

Transnational, Translocal, Transcultural: Some Remarks on the Relations between Hindu-Balinese and Ethnic Chinese in Bali

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In the course of the spatial turn in the social sciences, new terms and categories have emerged. This paper applies categories like translocal and transcultural to the way the Hindu-Balinese perceive themselves in order to bring out certain principles of their ethos and world view. This world view is symbolically expressed through a pair of black and white figures, Barong Landung, who are venerated as sacred by many Hindu-Balinese and perceived as representing their first ancestors or Kawitan. This multiethnic couple reminds the Hindu-Balinese that their origin as a people lies outside their island, that their religion derives from India, and that parts of their culture once came from China. Against the background to this rather global self-understanding of a local culture, the paper asks how the Hindu-Balinese define their relations with the ethnic Chinese in Bali.

Keywords: Barong Landung, Chinese minority, conceptions of space, Indonesia, interethnic relations, masks, spatial turn.

New paradigms will follow with new terms and categories. In the course of what is currently called “the spatial turn”, the terms “heterotopias” (Foucault 1984) and “ethnoscapes” (Appadurai 1991) have become among the most prominent neologisms.² Other new categories have been created using the suffix “trans”, such as transnational, translocal, transcultural. But what is meant by these compound words (*composita*)? Even eager promoters of the spatial turn seem to worry about this question. This lack of semantic clarity comes as a surprise, since most scholars who are engaged in this turn show a distinct favour for one of the new categories: Hannerz

(1996) for transnational, Freitag (2005) for translocal, and Welsch (1999) for transcultural. But how can they demonstrate such a strong commitment to particular terms when the distinctions between them are quite unclear?

It is obvious that the new terms were introduced to stress interactions and social ties beyond real and imagined borders. Likewise they were coined to study social and cultural processes of global transfer, circulation, and cross-border movement (Lerp 2009). Finally, the terms are intended to describe the interplay between the global and the local. But beyond these thematic fields in which the new terms are applied, there are more open questions than answers. It is, for example, quite unclear whether the new terms refer to different scales (global, national, local) or to different levels of analysis (institutional, discursive, intentional). And finally, are the concepts to which the new terms refer as new as is often suggested (Lerp 2009)?

The aim of this paper is to show that using categories which divide nations, cultures, and religions into strictly separate units is more characteristic of Western thinking than, for example, of Hindu-Balinese concepts. Against this background, the spatial turn and the neologisms introduced by it seem less innovative, though necessary to grasp what are principles of the Hindu-Balinese world view, namely that everything is related to everything else and that it is crucial in life to overcome differences.³

Transnational or Translocal?

The commitment of particular authors to particular terms has to be seen against the background of the particular definitions they were given. For Ulf Hannerz, for example, there is a strong distinction between *international* and *transnational*. According to him, the term *international* refers to contexts in which states appear as corporate actors vis-à-vis one another and *transnational*, on the other hand, draws attention to other kinds of actors — individuals, kinship groups, ethnic groups, social movements, and so forth — whose

activities and relationships transcend *national* boundaries (Hannerz 1998, pp. 236–37). With this focus on national boundaries, however, the term *transnational* refers to states (political units) rather than to nations (communities defined on the basis of a common culture and history). This invites one to conflate state and nation and to assume that every state (and every nation) is a nation state (*ibid.*, p. 237). Against this background, Hannerz speaks of a certain irony that is connected with the term “transnational”, one that comes from the tendency of this term to draw attention to what it negates, that is, to the continued significance of the national (Hannerz 1996, p. 6).

When a historical perspective is added to transnational studies, further shortcomings of the concept of transnationality come to the fore, which all derive from its implicit focus on the national. In terms of the history of mankind, the nation state is quite a late invention emerging in Central Europe no earlier than the eighteenth century, and not firmly established in some parts of Africa and Asia until the early twentieth century. Thus the term seems to be rather inappropriate to describe historical relationships between non-European regions and countries. It is certainly appropriate to focus on the history of Western nation states, but neither on the level of a global history (which goes beyond national boundaries) nor on the level of life worlds and culturally shaped experiences (which undermine national boundaries). Hence the term “transnational” seems rather unsuitable for anthropological studies.

Another new term that has emerged with the spatial turn is *translocal*. This term is used by Ulrike Freitag⁴ to invest the historical entanglements between different non-European regions in, for example, Africa or Southeast Asia (Freitag 2005). The focus is on the mobility of actors, ideas, commodities, and artefacts between different regions of the South and the consequences of exchange, circulation, and transfer beyond real or imagined boundaries. The emphasis is not on crossing national boundaries, but on overcoming

spatial differences. In this context, it is stressed that there are many borders, inside and outside the nation state, which are likewise important. There is rather a multiplicity of borders, which are not necessarily political, but economic, social, religious, etc. (Freitag 2005, p. 2).

Whereas the concept of transnationality takes the existence of nation states and national boundaries for granted, the concept of translocality not only emphasizes the diversity of spatial concepts and adjustments, it also aims to take the spatial categories of the actors into consideration (Freitag 2005, p. 3). Crucial for the concept of translocality, at least how it is used by Freitag, is the differentiation between locality and location: here the focus is on the interaction between the imagination of *locality* (as expressed, for example, by the term *Heimat*) and the practice of particular actors in particular *locations* (ibid.). In this way, the term “translocal” and the concept of translocality emancipate themselves from the geographical space and are used in a rather metaphorical way. Thus it is possible to analyse the interaction beyond real *and* imagined frontiers and to focus on the dialectics of transfer and demarcation as a crucial route to the understanding of globalization. Against this background, transnationality is considered to be nothing else but a special case of translocality (ibid.).

If the concepts of transnationality and translocality and the scholars who use these concepts have one thing in common, it is their interest in how the process of globalization is perceived by the local actors (Hannerz 1998, p. 245). I share this interest and will in this article show how processes of transfer and exchange are perceived by many Hindu-Balinese, what they think about their origins as a people⁵ and the roots of their culture, and finally how their self-perception affects their relations with the Chinese minority in Bali.

Location or Locality: The Localized Culture

In the context of the spatial turn and the new terms related to it, the French anthropologist Marc Augé is one of the most influential

figures. He has directed our attention to the fact that we spend more and more time in places of transience: motorway and metro, hotel and hospital, airport and supermarket. He called them "non-places" (*non-lieux*), thus adding yet another neologism to the spatial turn and the space-oriented paradigm that resulted from it. An impact of the extension of these "non-places", which are characterized by a lack of interaction and the absence of a sense of belonging, is what Augé called "supermodernity" and what in the German translation became *Einsamkeit* (solitude) (Augé 1995).

Beyond these observations on the interconnectedness of non-places, supermodernity and solitude, there is another passage in Augé's book that is quite significant for the analysis of religion and migration in transnational or translocal contexts. Augé refers to the idea of "the localized society", which he describes as follows:

In the ethnologist's ideal territory (that of archaic or "backward" societies), all men are "average" (we could say "representative"); location in time and space is easy to achieve there: it applies to everyone, and elements like class divisions, migration, urbanization do not intrude.... Behind the idea of the localized society there clearly lies another: that of consistency or transparency between culture, society and individual. (Augé 1995, p. 49)

The idea of "the localized society" is, in other words, connected with the idea of a place where conflict and contradiction, alienation and estrangement between culture, society and individual are either unknown or absent. From the perspective of the ethnologist (and here Augé refers to Marcel Mauss as a prominent example), "an island — a small island" is a perfect projection surface for the idea of "the localized society" (Augé 1995, p. 50). The reason why an island is suitable to uniting a particular space with a particular culture is obvious: "The contours and frontiers of an island can be designated or traced without difficulty" (*ibid.*). Therefore the ethnographer who is looking for "the localized society" wishes "for each ethnic group to have its own island" (*ibid.*).

It is, however, crucial to note that it is not only the ethnographer who follows "the idea of a localized society" and "the image of a

closed and self-sufficient world"; his or her objects cling to the same idea: "It is at this point that the indigenous population's semi-fantasy converges with the ethnologist's illusion" (ibid., p. 47). These surprising similarities between ethnologists and natives emerge out of the fact that, according to Augé, the organization of space and the founding of place are expressions of a collective practice that characterizes not only Western researchers, but also local actors (ibid., p. 51).

Against this background, I intend to show how space is organized and place is founded in Bali. I will demonstrate that Augé's suggestion that the illusions of the ethnographer and the fantasies of the natives converge in the assumption of a closed and self-sufficient world, could be applied to many ethnographers, at least up to the spatial turn, but not to all natives. The contrary is the case — at least in the case of many Hindu-Balinese. Even when they live on "an island — a small island", their perception of their origin as a people and of the roots of their religion and culture comes very close to the conception for which the notion of *translocality* is central. Such a translocal self-conception of the Hindu-Balinese has some crucial implications for their relations to the ethnic Chinese and other social groups on Bali.

Time, Space and Creation on Bali

That time and space are perceived and conceptualized in Bali in different ways is a commonplace in the ethnography of this island. In this context, and for the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to know that *time* is measured in Bali using two different calendars: the so-called Hindu-Balinese calendar, which counts twelve solar-lunar months, each consisting of 29 or 30 days, and whose year (*saka*) covers 355 days; and the so-called Java-Balinese calendar, which counts 30 weeks each consisting of 7 days and whose year (*oton*) covers only 210 days. All major ritual events follow one of these two calendars. Since they divide time up into different units with different lengths, the liturgical circle in Bali differs tremendously from year

to year. In one year, for example, the most important holy days in Bali — Nyepi, often compared with New Year, and Galungan and Kuningan, a mixture of All Saints and All Souls — can fall into one month, and the next year the same events are separated by almost half a year (Goris 1933; Geertz 1973c, p. 391ff.). The general perception of time, however, is cyclical: time may elapse, but all living beings are reborn again and again.⁶

The perception of *space* in Bali also follows a culturally specific mode. Here it is sufficient to know that the cardinal points are not the same as in the West, but seaward (*kelod*) and mountain-ward (*kaje*). To visit the so-called mother temple on Bali, Pura Besakih, located at the slopes of the central mountain Gunung Agung, Western visitors have to follow a northern, eastern, southern, or western direction, depending from where they start; Balinese, on the contrary, always follow the same direction (*kaje*). Since the mountains are perceived as the residence of deities and the sea as the realm of evil forces, cardinal points are not neutral, but normatively valued. This is mirrored in the architecture of the island: most temples are oriented towards the mountains, the cemetery always towards the sea. In this materialized way, it becomes obvious that cardinal points on Bali serve not only for spatial, but also for spiritual orientation (Swellengrebel 1960, p. 36ff.).

However, it is not only the organization of time and the founding of space that differ when it comes to the Hindu-Balinese world view; the same is also the case with regard to the origin of human beings in general and the origin of the Balinese people in particular. Here again differences are given: according to Hindu-Balinese belief, Brahma created the entire universe, all gods, demons, and human beings. There was no evolution of mankind, but rather a single creation act that called all people into being at the same time. Brahma, the creator, also produced the other gods like Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer; but later he lost — at least in Bali — his leading role within this trinity (Trisakti or Trimurti) to Shiva (Friederich 1959, p.7). Thus the local variation of Hinduism

in Bali is sometimes called Shivaism. However, nowadays all gods of the Hindu-Balinese pantheon reside side by side on the Gunung Maha Meru, a heavenly mountain and centre of the earth, which has its equivalent in Bali in the Gunung Agung and in Lombok in the Gunung Rinjani (Phalgunadi 1991, p. 89).

This creation act, here greatly simplified, has been handed down in traditional palm-leave texts (*Lontar*), which, however, make no statement about the origin of the Balinese people, their religion and culture. This is also not mentioned in the official Hindu-Balinese doctrines (there are only a few of them), but rather in popular religious beliefs that find their symbolic expression in myth, ritual, and masquerade. Part of this symbolic expression is the white mask of a female character to whom the Hindu-Balinese refer as “Chinese daughter” (*Putri Cina*).



Plate 1: The female character of Barong Landung who represents a woman from China (all pictures were taken by the author between 1998 and 2003).

The Origin of the Balinese: The Iconography of an Unequal Couple

On the origin of the Balinese people, Hindu-Balinese worshippers are reminded when they enter a temple in the southern part of the island that is dedicated to Shiva (Pura Dalem). Many of these temples contain a particular shrine that is the home of a white



Plate 2: The Barong Landung couple of the village of Medahan leaving the temple shrine to lead a procession to the ocean.

woman and a black man. These two characters, which always appear as a couple, are not represented only by masks, but also by costumes that cover their whole body. Since these figures are considered to be holy and powerful, they are sacred figures. Their name is Barong Landung.⁷

Barong is a generic name of unknown origin that refers to a group of sacred figures almost exclusively consisting of zoomorphic characters (wild boar, tiger etc.). *Landung* on the other hand is Balinese and has the meaning of "tall". The Barong Landung figures are tall, and Balinese actors who slip into these figures to animate them would lift the upper part of the body of these so-called "giant puppets" on to their shoulders, with the result that they tower tremendously above ordinary human beings. Together with the witch Rangda, the Barong Landung characters are the most influential anthropomorphic figures on Bali. But whom do they represent?⁸

Taking a close look at these figures, it becomes obvious that they represent first of all differences: the difference between man and woman, white and black, beautiful and ugly, old and young etc. A more general iconography, however, must take further details into account: dishevelled vs. covered hair, protruding vs. receding forehead and chin, narrow vs. bulbous nose, prominent teeth vs. enigmatic smile etc. All these details clearly indicate that this heterosexual and multicultural couple represents a widespread dichotomy in Indonesia: the dichotomy between a noble (*halus*) and a rustic (*kasar*) character, which in a wider sense refers to the difference between culture and nature. The crucial point here is that in contrast not only to other parts of Indonesia, but also to many traditions worldwide, the conjunction here is not between man and culture, woman and nature respectively, but the other way around: the woman with her white skin represents the noble (*halus*) character, who is obviously not only more distinguished than her black companion, but also much older. This is clearly indicated by her light or grey hair, pendulous breasts and worn-out earlobes. But why do the Hindu-Balinese have a mask representing an old, white, noble woman?⁹

Ritual Occasions, Songs and Dialogues

With regard to the meaning of Barong Landung, the different ritual contexts are important in which the white lady and her black consort make their appearance. They apparently perform in accordance with both calendars that are used in Bali: they perform when the Hindu-Balinese calendar, which follows the solar-lunar intervals, indicates the spring or autumn equinox, full moon etc. On a full moon night next to the spring equinox (Melasti), they are accompanied to a river or the ocean, where they are not only ritually cleaned in a symbolic way, but also directed towards the high seas to scare away a particular demon (Ratu Gedé Mecaling) and other evil forces.

Barong Landung figures also leave their usual temple (Pura Dalem) when the Java-Balinese calendar, which highlights particular days at particular time intervals (Kajeng Kliwon, for example), indicates that misfortunes are likely to happen (as on Friday the thirteenth,



Plate 3: The Barong Landung couple of the village of Bonbiyu displayed on the occasion of a cleansing ritual (Melasti).



Plate 4: The procession of the Barong Landung couple accompanied by musicians and dozens of people has reached its final destination.

according to Western concepts) or that it is time to honour the dead and the saints. These holy days in particular (Galungan and Kuningan) are the high time of Barong Landung activities. Then these figures are paraded through the streets of villages and towns, and the locals, attracted by the music that accompanies these processions, step out of their houses, pray and sacrifice in front of Barong Landung to receive their protection for the rest of the liturgical year. Here again it becomes obvious that the white lady and her black companion are magically powerful, and since they are able to chase evil forces away, they are used in exorcisms.¹⁰

In return for the prayers and sacrifices that the Barong Landung figures receive during processions, the white lady and her black consort dance and sing in front of the worshippers. Then they remind them of their duties as Hindus (Hindu Dharma), relate episodes of popular stories (Sampik Ingtai), or debate current political issues (like the *Krisis Moneter*; cf. Gottowik 2008). But sometimes they



Plate 5: A Barong Landung couple is dancing in the streets of the city of Gianyar.

also quarrel with one another like a jealous couple, and they may even engage in sexual affairs. Therefore it is possible to conclude that Barong Landung figures are a unique mixture of exorcism and pornography (Gottowik 2010).¹¹

Myths and Legends: "The Spirit of Balingkang"

Connected with the contexts in which Barong Landung figures make their statements are not only rituals, songs, and dialogues, but also myths and legends. These stories are known in detail only by few specialists, but all worshippers at least have in mind that the white lady represents a Chinese woman who is married to the black man.¹² Beyond this plain fact, myths and legends vary, they are multiple and contradictory. But the majority of these narratives can be summarized in two different, but related versions.

According to the *first* version — called in the following the *mythical* version, since it refers to a period at the margin between mythical and historical times — the white lady represents a Chinese

princess and the black man a prince from the south of India. The two fell in love with one another, but since they belonged to different religions — the princess was a Buddhist, the prince a Hindu — their parents did not agree to their getting married. Therefore they decided to flee, and for a long time they had to search for a place where they could live together. Finally they came to Bali, where they settled down. And the people, who live on this island today, the Balinese, are their descendants.

This mythical version, which is known not only to the Hindu-Balinese, but also to the Chinese minority in Bali, tries to explain why the Balinese have Barong Landung figures and what they visualize and explain to themselves by means of this symbol system. This is more or less that the roots of their religion and culture lay outside their island, in India and China, and that even the origin of themselves as a people is the result of the fusion of different ethnic and religious groups.¹³



Plate 6: Barong Landung couples and other sacred figures assembled on the main road in Bona to protect the village.

What is remarkable in the context of this mythical version becomes obvious when it is compared with the prevailing Western self-understanding: nations in the West, which refer to their origins and the roots of their religion and culture, tend to claim an uninterrupted tradition and a genuine past. Things as they actually appear are traced back in history until the beginning of time to legitimize them. Nothing could be more different on Bali. When it comes to Barong Landung, the Balinese show a *translocal* understanding of themselves: religion and culture once came from abroad, and what can be found on this island today is the result of a fusion of Indian and Chinese influences. Even when the Balinese live on “an island — a small island”, they do not refer to it in the sense of a “localized society”. The understanding they have of themselves is rather of their being hybrid, and in this sense they come close to so-called post-modern positions.¹⁴ Vis-à-vis India and China, their island is perceived as a third space where cultural influences converge. This third space overcomes contradictions and differences that are expressed on a symbolic level by the Barong Landung figures and their so-called children: as the skin of the Balinese is neither black nor white but brown (*cokelat*), all the other differences were also suspended on Bali, making this island a synthesis of contradictions and therefore an ideal place for all its inhabitants.

Here it becomes clear that the Balinese are also engaged in the organization of space and the foundation of place, but “consistency or transparency between culture, society and individual” is pursued in a completely different — just Hindu-Balinese — way. They do not localize their culture in the sense that they designate or trace its contours and frontiers — the opposite is the case. Borders are blurred, and the strange that intrudes is incorporated through intermarriage into their own genealogy. And once it becomes part of their own culture, the formerly strange loses its threatening characteristics.

But not all Balinese adhere to the mythical version that surrounds Barong Landung figures. There are other narratives that give other explanations about the lessons that the white lady and her black companion intend to teach the Balinese.

According to the *second* version — called in the following the *historical* version because it refers to the beginning of historical times — the white mask represents a Chinese lady (Putri Cina), while in contrast to the first version the black man refers to a Balinese king (Raja Bali). The name of this king is Sri Jaya Kesunu or Sri Jaya Pangus, both of whom are well known from the traditional court chronicles (Babad) and edicts (Prasasti), which place these kings in the twelfth century AD (Bernet Kempers 1991; also Zoete/Spies 1938, p. 294 and Wälty 1997, p.145). According to this version, the name of the white lady is Kang Cing Wi, who, it is said, had newly arrived from China in the company of her father or a priest. Although much older than the Balinese king, not least due to her white skin she was deemed extremely attractive, such that the king wanted her as his wife. The high priests of the court were against this marriage because the Chinese lady did not share the religion of the Balinese king: She was a Buddhist, while he was a Hindu. But the king refused to follow the advice of his priests. He married Kang Cing Wi, but on the day of the wedding it started to rain which did not stop until the whole kingdom was flooded. The king and his entourage had to flee to the caldera of the Gunung Batur, where they erected a palace. This palace is where the temple of Balingkang is located today. According to the Balinese, the name of this temple is a compound of (the king of) Bali and Kang (the name of his Chinese wife): *Balingkang* became the place where this couple resided and where Hinduism (Agama Hindu) and Buddhism (Agama Boda) fused to form the Hindu-Balinese religion (Agama Hindu-Bali). Even today the Balinese refer to “The Sprit of Balingkang” when they want to emphasize that there is tolerance and peace between Buddhists and Hindus on Bali.

However, the historical version is still not told until the end: the king and his Chinese wife reigned over Bali from Balingkang, and due to the wise politics of Kang Cing Wi, the whole island started to prosper. Everything was fertile, except that she was not able to give birth to a child. Therefore the king decided to go to the Batur

Lake to meditate and pray and to ask the gods for an offspring. But when he arrived there, he met the goddess Dewi Danu and immediately fell in love with her. They got married, and the goddess became pregnant and later delivered a son, who received the name Mayadenawa.¹⁵ Since Sri Jaya Pangus was missed by his Chinese wife, she started to search for him at the Batur Lake, where she finally found him in the arms of Dewi Danu. She began to quarrel and started to fight — but what happened then is a question of the version one follows. Some Balinese continue the story by saying that all the actors were punished by the gods for what they had done, for adultery, jealousy, and so forth. Other Balinese continue the story by saying that a solution was found. According to this version, Kang Cing Wi allowed the king to have a second wife, but only under specific conditions: The king had to import Chinese currency (Pis Bolong or Uang Kepeng) to Bali, where it is still used as ritual money; he also had to erect Chinese temples (Klenteng or Bio) and temple shrines which became part of even the most important Hindu-Balinese temple sites (Pura Besaki, Pura Ulun Danu etc.); and finally he had to file off his canines, which established the so called Hindu-Balinese tooth-filing ritual (Matatah or Upacara Potong Gigi), which still is performed by young people on Bali immediately before marriage.¹⁶

The particular conditions mentioned by Kang Cing Wi may vary, but they all provide an explanation for the numerous cultural traits that found their way from China to Bali. The Balinese are obviously aware of the influences that derive from their mighty neighbour and visualize them with the help of this Putri Cina. Seen from this perspective, the Chinese lady represents the mobility of actors and the transfer of ideas. She demonstrates that the Balinese do not localize their culture on Bali as "an island — a small island". Rather, they remind themselves of the fact that cultures are always interconnected, that they develop and change. In this regard, the Balinese show they have a translocal understanding of their own culture and its origin.

The Politics of Interpretation

Chinese influences are present on many different levels in Bali. The Balinese are aware of these influences and concede that not only the features mentioned above, but also some dances (Baris Cina), fruits (Buah Lici), and recipes (Cap Cai) once came from China. Even one of their favourite dishes (Babi Guling) is likely to be a Chinese invention. However, according to the Chinese minority in Bali, the influences from China are much more extensive.

The ethnic Chinese in Bali (Peranakan) are Christians or Buddhists, but even when they do not have Barong Landung figures, they know about the white lady and consider her to be one of their ancestors. According to the narratives they tell of this Putri Cina, her marriage to the Balinese king was a real civilizing act: she not only urged the king to shorten his canines, which — as already mentioned — established the Hindu-Balinese tooth-filing ritual, she



Plate 7: The Barong Landung couple of the village of Blahbatuh forming part of a temple ceremony.

also asked him to switch off the light during their wedding night because she was afraid of his ugly appearance. According to the ethnic Chinese in Bali this was the origin of a particular Hindu-Balinese holiday (Nyepi), when all lights and fires have to be extinguished for one day and one night. The Putri Cina also ordered that the dead be cremated in zoomorphic coffins, still unknown in Bali at that time, which established the famous Balinese cremation ceremony (Ngaben).¹⁷ According to some ethnic Chinese, the Putri Cina even had to teach the Raja Bali not only how to approach women politely, but also how to eat properly, since he was only used to raw meat at that time.

The long list of benefits that the Balinese king received from his liaison with the Chinese lady seems to be endless, but they all demonstrate that the presence of the Chinese in Bali was to the advantage of all. However, since some ethnic Chinese claim that almost all major cultural traits in Bali once came from China, their discourse has a hegemonic character: although embedded in a simple love story, it clearly has some elements of "Beauty and the Beast".¹⁸

Compared with the version of the ethnic Chinese, the Hindu-Balinese tell the story of Sri Jaya Pangus and Kang Cing Wi in a completely different way. Even though, according to them, a solution between the Raja Bali and his Putri Cina was found, a particular ambivalence is connected with this intermarriage. This ambivalence derives from the fact that she was not able to give birth to a child — a fact not mentioned or even denied by the ethnic Chinese in Bali. Childlessness is, of course, a trial and a threat to every relationship. And it is also a central issue for the Hindu-Balinese, who sometimes refer to the Putri Cina as "The Barren Lady" or (in her deified form) as Dewi Mandul.

Due to this ambivalence, the historical version can be told in at least two different ways: either the white lady and her black husband are presented as having had a successful relationship, since they were able to overcome even such a crucial problem like childlessness, or

they are presented as a *failed* relationship, since they were not able to secure the succession. Therefore Barong Landung figures are a *model of* a historical intermarriage which can serve at the same time as a *model for* further marriages between Balinese and Chinese, as well as being a *warning against* such matrimonial relationships.¹⁹

Indeed, many Balinese who live in the mountainous centre of their island, the so-called Bali Aga, believe that ethnic segregation is the message of Barong Landung. In their view, these sacred figures are intended to remind the Balinese that it is forbidden to marry Chinese; the gods were against this intermarriage, and it was only because the Raja Bali did not follow their advice that they made him black and ugly.

The Balinese in the south confirm that in former times such a ban really existed, but in doing so they refer to the "Spirit of Balingkang" and the fact that Buddhism and Hinduism became so close in this island that differences between these denominations are nowadays difficult to define. In fact many Balinese marry Chinese today, even when such relationships are perceived as *panas*, as hot in the sense of conflict-ridden.²⁰

The Historical Kernel: Between Myth and History

The narratives that surround Barong Landung figures form a contrast to Western conceptions that have been shaped since the beginning of scientific research on Bali, when the connection between India and Bali was acknowledged by Western scholars, but the connection between China and Bali was almost completely denied. Scholars like Raffles and Crawford perceived Bali as a living museum, where belief, tradition and custom had survived almost unchanged (Raffles 1817, p. ccxxxv). According to them, it was possible to study in Bali what had already been lost in Java for generations, that is, Hinduism. This approach, however, cut off Bali not only from its Chinese ties, but also from history. It was not until the end of the twentieth century that a fuller understanding of Balinese culture was achieved that did not only encompass Indian but also Polynesian

and Chinese influences (Boon 1977, p.18ff.; Bandem/de Boer 1981, p. 105).

In contrast to the Hindu-focussed perspective of Western scholars, the Balinese emphasize in their narratives that the roots of their religion and culture are in India *and* China. A close connection with both countries is emphasized by a symbolic marriage between an Indian prince or Balinese king on the one hand and a Chinese woman on the other. India and China were perceived as being historically much older than Bali and therefore acknowledged as high cultures at the same time. Against this background, it becomes obvious that influences from both countries were greatly appreciated, since they not only fuelled, but also ennobled the establishment of religion and culture on Bali.²¹

This rather translocal orientation of the Balinese is not exclusively historical. Since the middle of the twentieth century, there has been a strong orientation towards India as a source of spiritual inspiration and cognitive advice (Tisna 2001, p. 192). In the 1950s, for example, Balinese scholars consulted religious organizations in India in order to establish a Hindu theology that was able to meet the requirements for the Indonesian state to recognize Hinduism as a legal religion or Agama (monotheism, holy book etc.). Since the 1980s, there has again been a strong reorientation towards India, which Hindu-Balinese look to for spiritual renewal which they — at least the intellectuals among them — find in Hindu texts (*Bhagavad Gita* etc.) that were so far almost unknown to them (Tisna 2001, p. 194). Holy pilgrimages (Tirtha Yatra) to India became quite popular in the 1990s (Bakker 1997, p. 37; Somvir 2004, p. 261), and even sending one's children to study in India ("mother India") is an option that many Balinese intellectuals seriously consider.²²

These tendencies must be seen against the background of the Islamization of Java and other parts of Indonesia. Since many Balinese feel threatened by their Islamic neighbours, they seek to establish some kind of community with the Hindus in India. It is, of course, an imagined community in the sense of Benedict Anderson (1985), which, however, gives them the feeling that they are not alone facing Islam as a growing world religion.

In contrast to India, the relationship towards China has remained ambivalent. This has to do with the fact that the Indians never founded a community on Bali, whereas the Chinese have been a strong minority in the island for many generations. For different reasons, some of these migrants from China became extremely successful and influential in economic affairs, which led to conflicts with the indigenous population. Already in the middle of the nineteenth century, ethnic Chinese in Indonesia were called "The Jews of the East", a designation that referred, among other things, to the fact that in the history of Indonesia they became repeatedly the victims of riots. When finally in the 1960s thousands of ethnic Chinese were killed, not in the least on Bali, violence against them reached its previous peak.²³

In 1998, riots and mass rapes occurred again in Jakarta and many other places in Indonesia, which finally led to President Suharto's resignation. This time many Chinese fled to Singapore or Bali. In Bali they felt obviously more secure than in other parts of Indonesia, despite the ambivalent attitude of the Balinese towards them, who both fear and admire their economic power at the same time. However, nowadays the Republic of Indonesia is trying to come to normal relations with its Chinese minority: the Chinese New Year has become a public holiday, and Barongsai dance groups, related to the Barong family and possibly another invention from China, are allowed to perform in public again, to mention just two of the new regulations.

The Barong Landung figures must be seen against the background of this rather problematic relationship between the Chinese minority and the indigenous population on Bali. The Balinese use the Putri Cina and the Raja Bali as a medium to define collectively their attitude towards this minority. As a medium, however, Barong Landung figures are morally neutral. The message that is associated with the black and white masks and is disseminated through myths, legends, songs, and dialogues can be both integrative and segregative. In any case, it is society in the Durkheimian sense speaking to its members.²⁴

Today the Barong Landung figures have rather an integrative impact with regard to the coexistence of Balinese and Chinese on Bali. They emphasize that both sides took advantage of the rapprochement of Hinduism and Buddhism in Bali ("Spirit of Balingkang") and the cultural and economic progress introduced by the Putri Cina. Yet there are enough "uncoded elements" (to use a term from Fredrik Barth) that the story could be told differently and with different social implications, elements that have to do with adultery, jealousy, and barrenness. If these elements are stressed, it is also possible to opt for segregation through the medium of Barong Landung. However, the quality of the relationship between the Balinese and Chinese is expressed and shaped by Barong Landung in one way or the other. Only current ethnographic research on this symbol system will be able to clarify which option Barong Landung figures will choose in the near future.

Translocal or Transcultural?

The myths and legends connected with Barong Landung figures convey how global processes are perceived at the local level in Bali. The general modus of these stories clearly expresses the idea that the Hindu-Balinese do not restrict their religion and culture to their island. Instead they have a rather translocal or *transcultural* understanding of what it means to be Balinese.

The term *transculturality* is another neologism that has emerged in the course of the spatial turn and the space-oriented paradigm. Among the first to use this term for the diagnosis of the so-called postmodern world was the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (1987, 1999). However, what he introduced as a new conception is simply common sense for many Hindu-Balinese. At least from a Hindu-Balinese perspective there is nothing new as far as the conception of transculturality is concerned. This, at least, is what this paper will finally aim to demonstrate by juxtaposing this conception with some Hindu-Balinese principles.

In his writings, Welsch not only rejects the traditional concept of culture as unificatory, folk-bound, and separatory, he also rejects the

conceptions of *interculturality* and *multiculturalism* for related reasons. Interculturality is criticized for still proceeding “from a conception of cultures as islands or spheres”, while multiculturalism, according to Welsch, is also based on the “island-premise”, the only difference being that these cultures now exist within one and the same state community (Welsch 1999, p. 3).

These conceptions, which had already been criticized by Augé (1995) for referring to cultures as isolated islands, have, according to Welsch, no capacity to grasp the form of contemporary cultures: “Today’s cultures are deeply entangled with and continually penetrate one another” (Welsch 1999, p. 1). In other words: “They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called *transcultural* insofar that it *passes through* classical cultural boundaries” (ibid., p. 3).

The idea that cultures “penetrate one another” is expressed by the Hindu-Balinese on a symbolic level with the marriage between the Putri Cina and the Raja Bali: before their wedding could take place, husband and/or bride had to migrate and overcome imagined and real boundaries erected through different cultural traditions and religious belongings.

According to Welsch, the conceptions of interculturality and multiculturalism ignore the fact that “most of us are cultural hybrids” (Welsch 1999, p. 1), which did not involve the uniformization or homogenization of cultures, but rather led to new forms of cultural diversity. This idea is also clearly expressed in the narratives of the Hindu-Balinese: the intermarriage of members of two different cultures did not produce a uniform or homogenous culture, but originated a new one, i.e. the Balinese culture. Against this background, the self-conception of the Balinese has to be called hybrid in so far as they perceive themselves as a crossover of different cultural traditions.

What is disturbing in Welsch’s arguments is the underlying time scheme: according to him, cultures started to become entangled with one another only in recent times. This, however, is contradicted by Hindu-Balinese thinking as expressed through the medium of Barong Landung. As these “giant puppets” clearly indicate, India, China, and Bali started to mix already since the beginning of historical times.

There is no proceeding from isolated cultures to interculturality and finally to transculturality. According to the understanding of the Hindu-Balinese, cultures were always interconnected through a flow of people, ideas, and artefacts. Like the black and white figures, which always perform as a couple, cultures never remain alone.

This, however, is not to question the fact that in the course of time migratory processes became wider, communication systems faster, and economic interdependencies stronger. Yet hybridization does not only characterize cultures in modern times: cultural contacts have always been the norm, completely isolated cultures the exception.

Welsch does not deny the historical dimensions of these processes. Indeed, by referring to a passage from the German writer Carl Zuckmayer, he even gives an example of "factual historic transculturality" (Welsch 1999, p. 5), though he restricts his example to the European context. In doing so he makes Europe an *island* itself vis-à-vis influences from other non-European sources. In this context Indonesia again is an impressive example: when the first European ships arrived in the Indonesian archipelago in the early sixteenth century, Arabian, Indian, and Chinese vessels were already there. Cultural relationships between these countries had existed already for centuries and had left their traces in the languages spoken in this region: more than fifty per cent of the old Javanese language, Kawi, consists of words from Indian, Arabian, and Chinese sources (Radicchi 1996, p. 298ff.).

Beyond these critical remarks, Welsch arrives at some profound insights. For him, "the recognition of a degree of internal foreignness forms the prerequisite for the acceptance of the external foreign" (Welsch 1996, p. 6). Barong Landung figures represent this "internal foreignness", reminding the Hindu-Balinese that the Chinese have been at home on their island since the beginning of historical times. Therefore it is not just a matter of chance that the Balinese have this Putri Cina and show, at least today, a degree of tolerance towards the ethnic Chinese which is quite unusual in other parts of Indonesia.

Barong Landung figures are a symbolic expression of entanglement, intermixing and commonness, and ultimately they indicate that the Balinese perceive themselves as the result of exchange and interaction. The concept of transculturality promoted by Welsch is perfectly mirrored in some Hindu-Balinese conceptions that are symbolically expressed through the Raja Bali and his Putri Cina. With these figures, the Balinese remind themselves on the symbolic level that foreign influences are constitutive of their own culture. They undercut the polarity between self and other by referring to the other as part of themselves.²⁵

Final Remarks

This paper has attempted to apply some of the concepts of the spatial turn to Hindu-Balinese thinking in order to bring out certain particularities of this world view and ethos. According to the Hindu-Balinese, their ancestors came from Java, their religion from India, and some of their cultural traits from China. They see the origin of themselves as well as the roots of their religion and culture as lying outside their island and therefore have a hybrid perception of themselves. Taking the different locations and localities into account, they perceive themselves in rather global dimensions.

The Barong Landung figures articulate these dimensions on the levels of myth, legend, song, and dialogue. They have been used in this paper to reverse the perspective and to bring out some of the particularities of the new space-oriented paradigm. This was possible since the conceptions of translocality and transculturality are expressed on the symbolic level through this interethnic couple, who once migrated to Bali to establish new forms of religion and culture on the island. At the same time, processes of global transfer and exchange across real or imagined borders were made intelligible on the local level. Finally, it became clear that space is organized and place is founded in Bali in a way that transcends the boundaries of this small island.

This does not mean that it is impossible to localize Balinese culture. In Hindu-Balinese conceptions, Bali is where the Balinese cremate, commemorate, and worship their (deified) ancestors. This implies that anyone wanting to convert to the Hindu-Balinese religion has to transfer the graves of his ancestors to this island. To worship the ancestors is at the core of the Hindu-Balinese religion (Belo 1949, p. 7; Zoete/Spies 1938, p. 86).

It is indeed against the background of ancestor worship that the Barong Landung figures must be seen (Gottowik 2006). The black and white masks represent the earliest ancestors of the Balinese (Kawitan) and remind them at the same time that influences from abroad were constitutive of the origins not only of themselves as a people, but also of their religion and culture. Indian and Chinese influences in particular are visualized in these figures, and the fact that they once married each other in Bali made them part of their own genealogy and culture. Barong Landung figures are a reminder that these influences across borders and boundaries have always been there. They are a cognitive tool with which the Hindu-Balinese collectively define their relationships among themselves, as well as against the Chinese minority in their island.

However, these insights are not specific to the Hindu-Balinese. To integrate foreign elements into one's own genealogy is characteristic of many small-scale societies who try to associate themselves with cultures they perceive to be high cultures and with whom they therefore seek affiliation. The classifications introduced by Western thinking, on the contrary, have the side-effect that they emphasize real or imagined boundaries. There is, however, a crucial difference between Western and Hindu-Balinese conceptions: whereas in Bali these conceptions are legitimized by religion, in the West they are open to debate.

NOTES

1. This is an expanded version of a paper prepared for the 4th meeting of a scientific network on "The Religious Dynamics in Southeast Asia". This

- network, established in 2007, is sponsored by the German Research Council, and the topic of the 4th meeting, which took place at the beginning of May 2009 in Goettingen, Germany, was "Migration and Religion in Transnational Contexts".
2. "Heterotopias" are defined by Foucault as real places "which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia" in which all the other real sites of a given culture "are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 1984, p. 3). Heterotopias, according to Foucault, are "outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (ibid.). As examples of these places, Foucault mentioned barracks and prisons, psychiatric hospitals and rest homes, brothels and cemeteries, museums and libraries. All these places have in common that the given norms of a particular epoch or culture do not fully predominate there. Therefore they provide the possibility not only to critically reflect upon these norms, but also to call them into question. Since the term "heterotopias" can be traced to a radio lecture Foucault gave as far back as 1966, the French philosopher can be seen as a forerunner of the spatial turn for which Appadurai and his concept of "ethnoscapes" later became well known. According to Appadurai, ethnoscapes refer to "the landscapes of group identity" and express the idea that "groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous" (Appadurai 1991, p. 191). Ethnoscapes are profoundly interactive, but the group identities to which they refer sometimes exist only in the imagination (ibid., pp. 192, 202).
 3. What I call here in quite general terms "the Hindu-Balinese world view" refers to a couple of principles which are well known to almost all adherents of the Hindu-Balinese religion. These principles can be called the *theory* of this religion. That these principles are observed and interpreted in *practice* in different ways by different social groups (men and women, old and young, rich and poor) is taken for granted.
 4. Ulrike Freitag is director of the Zentrum Moderner Orient/ZMO, a research institute located in Berlin, Germany, devoted to the interdisciplinary study of the Middle East, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia from a historical perspective.
 5. In fact, most Balinese perceive themselves as a people. The criteria for being Balinese are, according to them, to be born in Bali, to speak the Balinese language, and to adhere to the Hindu-Balinese religion. The concept of "the Balinese people" became a strong boundary marker against Javanese and Chinese groups, as well as against Muslim and Christian denominations in Indonesia — even when this concept exists first of all in the hearts and minds of "the Balinese". It exists — in the sense of Benedict Anderson (1985) — in their imagination, but is powerful enough to bridge internal differences with

regard to caste, gender, age etc. and to establish a social unit ("the Balinese people"), even when — let us say — many Balinese farmers have more in common with Javanese farmers than with Balinese intellectuals. The intention of this paper is, however, to demonstrate that the origin of this unit is not projected by the Balinese actors into an undefined historical past. On the contrary, according to them this unit derives fairly recently from sources that are quite different in regard to gender, age, class, religion, and culture.

6. The Hindu-Balinese have many ways of thinking about time depending on the context in which they are referring to it (Bloch 1989, p. 9ff.). The belief in reincarnation, however, is central to their world view, which contains the idea of being reborn again and again into one's own family. There are strong indications that this perspective — reincarnation among the members of one's own family or lineage — is more tempting than *moksa*, the unification with the divine (Hornbacher 2008, p. 71).
7. The following statements on Barong Landung figures are based on intensive fieldwork conducted on Bali between 1997 and 2003. Ethnographic findings resulting from this research have been published previously in Gottowik 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2010.
8. A lot of ethnographic work has been conducted on Rangda and Barong Ket, a zoomorphic Barong character often described as a mixture of a lion and a dragon; the classic on this topic is Belo (1949). By contrast, Barong Landung figures never became the object of systematic ethnographic research, though mentioned in Covarrubias 1937, Zoete/Spies 1938, Belo 1960, Bandem/deBoer 1995, and Eiseman 1995.
9. It is crucial to note that not all Hindu-Balinese have Barong Landung figures. Both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic Barong figures are almost exclusively restricted to south and southeast Bali (for an exception, see Spies 1933 and Mead 1939). Therefore it is difficult to make general statements about the Hindu-Balinese and their use of masks and masquerades in connection with the Barong.
10. For a systematic description of the ritual activities of Barong Landung figures, see Gottowik 2005, pp. 189–250.
11. The term "pornography" may appear inappropriate in this context. The local actors, however, refer to the black man and the white lady as being engaged in *porno sekali*. And this — performing sexual intercourse in public — is the central feature of this unequal couple.
12. Almost all worshippers know exactly about the ritual occasions on which Barong Landung figures are activated and they can provide details about the sacrifices which have to be offered to receive protection from them. But whom these figures represent remains vague beyond the plain fact that the female character represents a Putri Cina who was married to her black companion.

- The clear emphasis that is given to rituals (and not to myths and legends) is in accordance with Geertz's characterization of the Hindu-Balinese religion: "The stress is on orthopraxy, not orthodoxy" (Geertz 1973b, p. 177).
13. According to the mythical version, the Barong Landung figures represent the earliest ancestors of the Balinese (Kawitan); these ancestors, an Indo-Chinese couple, were also the first inhabitants of Bali. There are other versions, however, which give other explanations for the existence of black and white "giant puppets" on Bali.
 14. The concept of cultural hybridity goes back to Homi Bhabba (1990) and the aim of overcoming binary oppositions and crude dichotomies. The frontiers and boundaries between one's own culture and a foreign culture are blurred, and divergence and equality are no longer perceived as contradictions. The concept of hybridity, however, also implies that the frontiers which were shifted or even suspended between cultures were at least partly transferred into these cultures themselves. Such a suspension of frontiers and displacement of oppositions meets Hindu-Balinese concepts as far as they are reflected in the myths and legends that go along with Barong Landung figures.
 15. As a young man this Mayadenawa rejected the religion of his parents and invaded the whole island in warfare. It was Indra and his divine hosts who were finally able to stop and destroy him. This episode in the mythology of Bali casts a dark light on the relationship between Sri Jaya Pangus and Devi Danu and surrounds their love with a particular ambivalence that characterizes not only this sexual affair but the whole historical version.
 16. The fact that Kang Cing Wi made Sri Jaya Pangus file his teeth before marriage provides an explanation of the fact that there are two different versions of the mask representing the Balinese king: one version with protruding canines, the other one with a row of plain teeth. The myths and legends told about this unequal couple make it clear that one mask represents him before his wedding and the other one afterwards. The explanation the Balinese give of their tooth-filing ritual points out that protruding canines represent the animal-like nature of human beings; to file off these canines therefore reduces particular desires (Sad Ripu) to a socially acceptable degree.
 17. Indeed, the Balinese give different reasons why they perform Matatah, Nyepi and Ngaben, but this simply proves to the ethnic Chinese that the Balinese have not only forgotten about the historical background of their rituals, but also about the real message of Barong Landung.
 18. This paper does not claim to be an ethnography of ethnic Chinese in Bali. It aims solely to demonstrate how different ethnic and religious groups refer to Barong Landung figures to enforce their particular interests.
 19. That symbol systems like Barong Landung could serve as both a *model of* and a *model for* is at the core of symbolic or interpretive anthropology and

- ultimately goes back to Clifford Geertz's influential essay "Religion as a Cultural System" (Geertz 1973a). The crucial point, however, is that Geertz was not aware of either the ambivalent or polysemic character of ritual action, nor of the politics of interpretation that resulted from it.
20. Beyond the two versions which are summarized in this chapter, there is a third one which could be called the *magical* version, since it refers to the magic or apotropaic powers of Barong Landung figures (Gottowik 2005, p. 295ff.). According to this version, the black mask refers not to an Indian prince or a Balinese king, but to a demon called Ratu Gedé Mecaling. This demon lives on the neighbouring island of Nusa Penida, but from time to time it comes to Bali to bring cholera and other deadly diseases to those who have not shown him sufficient respect and ritual attention. According to this version, the black mask was carved as an exact replica of the appearance of this demon and was used to chase him away from Bali. On particular ritual occasions connected with, for example, the spring equinox (Melasti), the black mask is directed towards Nusa Penida to menace this demon and to prevent him from returning to Bali. However, this version provides no explanation for the fact that the black mask is always accompanied by a white mask which refers to a Chinese lady. In this context, this unequal couple is probably best understood as representing a cholera demon and a person who has the means to cure the diseases the demon spreads, which, of course, is a reference to traditional Chinese medicine, highly esteemed not only in Bali.
 21. The fact that China is perceived as an older and therefore higher culture than Bali is expressed in the level of Barong Landung through the appearance of the white lady, who clearly shows signs of over-age femaleness: her hair is grey, her breasts are pendulous, her ear-lobes worn out etc. Her Balinese husband, in contrast, is obviously much younger, as his hairy black body and virile behaviour clearly indicate. However, it is crucial to note that here again ambivalence comes into play: the Putri Cina is highly appreciated for her age and wisdom, but since it is forbidden to marry an older and (according to the caste system) higher woman (anthropologists call this hypogamy), the marriage between the Balinese king and his Chinese wife represents a forbidden relationship.
 22. Further religious transformations as well as new religions in Bali are described in Howe 2005.
 23. During these riots, when everybody who was supposed to be a communist or Chinese (which was obviously the same for many of the perpetrators) was killed, not even Barong Landung could provide any protection. Since almost no ethnographic research has been done on these sacred figures until recently, it is unknown what kind of message they provided for the Balinese when these riots took place. For a history of violence in Bali, see Robinson 1995.

24. What is disseminated through Barong Landung figures is to a great extent untouched by modern tourism. Neither mass tourism nor "cultural tourism" (Picard 1992) have yet been able to transform Barong Landung performances into a profane entertainment or a commercial enterprise. It is exclusively Barong Ket, the fabulous beast, which became the object of tourist shows in, for example, the village of Batubulan. In sharp contrast to this commoditization of Balinese traditions, Barong Landung figures remain a vivid expression of popular religious beliefs on Bali to the present day.
25. The idea that outside influences are constitutive of the local culture is quite common in, for example, eastern Indonesia as well (Fox 2009).

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Zee TV and the Creation of Hindi Media Communities in
Singapore

Book Reviews