Is it okay to call it waste?

Discard studies on the Balinese Hindu's sacred waste

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Abstract

Studies about waste issue in Bali have been mostly framed under the domain of plastic waste and solid waste. However, the essence of waste itself, especially when it is interconnected to religious tourism, is rarely emphasised, and generally overlooked. Thus, this thesis explores the socio-cultural aspect of waste and its perception. The case of sacred waste in the context of religious tourism in Bali is discussed by employing various methodologies used by discard studies scholars: defamiliarization, denaturalisation, decentering, and depurification. The data was collected through participant observations, informal conversations, and interviews that are influenced by anthropological approach. I started my discussion and analysis with a background of Balinese Hindu which includes an introductory to Balinese Hinduism, the nexus between rituals and offerings, an elucidation on transformation of sacred offerings from *sukla* to *lungsuran*, and the exercise of Tri Hita Karana principles in the reality of Bali. Following to that, I explored Balinese Hindu's conception of clean, holy, and sacred, as well as *palemahan* to provide understandings on Balinese Hindu's connection with their environment. Further, I breakdown Balinese Hindu's conceived ideas of waste and wasting in regard to their littering habit, the paradox of tourism, and the waste viewpoint of organic versus inorganic. The discussion then ended with an explanation on the local's ways in dealing with waste in domestic and public space. To conclude, discard studies on Balinese Hindu's sacred waste shows that Balinese Hindu's understanding of their relationship with the nonhuman environment affects the way they carry perceived knowledge of waste and wasting.

Keywords: discard studies, waste, offerings, rituals, pilgrimage, Balinese Hindu, Hinduism, Tri Hita Karana

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1 Introduction

Waste has become quite a big issue that is being discussed around the world. Many journalists and academic scholars bring up the issue of waste by framing it under various domains, including, domestic waste and tourism waste, but it seems like they are mainly interested in breaking down the problematic side of waste. Waste studies are often focused on an inorganic type of waste, such as plastics and hazardous solid waste, and how this impacts wider environment, and not so much on the socio-cultural aspect of waste and its perception. Yet in developing my research I found it hard to decide how to tackle this issue at its root if we do not take into account a local people's perspective of what we label as waste. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to investigate in more depth on how local people themselves understand and perceive waste and how they deal with the waste they produce.

To fill the knowledge gap, I am focusing my study on the way Balinese Hindus perceive and manage waste rather than trying to provide practical solution to the waste issues on the Bali Island. This thesis will explore the socio-cultural aspect of waste and its perception. To have an elaborate discussion on the topic, I will first introduce a background to a case study in Bali, Indonesia, to see how Balinese associate themselves with waste. The initial part will cover the environmental issues that have developed side by side with the rapid growth of tourism in the island. In the later part, I will then describe the traditional philosophy of the Balinese and how it makes it guides the Balinese's relationship with humans, the environment, and God(s).

1.1 Bali: tourism, waste, and Balinese Hinduism

As a leading tourism destination in Indonesia, Bali is highly exposed to environmental degradation caused by the rapid growth of the tourism industry. There are many issues that arise as impacts of tourism development on the island, including water scarcity and growing waste. In terms of tourism development, it is important for all the stakeholders to actively engage in maintaining the sustainability of tourism if they want the next generation to also enjoy tourism in the way current and the previous generation have (Sutawa, 2012). Additionally, the management of waste holds a crucial role to keep the waste issue under control before it overly affects the environment. Unfortunately, many middle- to low-income countries have relatively poor waste management, including Indonesia which was listed right after China in second rank out of the top 20 countries that has been managing waste in a poor way (Siddharta, 2019).

In November 2017, Bali's officials for environment and hygiene declared a "garbage emergency" across 6 kilometres of the coastline, covering their most popular beaches: Jimbaran, Kuta and Seminyak (Widyowati et al., 2018). A few months later, Rich Horner, a British diver, shared his experience to the world through his social media pages on diving in a sea of plastics in Manta Point, Nusa Penida, Bali, which immediately caught a lot of people's

attention (Underwater Tribe, 2018). Around the same stretch of land, many organisations, and foundations such as R.O.L.E. Foundation, ecoBali, Bye Bye Plastic Bags, and Trash Hero, have been actively addressing their concern about waste issues by doing campaigns to reduce plastic waste in this island of Gods. Nonetheless, waste remains as notorious issue in Bali and activities like beach clean-ups are not considered the best way to tackle plastic waste pollution as they do not address the root causes of the issue. Once at sea, waste, particularly plastic, is at the mercy of a wide spectrum of physical phenomena (McAdam, 2017), which means it will need a serious action from all people around the world to take part on reducing the amount of plastic wastes that could end up in the coastal and marine areas of Bali or any other "hot spots" for plastic waste accumulation.

From one standpoint, it is easy to understand why many discussions about waste in Bali revolved around the issue of plastic waste as it is a highly visible pollutant, both on the land and in the ocean. Also, many news and scientific articles state that plastic debris harms the environment, wildlife, and humans. However, as a researcher who used to live in the island, I noticed that plastic waste is not the only pollutant that can easily be found in the environment. According to my preliminary observations, the remaining of Balinese Hindu's religious offerings are virtually everywhere, such as at temples, on the corner of buildings, on the road, on the beach, in the river, etc. These experiences intrigued me to get the picture whether the remains of religious offerings contribute to the issue of waste in Bali.

Statistically, 83.5% of Bali's population are Hindu (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bali, 2018). Balinese Hindus' worldview comprises two categories: *sekala* (the seen) and *niskala* (the unseen). They also have their own nested traditional philosophy for life, Tri Hita Karana, which principle contains the importance of harmonisation in relationship between humans and the upper world (*parahyangan*/God), the middle world (*pawongan*/other humans) and the lower world (*palemahan*/environment). This, however, doesn't mean that most Balinese people are highly religious; as Geertz (1973) mentioned, Balinese people's approach towards religion and spirituality are more practical as they are more into practicing than believing. Balinese Hindus expresses their cosmology through ceremonies and offering compositions made out of coconut leaves filled with various components, such as rice, flowers, fruits and snacks (Sujarwo et al., 2020). The offerings are considered as a sacred form of gratitude and generally interpreted as form of begging a gift from the superior or gods (Fox, 2015). For instance, to get as many blessings as possible and show gratitude to the ancestors or highest power, they use and put these offerings practically everywhere, in shrines or temples, in front of the houses or public buildings, road sections, beaches and on vehicles.

The extensive need and use of offerings raises a dilemma for the current society's rhythm and way of life. With more local Balinese people getting involved in the tourism industry, the hand-making process of these offerings is contradicting the need of moving fast to produce more and more. It is time-consuming, which means buying pre-made offerings has become a common preference for most people, especially for those who are living in the urban area. In

fact, the act of buying pre-made offerings and their components has been normalised for more than a decade now and people can easily find packs of plastic packaged offerings to buy at local stores or markets (Baliving, 2016). The increasing consumption of packaged goods, which later led to waste and pollution problems, is thus likely caused in part by the growth of the tourism industry in this area (MacRae, 2012).

The transformations of the religious offerings to a more practical form are shown by the shifting of materials that are being used, adding readily bought pre-packaged non-organic materials such as plastic packaging into the previously all-organic materials. Highlighting this issue, Sakenan Temple's authorities decided to educate the local Balinese communities to no longer use plastic bags to store their offerings on a seven-days long of ceremonies at the entrance of the temple (Putri, 2019). This action indicates the authorities' concern for plastic waste pollution in their sacred places such as the temples. In other words, offerings materials, both for the base and the various other components, have now become a commodity that adds to the waste issue in Bali.

The problem with plastics is that more than 76% of all plastic end up as waste, and nearly 50% of the plastic waste we now produce each year is used only once, and often only for a few minutes (Choi, 2020). This statement published in Harvard Business Review is in line with the situation happening in the local Balinese communities in relation to the use of plastic for their religious worship. Normalisation of buying pre-made offerings base and the use of plastic packaged snacks as their offering components is somehow problematic. People may not be fully aware of how their practices have contributed to this plastic waste issue. In addition, knowing the fact that they produce plastic waste as an unconscious act of living a religious practice may also complicate the process of raising this awareness. On a side note, this also seems to contradict one of the points of Tri Hita Karana, the harmony of life between humans and their natural surroundings.

1.2 Research questions

In this thesis, my main objective is to understand how local Balinese perceive and manage waste in the context of pilgrimage in Bali. To explain the objective, I have to explore the understandings of Balinese on their relationship to the environment by coming up with a set of questions. My list of questions for this research are:

Main research question

1. How do Balinese Hindus perceive and manage waste in the context of religious tourism in Bali?

Sub-research questions

2. How does Tri Hita Karana influence the way Balinese portray waste?
3. How do Balinese understand their relationship with the nonhuman environment?
4. How do Balinese understand and perceive ‘waste’?
5. How are the remains of sacred offerings managed by Balinese in domestic and public spaces?

2 Conceptual framework

In the former chapter, I introduced the case study and knowledge gap I identified to address in this research. I started with the environmental issues faced by people in Bali as one of the side effects of the rapid growth in tourism industry. Then, I connected this to the human-environment relationship of Balinese through Tri Hita Karana, their traditional philosophy for life. Following from this, this chapter develops the literature review and conceptual framework which provides me the tools to fairly address the research topic throughout fieldwork and data analysis/discussion.

2.1 Tourism, pilgrimage, and the environment

According to Graburn (2004, p. 24), tourists' need is "a product of their cultural background, and the promised reward is supposed to satisfy the need in a direction of further enhancement of these values, not turn the tourist into an entirely different kind of person". Graburn thus frames tourism as a "modern ritual" that creates a limited period of separation from mundane, ordinary life. In other words, Graburn argues that the structure of the tourism experience is similar to the structure of ritual behaviour, which later elaborate with the analysis of tourism as a ritual by adopting Arnold van Gennep's work to describe it as a *rites of passage,* a liminal phase between separation from and reintegration into everyday life.

The concept of liminality was developed by Victor Turner as a refined work from van Gennep's outlining of the phases of ritual. According to Turner (1977, as cited in Graburn, 1983, p. 14), the concept of liminality is "most appropriate for truly religious, or societal comprehensive phenomena, whereas the analogous phenomena in secular rituals and leisure activities may be called liminoid". Turner argues that during the liminal phase, social patterns are different from normal life and he thus characterizes this as 'anti-structure', wherein "the content of social relations is no longer normative, hierarchical and distance, but close and egalitarian, a state that he calls communitas" (Graburn, 1983, p. 14). Moreover, the communitas state is often indicated by an overthrow of marks that can distinguish and categorize individual persons, such as symbols of rank and status (Graburn, 1983, 2004).

In this view, consequently, leisure travel is seen as equivalent to pilgrimage, a "sacred" experience involving movement away from home. Pilgrimage is primarily an individually motivated journey to a certain destination, driven by a strong religious or spiritual motivation to reinforce a sense of renunciation of worldly matters (Shinde, 2007). By contrast, in the modern world, tourism is regarded as a phenomenon whose origin is rooted in pilgrimage, meaning that the study on development of leisure or tourism cannot be understood without a grasp on the study of religion and pilgrimage practices back in ancient times (Collins-Kreiner, 2016).

To solidify the connection between religion, pilgrimage, and tourism, as a form of travel with key elements of motivation, destination and journey, pilgrimage provides opportunities for people to visit sacred sites. However, the official recognition of the pilgrimage's sacredness might not be equally treated because "in certain cases, pilgrimage is explicitly authorized by centralized power" (Di Giovine & Choe, 2019, p. 362). To examine the sacredness of pilgrimages, Di Giovine & Choe (2019) try to break down the ways to 'measure' through tradition, canonical text, and institutional norms.

Despite the fact that there is an increase in the amount of pilgrimage travel to pilgrimage centres and studies about its connection to tourism, the existing literatures mostly address pilgrimage's religious, cultural, social, and economic dimensions rather than its environmental implications (Shinde, 2007). According to Shackley (2001, in Shinde, 2011), the limited research about environmental degradation in pilgrimage sites might be due to the belief that the celestial beings will take care of any issues that occur in these sites. Thus, it is not uncommon to find the local communities in pilgrimage centres to be less receptive towards the idea of discussing physical environmental problems (Shinde, 2011). To help a bit more in understanding the context, Shinde (2011) uses an example from Turnbull's (1981) observation of how Hindu pilgrims perceive the city of Varanasi as quite beautiful while foreign visitors often perceive to as rather dirty. Shinde argues that in religious context, the religious authorities and priests "did not deny the existence of dirty drains, waste, and general uncleanliness, but argued that this degraded material condition did not affect the sacredness or purity of the place or the river" (Shinde, 2011, p. 450). This demonstrates the significantly distinctive discourse about the relationship between pilgrimage and environment degradation in relation to other tourism activities. Still, cumulative and recurrent effects from regular and frequent visitations to pilgrimage centres remains a risk to the biophysical environment once its capability to absorb shocks from mega events gradually decreases (Shinde, 2007).

To appreciate this complexity, we need to acknowledge that there is a cultural subjectivity that might affect the different perceptions of the environment and humans' relation to it from one person to another. In the pilgrimage context, the definition of environment could stretch along a spectrum: from the physical environment that is easy to conceived and to the abstraction of sacred space (Shinde, 2011). Further, there is a "multi-layered connections between people, religion, and place ranging from geography of the place, to the experiential qualities of 'sensing' the sacred in the air, water, and, to 'doing' the sacred through ritual acts of prayer and purification, and ultimately to 'creating' the sacred in the mind, at home, and in places of worship" (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004, p. 395) which makes it even more complicated to have a single definition of the environment in a pilgrimage context. This is particularly significant to understand how the religious aspect could have some kind of influence towards environmental behaviour in pilgrimage sites because people's environmental attitudes might be affected by their religious beliefs.

2.2 Discard studies: waste and wasting

Waste is defined as a salient display of inefficiency in material utilization and its environmental impacts from improper treatments that has caused a crucial problem (Dileep, 2007). According to Dileep (2007, p. 378), "industry is the major producer of waste, and tourism, one of the largest industries in the world, is no exception to it." To some extent, the tourism industry has been acknowledging waste as one of the big issues arise within the industry which is causing environmental degradation (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017; Dileep, 2007; MacRae, 2012), while also downplaying the environmental consequences of waste at the same time (MacRae, 2012). Although some have tried to mitigate the problem, the production of waste is considered as an unavoidable issue of structural violence, along with production of inequality and production of "spaces of exception", within the process of turning tourism into a commodity (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017).

In regards to waste, plastic has become a global challenge that is closely associated with sustainability and also a hot topic in social media for its significant role in environment and human health's degradation. Heidbreder et al. (2019) worked out a review on perceptions, behaviours, and interventions to tackle this issue by looking at the problem of awareness and consumer perceptions towards plastic. In the study, they argue that it is necessary to put a focus on human behaviour through insights on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in developing effective solutions to plastic waste issue. However, it has also come to their attention that unsolved matters on "1) perceived practicability and convenience in the consumption context, 2) lack of knowledge on how to implement alternatives or lack of opportunities, 3) strong habits, and 4) shift of responsibility" (Heidbreder et al., 2019, p. 1087) might hinder development of behaviour-based solutions. After all, a change in behaviour will have to take awareness and perceptions into account, even though perception itself is highly contextual, depending on aspects such as subjectivity, location, history, as well as other socio-demographic factors, namely income and education (Ostry et al., 1995).

The inconclusive facets of waste and wasting has inspired scholars in exploring discard studies since the rise of environmental concern about waste in the 1960s (Zimring, 2015). Cultural and religion setting analysis was carried by Douglas (1966) to decipher waste, or dirt, as Douglas put in her book, Purity and Danger. Then from 1973 to 2005, The Garbage Project of Rathje's was ran to archaeologically study the consumer behaviours directly from their waste rather than surveys and interviews (Lehmann, 2015). On top of that, Tarr (1996, in Zimring, 2015) suggested that the complex ways of wastes being managed over history is likely the outcome of human's unsuccessful attempt in finding landfills or sinks for wastes with least to no consequences. To examine the type of politics and temporality in the framing of waste, Lau (2022) looked into three major conceptualisations of waste: as a resource and property, a risk, and a source of prosperity. The result highlights the possibility to generate or transform the

value of waste, but not necessarily adequate to balance the discussion of waste and the stewardship of discarded objects.

To add depth in the discussion of waste and wasting, Robin Nagle coined the term "discard studies" and founded a blog by the name in 2010 (Liboiron & Lepawsky, 2022). Discard studies ought to include the approaches from multiple disciplines, namely cultural anthropology, economics, sociology, archaeology, geography, history, and environmental studies, in questioning waste as material culture ("Discard Studies," n.d.). In a book titled Discard Studies: Wasting, Systems, and Power, Liboiron and Lepawsky (2022) argue on the role of waste and wasting as a technique of *power* that is exhibited in its pure value and how the essences are being reproduced and aligned with certain interests rather than to display any form of domination and coercion (p. 7). In the case of waste and wasting, power is being perceived to own material effects that produces reality; "it produces domains of objects and ritual of truth" (Foucault, 1977, p. 194 in Liboiron & Lepawsky, 2022, p. 7).

Theory of relationships, power, difference, and change are the main theories they built up to the end of the book to show the implication of their arguments on waste and wasting. In the same book, Liboiron and Lepawsky (2022) also discussed the various methodologies that are commonly used by scholars of the studied matter who are into truism of waste: defamiliarization, denaturalisation, decentering, and depurification. Defamiliarization is used by discard studies scholars to impede the common narratives on waste and wasting through empirical research and multidisciplinary cases. The attempt could be done by questioning the existing premises or by looking at the historical background of normalised disposable material culture. Denaturalisation is seen as the core game plan of the discard studies for its capacity to uncover the initial phase of normality which later be the key to reset the practice.

Decentering put forward the concept of "externality" from economics. In this case, waste is fixed as the cause of negative externalities that could sabotage the calculation of benefits and costs (Liboiron & Lepawsky, 2022, p. 22). To keep certain areas clean, centres and peripheries are made, and waste is placed in the externality or sacrifice zone to keep the centre land clean. The relation between Land, power, and its use in the case of waste and wasting is also discussed by Liboiron (2021) whose idea was to show that pollution is in fact a form of colonialism. Land is seen as a Resource in the eyes of colonial, and "the colonial logic of Resource are reproduced in practices and concepts of modern environmental pollution" (Liboiron, 2021, p. 63).

The work of Mary Douglas in Purity and Danger (1966) underlies the importance of purity in Liboiron and Lepawsky's (2022) explanation on depurification as one of the methodologies used by scholars of discard studies. According to Douglas, dirt or waste as an idea has taken humankinds "straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic system of purity" (1966, p. 37). It is also defined by Douglas as residual that has been rejected from the acceptable scheme of classification because it tends to treat the harmony of

the rest of the built-up pattern. Further in the breakdowns of depurification, Liboiron and Lepawsky argued that the discussion of waste and wasting should not fail to distinguish cleaning up and purification because of clean-up is based on separation, while purity is based on annihilation (Liboiron & Lepawsky, 2022, p. 27).

2.3 Conceptual model

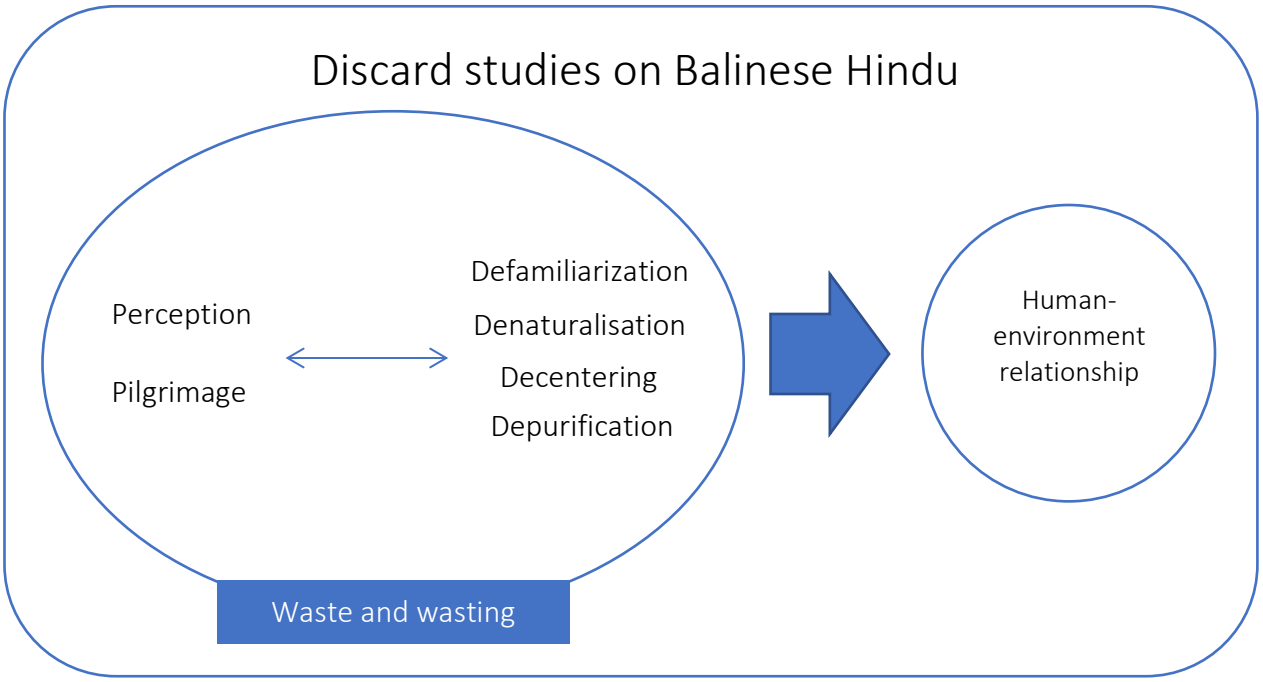

Figure 2.1 Conceptual model

3 Methodology

Since the beginning, I was motivated by my curiosity regarding waste. While executing research on plastic waste issue could be more favourable considering the wide selections of references all over the internet, I noticed that my interest in this waste issue is leaning towards the interplay between the religious aspect in Balinese Hindus' culture and how it plays a role in shaping their perceptions on waste. The following chapter will show you how I utilised the qualitative approach in constructing this thesis.

3.1 The field

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the fieldwork for this research was conducted in Bali, Indonesia. Since Bali is quite a large area to do a thorough investigation in a relatively short time, I decided to pick a selection of two smaller districts in the area. I chose Denpasar and Karangasem, specifically Besakih, as two of my main 'playing field'. Denpasar is the capital city of Bali Province which located in the southern part of the island and portray the image of urban society. For Denpasar, I was mainly talking to people who reside in the eastern area of Denpasar. In contrast to the portrayal of urban society, the village of Besakih serves as the depiction of the rural society. Geographically speaking, Besakih sits in the southern slope of Mount Agung, the highest point on the island and falls under the administration of Rendang District, Karangasem Regency. To add more context, the village of Besakih is home to the most important *pura*[1] complex of Balinese Hinduism, Besakih Temple. Hence, even though there is a whole village called Besakih, my study was focusing more on the Besakih Temple because I consider it as the representation of tourism and/or pilgrimage destination in Bali.

[1] A *pura* is a Balinese Hindu temple, the place of worship for the firm believers of Balinese Hinduism in Indonesia.

Figure 2. Map of Bali (Source: Bali Tourism Board)

I spent a total of seven weeks going back and forth between Denpasar and Besakih from early October to late November 2021. Most of the time, I stayed at a family house in South Denpasar. I also stayed at my informants' houses, Kayan's and Putu's, when I did my part of fieldwork in Besakih. I chose to stay at a family house when I did my part in Denpasar to stay on budget with my spending during the fieldwork while still having a convenient access to regularly meet Rai who resides on the outskirt of Denpasar. Rai is one of the key characters in my fieldwork in Bali because he posed as my gatekeeper[2]. He is actively involved in socio-cultural dialogues and research in multiple regions in Bali. He has a zine in which himself and other contributors often write about various issues surrounding socio-political, cultural, and environmental domains. Being a native Balinese, Rai took the part of translator whenever I need to consult about the meaning of certain Balinese terms or customs. Needless to say, he smooths my way to access the study setting and meet the participants of the study.

3.2 The methods

To respond to my research questions, I combined three typical methods in qualitative research: participant observations, informal conversations, and interviews. From the three methods, I

[2] Gatekeeper is a term commonly used in qualitative research to refer to a person who holds a key role to ensure researcher's access to potential participants and field setting.

feel that participant observations and informal conversations has gave me the most advantages to blend in with the locals. Although interviews have allowed me to dig deeper into my informants' thought process and/or expertise, I simply cannot deny that the first two methods has provided me the privilege to access to their trust in sharing valuable information for my research. Thus, a combination of the three methods was needed because it complemented each other.

During my fieldwork, I spent nights at my informants' houses as part of my participant observations. This opened my window of opportunities to explore the topic by allowing me to have a first-hand experience to their activities and ritual process. When I stayed with my informants, I was able to help them make and prepare the offerings then put the old ones aside. I also joined my informants for *sembahyang*[3] at temples and *melukat*[4] at water temple. There was also a moment where I participated in collecting domestic waste from the surrounding area of Besakih by jumping into UPS Basuki Lestari[5]'s waste truck, went to the landfill, and helped them to separate waste at the sorting place. As a researcher, it is quite a luxury to have access to such experience because it enabled me to come closer to the people who were likely to share their contribution to my research. This method also allowed me to have multiple informal conversations with them, which was part of the methods I used to collect the data.

Other method I exercised alongside with participant observations and informal conversations was interviews. Interviews provided me the space to reconfirm findings by creating a sense of affirmation. I used this method to dig deeper into the subject of matter and let the participants of my study elaborate their perspectives on the topic. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format with open-ended questions that served as a guideline to me as the researcher in performing the interviews. The judgement was made to allow the participants of the study to have the flexibility to discuss about other relevant subjects that weren't know to me before going into the field. As anticipated, trials and errors were involved in 'perfecting' the interviews process.

Early in the fieldwork, somewhere in the interview, I always shoot the same question to my informants: what is 'waste' to you? It is important for me to always ask the question so I can

[3] (Balinese) *Sembahyang* refers to a praying or worshipping activities.

[4] (Balinese) *Melukat* came from the literal translation of the word *lukat* which means to clean or to purify. *Melukat* ceremony is a ritual done by people in Bali to cleanse the body – both spiritually and physically, from negative energy by washing the body with holy water.

[5] *Unit Pengelolaan Sampah* (UPS) Basuki Lestari is a waste management unit created and organized by the local youth of Besakih Village. Structurally, the unit is part of the ocal youth organization of the official administrative village.

gather the right information on how they feel connected or disconnected to waste. In studying perception, experiencing a first-hand direct information from the informants plays a center part in helping me as the researcher to dissect the subject matter and construct an analysis for the study. Later on, nearly half-way through the fieldwork, I added an essentially similar question, but I replaced the word 'waste' with '*sukla*'. The decision was made because I noticed that '*sukla*' was frequently mentioned by the informants, while it also added a sense of depth to the matter of seeing waste in a religious context. This further development in the list of questions I asked to my informants contributed to my analysis process in finding the relation between their perception of waste and how they connect with the religious teachings, specifically concerning the human-environment relationship.

3.3 The people

Participant observation and informal conversations have allowed me to navigate my way to find the people I needed to talk to and the social settings I had to be present at. By planting my research theme and direction in mind, I set up a boundary on Balinese Hindus, thus excluding non-Hindus or tourists. I divided the local people into three groups: general practitioners or commoners, waste experts, and religious experts. The grouping was based on the context of this research, which is to understand the local people's perspective on waste but with a narrowed focus on sacred waste produced by Balinese Hindus' religious activities. The categories were made to ensure that I could embrace a diversity of perspectives.

By following this grouping, I was able to decide on whom I would want to conduct the interviews with. The people who are willing to be involved in this research are as follow: Mayun, Komang, Eka, Nining, Kadek Warti, Isti, Eva, Komang Ayu, Luh Suestri, Wayan Suartika (UPS Basuki Lestari's co-initiator), Catur (director of PPLH Bali), Gungtik (PPLH Bali), Anom (PPLH Bali), Yanda (*biopori* advocate), Wayan Sudiarta (*biopori* advocate, lecturer), Darma Putra (Balinese litterateur, lecturer), Nyoman Winata (archaeologist), Mangku Yuda (*pemangku*), Mangku Jana (*pemangku*), Mangku Wayan (*pemangku*), Mangku Widiarta (*pemangku, bendesa* Besakih), Komang Udaya (*pengayah, pemangku*), Dayu Pidada (*tukang banten*), Gus Artha (*pedanda*'s family). Each of these interviews lasted between 20 minutes to 2.5 hours.

3.4 The analysis

Once I was done with the fieldwork, I then faced a crucial question every researcher would have to deal with: how am I going to make sense of my muddled data? I guess it is true that the most exhausting part of conducting research happens when you are done with the data collecting process, whether it is from fieldwork, experiments, or desk research, and starting to move on to the data analysis. For me, the post-fieldwork phase feels more complicated because as a researcher, I have to revisit all the collected data to interconnect my findings and produce an analysis.

Before I start with the analysis, I have to first organise the scattered data that are stored on my phone, audio recording device, and system camera by transferring these data to my computer and put it under one folder. Sometimes, in the field, simple features like notes app and camera on smartphone can be the most convenient device to capture small but significant details for the research, especially since I always have my phone with me. Aside from that, an audio recording device plays an important role in storing information obtained from interviews. While pictures taken from my phone and system camera could complement the data obtained from interviews by giving some visual illustrations about the offerings and why I find it 'problematic'. Only when all the needed data has been put together in one place then I can better try to solve the chaotic puzzles pieces by pieces.

To start processing the collected data, I transcribed the audio recordings from the interviews I did, with both commoners and experts. Although my interviews were done in Indonesian, all of them contain a mix of Indonesian and Balinese languages. Since I am not a native speaker of Balinese, an attempt to understand certain Balinese terms has felt like an analytical process by itself. The reason is because I believe that one's capability to transfer knowledge through words has to do with their ability to understand the phenomenon. Accordingly, I took into account my interviewees' interpretations on the Balinese terms when I coded the interviews, along with other relevant information. The practice of coding, which I did manually, was needed to assist me in organising the muddled data from what I experienced and recorded during my fieldwork in Bali. The codes I derived from interviews and scattered notes provided me the idea to make sense of the Balinese Hindus and their (sacred) waste.

For structuring this thesis, in the beginning I was intending to create a distinction between my findings, analysis, and discussions by using separate chapters and subchapters. However, throughout the process, I find it rather organic to blend everything together into one single chapter. My rationale was because there was no absolute guideline for conformity when it comes to ones' perception, especially when individual interpretation on religious beliefs is being involved. Thus, the next chapter is intuitively my attempt to respond to my research questions by fusing findings, analysis, and discussions into one.

3.5 The positionality

Before I continue with to the next chapter, I would like to first share my positionality relative to the overall study. I came from a family with mixed religious and cultural background. My mother is a descendant of Javanese, Sundanese, and seems to be Madurese as well. While my father is half Javanese and half Balinese. Being a descendant of Balinese people made me have many relatives on the island. Even so, I still don't have much in-depth knowledge about Balinese Hindu religion and spirituality nor their take on sacred waste to produce a well-written thesis. Therefore, I took advantage of my shortcomings to provoke my instincts of curiosity in digging into the emic perspective when approaching people during my research in Bali, both those who ultimately agreed to become my informants and those who ended up as 'side

characters'. However, I cannot promise that my research is free from subjectivity because an etic approach is included to provide a comparative analysis to the universality of culture.

One of the practical limitations of my research is that even though I am of Balinese descent, my ability to speak Balinese is very limited. My limitations in speaking Balinese require me to communicate with people I encountered in Indonesian and this condition makes communication with some people feel less natural. I often have to double, or triple check the meaning of a term because some terms are a bit difficult for me to understand in a single explanation. It lost in translation. Another practical limitation has to do with the numbers of ceremonial days that happens quite often in Bali, both in the private and the social level. At times, I might have to reschedule or cancel appointment with some people because their time is reserved for *odalan*[6]. Even so, I was lucky enough to be invited to some activities which allowed me to participate and closely observed the sequence of their practices.

[6] (Balinese) *Odalan* refers to Balinese Hindu ritual conducted to ensure spiritual harmony.

4 Discard studies on Balinese Hindu

This is an essay on the unwritten narratives of habitualness; about how human and nonhuman environment coexist in Balinese Hindu's culture; and about the intricacy of understanding waste in the sphere of the sacred and the profane. The narration is divided into four parts. First, I begin with a descriptive background on my main research subject, Balinese Hindus. This background is meant to illustrate the causality between Balinese Hindu's teachings and the forming of perspectives towards waste. Second, I unfold the relationship Balinese Hindus have with the environment to provide a basis to the way they understand and dealing with waste. Third, I attempt to breakdown the waste discourse in Bali through multiple focal points. Before I eventually convey the conclusions of this study, I examine the various ways Balinese deal with their waste.

4.1 Balinese Hindu: A background

4.1.1 An introductory to Balinese Hinduism

Bali and Hinduism are commonly understood as an inseparable unit, both by outsiders and by the Balinese themselves. While not all Balinese are Hindu, the immense influence of Hinduism in Balinese culture has come to be the stem of this notion. The omnipresent traits of Hinduism in Balinese culture can be quite apparent to anyone who is setting their feet in Bali. Rituals are performed daily as a symbolic part of social processes. Religious practices, including ceremonies and rituals, take a big part in Hindu tradition, hence there is a rich prevailing religious ambience in the everydayness on the Bali Island.

The indigenous people of Bali have long had an intimate relationship with the local deities that are believed to exist in nature, such as in trees, rivers, sea, and mountain. These local deities are worshipped through ritual practices, which might include some sort of ritual dance and/or mantra chanting. Oral stories were the main means to convey sacred knowledge throughout generations. It wasn't until later that Balinese indigenous knowledge was assimilated with Hindu influence, archived into manuscripts such as *lontar*[7], then proceeded to be officially given the name *Agama Hindu Bali* (McDaniel, 2020; Picard, 2011).

The religion of Balinese Hinduism or *Agama Hindu Bali*[8] is a product of an ingenious fuse between indigenous belief and spirituality of Balinese and the classical India-oriented Hinduism that was imported to Bali more than a millennium ago. Considering that there is quite an

[7] (Balinese) *Lontar* is a palm leaves manuscript.

[8] There are multiple ways Balinese and non-Balinese refer to the religion of Balinese Hinduism. *Agama Hindu* is one of the names used to refer to Balinese Hindu religion. Balinese also refer to the religion as *Agama Hindu Dharma* or *Agama Tirtha.*

overlap in beliefs and practices, McDaniel (2020) argues that Balinese Hinduism can fall into both classical and folk Hinduism categories. According to McDaniel, the two categories are distinguished by looking at the origin of the teachings and how it survives throughout the years. Classical Hinduism is the type of Hinduism that is imported from Indian Hinduism teachings, while folk Hinduism is more about the early Balinese teachings that is exhibited by their relationships with the surrounding nature. Today, parts of Balinese folk Hinduism, or what some people might identify as the early Balinese beliefs and spirituality, survived mainly through folklore which is expressed in local cultural tradition like plays, ritual dances, and festivals. In addition, Balinese folk Hinduism might also still take the form of mediumship activities that leads to possession trance states or keeping heirloom kris that are inhabited by ancestral spirits.

On the other hand, the Hinduism that was brought into Indonesia by Indian priests introduced Brahma, Wisnu, and Siwa as the three major gods for believers of Hinduism. By default, Brahma holds a role as the mighty creator, Wisnu or Vishnu as the preserver and protector of the universe, and Siwa or Shiva has the honour to be the destroyer who is important to recreate order in the universe. These highest gods are also known as Tri Murti, which translated into English as the three forms of gods. The classical Hinduism infiltration of Balinese folk Hinduism progressed through teachings by gurus and *lontar* containing sacred texts. Over time, the syncretic process between the indigenous Balinese beliefs and the classical Hinduism formed the Balinese Hinduism religion that many people know in the present-day.

Another aspect of Hinduism that is quite unique is the caste system. The caste system is intended to apply a structure to the Hindu society, first in India and later diffused into Balinese Hindu culture. Scholars of Balinese studies believe that an anthropologist named Goris[9] showed that Balinese didn't have any caste system until it was introduced to them around the time Majapahit Empire[10] expanded their territory to Bali Island (Eiseman, 1989; Maulana & Dharma Putra, 2021; Muhajir, 2012). Although the Indonesian government adheres to a democratic system that prioritizes freedom and equality, the caste system in Bali is too ingrained to be eliminated by the state decree. The caste system serves as the basis of the

[9] Roelof Goris (1898 – 1965) was a Dutch archaeologist and anthropologist who spent most of his life studying Old Javanese and Old Balinese. Goris is known for his work on Balinese culture through his books. He resided in Bali around the same time as other Westerners who were also famous for their work in Balinese culture, namely Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and Walter Spies.

[10] Majapahit was a Java based Hindu-Buddhist empire that existed from 1293 to 1527. Majapahit was considered to be the greatest and most powerful empires in the history of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Their influence extended beyond the present-days Indonesia's territory, including Malaysia and Singapore. The impact of Majapahit has inspired many scholars to build their work based on this era.

social order or the codification of dharma, which lies at a deeper level than political system promoted by the government.

Brahmana, Ksatria, Waisya, and Sudra are the four castes that are used in Bali, listed from the highest to the lowest level in the hierarchy. Ideally, the Brahmin caste consists of native gurus and intellectuals who devoted themselves to spiritual matters. Then come the Ksatria, the caste of knights or warriors, whose conceptual role is to function as governmental agents. The third level of Waisya consists of people who are skilled in their job, namely farmers, fishermen, and traders. Finally, there is Sudra who serve the upper castes. Amongst the four castes, Sudra is the most common caste in Bali which make up as much as 90% of the population. Throughout the years, the distinctions between each caste are becoming less definite. The lower castes managed to achieve success and become wealthier through trade and tourism activities, while the upper castes struggle to maintain their wealth because of the costly ceremonies, which are often considered as a determinant of social status (McDaniel, 2020).

In the realm of religion, Balinese Hindu have *pandita* and *pinandita* as their holy figures whose duty is to carry out religious ceremonies. Generally, *pandita* and *pinandita* have the obligation to cast mantras, perform pujas, and chant praise in ceremonies. To become a *pandita* or a saint, a holy figure must be born twice by going through advanced stages of self-purification. Holy figures who belong to this group include *pedanda*, *rsi*, and *empu*. On the other hand, a *pinandita* doesn't have to be born twice, but must carry out purification in the form of *pewintenan*[11] ceremony. In addition to religious obligation, *pinandita* or *pemangku*[12] still have roles and obligations in social life. One noticeable difference between *pedanda* and *pemangku* in ceremonial activities is that *pedanda* function as a mediator to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, while *pemangku* carries the responsibility as servant and focuses more on the community.

Similar to Hindu in India, Balinese Hindu also have temples as their special place for worship. Balinese temples or *pura* are arranged according to the physical and spiritual realms of the Balinese people. It corresponds to the sacred axis of *kaja-kelod*[13] that is drawn from the top of mountain where gods and spirits existed, the middle plains in the world of humans and other creatures, to the coasts and oceans. There are several types of temples in Bali, each serving a specific function of Balinese Hindu rituals based on the Balinese calendar. However, amongst all temples, Besakih Temple is considered to be the most important temple for Balinese Hindu.

[11] (Balinese) *Pewintenan* is a spiritual self-cleaning ceremony, physically and mentally.

[12] (Balinese) *Pemangku* carries the responsibility as a servant to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa as well as to the society. *Pemangku* is on the same level as a priest.

[13] (Balinese) *Kaja* means north or towards mountain. *Kelod* means south or away from mountain.

Figure 4.1: A part of the second mandala at Pura Penataran Agung Besakih.

Besakih Temple is a complex of temples that is located in Besakih Village, Karangasem, Bali. Consisting of 25 *pura*, the complex is considered the most important and sacred temple complex for Balinese Hindu because it is believed that the first revelation of God for the origin of Balinese Hindu happened in this area. Amongst all temples in Besakih, Pura Penataran Agung is essentially the largest temple with the most *pelinggih*[14], the most types of *upakara*[15], and the centre of all temples in Pura Besakih complex. Pura Penataran Agung consists of 7 mandalas which symbolises the seven layers of the realm. The second mandala is usually the busiest one because it is where people may interact with God through their sincere devotion and offerings. Over the years, Pura Besakih has gone through several changes that mirrored the transformation process of Balinese and Hindu culture.

4.1.2 The nexus between rituals and offerings

For Hindu, there is no ritual without offerings; this is an essential part of Hinduism rituals. In rituals and ceremonies, offerings act as a medium to show devotion and gratitude to gods and deities. Aside from that, people also make offerings that are aimed for the negative forces so that these spirits won't do harm or disturb the living. The act is not done without a rationale. Balinese Hindu are known for their inclination to constantly seek for an equilibrium between

[14] (Balinese) *Pelinggih* or *palinggih* is a place of worship as an embodiment of the worshipped. It could also mean a place for something or someone very important.

[15] (Balinese) *Upakara* refers to all offerings or ceremonial equipment that are used in *upacara* (ceremonial, ritual).

the two sides of forces. They believe that the good and the evil cannot exist without one another. Hence, they positioned gods, *dewa* and *dewi,* or *bhatara* and *bhatari* as the personification of order, while disorder is personified as the earth demons, *bhuta* and *kala*. Respectively, Balinese Hindus' act of making offerings for the two opposing forces positively reflects their conscious and subconscious choice to preserve the balance and to position themselves as coexisting with the good and the evil.

Ritual plays a big part in Balinese Hinduism and is determined based on the deliberation of the Balinese calendar. Balinese Hindu classify their rituals into five categories called *panca yadnya* which cover their honours to gods and deities (*dewa yadnya*), holy persons (*rsi yadnya*), souls of the dead (*pitra yadnya*), demons and evil spirits (*bhuta yadnya*), and souls of the living (*manusa yadnya*). Depending on one's social status, wealth, and the type of the occasion, these rituals can be performed in three levels: modest (*nista*), average (*madya*), and extravagant (*utama*). Both categories and levels of these rituals determines the variety, amount, and size of the offerings that will be used in the ritual. During the ritual, these assorted offerings will be placed in various spots depending on the function and purpose of each variety. For example, offerings for gods are always presented on a higher platform, while the ones for demons and evil spirits will be laid down on the ground.

Figure 4.2: Piles of offerings showered with blessings by a group of pemangku *at Pura Batu Madeg.*

Offerings are cherished as tangible material culture. Philosophically, offerings represent a form of self-sacrifice through the amount of time, effort, and money one spent on making or preparing them. In Bali, the general term for offering is *banten*, though some people also call it *upakara*. *Canang sari, daksina, gebogan, lamak, and segehan* are only a few of the many types of offering in Bali. Amongst the extensive types of offerings, *lamak* has in fact been

thoroughly studied by Brinkgreve (2016) in her book Lamak: Ritual object in Bali where she explained about it as ritual object, the motifs that represent the complexity of life in Bali, the ephemeral feature of *lamak*, its social network within Balinese society, and the reason Balinese make and remake *lamak*.

The variety of Balinese Hindu offerings is mind-boggling because they need to be present in every ritual; each comes in a different form, depending on the function and purpose. Additionally, no matter which type it is or where it comes from, offerings should be made of the finest selection of materials and ritually cleansed before use. Ideally, Balinese offerings are always made of natural things that are easy to find; leaves, flowers, fruits, water, and fire are the basic components that need to be present in all offerings. In addition, on special ceremonies, some animals like chickens, ducks, pigs, and buffalos are also presented to gods as a form of blood sacrifice.

Figure 4.3: The remain of sacrificed buffalo stacked with other offerings.

During my fieldwork, it came to my attention that *banten* is commonly used by most people, whereas *upakara* is more often used by those who are directly involved in carrying out religious rituals and ceremonies at temples, such as *pemangku* and *pengayah*. My encounter with people from *gria*[16] was also when I heard the term *upakara* in more times compared to 'normal' situation. It is unclear to me whether religious figures with access to sacred *lontar* and other religious manuscripts would rather choose to use *upakara* over *banten* because it is

[16] (Balinese) *Gria* refers to a family residence of Brahmins, *pedanda* or priests.

plainly written in the documents or there might be other influencing factors such as living area, social circle, and personal preference. Regardless, the observed scene got me thinking whether social status in the realm of religion is not only limiting one's capacity in performing rituals at the level of *nista, madya,* or *utama*, but it also affecting one's capacity to learn about their religion directly from the source, or in this case, sacred texts.

Figure 4.4: Incomplete set of canang sari.

As indicated earlier, offerings are made for various purposes. Their unique and complex features exist to exemplify each of their symbolic meanings, the group of symbols that we know hold power in social life (Douglas, 1966). Hence, depending on the intention, there are many types of offerings in Balinese Hinduism that are visually different in terms of shape, size, construction material, and stuffing element. Sometimes, even one type of offering that serves the same function could still look different because there are local aesthetics that have been consciously embedded by the maker. This phenomenon is in line with one of the Balinese concepts, *desa, kala, patra*, where they believe that an understanding of the contextualization of place, time, and circumstances is needed to understand the dynamics of a society. Anyhow, since we noticed that there are countless versions of *banten* in Balinese Hinduism, I realise I will have to set a little boundary.

From here onwards, my discussion will revolve mainly around *canang sari.* Amongst all *banten*, *canang sari* is always there to complete any set of *banten*. It's small and simple, but it represents one's self-sacrifice act through the amount of time and effort to prepare. There are four elements that makes *canang sari* a *canang sari*: *ceper*, *porosan*, *raka-raka*, and *sampian uras.* It also needs to be topped with four different colours of flower, where each colour symbolises a specific direction: white – east, red – south, blue or green – north, and yellow –

west. Usually, *canang sari* is offered on a daily basis. However, there are people who choose not to offer it every day, but only on certain days.

> *"Eight times a month: purnama, tilem, anggar kasih, buda kliyon, buda cemeng, kajeng kliwon twice a month, and tumpek." (Mayun)*

From all the informants, Mayun for example, shared her experience about the use of *canang sari*. Since as long as Mayun can remember, she has always been *mecanang*[17] only on certain days each month instead of doing it daily and is not considering changing her habit anytime soon. Firstly, she feels comfortable with the frequency as the way it is now; secondly, she doesn't want to feel guilty or incomplete if she decides to *mecanang* more often but is then forced to skip a day from any unforeseen circumstances. Her mental analysis has been mentioned before by Douglas regarding ritual where the latter suggests, "Each day has its own significance and if there are habits which establish the identity of a particular day, those regular observances have the effect of ritual" (Douglas, 1966, p.65).

4.1.3 From *sukla* to *lungsuran*

One of the most interesting things I learned from the people during my research is the concept of *sukla*. The term *sukla* is widely used by the locals in most of the conversations I had with them, thereupon I find it important to attempt to breakdown my comprehension on what *sukla* means for Balinese. There are various versions in people's explanation when they were trying to describe to me what *sukla* is, thus I personally find it quite challenging to pin down a single definition to it. Directly translated from Sanskrit, the term *sukla* means white, pure, or bright. Then based on the conversations I had with my informants and the 'side characters', the terms that occur quite often when they responded to my question about *sukla* are new, pure, and clean. Some of them also imply that it is something that is considered sacred, a condition of something that is not *cemer*[18]. With this basic description, I believe it is worthwhile to dive into the significance of *sukla* to this study because the term is also often linked to the value of offerings in Balinese Hinduism. Examples of the significance of the term *sukla* for Balinese Hindu individuals is explained below by Mangku Jana as the representative of religious experts and Nining as the representative of commoners or general practitioners:

> *"*Sukla *in* canang *means unpretentious: a place, material (leaf, flowers) planted in an ideal place, in a place sanctified by Hinduism. A special place is*

[17] (Balinese) *Mecanang* is the activity of delivering *canang.*

[18] (Balinese) *Cemer* refers to a condition of something (or someone) that is considered as dirty, contaminated, or ritually unclean, mostly used in religious ceremonial context. The word is also interchangeable with *cuntaka* or *leteh*.

> *provided for planting* upakara *plants. Not picked or planted in an inappropriate place, like grave." (Mangku Jana)*
>
> *"What is considered* sukla *is if we buy a new one for prayer then it is splashed with holy water. In general, this is how I see it. I've been Hindu since I was little, but I don't really understand what it is (the meaning of* sukla*). In other people, it is often taught. The Bible is taught. We (Balinese Hindus) learn it ritually." (Nining)*

The term *sukla* covers a wide spectrum of referents in Balinese Hindu's culture, from goods to foods. To illustrate, a glass that has not been used for drinking water is still considered as *sukla* and can later be used for *tirta*[19] in the future. Another example is that freshly picked fruits or flowers is considered as *sukla* because it is still new and has not been used to serve any purposes. However, some people put *sukla* label on fruits or flowers not only when it has been harvested, but also when it is still sticking to the tree, or sometimes they say it is even before the fruit is being planted. Additionally, I've been told that the soil utilized to plant the fruits or flowers in the farmland is considered *sukla* goods. These different opinions on when to start attributing the label *sukla* to goods or foods is the reason it could be challenging to reach a unified meaning of *sukla*.

A few years back, there was an initiative from Arya Wedakarna, a young Balinese Hindu public figure, who wants to create a *sukla* label for foods or in restaurants ("MUI Sambut Labelisasi Sukla," 2014). The idea went quite viral amongst Balinese, and the idea is similar to Muslim's halal land Jewish's kosher. Yet while Muslims and Jews have their holy scriptures to set up a guideline on what is halal or kosher and what is not, Balinese Hindus are not necessarily equipped with one. Furthermore, the term *sukla* is not commonly used for consumable food and beverages. In that sense, many people find the idea of putting *sukla* label on foods a bit forced. In practice, Balinese Hindus use the term *sukla* to define the sacredness of foods or goods; basically, the term *sukla* is often linked to ritual equipment. Hence, the idea of creating *sukla* label for foods might not be the favourable way to go by many people.

When we are talking about *sukla* in Balinese Hindus' ritual context, we refer to offerings that have not been used or delivered to the gods as *banten sukla*. Physically, there is no apparent distinction to set apart offerings that have or have not been delivered for worship. Theoretically, foods that are included in offerings should taste the same before and after being delivered. However, some people believe that foods from offerings tastes better and gives more health benefits because it has been blessed by the gods. Balinese's term for goods and foods that has been delivered and blessed by the gods is *lungsuran* or *surudan*. Segments of

[19] (Balinese) *Tirta* means holy water.

my talks with Mangku Wayan and Gus Artha below demonstrate how religious experts perceived *sukla* and *lungsuran*:

> *"*Pelinggih *is His manifestation. There, the* canang *can be left for up to a year. Because to clean the* pelinggih *there is a special ritual, a purification ritual. But if the* canang *that is used every day is usually cleaned in the afternoon." (Mangku Wayan)*

> *"It (*sukla*) can be lost when we use it; we use it in a sense for our worldly matter. But if it's only used for ceremony,* sukla *won't be lost. It's also not losing its sacredness even though it's already* lungsur *because we don't use it (as profane goods)." (Gus Artha)*

Unlike *sukla*, people are relatively united when they were asked about *lungsuran*. So let me quickly summarise. From what I understand, *lungsuran* is when *banten sukla* is finished getting prayed. The moment someone is done with their ritual, *banten sukla* immediately changes its status to *lungsuran*. Although this part is easy to grasp, I soon faced to another puzzle to solve. If *banten* has become *lungsuran*, and by *lungsuran*, this means that it has no longer delivering the prayer, then why do they 'need' to keep it there instead of taking it down at once after they finish with the prayer? I noticed that all my informants reacted in an enthusiastic manner in telling me that *it* is called *lungsuran* and it can be taken down right away. But oddly none of them actually do this. I got different answers when I kept pushing to get a somewhat 'clear' reason to this enigma. Some people shared that they simply don't want to. Some told me they feel like it's wrong to leave the *pelinggih*, *pelangkiran,* or any other praying station empty. Some others believe that although the prayer has been delivered, if they leave alone the *lungsuran*, the gods and deities will continue sending them blessings until the *lungsuran* is replaced with the new *banten sukla*, then the cycle continue. Although I'm not quite satisfied with the final answers, I still highly respect their sincere devotion every single day. In the end, that is all that matter in religion.

4.1.4 Tri Hita Karana in the reality of Bali

Balinese people believe that the good and the evil cannot exist without one another. They seek to live in an equilibrium between the two sides, and Hinduism falls into place as the holder of a natural system in the universe that places things in order. Balinese Hindu positioned gods, *dewa* and *dewi,* or *bhatara* and *bhatari* as the personification of order, while disorder is personified by the earth demons, *bhuta* and *kala*. To preserve the balance between the two opposing forces, Balinese Hindu consider themselves coexisting in between the good and the evil. Akin to classical Hindu's triad of gods, Balinese Hindus' approach in living a harmonious life with the good and the evil displays a trinity concept from Hindu theology through an overlapping and interdependent layer that binds the three forces together as a whole (Eiseman, 1989).

Tri Hita Karana is a traditional life philosophy that lies in the heart of Balinese spirituality. Translated as the "three causes of well-being", Tri Hita Karana covers the indigenous cosmology that aim to achieve a harmonious life by keeping the balance of the three elemental relationships of humankind. The concept of Tri Hita Karana includes the harmony with God (*parahyangan*), harmony among people (*pawongan*), and harmony with the natural environment (*palemahan*). Obscurity shrouds the exact moment when whoever put this concept together, but the fundamental principle of this concept is still highly treasured by the people of Bali up until today.

To see how *parahyangan*, *pawongan*, and *palemahan* intertwine beyond the concept, people often use the water management system of *subak* as an ideal example. In 2012, *subak* was enlisted as one of the protected landmarks by the UNESCO World Heritage ("Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: The Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy," n.d.). The traditional irrigation system provides support to Balinese agriculture by allowing farmers to democratically access the water supply from water temples and is managed by the local community. The comprehensive interaction between people, landscape, and the spiritual realm in *subak* system is considered to covey Outstanding Universal Values and reflects the manifestation of Tri Hita Karana.

Regarding social movements, Balinese often put forward the concept of Tri Hita Karana to support the reasonings behind their attitudes towards environmental issues that are happening in their area. The most used local narration is that capitalism has dominated most of Bali and has taken Bali's environment for granted. As stated in Tri Hita Karana's principles, environment is one of the core elements for Balinese to achieve a harmonious life. In this sense, environmental degradation will cause damage to the balance Balinese strive to preserve. Through her personal blog, Saras Dewi[20] (2018) stated that "when nature is harmed by human greed, what we are inherently doing is harming our bond to the sacred." The piece was partly addressed to Balinese's massive long-standing rejection of megaprojects such as reclamation in the development of Benoa Bay and coal power plant expansion in Celukan Bawang. It summarised Balinese's popular judgement on the downside of capitalists' activities to the island.

On a governmental level, Tri Hita Karana philosophy has been recognised by the state and is also stated in various laws and regulations documents. Since the colonial era, Bali and its unparalleled features hold a special place in the heart of tourists, resulting in the island becoming an icon of Indonesian tourism whose activities need to be specifically regulated by

[20] Saras Dewi is a Balinese writer and philosophy lecturer at Universitas Indonesia. Her works revolves around human rights, eastern philosophy, and environmental ethics. She is also known for her activism in Bali Tolak Reklamasi movement that focuses on the ecological and spiritual imbalance of Balinese life caused by unsustainable mega tourism infrastructure.

law. With up to 86.8% of Bali's total population Hindu (Kusnandar, 2022), the state needs to ratify the incorporation of Tri Hita Karana principles in the formulation of laws and regulations. In Indonesian State Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, there are rules regarding the principles of tourism management based on the Tri Hita Karana philosophy. Regulation of the Governor of Bali No. 41 Year 2010 concerning Tourism Attraction Management Standardisation takes the state law further by requiring the construction and development of natural, cultural, and man-made tourist attractions in districts/city to meet the management standards with the concepts of Tri Hita Karana, Tri Mandala, and Balinese cultural tourism (PERGUB, 2010).

Still on government's regulation, in 2018, the government of Bali released Bali Governor Regulation Number 97 of 2018 concerning Restrictions on the Generation of Single-use Plastic Waste. The regulation is said to depart from the concept of Tri Hita Karana in carrying out life and to educate. They also expecting that the regulation would embrace all levels of society to revive awareness related to the natural environment. Although the idea seems concrete and working, there were still complains from few Balinese. On the other side of capitalism, this single-use plastic ban was quickly exploited by shops to sell alternative shopping bags. As a result, if someone forgot to bring their own shopping bag, they have to spend money on a shopping bag but at a higher price than the plastic version.

4.2 Balinese Hindu and the environment

4.2.1 Clean, holy, and sacred

Before we talk about Balinese Hindus' point of view on waste, I feel that it is also interesting to briefly talk about the definition of clean. In my opinion, getting into the sense of the way people define clean could give us a view on how the same people perceive waste, while at the same time helping us to see how it reflects their relationship with the nonhuman environment. This step is important for this research to see how Balinese Hindus then understand and perceive waste. Waste as an unwanted matter is often associated with something that is dirty or covered with unclean substances and hence considered somewhat polluting; it lies on the opposite side of clean. To get there, I try to connect the process of defamiliarization, denormalization, and depurification of waste that takes place in the society through which the arguments on their notion of clean, holy, and sacred are based.

From here, the immediate question raised is: what is clean? According to the Cambridge Dictionary, clean means "free from any dirty marks, pollution, bacteria, etc.". However, I think that there is a lack of depth in the process of defining clean if it is exclusively based on the dictionary. Thus, I checked to what Mary Douglas has, and this part was what I found adding to the discourse:

> *A criterion was produced for classing religions as advanced or as primitive. If primitive, then rules of holiness and rules of uncleanness were*

> *undistinguishable, if advanced then rules of uncleanness disappeared from religion. They were relegated to the kitchen and bathroom and to municipal sanitation, nothing to do with religion. The less uncleanness was concerned with physical conditions and the more it signified a spiritual state of unworthiness, so much more decisively could the religion in question be recognised as advanced (Douglas, 1966, p. 11).*

When we bring the concept of clean to a discussion framed in a cultural and a spiritual context, especially the later one, it is likely that the term pure or purity, holy and sacred would naturally enter as a part of the discussion. Pure or purity here is understood as a state of being uncontaminated from or mixed with anything that is confining oneself from experiencing a state of bliss. Whereas sacred is generally described as something that is considered holy, an abstract concept related to the higher power or God, and worthy of spiritual devotion. An explanation from Gus Artha below covers the Balinese Hindu's conception of sacred and clean that sometimes could be confusing for non-Balinese, especially when the term is discussed alongside with *sukla*:

> *"*Sukla *and sacred are different. Sacred is when it has gone through* pelukatan*. After it has been given* tirta*, then it's sacred [...] When (sacred tools) wants to be washed, the space is different. It can't be mixed. The placement should also be different, not the same. That's why there is a difference between* sukla *and sacred.* Sukla *and clean are also different." (Gus Artha)*

In Balinese Hindu culture, there is a variation in the way people define clean; this refers to the clean standard both in their day-to-day lives and in the spiritual context. When I was talking with a group of *mangku* at Pura Batu Madeg in Besakih one late afternoon, they gave me a specific remark that sets apart the definition of clean in both contexts. They carefully explained that a clean object or environment from a day-to-day situation should not be seen or treated the same as when we are having it in the spiritual context. A physically clean object in the mundane context could as well be seen as a profane, unholy object when it is situated in a spiritual framework. In addition to this, in the spiritual context, an object could be seen as clean, but this does not always mean that it is also falls under the category of being holy or sacred. Likewise, a noticeably dirty object doesn't necessarily have to be seen as an unholy or profane thing per se.

One simple explanation my informants uses to help me grasp their notion of the concepts of clean, holy, and sacred is by giving me an example of the different ways of utilizing a basin in various environments. A basin that has been used for laundry or other activities in the bathroom is not allowed to be used in other area of the house, namely the kitchen. While at times an object in the kitchen may not appear as clean as it seems to be, it still has the essence of purity or holiness because it is not mixed up with the profane principle of the objects from

the bathroom. The basin as an illustrated object here serves different purposes for its users when it is placed in a different area of the house. In a nutshell, the clean concept in Balinese Hindu culture could be presumed as an object or an environment that is substantially seen as spotless and at the same time will not be defiling the soul from its multifunctional uses.

There is a distinct approach in Balinese Hindu culture that cultivates the classification of clean and holy or sacred when it comes to the spatial domain. Balinese Hindus have a spatial concept called Tri Mandala which describes three parts of the realm: *nista mandala* or *jaba sisi* as the outer and lower mundane or least sacred realm; *madya mandala* or *jaba tengah* as the middle realm; and *utama mandala* or *jeroan* which constitutes the inner and higher or paramount of the sacred realm. The three zoning layers are commonly used as the layout guidelines in the architectural designs of *pura* or temples in Bali to set apart the sacredness hierarchy in each space division. Aside from temples or the religious domain, Balinese Hindus also apply the same three layers concept of spatial hierarchy to their houses. In terms of Balinese Hindus' houses or the domestic domain, bathrooms and toilets are equal to *nista mandala*, bedrooms and kitchen are equal to *madya mandala*, and the private family temple is equal to *utama mandala*.

The application of the Tri Mandala concept to Balinese Hindus' domestic domain generates a direct effect on the way people make use of their home goods and utensils. Considering that there is a sacred hierarchy between each room, it feels instinctive for them not to mix or switch the things that has been used for a certain purpose in one room with another to avoid tainted objects. I remember my conversations with some Balinese Hindus during my fieldwork where they told me that the sacredness of the spatial realm is not necessarily limited to the space alone. Household items carry the same sacred value, if not more, as the space it is intended to be used. If we look back at the basin example I mentioned earlier, it is now clear why the basin from the bathroom cannot be used for other purposes in the kitchen; the bathroom and the kitchen fall under two different layers, which means the basin is considered as profane because it comes from a lower level of the three realms. Though by the look of it the basin might seem merely gleaming, that poor object is still not entitled a spot to be used in the higher realm, for instance the kitchen.

4.2.2 *Palemahan* in everydayness

Now that we got a glimpse of Balinese Hindus' notion of clean, with an inclusion of the sacred hierarchy from Tri Mandala concept, the next thing I want to share is how I see, experience, and try to analyse the interconnection between Tri Hita Karana and Balinese Hindus' everydayness. Before we go deeper to this, however, allow me to sum things up from the earlier subchapter. Tri Hita Karana is Balinese Hindus' traditional life philosophy which covers the three causes of well-being: harmony with God, harmony among people, and harmony with nature or environment. In this part, my focus will lean heavier towards the third principle of the three. So back to my story. In the beginning of this thesis journey, I was somehow

convinced that Tri Hita Karana is the philosophy that regulates the day-to-day practices of Balinese Hindus. I went to the field under the presumption that Tri Hita Karana came first, presumably introduced by foreign ancient Hindu voyagers before Balinese civilization. This means that I was speculating that the present-day Balinese culture is moulded around the traditional philosophy.

Once I familiarized myself with Tri Hita Karana, it feels almost natural for me to see Balinese Hindus as a fair case of a worldly and spiritually balanced society. I recognized that there is an alignment in the way Balinese Hindus embodied the need to preserve the balance between the good and the evil through their rituals. During my stay in Bali for this research, I was exposed to the reality that Balinese Hindus religiously use offerings to pass on their respects to the two opposing forces. Both manifestations of the forces, *bhatara* and *bhatari* (the good) and *bhuta* and *kala* (the evil), are equally given the recognition for serving the life cycle of human's existence on a day-to-day basis. Often, rituals are done in a collective form, which can be seen as a representation of Tri Hita Karana's second point, harmony among people. However, when it comes to the third point, harmony with nature or environment, I find it quite challenging to ignore the contradictions I observed between people's beliefs and their practices.

> *"People prefer to throw garbage into the* tebe[21]*, it's simpler. Sorting garbage is considered complicated." (Anom)*

It is true what Anom said. Apart from him, the same thing has been mentioned by multiple people each time I had the discussion about waste in Bali. The habit of throwing garbage in any vacant land in one's area is somehow already ingrained in the minds of many Balinese still. This phenomenon aligns with the stress in discard studies, decentering, where people tend to keep their area of living clean and treat *tebe* as the periphery to dump the waste. Although if we are willing to look back to the old days of Bali, before the massive use of single-use plastic, it is quite understandable why they did that. The idea is that the waste is still mostly consists of organic waste. So, if it is thrown to a random field, the waste is expected to decompose and be a natural nutrient for the plants around it. Thus, if we study that behaviour in *palemahan* lenses, then it somehow seems acceptable, though less so at present with increasing presence of plastic waste. Moreover, these fields are often located next to the Balinese graveyard where

[21] (Balinese) *Tebe* refers to backyard or vacant land that is often used as household waste disposal site.

people usually use to perform *ngaben*[22]. In this manner, waste that is piling up in that area will eventually be burned with the fire when *ngaben* is performed.

On another occasion, I in fact observed such behaviour myself. That day, I was tagging along with the UPS Basuki Lestari's garbage truck. Then there was a moment where our truck drove past an old lady with two bags of plastics in her hand. Instead of stopping or waiting for us to carry along her trash, she innocently threw away the two bags into a ditch next to an elementary school. For me, to see that scene live was kind of absurd. But again, she is an old lady, living in a village. Even though that was not a behaviour I expected to see when a garbage truck is approaching, it seems that I still found myself romanticising the old ways of doing things and gave it a pass. Perhaps the reason I was facing that dilemma in deciding what I 'should' feel was because I have been adopting the western lens, as finally explained by Liboiron:

> *There is a long history of judging a society's waste management as a proxy for its level of civilization. This discourse is fuelled by dominant Western frameworks where "human beings, both at an early age individually, and in societies at 'less developed' phases of Civilisation, are profoundly coprophiliac. They love the sight and smell of their own wastes, or at any rate are not disgusted by them […] In short, from a colonial point of view, models of waste management are tied to ideas about civilization (European self-portraiture) and morality. (Liboiron, 2021, p. 75)*

An interesting view from Liboiron has actually makes me realise that the way I perceived waste or not waste, clean or not clean, in Bali or wherever I put my feet on is indeed could be based on the foreign doctrine. And if I decide to take a stance on whether I judge these Balinese as the wrong and my view as the right, then maybe I have to re-evaluate on where my judgement came from. In the end, I'm also just a foreigner to these Balinese. My opinion might be also seen as irrelevant to what is perceived as reality for them. Even so, I find that my experience of seeing the behaviour of the old lady is interesting to mention in this thesis because it allows me to examine what is considered normal in terms of wasting for some Balinese. But then again, Liboiron may have just explained why I even 'should' feel the need to examine her behaviour in the first place:

> *"The "rigorous control" of plastic wastes from a colonial perspective includes practices such as municipal curbside collection of trash and recyclables,*

[22] (Balinese) *Ngaben* is a cremation or cremation ceremony in Bali, Indonesia. The *ngaben* traditional ceremony is a ritual carried out to send the corpse to the next life by burning the body with their private possessions and some offerings.

> *industrial-scale recycling, and highly controlled and technical landfilling—the cultivation of a containment system based on assumed ontologies of separation […] If land relations are colonial, the solutions, initiatives, and studies that flow from those relations will also be colonial. (Liboiron, 2021, p. 75-76)*

4.3 Waste and wasting in Bali

4.3.1 Littering habit

Balinese Hindus have produced religious waste since a long time ago. Many locals confirmed that they were taught to make *canang* and prepare the offerings since they were young, approximately around 5 to 8 years old. Although, some of them shared that they didn't necessarily start with *canang sari*, but *banten saiban*[23]. Nonetheless, there were almost no further instruction on what to do with the remains of the offerings, whilst most Balinese Hindus use offerings on daily basis. What are the common premises of Balinese society in regard to treating waste? I find that my conversation with Anom is sufficient to provide us an overview:

> *"I guess it (the habit) was always like that. Because there is a space (to throw garbage), a (vacant) field, people think "Ah, it's fine, it will decompose and become soil." That being the case, people throw away their garbage there because there is an empty land […] It is a practice people habituate since early age, "It used to be like that"." (Anom)*

I guess if we refer to the time setting from our ancestors' era, years ago, littering is not necessarily seen as a harmless practice because they mostly only use organic, biodegradable materials. In that case, I could somehow understand why they had an unspoken agreement to occupy a vacant land and turned it into a landfill. Most domestic waste, either food waste or religious waste, will gradually decompose and eventually become one with nature. People don't really see any serious impacts on the environment from littering. If there is any impact on the environment from the littering habit, the disposed waste will eventually decompose and serves as fertilizer to the soil. Or if we put it in the religious context, the remains of fruits and snacks in offerings serves as a blessing to the nature and its creatures, such as ants, dogs, monkeys, and birds. However, this is no longer relevant for the modern-day as the one we live in today.

In many areas in Bali, both urban and rural, the waste management system is not yet sufficient to deal with the waste issues. While the consumption of single-use plastic and chemical preservation has been widely used on a daily basis, most of the Balinese society still keep their

[23] (Balinese) *Banten saiban* or *jotan* is a daily offering that is offered daily after cooking or before eating and usually done in the morning.

old habit in littering. Most people don't separate their waste based on its organic and non-organic characteristics. Although some people are progressively starting to separate their waste, I noticed that the number of people who are doing it because they have internalized the awareness are still relatively low. Many of them separate their waste because there is *perarem*[24] that asked them to do so. Or in other case, people are tempted to get the rewards from the local government or organization who are introducing a waste bank system to the community.

Figure 4.5: The remains of offerings stacked together at Pura Penataran Agung Besakih.

Komang Udaya told me that littering is also happening in Besakih. As one of the *pemangku*[25] in Pura Batu Madeg, he sees many *pemedek*[26] come to Besakih with their offerings and leave the remains of their prayers on the ground after they were done. Often, these *pemedek* have plastic packaged snacks or drinks on their offerings. Aside from the elements of the offerings itself, people bring their offerings in big plastic bags and leave only with their ratan basket or wooden plates because they throw away the plastic bags at the temple area. Although Besakih has encouraged their *pemedek* not to bring plastic to the temple area, the reality is many of

[24] (Balinese) *Perarem* means rules or decisions of the traditional village as the implementation of *awig-awig* or regulating new matters and/or resolving customary/talk cases in the traditional village.

[25] (Balinese) *Pemangku* carries the responsibility as a servant to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa as well as to the society. In some other culture, *pemangku* is on the same level as a priest.

[26] (Balinese) *Pemedek* is someone who comes to temples to pray.

them still do it. Some *pemangku* told me that it is close to impossible to ban plastic from temples, not only in Besakih, because if they ban people from using plastic bags then it might disrupt the sincerity of these *pemedek*.

Figure 4.6: Plastic packaged snacks as offerings elements.

Like any kind of worshippers, when *pemedek* visit a temple and do their rituals, they come with an intention to give respects to the God(s). The sincerity of *pemedek* holds a more important role in the whole ritual processes than forcing them to follow a certain rule that is less substantial in the religious context, such as banning plastics from temples. For this reason, the best thing *pengempon*[27] could do is to provide trash cans around the temples area, therefore *pemedek* can take their remains as they go and throw it on the closest trash can. Alternatively, *pengayah*[28] could also help bring the waste to the trash cans.

[27] (Balinese) *Pengempon* group of residents who are members of the traditional village, *Banjar Adat*, *Sekaa*, or other names with the obligation to maintain the temple.

[28] (Balinese) *Pengayah* means servant. It is originated from the word *ayah*, which means a sincere obligation.

Figure 4.7: Trash can with mixed waste in Pura Gelap area.

Dissecting littering habit in spiritual context is rather more complex than in a worldly context. There is a tendency for many people to put forward their relation to God(s) than proactively preserving the environment through certain practices. A myth around the religious materials could also contribute to allowing worshipper to ignore some logic. For example, Gungtik told me that she was taught not to put down the incense after prayer because the longer it is on, the longer her life would be. Then there is also a myth saying that it is not allowed to throw out *canang*, even after we were done praying, because then it lost its sacredness, and the God(s) won't grant your prayers. Accordingly, as I shared in the previous part, the notion of clean, holy, and sacred that are connected to the spatial concept in Balinese Hindus culture plays a role in shaping their littering habit. My deduction was supported by Catur's argument:

> *"Within the household scope, there is* sanggah[29] *that is categorized as holy area. If there is garbage from outside the holy area to be thrown into the holy area, that is called* leteh[30]*, it can't happen because it comes from the outside of sacred area. If there is garbage that comes from the holy area wanted to be thrown to the outside area, that's okay. It's not allowed to bring garbage*

[29] (Balinese) *Sanggah*, also called *merajan* for some people, is the family temple found in all Balinese Hindus houses.

[30] (Balinese) *Leteh* refers to something (or someone) that is considered not holy, dirty. In ceremonial context, the word *leteh* is interchangeable with *cemer* or *cuntaka*, which in religious sense means contaminated or ritually unclean.

from the unholy to the holy area because the land in the holy area has already been purified." (Catur)

4.3.2 The tourism paradox

It is no secret that the tourism industry in Bali is huge. The jobs sector that is directly related to the tourism industry is still the mainstay of the employment in Bali. This is inseparable from the fact that the tourism sector is the backbone of the Balinese economy. However, tourism is never all sunshine and rainbows. Although tourism can bring many benefits such as employment, regional and state revenues, and international recognition, it can also lead to environmental degradation and socio-cultural disturbance. In a nutshell, tourism is a double-edged sword whose development must always be controlled. I think this needs to be discussed here because in the end, the tourism industry in Bali is indicated to might have the power to transform local people's understanding of waste and wasting.

For the last decade, Bali has been forced to deal with environmental issues such as water scarcity and waste problem. Naturally, the issues are linked to Bali's rapid tourism development since the big jump in 1990. Numerous international hotel chains alongside food and beverages services with international connection or franchise chains were soon enliven the main tourism areas of Bali: Kuta, Sanur, and Nusa Dua. The year was marked as the golden age of tourism in Bali that leads to the opening of mass tourism program in around the end of 1990s or early 2000s and the Balinese provincial government plays a major role in the creation of the present-day Balinese culture (Yamashita, 2003). Shortly after, tourism value in Bali is shifting, along with the socioeconomic and cultural dynamic of Balinese society. Many people chose, and some might be gently forced, to leave their traditional jobs and switch focuses to provide for the tourists needs.

Before the tourism boom in 1990, most of Balinese were farmers. After spending a portion of their time working in the fields, Balinese had to commit to their social obligation as part of the traditional community. Balinese were subjected to practice music, dance, carving, and painting for traditional cultural and religious purposes, where it was mostly done in a collective setting than sole profit oriented. Although the life of Balinese before 1990 and now seems to be very different, the interaction between Balinese with foreign travellers has indeed been going on for decades prior. Bali probably would have a different face if the Dutch did not success in taking control of Bali and make it a tourist destination in the 1920s, which was then followed by travellers from other European countries and America. After all, the Bali of today is partly co-created by western artists and scholars such as Gregor Krause, Walter Spies, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Roelof Goris, Clifford Geertz, etc.

Being one of the leading tourism destinations, Bali receives continuous flow of tourists all year round. This situation has made many Balinese busy being the motors in the tourism industry by always seeking for the best service for tourists to keep them coming. Because without

tourists as the driving fuel, the tourism industry in Bali will not run and those who are already involved in the world of tourism will not be able to retain their main source of income. At this point, tourists have become the top priority for tourism workers. Along with the high turnover of domestic and international tourists in Bali, Balinese tourism workers are 'forced' to sacrifice their time to prepare daily offerings. There is a process that seems to be missing when the moment of solemnity in making offerings is replaced by the convenience of buying pre-made offerings. Some of the offerings' vendors might even have to sacrifice eco-friendly values to meet the market demands.

> *"Tourism is very influential because now everyone wants instant things; everything is made easy. "Ah, that's easy, just pay it later," because he has money [...] This instant need can also be seen from the making of* canang. *Now,* semat biting[31] *have been replaced with staples. It started with the fast need from tourism people, "*Duh, *I don't have time to get more (*semat biting*)." High demand. This change is driven by the tourism industry." (Catur)*

> *"My mom used to make it (*banten*) from scratch, and she didn't use any chemical preservatives. The making process would take days because the technique is different. (It needs to be) Soaked, washed, dried in the sun for days. That was the process." (Rai)*

In addition to being studied as local communities affected by the tourism industry, the Balinese here are also studied as tourists, or rather as pilgrims. As previously mentioned, Balinese Hindu visit temples regularly to fulfil their religious duties in worshipping gods and deities. Most Balinese Hindu even occasionally take the time to come in droves to Besakih Temple on ceremonial days to pray, worship, and express gratitude to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. The temple to which the *pemedek* go may not always be the same, depending on the purpose and lineage. But for many of them, pilgrimage to Besakih Temple is incomplete without a visit to the main temple where *bhatara* and *bhatari* gather, Pura Penataran Agung.

The busiest moment at Pura Penataran Agung happened on the days leading up to the tenth full moon in Balinese calendar which is celebrated with the *Ida Bhatara Turun Kabeh*[32] ceremony. The set-up period leading to the peak of the ceremony that falls on full moon might vary every year; it could take up to 21 days. Mangku Yuda reckons that for each worship session

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[31] (Balinese) *Semat biting* refers to pins made of small bamboo sticks used to sew leaves.

[32] *Ida Bhatara Turun Kabeh* is a ceremony in which all the Gods of God's manifestations gather at the Besakih Temple Hall and unite to give gifts to their people to serve God. The ceremony is held every year on *sasih kedasa* (or *Waisaka* is the 10th 'month' in the calculation of the Saka year which begins on Nyepi Day) to invoke the mercy and safety of the universe.

that last for about 45-60 minutes[33], the number of *pemedek* at the second mandala of Pura Penataran Agung on their busiest days could reach up to 2000-4000 people, despite the temple being open 24/7.

Figure 4.8: Pemedek *head to worship area at Pura Penataran Agung Besakih on full moon night.*

During this annual peak season for Balinese Hindu pilgrims, the roads to Besakih are always packed and jammed with people who want to pray at Besakih Temple. Like during the peak season of school holidays, these religious tourists come in droves with relatives and/or village representatives to the site on various types of vehicles, such as motorbikes, cars, to chartered buses. Often, *pemedek* have to walk for tens of kilometres because of the traffic and not enough parking spaces for these vehicles. The local, provincial, even state governments have been trying to find a solution to this problem of congestion and lack of parking space for years. Their latest discussion has led to the mega project of restructuring the sacred area of Besakih, which officially began to work as of August 2018 and is expected to be completed in December 2022. The mega project which was built to improve the facilitation of both religious and public tourists has cost IDR 770 billion for the construction of the parking lots and reached a total project value of IDR 1.6 trillion.

With such a massive overall budget, the people who I talked to in Bali whose shared concern is about the environment expressed their disappointment at the government's lack of

[33] The approximate number is based on the normal days' capacity. During the Covid19 pandemic, they limit the number of *pemedek* to only 25% of the normal capacity.

attention to solutions to the waste issue in the Besakih area. In addition to the issue of parking area, Besakih is also often hit by the waste issue, especially during the *Ida Bhatara Turun Kabeh* ceremony where the number of visitors soared high like a rocket. The common cause is that the visitors of Besakih Temple would leave behind some traces of activities from when they are visiting the temple area. By far, sacred waste like offerings and plastic waste are the two categories of waste that temple visitors and local residents complain about the most.

> *"In community temples such as Besakih, the* pemedek *is very much mixed. So, it is difficult to apply strict rules because* pemedek *comes with habits that are brought from the scope of the household." (Gungtik)*

The nitty-gritty of Gungtik's above statement is also frequently mentioned by the people I encountered during my process of trying to get a grasp on the issue. Indeed, ingrained habits could be very difficult to change because they occur repeatedly with little to no awareness of doing it. Moreover, a person's habits are not only made visible in one setting but could also be carried to more settings. In a similar manner, if we see it from a tourism studies perspective, we might notice that tourists also tend to carry along habits or customs they developed from their place of origin to the tourism destination. Then if the foreign habits or customs are incompatible with local practices, the tourism providers at destinations will somehow have to swallow the hard pill and strive to accommodate tourists for the sake of keeping the industry alive. For this reason, I think this waste issue in Besakih is quite interesting to study from a tourism perspective because even though the root of this issue has been known and openly displayed this entire time, the people of Besakih are still somewhat incapable of cutting down the problem.

4.3.3 Organic versus inorganic

Prior to going into the field, I have been made aware of the transformation in the used materials of Balinese Hindus offerings. The sacred ritual equipment that was once made of all organic materials has now been combined with inorganic materials as seen in Figure 4.9. I shared my curiosity with my informants and the 'side characters' regarding the inclusion of plastic packages in a set of *banten*. Mangku Jana and Mangku Wayan, for example. The two *pemangku* express similar opinions in not being a fan of seeing these 'new' elements in *banten*, but also cannot really do much about it other than making an appeal to *pemedek* to leave out plastic before entering Besakih Temple. The appeal seems to not be heard by most of the *pemedek*. Similar sights as in Figure 4.9 are almost seen as normal if one doesn't know things were done years ago. Some of the people that I talked to indicated that they also include additional elements to their *banten*. For example, Nining mentioned that she is now used to buy pre-made materials for her *canang* and sometimes put some plastic packaged candies because she feels that the gods 'wants' that candies. But those who learns about the original compositions of *canang* might disagree with the decision of Nining and other similar minded Balinese Hindu made. As it is well captured in my talk with Nyoman Winata:

"This is wrong. The canang *is not supposed to contain candy or cigarettes. So, people who serve* canang *filled with candy and cigarettes are doing it based on their culture. They are happy with cigarettes, it is thought that God is also happy with cigarettes, so they fill them with cigarettes. If you like candy, then fill it with candy." (Nyoman Winata)*

Figure 4.9: An assortment of offerings with fillings in the form of organic and inorganic materials.

At least in the last decade, there are many more people chose to buy their *canang* materials like Nining. The tourism industry has secured itself in the leading role for pushing people to start buying *canang* because then guides, receptionists, etc. are made busy by tourists. Also, some tourism workers have to rent a single room to live closer to their work if their hometown is like 2 hours away. As a note, many Balinese share land or house with families where they can sit together and share tasks in making *banten*. Hence, buying pre-made *canang* is convenient for those who live away from family most days a week because they can get a sack of *canang* that can be stored and last for days. This is also how Isti and her cousin get their *canang* when they are away at the city for school and work. Moreover, hotels and restaurants need multiple times more the amount of *canang* compared to the regular amount of *canang* used in domestic space. The reason hotels and restaurants also need *canang* is so that their staffs and business are blessed by the gods and deities. *Banten* sellers today saw these opportunities and now, they are very easy to find.

"The leaves are also preserved, some have even used fronds which smelting process is difficult and takes a long time because of the high chemical content that makes it difficult to make compost [...] Now that we are in the industrial era and the demand in a short time has increased, so there is the use of

chemicals to preserve materials. It is this organic matter which in the end makes the smelting process difficult." (Catur)

"Before, a while ago, it was put together. Plastic, canang*, whatever, we put it together in such mess. Last week, there was a briefing to separate plastic waste; plastic and organic. Yes, we automatically separate the* canang*, the paper. We separate the plastic." (Mayun)*

Naturally, an increase in demand will be followed by an increase in supply. Guided by the economic model, *banten* producers are likely to feel the pressure on meeting the demand without losing on production cost if the products are not sold on time. Keep in mind that essentially, *banten* are made of all organic materials that should decompose fast and harmless for the soil organism. The condition of pre-made *banten* shared by Catur has blurred the line between categorisation as organic or inorganic. Unlike Mayun's perspective that is clear in distinguishing organic waste like *canang* and paper from the plastic ones which is inorganic. To me, this part of Balinese reality is rather sad and seems to reveal a contradiction in Balinese Hindu ritual meanings and philosophy. I mean, how is combining organic and inorganic materials in *banten* then disposing the sacred waste as a whole considered ok? The two things don't seem really compatible to me.

4.4 Dealing with the waste

There is a quite famous quote saying that often randomly crosses my mind: "If you don't think you can solve the problem, you can at least start with yourself." I don't know who said this or when exactly I first heard it, but I must say that I agree with the quote. Especially when we are talking about the waste problem, I agree with Liboiron & Lepawsky (2022) that at some point we have to wise up to the fact that the nature of this problem is more systematic rather than due to specific individual factor. One's individual effort might not show a grandiose positive result to the overall problem. However, I do not deny the possibility that one's awareness to take part in overcoming the waste issue is might still contribute to a slight difference to their surrounding environment or domestic area. But again, the choice to put or not to put an effort is of course up to each of these individuals.

"It depends on human behaviour. Some are lazy, some are diligent. If you are diligent, so you don't have to intentionally sweep it up, after praying and so on, the canang *that was used for prayer is picked up to the trash. That's why I say it depends on human behaviour. For this household, Made (his nephew) here has also experienced in* merajan*, once it's done, we just put it in the trash can […] It's also a form of our culture, taking care of the environment from waste." (Nyoman Winata)*

Figure 4.10: Separated waste at Warti's before being passed on to local collector.

The 'easiest' way to start with the individual portion in dealing with waste issues is by first focusing on the domestic space like home. Why did I say 'easiest'? Because although it might seem and sounds easy, in reality, it could still be seen as an energy consuming chore. It's hard to do, it's a burden. But in Warti's case that is pictured above, we could see an indication that it is not the case in her household. Warti and the rest of their household reserved an awareness within them to keep their family house clean, but also tidy by putting in an effort to separate their waste into categories. These piles of used bottles and jugs will later be passed to local collector of recyclable waste. Their family's way in dealing with domestic waste was inspiring to see.

Figure 4.11: Hours-old canang *on family temple at* Warti's.

Yanda's home was another interesting household that I visited during my fieldwork. Yanda was once a tourism worker who worked in a local hotel chain in Ubud, Bali. Due to Covid19, he was unemployed but then found a passion in *biopori*[34] and start assisting many people in his neighbourhood to install some of this to their yard. This *biopori* was originally invented by scientists in West Java, Indonesia, to improve the ground water quality. The installation and to make it work are easy, just by digging small holes and fill it with organic waste. The organic waste, like fall-leaves and *canang,* is the main food of the earthworm that will help with decomposing the waste and at the same time digging more pores to the ground. This way, the *biopori* holes not only provide solution to waste issue but also water scarcity.

It was then made popular in Peliatan, Ubud by Wayan Sudiarta's group, in which Yanda is included. From their own village, *biopori* then introduced to other areas in Bali, like Singaraja, Tabanan, Badung, and Denpasar. Their movement is positively accepted by many people, they even got an offer from PHDI[35] to work with them in socialising the product to temples in Bali. As per our conversation on 27 October 2021, Wayan Sudiarta and his group have had installed *biopori* to not only households who requested their assistance, but also nearly all temples in

[34] (Indonesian) *Biopori* is a cylindrical hole that is made vertically into the soil as a method of water absorption which is intended to overcome standing water by increasing the water absorption capacity of the soil. This method was coined by Dr. Kamir Raziudin Brata, one of the researchers from the Department of Soil Science and Land Resources, Faculty of Agriculture, Institut Pertanian Bogor.

[35] Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (abbreviated as PHDI) is an assembly of Indonesian Hindu organizations that deal with religious and social interests.

Peliatan, Ubud. The installation in the one last temple is delayed due to temple renovation, but as soon it's finish, they will start working on it. Their group's vision is that *biopori* will be installed in at least most temples so that *pemedek* could discard their *canang* after *sembahyang* to the hole to keep the temple area clean.

Figure 4.12: Biopori hole filled with plants leaves and other organic domestic waste at Yanda's. The lid is taken off for demonstration purposes.

Compared to the first two, Dayu Pidada and Gus Artha let me learn more about how their households deal with sacred waste. Because they practically residence of *gria*, which is a home to families of *pedanda*, they deal with more *banten* than regular household. As *tukang banten*[36], Dayu Pidada often makes many kinds of *banten* for rituals and ceremonies. Actually, it is one of the functions of *gria* in Balinese Hindu society. People usually come to *gria* for spiritual guidance as well as getting certain kinds of *banten*. As mentioned in the earlier subchapter, types of Balinese Hinduism *banten* is way too many for common people to know. Also, ideally, only families of *pedanda* have access to spiritual manuscripts, hence the knowledge in Balinese Hindu spiritualism is usually broader than those from lower castes. Accordingly, their *gria* also has more rules in terms of dealing with their sacred waste. Likewise, their practice in dealing with the remains of offerings implies a condition where sacred waste

[36] (Balinese) *Tukang banten* or *serati banten* is a profession that specialises in exploring, studying, making various *banten* or *upakara* for ceremonial purposes. This profession is generally occupied by someone who lives in *gria*.

is simply seen as a matter out of place rather than being dominated by the knowledge of pathogenic organism (Douglas, 1966, p. 36).

> *"If it's already been blessed, it (offerings) can't be thrown away just anywhere. Must be (placed) in a good space so as not to be stepped on. When I'm away (from* Gria *Carik), I'm surprised to see that. After it is delivered at the temple, it is placed in front of the house, and then it is stepped on." (Dayu Pidada)*

> *"After being delivered, the* canang *will be withered. When it's already dry and you are going to replace it with the new one, you can't put the old* canang *on the ground. It must be put on a surface. It means, so that no one will step over it. So that nothing is stepped on, like that [...] There is a special place for that dump. That's* laiban*, it shouldn't be wasted. If it's thrown away, the fortune is thrown away. That's how it is here." (Gus Artha)*

Figure 4.13: An almost full trash can at Pura Batu Madeg after ritual.

We have seen how people in domestic space has been dealing with their waste. But then, what about the public space? In Besakih Temple, a system has been created by *pemaksan*[37] to set some order to the *pemedek* who often crowd the area, especially around big ceremonies like *Ida Bhatara Turun Kabeh*. Aside from creating an order to deal with the traffic of *pemedek*, the

[37] (Balinese) *Pemaksan* is the temple institutional system who is responsible in maintaining the temple, both in the form of ceremonies and physically.

system also helps the management of temple in dealing with the sacred waste which without question will soon piling on the prayer area if it's not organised from the initial prayer session. Also, in the *jaba*[38] Pura Pasucian Besakih, there are trash containers and smaller cans so that *pemedek* could discard their sacred waste there if they are not in favours to take the waste back with them and throw it at home. When the containers and cans from *jaba* Pura Pasucian Besakih are full, they are transported by truck to the Banjar Palak landfill, so that the trash can never overflows with garbage.

As soon as *pemedek* are done with praying, cleaning staffs organised by will immediately clean up the remains. During this process, the next *pemedek* are requested to wait in queue and not to rush into the worship area to provide an opportunity for the *pengayah* to pick up the trash from previous session. *Pemedek* are also advised to keep the area clean after ceremonies; thus ideally, *pemedek* are expected to pick up the remains of their offerings and put them in the trash cans that have been provided at the temple. If everything went in an orderly fashion, the cleaner's job will be easier, and the next *pemedek* won't have to sit on a pile of scattered trash.

So far, dozens of trucks that come from Besakih Temple like Pura Dalem Puri, Pura Penataran Agung, Pura Pedharman and surrounding areas throw garbage into the Banjar Palak landfill. Upon arrival at the landfill, the cleaners just pushed all the trash to fall into the ravine, so that Banjar Palak landfill looks clean from the outside. While in reality, the garbage is piling up in the deep ravine. Although at the Banjar Palak landfill there is a building to process waste, so far it is not functioning. It is said that the handling of waste at the Banjar Palak TPA will be re-evaluated so that only truly organic waste is thrown into the ravine. Previously, organic waste was taken by farmers for composting, but local farmers' interest in taking ceremonial waste is no longer what it used to be.

> *"Together with the customary village, in this (waste) management, I hope it will be stronger. Because the scope of this official administrative village area is owned by the customary village. The official village is only administrative. So, the power is there. When the customary village wants to bind, the community will start (following the recommended waste management mechanism), whether (based on) fear or whatever. That's our hope. Before the customary village issued the* perarem*, it would not be possible. The official village cannot (create the same effect)." (Wayan Suartika)*

[38] (Balinese) *Jaba* means outside, outer courtyard of temple.

Figure 4.14: UPS Basuki Lestari members worked with landfill workers to unload their truck.

Wayan Suartika, usually called Kayan by people in Besakih, is one of the people who are deeply involved in the management of waste in Besakih. Together with UPS Basuki Lestari, a waste management unit of Besakih that he invented with local youth organisation of the village, he goes around some part of the village to pick up domestic waste every other day from some of the households who are subscribing to their service. I once tagged along on their truck to help and learn how they are doing with the work and I must say, it is impressive to see these people being passionate about what they are doing even though the work is in fact voluntary. Kayan's humble and hardworking character is also known by other people who are also active in environment issues, especially waste. Catur from PPLH and Kayan know each other and at times share their insights on the waste issues they are dealing with. It seems that such connection is needed in Bali, especially if they share the same concern about the environment or whatever it is. Because then, you might find better solution to solve, or at least minimize, the problem from the exchange of insights.

> *"In urban areas, so far, because the waste management system has not yet been implemented, everything is disposed of together with inorganic ones [...] Then if we go back to the behaviour of the people, they are still used to mixing* canang *waste with other inorganic waste. Waste is not managed properly, and, in the end, it will only end up in the landfill." (Catur)*

Figure 4.15: Landfill, workers, and the abandoned waste processing building at Banjar Palak, Besakih.

5 Conclusion

Every story will eventually come to an end, and so must this thesis. But before I really put an end to this, of course, I will first share my conclusion to this discard studies analysis of Balinese Hindu's sacred waste. First, I will quickly respond to my main research question: how do Balinese Hindu perceive and manage waste in the context of religious tourism in Bali? Then I will point out the contribution and implications of this thesis, which will be followed by suggestion for future research.

In this thesis, religious tourism is the context where Balinese Hindu's perception and ways in dealing with waste takes place. It is a vehicle to articulate Balinese Hindu's understanding of their relationship with the nonhuman environment through the perceived knowledge of waste and wasting. Therefore, I decided to look into the practices of wasting in both domestic and public spaces to observe the constancy in terms of seeing waste under the lens of systemic and individual power. Under the umbrella of spirituality and religious tourism, I have gathered my responses to the research questions by putting the emphasis on defamiliarization, denaturalisation, decentering, and depurification of waste amongst Balinese Hindu.

To begin, defamiliarizing waste is important in the analysis of discard studies. I have investigated how Balinese Hindu perceived waste and wasting by questioning the premises upon which arguments are based through the realities surrounding Tri Hita Karana and their interpretation of *palemahan*. Based on what I have narrated in the previous chapter, I recognised a phenomenon where a harmony with the environment is worth to questioned because the practices are not likely to mirror the core of the principle. From the majority of the questioned practices, my elucidation on transformation of sacred offerings from *sukla* to *lungsuran* and on Balinese Hindu's conception of clean, holy, and sacred has exemplified Douglas' (1966) and Liboiron and Lepawsky's (2022) notions of purity and depurification. The remains of sacred offerings are treated in both tendencies to separate from the organic and profane. Although there are still missed details when it comes to 'purifying' sacred offerings from inorganic materials.

The analysis of Balinese Hindu is then connected to denaturalisation of waste and wasting, where we got the image on how waste and wasting in terms of the remains of sacred offerings that has been contaminated by inorganic materials has started to be seen as normal through my discussion on littering habit, the paradox of tourism, and organic versus inorganic. Finally, Balinese Hindu's ways in dealing with waste, especially in the case of using landfill in Banjar Palak, exhibited a waste system that relies on the relation between centres and peripheries. The existing system indicates Balinese Hindu's understanding on their relation to nonhuman environment and waste by keeping away the remains of scared offerings in the designed area where the conceptualisation of clean doesn't exist.

Overall, the application of the various methodologies introduced in discard studies has helped me answer my research questions. The Balinese Hindus' understanding of waste and wasting that I learned from the lens of defamiliarisation, denaturalisation, decentering, and depurification shows that for Balinese people, waste, especially in the context of religious tourism, is not really something to be defined in one concluding sentence because there are many layers that need to be dissected. Each person's opinion in terms of waste and wasting also still looks varied and dominates one's behaviour based on the results of interviews and observations, so it is difficult to draw a single line definition to it. However, I think discard studies has provided me with an analytical tool that fits the purpose of this research, which is to understand how Balinese society perceive and manage waste in the context of religious tourism.

My study of and with Balinese Hindu is not to be isolated from the larger implication in conceptualising and managing the remains of sacred offerings in Bali. From the beginning, I was intended to explore the interplay between the religious aspect in Balinese Hindu culture and how it plays a role in shaping their perceptions on waste. I am quite sure that this thesis could help me expressing the voices of Balinese Hindu on waste and the importance of preserving their nonhuman environment from the negative impacts of waste and wasting. Moreover, I argue that my study is parallel with the direction of waste and/or discard studies and significant to religious tourism studies. It fills the gap to the discussion on environmental issues in Bali that mostly covers the topic of growing plastic waste and water scarcity caused by tourism industry. In this fashion, my thesis has contributed to the entirety of discard studies by throwing in a new case on the study of Balinese Hindu's sacred waste.

Lastly, I would like to propose my suggestion for future research. Up until today, the waste issue in Bali doesn't seem to be acknowledging a new light in terms of finding solutions. Rather than solving the source-based waste problem, people tend to move the waste and get their hands clean from the problem. To be honest, this situation has got me worried that Balinese might running out of sinks and the waste issue would be unsolvable. Tourism industry might further damage the Balinese society rather than saving it from the revenue it brings. For this reason, critical research that builds on this topic might contribute to recentring the potential solutions based on the place relativity and materiality of the generated waste. To catch the essence on what kind of solution is actually needed in Bali, it is important to take into account, or even put more weight on the voices of Balinese. In the end, I believe that the best solution to any problems should come from within rather than imported from foreign deliberations.

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