and What is the Point of Speaking?**

Natalia Theodoridou

In this paper, I draw from my fieldwork experiences (2011-12) to explore some of the ways Balinese talk about performance and how such practices of commentary and articulation relate to notions of argumentation, reasoning, interpretation and meaning-making. In order to do so, I use a *Drama Gong* performance as a starting point to compare commentaries by different (but to some extent overlapping) groups of people, namely ISI academics and other enunciators fluent in what I shall call the *basa Bapak-Bapak*, actors, and spectators. I shall confine myself here to one aspect of argument in its broad sense, namely interpretation, because of its importance, but complexity, in Bali. As Mark pointed out in the Background paper, practices of argumentation are often crucially about controlling and delimiting discourse, and so about power. And what is 'the single, true interpretation' if not 'an autocrat's dream of power' (Donoghue 1981: 199)?

Interpretation

Before introducing the *Drama Gong* performance that will serve as a case study, I would like to probe the issue of interpretation further, not least because it is customarily upheld as one of the primary aims of scholarship. According to Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures*, culture 'is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action' (1973: 145). But what does the notion of interpretation take for granted, how relevant is it, and how might it relate to the range of practices that Balinese may be involved in when it comes to performance? And how are we to understand 'meaning'?

Interpretation presupposes the interpreting subject and the idea of interiority, which, according to Taylor, is a distinctive feature of Western modernity, which distinguishes sharply between the inner self and the world around us: 'But strong as this partitioning of the world appears to us, as solid as this localization may seem, and anchored in the very nature of the human agent, it is in large part a feature of our world, the world of modern, Western people' (1989: 111). How far, then, can the idea of interpretation be taken in Bali, and what is its role in Balinese, context-specific, performance? What alternatives are there, and how might recasting the question of interpretation as one of rethinking, commenting, discussing, exemplifying, and so forth, transform the issues involved?

So, while this might seem a rather curious question, it may be useful to pause before assuming that everyone everywhere interprets, still more in the same way. Who is entitled or authorized to interpret and who not differs contextually and cross-culturally. An example that brings to the fore the connection between interpretation and authority would be the case of the Catholic church, where interpretation of scripture is the preserve of priests and experts, the only ones trusted with the role of 'mediating the written word of God' (Goody 1987: 119). Who gets to interpret in contemporary Bali, and what is interpretation for? And what are the implications of treating European hermeneutic techniques as universal and as necessary and sufficient for understanding others?

First, there is the problem of the possibility of equally valid alternative interpretations: ‘An interpretation must not only be probable, but more probable than another interpretation’ (Ricoeur 1976: 79). This involves a process of validation by which to assess possible interpretations. However, ‘validation is not verification. It is an argumentative discipline comparable to the juridical procedures used in legal interpretation, a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability’ (Ricoeur 1976: 78). But what is it that needs to be validated in the first place? In other words, how does one arrive at possible interpretations? Paul Ricoeur’s response was that ‘we have to guess the meaning of the text because the author’s intention is beyond our reach’ (1976: 75). So even the starting point of the process of validation is not unambiguous. This transforms interpretation into a circular process of guesswork and validation based on uncertainty.

The above also implies that the notion of interpretation presupposes a triple unity: on the one hand a unified subject or self, who, through the process of interpretation, gains access to the meaning of a work, and on the other, the unity of the work and its meaning, which ultimately hinges upon the unified intellect that created it, however inaccessible its intentions. Interpretation, in a sense, becomes a process of mediation between unified subjects. But ‘[i]n the modern sense, subjectivity depends primarily on the unity of self-consciousness, and on interiority, freedom, and personal autonomy’ (Williams and Bengtsson 2014). In addition, Taylor has argued that

[o]ur modern notion of the self is related to, one might say constituted by, a certain sense (or perhaps a family of senses) of inwardness. [...] In our languages of self-understanding, the opposition ‘inside-outside’ plays an important role. We think of our thoughts, ideas, or feelings as being ‘within’ us, while the objects in the world which these mental states bear on are ‘without.’ Or else we think of our capacities or potentialities as ‘inner,’ awaiting the development which will manifest them or realize them in the public world (1989: 111).

Taylor also noted that ‘[w]ithout the unified self which we see articulated in Plato’s theory, the modern notion of interiority could never have developed’ (1989: 120). This should cast serious doubt on whether either the concept of a unified self or of interiority can be assumed unproblematically to be general in Bali. In addition, this partitioning of inner and outer worlds ‘is a function of a historically limited mode of self-interpretation, one which has become dominant in the modern West and which may indeed spread thence to other parts of the globe, but which had a beginning in time and space and may have an end’ (Taylor 1989: 111). Assuming the self-evidence of such modern, Eurocentric concepts, then, is ignoring their historicity and naturalizing them, while at the same time silencing, or erasing the possibility of, alternatives.

In addition, the question of interpretation being the process through which to discover meaning is further complicated if we consider Balinese ideas about it. The word most closely related to meaning in Balinese is *artos*; however, this is rarely used

in discussion. When I asked Ayu, my Balinese language teacher¹ about the differences of watching performances in a temple compared to performances in a secular context, she said the following:

If I watch *sasolahan*² at the temple, this is like a sacred [*sakral*] *sasolahan*, I am not noticing the *sasolahan* so much, whether it is bad, whether it is good, no. Because this *sasolahan*, which is sacred, is only a part of the ceremony. It is not entertainment [*hiburan*]. If the *sasolahan* is entertainment, I would focus more on assessing the movements, on whether I am entertained or not, in accordance with the purpose of that dance [*tarian*]. If it is a sacred *sasolahan*, the purpose [*tujuan/tetujon*] is not to be entertained. Because its purpose is for the ceremony, to complete the ceremony. If it is a *sasolahan* at the pavilion, that is entertainment. I watch, is it good or not this *sasolahan*, is it bad or not, because the purpose of this dance is to entertain us, therefore here we can comment, we can assess, am I already entertained or not? So, if the dance is at the pavilion we can surely focus more on seeing what the movement is like (Interview 25/02/2012).³

Ayu's commentary suggests a tendency to focus on the purpose (*tujuan/tetujon*) rather than the meaning of performance-related practices. In addition, as Mark demonstrated in his paper for the symposium and elsewhere, what one could generally term interpretive practices in Bali involve a wide range of activities, such as 'explicating (*ngartiang*), exemplifying (*nyontohin*), sifting (*nyaringin*) or unravelling (*melut*)' (Hobart 2015: 10). There is, then, a variety of practices such as rethinking, commenting, discussing, making fun of, ignoring, and so forth, which can only be collapsed into the single notion of interpretation by abstraction.

It follows from the above that, if interpretation's primary goal is to arrive at or explain the 'meaning' of something, such as a text or utterance, in Bali this would necessarily underplay the context, the social conditions and cultural circumstances within which these practices take place. The search for meaning also upholds a transmission model for understanding language and speech, assuming that the communication of a message is its primary, or even sole, purpose. It largely ignores questions that pertain to representation and articulation as practices, and erases the circumstances, purposes and consequences of these practices. So rather than focusing on an abstract analytical concept such as meaning, or trying to establish what are the essential features of interpretation, perhaps it might be more helpful to consider the kinds of interpretive practices used for Balinese performance, both by Balinese and by outside commentators. In what circumstances can one say that Balinese interpret?

¹ Gusti Ayu Eka Damayanthi is a young, high-caste student of Balinese linguistics from Batuan, Gianyar. She has studied dance at a local *sanggar* (studio), and has experience acting as an MC on various occasions. She also teaches elementary school, which makes her a *pegawai negeri* (civil servant).

² Balinese words are in italics. Indonesian words are also underlined.

³ For the original, see Appendix note 1.

And what is the relationship between meaning and knowledge in Bali, where ‘stories and texts only become meaningful by virtue of being read, sung, paraphrased or performed; but without engaged listeners or spectators nothing significant can take place’ (Hobart 2015: 15)? To what extent can the idea of interpretation be compatible with a genre such as *Drama Gong*,⁴ which is extemporized, long, and with distinct episodes that may, as I shall show in this paper, be very loosely threaded together to form the event we call a performance? And who is entitled to interpret or comment publicly under what circumstances, with what purposes and outcomes?

What emerges from the discussion above is that interpretation potentially lumps together a range of diverse practices. To treat discussing or commenting as interpretation stretches the notion absurdly and overlooks practice. In answer to Ricoeur’s hermeneutic circle of guess and validation, Foucault argued that one of the problems of interpretation is that it ‘finds itself before the obligation of interpreting itself endlessly, of always correcting itself’ (1990: 66). So, as Mark suggested in the Background paper for the symposium, perhaps a more useful approach to interpretation, would involve, on the one hand, asking not ‘what there is in the signified, but [...] who has posed the interpretation’ (Foucault 1990: 66), and, on the other, considering interpretations as situated practices to be scrutinized in their specific historical circumstances.⁵

Cupak

In order to address the questions above, I shall examine extracts from a *Drama Gong* performance entitled *Cupak Pengeng* (Cupak is Confused), which took place in Klungkung⁶ and was broadcast by BaliTV, as part of their *Lila Cita: Drama Gong Lawak*⁷ programme, in four parts, in February/March 2012. I chose to focus on this particular performance because the family that hosted me in the village of Bona⁸ picked it out as a favourite, and the one they were most eager to watch.⁹

⁴ *Drama Gong* was created in the wake of the 1965-66 killings, as a form of popular performance in colloquial Balinese, combining extemporized, slapstick-type humour and acting with Western-style melodramatic acting (*drama*), accompanied by *gamelan* (*gong*). For details see Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 96.

⁵ This is necessarily a preliminary investigation on interpretation, aided by Hobart’s previous work on the subject (1982, 2015).

⁶ No exact date was given, but usually no more than a few months intervene between the filming of a performance and its television.

⁷ *Lila Cita* is a daily BaliTV programme that broadcasts a variety of performance genres that were recorded live. A majority of the broadcasts consist of *sanggar* exams. *Drama Gong Lawak* is the part of the programme devoted to *Drama Gong* performances that are particularly rich in jokes (*lawak* is usually translated as ‘buffoonery’).

Both BaliTV and DewataTV are routinely commissioned by *sanggar* and villages to record and broadcast local performances.

⁸ This low-caste family of four, consisted of Ketut, the father, Gèk, the mother, and their two children. Gèk is the youngest of nine siblings, one of whom is a *pamangku*, a temple priest (and so was her late mother). Her family was very poor, and she did not finish school. She makes coconut oil, which she sells at local markets, and also works as a salesperson at a boutique in Ubud. Ketut has worked as a cook on American cruise ships, and now works for a merchant in Ubud. Sometimes they rent a room in their home to foreigners.

I stayed with this family for a couple of months on two different occasions. Some nights we watched together recordings of performances that they chose from a large selection that I provided. They commented freely on the performances while we watched, and we casually discussed some of the

Cupak, the eponymous character of the *Drama Gong* in question, is a figure from a well-known Balinese folktale, commonly referred to as the story of ‘Cupak and Grantang,’ which has been the source material for various performances at least as early as Soedarsono’s study of Indonesian ‘dances’ (1968), where he categorized it as a ‘dance-drama’ (1968: 175). Moerdowo also included the ‘Cupak Dance Drama’ among those ‘based on Balinese folklore’ (1977: 79) and noted that ‘[t]his story is also used as a theme in the *Cupak Wayang Kulit*, puppet-shadow play. But unfortunately as a drama as well as *Wayang Kulit* performance, it is almost forgotten. However, it is still performed as a dance drama in the village of Kramas, south of Gianyar and the only living *Wayang Kulit Cupak* narrator is I Ketut Rinda from Blahbatuh. When the story is performed as a dance drama, the dance technique is that of the Gambuh’ (1977: 79). Since then, however, the story, or rather storyline, has been used in *Barong Landung*¹⁰ (Slattum & Schraub 2003: 106), *Wayang Kulit*, and *Drama Gong*. It has also inspired modern drama, such as *Cupak Eats Land*, which was staged for the opening of the International Conference & Festival for North Balinese Culture (see North Bali 2009).¹¹

It should also be noted here that I use the term ‘story’ loosely, as the various performances that bear some relation to Cupak, depending on genre, level of extemporization, context and the themes chosen to be focused on by the performers, can be anything from a faithful reenactment of one of the folktale’s many versions to an assemblage of numbers that only barely touch on its themes. So before going on to examine *Cupak Pengeng*, it may be useful to present here a summary of the broad strokes of the story of Cupak and Grantang, as it was, to a large extent, taken as common knowledge by most of the spectators with whom I talked:¹²

The wife of a newly-wed Brahman (after being raped by both/either-or Brahma and Wisnu in some accounts), gives birth to twins: Cupak, the elder, and Grantang. Cupak and Grantang, despite being twins, are opposites when it comes to appearance and character: Cupak is ugly, lazy, greedy, and gluttonous, while Grantang is hard-working, handsome, and

themes when they were over. So this is not a sustained analysis of the performance in question, but simply an examination of some of the ways Balinese might engage with televised performance.

⁹ They singled out *Cupak Pengeng* from a selection of performances which included another *Drama Gong* performance with lesser known actors, *Arja*, which they found boring because ‘they sing all the time,’ and a *Calonarang*, which Gèk said she was not ‘brave enough’ (see Theodoridou 2015: 228-229) to watch, even though it featured a favourite actor (Ketut Suanda as the character Cedil). The notion of not being ‘brave enough’ to watch a performance is intriguing, because it invites the question of what it is that performance *does* rather than what it *means*.

¹⁰ A performance involving a ‘pair of larger-than-life body puppets, one male and one female’ (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 107).

¹¹ Original title: *Cupak Makan Tanah*, performed by Madé Sukadana and his troupe (North Bali 2009).

¹² There are evident methodological problems in trying to summarize ‘a folk story’ with ‘many versions,’ as the different versions presuppose an original, which is, however, only recognizable and re-constitutable through its versions, rendering the whole process circular. However, what I present here are the broad outlines of the story as it was relayed to me by Ayu, my Balinese language teacher, and by the family in Bona, as well as two accounts of the story as it was presented in Soedarsono (1968) and Moerdowo (1977). As this ~~thesis~~ deals mainly with representations and their articulation, an attempt to reconstitute an ‘original,’ or a search for accuracy or consistency between the different accounts does not only run counter to my methodology, but is largely beside the point.

respectful. When ordered by their father to work in the fields, Grantang does all the work, but it is Cupak who deviously takes credit for everything. In some versions, this causes Grantang to be expelled and to leave home, while Cupak decides to follow his brother. They arrive to the kingdom of Kediri, where they take it upon themselves to save the princess from a giant (Detya Menarung or Limandaru) who has kidnapped her. In other versions, the reason the brothers leave home is the news of the kidnapping. The twins go after the giant, but it is again Grantang who defeats him and saves the princess. However, Cupak tricks him and leaves him for dead in a well. Cupak is betrothed to the princess as a reward for saving her. Meanwhile, Grantang manages to make a ladder and climb out of the well. In some versions of the story, Cupak hears that his brother is still alive and sends a pack of dogs against him, captures him, and throws him bound in the sea. In other versions, Grantang simply wanders, emaciated and weak. He is then found by a fisherman, who takes care of him. Upon hearing that her real saviour is still alive, the princess, who is still not married to Cupak, convinces Grantang to present himself at the palace and fight for her. She also persuades her father to give her to the most skillful warrior. Grantang prevails and marries the princess. Cupak, in some versions, is exiled.

The main theme of the story is the idea of kingship and what is involved in one's fitness to rule, as well as the concept of *rwa bhinéda*, a Kawi phrase that translates as 'the two that are different' (Fox 2011: 242; Widiassa Kenitén 2013) and which, in contemporary Balinese usage, refers to 'the idea that all states and qualities are accompanied by, or bear the trace of, their opposite—e.g., happiness and suffering, beneficence and malevolence, female and male' (Fox 2011: 242 n. 45). As the story suggests, however, these opposites do not exist harmoniously, but in a state of perpetual conflict.

Hildred Geertz argued that conflict in Bali

is not evidence of chaotic breakdown of the cosmos, but the fundamental characteristic of life. The Balinese world is one in which the many elements are never harmoniously united, in which there is no single all-encompassing principle, no way of comprehending the whole. It is a universe of fluctuating, flowing, shifting forces, which can sometimes be commanded by certain human beings, the masters of *sakti*, who momentarily and precariously can draw some of these forces together into a strong local node of power, which will inevitably later dissolve again (1994: 95).

It seems to be the ruler's responsibility, or otherwise a defining characteristic of a ruler, to be able to give these opposing forces the appearance of a coherent whole, to bring together 'all the different worlds, manifest and intangible, of his or her various subjects, conflicting and potentially incommensurable as they are' (Hobart 2000: 267). Hobart has likened this process of ordering the world to an 'articulation' in the mechanical sense (2000: 237; also Fox 2011: 292-92), which references the Cultural Studies idea of the notion (Morley and Chen 1996: 115). In the following sections, I shall examine how these themes were treated in *Cupak Pengeng* and what the different commentators (in which I include the performers, as the first to 'interpret,' or 'comment' on, the themes of the story by means of their performance) chose to focus on.

Cupak Pengeng

Cupak Pengeng was only loosely based on the story discussed above, as is often the case in Balinese performances. Most of the dialogue was extemporized, which often resulted in incomplete sentences and comments that were not followed up. There was, consequently, much space for ambiguity, openness and unfinalizability in the way any one line could be taken by the other actors, as well as by spectators and commentators. In other words, the most decisive factor in discussing and understanding *Cupak Pengeng* is context.

One of the problems, but also, perhaps, one of the most interesting features of Balinese performance for Media Studies, is, then, the difficulty of translating and 'interpreting' such a performance, particularly given the fact that it is already twice removed from the live event, by the act of recording and transcribing it. And who is going to be interpreting at all, unless it is the expert analyst, foreign or local? Balinese are engaging with and commenting on the quality of a performance, among other things, but who actually interprets in any strict sense of the term? Since the performance is not the re-enactment of a pre-determined script or text, a view of interpretation as the decoding of the performance in order to accurately arrive at the original meaning or intention behind it is completely unsuitable and largely useless. Furthermore, such an approach would go against the Balinese tendency to avoid assertions or judgments about intentions, which are not manifest, and so are considered *niskala* and therefore difficult to know, if possible at all (Hobart 2015: 8). In other words, interpretation that hinges on pinpointing intention is inherently problematic in Bali.

The caution towards talking definitively about hidden meanings and intentions is exemplified in the concept of *basa makulit*, i.e. 'language with skin.' One such example is the phrase '*payuk perungpung misi brem*,' which literally means 'a broken pot containing rice wine.' This is both a case of *basa makulit*, and an explication on what *basa makulit* is (or is for). According to Gusti Lanan, a well-known Balinese actor based in Ubud, this phrase refers to the idea that appearances can be deceiving: 'one's face may be ugly, but his/her heart may be extraordinarily good,'¹³ but it can very well be the other way around. The point is that 'it is not yet certain' (*belum tentu*) and one should be hesitant in talking with conviction about what is inside and cannot be readily seen (*niskala*) (Lanan, interview 20/05/2012).

¹³ See Appendix note 2.

Taking the above into consideration, I think there is reason enough to treat interpretation with caution, and as a situated practice with specific purposes and outcomes. Rather than seeking the meaning of performance, I shall examine what various groups of people have said about the performance and the themes it touched upon, and explore the possibility of viewing this commentary as a performance in itself.

The promotional trailer (see ‘Promo Tayang Drama Lawak Cupak Pengeng’ 2013) for this televised production of *Cupak Pengeng* stressed the fact that it featured well-known actors and characters such as Dolar, Cedil, Sangar, and others, all of whom are *bondrés*.¹⁴ As the excerpt I shall address first focuses mainly on the role of Cedil, a few introductory comments about this character in particular are in order.

Cedil was created in 1998 by I Ketut Suanda, a dancer, actor and musician who graduated from ISI (STSI). Cedil is one of the most recognizable *bondrés* characters in Bali today. He is low-caste, dressed in a bright yellow synthetic vest and a cross between a Balinese lower garment (*kamben*) and white pants. He wears a white headscarf and white makeup with simple features, raised eyebrows, and a frown (Figure 1). He has a very thin voice, and generally does not talk much.

In the excerpt transcribed here, however, Cedil comes on stage as the King (of) Pitch-Black Night (*Prabu Peteng Dedet*) (Figure 2).

¹⁴ *Bondrés* are ‘demotic, and usually comic, figures that exemplify the rough-and-tumble of life outside the privileged circle of the court’ (Fox 2011: 226).



Figure 1 Cedil, one of the most recognizable *bondrés* characters in contemporary Bali, played by I Ketut Suanda. This is Cedil's usual makeup and outfit.



Figure 2. I Ketut Suanda as royalty (Prabu Peteng Dedet/Dewa Agung Cedil) in *Cupak Pengeng*.
Image source: BaliTV.

Excerpt A¹⁵

Dolar (Figure 3) and Dolir (Figure 4), singing, announce the arrival of Dewa Agung Cedil from Bangli to seduce a 'sexy' girl,¹⁶ marry her and spend their honeymoon at a seven star hotel.¹⁷

Dolir: Now there is a pitch-black night in the world.¹⁸ Come on, Dewa Agung Cedil. Du Agung is ill.¹⁹ If a king is ill his subjects must surely be ill as well.

Dolar: This person is shy.

Dolir calls Cedil and he appears at the palace door. He waits there, not speaking. [...] Dolar sings as is customary for the entrance of a king.

Dolar: All his followers... [Stops. To Dolir:] They can't really have chosen someone like him to become king. People [using *kasar* language] are sick.

Dolir: [to Dolar] His lineage doesn't fit.²⁰ [To Cedil, very respectfully] Go on.

Dolar: Go on. Yes yes, go on, walk.

[To Dolir:] This one [talking about himself] is an affectionate servant. He [Cedil] doesn't speak.

Dolir: His speech is difficult.

Cedil tries to speak.

Dolar: He hasn't spoken in three days.

Dolir: Let him, let him. [...]

Cedil keeps being interrupted every time he is about to speak. He keeps adjusting the kris on his back, which is slipping. He ducks under the hanging microphone, dances around it with his head. Finally:

¹⁵ See original in Appendix note 3.

¹⁶ Although not explicit in this passage, this refers to the Princess of Kediri. Prabu Peteng Dedet has come to Kediri to compete against the other suitors, including Cupak and Grantang, in the competition that the Princess has set up.

¹⁷ Although this scene is set in traditional Bali, the language of this passage and the reference to the hotel hints at modern times.

¹⁸ This is a pun on the name of Cedil's king persona.

¹⁹ *Gelem-geleman* means '(often) ill' or 'faint,' but it can also mean 'weak at the knees' because of lust. There is word play, here, and the phrase is left suitably open and ambiguous.

²⁰ This is a reference to the fact that a commoner is not of a lineage fitting for a king.

Cedil: [in a very small voice] Hello.

Dolar: Is this speaking?

Cedil: [to Dolar] Eh, Lardo.

Dolir: Weh! Is this how he speaks? He is turning words around. Lardo. This is Dolar. Lardo!

Cedil: Oh is it Dolar?

Dolar: Yes.

Cedil: Sorry [in English], I forgot. Dolar, follow me from behind. [Old Javanese]: follow me.

Dolir: [using High Balinese] Do I follow?

Cedil: [using common language] Come with.
[Relates the story in Old Javanese.] [...]

Shortly after the extract here, on the way to the kingdom of Kediri, Cedil stumbled and hurt his leg, so Dolir fetched him a wheelchair, which Dolar promptly used for himself. When Cedil finally convinced his servants to bring him the chair because he was in pain, he climbed on it backwards and they had to instruct him on how to sit in it properly. Dolir demonstrated, and Cedil wheeled him around the stage, until he realized something was wrong with this situation.



Figure 3. Dolar, another well-known *bondrés* character, played by I Wayan Tarma. This is his usual makeup, but the outfit varies. Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 4. Dolir in *Cupak Pengeng*, played by Gusti Nyoman Tingga. Dolar and Dolir usually perform as a duo. This is Dolir's usual makeup, but the outfit varies. Image source: BaliTV.

There are several issues that I find intriguing in this short passage, and I shall examine them in turn.

The most obvious one is that a character known to everyone as a funny, low-status person, now plays a king, which surprised and amused the family in Bona. However, Cedil is not *disguised* as a king. He represents a king, and by extension, kingship, a person with power and the capacity to rule. What purpose does this serve?

I asked Ketut Suanda, the actor who plays Cedil, whether he sees *bondrés* as entertainment, and whether it can do other things as well.

It does several things. Once I read about a comedian²¹ (*pelawak*), or a *bondrés* player, who was like a critic, or like a mediator, like an informant. He was like a critic. Or even like a fighter. Even heroism. But without him knowing it, this was a thing that he was already doing. For example, as a critic. He had already exercised his critique, but he didn't know it. Because he had never read about it or was told by people about becoming a critic, or how, like an ABC [an alphabet, or a manual for criticism]. He criticized. For example, there is a big temple ceremony [*odalan*]. There are people who are praying at this ceremony. There is also loud music. The next

²¹ Commentators deferring to unidentified books or unnamed authorities is common in Bali; I understand it as a way of displacing authority away from oneself, while avoiding the responsibility (or sometimes arrogance) that comes with pointing to oneself as the source of information or knowledge, and also the potential danger of direct confrontation.

day, I am performing. I talk about that. I criticize that. But in a refined way, so that the people who invited me won't be mad, they won't be embarrassed. I am like a critic. The next day, those who are holding the ceremony will not have loud music any more. They will have received the criticism. But I will not call the person holding the ceremony to say 'Sir, tomorrow don't allow the young people to play music.' I only criticize a little bit (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).²²

What was, then, Cedil's representation of kingship criticizing?

The king here is represented as shy, a coward, unable to carry his sword properly. However, his most important flaw, the one people found most amusing and that the characters made the most fuss about, is his speech impediment, his small voice. This is very much unlike a good ruler, who needs to have *wibawa* (authority, presence)²³ and the appropriate physical traits that accompany it. Commenting on Cedil's role in *Cupak Pengeng*, and on kings in *Drama Gong* in general, Ketut (the father of my host family in Bona), said: 'A king should not make jokes. I mean it's not appropriate, because the character of a young king must be serious and more commanding (*berwibawa*). His words have significance [*makna*; also purpose, meaning]. Like a *dalang*'s' (Bona, Discussion 23/05/2012).²⁴

Unlike Cedil's high-pitched voice, what Ketut described is the 'low-pitched and full-throated, almost raspy voice' that deserves 'respect and awe' (Wallis 1980: 109). Suanda in this performance, however, made it obvious that, unlike the other actors, for whom the use of microphones was seamlessly incorporated into their performance as a mere technical necessity, Dewa Agung Cedil needed a microphone in order to be heard. He danced around it, exploiting it for comical effect, but also, I think, making a point. Dolar, in addition, found it very hard to believe that people could have chosen someone like him as a king. In the timeframe where the play is placed, i.e. traditional Bali, this can mean that someone chooses to align oneself with that king. However, the way it was put ('to become king'), coupled with the muddled timeframe of the introductory song, is ambiguous to the point that it could suggest a process of election, and so point in the direction of elected government officials. This is necessarily rather speculative; however, a low-status character like Cedil becoming King is quite common in Javanese *Wayang*, where it has been used as a critique of both Dutch colonial authorities (in the play 'Petrus Becomes King' / *Petrus Dadi Ratu*; see Sudibyo-prono *et al* 1991: 401) and of various Indonesian presidents (Pausacker 2004). In addition, there is a recent example of a performance in which Cupak himself came to represent those in power: in *Cupak Eats Land*, mentioned earlier, Cupak has a strange appetite for land, and so he consumes anything from beachfront, forest and lake side estate to the land that houses the local government. According to the organizers of the International Conference & Festival for North Balinese Culture, '[t]his modern drama is a form of social and political critic [sic] of popular issues that happen in Bulèlèng. It talks about land acquisition by the tourism magnate, corruption in the house of representatives and other social issues' (North Bali 2009). In a similar

²² See Appendix note 4.

²³ From Sanskrit and Old Javanese *wibhawa* 'power, majesty, exalted position; wealth, possessions, affluence.' *Wibawa* is Javanese and Balinese, used in Indonesian by adoption.

²⁴ See Appendix note 5.

vein, and coupled with Dolar's disbelief that someone like Prabu Peteng Dedet could have been 'chosen' to be king, this Cedil-turned-king may not be who he seems to be. And if Cedil's speech defied interpretation, in the sense that looking for the meaning of his words would be futile, what would this imply for the speeches of the people he represented?

Dewa Agung Cedil is a person in a position to command respect, but without deserving it. In my interview with Suanda, in reference to a temple priest (*pamangku*) who told me TV crews should not record temple performances like *Calonarang*,²⁵ Suanda said that there are five kinds of people in Bali: 'people who are respected, people who understand, people who appreciate, people who know a lot, and people who don't know anything. His [the *pamangku*'s] answer is here [people who are respected]. But what does he know?' (Interview 27/07/2012).²⁶ Indeed, Dewa Agung Cedil does not seem to know anything either. So, the performers seemed to be asking, why should he be respected?

Dewa Agung Cedil's incompetence became even clearer in the wheelchair incident described above. On one level, in trying to understand what this performance was about and what it was trying to do, I take Cedil's transformation as an obvious reversal that generated much laughter because of the inferred absurdity of a king serving his servants. However, this may be significant on another level as well: court and literary uses of the word *linggih* refer to a seat, but in everyday usage, as in asking about someone's *linggih* in a formal context (given its refined register), refers to having a status, a social position. This 'elected' king is obviously incompetent and unfit for his position, literally unable to sit in it.

Is this Cedil playing a king, though, or did Cedil actually *become* a king (*Cedil dadi ratu*)? Asked about this, Suanda noted: 'It is the king who has become Cedil. I am no king' (Interview 27/07/2012).²⁷ In a reversal of the Javanese saying, 'Petruk became king' ('*Petruk dadi ratu*'—borrowed from the *Wayang* play about Petruk, the clown-servant who became king mentioned above), which is used to refer to 'somebody who does not deserve a top position in an organization' (Basuki 2006: 81), this time it is the king who has become a clown, or a servant (of whom?). This seems

²⁵ In a discussion with Mangku Wali, a low-caste temple priest, in Bona, Gianyar, he described *niskala*, the unmanifest worlds, not as audiences present at temple ceremonies, as they are often addressed by performers, including Dibia, but as the ones performing. This is the reason why, according to Mangku Wali, temple performances, like *Calonarang*, a genre often televised by DewataTV, should not be recorded and broadcast on television, to which he saw no point except commercialization. I offered the idea of competition between communities as a possible explanation; people want to enhance their village's reputation. (This explanation was often given to me by television producers. This also explains why it is the organizers of the performance who pay DewataTV and BaliTV to televise such events, rather than the other way around (Sutawan, DewataTV, Interview, 23/07/2012). TVRI, however, does not accept money from local communities, as it is subsidized by the Indonesian state.) To this Mangku Wali responded as follows: 'Dancers like Madé Sidia can go to other places to perform, but the *palinggih* [the deities residing there] of the temple cannot, so what is the point?' (Interview 19/05/2012). In Mangku Wali's view, when a dancer is performing at the temple, it is really the deity that is dancing. The *niskala* as audience does not enter into the discussion at all; *niskala* is, rather, the principal performer(s), using humans as vehicles through which to dance. It does not matter whether or not the humans dance well in an aesthetic sense. Ni Madé Pujawati, a professional Balinese dancer, agreed: 'That is why it does not matter choosing people who cannot dance, because the Gods dance for them. That is why they can perform dances that they do not know well' (Personal communication 15/12/2013).

²⁶ See Appendix note 6.

²⁷ See Appendix note 7.

to be saying a number of things: people with power in Bali are dependent on media (see the microphone dance). They get words backwards (Dolar becomes Lardo), or twist language to their own whims. Unworthy, ridiculous people can ascend to power and be in a position to give commands, without necessarily being able to command respect.

In many ways, Cedil seems to be the actualization of Geertz's idea of the king, or, as Hobart put it in his critique of Geertz's view of kingship in *Negara* (1980), of the king-as-cabbage (Hobart 2000: 237). Cedil's transformation into a king could amount to a carefully nuanced social and political critique. However, all of my interlocutors (Ayu, Suanda, the family in Bona, even some of the ISI academics with whom I discussed this, as I shall argue later in the paper), although clear that this was criticism, were reluctant to point fingers or be specific on what or whom this criticism was about (see above Suanda's deference to 'something he read' and the fact that the critic himself 'did not know' he was being critical). The context of the performance would conceivably allow people to at least suspect who the target of criticism might be. However, it is understandable that few people would go on record to a researcher and admit so. In addition, there may be more to this than reluctance: the whole point of indirectness is that it leaves one's target implicit. What is performed allows different audiences to think of different but equally suitable subjects. For Suanda to specify in interview what his target was would undermine what the indirectness is for.

Prompted further, however, Suanda remarked:

As a *bondrés* actor, you need to know a lot: music, dance, the situation. This is the difficulty: words, once they get out, they can't be erased. If you dance, you can make a mistake and most people won't know. They may see, but they might not know. If you speak, the words are weapons. Your speech is your tiger. You can say something, and someone can die. People can cause harm if they say something that is not good. Someone may die. Now, in politics. I see politics in Indonesia, and I say wow. Wow. This is great. I pick up on some of that. *But if I perform at a government event, I only need say a little, and people already ...* [he claps]. Just a little bit, not too much. If I say too much, then I will be taken [he crossed his arms, as if in handcuffs]. It's like fried rice; only a little bit of hot sauce is enough (Interview 27/07/2012; my emphasis).²⁸

Suanda's failure to complete the highlighted sentence above is proper, and inflects what might be considered as argumentation in Bali in an interesting way. It is arrogant to spell everything out. In addition, it becomes clear that social and political criticism in contemporary Bali is not without consequences—and although Cedil's speech is no tiger, Suanda's might be.

Furthermore, Suanda described his relationship with the audience, whether it is government officials or farmers, as a 'war,' and remarked that 'before a performance,

²⁸ See Appendix note 8.

I need a lot of ammunition' (Interview 27/07/2012).²⁹ There is, then, a sense that more is left out than what is said when it comes to performances like *Drama Gong*. What is the significance of these silences? In addition, it is evident that the multiple layers of reversal at play can be appreciated only through prior familiarity with Cedil and the other characters. The family in Bona, for instance, was familiar with Cedil's usual appearance and character; otherwise his transformation would not have made sense. They were also constantly pitting this performance against a series of other experiences—from live performances, to television, from radio plays and hearsay:

Ketut: Sometimes there are *Drama Gong* groups that have already existed for a long time, well-known, the acting is good. For example, *Bintang Bali Timur*; wherever they were, people who liked *Drama Gong* would come.

Gèk: I still like to hear to them. Because our neighbour has a cassette.

Ketut: But this is sound only.

Gèk: I listen to it. He has a cassette, he puts it on, I listen from here. I like it. It is well known.

Ketut: Like the piece we just watched [the episode with Cedil in *Cupak Pengeng*]: the characters are good, the acting is good. But now there are groups that do *Drama Gong* for only one time and then it is over. Some time ago there was a ceremony in Bona, the children put on a *Drama Gong* for one time only. They made jokes. The famous *Drama Gong* from before ...

Gèk: Lodra was his name.

Ketut: The one who became king. His name was Lodra.

Gèk: He played the young king. He had a good voice.

²⁹ See Appendix note 9.

Self: What is ‘good acting’?

Ketut: Sometimes their voice... Like in films, or *Sinétron*,³⁰ there are old actors with new actors and sometimes it is forced, sometimes the dialogue doesn’t flow. Like they are still trying to remember. He is still memorizing. If there’s only professionals, they already know. If he is new, he waits... like he is thinking ‘Now what do I say?’

Gèk: Lodra was well known, the *Bintang Bali Timur*. I still like it (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).³¹

The acting in all of the performances we watched was compared to the performances of *Bintang Bali Timur*, so these were used as a standard against which all other actors were judged and evaluated. The cassette that Gèk referred to is part of an extremely popular set of tapes, released in 1980, some productions of which ‘may have sold as many as a half-million sets of cassettes. It was played and played again on *bemos* (jitneys) and in work places, coffee stalls, and house yards for years after it was first released. The performers became celebrities all over South Bali, and expressions from the play became commonplaces in Balinese everyday discourse’ (deBoer 1996: 171). Apparently, some of these tapes were still being played in Bali in 2012. However, what I find important here is that this process of judging the present in comparison to the past when it comes to performance standards is precisely what happens in performances themselves: contemporary Bali is being pitted against traditional Bali. The past is used as a yardstick or a set of criteria by which to comment critically on the present. At the same time, Balinese spectators are constantly referring back from the present to how the past was supposed to be in a process of self-reflexive anachronism (for other examples see also Emigh 1996: 183; Hobart 2000: 229, 264; Fox 2011: 218-264). So what happens when the convention of ‘traditional Bali’ standing in for contemporary Bali is stretched to its limits and ultimately broken?

Excerpt B³²

At the beginning of a distinct bondrés episode incorporated within the Cupak Pengeng performance, Sangar (Figure 5), a red-faced character with a cowbell necklace, an ‘I <heart> Bali’ T-shirt and an animal print vest, a cross between a ‘traditionally dressed’ Balinese farmer and a modern, low-

³⁰ *Sinétron*, from *sinéma élektronik*, can refer to a variety of TV series, from loosely historical serials (drawing from the Indian epics and Chinese mythology) to soap operas. For a discussion of *sinétron* and how audiences may engage with such programmes, see Hobart 2014.

³¹ See Appendix note 10.

³² See Appendix note 11.

class Balinese man, comes on stage and addresses the audience directly, starting by flattering Klungkung, where the performance is taking place.

Sangar: Cultured Klungkung, pleasant Klungkung, holy Klungkung. *Om swastyastu*³³ Klungkung! [...] Eh, now is the modern times, the world has advanced, the Klungkung bypass is already completed, there is no more sickness because of poverty. Now there are rich illnesses. You know these poverty illnesses, like mange (*kerék*). Crusted with foulness, ringworms, these are illnesses of the poor. Klungkung now is advanced beyond the afflictions of the poor, now there are rich illnesses. Stroke, liver, kidneys. You see what my face looks like; I am ashamed to have a poor illness. I have diabetes, sir. Do you know diabetes (*kencing manis*)? Every time I see something sweet, I pee (*mengencingi*).³⁴ Klungkung is an area with history, clap your hands for Klungkung. Just now I asked where are we dancing? When I was told it was Klungkung, I was scared, sir. Excuse me. My lips are from Bulèlèng.³⁵ I am from Karangasem. I was married in Bulèlèng. I stay in Gianyar. I am a mixed person. I am not used to the elevated language. [...]

³³ *Om swastyastu* is a formal Balinese greeting. Although it used to be reserved for religious occasions, in recent years it has become common on a broader range of occasions (for instance, when answering the phone). For more details see Fox 2011: 63, 91-98.

³⁴ Here, Ayu, my Balinese language teacher, commented that this is ‘language with skin’ (*basa yang berkulit/makulit*), which has a hidden meaning, in this case sexual. ‘Something sweet’ (*né manis manis*) refers to women.

³⁵ This indicates that this character’s language is *kasar*, vulgar, and therefore not fit for Klungkung, which has a reputation for using refined Balinese, even for everyday conversation. However, coupled with the social criticism that follows, this may also indicate the position from which this character applies his critique. He then proceeded to say that he is from Karangasem—one of the poorest areas in Bali. Dibia, in a discussion about this performance at the Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI) remarked: ‘This is a person that associates widely. It is the “global Balinese.” He has friends everywhere’ (Group discussion 29/2/2012; see Appendix note 12).



Figure 5. Sangar, played by I Putu Gede Suartika. Sangar and Senger (see Figure 6) usually perform together. Image source: BaliTV.

After the excerpt above, Sangar proceeded to explain the vast potential for misunderstandings and laughs that comes from the fact that the same or similar words can mean something different, or be in completely different registers, and therefore potentially insulting, in different areas of Bali. He concluded that Bali had the concept of ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ long before the Independence of Indonesia in 1945, and that ‘in Bali we have different languages in the different regencies, but they become one in Bali.’ Then he presented different examples of misunderstandings, usually involving sex or scat.

Later, Sangar and his friend Senger (Figure 6), a character with a mouth deformity that made his speech almost indistinct, acted out a Calonarang play by taking on the roles of Rangda and her lover. In this play-within-a-play, Senger informed, in the role of narrator, that the temple priest (Jéro Mangku) arrived and said that the deity did not want to dance unless they purified the space. Once they did, Sokir (Figure 7), another servant-turned-ruler, now playing minister Pak Agung, came on stage, seeking to claim the Princess of Kediri. Pak Agung’s high-pitched voice elicited Sangar’s instruction on how to speak properly in order to become a king: ‘A king must be commanding. His speech must have power.’³⁶ Soon after, Pak Agung asked for a chair, and three men carried in a throne with an attached Indonesian flag. Pak Agung, was

³⁶ ‘*Raja harus mawibawa. Ngomong harus power.*’

utterly unable to sit on this throne. Senger, however, used a ladder and managed it just fine.



Figure 6. Senger, played by Gusti Ngurah Jaya Swarya. Senger's characteristic is his disfigured face and garbled speech. Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 7. Sokir, played by I Ketut Rudita. Sokir's voice is very high-pitched, but he carries himself with bravado. Usually a low-caste character, in *Cupak Pengeng* he presents himself as minister Pak Agung and carries a sword to fit the role. Image source: BaliTV.

Sokir in this passage blurred once more the lines between the make-believe (the play within the play) and its framework (the 'modern times' in which the performer earlier addressed the audience directly). This scene also continued the theme that had been introduced earlier: the proper way for a ruler to speak and behave.

In a discussion of this extract with performance academics at ISI Denpasar, on 29/02/2012, organized by Professor Dibia at my request, my interlocutors chose to focus on different elements of the performance. The discussion at ISI may be more useful in what it revealed about the ways people comment, discuss, and argue (or avoid argument) in different roles, than in what was actually said about the performance. This may be one of the ways in which Foucault's idea of interpreting the interpreter (1990: 66) is relevant to this study.

Professor Dibia was the first to speak.

Dibia: If we only watch this part, the *bondrés*, we don't know we are watching *Cupak*. It is funny indeed. But there are several jokes, several elements that are not good, in an ethical way. One is the pornographic, one also involves the abuse of religious elements. This, according to me, is not good.³⁷ But as entertainment, it is indeed funny.³⁸

³⁷ At this point, I remarked that what we watched had already been censored in order to be broadcast. The group laughed, but did not comment.

Dibia's statements are close to enunciations, that is definitive judgments that are not open to dispute, and so in effect close down discussion. They are, in other words, beyond argument in the sense of there being any alternative response, at least on this particular occasion. Whether these are open to counter-articulation by others, or even by Dibia himself in a different role, on different occasions is a question that is worth investigating and which I shall try to address later. Did Dibia's remarks limit the range of possible responses for the other participants? Did he reduce the freedom of choice for the rest of the speakers in selecting their messages, in what they *could* say (see Mark's paper, p. 9), and, if so, what did this discussion do beyond its discursive aspects?

Dibia also remarked on the actors' over-reliance on make-up, which he compared to a mask, and costume in order to be funny, unlike the early forms of *Drama Gong*, when no elaborate costumes or masks were used. Gusti Ngurah Sudibya, a high-caste choreographer and ISI professor, perhaps predictably after the way Dibia started the discussion, agreed with Dibia and added:

Sudibya: From the title, *Cupak Pengeng*, I thought it would be high humour. But I agree with Pak Dibia. First, this is rather ruined. Second, the costumes are too sloppy and without concept. This is modern, there is a tiger print, it's mixed. Their dialogue is indeed good. But these jokes are not related to the theme of *Cupak*.³⁹

However, only two of the commentators, Ketut Suteja (an ISI lecturer) and Gusti Agung Ayu Oka Partini (a high-caste ISI Professor), mentioned the potential of the performance for social and political critique:

Suteja: I feel that all the comic numbers in Bali are different now. This has an identity, they want to show something strange. So they show something like this [he refers to Senger's mouth deformity]. Their purpose is to attract the audience's attention, and so they can be identified wherever they perform. Like Cedil, for instance. [...] As far as the theme is concerned, they often deliver something of critical nature. A critique that has to do with the state of the community. Maybe the audience want entertainment only, but according to them, the community is expected to understand how to behave.⁴⁰

³⁸ See Appendix note 13.

³⁹ See Appendix note 14.

⁴⁰ See Appendix note 15.

Partini: I think that what that first performer said, all this has to do with the situation in the community. What the situation is like. For instance sometimes he referred to issues with women, sometimes to the issue of corruption, sometimes to issues related to religion. This is usually perhaps a parody.⁴¹

However, the discussion quickly focused on the performance's unruliness towards its own storyline, as Cupak was not mentioned or involved in any way in what was happening on stage for a very large part of the performance, which blatantly disregarded the 'recommended structure' for *Drama Gong* (Dyah Kustiyanti, ISI discussion 29/02/2012). What is involved in this disapproval?

Articulating Performance

It is unclear whence *Drama Gong*'s proper 'structure' originates. However, the emphasis placed on this became evident in the context of the 2012 Bali Arts Festival, where committees consisting of ISI academics and other experts supervised and scored the performances on how well they conformed. According to TVRI producer Anak Agung Istri Suryani (discussion during a *Drama Gong* shooting at the Arts Festival, 15/06/2012), *Drama Gong* performances at the Bali Arts Festival, as part of a judged showcase or competition (*parade*), needed to follow a prescribed 'traditional' structure (again, its origin was rather vague), which consists of four 'episodes': introduction, conflict, development, and solution.⁴² These are only sprinkled with jokes, usually at the beginning of episodes, delivered by the high-status characters' pair of servants or followers (*panasar*), who are thus necessarily directly linked to the main story. Outside the Arts Festival context, however, and this was the case in *Cupak Pengeng*, the performers could keep only the parts they wanted, in any order, while the *bondrés* need not have any connection to the 'plot.'

There seems to be, then, a tendency for institutions such as ISI and the Arts Festival to standardize Balinese performance, while the increasingly doctrinaire judgments of experts come in contrast to actual performance practices. Fox suggested a similar process in relation to the introductory dances in *Topèng* performances, the style and succession of which is now more-or-less rigid, with rare deviations: 'Although this is now a fairly widespread standard, the masks used for these opening dances have varied in the past from one place and time to another. There is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that the growing tendency toward regularization has been driven largely by the arts academy in Denpasar' (2011: 266). Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to talk about the ISI-ization, or indeed the '*Singapaduisasi*'⁴³ of Balinese performance. But why is the control of performance so important and pressing? What does it imply for performances in Bali?

⁴¹ See Appendix note 16.

⁴² This seems to mirror *Lègong*'s formal structure, which consists of the *papeson* (entrance), *pangawak* (main part), *pangecet* (elaboration), sometimes *pangipuk* (literally 'sweet talk,' so reconciliation), and *pakaad* (ending) (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 77).

⁴³ Hobart uses the term *Singapaduisasi* or Singapaduization to refer to the increasing role of Singapadu in defining the standard for performing arts in Bali (Personal communication 09/03/2014).

The apparent tendency to control *Drama Gong* in particular is not surprising if one considers the conditions under which the genre came about. *Drama Gong* was developed in the late 1960s under Suharto's New Order Regime. As many of Bali's best performers were killed in the 1965-66 events, precisely because of their ability to criticize the regime from the stage, according to deBoer, *Drama Gong* was created by Anak Agung Gede Raka Prayadnya of Gianyar in response to the 'shortage of talent for some of the technically more demanding theatrical forms' (1996: 165). *Drama Gong* was demotic, a people's theatre—as against the much more aristocratic forms of *Arja* or *Topèng*.

The new genre soon attracted the interest of KOKAR,⁴⁴ and 'was taken to heart by the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), which sponsored the first island-wide *drama gong* festival in 1968. But sponsorship of such festivals soon devolved to governmental organization' (deBoer 1996: 165-66). In addition, 'the potential of the form for dissemination of information and propaganda was by no means overlooked' (deBoer 1996: 169). What is surprising, then, is not the attempt to control *Drama Gong* now, since that had already been the case from its inception, but the performers' ability to subvert⁴⁵ these constrictions and achieve a remarkable level of ambiguity in practice: the same performance may include both a play on class, a potential critique of people in power and their flirtation with rhetoric and the media, and a reaffirmation of 'official' values that still remain from the early days of the New Order regime, such as the idea of Unity in Diversity (cross-ref. Extract B).

The control of performance under the New Order was part of the larger issue of the control over 'budaya',⁴⁶ the Indonesian equivalent of 'culture,' and its role in *Orde Baru* discourse:

the terms *budaya*, *kebudayaan*, *senibudaya* and other derivatives of the 'culture-concept' have played a central role in the New Order regime's model of governance, as they have for Indonesian governments both past and present. In simple terms, *kebudayaan* is conceptualised in both national (*kebudayaan bangsa*) and regional (*kebudayaan daerah*) forms. The regional forms, that partially acknowledge Indonesia's multicultural and heterogeneous composition, are most often *aestheticised* and represented material forms, as *senibudaya*. [...]t is clear that Indonesian discourse,

⁴⁴ Konservatori Karawitan (KOKAR) Indonesia was a government-sponsored high school of performing arts, formerly based in Denpasar. It is now called SMKI, Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia, and based in Batubulan.

⁴⁵ This was a standard theme in Eastern European performance under the Soviets. See Chadaga 2011 and Innes 1997: 382.

⁴⁶ The origins of the term '*budaya*,' a neologism, are rather obscure, and an accurate account of its genealogy would require further research. According to Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2010) the etymology is Sanskrit; however, there is no entry in Zoetmulder's highly trustworthy *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (1982). In a personal communication (10/06/2014), Vickers speculated that this may be one of the Sanskritic neologisms created by Prijono (1907-1969; also spelled Priyono), Sukarno's Minister of Education and Culture. Prijono was educated in Paris and Leiden in the study of medieval and Javanese texts, and 'was chief adviser in the creation of a new set of terms based on the Sanskrit-influenced Old Javanese language' (Vickers 2005: 146). He also established several institutions with the stated aim of reinforcing 'national culture that was in tune with the revolutionary sentiment, introducing a new set of "folk dances" based on the activities of peasants and workers. Along with these invented "traditions", Priyono's ministry taught ideological songs which people who grew up in the era can still remember' (Vickers 2005: 146-147).

particularly the hegemonic discourse of state policy, relies heavily on appropriated and adapted versions of [...] English ‘culture-concept(s)’ (Noszlopy 2002: 85).

In 2011-12, ‘*melestarikan budaya Bali*,’ to preserve the Balinese culture, was the answer most commonly offered whenever I asked professionals and students of Balinese performance about their motives and purposes in being involved in Balinese performing practices. However, this was no longer couched solely in the centrally-controlled ‘hegemonic discourse of state policy,’ but it was equally often ‘Balinized.’ An example can be found in the opening statement by Prof. Ida Bagus Oka⁴⁷ of *Pedoman Pasang Aksara Bali*, a book on Balinese language which is widely used in Bali:

If it is indeed like this that the state of a language is determined, and the literature and writing of Bali is increasingly becoming a luxury, it [this book] can result in the strengthening of Balinese culture that is also used to preserve and improve the culture of the nation, to be a hallmark of the development of national culture. I hope that starting from the book *Pedoman Pasang Aksara Bali* we will increase the effort to preserve and strengthen the language, literature, and writing of Bali (2002: vi).⁴⁸

In this passage, phrases such as ‘*melestarikan budaya Bali*’ are translated into Balinese and presented as an integral part of the ‘unity in diversity’ of national culture. However, the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity, just like its point of origin, the *Sutasoma*, is hardly descriptive, as it reflects the ‘interests of royal and priestly actors with a large stake in maintaining a fixed symbolic order (Hunter 2007: 27). In other words, it articulates and promotes the interests of specific groups of people with a stake in maintaining the appearance of the unity of a tamely diverse Indonesia. What changes is who gets to perform such articulations, on which occasion, for what purpose.

The Bali Arts Festival in turn started out as an event organized by Balinese for Balinese (Hough 2000), but was later co-opted by the government, with the President’s appearance for the opening of the Festival becoming mandatory in recent years. The Arts Festival has contributed to theatre becoming indissoluble from Balinese branding of itself internationally. It is also supposed to encompass the entire breadth, but only what is deemed the best, of Balinese art, with a strong focus on performance. However, as Laclau has unwrapped any claim to totality from its ideological pretensions and proposed that it is better understood as an articulatory practice, the Arts Festival’s declaration of showcasing the entirety of Balinese culture begs the question: what does it leave out?

The control exerted over Balinese performance by institutions such as ISI and the Arts Festival is, then, of a different nature now and has different goals than under the New Order (see also Theodoridou 2015: 194-213). However, Suanda remarked that actors are still conscious of the amount of ‘criticism’ that they can incorporate

⁴⁷ Professor Ida Bagus Oka (1938-2010) served as the Rector of Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali. It may not be coincidental that he was the Governor of Bali from 1988 to 1993, and the Minister for Family Planning and Population Control during the Jusuf Habibie presidency.

⁴⁸ See Appendix note 17.

into their performance, and commented that when performing, for instance ‘at a temple, it is unconstrained, because the community at the temple is free,’ whereas ‘at the PKB⁴⁹ you have to follow the [year’s] motto’ (Interview 27/07/2012)⁵⁰ and to reflect, or possibly elaborate, on its specific ideological and philosophical ramifications.⁵¹ So what were the Arts Festival mottos in 2011, 2012, and 2013⁵² and how did they shape, at least in part, the performances that took place during the festival? What dialogues and arguments were these performances a part of?

Articulating Bali

In 2011, the motto or theme of the Arts Festival was *Désa Kala Patra* (‘place, time, circumstance’),⁵³ with the subtitle *Adaptasi Diri Dalam Multikultur* (‘Self-Adaptation into the Multicultural’), focusing on Balinese ‘adaptation’ in a multicultural age, with the Indonesian subtitle putting a progressive or liberal spin on the Balinese idea of the importance of context. The implications of the phrase ‘*désa kala patra*’ are interesting: the idea of adapting to a place, a time, and a circumstance, when applied to argument and the breadth of themes that performers can touch on, seems to close down discussion rather than providing a starting point from which to spark something new.

In 2012, the theme was *Paras-Paros (Dinamika Dalam Kebersamaan)*, which focused on the ‘dynamics of togetherness,’ in effect echoing the Indonesian national ideal of ‘Unity in Diversity’ (cross-ref. Extract B of *Cupak Pengeng*). The Indonesian subtitles of the Balinese phrases that make up the Arts Festival themes are not translations; rather they inflect the Balinese in various ways. The phrase *Paras-Paros* carries connotations of reciprocity and exchange, which the Indonesian gloss does not convey. *Paras-paros* is similar to the Javanese phrase *gotong royong*, which is also in widespread use elsewhere in Indonesia, including, until recently, Bali. Does the increasing popularity of *Paras-Paros* in favour of *gotong royong* indicate a Balinese tendency to self-distance from Java? Might there be more in the way of an antagonism between the glossing over and delimitation of possible interpretations of the Balinese phrases and their usage prior to the Arts Festival, or a tension in the differing expectations of the centre (Indonesian) from the periphery (Balinese), and *vice versa*?

In 2013, the theme of the PKB was ‘*Taksu: Membangkitkan Kreativitas dan Jati Diri*’ or ‘*Taksu: Generating Creativity and Identity*,’ which attempted to link creativity to Balinese identity, while deriving both from *taksu*. *Taksu*, usually glossed as spirituality or charisma, is a concept vague enough to fit both foreign practitioners’

⁴⁹ *Pesta Kesenian Bali*, the international Bali Arts Festival which takes place every year in Denpasar, attracting a large local, national, and international audience.

⁵⁰ See Appendix note 18.

⁵¹ There is an interesting parallel here with the way Deleuze described what he called ‘societies of control,’ which ‘are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies. “Control” is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future’ (1992: 4). Control seems to be much more insidious than discipline. The potential repercussions of dissent remain vague, and yet there is no doubt in Suanda’s account that one must ‘follow the motto’ on which the *Bapak-Bapak* of the Arts Festival have decided.

⁵² Although I researched the Arts Festival for both years of my fieldwork (2011-2012), and followed it remotely in 2013, I had only just arrived for the first, so my materials draw more heavily on the second.

⁵³ According to Gusti Ngurah Bagus, the phrase *Désa Kala Patra* was itself invented in the 1950s (Mark Hobart, personal communication 09/03/2014).

quest for the essence of Balinese performance (see J. Turner 2010) and considerably more practical Balinese approaches (see Dibia 2012). How is creativity to be understood in the context of a curated and judged event like the Arts Festival, with directives imposed largely by the local, and by extension, central government? To go back to the idea of freedom in selecting one's message, what is possible for Balinese performers to create, what is possible for their performances to do, and, if we start to approach performances as practices of argumentation, what can they be arguments for, and for whom?

Hobart has argued that Balinese society instantiates Durkheim's idea of mechanical solidarity, in which groups, rather than personal networks, 'are central to social life and organize much of their members' activities, backed by formidable sanctions. Social integration comes through individual conformity, notably in religion and the arts' (2012: 7). In this context, originality and deviation from the norm, i.e. the potential features of a creative endeavour, are not only undesirable, but a danger to social cohesion and stability. 'So creativity becomes confined to endlessly elaborating accepted frameworks rather than potentially revolutionary exploration of the new' (Hobart 2012: 7). What, then, are the endless variations of the same performances,⁵⁴ created and overseen by the same (ISI-dominated) groups of people and accompanied by almost identical speeches delivered year after year for? Is expatiating on a theme an argumentative practice?

With these questions in mind, and as most of my fieldwork materials draw on the 2012 Bali Arts Festival, I would like to look more closely at the theme of *Paras-Paros* and what people had to say about it. The official stance towards and interpretation of the theme of the Arts Festival was clear from the outset, as it was presented by the Governor of Bali Madé Mangku Pastika and the President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono during the opening ceremonies of the Festival:

In keeping with the theme of the Bali Arts Festival 34, *Paras-Paros*, which means dynamics in togetherness, the opening parade will present the potential, the richness, and the dynamic of development of the arts and diversity of the arts of the archipelago (Pastika, PKB 10/06/2012).⁵⁵

Dynamics and togetherness become two keywords that can encourage the creation of creative ideas. This theme can refresh the identity, cause the blossoming of creativity and maintain the conduct and aesthetics in the cultivation of artworks. This theme also gives inspiration for strengthening the unity of the sense of togetherness and tolerance that is relevant to our joint effort in order to build order in a more civilized life. An order in life which is based on peace,

⁵⁴ I am referring here to the large numbers of new *Lègong Kreasi* that are delivered at the Arts Festival each year, where the only elements that change are the costumes and the brown, expendable bodies that wear them, or *Gong Kebyar* performances that are only differentiated from the year before by the amount of glitter and extravagance applied. Perhaps Goldenweiser's notion of 'involution' (1936) is relevant here; Goldenweiser used the notion to refer to Maori art and Gothic architecture, which consisted in endless variations within a rigid frame.

⁵⁵ See Appendix note 19.

brotherhood and harmony between groups of communities but also between the nations (Yudhoyono, PKB 10/06/2012).⁵⁶

Notions of ‘community’ and ‘nation’ seem to exemplify Laclau’s ‘empty signifiers’ (2005: 102-07) both in their ambivalence and in their importance to politics: ‘The presence of empty signifiers [...] is the very condition of hegemony’ (Laclau 1996: 43) in that, by attaching a particular content to a totality that is otherwise absent, they make hegemonic relationships possible.

The President of Indonesia then went on to remark on the performances that the gathered audience would enjoy during the festival:

The series of events of the Bali Arts Festival also constitute the means to build a national culture that is very important in addressing the challenges of today’s civilization. The Bali Arts Festival can become a fort for the strengthening of philosophy, values and creativity in the arts, that remain firmly planted in the roots of tradition. The roots of tradition stem from the refinement of the mind and values of the Balinese community, which is religious. I often say that the Bali Arts Festival constitutes a vehicle for the creativity and innovation by Balinese artists to be presented not only to the Balinese community but also to the global community. It is hoped that the Bali Arts Festival will become a window of information, a bridge of communication between cultures, as well as a relationship of cultural diplomacy between countries. In connection to the efforts to further introduce the richness of culture to the world, we should all be proud (Yudhoyono, PKB 10/06/2012).⁵⁷

Remarkably little has changed since Tri Sutrisno, the then Vice President of Indonesia, opened the 1996 Arts Festival with a similar speech,⁵⁸ which focused on

⁵⁶ See Appendix note 20.

⁵⁷ See Appendix note 21. It is worth noting here that, according to I Ketut Suastika, Head of the Department of Culture, Bali Province (*Kepala Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali*), many of the points used in the presidential speech were provided by the Arts Section (*Bidang Kesenian*) of their Bali-based Department. After an initial communication between the President’s secretary and the Bali-based Arts Section, the Governor of Bali was invited to a meeting with the President in Jakarta, in which they discussed the speech as necessary. Suastika stated that approximately 80% of the points provided were used in the speech (Personal communication 15/08/2014; I owe thanks to I Nyoman Darma Putra for mediating). The relationship between the central and provincial governments in articulating the official account of Bali and Balinese culture, and the ways this has changed, or not, over the years, may be a fruitful area for further research.

⁵⁸ ‘After a brief prayer to Divinity, the Vice-President welcomed all participants from overseas and urged them to use the opportunity of being in the beautiful island of Bali not only to introduce their own cultural arts (*seni budaya*) but also to become acquainted with Balinese and Indonesian social life, and the diversity of their cultural customs (*adat budaya*), the beauty of the natural panorama, the variety of flora and fauna. The Arts Festival, he said, was an occasion for friendship and co-operation, which was increasingly necessary in an era of economic and informational globalization.

the same concepts of European origin: creativity, tradition, philosophy (with the occasional Arabic exception, like *masyarakat*). Here, culture is still ‘a key part of the national development effort,’ ‘a treasured tourist asset [...and] integral to, and partly constitutive of, the disciplined development of the national spirit (remember the New Order was run by the military)’ (Hobart 2000: 36). This places the 2012 addresses excerpted above in a long tradition of classical speeches along New Order lines, which can be examined as a genre of monologic prescription of being Balinese in contemporary Indonesia. However, it may be worth examining how Balinese engaged with the Arts Festival themes in practice.

Paras-Paros in Practice

Dibia was a member of the committee responsible for the selection of performances for the programme of the festival. His answer to my question about how the Arts Festival themes are incorporated into the performances selected for the festival was even more telling:⁵⁹

Dibia: How the themes of the festival are elaborated or transformed into every programme or story featured in the performance. This year we’ve been able to bring the focus on the theme, to make every group really concentrate on this theme. If necessary they have to really create a story that speaks about *Paras-Paros*, ‘willing to live together,’ or ‘keeping the life in harmony.’ Because *Paras-Paros* is ‘we are different but always together.’⁶⁰

Self: How did you manage to make everyone be so focused on the theme?

Dibia: We had several meetings with representatives of the different districts and cities to give them some kind of workshop and how to sharpen the message of the

The Arts Festival is one way to construct and develop Balinese cultural arts (seni budaya) and simultaneously a means to promoting tourism. It was also a means of pushing artists to become more creative. So the theme of this Arts Festival was the realization of the national spirit, because in an era of global competition, the country needed to increase society’s enthusiasm to develop and improve on the past. *Included in development are the nation’s arts and culture so as to possess competitive capacity and the highest possible cultural endurance. Ladies and Gentlemen, art is part of the culture (budaya) and civilization of human beings, which is closely connected to creativity, to the will and work striving to the realization of a standard of living, which is better, more orderly and of a higher quality.*

He then gave a long account explaining how the arts festival encouraged creativity, productivity and innovation. The production of arts and crafts had great scope for entrepreneurial development (dwelt on at length), but artists were also part of the nation’s intellectual wealth, whose work should be protected by copyright. Art promoted health and reduced stress and was an important part of a flourishing nation’ (Hobart 2000: 36-37).

⁵⁹ This discussion took place in English, at Dibia’s insistence.

⁶⁰ This echoes the Unity in Diversity motto quite strongly.

story in order to respond to that theme. For example, the story of [the] *Arja* [from] Singapadu, that story is not about war, it's not about fighting but it was splitting two brothers, Raden Praditya, the younger, and Jaya Pramada, the older.

Pramada is a little bit arrogant, and Praditya is a little bit humble. They are brothers, not twins, but when still young they got split because of a typhoon. When the king was about to give them a weapon as a symbol of power, they both got split. Pramada got the sheath of the kris, and Praditya got the blade. And they got separated—Pramada still at home, and Praditya wandering from place to place. So when they come to a place called Tunjun Biru where there was a beautiful princess and her mother, Praditya meets Asmarawati, the princess of Tunjun Biru. They fall in love. Of course when the mother arrives, she tries to stop them, because the mother already promised her to Jaya Pramada. But when the time comes when they have romance in the garden, the mother found them and for some reason the mother cursed Praditya [to turn] into a monkey. And of course the monkey tries to protect Asmarawati from getting close to Jaya Pramada. But when Jaya Pramada got really angry at the monkey, he tries to kill him, and then Jaya Praditya emerges. So when they pull their weapons, they are surprised: 'Why do these things match? The case and the blade!' So they tell the story. 'Oh, you are my brother.' So then they all come to the same story. And Jaya Pramada says 'OK, since you are already in love with her, why don't you marry her? I am your brother, so I give my blessing to you.'

So there's no fighting actually. It's just a sense of unifying the family, to be willing to live together from different kind of spirit. So that's the kind of story we were trying to focus on. And because of that I had to read different kinds of stories and whenever I find this is not about *Paras-Paros*, I cut it.

I must say that most of the stories they are putting on now are created with a focus on *Paras-Paros*, but most ideally the activity itself should be showing the spirit of *Paras-Paros*, not just the story

itself, but the spirit of the group really working together as a team. There are still stories that we kind of hear from groups that are not really preparing in a good mood. They've been forced to do so, because they've already been given some money, so they grab people from here and there, so there's no spirit of togetherness. But in general, it works. And the most touching, I think, is the performance of children *Gong Kebyar*. When they walk on stage they hold hands and cross each other, so that side stands over here [on the other side], so there is no challenge like that. For me that's the most touching thing, and it really reflects the theme of *Paras-Paros*.⁶¹ Before, the *Désa Kala Patra* [the theme of the previous year's PKB] was also like that but less focused. Because we were not given enough time to select the stories that represent these things. And this time I think from the opening ceremony, the parades, also show this kind of *Paras-Paros* spirit there.

Self: Apart from the theme, did you give any other guidelines to the groups as well? What they may do, what they may not do?

Dibia: Well, basically just reminding them that this time you shouldn't exploit more fighting scenes or war or battle, because that obviously is not in line with our theme. So you can use some kind of battle, but to lead to the awareness that these two things should not fight, but they should help each other. That's the only thing.

Self: And how is the selection process, which groups can present at the PKB?

Dibia: They apply, they send their proposal, their material to us, so that's about 75 packets that we receive. Maybe two months before the festival, they send information, this is what we want to perform, this is the story, and I kept selecting and giving comments, this is okay, this is not. So with my other colleagues

⁶¹ How old is the preoccupation with shielding children from damaging influences like sex and violence that comes across in this scene? Further research would be required to establish whether this is an imported sentimentality that was absent in earlier years.

in the team we were really able to really examine the material of the groups (Interview 04/08/2012).

There are several points here. First, even though this interview took place after the PKB, Dibia described a careful pre-articulation of the theme. He also presented himself as the main judge of the degree to which proposals fit this pre-articulated theme; it is possible that he may have overplayed his role in this process. However, this invites the question of whether enunciation is primarily about its 'content' or about the practice, and so also the purpose, of enunciating. Second, Dibia explained the concept of *Paras-Paros* by invoking a story; this seems to be one of the forms that argument may take in Bali. In doing so, he took the case of one play as the exemplar. It was, additionally, a play from Singapadu, Dibia's home village, which has risen as a powerful centre of performance since the 1930s. The role of Singapadu, if anything, has become stronger in recent years in part by virtue of the positions and reputations *inter alia* of Bandem, Dibia and Kodi who all hail from there. In presenting this play as a yardstick for the evaluation of other performances on the one hand, and for the exemplification of the spirit of harmony on the other, is arguably an example of powerful synecdoche, by which a particular articulation is made to stand in for the whole of Bali and the Balinese point of view. In other words, this is interpretation in a classical form, by which a hegemonic, gate-keeping group determines the interpretation of a popular phrase that could potentially lead to a whole fan of meanings; it is a monologue that eliminates other possibilities of engagement. Despite the critique to the concept of interpretation and its universal applicability that I presented earlier, interpretation has now become part of how Balinese both self-discipline and control others. Quite apart from that, this particular practice of interpretation consists of reciting a narrative and then extracting from it what was the initial reason for reciting the narrative; it is, in other words, circular. In a sense, this is a case of 'foreshadowing,' reducing the multiplicity of possible outcomes in 'backward causation' (Morson 1994: 7): the conclusion of the narrative was pre-decided, and so the narrative was predetermined to this end.

There is, here, a sense that the notion of 'harmony' implicit in *Paras-Paros* as described above is the result of a systematic suppression or erasure of conflict. Now, if we accept H. Geertz's point earlier about conflict being the normal characteristic of life in Bali (cross-ref. 6), this precarious achievement of 'harmony' is an exercise of power. Can the denial of the precariousness of this situation be usefully approached as an argument, and if so, precisely what is this argument about?

This exercise in denying conflict was not limited to the content of performances. On the one hand, if performance is a means through which Balinese can work out issues they see as pressing, then the disqualification of performances that revolve around themes of conflict equals the silencing of these matters and of the groups that are currently preoccupied with them. On the other hand, as Dibia and Wayan Geriya,⁶² two of the principal organizers of the festival, argued, the Arts Festival is not supposed to merely showcase Balinese performance, but to foster the paradigms that it represents each year:

⁶² Geriya, from the next door village to Singapadu, is a Balinese anthropologist and scholar of tourism, and a professor at Udayana University.

In that context [of the Festival's theme, *Paras-Paros*], scenes of war or violence in the performances certainly do not fit the theme this time. Therefore such things do not need to be presented in the works of art. In order for the performances to reflect the theme *Paras-Paros*, there certainly needs to be a selection.

The same issue was brought up by Wayan Geriya, that the PKB 2012 is expected to rebuild [*membangun*] the spirit of *Paras-Paros*. *If that spirit is felt to have slackened, then we try to revitalize it through the performing arts*. Thus, an atmosphere of togetherness and peace is constantly built. *Art is a universal language that can penetrate political and economical barriers*. 'Through the arts we are able to elevate human dignity,' say Dibia and Geriya (*The Bali Post* 2011; my emphases).⁶³

A closer look at some of the statements above, and the presuppositions on which they are based, may prove telling. In the passive construction of the first highlighted sentence, the exnominated authorities over Balinese life elect to strengthen the essence of togetherness through a functionalist use of performance, while the term *membangun* (build) is intrinsic to the New Order language of development (Noszlopy 2002: 201). In the second, art is represented as a universal language, in what I take to be a euphemism for globalized capitalism.

The idea of *Paras-Paros* seems to have gained currency after the 2012 Arts Festival. In 2014, considering the history of conflicts that arise prior to elections, political party representatives invoked the principle of *Paras-Paros* as a guarantor of their intention to hold a 'peaceful, honest and fair 2014 election' in Bali, while 'maintaining [the] unity, harmony, order, security and peace of the Balinese people' (*The Bali Times* 2014; see also Erviani 2014). It is interesting that the prevention of conflict rested on a public declaration and the signing of a written agreement, in that it makes explicit the ways in which authoritative articulation aims to silence alternative accounts, to erase antagonisms by making their articulation impossible because they do not fit the official narrative. This reflects a clear trend in the Dibia and Geriya argument I presented above, which hinges on the rigid control of interpretation over both the narratives and their official interpretation. But how are these notions explored in performance?

Gusti Lanan, an actor, when talking about the ways in which he creates his masked characters, gave the example of the *Topèng Tamu*, a tourist character,⁶⁴ who said in an Americanized Indonesian accent: '*Saya senang di Bali!* [I like Bali!] [Then, in English:] I am impressed with Bali, because Bali is so peaceful!' (Interview 20/05/2012). This is a standard line for the representation of foreign characters in

⁶³ See Appendix note 22.

⁶⁴ Balinese may refer to tourists using either the term *tamu*, guest, or the English-derived *touris*. *Tamu* is usually considered more respectful, less blatantly cognizant of the economic, and sometimes power-related, implications of the relationship. However, its use can also have ironic overtones, when it indicates precisely a stark awareness of the relationship between tourists and Balinese, as, I think, is the case here.

contemporary Balinese performance, who tend to marvel at how peaceful Bali is,⁶⁵ when the rest of the characters are engaged in several different kinds of conflict (power, social status, romantic endeavours, and physical violence, among others) as in *Cupak Pengeng*. What should one infer from this perfect overlap between the, fairly repetitive, official speeches on peace and harmony (i.e. the executive decision to be peaceful, and the co-opting of the language of reciprocity and exchange into an innocuous version of togetherness), and the lines of tourists being made fun of in performance?

Suanda made clear earlier (cross-ref. 15) that there are limitations to how far a theme can be bent through a performer's abilities. However, what is also striking in the tight control over narrative that I described above is the sheer absence of consideration of how spectators engage with performance. Suanda remarked on this absence when I asked him about how notions of togetherness, diversity, and creativity are reflected in performance practices:

Togetherness. This is not a funny subject. This subject is good for speeches. What is this togetherness? I need to read a lot, then work together with my friends to come up with jokes, and also look at the audience. The audience is very important. [...] Because every occasion is different. The spectators are different. We can prepare the concept at home, but every audience is different. Something can be funny here, but not funny there. Sometimes, I come on stage, and people don't get it. Sometimes as soon as I come out, people understand. So they laugh (Interview 27/07/2012).⁶⁶

Suanda thus stressed the importance of circumstances and context in turning a theme 'good for speeches,' i.e. an easy, if hardly discrete, carrier of agendas, into something with performative potential. This is directly opposed to the top-down control model implied by Dibia and Geriya, where context is to be bent to prescription and proscription. Arguably, Suanda's approach may be a direct attack on monologues such as the ones surrounding ideas like togetherness. Suanda seemed to suggest here that these are good only for speechifying--the purview of *basa Bapak-Bapak*. He then switched register to explain the contextually sensitive nature of a Balinese performance, which should be dialogic, and so incompatible with such monologues. There is a striking antagonism between the Dibia-Geriya's and Suanda's accounts, which go to quite different ways of representing oneself. In addition, in invoking the

⁶⁵ The idea of peaceful Bali is readily falsified by the presence of Balinese militia called *pecalang*, which have largely taken over the maintenance of public order and in many ways effectively control the island. Their establishment 'ostensibly aimed at protecting village communities from "external" threats. This kind of neo-traditional village militia was first employed to provide protection to Megawati's party, the PDI-P, when it held its congress on Bali in October 1998. It was not long, however, before *pecalang* became identified less with party politics and more with the control of non-Balinese migrants. Their role as a communal security force even became officially sanctioned in March 2001 [...]. According to this regulation, the *pecalang* have the authority to ensure law and order in matters of "tradition" (*adat*) and "religion" (*agama*)' (Picard 2008: 105). For more information about *pecalang* and the related idea of *Ajeg Bali* ('Bali erect') see Darling 2003, MacDougall 2003, Widnyani and Widia 2003, and Fox 2011.

⁶⁶ See Appendix note 23.

ways in which spectators can alter or even determine the performance, Suanda referred to an idea of audiences fundamentally opposed to the one implied by Dibia. Dibia, in his capacity as an actor and teacher, stated that audiences need to be ‘driven’ by the actors, rather than the other way around. In fact, he often described audiences as children to be taught, or protected. This became quite obvious in an interview where Dibia discussed the reasons for censorship in televised performances:

Because of the law of pornography. The other thing is that that’s the function of television as a public medium where some things should not be included. Just this morning I was giving my short statement for the anniversary of BaliTV. As a public medium owned by the government, TV is trying to control their programmes in order not to let the programme be *contaminated* by morally low kind of programmes, because, other than giving info and entertaining, television also has the function of educating. Especially now it’s more important because our nation now is very concerned with character building (Interview 04/08/2012; emphasis added).⁶⁷

Tellingly, Dibia used the language of pathology⁶⁸ in describing what seems to be a state effort to pre-empt argument and control certain projected outcomes while preventing others. This is interesting, considering the centrality of the theme of sickness in the *Cupak Pengeng* extract (cross-ref. 10) we had discussed previously at ISI. In *Cupak Pengeng*, the actors used the idea of sickness, albeit much more subtly, with half-finished and ambiguous sentences, to refer to the unsuitability of elected officials and of the people who follow them. Was Dibia’s an attempt at a, much more forceful, counter-articulation?

In addition, in Dibia’s account, audiences are represented as children to be led toward the pre-determined interpretation and correct meaning of the performance. This stance can also be inferred by the fact that, at the PKB and before most of the large-scale, government- or regency-funded performances I watched during my fieldwork, the MC usually reads a list of guidelines for the audience, advising them not to go near the stage, not get on the stage, and not to make loud noises or point laser beams at the stage. It seems, then, that in the language of *Bapak-Bapak*, audiences (*penonton*) exist largely in the gerundive: they are there to be admonished and checked, like children.

There is an interesting parallel here with what Hartley called television’s ‘paedocratic regime’: ‘The institutional needs and purposes of the television industry

⁶⁷ This discussion took place in English, at Dibia’s insistence.

⁶⁸ Interestingly (to me, at least, for obvious reasons), the vocabulary of pathology was abundant in the discourse of the Greek military junta (1967-1974), where the country was described as a ‘patient’ that had to be strapped down and put in the ‘plaster cast’ (Van Dyck 1998: 16) of the dictatorship in order to recover, with the Colonels’ help, from its communist affliction. In Georgios Papadopoulos’ words: ‘We are in front of a patient who we have on a surgical bed, and who, should the surgeon not strap on the surgical bed during the operation and the anesthesia, there is a probability, rather than the surgery granting him the restoration of the health, to lead him to his death. [...] The restrictions are the strapping of the patient to the surgical bed so that he will undergo the surgery without danger’ (Van Dyck 1998: 16).

are survival and profitability, to be achieved (hopefully) by audience maximization and by minimizing risks and uncertainties. Audiences are *paedocratized* to serve these needs. [...] The audience is imagined as having childlike qualities and attributes' (1992: 108). Suanda, by contrast, referred to audiences as situated practices, which challenges the monologic representation of Bali and Balinese performance that Dibia and Geriya are engaged in.

However, Dibia's and Geriya's positions do not overlap completely and so should not be conflated. Dibia and most of the practitioner-academics of Bali, such as Bandem, Catra, and Sedana, as well as Kodi to a lesser extent, have made careers in no small part by being brokers, translators, and at times sole distributors of expert knowledge of Bali to international audiences and academics. So they are faced with a three-sided antagonism: as performers with academic credentials, Dibia *et al* have at once to be good performers, academics, and civil servants or cultural interpreters of Bali. So when Dibia, to use the example of the *Bali Post* article I quoted above, is writing together with Geriya, he needs to emphasize the third role, while when in performance or in class, his predicament is markedly different. Geriya's position, on the other hand, is much more straightforward, as the main conflict a Balinese anthropologist has to face is between being an independent academic and a civil servant, which Geriya has chosen to resolve by assuming the authoritative voice of Bali and Balinese culture, not insignificantly *via* the medium of the Arts Festival.

An additional point that the antagonism I outlined above brings to the fore is that there are two distinct versions of interpretation: on the one hand, interpretation as an analytical concept by which to control a narrative (and so interpretation as a hegemonic practice); on the other, interpreting as a local practice of self-performance. The first closes down, limits the possibilities of engagement by pre-determining the meaning of the narrative, which it turns into a monologue. The second engages in a dialogue between the constructed subject positions of the official account of what Bali and Balinese are, and the ways in which Balinese discuss, question, or outright reject these in practice.⁶⁹

Taylor argued that 'our self-interpretations are partly constitutive of our experience' (1985 [1977]: 127). However, 'to assert this connection is not to put forward a causal hypothesis: it is not to say that we alter our descriptions and then *as a result* our experience of our predicament alters. Rather it is that certain modes of experience are not possible without certain self-descriptions' (Taylor 1985 [1977]: 127). What emerges from the accounts of the authoritative articulators of Bali (ISI academics, the Governor, The President of Indonesia, Dibia and Geriya) is an attempt to articulate Balinese performance in a certain way, one that erases conflict and aims to give the semblance of harmony, through the exclusion of those works that deal with issues of war and violence, and the erasure of these issues from the performances that are selected and promoted.⁷⁰ So performance seems here to shift from a way through

⁶⁹ An interesting question for the symposium to consider would be whether these different uses are articulated in Bali using different terms.

⁷⁰ As suggested earlier (crss-ref. 32), an additional consideration would be whether the people involved in these practices prioritize the ostensible 'content' of such articulations over other elements, such as the command of the enunciative function. (There is an intriguing parallel here with what emerged, during my fieldwork, as a central theme in commentaries on a *Topèng Pajegan* performed at a cremation ceremony in Singapadu: what concerned the people involved was not what the performance contained, communicated, or was about, but that it was done. It was the *doing* of the

which conflicts are worked out and reflected upon to a means for erasing and silencing such conflicts. However, the issue may be more complicated than that. First, what is the relationship between an articulation and an argument in the way it is being discussed in this symposium? If these articulations are in fact arguments, are they first and foremost about what Bali and Balinese performance is, or an answer to a different question entirely, i.e. who gets to decide and enunciate about these issues, or who gets to decide what counts as conflict and harmony? Second, the success of attempts to articulate should not be taken for granted. Taylor's notion of the modern subject, of conflicting motives and drives, or 'cross-pressures' (1989), is strikingly absent from the official account. Perhaps one should also consider the possibility that perhaps part of the popularity of Suanda's and other such performances is precisely due to the ways in which they distance themselves from the official line without ever needing to say so outright. So the question is: what is the interpreting subject (both actor and spectator) in Suanda's, and other less official accounts?

Conclusion: What is the Point of Speaking?

The ISI academics' insistence on discipline and regulation brings to the fore the efficacy of criticism and commentary. *Cupak Pengeng* touched on a number of themes and questions: Who are the kings now? What is their relationship with power? What is class difference, how is it talked about and how does it relate to one's social and political position? And finally, what is it to be Balinese, what is it to be human, what is a good or sensible way to behave and what kind of trouble can one get into if they do not? In other words, through the juxtaposition of traditional with modern Bali and the tensions it creates, Balinese represent themselves to themselves. However, they do so in quite different ways depending on the context and circumstances in which these representations take place, and on the role one is called to play on different occasions.

The self-representation of Balinese to Balinese is an area that I found seriously under-researched. However, this is part of the various, potentially conflicting, arguments of what it was to be Balinese in 2012, which is arguably implied to a degree by others. Dibia and Geriya's rejection of conflict is in fact precisely part of that conflict, and so is their denial of it. In a sense, when one of the main issues of a performance is the various questions of what a Balinese person is, does, should do, and so forth (the answers to which can very well be contradictory and mutually-exclusive), and if the subject has no ontological priority over moments of decision or determination (Laclau 1990: 44), Balinese in performance are both playing and accomplishing themselves.

Because of the limited length and scope of international fieldwork in Bali, particularly as part of research degree programmes, the ISI and Arts Festival arguments about Bali are much more prominent and much more easily accessible in the time available than the monologue-shattering comments of Suanda or Lanan. Interpretation in the first sense, then, which invites looking for meaning rather than at context, can easily become an academic confirmation of the hegemonic reading of Balinese performance, precisely because the preferred meaning (see Hall 1999) is

Topèng that mattered, because otherwise the ceremony wouldn't be complete [see Theodoridou 2015: 221-222]. How might that inflect understandings of argumentation in Bali?).

hinged on ignoring the context of media-related practices and on taking the producer-centric idea of audiences as the default.

This is necessarily one particular way of framing the world (or arguing the world?); as the analysis of *Cupak Pengeng* implied, the performance of status and caste provides ample room for critique and commentary that is, however, ambiguous and hard to pin down because it does not obey the rules of a pre-conceived narrative, and is far from what Mark described in his symposium paper as the characteristics of good Ciceronian oratory (21). At the same time, this critique towards kingship or authority in *Cupak Pengeng* can co-exist with the nationalist echoes of ‘Unity in Diversity’ (cross-ref. Extract B). This is commentary by enacting, in a sense—and it does not need to be coherent. What does it mean, then, to interpret such a ‘work’ and who gets to do so? As Gramsci remarked, ‘all men are intellectuals [...] but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals’ (1971: 9). If we do not take the unity of meaning for granted, then the process of interpretation emerges as something akin to ideology in Laclau’s sense, that is, an *appearance* of totality (1990: 92). The fact that the ISI group chose to focus their critique on completely different ideas than Suanda and, to some extent, the family in Bona, is also part of the *discours*, in Foucault’s sense—a violence we do to things (1981: 67). The question then is, again, one of representation: ‘One needs to consider not just, or so much, what criticism *is*, as what is *represented* as criticism or critical, and the conditions under which judgments are held to be authoritative. And the question of what criticism is *for*, what its goals are, is generally overlooked’ (Hobart 1991: 3). In addition, the issue of judgment raises question of the *cultural criteria* of judgment, which are often portrayed as universal and, as it once was argued (Kant 2007 [1790]), relatively unproblematic.

Re-framing the issue of interpretation as a practice of representing and articulating (by someone, to someone, on an occasion, for a purpose [Goodman 1976: 27-31; elaborated by Hobart 2008: 12-13]) is, therefore, crucial. Cedil’s transformation into a king in *Cupak Pengeng* can only become intelligible through spectators’ past experiences and prior knowledge of his otherwise marginal and ambiguous character. In addition, a variety of historical, social and political backgrounds and contexts (only a tiny portion of which I was privy to) are required in order to make sense and be in a position to comment on the event. However, the very act of commentary itself is, as the case of ISI, with its echoing of the ‘official’ stance towards the aims of the Arts Festival, suggests, a performance (or an argument?) with particular purposes. This is further complicated by the position of most ISI academics as both government employees and practitioners. Despite the difficulties this poses for research, it does highlight the importance of role and the capacity in which people say or do the things they say and do, which evidently goes a long way beyond questions of classification or taxonomy, of trying to decide whether and to what extent ‘Balinese theatre’ is ritual, entertainment, or even culture. What emerges from this discussion is, to remember Suanda’s war metaphor, that culture, if anything, is a site of struggle between antagonistic representations, self-censorship, clawback, and silence. Do Suanda’s metaphors of war, unlike metaphors of control, which depersonalize the parties involved and so tend to exnominate, stress agency? This would allow us to ask: under what conditions is the interpreting subject a possibility in Balinese performance-related practices? In contrast to Dibia and his confident enunciations in the ISI discussion, Suanda avoided to complete his sentences;

however, would it be justified to characterize the first mode of discourse as argumentative, and not the second?

Cedil and Sokir, with their failure to sit on their thrones and their small, inefficacious voices, are incapable of articulating anything, both on the actual level, as well as on the level of ruling by becoming ‘masters of *sakti*’ (H. Geertz 1994: 94) and ‘articulators of worlds’ (Hobart 2000: 237). They embody the Balinese attitude of ‘*koh ngomong*’ (to hesitate, or be ashamed to speak): what is the point in speaking if either way no one will listen (see Hobart 1999)? In *Cupak Pengeng*, opposing forces are not amicably reconciled—solutions are found in conflict. This comes in stark contrast to the Arts Festival’s effort to erase conflict in the performances that came to represent Bali in 2012, and to the layers of sameness presented in multiple media and venues (speeches, newspaper articles, discussions and interviews with foreign researchers). Cedil and Sokir, with their exaggerated inability to speak the language of *Bapak-Bapak*, seem to be articulating the disarticulation of almost everyone by the ISI and Arts Festival monologue.

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Appendix

1. ‘*Yan nonton sasolahan ring pura, nika sakadi ring sasolahan sakral, I raga ten bes sanget nyingakin sasolahané, napi niki jelék, niki luung, ten. Saantukan, sasolahané nika, sakralné nika, wantah sasolahan sané bagian saking upakara. Nénten hiburan. Yan sasolahan hiburan, wawu I raga nika lebih fokus menilai bagaimana gerakannya, terhibur apa tidak, sesuai dengan tujuan tarian nika. Yan sasolahan sakral, tujuannya nénten untuk hiburan. Sakéwanten tujuannya nika untuk upakara. Untuk melengkapi upakara. Yan sasolahan ring wantilan, nika hiburan. I raga nonton, luung napi ten sasolahane, jelék napi ten sasolahane, saantukan nika, tujuan tarian niki menghibur kita, jadi kita di sini bisa mengomentari, bisa menilai, saya sudah terhibur atau tidak? Jadi, jika tarian yang di wantilan kita pastikan lebih fokus untuk melihat bagaimana gerakannya*’ (Ayu, interview 25/02/2012).

2. ‘*Mukanya jelek tapi hatinya luar biasa bagus*’ (Lanan, interview 20/05/2012).

3. Cupak Pengeng Excerpt A

Dolar-Dolir: [singing] *Uli di Bangli tiang rauh mariki. Ngarayu tu ayu sexy. Di satu mamunyi tiang tusing paduli miribang iya iri ati. Ulian takut mamunyi tu ayu bajang lugu sampunang ragu ragu bilang i love you meme bapak mu setuju. Nganten malu ngalih déwasa paling ayu mas kawin ngebon malu né penting bulan madu di hotel bintang tujuh laut au au.* [DISENSOR]

Dolar: *Jani raga kené ‘lir.*

Dolir: *Jani ada di jagat langit peteng dedet. Ngiring ida Déwa Agung Cedil. Du Agung ba gelem kéweh. Yén ba raja gelem panjaké pasti gelem.*

Dolar: *Benéh ba orang naké malu.*

Dolir: *Ratu du Agung!*

Dolar: *Oh dadi nganginang mai?*

Dolir: *Dadi nyén ngorang sing.*

Dolar: *Kadén sing dadi malah ditu dogén.*

Dolir: *Oh kéto.*

Dolar: *Ainggih durus durus medal ratu.*

[Cedil masuk]

Dolar: [singing] *Pajalané sada.* [stops singing] *Sing san maan milihin jelema ane kené kené dadi raja. Jelema gelem geleman.*

Dolir: *Nak katurunan sing dadi. Durus durus mamarga.*

Dolar: *Durus. Inggih inggih raris mamargi. Né mara parekan sayang né. Jeg sing ngomong sing ngomong ba né.*

Dolir: *Ngomong gen kéweh.*

Dolar: *Uli telun sing ngomong né.*

Dolir: *Pang pang.*
Dolar: *Jeg sing ngomong ba ya né.*
Dolir: *Pang pang ngomong.*
Dolar: *Apa kel oranga. Sing bisa ngorang apa ya.*
Dolir: *Né kené dadi raja.*
Dolar: *Nah sing ngomong. Jeg ngangisahang dadi raja kené.*
Dolir: *Ais tarik napas.*
Dolar: *Nah. Kénkén ngomong misi ngajengit doen. Kénkén ngomong.*
Dolir: *Jeg sing ngerti dadiné né. [...] Cara kidang misi nganggot.*
Cedil: *Halo.*
Dolar: *Ngomong to?*
Cedil: *Eh kéto Lardo.*
Dolir: *Weh tu kénkén ngomong? Mabading tu? Lardo. Dolar kénnten. Lardo!*
Cedil: *Eh Dolar ao?*
Dolar: *Ao.*
Cedil: *Saya lupa tadi. Dolar, ikuti saya dari belakang. Tut wuri [Old Javanese].*
Dolir: *Titiang sareng?*
Cedil: *Bareng. [Continues in Old Javanese]*

4. *‘Bermacam macam. Saya pernah baca ada pelawak, atau pemain bondrés, dia sebagai kritikus, dia sebagai mediator juga, sebagai informan. Dia sebagai kritikus. Dia sebagai pejuang juga. Heroism juga. Tapi tanpa disadari, hal itu sudah dilakukan. Misalnya dia sebagai kritikus. Dia sudah melakukan, tapi dia tidak tahu. Karena dia tidak pernah baca ada diberitahu oleh orang menjadi kritikus, seperti ABC. Dia mengkritik. Misalnya ada odalan. Di odalan itu ada orang sedang sembahyang. Ada musik. Besoknya, saya pentas. Saya bilang itu. Saya kritik itu. Tapi alus. Supaya yang mengundang tidak marah, supaya yang upacara tidak malu. Saya sebagai kritikus. Besoknya, yang punya acara itu tidak lagi musik. Masukan. Pada hal saya tidak nelson yang punya acara bilang “Pak besok orang mudah itu jangan musik.” Saya kritik sedikit saja’* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

5. *‘Tidak boleh dia malawak. Artinya tidak cocok karena karakter raja muda harus serius dan lebih berwibawa. Kata-katanya ada maknanya. Seperti dalang’* (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).

6. *‘Orang yang dihormati, orang yang mengerti, orang yang memahami, orang yang mengetahui banyak hal, ini orang yang tidak tahu. Ini jawaban di sini [Orang yang dihormati]. Tapi apakah dia tahu?’* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

7. *'Raja jadi Cedil. Saya bukan raja!'* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

8. *'Penari bondrés harus tahu banyak: musik, tari, situasi. Inikan sulit: kata kata, kalau keluar, tidak bisa dihapus. Kalau menari, salahkan, orang tidak tahu. Orang melihat, pun tidak tahu. Kalau ngomong, kata kata adalah senjata. Bicarakanmu adalah harimaumu. Kamu bicara yang bagaimana, orang bisa mati. Orang bisa celaka kalau omong-omong yang tidak bagus. Orang bisa mati. Sekarang politik. Saya lihat politik di Indonesia, wow. Wow. Hebat ini. Saya catu sedikit. Kalau saya pentas di pemerintah, saya bilang sedikit saja, orang sudah ... [claps]. Sedikit aja, jangan banyak. Kalau banyak saya nanti diambil. Seperti nasi goreng, ada sambal sedikit. sudah cukup itu'* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

9. *'Ini seperti perang. Sebelum pentas saya banyak harus amunisi'* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

10.

Ketut: *Kadang kadang ada yang Drama Gong yang sudah exis lama, terkenal, actinya bagus. Seperti namanya Bintang Bali Timur itu di manapun ada orang orang yang suka Drama Gong datang.*

Gèk: *Saya senang masih dengar. Karena tetangga masih ada kaset.*

Ketut: *Tapi kaset ini suara aja.*

Gèk: *Saya dengar, dia punya kasetnya, terus dihidupkan, saya dengar dari sini. Senang saya. Terkenal.*

Ketut: *Seperti pisah ini, wataknya bagus, actingnya bagus. Tapi sekarang ada yang dibikin Drama Gong untuk satu kali pertunjukan selesai gitu. Ada upacara dulu di Bona anak anak muda bikin Drama Gong untuk sekali saja. Lucu lucu. Drama Gong yang terkenal dulu ...*

Gèk: *Lodra namanya, Lodra.*

Ketut: *...yang dadi raja. Lodra namanya.*

Gèk: *Raja muda. Bagus suaranya.*

Self: *Acting bagus maksudnya apa?*

Ketut: *Kadang kadang suara dia itu... seperti di pilem, seperti sinetron, aktor lama dengan aktor baru itu kadang kadang ada dibikin-bikin itu, kadang kadang dialog tidak lancar. Seperti masing mengingat-ingat. Dia masih menghafal. Kalau hanya yang udah profesional dia udah tahu. Kalau baru dia menunggu... seperti dipikir 'sekarang bicara apa?'*

Gèk: *Terkenal Lodra, Bali Timur... Sampai sekarang saya senang* (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).

11. *Cupak Pengeng* Excerpt B

Sangar: *Klungkung sané banget berbudaya, Klungkung sané wangi wangiang titiang,*

Klungkung sané suciang titiang. Om Swastyastu Klungkung. Ngiring sampunang nyalid dados nak Bali, ngiring bangga dados nak Bali. Om Swastyastu. Nah né ané dimuka mara luwung. Om swastyastu. Mara ketiang masaut gèk'é. Eh luh jaman modèren, gumi maju Klungkung bypass suba tembus entungang penyakit lacuré. Penyakit sugih bakta. Uningin penyakit lacur, kerék. Bulénan, kusta, penyakit lacur. Klungkung gumi maju entungang penyakit lacure, penyakit sugih aba. Struk, lever, ginjal. Cara tiang kené jeneng tiangé, tiang lèk ngaba penyakit lacur. Tiang kencing manis, pak. Uningin kencing manis? Asal nepukin né manis manis dot ngencingin. Klungkung daerah bersejarah, tepek tangan buat klungkung. Tiang mara nikanga dija lokasiné ngigel? Dija lokasi pentasé di Klungkung, tiang ba takut, pak. Ampura. Bungut tiangé bungut Bulèlèng. Aslin titiangé Karangasem Manggis. Kelih titiangé di Bulèlèng. Ngoyong tiang di Gianyar. Tiang jelema polang-poleng tiang. Lédangan tiang ten midep basa alus.

[My translation of Excerpt B in this paper stops here. However, I include the passage I summarized for reference.]

Yan di Klungkung kadirasa dé ja ngajak orang tuané ajak musuhné nu matiang nika. Tepuk tangan buat kaalusan Klungkung. Basa alus Klungkung Karangasem tiang akui nika. Lédangan tiang kelihné di Bulèlèng, di Bulèlèng bahasané walaupun agak kasaran tapi kenahné luwung luwung. Contohné ampura pak tiang ngoyong di Bulèlèng ajak tiang ngoyong di asrama dajan tiangé nak gusti. Yan di Bulèlèng ngajengin makan kené carané: Hi Gusti, mai. Ajaké maamah-amahan. Pang nyak maurab-uraban bunguté. Biasa di Bulèlèng. Coba di Klungkung ngomong kéto. Setuta bunguté. Yan di Bulèlèng, ampura pak, cicing bisa dadi dokter. Pisagan tiangé masuk kedokteran di UNUD empat setengah tahun ba lulus. Mulih dadi dokter kaukina kén timpalne. Iiiih cicingé né suba dadi dokter poloné. Bayangkan di Bulèlèng cicing bisa dadi dokter. Coba, ampura niki. '45 Indonesia merdeka, Garuda Pancasila terpampang beténé misi bhineka tunggal ika. Sakondén Garuda Pancasila misi bhineka tunggal ika di Bali [...unclear] misi bhineka tunggal ika. Tepuk tangan buat kita orang Bali. Di Bali, ampura pak, malén-lénan kabupatené, malén-lénan bahasané sakéwala dadi abesik di Bali. Contoh, ampura niki, nyamané di Karangasem Saru Ambayen: Bih, can kija ragané? Wawu nika mantuk. Nak Karangasem ngomong kéto satu jam bisa maloglod bolné. Yan di Klungkung sorot ger pak. Gerdini ba bébéké tuni. Di Klungkung ampura niki. Yan di Bangli sorot ngoh. Ba ngamah cicingé ngoh? Ngoh. Basa paling kepara basa Gianyar, pak. Tiang [...unclear] makan. Meli nasi di Kètèwèl, kené bèt anaké ditu. Mai mai. Meli nasiné mai. Bene leneng. Bayangin anaké di Gianyar bene leneng yan to amahé bisa pungak giginé. To Gianyar. Yan di Badung lén buin, pak. Badung, kodya. Tiang meli palinggih dugasné ngajak nak uling Kesiman, kené betné: Pak, pak. Tiang meli palinggihé, pak. Lengkap ajak batarané [dual meaning: 1. Tuhan (God) 2. a small step]. Das ked pukul ndasné. Batara kénkén pak? Nika, pak, pondasi sanggahé. Maksudné batarané koné. Kéwah. Mawinan nika lah uniknya Bali.'

12. 'Orang yang bergaul sangat luas. Orang Bali yang global itu. Ke mana-mana dia punya pertemanan' (Dibia, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

13. 'Kalau kita melihat bagian ini, kita belum tahu kita nonton pisah Cupak. Terus, lucu. Tetapi, ada beberapa lelucon, beberapa unsur unsur yang secara etik, tidak baik. Satu yang bersifat porno, satu juga yang melecehkan unsur agama. [...] Itu menurut saya, tidak baik. Tapi sehingga hiburan memang lucu' (Dibia, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

14. 'Dari judul Cupak Pengeng saya pikir humor tinggi. Cuma saya setuju dengan Pak Dibia, ... kok hancur itu. Itu pertama. Kedua, kostumnya uraka, tanpa konsep. Kalau ini modèren, ada motif macang, campur. Dialog banyolan mereka memang sudah bagus. Tapi porsi banyolan ini, tidak terkait tema Cupak' (Sudibya, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

15. 'Saya merasa, semua lawak di Bali sekarang beda. Ini mempunyai identitas, ingin menunjukkan keanehan. Sehingga mereka tampil dengan seperti ini. Tujuannya adalah ingin menarik perhatian penonton sehingga dia mengatakan memiliki identitas di mana pun dia tampil. Seperti Cedil, misalnya. [...] Jadi, dari klasifikasi lawakan berbeda. Terkait tema, mereka sering menyampaikan sesuatu yang sifatnya mungkin kritik. Kritik yang terjadi di lingkungan masyarakat. Mungkin penonton ingin hiburan aja, tapi bagian mereka masyarakat diharapkan untuk memahami bagaimana berperilaku' (Suteja, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

16. 'Kalau menurut saya, tadi pembicaraan para pemain bondres itu, memang semuanya mengangkat situasi di masyarakat. Bagaimana situasi di masyarakat. Upamanya kadang kadang ada masalah perempuan, kadang kadang ada masalah korupsi, masalah keragaman. Nah itu biasanya mungkin sindiran' (G.A. Oka Partini, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

17. 'Yéning gumanti sampun asapunika majanten pisan kahanan basa, sastra, miwah aksara Bali sayan ngwibuhang, mawastu prasida mikukuhin budaya Baliné, sané taler kanggén dasar sajeroning ngwerdiang miwah nglimbakang pawangunan budaya bangsa, pinaka cihna pawangunan budaya nasional' (Ida Bagus Oka 2002: vi).

18. '[...] bebas, karena masyarakat di pura bebas. [...] Di PKB harus ikut motto' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

19. 'Sesuai dengan tema Pesta Kesenian Bali ke34, yaitu Paras Paros yang dimaknai sebagai dinamika dalam kebersamaan, pawai ini mempresentasikan potensi kekayaan dan dinamika perkembangan kesenian dan keragaman kesenian Nusantara' (Governor Pastika, PKB Opening Ceremony 10/06/2012).

20. 'Dinamika dan kebersamaan menjadi dua kata kunci yang dapat mendorong terciptanya ide ide kreatif. Tema ini dapat menyegarkan identitas, memekarkan daya cipta dan memelihara etik dan estetika dalam penggarapan karya seni. Tema ini juga

memberi inspirasi untuk memperkokoh persatuan rasa kebersamaan dan toleransi yang relevan dengan upaya kita bersama untuk membangun tatanan kehidupan yang lebih beradab. Tatanan kehidupan yang berlandaskan pada kedamaian, persaudaraan, dan kerukunan baik antar kelompok masyarakat maupun di antara bangsa bangsa' (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, PKB Opening Ceremony 10/06/2012).

21. 'Rangkaian Pesta Kesenian Bali juga merupakan sarana untuk membangun budaya kebangsaan yang sangat penting dalam menyikapi tantangan peradaban dewasa ini. Pesta Kesenian Bali dapat menjadi benteng untuk mengokohkan falsafah, tata nilai dan kreativitas seni yang tetap berpijak kuat pada akar tradisi. Akar tradisi terbangun dari kehalusan budi dan tata nilai masyarakat Bali yang religious. Sering saya katakan Pesta Kesenian Bali merupakan wahana unjuk kreativitas serta inovasi dari para seniman Bali untuk diketengahkan (presented) tidak hanya kepada masyarakat Bali tetapi juga masyarakat dunia. Pesta Kesenian Bali diharapkan menjadi jendela informasi, jembatan komunikasi antar budaya sekaligus hubungan diplomasi budaya antar negara. Dalam kaitan dengan upaya makin mengenalkan kekayaan budaya bali pada dunia, kita semua patut berbangga' (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, PKB Opening Ceremony, 10/06/2012).

22. 'Dalam konteks itu, adegan perang atau kekerasan dalam garapan seni, tentu kurang cocok dengan tema yang diusung kali ini. Karenanya, hal-hal demikian tidak perlu dihadirkan dalam garapan seni. Agar garapan seni yang ditampilkan para seniman betul-betul mencerminkan pesan Paras-Paros, tentu perlu ada seleksi.

Hal yang sama disampaikan Wayan Geriya, bahwa PKB 2012 mendatang diharapkan mampu membangun kembali semangat Paras-Paros. Jika kini semangat itu dirasa telah mengendur, melalui panggung seni kita mencoba merevitalisasi semangat tersebut. Dengan demikian, suasana kebersamaan dan damai senantiasa terbangun. Seni merupakan bahasa universal yang mampu menembus sekat-sekat politik, ekonomi. "Melalui seni kita mampu mengangkat harkat manusia," ujar Dibia dan Geriya' (The Bali Post 2011).

23. 'Kebersamaan. Kalimat itu tidak lucu. Itu kalimat bagus untuk berorasi. Saya lihat itu. Persatuan. Jadi persatuan, kesatuan itu apa? Harus banyak baca, kemudian cari persamaan, persaudaraan kan saya dengan teman, saya cari bikin lelucon, sama audien juga. Audien itu sangat menentukan. Kenapa saya bilang sangat menentukan audien itu? Karena setiap acara berbeda. Penonton berbeda. Konsep boleh kita bersiapkan dari rumah, tapi penonton berbeda. Tidak sama lucunya. Bisa tidak lucu di sini, bisa di sana lucu. Kadang kadang, saya keluar, orang belum mengerti. Kadang saya keluar, orang mengerti. Sehingga dia tertawa' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).