

## PSYCHOSOMATIC DISCUSSION

## A Sense of Control, Health, and Illness: Exploring the Mind-Body Relationship and the Socio-Cultural/Spiritual Context: Reflections on Bali

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*Abstract: Research has shown that there is a much more intimate and complex relationship between the "mind" and "body" than heretofore acknowledged within the predominant Western scientific paradigm; and that a "sense of control" may be one of the more important variables mediating that relationship. Furthermore, even when this "mind-body" relationship is studied, it is often done so in a reductionist way — at a psychophysiological level within the individual, thereby ignoring the socio-cultural context within which it is embedded. To address these issues, this article examines the mind-body relationship within the socio-cultural/spiritual context of Bali. Specifically examined are: (1) the culture's underlying assumptions about the mind-body-spirit connection across developmental and life cycle issues (including physical illness, and death); (2) the importance of maintaining a sense of control, harmony, and balance, within oneself, one's community, and the cosmos; and (3) the implications of those views for a control-based model of positive health. The article concludes with: (1) a discussion of why control seems to be such an important "construct" in human evolution; (2) an examination of the costs and benefits of different methods of maintaining a sense of control and orientation; and (3) a call for efforts toward a unifying theory of human control.*

### INTRODUCTION

Research is showing that the psychological construct "sense of control" can have a pronounced effect on an individual's physical and emotional wellbeing [1-3] and can even influence mortality [4]. On the one hand, research has shown that this sense of control can come from "self-control" efforts [5].

Therefore, increasingly there has been an effort among those in the health and healing professions to help individuals regain a "sense of control" in their lives, to move from feeling helpless, vulnerable, a victim of events, to feeling more self-determining, responsible, and "in control" [6-7]. This model of individual self-control and personal responsibility is an important one, and has been a hallmark of the holistic health and broad-spectrum psychosomatic medicine movements [8-9].

However, as shown by research with cancer patients [10] and in other health-related concerns [11], even those individuals who do not use self-control strategies, can gain a positive sense of control by believing that someone else is in control (e.g., the Doctor, a Higher Power). This has been termed "control" by a benevolent other/Other.

Therefore, as the field of psychosomatic medicine and holistic health expands, not only is health viewed as more than the absence of disease, but the attainment of that health is seen as the product of more than just individual efforts [12]. Furthermore, several different ways are being recognized in which an individual can obtain a "sense of control" as it impacts on his/her health [13]. Thus, there is increasing awareness of the need to look not only at the mind-body relationship (evidenced in self-control practices), but also at the role and importance of the socio-cultural environment and community within which the individual is embedded to understand its role in the development, maintenance, and enhancement of health and well-being.

This article reports on an opportunity to study the Balinese culture to examine their control-related strategies in addressing health and illness. These strategies include both self-control, involving the mind-body relationship; and con-

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control by a benevolent other, involving the socio-cultural and spiritual context.

Health, in Bali, depends upon developing and maintaining a "sense of control" by cultivating a harmony and balance among the individual, the society, and the "cosmos." Lack of proper balance, or disharmony, among any of these may cause illness [14]. Thus, for the Balinese, health is more than recovering from disease. Rather, it is "a concern of every day life" [15, p. 51], is "embedded in other activities" [16, pp. 298-299] and is only rarely singled out:

The concept of health refers not merely to bodily wellbeing or to avoiding what we might associate with bodily/mental affliction. Because body is linked in a conception with feeling-mind, vital force and balance in the cosmos, to be healthy (*seihat*) is truly a way of being in the world - - - It bespeaks harmony between oneself and cosmological forces - - - The conventional distinctions we draw among body and spirit/mind, individual and society, natural and supernatural are not applicable.

Thus to summarize, the Balinese believe in a close and necessary connection among mind-body-spirit; they utilize both self-control and control by a benevolent other to maintain positive health; and they have a view of health which is proactive, involving maintaining a sense of control and harmony with oneself, one's community, and the cosmos. Disease, whether psychological or physical, according to the Balinese, comes from not being in control, not being in harmony.

Therefore, before we can address the above issues regarding the connection between a sense of control (through cultural and individual efforts) and health and wellbeing [15,17], it is first necessary that we take a step back and identify those issues which have the potential to create disharmony, disorientation, and lack of control within the individual and the culture.

### WHAT ARE THE CONTROL-RELATED PERENNIAL ISSUES FACING HUMANS

Based on an exploration of different philosophies, cultures, and epochs, there appears to be major control-related developmental and life-cycle issues of a personal, interpersonal, and "cosmic" nature, which all individuals, no matter what culture in which they live, have to address in some manner [18-21].

At the personal level, there are questions of: (1) developing a stable, positive identity [22] and the fact of illness, decay, and death; (2) dealing with pain and suffering; (3) addressing, attempting to gain control over, and modifying unhelpful human habits (e.g., jealousy, greed, and sometimes, aggression, and anger) [20]; and (4) sometimes, delay of gratification of immediate wants and needs [23].

At the interpersonal level, there are questions of: (1)

reconciling individual separateness and social belonging (kins, groups, clubs, and sometimes, castes); (2) developing close interpersonal relationships, including friendship and love; (3) issues of competition and its place in the social order (e.g., aggressive ambition versus a reluctance to rise above one's peers; (4) ruthless individualism versus acceptance of one's place in the lineage system [24]; and (5) issues of morality and justice [25].

At the cosmic level, there are questions of: (1) the relationship of the individual to the cosmos's seeming chaos; (2) how to create (or discover) life's meaning, understand the origin of the world, the species, one's own roots and beginnings; (3) developing orientation in terms of space and time; and (4) understanding issues of good and evil [25-26].

These issues represent, to a greater or lesser degree, that which is unknown, uncertain, ambiguous, and even chaotic in the world. And these situations and issues, which are seemingly out of control, or appear beyond human control, can cause feelings of existential stress, frustration, surprise, fears, and vulnerability.

Bali, like all cultures, has attempted to provide answers to these perennial life cycle and developmental issues which all individuals must face. It is to the Balinese means of addressing these perennial control-related issues that we now turn.

### CONTROL BY A BENEVOLENT OTHER

"It can't be helped - - what can you do?"  
(Wayan)

The foundational assumption for the Balinese sense of orientation and control is based on religious and metaphysical beliefs. The Balinese pantheon of gods is a particular combination of Hinduism and the island's indigenous animism. The Balinese not only believe that there is an overarching framework of order in the world, but also that as long as one stays in one's place, one is part of this cosmic whole. This belief system provides individuals with an ordered structure in which they can have a sense the world is at least understandable [19]; and, on a higher level, controlled by a benevolent other [10,25] which transcends and unifies good and evil, life and death dichotomies [27, pp. 290, 307].

All areas of Balinese life are based on and follow from this overarching model: (1) the tight temporal orientation; (2) the ubiquitous use of four cardinal points of spatial orientation; (3) the rigid caste system; (4) the highly developed social etiquette procedure in which there is little room for ambiguity; (5) the lack of climax in personal and social interactions; and (6) the impersonal identity which is predetermined at birth [28-30]. These five areas, and the religious system, myths, and beliefs in which they are contexted, may be conceptualized as "preprogrammed" interventions which,

in a preventive way (for subsequent generations), anticipate potential control-related perennial issues that humans face, and serve as a type of "benevolent other" to provide order and control. This may be referred to as a type of "cultural" environmental planning [33], a mastery model of control [34,35], which attempts to structure and anticipate a situation in advance to reduce if not avoid anxiety, and to give a sense of understanding, order, and control.

### SELF-CONTROL

**"Life is discipline- - everywhere- - in religion, art, sex, life, work, and love- - the only way to be happy is to be in control of life (Wayan)."**

As suggested by Wayan's quote, the Balinese place a great emphasis on self-control efforts. This might at first seem contradictory to the previous section's discussion of a tightly structured external (cultural and religious) framework until it is realized that the Balinese self-control efforts are used only to harmonize with and fit into the very clear framework and context created by those cultural and religious beliefs.

What is in a person's control and where self-control efforts are directed, is: (1) toward acceptance of what is; (2) not feeling competitive or jealous (of another's goods, possessions, or lot in life); (3) not striving to go beyond the situation as presented; (4) learning to stop and take breaks from goal-oriented activities; (5) maintaining an egoless, "anonymized" view of the self; and (6) maintaining control of one's emotions so that they don't surface and interfere with interpersonal relationships (an anonymized view of the other).

Whereas a mastery model of control, based on the culture and religious practices, tries to give the Balinese a sense of control by anticipating potential perennial concerns, a coping model of control [36] is used to address those issues which are unanticipated and occur unexpectedly (which by definition have the potential for disorientation). The Balinese cope with these situations primarily by a yielding form of control (both positive and negative) which ranges from acceptance to avoidance [37-38].

For the Balinese, these avoidant techniques include actual avoidance of painful or fearful situations (which is anything unknown to them). They also include emotional and cognitive strategies such as: (1) efforts to avoid emotional expressiveness in everyday interactions [39]; (2) not caring [16]; (3) "awayness" (a type of informal trance practice involving a vacant face and emotionless expression) [28]; (4) not engaging in direct, assertive interactions; (5) lack of climax to goal-directed activities; (6) turning to a benevolent other for help; (7) forgetfulness; and (8) sleep (called takoet poeles - - - literally, "afraid sleep").

In all of these activities, the individual is working toward maintaining a sense of control through what Wikan [16, p.

304] calls "reducing confusion and cultivating calm":

A feeling of calm entails a state of adjustment to the circumstance in which one finds oneself: working on the feeling mind to bring them in tune with ones objective circumstances in life; an attitude of not caring, forgetting the bad, letting bygones be bygones, and giving without expectation of return. Relaxed at the center, one avoids disappointment, does not get worked up, combats anger, does not bear grudges. In so doing, the Balinese cultivates and conserves their "life force" (Bayu) thereby feels generally light, fresh, strong.

The cultural assumptions underlying these beliefs is that each person is responsible for cultivating an emotional and cognitive discipline in all aspects of their life; emotions and feelings are under the individual's personal control and:

can and should be chosen - - - thinking/feeling are two aspects of one process; emotional expression shapes and modulates feelings by deliberately making oneself appear to be cheerful - - - The Balinese is taught to not give in to sad emotions, but to always strive for a cheerful countenance. Laughter is part of an ethos that singles the person out as in no small measure the maker of her own fate [16, 298].

### SOCIETAL EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE SELF CONTROL

Maintaining this self-discipline and presenting to the world (the appearance of) a calm, cheerful face, is not only for the individual's health, but also for the community's. Each individual is seen as an integral part of the social fabric and harmony, and therefore because individual sadness, self-preoccupation, and lack of discipline is thought to create disharmony and sickness within the community, it is:

regarded as a threat to public health not to contribute to a cheerful and smooth social ambience - - - Therefore to make ones heart the best; make ones character the best; makes ones body the best - - - resound through everyday discourse - - - and people are implored to take responsibility for their own welfare and of social others - - - the shaping of one's feeling-mind is a collective concern, not a matter of personal choice [16, pp. 303, 309].

There are several ways that the Balinese culture encourages (through custom and ritual) individual efforts to control one's emotions and passions, and to practice self-control. One example is a rite of passage at puberty for both men and women known as the tooth filing ceremony. The six front teeth are filed down to symbolically rid the individual of six bad characteristics: laziness (sometimes translated as arrogance), anger, greed, desire, jealousy, and confusion. A second custom is wearing a syh (sash) around the waist before entering the temple, in order to keep greed, and other evil emotions "under control." As Wayan noted: "I was told constantly while growing up, 'Don't be jealous of your siblings. Settle for your own place where you belong.' "

## INTEGRATING SELF-CONTROL AND CONTROL BY A BENEVOLENT OTHER: A SUMMARY

We have discussed self-control and control by a benevolent other as if they were either/or concepts. However, all traditions, either implicitly or explicitly, seek some sort of integration between the two [25]. In Bali, on an internal/external locus of control continuum, most of life's events are considered outside the individual's control. However, choosing one's emotional reactions to those events, and accepting one's station in life (fitting in) is considered within one's control [40]. In terms of a self-efficacy model [41], the belief is that there is really little the individual can (or should) do to influence the events of the world (e.g., efforts with climax) and/or to break forth from his given situation in life. However, there is much that the individual can do in terms of choosing his/her thoughts and feelings. On an assertive/yielding continuum [42-43], the yielding mode is primarily utilized in Bali — both acknowledging that the universe is out of the individual's control, and also accepting as a given the universe's natural harmony of cycles of life and death, as well as the events occurring in between (i.e., one's caste, birth order, and so on).

When assertive strategies are utilized by the Balinese (i.e., religious ritual and other active efforts), they are generally performed as preventive coping — necessary and required behaviors to help the individual accept what is, and to continue to fit within the established order. Active efforts are generally not made (as they are in our culture) in an attempt to alter the world, or to create a new pattern or model. The unknown is not to be tampered with. Furthermore, even when active efforts are made, there is a limit placed on the amount and persistence of the effort. Once the individual has performed what is necessary (e.g., whether a ritual for temple worship or for good business), then it is out of his/her control, and the results, whatever they may be, need to be accepted.

Predetermined impersonal self-identity, low persistence and effort levels to address external tasks (ending with the expectation of lack of climax), high acceptance of what is, and lack of interpersonal flexibility and the possibility (or desirability) of emotional intimacy, are beliefs and attitudes nearly opposite to those in our culture. The assumptions in our culture are that there are few areas of life where human beings should not be in active control, and that these active efforts to master the external environment and the unknown and to subordinate objects to human will are good and useful.

To existentially develop and form a personal identity, autonomy, individuation; to strive for one's goals; to break forth from one's environment and better oneself; to seek to develop at least a few close interpersonal relationships and emotional bonds — all these are considered positive evi-

dence of self-confidence, self-efficacy, and beneficial self-control [38].

However, these very Balinese attitudes and beliefs, which would presumably, cause those in our culture to have a sense of "learned helplessness," [44]., provide, for the Balinese, a sense of control — of peacefulness and calm security — precisely because so much active control is out of their hands. Their model provides them with a clear sense of what they are "supposed" to do in their lives. It creates a circumscribed, relatively predictable world in which they can act within certain constraints. It gives them a clear sense of when to let go of active efforts; and it establishes a sense of order about their place in the world.

When the Balinese say: "Life is a discipline - - - the only way to be happy is to be in control of life," this means that one has to work hard to try to fit into one's given station in life (e.g., control one's emotions, stay oriented in time and space); and that one should try to maintain an anonymous, impersonal view of oneself and others. Beyond that effort, however, life is no longer in one's control, and that needs to be accepted. It is this combination of self-control efforts with acceptance, occurring within the framework of cultural and religious beliefs, that the Balinese derive their sense of control.

## PHYSICAL ILLNESS, DECAY, AND DEATH

**"When a Balinese seeks external help for his illness, he first goes to those who practice white magic; if they can't cure him, he goes to a Doctor who practices Western medicine. The Balinese are flexible about who cures them! (Dr. Denny Tong)."**

**"The World Health Organization has estimated that three-fourths of the world's population "are emotionally and culturally tied to indigenous systems of health care and have no access to modern medical care" (Rappaport, H., and Rappaport, M. The integration of scientific and traditional healing. *Am. Psychol.* 36: 774-781).**

Up to this point, we have focused on the implications of a sense of control for maintaining health. But physical illness, aging, (and ultimately, death) are inevitable, and can represent a loss of control [46]. This section focuses on how the Balinese seek to maintain a sense of control in addressing issues of physical vulnerability by utilizing, in a linear succession, four different control-related constructs: (1) self-control; (2) control by a benevolent other; (3) acceptance; and (4) forgetfulness (avoidance).

### Self-Control (the self-efficacy of self-healing)

The Balinese believe that there is a close connection between "mental activities" (thoughts, beliefs), individual

behavior, and physical illness. Therefore, when they first get sick, they seek to understand the reasons for their illness related to their mental activities and/or inappropriate behavior. The question of "Why have I been stricken?" is quite common in non-Western countries, although it is often considered just "a secondary anxiety not vital to disease models of the West" [45, p. 774].

Generally, a major reason for sickness is thought to be due to evil inclinations within or actions by the affected person. Lambo, discussing Africa, notes a similar belief: "Sickness is the natural effect of some social mistake — breaking a taboo or breaking a kinship rule" [24]. Some example of "evil" which Balinese expressed to me included: (1) wanting what is not yours, or in your lot; (2) wanting more than what one has; (3) "enemies" inside; (4) having a too busy mind; and (5) being out of balance.

According to Dr. Tong, once the Balinese have ascertained what they consider the reason for the disease, they then believe there is something they can do about the illness (self-efficacy) by changing their behavior, through self-control to be more properly aligned with their "given" station in life. This is done by "meditation" to cleanse the heart and soul; and by giving to others (to show that their hearts are not greedy, and are full of love and sharing). This not only maintains positive health, but is also the way that illness is initially addressed:

The power in healing is the person himself, his bayu. If the person feels sick, who can make him well. Medicine is only a means to ease the obstruction it cannot heal by itself. Other (Balinese) may say, in recovering from sickness, medicine works only 5%, 95% depends on the person himself, his bayu [16, p. 301].

If personally unsuccessful in healing themselves, they turn to a benevolent other for a sense of control. This includes the power of the community for self-healing [47], the traditional "medical" healer of the culture — the priests and other practitioners of white magic; and then, according to Dr. Tong, if that is unsuccessful, they may turn to Western medicine. The Balinese first turn to the priests and practitioners of white magic (powerful benevolent other) because of their belief that the evil which caused the disease may be stronger than they. The Balinese believe that "wrong thinking" is caused by evil forces in the world which can cause "black magic" to be visited upon the person, sometimes in the form of disease and illness. Priests and practitioners of white magic can cure "evil spirits" and the black magic (often through trance practices), and help keep (or return) a person to "balance."

### Acceptance (yielding to the natural order — surrender to religion)

If neither traditional nor modern medicine helps, the Balinese then conclude that there is nothing one can do about the illness during this particular earthly existence, and accept the outcome. Acceptance of physical illness, bodily decay,

and ultimately, death, is facilitated by their religious system (particularly the belief in reincarnation) and by their non-linear temporal orientation [29], in which their belief in reincarnation is embedded. The Balinese believe that there is a communion between the living and the dead; and that death is merely an extension of life (and a stage on the return to life), part of an "endless four stage replication of an imperishable form: child, mother, or father of; grandmother or grandfather of; and life in the other (spiritual world); which then leads to birth in this world again" [28, p. 255]. This framework diminishes their fear of death, and in fact, makes death a cause for celebration and joy, because a person is, the Balinese believe, coming closer to the spiritual world.

### Avoidance

This is the fourth control-related construct "utilized" by the Balinese. It is forgetfulness — a strategy for dealing with death. As Bateson and Mead noted, the Balinese are one of the very few people in the world among whom mourning is not institutionalized, and, on a purely secular level, "the death of an individual is followed very rapidly by forgetfulness. The names of the dead are soon forgotten, and it is scarcely possible to obtain any description of the character of a dead person" [28, p. 231]. Interestingly, in a study of the grief and mourning practices of 73 cultures, the Balinese were found to be the world-wide exception to the rule that death calls forth tears [48].

## DISCUSSION

### The Importance of the Construct of Control

This investigation has identified several control-related life-cycle issues facing humans, and detailed strategies that have been used to provide a sense of control in addressing these issues in Bali. The presence and use of these efforts — involving both mastery and coping models of self and other control — and their control-related purposes, is incontrovertible. Yet, it is obvious that these Balinese strategies arose before and were not based on any modern "scientific" evidence showing that the psychological construct "sense of control" can have a pronounced effect on individual emotional and physical well-being [1].

This can cause us to at least raise the question of whether having control or a sense of control may be meeting a universal psychological need, one which may be important (and necessary?) for human health, well-being and even survival [4]. Furthermore, since, empirically, much of the world is outside individual control, one of the major functions of culture, from the individual's perspective may be to help people address certain of these perennial issues.

For example, the Balinese culture helps individuals develop a sense of control not only through orientation (e.g.,

spatial/temporal), but also through self-control (e.g., tooth filing); through means for letting go of control (e.g., trance ceremonies); and through dealing with the loss of control (e.g., strategies for dealing with physical illness, decay, death). These strategies may cause us to reflect on how, and in what manner, our own culture addresses these issues. To illustrate with just one example from the above, practices and rituals such as the tooth filing may be understood as the culture's way to focus awareness on the importance of controlling (and helping to enhance an individual's ability to control) evil impulses which may be detrimental to the fabric of society [20]. This is not just the task of "primitive cultures," for as Huston Smith has noted:

twentieth century man is one with the aborigines in that each must regulate his appetites in some way if society is to continue -- [25, p. 271].

Thus, control-related strategies may be critical not only for individual, but also for "societal" survival [49].

### Costs and Benefits of Different Methods of Achieving A Sense of Control

In addition to research showing the positive benefits of control, there may be negative effects associated with efforts to seek and maintain control, e.g., too high a need for control, too extreme efforts in one mode to develop control. For example, it has been noted that one of the prime memories of Type A individuals (those evidencing a high degree of time urgency and hostility) is that they were loved for their behavior and accomplishments, not for who they "were" [50-51]. Furthermore, it has been suggested that there are negative effects of a high need for control in our culture, particularly when it is manifested by striving for external control and mastery [52]. These negative effects range from the individual physical problems of the Type A person [53] to global endangerment as evidenced in the international nuclear arms race [54].

There also appears to be negative effects of the Balinese culture's efforts to provide a sense of control. Some of these effects appear iatrogenic — a consequence of the strategies themselves. Some of what I perceive as "negative consequences" are merely my own cultural bias and values [20,55], and I have tried in the discussion below to distinguish between the two.

For example, as discussed, the Balinese (at least, from our culture's perspective) "live in a rigidly organized universe" [28, p. 20] based primarily on a mastery model in which cultural strategies attempt to anticipate and thereby prevent the occurrence of unexpected events, uncertainty, the unknown. But because it is almost impossible to prevent something unexpected and new from occurring in life, this emphasis on "preventive mastery" may put the Balinese at a disadvantage in terms of how to adapt/react to newness.

Early socialization practices instill in the Balinese a fear of the unknown, and because of "the considerable anxiety established early in life - - - this anxiety created a need for persistent reassurance" [28, p. 255] by the culture's high structure and orientation. Even then, "the Balinese is always a little frightened of some indefinite unknown - - -" [28, p. 48]. Thus, rather than change being seen as a challenge and opportunity [56] for the Balinese, it is generally seen as a potential threat to order and control.

On both a personal and an interpersonal level, the Balinese have made significant sacrifices (at least, from our culture's perspective) to retain a sense of control and orientation. In terms of a sense of self, it does not appear that the Balinese have developed (or value developing) an individualized [57] or autonomous [22] "self." In addition, it does not seem that they have "transcended ego" or developed a "transpersonal" egoic state [21], but rather that they have failed to develop any of the above. The culture seems to encourage a certain dependency, both on the gods and the Priests as well as on the parents [58].

Furthermore, on an interpersonal level, the rigid, unemotional style of interaction ensures that there is not even the potential for the depth of intimacy that we might state as a value within our culture. Rather, there is a great deal of fear in interpersonal relations. Wikan [16] has noted that their cheerfulness is often forced, a conscious, at times, frantic attempt to remove the bad feelings that threaten their balance. And Geertz [29] has observed, within an interpersonal context, the fear of loss of control, or even the appearance of it, causes what the Balinese call *Lek* (a stage fright consisting of both shame and guilt):

a fear - - - a virtually paralyzing nervousness before the prospect of social interaction, a chronic, mostly low grade worry that - - - for want of skill or self-control or perhaps mere accident, that one will not be able to bring it off with the required finesse [29, p. 59].

Thus, even though there are costs and consequences to Balinese strategies for control, are there benefits which we might be able to learn from these strategies? This raises the difficult question of how effectively can you "transpose" beliefs and techniques from one culture to another, as well as can you "have it both ways" [51]? Can we be instrumental, goal oriented, productive, and also calm, relaxed, enjoying the process, and able to let go of active control efforts? Certainly, it is apparent in Bali, where the emphasis is on the yielding mode of control, that there are creative examples of instrumentality (e.g., the terraced rice fields on the hillsides; beautiful, fluid sculptures) as well as the ability, if efforts fail, to let go of control and be accepting.

Based on a model of control involving two different modes [42-43], the Balinese primary emphasis on a yielding mode of control, non-attachment to goals, and enjoyment of the process of doing might be an important counterbalance

for our culture's emphasis on success, achievement, and external mastery as ways to maintain a sense of control. For example, Dollard and Miller's early work on approach/avoidance [59] noted that the nearer to a goal when blocked, the more frustration that occurred. The Balinese "lack of climax" socialization and techniques such as "awayness" might be helpful in teaching an acceptance when efforts are not successful, as well as a "letting go" of instrumental activities. Their view that self-worth is not dependent upon personal achievement and there is no "benefit" to strive to existentially stand forth and accomplish might be helpful counterbalance to our "need" for achievement and doing as a sign of self-worth. And certainly, in Bali, given their non-linear temporal orientation, time urgency is not an issue! Finally, the discussion of the "letting go" function of Balinese trance [30] may help us to examine: (1) in what ways individuals "let go of control" in our culture, and how healthy those ways are; and (2) what are our culturally approved and sanctioned ways to do this (e.g., rock concerts? sporting concerts?) and how healthy they are.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS: A CALL FOR A UNIFYING THEORY

As this study has shown, there are differences cross-culturally in terms of the extent, nature, and content of means provided for assisting individuals in orientation and a sense of control; as well as differences in the goal, nature, emphasis, emphasis, mode, and dimensions of individual self-control efforts practiced. It may be a necessary (and propitious) time to mount a major effort to develop a more complete and comprehensive unifying theory of human control. The task would be important and justified in its own right purely from a scholarly effort to have non-culture-bound knowledge. However, the task is even more critical based on recent research which shows the positive benefits of a sense of control for physical and emotional well-being; the fact control is a construct manifest in quite disparate cultures and utilized to address so many human life-cycle issues; and as this article indicates, the potential negative effects of certain control-related strategies no matter what the culture in which they evolved.

It is hoped that this article has helped highlight what may be "unconscious" (and culturally limiting) biases we may have regarding certain models as the "correct" way to achieve a sense of control, and, at least, has shown that additional, alternative models exist. The Balinese emphasis on accepting modes of control by a benevolent other, also reveals the implicit cultural bias in many of our scientific and psychological formulations of control (the terms in bold): primary and secondary [60]; instrumental and palliative [36]; situational reconstruction, focusing, and compensatory self-improvement [56]. Other biases that we also need to be aware of in such an undertaking are the variation in valence related

to control and autonomy depending upon the culture [20]; sex-role bias evidenced with respect to self-control and psychological health [38]; and biases related to underlying assumptions about the nature of "objectivity" and "reality" evident in understanding the world through science and religion [43, 61].

This investigation, by exploring the "case" of Bali, has provided an opportunity to step outside our culture to view different means in which human control and self-control have been utilized. Based on an inductive method [32], it can be seen as a preliminary step in developing a more comprehensive, unifying, and universally applicable theory of human control [13]. Such a theory should be useful in helping us refine a "holistic" model of health and wellness, one which includes individual self-responsibility; strategies for acceptance; integration of body, mind, heart, and spirit; and finally, seeing ourselves as part of a harmony and balance — internally, as part of our community, and as part of the cosmos.

### FOOTNOTES

1. The information used for this investigation of Bali covers several historical periods, beginning with the anthropological investigation of Bateson, Mead, and in the 1930s; the field investigations of the Geertz in the 1960 and 70s; my own two months in Bali in 1982; and Wikan's field work in the late 1980s. My time in Bali involved observations of several of the trance and dance practices and ceremonies such as tooth filing, burial; and a visit to the one inpatient mental health hospital on the island. My two main "informants" who helped guide me in Bali, were Wayan, a member of the lowest class, married, and father of two, who was my host while I lived in the jungle area outside Ubud, and the person who also served as translator; and Dr. Denny Tong, the Dean of the Medical School in Denpasar. There was also interviews with several artists (woodcarvers) and "white magic" priests. (For my sake, as well as their own, no one was willing to take me to see practitioners of black magic!)

2. The only positive connotation of paling (lack of orientation) occurred during trance. (See [30] for a discussion.)

3. On a personal note, I would like to emphasize that I believe that these issues are not just ones which the Balinese have to face, but ones which each of us, in an existential way, has to address, both personally as well as (often) professionally with our clients and patients. Furthermore, although these "perennial" questions are always present, it seems that it is generally at the time of crises (in the sense of the Chinese word, *weiji* — danger and opportunity) that these questions come to the forefront of our awareness. Certainly, this was true for me during the period I spent in the jungle in Bali outside Ubud.

4. The Balinese pantheon of gods is a particular combination

of Hinduism (the three gods of Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu — creator, destroyer, and protector — and the forms and heroes of the Indian Ramayana) combined with the island's indigenous animism. On one level, there is duality. For example, Rangda, the evil witch in the Barong dance, comes from the Indian goddess of death, Durga, and represents the eternal struggle of evil against good. However, on another level, the Balinese believe that good and evil, life and death dichotomies are transcended, and these covariables are "reconciled into one unity" [27, pp. 290, 307]. This is represented (and carried out) by the god, Shiva (Siwa) [27, pp. 290, 307].

5. For a discussion of the control-related aspects of each of these five dimensions, see [30].

6. For the purpose of this article, a reciprocal determinism [31] is assumed between culture and person; and neither issues of first causes, or percentage of variance from person/situation interactions [32, 62] is addressed. It is further assumed that in both the "homogenous" Balinese culture and in our own "pluralistic" American (Western, technological) culture, there can be identified what Bateson called an ethos: "a culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and emotions of individuals" [28, p. X1]; and what Skinner, in defining culture, labeled as "a set of categories of reinforcement" [63, p. 182]. However, the assumption of ethos (or generally accepted set of categories of reinforcement), and the use of the term, "person" in the aggregate are not meant to negate or in any way deny that within-individual variations do occur (often along the particular control dimensions discussed).

7. The term, "mastery" has historically been used by various authors in two different ways and is clarified here to prevent possible confusion. One refers to a "mastery model" derived from Wolpe's work [34-35], in which a person and/or culture preprograms and plans in order to "master" (e.g., not to be fearful) when a potentially difficult situation arises. The other use of the term, mastery refers to active assertive efforts to gain control over the environment (or one's self) and is not necessarily dependent on addressing a problem situation.

8. Another coping strategy is to turn to a benevolent other for help. In a fearful situation, the Balinese take the mask of a symbolic dragon figure and circle their village with it to mark that enclosed area as a space which has been safely encircled; or they may tie some of the hair of the dragon around the wrists (especially for smaller children) to protect them from the evil and unknown (symbolized by the evil witch, Rangda); or they may even literally get inside a Barong mask and become the dragon [28, p. 188].

9. Bateson and Mead [28, p. 19] observed that: people on the scene of an accident sit in a paralyzed semi-stupor, not talking, not

looking; - - - the thief whose case is being tried slowly falls asleep; - - - the older child who has lost or broken something valuable will be found, when his parents return, not run away, not waiting to confess, but in a deep sleep.

10. Although within the scope of a control-related analysis, the topic of control through the political and legal system is not addressed in this article. Relevant topics include the government's role in national defense and security; government's role in economic control (laissez-faire versus centralization); governmental regulation (through laws and punishment) of individual personal habits (self versus social regulation); and amount of individual freedoms allowed versus societal maintenance of control and order (e.g., amount of freedom of the press, free speech, freedom of assembly). Society provides a continuum of "external control" ranging from opportunity, influence, and suggestion to coercive punishment. This article is concerned primarily with non-coercive forms of external control, such as cultural beliefs and rituals.

11. Because of the Balinese belief in reincarnation, there is the feeling that, depending upon the judgment of the gods, one's current behaviors may influence one's caste and station in the next round of rebirths.

12. In Bali, ubiquitous ritual offerings to the gods range from simple (little squares of banana leaf with a few grains of rice) to elaborate, including great pyramids of fruit, flowers, intricate cut-out palm leaves, and other foods [27, p. 311]. There are several different purposes for these offerings: (A) to ward off evil; (B) to ask for a favor and good fortune; (C) to offer reverence and thanksgiving; and (D) to seek atonement for wrongdoing (even that which was inadvertently and unknowingly committed)

13. I once told my host, Wayan, about my fear in crossing a very narrow, high, shoddy bridge on the way back from a tooth filing ceremony far out in the jungle. His response to my fear was: "When it is your time (to die), the bridge falls. It can't be helped; what can you do?"

14. Both science and religion are based on initial assumptions (belief systems, faith) about the nature of reality, and the best means utilized to discover, investigate, and understand that reality. An interesting interface, however, occurs in the area of belief systems. Research has shown that the belief that we (or something more powerful and benevolent) are in control can have positive, healthy consequences, even if it is only an illusory belief [10, 64]. Research has also shown that belief systems themselves can "create" reality — i.e., "cause" something to be true as in the case of the placebo [65]; or in the case of self-efficacy, expectation effects, and demand characteristics [41, 66, 67]. Clearly, simple either/or answers



are not sufficient or useful in discussing the religion/science issue, particularly when it is viewed from the framework of constructs of control.

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

#### Notes

1. Jean Houston (Personal Communication), August, 1982.
2. Clifford Geertz (Personal Communication), August, 1982.

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## INDEX TERMS

control; self-control; mind-body  
relationship; Bali; benevolent other

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# A CONTROL-RELATED FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

FIGURE ONE

