

Critique of Religious Commodification in *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*: A Sociology of Religion Study

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural critique of religious commodification and the formalization of ritual practices in *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*, a traditional Balinese literary work. It focuses on how the character Pan Bungkling employs humor and satire to question the legitimacy of religious authority and expose the relationships among ritual practices, economic interests, and power structures. Using a qualitative approach, this study combines textual analysis with hermeneutic interpretation. The primary data are drawn from *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*, held in the collection of the Lontar Library Institute, Faculty of Letters, Udayana University, under inventory number Krp. 183, as transliterated by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus (1986). The analysis focuses on stanzas composed in *Pupuh Sinom* that satirically address religious authority, ritual practices, and power relations within the narrative. The analysis proceeded in four stages: identifying and selecting relevant stanzas; interpreting their meanings in linguistic and narrative contexts; examining the relationship between individual stanzas and the narrative as a whole through hermeneutic reading; and interpreting the findings through Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, particularly symbolic capital. The findings reveal three major patterns. First, the text depicts the interconnections among ritual practices, economic interests, and power structures. Second, humor, satire, and trickster strategies serve as narrative devices through which Pan Bungkling challenges the legitimacy and consistency of religious authority. Third, the narrative emphasizes *tattva* as a form of philosophical and spiritual understanding that cannot be reduced to formal compliance with ceremonial practices. These findings suggest that *Geguritan Pan Bungkling* functions as a site of cultural critique of dominant religious authority and articulates the possibility of democratizing religious discourse. This study contributes to Balinese literary studies and the sociology of religion by examining how spiritual knowledge, religious authority, and ritual practices intersect within the text.

Keywords: *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*; Religious Commodification; Satire; Hegemony; Symbolic Capital; Democratization Of Religious Discourse

Introduction

In discussions of the sociology of religion in Bali, the relationship between literary texts, Hindu religious practices, and socio-cultural structures often reflects complex dynamics. Traditional literary works do not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they frequently portray tensions among religious institutions, power, and the wider community. Historical-sociological studies indicate that when interpretations of religious rites become rigidly institutionalized, religious symbolic capital may become associated with the economic interests of particular groups. Theoretically, this phenomenon is known as the commodification of religion: a process through which spiritual values, symbols, and ritual practices (*yadnya*) are transformed into commodities with material and consumer

exchange value. Such commodification often accompanies ritual formalism, in which religious piety is reduced to mechanical compliance with formal procedures for material offerings, potentially sidelining the essential philosophical dimension (*tattva*).

In Bali's cultural history, tensions surrounding formalism have often been addressed not through physical resistance but through cultural subversion mediated by traditional literary forms, including *geguritan*. Among classical Balinese literary works, *Geguritan Pan Bungklung* presents a distinctive critical narrative. The text does not fully represent the sociological realities of contemporary Balinese society; rather, it serves as a discursive space in which Pan Bungklung is portrayed as a figure who critiques abuses of religious power in the period depicted. Through this character, the text questions the legitimacy of religious elites and power relations surrounding materially burdensome ritual practices. Ultimately, its critical ideas point toward the democratization of religion, understood as a discourse that challenges the monopoly of religious interpretation held by particular elites and seeks to restore more inclusive access to spirituality for ordinary people within the world of the text.

Although *Geguritan Pan Bungklung* has attracted scholarly interest, a systematic review reveals a significant research gap. Previous studies have generally focused on philological aspects, such as manuscript preservation, transcription, and textual variants. Extrinsic studies have more often emphasized literary structure, linguistic aesthetics, character-education values, and ethnographic analyses of local Balinese humour (for example, Luwih, 2026). To date, the literature reviewed for this study indicates an absence of systematic research examining *Geguritan Pan Bungklung* specifically through a critical sociology-of-literature perspective that brings together religious commodification, hegemony, and symbolic capital.

This study addresses that gap by clearly distinguishing empirical socio-historical contexts from the social world constructed within the text. Drawing on Ratna (2004), the sociology of literature views a text not merely as a passive reflection but as an arena for critical articulation capable of challenging established structures. Through textual analysis and hermeneutic interpretation, this study employs Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1971) to examine how the narrative challenges the dominance of religious discourse, and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital (1991) to explore how religious symbolic capital is represented. Accordingly, the study poses three key questions: How are religious commodification and ritual formalism represented in *Geguritan Pan Bungklung*? What strategies of cultural subversion does Pan Bungklung employ in response to the dominance of religious authority in the narrative? And how does the text articulate ideas about the democratization of religion through its critique of ritual practices?.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach using textual analysis and critical hermeneutics within a descriptive-interpretive framework. It positions literature as a discursive arena at the intersection of the sociology of religion and critical cultural studies. The primary source is the traditional Balinese literary work *Geguritan Pan Bungklung*. The manuscript edition examined is the 1986 translation and transliteration by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus, based on the collection of the Lontar Library Institute, Faculty of Letters, Udayana University, inventory number Krp. 183. The primary language for interpretation is Balinese, including both *alus* and *lumrah* registers, as found in the original manuscript; the Indonesian translation serves as an initial aid to comprehension. The corpus is specifically limited to stanzas in *Pupuh Sinom*, comprising 434 stanzas (*pada*) in total. Textual excerpts were selected through purposive sampling based on three

main criteria. First, stanzas depicting material commodification, costs, or economic requirements associated with ritual performance (*yadnya*). Second, lines containing dialogue, interactive discussion, or satirical behaviour by Pan Bungkling that questions the moral consistency and legitimacy of religious elites. Third, stanzas expressing the primacy of the essential philosophical dimension (*tattva*) over ceremonial formalities.

Results and Discussion

1. Representations of Ritual Economic Burdens, Religious Authority, and Religious Commodification in *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*

Geguritan Pan Bungkling is a traditional Balinese literary work composed as oral poetry (*tembang macapat*), depicting the dynamics of power relations and religious discourse in the period represented. Drawing on the transcribed and translated version by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus (1986), from the Udayana University lontar manuscript collection, inventory number Krp. 183, this article focuses on the character Pan Bungkling. An ordinary man from the northern area of Sigogo, he is portrayed as a dialectically skilled trickster capable of challenging the conventional thinking of religious specialists in the narrative, including Ida Gede Gangga Sura in matters of ritual and De Senggu Tangi in cosmology. Pan Bungkling's discursive challenges even trigger fictional geopolitical tensions between Tandurahim and Gusti Agung in Pemaron.

Through this storyline, the manuscript functions as a site of critical representation, textually depicting a shift in ritual orientation from deep spiritual devotion toward material accumulation. To avoid analytical oversimplification and interpretive leaps from a specific textual case to empirical generalizations, the analysis distinguishes three interrelated discursive elements: the economic burden of rituals, the position of ritual specialists, and the process of commodification itself.

a. The Economic Impact of Rituals

The first element clearly expressed in the narrative is the material demand and burden associated with death rites (*ngaskara* and *mamersihin*). The narrative does not depict religious ceremonies as theologically cost-free spaces; instead, they are shared responsibilities requiring substantial logistical and financial preparation from an ordinary character with limited means. This is illustrated in the following stanza:

Bawu padem ibi sanja, nyaman titiang mamersihin, dening titiang mula totos, mangaskara uli nguni, titiang tan wenten uning, ring banten punika ratu, malih kirangan ngarap, kabelet kirangan daging, dening ibuk, titiang mangkin mangrasayang (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2a, No 5).

Translation:

He died yesterday evening, and my relatives are the ones who purified him. I have long been accustomed to arranging the ceremony, but I do not know how to perform it or what kinds of ceremonies are required. There are also too few people to help and insufficient funds, so I am now troubled by all of this.

Polih titiang maangkuhan, inganan tuah roras tali, yen titiang tan kasangkawon, malih limang dina mangkin, ngutang lantak makirim, akuda pacang sasantun, nene karawos utama, padan da adeng nyawurin, da jua ibuk, lamun to kuangan ngarap (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2a, No 6).

Translation:

I can try to manage, but I have only twelve thousand. If nothing prevents me, in five days we must cremate and consign him to the water. How much money is needed for the offerings considered essential? The priest replied gently, 'Do not worry if you lack the people needed to carry out the work.'

Textually, Pan Bungklings conversation conveys the psychological anxiety and financial limitations experienced by an ordinary person confronted with the standardization of formal ceremonies. The phrase *kabelet kirangan daging* (difficulty caused by a shortage of necessary items) and the financial limit of *roras tali* (twelve thousand) construct a narrative reality in which fulfilling a transcendent religious obligation becomes a tangible economic burden for people in lower social strata.

b. The Authority of Ritual Specialists

The second element concerns the portrayal of ritual specialists throughout the text. Some religious authorities are depicted as having regulatory control over the validity of ritual instruments and as directing the performance of ceremonial procedures through a strict division of labour. This is evident in the priest's response to Pan Bungklings concerns:

Lamun suba ada gelar. ne ruwang kaine dini, jadma gawenya keto, ngawe banten sai-sai, kama iba delokin, banten nyane suba puput, banten anak mangaskara, len to banten mamersi hin: raris bangun, Pan Bungklings jani natasang (Geguritan Pan Bungklings 2a, No 7).

Translation:

Once you have sufficient funds, my people here, who are accustomed to performing such tasks, prepare offerings every day. Look over there; the offerings have already been completed: offerings for requesting safety, another set for purification, and then the concluding ceremony. Pan Bungklings then examined them carefully.

The passage suggests that, within the text, the priestly institution is represented as having an internal workforce (*ruwang kaine dini*, meaning my people here) specifically tasked with preparing banten every day (*ngawe banten sai-sai*). The narrative thus emphasizes the presence of actors who hold ritual authority and establish standardized classifications of ceremonies (*banten mangaskara* versus *banten mamersihin*), leaving lay participants dependent on the technical instructions and legitimacy provided by ritual specialists.

c. Commodification Within The Text

The relationship between economic burden and the legitimacy of authority produces a third element: commodification. In accordance with Kitiarsa's (2008) conceptual framework, commodification occurs when the spiritual value of a sacred rite is simplified and transformed into a transaction governed primarily by economic exchange value. This shift becomes evident when Pan Bungklings curiosity about the philosophical significance of ritual objects is obstructed by financial demands.

Wenten ne mawadah dulang, meka waja miwah lengis, menuh sikapa asoroh, baya tingkah banten suci, punika ke anggen napi, padanda ngandika alus, data takonang iba, pipise jua aba mai, malih matur, Pan Bungklings makita nawang (Geguritan Pan Bungklings 2b, No 9).

Translation:

There are items placed on a wooden tray: a steel mirror and oil, together with jasmine flowers and a gadung tuber. These are all purification offerings. What are they used for? The priest replied gently, You ask about many things; just bring your money here. Pan Bungklings continued asking because he wanted to understand.

When Pan Bungklings asks an ontological question about the symbolic function of sacred ritual objects (*punika ke anggen napi* what are all these things for?), the priest responds in a way that shuts down philosophical discussion: *data takonang iba, pipise jua aba mai* (do not ask so many questions; just bring your money here). The priest's

statement represents a particularly explicit form of commodification within the text. The essential philosophical meaning (*tattva*) of the ceremonial objects (*meka waja miwah lengis*) is obscured in the narrative and displaced by a formal economic obligation (*pipise jua aba mai*). In this textual context, commodification suggests a pattern in which spiritual understanding is restricted, while the devotee's material contribution to the ritual specialist is prioritized to ensure that the rite can proceed.

2. Strategies Of Cultural Subversion in *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*: Satire, The Trickster Archetype, And The Reorientation of *Tattwa*

The text deploys discursive strategies that sustain resistance without requiring direct physical confrontation with the existing hegemony. Within the storyline, Pan Bungkling employs three principal strategies of cultural subversion. Cultural subversion is understood here through the Gramscian concepts of counter-hegemony and cultural resistance: discursive political action by marginalized actors to unsettle, negotiate, and transform the signs and meanings produced hegemonically by dominant classes.

In Bali's social history, caste structures (*wangsa*) and religious institutions have often represented significant expressions of power in community life. Cultural subversion therefore emerges as a plausible and efficient strategy of survival. It operates through a mechanism that James C. Scott (1990) describes as the creation of hidden transcripts, whereby marginalized actors appropriate symbols of official power and reformulate them, destabilizing the internal logic of that power. Since this analysis focuses on a literary text, the following discussion examines how the narrative depicts hierarchical structures and how Pan Bungkling's discursive strategies function within it.

a. Satirical Discourse And Empirical Reasoning in Response To The Hierarchy of Religious Knowledge

The text depicts an unequal hierarchy between holders of religious authority and the general public, represented by Pan Bungkling. His initial discursive strategy is to expose the power of religious discourse through accessible everyday language grounded in people's lived circumstances, using empirical analogies to overturn arguments advanced by elites. The conflict over the metaphysical function of ritual offerings (*banten*) is clearly represented in the following passage:

Wenten ne mawadah dulang, meka waja miwah lengis, menuh sikapa asoroh, baya tingkah banten suci, punika ke anggen napi, padanda ngandika alus, data takonang iba, pipise jua aba mai, malih matur, Pan Bungkling makita nawang (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2b, No 9).

Translation:

There are items placed on a wooden tray: a steel mirror and oil, together with jasmine flowers and a gadung tuber. These are all purification offerings. What are they used for? The priest replied gently, You ask about many things; just bring your money here. Pan Bungkling continued asking because he wanted to understand.

The priest offers an eschatological-metaphysical explanation of the organic elements in the offerings, such as jasmine flowers and gadung tubers, which are said to become fully formed body parts in the afterlife. This is illustrated in the following passage:

Padanda raris nartayang, kene katatwannya cai, pan sipta uling makelo, yan dadi jadma buin, menuhe bakal caling, sikapa anggon pamulu, mekane anggon mata, majane anggon kal anggon gigi, mangde ayu, yen mepekang parikrama (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2b, No 10).

Translation:

Then the priest explained, This is their meaning. It has been a tradition since ancient times. If one is reborn, the jasmine flower will become fangs, the gadung tuber will become skin, the mirror will become the eyes, and the steel will become the teeth, so that the body will be complete if all these requirements are fulfilled. This passage presents Pan Bungkling's strategy of contradiction.

Pan Bungkling kedek mangakak, uning titiang kapo mangkin, nanging kangkat titiang kawok, titiang taen mamanggihin, anak mananem sampi, tan wenten madaging legu, nangingne panggihin titiang, tan wenten angan asiki, boya lamur, ban tenge ne bawu lekad. (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2b, No 11).

Translation:

Pan Bungkling burst into laughter. Now I understand, but I am puzzled. I have seen someone plant a cow, yet there was nothing inside. I saw that there was not even a single one; its eyes were blurred, like those of a newly born calf.

Discursively, Pan Bungkling's loud laughter parodies elite discourse, bringing its claims of sacredness down to the profane. By invoking empirical observations of the naturally occurring anatomy of a calf rather than a magical process, Pan Bungkling rejects a religious myth that he considers logically unsupported. This satire seeks to shift religious practice away from dogmatic, unquestioning acceptance (*gugon tuwon*) toward an emphasis on *Tattwa* philosophy or essential meaning grounded in critical awareness.

b. The Trickster Archetype And The Symbolic Reversal of Power Hierarchies

The second discursive strategy centres on Pan Bungkling as a trickster figure. He deliberately adopts pretence, humour, and behaviour regarded as a breach of feudal decorum as forms of self-protection. This strategy allows him to express social criticism without necessarily provoking direct repression by those in power. The hierarchical conflict is evident in his interaction with De Senggu Tangi. Pan Bungkling deliberately acts foolishly and pretends not to see in order to test the religious figure's claims to spiritual legitimacy.

Pan Bungkling malih angucap, boy a ada umah puniki, tampul watan ipun jro, de Senggu manyawutin ne te cai Pan Bungkling, mai ngedengang pangaweruh, ye dalem maman kalah, idong-idong senggu Tangi, buin putus, tekening ngitungang sastra (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 3b, No 19).

Translation:

Pan Bungkling again said, This is not a house; this is called the master's house pillar. De Senggu replied, You are Pan Bungkling. You have come here to display your knowledge. I would be ashamed to lose to you. What is the point of being Senggu Tangi if I already possess sufficient knowledge of literature?

The trickster's cultural strategy reaches an extreme in the carnivalesque action at the end of the episode:

Pan Bungkling raris makaad, sambil manglegingang jit, apan De Senggu mamogol, manyaluk brata manyatri, karena kaca cekering kenehanga tuara belur, suba inganan joh, tan kocap De Senggu Tangi, anak tuhu, magehang ucapan sastra (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 7a, No 48).

Translation:

Then Pan Bungkling departed while displaying his buttocks, because De Senggu remained silent and was performing ascetic observances. Pan Bungkling continued to disturb him, assuming that De Senggu was unable to respond. Once he had gone a considerable distance, De Senggu Tangi was no longer mentioned; he was in fact a person who truly adhered to the teachings of scripture.

In Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) account of carnivalesque culture, the act of exposing one's buttocks (*manglegingang jit*) becomes a potent symbol of social-hierarchical

reversal. A lower part of the body, considered indecorous or taboo, is used to ridicule and destabilize the artificial sanctity claimed by a dominant religious group. The text does not undermine spirituality itself; rather, it deconstructs rigid formalism and moral pretence used to preserve social status.

c. Discursive Reframing And The Reorientation of Religious Practice Toward *Tattwa*

The third strategy involves reframing religious meaning within the text. The *geguritan* narrative critiques shifts in religious values within the social structure of the period, in which religious symbolic capital is often reduced to formal compliance with grand and expensive material rituals. Through dialogue, the text contrasts De Senggu Tangi's discourse on inner discipline and eschatology (*Geguritan Pan Bungkling* 5b-6a) with the materialistic depiction of heaven as a commodified concept.

To madan meli dimudah, anake suargane cai, mas manik man dadi tembok, mirahe maka jalijih, kayu madan lungsir, permaslawan gagulung, bale maraab gedah, korine winten maukir, endih murub, galang tuara ada madamar. (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 6b, No 42).

Translation:

In heaven, everything can be purchased cheaply: gold and precious stones become walls, rubies become gravel, wood is called lungsir, gold and silk are rolled together, the roof of the house is made of glass, its doors are carved with diamonds, and everything shines brightly without lamps.

De Senggu acknowledges that this grand depiction of heaven is derived only from written teachings that is, from literary descriptions and words rather than from direct experience.

Jerone taen marika, doning tatase tan sipi, titiang mabudi matakon, apang titiang manggih becik, di senggu manyawutin, to suba buka karmane bawu, bapa sing taen kema, sok ucapan sastra luwih, mungging tutur, buka keto tuduhanga. (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 6b, No 44).

Translation:

Have you ever been there? I ask because I wish to attain happiness. De Senggu replied, That is what I have explained to you, my child. I have never been there. It is contained in the highest teachings and in the instructions that have been given.

Pan Bungkling then employs a discursive strategy that firmly rejects this materialistic illusion:

Yen jrone mangege titiang, titiang ngega jro Tangi, yan jrone mangaden linyok, ucapan titiange sami, jrone linyokan buwin, bobabe teked katilu, ngorahang ada kawah, tekening suarga luwih, tusing ngugu, munyin babedag nenenan. (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 7a, No 47).

Translation:

If you trust me, I trust you, Jro Tangi. If you regard all my words as lies, then your own words are even more deceptive. Your deception is greater when you claim that there is hell and even the highest heaven. I do not believe those words of yours.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) theory of symbolic capital, the text represents a struggle over authority and the imposition of meaning (symbolic violence). Pan Bungkling's subversion involves reclaiming the authority to interpret religious literature from the elites. He argues that sacredness and liberation are not attained through the extravagance of material rituals, but through the internalization of ethical values, intellectual honesty, and a profound engagement with *Tattwa*.

3. Sociological And Religious Implications: Reconfiguring Power Relations And Narratives Of Spiritual Democratization

The symbolic confrontation and discursive guerrilla tactics represented by Pan Bungklung extend beyond textual aesthetics and carry significant sociological implications for deconstructing socio-religious structures. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, such subversive acts offer a discursive response to cultural change and the reconfiguration of power relations in Bali.

To analyse this phenomenon without allowing theoretical eclecticism to obscure the focus, the study distinguishes the contribution of each framework. Antonio Gramsci is used to explain how consensus operates and how counter-hegemony challenges elite domination. Pierre Bourdieu's framework examines how religious symbolic authority is recognized and converted into social capital. Foucault's (1980) concept of power/knowledge is used specifically to analyse how dominant classes establish a monopoly over legitimate religious discourse, using the production of truth and control of language as key means of governing marginalized subjects. Within these theoretical boundaries, the text's sociological and religious implications can be mapped across the following dimensions.

a. Democratizing Religious Narratives: Exposing Elite Regimes of Truth

Geguritan Pan Bungklung depicts an attempt to free marginalized communities (jaba) from the constraints of a rigid and burdensome hegemony of material ritual. Using a Foucauldian approach, this article examines how elite religious institutions in the period represented control the discourse of truth, leaving ordinary people's spiritual consciousness dependent on dominant religious apparatuses. Pan Bungklung's subversion offers an alternative subjectivity that democratizes access to spiritual attainment and releases individuals from fear and the material burdens of ritual.

The representation of this discursive monopoly being dismantled culminates in Pan Bungklung's argumentative victory over holders of religious symbolic capital, namely Padanda Gangga Sura and De Senggu Tangi:

Nika di pasihe kaja, di tengah madasar pipis, rawuhing mirah a sok, titiang mangaturang sami, anging yan jrone bani, macebur sambilang maimpus, batise maka dadua, magantung bias a tapis, miwah batu, ambil telasang irika (Geguritan Pan Bungklung 7a, No 46).

Translation:

There, in the northern sea, money is scattered across the middle, together with a basket of precious rubies. I will offer all of it. But if you are brave, dive into the sea with your feet tied together and with a bundle of sand and stones attached to them; then take everything there.

Through the metaphor of an extreme wager in the Northern Sea, Pan Bungklung challenges the existential courage of religious leaders who claim authority over the transcendent realms of heaven and hell. When the elites' metaphysical claims are challenged to be demonstrated through tangible sacrifice, the *geguritan* narrative depicts the collapse of their legitimacy and of the consensus (hegemony) maintained by the upper strata:

Pan Bungklung 'sumangkin betak, tuara nyangka-nyangka munyi, mangaku awake iyos, ngalahang De Senggu Tangi, tuwi manabeng mati, tuara ngelah pacang tuwut, Padanda Gangga Sura, nembak bengkot bucu mati, dadi bendu kuciwa mesuang peta (Geguritan Pan Bungklung 7b, No 49).

Translation:

Pan Bungklung became increasingly outspoken and no longer restrained his words. He declared himself the winner, having defeated De Senggu Tangi, and stated that

he would never believe Padanda Gangga Sura, even unto death. He cornered Padanda Gangga Sura in the debate, causing him to become angry after losing the argument.

From a sociological-literary perspective, Padanda Gangga Sura's anger and frustration (*dadi bendu kuciwa mesuang peta*) after being cornered reflect the breakdown of religious narrative exclusivity. Symbolic authority (Bourdieu), associated with caste and priestly status, can no longer compel obedience when confronted by the logical and incisive counter-discourse of a jaba.

The text thus suggests that cultural capital in the form of logical and empirical verbal articulation can contest and deconstruct a monopoly over legitimate religious interpretation. The sociological implication proposed by the text is one of spiritual democracy: religious consciousness should be grounded in free inner understanding rather than blind obedience to institutions that use sacred knowledge as an instrument of control.

b. Profane Imagery As A Critique of Sacred Authority

Durkheim's (1912) sociological distinction between the sacred and the profane provides a framework for analysing this text. Durkheim argues that societies distinguish the sacred and transcendent, which are protected by taboos and treated with reverence, from the profane, which belongs to the worldly sphere of everyday life. In *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*, this rigid boundary does not simply disappear. Instead, the text deliberately introduces profane images and elements as discursive tools for evaluating, testing, and criticizing claims of sacredness made by religious elites. This tactical scrutiny is evident in the coarse language and sharp material analogies in stanzas 11-12, where metaphysical claims about the afterlife of offerings are juxtaposed with the biological reality of a calf.

Pan Bungkling kedek mangakak, uning titiang kapo mangkin, nanging kangkat titiang kawok, titiang taen mamanggihin, anak mananem sampi, tan wenten madaging legu, nangingne panggihin titiang, tan wenten angan asiki, boya lamur, ban tenge ne bawu lekad (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2b, No 11).

Translation:

Pan Bungkling burst into laughter. Now I understand, but I am puzzled. I have seen someone plant a cow, yet there was nothing inside. I saw that there was not even a single one; its eyes were blurred, like those of a newly born calf.

Punika anak padanda, doning cingake nganehin, manawi te meka kawon, anggen anake nagingin, cedang wantah asiki, bas mangawe salah angkuh, pamulune kah-kah dungkah, sikapa makulit-kulit, anggen ipun, nagingin layon punika (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 2b, No 12).

Translation:

That is the priest's child. Because his eye is defective, perhaps the mirror was flawed when it was used for his eyes. Only one eye is clear because of carelessness. His skin is extremely rough, so the gadung tuber with its skin was used to complete the corpse.

Furthermore, the use of extreme profane elements as a means of discursive critique reaches its peak in Pan Bungkling's carnivalesque act toward De Senggu Tangi:

Pan Bungkling raris makaad, sambil manglegingang jit, apan De Senggu mamogol, manyaluk brata manyatri, karena kaca cekering kenehanga tuara belur, suba inganan joh, tan kocap De Senggu Tangi, anak tuhu, magehang ucapan sastra (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 7a, No 48).

Translation:

Then Pan Bungkling departed while displaying his buttocks, because De Senggu remained silent and was performing ascetic observances. Pan Bungkling

continued to disturb him, assuming that De Senggu was unable to respond. Once he had gone a considerable distance, De Senggu Tangi was no longer mentioned; he was in fact a person who truly adhered to the teachings of scripture.

Theoretically, the act of exposing one's buttocks (*manglegingang jit*), located at the lowest level of secular bodily symbolism, does not seek to eliminate spirituality itself. Rather, the coarse language and behaviour strategically use the most worldly forms of expression to expose the pretence of sacred formalism employed by elites to preserve their social privileges. Profane imagery thus functions as a critical mirror. The text does not seek to destroy the sacred domain; instead, it suggests that genuine sacredness must be freed from shallow ritual commodification and class arrogance. True sanctity is rooted in ethical conduct and sincerity of spirit, not in exclusive external symbols exploited by those who dominate religious narratives.

c. Representations of Cultural Resistance In The Narrative of *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*

The interactions between Pan Bungkling and several authoritative figures in *Geguritan Pan Bungkling* show that critiques of religious knowledge claims and legitimacy appear in multiple narrative episodes. The presence of Padanda Gangga Sura, De Senggu Tangi, and De Dukuh Tandurahim enables an examination of how the text represents resistance to the conduct or claims of authority questioned by the protagonist. The recurrence of this pattern may be analysed as a consistent narrative strategy, but it does not in itself prove that similar resistance persisted in Balinese social life.

In the episode involving De Dukuh Tandurahim, Pan Bungkling questions the ethical inconsistency of De Dukuh, who claims to have renounced worldly attachments but continues to slaughter a cow every day. The text thereby emphasizes that its discursive criticism targets the misuse of sacred discourse, regardless of the religious institution involved:

Yan ade Maman goroke, lega te manahe jani, Maman bin liwating bogbog, ngaku liyu ngelah Aji, yen sesedang takonin, petane dadi ngarumuk, mairib beruk silemang, amonto munyin Pan Bungkling (Geguritan Pan Bungkling 13a, No 92).
Translation:

If my uncle were killed, would you be pleased? You are greatly deceptive, claiming to possess extensive knowledge. When you are questioned properly, your answers become confused and uncertain. Thus spoke Pan Bungkling, after which everyone suddenly burst into laughter.

This scene broadens the scope of the narrative critique by introducing a figure from a different religious background. The analysis therefore does not generalize that all religious institutions abuse their authority; rather, it examines how claims to superior knowledge or piety become objects of critical scrutiny. On this reading, *Geguritan Pan Bungkling* can be interpreted as a narrative that creates space for criticism of authority through humour, questioning, and the reversal of arguments. Cultural resistance here refers to strategies represented within the text, not direct evidence of the reception, influence, or continuity of such resistance across generations. Claims about the work's social function and historical continuity require further research, such as studies of the text's reception history, performance practices, or reader responses.

Conclusion

Through a sociology-of-religion analysis of *Geguritan Pan Bungkling*, this study shows that the text offers more than humour as a narrative device: it also critiques ritual materialism and claims to religious power. Through Pan Bungkling, this critique takes the form of satire, empirical reasoning, everyday humour, and trickster characterization.

These strategies enable the text to expose tensions among the validity of religious knowledge, ritual performance, and ordinary individuals' capacity to question explanations offered by powerful figures. From this perspective, *Geguritan Pan Bungklung* can be understood as a counter-discourse to materialistic tendencies in ritual interpretation and to the monopoly of religious symbolic authority represented in the narrative. The findings also indicate that satire, parody, and profane imagery do not necessarily amount to a rejection of spirituality or ritual practice as a whole. Rather, these elements can serve as narrative tools for testing the consistency of claims to sacredness and the legitimacy of religious leaders. Through these strategies, the narrative presents a more reflective orientation to religious life, placing philosophical understanding (*Tattwa*) and critical analysis at the centre of inquiry into the relationship between ritual, knowledge, and authority. This interpretation is limited to the representations found in the text and is not intended as a generalization about Balinese religious practices as a whole.

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