RMA 18/1 (Winter)
1984

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1. The horse stabbing.

RITUAL AND REPRESENTATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BALI

A. Vickers

Balinese paintings and rituals are more than just grist for the mill of commodity tourism. As well as having important roles within past and present social systems, these paintings and rituals are complex networks of signs and meanings. Rather than trying to come to terms with all traditional Balinese art and ritual, the following is an attempt to show how a painting which represents a ritual can involve such semiotic complexity, and how this process of signification needs to be considered as part of a social order of meaning. The painting also raises questions of how the Balinese perceived the role of the Dutch in the pre-colonial situation.

Prior to discussing the painting, however, we need to come to terms with aspects of the complexity of the Balinese ritual. A really detailed study of a Balinese ritual means being in ten places at once, seeing the different priests involved and hearing all their muttered incantations, as well as studying their ritual texts. It also means coming to terms with the numerous forms of offerings which have a place in the rite, and seeing and recording the various performances which are often incorporated into the proceedings, or held immediately afterwards. These are by no means the whole of a ritual, for each has its own form, and each ritual is different in each holding, be it a cremation, consecration, adoption, exorcism, temple anniversary, rite-de-passage or apotheosis. The forms are derived from tradition, and from the needs and perceptions of all the participants, and thus are open to the subtleties of political events and economic circumstances. In this sense rituals are like "meta-texts". Each ritual is a unique, highly specific event, but is linked to all other rituals of the same type by both the prior experience of other rituals and a common way of conceptualising ritual. The prior experience and the conceptualising are both elements which constitute a ritual. Whenever Balinese participate in or watch a ritual, they bring to that rite what they have seen and

done in similar rites, as well as the advice of ritual experts and textual prescriptions or descriptions which help to define what should be done and what the doing means. A cremation ritual, for instance, involves a conception of how that ritual is different from any others and the knowledge of what the order of events, roles and symbols was in dozens or even hundreds of other cremations. More than this, each ritual is also made up of other episodes or sub-texts. These are not just the written words memorised by priests, but the performances, the offerings and the actions of participants. As "meta-texts", rituals are rich textures of symbolism and meaning, related to each other, but within specific social, economic, religious and political contexts. They are changing and changeable processes.

How do paintings make the complexity of rituals easier to understand? Balinese paintings are statements which are far more concrete, making ideas and presuppositions more accessible than the maze of events which constitute "ritual". Not all Balinese rituals make use of paintings, and not all paintings are found in ritual settings, but most traditional paintings were either produced as parts of a ritual context, or drew on the same kinds of networks of signification as the rituals.

Paintings are one of the many types of narrative which are performed, presented, referred to or presupposed in Balinese ceremonies. They are part of the "meta-text" both because they help to link rituals (the same painting may be brought out for each different ritual production), and also because they make up one of the many sets of signs, another of the layers which give different possibilities of meaning. However, paintings have a degree of autonomy which allows them to be understood by and for themselves. They can exist outside the ritual without thereby being seen as "incomplete", and in this they, and the rituals, are open-ended. Nevertheless, the ritual context allows a painting to accrue another range of associations. Usually within such a ritual, a painting or performance bears some sort of relationship to the nature of the ceremony. The simplest examples of this relationship are the performances of marriage stories for marriage rituals, or depictions of the story of the creation of the liquid of immortality on the pavilion in which a _brahmana_ (brahmin) high priest performs a holy-water

rite. As Hinzler's survey of the _wayang_ (puppet play) stories used in rituals shows, however, the connection of narrative and ritual can often be complicated, if not oblique (1981:35-41).

This type of connection could be considered as an expression of a thematic link between the story and the nature of the narrative performed or painted. Since it is a relationship of similarity which is involved, it can be described as either a metaphoric relationship, in which the similarity is essential, or a metonymic relationship, involving a contingent connection (e.g. of marriage, or through the external relationship of the liquid of immortality to the priest's holy-water). This is not just the formal similarity or similarity of appearances we call analogy, nor is it the discrepancy between form and meaning which we call allegory (see Culler 1981:64&189f). The Balinese explanation of the link between narrative and ceremony is that the story is _pantes_ or _patut_, words more usually translated as "appropriate". These Balinese terms can be related to the epistemological feature of coincidence, which plays such an important part in Balinese and Javanese thought as an explanation of causality.

However, these metaphoric relationships should not be seen as the only way that paintings can relate to rituals. In this article I am concerned with an example of a different type of relationship which shows that metaphor does not constitute the only means of reference in Balinese painting. For that reason, the painting in question is an example of a work which more directly depicts a ritual. It is literally removed from a ritual context, since it is in the Museum Bali collection.

Iconographical Modes

Although not all Balinese traditional paintings come from the one place, the "classic" form of traditional painting is the style of the artists of the village of Kamasan, Klungkung (see Forge 1978). The painting with which I am concerned is one such Kamasan work. Within the Kamasan tradition, two different types of iconography can be distinguished. The first is the type Forge terms "mythological", which is used to represent stories based on the _Ramayana_ and

2. Prabhangsa and Kuda Nirarsa.

Mahabharata (known under the headings of Uttara and Parwa in Bali). These stories are concerned with the worlds of gods and demons, and with heroes who are the children or the incarnations of gods: Rama, Kresna, Arjuna, Bima and so on. The other type is what Forge has termed "post-mythological", a term which equates with the Balinese view that this type of iconography is used for stories which come "after" the Parwa and Uttara episodes (these are the terms used in the text Ali Gurnita:15a). As Forge defines them, the "post-mythological" stories are

> more diverse, covering the adventures of romantic heroes, past kingdoms, folk heroes, and struggles between the forces of black and white magic - good and evil expressed at a "domestic" level. Although some may have Indian prototypes, they all supposedly stem from actual life in the Javanese and Balinese kingdoms.
> (1978:13).

In the "post-mythological" we find events "closer" (in time) to the every-day world, with the "mythological" stories being more "distant". In general, it is the "mythological" which has a metaphoric reference to ritual, while the "post-mythological" is far more direct in its potential. This facet of the nature of reference then allows the two types to be brought together (or "coincide") in complex plays of signification.

The direct reference to every-day life in traditional painting has often been overlooked in discussions of the changes in Balinese art that occurred in the twentieth century:

> From the realm of the gods and mythological heroes, from the dramatic episodes out of epics, so close to their own hearts, the painters increasingly turned to Balinese life on the earth - to scenes of planting and harvesting, market life, ritual celebrations and dramatic spectacles. (Holt 1967:180).

Rather than describing the growth of "modern" Balinese art, this characterisation reveals a difference which preceded this new group of stylistic developments, and which was actively employed by the "modern" artists.

3. Panji and Prabhu Malayu

Malat

"Modern" Balinese painting was born in the 1930s, at a time when Dutch rule had altered the fabric of Balinese society. A different aspect of this transformation was the near disappearance of certain of the "post-mythological" narratives in Kamasan painting, most noticeably the Malat story (see Forge 1978: catalogue number 42). The Malat is a narrative concerned with the adventures of kings and princes, the types of kings and princes whose political power and influence was waning in Balinese society in the 1920s and 1930s (see Vickers 1980 and unpublished).

The Museum Bali painting under examination, number 2212, is one of these Malat paintings. Although there are no data available on the provenance of this painting, the fact that it is a Malat narrative in Balinese cloth suggests either a nineteenth century date for the work, or the possibility that it was done by a painter trained in the nineteenth century, and probably using nineteenth-century models for his work. Very little is known of the Malat amongst contemporary Kamasan painters.

The Malat, in its literary form, is a very long poem of the kidung type, which means that it is set in Javanese, not Indian, metres, and that it uses the Middle Javanese language (see Robson 1971). The Malat is also a "Panji story", a type of story which is found in many parts of Southeast Asia, defined by Robson in its most basic form:

> In Java, where the story is set, there are two kingdoms, Kuripan and Daha..., of which the former is senior. The prince of Kuripan is betrothed to the princess of Daha but, before they can marry, a complicating factor... intervenes... When the problems have been solved by the prince, in disguise and using an alias, then he can finally reveal himself and claim the princess.
> (1971:12).

In the Malat, the hero is the prince of Kuripan, whose alias is Panji Malat Rasmi, and whose lost

betrothed is the princess, Rangkesari. Although the setting of the story is Javanese, the Balinese who know anything about the story (confined to a small number of people, mainly older men who are or were performers of the dance-drama form known as gambuh), see the story as directly referring to a Balinese political order. This follows the Balinese self-classification as "Wong Majapahit", "people of the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit". This is a statement of origins, but more than this, the term "Majapahit" denotes a category of social order which is perpetuated in the courtly culture of Bali.

The particular painting with which I am concerned is even more directly Balinese in its reference, for it shows Europeans (who did not appear in Asia until after the demise of Majapahit) in a Javanese-Balinese courtly setting. But to understand the implications of this firstly requires a knowledge of the episode from the Malat depicted in the painting. According to the narrative order of the Malat text, the first scene of the painting would be that in the bottom right hand corner. In this scene a prince with bulging eyes (denoting a coarse or gruff nature) stabs a horse (ill. 1). The prince is Prabhangsa, the elder brother of Panji Malat Rasmi, and the horse is Panji's. The three fat men on the left are the horse keepers. Their fatness, caricatured features and straw hats show that they are peasants. Prabhangsa also has a number of characters with him, his followers, the potet. These potet (shown as smaller in size than their master) are known in the text and in its dance-drama performance as more or less juvenile delinquents, precursors to the young punks who sell nefarious substances on Kuta beach.

In the second scene of the painting, in the upper right-hand corner, Prabhangsa, still with accompanying potet, attempts to stab a refined aristocrat, who deflects Prabhangsa's kris with a round shield. Behind this character are four others. From the other Malat paintings we know that they are Panji's followers. The three gruffer looking characters with topknots are Kebo Tan Mundur, Kebo Prakasa and Kebo Angun-Angun, while their refined, moustachioed companion is Rangga Titah-Jiwa. The man fighting Prabhangsa is Kuda Nirarsa, a

4. Museum Bali 2212.

prince distantly related to Panji, who has joined his entourage (ill. 2).

In the scene immediately beside that one, Panji (second from the left) is shown talking with his first cousin (who is also the elder brother of his lost betrothed), who has taken on the alias of Prabhu Malayu, the king of Malayu. The character standing behind Panji in this scene is one of Prabhu Malayu's followers, Kuda Senetan (ill. 3).

The large scene which dominates the painting shows ordered groups of Balinese on either side of a "christmas-tree" type of structure. This structure stands on a platform, and has different types of animals on it: turtle, snake (naga), demon (raksasa or wilmana), tiger, horse, monkey, elephant, deer, cow, small turtle (?) flying, crow, rooster and eagle (garuda). These burning animals obviously represent no natural phenomenon. Their formal arrangement and the setting aside of a special area for their positioning represents a ritual in progress. Below the ritual structure are ten men with pointed noses, black hats, coats and pants: Dutchmen. While the animals above burn, the Dutchmen mill around, some firing guns into the air, others carrying flaming sticks. The Balinese/ Javanese on either side are still and composed (ill. 4). These figures are nearly all aristocrats, this time of both sexes, and including the characters who have appeared in the other scenes. Two groups of five women each are shown in enclosed spaces above both groups of aristocrats. The three at the front on the left, and the first two on the right, have the hair-styles and hair ornaments of princesses, and the other women would be their retinue. The enclosed spaces represent the enclosed courtyards in which Balinese princesses of the nineteenth century lived, and from which they were almost never allowed out into public (ill. 5).[1] The leading aristocrat in the right-hand group is the king of Gegelang, who, in the Malat, is the host (and uncle) of Panji and Prabhu Malayu. Prabhu Gegelang is distinguished by his size, by his visual prominence (he is slightly above the other figures), and by the fact that he has an umbrella (a symbol of high office), over his head. In front of him is a small servant, who carries an ornamental spitoon, and behind the king are three women, all of whom have umbrellas over them, and the first and the third of

5. The princesses.

which have high, forward-curling hair-buns, showing that they are queens. The woman in between them is a princess, perhaps Ratnaningrat, the only child of the king of Gegelang. The nine women arranged in two rows behind the royal women are probably either servants to the queens and the princess, or commoner wives of the king. In the row beneath the king, Prabhangsa stands out from the rest. He has a small servant in front of him, but otherwise is the foremost figure on that row, being slightly separated from the other seven aristocrats beside him, who are princes and state ministers. On the bottom row on this side, the first figure is a small servant, and beside him are two larger parekan, or commoner servants, easily distinguishable by their caricatured features. Three other lesser aristocrats (probably of the type known as arya) sit beside them, and at the end of the row are the state ministers known as demang and tumenggung, the former ot whom is bald. The leading figures on the other side, at the forefront of the top row below the princess' enclosure, are Prabhu Malayu and Panji, with their followers arranged beside and below them.

In the literary version of the Malat, Prabhangsa's motivation for stabbing Panji's horse is mentioned: he is angry at having lost heavily in the cock-fights. A secondary reason, less directly alluded to in the narrative, is that Panji won his horse in a great battle between the forces of Gegelang (headed by Panji, Prabhu Malayu and Prabhangsa) and the kings of Mataram, Lasem, Pajang and Cemara. The horse, according to the text, was that ot the king of Mataram, whom Panji killed. In the same battle, however, Prabhangsa was shown to be a coward, which increased his former emnity towards his heroic brother. Also in the text, it is not Kuda Senetan, but one of Panji's other followers, who confronts Prabhangsa after the horse is stabbed.[2] Also not shown in the painting, but both described in the text and depicted in an entirely different painting of this episode, is the clash between Panji and Prabhangsa which follows immediately on from the confrontation between Panji's follower and Prabhangsa, and a scene of the horse being cured by Kuda Senetan (ill. 6). Perhaps the depiction of Prabhu Malayu with Panji and Kuda Senetan alludes to the curing of the sick horse, although it may also allude to the fact that it is Prabhu Malayu who restrains Panji when the latter fights his brother.[3]

6. The horse stabbing.

This divergence from the narrative and from other paintings is not as significant as the fact that there is no mention in the text of a ritual taking place, either before or after the stabbing of Panji's horse. In the painting, in fact, there is no information to tell us whether the horse stabbing is temporally before or after the ritual. Usually the scene dividers in Kamasan paintings, which can be either rocks (for outdoor scenes) or architectural features (for court settings), give some indication of sequence in a narrative by pointing in the general direction of the story, but in this case there are no such indications. Looking at it another way, we can say that there is nothing to detract from the simultaneous viewing of ritual and narrative incident. However, the visual predominance of the depiction of the ritual, combined with the absence of any mention of a ceremony at this point in the text's narrative, could even suggest that the story is an "excuse" for the presentation of the ritual, something to satisfy the desire for some narrative content in an otherwise direct depiction of a ceremony.

The ritual

The search for meaning in this painting begins with the ritual, and may only be found within the nature of the ritual, if it is true that the narrative functions only as an "excuse". The killing of animals is a feature of many Balinese ceremonies. Usually a ritual has a section devoted to the placation of demonic influence, sometimes as a prelude to the major part of the ceremony, so that it may go unhindered, and sometimes as an end in itself. Rituals which are concentrated upon acts of exorcism vary in scale from small household ceremonies which feature the sacrifice of one or more chickens, to the centennial ekadasa Rudra, where great numbers of animals are sacrificed in order to free the whole world from the threat of demonic influence (Stuart-Fox 1982). In the ekadasa Rudra and the ceremony known as panca walikrama, the next largest type of exorcism (now held every five years), two types of offerings can be related to the "tree" form shown in the painting. One, called sarad, is a type of the larger category of offering known as bebangkit, and features symbols of all the elements of

the universe arranged on a flat, upright surface, in a shape which recalls the kekayon ("tree" - also known as babat, which has a secondary meaning of "roasting spit") of the wayang puppet theatre, the symbol which is used to open and close performances (Hooykaas 1973:243, Putra 1974:71-88, Stuart-Fox 1982:105). The second type of offering to which the image can be related is that known as bayang.[4] This is a type of the general category called caru, a term which usually means "exorcistic offerings". In the bayang offerings, a large number of animals are sacrificed: "many are needed, in all 26, of each type of animal ... One of each is slaughtered, and one of each is alive and set free" (Hooykaas 1973:245). This number, 26, can be directly related to the painting's representation of ritual, where the number of different types of animal is 13.

The sarad and the bayang have one thing in common, they are meant to represent all of the world. The sarad, and bebangkit in general, contain symbols of all the contents of the world: the contents of the sea, all types of birds, mankind, the symbols of the compass points, buildings, pools and rivers, representations of offerings,[5] animals, stars and the weapons of the major gods (Putra 1974:71-77). Participants in the ekadasa Rudra held in 1979[6] emphasised that the animals to be sacrificed in that ceremony were meant to represent one of every species in the world. Further, their belief was that by representing offerings which signify the contents of the world ("isin gumi"), it was hoped to satisfy the desires of the demons to consume men, so that the demons would all be summoned up, eat, and then return to their source.

These demonic influences are at the same time seen as demonic emanations of the gods, so that this purification can restore the divine and human worlds to the harmonious state of kerta (loosely translatable as "order" or "balance" - see Hooykaas 1973:211, Vickers unpublished).[7] These elements do not represent the whole of the nature of all forms of such rituals, but only those sections which could promote an understanding of the painting's image of a ritual. As such they are the kind of prior knowledge which could be brought to bear on this painting by its original audience. Another element of such exorcistic rituals which is also relevant to the painting, but which is

7. The ritual.

physically separate from the other elements mentioned here, is fire. Fires, called "api takep", are lit at various places around the offering area, although neither the sarad nor the bayang are set alight (see Supartha 1978:97).

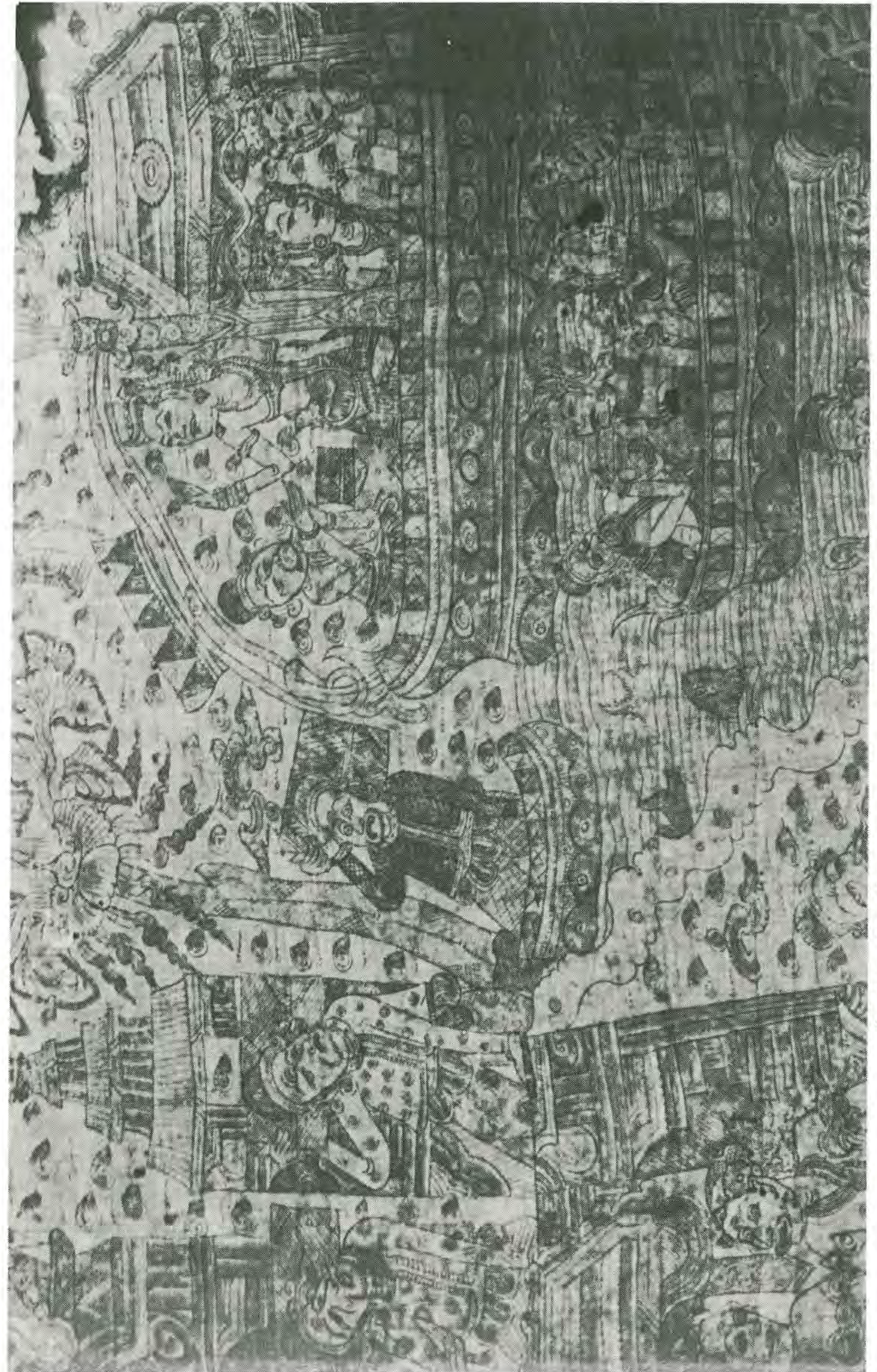
The painting then, represents an exorcistic ritual through a combination of certain elements which are felt to be particularly important, sarad, bayang and fire. By showing the garuda, a sky being, at the top, and the turtle combined with the naga (symbols of the underworld or the base of the world) at the bottom, a clear allusion is made to representations of the whole of the world in Balinese cosmology (see Hooykaas 1964:140) (ill.7). This type of representation is not the mimetic imitation of nature, nor is it necessarily metaphorical. Here is a summary or abbreviation of some of the most prominent physical symbols used in the rituals, a representation of symbolic objects which are themselves forms of representation. There is no attempt to naturalistically show what is there, but there is also a sense that what is being shown is reality. The thing itself, the ritual and its context, is being shown as the combination of the key elements which differentiate it from all other rituals in context. What is shown is something of what is seen at a ritual, only the visual elements normally separated in time come together. It could be said that there is a different sense of time, the sense of coincidence already referred to which here is the bringing together of things through the collapsing of time. However, because there is no naturalistic attention to representing all the details in sequence, there is also a sense that this may not be the only way that the ritual could be represented.

The Dutch

Another aspect of this realistic representation is the way that the Dutch are depicted. By representing the Dutch and the Balinese/Javanese as a contrast between disorder and order, the painting shows how the ritual of world-purifying exorcism is applicable to the nineteenth century Balinese situation, and perhaps even to early twentieth century politics. The Dutch are represented according to how they are seen as physiognomic types: with pointed noses and generally

caricatured features, and wearing their distinctive black uniforms and hats. However, despite their appearance, their actions are like those of demons, whose chaotic behaviour has, in turn, been likened to the actions of the chickens which are sacrificed to them: "Chickens like to fight, they are greedy, they want to be powerful and control things ... Whenever there are a group of them they will peck each other, and try to get as much food as possible" (Supartha 1978:92). The Balinese/Javanese who are present represent the opposite, the type of calm order for which ritual strives. Here, on one hand, is a statement that the Balinese are attempting, through ritual, to return the Dutch to their origin, to end the chaos of the world. On the other hand, however, the fact that the Dutch are not truly demons, because they only act like them and do not look like demons, makes this meaning ambiguous. Demons, known by their hairiness, corpulence and fangs, are part of the "mythological" mode of representation. Their fangs particularly are part of a discourse of power which is part of the "mythological" mode, but not necessarily an issue in this "post-mythological" painting (see Forge 1980).[8]

Moreover, the actions of the Dutchmen are not necessarily only demonic, they can be explained in another way, and this adds to the multiplicity of meaning in the painting. A clue is provided by the inclusion of Chinese amongst the Dutch. Other Malat paintings in which the Dutch are shown give an insight into this other dimension that is ascribed to the Dutch. One of the Malat scenes frequently depicted in the nineteenth century was the landing of the king of Malayu at Tuban.[9] Some paintings of this episode do not include representations of foreigners, but in others, Europeans and Chinese are shown (c.f. Galestin 1954). In one such painting, figures who may be Chinese are shown carrying baggage from the king of Malayu's boat (ill. 8), whilst in another[10] European sailors are shown off-loading goods. It is interesting that Europeans and Chinese appear in similar roles, for those Europeans who played any role in Bali in the mid-nineteenth century and before, did so as harbour-masters, a role which was also generally taken by the Chinese (Schulte Nordholte 1981, De Graaf 1949:76). In this sense the Dutch and the Chinese both belonged in the same category of outsiders, so that sometimes they are represented similarly. At other times the Dutch are

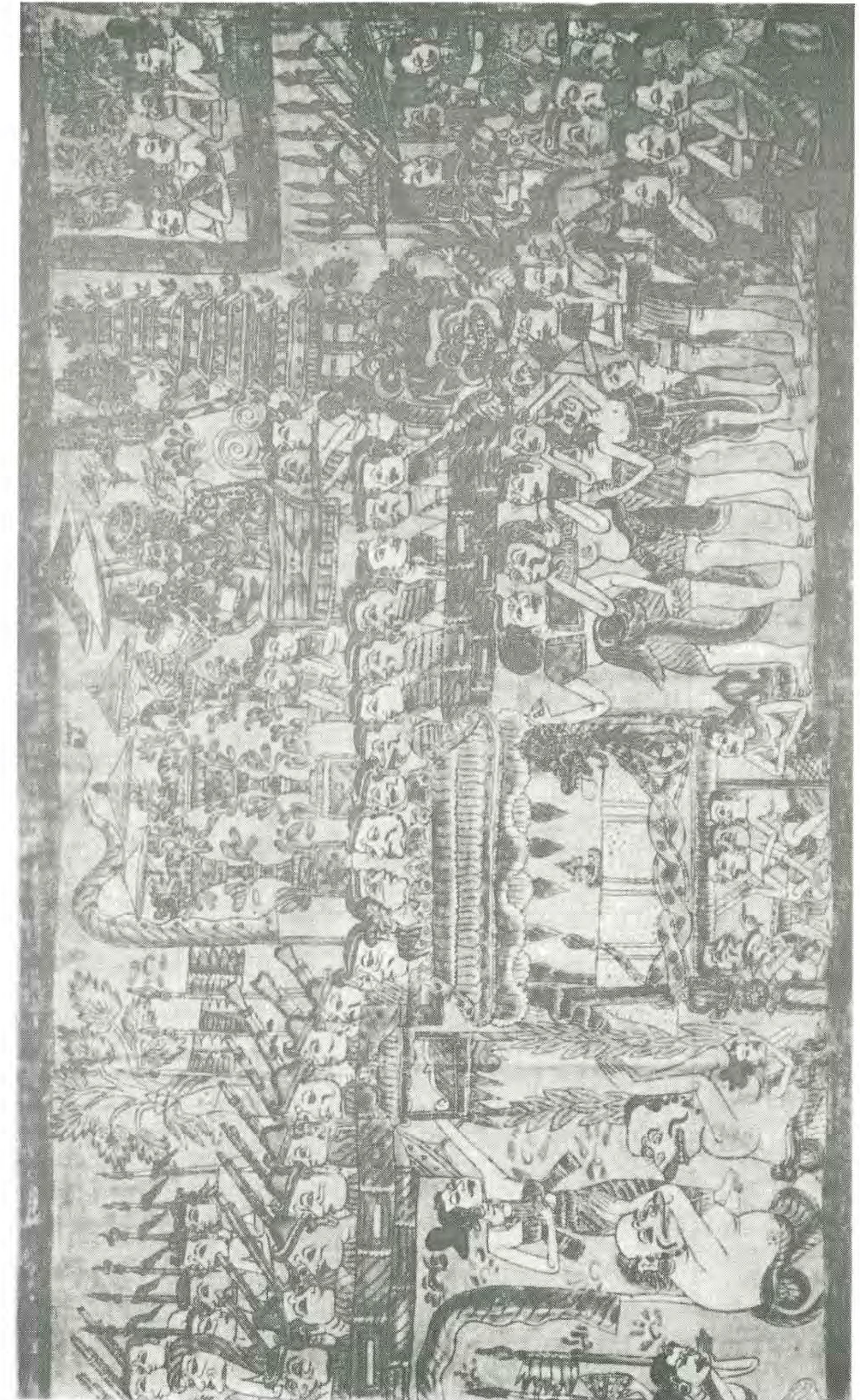


8. The landing at Tuban (detail).

quite clearly recognisable for their black coats and the Chinese for their pig-tails.[11] The other context in which the Dutch are depicted is far more rare, in fact only one example is known to me, and this is a painting not from Kamasan.[12] It depicts a cremation scene, again showing Panji and his followers, who are only present in the role of observers. The person being cremated is obviously of royal birth, because the cremation lion sarcophagus is accompanied by a naga banda, or "binding-serpent", which is initially shown wrapped around the corpse of the deceased. This naga banda is only used in Bali for the highest group of royalty (see Covarrubias 1937:374 & 387-388). It is quite possible that this painting represents the cremation of the king of Lasem, who died at the hands of Prabuh Malayu in the war between the Gegelang alliance and Lasem and its allies. In this painting, a number of Europeans are shown amongst the guard of commoners which is part of the funeral procession, and they carry firearms (ill. 9). In the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, salutes with fire-arms played a part in state rituals (Kidung Karya Ligia:I,34-35, Mershon 1971:306). In this painting, the Europeans belong with the commoner followers of the Balinese/ Javanese aristocracy. This is remarkably reminiscent of some of the palace guard corps in Jogjakarta, who used to wear the costumes of Europeans as their uniforms (see Groneman 1895).

In the scene of the exorcism in our painting, the Dutch, as in other paintings, have facial features which are caricatured. They share this with the commoners in the same painting, confirming the link between commoners and Dutchmen which exists in the other painting. Within the painting with which we are concerned, the contrast in actions between Balinese/ Javanese and Dutch coexists with a contrast established through physiognomic types, between the aristocrats on the one hand and the commoner servants and the Dutch on the other. This secondary reading is activated by showing the servants immediately beneath the king of Gegelang as overlapping with the group of Dutchmen. The Dutch are physically on the same level as the servants, but on the other side of the ritual scene, they are separated from the lower-ranking aristocrats by the border of the painting.

Commoners and Dutchmen (and Chinese) have one



9. Malat cremation scene (detail).

thing in common: to the aristocracy, they all belong to the social category of jaba, "outsiders" to the jero, the "inside" world of the courts. The representational conventions behind the painting do not allow for the Dutch to be the same as the Balinese aristocracy, they are physically not equal. Within the painting, this provides for an alternative interpretation of the role of the ritual. The Dutch are not shown as threatening elements. They do not aim their weapons at the Balinese, but fire them in the air. If anything, they are comical, a view of foreigners which still persists in Bali, and also acts as a strategy to preserve Balinese culture from tourist influence (see Young 1980:237). The Dutch are neither consuming the offerings (which they would if they were demons), nor being burnt along with the animals. In fact, by firing their rifles and using fire sticks (perhaps to set fire to the offering tree), the Dutch are participating in the ritual, adding the valuable element of ramé or crowded excitement, which is considered to be an important part of every Balinese ceremony (see also Becker 1979:230). When I showed a photograph of the painting to the artist Nyoman Mandra (of Kamasan), he also interpreted the actions of the Dutch as part of the ritual, but as nganyut, the section where, after the offerings have been given up to the demons to take their essence, the offerings are torn apart by those who are closest to the offering area. Those who take part in this act of nganyut in real life are the commoners who contributed the materials and labour to make the offerings. The lords and brahmana usually stand apart from this mock carnage.

There is a very strong argument for the view that the Dutch are seen as commoners in the painting, or at least on the same level as commoners. The association between the Dutch and nganyut (which means "destruction") may come about because of the demonic destruction the Dutch wrought on Bali in the wars in the middle of the nineteenth century, or it may come about because the Dutch can be seen as active participants in the Balinese social order, at the bottom. The ritual may be an exorcism aimed at banishing the Dutch, or it may represent the triumph of Balinese social order through the incorporation of the threatening Dutch at the lowest level of society.

This is, of course, a completely different view of

Balinese-Dutch relations than that which emerges from nineteenth-century Dutch documents, in which "Europeans had exerted a decisive influence on Balinese politics" (Schulte Nordholt 1981:26). It may be that, on the level of negotiations between the Balinese kings and the Dutch, that this statement was true, and there is certainly no doubt that the Dutch always saw themselves as the political entity of prime importance. As yet there have been no intensive studies of the Balinese documents dealing with nineteenth-century contacts with the Dutch (with one exception, Worsley 1972), but a preliminary examination of some of these documents would seem to argue for the painting's image of the Dutch as anything but a decisive influence in the eyes of most Balinese.

In the Rusak Buleleng, a text which deals with the events leading up to the Dutch conquest of Buleleng in 1846-49 (Geria 1957) the Dutch are shown as neutral characters. Their negotiations with the Balinese are described,[13] but the key character of the work is the patih (prime minister) of Buleleng, Gusti Ktut Jlantik. The negotiations with the Dutch are described in terms of the emotional reactions of Gusti Jlantik, who resists all pleas for moderation from the Balinese kings, and emotively advocates war. Gusti Jlantik's excessive behaviour is consistently described in negative terms in the text. It is also counterposed with a discussion of the conflict of two Balinese factions, the kings of Mataram-Lombok, and the kings of Buleleng, Karangasem and Klungkung. The contrast between these two groups is also played out in contrasting descriptions of rituals. The Mataram-Lombok kings hold a successful ritual, which results in a state of kerta (harmony and order) for their realm, but the king of Klungkung, at the time of the Dutch attack, fails to obtain such results from his ritual, and the only result is that the god Wisnu withdraws his influence from the world (Geria 1957:38-60). The real arena of political action in the text is not the negotiations between Dutch and Balinese, but the struggle for hegemony between Mataram and Klungkung (the latter is nominal overlord of Buleleng and Karangasem, as well as being the king of highest status amongst all the Balinese raja[14]). The second aspect of politics dealt with in the text is the role of emotions within the kingdom, signalled by the emotional excesses of Gusti Ktut Jlantik, which are contrasted with the attitudes

of the patih of Karangasem, Gusti Made Jungutan (see Geria 1957:30-37).

The text Uug Gianyar, which deals with the fall of the kingdom of Gianyar in 1884 and its restoration in 1894, can be seen in a similar light. Without going into detail, it is singularly remarkable that a text dealing with the political events of late nineteenth-century South Bali, events which lead up to the Dutch takeover of that region, credits the Dutch with absolutely no political influence in the south, to the point where the Dutch are only briefly mentioned as the rulers of the northern section of the island. No mention is made of their relations with other kingdoms. From reading this text, it would appear that the mountains which separated North and South Bali allowed the rulers of South Bali to completely isolate themselves from the Dutch presence. This does not mean that Balinese rulers were not aware of the military power of the Dutch. They were even prepared to make use of it.[15] In terms of general cultural images, the Balinese refused to see the Dutch as a part of "real" politics, or as political equals participating in the same arena of action.

An understanding of this aspect of Balinese perceptions of political action also helps to restore the role of narrative in this Malat painting. There are several visual points at which the narrative and the representation of the ritual link up. The foremost of these is in the depiction of Panji and Prabhu Malayu in the audience of the ritual. They are distinguished visually from the rest of the audience (with the exception of two of their followers below) because they are facing each other, talking, and not wholly directed towards the ritual (ill. 10). Their conversation together immediately creates a link with the scene on the right-hand side of the princesses, in which they are also talking, a scene which belongs to the horse-stabbing sequence of the narrative. This link also confirms a dichotomy within the aristocratic ranks, a division with the ritual as its centre. This is the dichotomy of Panji and Prabhu Malayu on the one hand, and Prabhangsa in the Gegelang court on the other. This is the same division which arises in the conflict over the horse stabbing, with Prabhangsa always placed on the right-hand side, and Panji, Prabhu Malayu and their followers on the left. This right-left division

10. Detail showing the audience of the ritual.

is from the viewer's point of view, but what is left to the viewer is "of the right" within the painting, for Kamasan painting shares the wayang theatre conventions, where the puppet master always places the "good" side on his right, which is the audiences' left (Forge 1978:70).

While the ritual is apparently about a difference between a Balinese/Javanese and the Dutch, it is also about internal divisions within the Balinese/Javanese ranks, divisions which are crystalised in the ritual, but which are shown, through the narrative section of the painting, to have a separate existence. The cross-reference is further reinforced by the coincidence of the horse, the main feature of the stabbing incident, also having an equivalent in the ritual - one of the sacrificial animals.

These links between the ritual and the narrative open the painting up to a complex play of meaning. We can find significance in the fact that the painting does not actually show a conflict between Panji and Prabhangsa, despite the fact that they are described as fighting in the text, and shown fighting in another painting of the incident. This is partially contradictory, since it serves to play down the nature of the rivalry between these brothers, but yet the rest of the painting emphasises their key roles on either side of a dichotomy. This is an important statement about alliance in relation to the Dutch, for it may signal a recognition of the need to play down internal conflicts in the face of outside threats. This is a very qualified view of the "outside", however, since the friendship between Panji and Prabhu Malayu which is depicted here is an alliance between a Javanese (Balinese) prince and a king who rules over a country which is not part of the same political unit as Java, Malayu (Malaya-Sumatera). This is partially a recognition of the common cultural ties of indigenous realms of the archipelago, when confronted with foreigners from a different culture.

We can see the painting, in the light of the concerns of the Rusak Buleleng, as being principally about a conflict of Balinese kingdoms, a conflict in which the presence of the Dutch plays a role of strengthening a pre-existing dichotomy, but does not cause that dichotomy. If this is the case, and the

Panji-Prabhu Malayu versus Prabhangsa-Prabhu Gegelang dichotomy is a similar conflict to the Mataram versus Klungkung-Buleleng and Karangasem, then Prabhangsa is a figure very much like Gusti Ktut Jlantik. The excessive behaviour of Prabhangsa is the thing that divides the aristocratic community. His aggression can also be directly related to the demonic behaviour which the ritual is aimed at exorcising, yet it is ambiguous. Prabhangsa is shown stabbing the horse: this could mean that he, not the Dutch, is the source of chaos which the ritual is trying to end. Yet the horse is one of the animals in the sacrifice, so Prabhangsa, by sacrificing the horse, may be playing an active and positive role in the ritual, a role which parallels that of the pamangku, or temple priest, in such a ritual. Aggression may or may not be a good thing in Balinese politics: Gusti Ktut Jlantik's aggressive behaviour is heavily criticised in the Rusak Buleleng as the real source of the conflict with the Dutch, yet in another text, he is described as "a man of considerable courage who was famed amongst advisers throughout the world of Bali" (Worsley 1972:197). Like the Dutch, Prabhangsa either makes an active contribution to the ritual, or is the negative agency which the ritual seeks to dispel.

The ambiguity which prevents the painting from having a definite single meaning is the result of contradictions inherent in the nature of artistic production. The painting attempts to represent a ritual, but the nature of painting is such that it can never represent all aspects of a ceremony. In particular, there is no representative, allegorical or otherwise, of the brahmana high priests who played a major part not only in the performance of state rituals in nineteenth-century Bali, but in the expression of royal rule. While the absence of the priesthood reinforces the image of the king as the principal figure in the state, it also reminds us that the image of Javanese (read Balinese) social order is primarily an image of aristocratic order. Commoners, who formed 90% of the nineteenth-century state, are a very small minority in the painting. Brahmana are usually shown in paintings which deal either with mystical actions or with the complex power relations that existed between the royal and priestly groups (Vickers unpublished). These royal-priestly relationships consist of both alliance and struggle, and the recognition that each group needs

the other to maintain a balance of power. The absence of the brahmana shows that the power struggle involved is a political one in which the supremacy of the Balinese aristocracy within Bali is not called into question. There is no depiction, for instance, of the brahmana as the highest "caste" placed above the kings and princes (see Worsley's article in this volume). The absence of the brahmana shows that the painting is part of a discourse about power in relation to politics, emotion and the way that royal rule copes with outside forces. The relative imbalance in the depiction of commoners also makes it clear that the nature of royal power over subjects or within the kingdom is not the main issue, although the ambiguity of the Dutch as outsiders and as potential commoners or subjects means that this possible theme cannot be forgotten. It is in fact these disjunctions which give ambiguity to the painting as a whole, and which belong to a covert political reality (that of the relationship between royalty and subjects) underlying an apparent political theme (the relations between Balinese and Dutch).

This element of intrusion is what Jameson calls the "political unconscious" of the work, inseparable from the very nature of making a representation (1981). We should not forget also that the artist who produced the painting was a commoner, part of the forgotten 90%. While he may have produced this painting as a manifestation of the ideology of a royal patron, the gaps and intrusions of the work belong to the difference between the commoner's and the patron's ideologies (Vickers unpublished). It may be that a commoner's view of the emotional excesses of the aristocracy (embodied in Prabhangsa) would be different from those of an aristocrat, since those who ruled had the power of life or death over commoners, and did not hesitate to use it, either in the course of administering aristocratic and priestly law, or in the frequent wars between kingdoms in the nineteenth century. In the situation of conflict, either with other Balinese or with the Dutch, the battles were made and run by aristocrats, but fought by commoner troops. Commoners can either be identified with the Dutch, or with the aristocrats, depending on which visual set of criteria are chosen from the painting. The ambiguities of representation refuse to allow it to be divorced from its social and political background, in which the differences between

commoner and aristocrat play a major part. The ambiguities of the work are questions with which we must interrogate the sources from which we read Balinese social and political history: the documents produced by Dutch imperialism and the privileged positions of Balinese aristocrats and priests.

The painting under discussion has been shown to be a work which uses a realistic mode of representation. It is realistic in the sense that it is a direct depiction of a ritual and social context as seen from one particular perspective. This directness contrasts with the metaphoric mode of representation mentioned above, and the co-existence of the two ways of representing things through the use of narrative gave the artists far more scope in dealing with the contexts of their work.

Ritual, like painting, is an act of representation. This painting shows the differing roles rituals can play in the world of Balinese thought. One reading of the painting, that which emphasises the divisions amongst the Balinese/Javanese aristocrats, accords with Clifford Geertz' interpretation of Balinese rituals as crystalising or enacting politics (1980:136). This view, which forms part of Geertz' famous "theatre state" view of nineteenth century Bali, is one in which ritual display constitutes the nature of the nineteenth century Balinese state. The painting, however, demonstrates that ritual has meaning beyond its display. Rituals are foci of politics that are multi-dimensional, and their meaning is never singular. In Geertz' view, meaning is singular, and society homogenous, but in the world of representations, ritual cannot stand for the whole of society, just as a painting cannot stand for the whole of a ritual, and the representation of a ritual in a painting does not constitute the whole of that painting's potential for meaning. Only through a closer study of rituals and their representations in texts, paintings and other art forms, can we understand their role in the systems of signification which served as part of Balinese state formations.

NOTES

1. Until the 1950s or early 1960s, this was still the practice in the Klungkung palaces.

2. The text mentions Banyak Tarawarsa as the one involved in the confrontation, with Rangga Titahjiwa also playing an intermediary role. In a gambuh dance drama performance of the story held by the Mayasari troups of Batuan at Payangan in October 1981, it was Kebo Angun-Angun who challenged Prabhangsa, although nobody played the role of Banyak Tarawarsa.

3. There is also a pun here, since "kuda" means "horse", but is also an Ancient Javanese title.

4. This name suggests a pun between bayang and wayang, especially since the sarad so closely resembles the kekayon of the wayang, which is also known as babat, the "roasting spit" on which the animals are sacrificed. We lack, however, specific data on whether the artist would have known the bayang under that name. Another aspect of this wayang-related punning is the fact that in the Malat, Panji's horse is called Dalang Anteban - a dalang is a wayang puppeteer.

5. This is a remarkable piece of inter-textuality - an offering containing representations of offerings.

6. My informants on this ritual were principally members of the Klungkung royal family, particularly Dalem Pemayun, the eldest son of the last Dewa Agung. Other informants included members of priestly households in Klungkung, and commoners from the village of Kamasan.

7. Bagus 1974:65 describes the ritual process as transforming the malevolent eka dasa Rudra (eleven Rudras) into benevolent divinities. The sengguhu text reproduced in Hooykaas 1974:ch.3 makes it clear that the process involves invoking the origin of all demonic forces in the union of Siwa and Durga, so that by taking these forces back to their origin, and then invoking Siwa and Uma in benevolent forms, the danger can be neutralised.

8. The raksasa or wilmana included amongst the sacrificial animals of our painting should probably be considered as another type of animal.

9. This incident was also used in nineteenth-century gambuh performances.

10. This painting comes from the collection of Donald Friend, who had also seen a number of other paintings of this scene which included Dutchmen. The painting was unfortunately far too worn to photograph.

11. Two rather remarkable paintings from Buleleng show a Dutchman abducting a woman, with the woman's genitals exposed, and two Chinese making love. In these the differences between the Chinese and the Dutchmen are apparent. Both paintings seem obviously satiric, showing the foreigners to be breaking the norms of Balinese behaviour, the Dutchman by having a vagina on the same level as his head (the head is the purest part of the body, the vagina is impure), and the Chinese by stimulating his partner from behind. Both paintings were apparently collected by Nieuwenkamp at the turn of the century, and are now in the Delft Museum collection.

12. This painting was collected by Th. Resinck in the 1930s. It is no. 4491-99 in the collection of the Ethnographic Museum, Leiden.

13. Mads Lange, the famous Danish trader, is described as participating in the negotiations as a servant (parekan) of the king of Kesiman (cf. Schulte Nordholt, 1981).

14. Schulte Nordholt 1981:44, speaks of the Dewa Agung "surrendering" to the king of Kesiman after the battle with the Dutch in 1849, but this is probably more the view expressed by Lange, as a loyal servant of Kesiman, than a political reality, since this would be an absolute infringement of the Dewa Agung's spiritual position as supreme ruler of Bali.

15. Here I am alluding to the nature of the Dutch-Balinese political negotiations, which according to Henk Schulte Nordholt's archival researches (pers. com.) show that the Balinese rulers were nervous about any internal warfare which would give encouragement to the Dutch to intervene (as eventually happened in the case of the wars of the late nineteenth century, although there the Dutch intervention was not military).

16. The author would like to thank Peter Worsley, Hildred Geertz and Elizabeth Young for their comments, and Henk Schulte-Nordholt for last-minute information. An earlier version of the paper was given at the fourth National Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, at Monash University, May 10-14, 1982. Another, different, version was given under the title of "Power, Violence and the Balinese Response to the Dutch", at the Annual Colloquium of Literature at Sydney University in July 1982. Thanks are also due to the Museum Bali, The Ethnographie Museum at Leiden, and Donald Friend for permission to reproduce paintings from their collections.

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