

"CULTURAL TOURISM" IN BALI: CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AS TOURIST ATTRACTION*

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*"In the temple we ask for a blessing,
and at a hotel we ask for money"*

*"It's a ritual dance to ask the gods
for a lot of tourists"*

Culture is Bali's defining feature, and Balinese culture is renowned for its dynamic resilience. The Balinese have been readily praised for their ability to borrow whatever foreign influence suits them while nevertheless maintaining their identity over the centuries. Today, there is no dearth of observers to claim that the Balinese have adjusted to the tourist invasion of their island just as in the past—taking advantage of the appeal of their cultural traditions to foreign visitors without sacrificing their own values on the altar of monetary profit. The following quotation should suffice as an example of such an established conviction:

The Balinese seem to be coping with the tourist invasion as well as they have coped with others, that is they are taking what they want, but they are not allowing them-

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selves to be any the less Balinese. This appears to have been the story throughout Bali's history, outside cultures have come, perhaps as conquerors, perhaps only as visitors and traders, but Balinese society and culture have remained distinctive, accepting outward forms, but molding them to its own different purposes."¹

Conclusions drawn in the early 1970s by the American anthropologist Philip McKean from his study of the impact of tourism on Balinese culture support this argument. Challenging the charge of corruption commonly laid against tourism by foreign intellectuals, McKean, for his part, is interested in the capacity of the Balinese to reap the fruits of tourism and turn them to their advantage. In his eyes, the coming of tourists to their island indeed provides the Balinese with an opportunity to preserve their social fabric while revitalizing their cultural traditions:

In short, and perhaps most dramatically stated, the traditions of Bali will prosper in direct proportion to the success of the tourist industry. Far from destroying, ruining, or "spoiling" the culture of Bali, I am arguing here that the advent and increase of tourists is likely to fortify and foster the arts: dance, music, architecture, carving and painting.²

To support his point, McKean makes use of the conception of culture as "performance" propounded by Milton Singer. He sees the various manifestations of Balinese culture as "cultural performances," which distinguish between various audiences—namely the gods, the Balinese, and the tourists. In his opinion, the belief that a divine audience is present at performances intended for the Balinese acts as a guarantee for the preservation of traditional values, whereas performances designed for visitors have but a commercial purpose and thus lack religious meaning. In this respect the presence of tourists, far from diminishing the importance or quality of performances intended for divine and Balinese audiences, helps to improve their presentation, through the monetary rewards brought in by commercial shows. Thus traditional performances provide a sense of authenticity to the tourist shows, whereas the tourist performances contribute toward the traditional ones.

If Balinese performances have indeed improved, it is because the presence of tourists in their midst did not induce the Balinese to *substitute* new roles for the existing ones, but on the contrary drove them to *add* original roles to their traditional repertoire. Thus, according to McKean, tourism has reinforced a sense of *boundary maintenance* among the Balinese between what they do for themselves and what they do for their visitors:

Acknowledging that there is "leakage" across the boundaries between the realms, I nevertheless have argued that for a number of social, religious, and economic reasons, the Balinese are likely to keep the realms distinct in terms of content, though inter-related in terms of structure.³

(Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1984).

¹A. Forge, "Bali" (manuscript, 1977), pp. 5–6. For similar opinion see also F. B. Eiseman Jr., *Bali. Sekala and Niskala*, Vol.1 (Denpasar: 1985), pp. 113–14; W. D. McTaggart, "Tourism and Tradition in Bali," *World Development* 8 (1980): 463–64; U. Ramseyer, *The Art and Culture of Bali* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 239.

²P. F. McKean, "Cultural Involution: Tourists, Balinese, and the Process of Modernization in an Anthropological Perspective" (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 1973), p. 1.

³*Ibid.*, p. 287. Originating in the work of Fredrik Barth, the notion of "boundary maintenance" was later to be taken up in numerous studies dealing with the impact of tourism on indigenous cultures. In these studies, the capacity of a local population to maintain a duality of meanings—that is, a cultural performance will continue

McKean's thesis was destined to have significant repercussions, in Bali as well as abroad. Within the context of the academic literature on the so-called "social and cultural impact of tourism," it greatly contributed toward promoting this island as an enviable model of a tourist policy that respected the cultural values of its population.⁴ But even more important seems the fact that the conclusion of his study appeared just in the nick of time to comfort the position the Balinese authorities had adopted with respect to tourism.

The Development of Tourism in Bali

Before discussing this, some information about the circumstances surrounding the development of tourism in Bali is required.

Begun in 1846, the Dutch conquest of Bali ended in 1906–1908, with the fight to the death (*puputan*) of the *Rajas* of Bandung and Klungkung, who, with their respective families and followers, chose a glorious end rather than capitulate to the foreign invaders.⁵ The protests raised by this brutality were a source of international embarrassment to the Dutch, who attempted to atone for the bloodbath by presenting a positive image of their colonial policy on the island. The situation has aptly been summed up by Adrian Vickers:

The scar on the liberal imagination of the Netherlands produced by these massacres had to be healed, and preservation of Balinese culture, in combination with tourism, were the most effective balms for the healing process.⁶

Here, the so-called "Ethical Policy" was combined with the vision of Balinese culture held by the Orientalist tradition. Since the days of Raffles, Bali had been seen as a "living museum" of Majapahit Java, and the enlightened colonial policy designed for the island aimed to preserve Balinese culture, and even return it to its former state.⁷ Once restored to its pristine splendour, Balinese culture could then be presented for the appreciation of the outside world.

It was in 1908, the very year which saw the fall of Bali's last *Raja*, that tourism in the

to have significance for the native people independent of the presence of tourists, and it would take place even in the absence of a foreign audience—has been selected as a criterion permitting their authors to evaluate the integrity of the culture under scrutiny. Restricting ourselves to the case of Bali, Raymond Noronha and Jean-Luc Maurer adopted McKean's argument, without seeking to assess its validity. See R. Noronha, "Paradise Reviewed: Tourism in Bali," in *Tourism, Passport to Development?* ed. E. de Kadt (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 201; and J. L. Maurer, *Tourism and Development in a Socio-Cultural Perspective: Indonesia as a Case Study* (Geneva: Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement, 1979), p. 97.

⁴See, for example, E. Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15/3 (1988): 382; T. J. Macnaught, "Mass Tourism and the Dilemmas of Modernization in Pacific Island Communities," *Annals of Tourism Research* 9/3 (1982): 373–74; A. Mathieson and G. Wall, *Tourism. Economic, Physical and Social Impacts* (London: Longman, 1982), p. 166; P. L. Pearce, "Tourists and Their Hosts: Some Social and Psychological Effects of Inter-cultural Contact," in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. S. Bochner (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), pp. 203–4.

⁵For a Western view of the Dutch conquest of Bali, see W. A. Hanna, *Bali Profile. People, Events, Circumstances (1001–1976)* (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1976); and for a Balinese view, I. A. A. G. Agung, *Bali Pada Abad ke-20. Perjuangan Rakyat dan Raja-raja Menentang Kolonialisme Belanda 1808–1908* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1988).

⁶A. H. Vickers, *Bali. A Paradise Created* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1989). p. 91.

⁷On the Dutch colonial policy on Bali, see H. Schulte Nordholt, *Bali: Colonial Conceptions and Political Change 1700–1940. From Shifting Hierarchies to 'Fixed Order'* (Rotterdam: Comparative Asian Studies Programme Publications, 1986).

Indonesian archipelago had its beginnings. In this year, the government opened an "Official Tourist Bureau" in Batavia, with the aim of promoting tourism in the Dutch East Indies. Initially focusing on Java, the Bureau was soon to extend its scope to Bali, then baptized in its brochures as "the Gem of the Lesser Sunda Isles."

By 1912 Netherlands rule was firmly established over the whole island, and in 1914 the military occupation force could be withdrawn and replaced by a police force. But it was not until 1924 that the Royal Packet Navigation Company (KPM) inaugurated a regular weekly steamship service connecting Bali with Batavia, Surabaya, and Makassar via the north coast port of Buleleng (Singaraja). Shortly thereafter, the KPM agent in Buleleng was appointed as the Tourist Bureau's representative on Bali, while the government began allowing visitors to use the official resthouses or *pasanggahan*, originally designed to accommodate Dutch officials on their periodic rounds of the island.

In 1928 the KPM opened the Bali Hotel to replace the *pasanggahan* in Denpasar, built on the very site of the *puputan* of 1906. Following this, the KPM also upgraded the *pasanggahan* at Kintamani, which from then on was occupied by tourists who came there to enjoy the spectacular panoramas around Lake Batur.

The first tourists arrived in Bali either aboard a cruiser that berthed in Padang Bay for one or two days, or more commonly aboard the weekly KPM steamship that called at the port of Buleleng. Passengers on the KPM ships usually disembarked on Friday morning and departed on the same boat, returned from Makassar on Sunday evening, giving them just enough time to make a quick round of the island by car. The number of visitors increased steadily from several hundreds in the 1920s to several thousands toward the end of the 1930s.

Among these visitors, special mention should be made of the small community of foreign residents—artists and anthropologists for the most part—which constituted a kind of avant-garde as well as a cultural asset for the elitist tourism which developed between the wars. The accounts, photographs, and films which recorded their stay on the island contributed to forging a brilliant image of Balinese society, an image which would be relayed through the promotional services of the nascent tourist industry. Since then, the island of Bali has consistently been described as the "last paradise" on earth, as a traditional culture whose bearers, endowed with exceptional artistic talents, devote a considerable amount of time and wealth to staging sumptuous ceremonies for their own pleasure and that of their gods...and now in addition for the delectation of foreign visitors.⁸

Reading these accounts of between-the-wars Bali, one is struck by the fact that their authors were persuaded they were witnessing the swan song of a traditional culture miraculously preserved right up until then from the corrupting influences of modernity. In fact it is as if, since the "discovery" of the island by an avant-garde of artists and anthropologists during the 1920s, the mere evocation of Bali suggested the imminent and dramatic Fall from the "Garden of Eden," a state which the Balinese could not be expected to enjoy indefinitely. Indeed, one could surmise, with James Boon, that the appeal the island of Bali exerted over its visitors rests to a large extent on the premonition of the impending demise of its culture.⁹

⁸On the creation of the image of Bali as a paradise, see Vickers, *Bali*. See also Tessel Pollmann, "Margaret Mead's Balinese," above, pp. 1-35.

⁹See J. A. Boon *The Anthropological Romance of Bali 1597-1972: Dynamic Perspectives in Marriage and*

Among the perils which threatened Balinese culture, the most conspicuous one was none other than the coming of the tourists themselves. Thus the ambivalent attitude evinced by the colonial authorities with respect to tourism. On the one hand, the cultural traditions of Bali were the major asset for the tourist promotion of the island. But, on the other hand, if the Balinese culture was to be preserved, measures had to be taken to protect it against the corrupting contact with the modern world brought about by the presence of foreign visitors to the island.

The landing of Japanese troops on Sanur beach in 1942 spared the Dutch government the necessity of determining a consistent tourist policy for Bali. In fact, until the late 1960s tourism remained very limited on the island, potential visitors being dissuaded by the rudimentary state of the infrastructure, together with the political agitation and the xenophobic orientation of the régime that marked the period. Yet President Sukarno adopted Bali as his favorite retreat and made it a showplace for state guests. Eager to use the fame of the island to attract foreign tourists, he built the Ngurah Rai international airport in Tuban and undertook the construction of a prestigious hotel on Sanur beach, the Bali Beach Hotel, which was financed by Japanese war reparations. The hotel was to be inaugurated in 1966 at a moment when political unrest due to the *Gestapu* "coup" had closed Indonesia's doors to foreigners.

When General Suharto became President of the Republic in 1967, his "New Order" régime rapidly began reopening Indonesia to the West. These moves coincided with a period of high growth in international tourism, and from this time onward tourists started coming back to Bali in significant numbers. Such development was the direct result of a decision made by the government within the framework of the First Five-Year Development Plan (1969/1974) to promote international tourism, primarily in order to address a pressing national balance-of-payments deficit. Bali's prestigious image, formed during the prewar years, was crucial to the island being chosen as the focus of tourism development in Indonesia.

Accordingly, the government, heeding the advice of the World Bank, commissioned a team of French consultants to draw up a "Master Plan for the Development of Tourism in Bali." Their report, published in 1971 and revised in 1974 by the World Bank, proposed the construction of a major 425-hectare tourist resort at Nusa Dua (on the east coast of the Bukit peninsula, between Benoa and Bualu), and a network of roads linking the new resort with major attractions on the island.¹⁰ With the official promulgation of the Master Plan by Presidential Decision in 1972, tourism became a top economic priority in the province, second only to agriculture. Meanwhile, the number of foreign visitors rapidly multiplied from fewer than 30,000 per annum in the late 1960s to over 600,000 in the late 1980s.¹¹

Caste, Politics and Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 189.

¹⁰See SCETO, *Bali Tourism Study. Report to the Government of Indonesia* (Paris: UNDP/IBRD, 6 Volumes, 1971); and IBRD/IDA, *Bali Tourism Project. Appraisal Report* (Washington: Tourism Projects Department, 1974).

¹¹Surprising as it may sound, there are no reliable figures concerning the total number of "foreign tourists"—that is, visitors who are not Indonesian citizens usually dubbed *wisatawan mancanegara* nowadays, as opposed to "domestic tourists," who are called *wisatawan nusantara*—visiting Bali. The only figures regularly published by the Bali Tourism Promotion Board (*Diparda Bali*) concern foreign tourists entering Indonesia directly via Ngurah Rai international airport, which numbered 360,415 in 1988. To this figure one has to add the foreign visitors to Bali who entered Indonesia through another international airport, estimated as being about 60 percent of the direct arrivals, thus making a total of some estimated 574,000 foreign tourist arrivals in

"Cultural Tourism"

Faced with this *fait accompli* and pressed to ratify the Master Plan, about which they had not really been consulted, the Balinese authorities insisted on profiting by the tourist trade, as well as on controlling its development. In reply to what they termed the "challenge of tourism" (*tantangan pariwisata*), the Balinese responded with the formula of "Cultural Tourism" (*Pariwisata Budaya*). The purpose and the outline of what was to become the tourist doctrine of Bali were officially adopted in October 1971, as the outcome of a "Seminar on Cultural Tourism in Bali" (*Seminar Pariwisata Budaya Daerah Bali*), jointly convened by the regional government and Balinese agencies for tourism, religion, and culture.¹²

The proceedings of this seminar reveal that the Balinese were perceiving tourism as being both fraught with danger and filled with the promises of forthcoming prosperity. Indeed, they were faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the artistic and religious traditions which made the name of Bali famous the world over provided the main tourist attraction of the island. But on the other hand, the invasion of Bali by visitors originating from different horizons was seen as a threat of cultural "pollution" (*leteh*). By their exposure to foreign influences conveyed by the opening up of their island to international tourism, the Balinese incurred the risk of no longer being able to differentiate between their own values and those brought in by their visitors. This in turn—or so it was feared—would lead Balinese culture toward a "touristic culture" (*budaya pariwisata*), characterized by a confusion between the values of culture and those of tourism.¹³

The policy of cultural tourism was conceived as the only way out of this dilemma. It was expected to develop and promote simultaneously culture and tourism (*pembinaan kebudayaan dan pengembangan kepariwisataan*), by taking advantage of Balinese culture to attract tourists, while using the economic benefits of tourism to foster Balinese culture.¹⁴

One might surmise that the policy of cultural tourism has achieved its mission successfully, at least if one relies on today's declarations from the Balinese authorities

Bali in 1988. These figures do not take into account the steadily increasing numbers of domestic tourists visiting Bali—Indonesian visitors to the island were estimated by the Bali Tourism Promotion Board at around 300,000 in 1988. Official forecasts for the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1989/1994) are 1,300,000 foreign tourists in Bali by 1993, while hotel capacity should increase from 13,000 to 20,000 rooms during the same period.

¹²Hasil Keputusan Seminar Pariwisata Budaya Daerah Bali (Denpasar, 1971).

¹³One thus sees that, from the 1930s to the 1970s, the dilemma facing the authorities charged with designing a tourist policy for Bali has been defined in similar terms: tourism relies on culture, but tourism is a threat to culture. The main difference is that the Dutch wanted to preserve Balinese culture in what they saw as its "traditional" state, whereas the Balinese authorities had a much more dynamic view of their own culture.

¹⁴Once publicized, the formula of cultural tourism aroused impressive fervor among Balinese officials and intellectuals, becoming the inevitable reference for every discussion and every decision concerning tourism on the island. In this respect, it is significant that the slogan of cultural tourism has led not so much to the adoption of concrete measures which one could have rightly expected from what has been defined as a policy (*Kebijaksanaan Pariwisata Budaya*), but to a profusion of discourses whose argumentation composes the Balinese tourist doctrine. The authors of this doctrine, whom I refer to as the "Balinese authorities," besides including members of the provincial government, also include senior echelons of the regional administrative apparatus, the intelligentsia such as academics and journalists, people holding an official position, and finally, any opinion leader of sufficient reputation to be acknowledged as a public spokesman by the Balinese as a whole.

attributing to tourism a "cultural renaissance" on the island. According to them, tourist money has revived Balinese interest in their own traditions, while stimulating their artistic creativity. And above all, the admiration of foreign visitors for Balinese culture is said to have reinforced the sense of cultural identity and pride of the people of Bali.

Such a conclusion accords with that expressed by a growing number of foreign observers, who willingly acknowledge nowadays that their former fears have proved groundless.¹⁵ Thus, while the French consultants who drew up the Master Plan predicted that, by 1985, "the cultural manifestations will probably have disappeared,"¹⁶ today one commonly finds statements such as the following:

If anything, tourism has pumped more life into the Balinese cultural Renaissance that began earlier this century... There are probably more superb artists and craftsmen in Bali today than at any time in its history. With the infusion of dollars from tourist performances, village dance companies have been able to afford new costumes that inspire continual pride in their art.¹⁷

Thus, the question which I pose is what has happened in the the intervening years now that tourism, formerly accused of being a cause of "cultural pollution," is extolled as an agent of "cultural renaissance"?¹⁸

Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction

I shall attempt to answer this question by endeavoring to understand what happens to cultural performances when they become a tourist attraction. For this purpose I shall take up the problem precisely where McKean left it. His thesis has indeed the great merit

¹⁵In this respect, one cannot but be struck by the fact that the fear of an imminent debasement of Balinese culture evinced by between-the-wars observers is still expressed in a similar fashion in more recent accounts. Thus Willard Hanna was writing in 1976: "It is prudent, however, to point out that certain highly discriminating visitors of the 1920s and 1930s, who first made the island's magical charm well known to the outside world, warned even then that it was already too late for later comers to experience the real, the unspoiled Bali. It was not then in fact too late. It is not too late now. Given Bali's demonstrated capacity over the centuries for continuous and creative self-renewal, it still may not be too late in the year 2000. But a stampede by then of half a million tourists each year seems the formula for extinguishing, not rekindling the luminous culture which is Bali's glory" (Hanna, *Bali Profile*, p. XIII). But then, insofar as this apprehension of an impending demise of Balinese culture as a result of tourism has remained to this day, to the point that the prediction of its forthcoming downfall has been continually postponed since the 1920s, it gives way to the conviction that Balinese culture is more resilient than one could be led to believe in view of the changes occurring on the island since its opening up to international tourism.

¹⁶SCETO, *Bali Tourism Study*, vol.2, p. 161.

¹⁷P. Zach, "Bali: Paradise Preserved," *International Herald Tribune*, (July 25, 1986), p. 9. Statements such as this one remind us of what was already being written by Miguel Covarrubias in the 1930s: "Judging from old reports, it seems that there are more performances, the shows are more elaborate and varied, and there are many new styles besides that of the jealously preserved classic theatre" (M. Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* [1937, Reprint, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987], pp. 223-24).

¹⁸An indication of what happened is provided by the choice of vocabulary used by the Balinese authorities when making these statements. Although of course the doctrine of "*Pariwisata Budaya*" ("cultural tourism") was necessarily phrased in the national language, the word used for "cultural pollution" was "*leteh*," a vernacular term, whereas the slogan "cultural renaissance," which came into use a few years later, appeared in English. This double switch of language, first from Balinese to Indonesian with the use of Balinese terms to express key cultural concepts, and then their progressive replacement by English references, is a sign of a revealing shift of identity pointing to the fact that Bali has become more and more integrated within the Indonesian state as well as within the international tourist market. [To help the reader identify these different idioms, I have marked all Balinese cultural references with bold face characters, whereas I used italics for Indonesian and other foreign terms.]

of discarding fruitless speculations, like "cultural pollution" or "cultural renaissance," in order to focus on an analysis liable to empirical assessment. It is clear in this respect that his argument—just like the Balinese doctrine of cultural tourism—stakes its validity on the capacity of the Balinese to maintain a distinction between those performances intended for themselves, and the attractions which are expressly designed to accommodate their foreign visitors. Thus the crux of the matter amounts to assessing whether the Balinese are actually in a position to discriminate between their cultural performances according to the audience for whom they are intended.

This approach is closely akin to that advocated by Edward Bruner, who states that "we must ask what the differences are between cultural expressions and performances designed for outsiders, as opposed to those designed for the people themselves."¹⁹ In this approach, cultural performances are seen as the locus of an ongoing dialogue between tourists and locals, between the universalistic requirements of international tourism and the particularities of a given tourist destination. International tourism generates a demand for cultural performances by prompting whole societies to stage their culture for foreign audiences. In reply to this demand, the local populations construct a representation of their culture, simultaneously based upon their own indigenous system of references and their understanding of the tourists' expectations.

In this respect, the contemporary evolution of the Balinese performing arts certainly provides the best illustration of the problems raised by the conversion of cultural performances into tourist attractions. If the much celebrated Balinese dances indeed represent the trademark of this island to outsiders, one should not forget that dance is considered by the Balinese themselves as the yardstick of their artistic creativity *par excellence*. Furthermore, beyond providing entertainment for Balinese and tourists alike, these renowned dances, which have contributed so much to Bali's fame, function above all as a stage where Balinese society displays itself, where its members simultaneously enact and watch their own history and their own values: a stage which serves as a crucible where the Balinese celebrate their common participation in the same community. So much so that it is in connection with the performing arts that the question of how to discriminate between what the Balinese sell to the tourists and what they reserve for themselves—between their own cultural performances and the tourist attractions which are derived from them—arises with the utmost clarity.

I shall present my argument in two stages. First, I shall consider *Balinese dance as a tourist attraction*. I shall briefly describe the main genres of performances expressly designed for the entertainment of tourist audiences, while trying to assess how far they depart from performances held for the Balinese themselves.

Then, I shall discuss the *Balinese responses to the "challenge of tourism."* I shall pay attention successively to the way the Balinese authorities have perceived the problems posed by the conversion of traditional dances into tourist attractions, to the measures they have adopted to resolve these problems, and to the results they have achieved. After this, my remaining concern will be to examine with circumspection the claim of a "cultural renaissance" of Bali, by specifying what has to become of their culture for the Balinese to attribute its renaissance to tourism.

¹⁹E. M. Bruner, "Experience and Its Expressions," in *The Anthropology of Experience*, ed. V. W. Turner and E. M. Bruner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p. 28.

I. Balinese Dance as a Tourist Attraction

Dance in Bali does not fit into the Western notion of "performing arts." To start with, there are no such terms as "art" or "artist" in the Balinese language. What we call "art" is for the Balinese a functional occupation, a service to the gods and community, a task which is always concrete and specific, executed by a "specialist." Thus a dancer is a "dance specialist" (*juru igel*), while a musician is a "music specialist" (*juru gambel*). And then, in Bali dance partakes of both theater and ritual. On the one hand, the terms in use—*igel-igelan*, *ilen-ilen*, *sasolahan*—refer to both the choreographic and the dramatic elements of a performance, which are not conceptually differentiated by the Balinese.²⁰ On the other hand, as a requisite of most ceremonies, dance and drama are "not merely a spectacle to be watched but a ritual to be enacted."²¹ The difficulty one faces when attempting to draw a dividing line between that which pertains to spectacle and that which belongs to ritual has been aptly expressed by Jane Belo, when she observed that the Balinese consider dramatic performances as an offering, whereas they stage the presentation of offerings like a performance:

in Balinese culture no very sharp line was drawn between the performance of ritual and dramatics; any dramatic performance was in itself an offering to the gods, and the presumption was that the better the performance, the better the gods would be pleased.²²

Indeed, in Bali dramatic performances are not intended only for human audiences, because present among the spectators, invisible but nevertheless attentive, are the ancestors, the gods and the demons—who share with the Balinese a keen taste for lively festivals and fine performances. In this respect, dance is at once an offering to the gods and an entertainment for the people.

The traditional context for a dramatic performance is provided by the numerous religious celebrations (*yadnya*) which punctuate Balinese life: temple festivals (*Dewa Yadnya*), rites of passage (*Manusa Yadnya*), funeral ceremonies (*Pitra Yadnya*), practices of exorcism (*Buta Yadnya*), and so on. Nevertheless, while most dances are organically bound to a ceremonial occasion, they do not all partake of ritual to the same extent. This poses a problem of classification, which foreign observers have tended to approach by sorting dance into the categories of the *sacred* and the *profane*, even though the authors of the first surveys of dance and drama in Bali had taken care to warn their readers against the fundamental inadequacy of principles of classification so radically foreign to Balinese reality.²³

²⁰For a detailed description of the various genres of dance and drama encountered in Bali, see B. de Zoete and W. Spies, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (1938, Reprint, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973); M. Bandem and F. deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod. Balinese Dance in Transition* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981); and M. Bandem, *Ensiklopedi Tari Bali* (Denpasar: Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia, 1983).

²¹Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 116.

²²Jane Belo, *Trance in Bali* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 115.

²³See W. Spies and R. Goris, "Overzicht van dans en tooneel in Bali," *Djawa* 17 (1937): 205; and de Zoete and Spies, *Dance and Drama in Bali*, p. 46. Bandem and deBoer have attempted to construct their presentation of Balinese dances upon the indigenous classification *kaja/kelod* (that is "mountainward"/ "seaward"). However, as they linked the former with the sacred, the divine, and the good, while associating the latter with the demonic, the chthonian, and the evil, they ended up creating even further confusion (Bandem and