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The Rhetoric of Paintings: Balinese Painters, Dutch Colonists and the Question of Gender Relationships in 19th and Early 20th Century Bali

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ABSTRACT

The present essay is about the interpretation of paintings and how an interest which Balinese painters display in gender relationships in the context of illustrations of ritual in their narrative works on the one hand, contrasts with strong expressions of Dutch disapproval of the despotic nature of the rule of Balinese kings and consequentially the unjust treatment of women in Balinese society on the other. With this in mind, the present paper first considers the representation of gender relationships in a number of Balinese paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and then turns to a discussion of the understanding of Balinese gender relationships of two members of Dutch colonial society in the Dutch East Indies, one a senior bureaucrat, Graaf C.W.S van Hogendorp and the other the protestant missionary R. van Eck. I discuss a play by Graaf C.W.S van Hogendorp, 'Pièce de Circonstance sur la conquête de Bali 1846', written to celebrate the victory of the Dutch army over the Kingdom of Buleleng in 1846 and an article about 'Het Lot der Vrouw op Bali' ('The lot of the Balinese woman'), published in the journal *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* in 1872 by the protestant missionary R. van Eck.

Keywords: narrative painting, ritual, theatre, gender, eurocentrism, war, protestant mission.

1. Introduction

Between the final years of the eighteenth century and the onset of World War II, the industrial revolution and the needs of western capitalism provided the stimulus for the European colonial powers to incorporate Southeast Asia within the orbit of their political power and their economic and cultural influence. This was a process often advanced by violent military campaigning. Within the frontiers of the colonies new political structures were established, centralized and bureaucratized in a way never before experienced. The state

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became capable of reaching the ordinary life of every inhabitant to a degree and persistence rare in earlier periods. Migration to Southeast Asia and within Southeast Asia reached quite new levels. Cities grew in number and expanded. It was a time when the insistent, intensifying and transforming influence of Dutch colonial society and its culture became widespread in Bali and more broadly in the archipelago (Picard 2017, 2020).

It is important that we do not overlook what the indigenous peoples of the archipelago themselves thought, imagined and felt about this period in which the Dutch colonial presence came increasingly to impact upon the worlds in which they lived. We need to identify their perceptions of change—changes of community, of leadership, religion, and gender relationships. Balinese paintings from this period are one important source which sheds light on what painters and their works reveal both about how the Balinese knew, imagined, thought and felt about the world in which they lived and about the visual representation and communication of these ideas, imaginings and feelings through the medium of narrative paintings.

In earlier papers and published articles (Worsley 2014; 2016a; 2016b; 2017a; 2017b; 2018; 2019), I have discussed a number of historiographical issues concerning the expression and reception of the ideas, imaginings and feelings conveyed in Balinese narrative paintings. I argue that painters painted their works from particular points of view, as members of some status, class, kin or religious group and gender (Vickers 1985) and that their viewers also viewed the paintings from these same points of view. Paintings are, as Hobart argues, like all forms of rhetorical exchange, sites of struggle (Hobart 2019:10).

Accordingly, I have considered the importance of the rhetorical effects of paintings and the way they are embedded in exchanges ‘between social agents, simple or complex, who are engaged in the rhetorical processes of ‘criticism, appropriation, repetition, refutation, simplification, [and] abbreviation [...]’. Paintings were works, like the texts which Inden has described, ‘enmeshed in the circumstances in which people have made and used them [...] both as articulating the world in which they are situated and as articulated by’ (Inden et al. 2000:3, 11–12; Davis 2002:1410).

This has involved discussion of a painting’s iconography and design and the role philology plays in the interpretation of Balinese works recorded in manuscripts which provide access to other expressions of Balinese imaginings about those same social and cultural issues to which paintings gave expression. This, I argue, requires understanding the rhetorical context in which each painter and author enunciated what they understood of their Balinese world and which the German medievalist and receptionist Hans Jauss usefully thought of as an ‘horizon of expectations’ (Worsley:1982a; 1982b), one shared by both the

Balinese painters and the viewers of their works.

Historians, when interpreting painted versions of narratives, also need to keep in mind that both the narrative paintings they seek to interpret and the literary and performed versions of these narratives are all embedded in a dynamic process of historically shifting “horizons of expectations” presupposed by successive generations of readers, viewers and audiences—what Fox (2005:90–91) referred to as the “performative reframings” which any work undergoes in the changing social conditions in which its reception takes place over time.

The present essay is about the interpretation of paintings and how an interest which Balinese painters display in gender relationships in the context of illustrations of ritual in their narrative works on the one hand, contrasts with strong expressions of Dutch disapproval of the despotic nature of the rule of Balinese kings and consequentially the unjust treatment of women in Balinese society on the other. With this in mind, the present paper first considers the representation of gender relationships in a number of Balinese paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and then turns to a discussion of the understanding of Balinese gender relationships of two members of Dutch colonial society in the Indies, one a senior bureaucrat, Graaf C.W.S van Hogendorp and the other the protestant missionary R. van Eck.

I discuss a play by the Graaf C.W.S van Hogendorp, ‘Pièce de Circonstance sur la conquête de Bali 1846’, written to celebrate the victory of the Dutch army over the Kingdom of Buleleng in 1846 and an article about ‘Het Lot der Vrouw op Bali’ (‘The lot of the Balinese woman’), published in the journal *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* in 1872 by the protestant missionary R. van Eck.

The present article is about a history of cultural differences, rival values and motivations, which, following Collingwood, render intelligible decisions made and actions taken by the Balinese and European actors on whom our historical inquiry is focussed. Jauss insisted that the historian, if he or she was to identify the characteristics of a ‘horizon of expectation’, had to work inductively from existing historically contemporary works rather than applying anachronistically preconceived categories of literature, and so avoid the dangers of what Hobart refers to as the ‘double discursivity’ involved in any attempt to explain the thought, imaginings and feelings of the subjects of our analysis.

Hobart, following Collingwood, reminds us that we must ‘keep strictly separate—and not confuse—our analytical discourse with those of our subjects of study’ (Hobart 2019:6, 8). We must also be alert to the different rhetorical styles that Balinese painters and authors on the one hand and colonial bureaucrats and missionaries on the other invoke in different contexts to enunciate their

thinking, imaginings and feelings about the world in order to convince the viewers of their paintings, the readers of their writings and audiences of their performances that what they paint, write and perform was true. Collingwood argues that this requires the historian to “re-enact” for themselves the thoughts, imaginings and feelings which motivated these historical actors, both Balinese and Dutch.

2. The Rhetorical Configuration of Paintings

In earlier papers and publications, I identified gender relationships as one important theme in a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century Balinese paintings. Balinese enjoy a rich ritual life as they honour gods and appease demons, celebrate moments of life crisis in the lives of humans and honour ancestors, teachers and sages—rituals celebrated on specified days in the calendar and on houseyards and in house-temples, *banjar* and village temples, the temples of *subak* irrigation system organizations and in the great *sadkahyangan* temples.

It is not surprising then that each of the paintings I have selected illustrates some aspect or other of Balinese gender relationships and does so in a rhetorical context focussed on the imperatives of a variety of rituals: the rites conducted on the houseyard at the time of Galungan, the consecration of a commoner priest or *dukuh*, the ritual of widow sacrifice, and marriage in a royal family. I argue that in each case the painters have configured their narrative paintings in order to persuade their viewers of the validity of some generally shared belief about gender relationships.

I have argued (Worsley: 2016a; 2016b) in the case of the first Brayut painting from the Tropen Museum in Amsterdam [illus. 1], that the painter has sought to impress on his viewers the imperative of carrying out rituals at the time of Galungan at a moment of serious tensions between husband and wife in a commoner family. The tension has arisen because of the gendering of roles within the family.

The painting presupposes two fundamental purposes of Balinese family life: the obligation to give birth to children and to nurture them and the obligation to conduct vital rituals to honour the ancestors. In the painting, it is the wife’s exhaustion from childbirth and the nurturing of children that demands of the virtuous, sexually active male head of the family that he, himself, diligently prepare the offerings and present them to the ancestors, work that is normally the responsibility of women in the family. It is this situation which gives rise to an argument between husband and wife.

The second Brayut painting from the Nyoman Gunarsa Museum of Classical Balinese Art in Klungkung [illus. 2] I have argued also emphasizes

the importance of conducting the required rituals during Galungan but, as the painter does so, he sought to focus viewers' attention on a vision of the commoner family as a convivial and closely-knit community centred on the authority of men, father, sons and brothers (Gunarsa: 2006:6, 104–105; Vickers: 2012:59, 62; Worsley: 2017a; 2017b). In the case of both these works, their painters, as they recount the stories of the father's consecration as a commoner *dukuh* priest and the youngest son's marriage, give expression to an interest in the family as a community in which husband and wife are reconciled and happiness, good health and prosperity are restored.

A second series of paintings illustrates scenes of the self-immolation of widows—Sita's ordeal [illus. 3], the ritual sacrifice of Ratih, God Smara's wife [illus. 4], Prabu Melayu's rescue of his sister Princess Rankesari [illus. 5], and the Death of Siti Sundari [illus. 6]. Each of these paintings is focused on the ritual obligation which royal and aristocratic wives had to join their husbands in death. This was the final act and ultimate expression of a virtuous wife's faithfulness to her husband (Creese: 2005; 2016). Sita's failed attempt to self-sacrifice draws attention first to the opprobrium which captivity in a rival ruler's court had for a queen, and secondly, to the principle of a wife's faithfulness to her royal husband, in Sita's case to Rāma (Worsley 2018 and 2020:318 n.16).

In a remarkable (late) nineteenth century *parba* from Tabanan illustrating scenes from the Burning of Smara, the painter has graphically illustrated scenes of widow sacrifice. Ratih, the divine consort of God Smara, with her companions are in mourning. At the top of the painting is a scene in which the divine sage, Wrehaspati, informs Goddess Ratih that God Śiwa, enraged by Smara's successful attempt to inflame his sexual passion and rouse him from his meditation, has incinerated him. In the scene below on the right Ratih sweeps up her husband's ashes and then in the scene in the lower left of the painting, Ratih is cremated in the presence of God Śiwa (Galestin 1943; Vickers 2012:38–9).

The painting of Siti Sundari's self-immolation (illus. 6) reminds viewers that pregnancy was good reason to absolve a wife of the duty she had to throw herself on the funeral pyre of her husband: the pregnant wife of Abhimanyu, Uttari, was relieved of this duty because she bore her husband's child; while Siti Sundari, Abhimanyu's second wife, joined her husband in death (Vickers (2012:42, 44; Worsley 2018; 2020:318 n.16). Another reason for exception from this requirement was the failure to consummate a marriage. Princess Rangkesari's refusal to be bedded by the King of Lasem was held to absolve her of the duty that she sacrifice herself along with his other wives and further that she remained still in a fit state to serve faithfully a future husband, Raden Ino Nusapati, Crown Prince and future King of Koripan (illus. 5; Worsley 2020:316–319).

Finally, male rivalry and poetic seduction, male priestly authority in the prosecution of the ritual consecration of a royal marriage, and male victory in the battle to consummate marriage are at the centre of the illustration of the story of Princess Indumatī's *swayamvara* and marriage to Prince Aja, Rāma's grandfather [illus. 7]. The painter of this work in his resolve to celebrate the achievements of the male protagonists, whom he has placed at the centre of viewers' attention in the person of Prince Aja, certainly illustrates the importance which the painter attached to Prince Aja's triumphant poetic seduction and sexual conquest of Princess Indumatī (Worsley et al. 2013:655–680; 2014).

3. Two Dutch Accounts of Balinese Gender Relationships from the Nineteenth Century

I want now to discuss the rhetorical configuration of the draft of the play by Carel van Hogendorp, 'Pièce de Circonstance sur la conquête de Bali 1846' and the article published in the *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* in 1872 about Balinese gender relationships by the protestant missionary Rutger van Eck who was resident in Buleleng between 1866 and 1875.

Graaf Carel Sidardus Willem van Hogendorp, the author of the play, had a distinguished career as a senior civil servant under several Governor Generals. Born in Bengal (India) in 1788 when his father, Dirk van Hogendorp, was stationed in Patna as an agent (onderkoopman/2e resident) of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), he returned to The Netherlands in 1799 and, at the age of thirteen, was sent by his father for his education to the military boarding school in Sorèze in the south of France (Compère 1984). Following a distinguished career in Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign and at Waterloo, he was appointed as ambtenaar 2e klasse to serve in Batavia. Under the patronage of Governor General van der Capellen, he was appointed to the prestigious post of the Resident of Buitenzorg and Krawang in 1818 and then in 1823 Resident of Batavia. He returned on leave to The Netherlands in 1827 and in 1830 at his own request he retired from the civil service following his appointment as Graaf.

Carel van Hogendorp returned to the Dutch East Indies for a second time in 1837 and was appointed in 1838 to the influential Raad van Nederlandsch-Indië, an appointment he held until his resignation in 1851, when he returned to The Netherlands for the last time. He died in Utrecht in 1856. Throughout his second period of appointment van Hogendorp held appointments of importance. He served as acting vice-president of the Raad on two occasions and, following the death of the Governor-General Dominique Jacques de Eerens, he was appointed as acting Governor-General between June 1840 and January 1841 when Mr. Pieter Merkus arrived to take up the post.

Alongside his responsibilities on the Raad for finance, personnel, cultures

and monopolies, he was President of the Committee for Education, President of the Board of the Indische Kerk and a leading exponent of the development of industrial rice mills in Java. He published several books. Following his service at Waterloo he worked on a collection of poems, ‘Essais de poesie par Charles de Hogendorp’, and while in Buitenzorg he wrote, ‘Eerste beginselen de aardrijkskunde’ for his children. Then in 1830 he published a book about the Netherlands East Indies, *Coup d’oeil sur l’île de Java et les autres possessions néerlandaises dans l’archipel des Indes*, translated into Dutch in 1833 by J. Oliver, under the title, *Beschouwingen der Nederlandsche Bezittingen in Oost-Indië*.

In 1833 he published, *Tafereelen van Javaansche Zeeden* and on his return to the Netherlands in 1853 he published his memoirs, first in Dutch *Bouwstoffen van een eigen levensschets*, and later in 1856 in French, *Souvenirs de ma vie publique et particulière* (Encyclopaedie van Nederlansch-Indië Tweede Deel:100; Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek, Deel 2:585–586).

4. The Dutch Wars against Buleleng 1846–1849

Following the restoration of Dutch colonial rule in Java at the end of the Napoleonic wars, the Dutch metropolitan and Indies governments remained fearful of British intervention in Bali and Lombok. The presence of the English country trader, George King, in Ampenan Lombok, from the early 1830s, his appointment as *bandar* there in 1839 and his monopoly over the lucrative rice trade between Lombok and the British controlled Singapore brought with it strengthening fears of British expansion in Bali and Lombok. To head off this possibility the Dutch colonial government in Java resumed attempts to conclude treaties with the rulers of the Balinese kingdoms in Bali and Lombok. In these negotiations, the Dutch were insistent that the rulers recognize the sovereignty of the Netherlands Indies government over their kingdoms.

Eventually in 1841, Huskus Koopman, the Dutch Commissioner for Bali and Lombok resident in Kuta Bali, persuaded the rulers of Buleleng, Karangasem and Klungkung to agree to a treaty. The Balinese rulers for their part agreed to the treaty because of the misleading advice of Koopman about the consequences of surrendering the sovereignty of their realms to the Dutch but particularly because of an undertaking by Koopman that the Netherlands Indies government would back their plans to invade Lombok to take revenge on the ruler of the Lombok kingdom of Mataram whom the rulers held responsible for the removal and death of their chosen ruler of the neighbouring kingdom of Karangasem-Lombok. However, J.C. Baud, the Minister of the Colonies in The Hague, reluctant to undertake military campaigns in pursuit of Dutch colonial interests, took the decision to refuse authorisation of the invasion of Lombok. Then, when a treaty between the Dutch Indies government and Mataram,

their avowed enemy, was agreed to, the rulers of Buleleng, Karangasem and Klungkung felt betrayed and no longer under any obligation to adhere to the terms of the treaties they had agreed to in 1841.

When Jan Jacob Rochussen assumed office as Governor General on 1st January 1846, he considered the situation so serious that he decided to take military action against the kings of Buleleng, Karangasem and Klungkung. Rochussen feared the consequences which the defiance of the Balinese rulers would have for the authority of the Netherlands Indies government in Java in particular and elsewhere in the Archipelago. Not only had the Balinese rulers refused on several occasions to comply with the terms of the 1841 treaties and done so in defiance of threats of direct military intervention by the Netherlands Indies government, but they had also continued to plunder wrecks of ships sailing under the Dutch flag.

Rochussen's 1846 military campaign in Buleleng proved successful. Following the Dutch military victory, during negotiations led by the English merchant George King, the rulers of Buleleng and Karangasem, Gusti Ngurah Made and Gusti Gede Ngurah, and their powerful uncle Gusti Gede Jlantik agreed to the terms dictated by the Governor General Rochussen, who made a short one-day visit to Buleleng. However, they did so under protest.

In a letter delivered to Rochussen by King, they explained their concern about what they considered to be the excessive burden of the reparations that Rochussen had imposed on them. Rochussen undertook to consider the matter but in the end did nothing to alleviate the crushing burden he had imposed on the Balinese rulers. The Dutch expeditionary forces were then withdrawn except for some 200 troops who were left behind to garrison a fortress to be victualled by the king of Buleleng. It was not long before the king reneged on the terms of the agreement and set about starving out the Dutch garrison that Rochussen had left behind. Rochussen would have to wait until 1849 and witness the embarrassing defeat of a second expeditionary force in 1848 before the rulers of Buleleng and Karangasem were brought to heel and agreed to comply with the terms Rochussen had set for them (van der Kraan:1985; 1992; 1995).

5. The Play

Van Hogendorp drafted his play to celebrate the victory of the Dutch expeditionary force to Buleleng on the occasion of their return to Batavia in August 1846. However, to date, I have found no evidence to indicate that the play was ever staged by a director whom van Hoogendorp names as Robert.

The play is in two acts, '*Avant*' and '*Après*', 'Before' and 'After', a war between Balinese and Dutch forces. Van Hogendorp chose to set his play in an unnamed Indonesian village and, as he says, '[o]n an island neighbouring

one of the great European settlements in Asian waters', and in the seventeenth century, 1646 to be exact.

Van Hogendorp explains that he has chosen to set the play in this fashion in order to avoid making any too direct a reference to actual events in Buleleng. However, he had perhaps other, and for him, more important matters to consider. Setting the play as he did also meant that he could take liberties with the costuming, in particular the costuming of indigenous women, who, he explained,

[...] nowadays go about with their upper body naked and wearing a sarong; we might suppose that two hundred years ago they were more modest and more sensitive to the cold.

Clearly, he had no desire to see the contemporary clothing standards of Balinese women on stage in Batavia in the mid nineteenth century: actresses, naked to the waist, were quite beyond the pale! Van Hogendorp's choice of names for his Balinese characters is also worthy of mention in this context. The two village leaders, Bukkels Oesman and Salamah, bear Islamic names, and Tamé and Saira, Javanese (?).

The play's stage instructions explain that the play's action in the first act takes place in front of the dwelling of a village chief with its *pendopo* pavilion, and in the second, in the same setting, but now in the aftermath of war, the chief's house has been burnt to the ground. The play begins on a note of despair and sadness and ends on one of triumph, patriotic fervour and hope.

Van Hogendorp recounts two stories. He tells the love story of Tamé, the daughter of the village head, Bukkel Oesman, and Bagoes, the son of a neighbouring and much respected village head, Salamah, who is a friend and confidant of Oesman. The love story of Tamé and Bagoes is set in the context of a second narrative which describes a transition between two contrasting worlds.

In the first act of his play '*Avant*', van Hogendorp presents his audience with a vision of Balinese society as preparations are underway to confront a military attack by Dutch forces. Balinese society is characterized by stark differences of social status and power between, on the one hand, a polygamous Balinese ruling elite who inhabit Bali's palaces and whose status and power places them beyond the rules which governed the lives of commoner villagers.

In the second act, '*Après*', the playwright describes a world-coming-into-being, one in which a victorious, racially and culturally distinct, and monogamous Dutch elite rule over a rejuvenated Balinese society rid of the capricious despotism of Balinese rulers. The prospect is one in which the Balinese ruler is to be restored to his throne but, now under an enlightened

and paternal Dutch administration, the king is to be advised by a commoner Balinese village leadership informed by their own good sense and the lived experience of the benefits of Dutch colonial mores.

The moment of transition between these two worlds is the moment of a decisive military victory when a well-led, courageous and superior Dutch military technology triumphs over an ill-equipped, naive and badly led Balinese army. The audience catches only brief glimpses of this moment of transition in descriptions of Balinese preparations for war in the first act, and in the second, reports of the heroism of Bagoes, Tamé's lover, who commanded a forward position in the defences of the Balinese army and Tamé's fortuitous rescue from the thick of battle by the young Dutch Sub-lieutenant, Alfred.

Van Hogendorp's rhetorical intentions are made most clear in Act 2, scene 2 when the Governor General celebrates and justifies the military imposition of Dutch colonial rule over the Balinese kingdom. He explains to his military commander, Major Dorval, that their task, now that military victory was assured, was to win over the hearts and minds of the Balinese. The Balinese, he explains, were a people in need of enlightenment. He was convinced that enlightening the Balinese would ensure that, when the Balinese ruler was restored to his throne, he would be better disposed and would understand what his own best interests and those of his subjects were. In explaining his point of view, the Governor General refuted another European understanding of what 'civilizing' the Balinese involved.

In the second act Tamé fortuitously falls into the hands of the young Dutch Sub-lieutenant Alfred. He rescues her from the thick of battle and smuggles her back into his quarters, quite determined to keep her as his companion, as many of his fellow comrades were accustomed to do. Alfred describes Tamé as 'uncivilized', as his 'untamed housekeeper', a 'little demon' and a 'frightened little tiger'. Clearly in his view she was in need of civilizing if she was to be the kind of companion he required her to be for the period of his military service. As he explains to his immediate commander, Lieutenant Gustave who is set on persuading him to surrender Tamé to her father, he planned to teach her European ways, to read and write, to sing and draw.

The commoner village leadership, with whom the Governor General was negotiating in the absence of the Balinese king who had fled, were grateful for the return of Tamé and warmly welcomed the promised new world which the Governor General promised them. Bukkel Salamah, for example, assured the Governor General that this, the Governor General's first visit was the dawning of a new day.

As we have explained, the tale of the two lovers, Tamé and Bagoes, runs in tandem with the story of military victory. Van Hogendorp has used this

lovers' tale to enhance the emotional impact of his play and its justification of Dutch colonial rule over Buleleng. The lovers' tale is calculated to play on the sentiments of the play's audience.

In the first act, the plight of Tamé and Bagoes as victims of a capricious despotism is intended to rouse the audience's sympathy. The play opens with Tamé singing of her despair at the consequences of the determination of the young dissipated polygamous prince Goesti Agung to marry her. Not only will she not realize her dream of marrying Bagoes but, confined to the palace with the many wives of the prince, she will lose her freedom to join her friends in the fields: Later in Act 1, in a scene in which Prince Goesti Agung in the absence of Tamé's father rudely enters the house compound on which Tamé lives, Tamé explains that she has little interest in the prospect of one day being roasted alive beside the inanimate corps of the prince. She announces that she would rather die than submit herself to a future life with the Prince. Bagoes too, as he prepares for war, whispers in an aside to Tamé that he too has no desire to face a future unmarried to Tamé. He announces his desire to meet his death in battle. In the second act, the audience is witness to Tamé's emotional and fierce resistance to the advances of the young love-struck Dutch Sub-Lieutenant, Alfred, and then to Tamé's and Bagoes' joy and hope of marriage in the dawning of a new and enlightened age. So grateful are Tamé and Bagoes that they throw themselves at the feet of the Governor General offering to be his slaves forever. The Governor General refuses the offer and asks them to stand and assures them of the goodwill of the Europeans.

Tamé's release is the signal for the accord between the Dutch officials and a group of commoner Balinese to be settled in the absence of the Balinese ruler. The play then proceeds to its conclusion with an exchange of statements of mutual respect between Dutch and Balinese and then patriotic song in praise of the Dutch King and Queen. Major Dorval, the Dutch field commander, sings first an air in praise of the Dutch king and then one in praise of the Queen. Finally, the Governor General brings the play its finish with an air extolling his King.

6. Rutger van Eck and "The Lot of the Balinese Woman"

R. van Eck (1842–1901) served as a protestant missionary in Buleleng between 1866 and 1875, when he returned home to the Netherlands because of illness. He is reported to have carried out his work as missionary for the Utrechtse Zendingsvereniging with energy and great optimism. However, in the end, the initiative to establish the mission permanently in Bali proved a disastrous failure when the one convert he had made, Gusti Wayan Karangasem, murdered his successor, J. de Vroom, one evening in June 1881. Gusti Wayan

Karangasem and his co-conspirators—de Vroom's servant and gardener—were condemned to death and hanged in Batavia before a letter arrived from the missionary society asking for clemency. The one remaining missionary, a young man by the name of Wiggelendam, was told to leave Bali and it was not until the early 1930s that the protestant mission returned to Bali (Swellingrebel 1948:62–66; 1978:229).

However, van Eck did acquire a considerable knowledge of Balinese society and culture which resulted in the publication of a Balinese Grammar in 1874/1876, a Balinese-Dutch dictionary in 1876, the texts and translations of two Balinese poems, the *Megantaka* in 1875 and the *Bagoes Hoembara* in 1876, articles about Balinese proverbs in 1872 and 1875 and a number of accounts of Balinese society which he published in a collection entitled *Schetsen van het Eiland Bali* between 1878-80. Following his return to the Netherlands in 1877 he was appointed as docent and then lector in Malay and the Geography and Anthropology of the Netherlands East Indies at the Koninklijke Militaire Academie in Breda. He passed away in Breda in 1901 (Swellingrebel 1978:334).

Van Eck writes in a quite different rhetorical style in his 1872 article than van Hogendorp does in his play. He provides his readers with detailed first-hand descriptions of his own observations of Balinese life. He explains that his account of the place of women in the life of the Balinese was to interest Dutch readers in the lives of the Balinese people and designed to convince them that the life of a Balinese woman was one of great misery. He explains the grounds on which he based this opinion.

Firstly, he argued, there is an important distinction to be drawn between Christian and non-Christian societies. In a Christian society women occupied a social position to which they had rightful claim as the better half of a husband while in non-Christian societies a woman was treated as little more than a chattel to be sold by her parents and bought by a husband to be his slave or to be secluded from view and brought out in public only on festive occasions (1872: 370). The situation, he noted, was particularly the case in societies in which marked differences of status prevailed as they did in Balinese society in which aspects of the ancient Indian caste system still had their place (1872: 571).

In contrast, in societies in which men are treated as equals, women enjoyed a higher standing. His great concern for the plight of women in Bali, was described in the hope that a Christian Netherlands and its metropolitan, colonial governments and missions would sooner or later succeed in introducing reforms to bring about the kind of cultural change in Bali which would result in Balinese men realizing their injustice and Balinese women enjoying all the privileges that we (Europeans) accord our women (1872: 393–394).

Van Eck discusses in some detail various practices leading to the contract of

a marriage—*mapadik*, a marriage arranged by parents, and two forms of kidnap, *marangkap* and *ngejuk/melegandang*. When discussing *mapadik*, an ancient and religiously approved form of marriage contract, van Eck is highly critical of the venality which motivated the practice. He speaks of the sale of the bride and the treatment of children as chattels by parents to dispose of as they will (1872: 373). His views on the practices of both forms of kidnap are more strident still.

Unsurprisingly Van Eck's strongest disapproval is reserved for *ngejuk/melegandang*, the violent kidnapping of a bride against her will from the street, field, even from her loom on a family houseyard. What incensed him most, however, was not just the violence of the practice itself but the fact that it was a practice accepted by the majority of people and that it, like *marangkat*—a form of kidnap to which the bride consented and which was much in vogue in the period when van Eck lived in Buleleng—could result in a legitimate marriage.

The popularity of *marangkat* (consensual kidnap), van Eck (1872: 873–874) interestingly explains in terms of changing attitudes amongst the Balinese, and which the Balinese themselves explained as a response to the presence of Europeans, their attitudes towards Balinese marriage practices and their subsequent influence on the behaviour of young Balinese of marriageable age.

Van Eck describes a growing resistance to marriages arranged by parents among younger Balinese. He says that in nine cases out of ten young Balinese of all castes were choosing consensual kidnap as their favoured pathway to marriage. So much in vogue had it become that even in cases where a couple were assured of parental consent they preferred *marangkat* instead. In the view of older Balinese, the growing lack of respect for parents was due to the presence of foreigners particularly in Buleleng where contact with the outside world was most frequent.

Polygamy was, in van Eck's opinion, a form of abuse and a stumbling block in the way of a happy marriage. That it was not widespread in Bali, according to van Eck, was due not to any noble sentiment. It was, he said, again simply a matter of money, whether a man had the means to support more than one wife, and further that, in any case, men were easily able to satisfy their sexual pleasures outside marriage. So, it was really only the rulers and some headmen who had the means to support more than one wife.

Van Eck was also of the view that in the circumstances a married woman in Bali was expected to live, she could expect no happiness in her married life. The law gave her no right to any such expectation. She had to be satisfied with whatever her husband decided. Her reward was to surrender all she possessed and, most importantly, to ensure that her husband was spared the shame of having no male children. If the marriage was infertile or there were only daughters, a woman lost what little respect she had, and what is more, was

condemned in the next world to be horribly punished by being hanged from a tree by God Yama's henchmen and worse still.

For the rest a woman was expected to serve her husband as a slave: everywhere one meets women, van Eck says—at the market, in the fields, anywhere one finds oneself—one sees women doing the heaviest work, while their husbands spend their time smoking opium, gambling or cockfighting. At home the wife's meagre earnings had to pay for opium or cover gambling debts and frequently the reward for her day's labour was to be mistreated. The wife was responsible for all the domestic chores: the upbringing of the children, cooking, weaving, trading in the market, feeding the dogs, pigs and chickens and in the fields harvesting the rice. No wonder, van Eck says, women often took to smoking opium to forget the chains that enslaved them (1872: 386–390).

Widowhood, van Eck considered, was the worst moment in a woman's life. By the time that van Eck was working in Buleleng, an agreement with the Balinese rulers had been reached that the self-immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands would be stopped. In fact, it was not until 1903 that an end was finally put to the practice, van Eck was certainly well aware that, at the time he was writing, Balinese had not yet abandoned support for what was in his opinion, a barbarous custom.

What he found particularly surprising was women's acceptance of the custom, not because their death in the cremation fire was an act of love—men had done little to inspire such devotion. Rather it was a choice between self-sacrifice and the sad conditions in which they would have to live as widows, and which van Eck describes as 'nothing but misery often in the most terrible form' (1872: 390).

Widows, and their daughters, unless there was a son and heir of the deceased father, became the lawful possessions of the ruler. They were taken into the palace and there they remained at the pleasure of the ruler, certainly safe from dangers in the outside world. However, as van Eck reminded his readers, they were subject to the 'greed, sensuality and vile behaviour' of the kings (1872: 391). He describes the ill-treatment to which widows and their daughters were subject while under the protection of royal courts. The most fortunate became one the ruler's concubines if they were young and beautiful enough. Others were presented to the ruler's lawful wives to be at their beck and call day and night or to spend their days weaving and selling their *kain* on the streets until late in the evening. Daughters too were often handed over to a ruler's favourite, or sometimes sold to a loyal ally outside the court. Worse still was the fate of those who became one of the army of public dancers who in the ruler's service travelled the land for the profit of their royal masters.

7. Conclusion

This article is about the interpretation of paintings and a history of cultural differences, rival values and motivations. For the Balinese painters, that is the painters whose works I have chosen to discuss, the imperatives of ritual motivated their interest in gender relationships. The two paintings of the narrative of the Brayut family display an interest in the tensions arising from the gendering of responsibilities in the family life of Balinese commoners on the one hand and the imperative that the family be a convivial and closely-knit community organized about the authority of its male members. Family solidarity was considered essential particularly at times of important rituals such as the celebration of Galungan when ancestors are the focus of the family's ritual attention and at the time when a father's consecration as a commoner *dukuh* priest and the youngest son married and assumed headship of the family.

The second series of paintings focus viewers' attention on the ritual of self-immolation of widows. The paintings of Sita's ordeal and Ratih's self-immolation illustrate the obligation required of virtuous wives of royal and aristocratic husbands that they join their husbands in death. The other two paintings establish that there were constraints on the application of this obligation—consummation of a marriage and pregnancy. The final painting's illustration of a royal marriage has at the centre of its attention royal male rivalry and poetic seduction, male priestly authority and male triumph in the battle to consummate marriage.

For the Dutch administrator and his missionary colleague, on the other hand, their interest in Balinese gender relationships was motivated by criticism of the nature of Balinese society and the treatment to which Balinese women were subject. Both van Hogendorp and van Eck are highly critical of the despotic rule of Balinese political and social elites. Both attributed the despotism to stark differences of social status and power between a polygamous Balinese ruling elite whose status and power placed them beyond the rules which govern the lives of commoner villagers.

In the case of the missionary van Eck, the absence of Christianity in particular was a cause of the arbitrary and capricious treatment of Balinese women. Both van Hogendorp and van Eck were of the view that Dutch rule would bring the enlightenment which Balinese commoners craved, and that the adoption of European and Christian ways would see the dawning of new and better times, when Balinese rulers would be guided by the good sense of commoner advisors under the benevolent rule of the Dutch East Indies Government.

Differences of understanding about the nature of Balinese gender relationships were of course only one aspect of broader differences in

understandings of the world that fuelled armed conflict between the Dutch East Indies government and Balinese realms in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We have seen that the Dutch East Indies government was victorious on the field of battle when negotiation failed to achieve their goals, and that the rulers of the Balinese realms were compelled in the end to surrender sovereignty over their realms to Dutch control.

However, it seems that this was not the end of Balinese resistance to Dutch presence in Bali. A Malat painting in the collection of the Museum Bali in Denpasar illustrates the story of the stabbing of Raden Ino Nusapati's horse, Dalang Anteban, by his older brother of lower status, Raden Misa Prabangsa (illus. 8; Vickers, 1984 and 2005:52–61). The second scene, on the left of the painting, to which the painter has clearly given greatest visual emphasis, illustrates an event which is not recorded in any other version of the Malat. This scene is visually focussed on an illustration of a *caru* ritual or *bhuta yadnya*, something in the order of a *Pancawalikrama*—rituals intended to purify the world of demonic influence.

In this illustration of the ritual the demonic presence is represented not by the usual beings whose bulging eyes, fangs, and corpulent and hirsute bodies mark them as demonic, but by black-coated-and-hatted Dutch soldiers who cavort under an image of a *sarad* offering, at a moment of ritual climax, the moment when the cosmos is on the point of being transformed and rid of the presence of the demonic.

The painter of this work has imagined an alternative solution to the threat of Dutch interference in and control over the Balinese world, a threat he imagined to be beyond the capacity of the Balinese courts to solve through wise council and armed conflict. He has placed his hope in the capacity of ritual to remove the demonic scourge of Dutch intervention (Worsley 2020:310–315, 322). We have returned to where we started our discussion of the paintings, to the recognition of the reliance which Balinese placed on the efficacy of ritual in order to ensure the good health and prosperity of their lives.

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Illustrations



Illustration 1: *Brayut* Late 19th C, pigments on cotton cloth, *tabing*, Charlie Sayers Collection, Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Coll. No. TM-2058-2.



Illustration 2: *Brayut*. 19th C, pigments on cotton cloth, 213 x 73 cm, *langse*, Nyoman Gunarsa Museum of classical Balinese Art, Klungkung



Illustration 3: *Sitā's ordeal, tabing*, 1915, pigments on cotton cloth, 136 x 177 cm, Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Coll. No. TM-118-13.



Illustration 4: *The Death of Rati*, 19th century, pigments on wooden boards, 132x148.2 cm, *parba*, Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Coll. No. TM-1586-34.



Illustration 5: *I Wayan Gereha*, Kamasan, Malat: *Surud Bela*, mid-19th C, pigments on cotton cloth, 76 x 24 cm, *langse*, ex-Collection Pasedena Museum, Collection of the Honolulu Museum of Art, 13257.1.



Illustration 6: *The death of Siti Sundari*, 19th century, *langse*, 71 x 216 cm, from the Doremus Missionary donation, Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History in New York, 70/1709.



Illustration 7. *Sumanasāntaka*, late 19th C, pigments on cotton cloth, 1.212 x 75cm, *langse*, Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Coll. No. TM 809-137b.



Illustration 8: Malat: “The stabbing of Raden Ino Nusapati’s horse Dalang Anteban”. Kamasan, mid to late nineteenth century, pigments on cotton cloth, Museum Provinsi Bali, 2212. (Photograph by Adrian Vickers, see in Vickers 1984:9).