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Cover Page Footnote

Special thanks goes to the many people with whom I have discussed these matters since 2011. In particular I would like to thank I Nyoman Murdita and I Putu Suranata for their time and insight into so many of the matters discussed here. I would also like to thank Dr. I Wayan Mastra and I Nyoman Darsane who have helped clarify many questions of historical chronology and artistic practice.

Tarian Perdamaian:

Enacting Alternative Hindu/Christian Identity Discourses through “Secular” Balinese Performing Arts

Dustin D. Wiebe

Given that there have been indigenous Christian communities in present-day Indonesia since as early as the sixteenth century, it is surprising that there is no historical record of a similarly localized Balinese church until the early 1930s. From this time until the late 1960s, Protestant churches in Bali institutionally opposed the use of gamelan, both in religious services and as a hobby for the membership and pastorate alike. As of 2016, the Bali Church (Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali, or GKPB) owns at least nine sets of gamelan instruments and has run music and dance programs at children’s homes since the mid-1970s. The following quotes underscore this ideological disparity. The first are reflections of former Bali Church bishop I Wayan Mastra on the difficult social situation of early Balinese Christians:

The water supply to their fields was cut off . . . their crops were destroyed; lone Christians were attacked and beaten up; their houses were burnt down. . . . The Hindus believed that their gods were angry at this infiltration of a new religion, and they feared retribution, so they did all they could to make the “traitors” give up their Christianity.¹

The second is by current GKPB *penata tabuh* (“music director”) I Putu Suranata:

Many Hindu artists are not that concerned about where they play [gamelan]. They see that we are all members of humanity. Maybe before they knew anything about the church they would think, “This doesn’t fit.” But since becoming involved with church activities it has become normal. Like at the *sekehe gong*, it is normal.²

Suranata is a Hindu musician who has, since the early 1990s, collaborated extensively with congregations throughout Bali to produce church-based music and dance performances. He describes the contemporary practice of Hindus playing in Balinese churches as “normal” and likens the phenomenon to musicians’ involvement with the village *sekehe gong* (music cooperative), perhaps the most normalized form of community-based music making in Bali. Though animosity between Christians and Hindus still exists, these accounts reflect a shift in interreligious relations.

This article aims to reconcile transformations in interreligious relations by tracing the parallel developments of tourism and touristic arts, “contextualized” Balinese music and dance, and localized identity discourse. Through the use of these performing arts, the Bali Church has sought to challenge the exclusionary, Hinducentric basis of ethnic belonging through the theatrical enactment of Christian *kebalian* (“Balineseness”). I conclude with an analysis of the

¹ Douglas G. McKenzie and Bishop I Wayan Mastra, *The Mango Tree Church: The Story of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali* (Brisbane: Boolarong Publications, 1988), 21–22.

² Interview with I Putu Suranata (Bali Church resident composer and music director), August 2012.

Bali Church production *Tarian Perdamaian* to demonstrate the complex interreligious interplay embodied on the theater stage.³

Setting the Stage: Contextualization and the Bali Church

Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali is a small, independent Protestant church body that traces its roots to a 1931 baptismal ceremony near the Balinese capital, Denpasar.⁴ Due to various factors, including the association between Christianity and the colonial Dutch government and a strong tradition of ancestor worship in Balinese religion, those Balinese who converted were subject to a severe form of social excommunication known as *kasepekan*. The retribution described in the opening quote above illustrates some of the consequences of this process (burnt crops, disrupted water supply, etc.). In addition to the strong reaction from many within Bali's vast Hindu majority, foreign missionaries preached a gospel message that drew clear distinctions between doctrine and elements of Balinese culture, including gamelan music and dance.⁵ Because of their close association with Hinduism, Balinese arts were often demonized. This led Christian communities to disassociate themselves from local music and dance traditions, resulting in the loss of the aesthetic, technical, and social knowledge connected with them.

Many factors coalesced to reverse the general rejection of Balinese arts within GKPB contexts; two are particularly notable. First, in 1971, I Wayan Mastra returned to Bali from the United States after completing a doctorate at the University of Dubuque. In both his M.A. thesis and his Ph.D. dissertation, Mastra outlines models for what he describes as a "contextualized" Balinese church; in other words, a church that utilizes Balinese arts, architecture, music, language, theology/ cosmology, and dance as a means to convey a localized expression of Christianity. Second, and as a culmination of the principles espoused by Mastra, a Bali Church synod was held in 1972, which officially institutionalized contextualization as a core principle of Bali Church development. In 1984 a department was established within GKPB to deal specifically with the development, promotion, and production of contextualized music and dance. It was named Divia Pradana Bhakti and is currently directed by I Nyoman Murdita. The term "contextualization" continues to be used widely by GKPB intellectuals and lay congregants alike to describe the use of Balinese cultural elements (including music and dance) within their churches.

³ I Nyoman Murdita, the choreographer of this work, translates the Indonesian title *Tarian Perdamaian* as "The Dancing of Peace." In my conversations with him, he has used the titles interchangeably.

⁴ The Dutch Reformed Church conducted the earliest known Protestant missions in Bali beginning in 1867. This expedition ended with the infamous murder of Dutch missionary de Vroom by his lone Balinese convert—a crime for which the assailant was later hanged. Throughout the early twentieth century the very few Christians living in Bali were primarily Chinese merchants. But as they intermarried with Balinese women, the distinction between local and foreign practices became blurred. This resulted, in part, in the baptism of approximately a dozen "full-blooded" Balinese in June 1931 (McKenzie and Mastra, *The Mango Tree Church*, 19); missionaries of the American-based CMA (Christian Missionary Alliance) conducted the baptismal ceremony. This event is today regarded as the genesis of both the GKPB and the CMA Church in Bali (known in Indonesia as Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia, or GKII).

⁵ In Bali, *gamelan* is a generic term used to refer to dozens of different instrumental ensembles.

At the same time that Bali Church officials were formalizing contextualized theological principles, members of the Bali Hindu intelligentsia were creating artistic nomenclatures as a response to the increasingly prominent role of Balinese music and dance in touristic contexts. Many seminars were held throughout the 1970s to address the impact of tourism in Bali. The 1971 Seminar on Sacred and Profane Dance (*Seminar Seni Sakral dan Profan Bidang Bali*) had perhaps the greatest lasting impact on touristic dance discourse, establishing both a general “sacred/secular” binary and a tripartite model for differentiating a particular dance’s degree of sacredness based on its proximity to spaces within Hindu temples.⁶ Members of the Balinese provincial government were influential in organizing the event and crafting subsequent policies.⁷ Since the advent of the GKPB contextualization project, the church has used only those dances either dissociated from the temple or those with an ambiguous relationship to it. For several decades, such practices were employed intuitively, as there is no written document explicitly stating which types of dance can and cannot be used in the church. In 2012, however, the Bali Church produced a treatise outlining the relationship between contextualized music and dance within the broader context of other Balinese arts, including those associated with the temple.⁸ The document clearly adopts both the sacred/secular and the tripartite nomenclature of the 1971 seminar as a means to legitimate church-based performing arts. This touristic seminar and its subsequent connection to GKPB contextualized artistic praxis form the basis of my argument that Balinese Christian identity discourse and associated music and dance are entwined with the development of tourism in Bali over the course of the twentieth century.

Framing Christian *Kebalian*: Establishing an Intellectual Basis

Balinese Christians have been subject to *kasepekan* (excommunication) since the first Balinese were baptized in the early 1930s. Such social ostracism was and continues to be institutionalized not only at the local community (*banjar*) level, but also at the level of provincial policy. Indonesia has been constitutionally polyreligious since it was founded as a nation in 1945, an ideal exposed by its founding document, *Pancasila*. Since that time, and particularly under Suharto’s New Order government (1967–98), nationalism has been promoted through a rigidly defined monotheism, which fundamentally excludes other (usually indigenous) ideas of spirituality and “religion.” This has resulted in clear guidelines as to what may pass as a nationally recognized religious affiliation; since the mid-twentieth century this marriage of nation and state-approved religion has informed influential distinctions between custom (*adat*), culture (*budaya*), and religion (*agama*). As recently as 2001, a provincial regulation (Perda 3/01)

⁶ Michel Picard, *Bali: Cultural Tourism and Touristic Culture* (Singapore: Archipelago, 1996), 152, 156. This tripartite model included: (1) *wali* dances (performed in the inner courtyard of the temple), (2) *bebali* dances (performed in the central courtyard of the temple), and (3) *balih-bali* dances (performed outside the temple and intended as pure entertainment).

⁷ Balinese governor Soekarmen and I Gusti Agung Gede Putra, head of the Provincial Office of the Department of Religion, were both closely involved in policy changes brought about by the 1971 seminar (see Picard, *Bali*).

⁸ Nengah Ripa et al., “Karya Seni Sebagai Ekspresi Iman di Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali” (unpublished manuscript, 2012).

was passed that defined the *desa adat* (“customary/traditional” Balinese village) according to nationally approved principles of *agama* (in this case, Hinduism):

A Balinese village is by definition a Hindu village and the villagers are of Hindu faith. . . . Any other people living in the village but not following Agama Hindu are excluded. . . . Thus, Perda 3/01 and its implementation resulted in an increased delineation of the Hindu Balinese by setting up religious and *adat* criteria for membership as well as for exclusion and likely discrimination.⁹

The institutionalized political segregation of Balinese Hindus has created something of a dilemma for intellectuals of the Bali Church who have attempted to counteract accusations that GKPB Christians are “foreigners” living in Bali because they do not adhere to local *adat* (customary) laws. They have sought to circumvent such accusations, in part, through Balinese music and dance productions that adhere to sacred/secular distinctions that developed in response to mass tourism. These efforts have been and continue to be couched within a terminological discourse that emerged in response to various encounters with foreign power.

Central to debates regarding identity in Bali are the aforementioned terms/discourses (*agama*, *adat*, *budaya*), in addition to that of *seni* (art). *Agama* is a Sanskrit loanword that has been adopted into the modern Indonesian language as a term roughly equal to “religion.” It is often used to refer specifically to “world religions,” especially those recognized under *Pancasila*.¹⁰ Following the formation of the Indonesian nation, and after much debate, Hinduism was granted the status of *agama* in 1962. This allowed many Balinese to register as Hindu citizens of Indonesia for the first time. Balinese Christians, on the other hand, had been able to register as either Catholic or Protestant since the 1940s, primarily because these faith traditions were more easily adopted into the monotheistic framework of the newly formed nation. *Agama*, in addition to being a marker of socio-political belonging, also refers to the doctrine of a particular religious formation. This doctrine must adhere to principles outlined in the Indonesian constitution, particularly the “belief in the one and only God.”¹¹

Adat refers to localized systems of belief and practice, which are often adhered to by a particular ethnic group. In Bali, *adat* is used to refer to the practice of ancestor worship and knowledge imparted by ancestors.¹² Balinese Christians have been subject to social excommunication not so much because of an incompatibility with Hindu beliefs, but because of an “unwillingness to become integrated into the ritual system,” or *adat*.¹³ In contemporary Indonesia the term is often used to account for certain religious traits that do not fit within the

⁹ Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and David D. Harnish, eds., *Between Harmony and Discrimination Negotiating Religious Identities within Majority-Minority Relationships in Bali and Lombok* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 15–16.

¹⁰ The basis of the Indonesian nation is outlined in a 1945 document known as *Pancasila*. The term is literally translated as “five principles,” the first of which is *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in the one and only God). The Indonesian government presently recognizes six *Pancasila* (i.e., constitutional) religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

¹¹ Indonesia officially declared itself a nation in 1945. It was admitted as a member of the UN in 1950.

¹² Angela Hobart et al., *The People of Bali* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 66.

¹³ Arlette Ottino, “Conflict Avoidance and Cohabitation of Different Religious Groups in Bali,” in *International Symposium on Management of Social Transformation in Indonesian Society: In Search of Models for Conflict Prevention*, ed. Henny Warsilah and Raldi Koestoer (Jakarta: Management of Social Transformation Programme--UNESCO), 73.

defined parameters of *agama*. This has resulted in a perceived binary opposition between *adat* and *agama*, which has been used in national Indonesian discourse to explain the existence of orthodoxy or orthopraxy that does not adhere to mainstream *agama*. This distinction was exploited as a means to develop regional and national “identities” under the New Order regime.

The terms *seni* (art) and *budaya* (culture) have emerged as central concepts for the contemporary Balinese economy, despite the fact that neither is indigenous to the Balinese language nor existed in local discourse until the twentieth century. The development of a distinct discursive category for “art” was in large part a result of increasing numbers of Western tourists, artists, and scholars who visited Bali throughout the 1920s and 1930s. During these years, the Ubud Style of painting and the new, revolutionary energy of gamelan *gong kebyar* became objects of foreign fascination. Both quickly attained the (Western) status of art, a concept that soon took on the Indonesian title of *seni*. The individual terms have more recently been combined as *seni budaya* and refer to a host of “decorative aspects of Indonesian ethnic cultures,” including dance and music, costumes, handicrafts, and architecture.¹⁴ The concept and practice of *seni budaya* has been used by the Indonesian government for various national building projects and the promotion of international tourism.¹⁵ *Seni budaya* has been particularly successful in Bali, where it is at once a source of national pride, ethnic identity, and a major stream of tourist revenue. Whereas *adat* references a wide range of beliefs and practices, which may include music and other arts, *seni budaya* references only these arts in a context often abstracted from custom and ceremony. In this sense, *adat* is vestigial and inextricably tied to *agama*—and by extension the “sacred.” On the other hand, *seni budaya* has been adopted as a discourse to reference ethnic arts in secularized socio-economic forums such as tourism. As I will demonstrate, members of the Bali Church have used the artificial separation of *seni budaya* from *adat* as an intellectual basis for contextualized church music and dance.

The Discourse of Christian *Kebalian*

Throughout the twentieth century, various ethnic groups in Indonesia struggled with the definitions and implications of the aforementioned terms, often in an attempt to outline localized identity. Such cases are well represented in the anthropological and ethnomusicological literatures.¹⁶ Writings pertaining to Balinese self-understandings of identity date back to the

¹⁴ Michel Picard, “Cultural Tourism, Nation-Building, and Regional Culture: The Making of a Balinese Identity,” in *Tourism, Ethnicity, and the State in Asian and Pacific Society*, ed. Michel Picard and Robert E. Wood (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 197.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁶ For further reading on the topic, see Lorraine V. Aragon, “Reorganizing the Cosmology: The Reinterpretation of Deities and Religious Practice by Protestants in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27 (1996): 350–73; Dana Rappoport, “Ritual Music and Christianization in the Toraja Highlands, Sulawesi,” *Ethnomusicology* 48 (2004): 378–404; David Harnish, “New Lines, Shifting Identities: Interpreting Change at the Lingsar Festival in Lombok, Indonesia,” *Ethnomusicology* 49 (2005): 1–24; and Mauly Purba, “From Conflict to Reconciliation: The Case of the ‘Gondang Sabangunan’ in the Order of Discipline of the Toba Batak Protestant Church,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36 (2005): 207–33.

1920s, when articles on the topic began to appear in Malay periodicals. Picard suggests that this was a result of Western-educated Balinese attempting to define themselves “in terms comprehensible to non-Balinese.”¹⁷ He also posits a hypothesis as to the motivations of these early Balinese authors:

[F]or the first time, the Balinese viewed themselves as a singular entity, as a “people.” Specifically, they described themselves both as a religious minority, the stronghold of Hinduism threatened by the aggressive expansionism of Islam and Christianity, and as a particular ethnic group, characterized by their own customs. That is to say, they construed their “Balineseness” (*keBalian*) as being based simultaneously on religion (*agama*) and custom (*adat*).¹⁸

This formulation of identity continues to have important implications for members of GKPB who have attempted to expand the parameters of conventional (Hinducentric) *kebalian*. The nature of normalized identity discourse, however, poses challenges for Balinese Christians.

First, the term *kebalian* was constructed as a unifying front for a localized Hindu people who positioned themselves in opposition to other world religions, most notably Christianity. The historical impetus of a unifying Balinese identity stems from a desire to distinguish difference based on *agama*, making a Christian *kebalian* something of an oxymoron. Second, *kebalian* is intrinsically linked to *adat*, a system of practices and beliefs with roots in pre-Hindu, animist traditions that GKPB leaders had worked to distance their congregations from since Protestantism was first established in Bali during the 1930s. Many Balinese Christians gave little thought to *kebalian* and to its founding principles in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, most Bali Church congregations actively distanced themselves from Balinese *agama* and *adat*, a practice that regularly led to social excommunication. Following the contextual reforms of the 1972 synod, however, Balinese Christian intellectuals began to postulate ways to integrate church congregations into the newly emerged discourse of *kebalian*. Though some Balinese Hindus continue to reject Christian claims of *kebalian*, the Bali Church has been at least partially successful in articulating a Christian form of Balinese identity, first, by adhering to and further codifying sacred/secular distinctions established through tourism, and second, by crafting the language of contextualized arts to conform to the discourse of *seni budaya*.

Kebalian and Tourism

In the 1920s, foreign visits to Bali increased to the point of sustaining a small tourist economy, highlighted by the completion of the famous Bali Hotel in Denpasar in 1928. These early tourists formed a new (and often wealthy) audience for the innovative musics and choreographies that emerged from Bali throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Tourism peaked at the end of the 1930s, when there were an estimated 250 visitors per month, but this new economy soon crashed with the onset of war in Europe. Following Suharto’s rise to power in 1967, the Indonesian government moved to stimulate economic relations with Western nations, and accordingly

¹⁷ Picard, “Cultural Tourism, Nation-Building, and Regional Culture,” 187.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

promoted Bali as an ideal vacation area.¹⁹ This national push to promote Bali, coupled with its prewar image as a tropical paradise, helped ensure the continued development of tourism. Tourist visits doubled after the completion of an international airport in 1969, and increased another ninefold by 1974.²⁰ By the 1990s, tourism had replaced agriculture as the island's main industry.²¹

The financial success of tourism in Bali has been premised in large part on the effective incorporation of Balinese arts into the tourist experience. The integration of these arts into many aspects of Balinese society and ceremony has made them at once more appealing to tourists and more problematic for Balinese politicians and religious leaders to manage because of the conflicting interests of ritual and spectacle. As discussed above, this tension resulted in a sacred/secular artistic binary. Due to the popularity of music and dance among tourists, this distinction became particularly pronounced where these arts were concerned. In an effort to demarcate elements of Balinese religion and custom from the tourist economy, prominent Balinese performer and arts scholar I Wayan Dibia devised what he calls a “two worlds” model: “Balinese artists must dedicate themselves and their art to two worlds: traditional Bali and its emphasis on *adat* and *agama*, and modern Bali, which is dominated by tourism of other parties.”²² These “two worlds” could be interpreted simply as sacred (Balinese “*adat* and *agama*”) on the one hand and secular (tourism/tourists) on the other.

In practice, however, the distinction between sacred and secular elements of Balinese art is much more difficult to define than a simple binary-based social context.²³ Rather than conforming to sacred/secular categories, the tourist economy has bypassed any attempt to establish boundaries. As Michel Picard observes:

Far from being an external force striking a local society from without, tourism—or, rather, what I am inclined to call the *touristification* of a society—proceeds from within by blurring the boundaries between the inside and the outside, between what is “ours” and what is “theirs,” between that which pertains to “culture” and that which pertains to “tourism.”²⁴

Balinese Christian intellectuals are twice over the beneficiaries of “touristification.” First, in their efforts to concede all sacred aspects of Balinese music and dance to Hindu religious praxis, they are simultaneously deemed sensitive to the traditions of this national minority religion while avoiding any stigma of coopting the most revered rituals of Hinduism. Second, as Picard suggests, touristification causes gray areas to emerge between the “authentic” culture of the hosts’ ritual life and the touristic culture “staged” for visitors. The *wali*, *bebali*, and *balih-bali* categories codified at the 1971 seminar suggest clear distinctions. Among

¹⁹ Michel Picard, “‘Cultural Tourism’ in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction,” *Indonesia* 49 (1990): 41.

²⁰ Picard, *Bali*, 51.

²¹ Terrorist bombings in Bali in 2002 and 2005 resulted in major downturns in the tourist economy; however, tourist visits have since returned to and exceeded pre-2002 numbers.

²² I Wayan Dibia, “Berkesenian di Antara Dua Dunia,” *Wreta Cita* 1/1 (1994): 30.

²³ The difficulty of distinguishing the sacred from the secular is a point that Dibia himself has made; see I Wayan Dibia and Rucina Ballinger, *Drama and Music: A Guide to the Performing Arts in Bali* (Singapore: Periplus, 2004), 10–11.

²⁴ Picard, “Cultural Tourism, Nation-Building, and Regional Culture,” 183.

performing artists, however, they are viewed as a spectrum, with a variety of factors determining the appropriateness of a particular dance genre in a particular place. “Entertainment”-based genres (*hiburan*)—or those belonging to the *balih-bali* category—are considered secular and appropriate for essentially all tourist performances despite the ritualistic origins of many of these dances and the continued presence of images, actions, and narratives common in temple repertoires.²⁵ The creation of a subcategory of Christian dances (*tari secara iman Kristiani*)²⁶ associated with the secular end of the spectrum does not, therefore, seem unusual or out of place, as many dances in the same spectral range already convey elements of *adat* and *agama*. Examples include the performance of offerings (*adat*) and incorporation of sacred, text-based narratives (*agama*) in shows considered as pure entertainment. The common association between “entertainment” and elements of ritual and religious life has meant that similar juxtapositions of sacred/Hindu and secular/Christian in contextual church repertoires are not regarded as unusual.

Figure 1 illustrates such sacred/secular blending as dancers and stage props interact in a contextual GKP B production at a hotel in Seminyak, Bali. The dance is known as *Amertha Candra Bhuana* and prominently features three *kayonan* (“tree(s) of life”) in the opening section.²⁷ A smaller *kayonan* is used in *wayang* (shadow puppet) shows, which commonly depict stories from Hindu epic literature. In more recent years, however, the *kayonan* has been “secularized” through use in touristic *wayang* performances and through dance genres (e.g., *tari lepas*, “free dance”) associated with the *profan* (profane).²⁸ This process of secularization has enabled Balinese Christians to employ the *kayonan* as a sign of a Christian creator God. Each *kayonan* pictured in Figure 1 evokes the Christian Trinity: the Father’s celestial glow above, Christ’s cross in the center, and the dove (Holy Spirit) below. This image has become a trope in Balinese Christian art, which now literally illustrates the problematic nature of strict social binaries.²⁹

²⁵ Examples include the dramatic enactment of Hindu narratives from the Ramayanian *kecak* (“monkey chant”) and the presence of *kris* daggers and feigned trancing in touristic trance dances.

²⁶ The subcategorization of Christian dances within a secular/entertainment-based framework is outlined in the GKP B arts treatise (I Nyoman Mardita, “Bentuk-Bentuk Iman Melalui Karya Seni,” chap. 3 of Ripa et al., “Karya Seni Sebagai,” 24–25). Its use in GKP B contexts is justified accordingly: “This genre of dance [*balih-bali*/secular] may be used in church services because it is not sacred in nature.”

²⁷ The overall formal construction of *Amertha Candra Bhuana* is discussed in Ripa et al., “Karya Seni Sebagai,” 37–41.

²⁸ For an example of a *kayonan* in “secular” *tari lepas* context, see Dibia and Ballinger, *Drama and Music*, 104.

²⁹ Reference to the *kayonan* can be seen in the contemporary contextual paintings of I Nyoman Darsane and Tina Bailey. *Kayonan* are also featured in Balinese Protestant and Catholic architecture, including prominent positioning in altar decorations at the Renon Cathedral (Denpasar) and the Widhi Satya GKP B church (Denpasar).

Figure 1: Hindu and Christian artists perform the contextualized musical dance drama *Amertha Candra Bhuana* at the Hotel Dhyana Pura in Seminyak, Bali, in June 2012. (Photo by GKPB, used with permission)

Touristification of Balinese music and dance has created an artistic milieu whereby the sacred is difficult and perhaps impossible to distinguish from the secular. This has benefited Christian attempts to stage works that can be accepted as expressions of *kebalian* by members of both Balinese Christian and Hindu communities. Christian intellectuals and artists of the Bali Church have done this by intentionally framing church-based music and dance productions as secular while benefiting from the inherently vague and problematic nature of this distinction. Both Hindu and Christian constructions of *kebalian* are based on cultural traits attributed to *agama* and *adat*,³⁰ and recognized by members of these respective communities as essential to their self-understanding in relation to others. The minority Christian population bears the additional burden of establishing a *kebalian* that is recognized not only among themselves but also by (at least a portion of) the Hindu majority. The desire for GKPB congregants to convey *kebalian* was repeatedly mentioned during my fieldwork as individuals expressed concerns that Hindu Balinese may regard them as “foreigners” (*orang asing*). Members of GKPB have attempted to counter such accusations, in part, by expressing Christian *kebalian* through performances of biblically inspired Balinese music and dance that avoid transgressing Hindu definitions of the sacred while accessing elements of *agama* and *adat* through “secular” dance genres.

³⁰ Rituals associated with *adat* have been a major source of division between Balinese Christians and Hindus since the 1930s. Many Christian converts have been forced to leave their villages over disputes related to *adat* practices. As I will demonstrate in the next section, Christians often accessed elements of *adat* through the discourse of *budaya* (culture).

A Kebalian Based on Seni Budaya

Though the relationship between *agama* and *adat* continues to be contested by scholars, there is widespread agreement that these elements are inherently interrelated and cannot be neatly separated.³¹ At various points in history, however, such a division has been promoted. In the 1950s, for example, Balinese religious reformists argued that *agama* was distinct from *adat* as a basis for the national recognition of Hinduism.³² More recently, GKPB leaders have maintained a similar distinction, again for the purpose of religious reform. Unlike the Hindu reformists, Balinese Christians have sought to demarcate *agama*, not from *adat*, but from *budaya*. They have done this to further establish a compelling basis for *kebalian* while avoiding the historical resistance of Christian converts in Bali to *adat*, or more specifically *desa adat* (the ritual practices of a particular village).³³

Gamelan music and dance are so integral to many Hindu ceremonies in Bali that it is impossible to differentiate these arts as either *adat* or *agama*; they are essentially both. Michael Tenzer has observed the importance of gamelan at religious events: “The Hindu-Balinese religion (Agama Hindu Dharma) requires gamelan for the successful completion of most of the tens of thousands of ceremonies undertaken yearly.”³⁴ For many of the Balinese who attend such ceremonies, determining the role of gamelan as *adat* or *agama* is often irrelevant, but it has become essential for Christians seeking to incorporate Balinese music and dance into church services and other events.

Conflict stemming from Christian refusal to participate in *desa adat* has been a deeply divisive issue since the first Balinese Christian congregations were established during the 1930s. It continues to be a source of debate today, as evidenced by the aforementioned provincial regulation Perda 3/01, which defines village membership on the premise of *adat* criteria. Christian organizations such as GKPB that have adopted elements of Hindu ceremony perceived as *adat* have also come under scrutiny. In a 2011 book dealing with religious conversion in Bali, Kadek Aryadharma criticizes Christians in Bali for using contextualized elements in church services because the practice transgresses government regulations. Furthermore, she states: “Balinese Christians are wrong [*salah*] to take [*ambil*] from Balinese *adat*.”³⁵ Citing a case from

³¹ For further reading on the interconnectedness of *adat* and *agama*, see Urs Ramseyer, *The Art and Culture of Bali* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 15; Hobart et al., *The People of Bali*, 67; and Hauser-Schäublin and Harnish, *Between Harmony and Discrimination*, 14.

³² Carol Warren, “Adat in Balinese Discourse: Locating Citizenship and the Commonweal,” in *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Development of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism*, ed. Jamie S. Davidson and David Henley (New York: Routledge, 2007), 175.

³³ Douglas McKenzie describes how foreign missionaries of the 1930s encouraged new converts to reject *desa adat*: “One aspect of these conversions was to have long-term repercussions. This was Tsang’s [foreign, CMA missionary] insistence that Christians reject their cultural lifestyle. In this he was wholeheartedly supported by Dr. Jaffray [foreign, CMA missionary] who denounced their former religion as pagan, and encouraged them to deny their culture” (McKenzie and Mastra, *The Mango Tree Church*, 21). Though not specifically addressed here as *adat*, such rejection of “cultural lifestyle” undoubtedly would have amounted to a rejection of *desa adat*.

³⁴ Michael Tenzer, *Gamelan Gong Kebyar: The Art of Twentieth-Century Balinese Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 15.

³⁵ Ni Kadek Surpi Aryadharma, *Membedah Kasus Konversi Agama di Bali: Kronologi, Metode Misi dan Alasan di Balik Tindakan Konversi Agama dari Hindu ke Kristen dan Katolik di Bali serta Pernik-Pernik Keagamaan di*

a Catholic service, she mentions the inclusion of gamelan as a particular area of concern: “Even though they use gamelan, bells and penjor it seems as though they don’t understand the theory of Balinese gamelan whereby each note has a relationship to the gods—so it is certain this is still inappropriate to use in the Church.”³⁶

Throughout my fieldwork, interlocutors have referenced similar attitudes toward contextualized music among what many call “fanatic” Hindus. As a means to circumvent protracted debates regarding Catholic and Protestant relationships to Balinese *adat*, members of the Bali Church have adopted the discourse of *budaya*. The decidedly secular implications of the term *budaya* help to distinguish it from *adat* and its common associations with *agama* and the sacred. The discourse of *kebalian* among GKPB members is, therefore, framed not in terms of *agama* and *adat* (as earlier generations of Balinese Hindus did), but rather as a distinction between *agama* and *budaya*. Over the course of my field research, I conducted numerous interviews with members of the Bali Church who repeatedly justified the use of Balinese music and dance in these very terms. For example, I Nyoman Murdita stated:

When we convert we are considered foreigners [*orang asing*] because we are no longer Hindu. This is why we want to continue using Balinese *budaya*, so we don’t become foreign. This is why we at the Bali Church want to keep Balinese *budaya*, to preserve it. To do this we need to be strong in *budaya*. Then we can have a strong *kebalian*.³⁷

The association between *budaya* and *kebalian* is clear here: Murdita believes that the perception of Balinese Christians as foreigners can be counteracted through the “preservation” (*pelestarian*) of Balinese *budaya*, which will in turn reflect a localized identity.

Other Bali Church members have supported the claim that Balinese *budaya* can be used in churches on the grounds that it is distinct from religion (*agama*). Bali Church musician and GKPB member I Ketut Firman articulates this notion:

Gamelan is not *agama*, it’s *budaya*. We are Balinese Christians so we use Balinese *budaya*. We believe in the grace of God and we believe that we can use gamelan to praise and honor God. That’s the reason we believe that gamelan is not *agama* but *budaya*. We need to keep *agama* and *budaya* separate.³⁸

In defining gamelan as *budaya*, Firman separates it from problematic associations with Hindu temple ceremonies and creates a space for “the grace of God” to work in society. In more anthropological terms, Balinese Hindus and Christians have negotiated such “grace” on the basis of the flexibility of the term *budaya*, itself a result of modernizing influences, most notably colonialism and tourism.

I Nyoman Darsane, director of the Bali Church arts bureau from 1986 to 1992, reinforced a similar *budaya/agama* dichotomy in discussing the changing views of GKPB congregants during contextual reform:

Dunia [Dissecting the Case of Religious Conversion in Bali: Chronology, Missiological Method, and the Reason Behind the Act of Converting from Hinduism to Protestantism and Catholicism, along with the Trinkets of World Religion] (Surabaya, Indonesia: Paramita, 2011), 55–56.

³⁶ Ibid., 167. Aryadharma is consistently critical of Catholic and Protestant efforts at contextualization/interculturalization throughout her book.

³⁷ Interview with I Nyoman Murdita (director of Divia Pradana Bhakti, the Bali Church arts bureau), July 2012.

³⁸ Interview with I Ketut Firman (amateur gamelan musician, Bali Church member), March 2014.

Author: When Mastra returned from America [1971], were there already people using Balinese music and painting in the church, or did that happen afterward?

Darsane: My feeling is that this did not exist yet. There was definitely already [gamelan] *gong kebyar*, but church people had already rejected it because it was considered Hindu. Balinese arts [*seni*] and culture [*budaya*] were still considered to be Hindu. This was one view, but *seni* and *budaya* are not religion [*agama*].³⁹

The views described by Darsane were common among GKPB Christians prior to the contextualized reformation movement initiated by Mastra during the early 1970s.

I Putu Suranata, long-time GKPB Balinese music director, also made similar claims about the relationship between *agama* and *budaya*. He went slightly further by connecting this distinction to *kebalian*:

These types of church people [those who have grown up listening to gamelan] don't question the use of gamelan because it's not owned by *agama*. It's part of an artistic culture [*budaya*]. It's like the keyboard, it's not owned by religion, it's part of an artistic culture. That which one creates from the keyboard isn't *agama*, it's just the keyboard. . . . Any religion has its own character on each island [within Indonesia]. Like in Bali, there's Balinese *budaya*. That's why the Bali Church uses the *budaya* of Bali—so it's different. . . . At churches throughout the world you'll find keyboard or organ, but in Bali you'll find the gong [gamelan]. . . . They keep using these things because they don't want to lose their *kebalian*. They do these things because they want to be called Balinese people.⁴⁰

Like Firman and Darsane, Suranata specifically described gamelan as a form of *budaya* so that it could be contrasted with *agama* and then applied in a new Christian context for the purpose of reframing the parameters of *kebalian*. The common association of the keyboard in Indonesia with both church and popular musics is suggested as a reason why gamelan can easily be repurposed for Christian services. In all of the aforementioned examples, and in others I have not provided here, interlocutors have consistently cited the importance of distinguishing *agama* from *budaya*. Never have they used the term *budaya* interchangeably with *adat*.⁴¹

In the same interview, however, Suranata mentioned that not all people immediately accept the use of gamelan in the church, a matter that may suggest resistance to other aspects of contextualization as well. He attributed these concerns to a lack of education regarding the distinction between *agama* and *budaya*:

Sometimes if people don't know what is religion and what is culture, they might complain a little bit [about the use of gamelan in the church]. But we inform them because they don't already know. After we explain it, then they usually understand. We're not stern with them and we don't get angry, we just tell them.⁴²

³⁹ Interview with I Nyoman Darsane (professional painter, former director of Divia Pradana Bhakti, the Bali Church arts bureau), July 2011.

⁴⁰ Interview with I Putu Suranata, September 2012.

⁴¹ Hauser-Schäublin and Harnish note that the term *adat* is “sometimes phrased in terms of ‘culture’ (*budaya*)” (*Between Harmony and Discrimination*, 13). Though such terminological interchangeability may be present elsewhere in verbal and written discourses on Balinese subjects, I have rarely, if ever, encountered such variability in my own fieldwork or in written sources pertaining to the Bali Church. References to Balinese culture within GKPB contexts are almost invariably described as *budaya*.

⁴² Suranata interview, September 2012.

Suranata's remarks suggest that a simple explanation is often enough to change people's perspective on contextualized music, but others I have spoken to have hinted at much stronger resistance. Firman told me that some Hindus in Bali are critical of the use of gamelan in churches because they do not recognize an *agama/budaya* distinction:

Author: Have you ever met someone who doesn't agree with this principle [the separation of *agama* and *budaya*]?

Firman: Yes, I know people who think gamelan is owned by Hindus, but I believe there must be a distinction between *agama* and *budaya*. We need to clarify—there are some who believe that *agama* and *budaya* cannot be separated. We must understand this. We live in Bali so it's okay for us to use Balinese *budaya* in church. We're not foreigners, we're Balinese. We still use Balinese names, when we make our offerings we still use Balinese *budaya*. We still mingle [*berbaur*] with our Hindu neighbors. We must be free to worship. At first we worshipped Hindu gods, now we worship God in church.⁴³

Dra Adri Supriyati, an administrator at the GKPB arts bureau, has noticed a similar challenge for some Christians when trying to establish a basis for *kebalian*. Like both Firman and Suranata, she linked this resistance to one's interpretation of the relationship between *agama* and *budaya*:

Author: I have heard that some Hindus have a problem with Christians trying to develop a *kebalian*.

Supriyati: This is their problem, not ours. They don't understand that when someone converts they are only changing their faith [*iman*], not their *budaya*.⁴⁴ This is still a problem in Bali. I hope that in another 20 years it won't be a problem anymore.⁴⁵

My discussions with Suranata, Firman, and Supriyati reveal that the division between *agama* and *budaya* is far from self-evident. For GKPB Christians, a contextualized discourse based on such a binary is productive because it enables one to position desirable cultural attributes (that which is called *budaya*) within a Christian context while simultaneously disassociating them from Hinduism (*agama*). The choice of *budaya*—over the more problematic term *adat*—has been employed (consciously or otherwise) in an attempt to bypass the historical Christian rejection of local *adat* practices that are now synonymous with the enactment of Hinduism in Bali. Based on the success of the contextualization movement in GKPB churches, it would appear that most church members have accepted this intellectual distinction as promulgated by Balinese artists and Bali Church leadership.

As I have shown, many members of the Hindu majority remain resistant to the claim that *budaya*—allegedly disassociated from *Agama Hindu*—can form the basis for *kebalian*. Picard provides some insightful commentary as to why this may be. In an article entitled “The Discourse of *Kebalian*,” he observes a desire among Balinese to employ the official discourse of

⁴³ Firman interview, March 2014.

⁴⁴ In this instance the term *iman* is used as a synonym for *agama*. The focus here is less on orthodoxy and what one believes than on the official proclamation of a nationalized *agama*. The “change” that Supriyati speaks of here relates to a conversion and the administrative adjustments inherent therein—most notably the change of official religion on one's national identity card (KTP, or *Kartu Tanda Penduduk*).

⁴⁵ Interview with Dra Adri Supriyati, July 2012.

agama as an “ethnic boundary marker” and an “emblem of their *kebalian*.”⁴⁶ Elsewhere he has specifically connected this *agama*-driven desire for ethnic identity to Christianity:

Here we are no longer referring to the communal identity Balinese could secure from practicing their customary religion . . . but to its reformed persuasion, which characterizes the Balinese people as a non-Muslim (*and non-Christian*) minority within the Indonesian multiethnic and multireligious nation.⁴⁷ (italics added)

Based on these assertions, the construction of a Christian *kebalian* premised, in part, on Balinese music and dance as a form of *budaya* is problematic and even oxymoronic. *Kebalian* is by definition political, emerging during a complex period of modernization involving various forms of foreign influence such as colonization, nationalism, and the development of cultural tourism. The notion of a collective Balinese people, united under a single *kebalian*, was developed as a means to define “insiders” from “outsiders.” Christianity itself was—and in many cases still is—perceived as an invasive outside influence because of its association with Dutch colonialism, national religious reform, and the culture of Western (especially Australian, North American, and European) tourists. As a result of this history, Christianity continues to be viewed by some as antithetical to *kebalian*.

From an intellectual standpoint, GKPB Christians have tended to frame their *kebalian* as a form of Protestant Christianity rooted in Balinese culture/*budaya*. In many ways this project has been highly successful in allowing GKPB Christians to reconsider the position of the church in relation to gamelan, a musical tradition that was once quite literally demonized. For many Balinese Hindus, however, the veneer of *budaya* applied to this “foreign” world religion in the name of contextualization is too weak a claim to accept at face value. In arguing for a distinction between *agama* and *budaya*, and by adopting the state-sponsored sacred/secular binary, Balinese Christians have attempted to separate themselves from all sacred aspects of the local Hindu culture. If the Bali Church has been successful in this endeavor, as many GKPB Christians claim, it is at once a resounding success for the anti-syncretists (as they have avoided the merger of Hindu and Christian traits) and an utter failure for the contextualists (who have sought holistic integration and acceptance by the broader Hindu community).

As I will demonstrate in the remainder of this article, the ability for contextualized Balinese music and dance to establish interreligious discourse and music networks has not been due to the successful division of *agama* from *budaya*. Just as Hindu reformists argued for the separation of *adat* from *agama* as a means to forge a political identity in the context of the emerging Indonesian nation-state, Christian contextualists have argued for a division between *budaya* and *agama* as the basis for a localized political identity. Upon closer analysis, both of these distinctions have proven artificial. Contextualization has succeeded in creating a mutually intelligible discourse between Christians and Hindus precisely because *kebalian* is necessarily intertwined with elements variously described as *budaya*, *adat*, and *agama*.

⁴⁶ Michel Picard, “The Discourse of *Kebalian*: Transcultural Constructions of Balinese Identity,” in *Staying Local in the Global Village: Bali in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Linda H. Connor and Raechelle Rubinstein (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 44.

⁴⁷ Picard, “The Making of a Balinese Identity,” 195.

According to Tenzer: “Bali is one of a handful of places in the world where there seems to be . . . a much greater overall respect granted to the role of music in sustaining the very foundations of society.”⁴⁸ Rarely is the social importance of music (and accompanying dances) more evident than in the interactions between Christian and Hindu artists. These interactions are often expressed as music and dance events (including rehearsals, concerts, and church services) and provide a forum for Balinese Christians and Hindus to negotiate the practical parameters of a Christian *kebalian* through the establishment of an “interreligious gaze.”

Enacting *Kebalian*: The Interreligious Gaze

In a 1990 monograph, anthropologist John Urry describes what he refers to as the “tourist gaze.” It describes the expectations established in a primarily Western imagination in relation to “exotic,” “romantic,” and usually far-away places. These expectations, Urry explains, are established through various forms of media and are based on difference.⁴⁹ Jorgen Baerenholdt and his coauthors position these developments as historical offshoots of technological advances developed during the British industrial revolution, including railways, photography, and organizational innovation.⁵⁰ These and other technological and political developments have coalesced to produce a uniquely Balinese manifestation of guest/host relations.

Whereas the tourist gaze is focused primarily on Western perceptions of Others, more recent scholarship has begun to focus on the effects of gazing tourists upon the host society. Anthropologist Shinji Yamashita notes: “Tourism also stimulates traditional culture, and this may result in the creation of new culture. In addition, tourism heightens the self-awareness of the local people in tourist areas, and strengthens their identity.”⁵¹ In Bali, tourism has undoubtedly contributed to an increased self-awareness of the potential for music and dance to form the basis of a distinct Balinese identity. Moreover, reforms brought about through tourism and the political and economic advantages associated with *kebalian* have spurred members of GKPB to develop arts-based discourse that connect the church to “desacralized” components of Balinese *budaya*. This has led to intellectual posturing, but more important, it has established what I describe as an “interreligious gaze,” or the process by which members of distinct religious formations negotiate the parameters of overlapping social, economic, and/or political interests through the establishment of a venue whereby points of contention may be examined. Though this gaze may have aspects of privacy or interiority, it is inherently public so as to be open to constant critique, reform, and sustained dialogue. There are many forums for such interreligious gaze in Bali. I will focus here on the gaze established between Balinese Hindus and members of the Bali Church as enacted through the production of contextualized music and dance. While this type of interreligious relationship is not inherently connected to

⁴⁸ Tenzer, *Gamelan Gong Kebyar*, 19.

⁴⁹ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 1.

⁵⁰ Jorgen Ole Baerenholdt, Michael Haldrup, Jonas Larsen, and John Urry, *Performing Tourist Places* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 142.

⁵¹ Shinji Yamashita, *Bali and Beyond: Explorations in the Anthropology of Tourism*, trans. J. S. Eades (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 109.

tourism, the unique history of Bali, combined with the ubiquity of tourism on the island, brings it into the purview of the present analysis.

Long before Hindus and Christians were engaged in the production of contextualized arts, Balinese music and dance had become the subject of an “aestheticizing gaze” amid the glow of nascent tourism. As Picard describes it, “this esteem must have been seductive to a newly colonized people, and it is not surprising that the Balinese were easily persuaded that they were ‘artists.’”⁵² This sense of wonderment on the part of tourists, and the willingness of Balinese to indulge them, forged the arts as a communicative device between hosts and guests and established a tourist gaze with an increasingly international influence. As Yamashita suggests, this stimulated a “hybrid culture,” which included newly formed music and dance genres such as *kecak*, *sendratari* (dance drama), and *tari lepas* (free dance).⁵³ Since the 1960s, as these and other arts genres have been popularized, music and dance have remained a forum of negotiation between Balinese (who seek to maintain some sense of the “sacred” in Hindu arts) and tourists (who often seek an “authentic” yet easily accessible form of local “culture”). The development of this type of hybrid culture, which is premised on ongoing negotiation and change, is illustrative of tourist subjects who have “gazed back.”⁵⁴

This model of socio-economic dialogue, as expressed through the tourist gaze, has come to form a template for Balinese Christians and Hindus as they enact new forms of *kebalian*. Contextualized arts thus challenge conventional parameters of Balinese identity, especially when and where these boundaries have defined ethnicity in relation to Balinese Hinduism. This process of change was formally initiated at the 1972 Bali Church synod as holistically contextualized church reform. From the beginning this project was intended to reconnect GKP membership with components of Balinese *budaya* considered essential to *kebalian*. The earliest church-based productions of music and dance during the mid-1970s relied exclusively on Hindu artists as there were few, if any, Christians performing at a professional level at that time.⁵⁵

These early performances mark the start of the interreligious gaze as expressed through gamelan events sponsored by the Bali Church. Similar to many productions for foreign tourists, GKP spectators watched programs of *tari lepas* and *sendratari*, both dance genres that developed over the course of the twentieth century in response to the demands of tourism.⁵⁶ In a manner that reflected a desire to demarcate the sacred from the secular amid the

⁵² Picard, *Bali*, 22.

⁵³ Yamashita, *Bali and Beyond*, 37. *Kecak* is a type of interlocking vocal chant that was developed during the 1930s at the request of European painter Walter Spies. *Sendratari* is a form of dance drama with gamelan accompaniment and was first performed in Java and Bali in the mid-1960s. Stories depicted are often linear in nature, a significant aesthetic departure from earlier forms of Balinese theater. *Tari lepas*, or “free dances,” are also accompanied by gamelan but are shorter and stand alone, outside a theatrical context.

⁵⁴ Martin Stokes, “Travel and Tourism: An Afterword,” *World of Music* 41 (1999): 143.

⁵⁵ Interview with I Nyoman Catra (Former Bali Church artistic collaborator and professor of music at Institut Seni Indonesia, Denpasar), February 2014.

⁵⁶ Early *tari lepas* performed at GKP events during the mid-1970s include *Oleg Tambulilingan* and *Kupu Kupu Tarum* (I Wayan Mastra interview, June 2013). Since that time, artists employed by the Bali Church (most

tourist economy, Balinese Christians, in collaboration with Hindu performers, designed programs that would not transgress normative sacred Hindu arts.

Foreign influences became manifest in church practice and in relations between Balinese Hindus and Christians as touristic arts genres and taxonomies were employed as a part of the Bali Church's contextualization project. The tendency for interreligious relations to mirror newly emerging socio-economic models highlights the wide-ranging influence of tourism. The reorientation of Hindu/Christian relations included the adoption of an arts discourse that was mutually intelligible and acceptable to Hindus and Christians.

Contextualized productions of the 1970s were characterized by Christians *consuming* media produced by Hindu artists. This began to change during the 1980s and 1990s as Christian artists increasingly became involved in Balinese performing arts, including composition and choreography (Fig. 2). Hindu artists were no longer simply performing for Christian audiences; the two groups were now performing, rehearsing, and creating together, which fundamentally changed the nature of the interreligious gaze. Similar transformations occurred in interactions between Western tourists and Balinese over the course of the twentieth century. Though slight changes were made, many of the earliest tourist shows in the 1920s and 1930s were essentially replicas of existing temple-based repertoire.⁵⁷ As tourism developed in Bali, concerns were raised that certain dances were being "desacralized" in the context of tourist shows. This set off a complex process of negotiation between Balinese Hindus (including politicians, artists, and religious leaders) and tourists. In other words, the expectations of the tourist gaze must be met in performance or risk retribution, which in the case of tourism equals fewer tickets sold and less revenue.

notably I Nyoman Darsane, I Nyoman Murdita, and I Putu Suranata) have choreographed, composed, and performed at least two dozen different contextualized *tari lepas* and *sendratari* (Ripa et al., "Karya Seni Sebagai," 26–51).

⁵⁷ Annette Sanger, "Blessing or Blight? The Effects of Touristic Dance-Drama on Village Life in Singapadu, Bali," in *Com Mek Me Hol' Yu Han': The Impact of Tourism on Traditional Music* (Jamaica: Montrose Printery Limited, 1988), 93. Sanger notes that slight changes were made in instances of ritual that transgressed Western norms, such as eating live chickens to help dancers come out of trance.

Figure 2: I Nyoman Darsane, shown here performing contextualized *topeng* (Bandung, Indonesia, 2007), was born in Payangan, Bali, around 1939. He converted to Christianity from Hinduism at the age of 17 and began to compose, choreograph, and perform contextualized music and dance in the late 1970s. He is one of the first artists to produce church-sanctioned music and dance for the Bali Church. His contextualized paintings are known internationally and regularly borrow imagery and themes from Balinese performing arts and philosophy. (Photo by Jonathan Bailey, used with permission)

Like these early tourist shows, contextualized music and dance of the 1970s relied primarily on a preexisting repertoire, particularly *tari lepas*.⁵⁸ These shows came as “secularized” touristic content that, from the perspective of Hindus, could easily be adapted to new foreign contexts such as a church event. As Christians became proficient practitioners of Balinese art, new works were composed that more clearly conveyed contextualized Balinese Christian perspectives and biblical narratives. GKPB members thus shifted from being primarily consumers of repurposed touristic media to collaborators. Unlike tourists who interact indirectly with art, Balinese Christians had become direct collaborators, capable of *producing* art that could subsequently become the subject of an interreligious gaze. In the instance of Balinese Christians and Hindus performing together, this gaze is further defined by a mutual ability to produce art that is subsequently used to articulate shared traits of ethnicity and identity.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Michel Foucault identifies a pivotal moment in Western medicine when the power to see, or to gaze, became a dominant epistemology. Foucault describes this transition: “It meant that the relation between the visible and invisible—which is necessary to all concrete knowledge—changed its structure, revealing through gaze and language what had

⁵⁸ Interview with I Wayan Mastra (former bishop of the Bali Church), June 2013.

previously been beyond their domain. A new alliance was forged between words and things, enabling one *to see* and *to say*.⁵⁹ The gaze thus becomes the means by which things are identified, observed, and defined according to empirical systems of knowledge. The respective gazes imposed upon nineteenth-century European medicine and twentieth-century Balinese tourism, therefore, reflect similarities. The will “to see and to say” was exercised at every turn, always under the surveillance of another’s gaze. Under Dutch colonialism, Protestant missionization, nationalism, and finally tourism, the Balinese were required to define who they were in relation to foreign categories (e.g., *adat*, *agama*, *budaya*). The weight of this empiricizing gaze eventually manifested itself as a distinction between “sacred” and “secular” dances. The Bali Church adopted those deemed secular because they had been carefully amputated from Hinduism through 60 years of observation.

Analysis: *Tariaan Perdamaian* (“The Dancing of Peace”)

Victor Turner has argued that theater is much more than a story conveyed by actors on a stage. Rather it reflects the struggles of life in what he calls “social drama”:

By means of such genres as theatre . . . performances are presented which probe a community’s weaknesses, call its leaders to account, desacralize its most cherished values and beliefs, portray its characteristic conflicts and suggest remedies for them, and generally take stock of its current situation in the known “world.”⁶⁰

Likewise, the production of theatrical events by the Bali Church is a way to recognize the conflict that has plagued Christian/Hindu interactions and to embody a collective negotiation that has more recently emerged. I Nyoman Murdita understands the performance of these arts as creating *kehadiran* (a presence) in the wider Balinese community, and cites this as a way to ensure that “our Christianity is compatible with Balinese culture and art.”⁶¹ By creating *kehadiran*, GKPB sustains a venue for both an interreligious gaze and an embodiment of *kebalian*. Such productions are also vestiges of empiricizing gazes; the following analysis of *Tariaan Perdamaian* (“The Dancing of Peace”), a touristic dance drama/*sendratari* premiered by the Bali Church in 2006, reveals these conflicting viewpoints.⁶²

The storyline of the dance drama is enacted in four scenes, opening with angels and followed by the introduction of the king (presumably Jesus). It then shifts to earth, where commoners stumble blindly for direction, all of whom are finally redeemed in the presence of the king.⁶³ On

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), xii.

⁶⁰ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 11.

⁶¹ Interview with I Nyoman Murdita, August 2012.

⁶² The term *sendratari* is a combination of three Indonesian words: *seni* (art), *drama* (drama), and *tari* (dance). The genre is a twentieth-century development, premiering first in Java during the mid-1960s and shortly after in Bali. Since that time, the genre has developed under the influence of both Western (touristic) and Balinese (“local”) aesthetic perceptions.

⁶³ The division of the production into four scenes (over two acts) is detailed in the GKPB contextualization treatise (Ripa et al., “Karya Seni Sebagai”).

the surface this appears to be a classic Pauline conversion narrative as characters transition from sin to epiphany, repentance, and forgiveness. There is little doubt that Murdita, who wrote and choreographed the work, intentionally foregrounded this conversion story with a kinglike Jesus figure at the center, but a closer analysis reveals a more complex narrative.

Divine Terminology: *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*

GKPB Christians use a number of terms to refer to the divine, or some aspect of it, as a component of the Trinity. These include *Tuhan* (God/Lord), *Allah* (God), *Pencipta* (Creator), *Bapak* (Father), *Yesus* (Jesus), and *Roh Suci* (Holy Spirit). These words, however, have all arrived in common parlance among Balinese Christians through Malaysian, Sanskrit, Arabic, and other languages. The one Balinese term for “God” is *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*. It is widely used by Bali Church leaders and congregants in prayer, song, and speech. Interestingly, it is also the term used by reformist Indonesian Hindus (including Balinese) for “the one and only God.” This designation was made in the 1950s as a condition of the state recognition of Hinduism under Indonesia’s monotheistic constitution. Karel Steenbrink and Jan Aritonang have noted that some Hindus protested the use of this term by Christians as they considered it “a violation of their exclusive rights to these specifically Hindu-Balinese words.”⁶⁴ Over the course of my research many of my interlocutors have echoed similar sentiments, and although some have suggested that the term is less contested today, it is clear that *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa* has been a point of ideological tension between Christians and Hindus.⁶⁵

Tarian Perdamaian features a chorus, a complete gamelan *kebyar* group, and dancers. As this work has been performed over the last ten years, the group has been variously composed of Christian and Hindu men, women, and children performing in ensemble.⁶⁶ Together the chorus sings the following text in Balinese: “It has been told that all people are like angels praising the great name of *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*. The kingdom of the almighty *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa* is eternally peaceful.”⁶⁷ What does it mean, then, for Balinese Christians and Hindus to join their voices in recognition of *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa* as the “almighty” “one and only God”? Is it a competition for recognition? A sign of solidarity? A symbol of political jest meant to underscore the results of missionization and imposed religious reform? Or is it simply Hindus performing

⁶⁴ Karel Steenbrink, “A Small Flock in Bali,” in *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, ed. Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 740.

⁶⁵ I Nyoman Darsane, former director of the GKPB arts bureau (DPB), explained: “For people that don’t have a lot of insight, they feel that because *Sang Hyang Widi* is Balinese it should only be used by Hindus. The problem is that Christians have been using the term to worship *Tuhan* [God/Lord] for much longer. Hindus say it didn’t happen like that.” Despite these ideological differences, he went on to suggest that this debate between Hindus and Christians is no longer a pressing concern (interview, July 2011). Christians and Muslims in Malaysia have faced a similar conflict over divine terminology. In 2014 a Malaysian federal court upheld a ruling forbidding Christians in that nation from using the word “Allah,” citing the term as exclusively Islamic.

⁶⁶ I Putu Suranata, email communication with the author, August 2015.

⁶⁷ The text as sung in Balinese: “Kacerita yang ring suargan, Maka sami malaikate. Ngeluwihang parab ida sanghyang widi wasa. Sutrepti rahayu sane langgeng wantah wenten ring keraton ida sanghyang widi wasa.”

the music they were hired to play in the context of a “secular” touristic performance?⁶⁸ Of course, there is no single answer to these questions, and depending on whom one asks, all responses could portray some element of truth. Such fluidity of definition is characteristic of the interreligious gaze. To see is to say, but not definitively.

Halus and Keras: A Caste-Based Dichotomy

The performative context of *Tarian Perdamaian* illustrates the flexibility of *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa* to function as a religious marker for both Balinese Hindus and Christians; and this suggests overlapping priorities in how members of these religious groups construct notions of the divine. The continued performance of this dance drama also points to similar flexibilities in Balinese social epistemologies. Historically, the kings of Balinese society have been the ultimate authority of the local Hindu caste structure. The massive rituals of nineteenth-century Bali were executed within this hierarchic system, and as such, every person from the king down to the lowliest peasant had his or her role. In his magnum opus on Balinese society, *Negara*, Clifford Geertz describes the disparate yet equally essential roles of those within this system, finally summarizing this state of affairs: “Functional, or, as the Balinese would say, ‘coarse’ toward the bottom, the Negara [state] was aesthetical, ‘refined’ toward the top—a model itself of the nature of hierarchy.”⁶⁹ This aestheticization of hierarchy is mirrored in the costumes, language, and dance/musical gestures associated with the characters throughout *Tarian Perdamaian* and is a common element of many Balinese performing arts.

The spectrum of character types in Balinese theater is marked by oppositional extremes, with many combinations and variations present in between. On the one end are traits described as *halus* (refined), which are most easily identified by slower, compact movements, thinner musical textures, and softer dynamics. In contrast, *keras* (coarse, hard, or strong) characters demonstrate affect, often with larger, more abrupt movements accompanied by louder, more densely orchestrated music.⁷⁰ As Geertz notes, these ideals are applied hierarchically, and in Bali this inevitably references caste. In other words, more refined characters are generally regarded as higher-caste (*brahman* or *satria*), while coarse characters belong to the lower caste (*sudra*).⁷¹

[See video #1 on journal website article page: The entrance of the king (beginning scene two)]

⁶⁸ Hindu musicians and dancers who perform in professional or semiprofessional GKPB productions at various church events are typically paid for their work. Christian performers generally do not receive direct remuneration for artistic contributions as these are seen as service to the church (I Putu Suranata, email communication with the author, June 2015).

⁶⁹ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 132.

⁷⁰ For more on the *halus/keras* dichotomy, see Lisa Gold, *Music in Bali: Experiencing Music Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 93–95.

⁷¹ For a more complete explanation of Balinese caste, see Hobart et al., *The People of Bali*, 65–82.

These conventions are applied to figures throughout *Tarian Perdamaian*, with two principal characters embodying the traits of these oppositional poles. On the one hand is the Jesus, or king, figure who utilizes slow and graceful dance gestures (Video 1). As the king first appears onstage in the second scene, the music becomes decidedly softer, with the louder elaborating instruments temporarily mute.⁷² His white costume, almond-shaped eyes (exaggerated with makeup), and often-downcast gaze further enhance his refinement.⁷³ On the other hand is a decidedly *keras* figure who enters the stage toward the end of the third scene. In Christian terms he represents a satan or “accuser” character, and his coarseness is easily identified. A bright red *kain* (sarong) and *udeng* (head dress), wild, frantic gestures, and loud music punctuated with percussive attacks from the *reyong* and *ceng-ceng* readily indicate his opposition to the king (Video 2).

[See video #2: Entrance of the accuser (end scene 3)]

Not all figures, however, represent these idealized extremes. Two sets of characters portrayed as human convey subdued aspects of refinement and coarseness, respectively. *Tarian Perdamaian* begins with six dancers dressed as angels entering the stage (Video 3). A written description, by Murdita, of this scene identifies them not as angels but as human beings (*manusia*): “human beings who live in peace are likened to angels.”⁷⁴ Their subservience to the king is illustrated in gesture when they kneel with hands folded in prayer upon seeing him. Their white robes (wings) and sarongs, coupled with golden crowns and earrings, are further evidence of their high stature.

[See video #3: Entrance of “angelic” humans (beginning scene 1)]

The second group of human characters first appears at the beginning of the third scene as seven male dancers enter the stage wearing *topeng* and *bondres* masks (Video 4).⁷⁵ They appear to suffer from various physical afflictions, such as blindness and lameness. The dancers’ masks, featuring bright reds and browns, their deformed and exaggerated facial features, and their bright red headdresses (*udeng*) coalesce to indicate the coarseness of this group. Such characterization is further underscored by Murdita’s scene description: “It has been told: The world has fallen into chaos, which is seen in the suffering of humanity and the hardness [*kekerasan*] of hearts.”⁷⁶ The word *kekerasan* is based on the root word *keras*, the same word used to describe unrefined dance gestures and character traits, and in Geertz’s analysis also indicates low social position. The desperate fate of this group is not mere happenstance, a result of tragedy beyond their control. Rather, their suffering is a direct result of disobedience to the king as evidenced in the text sung

⁷² The instruments used for melodic elaboration (most notably the *reyong*, *pemade*, and *kantil*), which have been active throughout the piece, suddenly fall away as the king enters.

⁷³ Gold, *Music in Bali*, 93–94.

⁷⁴ Murdita, “Bentuk-Bentuk Ekspresi Iman,” 42.

⁷⁵ These types of masks are typically used in comedic performances (*bondres*) and various genres of masked dance performance (*topeng*).

⁷⁶ Murdita, “Bentuk-Bentuk Ekspresi Iman,” 42.

by the female chorus: “It is now told: All of humanity suffers as a result of the sin of the world because they have not followed the command of *Sang Yang Widi Wasa*. Because of this all of humanity suffers deeply.”⁷⁷

[See video #4: Entrance of lame/blind (beginning scene 3)]

The drama concludes in scene 4 as the coarse (including the accuser figure) sit cross-legged with hands pressed together and elbows raised, a common posture of prayer among Balinese Hindus. Some of the unrefined dancers remove their masks as a symbol of their transformation, now subjects of the king.⁷⁸ In this way they have yielded to the commands of the refined members of the hierarchy, most notably the king. The aestheticization of this hierarchy is thus complete (see Table 1). Those of lower social standing (the *keras*) have deified the king and empowered other members of the higher castes (the *halus*) through their subservience. This hierarchy is performed using well-established conventions of Balinese theatrical and musical arts that are closely connected to local socio-religious norms.

<i>Halus</i> , Less <i>Halus</i> → →		← ← Less <i>Keras</i> , <i>Keras</i>	
King/Jesus Figure	Angelic Humans	Blind, Lame Humans	Satan/“Accuser” Figure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music: thinner texture, softer dynamics (esp. at first entrance) - Refined <i>agem</i>: low body position, arms close to body - Slow, compact, graceful movements - White costume - Frequent downward gaze - Narrow, almond-shaped eyes (exaggerated with makeup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refined <i>agem</i>: low body position, arms and legs generally closer to the body - Gestures of supplication (kneeling, hands folded in prayer, following the king in procession), indicating subservience to the king - White and yellow costumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disjointed, stiff, awkward movements - Blind, lame, physically disabled, representing suffering - A number wear comic (<i>bondres</i>) masks, suggesting lower caste - Bright reds and browns (of masks and costumes) indicate coarseness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music: louder dynamics, percussive accents (esp. from <i>reyong</i> and <i>ceng ceng</i>) - Unrefined <i>agem</i>: straight legs, wide stance, arms far from body, indicating arrogance⁷⁹ - Bright red costume

Table 1: Hierarchy of Characters in *Tarian Perdamaian*

The image of the king as divinity has a long history in Bali. As Geertz suggests, it is a divine status realized through the dramatic participation of all Balinese citizens in the “theatre state”: “It was the king’s cult that created Him . . . for, without the dramas of the theatre state, the image of

⁷⁷ As sung in the original Balinese: “Kaceritayang ne mangkin, jatmane sami ke lara lara. Santukan akeh dosa, karyan ipun ring mercepada, santukan sampun lali ring titah ida Sang Hyang Widi Wasa. Nika mawinan jatmane sami ke tibenin baya.”

⁷⁸ I Made Bandem has noted that the removal of masks in Balinese *arja* (opera) is a common symbol of personal transformation (interview, May 2015).

⁷⁹ Gold, *Music in Bali*, 102.

composed divinity could not even take form.”⁸⁰ The same holds true for the dramas of the Bali Church. At the most obvious level, the dramatic enactment of *Tarian Perdamaian* creates new images of Christ as a contextualized king in Balinese clothes and dancing to Balinese gamelan music. As one moves closer and begins to take account of the members of this “theatre state,” composed of Balinese Hindus and Christians, the composition of the onstage divinity embodies unexpected qualities. The raw artistic materials that form this contextualized Jesus are thus transmuted as a result of Hindu/Christian collaboration.

This sort of diversity, which is an inherent component of any interreligious gaze, is also central to Geertz’s model of theatrical spectacle:

Yet the frequency, richness, and scale of those dramas, and thus the extent of the impress they made upon the world, was in turn dependent upon the extent and . . . the diversity of the political loyalties that could be mobilized to stage them.⁸¹

In a similar fashion, the “cult” of Jesus-as-king has sought legitimation in Balinese society through theater—not the dramatic ritualistic drama of nineteenth-century Bali, but the staged “social drama” described by Victor Turner. The king has entered and has been attributed divine status, but whose king is it? The name of the king, *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*, does little to clarify matters, as it is a name shared by Balinese Hindus and Christians alike. The people singing, dancing, and playing gamelan serve to further obscure the king’s orientation as they perform together as a collage of Christians and Hindus. What at first glance so clearly appeared as another example of colonial, touristic domination—an embodiment of the empiricizing gaze—is, upon closer examination, a dramatic enactment of Balinese king deification. Through this process, the parameters of *kebalian* are renegotiated in an effort to account for the religious plurality of those people who call themselves Balinese.

⁸⁰ Geertz, *Negara*, 131.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 131.