

One of the first questions motivating my research on the violence of 1965–66 in Bali, Indonesia, was that of silence. It was 1998, almost 35 years after the state-sponsored massacres of alleged communists had left some one million Indonesians dead and hundreds of thousands of others deprived of basic civil rights. Yet these events, and their deep repercussions, remained relatively unreferenced outside the communities they had devastated.<sup>1</sup> In Bali, where some 80,000 to 100,000 people (or 5 to 8 percent of the population)<sup>2</sup> had lost their lives over a span of less than six months, stories of the violence were rarely found in the guidebooks carried by the two million-plus tourists who by the turn of the 21st century were visiting the “Island of the Gods” each year. Neither did the substantial scholarly literature on Bali offer much insight into what had happened or what the continuing implications might be.<sup>3</sup> Despite its domination by anthropologists, whose in-depth engagements with Balinese lives would seem likely to have turned up traces of violence, Balinese studies tended to echo official Indonesian histories by circumscribing and distancing the massacres as an extraordinary “incident” located safely in the past. Those few scholars who did mention 1965–66 tended to conclude that Balinese no longer wished to speak about this troubled time, having either forgotten, forgiven, worked through, or moved on from the past.<sup>4</sup> Even among Balinese themselves there seemed to be little public acknowledgment of the massacres. Reference to them

was missing from the national history textbooks,<sup>5</sup> the Balinese media, and the pronouncements of public officials. Granted, when I began my research Indonesia was just emerging from over three decades of repressive rule, during which utterances perceived to be political risked harsh responses from the state. Yet by December 2002, four years after the fall of Suharto's dictatorship and two months after terrorist bombs exploded in a crowded nightclub in one of Bali's tourist districts, the 202 fatalities, mostly tourists, could be termed by the governor of Bali "the worst tragedy the island has experienced," with few voices in the domestic or international media to contradict him.<sup>6</sup> Similar settings of mass violence around the world had—if not immediately, then in the years and decades that followed—come to serve the public imagination as shorthand for human brutality: Armenia, Nazi Europe, Cambodia, Argentina, Guatemala, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan. Why, then, did 1965–66 seem to have disappeared not only from so-called expert attention but also from the lives of Balinese themselves? Were these silences indicative of an absence of interest or meaning? Or were they spaces of cultural and political signification with their own complex and contested genealogies? Starting from these questions, this essay—part of a larger collaborative research project on the aftermath of 1965–66 in Bali—explores some of the troubled terrain of postmassacre Bali, focusing on the processes of remembering and forgetting, and of speech and silence, that have marked it.

One of my earliest encounters with the violence in fact took the form of questioning an absence. It was July of 1998, two months after Suharto's resignation from the helm of the country he had ruled for 32 years, and I was in Bali conducting research on women's participation in the political activism that had ushered in the end of his New Order (Orde Baru) regime. A Balinese colleague, Degung Santikarma—who would soon become my research partner and husband—invited me to his family compound, a warren of alleyways, pavilions, sleeping quarters, and shrines where some 150 people lived in tight proximity. It was close to dusk, and the compound was busy with a familiar Balinese bustle of children being bathed, food being shared, and ritual offerings being prepared to the soundtrack of the evening soap operas. But something struck me, my attention so recently trained on gender, as unusual about the scene. While there were women of all ages visible, there were no men older than around 50 to be seen. I commented on this to my colleague, who gave me a look of surprise, saying

that no one had ever pointed this out to him before. Later, away from those who could overhear us, he told me how his father, several uncles, and other relatives had been killed in late 1965 and early 1966, and how the few men who had survived had chosen to leave the family compound to escape the memories it held and the scrutiny of the state it enabled. “Many people are now talking about the end of the New Order,” he warned me. “But it’s still hard to talk about how it began.”

At the time it was difficult for me to imagine that I was indeed the first person to comment on what appeared to me as a striking absence. My colleague had a large international network of fellow scholars and friends, some of whom must surely have known about the massacres. Yet as I learned more about what had happened in Bali during and after the violence, I began to see how the production, maintenance, and negotiation of silences had become a crucial feature of the everyday lives of Balinese and of their self-presentations on a global stage. Popular belief often holds that exposing genocidal violence to international scrutiny is among the most effective ways of halting it. Violence, in such framings, is something done in the dark, on the isolated edges of a civilized international community whose attention promises to spotlight and thus banish injustice. In Bali, however, an increasing incorporation into transnational flows of power, profit, and knowledge in the form of tourism, scholarship, and various modes of state-mediated modernity has served overwhelmingly to strengthen rather than slacken the force of silence. While I was undoubtedly far from being the first person to have noticed one of the many traces of violence marking my colleague’s family—indeed, as I came to know them better, I began to see just how visible this history was to those in their community—I was, however, among those naive enough to think that verbalizing my notice, both as an American scholar and as someone being pulled closer into the dense social politics of survivors’ worlds, was a simple matter.

As I began to work collaboratively with my colleague to try to understand the political and cultural aftermath of 1965–66 in Bali, I realized that such silences are not simply blank spots on a communicative landscape; rather, they constitute social products with particular genealogies. In large part the silences surrounding 1965–66, and the enduring resonance of violence that they often signal, can be traced to the cultural work of the state. Suharto’s New Order regime (1966–98) engaged in persistent attempts

to characterize the *Peristiwa '65*, or “1965 Incident,” to contain a diverse range of terrifying experiences within a singular and minimizing frame (“the Incident”) while at the same time expanding it into a flexibly evocative symbol (communism) that could authorize ongoing political oppression. The state’s strategies for discursive management included not only the repressive imposition of silence on survivors but also an enthusiastic program of commemoration and the symbolic control of history. Suharto’s regime created an official account of what happened in 1965–66, focusing on an alleged violent coup attempt claimed to have been masterminded by the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI) on September 30, 1965. According to this “history,” the coup was put down by an army officer named Suharto, who took control of Indonesia’s military and directed its “defense” against Indonesia’s left before relieving Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno, of his duties in March 1966.<sup>7</sup> The killings of suspected leftists, when they were acknowledged, were characterized as a rational response to a communist threat to national security—the legitimacy of these actions ensured by both covert and open Western support for the annihilation of the PKI (Robinson 1995; Roosa 2006).<sup>8</sup> Until the fall of Suharto, public debate of the events of 1965–66 was banned, and alternative analyses of both the alleged coup and the violence that followed it were censored. Borrowing from modern biomedical imagery, the state stigmatized and socially alienated those accused of being “infected” by the dangerous virus of communism—people once known as neighbors, relatives, and friends. Official portrayals painted “communists” as shadowy, sadistic figures lying in wait for a chance to contaminate the beloved nation, which in turn needed the protection of a vigilant military and a powerful system of state surveillance. For a new generation of Indonesians, the halting tales their parents might have told of their experiences—or the deep silences they may have affected to preserve their safety—were drowned out by the insistent rhetoric of the New Order. Under Suharto the state staged regular “remembrances” of the alleged September 30 coup and the military’s victory over communism and spread images of communist evil and bloodthirstiness through the school curriculum, public monuments, and propaganda pieces such as the state-produced film *Pengkhianat G/30/S* (The September 30th Movement traitors), which was screened on public television and in classrooms each September 30 until 1999. Up until the last days of the New Order—and even after—state officials continued to

animate the specter of communism, dismissing most social or political protest as the work of “formless organizations” (*organisasi tanpa bentuk*) of communist sympathizers or as the result of provocation by “remnants” of the PKI. Warnings to remain on guard against communism were typically expressed in the command “awas bahaya laten PKI/komunisme” (beware of the latent danger of the PKI/communism), rendering communism less a matter of party affiliation or intellectual position than an invisible but inevitable aspect of virtually any challenge to Suharto or his military regime.<sup>9</sup> While many Indonesians were skeptical of such claims, the latter’s power often lay not in their perceived truth value or in their ability to persuasively represent communism, but in their evocation of the terror—both remembered and anticipated—accompanying the articulation of such words. To hold silence, in such a context, was a far more fraught position than a simple forgetting.

This shadowing of speech about violence has also been encouraged by certain works of Western scholars, whose descriptions of Bali have often shown a striking kinship to the framings of state history. Classic anthropological representations of Bali—the reports of Dutch colonial ethnologists who saw Bali as a series of protodemocratic “village republics” based on consensus and custom;<sup>10</sup> the writings of Gregory Bateson on Balinese culture as a homeostatic “steady state”; the essays of Margaret Mead on a gentle, graceful “Balinese Character”; Clifford Geertz’s famous “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in which social hierarchy is made meaningful not through human bloodshed but through the mesmerizing cultural text of chickens hacking each other to bits—have overwhelmingly tended to dismiss (human) violence as external or incidental to the “real” Bali (see Bateson 1970; Bateson and Mead 1942; C. Geertz 1973).<sup>11</sup> Where violence has been acknowledged, it has most often been explained as a matter of cultural contamination wrought by conniving colonists or bumbling tourists, as the by-product of wrenching social change or relentless globalization, or as the result of Bali’s integration into the modern Republic of Indonesia in all its military might: in Clifford Geertz’s essay, it is not the cockfight that signals violence but the Javanese policemen, armed with machine guns, who interrupt the proceedings and send the audience scattering in fear. Viewed through this aperture, violence in Bali has tended to appear as an anomaly, as a spot of dust that contaminates the lens, having little to do with the real landscape at hand. To the extent that violence has

been seen as atypical of or external to Bali, even contemporary scholars have been able to presume the existence of orderly, stable, and consensual symbolic systems in both pre-1965 and post-1965 Bali, bracketing the violence as optional to either historical scholarship or cultural analysis.<sup>12</sup> To take but one recent example, the anthropologist Michele Stephen (2006), in an essay for an edited volume entitled *Terror and Violence: Imagination and the Unimaginable*, offers a brilliant analysis, drawing on the work of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, of “imaginary violence,” sorcery, and the figure of the “terrible mother” in Bali—without once acknowledging that in 1965–66 tens of thousands of Balinese in fact experienced horrific violence that continues to haunt personal and social imaginations.

By highlighting how scholarship on Bali has persistently failed to give sustained attention to the massacres, I am not just suggesting that anthropologists have lost opportunities for a more complete or complex understanding of Bali, or that they have refused a politically responsible engagement with their interlocutors’ suffering—that they have been “missing the revolution,” as Orin Starn (1991) described anthropologists’ similar failure to see social tensions in 1980s Peru. Although these scholarly representations of Bali are rarely consumed as original texts by those other than upper-class, educated Balinese, they do not exist in some ivory tower far removed from everyday life, but have filtered into popular Balinese culture via the mass media and, especially, via the tourism industry. Tourist ignorance is, of course, often glibly dismissed as irrelevant to the real matters of scholarly pursuit. Jokes abound in Bali (often told by other tourists) about the holidaymaker who arrives at the airport immigration counter only to exclaim furiously that the plane was not supposed to have been going to Indonesia. But it becomes harder to ignore the place of tourism in the aftermath of massacre if one recognizes that an estimated 80 percent of Balinese depend, directly or indirectly, on the industry for their livelihoods. Tourism has simplified and commodified scholarly representations of a harmonious Bali, turning them into spectacular commercial displays used to advertise the island as an outpost of peaceful, premodern culture where life revolves around ancient, apolitical Hindu-Balinese ritual and where social relations are based on consensus.<sup>13</sup> In their roles as tour guides, drivers, wait staff, vendors, and performing artists, Balinese are expected to reproduce such images for tourist consumption, with the articulation of alternative views seen as not only politically dangerous but

economically irrational. Balinese themselves have also become subjects of a representational regime that defines appropriate touristic subjectivity through campaigns such as the New Order-era *Sapta Pesona*, “The Seven Charms/Seductions,” which exhorted Balinese to be clean (*bersih*), friendly (*ramah*), orderly (*tertib*), beautiful (*indah*), safe (*aman*), preservationist (*lestari*), and memorable (*kenangan*) to maintain their ability to attract tourists.<sup>14</sup> Through such discourses tourism became an instrument of state control, with Balinese admonished not to protest against injustices nor to call public attention to histories of violence because a fickle tourist audience might be watching, ready to depart for a more peaceful paradise island. Tourism has attempted to cover up violence with layers of alluring images, at the same time as it often literally covers up traumatic history, as in the case of one five-star, 500-dollar-a-night beachfront resort in Seminyak, South Bali, whose lushly landscaped grounds are known by the local community (but not, of course, by the vast majority of its guests) to cover a mass grave containing victims of 1965–66.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, one of the many ironies of 1965–66 is that survivors of the violence who were marked as linked to communism and thus were barred from obtaining the official “letter of good behavior” (*surat kelakuan baik*) and “letter of noninvolvement in the PKI’s September 30th Movement” (*surat keterangan bebas G-30-S-PKI*) required for most salaried employment were often forced into the informal economic sector. Many survivors who began by selling trinkets to tourists or by offering them massages on the beach in the early 1970s when mass tourism began have ended up deeply invested in the industry and thus have a serious economic incentive to censor their own memories. While anthropologists often position themselves as external to or critical of this tourist economy of images, ethnographic representations of Bali that disregard its legacies of violence often fit all too comfortably with tourist and state visions of peaceful, apolitical, “well-behaved” Balinese. Ethnographic representations taken up and used to authorize the economic and political projects of tourism help to shape the limits and possibilities of what can be said in and about Bali.

The failure of the majority of the extensive area studies literature on Bali to address the violence and its aftermath has not, however, simply resulted from a willful uncaring about Balinese suffering or a theoretical and ethnographic gaze that rests more comfortably elsewhere. Indeed, if it did, it might be far more straightforward to challenge. Scholarly inattention

has no doubt worked to strengthen the Indonesian state's long-standing resolve to remain silent on its own implication in the violence and on the continuing pain it has engendered, but it has been motivated by a complex set of causes. Foreign scholars' concerns have ranged from the pragmatic fear of losing hard-won government permission to conduct important research to encompassment by the habitual ways of understanding Bali that have built up over a century of academic production. Silences have been rendered easier—even “locally sensitive”—by the fact that under the New Order regime, a “clean environment” letter certifying one's lack of leftist family ties was required of Indonesian university scholars, who often served as research sponsors and assistants for foreign anthropologists and steered them away from matters considered dangerously political. A reluctance to engage with matters of violence has also, ironically, been supported by narratives of concern for the tenuous and troubling situation of victims of violence in the years following 1965–66, in which scholarly silence is presumed the most appropriate way of protecting the communities with which one works. Commonplace anthropological practices of offering pseudonyms to one's informants or of disguising place names and identifiable incidents here shade into a more general hesitancy to speak of dangerous matters or to see the powers that may take strength from such silences. Even those willing to acknowledge the place of violence face a more general challenge in that anthropology, as a rule, has found it difficult to engage with what seem to be absences, rather than easily accessible and narratable presences. In part, this is a methodological issue: it is much easier, and seems to make much more common sense, to ask people about what they remember of the past than about what they have come—or decided, or been forced—to forget. Yet this approach has implications both theoretical and ethical: a failure to think through the politics of silence has meant that the anthropological literature offers far more sophisticated understandings of how people enact practices of history making, memory, or commemoration than of how they engage in forgetting and silence. In the case of 1965–66, it means that scholarship has often elided its own reluctance to speak about violence or its own privileging of familiar narrative forms of history telling, with the conclusion that Balinese also do not concern themselves with such things.

While acknowledging that many Balinese have spoken—generally in contexts they deem nonpublic and “safe”—about the violence, my primary

focus in this essay is on how terror has been articulated less through direct speech than through non-narrative practices including ritual, magic, community politics, and gender relations. I argue that far from being definitively past, the events of 1965–66 continue to channel and block possibilities for speech, social action, and political agency in Bali. Yet at the same time as I highlight how 1965–66 still saturates the island’s social, cultural, and political landscape, I also explore the theoretical, methodological, and political challenges of including ethnographies of silence and forgetting in our approaches to the aftermath of violence. Posing anthropology’s desire to locate and excavate sites of memory—often assumed to be staging grounds for liberatory challenges to official histories and repressive silences—against Balinese practices of concealment, suppression, and redirection, I show how a dialectic of social remembering and forgetting reworks relations of power and provides a means of ensuring a continuing coexistence in communities in which the lines dividing “perpetrators” from “victims” have been highly blurred and in which particular versions of the past have become commodities of touristic value. I conclude with a brief consideration of concepts of reconciliation, arguing that a reliance on models that privilege truth telling, confession, and linear historical narrative may fail to account for local experiences of living in the wake of mass violence and genocide.

#### POWERS OF SPEECH AND SILENCE

To express something of the ways in which 1965–66 shifted the discursive topography of Bali, I first tell a story. Although I present it in the form of a narrative, it is a story marked with silences, one that refers to the powers of the unsaid and to memory’s ambivalent relationship to discourse. As the story of one of the women I noticed the first time I entered my colleague’s family compound, it speaks to both the visibility and the concealment of violent history in everyday Balinese relations. Parts of this story were told to me by its subject, Ibu Ari, and parts I pieced together from other people’s tales and from what I have seen and heard of how people speak and stay silent. Although it shows how people are not simply silenced by the state or by the pain of the past, this story does not exist spoken in the form I write it here, as a concise oral history, a point that is crucial to understanding both its power and its limits. By focusing here on one woman’s experiences during and after 1965–66, I do not claim to portray a representative

victim of the violence. Indeed, one of the key insights I gleaned from this and other Balinese stories is that violence does not necessarily lead to solidarity, a collective memory, or a shared subjectivity or political position among those it affects (Das 2000). Instead, violence often fragments communities and casts social interactions into tense configurations. What Ibu Ari's story offers, however, is a detailed account of the complexities and ambiguities that constitute much of what it means in Bali to live after attempts to annihilate life.

Ibu Ari was a new bride in December 1965 when a group of nationalist paramilitaries entered her family home and took her husband and her younger brother away, never to return. Soon after these two men disappeared, another one came to see her: Bli Made, a neighbor and village leader of the anticommunist Indonesian Nationalist Party (Partai Nasionalis Indonesia, or PNI), who was rumored to have had his eye on Ibu Ari for years. No one in the family compound dared deny Bli Made entrance that afternoon when he marched in wearing the heavy boots of a soldier, accompanied by half a dozen of his thugs and saying he was there to carry out an "inspection" (*periksa*), searching for proof of the family's communist allegiances. That afternoon, the "proof" they were searching for was a hammer and sickle tattoo, said to have been drawn by women sympathetic to the communist cause on their vaginas, thighs, or lower abdomens. When he ordered Ibu Ari to climb up the ladder to her family's rice barn, followed her up, and closed the door behind them, no one, they now say, could move or speak or see anything but their feet for the hour until the door opened again. And when Ibu Ari came down from the rice barn clutching her batik cloth across her breasts, she said nothing, and her family never asked. "We knew that she couldn't tell us what happened," says one of her cousins, a woman a few years younger than Ibu Ari. "How could we speak of it? Death we could speak of; death was different. Even if we were afraid, death was something ordinary. But 'inspecting' women, who could speak of it? We were afraid of the words themselves."

Ibu Ari still says nothing about that afternoon, only shakes like a tree in a storm if someone mentions Bli Made, who now appears regularly on television after having become a member of Bali's provincial legislature in 1999. Ibu Ari does not speak about it, but many in the family remember what no one knows happened or not, so they say nothing when suddenly, in the midst of the daily women's work of weaving ritual offerings, Ibu Ari

will sometimes start speaking to no one they can see or hear, gripping her hands together in front of her chest, closing her eyes and rocking back and forth with the motions often used by women in trance to welcome deities into their bodies. Behind her back, though, they say that Ibu Ari is crazy, the kind of crazy, maybe, that happens when an unquiet history returns to inhabit the present.

“But what else could have been done?” Ibu Ari asks. Two years after her brother and husband disappeared she went with a group of women relatives to consult a *balian peluasan*, or spirit medium, who she hoped could tell her where the bodies had been buried. She could not, she felt, tell the medium that the men had certainly been killed—that would have immediately and openly identified her as coming from a family of alleged communists—so she said that their deaths had been *salahpati*, “wrongful deaths” that arise from suicide or accident, the kinds of deaths that might result in a missing body. She knew it was wrong to say this: It is no suicide when you have no power to resist, is it? And is it an accident, she asks, when someone—someone who has had their eye on you for a long time—comes one day and takes you away from your family, showing less mercy than one might show a dog? The medium told Ibu Ari where to look for the bodies, but she never found them; she speculates that maybe the medium guessed the truth behind her lie and lied to her “for politics,” or maybe that her own diverted speech detoured the medium on her path to the truth. Whatever the case, she recounts how with no bodies to cremate, she and the other widows in the family went to their village graveyard one quiet night in 1968 and took some earth home to shape into effigies of bodies (*adegan*), which they then wrapped in white cloth. Standing in front of the gates to the family compound, they called out softly to the spirits of their family members to come home and inhabit the effigies, which they then cremated secretly, without the usual acknowledgment and assistance of the hamlet (*banjar*) association. These were proper cremation ceremonies, she insists, with seven kinds of holy water and a complete set of offerings, but she admits that after they were over, she still did not feel “satisfied” (*puas*) in her heart. She had done everything she could, but were the *pedanda* (Brahmana priests) from the Parisadha Hindu Dharma Indonesia, the official Hindu body of the state Department of Religious Affairs, right about what they were saying in the years following the violence, that it was the purification of the soul that made a cremation real, not the material body? Now,

she says, she believes that the priests' pronouncements were political, part of the state's attempt to hide what really happened by denying the importance of the bodies of the missing. But back then, when the world was so confused, how could she know? After all, she was no Brahmana who might know such things. And who could she trust to answer her doubts about a ritual that had been carried out in secret, for men who were now said by the government, in its official comments on 1965, to have been atheists out to destroy religion and raise up the gods of Marx and Lenin?

There was so much in those days that was not spoken, she says. People used to talk about 1965 as the time when "ulian raos abuku matemahing pati" (you could die just because of a word). Spoken words are said in Bali to evoke actions, like the holy mantras of priests or the stories of shadow puppeteers that resonate across the visible (*sekala*) and the invisible (*nis-kala*) worlds, temporarily binding and directing energies, channeling the impersonal potency known as *sakti* that imbues the organic and inorganic universe. The word of a curse, spoken by the powerful, can bring illness or even death, and words can invest the inanimate—a mask, a jar of holy water—with *taksu*, or charisma. But in 1965 words became new kinds of triggers. Improperly articulated words—an insult never quite forgotten, coarse low Balinese language spoken to someone who thought they should have been addressed in refined high Balinese, flirting exchanges with someone else's wife—could return from the past to provoke horrifically exaggerated responses. A 15-year-old neighbor of Ibu Ari's who "talked too much" for some people's liking was corralled in a wicker cage used to transport pigs and then thrown into the river to drown. A man who witnessed his neighbor helping burn down someone's house called out in protest and the next day was dead. A woman food stall vendor whose welcoming small talk was heard as a promise saw her husband killed by her would-be suitor. And one word above all, *communist*, held the power to determine who lived and who died, a power no one word had ever been known to have before. Uttering the word *communist*, speakers shifted social assumptions: no longer did the powerful alone speak words of power, but the word itself, for those who dared to speak it in accusation, was imagined capable of saving one's own life and determining others' destinies. Heady, extraordinary, horrific: language became an unstable weapon in terror's fantastic arsenal, like a mythical *keris*-dagger blade loose in the hilt, which could slip and wound its bearer should the flow of battle turn backward. For as

the word *communist* was wielded, it came to mean far more than one who had pledged to party membership or felt sympathy for the PKI's aims. As the ambitions of those who spoke it extended beyond the military mandate of "uprooting the PKI" to staking social claims, exacting revenge, or protecting themselves and their families in a treacherously shifting landscape, *communist* transmuted from a symbol of political affiliation in the narrow sense to an indexical sign marking the instability of knowledge and language themselves, and the impossibility of accurately reading another's signs in an opaque field of highly charged power relations. As another of Ibu Ari's cousins expressed it: "Today you call me a communist, tomorrow someone calls you a communist. Anyone could be a communist as long as someone was willing to name them as one."

Not only were words imbued with dangerous new potential but they also became disarticulated from the things they had been thought to represent: *sentimen*, an Indonesianized English word, was popularized in 1965 by army propagandists to refer to local affective ties, with people urged to sever their emotional bonds to root out communist evil in their families and villages. *Jatah*, an Indonesian word meaning an allotment or quota, was used prior to 1965 to refer to the rations of kerosene, rice, and sugar given by the government to supplement civil servants' wages, or to the share of the rice earned by a hamlet harvesting society (*sekehe manyi*) that was distributed to each member. But as the killings got underway a *jatah* became the number of men a paramilitary group aimed to execute in a particular night—a gift from the state to those who served it, the fruit of one's cooperative labors, became one's gift to the state's vision of a new order through the violent dismemberment of the social body. And a *periksa*, or "inspection,"<sup>16</sup> an Indonesian word reeking of state authority and of efficient, top-down bureaucracy, could enter the intimate space of one's family home or enact its control on a woman's body, bringing the state and its subjects into a terrifying new embrace as men like Bli Made claimed to be guarding the nation against what might be written—literally—on a woman's vagina. Even words like *sibling* or *neighbor* or *friend* turned slippery and treacherous, transformed into new hazards like informers, collaborators, and provocateurs. And the emotions this speech engendered—the fear Ibu Ari's cousin speaks of as being "afraid of the words themselves"—grew so strong as to choke off streams of language and to channel meaning into silent forms.

This sense of the dangerous ambiguity inherent in everyday social interaction, and of the ability of words to conceal as well as to reveal intentions, was not new to Balinese. I interpret it as having drawn on and strengthened Balinese notions of fundamental social uncertainty that coalesce around the figure of the *leak*, a shape-changing sorcerer capable of causing illness or death. Although people may whisper their suspicion that a certain person is a *leak*—whispering so as not to anger the sorcerer—*leak* are not always identifiable, even to their most intimate relations. Among Ibu Ari's family it is often said that the most effective sorcerers are in fact those who prey on the people who worship at the same *merajan* temple as they do,<sup>17</sup> a *merajan*'s congregation comprising those who share patrilineal descent from a common ancestor. The closeness of social relationships, which promises comfort and communication, thus also enables the possibility of treachery and harm. This understanding that relationships between neighbors like Bli Made and Ibu Ari, or even among members of the same family, could be shot through with suspicion and unknown intentions, was heightened by the military's propaganda in 1965, which called on people to uncover the hidden "enemy within the blanket" (*musuh dalam selimut*) in the service of destroying communism "down to its roots" (*sampai ke akar-akarnya*).

This newly forceful semiotics of terror perhaps explains why when Bli Made came back every few months after his "inspection" to ask Ibu Ari for money, she did not say anything, just sold what jewelry she had to keep up the payments. As a widow marked as "politically unclean" (*tidak bersih lingkungan*),<sup>18</sup> with no brother or husband to protect her, she was acutely vulnerable, painfully conscious of what actions a word of hers could evoke from him or what unwanted words from him any action of hers could set loose. But Ibu Ari's payments to Bli Made were part of an exchange that never quite managed to substitute money for memory—the memories of either party to the transaction or the memories of those who witnessed something, no one quite sure what, change hands. In the months and years that followed the inspection, Bli Made would sometimes see Ibu Ari at village temple ceremonies or in the nearby market, making her way through the crowd. Once she was within shouting distance, he would yell out to her, "Oh, you want that money I borrowed from you, don't you?" As the years passed, however, and new young toughs and political party configurations emerged to eclipse Bli Made's standing in the neighborhood,<sup>19</sup> and as the

rumors multiplied about the number of women—and not only PKI-linked women—he had sexually harassed, abused, and threatened, his public calls to Ibu Ari began to sound, people said, more and more like the desperate pleas of a debtor and less like the boasts of an invulnerable assailant. Uttering words that reduced what had transpired between them to a loan of money, Bli Made was met by silence. Ibu Ari never responded with the language of a true woman trader, with marketplace banter, or with aggressive coaxing, and with that absence of language sent out signs that grew all too easy for others to interpret. Ibu Ari took on silence as a barricade, protecting herself from the pain of memory and from the possibility of inciting more violence on her. But even as she erected this wall she opened another door to memory, her own memory of just what karmic debt had been incurred in the rice barn, and the memories of her family and neighbors, which were elaborated from an image of a closed door into an imagination of what lay beyond it during that hour when no one dared to see. Her silence did not preclude semeiosis, involving as it did an awareness of relations of signification on the part of she who does not speak and an interpretation on the part of those who do not hear (see Daniel 1996:122). She was “muted,” yet her muteness spoke memory.

Nor did Ibu Ari forget other things. She thought sometimes about her husband, whom she had never had a chance to grow close to after their arranged marriage, but she thought more often about her younger brother. “He was the one person in the world I could really talk with,” she remembers. “We could tell each other everything, even if we didn’t always agree.” Ibu Ari had not, for instance, agreed with her brother’s insistence that Balinese ritual should be simplified to take account of one’s economic condition. This “Hindu rationalist” movement had grown popular in the early 1960s among the young leftist men of her family, who were high caste but poor in land and the hard currency that came with it. Their thinking had led to conflict among the family, especially after 1964, when Ibu Ari’s uncle died and his PKI-member son and some other young leftist men, including Ibu Ari’s brother, insisted that the family hold a simple cremation ceremony for him, arguing that the essence of the ritual, its practical effects of purifying the dead so that they may take their place among the divine ancestors and later reincarnate into the family, did not require the trappings of social hierarchy represented by a vast and expensive variety of ritual offerings. Most of the women of the family, including Ibu Ari,

who were used to devoting their days to making offerings and organizing their use for family rituals, were uncomfortable, feeling that such a cremation would not only undermine the value of women's ritual expertise but would also surely evoke curses from their ancestors and shame the family socially. It was a measure of Ibu Ari's closeness with her brother that they could openly debate such matters of great importance to the family, with no need to gloss their disagreement with the careful language and etiquette indicative of a woman's deference to her male relatives. Indeed, it was the language they used—the coarse Balinese *ci/ciang* for “you/me”—that Ibu Ari references to remember their intimacy.

This relationship with her beloved brother was cut short by his disappearance, but even then, the tie was not completely severed:

We were so close, so very close. So close that when he died that afternoon, when he was killed, who knows where, nobody knew the place, that same night he came looking for me. He called out to me three times. I had already fallen asleep over there, next to that small coconut tree. Already he was looking for me. We were so close. He would tell me everything. If he spoke to our older brother once a day, he would speak to me ten times. He had left his watch behind. The day he died, his first son was just 42 days old, it was the day of his *dedinan* [infancy] ceremony. He said to me [about the child], “Later, when he's grown, don't forget about him. It doesn't matter if you have nothing to eat, you must give him the food from your own mouth, for this child who still lives.” He told me to sell the watch to pay for the *dedinan* ceremony. Three times he came to me, coming back and forth, telling me, “Remember, remember, remember.” I was so shocked. I didn't know that he was dead until the next day, when someone came to tell us he had been killed. They never told us where the place was where he had died, just that he was dead. He told me to remember.

As the years passed and Suharto's New Order continued its project of history making, characterizing the men who died in 1965 as communists willing to undermine family, religion, and state in pursuit of evil aims and erasing from national discourse the sexual assaults on women said to be wanton destroyers of society itself, Ibu Ari continued to receive visits from her brother. Often he would just greet her and then depart, but sometimes he would give her instructions about family ritual matters. These

instructions had little to do with his former stance in favor of simplifying and rationalizing religious ritual—a stance later glossed by the state as communist atheism—but instead directed Ibu Ari to make additions to the offerings she was preparing to make them more complete. That her brother, who had exhibited little interest while alive in the women's work of offering making, was now instructing her in ritual procedure did not appear odd to Ibu Ari; she was aware that once a spirit entered the realms of the dead he or she could change in character. Indeed, in the early 1970s, when Ibu Ari was among a group of women visiting a spirit medium to inquire as to who had reincarnated in a child of the family, it was she who was addressed by name through the medium with the voice of her PKI cousin, who before his death in 1965 had caused so much controversy in the family by arguing that his own father should be cremated simply. This cousin, Ibu Ari said, told her that he had changed, that he was now a woman, and exhorted her, as her brother had, to “remember.”

Perhaps it was the strength of Ibu Ari's nostalgia for an imagined time before the violence when she believed language could serve as a means of intimacy, rather than as an implement of social fragmentation, that kept the door open between her and her brother. Perhaps it was Ibu Ari's desire to be free of the stain of communism with which the state had smeared her family that led her to hear her brother as having been religiously rehabilitated, worthy of a return to history. Perhaps it was her vulnerability as a widow that left her prey to people like Bli Made that evoked in her a desire for protection from her own patriline in the spirit of her brother or, conversely, her struggle to maintain women's centrality to ritual practice that caused her to voice her brother's instructions as authoritative. But these are all anthropological attempts to come to terms with the uncanny, to strip it of its mystery. Ibu Ari herself is not interested in such explanations. Whatever the reason—and how, she asks, could the living ever really know what goes on in the realms of the dead?—even after the secret ceremony that should have freed Ibu Ari's brother from his worldly ties and allowed him to move toward reincarnation, he still visited Ibu Ari. The last visit she described took place in 2003, when she went with her family to a major ceremony at the Pura Dalem Puri, a temple associated with death rituals near the Besakih temple complex. In the midst of a crowd of hundreds, Ibu Ari felt a pair of hands descend on her shoulders. Not knowing who had touched her, she called out questioningly, “Bapak?”—the formal

Indonesian term of address for a man, the word one might use to speak to a government bureaucrat, a soldier, or a stranger. She heard a voice chide her in low Balinese: “Who are you calling ‘Bapak’? Don’t you [*ci*] know me [*ciang*]? Have you forgotten already?” No, Ibu Ari replied, she still remembered.

#### MADNESS AND UNCONSCRIPTED MEMORY

Listening closely to the story of Ibu Ari—and to the silences that are so much a part of it—we can, if we are so inclined, identify elements of the heroic. By refusing to speak with Bli Made, Ibu Ari refused to occupy the space that his talk of borrowing and paying back allotted her: the space of one owed a debt that could be satisfied, a space from which closure on past losses is possible. In her silences and their significations Ibu Ari expresses the persistence of memory, its ability, despite the pain and terror it evokes, to circumvent the treacherous realm of language and to find a social existence, no matter how tenuous and fragmentary. Speaking with her dead brother, and in the maintenance of memory she pledges to him, Ibu Ari recasts official state narratives of 1965 that would silence the dead and their families and preclude mourning for those disappeared and exiled from national belonging. By articulating her positions through ritual practice, rather than by attempting to express her suffering through a more straightforwardly referential speech, she bypasses some of the potential dangers of language in the aftermath of terror, rooting herself in a realm of religion that can also protect her from accusations of “atheist communism.” But these moments of potential defiance, when she will not accept dominant narratives of truth (“what really happened”) or of memory (as subordinate to state history or the erasures attempted by the perpetrators of violence), are precisely when Ibu Ari finds herself most marginalized. Even as her silences and her speech position themselves against power, they deprive her of a stable place within a community of victims—showing up the fragile fictions on which such a notion of social coherence rests in post-1965 Bali. Her own family cannot break down the door of her silence to incorporate her pain into a collective narrative of suffering, and in her speech they find signs of madness.

Ibu Ari knows that there are those who think she is crazy, but she shrugs it off with a dismissive laugh. “Let them think I’m crazy. They don’t hear my brother speak; I do,” she explains. But if Ibu Ari holds on to her experi-

ence as its own truth, incommensurable in its phenomenological and historical uniqueness, it is this specificity that others critically engage as they characterize her as mad. Her family insists that her madness could not be located in any particulars of her history, in any painful experiences that she alone underwent, which might have transformed her into someone who could speak with one who died violently. We were all victims, they say, each with our own impossible tale, each with our own unspeakable losses. All victims, but no one else they know speaks with the dead of 1965 in their waking hours, even if many hear the whisperings (*pawisik*) of deified ancestors, or even unnamed gods, in their dreams, and many more are possessed in trance by gods, who may themselves be long-ago ancestors, at temple ceremonies when the gods and the ancestors are called down to earth. All victims, but only Ibu Ari gives voice to a victim whose death has not yet congealed into history, who is neither a vilified enemy of the state nor a divine ancestor but someone far more complexly present in everyday life. All victims, but only one woman whose weighted silences and uncanny speech carve cracks into the family consciousness. All victims, but Ibu Ari is the one who is crazy.

But if her family doubts Ibu Ari's sanity, they do not doubt that what she experiences is real. In their eyes, hers is not a madness of delusion, a madness of failing to grasp the reality of the world around her. Ibu Ari is mad, they say, but it is not a madness that falls into any established categories. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the talk concerning Ibu Ari's supposed madness is its resistance to conscription. There seems to be no term in Balinese—a language not lacking in descriptions of mental illnesses or in speculations as to their various causes—that can comfortably encompass it. Asked to describe her madness, her family members sift through and reject a series of typical Balinese diagnoses: it is not the madness that afflicts victims of black magic or sorcery; it is not the madness that may occur when some ritual responsibility is overlooked and one is cursed by one's ancestors; it is not the madness that is risked when someone unwittingly disturbs one of the spirits inhabiting one's environment. Nor do they describe Ibu Ari using the lexicon of modern psychology that has filtered into popular Balinese culture through the Indonesian-language media: *skizofrenia*, *depresi*, *stres*, *trauma*. Most often they describe her simply as *gila*, an Indonesian word meaning “crazy” that is equally applicable to persons, mad dogs, or bizarre situations, or as *sinting*, an Indonesian word

that might best be translated as “not quite all there.” By using their second language, the formal national language of Indonesian, the members of Ibu Ari’s family distance not only Ibu Ari but also her madness itself, placing it in a register that, if not exactly alien, remains far from intimate family speech. Yet even as they call her mad, they do not treat her as if she were suffering from a pathological illness. No one has ever suggested she seek a cure from a psychic healer or from a modern psychiatrist, as they have with a number of other family members afflicted with more easily classifiable mental illnesses. In fact, the reverse holds true: when Ibu Ari says that her brother has told her that the family must add specific offerings to the preparations for the family temple anniversary, or that they must seek out holy water from a particular temple to make a ceremony complete, her word is followed without question. For who knows what happens to those who have passed on through death, disappeared from a time when fundamental social certainties wavered and splintered? Even as it is excluded, Ibu Ari’s madness returns to family practice—not quite all there, but not all elsewhere either.

Some members of the family who have witnessed Ibu Ari speaking to her brother in what appears to them as a state of trance have attempted to push her into a more familiar cultural framework, suggesting that she could perhaps herself become a spirit medium, claiming social significance as a conduit through which the living can speak to the dead. They warn that someone who has received the gift of the medium and refuses to accept it as a social role risks being cursed by the gods with madness, as can a psychic who shows arrogance in his or her personal power at the expense of acknowledging that this gift comes from the divine. Yet Ibu Ari insists that her experience is not the trance of a medium, but rather normal waking consciousness. She denies any agency in initiating this communication: her brother enters her everyday world; she does not purposely try to open a door to the unseen realm where he dwells. She rejects the idea of playing the public role of a medium, saying she has no desire for such power. She speaks with her brother, the only person she could ever really speak with, and she has no interest in speaking with others or their dead. Ibu Ari knows that many psychics repeatedly refuse to take up a social role before finally acquiescing to the unceasing demands of the divine, but she claims that there is no possibility of changing her mind. After all, she adds, who would consult a psychic who was known to have communist ties?

And were her ability to speak with the dead made public, would people start talking again about what she wished them to forget: that she was the widow and the sister of men who had been marked as communist? And would they try to force open the closed door of the rice barn, to put into language what had become for her and her family a silence weighted with ambiguous memory and ambivalent forgetting? The politics of speaking, even with the dead, are, Ibu Ari knows, treacherous indeed.

It is here, at the nexus of one woman's experience and the traumatic history her family members imagine themselves to share—to share, especially, after the fact, as they all, young and old, men and women, sympathetic or disinterested in the aims of the PKI, were marked by the state as sharing an “unclean environment”—that madness is identified. Ibu Ari is considered mad not because her behavior or the state of mind that people attribute to her can be fit into what they know of madness, but precisely because it cannot be clearly diagnosed. Although Ibu Ari is considered by her family to be one of a community of victims who have experienced similar suffering, her madness refuses a place in shared knowledge or practice, as it unsettles awareness about what can be shared. Private speech challenges collective memory, violent disappearance evokes an uncanny presence, and language grows alien and inexact as it flows through the figure of the woman searched for signs of communism. Ibu Ari's speech engages an absence familiar to all members of her family, each of whom acknowledges the deaths of loved ones during 1965, but it does not become an allegory of communal loss, a public lament of mourning, memory, and recovery.

#### THINKING WITH SILENCES

Models that hold silence to be simply the absence of speech, or forgetting the absence of memory, promise a relatively straightforward engagement with the aftereffects of mass violence. Operating within such frameworks, the scholar has only to wield questions about the past as tools in an excavatory process in which speech is recovered from silence and memory is released from forgetting, these absences left to the side like earth that has given up its buried artifacts. The work may be slow and painful, touching as it does on the fragments of terror still embedded in selves and society, but the main challenges are technical ones: reaching truths, recognizing references, and placing responses within a cultural and political context that can render the unthinkable subject to sense. Yet in reflecting on the

silences that obtain in the wake of 1965–66, such models seem insufficient. Keeping the experiences of Ibu Ari and other survivors of 1965–66 in mind, I offer a brief consideration of some of the complexities of the engagement with silences, touching on several key concerns that may resonate across other contexts of genocide and mass violence.

One of the most pressing questions many scholars of violence face is that of the ineffability of terror, its presumed inability to be fully expressed and understood through the limited medium of language. While a number of artists, theorists, and memoirists have noted their own inability to capture extreme violence in words, Scarry has perhaps gone furthest in asserting the generic nature of pain's resistance to language, arguing that the experience of torture, rather than provoking a confessional flood of truth, in fact blocks its narration, reverting the tortured to a primordial, prelinguistic state of inarticulate embodiment (1985). In a similar vein—albeit one far more attuned to the specificities of sociopolitical location—E. Valentine Daniel describes how Sri Lankan torture victims may find it impossible not only to voice their own suffering but to hear the truth of pain in the words of others (1996). Such phenomena, Michael Taussig suggests, demand that the engaged scholar “write against terror” in a way that combats the oppressive power of silence without reproducing the reductive rationality of didactic speech that claims to have encompassed the causes and effects of extreme violence; or, as he phrases it, in a way that can “penetrate the veil while retaining its hallucinatory quality” (1987:10).

Writing in the aftermath of terror in Bali, such concerns about the relations of silence and speech to violence are highly relevant. The violence of 1965–66 has produced silences both among Balinese and among those who author representations of them, and the events spoken of often seem to exceed language's ability to capture their chilling experiential reality. Neither Ibu Ari nor her cousin—“afraid of the words themselves”—could turn Bli Made's act of terror into narrative. Yet I argue that silence is neither a natural response to physical or psychic pain nor a blunt barrier blocking the analyst—or those people who share a social space in the wake of terror—from full description and comprehension. Silence, like speech, is a cultural and political creation that takes place in particularly contoured settings, with certain interlocutors—or eavesdroppers, or informants—in earshot or mind. As Rosalind Shaw reminds us, “there are different kinds of silence” (2006:89), and each may perform particular cultural and

political tasks. The interplay of silence and speech may sketch spaces of fear, secrecy, and suspicion, with the urgency of such mapping intensified in settings of violence. Speech, like silence, can conceal, accuse, and redirect, while silence, like speech, can have semiotic effects, making silences never purely monochrome, any more than speech can be strictly monologic. Ibu Ari could not tell me (likely because she could not be certain how her words would then be transmitted), but I heard it whispered by others in the family that perhaps the reason 1965 sparked a strange kind of madness in her was that it was one of her own cousins who informed on her brother as part of a plan to claim his rice land. Her own silence about this matter—and her relatives' ability to send tendrils of gossip about it through their local networks in a way they could not about her experience in the rice barn—marked a different kind of political claim than that staked by her silence at Bli Made's offer of "compensation."

Fieldwork, of course, participates in such contexts, often without realizing it. This makes it crucial not to mistake a reluctance to speak to the anthropologist for a more general absence of memory or voice, an issue that cannot be resolved by reference to such notions as *rapport*. Given this, I suspect that "penetration" is not the most apt of metaphors for engaging with the silences that have emerged in the wake of violence in Bali. Even if we ignore its masculinist and militarist presumptions, silence is not an even fog barricading events and emotions from view, but a variegated landscape that Balinese navigate with what knowledge and caution they can muster, sometimes drawing on local notions of how speech is channeled and dammed and sometimes moving blindly, the certainty that one can find direction on a shifting social topography undermined in the experience of terror. By describing some of the shapes, textures, and motions of Balinese silences, and the cultural and political relations in which they are enmeshed, I hope to question analytic binaries that hold speech and silence, memory and forgetting, expression and its repression, in rigid opposition, pointing toward the more complex and politically fraught processes of semiosis that have emerged in the aftermath of 1965.

Another question raised by placing forgetting and silence within one's analytic purview is that of the relationships between what took place during 1965–66 and contemporary Balinese lives. How does one know, in the frequent absence of explicit statements to that effect, that phenomena are connected, that what emerges in the present can be traced back to violence

in the past? To take but one example of what I mean, I remember being struck by the intensity of a debate over another elderly woman, a cousin of Ibu Ari's. The discussion flared up around whether her foot, which was to be amputated due to an infection exacerbated by uncontrolled diabetes, should be saved to later be cremated with the rest of her body on her death. Family members educated in a modernist Balinese Hindu theology that sees the coarse material body (*awak*) as separate from and subordinate to the soul (*atma*) argued that this was not only unnecessary but disgustingly unhygienic and backward. She and others less influenced by contemporary theological claims insisted that a body lacking wholeness would follow her into her next incarnation. This debate was, I thought, "about" a number of things: competition among divergent religious interpretations and resistance by an older generation to a state-sponsored, rationalist Hinduism; the pain and stress felt by a woman whose poverty and thus lack of access to decent medical care in part derived from her family's supposed association with the Communist Party; and an attempt by a woman known as a respected ritual expert to claim authority both over religious practice and over what little—her body, her death, her movement through cycles of reincarnation—she could, at least partially, call her own. Yet the anxiety surrounding this topic also seemed to me to parallel the feeling with which that same woman had told me stories of nationalist paramilitaries dismembering alleged communists and placing their body parts about her village; entrails on the victim's doorstep and limbs marking the village's boundaries. Such stories in turn seemed to evoke, in grotesque parody, the manipulation of a Balinese ritual animal sacrifice (*caru*), in which the parts of a chicken or of another animal are ordered in space according to the Balinese compass points. And all this seemed to fit with tales I heard spoken in the intimate whispers of family gossip about the karmic consequences of violence said to work through the body, including that of the former paramilitary member known for hacking his victims apart whose child was later born with stumps as arms and legs.

To me such connections seemed reasonable, and I took them both as indications of the hold the events of 1965–66 continued to have on Balinese lives and as a reminder to look for violence not simply in purposeful physical harm or in straightforward recollections of it. Yet I also

wanted to understand how the connections I was drawing differed from those this woman and her family articulated, and how all our historical diagnoses took place within a power-charged field in which making links to the violence is often perceived as a dangerous endeavor. In such settings, the challenge for the analyst becomes placing people's utterances about a violent past within frameworks both of sense making and of silence, neither reducing the present to mere reproductions of the past nor engaging in a shallow neofunctionalism that locates the past's meaning, power, and relevance solely in present concerns (Shaw 2002; Trouillot 1995). Such analyses run interpretive risk, but it is only by attempting to trace links between the past and the present, by attending to how silence blocks the emergence of certain conclusions and enables the articulation of others, that we can avoid the ahistoric and apolitical stance taken by many observers of Bali, who see "Balinese culture" as an unproblematic category, with the violence standing as an aberrant occurrence, reassuringly enclosed by historical remove.

Yet perhaps the most important question surrounding silence in Bali is that of its ethics and politics. The questions of why not only outside observers of Bali but Balinese themselves have frequently remained silent on the matter of 1965–66, and what is the continuing relevance of the violence for Balinese life, are closely entangled with the question of what it means for me—or anyone else concerned with these issues—to probe into the shapes and textures that silences take. Clearly, an analysis of, say, a Balinese temple ritual that sought to debunk its assumptions and expose it as mere mystification or trickery would be received in most quarters as highly problematic. Yet anthropology's long tradition of relativistic neutrality on matters of belief, which has often complicated activist positions, has rarely extended to silences, which are often assumed, following the convergent models of psychoanalysis, juridical witnessing, and Christian confessionality, to result from powerful structures of repression whose dismantling promises empowerment: "But only say the word and you shall be healed." That silence itself may offer certain forms of agency that are not simply the absence of speech, that it may be striated with a more complex politics than merely a cowed acquiescence to power, has remained an underexplored possibility. If, however, we understand something of the specific social and political relations that give rise to silences—which in Bali

include not only engagements with a repressive state, an overwhelmingly ignorant or indifferent international community, and a tourism industry that commodifies the erasure of violence from images of Bali but also everyday practices of living within families and communities fractured by betrayals, complicities, or suspicions—it is not at all clear that breaking the silence constitutes a sure route to liberation. Certainly Ibu Ari does not see it as such. Here I caution not simply that asking people to speak risks exposing them to the psychic pain of memory—although that is an issue for which anthropologists have often been unprepared. Indeed, such concerns must be weighed against the patronism they often imply and against the way in which they tend to paint survivors of violence as uniformly delicate victims to be approached with clinical care.<sup>20</sup> Ibu Ari is willing to speak of pieces of her past, and to let that speech evoke accusations of madness, to keep her commitments to memory and truth. I do, however, wish to stress that to the extent that silence arises as a response to political risk, as a tactic to ensure that new violence does not erupt within families and communities among whom memory remains poignantly present, or simply as a way to attract desired tourist dollars, attempts to excavate the remains of violence in the service of social healing or activist truth telling cannot constitute a straightforward endeavor. If I began this essay with an anecdote of questioning absence that risks being read as a classically heroic ethnographic tale of discovery, insight, and exposure, I hope to end it by urging a more complex consideration of the ethics of speech and silence and of the ramifications of how we write about them.

Rethinking our approaches to silence, and questioning analytic binaries that pose it in sharp opposition to speech, has much more than academic significance. Since the fall of Suharto's dictatorship Indonesians have wrestled with concepts of reconciliation and have begun a process—slowly, and hampered by a reluctant state—to put a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission in place (see Agung Putri 2003; Zurbuchen 2001). Most calls for reconciliation at the national level have advocated models laid out in South Africa, whose Truth and Reconciliation Commission encouraged victims of human rights abuses to speak publicly of their experiences in the service of national “healing.” Yet stories like Ibu Ari's offer caution that such processes may be less than straightforward in Bali. Speaking memories of violence does not simply place one in relation to a distant past but also engages with a complex politics of the present and its articulation and

concealment in social practice. A truth commission's work in Bali could not be expected to bring closure to the past—to the extent that such a possibility ever exists—but rather will open new challenges as Balinese re-think what it means to speak of and to power.

#### NOTES

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1. The exact number of Indonesians killed is unknown and will likely remain so, despite recent efforts at fact-finding by victims' advocacy groups such as the Yayasan Penelitian Korban Pembantaian (Foundation for Research on the Victims of Massacre). Estimates have ranged from around three hundred thousand deaths to as many as three million, with a figure of one million frequently cited in academic and journalistic accounts of the violence. The politics of numbering the dead is, of course, far from straightforward, speaking both to the state's desire to block access to nonofficial historical research and to activists' desires to ground calls for attention to the violence in statistical claims of its significance. It is important to note, however, that while the extent of the suffering wrought by the violence of 1965–66 should be undeniable, survivors often locate its import not in its scope but in its intimacy, not in its manageable facticity but in its destabilizing incomprehensibility, not in its right to a place in the annals of the 20th century's greatest tragedies but in its continuing power to deflect possibilities for living in the present. Gyanendra Pandey discusses a comparable politics of enumerating the deaths that occurred during the partition of British India in 1947, suggesting that such "extravagant, expandable, unverifiable but credible" (2001:91) statistics function to obscure the social production of history and its qualities of rumor. For more on the challenges of estimating the death toll in 1965–66, see Cribb 2001.
2. Robinson 1995, based on research carried out while Suharto was still in power, gives an estimate of 80,000 deaths in Bali. Activists conducting fact-finding projects after Suharto's resignation have estimated the figure to be closer to 100,000.
3. The major—and until recently, only—exception is Geoffrey Robinson's (1995) important work on 20th-century Balinese politics, which includes a substantial discussion of the events leading up to the violence of 1965–66 and an analysis of the patterns it took. Since then a handful of works discussing 1965–66 in Bali have been published, including Darma Putra 2003 on the politics of Balinese literature

in the years prior to the violence; Parker 2003, chapter 4, on memories of 1965–66; Dwyer 2004 on the gender politics of the violence and its aftermath; and Dwyer and Santikarma 2003, 2007 on the cultural and political landscape of post-1965 Bali. For an overview of recent work on 1965–66 elsewhere in Indonesia, see Zurbuchen 2002.

4. In his popular history of Bali, Adrian Vickers writes: “Understandably, few Balinese want to relive this time in conversation and most, like survivors of other conflicts, prefer to block it out of their memories” (1989:172). Graeme MacRae echoes this characterization: “Most people in Ubud [Bali] who remember this era prefer not to think or, at least, not to talk about it” (2003:44).
5. The national high school and junior high school textbooks were revised in 1999 after the fall of Suharto’s dictatorship to include a brief statement that the history of 1965 is debated by historians. The high school textbooks also include a new section presenting differing theories about the alleged coup and about whether it really was carried out by the PKI. The textbooks still do not make mention of the violence against alleged communists.
6. From Berata 2002. On the contrast between the Indonesian state and international media’s responses to the Bali bombings and to the violence of 1965–66, see Santikarma 2004.
7. For more on the events of September 30, 1965, see Anderson and McVey 1971; Cribb 1990; Crouch 1978. For an overview of the events in Bali, see Robinson 1995. For an examination of the cultural and political repercussions of the violence in Bali, see Dwyer 2004; and Dwyer and Santikarma 2003, 2007. For discussions of the important place that 1965 as history, imaginary, and threat has held in state discourse and in public culture, see Anderson 1994; Pemberton 1994; Siegel 1998; Steedly 1993; Shiraishi 1997; Heryanto 1999.
8. While the international media at the time tended to describe the killings as an irrational outburst of primitive emotion, describing “orgies” of bloodshed and a “frenzy” of anticommunist fervor (the Pulitzer Prize winner John Hughes’s book on 1965, *Indonesian Upheaval*, recently reissued as *The End of Sukarno: A Coup That Misfired; A Purge That Ran Wild* (2003[1967])), state accounts instead stressed the savage excess of the left, framing military and civilian violence against alleged communists as the careful, calculated, and justified enactment of bureaucratic rationality on those who had forfeited claims to citizenship.
9. Honna 2001 details how Indonesian military ideology framed and reframed the notion of communism from 1966 to 1998 to address changing “threats” to its power, ranging from pro-democracy activism to globalization. Heryanto 1999 discusses the deployment of and resistances to the term *communist* under the New Order. Despite the fall of Suharto’s dictatorship, anticommunist rhetoric continues to be used in Indonesia in attempts to effect various political ends. To take only a few examples: In Java, some Islamist groups have gained support for their agendas by

evoking an “atheist” communist genealogy to contemporary secularist movements; in Bali, a labor strike against a tourist facility was followed by the “mysterious” appearance of posters tacked to walls and trees warning against a potential resurgence of communism; in Jakarta, in preparation for an interview for a permanent resident visa at the U.S. embassy, my husband was required to be interviewed by the local police, who interrogated him from a standard set of questions that referred, among other matters, to his family’s political affiliations in 1965—a new level of surveillance made possible by U.S. funds for the Indonesian police to enlist in the so-called war on terror.

10. For a discussion of romantic conceptions of the Balinese *desa adat*, or customary law village, see Warren 1993.
11. One notable exception to the tendency of this earlier generation of anthropologists to bracket violence is H. Geertz 1991, in which the author discusses a “ritual drama” performed in 1947 that involved the communal beating and torture of a group of men arrested for their participation in the anticolonial movement and for their rejection of the political authority of the traditional Kingdom of Gianyar, which had allied itself with the Dutch. Geertz argues that rather than reproducing or enacting harmony among Balinese and between humans and the unseen world, as so many other observers of Balinese ritual have argued, Balinese ritual drama has “agonistic violence at its core” (1991:180).
12. Robinson 1995 makes a similar critique of classical scholarship in Bali.
13. For a discussion of how related concepts of tourism and politics operate in Ubud, the Balinese village that reinvented itself in the 1950s as Bali’s “center of art and culture,” see MacRae 2003.
14. For a discussion of how tourism and state developmentalism have shaped discourses of Balinese culture in the service of state control, see Santikarma 2001.
15. Much of the work of the small group of advocates for the rights of victims of 1965–66 in Bali has consisted of trying to identify mass graves from 1965–66. Hopes for exhuming the bodies they contain are slim, however. Such land is considered by Balinese to be *tenget*—spiritually “hot” or “contaminated”—and thus unfit for Balinese to inhabit or cultivate. Much of this land was therefore sold to non-Balinese or, in South Bali, used to build tourism facilities, meaning that any attempt to find what lies beneath the ground would most likely face serious opposition from the owners of what now lies above the ground. As one activist reminded us: “Tourism is big business, big money. If you take on tourism, the next thing you know you’re a communist, and the corrupt *aparats* [“security apparatus,” military and police] make sure that you’re buried as well.”
16. Scholars of Indonesia reading my work have pointed out that the Indonesian noun for inspection should be *pemeriksaan*, not *periksa*. This is true; however, Balinese do not always speak Indonesian as they “should.” Grammatically proper or not, Balinese identify *periksa*—both the word and the events—as emanating from the central Indonesian state.

17. *Merajan* is the term used by Bali's *triwangsa* ("three peoples") or upper-caste nobles. A non-*triwangsa* family would use the term *sanggah*.
18. The New Order's infamous "clean environment" (*bersih lingkungan*) policy claimed that spouses, parents, siblings, children, and even grandchildren of those marked as communists were contaminated by "political uncleanness" and thus to be barred from participation in government or civil society. Officially the policy applied only to those who were over 12 years old at the time of the violence, with the exception of younger children of those considered to be leaders of the PKI. In practice, however, entire families, especially if they lived together in family compounds, were often considered unclean for local political purposes. Relatives of alleged communists who themselves had never been charged with crimes were barred from obtaining the *surat keterangan bebas G-30-S-PKI*, or letter of noninvolvement in the PKI's September 30th Movement, a document necessary to obtain permission to join the vast government bureaucracy, to work in the media or in social welfare, or to obtain a university teaching position or scholarship.
19. By 1972 the New Order state had grown uneasy with the power that the PNI had gained as a result of its participation in the massacres of the PKI, and it began a process of reconfiguring the political party landscape in which the PNI was banned and the government "functional group" Golkar was ensured dominance through the mandatory membership of the military, government officials, and vast national civil service.
20. I thank Gung Ayu Ratih for stressing this point in conversation, as well as in an unpublished paper authored with John Roosa on how we might rethink methodologies of oral history on 1965–66 in Indonesia.

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