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Manifestations of Presence in Korea and Bali

Crossroads, Intersections, Divergences

Korean shaman rituals (*kut*) and Balinese temple festivals (*odalan*) display presence: gods, ancestors, and restless ghosts in Korea; oscillations between demonic and divine in Bali. Both rituals require an artful construction of space, music, costumes, and, in Bali, masks to convey an emotionally resonant sense of encounter. Our discussion begins at the point of intersection between these two traditions, the crossroads from which we follow their divergence, contrasting the work of a shaman (*mansin*) in Korea with the combination of an entranced medium (*pemundut*) and a mask empowered by a local tutelary (*sesuhunan*) in Bali as ultimately very different visual realizations of presence, or "display" in the context of this volume's discussion. We consider how the powerful entities that Korean *kut* and Balinese *odalan* engage are ontologically realized through different deployments of bodies and objects in ritual space. The idea of crossroads, intersections, and divergences permits a deeper understanding of resonance and contrast than might be subsumed by the broad headings of "possession rituals" or "ritual theater."

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Korean[1] shaman rituals (*kut*) and Balinese temple festivals (*odalan*) are richly constructed displays of presence, an "unfurling" in Katherine Swancutt's (2023) terms of gods, ancestors, and restless ghosts in the Korean case, and in Bali of forces that oscillate between demonic and divine in an active contestation with practitioners of black magic. Both ritual processes assume lavish displays, artful constructions of space, music, and material properties such as costumes, props, and, in Bali, masks. All of these elements, realized through no small human effort, create a sense of time and space "at odds with the normal" (Taussig 2009, 8), wherein performers and spectators—to their different degrees of engagement—encounter entities and processes otherwise unseen but now compellingly realized in visual forms (or not, in the case of poor performance and failed ritual). In both Korea and Bali, efficacy occurs through skilled performance—by an inspired shaman (*mansin*) in Korea, and in Bali through the conjoining of a mask and its empowering invisible energies to make a local tutelary god or *sesuhunan* and an entranced medium who bears the *sesuhunan* embodied in the mask he carries on his head.[2] In the Korean example, greedy gods and restless ancestors are feasted, entertained, and mollified, their goodwill restored such that the sponsor's fortunes are transformed.[3] In the Balinese temple festival, the *sesuhunan* draws out and neutralizes demonic forces for the collective benefit of the community. Both systems assume the impermanence of their resolutions; in Bali, demonic and divine are in perpetual oscillation, like changing seasons, and in Korea, the appetites of gods and ancestors are stated, but only for a while.[4]

If these rituals—the *kut* in Korea or the *odalan* in Bali—are successful, a sense of transformation is accomplished through an unbinding of tension and anxiety. Success is also measured retrospectively through local readings of what happens next in the world of mundane fortune, through whatever befalls the participants soon enough after the ritual to be read as consequential. Both the *kut* and the *odalan* are high-stakes rituals; they can fail both performatively and in their consequences. In their own logics, well-articulated performance and auspicious consequence are not unrelated. Both the Korean *kut* and the Balinese *odalan* are highly theatrical ritual forms, visual spectacles that in both places have a double life as performance art. In South Korea, *mansin* and their non-*mansin* apprentices give heritage performances of *kut* on secular stages; some *mansin* hold the official government designation as "heritage-bearer" (*poyuja*), exemplary performers of rituals that have been designated as Important Intangible Cultural Properties (*Chungyo Muhyŏng Munhwajae*). In Bali, performances

of temple dances and dramas for tourists have been a daily occurrence for decades, often involving the same performers and sometimes using the same masks as are mustered for an *odalan* in a temple (Picard 1996). Secular versions of both *kut* and the climactic demon-transforming dramas that are part of the *odalan*, and our focus here, are performed on theater stages and at arts festivals all over the world.

None of this is surprising; there are parallels in many other places. What we have said thus far about the performance of Balinese *odalan* and Korean *kut* could be subsumed under the broad heading of "possession rituals" or "ritual theater" as described in many places beyond Bali and South Korea. Most of us have been there before (e.g., Laderman and Roseman 1996). In our discussion here, however, we take convergence as the point of intersection, the crossroads where South Korean *kut* meets the Balinese *odalan* and from which these two distinctive roads then veer off in their own directions. The idea is one of crossroads, intersections, and divergences, the invitation to see our material together and apart, to think about the different premises through which presence comes to be realized in theatrical display. The crossroads metaphor enables an understanding of the resonances and contrasts between a *kut* in Korea and an *odalan* in Bali, how things that fall comfortably under the same heading—such as "ritual drama"—may in fact be very different both ontologically and in each ontology's visual realization. To use Stephan Feuchtwang's (2011) term, we will be exploring two different "regimes of visibility," one realized in a shaman's body, and the other in an empowered mask.

Bali: The *odalan*, the mask, the medium

In Bali, Indonesia, it is estimated that almost 90 percent of the population follows the Balinese form of Hinduism, but religious beliefs and practices have developed various local characteristics that include a focus on worship of the ancestors and so-called "animist" beliefs that distinguish Balinese Hinduism from Hinduism as practiced on the Indian subcontinent. Balinese recognize five categories of ritual, known collectively as the *Panca Yadnya*: *Dewa Yadnya* to venerate deities, *Manusa Yadnya* to mark the life cycle, *Resi Yadnya* to initiate priests, *Bhuta Yadnya* to appease demonic spirits, and *Pitra Yadnya* to purify the souls of the recently deceased. All Balinese rituals are inextricably linked to performing arts, most notably to music and dance. There is no religious ceremony in Bali without its attendant art forms, and nearly all forms of Balinese artistic expression—dance, music, carving, and even the subjects of much secular painting—have ultimate sources in and often an explicit link to religious action. Even a performance art as "secular" as the flirtation dance called *Joged Bumbung* will never be performed without a prior blessing of the stage and the ornate headdress of the dancers, and the dance itself adds an auspicious note to the conclusion of ceremonies like the three-month blessing of a child, when the father or grandfather briefly takes the male role in the dance while carrying the child. Secular performances for tourists begin, like any other performance, with the sacred elements of incense, offerings, and prayers, raising the possibility of a mustering of invisible forces, as evidenced on those rare occasions when a performer falls into deep trance in front of an audience of tourists.

The *odalan* that concern us here are *Dewa Yadnya*, rituals performed for deities, temple festivals that are most often timed according to the 210-day Balinese sacred year (*Pawukon*).[5] *Odalan* are the melting point where the *sekala* and *niskala*—visible and invisible beings—interact with each other. Each village in Bali has at least three temples, and each of these three temples is a site of religious focus and custodial responsibility for a temple community.[6] The temple community is responsible for organizing the *odalan*.[7] The setting for an *odalan* is artistically constructed; the shrines in the temples are decorated with colorful traditional umbrellas, banners with images of deities, and elaborate offerings made from fruits, flowers, and meats. People go to the *odalan* in their best traditional costumes to pray and also to socialize. Temples are very lively during the festival. The men of the temple community play the gong ensembles of the gamelan orchestra or work in the community kitchen of the temple, while the women are busy with preparing offerings of plaited palm leaves, flowers, and foodstuffs, placing them at appropriate points in the temple, or taking part in processions, as when women perform the stately *Pendet* dance to welcome the deities on their return from a lustration of water from the temple's holy spring or river.

An *odalan* lasts over several days and includes many different types of performance, all sacred (*wali*) but some more sacred than others (figure 1).[8] Sacredness is also calibrated in relation to the spaces in which different activities take place over the duration of the festival. A Balinese temple is divided into three ascending courtyards that are sites for different degrees of sacred activity. The outer courtyard (*jaba sisi*) has an atmosphere something like a county fair in the United States and is the place for dances, shadow plays, and other performances aimed at pleasing the temple goers, "entertainments to be watched" (*balih-balihan*) and open to all. The middle courtyard (*jaba tengah*) is where final preparations are made for the many offerings that are

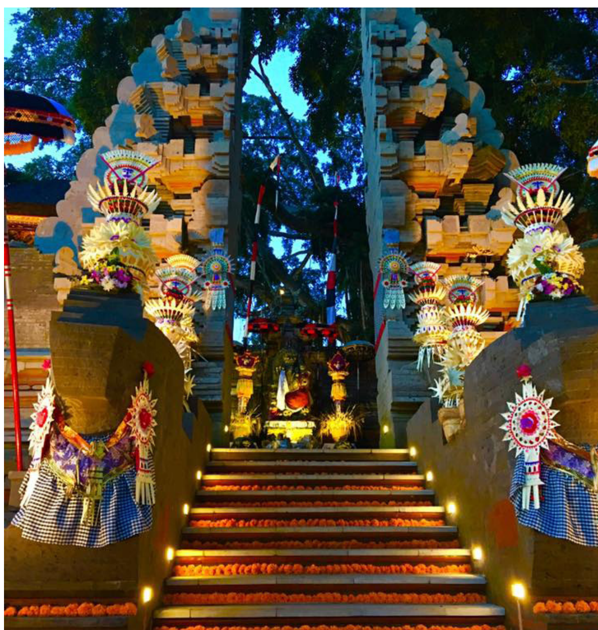

Figure 1. Main Gate (Candi Bentar) of the Pura Dalem Ubud decorated for an *odalan*, 2017. Photograph by Laurel Kendall.

Figure 2. Rangda appears at the odalan, Pura Dalem Ubud, 2017. Photograph by Wayan Ariati.

brought to the temple for blessing by all the community members and where the musical ensembles perform, such that the middle courtyard is often alive with the resonant and exciting sounds of the Balinese gamelan orchestra. Performances here accomplish important ritual work and can only be watched by those who are wearing temple attire. The inner courtyard (*jeroan*) holds the most sacred shrines, sites for solemn worship of the deities that is accomplished by offering flowers with hands outstretched in prayer-like fashion and completed with a blessing of holy water. This is also the space where the most sacred dances are performed and where the masks/ local tutelaries reside.[9]

The divine and demonic are most intensely present in the performance of masks that embody the *sesuhunan*, masks borne on the heads and shoulders of their designated human mediums as they descend from the inner courtyard into the crowded central courtyard during an *odalan*. The appearance of fanged Rangda in the Calon Arang play is a riveting moment—Rangda with bulging eyes, lolling tongue, and wild hair; Rangda the queen of the *léyak*, women who gather in cemeteries and work black magic on their neighbors (figure 2). Rangda's appearance here and Rangda's encounters with the lion-like Barong Ket may be the single most dangerous and consequential element of the *odalan*, abundantly described, filmed, and photographed by anthropologists and performance scholars.[10] Rangda feints and parries with the lion-like Barong, she is attacked by *keris*-bearing trancers, but her own force field causes them to stab their *keris* blades at their own chests and collapse into deep trance, eventually revived with holy water (*tirta*) poured through the Barong's beard. In the Calon Arang play, an aggrieved widow practicing black arts in a cemetery gains

sufficient power to transform herself into terrifying Rangda, leading her demonic *léyak* followers in sowing pestilence throughout the land. Patih Agung, the King's Minister who has been commissioned to kill Rangda, makes an inconclusive attack. Rangda's appearance in the inner courtyard culminates with her sprinting down from the temple and running toward the cemetery, transformed now into a protective but still scarily powerful tutelary who challenges and neutralizes practitioners of black magic in her path (Geertz 1994, 81). She will return to the nearly empty temple for a final placation of demonic forces. Through the actions of the masks, the entranced medium, and the supportive work of the other performers and musicians, this powerful visual manifestation of presence does the ritual work that transforms what was demonic into what becomes, for a time, divine, a protective tutelary presence. As theater scholar John Emigh observes, the dramatic structure gives the expectation of a fixed narrative, which, in the Calon Arang play, includes anticipated comic interludes and other business. The expectation of a fixed performance is reinforced by tourist performances, but the powers brought forth by the mustering of demonic and divine forces can disrupt the anticipated frame of a ritual drama. The Barong might not drive back Rangda, or Rangda might leave the temple before the Barong even appears; what matters is that the energies embodied in the masks be danced (Emigh 1984, 30–33).

Rangda in the Calon Arang play and Rangda's engagement with the Barong Ket may be the most iconic expression of ritual transformation through the visual medium of masks in the context of an *odalan*, but other masks have been deployed to similar work. *Topeng Sidhakarya*, a culminating masked ceremonial performance enacting a white-haired old man, also occurs in the middle courtyard (figure 3). "Sidhakarya" means "accomplished ritual," and the performance of the dance puts a final auspicious seal on all that has transpired in the temple space. The uncanny appearance of this old man's mask with bulging eyes, wild hair, and protruding buck teeth is both comical and slightly frightening, factors that may account for why this mask is prone to trigger trance states among members of some village congregations. While the performer who takes on the mask of Sidhakarya usually meditates in anticipation of his performance, he is not usually taken over by deep trance in the manner of the medium who becomes Rangda. As theater scholar John Emigh describes it, the *Topeng* masked play of which Sidhakarya is a part is performed in the idiom of a visitation from another world, but in most instances, it is

Figure 3. Performance of Topeng Sidhakarya, Ubud, 2017. Photograph by Laurel Kendall.

understood more as sacred entertainment for the divine spectators than as a full incarnation in the manner of Rangda and the Barong (Emigh 1996, 115–16). Unlike the medium under the temple mask, *Topeng* performers are, in most instances, skilled and highly trained performers, and even some talented non-Balinese have been welcomed as students of *Topeng*. And yet, a full generalization does not hold. In at least one community known to us, the Sidhakarya mask is known to have uncanny power, the wearer to have been in some sense "chosen" by the *sesuhunan*.

In what may be even more of a departure from type, a temple in the residential complex of the former rulers of Ubud has incorporated a new mask into the array of spiritual images that have become an active part of current belief and practice: Ratu Gede Gombrang, "The Great Lord Gombrang" or simply Jero Amerika, a mask returned from abroad after demonstrating its uncanny power. The mask is of old woman Celuluk, a comic role, but Jero Amerika has switched genders and gained a sacred gravitas equivalent to a Rangda, appearing at the *odalan* to do the protective work expected of a *sesuhunan*, sprinting out of the temple and running through the town and its surround to challenge practitioners of black magic. Jero Amerika speaks Old Javanese (*Bahasa Kawi*) as the Rangdas do rather than in the bawdy colloquialisms of the old woman, and appears, as the Rangdas do, in an enclosing cloak. Like Rangda's medium, the body of Jero Amerika's medium is wrapped with a special fabric (*cepuk*) from Nusa Penida Island used for rituals, and with the black-and-white cloth (*kamen poleng*) that is also wrapped around sacred figures. In other words, Jero Amerika is a *sesuhunan*, described by one of our conversation partners as a "sacred figure supported and held high by the community," a mask so powerful that it can protect the community members from all manner of calamities (Kendall and Ariati 2020).

The mask, more than a bit of theatrical artifice, is the agentive presence that channels otherwise invisible energies, and it is the ritual work of the *odalan* to transform the realization of these energies from demonic to divine. An efficacious mask must be enlivened (*idup*), charismatic, exalted (*berwibawa*/*wibawa*), and, above all, charged with a magical and potentially dangerous power (*tenget*) analogous to an electrical current. Such a mask is carved by someone who has a deep store of personal power, or *sakti*, which he has cultivated through meditation and esoteric practice. The carver's work is a ritual act as much as an expression of good craftsmanship. Offerings rest at his side while he works in a state of near-meditative concentration, chanting appropriate mantras at different stages of the process (Eiseman 1990, 207; Wiener 1995, 55–56). Once the mask is complete, a Brahmin priest ritually purifies (*melaspas*, *melaspasin*) the mask and then ensouls (*pasupati*) it, installing five sacred elements (*panca dathu*)[11] inside the mask that act as conductors for the forces or energies that will empower it. The final enlivening (*ngeréh*) takes place in a cemetery in deep midnight, where, in an atmosphere of rising tension, the activation of the mask is confirmed in a burst of light, usually experienced as a waking vision.[12]

Thus far we have been speaking of masks and the realization of powerful entities through masks. The entranced medium who bears the mask/*sesuhunan* during an *odalan* is, with the carver and the priest, a man who has cultivated a deep personal store of *sakti*. He is someone who has been chosen for this work by forces in the unseen world, the *niskala*, who have revealed their intentions for the medium of a

particular *sesuhunan* during a temple ceremony by such means as a medium's voice or a priest's waking dream. Like *mansin* in Korea, and like shamans and spirit mediums in many traditions, those who are chosen in this way cannot reject their spiritual obligation; to do so would risk calamity. The medium who bears the mask/*sesuhunan* does not need to be trained to this role in order to perform in a temple festival the way that masked performers for *Topeng* are trained, but to do this dangerous work it is essential that he be a man of considerable *sakti*. Stories are told of mediums with insufficient *sakti* who succumb to the stab thrusts of the *keris* blades aimed at Rangda. Some mediums gain renown as vehicles for extraordinary manifestations of presence. When the late Bapak Rarem from Peliatan was chosen to be the medium for Jero Amerika, he was already an old man, but when he took on the mask of Jero Amerika, he became filled with the *sesuhunan*'s power and energy. Spectators remembered how, by the end of the performance, Jero Amerika would run as though flying, "patrolling" Ubud and the neighboring villages to make sure that their inhabitants were protected from evildoers both seen and unseen. But even with a nod to Bapak Rarem as a man of extraordinary *sakti*, a man of power who was capable of bearing such a powerful mask, these activities were locally read as a measure of the mask Jero Amerika's empowerment by a noteworthy *sesuhunan*, which propelled the aged medium in his remarkable performance.

Kut: Gods, costumes, and shaman bodies

In Korea we encounter a different relationship of body, image, and inspirational energy from what we have seen in Bali. "Korean shamanism" (*musok*, *mugyo*) is often described as Korea's most indigenous and ancient religion, but whatever its roots, shamanship is an adaptive practice that draws, sponge-like, on the social surround. Korean shaman practice is infused with Confucian and Buddhist notions of cosmology, causality, morality, and the afterlife, as well as notions of gods, ancestors, and ghosts that are recognizable throughout East Asia, albeit they express themselves in recognizably Korean ways and address the immediate concerns of living Koreans. As a shaman, the *mansin*[13] is chosen by the gods and empowered to engage with them, to learn their will and call on their power to secure auspicious outcomes and banish impure and inauspicious forces. In contemporary Korea, auspicious outcomes are often a matter of business success. Korean shamanship involves inspiration but also the mastery of skill, most particularly the artful articulation of words, song, performance business, and, most particularly, the inspired speech of compelling divinations (*kongsu*). *Kut* are the primary and most visually realized occasions for these transactions. *Mansin* do divinations and perform a range of smaller rituals, from exorcisms to inducements of the birth spirit into an infertile womb, but *kut* is their most elaborate, significant, and expensive ritual vehicle. During *kut*, *mansin* mark the presence of a succession of gods by garbing themselves in a series of costumes approximating antique dress and conveying appropriate voice and body affect for each manifesting god. The country *kut* that form the basis of this discussion did not match the artful decorations and entertainments produced through the collective efforts of a Balinese community for a temple festival. Even so, all *kut*, even the most

Figure 4. *Kut* for the dead performed in the courtyard as a spatial compromise, 2003. Photograph by Laurel Kendall.

humble, include careful arrangements of offerings, fruits, cakes, and candy, which combine with the costumes of the *mansin*, candlelight, and incense to create a colorful scenescape different from that of the everyday. In contemporary urban *kut*, the offerings have become more ostentatious (although not necessarily more beautiful) and the costumes more spectacular. Rather than the household preparations of the remembered past, the *mansin* usually take charge of catered offerings, and the lavishness and waste sometimes involved in making a good show has provoked critical social commentary.

Into the 1970s, most *kut* were performed in and around traditional Korean houses, structures facing small courtyards enclosed by walls and gated. This is where Laurel Kendall encountered *kut* during her first fieldwork and where Korean and Japanese ethnologists had described them (Kendall 1985). The gods were invoked outside the house gate and then inside on the narrow wooden veranda. Gods from high mountains were greeted beside an outdoor platform where tall earthen jars of condiments were stored beside the house. Most of the action of the *kut* would take place under the main roof beam on the open veranda, the residence of Sŏngju, the House Lord, while family members and spectators crowded the doorways of the adjoining rooms or bundled next to the *mansin* team who accompanied their colleague with drum and cymbals. The birth spirit (Samsin Halmŏni) appeared in the inner room. As the *kut* wound toward conclusion, the action moved down again to the courtyard, where the House Site Official (T'ŏju Taegam) libated the perimeters of his domain, and eventually the action went out the gate as wandering ghosts and other unclean forces were purged from the house and carried away. If family dead were to be sent to paradise (*chinogi*/*chinogwi kut*), this too would happen outside the gate, as a *mansin* manifesting a lachrymose ancestral presence would move directionally away from the house while navigating the roads out of hell and into paradise. In more cramped residential circumstances or when, as in recent years, an urban population holds their *kut* in the *mansin*'s own shrine or in rented commercial facilities, compromises are made (figure 4). Thus while the environmental theater

(following Schechner 1985) of a Balinese temple constructs ritual space and ritual performances within that space as a layered and hierarchically restricted access to sacredness, the environmental theater of a *kut* casts a visible encounter between the living household and its gods and ancestors within the metaphoric structure of the physical house itself, the common space that living family, house tutelary gods, and ancestors share day to day, its boundaries secured through the ritual and unclean entities cast away, at least for a time.[14] In the past, *kut* were also held on behalf of villages, although rarely by the 1970s, and sometimes collectively on behalf of lineages. On these occasions boundaries of entrance and exit were marked in ways analogous to *kut* held in private homes, and the community in question became like a household for the common intentions of the ritual. In the twenty-first century, South Korea is an almost completely urbanized society, and most *kut* are held in the rented rooms of commercial *kuttang*, establishments that rent out space for this purpose, but the palimpsest of interior space, courtyard, and space outside the walls may be discerned in the ways these *kut* are staged.

In *kut*, the *mansin* manifests several gods in a single performance, wearing their costumes, enacting their characteristic gestures, and speaking their words. She[15] garbs herself in clothing appropriate to each god, usually layers of clothing for a predetermined sequence of gods that are peeled off to mark transitions from the highest-ranked god to each in a series of subordinate deities. She dances to the cadence of drum and symbols, and when inspiration strikes her, begins to jump and spin on the balls of her feet, pounding her arms to a rising crescendo of percussive sound. A flick of her arm, then silence. She speaks in the persona of each god, assuming the characteristic gestures of an imperious king or general, a venal lower official, a flighty maiden, a weeping ancestor (figure 5). Sometimes she twists her face into a particular

Figure 5. Mischievous dead sister-in-law appears; client (behind) is amused, 1977. Photograph by Laurel Kendall.

Figure 6. Petulant birth grandmother (*mansin* in white costume) berates client for neglect, 1977. Photograph by Laurel Kendall.

affect, a "mask" in the sense of a Grotowskian actor (see Grotowski 1968, figs. 9–12). In character, she/the god examines the lavish piles of offering food and scowls with contempt at the client who is rubbing her hands in urgent supplication (figure 6). In the god's voice, she assesses the client's situation, singing out the disappointments and dangers that are causing the client to sponsor a *kut*, sometimes evoking tears and sometimes inducing laughter. In the persona of a complaining, greedy, or lusty god, she/he berates the client for past neglect in a manner not only intimidating but often humorous. The client bobs a series of contrite bows––"I didn't realize, I didn't know any better"––and the client may enter into the spirit of contestation, "How can I feast you if you don't make me rich? Make me rich, next time I'll take you out for grilled ribs!"[16] When the god is won over, the atmosphere shifts, and the god sings his own praises with lavish promises of succor and good fortune. And then the costume is pulled off revealing another costume underneath, the drum beats pick up again, the *mansin* spins, the music stops, another demanding god is present, and the process is repeated, from castigation to reconciliation with possible surprises of revelation and stage business—the lecherous Official who tweaks the client's breast, wags a phallic dried fish at her, and leers; the flighty young Princess or virgin ghost who briefly gyrates to a disco beat from the drummer, the Child God who runs around the offering tray snatching sweets and saying things that only a child can say: "I don't like you!" When all of the gods in one sequence have been played and all of the costume layers have been peeled off, the *mansin* spins back to herself, an exhausted self, and another *mansin* layers up for the next sequence of gods, the next round of encounters.

This is not a possession ritual. The gods do not move the *mansin*'s lips and body. They do send her inspiration (*myŏnggi*, literally "bright energy")—as dreams, visions, bodily sensations, and sometimes raw intuition such that she views the situation through the eyes of the god she is manifesting and speaks and acts accordingly. Inspiration, as an expression of the gods' favor, is something the *mansin* must cultivate through rigorous acts of devotion. A *mansin* offers daily devotions to the gods who

sit in the paintings in her shrine. She further cultivates her powers by making pilgrimages to sacred mountains, places charged with the presence of divinity; after making offerings and praying zealously, she channels this divine energy back to her shrine through the medium of her own body. When a god "plays well" (*chal norda*) with the *mansin*, the *mansin*'s words are uncannily resonant, the performance is lively, and the spectators respond with laughter, tears, and their own playful banter.[17] When the gods who appear in a *kut* play well with the *mansin*, when the collectivity of gods favors the *mansin*, it is assumed that her *kut* will be efficacious. This is the braided source of an individual *mansin*'s renown: a *mansin* whose *kut* are lively and engaging and a *mansin* whose *kut* are efficacious because the gods have played well and are satisfied, such that they now favor the client's household with good fortune. *Mansin* have been known to characterize themselves as the gods' *kisaeng*, their female entertainers. When inspiration eludes the *mansin* she needs to ad lib; she must get it right, accurately interpret and enact the gods' intentions, or both she and her client will suffer. When the gods do not play well, the *mansin*'s reputation slides, sometimes to ruin. In all of this, the *mansin* is a shaman, one who actively engages the spirits/gods in ways that have social consequence. She is a doer, the one who performs the display; she is not a puppet animated by a god, a characterization often applied to spirit mediums.[18] *Mansin* who are able to orchestrate a fine and consequential mustering of gods and ancestors on their clients' behalf become "great shamans" (*kŭn mansin*).

Discussion

Where do the branching roads lead us? As anticipated in Swancutt's introduction to these articles, Korean *kut* and Balinese *odalan* are spectacular displays that mirror into presence things otherwise unseen (Swancutt 2023, following Feuchtwang 2011). But the two processes of unfurling, unfolding, exhibiting, and revealing are orchestrations in different keys driven by different ontologies in relation to spirit, matter, and bodies. Of course, ours is a selective comparison, not "Bali" and "Korea" but rather two different regimes of display as enabled by temple masks and their mediums in Bali and *mansin* in Korea. Had we chosen, instead, to focus on the work of the traditional Balinese healer, the *balian*, the presentation of facial affect would be significant, and that would be another discussion entirely. Our comparison is justified in that we have brought together two forms of ritual performance that are highly theatricalized, involving embodied performance, musical competence, and a ritually signifying surround. *Kut* and *odalan* are sufficiently resonant as ritual theaters to permit the sort of discussion that might cause us to illuminate the contours of two distinctive visual regimes of ritual practice and signification.

In Korea, we find shamans whose own bodies, voices, and facial affect evoke a mobile and immediate presence, as close as a playful pinch of the breast, a spit of wine on the face, a caress from a weeping ancestor. It is the *mansin* who makes that presence work, both through her cultivation of the divine favor that brings her inspiration and in her own ability to deploy that same inspiration as emotionally resonant performance. These acts of spectacular doing constitute shamanship; a

shaman actively engages the spirits (see Shirokogoroff 1935; Hamayon 2000; and for Korea, Kendall 2021a; Walraven 2009). A *mansin* does the gods' will but is not their animated, entranced puppet, a condition most *mansin* would probably consider easier than what the gods expect of them. In Bali, by contrast, the invisible forces of a *sesuhunan* as a powerful and empowering presence animate the mask. In the *odalan*, the mobility of the medium testifies to the presence of the *sesuhunan* in the mask, but in the first instance, it is the *sesuhunan*/mask that animates the medium, sending him into trance and propelling his actions. While a *kut* is, in some sense, about the *mansin*, a visible test of her abilities and the efficacy of the particular gods she serves, what happens in the appearance of Rangda and Rangda-like entities at an *odalan* is primarily about the power of presence embodied in a particular named mask/ *sesuhunan*, the conjunction of invisible energies (*niskala*) and the carved wooden mask (*tapel*).

Consider how things otherwise unseen become visible in the two distinctive ritual forms of *kut* and *odalan*. The *kut* takes place in and about known and mundane space, not hidden, not veiled. The *mansin* is never not there.[19] She transforms herself in full view, first as her colleagues help her to layer on the gods' costumes, then as she spins herself to the drumming, from which she emerges to speak with their authority. In the manner of good theater, she is not the *mansin* but she is not not the *mansin*; she is not the god (in a one-on-one sense), but she is not not the god as a signifying, prognosticating, commanding presence who needs to be engaged with music, feasting, and banter.

In Bali, the transformation is complete even before the energized mask and entranced medium become a visible presence in the ritual.[20] Rangda emerges from the sacred-most pinnacle of the temple, where the medium meditated and entered the altered state that inspired him to take on the mask. In the arc of the ritual, the spectators never experience the medium's own face. It is the *sesuhunan*/mask that spectators anticipate, while the medium all but disappears under its head-encasing burden and enveloped in his thick cloak. This distinction between the different visual regimes that accompany a Balinese temple mask and a Korean shaman was clarified for Kendall when, after watching an impressive appearance by Jero Amerika at an *odalan*, she spent the better part of a day tracking the medium who had succeeded the renowned Bapak Rarem. Although Kendall was operating on a tip from seemingly well-informed sources, it was the wrong medium. Such a mistake would be virtually impossible after a *kut*. Teri Silvio's (2019) distinction between "performance" and "animation" is useful here, with performance as a primary descriptor for the dancing, miming, and speaking through which the *mansin* gives presence to gods/spirits in Korean *kut*. Like other shamans elsewhere, the *mansin* is a doer whose own marked presence is an inextricable part of the visual realization of the ritual (although some of her ritual props might briefly, and less consequentially, become animated; Kendall 2021b). Animation characterizes the activities of an empowered mask and its medium in Balinese temple festivals, with emphasis on the mobility of an otherwise immobile material subject, the mask/energizing tutelary.[21] Technically, the medium animates the mask, as masks and puppets are animated by those who operate them; ontologically and experientially, the mask/*sesuhunan* animates the medium.

As Silvio (2019) notes, such distinctions are never absolute; mobile materiality in the form of bodies, costumes, props, offerings, and the like is never absent from *kut*, and it is virtually impossible to talk about a Balinese *odalan* without using the word "performance." Even so, "performance" and "animation" distil two distinct ontologies of presence, two different regimes of visible display for gods appearing via *mansin* and *sesuhunan* appearing via masks. These distinctions might not have been so clearly revealed had we not begun at a point of intersection and followed both branching paths.

An afterword about words

One of our reviewers suggested that we had riddled an earlier draft of this article with an excess of native terms and done so to the point of distraction. We set about, then, to pare them down; this proved to be a useful exercise that in the end sharpens and reinforces what we have to say. We bore down to a limited number of native terms that it was impossible to discard. *Kut* and *odalan* are both "ritual theater," but their usefulness in this discussion comes from their mutual distinction, and we have preserved the Korean and Balinese terms. Likewise, *mansin* are "shamans" by the broad definition accepted by scholars today—masters of the spirits—as we have explained in the text, but they do their work in distinctive ways that would not, say, meet the expectations of a Euro-American neo-shaman. It thus seems useful to keep their Korean identity present. "Medium," however, seemed sufficient for the role of the Balinese *pemundut*, the medium as a vehicle for the empowering mask/*sesuhunan*. *Sesuhunan*, however, offers its own challenges. While *sesuhunan* could be glossed as a "tutelary god," the English term washes away the particular combination of animating energies and empowered mask that make a presence in the Balinese *odalan* and the recognition that a *sesuhunan* as a presence oscillates between demonic and divine. The recognition that we need the Korean gloss *mansin* for the shaman and Balinese *sesuhunan* for the enlivened presence in the mask affirms the counterpoints of our discussion.

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Notes

1. "Korea" is used in generalizations about the *mansin* tradition, which includes transplanted regional practices from what is now North Korea (DPRK), although most of the observations in this article are from the practices of *mansin* in and around Seoul. The ethnographic present is that of late-twentieth- and early twenty-first-century South Korea (ROK).

2. Mediums of powerful temple masks are all male. *Topeng* mask dance includes women who may, in this capacity, perform during temple rituals in ways pleasing to a divine audience, but the performers of this genre are not considered to be embodying a *sesuhunan*.

3. For more detailed information on *mansin* and *kut* than can be provided here, see Bruno (2002), Choi (1989, 1991), and Kendall (1985, 2009); for *odalan* and related see Ariati (2016), Bandem and deBoer (1995), Belo (1960), Geertz (1994), and Hobart (2003).

4. For an extended discussion of the agency of masks and images in four Asian settings see Kendall (2021b).

5. While most *odalan* are timed according to the *Pawukon* calendar, occurring once every 210 days, some Balinese follow a cycle based on a Balinese lunar calendar, timing their *odalan* to fall on *purnama* (the full moon) of a certain month in a 360–365-day cycle, or more rarely during *tilem* (the new moon).

6. These are the Pura Puseh, sacred to the god Wisnu and his consort Dewi Sri or Laksmi, who represent water and rice and are the sustainers of human life; the Pura Desa, or "Temple of the Village," sacred to Brahma, who in Bali is the god of fire and the household hearth as well as creator of the universe, and to his consort Dewi Saraswati, the goddess of speech, learning, and the arts; and the Pura Dalem, sacred to the god Siwa and his consort Dewi Durga, who preside over the postmortem rituals of cremation that dissolve life back into its origins and ensure that deceased family members enter the realm of protective ancestors. Those three divine beings—Wisnu, Brahma, and Siwa—keep this universe in balance through their three functions of creation (*utpatti*, Brahma), preservation (*sthiti*, Wisnu), and dissolution (*pralina*, Siwa). They are called collectively *kahyangan tiga* (the three village temples).

7. This cluster of community members is responsible to the *Desa Adat*, the village as a customary body whose members share belief and practice in the Balinese form of Hinduism. At the same time, they are also likely to be members of the same *Desa Dinas*, the village as an Indonesian administrative unit. This includes all of those who reside within the same village, whatever their religion may be. Because of the separation of the *Desa Adat* and *Desa Dinas*, non-Hindus of the *Desa Dinas* are not required to take part in Hindu ceremonies. However, it is common for the members of the village to help each other or respect each other's social and religious obligations, and it is not uncommon for non-Hindu members of a village to participate in the elaborate preparations for events like weddings and cremations. Since the *odalan* is very entertaining, many non-Hindus

will visit the temple festival to see the semi-sacred entertainments performed in the outer courtyard (*jaba sisi*) of the temple. In this *jaba sisi*, both Hindu and non-Hindu members of the village can buy and sell food items, toys, or other material goods; however, in contemporary Bali they will not sell any food preparations containing beef.

8. The provincial government in Bali, concerned that the tourist industry would have a deleterious effect on sacred dances, classified performances into three categories: sacred (*wali*), semi-sacred (*bebali*), and entertainments (*balih-balihan*). Some Bali scholars consider this schema artificial; for example, performer/scholar I Madé Bandem asserts that all phenomena in Bali are either very *wali*, *wali*, or less *wali* (quoted in Herbst 1997, 129).

9. It is a strict rule in Bali that women are not allowed to enter any temple or other sacred place during their menstrual period, because blood is considered attractive to negative forces and can thus put women and the community in danger. This prohibition is often misunderstood by Western visitors to Bali as being a way to "keep women down." However, this is not the view of Balinese women, who often speak of menopause as a time in their lives that frees them to become closer to the deities and less directly involved in the difficulties and challenges of the reproductive cycle of life.

10. See Ariati (2016, 196–97, 205), Bandem and deBoer (1995, 102–26), Bateson and Mead (1952), Belo (1960), Emigh (1984, 30–34; 1996), Geertz (1994, 65–81), Hobart (2003, 123–205; 2005), and many others.

11. The term is Sanskrit, meaning five (*panca*) elements (*dhatu*). These are gold, silver, bronze, iron, and diamond or ruby. As in the five-element scheme of the Sinosphere, the enlivening elements exist in relation to each other and as equivalents for other things such as directions and colors, but these are two distinct systems, and their components are not the same.

12. See Belo (1960, 98), Hobart (2003, 147), Eiseman (1990, 208), Slattum and Schraub (2003, 26–27), and Stephen (2001, 146–47).

13. *Mudang*, a broad and somewhat derogatory term, broadly describes those who serve the spirits, feasting and entertaining them to secure their goodwill by performing *kut* (Yim 1970). The most shaman-like *mudang*, those who operate on the basis of inspiration rather than through hereditary mastery of song, dance, and ritual business, are the *mansin* of what is now North Korea and the Seoul area. However, through media exposure to photogenic *mansin* and the expectations such images have engendered, along with decline of hereditary *mudang* as a rejected outcast status, the *mansin* style of shamanship, the costumes, and the shrine fittings are widely replicated throughout South Korea today.

14. "Environmental theater" as developed in the work of performance studies scholar and theater director Richard Schechner (1985) builds on anthropologist Victor Turner's work on ritual process (1968, 1969). Turner encouraged students of ritual to study the social field where ritual activity takes place. What situations prompt the holding of a ritual? How are the precipitating problems addressed inside the ritual itself? How does the flow of ritual action cause participants to engage symbolically and emotionally in transforming their situation? In Turner's writing, movement through time, space, and a sequence of symbolically and emotionally potent ritual engagements worked a transformative effect from a condition of affliction to healing. Schechner's "environmental theater" is not restricted to a theatrical stage or even to a single space but rather moves through and in relation to a space, as in Turner's descriptions of Ndembu

ritual. The setting of a Balinese temple and the domestic space that became background to a *kut* could similarly be considered "environmental theater."

15. Most but not all Korean *mansin* are female. Male *mansin* are a marked category (*paksu mansin*, *paksu mudang*), and traditionally these male *paksu* would dress in Korean women's clothing before layering on the gods' costumes for a *kut*. Kendall has encountered some *paksu* who no longer do this and whose gendered presentation of self is more masculine than older stereotypes of *paksu mansin*. Balinese *pemundut* are male.

16. Pork also figures in religious vows made in Bali. When prayers are answered, the supplicant offers *babi guling*, roast suckling pig, in return. This vow is called *mesesangi*.

17. Space does not permit a detailed exposition of the dynamics of a *kut*, which has been described in greater detail elsewhere (Kendall 1985, chap. 1; 2009, chaps. 2, 3). See Bruno (2002) for a detailed analysis of speech slippages between shaman and god, and Yim (1970) for an early recognition of the absence of trance. The *mansin*'s relation to her paintings is described in Kendall, Yang, and Yoon (2015) and Kendall (2021b). For mountain pilgrimages see Kendall (1985, 127–31) and Kendall (2009, 184–88).

18. As per Silvio's (2019) discussion of "performance" and "animation" as two contrasting modalities.

19. The only exception to this is in the *kut* for the dead, where the Death Messenger costumes-up out of sight and aggressively approaches the house gate, face twisted in a threatening leer. Women gather to protect the threshold, a play of interior space to be defended against dangers that come to the household from outside.

20. Mediums who perform in the *odalan* and those close to them describe a sense of partial consciousness, like a waking dream state. Our reference here is to how the presence of the *sesuhunan* is visually experienced by other participants in the *odalan*.

21. We use "animation" in the basic sense whereby an agent causes an otherwise immobile material form to move; we appreciate that Silvio has also cast her ethnographic gaze on new domains such as media animation (Silvio 2019).

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