

THE QUALITY OF SCHOOLING IN A BALINESE VILLAGE

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In a little over a generation Indonesia has become not only a nation but also a literate nation. Teenagers and householders in villages all over Indonesia are now able to read posters, signs, and advertisements, as well as any books, magazines, and newspapers that come their way. They are aware of their role as citizens in the state and its development. They are, to some extent, conscious of a model or ideal future for their country, knowledgeable about the structure of the state bureaucracy, and more outward-looking and open-ended in their view of life than their parents. The role of village schools in this revolution has been critical.

Academics and government education planners in Indonesia almost always analyze education in quantitative terms—the numbers of school buildings/teachers/books that will be needed, projections about the labor force, etc. In press reports, too, there is an understandable tendency to emphasize quantity rather than quality.¹ The main aspects of education that are publicized are the construction of new school buildings and the contributions of pupils and teachers to “Development” projects.

This article looks at the quality rather than the quantity of schooling. It is an analysis of the content of primary-level schooling in Brassika, a village in Kabupaten Klungkung, Bali. I examine the history and physical environment of the village's schools, the teaching and learning methods employed in classrooms, the textbooks and subject matter of lessons, and the curricula.²

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¹ In the year that I was in Bali, from August 1980–July 1981, there was not a single article in the *Bali Post* about curricula contents, the aims or purpose of schools, teaching methods, or the effectiveness of schools.

² The subject of the quality of education has largely been omitted from writings on modern Indonesia. Exceptions include S. F. Schaeffer, “Schooling in a Developing Society: A Case Study of Indonesian Primary Education” (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1979); J. T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and a few of the contributors to the ANU's recent

History of Schools in Brassika

Brassika is a village, *desa*, in Kabupaten Klungkung in the east of the rice-growing heartland of Bali. A bitumen road connects Brassika to the main road that runs along the south coast of Bali, linking the eastern towns of Karangasem, Klungkung, and Gianyar with the provincial capital, Denpasar. In Brassika there are about 3,800 inhabitants in eight *banjar*, wards or hamlets. Although it is traditionally a rice-growing village, in 1981 42 percent of all households owned no *sawah*.

In pre-Dutch times, i.e. before 1908, Brassika was a small but strategically placed kingdom. Forty years ago the Raja of Brassika owned at least 60 hectares of good quality *sawah*, worked by sharecroppers.³ He commanded the reverence, and, on occasion, the labor of the inhabitants of Brassika and the surrounding villages. Today the Raja's son, Cokorda Gede Agung, enjoys an extraordinary position in Brassika and in the surrounding villages. He is called the "Dewa Agung," literally, "Great God," as he is the local equivalent of the pre-colonial king of Bali, the Dewa Agung of Klungkung. He was *perbekel*, village head, of Brassika between 1966 and 1989, when he resigned in order to take a better-paying public service job in Klungkung.

The most distinctive feature of Brassika is the strength of this anachronistic traditional leadership. The following brief history of the village's schools reveals the significant role played by the two Cokorda in the provision of educational facilities in Brassika.

There are five SD (*Sekolah Dasar*, primary schools) in Brassika, providing its population with good access to primary education. Generally speaking, parents choose which SD their children will attend on the basis of proximity to home.

SD 1 (originally *Sekolah Rakyat*, People's School) was built about 1930 at the central cross-roads of the village. Land opposite the "palace" was donated by the Raja, and the building was funded by contributions from the inhabitants of Brassika and three neighboring villages. Pupils came from these villages. The school catered to pupils in grades one to four until 1952. Since then, it has provided education in all six grades, and until late in 1981 was the only school in Brassika to do so. Educated parents of the present generation of schoolchildren were all taught in SD 1. They became farmers and village leaders, teachers and civil servants, and several men left the village to follow professional careers.

SD 2 was built with government money in 1971, on land donated by the Cokorda. Until 1981, it had only four classrooms, and accommodated grades three to six. In 1981, three additional rooms were built and were opened officially by the governor of Bali. This school is also centrally located on the main bitumen road, about a hundred yards to the north of SD 1.

SD 3, or "SD Inpres" as it is locally called, was built in 1973/74 with special funds allocated under the Instruksi Presiden (Inpres) scheme. As any schoolchild in Brassika will tell

conference on Higher Education: A. H. Nasoetion, "Indonesian Higher Education: Improving Input to Improve Output Quality," *Indonesia Assessment 1991*, ed. H. Hill (Canberra: Political and Social Change Monograph 13, ANU, 1991), pp. 58-76; J. Harjono, "Higher Education: A Word from the Classroom," *ibid.*, pp. 155-62; and H. W. Arndt, "Higher Education: The Problem of Quality," *ibid.*, pp. 151-54.

³ Local Land Tax records indicate that he owned at least 65 hectares of land in 1949, but informants reckoned that he controlled 200-300 hectares earlier in the century. In 1981 my village survey revealed that his son owned 15 hectares and his descent-group owned a further 10 hectares. L. M. Parker, "Village and State in 'New Order' Bali" (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1989), pp. 126 and 136.

you, in identical words, the Inpres scheme is one in which money is dropped (“*uang didropkan*”) straight from the President to fund special development projects. In Brassika, the Perbekel organized some voluntary labor, and the Inpres money was spent on materials and additional labor costs. SD Inpres teaches children in grades one to five. The school is situated on the very edge of the central living area of the village, almost one kilometre southwest of the central crossroads.

In 1983 SD 4 was built, also with Inpres funds, on uninhabited houseyard land (*teba*, BB) in an out-of-the way corner of a small and poor *banjar*. The land was not bought but was “requested” of the *desa* and the *banjar* by the Cokorda.

In 1986 the fifth school in Brassika, again built with Inpres funds, was opened. It is centrally located, two blocks from the bitumen road and has six classrooms. In the mornings it operates as SD 5 and in the afternoons it operates as Brassika’s only SMP (Sekolah Menengah Pertama, Junior Secondary School). This is a private, SMP-PGRI (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia, Teachers’ Union) school.

Until 1986 almost all junior secondary school students from Brassika attended the state SMP in Jalananyar (6 kilometres from Brassika), which was built in Dutch times on land provided by Brassika’s Raja and is sited next to the main “palace” at the central crossroads.

Between 1986 and 1992 there was a rather dramatic increase in the number of secondary schools and of places within them for Brassika students, as was the case for primary schools in the years 1973–1986. Now most of the children attend one of three SMP within six kilometres of the village, though the quality of the three is variable. The schools with good academic reputations select the brighter students, judging them by the marks they obtain in the end-of-primary-school external exams (EBTA). In 1981 there were five SMA (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*, Senior Secondary Schools) in Klungkung, including one teachers’ training school and two vocational schools. Nowadays there are six state SMA and seven private SMA in the kabupaten. Students from Brassika attend these and other senior high schools in Denpasar, Bangli, Gianyar, Singaraja, and Jakarta.

Physical Appearance of Schools

The primary schools in Brassika are generally well maintained by their pupils. Children are expected to arrive at school at 7 a.m., a half-hour before the bell is rung for assembly, to sweep classrooms, wipe blackboards, and keep schoolyards as clean as bare mud allows. Saturdays are cleaning days—the boys bring hoes to clear drains; girls bring brooms to sweep the yard (mostly of dead flowers and offerings); bushes are pruned and gardens weeded. The toilets are not kept clean as they usually lack water for flushing. Most schoolrooms are light and airy, with concrete floors and walls of painted mortar over brick. Although there is electricity in the village, the schools are not connected. Some have high glass windows, others have frames only, with wooden shutters.

Every few years the school buildings have to be renovated or rebuilt: termite infestations, shoddy workmanship, substandard building materials, and damp all contribute to the need for constant rebuilding. At any one time all or part of one of the five schools is out of commission and needs to rent classrooms from one of the other four for use in the afternoons.

Enthusiastic “beautification” programs had been undertaken; for example, at SD Inpres there was a topographical map of Bali in the schoolyard, mounded out of dirt, with a moat

for the sea surrounding the island. Sometimes schools plant productive trees, such as coconut palms, or keep animals, such as goats, for the double purpose of teaching life skills to the pupils and for raising money, so that the school can contribute to ceremonies in village temples or finance their own ceremony on Saraswati (Goddess of Learning) Day. Each school has a small shrine; girls are rostered to bring offerings for it and the schoolrooms.

Each class has its own room or sometimes half-room; teachers have a common room; some schools have a reception room for visitors; and there are 2-4 toilets in each school. The teachers' rooms contain desks and benches for teachers and headmasters, charts on the walls (timetables, announcements of meetings or other activities, the "Ethical Code for Indonesian Teachers"), cupboards containing textbooks, and equipment such as globes of the world, compasses, chalk, chess sets, and sometimes vases of flowers on the desks. The classrooms are sparsely but adequately furnished and decorated with national regalia, graphs, and posters but never with children's work.

The 1992 classroom for Grade 5 at SD2 is Spartan but typical: it contains more than enough benches and desks (some broken or rickety) for the ten boys and eleven girls, and a bench and desk for the teacher, the latter decorated with a vase of flowers and an offering. On the front wall is a large blackboard and above it the three standard national symbols: the emblem of the Garuda bearing the shield with the five pictorial symbols of Pancasila, flanked by photos of President Suharto and Vice-President Sudharmono. On the back wall is the only relatively new decoration: a glossy poster for Census 1990 showing through photographs how census statistics can help the government to plan for provision of school buildings, and so on. Also, there is a dusty, crude relief of the Garuda again, an old, faded poster of the "Heroes of the Revolution" (10 photographs of men in military uniform), and a chart listing all the pupils in the four work groups, each with a leader. On one side wall hangs the class timetable and both side walls have two prints of national heroes including Kartini and the Balinese freedom fighter Ngurah Rai.

Teachers and the Learning Environment

There is no shortage of teachers in Brassika—class sizes rarely exceed 22 pupils. There are and always have been more male than female teachers, and all school principals are male.⁴ Most teachers are young, and the headmasters are usually the oldest members of staff. Most teachers live within the *kecamatan*, and several, the children of local luminaries, were born and live in Brassika. Many teachers own small motorbikes to enable them to travel to work. Their base salaries are low, ranging from Rp. 67,000 to Rp. 156,000 per month, and many teachers have two jobs or work *sawah* out of school hours. Most schools have one or two teachers serving (*mengabdikan*) as candidates for the civil service, receiving either very low payments or nothing at all.

Teachers are among the few people in Brassika to be paid salaries. Although most live in circumstances of genteel poverty by the standards of most white-collar workers, they enjoy a position of prestige and local influence.⁵ Teachers are often called upon to represent the outside world in Brassika—they are asked to translate, explain, mediate, and arbitrate when the two worlds meet. Most teachers from Brassika are members of organizations such as the LKMD (Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa, Organization for the Maintenance of Village

⁴ For instance, in 1981 there were nineteen male teachers and six female teachers in the three schools in Brassika.

⁵ Partly this is because many are from elite, high-caste households, such as the houses of Brahmana and Cokorda, and therefore enjoy prior, unachieved high status.

Society), and all are members of the public service organization, KORPRI. They are respected, despite the fact that some of the older teachers have had what is now considered a minimal education. One suspects, however, that their prestige is declining now that there is a new generation of better-trained villagers. They are well-dressed, dignified, responsible citizens, and provide role models, an "ideal type" of person for their pupils to copy. They are also civil servants. Education and the State are inextricably bound in the person of the teacher.

In general, teachers in 1981 were enthusiastic and interested in their pupils' welfare; my impression is that since then a variety of factors has combined to weaken their morale and enthusiasm, not least of which is their low level of wages. In 1981 many teachers who lived in Brassika helped children individually and in groups with their homework out of school hours, at no charge, and other teachers who lived in nearby villages did likewise. This is rare in 1992. Many teachers turn up late for school and invent reasons for absenting themselves, while few show any sign that they have prepared lessons or collect assignments to mark. Most seem content to regurgitate information from textbooks.

Teachers are always poised, dignified, and very conscious of their position of responsibility. They have excellent control when they are in the classroom, though this year I have noticed that (frequently) unattended children are much more likely than previously to jump up on desks, have fights, pick on smaller children, scribble on blackboards, etc. The atmosphere at school has never been one of rigid discipline. The children do not live in fear of punishment, and answer enthusiastically whenever they know the answers. When they don't know the answers they become quiet and withdrawn, sometimes nervous, but teachers rarely embarrass or punish children for ignorance or stupidity.⁶

Discipline is rarely a problem and teacher authority is unquestioned. Balinese children are expected to behave, and, being malleable and obedient, they do. I rarely witnessed attempts at overt classroom control by any teacher.⁷ The behavior of children is generally exemplary—they are usually quiet and attentive when the teacher is speaking, extraordinarily enthusiastic when singing, clapping, getting new books, saying "good morning," etc., and busy and absorbed when there is an interesting craft project. In most classes boredom is obvious, and children's attention wanders when the repetition of a reading passage seems endless. When teachers are marking books or are otherwise busy in the classroom, the children talk quietly but snap back to attention when the teacher resumes the lesson. As in Balinese public life generally, the atmosphere is one of busy order. The learning environment is thus controlled, but reasonably pleasant and relaxed.

⁶ However, I did notice one teacher who pokes fun at the duller students if they don't know an answer, laughing incredulously at their answers when he asks them what class they are in, throwing chalk at their heads, chucking their cheeks, pulling or lightly boxing their ears if they give nonsensical answers. Such behavior is atypical in my experience.

⁷ It seems to me, however, that behavioral problems are on the increase. In 1981 I only witnessed two instances of physical "crowd control": on both occasions younger students were crowding the activities of older students and teachers; older students, on their own initiative and armed with rulers, herded the younger ones out. In 1992 I have already recorded several incidents in which teachers have administered physical discipline (for instance by pulling a boy's ear).

Timetables and School Routines

Lessons generally last for thirty minutes in Grades 1 and 2 and for forty minutes for the higher grades, and gongs/bells are struck to signify the end of lessons. Table 1 shows the number of classes devoted to the various subjects in SD 2 each week in 1981:⁸

Table 1. Number of Lessons for Each Subject and Class in SD 2 Each Week

| Subject | Class | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|----|-----|----|----|----|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
| Religion | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Pancasila Moral Education | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Bahasa Indonesia | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8* | 8 |
| Social Science | — | — | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Natural Science | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Sport and Health | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Arts | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Special Skills | 2 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Bahasa Daerah | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 30 | 28 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 |

* On the Grade 5 timetable two classes are optionally Bahasa Indonesia or PSPB (Education in the History of the National Struggle). This latter subject does not appear on other timetables in this school but I have seen it taught.

The school day in Brassika starts officially at 7.30 a.m. and finishes at 11.10 for Grades 1 and 2 and 12.50 p.m. for Grades 3-6. Each day begins with the entire school lining up for calisthenics, usually led by a senior boy, in the school yard. Boys and girls then line up separately in front of their classrooms and file inside. Class captains (elected boys) then stand in front of the class and lead the children in the chanting of the morning prayer, the *Tri Sandhya*.⁹ On Monday mornings a more elaborate flag-raising ceremony is held, as is the case outside government offices, schools, universities, etc. throughout the country.

State primary school pupils throughout Indonesia wear the same uniform: girls wear white blouses and red skirts, boys wear white shirts and red shorts, following the colors on the national flag. On Mondays they wear red hats and ties and endeavor to wear shoes and socks. On other days thongs are the most commonly worn footwear.

⁸ Unfortunately I cannot present the number of lessons to be devoted to each subject in the current curriculum because that information was not available in the village. The SD 2 timetable presented here is very similar to the 1975 Curriculum. In 1981, when the 1975 curriculum was used in Brassika, Scouts and Ekstra-Kurrikular were scheduled for up to 5 and 6 lesson-times respectively, usually on Saturdays; nowadays, these activities are not officially scheduled but still occur, often as free time.

⁹ This routine was new to me on my 1992 visit. Previously morning assemblies were much more elaborate and nationally oriented: the whole school attended a flag-raising ceremony (now only held on Monday morning assemblies in Brassika schools); the headmaster often delivered a little talk; the children sang the National Anthem or Pancasila song, recited the Pancasila, said prayers, and marched and paraded. The school children comport themselves publicly with poise and dignity and frequently lead the classes in prayers, songs, and physical exercises.

Teachers usually wait until at least 8 a.m. to appear in classrooms. Frequently pupils and teachers enjoy “free time”—sometimes I look up from a classroom activity and see a *warung* (stall) or vendor’s cart outside, crowded with children from other classes clamoring for sweet ices or *bakso* (savory gruel). Teachers frequently repair to coffee shops for coffee and snacks and students sometimes go home at mid-morning for food. There are two official recess periods. The school day is neither long nor onerous—schools are usually empty by 12.30.

Saturday is a free-form day—the day for Scouts (*Pramuka*), sport, arts, special skills, and cleaning—and there is a general mood of relaxed enjoyment.

Curricula, Textbooks, and Teaching Methods

Bahasa Indonesia is the most important subject for the purposes of both Government and students. It is taught from Grade 1 and aims to teach understanding of and literacy in the language by the end of SD. Oral fluency is not given much attention, except for reading aloud and recitation. The pupils are rarely required to say more than one or two words in answer to a question, most commonly “*Sudah!*” (“Yes, already!”), or, in the lower grades “*Ampun!*” (BB) in answer to “Do you understand?” Even now there are few theatrical or creative oral activities,¹⁰ and in 1981 I saw none. However, individual children are coached in and out of class to recite set poems, folk stories, etc. at competitions in public speaking in front of large audiences.¹¹

Pupils have a considerable understanding of spoken Indonesian. In First and Second Grades, most lessons except Bahasa Indonesia are conducted in Basa Bali, with Bahasa Indonesia gradually introduced until by the end of Third Grade, all lessons except Basa Bali are conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, and are understood, for the most part, by the children. Any child attending school for less than three years could not be called “literate” in the national language. By the time students reach the end of Grade 4, most are capable of writing grammatically correct, if simple, sentences. However, the range of sentence constructions, the vocabulary, and the subject matter of writing in SD are severely restricted, because teachers and students are totally dependent on textbooks for reading material.¹² The text-

¹⁰ Currently used textbooks by Drs. Masnur Muslich, *Bahasa Indonesia 1a–6c* (Klaten: Intan Pariwara, Edisi Kedua, 1988) provide a greater variety of exercises than those used in 1981. This year I witnessed classes in which children “*mendramakan*” incidents described or pictured in textbooks and were supposed to devise their own telephone conversations, working in pairs. In the latter exercise the children displayed a marked aversion to deviating from the model conversation presented in the textbook. Drs. M. Muslich, *Bahasa Indonesian 5c Untuk Kelas 5 Catur Wulan 3 Sekolah Dasar* (Klaten: Intan Pariwara, 1988), pp. 8–9.

¹¹ Children are trained exhaustively in the weeks leading up to these kecamatan- or kabupaten-wide competitions, and normal classes virtually come to a halt. The competitions are for recitations in Bahasa Indonesia and in Basa Bali. Teachers usually type out the set pieces for the children, provide them with an introductory sentence explaining who they are and which class and school they represent, and even drill the children in gestures. Bahasa Indonesia textbooks frequently contain exercises exhorting the children to “*Deklamasikan!*” a poem.

¹² For the most part, teachers and students have to buy their own textbooks. Consequently, texts are in short supply in classrooms, and often four or five students cluster around a single book. Most textbooks currently cost Rp. 1–2,000 each; there are three Bahasa Indonesia texts for each grade, other subjects have only one text for each grade. I don’t know any primary school students who have a complete set for their grade. Further information on textbooks can be found in L. Parker, “The Creation of Indonesian Citizens in Balinese Primary Schools,” *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, forthcoming.

books contain few excerpts from poems, plays, short stories, or novels.¹³ (The children also read simple Balinese folk tales in Basa Bali.) Prose passages on such topics as national heroes, development, government, and the responsibilities of pupils dominate all language and social science textbooks, to such an extent that subject areas are not clearly demarcated.¹⁴

Bahasa Indonesia lessons most commonly consist of teacher and pupils reading aloud the passage which begins each chapter of the textbook. Most of these concern national history, development, and community service subjects.¹⁵ These passages are read repeatedly by both teacher and individual pupils, but the supplementary exercises that follow are dealt with much more summarily. I also saw lessons containing dictations, complete-the-sentence exercises, and compositions. The classes are generally boring, repetitive, and dictatorial. No thought is given to teaching language as a vehicle for the expression of ideas, emotion, or spirit, and few attempts are made to stimulate the children with open-ended stories, creative expression, play-acting, or like activities. I did, however, witness various attempts to urge the children to participate more, especially on an individual basis, by encouraging them to come forward to write their answers on the board.

In 1981 I conducted an experiment in creative writing in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at two schools.¹⁶ I asked the headmasters' permission and told the teachers the day before the compositions were to be written. I impressed upon them that the children were to be free (*bebas*) to write whatever they wanted. I had originally intended not to restrict the *kreativitas* by giving titles for the compositions, but was dissuaded from this plan by all teachers. They were convinced that the children would not write anything at all if they were not given some guidance (*bimbingan*). In the end, the titles decided upon were "*Banjarku*" (My Hamlet) for Grade 4 (SD 1 and SD Inpres), "*Desaku*" (My Village) for Grade 5 (SD 1 and SD Inpres), and "*Pulau Bali*" (The Island of Bali) for Grade 6 at SD 1.

¹³ In 1981 it was not until Grade 2 in SMP that children were presented with any real literature: seven short poems and excerpts by writers such as Chairil Anwar and Sanusi Pane. The current situation is somewhat better.

¹⁴ Barbara Leigh, "Making the Indonesian State: The Role of School Texts," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 25/1 (Winter 1991): 17-43, esp. p. 25.

¹⁵ The three textbooks for Grade 6 contain passages with the following headings:

Pangeran Jayakarta (a Javanese prince)

A Small Family is a Happy Family

The Role of Youth in the Formulation of the Young People's Oath (national history 1928)

The Importance of the School Health Effort

A Promisory Bill of Sale for a Bicycle

The Events of 10 Nov. 1945 (Indonesian History)

Decision of the Head of the Office of the Dept. of Education and Culture Kabupaten Sukamaju 1987

Instruction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 1980 About Proof of Citizenship of the R.I.

Joint Letter of Decision Between the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior

Decision of the President of R.I. no. 68 1983

General Sudirman (hero of the nationalist revolution)

The Prize of Kalpataru (salutary tale of community service)

Mutual Help Among Young People

Two Children is Enough

The Activities of the Red Cross in the Village

The Fall of Sisingamangaraja XII (national history, 1907)

Birth Certificate from Kabupaten Malang

¹⁶ I am most grateful to the headmasters and teachers in Brassika's schools for surrendering lesson time to my experiment and indeed for the forbearance and general assistance given me.

The conditions under which the roughly page-long essays were written were not ideal for the free expression of ideas. I began in Grade 4, SD 1. The teacher there was very intrusive, insisting, before the lesson began, that the title “*Pulau Bali*” was impossible because the children had not yet studied that in Social Science.¹⁷ In order to keep her support, I changed the title to “*Banjarku*” and wrote the title on the board. There was a long silence, and nobody wrote anything. The teacher told the children to write their names, date, title, and margins. Then she informed me that they needed *bimbingan* (guidance) and proceeded to rattle off suggested subjects such as *banjar* meetings, *klian banjar* (hamlet heads), repair of roads, temples, and *bale banjar* (hamlet meeting halls). She walked around the room, muttering these subjects all the while and exhorting the children to write neatly, not make mistakes, etc. There went my plan to see what the children knew, or what they thought they should write. They did not have to think—they were not given the chance to do so.

I was generally very favorably impressed with these children’s ability to write in Bahasa Indonesia.¹⁸ However, the compositions in SD 1 lacked coherence and were very jumbled. The children wrote about a wide range of topics and included a great many interesting details about their *banjar*.

In SD Inpres, the teacher was not overbearing, and peace and quiet reigned in the classroom. However, here too the teacher could not let the children write without some *bimbingan* and so wrote on the board:

Suggestions

- agriculture
- development
- family planning
- study group activities
- handicraft activities

The children worked largely on their own. The result was a collection of comparatively simple, short, clear essays. The difference between these and the SD 1 essays could be in part a result of the teacher’s constant patter of suggestions which must have impeded the continuity of the compositions from SD 1. The compositions from SD Inpres were much less interesting and more homogeneous than those from SD 1, indicating that the blackboard suggestions were rather rigorously followed, for example all thirteen children mentioned *sawah* and study groups, twelve mentioned *pembangunan* (“development,” usually understood as “*bangunan*,” buildings such as meeting halls, temples, and houses), and eleven mentioned craftwork such as basket making (a *banjar* activity for the *banjar* around

¹⁷ In the textbooks then in use, “Bali” was first mentioned by name in Social Science (IPS) lessons in the textbook by Mugiyana and S. Hadiatmaja and others, *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Untuk Sekolah Dasar* (Solo: Tiga Serangkai, n.d.), Buku IVA, pp. 10–11.

¹⁸ Fourth grade children wrote nearly everything in Bahasa Indonesia. Commas and periods were rare. Sentence construction was quite good. However, the stringing-together of sentences into coherent paragraphs was poorly executed, to such an extent that it was often very difficult to piece together the meaning. Balinese children are the inheritors of an oral tradition of literature, and this is evident in these features of their literacy. All 22 wrote the name of their *banjar*, most included the names of the temples in their *banjar*, and described *odalan* (temple anniversaries), *wayang*, and other entertainments. Most children mentioned that *banjar* meetings are held once a month, the number of people in the *banjar* (always a wild guess), and that there is a *klian* (head). Nearly all the children described aspects of daily life—bathing and washing clothes, helping mother cook, and watering the cattle—interpreting the term *banjar* as a geographic, not a social or political, entity. Many children detailed the work activities involved in the *odalan*—getting *adat* clothes ready, making and carrying the offerings, cutting, carrying, and lashing bamboo poles, and praying at the temple.

the school). The SD Inpres compositions were more formal, correct, and stiff than those from SD 1. Many sounded like a report to a superior and included sentences such as: "My *banjar* is already progressive/good enough." Nearly all concluded with the formal sentence, "Thus is my composition about my *banjar*."

The Grade 5 compositions at SD 1, about "Desaku," "My Village," suffered from interference by the same teacher who had supervised Grade 4. Her first, most frequent, and loudest suggestion to the class was that a village is headed by a *perbekel*. The only statement common to all seventeen students was "My village/Brassika is headed by a *perbekel*." Sixteen pupils informed the reader that there are eight *banjar*, and fourteen named the *banjar*. Fifteen students concluded formally, "Thus is my composition about my village." Nearly all the compositions were comprehensible.

In SD Inpres the twenty-three pupils in Grade 5 writing about "Desaku" were "guided" by the teacher's suggestions that were written on the board:

1. Agriculture
2. Development —Education
—Family Planning
—Farming Groups
3. Government
4. Arts
5. Study Groups

In this class there were several attempts at collusion and copying from the Social Science textbook. The results were a few clones and a few would-be clones with weird mixtures: lists of *banjar* and handicrafts, rhapsodies about getting up early in the morning in the fresh country air (taken from textbooks), interlaced with doses of "The village must advance," "We must build the village," and "Progress in the village means progress in the state." Most children wrote that they lived in Brassika, and that there were eight *banjar* in Brassika. A few children showed an impressive knowledge of the names of all eight *klian dinas* (*banjar* heads) and their *banjar*. Most students wrote that their village was already *maju* (progressive, advanced), and mentioned in this regard the number of schools in the village, the successful Family Planning program, and even the appearance of Brassika's famous *topeng* dancer on television.

Grade 6 pupils showed the ability to construct a short, sensible report and a high level of competence in Bahasa Indonesia. Spelling was excellent, punctuation and sentence formation fairly good, but with long, rambling sentences. This opening sentence and paragraph by Ida Bagus Oka is typical:

"Pulau Bali adalah pulau dewata, apa sebab disebut pulau dewata, karena banyak pengunjung turis dari luar negeri maupun dalam negeri."

(The island of Bali is the island of the gods, what is the reason it is called the island of the gods, because of the many tourists from overseas as well as from within the country.)

This excerpt shows a lack of understanding of causation and of the use of the words of causation, "apa sebab" (why, what is the reason) and "karena" (because). All the children who used the phrase "island of the gods" had trouble explaining it, yet twenty-one of the twenty-four pupils in the class used it. They knew the formulation and knew that they could safely use it in their compositions. The pupils did not understand its meaning (i.e. the pervasive influence of religion in all aspects of life in Bali) and the nature of its connection with the

tourist trade. Also, they either did not realize their lack of understanding, or considered that it did not matter. As I expected, I found the phrase in the Social Science textbook, albeit the textbook for Grade 4:

"Anak-anak, pulau Bali disebut juga pulau Dewata. Sebagai tempat wisata karena pemandangan alamnya yang indah. Terkenal di seluruh dunia."¹⁹

(Children, the island of Bali is also called the island of the gods. As a tour place because the views of nature are beautiful. [Bali is] Famous throughout the world.)

It is no wonder that the children found the meaning unclear.²⁰

The content of the compositions was very homogeneous across the 24 pupils in the class. The teacher who looked after the class when I was not there said she had suggested the children include in their essays the government structure of the eight kabupaten (residencies), etc. The following statements were the most frequent:

Bali is famous for its culture/arts. (24)

Many tourists come to Bali. (24)

There are eight kabupaten. (24)

The name of the governor is Prof./Dr. Ida Bagus Mantra. (21)

Bali is the "island of the gods." (21)

Bali is headed by a governor. (19)

Bali is famous for the art of dancing. (18)

Kabupaten are headed by bupati. (16)

Denpasar is the capital/busiest/most beautiful city. (16)

The following composition is one of the best in the class in terms of spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, style, and paragraph formation. Its content is typical.

"This island of Bali of ours is much visited by tourists, domestic as well as foreign.

This island of Bali of ours is much admired by foreigners because it is famous for the arts, the arts of dancing, painting, *seni tabuh*, and there are others, so that this island of Bali of ours is called the island of the gods.

The Province of Bali is headed by a governor. The name of the governor of the Province of Bali is Professor Dr. Ida Bagus Mantra.

The Province of Bali is divided into eight kabupaten which are headed by a bupati. [kabupaten correctly named]

Whereas the Province of Bali is divided again into kecamatan headed by camat. [4 kecamatan in kabupaten correctly named] The busiest city is Denpasar.

Thus is my composition about the Island of Bali."

¹⁹ Mugiyana and S. Hadiatmaja and others, *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Untuk Sekolah Dasar* (Solo: Tiga Serangkai, n.d.), Buku IVA, p. 11.

²⁰ Note also the stylistic presentation of this set phrase, i.e., as a question. This was the way the phrase was presented by almost all pupils in their compositions. The reason for this was probably the usual teaching method of teacher questioning and pupil answering—in this case the meaning of the textbook passage could only be approached with the insertion of a teacher's question. Sweeney makes exactly the same observation about the work submitted by university students in Malaysia: whenever students were asked to provide literary analysis, evaluation, interpretation, etc., the students' oral traditions of repetition, narrative, accumulation of information, etc., were so strong as to make it impossible for them to fragment, juxtapose, and subordinate sentences in order to properly analyze their content and style. A. Sweeney, *A Full Hearing. Orality and Literacy in the Malay World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987), pp. 267–302, especially p. 268. Conjunctions of causation ("oleh sebab", "karena", etc.) caused particular problems.

The compositions reveal most strikingly a knowledge of government structure and its importance. There is an almost complete disregard of history and geography (Social Science lessons notwithstanding), but there is a well-developed awareness of the presence and importance of the tourist industry in Bali.²¹ For instance, only three children mentioned that the Balinese follow the Hindu religion, but six mentioned that tourists visit Pura Besakih (the "Mother Temple").

My experiment in "*kreativitas*" seemed to imply that it is important that education be seen to be done. Not a single child handed in an empty sheet of paper or a token effort of one line: everyone wrote a respectable length of composition, and everyone had a margin, heading, name, etc. The pages were extraordinarily neat, and many contained decorative flourishes.

Mathematics, as it was taught in 1981, was a new subject. I was told that prior to 1976 a subject similar to Arithmetic had been taught which involved counting and simple sums. Mathematics is now quite comprehensive, involving elementary algebra, geometry, "problems" from everyday life, and some of the "new math" such as number-lines and sets. Several teachers still admit to feeling less than confident of their ability to understand and teach the subject, and comment that it is the most difficult subject for students.

Some Mathematics classes were quite embarrassing to sit through because the atmosphere was tense, the teacher unsure of his/her ability, and the pupils silent and fearful, unlike their usual enthusiastic selves. Sometimes a teacher judged incorrect answers as correct, and sometimes the textbook showed an incorrect answer which the teacher would not correct because s/he was not sufficiently confident of his/her ability to override the authority of the textbook. These problems usually arose when the problem was from the new math, long division, or algebra. There were no problems with simple additions and subtractions, and students were very keen to take their turns at the blackboard once they had mastered a concept. Teachers sometimes openly use calculators in front of the students, who are not allowed to use them for normal work in class.

The standard math lesson consists of a teacher working through the stages for reaching the answer to a sum on the board, and then for students to do similar sums from the textbook in their books. The teachers in 1992 seem more frequently to give the children the opportunity to work at the board in front of the class than had been the case in 1981. Also, this year I have heard the brighter children volunteer that they are having trouble with particular sums. Sometimes this is because the textbook-set sum is poorly designed, for example one boy said he could not work out the square root of 132, and the teacher substituted 256.

A continuing problem is the reticence of most students who are reluctant to admit to a lack of understanding. In a typical Grade 1 lesson the children copied addition squares which the teacher had drawn on the board with no explanation:

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 | |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 5 |
| 2 | |
| 6 | |

| | |
|---|--|
| 6 | |
| 6 | |
| 5 | |
| 0 | |
| 4 | |

²¹ This may have been due to my presence. As a white person I was usually regarded as a tourist. If a Balinese researcher had been taking the lesson it is probable that fewer children would have mentioned tourism.

Five children instantly worked out the pattern, while the rest of the class busied themselves with drawing up the boxes but left them empty. At the end of the time, the teacher, having left the class unattended to do their work, asked the children to come to his desk so that he could mark their work. He helped one boy reach the answers, for instance, by asking, "What do you have to add to 5 to get 6?" which the boy answered by dint of counting on his fingers. The remaining 13 children, however, hadn't been taught anything.

IPS (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial, Social Science) contains elements of sociology, geography, government and citizenship, history, and economics and aims to teach students about "the interaction between the individual and society in the (physical and sociocultural) environment."²² There is a strong bias towards the study of Indonesia, and it is not until the second half of Grade 6 that students are introduced to more international topics such as the United Nations and ASEAN. Many topics are also presented in other subjects, e.g. family planning and nutrition.

The reading passages present information about society as cut-and-dried fact and are followed by multiple choice, complete-the-sentence, or comprehension questions. The students are introduced to families, neighborhoods, and schools as social institutions, and to the government hierarchy of villages, subdistricts, districts, provinces, and nation. Variation on the model or ideal institution (one could imagine families with more than two children, or families where it is not solely the mother who works in the kitchen) is virtually absent. Likewise, the textbooks do not encourage the students to question features of society or to think about the reasons society is organized in particular ways.

In Grade 5, students are introduced briefly to representative government: the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and Council (DPR), Golkar, and the two political parties. However, the amount of time and space devoted to political representation fares poorly in comparison with such subjects as the responsibilities of students and citizens, the value of work, obedience, discipline, loyalty, and cooperation, and the importance and structure of government. The Indonesian education system emphasizes the weight and immutability of government, and political participation is defined as the responsibility of citizens to obey and contribute via hard work, discipline, loyalty, and cooperation to the stability and prosperity of community and state.

The only IPS lesson I witnessed that deviated from the reading passage in the textbook concerned the division of the archipelago into the various administrative areas. I saw this lesson taught to two classes in 1981—Grades 4 and 5 in two different schools—and both had a new map of Indonesia, complete with East Timor as one of the provinces. The lesson was one of the more interesting I attended, with the children taking turns to point out the various islands, provinces, and capital cities. It was a well-rounded lesson, including elements of geography (such as the use of rivers for transport and irrigation), geology (volcanoes), and government (the main topic). One teacher gave an excellent explanation of the time zones, and told the children to listen on the radio to the different times in the different zones. The children showed an impressive knowledge of the provinces and their capitals, and the hierarchical structure of the government. Almost all children could name and locate all 27 provinces and their capitals with the map in front of them. In both classes, the latter part of the lesson was spent reading the relevant textbook passage.

²² Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Dikektorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, Direktorat Pendidikan Dasar, *Kurikulum Sekolah Dasar Kelas III, Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran* (Jakarta: 1986), p. 71.

IPA (Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam, Natural Science) was a new subject in 1981, incorporating such subjects as elementary physics, astronomy, chemistry, geology, botany, demography, health, and nutrition. Two of the lessons I saw were interesting because the very young teachers attempted to use everyday materials to give a practical demonstration of a scientific concept. This more practical and participatory teaching method was more common among the younger teachers. However, once the demonstration was over, at least half the lesson time in each case was still taken up with reading the relevant textbook passage.

One lesson for Grade 4 was about "Density," and the teacher brought into the classroom a basin of water, a glass, a banana-leaf packet containing salt, and an egg. The whole class was very subdued and embarrassed when the teacher could not get the experiment to work for some time. (The classroom atmosphere was similar to that in several Mathematics classes I witnessed.) It was with some relief that the teacher and students retreated to the textbook. The other lesson was about "Eclipses," and the teacher brought a soccer ball, a tennis ball, and a table tennis ball to represent sun, earth, and moon. In this Grade 6 class, the work was familiar territory, and the children immensely enjoyed the model making with the balls. There was good understanding of how the earth spins on the axis, the creation of day and night, eclipses, and the solar system. The subject had obviously been well taught and was of interest to the calendar-conscious Balinese.

PMP (Pendidikan Moral Pancasila, Pancasila Moral Education) is not only taught in the two lessons allotted to it every week. As instructed in the Curriculum, all general education must contain PMP, and indeed it does. The reading matter for the textbooks on IPS, Bahasa Indonesia, and PMP overlap to a great extent. Topics include: citizenship; the meaning and significance of Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945; the proclamation of Independence and the national motto, anthem, and oaths; social justice; *gotong-royong* (mutual help); the rights and responsibilities of students and citizens; the virtue of subordinating self-interest to the common good; the Scouting movement; and the role of students, farmers, soldiers, and civil servants in making the country *maju* (progressive).

The following is a description of a typical PMP lesson, taken from my 1981 field notes, written in the classroom as the lesson progressed.

"There are 19 pupils in the room—seven girls, all down at the front as usual, and 12 boys—with eight textbooks between them. The teacher directs the children to open their books at page 33, and with no further introduction, she chooses a boy to read the passage, "Rights and Responsibilities as Pupils,"

1. Rights and Responsibilities

We live in a family. A family usually consists of father, mother, and children. A good family consists of father, mother, and three children. As the size of a family increases, the costs of daily living increase. Costs of food, clothes, school expenses and so on. A good family is a family that consists of three children. A family like that is called a happy family.

Budi's family is a happy family. In Budi's house, there are only Budi's father and mother, Budi, Iwan, and Wati. Budi's family does not have a servant. All the work in the house is done by the family members themselves. They do the work in the house together. They learn to work helping each other. Because it is usual for them, Budi, Iwan, and Wati already understand their daily responsibilities.

By early morning they are already up. After that, Budi and Wati go to early morning prayers. After prayers, Budi sweeps the houseyard. Iwan helps Budi collect the rubbish. The rubbish is put into a bin. Wati works in the house. She sweeps the

floor of the house and cleans the furniture. After cleaning the house, Wati helps mother in the kitchen. Mother works in the kitchen each day. After working in the kitchen, mother washes the clothes. Budi's father helps to straighten the room.

Budi's father has even heavier responsibilities. He must do his work at the office. He has the responsibility of providing money for his family. He works from morning until afternoon.

Budi's father works for country and state. Because he works for the state, he gets a wage from the state. He gets a guarantee of health care if he gets sick.

Apart from responsibilities, he also has rights. Budi has the right to graduate to the next class if he is clever and industrious at school. Budi, Iwan, and Wati have the right to a guarantee of food, clothing, and continuing schooling from their parents. There are many other rights too. Can you give some other examples?²³

The teacher stands next to the boy, correcting his mistakes. All except three children are following the reading, and she notices and tells them to pay attention. Now the teacher chooses a girl, and she competently reads the next whole section. When the girl finishes reading, the other children volunteer, 'Saya, 'Bu!' ('Me, Teacher!'). A boy is chosen and begins to read, but the teacher interrupts him and asks, 'What are the rights and responsibilities of pupils?' She answers this herself, saying, 'Number one, is to study,' but that is not what the book says. (The book says: 'As pupils we must follow the admonitions of the teacher.') Then she asks the class their responsibilities at home. The children answer easily, suggesting cleaning their rooms, helping father in the *sawah*, getting water and helping in the kitchen. The teacher uses the completion-of-sentences-and-words method:

'Budi's family does not have?'

'A servant.'

'But if Budi had lots of younger brothers and sisters, they would have to have...?'

'A servant.'

'Each person has his or her own job so that the work is finished more . . . ?'

'Quickly!'

I try this myself, and find I can do it while barely listening, almost without paying attention. The teacher suggests that they could give 'guidance' to their younger brothers and sisters with their homework. She asks, 'Who has brothers and sisters in the lower grades?' Eight children raise their hands.

Then she asks straight comprehension questions of the class generally: How many children are there in Budi's family? What are their names? What are their responsibilities? Why are they happy? The teacher then breaks into Balinese for a couple of sentences to talk about Family Planning and its economic advantages. The children all smile and look at me. 'If your mother does not know about KB, tell her. Remember, a small family is a happy family.'

She then reverts to Indonesian, using the common complete-the-sentence technique.

'Budi's family does not have?'

'A servant.', etc. Then, 'Budi's father works to get money for his family. He should not gamble or waste it because it is for food, clothes and school. He serves his country too,

²³ S. H. Permadi, *Pendidikan Moral Pancasila Untuk SD Kelas IV* (Surabaya: PT Bina Ilmu, Cetakan Kedua, 1980), pp. 33–34 (my translation). Budi's family is the model family in the model Desa Sukamaju, the Village of Like-To-Progress. This series of textbooks follows Budi and his family for two years of PMP lessons. In 1992 this series of texts is no longer in use.

by farming and producing food [sic], and the government helps him too, for example, if he gets sick, he is given medicine. Budi has the right to go on to the next class if he is industrious.'

After this reinforcement speech, she chooses six more children to read the passage aloud. It is very boring for me and the pupils, despite the great sociological interest of the content of the reading passage."

The reading passage from the textbook is typical in its subject matter, as are the teaching methods employed. The salient messages are: small families are good and happy; fewer children mean greater family prosperity; mothers should use Family Planning; cooperation is good; people must work hard and contribute to their families and state in order to deserve the rewards of food, clothing, schooling, wages, and medical care. The textbook passage presents a model family life: there is a nuclear family; there are morning prayers, as in Islam; and there is a marked sexual division of labor, with mother and daughter in the kitchen, and father with the "heavier responsibility" of working in a government office and being the family breadwinner. Note that, like all good teachers, this teacher tried to make the passage more relevant to the children of this farming community by saying that the father's responsibility was to produce food.

The lesson described above is typical of the general teaching method, often referred to by teachers as *bimbingan dari belakang* (guidance from behind). Salient features of this method are: repetition of reading passages from the textbooks, straight "factual" questions for the children to answer verbally, and the complete-the-sentence question and answer sessions. There is much rote learning, concentration upon textbook information, presentation of information as fact, compliance with centralized curricula, strict scheduling of classes on paper, and unquestioned teacher authority. To Western eyes the absence of student-initiated learning, creative writing, alternative viewpoints and criticism, problem-solving and comprehension questions that ask "why" is noticeable.²⁴

In Balinese schools there is a relaxed, unstressed learning environment. Tension only occurs in new or experimental lessons, when the teacher is not confident of his/her knowledge or when the teaching techniques involve uncertainties and open-ended experiments. Individuals are not under pressure to perform, and much learning is "group learning." The unquestioned authority of the teachers and textbooks assures student receptivity. Learning is thus a matter of rote repetition and passive intake of "facts." Learning is not a matter of questioning and exploration, discovery and insight, self-expression or self-knowledge. Understanding concepts and meanings is not important and there is no place for criticism, for instance of literary works.

Bahasa Daerah (Regional Language, Balinese Language) is accorded decreasing importance as children progress through school. In Grade 1 all lessons are initially conducted in Basa Bali, but by Grade 6 all lessons except Basa Bali are conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, with occasional asides (as in the lesson described above) in Basa Bali.

Basa Bali textbooks follow the same pattern as Bahasa Indonesia texts: reading passages are followed by comprehension questions, complete-the-sentence questions and other exercises, including some essay-writing topics. Balinese, as well as Latin, script is taught. Although many of the same topics are presented here as in textbooks for other subjects (for instance, the Grade 5 text contains stories about cooperatively building a *bilik*, room, for the

²⁴ This is not intended as a criticism of teachers—indeed they are as much the victims of the over-stretched education system as the students.

village; the national heroine Kartini; the official opening of a village clinic by the Camat; and national savings banks²⁵), the stories are often about, or mention, places, folk heroes, temples, and institutions that are exclusively Balinese. This is a refreshing change, and children enjoy hearing about these more familiar topics.

Religion is the one subject which specifically teaches children about Balinese culture, albeit in a very intellectualized and bookish manner. For instance, in real life the main "religious" activity undertaken by girls is the making and presentation of offerings; yet these are barely mentioned in textbooks.²⁶ Much of the material presented is in the form of codifications and lists, for instance, chapters 2-5 of the Grade 6 text list the Panca Dewata (the five gods), types of sacred places (temples) and their functions, the Panca Niyama Brata (the five techniques of self-control), and the Sapta Timira (the Seven Darknesses or Evils).²⁷

Pramuka (Scouts) activities are well liked. The children wear special Scouts' uniforms, gather around the flagpole in the schoolyard, take the oaths, and sing the songs, including the National Anthem and the Pancasila song. Then the fun starts. Sometimes they play games, like a wild game of Blind Man's Buff I witnessed in the schoolyard and a very muddy chasing game involving long "dragons" formed by the pupils in a class holding the preceding child's waist.

The most memorable lesson I attended was a 1981 Scouts' lesson devoted to singing. The popular teacher commanded the attention of the combined Grades 5 and 6 as soon as he walked into the room by saying very softly "Pra-muka." Instantly, there was a loud rhythmic clap, in unison, from all the children, and then the teacher proceeded to sing, very softly, a song which all the children knew. The whole "lesson" of singing was punctuated with the tattoo of "Pra-muka!" which the teacher slipped in when the children were least expecting it, followed by the rhythmic clapping. There were broad smiles as each song was begun and recognized. The singing was of such volume that my ears hurt. All the songs were in unison, but frequently the class was divided into *kaja* and *kelod* (BB, mountainward and seaward) to sing very simple question-and-answer songs. At the end of many of the songs there was spontaneous applause.

Sport and Health are taught more formally now than in 1981. Village and school sport facilities have improved, especially with the conversion of one of the graveyards to a (somewhat bumpy!) sports field. International sports such as softball, soccer, basketball, and volleyball, as well as a variety of fun team games such as Blind Man's Bluff are played at

²⁵ I Gede Madera, *Sari Basa Bali, Kelas 5* (Denpasar: GEMA, 1974?).

²⁶ I suspect that the constraints of complying with official definitions of what constitutes an *agama*, religion, in Indonesian law have strongly influenced the textbook writer's choice of material. Balinese religion was not officially recognized until 1962; before then the Department of Religion relegated it to the realms of "wild" or animistic beliefs. An officially recognized religion in Indonesia must have one god and one sacred book, as in Islam and Christianity. Bali's government-recognized institute of religion, the Parisadha Hindu Dharma, has busied itself with producing a huge corpus of regulations, rationalizations, qualifications, etc., to prove that Balinese religion qualifies as a government-recognized *agama*. Clifford Geertz, "'Internal Conversion' in Contemporary Bali," in *The Interpretation of Cultures, Selected Essays* (London: Hutchinson, 1973) pp. 170-89, esp. pp. 181-88. The Grade 6 text presents the morning prayer, the *mantra* Tri Sandhya, its meaning, and its translation into Bahasa Indonesia. This morning prayer is a feature of contemporary school life but not of contemporary life outside schools. The textbook states that it should be said three times daily, at 6.15, 12.15, and 18.15, and it is often said again at the completion of school. The parallels with Islam's prayers five times daily are obvious. I Gede Wijaya, *Pengantar Pendidikan Agama Hindu Untuk Sekolah Dasar Kelas VI* (Denpasar: PT Upada Sastra, 1991), pp. 11-16.

²⁷ I Gede Wijaya, *Pengantar Pendidikan Agama Hindu*, pp. 17-43.

class level. Another new feature is the in-class teaching about sports, nutrition, hygiene (one memorable lesson taught children to aim straight when using toilets), family planning, etc.

Arts education has a curriculum, but like Sport and Skills there is no textbook.²⁸ The curriculum contains sections on the plastic arts, music, dance, and theater, and makes provision for practical *demonstrasi* of drawing, playing music, play-acting, etc.

One lesson the pupils greatly enjoyed was a Skills (Craft) lesson, again conducted by a young teacher. The previous week he had made a very professional-looking model of a modern suite of furniture out of cigarette packets covered in colored paper to look like upholstery. This week it was the children's turn, and they had brought cigarette and match boxes, rice-paste glue, scissors, razor-blades, and paper to school. They cooperated beautifully and produced high-quality work. They worked in groups of two or three, with much quiet comparison of work between groups. Most children made two-seater couches, complete with contrasting colored antimacassars, and a table with cut-out white paper "lace" tablecloths. The three girls present in the class that day did not participate—one did some embroidery, which she'd obviously been working on for some time, and the other two just sat and quietly chatted. At the end of the lesson, the teacher graded each group's suite of furniture. The only three-seater couch gained eight out of ten points, with most of the rest scoring seven. The boys had worked without direction and without imposed discipline. The Western-style furniture models with their fussy decoration were completely unlike any real furniture I saw in Brassika.

Conclusion

The villagers of Brassika face a range of contradictions produced by the transplantation of a foreign education system. Not only is this system based on Western models, but it is also further filtered by the national government.

In previous decades the traditional division of labor, socialization techniques, and the ambiguous status of women combined to limit access to school for Balinese girls.²⁹ In addition to traditional family socialization, there is now the rather subtle mass socialization that channels women into a marginal, non-productive service niche in society. School lessons (such as when the few girls embroider or chat while the many boys get on with the

²⁸ During my recent fieldwork the only Arts lesson I saw was a singing lesson. This suggests that the other strands of the Arts subject as prescribed in the curriculum are not usually implemented.

²⁹ Parker, "Village and State," pp. 365–68. In 1981 this was the case at primary school level: school rolls showed that more boys attended school than girls, and that their numerical preponderance increased with length of time at school.

Table 2. School Enrollments at Primary Schools in Brassika, 1981

| Class | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys as % of Total |
|-------|------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| I | 51 | 42 | 93 | 55 |
| II | 47 | 39 | 86 | 55 |
| III | 61 | 33 | 94 | 65 |
| IV | 50 | 25 | 75 | 67 |
| V | 43 | 25 | 68 | 63 |
| VI | 38 | 10 | 48 | 79 |
| Total | 290 | 174 | 464 | 63 |

Source: School rolls.

In 1992 village statistics show that all girls and boys attend primary school, and my observation of school attendance indicates that this is so. I would expect that the discrimination against girls still exists in higher levels of education and choice of employment but I have no statistical evidence at this stage.

main, productive job of making match-box furniture), government women's organizations such as PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, Organization for the Promotion of Family Prosperity) and Dharma Wanita, and women's development programs tout the image of women as demure, well-dressed mothers, wives, and housewives occupying a private, non-productive female domain. This image contradicts, diminishes, and devalues the actual role that Balinese women play. Women have an active, significant role in agricultural, livestock, and craft production and they organize the market. Their other key occupations are the service ones of household maintenance, childcare, health care, and the time-consuming tasks of religious ritual. Government ideology ignores women's productive work, assigns a low value to domestic tasks, and assigns no value at all to the work of traditional ritual. The government, through its schools, advocates that women's role is primarily to serve their husbands and children, and secondarily, their community and state.

Perhaps the most obvious contradiction is that education prepares young people for a life of service to their family and state but is no guarantee of a job. The considerable economic sacrifices parents make in educating their children only lead the children away from home and village in search of suitable employment. It is no wonder students aspire to the modern jobs publicized by schools and government—access to which is through a combination of qualifications, traditional elite connections, and wealth—and wish to distance themselves from traditional village-based occupations.³⁰ There is no alternative model presented. In school textbooks it is rare to find rural occupational role-models apart from that of *sawah* farmer. In particular, there are no respected rural occupational role-models for girls. There is no suggestion of the adaptability and diversification needed to preserve and develop land-hungry villages.

School presents a model of a modern life-style, which, it is implied, is attainable if one is a good citizen. The model includes a small nuclear family and a sexual division of labor. A life of service to the state and family is rewarded with health care, adequate food, clothing and housing, and an upholstered suite of furniture. Although the government is not specific about the dimensions of this future prosperity, expectations of "the good life" fostered by school are probably unreal for most village children.

School students often have extraordinarily high and unrealistic hopes: hopes of individual and family material prosperity, hopes of white-collar job satisfaction, hopes that Indonesia will catch up to a First World level of economic prosperity in the near future. At times, students talk as if problems of poverty, overpopulation, and high rates of unemployment do not exist. There is a "willing suspension of disbelief" that co-exists with occasional real concern about these problems and, these days, realistic worries about future jobs. These aspirations are at least partly fed by the "hidden curriculum" in the schools.³¹ This curriculum teaches a range of ethics, such as the possibility and desirability of unlimited economic expansion and unquestioning consumption of material goods, that suggest to pupils that living standards and physical conditions are the aspects of life that are most important. It is implied that the attainment of ever-higher living standards should be the primary goal of life.

One of the most important contradictions produced by the transplantation of the Western education system and the government's control of it is the lack of understanding about

³⁰ J. Branson and D. B. Miller, "Education and the Reproduction of Sexual Inequalities," in *Women and Education* ed. R. Burns and B. Sheehan (Melbourne: ANCIES, n.d.), pp. 16–17.

³¹ I. D. Illich, *Deschooling Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 52.

the nature and value of knowledge as it is understood in the West. One East Javanese teacher said,

"The problem with education in Indonesia is that what's important is the skin (*kulit*), not the contents (*isi*)."³²

Literacy is held in high esteem in Bali, because the written word is thought to have inherent power. Students are very concerned with the appearance of written work—always drawing margins, setting out points, drawing scrolls to signify the end of a piece of work, underlining headings, and in many other ways going to some trouble to make an artistic and impressive presentation of what could have been a few hastily scrawled notes. All children presented me with compositions roughly a page in length, even those whose work was largely incomprehensible. All were beautifully neat, with margins, headings, etc. and sometimes little pictures. There was little concern with accuracy or understanding—witness the "island of the gods" fiasco.

The skills of writing and presentation are more highly regarded than the acquisition of knowledge. Accuracy in record making, map making, and census taking was subordinate to the act of recording and the appearance of the record. A similar comment can be made with regard to sacred writing in Bali: the writing of Kawi letters on pieces of white cloth has an inherent mystique and power which is in no way diminished by the fact that most people, often including the writer, cannot read the letters, nor by the fact that the letters may be incorrectly formed or even nonsensical to the literati.

Education in Bali is perceived as the passive accumulation of masses of rote learning, the ticket to a prosperous new urban life. Schooling in Bali does not develop the critical faculties, creative expression, or even the application of open-ended learning to practical problems.³³

Another contradiction is that the government and the schools propound the "common good" ethic, but the reality of the school examination system, the labor market, and the cash economy is that one must pursue individual self-interest to succeed. Ambiguity about competition and individual achievement is evident in schools. On the one hand, the rhetoric of textbooks promotes "*kepentingan bersama*," common interests, above "*kepentingan pribadi*," self-interest.³⁴ Textbooks exhort students to learn and study in groups (the model telephone conversation was for students to arrange a study group after school), to help disadvantaged students with their schoolwork, and to work in mutual help groups on community advancement projects. On the other hand, students should be clever, industrious, and enthusiastic, and in return they, as individuals, will be rewarded with good marks, promotions, and prizes.³⁵ Schools stream pupils in a way that traditional socialization never did. Clever students are rewarded not only with higher marks and more confidence but also by en-

³² Schaeffer, *Schooling in a Developing Society*, p. 134.

³³ Harjono, "Higher Education," p. 161: ". . . the days of the diktaat have not entirely disappeared and the learning by heart of lecture notes . . . is still favoured. This undoubtedly reflects the fact that both primary and secondary school pupils are still 'getting educated' on this basis. For their part, students say they feel 'safe' if there is something tangible to learn off parrot-fashion for examination purposes. Most are unaware of any other way in which knowledge can be acquired. Similarly, they remain extremely hesitant to challenge or even question any statement made by a lecturer. Indeed the whole education process still tends to train the younger generation *not* to think critically or with originality."

³⁴ *Pendidikan Moral Pancasila Untuk Sekolah Dasar Kelas 4* (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1990), pp. 19–20.

³⁵ *Pendidikan Moral Pancasila Untuk Sekolah Dasar Kelas 2* (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1990), 81–82; *Pendidikan Moral Pancasila Untuk Sekolah Dasar Kelas 3* (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1990), pp. 83–84.

trance to the better institutions. This conflict between self-interest and the common good is clearly perceived in Brassika.

Villagers do not recognize the contradiction between the government's aims in providing schools and the villagers' aims in attending schools. Parents in Brassika see education principally as a means to an income. When asked, parents first say that they want their children to go to school so that they can read and write. When asked why, the economic motive is the common answer. Education is perceived to be the key to the modern sector and to its high-status, well-paid jobs.

Schools do a good job of teaching Bahasa Indonesia and of inculcating children with the "facts" of mathematics, history, geography, natural science, etc. In 1981, after several weeks of listening to classes of all kinds, and before I had had a chance to read the curricula and textbooks (though I was familiar with the latter from the classes), I came to the conclusion that the main purpose of schools was to create good citizens. On reading the curricula I discovered that this was indeed the purpose of Indonesian primary schools. Thus, **by the standard of the government's stated objectives**, presented below, the education system is successful: schools do an outstanding job of teaching citizenship and patriotism.

The 1975 Curriculum states the purpose and aims of its education program:

(1) The purpose of National Education is to form a 'development mankind' which practices Pancasila [*manusia pembangunan yang ber-Pancasila*], and to form an Indonesian who is healthy in body and mind, who has knowledge and skills, who can develop creativity and responsibility, who can promote an attitude of democracy and who is capable of holding opinions, who can develop high intelligence accompanied by a noble character, loving his nation and all men in accordance with the stipulations which are written down in the Constitution of 1945.

(2) The whole of the education program, especially General Education and the field of study of Social Science, must contain Pancasila Moral Education and elements that bring the spirit and values of 1945 to the Young Generation.

"The aims of Primary School General Education are that the graduates

- a. Have good basic qualities as citizens;
- b. Are healthy in body and mind;
- c. Have knowledge, skills, and basic attitudes that are needed for:
 1. Continuing studies;
 2. Working in society;
 3. Developing themselves for life in accordance with the principles of education.³⁶

The government is an enthusiastic proponent of education not simply because its development effort requires a literate, occupationally specialized workforce. Education in Bali is a form of political control, and the content of the lessons is a clear illustration of that. School textbooks make fascinating reading and can be seen as portraying the ideal Indonesia in the eyes of the government. There are models for everything—the model for the flag-raising ceremony performed on Monday mornings in front of schools and offices all around Bali; models for family life; models for school life; models of the ideal morning in a village; and the ever-present model government administrative hierarchy. The "education" taught in village schools is not very useful for a rural farming life, but it does impress the villager

³⁶ Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Kurikulum Sekolah Dasar 1975, *Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran*, Buku II.A.4, *Bidang Studi Agama Hindu* (Jakarta, 1975), p. x.

with the strength of the state.³⁷ Messages about the state—the desirability of development and of a Pancasila society, the qualities of good citizens, the virtue of national loyalty, and the desirability of stability and order—all come through loud and clear every day in every classroom. Pancasila permeates almost every lesson—and if it is not actually mentioned, there is always a poster on the wall.

School lessons define the nature of the world and the nature of society, and school persuades children that that particular vision is the true one. Children are taught unthinking respect for a new, outside authority, the state, and for the desirable modern life. In Bali, school is a government “advertising agency for making you believe you need the society as it is”³⁸ or, more accurately, as the government would like society to be. School is conservative because it is a government organization, but it is also radically disruptive.

The rhetoric taught in schools contains a hazy vision of an ideal future, but neither the exact nature of this new society nor the route to this idyll is described. The great contradiction is that government ideology does not acknowledge the inevitability of the fundamental social change which is being wrought in real life.

³⁷ B.R.O.G. Anderson, “Old State, New Society: Indonesia’s New Order in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 42 (May 1983): 477–96, at p. 488: “(T)he consistent leit-motif of the New Order governance has been the strengthening of the state-qua-state.”

³⁸ Illich, *Deschooling Society*, p. 114.