# Rangda Revisited: Pluralizing Euramerican Stereotypes of Bali's Queen of the Witches

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended to help remedy the characterization of the Balinese figure of Rangda, Queen of the Witches as a monolithic symbol of evil. Throughout the thesis I explore the notion that Rangda has not simply one, but many overlapping identities. In Chapter One I discuss Rangda as she has been constructed in the past by non-Balinese writers, both in the context of scholarly writing and that intended for a general Euramerican audience. Chapter Two consists of a description of the physical appearance of Rangda followed by an exploration of a variety of contexts in which she may be encountered and how her nature may change in accordance with each new context. In Chapter Three I argue that while undeniably a destructive force, Rangda should not be characterized as simply a force of evil. Chapter Four focuses on how the construction of Rangda as a terrible woman may reflect and affect Balinese social mores with regards to feminine behavior. Chapter Five looks at Rangda's relationship with tourism and the way in which her use in advertising threaten to propagate the image of the witch as a one-dimensional symbol of evil.

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# INTRODUCTION

## AN OPENING SNAPSHOT

Huge round eyes start angrily from the mask-like face of Rangda, Queen of the Witches in the 1974 painting by the male Javanese artist Hendra Gunawan entitled "Barong III" (See Fig. 1). Swirls of bright red represent the firey tongue which flows from a thick-lipped mouth lined with great tusks, clashing with the magenta streaks in her wild hair. Veins zigzag over long breasts which flop as she dances on a promontory high above a beach with its throngs of people in ceremonial dress. Nearly a meter and a half tall judging from the dimensions of the canvas and placed emphatically in the foreground, the figure of Rangda seems oddly separate from the tiny, sketchy human figures in the distance. Here are the people of Bali, and in their midst stands the dragon-like figure of the Barong, the mythical creature whose white magic protects Bali-Hindus from the dangerous black magic of the witch.

The contrast between the large-scale, highly worked image of Rangda and the more small-scale, loosely defined figures found in the rest of the painting serves to set her apart from the community, perhaps reflecting the way in which the darker forces which she has come to symbolize are so often viewed as undesirable. On the other hand, Hendra's use of strong colors which reverberate between fore and background, so that all the hues in one may be found in the other, draws the two elements back together and establishes Rangda firmly as a participant in the activities of the human community. This is reinforced by the painting's title, "Barong III",[1] named for the sacred dance in which Rangda and Barong do battle. Rangda looms large in the image culture of Bali, but, as this thesis will show, hers is a figure

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[1] Astri Wright believes this title to be a mistake and not the artist's original title. The painting is in the process of being retitled as "Rangda". Although "Rangda" is a better descriptive title due to the prominence of the figure of Rangda, "Barong" is not totally inappropriate, as this name is sometimes used in the tourist literature as the title of the dance in which Rangda appears to challenge her rival.

which can be painted in many colors. She may hold the place of a storybook witch or a character in a dance drama at the same time as she functions as a deity, a symbol of the forces of chaos, or an image of the exotic with which to sell Balinese culture to tourists. These are shifting, overlapping roles whose currency varies from one point in time to another and from individual context and person within each point in time.

**SUMMARY OF CENTRAL ARGUMENT**

Rangda, the Queen of the Witches in Balinese mythology and art, was one of the first subjects to seriously interest foreign artists and writers in Bali during the first half of the twentieth century. The image of Rangda was at that time, and remains still, one of the most pervasive ones in the symbol-rich culture of Bali.[2] The study of Bali by non-Balinese - in a range of modes from amateur, colonial, scholarly and touristic - has grown much since German artist Walter Spies came to live in Ubud village in the late 1920s. But in spite of the many changes in the approaches taken by anthropologists and other writers in the discourse on the society and culture of Bali, very little has been done to update those early ideas about Rangda and to question whether they still hold true now.

While I do not suggest that these early views are wrong, I will argue that they are in some respects outdated. Although Spies worked via his painting and photography to challenge the vulgar image of Bali brought to the island by early twentieth century Western tourism which was further propagated through such media sources as Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Bali Ha'i", the image of a rich folk culture with which he sought to replace it was itself strongly influenced by his own

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[2] Rangda is well known in Hindu Bali through stories told in dance drama, through the appearance of her mask in processions and though the stone sculptures which can be found in the death temples and graveyards. This familiarity with the image of Rangda extends to the academic discourse outside of Bali as well: "Rangda and Barong are compelling, almost irresistable symbols, and nearly everyone who studies Balinese culture eventually writes about them." (John Stephen Lansing Evil in the Morning of the World: Phenomenological Approaches to a Balinese Community. University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1974. p. 75)

personal vision of Bali.[3] Spies was given a free hand in his work on the pseudo-documentary film *Island of the Demons*, a story in which the happiness of two lovers was threatened by a Rangda-like witch.[4] It is my intent for this thesis not to present the romantic and sensual image of the darker side of paradise à la Spies and his Friedrich Murnau inspired visions of Rangda as seen in the *Island of the Demons*.[5] I wish to attempt instead a study of the Queen of the Witches which is not skewed by a fascination with the exotic Other, but one which utilizes later studies in critical anthropology to inform art history and arrives at some sense of how the contemporary Rangda is constructed and perceived.

Spies's Rangda was an exotic and mysterious being of Gothic proportions. For anthropologist Margaret Mead,[6] and subsequently for her colleague Jane Belo whom Mead encouraged to undertake a study of Rangda,[7] the Queen of the Witches was in many regards seen as a perfect case study within psychoanalytic theory of the fear aspect of the mother figure. This theoretical framework becomes problematic for the present day, given the serious critiques of Freudian theories in the latter half of the twentieth century, beginning as early as Carl Jung and culminating in post-colonial criticism.

Anthropologists such as John Stephen Lansing and Adrian Vickers have in the past expressed concerns about simplistic representations of Bali similar to those I hold regarding the way in which one or two interpretations of Rangda have been

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[3] Adrian Vickers Bali: A Paradise Created. Singapore, Periplus Editions, 1989. pp.105, 107.

[4] Vickers 1989: 107. I have not personally seen this film, but according to Vickers it was made by Victor Baron von Plessen and Dr Dahlseim, two German intellectuals who knew little about Bali themselves and consequently relied heavily on the impressions of Spies from his time there.

[5] Vickers 1989: 106. The famous German filmmaker Friedrich Murnau, of whom Spies was a personal friend, directed the 1922 horror classic *Nosferatu*. Vickers credits Murnau for Spies's interest in the use of dramatic light and shadow in film and suggests that his very interest in the macabre subject of Rangda was likely inspired on some level by this type of horror film.

[6] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis. New York, New York Academy of Science, 1942.

[7] Jane Belo Bali: Rangda and Barong. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, [1949] 1966.

privileged over all others.[8] However, as Rangda was not the focus of their studies, they did not pursue the concern they raised beyond a couple of explanatory sentences. What I hope to accomplish here is to pick up some of the threads which they have left hanging and to explore some of the alternate ways in which Rangda may be viewed. In this thesis I propose to present an interdisciplinary art historical discussion of Rangda, that is to say I write as an art historian but draw from sources in anthropology as well as religious, gender and cultural studies.

The thesis also works loosely with the sense of pluralism which is often associated with postmodernism as it is spoken of by such writers as Susan Sontag. Sontag writes that "the new [postmodern] sensibility is defiantly pluralistic; it is dedicated both to an excruciating seriousness and to fun and wit and nostalgia."[9] This sort of pluralism is appropriate for a figure such as Rangda with her many overlapping identities. I link Rangda's appearance not to a single identity, as I feel art history has done in the past, but to the many identities suggested by anthropological writing, by my close reading of a number of artworks in which Rangda occurs, and by my own contacts in Bali. This link serves as a jumping off point for an exploration of the Queen of the Witches and her various possible implications for the contemporary culture of Bali, but one which neither seeks to romanticize her nor views her through a Freudian filter.

Having set these parameters, I must acknowledge that even the use of the word "witch" with regards to Rangda is suspect. Although Rangda is often referred to as a witch, as this appears to be the closest word in English to the Balinese "*leyak*", a person who has studied black magic and uses it destructively, the connotations of the word witch in Balinese culture are not the same as those in European culture. Unlike witchcraft in the context of the Christian religion, in Bali

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[8] Vickers 1989: 123; Lansing 1974: 75-76.

[9] Susan Sontag Against Interpretation. New York, Deli. 1966. p. 304 cited in John Storey An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture (second edition). Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1998. p. 199.

"acts of sorcery are hardly distinguishable from acts of worship, except in intent and consequences." [10]

I have decided to use the word "witch" throughout this thesis as this was the word most often used by my contacts as an appropriate translation for "*leyak*", and it is the word which appears most frequently with regards to Rangda in both the tourist and the academic literature on Bali. This choice may appear to run counter to my aim to avoid exoticizing Rangda, especially when it appears in a title such as "The Queen of the Witches". However, the fact that "witch" was used by my contacts interchangeably with *leyak* and that they would also on occasion use such terms as Queen of the Witches suggests that they were not uncomfortable with this terminology. The fact that Euramerican readers accustomed to the idea of a witch as a skinny old woman with warts on her nose, a tall, pointed hat and a broomstick may tend initially to impose this image onto the Balinese entity is admittedly problematic. My decision to use the word regardless of this is meant as a continuation of the efforts of those feminists and followers of the Wiccan tradition who have been working to reclaim the word "witch", allowing for it a much more inclusive definition. Rather than interpret Rangda according to the model of the Wicked Witch of the West, I would ask the reader to broaden his or her idea of witch to include the Balinese model.

My overall approach in this thesis has been to draw from contemporary anthropological studies of Balinese culture in order to "update" a topic which has not been dealt with at any length since Jane Belo published Bali: Rangda and Barong in 1949 and to demonstrate that there is more to Rangda than existing studies would suggest. In addition to my reading of anthropological texts, I will also be drawing on an analysis of visual depictions of Rangda in two-dimensional, three-dimensional and performance art. I do not only discuss material culture made for and by people in Bali, but also work by Javanese artists such as Hendra Gunawan

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[10] Hildred Geertz Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994. p.81.

or Kartika Affandi and even materials designed specifically for tourists to Bali. The use of the art by non-Balinese is a partial reflection of the unavailability, perhaps even nonexistence, of contemporary works by Balinese artists on the subject of Rangda (I will discuss this further with regards to women artists in particular in Chapter Four). The use of tourist art and writing is intended to provide some insight into how Rangda is portrayed (and marketed) to non-Balinese and where disjunctures may occur between this portrayal and that for contemporary Balinese. The thesis will question the extent to which Rangda can be said to be evil in the context of popular Bali-Hindu thought, it will explore the implications of the character and the appearance of the witch for the construction of the feminine and gender roles, and will present some perspectives on Rangda's currency in the Bali of the late 1990s.

Concepts such as these also take on a different spin when one challenges the notion propagated by the tourist industry that the Queen of the Witches is in fact evil. It did not take too many interviews to find out that the touristic pamphlets and books which painted Rangda in broad strokes as "the evil, hair-raising witch, a symbol of villainy, hatred, lust, jealousy and everything else that's nasty"[11] or as a practitioner of black magic who dwells in a world of darkness were not addressing the whole picture.[12] Scholarly works by non-Balinese occasionally hint at a more multidimensional character for Rangda, but they also tend to use the above manner of description as a default.[13] When I asked an American woman living in Baliand married to a Balinese man whether Rangda was always evil, she corrected me, saying that "many Balinese would argue that Rangda is *not* evil. She is part of the

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[11] From a pamphlet accompanying *Wayang Kulit* performances given by Made Gender in Ubud during the Summer of 1999.

[12] From a pamphlet accompanying *Wayang Kulit* performances given by Made Gender at Ubud's Kertha Accommodation on July 18, 1999; Brian Bell ed. Insight Guides: Bali. London, Apa Publications, [1970] 1997. p. 91.

[13] See for example Lansing 1974: 76, 80.

balance."[14] Since the literature on Bali either speaks of Rangda predominantly as "the most evil of all",[15] or is simply silent on the extent to which Rangda is actually perceived as a negative, bad or undesirable being, I had not up to this time come across this. To the Balinese people whom I subsequently interviewed, she came across as something infinitely more complex, a necessary part of the balance between light and dark, part of the cycle of life and death. Also, as will be demonstrated later, individual perceptions of this complex figure can vary greatly. The one-dimensional depiction of Rangda cited above is indicative of the material written for a general audience made up of non-Hindu tourists - domestic and international, Christian, Muslim and other - and is composed with the assumption that visitors only have an attention span of a few words. Brevity is of the essence in the context of reading material designed with tourists in mind, and Rangda described briefly appears as above. Anthropologists who have written on Bali do not stand accused of the same crime. However, when they speak of Rangda at all, they have tended to deal with her solely as she appears in the realm of dance.[16] Hence, more research and analysis remains to be done before this character is really done justice.

Art history has in the past ignored Rangda outside the realm of a basic and monolithically interpreted iconography. This is likely due to the fact that no one with a strictly art historical scholarly background has yet undertaken a study of Rangda in particular. When she appears at all, it is either too briefly to explore her in any detail, or it is in a context in which the history of art as an exploration of visual

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[14] Field research notes #4, p.1.

[15] Willard A. Hanna Bali Profile: People, Events, Circumstances 1001-1976. New York and Hanover, N.H., American Universities Field Staff, 1976. p. 135.

[16] See for example Clifford Geertz Person: Time, and Conduct in Bali: An Essay in Cultural Analysis. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966. pp. 60, 61; Margaret Mead "The Strolling Players in the Mountains" in Jane Belo ed., Traditional Balinese Culture. New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1970. pp. 139, 143; Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies "Dance and Drama in Bali" in Belo 1970: 284,285; Lansing 1974: 75 - 88; Hanna 1976: 135, 136.

culture is not the main focus. Rangda's appearance in sacred dance is often touched upon, but only to the extent that it illustrates the points made with regards to iconography.[17] For example, her large teeth may be pointed to as a symbol of the bestial, or the flame sometimes shown topping her head as a representation of her magical powers.[18] Art history has left all other avenues of discussion - Rangda's role outside the boundaries of the dance stage, the possible reasons behind her construction, the place she holds in the imaginations of individual Balinese people and how this is manifested, etc. - to the fields of anthropology and religious studies, which in turn have focussed only passing attention on her. My work may appear to straddle a number of fields; I feel this is necessary in order to deal with a figure such as Rangda who is most often encountered through the media of visual or performance art, but who also has a complex and wide-reaching history and present-day influence beyond these realms in her mythology, ritual, and the ways her archetype resonates in Balinese people's minds. It is not sufficient to talk of Rangda simply in terms of iconography if one wishes to gain an understanding of her shifting identities and numerous possible perceptions of these. Together with her nemesis, the Barong, Rangda is, according to John Stephen Lansing, "possibly [one of] the most popular symbols among the Balinese".[19] The degree to which people in Bali today still believe in the power of Rangda over twenty-five years after the publication of Lansing's book may vary, but her image and attributes remain widely known throughout the culture.

Surrounding my research are a number of key questions. For example, what negotiations between good and evil may exist behind Rangda's deceptively straightforward iconography? If the face of evil is an old woman, does it follow that

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[17] See for example Judy Slattum Masks of Bali: Spirits of an Ancient Drama. San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 1992. p. 80; David A. Napier "Balinese Faces and Indian Prototypes" in Masks, Transformation and Paradox. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1986. pp. 18-20.

[18] Geertz 1994: 17.

[19] Lansing 1974: 75.

Balinese culture with regards to the feminine condemns female power as a purely negative force, or that it has an ageist bias against women? To what extent did the individuals interviewed perceive Rangda as a force of evil in today's society? How do individuals in Bali feel about the adoption of Rangda by the tourist industry as one of the key symbols by which Bali is marketed to the world? What currency does Rangda have in Bali during the late 1990s? How might an individual's perception of this alter according to the spatial context of the interview?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The existing literature related to my topic is characterized by both abundance and lack. On the one hand, there are many studies dealing with various aspects of broader cultural matters as they occur in Bali. On the other hand, material which focuses directly on Rangda is scant. The fact that much of it is in addition not particularly recent presents an obstacle to anyone whose interest extends to Rangda's place in Bali during the late 1990s. R. Ng. Poebtjaraka's De Calon Arang (1926), a translation from Kawi into Dutch of the story of the historical Rangda, is frequently cited as background information in the writings of subsequent scholars who touch on the subject of Rangda. Jane Belo's Bali: Rangda and Barong (1949) remains the definitive study of Rangda in its effort to contextualize the role of the witch in Balinese culture. However, as I will discuss further in Chapter One, Belo tends to privilege a psychoanalytic interpretation of the material which overrides anything the author might have said about Rangda's multiplicity. One of the few other sources which discusses Rangda at sufficient length to include her name in the title is a documentary film called Bali, the Mask of Rangda (1975) which presents her as she appears in trance dance and in her battle with the Barong.[20] This film was made for a general audience, and thus explores the subject matter in

[20] A fictional account of Rangda was undertaken in the form of the 1927 film *Calon Arang*. This was the first fictional film to be set in Bali. With no copies surviving, little is known about the film or its makers, although Adrian Vickers thinks it more than likely that the makers of the film had connections with the Italian owned cinema in Denpasar. (Vickers 1989: 104.)

far less depth than Belo's study. It does, however, include film footage of a dance performance which I found to be invaluable for observing the subtleties of the relationship between Rangda and Barong. The 1989 article by Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff, "A Sacred Cloth of Rangda: Kamben Cepuk of Bali and Nusa Penida" deals closely with one aspect of Rangda's ritual attire, the *cepuk* cloth. This source did serve to add another layer to my iconographic understanding of the witch. However, the way in which the text began by setting up Rangda as "the embodiment of black magic and the opponent of the mighty Barong"[21] and then ceased all mention of her for the remainder of piece did not satisfy my interest in other aspects of her character.

The body of literature which discusses Rangda in passing, as an illustration of some other point, or only as an allusion to what is presumed to be common knowledge is much more abundant. The following are some of the sources which I found the most useful, either as a source of inspiration or as a means of learning where more research remains to be done. Miguel Covarrubias' Island of Bali (1937) was useful as a means of understanding how artists and writers from outside Bali during the 1930s viewed Balinese culture. Of Jane Belo's other writing, I found Traditional Balinese Culture (1970) to be the most helpful to my research. This volume of essays selected by Belo includes work by Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, Colin McPhee, and Belo herself. Even though the book is devoted to discussions of "traditional Balinese culture", and the contributors number among the better known authors of material on Bali in this time period, it remains suprising just how little Rangda appears there. In his book Evil in the Morning of the World: Phenonmenological Approaches to a Balinese Community (1974), anthropologist John Stephen Lansing devotes the short fourth chapter to Barong and Rangda in their function as symbols of good and evil.

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[21] Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff "A Sacred Cloth of Rangda: Kamben Cepuk of Bali and Nusa Penida" in Mattiebelle Gittinger ed., To Speak with Cloth: Studies in Indonesian Textiles. Los Angeles, Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1989. p.181.

However, although Lansing hints at the multiplicity of Rangda's character, he did not follow through enough in his further discussion of her to satisfy me in this regard. The writing of Clifford Geertz, so inspirational to the work of Unni Wikan a generation later (Wikan1990: xvii), has also proved worthwhile to me, though to a fledgling art historian interested in Rangda (who he does not discuss), its greatest benefit was as a very necessary introduction to one important branch of the field of anthropology. The two essays by Geertz which most aided my research into Rangda were Person, Time and Conduct in Bali: An Essay in Cultural Analysis (1966), and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" (1972).

Moving into the 1980s, a number of scholarly works by anthropologists writing either about broader issues pertaining to Balinese culture or about one specific aspect of it were especially useful when it came to situating Rangda. An essay by Barbara Lovric entitled "Bali: Myth, Magic and Morbidity" (1987) provided me with an alternative reading of the iconography of Rangda as something springing from a historical instance of plague. Adrian Vickers' Bali: A Paradise Created (1989) and James A. Boon's Affinities and Extremes: Crisscrossing the Bittersweet Ethnology of East Indies History, Hindu-Balinese Culture, and Indo-European Allure (1990) were a revelation in that they examined not only Balinese culture, but the ways in which the culture has been studied. The self-reflexivity of their approach has had a strong influence on the way in which I have positioned myself as a writer in this thesis. Unni Wikan, a Norwegian social anthropologist whose husband is fellow anthropologist Fredrik Barth, has written a book called Managing Turbulent Hearts: A Balinese Formula for Living (1990) which succeeded in dealing with Balinese people on a much more personal and individual level than I had come across previously. Wikan's contacts are not simply abstract "Balinese people", but men and women with distinct and different personalities and personal histories whom she came to know as acquaintances and friends during her time in Bali. This has informed the manner in which I treat the voices of the individuals with whom I interacted in Bali in this thesis. Balinese Worlds (1993) by Fredrik Barth

added to my understanding of Balinese social mores in general and of sorcery in particular, an area in which The Peoples of Bali (1996) by Angela Hobart, Urs Ramseyer and Albert Leeman was also helpful. Though not as scholarly as the other sources listed in this section, Fred and Margaret Eiseman's two volumes of Bali: Sekala and Niskala (1990) proved useful for general reinforcement of ideas and perceptions about various components of Balinese culture.

In this thesis, imagery in the form of photographs I obtained from a number of the above sources are supplemented with my own photographs and some courtesy of Astri Wright. For examples of paintings of Rangda and other related subjects, I relied mainly on two sources: Hildred Geertz's Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead (1994), and F. Haks, Jop Ubbens, Adrian Vickers, Leo Haks and Guus Maris's Pre-War Balinese Modernists 1928-1942: An Additional Page in Art-History(1999).

**METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This thesis is informed by an analysis of the literature on Rangda and related subjects. The analysis has been supplemented with a summer spent in Bali (June - August 1999) in order to see for myself aspects of the culture I had only read about and to conduct interviews with a selection of Balinese men and women from different spheres of life.

I would like to be able to say that I held few preconceived notions when approaching this project, but my views from the outset were necessarily colored by my cultural background, the experience of writing a short paper on Balinese masks for an undergraduate course, and by an ongoing interest in the stories of witches from a variety of other cultures. I would like to say that my findings were based purely and objectively on the data I collected, but the reader would immediately recognize this as an impossible claim. First of all, being a Canadian of European descent, I am not writing from the vantage point of a Balinese, or even an Indonesian. My own cultural heritage cannot help but inform my interpretation of the

culture of Bali. As Clifford Geertz writes in his essay "'Native's Point of View': Anthropological Understanding":

> The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion, largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives, and that uncertainly enough, is what they perceive "with" -- or "by means of", or "through"... or whatever the word should be. In the country of the blind... the one-eyed is not king, he is spectator.[22]

In other words, a researcher coming from outside the culture cannot expect to perceive Balinese realities as people in Bali would. I use the plural of reality because if Balinese culture is to be understood as non-monolithic, then it follows that individuals will not perceive Balineseness in the same way; the reality of a Brahmin priest is going to differ from that of a low caste widow. Differences in age, gender, caste, geographic placement all have the potential to vastly alter perceptions. Some generalizations are necessary when one is studying a topic, as there would never be enough time to interview everyone (assuming everyone would even want provide testemony) or enough space to record every view. At the same time, there is a considerable potential for misrepresentation in a monolithic version of Balinese culture(s). For example, while it may be acceptable to say that Rangda is a pervasive force throughout much of Bali, it would be misleading to say that the Balinese all believe in Rangda as this does not take into account some regions, the most obvious of which being the Muslim part of North Bali (the island generally being characterized as Hindu), which do not include her as a major figure in their mythology. Cautiousness with regards to generalizations and an openness to multiplicities are especially important for me as an outsider who cannot expect to be able to perceive all of the often subtle differences between that which is widespread and that which exists on the individual level.

By the very fact that I have undertaken this study rather than a Balinese person, it could conceivably be said that I am joining in and propagating that

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[22] Clifford Geertz "Native's Point of View": Anthropological Understanding" in Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. New York, Basic Books, 1983. p. 58.

discourse on Bali which has been conducted outside Bali by non-Balinese whose voices are too often privileged over the voices of the Balinese themselves. This is an undesirable position for anyone who sees equal access to self-representation as an ideal, but I am not convinced that the solution can be found in silence. The best I can do in the writing of this thesis is to make my cultural vantage point as obvious to the reader as possible. Throughout this thesis, therefore, references to aspects of Euramerican popular culture which have been triggered by association during my research occur. These are not included with the intention of being flippant. They are there for several reasons: as an acknowledgment of the practical fact that the majority of any potential audience for this thesis is likely to be made up of people with backgrounds not entirely dissimilar to my own - or at least more closely linked to mine than the people who generated the figural meanings of Rangda, and as a constant reminder to that audience of my own cultural bias.[23]

My North American popular culture references could also be said to take a cue from Boon's approach in Affinities and Extremes, specifically in the chapter entitled "Siwaic Semiotics: Allegorical Machineries, Spatial Desituations, Polycosmology, Parodic Performance", in that it emulates conventions found in Balinese performance traditions.[24] The use of laughter and the familiar often has the ability to provide an antidote to suspicion towards the unfamiliar. In dance, it is the role of clown or servant characters to break into the action at intervals in order to reiterate in the vernacular, and make fun of, the complex ideas presented in the elitist language of the main characters. Similar tactics may be used in writing. In addition to disseminating sometimes difficult concepts in an approachable manner, this approach also serves, I believe, to demystify the subject matter through the

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[23] Cross-cultural analogies can be an aid to the understanding of foreign concepts. In fact, Jane Belo makes just such an analogy when she likens Rangda to Santa Claus, the Tax Collector and the Angel of Death rolled into one. (Belo 1949: p.19)

[24] James A. Boon Affinities and Extremes: Crisscrossing the Bittersweet Ethnology of East Indies History, Hindu-Balinese Culture, and Indo-European Allure. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1990. p.90.

promotion of empathy. This is especially important for me in the context of this thesis, as one of the things I am seeking to do is to avoid exoticizing Rangda - and hence the Balinese - as an example of a sort of "oriental horrific" as I feel writers in the time of Covarrubias did.[25]

At the outset of this project, I did not have a specific agenda regarding my treatment of the subject of Rangda outside the notion that I was interested in the gender implications of this figure for aspects of Balinese culture and in the place which she holds in Bali during the late 1990s. Interview questions were constructed according to this basic direction. Although some of the answers fit with whatever preconceived notions I inevitably held, many were quite unexpected. The information given to me by some contacts totally contradicted the information given by others, creating a picture of Rangda which varies considerably from individual to individual.

With regards to research undertaken in Bali, I need to be clear as to the scope of my work in the field. The goal of this thesis is not to offer a definitive study of Rangda, but to provide an additional page to the past scholarship in which she appears. My interest has been in personal perceptions of Rangda, especially those of individuals whom I had the opportunity to interact with socially on more than one occasion. For this reason, combined with the relatively short period of six weeks' field work for which I had funding and with only a very basic knowledge of Indonesian which necessitated cooperation with a local translator, I did not interview a large sampling of individuals from throughout the island. Most of my work was done in Ubud, with visits to some of the surrounding villages as well as occasional excursions to places such as Tabanan or Klungkung.

Another factor which I wanted to take into account is the matter of individual

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[25] Adrian Vickers writes that "Bali the archetypical oriental paradise has played a part in Western modernity as exemplar of what is lost in the process of becoming modern." (Adrian Vickers "Modernity and Being "Moderen": An Introduction" in Adrian Vickers ed. Being Modern in Bali: Image and Change. New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1996. p.25) That authors such as Covarrubias and Spies were technically artists rather than academics did little to lessen the impact of the image which they projected onto Balinese culture.

experience and opinion. This comes into play in any study involving perceptions held by people, Balinese or otherwise, towards a given subject. It would be too easy to dehumanize the individuals interviewed by compiling the data collected and placing it all under the heading of the one culture group, in other words, rendering Balinese culture monolithic. This has been the approach taken by the tourist industry, fueled by the desire to simplify Bali's cultural identity into something which can be easily packaged and sold. The commodification of cultures can be found to a greater or lesser extent worldwide, but the intensive tourism in Bali has caused the effects to be particularly noticeable here. In this thesis, I in no way presume in my findings from my work in the field to encompass the views of even most Balinese on the subject of Rangda. They reflect the views of a limited cross section, a small number of individuals as they chose to transmit them to me at a particular point in time.

The essentializing approach of tourist presentation and consumption runs counter to that taken by recent academics writing about Bali in the last decade, who have been at pains to underline the complexity of Balinese culture. This has not always been the case, especially among writers who were not academics. Covarrubias' Island of Bali is a case in point. Covarrubias was not an academic but, like Spies, an artist. In spite of this, the popularity of his book over the years lent his words a weight which rivalled that of more scholarly studies. James Boon points out the tendency of Covarrubias to make just such generalizations for the sake of presenting a more seamless narrative.

According to Miguel Covarrubias, for example,

"The Balinese say that a house, like a human being, has a head - the family shrine; arms - the sleeping-quarters and social parlor; a navel - the courtyard; sexual organs - the gate; legs and feet - the kitchen and the granary; the anus - the pit in the backyard where the refuse is disposed of" (1937:88). Balinese, at least select ones do indeed say (and write) such things, as do other Indonesians who like to liken domiciles to crocodiles, ships, macrocosms, intercourse, and so on. Yet these tropes are just that - tropes - and are not

to be generalized as a culture's tacit creed or central doctrine.[26]

In the essentializing mode, an anecdote told to me by the painter Murni about being terrified by an apparition of Rangda she saw when returning from the cinema one night with her boyfriend turns into a statement along the lines of: Balinese people are understandably frightened of Rangda, the widow-witch who may periodically appear as a nightmare vision on dark, deserted roads or elsewhere, and is capable of causing terrible illness. Such a statement does two things. First of all, it erases the subject's identity: in this case, a woman from West Bali who spent her childhood in Sulawesi (Indonesian islands to the northeast of Bali), is a divorcée, and practices painting in a non-traditional form.[27] It erases her identity as an individual capable of autonomous actions and opinions which need not invariably be a function of her identity as a Balinese. Secondly, the statement would suggest that all Balinese people relate to Rangda in the same way.

Unni Wikan opens Managing Turbulent Hearts with a quotation from Mark Hobart: "I do not wish to suggest that there is any essential Balinese culture. There are only the myriad statements and actions in which people living on the island of Bali, and calling themselves Balinese, engage."[28] For Rangda also there are many perspectives possible and many interpretations based on them. However, as Rangda is unique to Bali, it is still in a sense possible to describe all these differences as fitting into a single, unified whole under the heading of Balinese culture. Such an approach could effectively gloss over the multitude of different life experiences which cause people in Bali to perceive Rangda in the various ways

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[26] Boon 1990: 71, citing Miguel Covarrubias Island of Bali. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1937, and working from the writing of V. Turner and E. Bruner eds., The Anthropology of Experience. University of Illinois Press, 1986.

[27] Astri Wright "Selftaught Against the Grain: Three Contemporary Women Artists in Indonesia (and a Researcher from Abroad)" in May Datuin Flaudette ed., Women Imaging Women. Manila, University of the Philippines, forthcoming 2000. p.17; Field research notes #5, p.1.

[28] Unni Wikan Managing Turbulent Hearts: A Balinese Formula for Living. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1990. p. xv.

suggested by this thesis. At the same time, a researcher, both in the library and in the field, is constantly confronted with just such generalizations. For example, John Stephen Lansing writes in an essay called "Barong and Rangda: Balinese Symbolism of Evil" that: "The Barong, *to the Balinese* [my emphasis], is the archfoe of Rangda, the witch who controls black magic and delights in feeding on the entrails of young children."[29] This statement implies that every person in Bali, by virtue of being Balinese, views Barong and Rangda in this fashion. Among the people whom I interviewed in Bali, not everyone limited their observations to what they perceived as individuals. A middle aged, male temple priest who begins statements with the words "In Bali, we believe...."[30] implies a unity of belief among all Balinese people which is only marginally less generalizing than the words of the foreign anthropologist. Such a statement can easily give rise to an essentializing one if I as the researcher report, based on the information from my contact, that "the Balinese believe" this or that with regards to "their culture".

Mark Hobart's further definition of culture as a construction is relevent here. Concepts of culture and society are "in no small part outsiders' [and these may come from as far away as another continent or as close as another village] constructions of an amalgam of processes, interpreted and disputed by those involved."[31] Both Rangda and the culture of which she is a part are changeable entities varying in accordance with time, place, and individual perception. In this thesis I avoid essentializing Bali in the same way I avoid essentializing Rangda. However, since many of my sources, especially the earlier secondary sources, do refer to the Balinese when indicating what the writer thinks to be majority views, I

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[29] Lansing 1974: 75. See Covarrubias 1937: 194; Belo 1949: 12; C. Hooykaas Religion in Bali. Leiden, Brill, 1973. p.2; Hanna 1976: 136 for some other examples of statements made about the beliefs and practices of the Balinese in general.

[30] Field research notes #1, p.2.

[31] Mark Hobart "Introduction: Context, meaning and power" M. Hobart and R. H. Taylor eds., Context, meaning and power in Southeast Asia. Ithaca, Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1986, p. 8 cited in Wikan 1990: 14.

am compelled to use similarly general wording when citing these sources. I will, however, ask the reader to remember that generalizations, even those which have been widely accepted, are just that. The use of these more general statements in the body of the thesis will also be tempered by those sections in which individuals with whom I spoke in Bali share their personal perceptions with regards to Rangda.

Though my personal contacts were relatively small in number, they came from a variety of backgrounds. Between my thesis advisor and my Balinese research assistant, I was put in contact with experts on general Balinese religion and culture. These included the director of the largest art museum in the Peliatan/Ubud area; a school teacher in Tabanan; a *pemangku*; a *pedanda*; and a *balian*.[32] In addition, I talked to a couple who run a homestay in Ubud; a female artist who lives just outside of Ubud in Pengosekan; an American woman who had married a Balinese man and taken up residence in Peliatan just south of Ubud; and some of the young women who made up the staff of one of the many Internet cafés appearing in recent years in the town of Ubud. Individual responses to my topic were as diverse as the people. Comfort levels when it came to speaking freely about Rangda or about magic and witches in general also varied greatly: where some subjects seemed glad to explain their perception of Rangda to me, others displayed a marked reticence with this particular topic. The issue of witches or black magic is a senstitive one in general, since it is difficult as a researcher to know the extent to which the individual being interviewed believes in black magic. An individual who believes strongly may be afraid to discuss it from fear of repercussions, or he or she may simply not feel it a suitable topic to discuss with someone who is both a stranger and a foreigner.

I mention this to point out that the language barrier is not the only significant obstacle faced when conducting research in Bali, or anywhere in the world outside

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[32] *pemangku* = family or village priest, generally of the Sudra caste
*pedanda* = Brahmin priest, of a higher caste than a *pemangku*
*balian* = traditional healer/magician, of a lower caste than a *pedanda*

of one's own culture group, for communication is a multi-step process depending not only on grammar, but on the countless complex, culturally specific signifiers which imbue language with meaning beyond the words themselves. These may take the form of body language, the way in which words are chosen according to various contexts, the nature and length of the silences which punctuate speech, the avoidance of speech on certain topics, and so on. The discussion of these conceptual differences, as relevant to the topic of Rangda as she is encountered in Bali, form the core parts of my thesis.

**OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter One provides a general introduction to Rangda as she is situated in the context of Balinese religion, art, and popular perceptions and in the context of the discourses on Bali shaped by artists and scholars from outside the culture, beginning in the first half of the twentieth century.

Chapter Two opens with a discussion of the background and iconography of the Queen of the Witches and goes on to explore the multiplicity of her identities in Balinese culture. I do not present these identities as rigid categories from which one is to be chosen as correct to the exclusion of the others, as there appears to be no single, simple definition of Rangda. Rather, in a reading inspired by the variety of overlapping perceptions voiced by my contacts in Bali, they are presented as numerous roles filled by Rangda. Thus, she may be seen alternately, and at times simultaneously, as a historical figure *and* a character in sacred dance *and* a symbol of balance or harmony *and* a deity, both in her own right and as an aspect of the Hindu Goddess Durga as she occurs in Bali. This section is grounded in the late 1990s by a discussion of the extent to which Rangda's power is viewed seriously in Bali today.

Chapter Three questions the notion by which Rangda can be defined solely as an agent of evil as has been done in much of the tourist literature and in the academic writing which mentions her only in passing, often in the context of a

discussion on black magic in general. Based on the views of my contacts in Bali, I argue that destructiveness is not inherently synonymous with that which is evil or undesirable. Rangda is associated with the goddess Durga, a link which even tourist pamphlets occasionally acknowledge. A section of this chapter discusses the implications of these associations with Durga, who destroys ignorance and enemies of the truth, rather than Kali, a goddess who threatens to destroy not only individuals but the whole world. This exemplifies the types of changes which occurred in Indian Hindu religion and mythology as it was adapted to Bali. A number of my interviews with individuals in Bali are cited in this chapter as a means of demonstrating that not all Balinese consider Rangda to be evil. Ways in which Rangda may serve not to harm but to preserve society as it stands are outlined here.

Chapter Four explores Rangda's role in the construction of gender in Bali. The extent to which Rangda may or may not serve to teach, vilify or empower women will be discussed in addition to Rangda's role as a negative example of appropriate female behavior. The existence of a possible male equivalent to Rangda in the form of the Demon King Rawana from the *Ramayana* is postulated; as such an equivalent would alter the extent to which it could be said that women are singled out as a symbol of evil in Balinese mythology and iconography. The fact that Rangda occurs in a ritual context while Rawana is found in performances of puppets and dance which are less overtly sacred is also signalled. The dance battle between Rangda and the Barong is discussed here, with attention given to the possible implications of the fact that Rangda is rarely performed by a female dancer. Here too I note the apparent absence of imagery by women artists in Bali which engages with the subject of Rangda.

Chapter Six forms the conclusion of this thesis. Based on my discussions with individuals in Bali, I examine the extent to which Rangda is thought to remain a real and potent figure rather than a purely mythical one, that is to say a character who exists in stories as a means of transmitting cultural values but who is not

considered "real" outside that context. I also examine whether or not the continuing use of the witch as a symbol of Balinese culture through which to promote the island to tourists is deemed appropriate by the Balinese themselves. Next, the discussion returns to Rangda's position in the academic discourse outside of Bali, summarizing the changing nature of this discourse between the first decades of the twentieth century and the present. As has been already stated, developments in the complexity with which Balinese culture is dealt with academically have not, in my view, been proportionately matched by developments in the study of Rangda in particular. It is hoped that this thesis will aid in rectifying the imbalance.

# Chapter I

## Situating Rangda in Past Discourses

Balinese Hinduism, also called *Agama Hindu Dharma*, is related but not identical to the Hinduism found in India. It built around a number of deities but dominated by a particular reverence for Siwa.[33] Though it may be described as a Siwaistic sect, Balinese Hinduism views Siwa not simply as a single entity, but as a vital part of the *Trimurti*, a trinity made up of the gods Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa. The power of the three gods of the *Trimurti* is then united in the form of Sanghyang Widi Wasa, the ultimate manifestation of the divine in Bali. The power of Sanghyang Widi Wasa can in turn be divided by two in the form of Rangda and Barong, in three as has been said, and on to include all deities in the Balinese Hindu pantheon. This collapsing and expanding of identities is aptly expressed by the Indonesian motto *bhinneka tunggal ika* - unity in diversity. Balinese Hindu cosmology has the ability to take into account for both the unified nature of the whole and the complexity of the parts which come together to create that whole.

Many aspects of Balinese Hinduism originated in India, including the names and basic natures of a number of the deities and the transmission of the myths which surround them. Bali was extensively Indianized by the late tenth century via the island's connection with nearby Java, both through intermarriages among the royal houses and through Javanese military action.[34] Despite this, the earlier animist tradition and ancestor worship practiced by the people of Bali was by no means wiped out, neither in this period nor later when Islam gained power in Java after the

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[33] Siwa is the Balinese form of the Hindu god Shiva. Balinese spellings will be used whenever possible. Hence Shiva = Siwa, Vishnu = Wisnu, and Devi (the Great Goddess) will be written as Dewi.

[34] Hooykaas 1973: 1.

fall of the Majapahit empire in 1515.[35] Indeed, honoring the spirits of ancestors and a whole host of other spirits is still a vital aspect of daily rituals today and the absence of such attention would be seen as akin to neglecting to honor the gods, as these spirits have become one with the gods.[36] Hinduism as a religion has the capacity to be many different things, including magical and Tantric practices. This flexibility facilitates the incorporation of the local practices of each new area adopting Hinduism. Thus, the strong belief in Bali in the prevalence and potency of magic is also a legacy of traditions existing in Bali before the introduction of Hinduism. This legacy of a magic as a force which is equally present in both left and right hand forms is thought to contain the roots of the island's most powerful conduit of black magic, Rangda.

This background information is accepted by scholars of Bali as a basis for the understanding of Rangda, but in many cases is also quickly abandoned as the discussion veers towards more European frames of reference. I refer in particular to an interest in the romantic darker side of Balinese culture as embodied by Rangda, and to the interpretation of the witch via psychoanalytic theory. The first has been most evident in the writing of Spies and Covarrubias, and the second in that of Mead and Belo.

"The Bali Hai (sic.) of *South Pacific* had nothing directly to do with the people who lived on Bali in the 1930s, but everything to do with Bali's image."[37] Thus wrote anthropologist Adrian Vickers in his 1989 work Bali: A Paradise Created. He speaks of a Bali constructed by and for a foreign audience. This image was propagated not only in those books written with holiday goers in mind, but is evident from the 1930s

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[35] Islam has since become the primary religion in Indonesia, with Bali alone retaining a substantial Hindu presence. Although I deal almost exclusively with Hindu Bali, the island is also home to Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, and Bali Aga (those who still follow the old Balinese animist traditions).

[36] Hooykaas 1973: 23.

[37] Vickers 1989: 126.

output of the members of what Vickers calls the Bali circle.[38] Walter Spies, Beryl de Zoete, Margaret Mead, Willem Stutterheim and others were fascinated by both the loveliness of the island and its people and by the darker side of paradise, with its witches and violent exorcism rites. The influence of Spies in the propagation of such images appears to have been considerable. His striking photo of Rangda emerging from an eerie haze during a Barong performance is often reprinted in books on Bali (See Fig. 2).

Originally appearing in Spies and de Zoete's 1938 Dance and Drama in Bali, the photograph descriptively titled "Rangda in Barong Performance" epitomizes the construction of Rangda as an exotic denizen of darkness. The figures of three witches are foregrounded against a backdrop of palm trees rendered in silhouette by the mist and the quality of light. Brandishing their magical white cloths, they approach the viewer with their claw-like fingers outstretched. One could almost read demonic glee in the tilted back head of the central figure as she leers out at the viewer. It is not entirely clear why the photograph shows more than one Rangda. I am not aware of any performance of the Calonarong in which more than one dancer at time wears the mask of the witch, although it is not unusual for Rangda to appear with a number of her pupils.[39] De Zoete and Spies did document an event in which several Rangda masks belonging to the same village were brought out to be worn by members of the village who fell into trance, possessed by the spirit of Rangda.[40] Although the photograph was likely taken to document this very event, Spies was probably more interested in using the image as a means of conveying a sense of Rangda as he had come to understand her: the violent, monstrous, and supernatural witch; the maker of terrifying, inhuman cries who is capable of inducing

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[38] Vickers 1989: 123.

[39] I Made Bandem and Fredrik deBoer Balinese Dance in Transition: Kaja and Kelod. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford, Singapore and New York, Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 112.

40 De Zoete and Spies in Belo 1970: p. 285.

a state of trance.[41]

When I was in Ubud, the image could be found in large quantities in the shops as cover art for a recent novel by Michael Weise entitled On the Edge of a Dream: Magic and Madness in Bali. Clearly, Spies's Rangda is still being presented to tourists as an image of the exotic, magical, dark side of Bali. Early on in my stay I Wayan Sugita, my assistant, suggested that I should read this book to help my understanding of Rangda.[42] I asked him whether or not he had personally read it. It turned out that he had not read it, but had seen it in the shop. This conversation caused me to question my assumption that material targeted at the tourist market was quite separate from material created for and by people in Bali. When Wayan looked at the cover of Weise's book did he see an image of a Rangda he believed in, causing him to recommend the book to me as what he felt would be an accurate portrayal of her? Or did he identify the image and the book as something made for purely for non-Balinese, suggesting I pick up the book because I fit the profile of the target audience? It may be impossible to answer this, but what is clear is the way in which the legacy of the dark and the exotic from the 1930s has lingered on into the 1990s.

In the few studies from the early part of this century which have dealt with Rangda in a less exoticizing manner, the figure of the witch has been primarily dealt with in terms of psychoanalytic theory.[43] The following excerpt from Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis will give the reader some idea of how Rangda was seen through this filter:

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[41] De Zoete and Spies in Belo 1970: pp. 270, 272, 279.

[42] Field research notes #10, p.1.

[43] Barbara Lovric "Bali: Myth, Magic and Morbidity" in Norman G. Owen ed. Death and Disease in Southeast Asia: Explorations in Social, Medical and Demographic History. Singapore, Oxford and New York, Asian Studies Association of Australia and Oxford University Press, 1987, pp.138, 139.
Lovric cites the following examples: Bateson and Mead 1942; Belo 1949; and M. Le Cron Foster "Synthesis and Antithesis in Balinese Ritual" in A.L. Becker and A. Yengoyan eds., The Imagination of Reality. Norwood, Ablex, 1979, pp.175-96.

> While the Balinese child is passing through this first period of responding with passion to his mother's gay, disassociated teasing... he is also the spectator of the drama in which the Balinese express their feeling about just such a mother-role. The Witch play, the Tjalonarang, the definitive dramatic theme of Balinese parent-child relations, not only expresses the residue in the adults of what they experienced as children, but also is watched by children and shapes their reading of the experiences to which they are subjected daily. It colors the child's appreciation of his mother's behavior, and stylizes his attitude toward her.[44]

The teasing referred to by Bateson and Mead came from an instance in which they had witnessed a mother teasing her tiny son by twiddling his penis, an instance which Adrian Vickers speaks of as one of the crucial moments in the couple's study of Bali.[45] The frustrated child and the teasing mother are likened in this context to trance dancers attempting to confront the figure who constantly provokes them, only to render impotent their efforts to fight back with the small daggers they carry. The Barong is likened to a benevolent and protective father figure. To Jane Belo, Rangda is "a representation of the fear aspect of the Mother Figure."[46] This statement reinforces the notion that analysis such as this says more about the analyzer than the analyzed: we can draw from it that Belo was influenced by the psycholanalytic theories popular at the time she was writing.

"To be a good classical Freudian is to hold first, that all children entertain highly explicit sexual designs on at least one parent and murderous designs on the other, and, second, that the repression of those desires, even though it occurs in everyone, can bring on hysteria many years afterwards."[47] In the case of Rangda, however, both of these drives appear to have been placed on the mother figure. Mead has written that Balinese men seek as sexual partners the archetype of the

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[44] Bateson and Mead 1942: pp.34-35.

[45] Bateson and Mead 1942; cited in Vickers 1989: 122.

[46] Belo 1949: 38.

[47] Frank Cioffi "Was Freud a Liar?" in Frederick Crews, ed., Unauthorized Freud: Doubters Confront a Legend. New York, Penguin Putnam, 1998. p.34.

beautiful dancing girl, but that upon marriage, the girl would turn into Rangda in her relations with her husband. The man knows this will happen, but carries on nonetheless because he is unconsciously seeking someone who resembles his own mother.[48] In addition to being the parent to whom the male child is sexually attracted (female children are strangely not addressed outside of the idea that they will eventually become Rangda), the witch is also said to be the object of the child's murderous designs. Thus, acting out their repressed frustration towards their mothers, men who fall into trance during the dance performance will repeatedly attempt to stab the mother figure.

The use of Freud as the primary means of explaining Rangda is problematic on two levels. Firstly, Mead's collapsing of the cross-gender aspects of the Oedipus complex and the erasing of Electra is not convincing in terms of classical psychoanalytic theory. Secondly, I agree with Barbara Lovric's impression that "such theories seem anachronistic and inappropriate within the context of the culture, the myth and the morbidity. Obviously, there are many layers of meaning."[49] I do not want to take so strong a position with regards to psychoanalytic theory that I would approach this entire thesis as a means of launching an attack on Freud, and in any case, this lies outside the framework of this study. However, a discourse which has been conducted largely from this vantage point when there are so many other ways of approaching the material remains a problematic one. Any study which privileges one interpretation of Rangda to the exclusion of all others strikes me as inadequate for a full and rich exploration of the topic. In addition, if a single interpretation *must* be used, I find psychoanalytic theory to be a particularly inappropriate choice since, like Lovric, I see nothing in the cultural and social structure of Bali which supports such an interpretation.

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[48] Bateson and Mead 1942: 36, cited in Belo 1949: 38. This was the one point on which Belo disagreed with Mead.

[49] Lovric 1987: 139.

I have highlighted these two ways in which Rangda has been interpreted in the past because these have been the interpretations privileged by past writing which deals with Rangda at any length. Subsequent writing, be it for an academic audience or for tourist publications, has tended to deal with Rangda very briefly. The tourist literature continues to propagate the notion of the exotic with pamphlets advertising spectacles such as "The infamous tale of black magic: Calonarang!!".[50] Even when not so obviously exoticising, the limited space which may be allotted to Rangda in the context of material written about Bali in general for tourists leads to much simplification of her character. One of the most truncated and one-dimensional descriptions I have found is on a web page displaying a painting of Barong and Rangda by an unidentified artist which is set with the caption "The Barong dance depicts the ever present duel between Barong and Rangda - the forces of right and wrong."[51] At the other end of the tourist spectrum, in an extensive description by tourist guide standards, she is described as:

> The widow-witch Rangda - a manifestation of Siwa's consort.... She rules the evil spirits and witches who haunt the graveyards. Her world is darkness, and her specialties lie with the practice of black magic, the negative, destructive force of the left.[52]

Although this sort of description fits well with the image of Rangda presented by Spies in his photograph of three Rangda's emerging from the mist (see Fig. 2), it rings less true when we look back at the painting by Hendra Gunawan with which I opened this thesis (see Fig. 1). Here, though she may be seen as a destructive force, the riot of pinks, blues, yellows and reds with which she is rendered (I have yet to see a Rangda mask which includes either pink or blue) make her less of a purely malevolent being than the essentialist description would suggest. Hendra's palette makes her appear more grotesque than evil. Intentionally or unintentionally,

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[50] From a pamphlet advertising *wayang kulit* performances put on nightly for tourists at a hotel in Ubud during the summer of 1999.

[51] Hal Kacanek - Gallery Page. http://www.drhal.net/pdrhal/pages/view/gallery

[52] Bell 1997: 91.

the use of yellow in her hair and part of her costume could be taken in accordance with traditional Balinese color symbolism to denote wisdom.[53] Also, Rangda is shown facing away from the figures on the beach, aiming her demonic gaze and magical gestures elsewhere. As she does not menace the people involved in the ceremony, she seems more akin to the goddess Durga, destroyer of evil, than Kali, the barely controllable destroyer of all things. I will discuss Rangda's relationship with these two goddesses further in Chapter Two.

Scholarly writing has come to avoid exoticizing Rangda, but has done little to question the psychoanalytic readings of the previous generation. John Stephen Lansing expresses some dissatisfaction with Belo's interpretation of Rangda as Fear itself,[54] but after a single paragraph listing alternative readings suggested by his Balinese contacts (some the same as, some different from readings proposed by my contacts), he drops the reference and reverts back to naming Rangda simply as "the personification of the evil powers in the universe."[55] Adrian Vickers has drawn question marks behind both the romanticism of Spies and the Freudian bias of Mead with regards to their approaches to the witch,[56] but since Rangda was not the focus of this study, he did not follow through by proposing alternative interpretations. Part of my aim for this thesis is to pick up where Vickers left off.

The need to allow for more complexity than is generally done in discussions of Rangda starts even at the level of the background to her identity. Rangda cannot be categorized simply as a wicked witch. She is a historical figure from 11th century Java, she is the villain in a play, she is a terrifying demonic figure found lurking around crossroads and graveyards, and she is an aspect of the consort of the Hindu god Siwa, who also takes the form of the young and gentle rice goddess Dewi Sri.

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[53] Slattum 1992: 50.

[54] Belo 1949: 36.

[55] Lansing 1974: 81. See "Rangda and Barong as Aspects of Durga and Siwa" in this thesis.

[56] Vickers 1989: 105, 122.

To people in Bali today, as is clear from my interactions with individuals and from a piecing together of the multiple fragments of information found in scholarly texts, she can be all of these things at once, taking on different aspects in different situations to fill a variety of agendas.

# Chapter II

## Rangda's Singular Appearance and Multiple Identities

At this point I will discuss in more detail the overlapping identities of Rangda based on contemporary Balinese perspectives. The question of Rangda's identity is a deceptively complex one due to the fact that it varies in accordance to the context. Rangda is a title which refers to a historical figure, the villain in a play, and a goddess, roles which signal subtle changes in her nature. According to Lansing, she is also, along with the Barong, arguably the most popular symbol among the Balinese.[57] Sometimes, shifts in nature may be signaled by changes in name, so that Rangda, Randeng Direh and Mahendratta may all be used to refer to the same being.[58] "The word "*rangda*" in Balinese translates to "widow". This *rangda*, without the capitalized "R", does not refer to a specific person but is a generic term. This is not to say that the two words are unrelated, for although the technical translation is "widow", the association with Rangda often leads to a translation as "witch", or even "widow-witch'. When asked, some of the Balinese people whom I interviewed would say that the word *rangda* means widow, but the idea of sorcery, though often not directly and specifically linked, was rarely far off. This is in all likelihood due to an association made between a *rangda* and *the* Rangda, Queen of the Witches.[59]

For example, Balinese artist Ida Bagus Nyoman Tjeta's *Balinese "Witches"*,

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[57] Lansing 1974: 75. Although it may be hard to prove the level of popularity alleged by Lansing in such an image-rich culture, it is safe to say that Rangda may be the most *complex* of Balinese symbols.

[58] Rangda is the name given to the Queen of the Witches; Randeng Direh is derived from the word "rangda", literally "widow", and the old East Javanese region of Direh - hence "Widow or Direh", the original Rangda; and Mahendradatta is the name of the historical figure thought to have been the basis of the story of Rangda. Among the people I interviewed, the name Randeng Direh was used only in the introduction of a retelling of the story of the original Rangda. Thereafter, and in all other contexts, the name Rangda was consistently used, both to denote the witch and as the Balinese word for widow.

[59] In India, widows have often been blamed by their in-laws, in whose eyes they hold very low status, for their husband's death and treated with suspicion accordingly. (Elisabeth Bumiller May You Be the Mother of a Hundred Sons: A Journey Among the Women of India. New York, Fawcett Columbine, 1990. p. 64.)

commissioned by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead in 1937, depicts a group of *rangda* worshipping Rangda, their leader (see Fig. 3). Rangda is shown in the center, with three heads to show the extent of her magical power. Her followers, depicted as lesser versions of herself, gather around and pay homage. The spatial orientation of the figures on the picture plane is of lesser importance for my current discussion, as this stylistic element was dictated by the tastes of visitors to Bali during the 1930s who desired depictions of exotic myths rendered in pleasing a decorative pattern.[60] What the painting does help to illustrate, however, is the uses and associations of the word "R/rangda". The title of the painting, as well as the iconography, indicates that the smaller figures are *rangda*, that is to say witches or sorcerers. The central figure to whom they defer is therefore Rangda, the Queen of the Witches. Neither the title of the piece nor Hildred Geertz's writing on it indicates that the figures depicted by the artist are intended to be widows. However, three of the Balinese people I spoke with commenced the interview by telling me that *rangda* means widow,[61] and the glossary in Eiseman's Bali: Sekala and Niskala gives that as the literal meaning of the word.[62] I will not generalize to the extent of saying that all widows are thought to be witches or all witches are thought to be widows, but I will suggest that the double-meaning is not lost on people in Bali.[63] De Zoete and Spies have also explained that Rangda shares her name with the Balinese word for widow, "but to the idea of widow is attached a certain awe, even a degree of fear or horror. For a widow is the wife of a spirit and ought really to have given up her

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[60] Geertz 1994: 17.

[61] Field research notes #2, p. 1; #6, p. 1; #7, p. 1.

[62] Fred B. Eiseman Jr. and Margaret Eiseman Bali: Sekala and Niskala Volume 1: Essays on Religion, Ritual, and Art. Jakarta, Periplus Editions, 1990. p. 363.

[63] The use of puns is by no means unknown in Bali. Clifford Geertz has pointed out that the word "cock", which in Balinese produces the same double entendre as it does in English, gives rise to a clear association between a man's fighting rooster and his penis. (Clifford Geertz "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in The Interpretation of Cultures. New York, Basic Books Inc., 1973. p.417.) Given the prevalence of such puns, it seems highly unlikely that people in Bali would be wholly unaware that the same word could be used to denote widow and witch.

bodily form when her husband died, and to have followed him to the underworld."[64]

In addition to the existence of numerous roles which Rangda fulfills, aspects of her personality may change slightly from region to region, and even from village to village. As John Stephen Lansing writes:

> One of the distinguishing features of Bali-Hindu ... is that the gods are supposed to "blow like the wind" through Bali and to alight from time to time at various temples.*It is only when resident at a temple that they have a personality*. Durga, for example, may be called Durga at temple X, and have a well-defined personality, but at temple Y three miles to the north she will have a different name and perfectly distinct personality when she comes to "visit".[65]

Presumably, both name and personality are determined by members of the priesthood who are thought to be in contact with the gods and can therefore transmit information about the nature of a deity and the name by which he/she wishes to be known to the people. Although a survey of regional variations in the definition of Rangda's identity will not be undertaken here, this concept is relevent to the variety of individual opinions regarding the nature of the witch, something which will be discussed in chapter five of this thesis. Rangda, like Durga of whom she is an aspect, will often mean different things to different people, even when her physical appearance remains much the same.

**ICONOGRAPHY**

Most people who encounter Rangda, Balinese or otherwise, experience her presence in visual form, particularly masks and stone sculpture. Distinctive iconography in the form of her bulging eyes, great fangs, long fiery tongue, and pendulous breasts make her easy to recognize. The use of visual conventions to aid members of a given culture in the recognition of historical and religious figures is common in the art of many parts of the world. In the same way Christian saints

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[64] De Zoete and Spies Dance and Drama in Bali. London, Faber and Faber, [1938] 1973. cited in Napier 1986: 219.

[65] Lansing 1974: 2.

are recognized with the aid of standardized iconographic features such as Saint Sebastian's arrows or Saint Catherine's wheel, so are Balinese mythological figures identified with the help of visual conventions. In general, the rules of representation for traditional Balinese art serve to distinguish between coarse and refined characters. The most refined characters have very delicate features as a physical extension of their pure and noble natures, while the coarsest are given very exaggerated features - bulging eyes, large nose with flared nostrils, gaping mouth with large, fang-like teeth - to demonstrate their rough manners and base impulses. This comes from what is often written of as a distinctive Balinese aesthetic which finds beauty in that which is small, delicate and distinctively human, and which may find cause for revulsion in that which is bestial.[66]

As with the appearance of particular facial features, the colors used on the Rangda mask also help to describe her character. Many Rangda masks are painted white, but red masks may also be found both in tourist settings and in the context of sacred dance. In general, masks which are predominantly white often signal the purity, refinement and noble birth of the character, while those which are red will denote more dynamic, aggressive or bestial qualities.[67] Although research dealing with regional and individual variations among Rangda masks in particular has yet to be undertaken, it may be posited for the present that white Rangda masks are meant to stress her royal birth, while red ones emphasize her violent nature.

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[66] Geertz 1973: 419. Jane Belo has noted that the traditional punishment for incest was to require the offending couple to behave like animals for a set period of time. (Jane Belo "Trance Experience in Bali" in Richard Schechner and Mady Schuman eds., Ritual, Play, and Performance: Readings in the Social Sciences: Theater. New York, The Seabury Press, 1976. pp. 159, 161.)
This feeling is sufficiently strong for the Balinese to regard the human canine teeth, which are naturally slightly pointed, as too closely related to the animal world. One of the more important ceremonies for any individual to undergo involves the filing of these teeth, for it is felt that the person is susceptible to a dangerous level of passionate behavior (lust, anger, greed, arrogance, drunkenness, jealousy) until this has been done. (see Angela Hobart, Urs Ramseyer and Albert Leeman The Peoples of Bali. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, Mass., Blackwell Publishers, 1996. pp.199-120.) It is not clear to what extent tooth filing is practiced in urban areas where the effects of globalization have been felt more strongly, but I was aware of a number of non-Balinese acquaintances in Ubud while I was there who attended a tooth filing. It was not spoken of as an uncommon occurrence.

[67] Slattum 1992: 32, 50.

In addition to the standard features denoting bad character, Rangda is given characteristics which allowed her to be identified specifically as the Queen of the Witches. This can be seen in a drawing of a Rangda mask (see Fig. 4). Rangda's canine teeth are not simply pointed, but are exaggerated to the point of resembling tusks befitting one who is the supreme incarnation of the forces of evil. From her gaping mouth protrudes a red and gold tongue of stylized flames which symbolizes her anger. Around her neck is a necklace of human entrails. She is shown with a mass of wild, course hair which is lacking in the hair ornaments usual to female figures but is sometimes topped by fire which is a sign of her great *sakti*, or magical power. The large ear plugs she wears indicate that she is a female. The way in which the body of Rangda is represented enhances this symbolism. Pendulous breasts mark her as an old woman while claw-like fingernails and hairy knuckles suggest a bestial or demonic monstrousness to her character. Her tremendous personal power is made plain by her relative size; whether Rangda is seen in sculptural form or as a costume worn as it traditionally is by a male dancer,[68] she cuts a large and impressive figure. These devices all work together to present the viewer with an old woman who is as powerful as she is coarse, violent and quick tempered.

Although Rangda is most easily recognizable via her distinctive visage, it is not this so much as the black and white checked *poleng* cloth forming part of her costume which acts as the most effective symbol of what she means in Bali. This cloth may be found wrapped around the waist of a dancer performing Rangda or around stone statues of Rangda at the time of a temple festival. The equal presence of the two opposites, black and white, symbolize the presence of both the forces of left and right, of dark and light. Since it would be impossible for either to exist without the defining force of the other, the two together symbolize a duality which

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[68] It is not unheard of for a woman to dance Rangda, but it remains very rare. (Field notes #9, p. 4) I deal with this issue further in Chapter Four.

makes up the whole.[69] Rangda's left hand magic is symbolized by the black squares and exists as an antithesis to the white which symbolizes the white magic power of her opponent, the Barong. Rangda's ability to be both a destructive and a protective force suggests that the duality is also present within herself. In either case, she is seen to function as a vital component of the totality of being.

The appearance of Rangda is usually interpreted as above, with each physical characteristic taken as an outward manifestation of less tangible inner traits. The majority of the literature on the subject either implies or states, as I have, that the iconography of Rangda is derived from conventions in Bali for the depiction of the demonic and the bestial.[70] Since the history of visual conventions relating specifically to Rangda is sketchy at best, it is difficult to state with assurance exactly where each element of her distinctive appearance came from. Jane Belo tentatively hypothesizes that "the masked Rangda figure was elaborated out of the Durga worship belonging to the Sivaite tradition", but admits a lack of supporting evidence capable of proving this with any surety.[71] This uncertainty stands in contrast with the iconographical origin of the figure of the Barong, which is often hypothesized as something derived from the form of a Chinese lion who, like the Barong in Bali, functions to dispel evil.[72] In the section in David Napier's Masks, Transformation and Paradox which deals with Rangda and Barong, the various elements which make up the Barong's costume are dealt with in some detail, while Rangda is mentioned more obliquely and generally in relation to the story of the Calonarang.[73]

Barbara Lovric's essay "Bali: Myth, Magic and Morbidity" proposes an

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[69] Brigitta Hauser-Schaublin, Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff and Urs Ramseyer Textiles in Bali. Berkeley and Singapore, Periplus Editions, 1991, p.92.

[70] See for example Jane Belo "Balinese Children's Drawing" in Belo 1970: 249; Covarrubius 1937: 192; Geertz 1973: 420; Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 198-199.

[71] Belo 1949: 32.

[72] Bateson and Mead 1942: 188; Belo 1949: 33.

[73] Napier 1986: 206-220.

alternate historically based source of the iconography which is also worth mentioning, as it provides an alternative to the usual interpretation by which Rangda's appearance is said to have developed from a long running iconographic tradition for coarse or demonic characters. Lovric suggests that Rangda's attire of blood and entrails, rather than or in addition to being standard attributes of Indian trantrism and Kali worship, may be connected with the graveyard in a more literal than metaphorical sense. She likens the appearance of Rangda to a victim of the plague, "the overwhelming haemoarrhagic discoloration of the skin; the bulging, blood-shot, wide-open eyes; the protruding tongue and perforated abdomen associated with sudden death."[74] Like the mysterious stranger in Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death*, Rangda bears the appearance of a plague victim and functions as a symbol of the pestilence. Since the figure of Rangda most often appears in the context of a sacred dance whose function is to ward off or rid a village of epidemic, it is understandable for Lovric to link the very appearance of the witch with pestilence. In any case, this interpretation does not negate the more common interpretation that Rangda's appearance is the result of visual conventions of representation, nor does the latter explanation rule out the former. There is no reason why both could not be contributing factors to her physical form.

Although the majority, if not all written material in which Rangda is mentioned describes *what* she looks like, hypotheses of exactly *why* she looks that way are quite rare. In Bali: Rangda and Barong, Jane Belo does not explicitly state a single historical point of origin for the iconography of Rangda as she appears today, but she does, following W. F. Stutterheim's Oudheden von Bali (1930), track a number of stone carvings of Durga as they gradually come to resemble the Balinese Rangda rather than the Indian Durga.[75] The earliest of these dates to the tenth to thirteenth centuries and is located at Pura Kedarman in Koetri (see Fig. 5). Here,

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[74] Lovric 1987: 117-141.

[75] Belo 1949: 25-27.

Durga is depicted as a supple and youthful beauty not unlike the Durga in the Indian miniature painting discussed in chapter two of this thesis (see Fig. 19). A statue found in Bedoeloe from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries shows a heavier, less voluptuous Durga with large canine teeth which Belo tentatively puts forward as predecessor's of Rangda's trademark tusks (see Fig. 6).[76] The final statue which Belo discusses is located in Pura Medoewe Karang, Koeboetambahan (see Fig. 7).[77] Here, she follows not Stutterheim but C.J. Grader's study "De Poera Medoewe Karang te Koeboetambahan, een Nord-Balisch Agrarisch Heiligdon" (1940). This image, though clearly meant to be Durga Mahisasuramardini (named for the episode in the story of the Indian goddess Durga in which she slays the buffalo demon Mahisa), as evidenced by the placement of Mahisa under her upraised right foot, bears very little resemblance to the Indianate lines of the Durga from Koetri. Instead, her appearance is strikingly similar to the statue of Rangda (of which no one could tell me the date) which marks the entrance to the Ubud Pura Dalem (see Fig. 16). This gradual shift in the representation of Durga in Bali from the beautiful warrior goddess of India to the horrific witch Rangda could suggest that the iconography of Rangda developed along with the visual conventions which arose for the depiction of the darker forces in general as they appeared in masks, puppets and stone sculpture. Alternately, one could say that from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, the more purely Indianized influence of Hindu Java was strong in Bali and gave rise to a new interest in stone carving in a similar style. After the fourteenth century, however, contact with the now Muslim Java lessened considerably, causing Balinese sculptors to look increasingly to older indigenous shamanic forms and symbols.

My discussion on the origins of Rangda with the *balian* (a traditional healer or shaman in Hindu Bali) I interviewed produced a more specific explanation based

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[76] Belo 1949: 26.

[77] No date given.

on Balinese religion:

> It's a long time ago, about eight generations before we could see the Rangda and Barong as we do now. The Balinese people started with simple masks of Rangda and Barong using simple materials such as palm. People used palm leaves for the decoration of the Barong and the Rangda. And then one day, the spirit of the god came to the Rangda and the Barong. So that's the start of Balinese people using Rangda and Barong as the symbol of good and evil....[78]

With this interpretation, the iconography of Rangda is said to have come directly from the gods themselves who instructed the Balinese people on the correct way to depict Rangda and Barong. The literature to date has not seriously explored a shamanic explanation such as this, where dreams and visions are presented as the source for innovation, as a viable interpretation.[79]

Whether derived from iconographic conventions which apply to much of traditional Balinese modes of representation, as a way of ritually resolving an occurrence too horrific to be dealt with in words, or as the dictate of the god, the physical appearance of Rangda in contemporary times is consistent. I present this only as a relative consistency with the natural exception of subtle regional variations in traditional art throughout Bali. Occasionally, twentieth century paintings made specifically with tourists in mind, such as Ida Bagus Nyoman Tjeta's *Balinese "Witches"*, will have modifications which may be intended to take into account non-Balinese tastes. In this work, Rangda's breasts are rendered much smaller and rounder than would normally found in depictions of the witch. According to Hildred Geertz, this is done "in the spirit of tourist paintings",[80] but one cannot rule out the possibility that the artist pursued this variation in accordance with his own vision of

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[78] Field research notes #7, p.3. Part of a *balian's* job is to be able to contact the spirits and to have a good working knowledge of both black and white magic. I was introduced to this *balian* by my assistant, I Wayan Sugita. The *balian* comes from the Marga area of the Tabanan Regency and the interview took place at his home. I was not given his name.

[79] When it comes in the form of what Euramericans might term as "myth", oral history relating to indigenous practices is generally ignored in art history and much of anthropology as a serious explanation for the adoption and development of customs within a culture.

[80] Geertz 1994: 16.

a *leyak*. Even with the existence of a certain number of variations in practice, in all of the literature on Bali, if Rangda makes even a brief appearance in the discourse via text or illustration, she is invariably described as I have described the traditional Rangda.[81] In addition, any time I came across her in Bali whether in stone, wood or ink, or through the words of Balinese people I met, an image of this traditional Rangda was conjured up. Given this, one could safely surmise that whatever specific aspect of Rangda's complex nature a person may mean when they are speaking of her, this tends to be the image they have in their heads at the time. That people envision Rangda in this fashion is clearly demonstrated in their descriptions of her which are remarkably consistent regardless of whether they are speaking of a vision they once had of her or a masked dance performance they saw.[82] Even the drawing of the Calonarang story by nine year old artist I Lungsur illustrated in Jane Belo's essay "Balinese Children's Drawings" depicts Rangda in a manner remarkably similar to what I have described above (see Fig. 8).[83] In summation, whether Rangda means the historical figure, the ferocious aspect of a local village *leyak*, or an aspect of Dewi Durga, the outward form remains much the same.

Having described Rangda's physical self, it is now possible to enter into a survey of the different personages which can be meant when she is referred to. This will begin with the story of the historical Rangda and some of the most common variations thereof, then move on to the Rangda found in the dance drama as observed throughout the twentieth century, followed by Rangda as a member of the Hindu Balinese pantheon.

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[81] See, for example Bateson and Mead 1942: pp.35-36; Belo 1949: 19; Covarrubius 1937: 326-327; Hanna 1976: 136; Napier 1986: 209-220; Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 198; Vickers 1989: 105.

[82] Field research notes #5, p.3.

[83] Belo 1970: 257 and plate xxxiii.
The artist's title for the drawing is "A Chalonarang story. Pandung stabs the *rangda*, but she does not die."

**RANGDA AS A HISTORICAL FIGURE**

The original Rangda is said to have lived in East Java during the eleventh century. Her name is given by historians and anthropologists as Mahendradatta, a Javanese princess whose son was the king Erlangga (also Airlangga) a historical figure known to have taken the throne in Java in the year 1019CE,[84] but my conversations with a number of Balinese today, some high-caste, well-educated ones among them, suggest that this name is perhaps not so well known nor widely used as would appear from its regular inclusion in anthropological studies. Many people refer to the historical figure instead as either Calonarang or Randeng Dirah, the widow of Dirah.[85] Regardless of the name used, the story is much the same.[86] Upon learning that Mahendradatta practiced black magic, her husband banished her to the forest and took another wife. The subsequent death of the king - some say by his exiled wife's magic - left Mahendradatta a widow, a *rangda*. Although there existed a growing rift with her son Erlangga, whom she blamed for failing to take her side when she was exiled and not blocking his father's plan to remarry, the thing that angered Mahendradatta most was the fact that nobody would marry her daughter.

Mahendradatta's daughter Ratna Mengali does not appear in art nearly as frequently as her mother, but when she is shown it is as a young woman of great beauty (see Fig. 9). Covarrubias includes an image of her from an unidentified Balinese manuscript in his Island of Bali, where she appears with a sarong wrapped

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[84] Belo 1949: 18.

[85] Field research notes #1 - #10. Other names from the same story appeared in various interviews, namely Erlangga, Ratna Mengali and Mpu Baradah, but none of the subjects mentioned Mahendradatta.

[86] The bulk of the following summary is based on R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka's "De Calon Arang" (Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. 82, 1926, pp.110-186), extracts of which are cited in Covarrubius 1937: 328-329, and in Lovric 1987: 121. Accounts of the tale from my field research notes #1, #2, #6 and #8 were also consulted.

around her slender waist and delicate ornaments in her long hair. In form and attire, the image is not dissimilar to images of Sita, the beautiful and good heroine of the Ramayana epic.

It was widely known that Ratna Mengali was beautiful, but it was also widely known that her mother was a terrible witch. Since the thought of having a witch for a mother-in-law was a sufficiently unattractive proposition to outweigh the benefits of having a lovely princess for a wife, the young woman found herself entirely unable to get a husband. Enraged at the thought of her daughter being shunned, Mahendradatta, who at this point in the story begins to be called Rangda, used her magic to unleash an epidemic. At this point Erlangga, now king, feared for his people and realized that decisive action was necessary. Although he did not initially know for certain the cause of the sickness, a meeting with his chief advisors soon revealed the cause to be the angry widow. It was known to the king's advisors that Rangda got her power from a *lontar*, a magic book made up of text scratched into palm leaves, so they contrived a plot in which the prime minister's son would marry Ratna Mengali and steal the book. Unfortunately, Rangda's magic allowed her to foresee what was being planned and flew into an even greater rage at the attempted trick. She immediately responded with another, stronger epidemic.

Since Rangda's magic was obviously much too strong for the government to deal with, the king asked for the help of a holy man named Mpu Baradah (also spelled Empu Pradah). The priest had a thorough knowledge of white magic but none of black magic, so it was still necessary to obtain the *lontar* in order for him to learn the black magic himself so he could effectively do battle with the witch. To this end, he enlisted the help of Bahula, the holy man's assistant, and launched the same plot that had been attempted with the prime minister's son before. The plot was successful the second time around and Mpu Baradah was brought the *lontar* from which he immediately began teaching himself the art of black magic. With his new knowledge, the priest was able to challenge Rangda to a sorcerer's duel. Rangda, now appearing in her recognizable, ferocious form, used her magic to

render a large banyan tree aflame and surround her opponent with a ring of fire. Protected by his own magic, Mpu Baradah was not harmed by the flames. He first restored the tree to show his strength, then killed Rangda, first in her monstrous form and again when she returned to human form.

This version of the story of Rangda is based on the one recorded by R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka. Details vary depending on the region in which the story is told and the individual recounting it, but I have chosen to include this version as it is the one most commonly cited in studies dealing with Rangda.[87] Rangda is generally said to have been a high caste woman from the East Javanese province of Dirah (sometimes spelled Girah) during the eleventh century reign of King Erlangga, but her exact relationship to the royal court is unclear. In some versions, as with the one given above, she is a close relative of the ruler, while in others she is given no named relatives save her daughter. Needless to say, whether or not Rangda is the mother of the king whose mortal enemy she becomes has a strong impact on the way in which one interprets the story, but more on this in a later section. Being such a vital motivating factor for Rangda's behavior, the daughter is naturally always present, but the question of her paternity is so infrequently dealt with that one is made to wonder if it is known. In the story as it has been presented here, the reader may make the assumption that Ratna Mengali's father is the same as Erlangga's, that is to say Mahendradatta's husband the king. Even when he is not mentioned directly, the fact that Rangda is a widow alludes to a late husband and possibly father of one or both her children. The story increases in complexity when a drastically alternate paternity is proposed, as was the case in an interview with a *pemangku*[88] who said that Ratna Mengali had no mortal father and her mother had

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[87] Geertz 1994: 123.

[88] As was said earlier, a *pemangku* is a lay priest of the Sudra caste whose job is to oversee the temple. I was introduced to this *pemangku* by my assistant, Wayan Sugita, and the interview took place at the home of my assistant in Pertiga village, Marga District. The *pemangku* declined to give me his name.

made her using a flower.[89]

Another detail to do with Rangda's daughter, one which is sometimes included and sometimes omitted, is her complicity in her mother's destructive use of black magic. In other words, Ratna Mengali risks being condemned to perpetual spinsterhood, in itself frowned upon in that society, due to the magical practices of her mother. In many versions of the tale however, the daughter is explicitly implicated in her mother's actions. There is often a segment of the story which tells of Ratna Mengali being sent along with a group of young women referred to as Rangda's pupils to the graveyard where they must find a dead baby needed for a black magic spell. This detail appears often enough that its omission when it occurs is could be interpreted as due to space and time restrictions when telling the story rather than to any ambiguity in Ratna Mengali's intentions in following her mother's career path. Like legends in our own culture, the story of the angry widow and her fight with Mpu Baradah is so well known to many people in Bali that it need not always be told in its entirety, as the audience is quite capable of filling in the missing elements for themselves. This said, one must not forget that the texts in which the narrative segment about Ratna Mengali appears tend to be written by non-Balinese authors who, as has been said earlier, have drawn on R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka's version of the story. This version of the Calonarang story has become the norm through repetition in the works of Euramerican writers, and as such should not be seen as something which categorically rules out other levels of ambiguity and diversity possible in the way the story may be told in Bali.

**RANGDA AS A CHARACTER IN A SACRED DANCE**

The story of the historical Rangda forms the basis of the Calonarang dance-drama, the present form of which is thought to have originated circa 1890 in the southern Balinese province of Gianyar.[90] Dance-drama in general refers to a

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[89] Field research notes #1, p.1.
[90] Bandem and deBoer 1995: 113.

popular form of performance art in Bali, in which stories are transmitted to the members of any given community through the medium of dance. Elaborately costumed dancers, sometimes masked sometimes not, will act out the narrative through a combination of spoken word and stylized dance movements. Many of these stories are, like the Calonarang, based on tales from the royal houses of East Java during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.[91] As has been said, the Calonarang dance follows the basic outline of the story of Rangda related above. This is with a notable exception: as a performance piece, the Calonarang invariably includes Rangda's fight with the Barong, a fight which lacks a permanent resolution of the conflict between the opposing forces. Most often appearing in the form of a creature which closely resembles a Chinese lion, the Barong is a mythical creature symbolic of white magic and the forces of good, basically the antithesis of Rangda.

At what point the Barong came to be associated with the historical story of Rangda is unclear, especially as different productions of the Calonarang will introduce the Barong in different ways. The timing is the same, occurring after Mpu Baradah's duel with the witch (and in this case he is not able to kill her), but in some versions the holy man transforms himself into the Barong to defeat Rangda, while in others the Barong is an individual entity which takes the side of Mpu Baradah in the fight with the witch. There appears to be a certain amount of flexibility here, as the struggle between Rangda and Barong is viewed to a certain extent as a story in itself which may be inserted into the framework of other narratives as appropriate. The extent of flexibility is difficult to isolate, as my experience with the fight between Barong and Rangda occuring outside the context of the Calonarang is limited to tourist performances. In a *wayang kulit* show I observed in Ubud, the performance consisted of a telling of the Hindu epic, the Mahabarata, which blended into the Barong and Rangda story.[92]

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[91] Belo 1970: 95.

[92] Field research notes #10, p. 18.

The introduction of the Barong is one departure from the traditional narrative surrounding the historical Rangda, but the manner of the witch's defeat in the dance drama presents a far greater departure. Namely, Rangda never dies in the Calonarang dance. The usual ending for the story of the historical Rangda in which Mpu Baradah twice kills Rangda is nicely summarized by Colin McPhee, working from a translation from the Old Javanese by R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka:

> In a fury the sorceress reproaches him for reanimating her. The holy one replies that is was done in order to give her a last opportunity for repentance. And so the *rangda* is calmed and, having been taught the way of redemption, is killed once more, in a state of absolution.[93]

In dance performances however, Rangda is not killed at all, but only made to flee. In the first version of the tale Rangda is neutralized and destroyed, thus permanently removing her potential to do evil. In the second she is only repelled, with the implication that she may come back at any time. Here, evil is not eradicated but only pushed a little further away from oneself and one's community. Since this difference signals a shift between the way evil is conceived of and dealt with, it also signals a shift in the construction of Rangda as the symbol of that evil.

**RANGDA AND KARMA**

The double killing of Rangda in the oral tradition as a means of facilitating her atonement for her crimes could conceivably be linked to the Hindu belief in karma and its effect on reincarnation, although the differences between what could be called orthodox Hinduism and Balinese Hinduism invariably make such comparisons problematic. In the Hindu religion it is believed that one's fate in this life has been cosmically predetermined in accordance with his or her actions in the previous life,

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[93] Colin McPhee "The Balinese *Wayang Kulit* and its Music" in Belo 1970: 182.
This multiple killing echoes the details of the Hindu goddess Durga's slaying of Mahisa in Indian mythology, where Durga kills the buffalo demon first in his animal, then in his human form. Further discussion of Durga will occur later in this chapter.

and consequently that actions in this life will have a direct impact on the quality of the next life. Positive and negative acts accumulate good and bad karma. According to this model Rangda's predilection towards spreading epidemics would have caused her to accumulate an extraordinary amount of bad karma, likely to result in her reincarnation not as a person of high caste but as a low caste human or, even worse, an animal or a demonic being. In addition, before this reincarnation happened, she would be forced to undergo a period of torment in hell.

A work done in pen and ink, watercolor and crayon by an anonymous Balinese artist between 1928 and 1942 illustrates the idea of torment arising from the accumulation of bad karma (see Fig. 10). Scenes of punishments to the soul occurring after the death of the body are not uncommon in Balinese painting and relief sculpture.[94] This work depicts a woman traveling to purgatory, passing on the way Sang Suratma, Scribe of Sins, and Sang Jogormanik, who dictates punishments.[95] Both figures are shown as demonic forms (apparent by their bulging eyes, pointed teeth and beast-like noses), making them suitable for the administration of hell. On either side of the path are men and women undergoing various forms of torture meted out by Sang Jogormanik, with different torments corresponding to different sins performed during life. For example, the tree on the left bank from which daggers fall is called "the tree of suspicion".[96] A painting such as this may be taken as further evidence of a Balinese concern with the

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[94] For a discussion of images of hell in Balinese art, especially as it relates to women, see: Kaja McGowan "Balancing on Bamboo: Women in Balinese Art" Asian Art and Culture Volume VIII, Number 1. Oxford University Press and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1995, pp. 74-95.

[95] F. Haks, Leo Haks, Guus Maris, Jop Ubbens and Adrian Vickers Pre-War Balinese Modernists 1928-1942: An Additional Page in Art History. Haarlem, Ars et Animato, 1999. pp.56-7.
A descriptive title in English accompanies the color plate. The title reads: "*'Tjerita Derman'* A woman, possible Sri Tanjung, travels to purgatory. On her path are Sang Suratma, scribe of sins, and Sang Jogormanik, who dictates punishments." The reader should be cautious, when confronted with words such as "sin" and "purgatory", of interpreting these in the context of the Christian tradition. Such words are often used because they are the closest available translation for a similar, but by no means identical, concept found in another culture. For example Kaja McGowan has used a Balinese document called the *Sarasamuscaya* in a translation where the word "sin" is used.

[96] McGowan 1995: 86.

consequences of one's actions during life, as is shown by the fearful expressions of the four men who approach the demonic figures who will hold them to account for the bad karma they have accumulated.

In reviving Rangda and causing her to see the error in her ways, in other words the awakening of conscience, Mpu Baradah is able to help her offset, even if only by a minute measure, the large sum of bad karma which would condemn her to misery in the next life.[97] Through her death, the Rangda in this story is made an example. She is shown to be wicked and through repenting former behavior after her total defeat she acknowledges that she is in the wrong and the norms of the society are right. When I asked a pemangku to sum up Rangda in a few words, he said she is synonymous with "bad character".[98] As a powerful villain who repents before dying, the Rangda in this story capitulates to the side of right and good in the form of Mpu Baradah, and through this act reinforces the social mores of the culture.

When Rangda gleefully runs off at the end of the Calonarang dance, the implication is that she is not being made an example in the same way. In performance art Rangda is not a simple symbol of negative behavior, but a symbol of the balance that is so important to Balinese Hinduism. The Balinese cosmology is written of as envisioning all things divided into pairs: good and evil, day and night, life and death, white magic and black magic, male and female, the mountains and the sea, and so on through all things in the world.[99] Both components of each duality are accepted and the drama lies in the negotiations between the two. Although some things may be more desirable than others - good is more pleasant

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[97] This is the reading suggested by scholars such as Colin McPhee, who writes that Rangda was killed once and then revived so that she might die "in a state of absolution". (McPhee 1970: 182) No one appears to have questioned why she must be killed at all if she has indeed been made to see the error of her ways. Perhaps it is thought that she must forfeit this life in order to be granted a chance at improvement in the next life.

[98] Field research notes #1, p.1.

[99] Francine Brinkgreve "The Cili and Other Female Images in Bali" in Elisabeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof eds. Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions. Leiden, KITLV Press, 1992. p. 136.

than evil, clean is generally nicer than unclean - all are seen as necessary and part of the natural order of things. Therefore, while the Barong is symbolic of white magic and positive forces and Rangda is a symbol of black magic and negative forces, it is not expected that good can permanently conquer evil. This could be viewed as an example of Bali-Hindu realism, based on empirical observation of history and human nature.

**THE ONGOING BATTLE BETWEEN RANGDA AND BARONG**

The theme or moral of the story in dance form is not the eradication of the forces of evil and the triumph of the forces of good, but instead the achieving of balance and harmony between the two elements. To illustrate just how this works I will summarize the action during the portion of the dance-drama which deals with the fight between Barong and Rangda. The Barong enters the dance stage first, playfully snapping its jaws at the audience seated around three sides of the rectangular enclosure. As the iconography of the mask suggests - bulging eyes, large fangs, etc. - the Barong looks something like a monster, but it is a good spirit who holds the welfare of the village at heart. A photo by Rose Covarrubias (wife of Miguel) shows the Barong standing by the shoulder of a temple priest, aiding the powers of light and order in preparation for the upcoming battle with Rangda (see Fig. 11). After a short gamboling dance by the Barong followed by its retiring to one corner of the clearing, a strange shriek offstage and/or the appearance of long fingernails from around a door-frame mark the entrance of Rangda. The witch prowls around flicking a magic white cloth and occasionally calling out phrases in the Old Javanese language of *Kawi*, which is little understood today.[100] Although Rangda's primary target is Barong as the protector of the village, she does not

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[100] *Kawi* is the literary language spoken by the high born and/or very refined characters in Balinese dance dramas and puppet performances. An archaic language, it is basically unintelligible to the majority of people in Bali, who need it interpreted for them when it is used in dance. *Kawi* is also a highly potent tongue, both in spoken form and in written form, especially, it would seem, in the latter which is used in the writing of the magical texts on *lontars*. (Covarrubius 1937: 218, 236; Vickers 1989: 49; Bandem and deBoer 1995: 32-33.)

attack him directly. Instead she uses the spell of her magic cloth to induce a state of trance in the Barong's followers. These men try to attack her with their daggers (see Fig. 12), but her magic causes them to turn their blades instead upon themselves. This can be seen in the painting by Balinese artist Ida Bagus Made Tagog which is entitled "Scene from a dramatic performance in which men, who try to kill the witch-goddess Rangda, turn their *krisses* on themselves under her spell" (see Fig. 13).

If one thinks of this short sequence as a battle in itself, Rangda has indeed won. However, the Barong's white magic is just as strong as Rangda's black magic and its protective power prevents the trance dancers from harming themselves with their daggers. The Barong's beard dipped in holy water provides an antidote to the black magic induced trance and Rangda, seeing how she has been thwarted, decides to retreat and bide her time until the next encounter. So although the Barong is sometimes said to have won the fight against Rangda, this is not strictly true in the sense of winning outright. Barong succeeds in frustrating the witch's attempt to wreak havoc in the village, but one is not meant to get a sense of the triumph of good. One could say that the fight results in a draw, having no real winner; in repelling Rangda, the Barong has simply restored the balance. When stated in this fashion, the reader may be led to think that little has been accomplished, which would be a fallacy. The maintenance of balance is so central both to Balinese cosmology and to daily life that few things could be seen as more important than its preservation.

If one interprets Rangda's flight from the dance stage at the end of the performance as a form of banishment, it may be tempting to think that the Barong has actually won a decisive victory after all. This is based on the notion that for many in Bali, banishment from the community is considered a fate far worse than death, as it is seen to disorient the soul and disrupt the cycle of reincarnation.[101] In

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[101] Lansing 1974: 1.

this light, Barong's ability to put the witch to flight is in fact a far greater punishment than the death of Mahendradatta at the hands of Mpu Baradah. However, it should be remembered that the ending of the Barong and Rangda dance is always a somewhat open one, in that it is generally understood that Rangda has not run away very far or for very long. She is effectively not banished at all.

The idea of there not being a decisive victory for one side or the other is important to the Balinese conception of the dualities which pervade all aspects of existence. For Barong and the side of good to win the fight would be just as disastrous to the balance as it would for Rangda and the side of evil to win. In the story of the historical Rangda on which the dance-drama is loosely based there is a decisive victory for Mpu Baradah as the representative of the powers of good. The implication of this ending, that the forces of darkness can and should be vanquished, runs counter to the symbolism apparent in the much more open ending of the Calonarang dance. There are several possible explanations for this. To begin with, there is the link to the orthodox Hindu religion that was proposed earlier with regards to the problematic issue of karma as it pertains to Hinduism in Bali. Although Balinese Hinduism includes a belief in reincarnation, the fact that none of my contacts in Bali spoke of it suggests that there may be a less direct reference to karma than one finds among Hindu people in India.[102] This is not to say that people in Bali categorically do not believe in or give consideration to the concept of karma, merely that the individuals I spoke with do not appear to concentrate on it to the same degree. This is due in large part to the incorporation of ancestor worship into the Hindu philosophy imported from India.[103] It is believed that when a Balinese person dies, he or she will be reincarnated as a member of the same family. It is unclear at what point exactly the relationship between the orthodox and the Balinese Hindu parameters set for reincarnation was worked out, and therefore

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[102] Field research notes 1 - 9. Karma is not unknown in Bali, as Unni Wikan speaks of *karma pala*, the Balinese term for "the fruits of one's actions in previous lives", with regards to her research in North Bali (Wikan 1990: 101).

[103] Hooykaas 1973: 1.

how it relates to the eleventh century morality of Rangda is unclear. It is possible, however, that at the point when the story of Mahendradatta first began to be told there was a closer link to the Indian conception of karma and reincarnation and the narrative therefore had an element of this built into it.

A more likely reason for the difference relates simply to function. When transmitted as a story, either orally or in manuscript or pictoral form, a central purpose of Mahendratta's tale is didactic. The closed ending in which Mahendratta is clearly defeated indicates that behavior such as hers is not condoned by society. The story functions to indicate to those who hear it the type of passionate and uncontrolled behavior which will not be tolerated by the society. The Calonarang dance however, is not only a retelling of a famous Balinese story, but a sacred ritual. Rangda does not cease to be constructed as a negative behavioral example in this context, but this function is secondary to that of maintaining the balance between the forces of left and right. Ceremonial dances such as the one featuring the fight between Barong and Rangda serve not only to transmit moral lessons and histories to the populace, but to act as offerings to the gods, as rituals of purification, and at times as exorcism rites.

Although ceremonial dances rarely belong in one category to the exclusion of all others, the Calonarang could be said to fit *best* into the category of exorcism rites.[104] To begin with, a Calonarang dance is usually held when there is sickness in the village and with the express purpose of appeasing or banishing the powers which caused it.[105] In Bali, sickness is not seen to be caused by germs, but by black magic, either from ill-tempered local *leyak*, or from spirits who feel they have been neglected by the people. Therefore, to remedy an illness it is necessary to fight back with magic. Magic is definitely at work in the Calonarang, as dancers do not simply act out the story of Rangda and Barong, but actually become possessed by the

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[104] This naturally excludes tourist performances which, although following the outward form of the ceremonial dance, have no intrinsic ritual value.

[105] Bandem and de Boer 1995: 102; Field research notes #8, p. 1.

spirits of the characters they are dancing. The struggle between Barong and Rangda in dance form is therefore not exclusively a reenactment of the story, as the forces of good and evil really are doing battle through the conduit of the human dancers.

**THE POTENCY OF THE RANGDA MASK**

In the sacred dance as performed today, the Rangda we see is not simply a character called Mahendradatta or Randeng Dirah, and not exactly just a dancer in a costume, but the larger-than-life figure of the mythological Queen of the Witches, a powerful spirit, a goddess. In Balinese cosmology, Rangda is no less real in this context than she is when viewed exclusively as a historical figure. Didactic aspects of the story are pushed into the background because the black magic which caused illness in the village is now fighting with the white magic which protects the village. The black magic must be subdued in order to bring the people back to health, but it would never be destroyed altogether as this would upset the balance and bring only chaos. In dance, therefore, Rangda is a symbol of negative forces which are a necessary part of the balance. Here Rangda is powerful in a very real sense: she is a malevolent spirit who will spread destruction if allowed to proceed unchecked, and yet by acting as a counterpoint to the white magic of the Barong, she also preserves the balance.

In order to make more clear how the spirit of Rangda can be present in the form of a masked dancer, I will briefly outline the key steps in the making of a sacred mask as it is explained in Judy Slattum's Masks of Bali: Spirits of an Ancient Drama.[106] The carvers of sacred masks tend to come from carving families and must undergo purification rites before commencing their carving careers. To begin a Rangda mask, a small amount of wood is taken from a living tree, seen as a

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[106] Slattum 1992: 124-127. Although written for a general Euramerican audience rather than a specifically scholarly one, as is reflected by the preface in which Hildred Geertz refers to the book as "a wonderful entry point" to an understanding of the Balinese cosmology, Slattum's text is nonetheless of value for the way in which it spotlights the masks themselves and the stories around them.

sacred tree whose permission must be sought by the carver and a priest through prayers and offerings at the time of the cutting. The wood is taken to the village temple, where it is stored until it has dried out sufficiently and an auspicious date has been determined. Before carving can begin, offerings must be made and holy water sprinkled on the wood and carving tools. Carving and painting take place in the temple, after which a purification ceremony is held to basically apologize to the mask for having been placed on the floor, stepped over and other treatment considered demeaning for a sacred object.

In the final and most important ceremony, the spirit of Rangda is invited to enter the mask made in her image. This is done at night with the entire village present. If the ceremony is successful, it is said that the deity will enter the mouth of the mask in the form of a ball of fire. The mask is then considered to be *tenget*, imbued with the supernatural power of Sanghyang Widi Wasa, the one entity in which all deities (including Rangda) are ultimately unified.[107] From this point on, the mask is treated with respect as an esteemed member of the community and one who will act as a protector of the village for as long as it continues to be cared for in an appropriate fashion.[108] No one who is ritually impure may touch the mask, and severe illness has been known to result from a person looking through a Rangda mask without having first undergone the proper purification rituals. In order to maintain the goodwill of the deity, offerings are made to the mask on specific calendar days as well as every time it is used in the sacred dance.

**RANGDA IN THE TEMPLE**

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[107] My assistant Wayan often referred to this being simply as "the God". I am unsure whether my interpreter's designation of Sanghyang Widi Wasa as male when this being is usually described as existing beyond such gender divisions reflects his personal worldview, or an unconscious effort to simplify a difficult concept for a foreigner. Angela Hobart defines Sanghyang Widi Wasa as "a higher transcendental spiritual unity or world order". (Angela Hobart Dancing Shadows of Bali: Theater and Myth. London and New York, KPI Ltd, 1987. p.20) Since all the deities in the Bali-Hindu pantheon are ultimately aspects of Sanghyang Widi Wasa, all magical power could be said to come from the same source.

[108] Rangda too has a protective function. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Rangda's power and influence is not limited to the intermittent contexts of sacred dance, but extend far beyond into the lives of many Bali-Hindus in her capacity as a deity. Her outward appearance is the same as has already been described, but the medium is different. This Rangda appears most frequently in the form of temple sculpture, particularly in the *Pura Dalem*, or death temple, located in each village. This is the temple dedicated to Siwa the Destroyer, one of the Bali-Hindu trinity, and to his consort Durga.[109] Although Rangda the goddess is not totally divorced from the historical figure Randeng Dirah, the Balinese whom I spoke with did not think of the two as entirely interchangeable either. When asked about Rangda they often related the story of Mpu Baradah and the angry widow, but they made a distinction between the character in the story and the Rangda found in the temple. As I Ketut Arthana, a *pedanda*[110] from the Marga area, told me: "Rangda does not always have a bad character. The bad character, that is just in the story."[111] Thus the Rangda one might meet in the graveyard has a subtly different nature than the character in the legend.

These shifts in the objective "truth" of Rangda's identity are similar to those signalled by Belo in her discussion of the association between Rangda and Durga. Although it could be said Rangda indeed *is* Durga, she is no more identical to Durga than the Black Christ of the Aztecs is to Jesus of Nazareth.[112] Or, to continue with my analogies to North American popular culture, compare the various perceptions of the relative reality of any of Rangda's identities to the relationship between a film

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[109] There are three primary temples found in every Balinese community: (1) Pura Puseh, the main temple, dedicated to the God Wisnu the Preserver; (2) Pura Desa, the village temple, dedicated to the God Brahma the Creator; and (3) Pura Dalem, the death temple, dedicated to Siwa and to Durga. (Eiseman 1990: 8; I Nyoman Suradaya Pamphlet distributed by the Pura Desa Ubud for the Temple Anniversary of July 25 - 28, 1999.)

[110] As was said earlier, a *pedanda* is a high priest of the Brahmin caste. As with the *balian* and the *pemangku* whom I interviewed, this pedanda was introduced to me by my assistant, I Wayan Sugita. My interview with I Ketut Arthana was conducted at his home in the Marga District of the Tabanan Regency.

[111] Field research notes #3, p.1.

[112] Belo 1949:20.

actress and a popular role she has played. To some viewers, the fictional character she has portrayed is clearly different than the actress "in real life". For other viewers, the identity of the actress as a person may be lost in favor of the characteristics of the fictional character.

The Pura Dalem in any given village is appropriately located next to the cemetery. To enter the Ubud Pura Dalem one must first ascend a flight of moss-covered stone steps decorated at intervals with demonic figures and skull forms in stone (see Figs. 14, 15). Presiding at the top of the steps is a slightly over life-size figure of Rangda (see Fig. 16). She leers at the viewer, casually resting one foot on a skull and holding the corpse of a child. Anyone wishing to enter the temple proper must pass directly under the watchful eyes of this figure. Smaller statues of Rangda are found here as well, and also on the boundaries of the graveyard itself (see Fig. 17). Wherever these statues may be found, Rangda is shown as a terrifying figure, open mouthed in preparation to feed on the infant corpses which further fuel her great *sakti*.

It is important to note that Rangda is in no way relegated to the distant past as a purely legendary figure. True, Rangda's background is still linked with the story of the historical figure Mahendratta, as is evidenced by the fact that a number of the people I spoke to, namely the *pemangku*, the school teacher from Tabanan, A. A. G. Dela Aribuana (known to the guests of his homestay Pak Agung after the name of the establishment) and Agung Rai (director of the Agung Rai Museum of Art), gave a summary of this story when asked about Rangda.[113] Despite this, these same individuals do not appear to accept her death, or at least not in such a way that would prevent her from also being alive and kicking in the context of temple ceremonies. This view is echoed by the short description of Rangda in Hobart, Leeman and Ramseyer's The Peoples of Bali which says the Supreme Witch is

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[113] Field research notes #1, p.1; Field research notes #2, p.1; Field research notes #6, pp.1-2; Field research notes #8, p.2.

"confronted, but never defeated" by the Barong,[114] and in Jane Belo's Bali: Rangda and Barong which states how "over and over, the Balinese reiterate... "you cannot kill her.""[115] She is therefore given a set of characteristics not dependent on the eleventh century myth which describe her nature as a current presence in the village. In her association with the Pura Dalem, the temple dedicated to Durga as the consort of Siwa, Rangda rules over the forces of death and destruction. This is where her role as the mistress of black magic comes to the fore.

According to much if not all of the literature on Bali, the Balinese have always believed very strongly in the presence and power of magic in Bali, a sentiment which my own research suggests carries through to the present day. For example, the artist Murni explained how it was possible to identify a person who practiced black magic by looking into his or her pupils and seeing the image of Rangda there. Armed with this knowledge, one would then avoid eye contact to prevent the person from attacking with their magic.[116] In this context, Rangda is not so much the incarnation of evil as the face of black magic power. Humans who wish to attack others with magic or to prevent similar attacks on them by others will go to the Pura Dalem and pray to Rangda for her assistance. If approached with proper ceremony, Rangda will answer their prayers for good or for ill. In a painting by Ida Bagus Made Tagog, done between 1928 and 1942, the descriptive title tells us that here *Rangda, Goddess of Sorcery, bestows her blessing on a man meditating in her temple* (see Fig. 18). In this scene Rangda does not behave in the violent, uncontrolled manner of the witch in the story, but as a goddess rewarding with the gift of magical power one who has honored her. Her right hand displays the characteristic claw-like fingernails, but they are shown doing no harm to the figure of the meditating devotee encircled by her protective arm. As Agung Rai told me, "If you are nice to

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[114] Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 198.

[115] Belo 1949: 19.

[116] Field research notes #5, p. 6.

Rangda, Rangda will be nice to you."[117]

When picturing the Rangda to whom one may pray in the temple, her physical presence is the same as has already been described. Her behavior, however, is not dependent on the demands of a narrative in which she fulfills the role of the villain, the negative element in the story. She is constructed here as the quintessential *leyak*, as is in keeping with her position as the queen of black magic power. Her favorite haunt is the graveyard, especially after dark. This is appropriate for a *leyak*, as it is known to many, if not most, Balinese that the best way to attain the ability to do black magic is to undergo nocturnal meditations in the local graveyard. This is something anyone can attempt. If they have exceptionally good strength of mind, the power will come to them, granted by the gods. Since Rangda is the ruler over such powers, she tends to be constructed as the stereotypical *leyak*, that is to say she spends time in the cemetery, eats babies, and revels in magically causing illness and general bad luck. The iconography of her statues reflects this, as the examples from Ubud and Peliatan show. In her capacity as a deity however, such actions are given a specific function. In Bali, as has been said, personal misfortunes are caused by black magic, either at the hands of local *leyak* or by the power of Rangda herself. It is also thought that such things only befall those people who have somehow transgressed Hindu practice and accumulated bad karma.[118] If an individual does not make the proper offerings to the gods, that person places themselves greatly at risk of attack by black magic.[119] Rangda will only disturb people who fail in some way to honor the gods.[120] In this way, Rangda acts as a deity working on behalf of all other deities to punish the unfaithful. Thus, through her attacks by black magic, Rangda ultimately serves the mechanisms of

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[117] Field research notes #8, p. 7.

[118] Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 178.

[119] Hooykaas 1973: 2-4.

[120] Field research notes #1, p. 2.

justice and truth. I will discuss Rangda as a potential agent of good further in Chapter Three.

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH RANGDA RETAINS HER TERRIBLE POWER**

Are people in Bali today frightened of Rangda? Do they believe in Rangda as the very real and very potent being I have described here? Writing on the subject of sorcery in 1980, C. Hooykaas noted that though belief in *leyak* in general was still widespread, the number of skeptics was growing.[121] According to a teacher from Tabanan whom I interviewed,[122] Rangda has lost much of her power to terrify in recent years due to advances in technology and the inroads made into the culture by the Western scientific viewpoint. "Now, every place has electricity, so it's not like before. When there was no electricity, it was very dark in the villages, so children were more easily scared by the Rangda story. But now, it's different. The children aren't very scared of Rangda because they want to know the reality. They don't believe. They hear it as a story, but then they want to know the reality."[123] As for the adults, it was his feeling that about fifty percent of the people in Bali today believe in the magic of Rangda. I later posed the question to Agung Rai, asking him whether all people in Bali today were scared of Rangda. After making a distinction between Calonarang performances put on for tourists and the sacred rites where the Rangda appears, he indicated that in the latter context, Rangda is indeed

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[121] C. Hooykaas Drawings of Balinese Sorcery. Leiden, Brill, 1980. p. 14.

[122] This high school teacher, who declined to give me his name, was introduced to me by my assisstant, who had been one of his students some years before. The interview took place at the home of my assistant's cousin just outside of the town of Tabanan. The family's living space is built onto the back of a mechanic's garage which they run.

[123] Field research notes #2, p.1.

universally feared even today.[124]

Of the Balinese men and women whom I interviewed at length, the two who made a point of saying that Rangda frightened them *personally* were "Ibu Agung", as I came to know the wife of A. A. G. Dela Aribuana, the owner of the homestay where I lived in Ubud, and Murni, the artist from Pengosekan. Ibu Agung, like many people in Bali, had first been introduced to Rangda in the context of dance performances when she was a child.[125] She described seeing the figure of Rangda, and then coming home after the performance and having nightmares caused by the terrible visage of the witch and the powerful magic she was capable of. She soon decided that when the Rangda appeared, it was best just not to look, a tactic she continues to employ.[126] For Murni, Rangda was terrifying in a very real and tangible way. She described coming home from the movies after dark when she saw the image of Rangda, complete with big eyes and long tongue. This experience, which she stressed was not a dream, frightened her so much that she became reluctant to venture out at night by herself.[127] When I asked her whether she thought all people were scared of Rangda in this fashion she said no, but this didn't stop her from telling her non-Balinese boyfriend point blank that he was crazy for saying that if he ever saw Rangda he would try to get a good look at her face, and perhaps even a photograph of her.[128]

**RANGDA AS AN ASPECT OF DURGA OR KALI**

Thus far I when have spoken of Rangda as a goddess or deity, it has been

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[124] Field research notes #8, p.1.

[125] Bateson and Mead 1942: 34-35; Field research notes #2 p.1.

[126] Field research notes #9 p.1.

[127] Field research notes #5, p.3.

[128] Field research notes #5, p.5.

in a rather vague way which made little attempt to outline where such a being would fit in with the Hindu pantheon. Indeed, it is a problematic issue, as the Balinese did not indiscriminately import every single god and goddess when they adopted Hinduism, instead omitting some and adding others. This makes a lot of sense, as polytheistic religions generally do have some regionally specific deities in their pantheon which are well-suited to the physical or mental landscape of one area and not another.[129] This applies not only to the omission of some Indian gods, but also to the creation of specifically Balinese deities such as the rice goddess Dewi Sri, or Rangda herself. Rangda is nowhere to be found in the Hinduism of India, and yet she has been required to coexist with the Hindu gods. Although she for the most part maintains an individual identity as a deity, she has also come to be associated with Dewi Durga, consort of Siwa the Destroyer.

Those with some prior knowledge of the Hindu pantheon may find it strange that Rangda is seen by many in Bali as an aspect of Durga when Kali would seem to be much more similar in nature. For those not well acquainted with these goddesses I will begin my examination of this point with a short description of each as they generally appear in their native India. Although she enters into many stories, Durga is best known in her role as *Mahisasuramardini*, the slayer of the demon Mahisa. An abbreviated account runs as follows.[130] The buffalo demon Mahisa had been granted a boon by the gods that rendered him invincible to any male opponent. He used this to defeat all the gods and usurp their positions. The gods became so angry at their inability to prevent this that the fiery energies emitted in

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[129] I am using the term "polytheistic" quite loosely here, and purely in the sense that the Balinese use many names to address the divine. If asked, many Balinese people today would likely say their religion is a monotheistic one, as all the many deities whom they worship are all ultimately aspects of Sanghyang Widi Wasa. (from Hildred Geertz, preface to Slattum 1992: 8, also Research Notes #10, p.15)

[130] This account is based on those presented in the following sources:
Indira S. Aiyar Durga as Mahisasuramardini: A Dynamic Myth of Goddess. New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 1997, pp. 259-261; David Kinsley Hindu Goddesses. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986, pp.96-97; Edward Moor The Hindu Pantheon. Varanasi and Delhi, Indological Book House, [1810] revised edition 1968, p. 87.

their frustration and their rage assumed the form of a beautiful goddess. Each of the gods gave this goddess - Durga - a weapon and she successfully slew Mahisa, aided both by her tremendous military prowess and by the distracting effect of her beauty on her opponent. This is not the only story in which Durga makes an appearance, but iconographically she is always the same: a beautiful, many-armed warrior goddess brandishing the weapons of all the gods, as is apparent in the miniature painting from the school of Nupur, c. 1765 CE (see Fig. 19). Although created out of the collective energies of all the gods, Durga as she appears in this story does not act in a submissive way to any man and is not defined solely in a wifely capacity. She is neither subordinated by nor lends her *sakti* to a male deity; in fact she actually takes power from the gods to perform her own heroic deeds. In addition, as a warrior Durga takes on and excels at a traditionally male function and is not at all concerned with finding a way by which the gods may not only overcome Mahisa's boon but also destroy him on their own so that they may have the resulting glory. Such behavior is appropriate for a goddess, especially one whose epithets include "The Inaccessible" and "The Unconquerable One", but her fierce independence makes her an unlikely candidate for a "perfect wife" in the mold of Sita, the heroine of the *Ramayana* epic.

This is not to say that Durga performs no function as a wife. As a result of an origin story in which Durga arose from Parvati as a fierce aspect of that goddess, Durga has come to take on the role of the consort of Shiva.[131] This association has also brought Durga to be regarded as the mother of Ganesa, Karttikeya, Sarasvati and Laksmi, and she is often depicted in this way during Durga Puja celebrations. However, the countless depictions of Durga with no companion save her lion vehicle reveal her more domestic side to be peripheral at best. Even when the goddess is shown with her children around her she appears distant from them, concentrating instead on her battle with Mahisa. More often, Durga is unmarried, or at least

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[131] As I am referring to the god Shiva (Siwa) specifically as he occurs in India, I will momentarily revert to this spelling.

pretends to be so if we consider the stories which name Shiva as her consort, and lures some love-struck demon into battle by saying that her family will only allow her to marry one capable of beating her in combat. The would-be suitor is always slain.

There is little of Rangda apparent in the above description of Durga. This is not the case when we turn to Kali. Often referred to as "Terrible Mother" or as Shyama, "the dark one", Kali appears in Indian art as a emaciated, inky complexioned woman.[132] She wears a garland of severed heads as a necklace and her mouth is often shown ringed with the blood of her victims and her reddened tongue sticking out. The protruding tongue of Kali is a direct parallel with that of Rangda. Although she is treated in some Hindu texts as an independent goddess standing alone, Kali may be considered another aspect of Devi, the Great Goddess, who is also worshipped alone. In addition, she is often associated with Shiva. When she appears as his consort in art, she is invariably the dominant one as is clear in the miniature painting from c. 1800 CE entitled "Kali, Goddess of Time, standing over her consort Shiva" (see Fig. 20). A cemetery serves as the setting for this painting, and indeed Kali is generally associated with this locale. In the legends Kali's participation in a battle often cause her to lose control and go into a frenzy of killing, causing mass destruction which threatens to destroy the world. As David Kinsley points out in his book Hindu Goddesses, there are even some sources which prescribe the location of temples dedicated to Kali as near the cremation grounds and away from the homes of all but the very lowest caste.[133]

Kali's predilection for graveyards, along with her appalling appearance and violently destructive nature make her seem the ideal model for the similarly disposed Rangda. Kali is not unknown in Bali, as is evidenced by the existence of a category of *usada*, or medical handbook to be used by a balian, called

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[132] Aiyar 1997: 160,173.

[133] Kinsley 1986: 118.
Kinsley specifically refers to an architectural work of the sixth to eighth centuries called the *Mana-sara-silpa-sastra*.

*Kalimosada*, or "the medicine of the goddess Kali".[134] Yet Balinese people very clearly identify Rangda with Dewi Durga. This notion comes not only from those individuals I spoke with in Bali, but is also documented in the writings of Colin McPhee, Miguel Covarrubias, Angela Hobart, Albert Leeman, Urs Ramseyer and others.[135] Since these writers were not spotlighting Rangda in their studies, they did not make any reference to the possible implications of such an association on Rangda's character. I will venture to do so here. Whereas one of Kali's main characteristics is her tendency to get totally out of control, Durga is much more selective as a destructive force. Kali's wild dances threaten to destroy the world that she in her capacity as a deity is supposed to protect.[136] Durga's most popular epithet, Mahisasuramardini, comes from the great service she rendered to all the gods through her slaying of the demon who threatened to undermine the order of the cosmos.

In aligning Rangda with Durga rather than with Kali, the implication for Rangda's character and role in Balinese mythology is that she is ultimately not an enemy to the state of order. She may be destructive, but it is not wanton destruction. She protects against any forces which may serve to disrupt the balance. She is herself a part of the balance.

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[134] Hooykaas 1980: 7.

[135] See for example Covarrubius 1937: 176; Colin McPhee "Dance in Bali" in Belo 1970: 300; Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 193; Hooykaas 1980: 13.

[136] Kinsley 1986: 120.

# Chapter III

## Exploring the Extent to Which Rangda is Truly Evil: Philosophical/ Ethical Dimensions

It is difficult to reconcile the Rangda who protects the balance with the Rangda who Lansing describes as "the personification of the evil powers in the universe."[137] In spite of this apparent disjunction, there is very little in the existing literature on Rangda which questions the premise that she is evil. It was only when I began to interview people in Bali that I realized this was not a premise to take for granted. Continuing my efforts to gain some understanding of how different people perceived Rangda, I asked my subjects whether Rangda was always evil or did she ever do things which were helpful to the community. In cases where the subject appeared to be fluent enough in English to understand that "evil" in English is defined as "something morally wrong or bad" which would ideally be absent from the world,[138] I was invariably corrected. Rangda may be frightening, destructive, and even bad, but not necessarily evil. Her presence may not be desired, but it is inevitable, something to be expected and accepted. This chapter will explore the negotiations made between these concepts and Rangda's character.

### DESTRUCTIVENESS DOES NOT RULE OUT USEFULNESS

The experts on religion and culture with whom my advisor and assistant had put me in contact were readily willing to discuss their perceptions of Rangda. Other interviewees were not so forthright. With the exception of Pak Agung, the man who ran my homestay in Ubud, and Rucina Ballinger, the American woman living in

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[137] Lansing 1974: 81.

[138] This is the definition given for "evil" in Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary. New York, Berkeley Books, 1984.

Peliatan, both of whom had no trouble discussing any aspect of my topic, this second group was much less straightforward to talk to about Rangda's influence outside the usually discussed realms of mythology and the dance stage.

Ibu Agung and Murni initially approached the topic with trepidation, but opened up considerably when encouraged by others present, the husband in the first case and Joanna Moon, a British artist with whom both the subject and I were friendly in the second case. The three young women from the Bali3000 Internet café said they did not know about Rangda and that I should consult an expert such as a *balian*, who would be able to tell me all about her.[139] They could not be coaxed into offering any opinion on the subject, however humble. Such behavior may come as a result of a fear that bad luck may come to the person who speaks of Rangda or of witchcraft in general. Over the course of her research in North Bali during the 1980s, Unni Wikkan found that black magic was considered dangerous to speak of, as "the air itself may have ears, and the magicians themselves may be enraged at the talking."[140]

According to the *balian* I interviewed, *rang* means "bad" or "something bad" and *da* means "don't". The word Rangda then means "don't do bad", with the implication that this figure does not advocate wrongdoing. The manner in which my assistant I Wayan Sugita translated this for me made it clear that he personally did not agree with the subject's interpretation of the derivation of the name Rangda.[141] Wayan had less trouble with the *balian's* assertion that Rangda could not only attack the people, but protect them as well, thus performing a positive function for the community. For Ibu Agung, Rangda is "sometimes bad, sometimes nice."[142] She

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[139] This interview took place in the eating area of the internet café and was quite informal in mood. The three subjects told me only their birth-order names: Wayan, Wayan, and Ketut.

[140] Wikan 1990: 6.

[141] Field research notes #7, p.1.

[142] Field research notes #9, p.2.

went on to remind me of the Bali Hindu concept that all deities are ultimately one, Sanghyang Widi Wasa, and that therefore Dewi Rangda has many names, from Dewi Durga to Dewi Sri to Dewi Parwati. All are one woman, and ultimately all are genderless.[143] If an individual has in mind that the Rangda who spreads illness and fear is the same as the Dewi Sri who watches over the rice crop like a loving mother, that person is unlikely to perceive the Supreme Witch as one-dimensionally bad.

"Rangda does not always have a bad character." said Arthana, the *pedanda* I spoke with. "The bad character, that is just with the story [of Durga's unfaithfulness and also of Mahendratta]. ...in Bali, Rangda is always good. Only in the story is she a symbol of the bad character. It depends on the people who pray to [Rangda]. For example, the people who want good things, they will be blessed with good things."[144] Pak Agung felt that neither Rangda nor the black magic power she rules over are inherently bad. He looks at black magic as a sort of science which, if used appropriately and not to harm others, can actually aid an individual in making contact with god. The black magic itself is not bad, and Rangda who bestows the ability to use it is not bad, only the individual people who use and abuse the magic, guiding it by their emotions rather than their intellect.[145] "Rangda is not always bad. She is very bad if someone disturbs her, [but] I think everyone is like that."[146] Agung Rai's view of Rangda was similarly based on a policy of respect for her power. "The Queen of Evil," he said. "can be very wise."[147]

These statements represent the views of just a handful of individuals at a

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[143] Field research notes #9, p.3.

[144] Field research notes #3, p.1.

[145] Field research notes #6, p.3.

[146] Field research notes #6, p.6.

[147] Field research notes #8, p.6.

specific point in time. I do not present them as evidence that the Balinese all feel that Rangda is primarily good, but merely as evidence that not everyone in Bali necessarily thinks of her as exclusively bad, the way much of the literature on the subject would lead one to believe. In her 1949 study of Rangda and Barong, to my knowledge the only work of any length to concentrate on Rangda, Jane Belo describes the witch as something which "...looms out of the past, enormous, threatening, trailing all sorts of inglorious clouds, an evil nature and an evil reputation."[148] In that she is depicted via the more traditional artforms such as carved masks and stone sculptures, and to the extent that these depictions follow long established iconographical conventions, Rangda does indeed seem to come at us from out of the past. This passage does however, present us with a somewhat monolithic figure of the Queen of the Witches who is unchanging in the perceptions she elicits from people in Bali today.

In her capacity as Queen of the Witches, Rangda's role is not only to give power to Bali's *leyak*, but also to keep them in check lest they spread too much evil and thus upset the balance. In the Calonarang dance Rangda comes to fight the forces of good in the form of the Barong, true, but she also comes with a more benevolent purpose. If the local *leyak* have become very troublesome in the village, Rangda will call out a challenge for them to come and fight her. This is one of the reasons, according to the owners of my homestay in Ubud, that it can be so dangerous to dance Rangda.[149]

Through the conduit of the masked dancer, Rangda calls out to all the *leyak* in the surrounding area: "Leyaaaaak! Hey, all you *leyak*: come and fight with me!"[150]

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[148] Belo 1949: 18.

[149] Field research notes #6, p.5; Field research notes #9, p.4.

[150] Field research notes #9, p.4. Pak Agung felt that black magic could not harm him, based on previous experience with failed attempts by jealous neighbors and on his ongoing efforts to treat with respect and humanity a local woman who many others shunned because of her black magic power. He therefore felt sufficiently comfortable with the subject of Rangda and *leyak* in general to spend time demonstrating to me how Rangda issues her challenge. The call I have included here represents a combination of the challenges told

These lower-level witches, unable to control their anger at such taunting, come to the temple courtyard where the dance is being held and hurl volleys of black magic at Rangda via the human form she has possessed. This poses an obvious threat for the dancer, who can face sickness and even death at the hands of the *leyak*, but if the proper purification rites have been undertaken before, the power of Rangda will protect this temporary vessel from harm. Rangda is not considered to be endangering the dancer for her own amusement and gratification, but as a necessary means of keeping local *leyak* troubles under control.

The owner of the homestay told me that the result of a magical battle with Rangda often meant death for the lesser witch. At the very least the identity of the *leyak*, often previously only in the realm of suspicion, will be conclusively revealed to the other members of the community, who can then guard themselves against his or her future attacks by black magic. "Sometimes Rangda will stop the spread of magic in the village. If we make an offering in the Pura Dalem, in the temple of the Dead and the center of magic, ... Rangda will stop the spread of magic anywhere in the village. So the Rangda does good."[151]

Rangda also appears as a protective spirit in the form of the goddess Durga in some magical texts such as those dealt with by Hooykaas in Drawings of Balinese Sorcery. The extent to which an individual drawing of Durga is specifically intended to invoke the aspect of her which people in Bali would clearly recognize as Rangda is difficult to ascertain. However, since Rangda is associated with Durga and sometimes seen as synonymous with her, it is not unreasonable to identify Rangda's magical power with that of Durga. In one of these drawings, she is called Durga Dedeweng, a name referring to her ability to frighten away all manner of supernatural beings (see Fig. 21). In another, she is given the title Durga Demba and endowed with the power to reverse the effects of encounters with vampires and

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to me by Pak Agung and his wife.

[151] Field research notes #9, p.2.

other mishaps (see Fig. 22).[152] This does not negate her identity as a malevolent being, as can be seen in a drawing intended to inspire fear and cause submission of the enemies of the individual for whom the image was made (see Fig. 23).[153] Rangda/Durga has the ability to perform both malevolent and benevolent acts.

**RANGDA AS PART OF THE BALANCE**

Despite initial appearance, Rangda is not an enemy to the state of order. First of all, Rangda's destructiveness need not be a bad thing, as she is not only the destroyer of order, but of the forces of chaos as well. This may seem an odd statement, given that I spoke of Rangda earlier on as a symbol of the forces of chaos (recall her identities as the angry spreader of illness and nemesis of the protective Barong), but if we view her various roles as a "both and" rather than an "either or" situation, there may be less of a feeling of contradiction. The fact that the Balinese are said to associate Rangda with Durga and not with Kali suggests that they see her destructiveness as something which is ultimately helpful to the maintenance of order, and not as a tool for wanton devastation. Indeed, the individuals I spoke to were eager to impress upon me that Rangda is a necessary part of "the balance".[154]

Balance in the world is maintained, writes anthropologist Unni Wikan, when "good and bad powers hold each other neutralized."[155] Unlike the "People of the Book" (Jews, Christians and Muslims)[156] who see negative forces as contrary to

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[152] Hooykaas 1980: 143,155.

[153] Hooykaas 1980: 43.

[154] Field research notes #4, p.1; Field research notes #10.

[155] Wikan 1990: 248.

[156] All three of these religions recognize the validity of the Old Testament of the Bible. The term "People of the Book" refers to this commonality.

order, Bali-Hindus value these forces as an integral part of the whole. To help explain this point I will make a brief comparison between the subject matter of two paintings, one Christian European and one Hindu Balinese. I will start with the European work, entitled *Death of the Miser* of about 1500 by Hieronymous Bosch (see Fig. 24). Bosch depicts an avaricious old man on the edge of death whose accumulation of material possessions has fallen prey to Satan's minions. Startled by the figure of Death coming in through the door, the miser does not notice the demon who steals a bag of money out of his very hands and is equally oblivious to the angel at his shoulder who tries to show him the light of God. In pointing out the fact that a love of earthly riches does not bring one closer to God but instead attracts the Devil, *Death of the Miser* acts as a warning against the deadly sin of greed. The work also implies that conversely, if the old man had not sinned with his miserliness, there would be no demons present. Christianity carries with it an idea that evil is propagated through human vice and eradicated through human virtue.

Despite being separated by over four hundred years and half the globe, *Cremation Preparations Observed by Sorcerers* by Balinese artist Ida Bagus Putu Blatjok makes a useful comparison to *Death of the Miser* due to the shared subject matter of death in the presence of darker forces. In the pavilion with the tiled roof is a body awaiting cremation (see Fig. 25). The carved wooden *lembu* (bull) sarcophagus in which Bali-Hindus traditionally cremated their dead stands ready in the center foreground while the villagers make themselves busy with the remaining preparations.[157] These villagers are unaware of the presence of the *leyak* in their midst. They are equally ignorant to the presence of the Barong in the top right corner, as it is not a mask depicted here but the invisible spirit of the actual being. Where the Bosch panel depicts servants of the Devil running amok despite the presence of one of God's angel's, Blatjok's ink drawing shows leyak (who serve

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[157] The type animal chosen for the sarcophagus in a traditional Balinese cremation ceremony reflects the caste of the deceased. As the vehicle of Siwa, the bull is the most prestigious and therefore reserved for men of the highest caste (a woman would have a cow). The cremation preparations in the painting by Blatjok are therefore for a man belonging to the Brahmana caste. (Eiseman 1990: 118)

Rangda, their Queen) rampaging through a village despite the presence of the powers of good in the form of the Barong. Here though, the relationship between the powers of good and evil is radically different. In a Christian context, as in the Bosch painting, the desirable state of affairs would be the triumph of good over evil. This would be accomplished by the dying man's repentance which would banish the Devil's servants. In the Bali-Hindu context, it would be just as disastrous for the forces light to get the upper hand as it would be for the forces of darkness to do so. Balance is the natural state of things and the state to which things always and inevitably return. The occurence of a disproportionate number of good things is a cause for concern for people in Bali who "... believe it [the desireable occurence] will be followed by something bad so there will be balance."[158] Blatjok's work is therefore without the implication that the Barong should ideally triumph over Rangda's followers, for this could only be a temporary victory for the forces of light which would surely be offset by a victory for darkness on another occasion. The Barong in the painting watches over the village and will prevent the *leyak* from getting out of hand and causing imbalance, but the forces of darkness have just as much of a place as do those of light.

The idea of Rangda's more benevolent role in the Calonarang dance in no way negates or even lessens her symbolic importance as an opposing force to the Barong. Rangda is said to symbolize the black magic and the forces of darkness, while Barong is said to symbolize white magic and the forces of light, but together they symbolize the balance. Even when Rangda is fighting the Barong, she is viewed as a necessary part of the balance, without whom harmony and order in the universe would not be possible. As an expression of this, when not in use, the Rangda mask is not housed in the Pura Dalem as one might expect given her connection with that temple. Instead, she resides together with the mask of the

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[158] Wikan 1990: 248.

Barong in the Pura Desa, or village temple.[159] "While they are together," said the *pemangku* I interviewed, "they are the symbol of life, because in Bali, good and evil, day and night, we can't avoid that in this life. It is a balance that makes life. There is bad, there is good. They are always together."[160] Potent enough when taken individually, Rangda and Barong as a pair have tremendous power which can be used for the benefit of the community. I was able to witness this during an annual ceremony at Pura Luhur on the slopes of Gunung Batukau which my assistant took me to. Here the Barong and Rangda from all over the Gianyar regency were assembled (see Figs. 26, 27). After holy water was distributed by the priests in attendance and offerings were made by the people from the surrounding area, the Barong and Rangda were led off on a procession through a number of the surrounding villages. My assistant informed me that the purpose of the ritual was one of purification and would help to prevent outbreaks of illness in the area.[161]

**ENCOURAGING HUMANS TO ADHERE TO BALI-HINDU TRADITIONS**

Another way in which Rangda helps to maintain order in the long run rather than working to destroy to it is through disturbing those people who have failed to make proper offerings to the gods. This aspect of Rangda's behavior is not explicitly mentioned in any of the anthropological literature I read on Bali, but it came up a number of times in my interviews. It is necessary, as was mentioned earlier, for Balinese people to regularly attend to the needs of the unseen beings with whom they share their world. This takes the form of *dewa yadnya* (rituals performed as worship of the gods) and *buta yadnya* (rituals which pacify demons and other malevolent spirits).[162] These range from small scale daily rituals to annual regency-

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[159] Occasionally a village will have two Rangda masks, in which case one is housed in the Pura Desa with the Barong mask, while the other is kept in the Pura Dalem. (Slattum 1992: 124.)

[160] Field research notes #1, p.3.

[161] Field research notes #10, p.14.

[162] Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman 1996: 102.

wide ceremonies to the island-wide ceremony of Eka Dasa Rudra which is held once a century.[163] All are seen as important. If an individual or community becomes somewhat lax in their duties, the gods become annoyed at the lack of proper attention being paid to them, and Rangda is invited to cause trouble for the guilty parties.

People who have recently suffered a series of misfortunes will often find out through the visions of a *balian* that they have failed to make the proper offerings and are thus feeling the anger of the gods at the hands of Rangda. When I asked the *balian* whom I interviewed whether Rangda was always bad or if she ever did things which are helpful to the people or to the gods, he said that it all depends on the individual people themselves. "Rangda can attack the people, but she can also protect the people. When we do something wrong, I mean contrary to the religious lessons, Rangda will attack. And then when we do something good, Rangda will protect us."[164] The *pemangku* with whom I had spoken a few weeks earlier made a similar statement when asked about Rangda's influence upon people in their everyday lives. "Rangda disturbs people who don't care for the gods, especially the Hindus who don't make offerings every day...." He went on to explain that it is Rangda's job to control the people. "Rangda kind of controls the people who are praying to the gods. Rangda has the rules which control the people, Balinese people, in their prayers to the gods."[165] Since Rangda will only disturb those people who have in some way contravened the rules of the Bali Hindu religion, she could be said to encourage people to stay on the correct path. In this way Rangda's destructive force also helps to maintain the order of the Bali Hindu religion.

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[163] The great purification rite of Eka Dasa Rudra could also be said to extend far beyond the scope of the island, in that its purpose is to purify the universe. This does not pertain to Bali only, but is done, as The Three Worlds of Bali (Washington, D.C, PBS Video, narrated by Stephen Lansing, 1981) asserts, for the sake of all of us.

[164] Field research notes #7, p.1.

[165] Field research notes #1, p.2.

As can be seen from this last example and from the *balian's* interpretation of the word "Rangda" as an instruction to the people not to do bad things, there is an element of Rangda which is strongly didactic. Those who due not pay proper respect to the myriad useen forces as set out by Bali-Hindu traditions are threatened with a visitation from Rangda. People in Bali likely learn as I did, from priests and elders, that she will attack those who behave contrary to the lessons of their religion. If by invoking the name and image of Rangda the priests are indeed successful in deterring members of their community from straying from the religion as they have defined it, then these people benefit greatly from the manner in which Rangda is constructed. If one were to ask "Who does the figure of Rangda empower in this context?", the answer would likely be those who seek to perpetuate a central role for religion in Balinese society and their own roles as the guardians of this knowledge. As the way in which Rangda is constructed varies according to context, so do the groups who benefit. For example, social function performed by Rangda as a means of preserving modes of worship can be quite different from the one she performs with regards to the proper place of women in Bali.

# Chapter IV

## Implications of Rangda for the Construction of the Feminine

Thus far I have for the most part glossed over the possible age and gender implications inherent in a figure such as Rangda. Now that the reader has had an overview of some of the concepts and contradictions of Rangda, I will turn to this topic as the subject of the next section. Indeed, a discussion of Rangda and gender is well worth a whole paper in itself, but there remains so much which is uncertain about the full implications for the figure of Rangda to the construction of gender as it is envisioned in Bali. Therefore, at this time I will present only an entry point to the material in hopes that others will be inspired to give it the attention it deserves. To Euramericans, especially those of us who have been brought up with Western Feminism, the way Rangda is constructed can be something of a concern. By "Western Feminism", I refer to the type of feminism encapsulated in the following excerpt from an essy by Margot Mifflin:

> The failure of the women's movement in the late '60's was its almost exclusively white middle- and upper-class orientation. It basically remains that way, but the difference is that white women are inviting women of color to participate, and unless women of color join them in their endeavor, no amount of change can take place.[166]

This feminism has been criticized by Asian women, writes Margo Machida in her essay "(re)-Orienting", who feel that:

> ...the traditional Western feminist movement, originating in white middle-class women's concerns, is frequently seen as insisting that the behavior and needs of women from other cultures and ethnic backgrounds be evaluated by their standards. ... Asian women often consider white feminists' critiques of patriarchy and emphasis on individual

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[166] Margot Mifflin "Feminism's New Face" ARTnews. November 1992, p. 121 cited in Charleen Touchette "Multicultural Strategies for Aesthetic Revolution in the Twenty-first Century" in Joanna Frueh, Cassandra I. Langer and Arlene Raven eds., New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action. New York, Icon Editions, 1994. p. 200.

independence as a threat to family unity....[167]

These statements underline the fact that the feminism(s) designed for and by Euramerican women within specific parameters of race and class does not address issues specific to women outside those guidelines. To a Euramerican woman, the fact that the face of evil in Bali is an old widowed woman may appear to vilify mature independent women. Rucina Ballinger, who has been living in Bali since the early eighties told me that one of the things she finds most disturbing about Rangda is that "...the Balinese use an older woman, unattached to a man, as something frightening."[168] When I interviewed Murni, the artist who divorced her Balinese husband when he wanted to take on a second wife who could give him a child, and then Ibu Agung, who co-ran a homestay with her husband, neither expressed a similar concern when speaking about their perceptions of Rangda.[169] One could attribute this to the subjects' self-censorship after having internalized the patriarchal values of "their culture", or one could question whether a negative view of Rangda as an independent being can specifically target women in a culture where people (male or female) are said to place a high value on family ties and dislike being alone.[170] Until a study of Rangda is undertaken by a Balinese feminist, it will be difficult to know which interpretation best fits the reality of women in Bali.

**DOES RANGDA SERVE TO VILIFY WOMEN?**

What is there in the way that Rangda is constructed that might lead one to think that she vilifies old women, or even women in general? For a start, if we

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[167] Margo Machida "(re)-Orienting" in Frueh, Langer and Raven 1994: 178.

[168] Field research notes #4, p.1.

[169] Field research notes #5, Field research notes #9.

[170] Hooykaas 1973: 3.

assemble a number of the dualities which are so important to the Balinese cosmology - life and death, good and evil, white magic and black magic, *kaja* and *kelod*,[171] male and female, right and left, day and night, Barong and Rangda - we find Rangda firmly placed on the left hand side. In fact, women in general are put in this half of the duality, where "female" exists along side of death, evil, black magic, *kelod*, left and night. If read in an "either/or" rather than in a "both/and" sense, this system of organization seems to suggest that the feminine is associated with the negative in Balinese thought. Rangda, as described in the documentary film Bali: Mask of Rangda, is "the witch, the widow-mother who devours her own children, who robs souls from the graveyard and feasts on human entrails, who brings pestilence and famine, she is the left-hand path, the supreme sorceress of black magic."[172] The fact that the ruler over the negative forces is a female underscores the connection between those forces and the feminine.

In her book Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, Hildred Geertz attempts to downplay the implications of Rangda for the construction of the feminine. In her discussion of Ida Bagus Nyoman Tjeta's *Balinese Witches*, she consciously uses the term *rangda* as a translation of "sorcerer or deity in ferocious form" to reflect the fact that men as well as women practice black magic. Yet all the figures in the painting are clearly given female form, and when Geertz speaks more at length of sorcery in a later chapter, she uses the word *leyak* with a feminine pronoun.[173] Geertz summarizes the appearance of the generic *rangda*, but states that "femininity is not central to the idea, since a male

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[171] *Kaja* and *kelod* are the two sacred directions, meaning "towards the mountain" and "towards the sea". Mountains are honored as the abode of the gods, while the sea is feared as the realm of demonic forces. Family compounds are oriented with these directions in mind, so that shrines are located on the *kaja* side and such things as lavatories and pens for livestock are found on the *kelod*.

[172] Hartley Productions Bali: Mask of Rangda. Cos Cob, Conn., Hartley Film Foundation, 1975.

[173] H. Geertz 1994: 70.
The specific statement referred to: "A *léyak's* steps to infuse herself with power also closely resemble the rites carried out nearly every day in family and communal temples."

sorcerer on a violent rampage may take the shape of a rangda."[174] In a sense, femininity is indeed not the central issue, in that not only females can become *leyak*.[175] On the other hand, the concept of male sorcerers taking on female form in order to perform deeds of violence and destruction appears to make a case for the association of the feminine with evil rather than against it. It is true that this is not the only form that a *leyak* may take, as they will have the ability to transform themselves into a variety of animals (such as a pig, a monkey or a goat) and the more magically powerful ones can change into a small tower or a simple white cloth.[176] The highest form of transformation, however is into the semblance of Rangda herself.[177]

Despite the fact that *leyak* tend to favor the guise of animals or women while out pursuing their destructive impulses, it would be unfair to say that this represents a dim view taken by Balinese culture of women in general. The existence of the beloved rice goddess Dewi Sri is a case in point. One could safely say that Dewi Sri is the antithesis of Rangda - young, beautiful, gentle, benevolent and powerful. Also a goddess of beauty,[178] Dewi Sri is often found in the form of a *cili* (also spelled *tjili*), a stylized silhouette of a slender young women wearing a large headdress of flowers which is made out of a variety of plant materials. Dewi Sri is sometimes spoken of as the Rice Mother, and when the time comes that the human inhabitants of Bali must harvest her children, it is customary to use a small blade which can be concealed in one's hand to cut the rice. This is done out of respect to the goddess,

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[174] H. Geertz 1994: 16.

[175] According to much of the literature on Bali, both men and women can and do practice black magic. Unni Wikan, however, defines "leak" (leyak) specifically as "females of inborn evil, with the capacity to transform themselves into any kind of shape...." (Wikan 1990: 86.)

[176] Field research notes #6, p.6. The white cloth here is not seen to be the same thing used by Rangda to put people into trance during the Calonarang dance, as that particular white cloth has special black magic mantras written on it.

[177] H. Geertz 1994: 73.

[178] Covarrubius 1937: 170.

so that she may not be frightened or offended by the necessary violence of the act. Given the very positive attitude that one sees towards this goddess, it would be incorrect to characterize the construction of Rangda as a reflection of a general Balinese attitude towards women in general. Could the same be said for old women though? Is Rangda a reflection of an attitude which is not so much sexist as it is ageist?

**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF WIDOWS AND OLDER WOMEN**

Based on the research done by Unni Wikan for Managing Turbulent Hearts and backed up by my own research, there is little or no evidence for a Balinese viewpoint that all women are in some way associated with Rangda. When the discussion turns to elderly widows, however, one gets more of a sense that a mental connection is made, however small, between these widows and the widow who is the Queen of black magic power. As well as being an analysis of the famous "Balinese poise", Wikan's book is also a story of a few young women with whom she spent a good deal of her time in Bali. In one anecdote she tells of going with her friend Issa to the home of a widow of high rank who was well known for her refined nature and religious piety. During the visit, both hostess and guests behaved impeccably in accordance to Balinese social graces, but some time afterward Issa revealed to her friend that she had in fact been terrified of the woman. She was concerned that the hostess, due to some unknown cause, did not like her. Perhaps she had unwittingly at some time in the past caused offense, and now the woman sought to do her harm through black magic.[179] What could possibly lead Issa to suspect her gracious hostess, a woman who was by all appearances full of kindness? Could it be because she was a widow? In a society in which sex roles ("social expectations that females ought to do certain things and males ought to do

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[179] Wikan 1990: 43.

others"[180]) give lower status to women who are not wives or mothers, and in which widows are often linked with *leyak*, it is quite probable that this woman's marital status would place her under suspicion.[181]

In another anecdote, this time revolving around a young woman named Suriati, Wikan speaks of the necessity felt by her friend to keep her true feelings under wraps. Suriati had just suffered a great personal tragedy with the sudden death of her fiancé, but it was vital that she presented herself to the world as one who is gracious and calm, not sad or bitter. "I do not want them to think or say that I have a broken heart, for then they will mock me. Then they will say, "Oh, you're a widow!" and they will laugh. It is very bad if you are sad and they laugh. That is why we keep our sadness."[182] From this statement, it is quite clear that it is undesirable to be compared with a widow. When I asked Wayan, my interpreter, to clarify his use of the word "widow", he led me to believe that the term served to denote both single women whose husbands had died and single women who had never been married. Unni Wikan's anecdote about the young woman, not yet married, who feared that people would call her a widow also supports this interpretation.

In my own interviews, practitioners of black magic were mentioned twice. In both cases they were identified as mature single females.[183]According to one, this was pure coincidence, according to the other, it was indicative of a cultural bias against independent women. In the first, Pak Agung, the owner of my homestay in Ubud, spoke briefly of an old woman in his village of whom most people were very

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[180] Francine Rainone and Janice Moulton "Sex Roles and the Sexual Division of Labor" in "Femininity," "Masculinity," and "Androgyny": A Modern Philosophical Discussion. Mary Vetterling-Braggin, ed. Totowa, N.J., Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1982. p. 229.

[181] Wikan does not mention whether or not this widow had any children, something which may or may not have had an impact on the level of suspicion directed at her. Sometimes a widow who has children is treated with considerable respect in honor of her status as a mother (Field research notes #4, p.2.). This said, the fact that Rangda has a daughter, Ratna Mengali, does not prevent her from being referred to as The Queen of Evil.

[182] Wikan 1990: 11.

[183] Field research notes #4, p.2; Field research notes #6, p.4.

frightened. "Most people don't want to touch [her]," he told me. I asked him if this was because she was a widow and he said "because she is a widow, and also because she has strong black magic power." However, when I went on to ask him whether this meant that widows were more likely to practice black magic or that people in Bali were more often frightened of widows than they were of other people, he thought not. When the question was put to him in this manner, he disagreed with the notion that people would be more likely suspicious of a widowed woman.

Rucina Ballinger, who has lived in Peliatan with her Balinese husband for some time, also knew of a woman who was thought to be a witch. In this case the woman in question, her husband's maternal aunt, was technically not a widow but a spinster, having remained unmarried rather than having lost her husband. However, the Balinese seem to use the English word "widow" rather loosely, sometimes meaning a woman whose husband has died, sometimes meaning a woman who has never married. When Ms. Ballinger married into the household of which this woman was a part, she was advised not to eat any food prepared by her, as it may be infused with black magic spells. Despite the fact that even after many years of close contact Ms. Ballinger never saw her new aunt perform any of the acts usually associated with witchcraft - nightflights, meditation in the graveyard or Pura Dalem, nocturnal rituals - the woman was generally thought to be a witch. For Ms. Ballinger, this was an allegation with absolutely no evidence to support it. If this old, unmarried aunt was not considered a witch due to any suspicious actions, then why did members of the family and the community at large feel so certain that she practiced black magic?

Ms. Ballinger felt the answer to be quite simple, if equally disturbing. "I think that all over the world, men, and to a certain extent women, are very threatened by women who don't have to be married to validate themselves."[184] Older single women would thus be more of a threat than younger single women, as with younger

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[184] Field research notes #4, p.2.

women there is still seen to be a potential for eventual marriage. The notion of the independent and happily single woman as a threat to the male ego comes from a Euramerican feminist mode of thought. Another way in which the stigma of the unmarried woman could be viewed is as a threat not to individual men, but to the male/female balance which is seen to underly all aspects of traditional Balinese society. Kaja McGowan addresses this in her essay "Balancing on Bamboo: Women in Balinese Art":

> Central to this configuration of male and female, usually the conjugal couple as a single entity, is the importance placed in traditional Balinese society on bearing children, the woman's procreative capacities being connected symbolically with the renewal of the crops and the fecundity of the land.[185]

If traditional Balinese cosmology places great spiritual importance on procreation and the coupling of male and female, as symbols of the fertility of the land and the harmony of the gods, then women must be encouraged to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers or risk throwing off the balance of the whole.

In their essay "Sex Roles and the Sexual Division of Labor", Francine Rainone and Janice Moulton write that: "Where there are expectations and standards in a society, there will be rewards and penalties for not fitting some patterns or carrying out some functions."[186] If getting married and raising a family are expected roles for women, then those women who follow this pattern are rewarded with higher social status and those who do not are penalized with a lower status. Ibu Agung felt that all people want to marry, if only to ensure in a country without pension plans that older people will have their children to look after them when they are no longer able to work themselves.[187] Her husband added that according to Balinese religion, an unmarried or childless woman is not a perfect

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[185] McGowan 1995: 77.

[186] Rainone and Moulton 1982: 233.

[187] Field research notes #9, p. 5.

human being and will be punished in the afterlife.[188]

Men are not immune to the pressures to get married and start a family either. Rucina Ballinger observed that pressure appears to mount for men after the age thirty, with members of the community asking the same question Ibu Agung admitted to asking: "When will you be married?"[189] A more concrete form of pressure comes from the fact that men are not allowed to become members of the village *banjar* (community administrative body) unless they are married.[190] Even men who are known to be homosexual are expected to marry eventually and join the *banjar*.[191] However, despite the fact that there is a degree of stigma attached to remaining unmarried for both sexes, there appears to be more at stake for women in that they do not inherit from their family.[192] The land and the house go to the sons, while the daughters are expected to go and live with their husbands' families when they marry. A woman who choses not to marry is thus placed at a great disadvantage financially.

Among the Balinese men and women I spoke to, the general consensus was that their society looked on marriage as the natural state of things and that it would require a good deal of courage on the part of an individual who wished to remain single. "In Bali," the schoolteacher I interviewed in Tabanan told me, "people hear the word "widow" and think of Rangda. It functions as a lesson for people, not to become a widow. That is why Balinese women try hard to avoid becoming a widow.

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[188] Field research notes #9, p. 5.
Women who conceive children but abort them are also considered fit for punishment in the afterlife. As a text called the *Sarasamuscaya* says, "How great is a sin, the greater is that of aborting a fetus from the womb, a small word but a large sin." (McGowan 1995: 92.)

[189] Field research notes #9, p. 6.

[190] Field research notes #4, p. 3.

[191] Field research notes #4, p. 4.

[192] Field research notes #4, p. 3.

That is why they have to marry."[193] Rangda functions here as a negative example. She is an angry, destructive woman working alone, that is to say without a man.

With Rangda, as with Balinese women who have the misfortune (by Balinese standards) to be compared to her, chronological age is less of a factor than independence. Women in general are not seen in the same negative light as Rangda; Arthana, the *pedanda* with whom I spoke, maintained that "when women are respected, there will be peace forever. In some ways, women are more respected than men, because a woman has a great ability. She is the one who has children and takes care of the family."[194] Nor are all old women looked down upon or feared, as related by Ms. Ballinger with regards to her mother-in-law. This woman is a widow and the oldest person in the family compound, and yet it is she who is consulted about the undertaking of particular rituals and ceremonies.[195] Why do her words carry weight when those of the unmarried aunt in the same compound do not? According to Ms. Ballinger, is it because her mother-in-law had been married and has children. This makes sense when one looks at the *pedanda's* concept of the ideal woman as wife and mother. Marriage and the raising of a family appear to be all important in the Balinese conception of a woman's role in society. With regards to Rangda, the fact that she was not only a mother but was motivated by a desire to marry off her daughter seems to be strangely overlooked when she is spoken of as a negative force. Perhaps it is thought that she was not a good mother because it was her practice of black magic that prevented her daughter from finding a suitor in the first place and because she sought a violent solution to the problem. Whether the issue of her motherhood is included or viewed as an exception,

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[193] Field research notes #2, p. 2.

[194] Field research notes #3, p. 3. There is a good chance that a statement such as this arose from the fact that I, the interviewer, am female. However, even if the subject wished to flatter me or tell me what he thought I would like to hear, his choice of childbearing and rearing as that which is most worthy of celebration in a woman reveals what his vision of the ideal role for women is.

[195] Field research notes #4, p.2.

Rangda could still overall be said to be a summation of everything that a woman should not be. In this way, she helps define what is thought to be proper and improper behavior for a Balinese woman.

**RANGDA AS A NEGATIVE EXAMPLE OF APPROPRIATE FEMININE BEHAVIOR**

When I say that Rangda helps to define feminine behavior protocols in Bali, this does not mean that she is the causal factor in this relationship. I would argue that she is more symptomatic, in the sense that she is constructed in accordance with existing sensibilities. She is an amplification of these sensibilities. In order to show how this works, it is necessary to attempt a sketch of what actions and character traits constitute proper versus improper behavior for a woman in Balinese society.[196] For this section I will work with the information presented by Unni Wikan in Managing Turbulent Hearts, which was based on her close personal contact with a number of Balinese women over a period of time

To begin with, the very title of Wikan's book, "managing turbulent hearts", comes from the emphasis she witnessed among the Balinese on not giving way to their emotions, instead maintaining at all times a "clear, bright face." Rangda-like displays of anger cause bad feelings and there is a sense that a person who dwells on their own problems rather than seeking to maintain harmony in the community is viewed as selfish. "If someone sits there brooding, people will say he is thinking about himself only, not the whole of our people."[197] Wikan used the story of Suriati as a case in point. Despite suffering the effects of a great personal tragedy in the form of the sudden death of a loved one, it was vital for the young woman to repress her feelings of sorrow and loss and carry herself in a calm, even cheerful manner. Not to do so would be socially disastrous, and her punishment would be ridicule, an

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[196] I say "woman in Balinese society" rather than "Balinese women" here for the reason that the code of behavioral conduct applies not only to women born in Bali, but to foreigners who become members of a Balinese community.

[197] Wikan 1990: xvii.

ever effective means of humiliating deviants in any society into adhering to social convention.

I do not wish to suggest, and I doubt Wikan does either, that this behavior is limited to the *women* of Bali. I would argue, however, that the men alone are provided with a venue for the expression of their "turbulent hearts". This occurs in the battle between Barong and Rangda where some of the dancers go into trance and attack first the witch and then themselves. The violence of this rite, in which members of a community who normally coexist peacefully will often turn their blades on each other, functions as a cathartic experience. The documentary film Bali: Mask of Rangda states that "in sacred drama, in full public view, they are acting out the hatred and violence which can tear apart the individual mind or social fabric and they are exorcising it."[198] By acting out the anger which the Balinese acknowledge lurks in all of us in a controlled setting,[199] the dancers are able to prevent these forces from taking over in everyday life. However, only males are found doing this. At one time, *kris* dancers, as the trance dancers who carry traditional Balinese daggers are called, could be male or female, but this practice appears to have stopped at some point after the nineteen-fifties.[200] In contemporary times, women have no such form of release, and to them is left the task of maintaining that "clear, bright face" at all times, in life as in the female-danced roles in the dance-drama.

In this context, Rangda is a clear example of how not to act. In the story of Randeng Direh, the widow's response to the shunning of her daughter by the eligible bachelors in the community is one of intense anger. Rather than managing her feelings and projecting an image of calm and cheerfulness, she uses magic motivated by rage to spread an epidemic. As Wikan writes, "sadness and anger are

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[198] Bali: Mask of Rangda.

[199] Bali: Mask of Rangda.; also Field research notes #6, p.3, Field research notes #8, p.4.

[200] This came from a discussion with my advisor Dr Astri Wright at the University of Victoria which centered around photographs of female *kris* dancers taken in the 1950s by Henri Cartier-Bresson. I have not, at present, sufficient information on the subject to analyze why women ceased to be *kris* dancers. I must therefore leave this in the form of a tantalizing question for the reader to ponder at his or her leisure.

anathema to health and happiness",[201] and should therefore be avoided for the sake of oneself and the community. Bad feelings towards another person will often turn into what the Balinese term as "anger sickness", for which the natural progression is thought to be gratification through black magic.[202] Rangda's violent behavior throughout the Randeng Direh story is the perfect example of this principle in action. According to the Balinese behavioral code, she should have responded to the offense paid to her daughter with cheerfulness, acting as if none of this mattered in the least. Her ability to maintain impeccable manners despite the way in which her daughter had been ill treated would hopefully the guilty parties to compare their behavior to hers and find themselves lacking, and shame them into doing right by the girl.[203]

Rangda can also function as a negative example of feminine behavior in her incarnation as Durga. When asked about the relationship between Rangda and Durga, I Ketut Arthana, the *pedanda* whom I interviewed, told the following story. Siwa asked his wife Durga to go into the woods, ostensibly to look for a particular food item, but in fact because he wished to test her loyalty to him. After his wife departed, Siwa changed his outward appearance to that of a cattle herder and followed her into the woods. Durga met the cattle herder, not knowing it was her husband, and found herself very attracted to him. The two made love, after which Durga returned to heaven where Siwa was waiting for her and asked her what happened in the woods. She lied, saying nothing at all had transpired, an act which sent Siwa into a fury with the knowledge that not only was his wife unfaithful, but that she lied about it. Durga then became Rangda, a symbol of bad character.[204]

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[201] Wikan 1990: 28.

[202] Wikan 1990: 64.

[203] Unni Wikan "Public grace and private fears: Gaiety, offense, and sorcery in North Bali" Ethos. vol.15. p.359.

[204] Field research notes #3, p.1.

After relating this legend, Arthana was anxious to make it clear that the idea of Rangda as a symbol of bad character is limited to the story. His point was that although Rangda's character may be simplified for the purposes of didactic tales meant to discourage behavior which runs against the social mores of the culture, it is still understood that the real Rangda is not nearly so one-dimensional. Nonetheless, the figure of Rangda is used here, as elswhere, as a demonstration of how women in Bali should and should not behave.

Returning to the question posed earlier with regards to the conventions of worship, we may again ask "Whom does the figure of Rangda empower in this context?", the context here being the construction of gender roles in Bali. When Rangda is held up to a woman as a negative example, the woman may feel that she is not meant to define herself independently from their husband and children and that she must approach the role divinely given to her uncomplainingly and with a "clear, bright face". Rangda is not the sole propagator of such modes of thought, but works in tandem with other aspects of Balinese mythology, such as the images of hell described by Kaja McGowan in which women who remained childless in life are punished after death by being made to suckle giant caterpillars.[205] Elements such as these function together to present an image that a Balinese woman who wishes to avoid being like Rangda or suffering after death is married with children and goes about smilingly performing the ritual tasks allotted to female members of the household. It is doubtful women in Bali would feel empowered by a mythology with such clearly defined and narrow parameters for female fulfillment. I would suggest that it is the men in the society who benefit the most. Ibu Agung referred to the practical side of having children, in that they would be able to look after her when she grew old, but it was the men I interviewed who looked upon childbirth as more of a higher calling for women.[206] If it was truly the feeling of all Balinese women that

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[205] McGowan 1995: 87.

[206] Field research notes #9, p. 5; Field research notes #3, p. 3; Field research notes #8, p. 7.

being the ideal wife and mother was the pinnacle of womanly existence, it seems unlikely that there would be a need for either the negative example of Rangda or the threat of divine punishment for those who failed to comply.

**RAWANA AS A MALE EQUIVALENT TO RANGDA**

Much of the feminist objection to Rangda stems from the fact that the face of evil in Bali is a feminine one. Are women viewed as being more closely linked to the negative element than men in Bali? According to the examples presented above, this may well be the case for some groups of women, namely those operating outside the activities and contexts prescribed for woman in Balinese society. It would not be true to say, however, that women are singled out in this regard exclusively due to the existence of a *queen* of evil. Bali: Mask of Rangda presents the demon king Rawana as a male equivalent of Rangda.[207] Rawana is the villain of the *Ramayana*, an epic story from the Hindu tradition. Motivated by lust for King Rama's wife Sita, Rawana kidnaps her with the help of his great magic power. In mask form, Rawana's iconography follows a similar pattern to that of Rangda (see Fig. 28). As seen in this mask, he has the bulging eyes and the large, flared nostrils. His pointed teeth, though not as pronounced as those of the witch, are set in thick red lips with an overbite, suggestive of his violent temper and greedy nature. To compare a person with Rawana is said to be seen as a great insult in Indonesia.[208]

In a series of magical drawings published by C. Hooykaas in Drawings of Balinese Sorcery, there appears a figure labelled "Ki Chalon Arang". For Hooykaas, this figure, illustrated in a section devoted to spells causing death and decay, is

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[207] Bali: Mask of Rangda.

[208] Slattum 1992: 72. I have not heard of anyone directly comparing someone to Rangda. This may be because Rawana, existing only in the story, is safe while Rangda, who holds real power, is a dangerous name to invoke. Also, comparing a person with the Queen of the Witches may be interpreted as an accusation that the person referred to practices black magic. This could result in great offense if that person was not a *leyak* and great danger if he or she was.

"obviously a male derivative of the witch Chalon Arang" (see Fig. 29).[209] As this is the only information given with the image, it is difficult to know how commonly it may occur in magical drawings. However, the existence of even one such drawing suggests that envisioning the powers of death and destruction in masculine rather than feminine form is not a totally alien concept in Bali. Indeed, the god Siwa is the embodiment of these forces and is himself seen as the Lord of the Pura Dalem.

The existence of a character such as Rawana or of a male equivalent to the witch Calon Arang alters the extent to which women can be said to be vilified in Balinese mythology. Rangda is not the only wicked sorcerer in Bali, so the practice of harmful black magic and the inability to control one's emotions is not likely to be associated exclusively with women. Both Rawana and Rangda could be said to function as negative examples of behavior for the two genders respectively. Through their violent outbursts of anger, lust or jealousy, they demonstrate to Balinese men and women how not to conduct oneself. The threat of being compared by one's peers to either character underscores the lesson.[210]

This said, I still do not want to draw the comparison out too far. There are two factors which stand in the way of interpreting Rangda and Rawana as totally equivalent. Firstly, there is the matter of context. The *Ramayana* is presented as a ceremonial offering to the gods and for the enjoyment of the human spectators. It is not seen as magically powerful and is therefore safely performed in the mid-space of a temple.[211] The Calonarang is a sacred exorcism rite held outside the temple

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[209] Hooykaas 1980: 195, figure 2.

[210] It is worth mentioning that the Balinese people, at least those to whom I spoke, do not consciously consider Rawana to be the male equivalent of Rangda. This is not to say that they would necessarily deny there being any connection between the two, but when I asked if there existed in Bali any male equivalent to Rangda, I met with bafflement followed by a negative answer. (See Field research notes #1, pp.2-3) No-one I spoke to brought up Rawana in conjunction with Rangda, and the comparison appears very rarely in the literature on Bali. This information need not contradict what I have said about the relationship between Rangda and Rawana. It just means that people focus on each in their own context - Rangda in the Calonarang, Rawana in the Ramayana - and are not given to contemplating them as a pair.

[211] Bandem and deBoer 1995: 60.

proper and close to crossroads and the graveyard, both ritually dangerous places where the darker forces may be met on home ground.[212] Also, Rawana is killed at the end of the *Ramayana*. He does not represent the prinicple of darkness, but is just one example of its occurence. There is more of a sense that Rawana is simply the villain in a play, whereas Rangda's spirit comes down through her mask to battle the Barong and challenge the local *leyak*. The second factor was brought to my attention over the course of my interview with the *pemangku*. Through my interpreter, I asked him if there existed in Balinese mythology a male equivalent to Rangda.[213] Despite countless rephrasings, this turned out to be the only question I asked during my stay in Bali which neither interpreter nor subject understood. That this should go unanswered while other, to my mind more complex topics were discussed with relative ease, suggests to me that none of the Balinese individuals present during the interview consciously held Rawana as a male equivalent to Rangda. If it is through her association with the similarly disposed Rawana that we decide Rangda does not villify women, is the hypothesis still valid if many Balinese people do not hold such an association in their minds?

**SIWA AS A MALE EQUIVALENT TO RANGDA**

Rawana is not the only male figure with whom Rangda may be linked. One of the epithets for the god Siwa, both in India and in Bali, is "The Destroyer". Durga, as she occurs in India, also bears this epithet. Theirs is a focused destruction, ultimately combating the forces of chaos. They exist in a context where death and destruction are seen as a necessary part of the cycle of life and death, and function to allow these to happen with a minimum of chaos. In Bali, Durga (as Rangda) is sometimes a symbol of focused destruction, and sometimes of a more chaotic destruction, such as the spreading of epidemics. She is still seen as a necessary

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[212] Bandem and deBoer 1995: 102.

[213] Field research notes #1, pp.2-3.

part of the cycle of existence.

Balinese Hinduism, as was said in Chapter One, has a special reverence for the god Siwa. He is often called The Destroyer, but since life and death occur as part of a never-ending cycle, in being a power of death he is also seen as the creator of new life.[214] Durga, and therefore Rangda as an aspect of Durga, may be seen either as the consort of Siwa or as one of his feminine manifestations, since all deities are ultimately one. The people I interviewed in Bali who mentioned Siwa tended to speak of him as the goddess's husband.[215] Despite the fact that the death temples are dedicated to both deities, none of my contacts suggested Siwa as a male equivalent to Rangda when this question was posed. It seems to be that Rangda's designation as The Queen of Evil is not generally carried over to apply to the god of destruction as "The King of Evil".

**WHY RANGDA IS DANCED BY A MAN: THE NOTION OF THE FALSE WOMAN**

Although the Rangda of myth is clearly a female being, indeed so much so that my attempt to question her gender was met with incredulity, the fact remains that the Rangda of the Calonarang dance is traditionally performed by a male dancer. Each person I interviewed about this had a slightly different opinion as to why or the extent to which this is the case. For example Agung Rai, the director of ARMA, said that women were generally not encouraged to dance Rangda, but that in certain areas the dancer could be either male or female. He also stressed the danger of wearing that mask and the need for the dancer to undergo purifying rituals.[216] Unsaid but implied is that fact that the menstrual cycles renders women "ritually impure" for a week out of every month, during which time it would be highly dangerous, even sacrilegious for a woman to perform a sacred dance. The painter

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[214] Field research notes #1, p. 3.

[215] Field research notes #3, p. 1; Field research notes #7, p. 1.

[216] Field research notes #8, p.5.

Murni said that women are not allowed to dance Rangda, mostly due to the issue with menstruation, but that they wouldn't want to anyway out of fear of the power of the mask and the spirits it would call forth.[217] Pak and Ibu Agung from my homestay felt it is due to more mundane physical matters that women only rarely dance Rangda, specifically, that a man can carry the often heavy mask with its mass of wild hair, and that a man's voice has a volume and pitch which is more conducive to the shouting of challenges to local *leyak*.[218]

From the way it is dealt with in the books on Bali and from the discussions I had with people, it appears to be universally known in Bali that the human behind the mask of the witch is male. The idea of the "false woman" is readily apparent at a point in Bali: Mask of Rangda where the dancer is unmasked and proceeds to do a circuit of the temple courtyard clad in only a portion of the costume. Clothed in this manner he became simply a man in women's clothing with fake breasts. Transvestitism and the use of costume to alter identity are not uncommon in many cultures throughout the world, from tales of a Trickster figure in North American aboriginal art, to the Tibetan Uncle Tompa,[219] to the men of Tomman island in Vanuata who perform a dance stolen from the women of their island.[220] Rituals involving a masquerade as a member of the opposite sex have been described by writers such as Mircea Eliade and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty as a simulation of androgyny, and through this "the integration of opposites and the return to chaos."[221] Whether the ultimate state of existence is thought to belong to the realm

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[217] Field research notes #5, p.4.

[218] Field research notes #9, p.4.

[219] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1980. p. 297-298.

[220] Nadine Amadio Pacifica: Myth, Magic and Traditional Wisdom from the South Sea Islands. Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1993. p. 71.

[221] O'Flaherty 1980: 297, citing Mircea Eliade Mephistopheles and the Androgyne. New York, 1965. pp. 112-113.

of chaos or that of harmony depends on the cosmology of the culture in question. I would argue that in the case of Bali, the integration of opposites is meant to facilitate balance rather than chaos. The statement does however appear to be an apt interpretation of Rangda, symbol of the forces of chaos, and the delicate balance she holds with her opposite, the Barong.

To continue with my analogies to Euramerican popular culture, Rangda could also be said to be evocative of the male comedians in the Monty Python troupe playing one of their "Pepperpots", a series of ugly, crotchety and occasionally violent old women. I will not venture to make too much of this comparison and make absolutely no claim of influence in either direction. However, in each case, the performer is winkingly known by the audience to be male while the character he is portraying is still read as female.

This does not change the fact that Rangda and the Pepperpots function as caricatures of "bad women", but it does have strong implications for the degree to which women in general are viewed in this light. If the Rangda in the dance is a false woman, she is separated from real women and is not associated with them as one of the same kind. Furthermore, women are often called upon to play the part of a hero or a god in a dance drama, as, according to Judy Slattum, "few men have to ability to perform the exquisite qualities of a deity."[222] A similar arrangement is found in Monty Python where Carol Cleveland, the lone female performer, would never play the part of a Pepperpot but would often play a fresh-faced, pleasant young man. The construction of Rangda cannot truly vilify women, because through being prevented from dancing the part they are not so closely connected with her. If women were viewed in such a negative light, it would be inconceivable for them to be asked not to play the villainous witch, but to play gods and heroes.

## THE ABSENCE OF RANGDA IN THE WORK OF CONTEMPORARY WOMEN

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[222] Slattum 1992: 19.

**ARTISTS IN BALI**

Not only is Rangda absent from the repertoire of female dancers in Bali, but from the work of female visual artists also. During my time in Ubud, I found no imagery of Rangda created by a woman artist, even when I visited Ubud's Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women, a gallery devoted to women artists resident in Bali. Astri Wright, a professor at the University of Victoria who has done extensive research on contemporary Indonesian art, did not recall having seen any such works by Balinese women artists, and only one by a woman from elsewhere in Indonesia.[223] This exception exists in the form of a painting by the Javanese artist Kartika Affandi, whom Wright describes as "the leading radical figure of the first generation of modern women artists in Indonesia."[224] Radical is an appropriate word for Kartika, who has never been afraid to tread her own path. To quote Wright again, "where women of her generation and class did not wear casual clothing in public in the 1980s, she did. Where others did not drive a van around, she did. While others would hesitate to study the axe-split head of a buffalo, she didn't."[225]

Not only is Kartika not afraid to explore the gruesome imagery of the buffalo head, she has also tackled the subject of Rangda. In 1995 she painted "Dancer Stepping on My Head" (See Fig. 30), an image which she has identified to Astri Wright as Rangda. Kartika has recently painted a more easily recognizable image of Rangda, but the 1995 work deals more closely with how the witch has struck her on a personal level. Although the palette used here is similar to Hendra Gunawan's painting (See Fig. 1), the color is applied in such a way as to express heightened tension. The paint comes straight from the tube, sometimes to be left in *impasto*

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[223] Modern Indonesian *male* painters have on occasion depicted the struggle between Rangda and Barong. One of Hendra Gunawan's images is looked at in this thesis, but the subject also appears in his "Barong I" and "Melasti Ceremony in Sabe Beach", both painted in 1982. The Javanese artist Affandi (father of Kartika) has also treated the subject of the Barong.

[224] Wright 2000: 11.

[225] Wright 2000: 11-12.

swirls and streaks, and sometimes to be smeared with the artist's fingers into solid blocks of color. Among the distorted features of the figures it is possible to make out a dancer whose costume is adorned with severed heads and appendages which appear to represent the witch's long hair and characteristic necklace of human entrails. Underneath the raised foot of the dancer is the head of the artist, which may itself be servered or attached to a body which has already been trampled into the ground. It is an image of horror and pain.

As Kartika is approaching the subject of Rangda as a non-Balinese, it is difficult to know exactly what Rangda represents to her in this context. Is her head being trampled in divine retaliation for some past wrong-doing? Does she identify in some way with the victims in the story of Randeng Direh? Perhaps Rangda symbolizes to Kartika a more abstract concept such as fear, anger or hatred. The image may even function autobiographically, as a metaphor for the physical ailments which cause her discomfort and restrict her movement as the dancer does by pinning her down, or for the emotional pain she may feel at social stigma she has faced "for presuming to become a modern artist" rather than following the accepted path of defining herself first and foremost as a wife and mother.[226] What is clear is that, as with the painting she did of the dead buffalo, Kartika approached this work as something challenging and difficult. It is challenging to the viewer in its violent and macabre subject matter and must be even more so to the artist who chooses to use such an image to express herself. I would argue that it is this willingness to paint difficult, potentially unpleasant subjects which has drawn Kartika to paint Rangda when so many others have shied away from the image. It takes courage to invoke the Queen of the Witches.

It is possible that Balinese women artists have not thus far chosen to depict Rangda due to a feeling of discomfort towards an unpleasant and unattractive subject. This is the basic interpretation taken by Mary Northmore, the director of the

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226 Wright 2000: 11.

Seniwati Gallery. She feels that Balinese artists prefer to paint cheerful, aesthetically pleasing subjects and tend to ignore the darker side. Even when the gallery had an exhibition of goddess images earlier in the 1990s, the artists invariably chose to depict beautiful, benevolent goddesses such as Saraswati, Sita or Dewi Sri.[227] Sales are bound to have an impact on artistic production, since most working artists cannot afford to paint subjects that past experience has proven will not sell. If the buying public which often consists of affluent tourists from outside Bali favors *legong* dancers, family scenes and rice fields, then artists will be more likely to explore these themes. This said, the encouragement of Balinese artists to paint according to foreign tastes can also work the other way. When asked about explorations by women artists in Bali of the darker side of Balinese mythology, Mary Northmore could think of one artist, Suciarmi, who had painted Durga. She added, however, that this was only done at the instigation of an American friend who was interested in that subject matter.[228] In the case of Rangda, it seems less likely that a lack of artworks featuring her image is influenced by tourism, for the proliferation of Rangda's on travel book covers and advertising posters make clear that tourists are indeed interested in her as a key image of Balinese culture.[229] If artistic production was based purely on what interested tourists rather than what imagery artists felt comfortable with, then Rangda would probably be painted much more frequently. This said, a distinction could conceivably be made between what interests tourists intellectually and what interests them as potential decor. In this case, foreigners may be almost as reluctant as the Balinese to have the face of Rangda staring at them from the interior of their home.

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[227] E-mail from Mary Northmore to Astri Wright, April 13, 2000, p.1.

[228] E-mail from Mary Northmore to Astri Wright, April 13, 2000, p.1.

[229] For a further discussion of Rangda in relation to the promotion of Balinese culture to tourists, see Chapter Five.

## RANGDA AND BARONG AS ASPECTS OF DURGA AND SIWA

Bali: Mask of Rangda brings up another point with regards to Rangda and gender. In the film, the struggle between Barong and Rangda is highlighted in regards to its social value as a reenactment of the ongoing struggle between the forces of good and evil. In addition, the film makes a passing reference to the Barong as an incarnation of Siwa.[230] It does not, however, go into Rangda's complementary role as an incarnation of Durga. As Durga is the consort of Siwa, this is really quite an important point. In Hindu mythology, both Siwa and Durga take as one of their titles "The Destroyer". It seems quite appropriate then that the demonic forms of Barong and Rangda should represent the male and female elements of the destructive principle. It should be remembered, however, that in the context of the Barong dance, the Barong is seen as a benevolent force dedicated to the maintenance of order. The Barong does not initiate violent acts, but only prevents the witch from doing so. Rangda, the incarnation of Durga, is clearly the more destructive of the two, implying that of the two deities bearing the title of Destroyer, it is the goddess who is the most destructive.

Envisioning Barong and Rangda as husband and wife also adds another dimension to the way in which the two function as a pair. Firstly, the fact that they are not only sparring partners but spouses gives more meaning to their ability to become a symbol of balance when they are brought together. Balance is created when opposing forces are equal, but when these forces are seen as a couple in the truest, most literal sense, the Balinese concept that balance is the natural state of things is underlined: the husband and wife work together to maintain harmony. This in turn reflects Balinese social organization in which all tasks are divided up into men's work and women's work, with the idea that people will form couples in which the husband does his bit and the wife does hers. The division of labor along gender lines is particularly apparent in the making of offerings, where women are responsible for creating daily offerings from vegetable materials and men are responsible for those offerings needed for larger ceremonies which require the use of meat products. Francine Brinkgreve, author of "The Cili and Other Female Images in Bali", speaks of this

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[230] There is little or no mention of this interpretation elsewhere in the literature on Bali, although Covarrubias writes that the Barong is known by many titles (Covarrubias 1937: 332, 356).

division as a manifestation of the complimentary opposition between male and female and a part of the "socio-cosmic dualism" which has traditionally been an integral part of Balinese culture.[231] The balance symbolized by Barong/Siwa and Rangda/Durga thus carries over into the human realm where individual couples could be seen as representing this balance in microcosm.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to note that not everyone in Bali necessarily views Rangda and Barong as Durga and Siwa respectively. Lansing lists several variations he was told by his informants. According to one, Rangda is Iswara (another name for Siwa) and the Barong is Brahma, while another said Durga was the mother of Rangda. Another interpretation yet was that Rangda derives her power from Siwa, and the Barong from Banas Pati Raja, the Lord of the Jungle.However, if one accepts as one possible interpretation a link between the following pairs - Barong/Rangda, Siwa/Durga, husband/wife - balance may not be the only implication of the association.[232] I have presented the husband-wife relationship of Barong and Rangda as evidence of the underlying harmony between the two, but what is to prevent one from looking at this equation the other way around? That is to say, could the depiction in performance art of the husband-wife relationship made up of the ever fighting Barong and Rangda be construed as evidence of a conflict on some level between a man and woman who are married? Looked at in this light, the fight between the beast and the witch in sacred dance is a literal acting out of the battle of the sexes. In the performance filmed for Bali: Mask of Rangda, there is a segment of the dance in which the bulky Barong first envelopes and then pins down the comparatively smaller Rangda who, lacking the physical bulk to retaliate by force, bides her time then lets loose a volley of shrieked curses. Could this be an archetypal depiction of an instance of domestic violence?

This possible interpretation of the struggle between Barong and Rangda as

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[231] Brinkgreve 1992: 136-141.

[232] Lansing 1974: 76. This is the instance, referred to in Chapter One, where Lansing mentions a variety of possible readings of Rangda but goes on to refer to her only as an archetype of evil.

a symbolic indicator of violence against women in traditional Balinese culture was not put forward by any of my contacts in Bali, nor has it been presented in any of the scholarly texts dealing with Rangda. Lacking any such corroboration, I do not wish to make too much of this point. However, it is worth noting that since many of my subjects were male, it is unlikely that they would wish to put forward such a view, especially to a female researcher. I also must question whether viewing the female Rangda as a victim of physical assault by the male Barong constitutes inappropriately imposing a Euramerican way of looking at gender relations onto a Southeast Asian culture. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore the effects of globalization which tourism has brought to Bali in concentrated form: as apects of modern Bali become increasingly integrated with Western culture and Western modes of thought, is it practical to say that these imported interpretations have no currency there?

# Chapter V

# Conclusion

## THE ADOPTION OF THE MASK OF RANGDA AS A TOURIST SYMBOL OF BALI

> Within the discourse on tourism and culture, "culture" has taken on a rarified status, as Balinese seek to identify for their interlocutors, tourists, academics and development planners alike what is essentially Balinese. Thus the statements of identity convert readily into a set agenda of dance movements, or an elaborate ornamental carving style to be applied to the front of new public buildings and hotels alike. Within the discourse many Balinese have taken up positions that are opposite from the "tourism as a threat to culture" camp and argued that tourism reinforces Balinese culture.[233]
>
> -Adrian Vickers

The impact of the interest by foreigners in Bali over the course of this past century cannot be overlooked. Tourists seek out those elements of culture in Bali which appear exotic in comparison to their native cultures, and these elements become in turn symbols which serve to encapsulate Balinese culture for the world. Thus Rangda, as an aspect of Balinese "statements of identity", is converted into a memorable image on book covers and postcards through which Balinese cultural tourism is marketed.

Back in Chapter Two I recorded an anecdote told to me by the artist Murni in which her non-Balinese boyfriend expressed an interest in Rangda's appearance. While Murni was terrified, he was thinking of photo opportunities. The reaction of Murni's boyfriend to Rangda is not unusual for people from outside of Bali. Visitors to Bali are just as intrigued by the image of the Queen of the Witches now as they were in Walter Spies's day. One of the things that struck me during my time in Bali was the proliferation of images of Rangda. In addition to the many performances of the Calonarang put on exclusively for tourists (as opposed to serving any religious function), she could be found both in the form of masks (full scale and miniature)

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[233] Vickers 1996: 27-28.

created for sale to tourists and as printed pictures on the covers of any number of books written for the tourist market (see Figs. 31, 32, 33). Presented to visitors in this fashion, as one of the key images of Balinese culture, Rangda becomes a symbol of Bali. Given that this is meant to be the same being which the tourist pamphlets describe as "the evil, hair-raising witch, a symbol of villainy, hatred, lust, jealousy and everything else that's nasty", I found myself to be extremely curious about what Balinese people made of this seemingly unlikely choice of cultural emblem. Thus, the last question I posed in each interview involved trying to find out whether and the extent to which each subject found Rangda an acceptable image to present to the world as something synonymous with Bali.

Even with such a small sampling of individuals as I had to work with, I was surprised at the range of opinions on the subject of Rangda as a symbol of Bali. Agung Rai felt it was entirely appropriate for the mask of Rangda to serve as the face of Bali because for him, Rangda is the symbol of the balance between what is good and what is bad, and this balance is in turn indicative of the Bali Hindu cosmology.[234] The *balian* and the teacher whom I interviewed condoned the practice, but added the qualifier that it was necessary for people to distinguish between the Rangda one may encounter in a shop window versus the Rangda who must be prayed to in the temple.[235] The masks made in the image of Rangda for foreign consumption are not made of sacred wood and have undergone none of the rituals which would render them *tenget*, filled with divine energy.[236] Not containing the spirit of Rangda, these masks are seen to have little in common with the real Rangda as she appears in sacred masks.[237] Both the *balian* and the teacher felt that

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[234] Field research notes #8, p.6.

[235] This relates to the point made in a footnote on page 51 of Chapter Two regarding the shifting notions of the relative reality of Rangda as she appears in a variety of contexts.

[236] This said, according to Judy Slattum it is not entirely unheard of for masks made for the tourist market to become charged with magic power. She was given the explanation that "If you make an attractive home, someone will want to live in it." by a former director of the Art Center of Bali. (Slattum 1992: 14)

[237] Field research notes #2, p.3; Field research notes #7, p.3.

as long is this distinction was understood, there was no problem with using the image of Rangda as a symbol of Bali. Both said they were very happy that people from other parts of the world were interested in Rangda, as this demonstrated an interest in Bali Hindu culture. In their eyes, Rangda is a means of promoting Bali Hindu culture.

I Ketut Arthana, the *pedanda* I spoke with was in partial agreement with this, in that he was pleased that "most people in the world know about Balinese culture".[238] He did however, have one objection to the situation owing to the fact that he was not convinced that all visitors to Bali would make the distinction between the two Rangda. "As Balinese, we are scared that people don't really understand - maybe they think the Rangda in the art shop and the Rangda in the temple are the same."[239] To consider the physical form of Rangda as it appears in a commercial setting, without regard to ceremony, to be inherently synonymous with the powerful Queen of the Witches who can protect the people or spread illness at will would be quite blasphemous in the context of the Balinese religion.

Arthana does well to be worried, for it is unlikely that the bulk of tourists, the majority of whom have only ever seen non-sacred Calonarang performances put on for their viewing pleasure, have any concept of the complexity of Rangda's character. As Jane Belo wrote in Bali: Rangda and Barong, "[Rangda] has the sort of authenticity which in our culture belongs to Santa Claus, to the Tax Collector, and to the Angel of Death - with the difference that we could not very well imagine all these figures rolled into one, while the Balinese find no difficulty attributing to Rangda such a multiplicity."[240]

Not only are we unaccustomed to collapsing many characteristics into one entity within the context of Euramerican culture, there is a tendency to treat figures

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[238] Field research notes #3, p.3.

[239] Field research notes #3, p.3.

[240] Belo 1949: 19

from other cultures in a similar manner. A children's book written by Australian writer Stephanie Owen Reeder and illustrated by Javanese installation artist Dadang Christanto is a case in point. The Flaming Witch deals with the story of the historical Rangda and her battle with Mpu Baradah. Described in a panel on the back cover as a new translation from Old Javanese by the author herself, the story is not noticeably different from the account of the historical Rangda presented in this thesis. There is a difference, though, which lies not in the narrative structure but in the many layers of meaning which lay behind the story. According to the back cover of the book, "Rangda is a powerful witch and she is angry enough to bring down a curse on the whole kingdom. This beautiful, peaceful kingdom where no one is hungry and no one is poor is suddenly a place of fire and destruction."[241] True, this is one aspect of Rangda, but the writer goes on to say that the story presented in The Flaming Witch is still performed today. As a result, parents and children who are introduced to Rangda via this book will not think that the Calonarang dance is about maintaining the cosmic balance, or that Rangda can be called a goddess, or that she can be a protective force. The resulting misunderstanding appears to be the literary equivalent to the *pedanda's* concern that visitor's confronted with Rangda masks in shop windows will be under the impression that what they see is synonymous with the sacred image of Rangda.

For Pak and Ibu Agung, the owners of my homestay, there was little question of Rangda being a good choice for a symbol of Bali. Ibu Agung was simply not comfortable with the prevalence of such a frightening image and the idea that people from outside of Bali would associate the island and its culture with Rangda. "Already, people say "Oh, Rangda - magic.""[242] Pak Agung didn't like the idea of using Rangda as a symbol of Bali any more than his wife did. For him though, Rangda does not conjure up images of terror, as he does not think of the darker

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[241] Stephanie Owen Reeder The Flaming Witch. Sydney, Random House Australia, 1997, back cover.

[242] Field research notes #9, p.4.

forces as something to be feared so much as understood and respected, but rather of anger and aggression. "Yes, I do mind," he said. "if Rangda is to be a symbol of Bali, because there are a lot of things possible in Bali, because," he joked. "Bali is pretty cute." Growing serious once again he added: "But Rangda is like a monster. Rangda is good for a symbol of anger. If we were to use Rangda as a symbol of Bali, Bali would be [seen as] very strong and aggressive. But, as you know, the people in Bali are not really aggressive. [Not like Rangda.] That is the symbol when the people are angry."[243]

As can be seen from even this small group of responses, there are any number of different and highly individual views on the way in which the mask of Rangda is presented to the world. Why choose Rangda as a cultural symbol when there are so many mixed feelings on the part of Balinese people about the selection? Certainly no referenda have been held on the subject. To Rucina Ballinger, the choice is clearly related to the taste for the exotic and sensational which so often intrigues people from one culture when presented with a very different one. "To sell books or a culture, one must choose something exotic, and you can't get much more exotic than a witch who makes people go into trance."[244] That turning Bali into a magical mystery tour through the presentation of Rangda still attracts visitors today makes one wonder if perceptions have really changed much since Spies and co. were first intrigued by the darker side of paradise in the 1930s. As Vickers writes: "it may not be true to say that 'paradise hasn't changed in a thousand years', [as the tourist books and pamphlets are so fond of doing], but it is true to say that tourist images have not changed in over fifty years. The only difference is that Indonesians, not Europeans, must take the credit for these statements and images."[245]

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[243] Field research notes #6, p.7.

[244] Field research notes #4, p.1.

[245] Vickers 1989: 192.

I would argue that there is no single unified, typically Balinese response to Rangda in contemporary society. Perhaps there never was. Context and venue may be very influential as well, as the teacher suggested with regards to the notion that what is terrifying by torchlight may be less so by fluorescent light. In addition, it is worth mentioning that I interviewed the teacher in a courtyard behind an auto repair garage where vehicles were being worked on while we spoke, while Agung Rai was interviewed in the grounds of the Agung Rai Museum of Art where we were surrounded by architecture and sculpture in a traditional style. Is it possible that an individual's view on whether Rangda's power is still pervasive or whether she is being slowly but surely ousted by the influx of Western technology and culture could be subtly influenced by their location, either in a mechanics' workshop surrounded by Japanese cars and motorbikes or in an art museum surrounded by examples of traditional Balinese art?

Throughout this thesis I have stressed the multiplicity of meanings which may be associated with Rangda. The personal views of individuals in Bali, both my own contacts and those of past researchers, have played an important part in this approach. Is it possible though, to avoid generalizations altogether? I would unfortunately have to argue that it is not. The logistics, as has been said earlier, are prohibitive: realistically, one cannot interview *everyone* and hope to include all the findings in a single piece of writing. Researchers must be content to collect as much data as they can and make projections beyond that. In practical terms, the majority comes to stand for the whole. Since it was never my intent for this project to interview a large number of people or to present the views of all of Bali, this difficulty does not apply to me as much as it might have. However, whatever the number of people one chooses to interview and however personal the approach to these individual informants may be, the researcher cannot avoid the fact that the informants themselves may be inclined to essentialize their own culture. By way of an example, I will remind the reader of the following statements by my contacts:

"In Bali, we believe that when the good spirits are well disposed towards someone,

the bad spirits will never disturb [that person]." - *pemangku*[246]

"People are always scared [of Rangda]."- Agung Rai[247]

"All people want to get married." - Ibu Agung[248]

There is no little irony in the fact that these essentializing statements come from the very people whose multiplicity I have been seeking to present. There is a difference however, between the manner in which people may represent their own culture and the manner in which it is appropriate for an outsider to do so. The case is in some ways similar when a Canadian versus an American makes an observation about the nature of Canada in general: in the former case it is simply an observation, whereas in the latter it is often seen as a stereotype. There is more at stake with Bali though, since the observations made by outsiders throughout this century have too often been privileged over those made by the Balinese themselves. The unequal positions of power for the researcher and the researched makes it all the more important for the former to endeavor to avoid essentializing Balinese culture, even when their informants are doing just that.

## RANGDA IN DISCOURSES OUTSIDE BALI: 1930s TO THE PRESENT

During the early part of this century, scholars were not yet addressing the notion of "power over" with the self-reflexivity which has characterized more and more of recent writing which seeks to cross cultures. Then, a Rangda mask would evoke images of a moonlit temple courtyard filled with the heady aroma of incense and the shouts of men going into trance, or tiny flickering blue lights floating down a deserted path as *leyak* roamed village byways: in short, an image like the one found in Spies's photo of Rangda at a Barong dance (see Fig. 2). This description

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[246] Field research notes #1, p. 2.

[247] Field research notes #8, p. 1.

[248] Field research notes #9, p. 5.

of a hypothetical thought association was indicative of the romantic approach to Balinese culture which was spoken of in Chapter One. A more critical anthropological discourse was created by Bateson, Mead, and later Belo, but it was an approach strongly colored by these scholars' interest in the teachings of Freud. As Lansing writes in Evil in the Morning of the World, "...while many of Belo's observations are illuminating, the ultimate meaning which she attaches to the ceremony may have more to do with the *Weltanschauung* of the early Freudian anthropologists of the thirties than with that of the Balinese."[249]

When anthropologists such as Geertz began undertaking their studies on Bali in the 1960s, they attempted to take a less enraptured, more respectful approach to the culture than was evident in the work of Covarrubias, and less psychoanalytically based than Mead. This was continued by the next generation of anthropologists in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with studies done by Vickers, Wikan, Barth and others. These works have added much to the study of Bali, but less to the study of Rangda.

Hence, very little has been produced which deals especially with the figure of Rangda. Jane Belo's Bali: Rangda and Barong has unfortunately become outdated. For one thing, the author's close connection with anthropologist Margaret Mead (it was Mead who had encouraged her to write Bali: Rangda and Barong)[250] led her to approach Rangda through a predominantly psychoanalytic filter, an approach which has fallen out of favor in recent years as an interpretation to be privileged above all others. Bali: Rangda and Barong is also outdated, through no fault of the author, simply because its publication date of more than fifty years ago renders it unable to address the effect of newer technologies the influx of foreign cultures to Bali on the mythology of the island. The individuals Belo may have interviewed or observed did not have to explain how they felt about the images of

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[249] Lansing 1974: 77.

[250] Vickers 1989: 122.

Rangda staring at them row upon row from the covers of books or videos in all the languages of the First World. They did not sit in auto repair shops while considering the detrimental effect of improved access to electricity on the younger generation's belief in the old stories. They were not approached for interviews in Internet cafes designed for an international community or observed during dance performances staged nightly for large audiences made up entirely of tourists. I am not attempting with these examples to conjure up an image of a culture which has been eroded by fifty years of ever increasing tourism, only to suggest that the relationship between many people in Bali and Rangda will have changed due to the new issues brought about by the influence of technology or by concessions made to foreigners so they might feel reasonably at home. These issues just add yet another layer to the multiple incarnations and interpretations of Rangda.

In this thesis I have attempted to present a few of the aspects of Rangda's complex nature which have thus far not found their way into any one study of her. Why this has not been done before is a question well worth asking. Perhaps it is because she does not fit easily into any one field of study, calling instead for an interdisciplinary approach which draws from art history, anthropology and religious studies. Also, if we consider, as many do, Jane Belo's Bali: Rangda and Barong to be the definitive study of Rangda (in that this has been the only monograph to be dedicated to the subject), we must take into account the influence of that period on the nature of the study. Freud was a highly influential figure during the earlier part of this century, so it is not surprising that an interpretation of Rangda through the filter of psychoanalytic theory would be privileged at that time. To be fair to those scholars who viewed Rangda through a single filter, one must consider the time period in which they wrote. The multiplicity allowed by Postmodernism's emphasis on pluralism seems quite natural now, but academics from previous eras were not necessarily encouraged to approach topics in this way. If the academic community at the time preferred arguments which were not too open ended, then Belo did well to say end her monograph on Rangda by saying that "Rangda, in her connection

with death, destruction, and disease, is but the ugly counterpart of living, procreation, and well being."[251]

I might well have had difficulty presenting my thesis in an earlier era, for if asked to answer "Who or what is Rangda?" in a single statement, I would have to respond with the open ended statement that "She is many things." Fortunately, in the current time period, acknowledging multiplicity is much more widely accepted. There is more room for "both and" rather than strictly "either or" interpretations, as well as a greater capacity for paradox and contradiction. I feel this to be an approach which works well for Rangda, allowing as it does for many non-mutually exclusive readings which reflect the many overlapping identities she holds in the culture of Bali, both traditional Hindu and modern international. Thus, Rangda may be both a threat to and a protector of the village, a force of chaos and a defender of order.

As a final illustration of Rangda's multiple identities, I will return once more time to "Barong III", the painting by Hendra Gunawan which I used as a starting image with the metaphor that Rangda can be painted in many colours (see Fig. 1). Regarding this work, we can see how Rangda simultaneously threatens to explode the picture plane with her wild dancing and watches over the human community down below. The latter appears to be a protective gesture if one looks at the unconcern displayed by the people in the mid-ground. Hendra paints her with the distinctive facial features which we have come to associate with Rangda, but it is impossible to tell whether the artist is depicting a dancer wearing a mask or the face of the goddess herself. As in the context of sacred dance where even a dancer wearing the Rangda mask is never simply a dancer in a costume, there is no reason why it cannot be both things at once. We may ask who Rangda is doing battle with here. Is she preparing for the next round of a fight with the Barong who waits among the members of the human community, does her position far from the

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[251] Belo 1949: 59.

activities of the community present an example to women who would let themselves be similarly outcast through remaining single, is she magically causing illness to the people in the painting or to the people outside the picture plane (i.e. us), or are we seeing her in the act of chasing off an evil spirit which stands behind the viewer's shoulder? It is in her capacity to do all these things.

It is not necessary, nor has it been the intent of this thesis, to suggest that Rangda as a cultural and religious entity is simply all things to all people. She does indeed have many identities which may come into play in a variety of different contexts, but these are identities which overlap in that they share a common root or purpose. As the most powerful conduit of black magic power in Bali, Rangda is akin to the black squares in the sacred *poleng* cloth which often adorns her statues: she is a vital component of the duality which ultimately makes up the whole. When one considers, as some of my contacts did, that magical power is inherently neither good nor bad, then Rangda is not only a force of black magic opposed to white magic. One could then say that Rangda is ultimately a conduit of power which exists beyond the designation of bad or good.

The idea of expanding and collapsing identities which permeates Balinese Hindu cosmology can also be applied to the figure of Rangda. As with the entity called *Sanghyang Widi Wasa* who may be infinitely divided to express each characteristic of divinity in Bali, Rangda is the Queen of the Witches who contains within her all of the identities discussed in this thesis and many more besides. Her complexity arises not only from variations in context and function, but from the way in which these variations then combine to form a whole. This whole cannot be properly understood, though, without an awareness of the many parts which create it. Considering Rangda in this manner, she may be seen as an embodiment of the philosophical concept of "unity in diversity".[252] Without the complexity of the parts, the whole would be considerably less rich.

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[252] Although it has been adopted as the motto of Indonesia as a nation, this phrase (which originated in Sanskrit) need not be seen only as something tied to a political ideology. I use it here as it applies to the mythological, spiritual and philosophical culture of Bali.

## APPENDIX

**Field research notes #1:** a *pemangku* (family or village priest, generally of the Sudra caste); Pertiga village, Marga District of the Tabanan Regency, June 25, 1999.

**Field research notes #2:** School teacher; Tabanan, July 2, 1999.

**Field research notes #3:** I Ketut Arthana, a *pedanda* (Brahmin priest, of a higher caste than a *pemangku*); Marga District of the Tabanan Regency, July 15, 1999.

**Field research notes #4:** Rucina Ballinger, an American woman living in Bali; via e-mail, July 14, 1999, in person in Peliatan, July 28, 1999.

**Field research notes #5:** Murni, a Balinese woman artist; Pengosekan, July 29, 1999.

**Field research notes #6:** A. A. G. Dela Aribuana (aka. Pak Agung), proprietor of Agung Cottages, Ubud, Gianyar Regency; August 1, 1999.

**Field research notes #7:** a *balian* (traditional healer/magician, of a lower caste than a *pedanda*), Marga district of the Tabanan Regency; August 2, 1999.

**Field research notes #8:** Agung Rai, director of Agung Rai Museum of Art, Peliatan, Gianyar Regency; August 4, 1999.

**Field research notes #9:** Ibu Agung (wife of Pak Agung), Ubud, Gianyar Regency; August 4, 1999.

**Field research notes #10:** Miscellaneous notes, June 22 - August 5, 1999. Includes general notes, discussions with I Wayan Sugita (my assistant and interpreter), short interview with Wayan, Wayan and Ketut, three young Balinese women working at the Bali3000 internet cafe.

**Field research notes #11:** Miscellaneous notes, June 22 - August 5, 1999. Research diary.

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Figure 1:"Barong III", Hendra Gunawan, 1974, oil on canvas.

Figure 2:Rangda in Barong Performance, photo Walter Spies.

Figure 3:"Balinese 'Witches'", Ida Bagus Nyoman Tjeta, 1937.

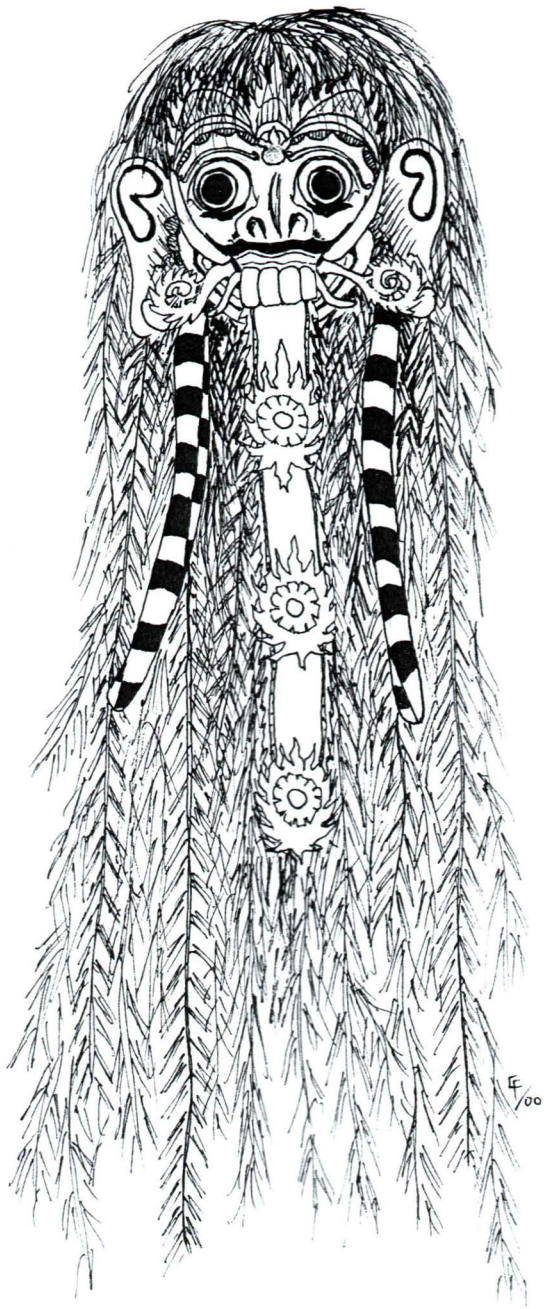

Figure 4:Rangda mask, also called Dewi Durga, drawing Claire Fossey.

Figure 5:
Durga Mahisasuramardini,
Koetri, Bali,
drawing Claire Fossey
after W. F. Stutterheim.

Figure 6:
Durga Mahisasuramardini,
Bedoeloe, Bali,
drawing Claire Fossey
after W. F. Stutterheim.

Figure 7:Durga Mahisasuramardini, Koeboetambahan, Bali,
drawing Claire Fossey after C. J. Grader.

Figure 8:"A Chalonarang (sic) Story", I Lungsur.

Figure 9:Ratna Mengali, from a Balinese manuscript.

Figure 10:"Tjerita Derman", anonymous, before 1942.

Figure 11: Barong, pemangku and followers, photo Rose Covarrubias.

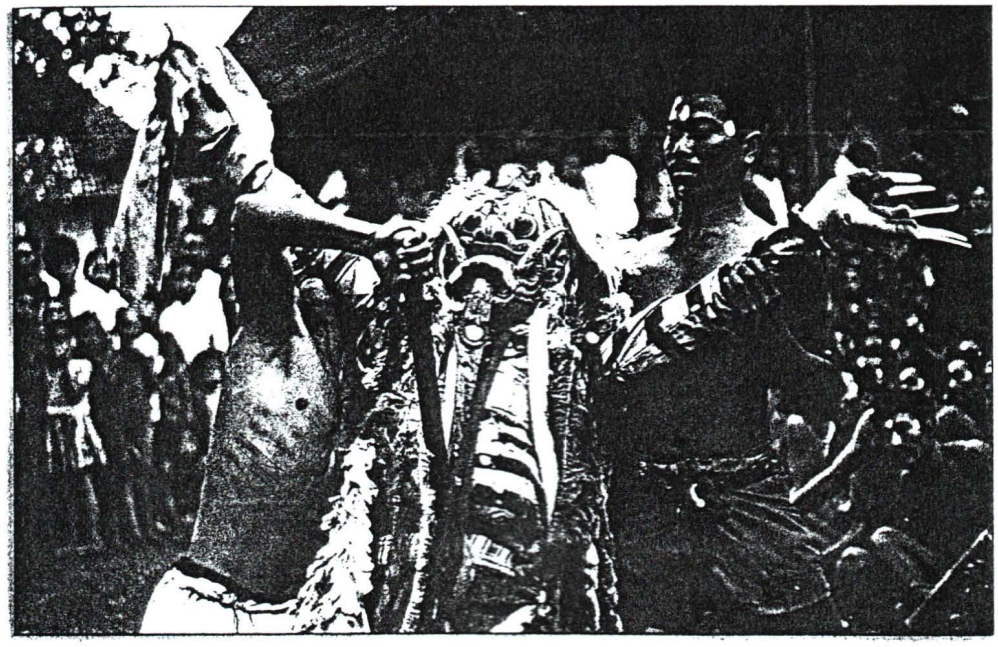

Figure 12: Rangda with kris dancers, photo Hans Höfer.

Figure 13: "Scene from a dramatic performance in which men, who try to kill the witch-goddess Rangda, turn their krisses on themselves under her spell", Ida Bagus Made Tagog, before 1942.

Figure 14: Stone sculpture, entrance walkway, Ubud Pura Dalem, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

Figure 15: Stone sculpture, entrance stairway, Ubud Pura Dalem, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

Figure 16: Rangda, stone sculpture, top of entrance stairway, Ubud Pura Dalem, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

Figure 17: Rangda, stone sculpture, boundary of graveyard, Peliatan, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

Figure 18: "Rangda, goddess of sorcery, bestows her blessing on a man meditating in her temple", Ida Bagus Made Tagog, before 1942.

Figure 19: "Durga Slaying Mahisa", miniature painting from the school of Nupur, India, c. 1765 CE.

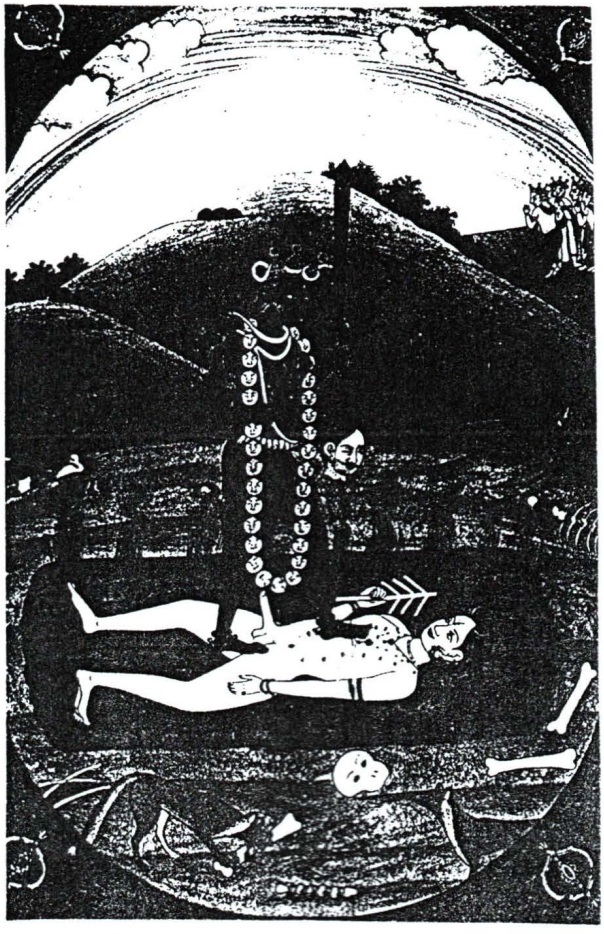

Figure 20: "Kali, goddess of Time, standing over her consort Shiva", anonymous miniature painting, India, c. 1800.

Figure 21:"Death and the Miser", Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1485 - 1490, oil on panel.

Figure 22: "Cremation preparations observed by sorcerers", Ida Bagus Putu Blatjok, 1936.

Figure 23:
Durga Dedwang,
drawing Claire Fossey
after Balinese manuscript.

Figure 24:
Durga Demba,
drawing Claire Fossey
after Balinese manuscript.

Figure 25:
The goddess Durga,
drawing Claire Fossey after Balinese manuscript.

Figure 26:Procession of Rangda at Pura Luhur, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

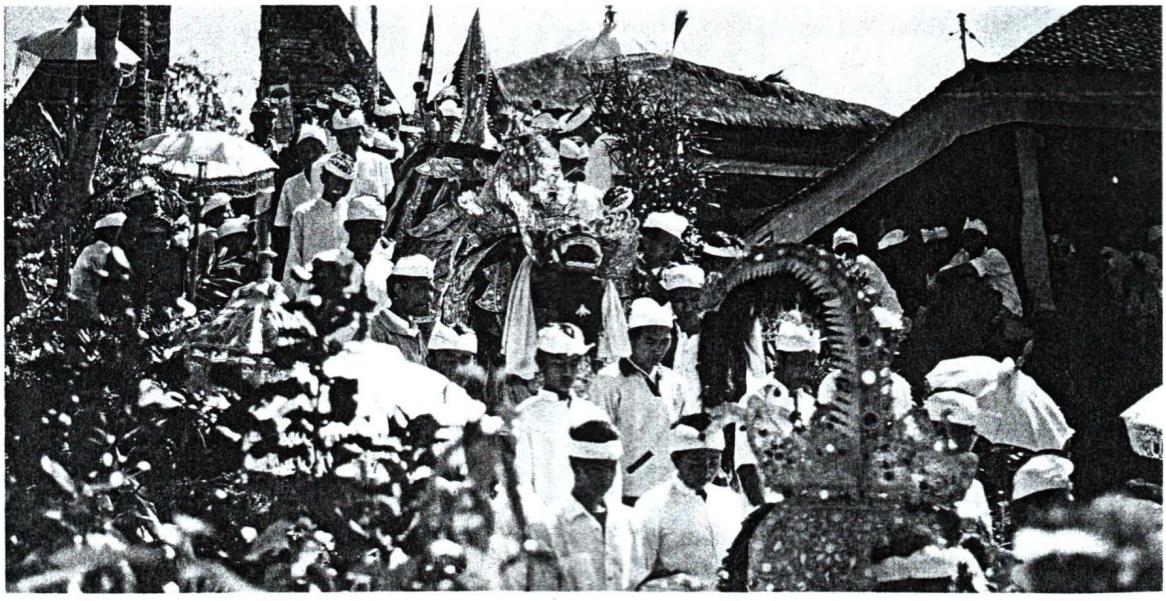

Figure 27:Procession of Barong at Pura Luhur, Bali, photo Claire Fossey.

Figure 28:Rawana mask, drawing Claire Fossey.

Figure 29:Ki Chalon Arang,
drawing Claire Fossey after Balinese manuscript.

Figure 30: "Dancer Stepping on My head", Kartika Affandi, 1995.

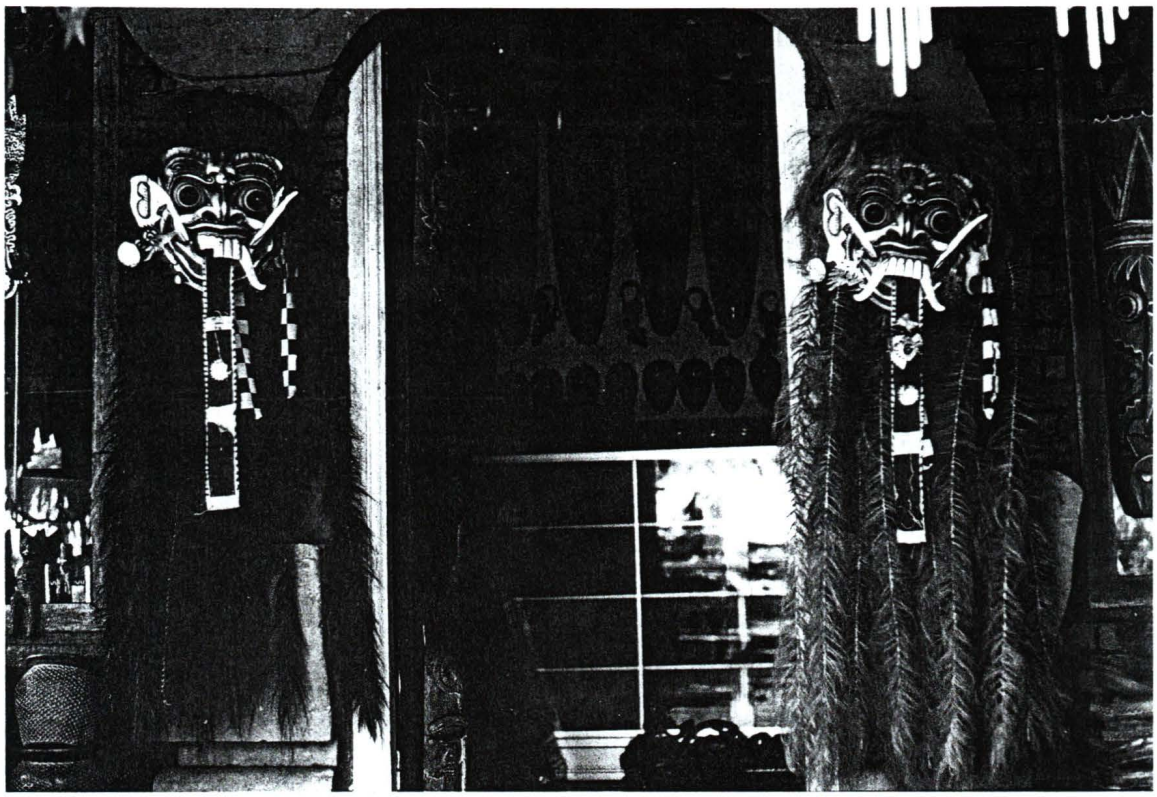

Figure 31: Rangda masks displayed in shop front, Ubud, photo Claire Fossey.

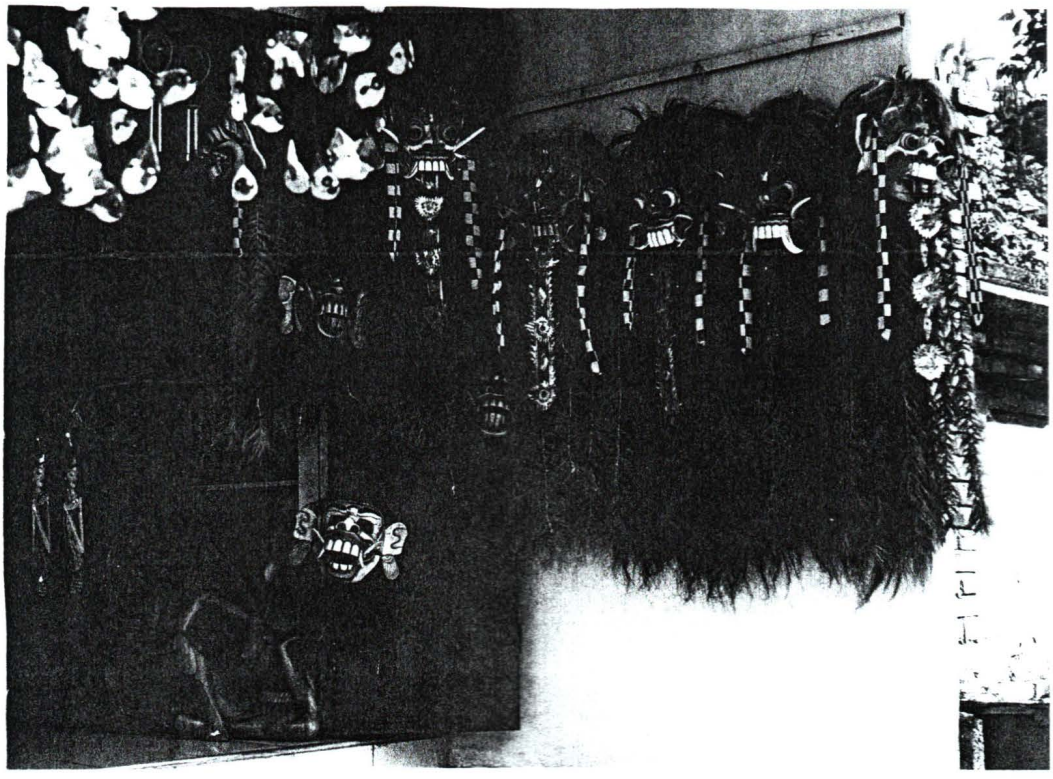

Figure 32: Rangda masks displayed in shop front, Ubud, photo Claire Fossey.

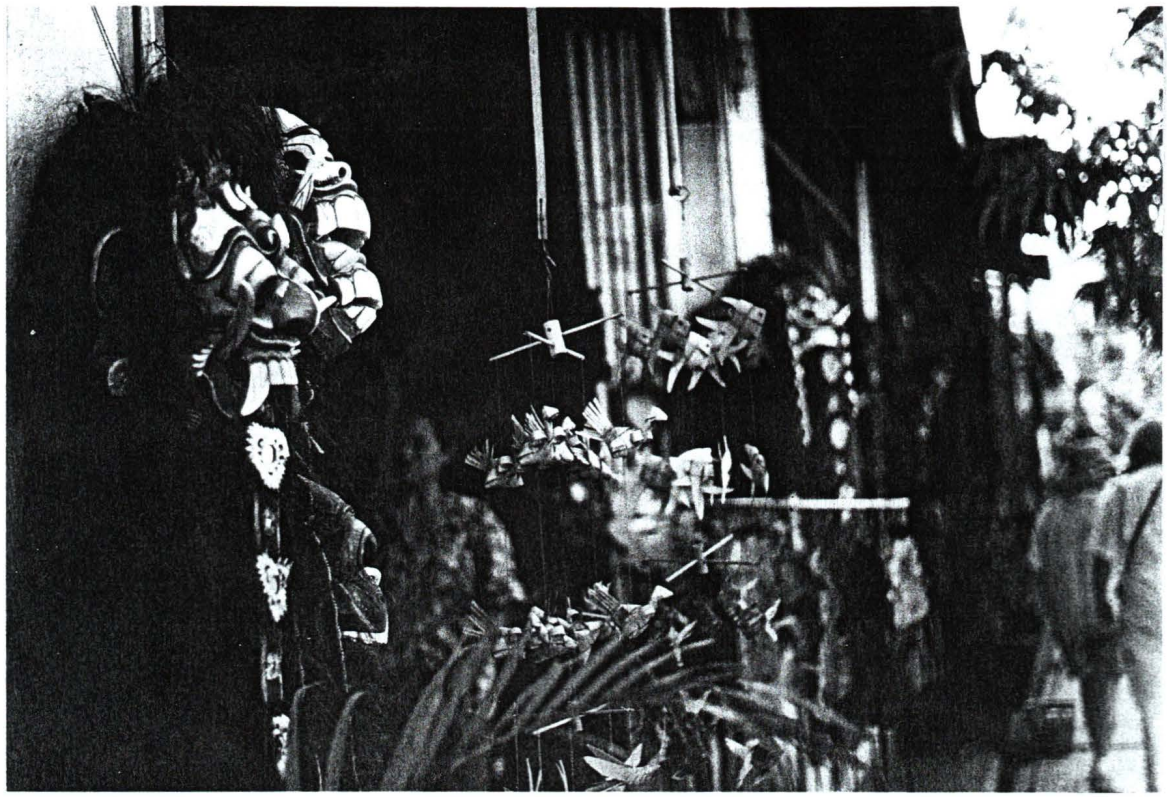

Figure 33: Rangda masks displayed in shop front, Ubud, photo Claire Fossey.

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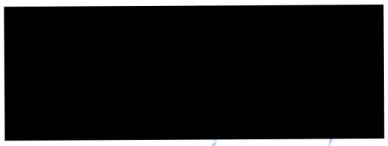
Author 

Claire Ann Fossey

April 17, 2001.