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GODS, PEOPLE, SPIRITS AND WITCHES: THE BALINESE SYSTEM OF PERSON DEFINITION

1. *Introduction*

The present paper has both ethnographic and theoretical aims. Ethnographically it attempts to describe the structural order embedded in a sub-system of Balinese collective ideas, viz. those that systematically interrelate the similarities and differences between the various beings which exist in their universe, and in this way to gain a fuller understanding of the actions of, and the beliefs about, any one particular kind of being. Incidentally this demonstration provides the example Crick was unable to supply in his more theoretical discussion of witchcraft. He argued that any explanation of witchcraft which neglects to relate these personages to other categories of being in the same culture is inevitably incomplete and unsatisfactory (Crick 1976: 115-116). This type of approach, whose primary goal is to elucidate the cultural categories of the people one is studying, also furnishes an implicit but powerful critique of functionalist explanations of witchcraft and witchcraft accusations which had been content to interpret the latter as nothing more than pointers to the foci of social strain (cf. Holy 1976). One simply cannot successfully comprehend Balinese beliefs about witchcraft by treating them as epiphenomena of the system of social relations, since this fails to take account of the conceptual nature of the latter, and it also violates the integrity of the indigenous conceptual structure. Witchcraft has to be dissolved into the wider conceptual framework before it becomes possible to grasp the totality of the phenomena under discussion.

Theoretically I wish to emphasize that a system of categories articu-

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ated in a more or less specific and reasonably stable manner constrains perception of the world within bounded limits, but that this does not entail the absence of significant differences of opinion, and indeed disagreement, over the content of beliefs and over the appropriateness of particular modes of social action in particular situations.

If one lives in a Balinese village for any length of time, it is inevitable that one will eventually become acquainted with a wide spectrum of creatures of a kind not normally encountered in Europe. The category "human being" (*jalma*) is first subdivided into the four great classes reminiscent of the four Indian *varna*: *brahmana*, *satria*, *wésia* and *sudra*. The first three are collectively designated the *triwangsa* ("three kinds"), and they comprise about ten per cent of the population. The distinction between this group and the *sudra* constitutes one of the most significant features of Balinese social organisation (cf. Geertz and Geertz 1975, where these aggregates are labelled gentry and commoner respectively). As in India, the four sub-groupings are hierarchically ranked¹ and this is based on complementary opposition² (Howe 1980).

The term *bangsa* (also *wangsa*) has the general signification of "race", "family", "consanguinity" (van Eck 1876:152); they are classes of people who ideally share common birth from a putative male ancestor. *Bangsa*, however, also carries the connotations "species" or "genus", so that people, birds and animals are all different *bangsa*. This is very important since differences between kinds (*bangsa*) of animals are analogous to differences between different classes (*bangsa*) of people.

The four *bangsa* are internally divided into numerous groups distinguished by the proud possession of a title patrilineally inherited. The number of groups within each *bangsa* is small in the case of the *triwangsa* but very large in that of the *sudra*. The *brahmana* *bangsa* has five ranked titles, as follows, in descending order of religious status: *kemenuh*, *manuaba*, *kenitén*, *mas*, and *antapan*. Amongst the *satria* one can recognize such titles as *cokorda*, *anak agung*, *déwa agung*, *déwa gedé*, *déwa*, *pradéwa*, etc. Sub-groupings in the *wésia* category can be identified, but their interrelations are notoriously difficult to specify (cf. Boon 1977:165 *passim*). The title groups within the *sudra* *bangsa* are too numerous to mention, and anyway many are territorially restricted to certain areas of Bali.

These groups³ are known in the literature as title groups, but the Balinese words used to designate them would belie such a translation and instead point in a different direction. In Balinese title groups are *soroh* (occasionally *sorot*) or *bangsa*. *Bangsa* has already been discussed and *soroh* has an almost identical set of referents. Thus according to the main dictionaries and my own field notes *soroh* means "classification", "species", "race", "type", "a group of people based on

consanguineal ties" (Warna 1978; van Eck 1876; van der Tuuk 1901, 3:60). It is not only the title groups which can be designated in this manner; one may collect all thieves together as *soroh maling*, all demons as *soroh raksasa*. *Soroh*, like *bangsa*, can also be used to classify plants and animals into species and genus. This is startling really because the Hindi word for caste, *jat*, has precisely the same meaning (Mayer 1960:152; Dumont 1972:80; Inden 1976:10-16). The conclusion is that *soroh* are separated from each other in a qualitative rather than a quantitative way.⁴ In sum then, the category *jalma* ("human being") is internally divided into a set of discrete classes or entities, the members of each one perceiving themselves as essentially different kinds of beings from the members of others.⁵

In Bali four other major divisions may be unambiguously distinguished. These are the gods (*batara, déwa*), malevolent spirits (*buta-kala*), witches (*léyak*) and animals (*buron*). Within each of these classes further distinctions are indeed apparent and where possible I will supply detailed information. However, as I should point out, such is the profusion of beliefs and forms, especially in the category *léyak*, that many particulars will have to be omitted.

The five classes are hierarchically ranked, although the relative position of animals and witches is, in the nature of things (witches often choosing to do their work in the guise of certain animals), impossible to determine. The ranking, not only of the broad categories themselves, but also of the members within each category (where applicable), is a result of the operation of a series of dichotomies such as purity/pollution and *alus/kasar* (refined/coarse, cf. Geertz 1960:232), but it is also founded on an indigenous theory concerning the moral evaluation of emotions, feelings, thoughts and dispositions.

2. The Gods

I do not think that it is feasible to argue that the Balinese have a single coherent conception of divinity, if only because they have absorbed, over the years, a number of Hindu gods into their own pantheon. These Hindu deities, Siwa, Brahma and Wisnu being the most famous, might be termed the superordinate gods, since they stand just below the very pinnacle of the hierarchy, and also because they exhibit characteristics which the other Balinese gods do not. At the summit of the ranking stands the supreme Sanghyang Widi. Widi according to both Swellengrebel (1960:71) and C. Geertz (1973a) receives more attention these days than in previous eras. In the myths of creation Widi is the transcendant spiritual unity out of which the material existence of man gradually differentiates. As such this god is remote and exceedingly abstract; not the type of god to which the ordinary Balinese, whose village religion emphasizes a very close

relationship to a particular though anonymous god, is capable of relating. In that sense it is a communal rather than a personal religion.

The traditional gods of the Balinese are their deified ancestors, and even if no-one can say which specific ancestors are the gods at any one time, they are ancestors nevertheless, and thus "creatures of the same kind". In order to understand this fully I must add that the gods are themselves divided in the same way humans are. Each title group has its own gods who are the ancestors of the members of that group. The hierarchy of the gods replicates that of the title groups. In general gods are purer than humans, but only with reference to a particular title group. The gods of a *sudra* title group are not only inferior to the gods of a *triwangsa* title but also to the living holders of that title. This is why *triwangsa* will neither pray in, nor accept holy water from, a temple dedicated to the worship of an inferior title group. If they should do so they become permanently polluted and decasted to the level of the lower group.

Widi is not this kind of god, and neither are the other Hindu deities, so there are no temples especially dedicated to their worship. The only shrine through which they may be supplicated is called the *kamulan* (from the root *mula*, "root", "origin"), and this may be found in family temples as well as village temples (cf. Howe 1983). However, even here I tend to think that they are conceived as a sort of abstract divinity with which the ancestors, as they become more and more remote from the present day, gradually coalesce. In other words, the world of mankind is formed by a progressive differentiation of Widi, in the sense that the pure disembodied spirits of the ancestors reincarnate into specific members of their title group, this process reversing after death as ancestors gradually relinquish all ties with the living and fuse with the creating principle, in which all category distinctions are again obliterated.

Whether or not one classes these Hindu gods with the Balinese gods (*déwa*, *batara*) is not a question of paramount significance to the Balinese. The former are the deities which appear in the myths, tales and stories, and play a part in the "good and bad day" system. However, the ordinary villager knows very little about these Hindu gods apart from their names and that they are the "god of such and such". Thus, for example, Sri is the goddess of rice and Bayu the god of the wind. But the name and the function of the god in question exhausts the knowledge of all but the most erudite and analytical. In this sense all gods, be they of Indian or Balinese origin, are pretty much alike — they are nondescript.

Their anonymity, however, is their most interesting characteristic. Thus the name of the god of the Balé Bang temple in Pujung (the village in which I did fieldwork) is Ida Batara *ring pura* Balé Bang, which simply reiterates the description ("Most Respectful God of

the Balé Bang temple"). The God has no other name, nor can anyone list a set of features which might distinguish this god from the god of another temple. This is, however, not the same as saying that the god is remote in the way that Widi is. When Ida Batara descends, he does so onto a "throne" and is then carried about on the head of a priest's wife. At the annual temple festival the gods are bathed, nourished and entertained; they are in very close proximity to their congregation, and it is at this time that members beseech the gods for favours by making vows (*masaudan*). In this sense at least there is an intimate and substantial relation; it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be said to be merely formal. It is this aspect of the relationship between the Balinese and their gods which Geertz tends to neglect, even if, on the other hand, he apprehends exactly their abstract nature (1973b:387-8). Analytically they may be characterized as faceless and conventionalized, as spiritual and disembodied, as transcendental and eternal. The gods live in a realm the Balinese call *niskala* (invisible", "intangible"), while mortals survive in the concrete, tangible world, *sakala*. It is possible that these two terms are etymologically related to the word *kala*, which carries connotations of both "time" and "malevolent spirit" (cf. Howe 1981; Warna 1978:510; Friederich 1959:78). If that is true, then *niskala* (*nis* is a negative prefix) describes a domain for which the passage of time has little significance and in which there is an absence of malevolent spirits. Conversely, *sakala* (*sa* is a prefix meaning "all", "one") denotes the historical world of transient events in which noxious spirits are ever present. I have to admit, though, that this argument goes beyond what even educated informants are willing to admit.

There are certain features of the gods which Geertz does not mention, because, I think, he makes no effort to discriminate between temple gods and Hindu deities. It is these latter only which appear mythically as occasionally rapacious; thus, for example, Guru (i.e. Siwa) is often portrayed as incapable of restraining salacious impulses. Ordinary temple gods are considered pure and perfect, and there are no stories at all of this kind concerning them. Moreover, in those recensions of the Hindu epics found in Bali which describe such indecorous scenes, the god invariably metamorphoses, as a direct consequence of his lascivious actions, into an ogre (*buta-kala*), but more about that later. The point is that, notwithstanding the fact that certain gods (Hindu gods) go off the rails occasionally, gods in general are conceived of as pure and restrained. In short, they are the epitome of all that may be described as *alus*. I would contend then that the category of "god" constitutes one extreme of the classificatory system of person definition in Bali. This end of the continuum is viewed as the source and personification of positively evaluated conduct and feeling, even if, as I shall try to show in the following

section, people do not necessarily aspire to emulate such behaviour.

According to Geertz (1973b:338-9) the gods represent "... the purest expression of the Balinese concept of personhood. They are also confronting the image of what they consider themselves at bottom to be; an image which the biological, psychological, and sociological concomitants of being alive, the mere materialities of historical time, tend only to obscure from sight". I cannot agree with this, because it tends to oversimplify the very complex ideas the Balinese have of what constitutes appropriate social action. Rather than the gods representing what the Balinese fundamentally feel themselves to be, I would instead suggest that the gods simply personify all those aspects of character which the Balinese find most meritorious. The actions, thoughts and emotions which the Balinese place great value on are precisely those which the gods and the higher castes are supposed to embody to the greatest extent. Thus behaviour that is highly refined, stylized and dignified (*alus*), language that is grandiloquent, circumlocutory and discursive, emotions that are tranquil and steady, thoughts that are devoid of anger and jealousy, envy and hate, are all expressions of a personality which ordinary Balinese assert should be projected by those superior to themselves.

The highest gods of course are thought to be in a permanent state of bliss, they are disposed to these states by definition. That is to say, a god is a representation or embodiment of these dispositions, and the more elevated the god the more he is conceived to display such characteristics. In a sense the Balinese have immortalized a certain temperament, a certain quality of mind, and have therefore placed it in the realm of the eternal and immutable. These gods are then not an image of what the Balinese consider themselves to be but, more accurately, a representation of what they perceive to be their most commendable traits.

The existential status and integrity of the gods is assured because it is they who legitimate and authorize the evaluation of emotions and dispositions. I am thus not denying their reality, but simply attempting to elucidate the nature of that reality. Moreover, the static characterization I have provided, although not exhaustive, is nearly so because gods appear to lack an action component. Gods do not *do* anything *qua* gods. If they are roused to action they become something other than gods. Whereas illness and failure are caused, amongst other things, by spirits, success and prosperity are usually dependent on good *karma* and spirit inaction. If the gods are not neglected, there is nothing for them to do, and if they are it is not they who deal out retribution. The reason for this is that neglect causes a god to become angry, but in so far as he is angry he automatically becomes a *buta-kala* spirit.

In a recent article Fuller (1979:469) has argued that the crucial

attribute of the Hindu gods is power, and I suppose this is how it has to be, for it would seem ludicrous to beseech impotent gods. However, in Bali there is a most pronounced conceptual distinction between spiritual authority and temporal power (cf. Howe, in press). This poses a problem, since gods are the embodiment of spiritual authority and as such cannot wield temporal power. In other words, they cannot directly interfere in the activities of men, because the crude implementation of power is not an aspect of their character. In fact, as the Balinese in Pujung eventually explained to me, the gods have only indirect power. If someone is ill and the cause of this illness is attributed by a medium to the anger of that person's ancestors, this does not entail that the ancestors directly caused the illness. The illness is a result of attack by spirits acting as the agents of the ancestors. In short, punishment (for neglect of ancestors etc.) is meted out by spirits which stand very low in the hierarchy. Gods, viewed as the distant instigators, have the prerogative to recruit these spirits (in general the *buta-kala*), whose inferior position in the hierarchy is commensurate with the implementation of gross power, as the immediate agents. In this manner the opposition between the spiritual authority of the gods and the temporal power of the lesser creatures is wholly maintained. Power to effect illness or misfortune is only possessed by embodied spirits in the world of substance (*sakala*). Whether one wishes to view this process as (a) the recruitment of a spirit by a god, in which case the god and spirit are kept separate, or (b) as the metamorphosis of the god into the spirit in accordance with a change in his behaviour from *alus* to *kasar*, is, analytically speaking, largely irrelevant, for I would argue that the Balinese make no conceptual distinction between these formulations.

3. People

That there is continuity between the mortal and divine realms is first of all indicated by the fact that the gods, eventually, are nothing other than deified human beings (*jalma*). Moreover, one of the words used in reference to the death of members of the high castes is *néwata* — literally "to become a god". The central figures of the high castes are, as I have already said, supposed to exhibit those characteristics, although in a rather attenuated fashion, which are most properly displayed by the gods, and the higher one is in the hierarchy the greater should be the coincidence. Finally, even the names, or rather titles, of the high castes demonstrate that they are only a step away from divinity. Thus *brahmana* are addressed by the same honorific as gods, *ida*. Within the *satria bangsa* elevated titles are *déwa agung*, *déwa gedé* ("great god"), *anak agung* ("great man"), *pradéwa* ("official of the god").

The nearer one is, in the context of the title system, to divinity, the closer should one's conduct and inner condition approximate that of the gods. The hierarchy of emotions and dispositions is equally based on the dichotomy *alus/kasar*, so that the sort of action which is termed *alus* is praiseworthy, whilst that which is *kasar* is condemned.⁶ But this does not mean that the only model on which action can be based is that of the higher castes. Indeed, it is considered presumptuous and somewhat ridiculous for a *sudra* farmer to aspire to exquisite forms of *alus* behaviour. Or, more accurately, it is permissible for all to aspire to the ideals manifested by the gods, but the higher the ritual status the more appropriate is the imitation considered to be. For those low in the hierarchy action of a more brutish nature is, to some degree, more acceptable and certainly far more easily tolerated by others. Men of a dynamic nature can hardly expect to be lauded for their reserve, so that such people, should they become active in the village, may be characterized as hard (*katos*), coarse (*kasar*), or even cruel (*gemes*). But this is not necessarily a completely negative assessment. One character who regularly beat his wife was respected as a man who was not afraid to say what he thought at *banjar* meetings (the official arena for overt political action).⁷ This man was in fact the self-professed leader of the "silent majority" of the village, and as such he was an important figure. But whereas some people, and not only those who opposed him, contemptuously labelled him as *kasar* and generally denigrated his behaviour, others saw his *kasar*-ness as necessary and even endearing. A more graphic example of the disagreement over the characterization of action occurred one market day when the centre of the village was alive with traders. The driver and his conductor cousin (both in their early twenties) of a local passenger van had parked in such a way that the local bus could not pass. The bus driver, a man living in the same compound as the two younger lads, and with whom there was a history of conflict, hooted his horn, whereupon the van driver immediately gunned his vehicle into life and veered across the road to park it on the right, leaving the bus driver just enough room to get by. However, this action seemed to infuriate the bus driver, who then rammed the back of the van, unfortunately damaging his own headlight. Consumed with rage, he leapt out of the bus and proceeded to violently attack the two young men, giving them bloody noses and kicking them both in the groin. They did not offer to fight back, but simply defended themselves by using their arms to block the rain of blows. In general the villagers felt the bus driver had been wrong to lose his temper and act in such a *kasar* manner. Moreover, the two boys were praised for their incredible restraint (*alus*). However, later on some people, who were well aware of the problems between the protagonists, held that the boys had had it coming to them. They

were said to be arrogant and disrespectful and to have pushed the bus driver too far. They still took exception to his violence, but mostly because it was exhibited in such a public place; under the circumstances they considered his action understandable. In fact, a number of the violent altercations that occurred in the village were initiated by the person who was considered to be the wronged party. In short, violence in certain circumstances is thought to be a reasonable course of action to take. Although everyone I talked to structured the situation using the same set of concepts, there appeared to be significant differences concerning the content of these. Some people felt the bus driver's behaviour was unjustified, irrespective of the reasons he had, whilst others considered his action as tolerable because of those very same reasons; but all labelled it as *kasar*.

A similar sort of analysis may be carried out with regard to political activity. To begin with I have to assert, without providing evidence (see Howe 1980: chap. 6), that men in the prime of life, that is those who are married and members of the *banjar* (in which case their inherent purity is at its lowest point (cf. Hobart 1978a:15)), are, as it were, culturally entitled to engage in brash activities, to forsake spiritual concerns and to apply themselves to the acquisition of wealth and power. This must not be taken in an absolute sense, and political activity (whether open or covert) should be carried out within the framework of the rules of conduct laid down by the village religious association, the *désa*. But in so far as these rules govern action, they have far more to say about religious action than political action. This means that the conceptualization of concrete political behaviour is rather vague and open-ended. Although there is, as I have already said, a distinction between temporal power and spiritual authority, it is only the latter which is highly articulated and structured, whilst the former is left largely unstructured. In other words the Balinese concept of temporal power has no form and little content, and in this sense the mode of political action is contingent and historical; in short, culturally speaking, there is no pre-determined mode for political action. Temporal power is opposed to spiritual authority, and if the latter lays down ideal patterns for conduct, the former lays down that almost any form of action is culturally permissible.⁸

Whereas there is a particular form of, and a specific content to, the conceptual notion of spiritual authority, the content of the opposed notion of temporal power, because it legitimizes the pursuit of one's best self-interest, considered in terms of material gain in the form of wealth and power, may best be described as consisting in a relative absence of institutionalized rules of restraint. Given this, it is not then surprising that political activity is differentially evaluated.

Now local village politics in Bali has already been admirably described by Hobart (1975). It seems to consist in processes of in-

formal decision making (behind the scenes) which are subsequently legitimized, publically and formally, in the monthly *banjar* meetings, in such a way that the apparent democratic structure of the *banjar* (one man, one vote) is effectively circumvented. This is achieved by fragile alliances between patrons and their clients on the one hand, and, on the other, talented public orators who plead the case at meetings. Orators employ a number of tactics so as to (a) give the impression of consensus and (b) shame their opponents by their oratorical skill. In Tengahpadang, where Hobart worked, there were a number of competing factions, and orators were wont to change sides according to how they thought the political wind was blowing. In Pujung the same sort of mechanism could be observed, but the situation was greatly simplified since there was only one coherent and organized faction. This was headed by Pujung's foremost priest, the *kubayan*, who was also by far the village's most wealthy man. He was moreover a high ranking official in the regional government office, which dealt with irrigation affairs (taxation, allocation of resources for large-scale projects, etc). Finally his son-in-law (who married uxorilocally) was the area representative to the regional parliament. In short, even in comparison with other very wealthy villagers in Pujung, the *kubayan* had an enormous political influence. This, combined with his wealth, which made him a sizable employer, enabled him to bestow a wide range of favours.

Kubayan's supporters were not simply those who held the same title, nor were they predominantly kin. Indeed, most were genealogically unrelated, and many of his near kin were not too enamoured of his methods. His supporters consisted of his clients, i.e. those whom he had helped in the past and who were themselves now in positions of some power and influence, both in village public offices and in supra-village local government. These in turn had their own clients, but the latter were of a generally more temporary kind in that the continued alliance was based on continued reciprocal favours. With regard to *kubayan* his clients are more accurately described as permanent supporters. They allied themselves to him not merely in return for favours, but also because they regarded him with some awe and greatly respected him. This political faction was small and tightly knit, and in fact the *kubayan* was said to lead the *banjar* like a farmer led his cow. The opposition, if that is what it can be called, comprised the rest of the village, although it also contained a number of lone wolves and many neutrals. As I said earlier, one man proclaimed himself the leader of this amorphous mass. He called it the *banjar belog* ("the stupid banjar") because, he asserted, most ordinary villagers were unaware of how *kubayan* manipulated them.

Without going into the ethnographic details any further, the point I wish to make is that although *kubayan's* clients were squarely behind

him, many of the so-called silent majority, including neutrals, felt that in pursuing material power he was demeaning his religious role as priest. Others considered that as a *bona fide* member of the *banjar* his political activity was tolerable. Those who vehemently opposed him, whilst giving a fairly self-effacing description of their own motives, characterized *kubayan* as greedy (*momo*) and as acting in a way largely detrimental to the interests of the poorer inhabitants of the village. They even posed rhetorical questions concerning the likely provenance of his wealth, with the clear implication that it derived from very dubious sources. Still others, mostly neutral, although they appreciated *kubayan*'s aims, which were to physically (by reparation and extension of temples and public buildings) and economically improve the village, felt that these altruistic objectives were merely a cover for an underlying motive, which, they suggested, was nothing less than a status drive to have himself recognized as an *anak agung* (a high *satria* title). As such they considered some of his actions reprehensible, because they entailed large village expenditure which the poorer folk could not afford. In their opinion he was trying to elevate himself by climbing on the backs of his fellow-villagers. (Incidentally, this kind of status drive was greatly feared in the village by a number of people, who maintained that it would irrevocably undermine the largely egalitarian ideology which, they assured me, had prevailed for so long (on this, see Howe 1980).) Finally, a number of villagers were clearly shocked when *kubayan* himself attended a *banjar* meeting (one of his very rare appearances, this time occasioned by the recent and unexpected death of his main orator) and berated the association on almost every item on the agenda. After the meeting some villagers privately complained about this public exhibition by a priest of very high status. The implication was that his behaviour was tolerable so long as he kept his politics hidden. Quite frankly other villagers found this idea vaguely ridiculous.

Thus for the Balinese of Pujung, what was considered as appropriate political activity varied considerably, even in respect of this one man. The reader may imagine the variation in attitudes and values that presents itself when other political actors come under consideration. It is in such ways then that the Balinese conceptual structure relates to action; it provides guidelines, possibilities and potentialities. It rarely, if ever, specifies a particular course of action. For example, those Balinese who do not aspire to *alus* forms of conduct are not thereby failing to conform to the norms of ideal behaviour, because in a sense ideal modes of action do not exist, or if they do they are context dependent. There are numerous models on which action can be and is based, and indeed these are differentially evaluated.⁹ In general, conduct which is *alus* is deemed preferable to that which is *kasar*. But in many situations *alus* behaviour is out of place and other

models are more apt. But there is more to it than that, as I hope I have shown, since the models themselves are also open to interpretation in all sorts of ways.

Moreover in Bali, although at a more rudimentary level, as in India, caste status indicates a particular kind of activity and an associated moral duty (*dharma*). Complications for analysis arise because there appears to be a distinction between the absolute *dharma* as personified by the gods and the relative *dharma* specific to caste status, age, occupation, sex and so forth (O'Flaherty 1978). In other words, in any particular situation any one of several models of action may be considered appropriate, and the choice will depend, amongst other things, on the kind of goals sought. Finally, different models are likely to be differently interpreted by different users and differently perceived by different observers. In short, the Balinese are allowed all manner of modes of behaviour, and their conception of action is correspondingly complicated; it cannot simply be characterized by appeal to an undimensional theory which sees all Balinese as rather inadequate approximations of the gods.

Let me turn now to the structure of the conceptual system. If I am correct in suggesting that all those dispositions, emotions and characteristics which the Balinese consider most creditable are represented and embodied in their gods, so that in effect the gods may be treated analytically as reified entities personifying these dispositions, then equally we should expect to find other creatures which symbolize those traits of personality, emotions and feelings which are despised, and which are thought to be antithetical to social and moral harmony. In fact, we do not have to look far for the beings which fit the bill, they are none other than the *buta-kala* spirits.

4. *The Buta-Kala*

The Balinese conceptually equate outward appearance with inner condition, so that *alus* connotes both a relaxed inner tranquility and external beauty, whilst *kasar* refers both to an inward agitation and to an ill-favoured physiognomy. Thus, according to Hobart, girls of high caste are generally thought to be more beautiful than those of low castes (Hobart 1979:439), and in previous times a girl would deform herself if she thought it likely that the local *raja* would have her carried off to his harem. Girls with such defects (*mala*) are considered as unfit consorts for a king, and conversely an unrighteous monarch was conceived as afflicted with a deformity (Moertono 1968:39). It is clearly notions such as these which provide the exegetical context for a proper understanding of certain events portrayed in Javano-Balinese literature. I am here referring to the motif in which various gods, most frequently Siwa and Uma, metamorphose into

their antithetical forms and appear as huge and uncontrollable ogres whose physical aspect and venal motives are equally loathsome.¹⁰ Such ogres (*raksasa*, *kala*, *buta*) are only temporary deviations from their normal and benign forms as gods, which they assume as a result of being overwhelmed by base feelings. This transformation is always accompanied by a transition from heaven to the world of mortals and often to such marginal areas as crossroads, ravines or the graveyard. The ogre reverts to his divine form on the abatement of his odious proclivities and the performance of some sort of purification ceremony (*lukat*). Another important characteristic of these creatures is their egotism, which stands in stark contrast to the altruism of the gods. Ogres are unrestrained, their action being determined solely by their lusts. Physically demons embody every trait the Balinese despise. They are ugly to a grotesque extent, with round eyes, swollen noses, pointed teeth, hairy bodies, thick lolling tongues, foul-smelling breath and a stupid, ludicrous gait. Their behaviour is completely obnoxious; they eat and drink anything and are perpetually drunk — which might account for the widely held belief that they are unable to turn corners with any degree of success. Indeed, they are the epitome of brutishness and inelegance — they are *kasar*.

Because of the characteristics which these creatures exhibit they are perceived to be like animals, since animals also are grossly self-indulgent, desiring only to satiate their bodily appetites, and this accounts for the detestation the Balinese have for any type of behaviour which smacks of animality. Specific animal-like behaviour is expressly forbidden, Geertz (1973c:419-20) remarking that the revulsion against such behaviour can hardly be overstressed. Belo relates that children are not allowed to crawl, as only animals walk on all fours (Belo 1970:90), and indeed this proscription was in evidence in Pujung whilst I was there.

A story which is recounted by de Kat Angelino (1921:215-6) seems to indicate that the main difference between men and animals is conceived in terms of the possession of culture, and specifically in respect of Man's ability to fashion metal, speak and dance, and also in the fact that men and women do not mate indiscriminately. In other words, men distinguish themselves from animals and all other non-humans (except the gods, of course) in that they live by rules and conventions and thus have to restrain their natural impulses in order to create social harmony. To commit rape, adultery or incest is essentially to deny these rules, and consequently to confuse categorical divisions; thus such actions are heavily punished. Bestiality is the most obscene violation of the distinction between man and non-man. Such a crime is said to make the country "hot" (*panes*), which in turn leads to droughts, loss of crops, epidemics, natural disasters, etc., and if Covarrubias is correct, in former times both animal and offender

were thrown into the ocean (Covarrubias 1937:145). Incest is punished by forcing the couple to crawl on their hands and knees to a pig's trough where they must drink the water provided for the pigs (Belo 1970:90). Similarly, twin births, especially if these are of opposite sex, and even more so if the girl comes out first (in which case she is considered older), are perceived as replicating the multiple births of animals, and this is compounded by the belief that the children have committed incest whilst in the womb. In such cases the family is banished from the village for 42 days.

As should already be evident, it is not simply animal behaviour which is abominated, but anything which approaches a rejection of the rules and customs by which the Balinese live. Thus Covarrubias records that it is tabooed to have sexual relations with albinos, idiots, lepers (Korn 1922), and the sick and deformed in general (Covarrubias 1937:144). Suffering of this nature is thought to be caused by a curse inflicted by an ancestor or other spirit. In other words, such unfortunates already inhabit the marginal world between the realms of men and animals, and relations with them should be avoided. In the case of lepers relations are terminated altogether since they are forced to leave the village.

It is possibly in the light of these ideas that inter-caste (at least inter-*warna*) relations should be viewed. Although all human beings are at one level the same, at a less inclusive level they are creatures of a different kind, and interaction between them is bound to reflect this. Thus hypogamy, and even hypergamy, are to some extent abhorred because they both entail the fusion of fundamentally different classes.

If a condition bordering on the bestial is thought reprehensible, then to some extent so are illness and other forms of physical and mental distress. For Java, H. Geertz (1961) records that mothers attempt to preserve the well-being of their babies so that they do not cry. She further notes that people who have not learned the necessary forms of respect and etiquette (e.g. children) and those who are unable to control themselves emotionally (e.g. the insane) are considered to be not properly Javanese (H. Geertz 1961:110). Much the same can be said for Bali, where child-rearing practices are very similar. The other side of the coin is that emotional turmoil is thought to be a cause of sickness and even death (H. Geertz 1961:134, 137; C. Geertz 1960:47, 97). The point I wish to argue by the collocation of these several types of evidence is that the deterioration of physical and mental stability is conceived, to some degree, as a descent towards animality. People in this condition are more vulnerable to spirit attack, and the spirits involved, the *buta-kala*, are themselves animal-like. Moreover, a person overcome by emotional distress or by any disvalued feeling is often said to have been invaded (*susup*) by a spirit in the *buta-kala* class. Conversely it may also be said that a

person who is emotionally distressed is more likely to fall victim to an attack by a malevolent spirit and hence to a display of violent feelings. This means that certain types of illness, emotional disturbances of all kinds and reprobate inclinations in general, animality, deformity and repudiation of the norms and values of Balinese society are all more or less interrelated. Furthermore, this set of partially articulated concepts is associated with the abode of mankind, transience, gross materiality and the *buta-kala*.

Having reached this stage of the investigation it is time to turn to a more detailed examination of the *buta-kala* spirits. First of all it will prove invaluable to record some of their names since, unlike the anonymous gods, the spirits are named in a most specific fashion.

To begin with I will enumerate some of the names of this class of spirit which appear in Balinese literature, in this case the litany of the *sengguhu* priest (Hooykaas 1974:69-70): *kala nundang* (lurer), *buta sayah* (poverty), *kala graheng* (snatcher), *buta nandang* (enticer), *kala duleg* (mistrust), *buta nelik* (spy), *kala mukti* (gorger), *buta nelep* (peeping Tom), *kala ninté* (peeper), *kala nintip* (nosey), *buta mangsa* (flesh eater), *buta édan* (lust), *buta wuru* (drunkard), *buta simuh* (worry), *buta ngoncang* (noise), *buta ngadu* (attacker), *buta lepek* (scared). Elsewhere Hooykaas records "*kala* serious bewilderment" and "*kala* sensual pleasure" (Hooykaas 1977:77). It can easily be seen that most of these spirits are named after vices, anti-social acts, and worthless and despised dispositions.

I should, however, point out that in the litany there are one or two which, from the perspective adopted here, are rather anomalous. For example, there is a *buta suci* (pure), *buta asih* (love) and a *buta-nembah* (respect). Quite frankly I cannot explain the existence of these, but I will iterate that in all the time I was resident in Bali I never heard anything that led me to believe that these spirits were other than inimical.

In the litany many *buta* and *kala* are said to live in marginal places such as gates, the graveyard, crossroads, slopes, hollows, walls, wells, boundary marks, ravines, roads, meeting places, and so forth, as well as in places such as sleeping-bunks and pillows, where people may be possessed as they sleep (a state conceptually linked to death).

I myself recorded a number of these names whilst in the field, and also some rather different ones: *kala rau* and *kala peteng* (confusion), *kala catur muka* (crossroads), *kala ngadang semaya* (fate), *kala ngadang pati* (death), *kala dengen* and *kala dangastra* (anger), and *kala kilang-kilung* (bewildered). Moreover, if someone is very angry for no apparent reason he is said to be *kasusupan kala* (entered by a *kala*) or *kalanan* (in the state of *kala*). Finally I will mention that *kala* spirits are at their most active at transitional points of the day, such as midday (*kali tepet*) and dusk (*sandi kala*), that *Kala* is the imperfect demon progeny formed from the spilt semen of the god *Guru*, who

attacks and devours people, and that he does this most especially to those who find themselves in transitional places and times. "*Kala*" is also a word which is used to denote point-time rather than interval-time (it is used in such phrases as "at that time", "this time tomorrow", "what time is it?", etc), and it also translates as "during" and "while".¹¹ In other words, *kala peteng* is the evil spirit which causes "darkness" (*peteng*) and "confusion", but it may also be translated as "the time when one is dark inside" or "while confused"; "*kala* serious bewilderment" is the reification of an abstract concept, "the time when one is overcome by serious bewilderment", into an external and concrete entity which has an independent and causal existence.

Now it has already been shown that the defining criteria of gods are their spirituality, rejection of self-gratification and anonymity. However, all gods have the potentiality to change into their opposite and antithetical forms and so, for a short while, become a *buta* or *kala*. This transmogrification occurs when the god is consumed by a feeling or thought contrary to the divine state. During this temporary and deviant condition the god is totally absorbed by his own selfish desires, and self-indulgence is the only motive for action. Thus the transient mood of the god as a *kala* or *buta* spirit is concordant with the notion that disvalued emotions such as anger are transitory states of the human condition. It is also congruent with the conception that the *buta-kala* are beings marked by their symbiotic relation to transitional times and places. These ideas are, of course, embedded in the overarching opposition between *niskala* and *sakala* mentioned earlier. When a god metamorphoses into a *kala*, he enters the time-filled world of suffering humanity, remains for a brief period and then re-enters the eternal world of the gods, just as, similarly, the *kala* only enters a person for a short while, the duration of the emotion.

I must now say a few words concerning the *buta* spirits, if only because their name does not signify anything to do with "time". *Buta* in fact means "blind" in both a literal and metaphorical sense. In the context of the spirits a *buta* is a mumbling, malicious creature that knows no shame. A person who stands naked without covering his genitals, someone who displays his emotions too readily, who shouts and criticizes too quickly, someone who too swiftly resorts to physical violence, in short someone who is blind to shame, is thought to have been possessed by a *buta*. Thus if, for example, two people suddenly explode into anger and start to fight, it is said that spirits have entered them causing them to become "blind" (*buta*) whilst their minds become "confused" and "dark" (*peteng*), preventing them from realizing what they are doing. In this way the *buta* have properties virtually identical to the *kala*, and indeed people generally talk of them in the same breath and consider them as belonging to one coherent class.

If the gods are personifications of all those dispositions which the Balinese most highly prize, then the *buta-kala* are concretized, physicalized representations of emotions which they most despise.

Apart from irregular offerings to the *buta-kala*, about which I shall have something to say in a moment, periodical offerings are also provided. These are put out every day before anyone has eaten. They consist of small amounts of any type of food that has been cooked that morning, and they are placed at various points all over the compound in order to placate the spirits. Every fifteenth day, on the day called Kajeng Kliwon, a small *caru* ceremony is carried out in each compound at dusk. Offerings are put on the floor in the family temple, in the middle of the compound floor (*natah*) and out in the street. Generally also a lighted torch (fire is thought to remove spirits) is carried through the compound and a mixture of crushed garlic and the leaf of the *jangu* (*Acorus Calamus*) plant (both have the property to ward off spirits and witches) is spat into the rooms and on to the heads of family members.

There are many ways in which the *buta-kala* spirits can be brought under control, but perhaps the most frequently used method is the *caru* ceremony. This is a class of rituals of which the smallest is the *segehan* (or *nasi manca warna*, "rice in five colours/forms") and the largest is the so-called *Eka-daca-Rudra* ("the Eleven *Rudras*", a *rudra* being the demonic form of a god). Although the physical appearance and size of these ceremonies differ enormously, the aim and mechanics remain identical. Each *caru* has two main purposes, the first being to purify the area which has been polluted by the appearance of the *buta-kala*, and the second being to facilitate the reversion of the spirit to its divine form. Thus, for example, if a woman is found to have menstruated in a temple, whether intentionally or not, the *caru* known as *malik sumpah* ("to reverse the curse") must be performed. Offerings in the right numbers and colours are arranged in the symmetrical pattern known as the *panca déwata* or the *nawa sanga*.¹² The *buta-kala* of the east are requested to eat and drink their fill of the offerings provided and return to their abode in the east. This is then done for the spirits of the south, west, north and centre. It is considered that these spirits are the demonic forms of the guardian gods (Iswara-east, Brahma-south, Mahadewa-west, Wisnu-north and Siwa-centre), and that once they have been regaled in sumptuous fashion (for these spirits this means rice, dog or chicken meat, blood and alcoholic drinks) they will calm down and so change back to their divine forms. They have become angry in the first place because of the desecration of the temple brought about, not so much by the blood, although this is the concrete form of the pollution, as by the sheer lack of concern for a holy place. Having returned to their normal states, the spirits/gods then participate in a constructive, rather than

a destructive way, in the rest of the proceedings. The reversion to the benign form is termed *panyupatan*, which may be translated as "payment for sins".

A special type of *caru* ceremony is performed just before the beginning of temple festivals (*odalan*). This particular *caru* is called *mabia kaon* ("to pay off the evil"), and unless it is celebrated, the temple will be unfit for the subsequent descent of the gods, which is the centre piece of the *odalan*. The *caru* is designed to expel the *buta-kala* from the temple and thereby symbolically to spiritually clean all the participants of evil thoughts and intentions. In this sense one might say that the rules for action in the presence of gods seem to be based on the simple principle of the avoidance of unconscionable desires. This does not mean that a temple ceremony is carried on in an atmosphere of awesome reverence; it would be closer to the truth to describe it as cheerful exuberance. What is strictly circumscribed is the occurrence of fights and quarrels and the use of coarse language, since it is precisely action of this sort which entails the appearance of the *buta-kala*. The performance of the *caru* just before the *odalan* gets underway is insurance against this eventuality.

Along the same line of thought, offerings themselves are ideally efficacious only if they are made with a sincere (*sujati*) heart, using materials previously unused (*sukla*) and honestly obtained, and presented to the gods in a reverent attitude. Indeed, one can purify oneself in two ways, these being only superficially different. One may purify oneself with offerings (*suci baan banten*), but also through the purity of one's thoughts (*suci baan kenehé*) (cf. Hobart 1979:463), and since the purity and power of the offerings depend, in the last analysis, on the purity of the thoughts of the person who makes them, the two processes amount to much the same thing.

In the same context should be included yogic practice (*tapa, brata*). This should be performed by the whole village on the day *nyepi* ("to make silent"), which follows the last day of the old year, on which all the evil spirits are chased out of the village to the accompaniment of a great deal of noise and fire. On *nyepi* all should refrain from food, work, sexual and social intercourse and the lighting of fires. Those who want may spend the day in meditation. The intention is to concentrate one's thoughts and direct them to the contemplation of divine subjects and in this fashion to banish the presence of the *buta-kala*.

Entertainment is often used to assuage the violent passions of this class of spirits. At cremations the *buta-kala* are pacified by the soft (*alus*) tones of the *gamelan* (percussion orchestra) *gambang* and *gamelan gendér*, and once they have reverted to their normal forms they are said to watch over the successful completion of the rest of the undertaking.

Finally, I should just like to mention the use of the *barong* in the pacification of the *buta-kala*. The *barong* is a fantastic mythical monster which closely resembles the Chinese dragon, to which it may be related (c.f. de Zoete and Spies 1973: 86-116). The *barong* is animated by two men, one at the front and one at the back. After the festival of Galungan, the *barong* of a village travels to surrounding villages to visit (*malancaran*). Ideally the monster should walk slowly through the village, stopping at every door (*nglawang*) to dance a little and clack his wooden jaws. I was told that such entertainment mollifies the *buta-kala*, with the result that their particularly aggressive qualities are restrained. The *barong* should also walk through the streets of its own village every Kajeng Kliwon at dusk for the six weeks succeeding Galungan.

Before moving on to a discussion of Balinese witches, I should perhaps comment on that now famous characteristic of Balinese behaviour first observed by Bateson (1970) and Bateson and Mead (1942). According to these writers, Balinese music, drama and, indeed, all art forms typically lack any sort of climax, and the avoidance of climax in interpersonal relationships is said to be very striking. I must say I did not witness the kinds of behaviour patterns that Bateson describes (1970:388-9), indeed, I quite regularly saw children of very young ages teased to such an extent that they ended up crying uncontrollably. It seems to me that it is not so much an absence of climax that is the proper object of study, since the problem largely dissolves when the evidence is viewed from the wider perspective adopted in this essay. On the contrary, climactic emotion is a feature of some drama performances, and anyone who has been to a good cock fight cannot fail to be impressed by the climax which the betting eventually reaches. But perhaps most significant of all is the programme of events for a Balinese temple festival. Geertz, following the line created by Bateson before him, described the festival as consisting largely of "... getting ready and cleaning up" (C. Geertz 1973b:403). According to Geertz the major part of the ceremony, the supplication of the gods "... is deliberately muted to the point where it sometimes seems almost an afterthought..." (C. Geertz 1973b:403). I have to say that my experience is altogether different.

At this stage of the festival everyone is dressed in their finest, waiting to pray and receive holy water. The village is almost deserted because everyone is in the temple, and the rite of *ngaturang piodalan* (the supplication of the gods) is the focus of attention. Many of the women present sing poems (*makidung*), and a group of men sing a different class of literature (*kakawin*). A number of priests will be in attendance, for a large ceremony always requires the services of assistants, for example to carry holy water around to the various shrines in the temple so that they may be purified. In short, I would

assert that most Balinese would be genuinely shocked at the lack of sensitivity in Geertz' description.

The sequential programme for an important festival is extremely interesting, since it indicates without doubt that the Balinese conceive of the ceremony as reaching a climax. In Pujung the programme is as follows: (a) *medal* (the gods "come out") on the first day, (b) *mungгах canang* (decoration of shrines with offerings) on the second day, (c) *gedéna* (the main rite of *ngaturang piodalan*; *gedéna* may be translated as "biggest", from the root *gedé* "big"; this part may also be called *pucak*, meaning "summit") on the third day, (d) *nglayud* or *nglayu* ("withered", of flowers; indeed the analogy of the course of the ceremony with the blooming and withering of a flower was made explicit to me), which involves a very small ceremony, on the fourth day, (e) *nyuung* ("empty") is the fifth day, on which nothing happens, (f) *mungгах canang* for a second time, (g) *gedéna* for a second time, (h) *nglayud* once again, and (i) *nyimpen* ("to keep", the gods are put away) on the morning of the ninth day. It really would be difficult to present a more telling example of the way in which events are culturally recognized as reaching a climax.

What Bateson and Mead and subsequent writers characterized as an absence of climax, I would prefer to conceptualize as an avoidance of certain types of abhorred emotions, namely those thoughts, feelings and dispositions associated with the appearance of the *buta-kala* spirits and largely indicative of social discord. Quarrels, in truth, do not build, they are left to simmer, and there is even an institutionalized silence (*puik*) to take account of these contingencies. Moreover, if fights do erupt, as from time to time they must, then it is considered as exceedingly brutish behaviour. On the other hand, mirth, merriment, joviality, sportiveness and other actions conducive to social harmony are all allowed to be expressed without any restraint whatsoever.

5. *Witches*

In this final section it is possible to provide only a very general account of Balinese witches (*léyak*), since the topic is a vast and confusing one not least because it is rarely open to explicit investigation, people in general being reticent in their talk about it. The *léyak* is to the Balinese extraordinarily obnoxious and virulently malevolent. Even to mention the name of a suspected witch is likely to bring disaster about one's head. Therefore witchcraft accusations are rarely made and mostly confined to indirect and hushed gossip. This sort of situation poses formidable problems for any type of sociological or functional interpretation, since the kind of evidence which is the mainstay of these analyses, namely the accusations, is largely absent. These theories being virtual non-starters, we must endeavour to furnish a cultural interpretation.

Balinese knowledge and action may be seen as partitioned into two broad categories, that which goes to the "right" (*tengen*) and that which goes to the "left" (*kiwa*). That is to say, magic is of two forms, *panengen* (from *tengen*), and *pangiwa* (from *kiwa*). The first designates the right-hand path and is said to lead to a complete understanding of oneself and one's proper relation to god, other people and nature in general.¹³ The study of *panengen* provides for a full and satisfying consciousness of one's *darma* and of the *darma* of all other creatures and things. The second form indicates the left-hand path and is, of course, the opposite of *panengen*. Those who devote their life to the study of *pangiwa* are totally absorbed in themselves and their own self-aggrandizement. They wish merely to enrich themselves at the expense of others, and their behaviour is motivated by greed, envy, hate and selfishness. The ability to perform *pangiwa* supplies a means whereby they can inflict illness and even death on people they do not like and those who impede their machinations. It is said that those who have studied *pangiwa* find the study of *panengen* pointless and indeed stupid.

I was told that the Balinese gods are fully cognizant of the right-hand path, whereas animals, in the nature of things, and without it in any way being their fault, are completely unaware of this path. People come somewhere in between and have the potential to become either like gods or like animals, this being determined by their inclination (itself a product of many causes: past actions, day of birth, upbringing, etc.) and by what they study. Certainly most people exhibit characteristics of both during their lives, since they do not actively study either *panengen* or *pangiwa*.

To study *panengen* it is not sufficient to simply pray at the right times, follow the village regulations and observe one's *darma*. On the contrary, one must actively study the religious literature in order to comprehend why it is right to act in that way. Once a person has accomplished this, admittedly very difficult, task he himself becomes something like a god, and his feelings and thoughts are bathed in celestial light (that is to say, he becomes "pure through his thoughts", *suci baan kenehné*). Similarly, to become properly a witch it is necessary to study *pangiwa* (in many cases the actual documents are identical, but the knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge are very differently applied).¹⁴ In this way one reduces one's awareness of the type of behaviour the Balinese consider essential for social harmony. Since the principles of *pangiwa* are the obverse of those of *panengen*, a person studying the former distances himself from the gods and approaches the sphere of animals. It should occasion no surprise, then, that witches are often thought to perpetrate their disgusting doings in the guise of animals (notably pigs and monkeys) and that in fact the *léyak* are classified in that group of despised

creatures known as *gumitap-gumitip*, whose other members include mosquitoes (*legu*, *nyinyik*), leeches (*lintah*), a type of ant (*babucung*), poisonous snakes (*lelipi*) and many others. Because of this it cannot be decided whether *léyak* are hierarchically superior or inferior to animals, since the *léyak* is an animal and one of the lowest forms at that; indeed, the Balinese consider that the class of *gumitap-gumitip* is absolutely useless and created merely to make life unpleasant.

Moreover, *léyak* are creatures of the night. Since they study *pangiwa* and reject the teachings of the right-hand path, they are unaware of the proper way to live, and are, in fact, literally and metaphorically "in the dark". Indeed, I was told that *léyak* exist only at night (and midnight, *tengah lemeng*, is when they are most active) and that during the daylight hours they are like everybody else. For example, if someone sees a fine healthy child in the daytime he will think nothing of it, but come the night, if he is a *léyak*, his thoughts will automatically turn to that child and plan its death.

In all respects the *léyak* stand in conceptual opposition to the way of the gods and of righteous people. In myth they are portrayed as dancing upside down in the graveyard at midnight. For food they enjoy everything that the ordinary Balinese finds revolting: human flesh, excrement and decaying corpses constitute veritable delicacies. The most fabulous powers are ascribed to *léyak*; they can fly through the air, change (*nglekas*) into animals, emit fire balls and shoot them through the air, say spells (*nglekas*; this word means (a) to attack using *pangiwa*, (b) to change into animal form and (c) to say spells to activate one's knowledge of *pangiwa*) that can kill a man at a distance, use an aborted foetus (*babai*) as an agent of destruction, and so on.

In the general category of *pangléyakan* (also known as *désti*) there are a number of subsidiary classes recorded by Weck (1976:194-95). Those witches who assume an animal form are known as *pamoroan*. Those who remain in human form, however, are designated as *tuju teluh* and are described as having swollen faces and staring eyes. He also lists the class *teranjana*, which become invisible and attempt to strangle their victims. Although people in Pujung had heard of *teranjana*, they could not tell me how they differed from other manifestations of *léyak*, whilst *pamoroan* and *tuju teluh* were classed in terms of the types of illness they were supposed to cause, the former a genital disease and the latter rheumatic fever and other like illnesses.

Instead of acting himself, the *léyak* may use indirect means to inflict illness and suffering. These again take numerous forms, and only some of them can be mentioned. First of all there is the belief that an aborted foetus (*babai*), if obtained by the *léyak* without the knowledge of its mother and if it has performed for it all the necessary life-crisis rites up to the first birthday at 210 days, will be able to walk and cause all types of illnesses. A second major method is the

employment of various sorts of poisons (*cetik*) which are surreptitiously inserted into the prospective victim's food. Many people suffering from recurrent pains which modern medicine has been unable to cure usually attribute these to the action of poison. This is generally the reason why people are reticent to eat in other villages unless they have very good friends there. A very important category is that known as *papasangan*, in which an object of some sort (almost anything small may serve), to which is attached a *mantra* including the victim's name and inscribed on palm leaf, is inserted in the compound, either in the wall or buried in the ground. When the victim goes near this the magic will "hit" (*kena*) him.¹⁵ A fourth, and I think rare type, is called *bangkret* or *bangkruk*, in which, it is said, the *léyak* can make insects come out of his body (*ngumik*). In general it is said that the *léyak* disturbs and annoys (*nguig, megigin*) other people by virtue of his parasitic nature.

A person becomes a witch through the study of the literature. But a passive knowledge is the least that is required. The novice must undertake all manner of tasks and must be able to teach himself to imagine the almost unimaginable. For example, he should shut off all outside influences and concentrate on his inner body and its functions. He should strive to imagine what it would feel like if the "water" and "fire" in his body mixed together (in the medical treatises in Bali the body is conceived of as a set of organs, arteries and veins at the "base" of which is "fire" or "water"; the proper balance of "fire" and "water" confers health, while an imbalance means that whereas one part of the body will be hot (*panes*) another part will be cold (*nyem*), resulting in illness; for further details on this see Weck 1976).

Because of the power of the teachings some people go mad during the process of learning, or so I was told. Such people absorb the lessons much as a tyre is blown up with air, and if they are unable to withstand the pressure their minds snap and they end up as babbling lunatics spewing out (*ngumik*) in a totally incoherent stream all they have learnt. There was, in fact, one old man in the village reputed to be a witch (though I was told he never actually attacked anyone in Pujung) who some years previously had gone mad. During his illness he suffered from a horrendous attack of constipation (*embet*), followed after some weeks by an equally horrendous bout of dysentery (*mising*). When I left the field he had just recovered from yet another illness and was beginning to get about again.

If the apprentice survives intact his next step will be to go to the graveyard and invoke the goddess Durga (the demonic form of Uma, who is in turn the consort of Siwa), the personification of evil and Bali's chief *léyak*. It is theoretically only with her permission that one may practise *pangiwa*, and such action will only prove successful if the supreme god allows it (Hooykaas 1978:9).

It is believed that one who only learns the left-hand path will finally end up in a hell on earth. He is doomed to live to an extraordinary age but be afflicted with loss of sight, paralysis and all manner of other ailments.¹⁶ If, however, he comes to some realization of the evil of his ways and subsequently studies *panengen*, he may well become what Weck calls a *léyak sari* (Weck 1976:201), or a *balian*, and use his knowledge of *pangiwa* to combat *léyak*.

Now the notion of what constitutes a witch is variable, and whereas certain members of the population, most notably women, believe implicitly in the existence of them and their capacity to cause harm, others interpret them in different terms.

I will illustrate what I mean by the beliefs concerning the ability of *léyak* to change form. One way to accomplish this, it is said, is to go to the graveyard at midnight, pull all one's hair down in front of one's face and dance around on one leg. During this performance the witch is supposed to recite *mantra* which change him into an animal. According to a number of Balinese, the witch would be seen by a stupid man as an animal, whilst to them he would appear as exactly what he is, a dishevelled man standing on one leg. In other words, in the view of the man who understands the right-hand path, it is the efficacy of the *mantra* which deceives the stupid man into thinking he sees an animal. The knowledgeable man is less susceptible to the effect of the *mantra*, and so sees clearly. Therefore the capacity to change form is a function of the variable power of the *mantra* to effect a change in the viewer's perception of the event.¹⁷ Thus those who have studied the right-hand path believe in the existence of *léyak*, but the content of their belief is different from that of those who are ignorant of such knowledge. For the former the witch is an evil person intent on inflicting pain and suffering on his fellow-men, and the belief that a witch can transform himself into an animal is simply a function of the belief that the characteristics of evil people are much the same as those of animals. Such people are usually highly sceptical of stories which tell of witches taking the form of animals, and the tellers of these tales are often branded as gullible, impressionable and patently ignorant of the subtleties of Balinese beliefs.

In conclusion we must decide how the witch fits into the wider framework containing all the other types of creature. To begin with, the witch is at the opposite end of the spectrum to the gods. The *léyak* symbolizes all those characteristics which are anathema to the gods. Moreover, witches exhibit certain properties which are also displayed by the *buta-kala* and animals. Earlier it was shown that a *buta* or *kala* was a symbolic concretization of disvalued emotions and thoughts, but only of a temporary kind. Witches embody this principle in a far more permanent way. A *léyak* is someone who is chronically

disposed to be greedy, jealous, angry etc. It is recognized by villagers that all Balinese will erupt in violent emotion sometimes, but this is only a transient state. It is also well understood that some people manifest these reprehensible qualities most of the time, and in my limited experience it is these who are most likely to be labelled as *léyak*.

Whereas the *buta-kala* are conceived to precipitate short, sharp emotional disturbances and temporary, minor illnesses, the *léyak* are viewed as much more powerful, and illnesses caused by *léyak* are much harder to cure. Generally speaking, an illness is not likely to be diagnosed as caused by a *léyak* until other avenues have been explored. When someone is ill, a visit to a medium will most probably result in the simple diagnosis of spirit (*buta-kala*) possession due to the anger of the gods or ancestors. The remedy is conventional and easily implemented (offerings to the ancestors at regular times possibly in conjunction with herbal medicine to alleviate the symptoms). If the illness persists, the chances are that the medium was incompetent, that the medium was a charlatan, that there is more than one set of ancestors involved, and so on. In such cases a second visit is called for, but to a different medium. If this too fails, then witchcraft becomes a distinct possibility. In short, the whole process of diagnosis and treatment is skewed so that only if the illnesses persist is attack by *léyak* a probable diagnosis. Witchcraft then is a sort of residual category for any prolonged chronic ailment.¹⁸ I know of a number of cases in Pujung in which people have been to see western doctors, experts in herbal remedies and mediums because they have been suffering from a debilitating illness. When this fails to produce a cure, witchcraft is all that is left.

The *léyak* can cause death, and serious epidemics are put down to them (Poerbatjaraka 1926). Nevertheless, all witches, including the arch-witch of Balinese mythology, Rangda, are answerable to the supreme gods. Rangda only practises witchcraft with the permission of Brahma, who indeed gives her the power she has (Weck 1976:131). In short, there is no cause of illness and strife other than the gods, at least at the theoretical level. Droughts and epidemics, like those described in the epic story of Rangda, are in the final analysis allowed to take place because of the passive acquiescence of the gods.

Just as the transient *buta-kala* inflict temporary confusion and minor illness, so it is the more permanent figure of the *léyak* which causes chronic and debilitating suffering.¹⁹ In sum, the final scheme of person definition in Balinese culture appears as in the table below.

Table showing the hierarchical system of beings in the Balinese pantheon

Déwa Batara	} Gods	External representations of highly valued thoughts, feelings and dispositions. The gods are abstract, eternal, non-descript and refined.
Jalma	People	People are a mixture of good and bad and have the potential to become any of the other types of creature in the pantheon.
Buta-kala	Evil spirits	These are representations of disvalued emotions, feelings and thoughts. They can cause minor and temporary ailments. They are concrete, in time (as opposed to the gods who are, as it were, outside the flow of time), and unintentional causal agents.
Léyak	Witches	Physical manifestations of disvalued chronic dispositions. They can cause chronic and even fatal illnesses; they are in time (night time) and they are malevolently intentional.
Buron	Animals	Unintentional embodiment of base emotions and dispositions. This class of creature is related to the léyak in that the latter are conceived to be no better than animals, in which form they are often thought to go about their affairs.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

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1 The extent to which hierarchy is recognized within and between these four classes varies considerably. For example, there is often a significant gulf between a *sudra* and a *triwangsa*, and marriage between these is fraught with status implications. In terms of etiquette, physical contact, speech, ritual and marriage, hierarchy is also very important between and within the top three classes. On the other hand, status differences between and within the *sudra* groups are muted, and in fact the numerous sub-classes of the *sudra* category are rarely ranked, whilst marriages between members of different *sudra* groups only occasionally involve hypergamous implications (cf. Howe 1980, Hobart 1979).

2 Such oppositions are phrased in terms of spiritual authority/temporal power (cf. Dumont 1972), *alus/kasar* (cf. Geertz 1960), purity/pollution and essence/substance (Howe 1980).

- 3 Title groups are not always corporate in their action; often they are simply aggregates of people who share a title and common descent, and are somehow conceived as being "of the same kind". Title groups sometimes crystallize into more solidary groups called *dadia* (Geertz and Geertz 1975).
- 4 According to Inden (1976) and Inden and Nicholas (1977) *jat* differ one from another in terms of their bodily substance in which inheres a particular *darma*. Hobart appears to assert that this is also the case for the Balinese, since he contends (Hobart 1979:400) that their innate and ineluctable differences stem from the fact that they are ranked with reference to their relative purity combined to a particular *darma*. My own data tends to confirm this view (Howe 1980:362-363).
- 5 These ideas establish the foundation for an ideology of endogamous marriage in Bali, since the ideal spouse is a "person like oneself". Sameness, however, is differentially interpreted; it can mean "of the same title group", "of the same village", even "of the same economic wealth bracket" (Howe 1980: chap. 15).
- 6 The point here is *not* to insist that the Balinese have instituted ideals of behaviour which all are committed to, but few rarely succeed in, emulating. Rather it is that the Balinese recognize very clearly that it is impossible for all the people all the time to exhibit such conduct, and it is not expected that they should do so. In accepting that ideals are precisely that, i.e. not prescriptions for actual behaviour, the Balinese conceptualize other forms of conduct and evaluate them accordingly.
- 7 See Ward Keeler, who documents very similar information from Java (Keeler 1975:92).
- 8 There are of course certain limitations, such as the legal code concerning theft, murder and other serious crimes. Moreover, such action is restricted, in theory, to those who are active members of the *banjar*.
- 9 For example, there is a plethora of diverse models of behaviour to be found in the Balinese and Javanese shadow theatre, and Anderson has admirably researched these. He describes the moral pluralism (Anderson 1965:7-10) which is involved, in which the appropriateness of a particular action cannot be determined without the knowledge of the person's status position in the hierarchy.
- 10 There is no shortage of examples, and the interested reader is recommended to consult Pigeaud (1924:170), Poerbatjaraka (1931:170), van Stein Callenfels (1925:84), Swellengrebel (1936:103,137), Covarrubias (1937:340-1), and Hooykaas (1972:135). In Hooykaas (1974:64-5) Uma, having become Durga, is described in the following manner:

The Goddess then looked on Her Self
and full of wrath She then became.
Her urge was then to eat mankind;
She screamed and like a lion roared.
Her teeth were long and sharp, like tusks,
Her mouth an abyss in between,
Her eyes shone, they were like twin suns.
Her nostrils, deep and cavernous.
Her ears stood like two thighs, straight up,
Matted and twisted was Her hair;
Her body was misshapen, huge,
There was nothing that broke its height.
It pierced The Egg of the Universe,
Reached to the centre of the Sky,
Such then, was the Goddess Durga,
That was the name She then bore.

- 11 Consult Howe (1981) for an analysis of Balinese concepts of duration.
- 12 This pattern approximates that of the eight cardinal directions plus the centre (cf. Swellengrebel 1960:47).
- 13 To "travel to the right" (*ka'ngawan*) is conceptually linked to going upwards and thus towards the realm of the gods (Howe 1981, 1983).
- 14 For one thing, witches are said to use the religious texts in reverse, i.e. they read them from back to front (Covarrubias 1937:329).
- 15 People "struck" with *papasangan* can go to a *balian*, who will attempt to remove the offending substance from the body. In one case that I know of the *balian* was reputed to have removed, with the aid of a short dagger, two small stones, a large silver coin, and a blunt pin, without the skin being damaged in any way.
- 16 That is to say, he is prevented from going to heaven because his nature is so antithetical to that of the gods.
- 17 The power of words to directly effect a change or to bring about a desired state of affairs is highly developed in Balinese ritual (cf. Howe 1980; Hobart 1978b).
- 18 Often the symptoms of such maladies are diffuse and so not easily amenable to curing techniques (whether western or Balinese). They regularly involve general lethargy, sleeplessness, aches and pains, recurrent headaches, etc.
- 19 Hobart also records that it is the ancestors who cause mild illnesses and *léyak* serious ones (Hobart 1979:600).

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