

Interpreting Balinese Culture:

Representation and Identity

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Julie A. Sumerta

Abstract

The representation of Balinese people and culture within scholarship throughout the 20th century and into the most recent 21st century studies is examined. Important questions are considered, such as: What major themes can be found within the literature?; Which scholars have most influenced the discourse?; How has Bali been presented within undergraduate anthropology textbooks, which scholars have been considered; and how have the Balinese been affected by scholarly representation? Consideration is also given to scholars who are Balinese and doing their own research on Bali, an area that has not received much attention.

The results of this study indicate that notions of Balinese culture and identity have been largely constructed by “Outsiders”: 14th-19th century European traders and early theorists; Dutch colonizers; other Indonesians; and first and second wave twentieth century scholars, including, to a large degree, anthropologists. Notions of Balinese culture, and of culture itself, have been vigorously critiqued and deconstructed to such an extent that it is difficult to determine whether or not the issue of what it is that constitutes Balinese culture has conclusively been answered.

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For my beautiful daughter Anjali.

And in loving memory of my great-uncle, David M. Brown, who first introduced me to Bali and who both lived and died on the island he loved.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to consider how both the Balinese people and their “culture” have been represented within the anthropological canon, and whether this has been an adequate representation of Balinese identity, for both the Balinese and the reader. Culture itself is largely a scholarly construct, and is consistently exposed to further development, critique and, at times, deconstruction. As it is difficult, with any degree of certainty, to understand exactly what culture “is,” it is equally difficult to understand exactly what constitutes any one particular culture. As theories have changed over the years, so have the ways in which scholars approach and attempt to analyze specific cultures.

Bali is a well-studied and documented region of the world that has felt the impact of tourism and other aspects of globalization, such as the advent of the worldwide web, and yet, to a large degree, it has also been able to maintain its distinct traditions, such as its unique religious practices based on Balinese Hinduism, and its acclaimed artistic history. It is often held up for analysis within anthropology.

Bali is one of over seventeen thousand islands, most uninhabited, that comprise the Indonesian Archipelago. It lies just west of Java, Indonesia’s most populous island and home to its capital city, Jakarta. It is the only predominantly Hindu province within Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world. The current population of Bali is over 3.8 million. Although Indonesian is the lingua franca throughout the nation, each island has its own language and Bali is no exception. *Basa Bali*, the Balinese language, is still the language used every day by the Balinese. The language itself is broken into several different variations, which

are dictated by caste. The sudra or *jaba* (Bln.) caste primarily speak “low Balinese” amongst themselves, switching to “high Balinese” when they are in a temple setting or are speaking with those of higher caste. Those who are of higher caste generally speak more prestigious variants of the language but will often speak a less prestigious variant when amongst friends of lower caste. This does seem to differ regionally, particularly in the Northern region where caste designations are not adhered to as stringently.

To consider how the “culture” of Bali has been represented over the last century is, indeed, a very large undertaking. It is a topic that could be studied over the course of an academic lifetime and through the scope of several books and papers. Hence, this thesis certainly could not consider every single source available. With this in mind, I have considered scholars that are seemingly most influential to the study of Bali, and their relevance to anthropology and to the North American reader. I anticipate that I may be able to continue this discussion in future publications using sources and materials I was unable to use in this thesis. I made every attempt to obtain the original sources cited wherever possible, including in cases where the original text was not English but was translated for English readers at a later time, for example Gregor Krause’s *Bali 1912* (1922), with its original Dutch text. It was an honour to spend so much time with a century’s worth of printed studies on Balinese history and culture.

This study will consider several stages of scholarship on Bali. First, it will consider the earliest 20th century tourists-turned-scholars on Bali who pioneered both the scholarship and the tourist industry itself. I refer to those writing during this period as “first wave” scholars. These include Holland’s Gregor Krause and the Mexican-American Miguel Covarrubias, who

were enamored with the island, and were presenting their first hand observations of the people, which was oftentimes quite essentializing. Many of these earliest scholars have been accused of romanticizing Bali through their writings. This notion of Bali being romanticized is a theme that comes up more than once in the more recent literature. David Shavit, for example, notes that scholars such as Gregor Krause discussed at length the beauty of the Balinese people, particularly the women, and the island itself. (Shavit, 2003: 18-19) Words like sensual and exotic were often used to describe Bali. The island was treated as “a hallowed land of love, peace and beauty.” (*ibid.*) Robert Pringle described it as a place of “nectar and ambrosia” for the earliest anthropologists. (Pringle, 2004: 147) So certainly the idea that Bali has been viewed not only as exotic but as romantic in the eyes of its earliest visitors is not a new idea, but rather one that is visited with some frequency.

Along with these earliest scholars, this stage also includes anthropologists Margaret Mead and Jane Belo, who came to the island shortly after the first scholars and who were writing around the same time. They were influenced by their predecessors, but brought more analysis and theory to their study of Balinese culture. In this way, Mead and Belo became an academic bridge between the earliest first wave scholars and the “second wave” scholars.

The next stage of scholars is a group I collectively refer to as “second wave” scholars. They conducted research post-World War II and during or after the period when Indonesia gained its independence from the Netherlands. These included anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Hildred Geertz, and J. Stephen Lansing. This stage of writers built on the contributions of

the first wave and also brought new questions to the study. These scholars applied further theory and analysis as they went in search of deeper understanding and new information.

The third section of the thesis deals with the representation of Bali within anthropological pedagogy, specifically in undergraduate textbooks. The representation of Bali and of scholars who conducted research in Bali, often called Baliologists, has been very limited and this paper will attempt to determine why that is. I investigate what scholarship has been presented within a sample of introductory undergraduate anthropology texts, why they were considered, and how these ideas have been presented. I identify specific areas in which this representation of Bali and the Balinese is very limited. This research was initially done for the project *Significant Others: Iconic Ethnographic Cultures* directed by Thomas Abler and Pamela Stern, which investigated how different cultures and topics have been presented in undergraduate anthropology textbooks.

The final section of the paper looks at what has been, and what is being, published about Bali since the late 1980s. Many of today's prominent scholars, such as Michel Picard have strongly criticized the work of first and second wave scholars. There has been a real interest in Balinese identity and how that identity has been influenced and even largely created by this scholarship. The impact of tourism and globalization, are being thoroughly investigated. Unni Wikan, Megan Jennaway, and others have written extensively on the representation of Balinese women through scholarship and women's agency within Bali.

Until recently, Balinese themselves have contributed very little to academic discourse but, over the past several decades, more Balinese researchers have become engaged in the

discussion. One critical question I will consider is how the representation of Balinese culture through scholarly research has affected modern day understanding of the Balinese, and thus how earlier research influenced later research. The final chapter includes a section detailing Balinese writers within scholarship today.

Through analysis of past and more recent ethnographies and other scholarly publications, this thesis will investigate the ways in which the culture and peoples of the island have been represented and whether these interpretations of culture have been accurate representations of the Balinese worldview. For example, has the “Outsider” (often times an anthropologist or other scholar) been able to accurately portray the experience of Balinese women? I will look at how scholarly/anthropological representations of the Balinese have changed over time. This thesis will also consider how the Balinese potentially identify as Balinese through an investigation and analysis of published works by Balinese scholars.

Significance of this Study

This study is significant in several ways. First, it will consider how the ethnography of Bali, Indonesia, has been presented within the anthropological canon, giving us a look at what specific institutions within Balinese culture have received the most exposure and interest by anthropologists and how, in turn, this work has influenced the discipline. When put together, this will give an idea of how Balinese “culture” has been constructed within anthropology. It will also provide information about any essentializing notions that have arisen from the scholarship, and how these notions have been critiqued.

In addition, very little study has been done about how the Balinese present themselves as a people and this thesis attempts to make a contribution here. This emic perspective is a welcome addition to scholarship that has largely viewed Bali and the Balinese through the eyes of the “Outsiders.” Further, when Balinese scholars have produced works, there has been very little analysis or critique of what they have published within the larger anthropological community. It is important to deal with this as it represents a gap within the literature that would benefit from being explored further.

Finally, it offers an important look at what contemporary scholars are presenting and, potentially, will point the reader in the direction of where the scholarship on Balinese culture and people could be heading. Personally, I consider this research significant as a “springboard” for my own work, which ideally will include a study on the Balinese migrant community in Canada.

CHAPTER 2

Romanticizing the Exotic-Early 20th Century Images of Bali

The earliest 20th century writings about Bali come to us by writers such as Holland's Gregor Krause (1920), Mexican-American artist and writer Miguel Covarrubias (1937), and one of Bali's earliest non-Dutch European residents, German artist Walter Spies (De Zoete and Spies, 1938). They were exposed to Bali during a time of Dutch colonization. During this time, the Dutch colonizers, wanting to control what they saw as the wilder tendencies of the Balinese (van der Kraan, 1985), were attempting to control the Balinese, sometimes through force and/or law, the way the Balinese acted and dressed. In contrast, these "tourists" were entranced with what they perceived as the physical beauty of the Balinese people, exotic religious rituals, arts (including dance, music, and the visual arts – painting and carving), and by the lush tropical beauty of the island itself. This led to a period of writings romanticizing the culture and people of Bali. This period ends with the arrival of an early generation of professional anthropologists. This chapter will present these writings and analyze how they influenced future studies on the Balinese people and culture, including the critique of such early writings which continues into contemporary scholarship.

Being "Balinese" in Pre 20th Century Bali

To fully understand Bali in the 20th century, it is necessary to take a deeper look into the history of the island. Not much is known about the "pre-history" of Bali, the period which predates European contact with the island. Portuguese and British traders first had contact with the Balinese beginning in the late 14th century. Shards written in Sanskrit have been found on

the island dating to the 9th century BCE, indicating that early Indic peoples came in direct contact with the Balinese in the first millennium A.D. (Lansing, 1983:23)

One of the first Europeans to write about Bali, England's Sir. Thomas Stamford Raffles, argued that Bali was like a living museum of what pre-Majapahit Hindu Java would have been like. (Geertz C., 1980: 7) Raffles is referring here to the period before the Islamization of Java through the Majapahit revolution, a period in which Java was separated into Hindu kingdoms. Many Javanese Hindus fled to Bali during the Majapahit revolution in the 16th century, and Raffles argued that this was the source of Hinduism on Bali. Of course, culture is not a static thing and the theory that Bali could be viewed simply as a museum of Hindu Java was challenged by Clifford Geertz. (*ibid.*) Geertz cites several facts to refute this point. Hinduism throughout the archipelago at the time, notes Geertz, was largely subject to regional interpretation. Bali had its own pre-Hindu customs and practices which thrived alongside Hinduism. Poignantly, Geertz argues that making such an argument "cannot be based on the assumption that, by strange good fortune, the island has been spared history." (*ibid.*) As much as the Balinese have been able to keep many of their traditional practices and customs alive, such as their own form of ancestor worship, they have certainly been exposed to changes that have both challenged and influenced their own belief systems.

Dutch colonizers, who were unable to dominate Bali to the same extent as they were able to dominate other parts of the archipelago (*ibid.*), did not seem as concerned with learning about Balinese "culture" as they were with ridding it of practices they deemed horrific, such as widow immolation. They were, of course, interested in having some degree of control of the

island, its people and resources. They were also interested in “civilizing” the Balinese, although not to the same level of “civilization” the Dutch themselves enjoyed. The Dutch were also frustrated because the Balinese did not seem to have an island-wide form of government. Instead they noted the Balinese had “fluid, inconsistent” traditions that differed from region to region. (Lansing, 1983: 113) Such regional distinctions can still be noted today, such as with the 2-3% of Balinese who consider themselves Bali Aga, a group believed to have lineages to pre-Majapahit Balinese kingdoms, who have their own distinct customs and beliefs, and who were staunchly resistant to any Javanese Hindu influence. (Pringle, 2004: 11-12) The issue of regional differences was also addressed by Bateson and Mead who noted that every village in Bali differed in “conspicuous respects...so that no single statement about Bali is true of all of Bali, and any negative statement about Bali must be made with the greatest caution.” (Bateson and Mead, 1942: xiv) Nevertheless, as discussed below, many of the first and second wave theorists such as Mead and Bateson, drew conclusions based on their field work within certain regions of Bali and applied them to all Balinese.

Other colonialist views of the Balinese impacted Balinese culture and people. The Dutch felt the Balinese were “not Hindu enough” and felt forced to reform or even reinvent Balinese traditions. They were bent on stratifying Bali as a Hindu culture with a caste system. Prior to Dutch colonialism, the Balinese had four castes, including the exalted state of the Brahman caste in particular, but were not rigidly enforcing the system. Under Dutch control, the loosely structured “caste system” of pre-colonial Bali was “Indianized” and, as a result, more than 90% of the Balinese population became “sudra,” or low caste. (*ibid.*) This is very important to note because Balinese “identity” has, in the 20th century, become intimately connected to Hinduism

and the caste system. But, as many 20th century scholars would note, the Balinese certainly were influenced by Hinduism and, later, forced to accept Hinduism by both the Dutch and, as will be discussed, by the Indonesian government. Yet they would never fully replace their own traditional beliefs, such as their own set of gods and unique rituals, with Hinduism or anything else. (Eiseman, 1989; Geertz, 1980; Pringle, 2004)

Early Tourists, Early Writers

The earliest 20th century writings on Bali coincided, not surprisingly, with the onset of tourism on the island, an emerging industry that, as David Shavit notes, would quickly exploit the images and writings of the earliest European and American writers in an attempt to sell Bali as a tourist destination to the rest of the world. This would result in a “Western romance with Bali largely composed of images of a tropical Eden.”(Shavit, 2003:12-13) The world was, after all, Shavit points out, still struggling through post-WWI hardships in the 1920s and 30s. Books showing the allure of inviting peaceful landscapes and beautiful Balinese people “struck a chord” in Europe. (*ibid.*) Those writing and presenting ideas and theories about Balinese culture at this time fall into what I am describing as the “First Wave” category of scholars or Baliologists. Enchanted by the tiny island and its peoples, these earliest theorists presented research based on first hand observations. Much of the writings of this time illustrated a sense of discovery: a discovery of something exotic, sensuous, something “different” from what these early travelers were accustomed to. Hence, there seemed an overriding desire to capture and present what it was that made the Balinese so “Balinese.”

As important as the writings, and perhaps even more so, were the black and white images captured on film. Reprinted in such a way that the writing further enhanced the photographic impact, these early images gave Europeans a glimpse into the far off and exotic world of Bali, profoundly affecting the way the island was envisioned by those who would travel to Bali, and by those dreaming to do so. Later photographic works such as those by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, although presented quite differently, were likely influenced by these earliest images.

The first official tourist to Bali was the Dutch parliamentarian Henri H van Kol, who visited in 1902. (Pringle, 2004: 128-129) Although Dutch and, as such, part of the population of colonizers within the Indonesian archipelago, van Kol was a tourist as his visit to Bali did not involve any official business. Significantly, his visit resulted in a book, *Uit Onze Kolonien* (From Our Colonies), an 800 page travel book of sorts, chronicling his time spent traveling throughout the Indonesian archipelago. The book, published in 1903, included a significant amount of information about Bali, along with a substantial collection of photographs. (*ibid.*)

Several years later, in 1912, Gregor Krause, a German doctor posted in Bali, would begin to document his time there with one of the world's earliest portable cameras. This book would be influential on future visitors and theorists, such as Miguel Covarrubias, who would note how the book influenced his decision to travel to Bali. (Covarrubias, 1937: xvii) In fact, Krause's book is viewed by some as the "decisive first step" toward the promotion of tourism on the island. (Shavit, 2003: 18)

Taking over 4000 photos, Krause published *Bali 1912* in 1920. It included 400 photographs, along with text written by Krause. (Mabbett, 1988: 7) The book, based on a period of almost 18 months on the island, would bring a “new vision of Paradise” to Europe. (*ibid.*) Krause created a Bali that is both exotic and primitive. The island, he said, is more than one third jungle. The people are “bound together by their equal duties to the Gods,” (*ibid.*:21) Gods who need appeasing in order for society to continue harmoniously. Krause wrote of Hinduism and the caste system, the Princes and royal families of Bali. He wrote of irrigation systems and days in the marketplace. And he wrote of the beauty of Bali and its people. The accompanying photos, as will be described below, would further define Krause’s Bali.

Balinese Hinduism, Krause maintained, is “their most vital possession.” (cited in Mabbett, 1988: 88) Although the Balinese were quite tolerant of other religions and their followers settling in Bali, Muslims succeeded in converting only a few Balinese. (*ibid.*) Krause noted that efforts to convert the Balinese to Christianity were equally unsuccessful. In fact, plans to convert the island’s people to Christianity were cancelled due to a “tragedy” narrated by Krause for its “comic moments.” (*ibid.*: 88) In 1866, Krause recounts, a Dutch Protestant Missionary, (identified as Reverend R. van Eck of the Utrecht Missionary Society in Robert Pringle’s book *A Short History of Bali: Indonesia’s Hindu Realm*(2004: 124)), was sent to Bali. In 16 years on the island, he was able to convert only one Balinese, a man he called Nicodemus. Nicodemus tolerated this conversion “since he found his master and his studies entertaining.” However, authorities, believing that the mission was failing, sent two more missionaries to assist in the conversion attempt, with one in particular taking his post very seriously. Since only Nicodemus was willing to convert to Christianity, not fully understanding what this would

mean, he was subject to hearing daily about how horrible the fate of the non-Christian Balinese was. Nicodemus found himself constantly confronted by his pastor, the overbearing missionary, while at the same time being further isolated by his fellow Balinese. Out of desperation, he chose to leave his village and wander the island to avoid the missionary. When he was finally found, he was so defeated that he decided to hire two non-Balinese murderers to kill the missionary, who is murdered and died a “martyr’s death.” The Balinese, however, are not sympathetic to Nicodemus and do not spare him punishment. He was dragged across the island in a bamboo cage and treated like an animal, a punishment seen as a great insult to the prisoner. In order to not disgrace other Balinese with his crimes, he was forced to explain to everyone that he is no longer Balinese but Christian, pointing to the fact that conversion for the Balinese was more than simply religious but also cultural. He was then put to death knowing, as Krause explains, “that his soul would never be saved by cremation [since he was no longer Hindu and now an outcast thus, not entitled to a cremation ceremony] from a disembodied wandering of the earth.” This is a significant retelling of an event for several reasons. First, early 20th century expatriates and visiting artists and writers to Bali, such as Miguel Covarrubias (Pringle, 2004: 124; Covarrubias, 1937: 396-399), were very concerned about the damaging potential to Bali from conversion. And, second, it is an early discussion of the resiliency of the Balinese against potential invaders, a discussion that, as will be shown, continued throughout the twentieth century.

Krause gives intriguing descriptions and accounts of Balinese religious ceremonies, creating the image of extremely devout people deeply engaged in ceremony. One of the ceremonies he describes in detail is the cremation ceremony, the initial pre-cremation burial

and later exhumation of most of the island's dead. (cited in Mabbett, 1988: 105-109) He notes the importance of the ceremony to the families and the villages. This illustrates the deep connection that existed between occupants of a village and their commitment to one another as they pass through different stages of life and death. His most striking observations were made when describing the people involved. "The senses are confused," he observes, "as an apparently endless procession of beautiful girls and women rustles past, in magnificent posture, moving slowly with indescribable beauty and grace. Behind them come men with weapons such as krisses¹ [traditional Balinese daggers, used for ceremonial purposes] and lances, and after them fantastic and fearful demons of the other world." (*ibid.* 109)

Krause's account of 1912 Bali came on the heels of tragedy. In 1906 and again in 1908, the Balinese engaged in *puputan*, or mass ritual suicide, in reaction to Dutch invasion and control. The 1906 *puputan* occurred in the region known as Badung, while the 1908 event occurred in Klungkung. Led by the Prince and Royal family of the respective region, hundreds of Balinese, men, women, and children walked headlong into Dutch gunfire. Startled by this, the Dutch withdrew fire which led determined Balinese to stab themselves to death. Krause offered one of the earliest retellings of the *puputan*. In his book *The Romance of K'tut Tantri and Indonesia*, Timothy Lindsey describes Krause's retelling of the 1906 *puputan* as a "depiction of the oriental royal 'other' as a combination of the decadent and beautiful with the weak and irrelevant." (Lindsey, 1997: 23)

¹ In regards to the spelling of the Balinese word *kris*: The word refers to the ceremonial daggers used by the Balinese and is commonly spelled by scholars as either *kris* or *keris*. The common spelling of the plural of *kris* is *krisses*. In instances where the word is used within a quotation, it will be presented as the original author presented it.

Men, in gleaming red and black raiment, with their long, wavy hair uncovered and bejewelled krisses sparkling in their belt. Among them were women adorned as for a festival, with flowers in their hair, and there were hundreds of children. All were wearing the white coat of those who dedicate themselves to death. Last of all appeared the prince, on a golden throne borne by four men. Slowly and silently the procession moved toward the [Dutch] soldiers... With raised lances and drawn krisses, the Balinese plunged into the rapid fire of the Dutch soldiers' automatic weapons. The artillery fired its shrapnel into the thick heap of humanity... Horrified the troops stopped firing. Then they saw a man dressed as a priest plunging his kris with icy certainty into the breasts of men and women crowding around him. He was shot down and another took his place. Wounded men stabbed themselves or stabbed others who could not do it for themselves. More masses of people came closer, singing and died... (cited in Mabbett, 1988: 85)

Krause concludes his discussion of the *puputan*, by saying that "the Balinese working in their rice fields [i.e. the peasant caste not involved in the revolt] said 'It is the will of the Gods.'" In this way, David Shavit argues, Krause presented the massacre as "an unreal event with no meaning for the majority of the Balinese." (Shavit, 2003: 21) Krause was essentially trivializing the event and, in so, belittling the sacrifice of the Balinese people and the power of the ruling Balinese authority. Krause's retelling of the *paputan* was, Shavit argues, "a blatant apology for colonialism." (*ibid.*) Yet, the photos in the book, he points out, are more powerful than the text, attracting future generations of tourists.

Indeed, the most striking thing about Krause's work is the photography. A look at the original German book, *Bali*, by Krause and Karl With, on which the English translation discussed above is based, shows that text merely complements the striking black and white photography, and not the other way around. Krause's photography chronicles the beauty of early 20th century Balinese landscape. Krause also chronicles his appreciation for the Balinese beauty and grace with a substantial number of nude pictures, an homage of sorts to the Balinese physique. The majority of these photos depict Balinese women, often naked in public baths.

Other pictures show the Balinese in everyday activities, such as selling wares in the marketplace. Still other dramatic pictures depict the Balinese engaged in traditional customs: dancers in ornate costumes; men plunging *krisses* into their chests while in states of trance; women balancing exceptionally large and beautiful religious offerings on their heads. These photographs, Shavit maintains “firmly established Bali as a paradisiacal world unlike no other on earth.” (Shavit, 2003: 18) In particular, Shavit notes, the beauty of this paradise was “owed primarily to its women.” The bare breasts of Balinese women, he continues, were a major attraction for tourists. And the accompanying text added to the allure. “The Balinese women are beautiful, as beautiful as one can imagine, with a physiologically simple and dignified beauty, full of Eastern nobility and natural chastity...Their gait is so splendid and functionally simple that one can see all the truths of statics revealed in a most magnificent way.” (Mabbett, 1988: 55)

Many of the photos do, indeed, have a sensual or provocative feel to them, as Shavit points out. But many also have a sense of humility and discretion as the subjects, the Balinese, appear to be covering or shielding their genitals and other areas, perhaps realizing the vulnerability of their positions. This arguably may have been the case as nude Balinese bodies were increasingly being photographed by Western visitors. The Krause images, Shavit points out, influenced the “dirty postcard industry” to come to Bali. (Shavit, 2003: 5) There were many willing participants, notes Shavit, but as well some Balinese “did not want to sit nude and were angry when they were forced to do so,” only doing so for fear of being arrested if they refused, and for the financial gain the photos would bring. (*ibid.*) Through my own travels and experiences in modern day Bali, it has been made clear to me in conversations with the

Balinese that taking pictures of them in their public bathing places and in rivers is frowned upon. I have also seen signs in public bathing places frequented by tourists that indicate photographs are not permitted. This has been noted in several more recent travel guides, such as the 2009 Lonely Planet Guide *Bali and Lombok*, which notes that the Balinese view these places as private and view the practice of photographing people in such a way as “rude voyeurism.” (Ver Berkmoes, et al, 2009: 340) I cannot help but wonder if early works such as Krause’s, which was influential in both Europe and America, helped create this view. Whether or not this is true, there is no doubting the impact of Krause’s book on both future scholarship and the tourist industry.

In 1930, the Mexican-American artist, Miguel Covarrubias, along with his wife Rose², first travelled to Bali on honeymoon.³ “We had seen a splendid album of Bali photographs (*Bali*, by Gregor Krause), and gradually we had developed an irresistible desire to see the island, until one spring day of 1930 we found ourselves, rather unexpectedly, on board the *Cingalese Prince*, a freighter bound for the Dutch East Indies.” (Covarrubias, 1937: xvii) This interest would lead to the publication of 1937’s *Island of Bali*, a book of over 400 pages written by Covarrubias with photographs by Rose Covarrubias. This book, one of the earliest written on Bali by someone from the Americas, would prove to be very influential academically. It was also the only book Covarrubias would ever write about Bali. It is respected as an important

² Although Covarrubias refers to his wife as Rose, she is referred to as Rosa by both Robert Pringle (2004: 140) and David Shavit (2003: 108). I have chosen to refer to her as Rose, as Covarrubias himself does.

³ Covarrubias notes in the introduction of his 1937 book that he and his wife Rose travelled to Bali in the spring of 1930. He does not provide any further information in regards to date. Robert Pringle (2004: 140) and Jonathan Copleand/Ni Wayan Murni note (2010: 59) that the Covarrubias’ were in fact on Honeymoon during this time but similarly does not provide a date. David Shavit (2003: 108) discusses the circumstances in greater detail, further suggesting it was a Honeymoon, but again does not provide an exact date.

pioneering look at the island and is cited throughout the sizeable canon of books on Bali published within the 20th and into the 21st century, by writer`s such as Jane Belo (1960, 1970), Clifford Geertz (1980), Leo Howe (2001) and Robert Pringle (2004), among many others.

In *Island of Bali*, Covarrubias makes observations on the daily life of the Balinese, their social organization, their exceptional flair for art and drama, and their religious practices, with two separate chapters focused on witchcraft, and death and cremation. Covarrubias states that religion for the Balinese is “both race and nationality,” (*ibid*: 261) pointing to the fact that a Balinese automatically loses his or her status within their community if they convert to another religion or if a Balinese woman marries a non-Balinese. This is still very much the case within Bali and is something that many people, including myself, had to consider when marrying a Balinese. Hence it affects all other aspects of their society, including communal organization and production of art and dance. The sense that religion for the Balinese plays a large part in what makes a person “Balinese,” is a theme that has persisted in the anthropological literature.

Some of Covarrubias’ most interesting observations come in the last few pages of the book in the chapter “Modern Bali and the Future.” As Krause was, Covarrubias was concerned about the impact Christian missionaries would have on the island. Although Krause gave the impression that missionary work abruptly came to end with the tragic story of Nicodemus (Mabbett, 1988: 88), Covarrubias spoke nearly twenty years later of both Catholic and Protestant missions on the island and the movements, often led by European expatriates, against them. Covarrubias described the missions as “discreet but tireless in their efforts to

'save' the Balinese." (Covarrubias, 1937: 399) But, he also felt that Bali was not a place where missionaries could "improve in anyway the moral and physical standards of the people."

...it is hard to imagine, knowing the Balinese character, that [missions] will succeed. Religion is to the Balinese people more than spectacular ceremonies with music, dance, and a touch of drama for virility; it is their law, the force that holds the community together. It is the greatest stimulus of their lives because it has given them their ethics, culture, wisdom, and joy of living by providing the exuberant festivity they love. More than a religion, it is a moral philosophy of high spiritual value, gay and free of fanaticism, which explains to them the mysterious forces of nature. It is difficult to imagine that it will ever be supplanted by a bleak escapist faith devoid of beautiful and dramatic ritual. (ibid.)

Covarrubias also creates a sense that Bali represents a time that is lost in most other parts of the world. It is still, Covarrubias suggests, "one of those most amazing nations that we shall never know again, one of the so-called primitive countries." (*ibid.*: 400) This is reminiscent of the views of pre-twentieth century scholars who, as has already been noted, saw Bali as an unchanged museum of Hindu Javanese culture. In this way, he contributes to the continued essentializing of Bali. He continues, explaining that he does not see the Balinese people as primitive, but rather uses the word "to differentiate our own material civilization from the native cultures to which the daily life, society, arts, and, religion form a unified whole that cannot be separated into its component parts without disrupting it; the cultures where spiritual values dictate the mode of living." (*ibid.*) For Covarrubias, it seems, "primitive" cultures are much more spiritually based than so-called "modern" ones, such as early 20th century Europe or America. This is a rather stereotypical cross-cultural comparison, but also quite typical of those attempting to define the "other."

Already, however, Covarrubias notes changes within Bali that have resulted, in his eyes, from contact with outside civilizations. These changes, such as "trade, unsuitable education,

tourists and...missionaries” made a “deep dent in the simple and logical life of the Balinese.” (*ibid.*: 402) Covarrubias described these changes as both rapid and strikingly evident, leading him to fear that “the gradual breakdown of their institutions, together with the drain on their national wealth, will make coolies, thieves, beggars and prostitutes of the proud and honorable Balinese...and will, in the long run, bring a social and economic catastrophe.” (*ibid.*) In other words, as tenacious as Balinese culture was imagined to be, it would not be able to overcome the invasion of newer and, in Covarrubias’ view, more powerful outside influences. Covarrubias’ fear would not come to full fruition as, even though the Balinese became exposed to further change and outside influences, their ideologies and customs survived, as did their pride and honour as a people. Although the Balinese have been seen as a fiercely resilient people, the effects of tourism and globalization on the Balinese and their systems make for popular topic in modern discourse on the island/among the Balinese, as discussed in chapter 5.

No conversation about early 20th century would be complete without the inclusion of Walter Spies. Spies was a German musician and artist, who traveled in Indonesia in the early 1920s and moved permanently to Bali in 1927. (Belo, 1970: xviii). He influenced and assisted both Covarrubias and his wife, along with Jane Belo and Colin McPhee, during their travels within Bali. Covarrubias would describe Spies as a good friend who was “a constant source of disinterested information to every archaeologist, anthropologist, musician or artist who has come to Bali.” (Covarrubias, 1937: xxii) Later, Belo would credit Spies as being the one person more than other preceding WWII that would contribute to “the knowledge and appreciation of Balinese culture in its many manifestations by steeping himself in the lore of the people...and by taking up with great enthusiasm, combined with complete disregard for personal credit, the

particular interest of foreign scholars or investigators who came to him for help.” (Belo, 1970: xix) She noted that meeting Spies “opened up vistas for us...[she and McPhee] are both more deeply indebted to him than to any one single individual who had entered our lives during that period.” (*ibid.*) Spies was also very active in the Balinese artist community. Robert Pringle notes that both he and Covarrubias were “both influencing Balinese artists and being influenced by them.” (Pringle, 2004: 137-138)

Spies, however was as controversial as he was charismatic and helpful. It was well known among his circle of friends and the Balinese community that Spies was homosexual and was engaging in sexual activities with young Balinese men, some said to be minors. In December 1938, during a Dutch-led crackdown on homosexuality in Bali, Spies and Roelof Goris (Pringle, 2004: 154-155) a Dutch scholar, were arrested for having homosexual sex with a minor. The Dutch, it is noted, had mixed feelings about the expatriate community who were, at once, good at promoting Bali as an exotic getaway, while also perpetuating the image that Bali was a sexually permissive “paradise for homosexuals.” (Shavit, 2003: 180) Spies and Goris both viewed Bali as a “heaven of tolerance,” (*ibid*: 56) in a world that they otherwise felt was intolerant of homosexuality. Further, Goris, like Covarrubias, was actively taking action against missionary activity on the island. (Covarrubias, 1937: 402) The crackdown by the Dutch was viewed as a sudden and unexpected “witch-hunt.” (Shavit, 2003: 180) The Balinese, themselves very accepting of homosexuals, were stunned by this crackdown against people they viewed as friends. (Shavit, 2003: 182) Spies, who chose to ignore the threat of the crackdown, was jailed in Surabaya. Friend and colleague Margaret Mead quickly came to Spies’ defense, noting that it was very difficult to tell the age of the young Balinese men, who saw homosexuality, Mead

argued, as nothing more than a pastime. (Pringle, 2004: 154-155; Copeland and Murni, 2010: 382) She and Jane Belo worked hard to find Spies a lawyer and to get him released. Even the father of the young boy involved in the case appealed for the release of Spies, saying “He’s our best friend and it was an honour for my son to be in his company. If both are in agreement, why fuss?” (*ibid.*: 382) Spies did return to Bali after his release in September 1939 but, with the outbreak of WWII, he was re-arrested as an enemy alien in 1940. In 1942, he was on the Dutch freighter *Van Imhoff*, which was bombed by the Japanese. All the prisoners still locked within the ship, including Spies, perished. (Pringle, 2004: 154-155) With this event, Shavit notes, the earliest expatriate community in Bali was “decimated. The days of joy for westerners in Bali was temporarily over.” (Shavit, 2003: 182)

Spies is also a controversial figure when it comes to his role in the essentialization of Bali and Balinese culture. In 1938, Spies, along with his British colleague, Beryl de Zoete, herself a writer, and student and critic of dance, published *Dance and Drama on Bali*. De Zoete was the main writer of the book and Spies photographer and “ideas man.” (Pringle, 2004: 151) The extensive book is full of picture and text, detailing the development and progression of dance and the dramatic arts in Bali and how intimately connected it is to Balinese life.

Bali, Spies and de Zoete argue, “has long been famous as an earthly paradise in which a favoured race of men live in Utopian harmony with their own kind, with nature and their gods.” (de Zoete/Spies, 1938: 2) One of the most oft cited (Shavit, 2003: 131; Pringle, 2004: 152; Horst and Rathenau, 1945 :54) sections from the book follows here:

Bali is neither a last nor a lost paradise, but the home of a peculiarly gifted people

of mixed race, endowed with a great sense of humour and a great sense of style, where their own traditions are concerned; and with a suppleness of mind which has enabled them to take what they want of the alien civilizations which have been reaching them for centuries and then leave the rest. And in spite of the few exceptions mentioned above they seem to have left the rest very successfully. The swift tourist does not even scratch the surface of Bali; indeed, one may drive for about four months and do no more. Yet not very far from the main road are fantastic regions of jungle, mountains, lake sea-shore where the path winds from one village to another...Here is the unchanged traffic of Bali, between villages inaccessible from the road, but with a very complicated life of their own... Something in the atmosphere, which is extraordinarily clear and light, seems to have turned all the processes of man's thought into beauty.... They have fashioned Bali out of its original jungle into this incomparable harmony of rice-fields, temples, villages, so different each from the other, yet so characteristically Balinese (ibid.: 3)

They go on, differentiating Bali from other “primitive communities,” by saying the Balinese do not engage in the same types of terrible initiation rites practiced by others. Balinese village custom (*adat*), they say, “lies beyond the reach of foreign influence.” They describe the Balinese as being exquisitely polite with a supple social disposition and grace, and that music and dance permeate their lives in a way unlike in any other place. They are, arguably, creating a romantic, exotic and essentializing image of the Balinese, at once differentiating them from those studying them, and from cultures widely viewed as more primitive. Bali for de Zoete and Spies is one-of-a-kind, a place seemingly exempt from, and perhaps oblivious to, the problems of the world outside of it.

Mark Hobart, as noted above, agrees that de Zoete and Spies are guilty of doing essentializing Bali in such a way and goes further, describing Spies as “a complex and ambiguous figure in the romanticisation of the island and in helping to forge the hegemonic account that subsequent works replicate – largely uncritically.” (Hobart, 2007: 3). In his 2007 article, he argues that de Zoete and Spies presented Bali and, in particular, Balinese dance as

not just different from that of other regions, but as “the luminous acme of human difference, which at once sheds light on the baleful condition of modern society and offers relief from it, through myth and counter-myth.” (Hobart, 2007: 12) He goes further again, claiming that this romanticizing of Balinese art then led to the romanticization of Balinese bodies. The Spies/de Zoete book is certainly presented in very dramatic vernacular, with text accompanied by fabulous black and white stills. It is clear, also, that Spies and de Zoete spent much time and effort studying Balinese dance and acquainting themselves with the performers and composers. But it is equally easy to argue that the presentation of the book is rather idyllic.

Several years after the publications of both Covarrubias’ *Island of Bali*, and Spies and de Zoete’s *Dance and Drama in Bali*, selections from each text were reprinted in the book *Oriental: People from India, Malaya, Bali, China*. Published in 1945 by photographer Ernest Rathenau and edited by the German-American fashion photographer Horst P. Horst,⁴ the book is a collection of black and white photographs of people considered to be “Oriental.” It is intriguing that this book took a specific interest in the Balinese, a relatively small population compared to many others within the region, as representative of “Oriental” over, say, the Javanese or even an overall look at the peoples of the Dutch East Indies, of which the nation of Bali, as it was viewed at the time, was a part of. The book included several pictures of bare breasted Balinese women, playing on the European ideal of Bali as a Paradise, perhaps even a hedonistic one. The lack of substantive text leaves the reader with just a cursory understanding of the Balinese, and only introduces some of Covarrubias and de Zoete’s more dramatic observations. Other pictures show graceful Balinese dancers in full regalia and then, in contrast,

⁴ Horst P. Horst was born Horst Paul Albert Borhmann and published under the single name Horst.

a look at more impoverished Balinese people who do not look as clean or well kept. In its simplicity, this book presents quite an essentialized image of the Balinese for early twentieth century readers. A quick scan of the pictures leads to several possible rudimentary conclusions: the Balinese are brown skinned; they are comfortable with female upper body nudity; the dancers wear beautifully ornate costumes; the women are beautiful; the poor likely lead simple lives that involve some degree of hardship; the old appear quite weathered. No photos of the Balinese wearing traditional ceremonial clothing or engaging in ritual are included. This is interesting as so many of the texts up to this point have noted the importance of religion in everyday life.

Application of Theory in the First Wave

Around the same time as Covarrubias and Spies were publishing on Bali, anthropologists Jane Belo, Colin McPhee, Margaret Mead, and Gregory Bateson, were beginning to contribute to the literature as well. What differentiated these writers from the others, however, was not so much the time period in which they were writing but rather their approach to research and presentation. While Covarrubias and Spies were influenced by the works of Krause and others, largely presenting their experiences and observations as if exposing the world to the hidden secrets of the Balinese, Belo and Mead were approaching the subject matter from a more theoretical, analytical stance.

Still very much attracted by the allure of Bali, and also closely connected to their early Baliologist predecessors, these first wave writers were beginning to apply theory and critique to

Balinese “culture.” These writers were, arguably, as interested in the study of Bali within the framework of their theories, as will be discussed below, as they were interested in Bali itself. They were, however, also very concerned that they were “witnessing the swan song of a dying civilization.” (Jacknis, 1988: 163) Yet, their presence and their textual and visual contributions to the anthropological canon “actually sparked a cultural revival.” (*ibid.*) Margaret Mead and Jane Belo were both influenced by Ruth Benedict and shared her views on the connection between culture and personality, which argued that culture had a vital impact on the development of personality.

American anthropologist Jane Belo and her husband, ethnomusicologist Colin McPhee, a Canadian, first traveled to Bali in 1931. Belo, was attracted to the island as an opportunity to do fieldwork, while McPhee, was lured by Balinese music. While traveling to Bali by ship, they met Miguel and Rose Covarrubias who wrote a letter of introduction for them to Walter Spies. (Shavit, 2003: 121)

Through her research, Belo set out to present Balinese “culture,” and its effects on human development and relationships. To do so, she engaged in field work and first hand observation. She was particularly interested in considering aspects of Balinese culture that seemed somehow distinctive, such as taboos about, and rituals surrounding, the birth of opposite-sex twins, and the role of trance within Balinese society, interpreting what these aspects then said about the Balinese personality. As such, Belo used case studies and then applied the findings to the culture as a whole. One of the limitations of such a study is that it

assumes that generally everyone within a particular culture would be affected similarly by the aspects considered. This in itself is arguably essentializing.

While on the island, Belo produced several important publications on Balinese character and relationships. Her first major contribution to Balinese scholarship was “A Study of Customs Pertaining to Twins in Bali,” (1935a) first published in the Dutch journal *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*. She revisited the topic in the essay “Customs Pertaining to Twins in Bali,” printed in her 1970 collection of essays *Traditional Balinese Culture*. Belo was not the first to tackle this subject. Covarrubias noted the Balinese practice of banishing lower caste families who had birthed opposite sex twins, while at the same time celebrating the birth of opposite sex twins for royal families, in which case the twins were believed to be ideal marriage partners for each other. Yet, Covarrubias’ 8-page presentation is quite cursory when compared to Belo’s substantial report. In fact, Covarrubias cited Belo’s article in his own book.⁵ (Covarrubias, 1937: 37-38) Belo presented the beliefs and practices surrounding the birth of opposite sex twins but went further, using case studies and interviewing the Balinese about specific cases. This was a very significant contribution as this topic continues to be discussed thoroughly within scholarship, and Belo’s work here is often cited.

Similarly, Belo used case studies in later articles. She wrote several more in the 1930’s: “The Balinese Temper” (1935b), “A Study of the Balinese Family” (1936), and “Balinese Children’s Drawings (1937). Later, Belo published *Trance in Bali* (1960). One of the most

⁵ It is interesting to note that, although Covarrubias had been to Bali earlier than Belo had, Belo’s contributions to the canon would appear first. In fairness, at this time Covarrubias was publishing a book and Belo journal articles, which would not have taken as long to write. However, Belo was also engaging in rather thorough research practices, arguably more thorough than Covarrubias’. The fact that Covarrubias cites Belo in his book attests to her exceptional research abilities

interesting statements Belo makes in this book comes early on within the introduction. In the book, based on research from her time in Bali in the 1930s, Belo argues that in spite of the significant changes that took place between her time in Bali in the '30s and the time of the publication of the book in 1960, such as WWII and Japanese occupation, Bali's ceremonial life continued unchanged and with the same focused intensity. (Belo, 1960: 1) This suggests that Balinese culture, or at least certain aspects of it, is unchanging, an assumption that is similar to those of scholars who came before Belo, such as Raffles and Covarrubias, and one that has been critiqued strongly in more contemporary scholarship.

Toward the end of her life, Belo edited and contributed to the book *Traditional Balinese Culture* (1970), published posthumously, and included the three essays just mentioned and her study on Balinese twins. In the introduction to this book, Belo speaks at length about 1930s Bali, noting many of those who were actively involved in the expatriate community. She wrote of a time when celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin and Barbara Hutton visited the island as guests of the artist and writer, Walter Spies, pointing to Spies involvement in the development of tourism in Bali. (Belo, 1970: xxii) And she wrote of the scholarly contributions of many of those from this community. The book included essays by many of her colleagues including Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and Katharine Edson Mershon, a dancer who published the book *Seven Plus Seven* (1971) based on her own research on Balinese dance and culture. Each topic Belo presented would later get further significant consideration within scholarship from those influenced by her work.

Belo's husband, Colin McPhee, would go on to study Balinese gamelan, a traditional percussion instrument used often in both religious ceremonies and dramatic performances, similar to a xylophone in the way it looks and how it is played. He would publish several books on Balinese music. He also wrote a first person account of his life on Bali, *A House in Bali* (1947). He and Belo would divorce in 1938, and he would leave Bali in December 1938, not wanting to be subject to the Dutch "witch-hunt" against homosexuals. (Shavit, 2003: 127)

Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, arrived on the island in 1936, to start several years of field study, based largely on photographic analysis (Pringle, 2004: 147). Already experienced in fieldwork in New Guinea and elsewhere in the South Pacific, Mead and Bateson made several significant contributions to the scholarship on Bali. More scientifically inclined than the other writers before them, Mead and Bateson applied Freudian theory to their research. (*ibid*: 150) Their study resulted in two books: Bateson and Mead's *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* (1942) and Mead and Frances Cooke MacGregor's *Growth and Culture*. The books were seen together as a two part study based on the combined research of both Mead and Bateson. They were assisted during this time by Belo, McPhee, Mershon, American dancer and art historian Claire Holt, and their Balinese assistant and translator, I Made Kaler. (Jacknis, 1988: 163)

Both books contain very detailed descriptions of the Balinese people in everyday life, specifically looking at children and how they are treated within the home and village setting. The movements, actions and socially accepted behaviours and norms, specifically those to do with child rearing, are analyzed vigorously. Photography plays a big part in both of the books.

However, unlike the earlier photographic contributions of Krause and others that set out to capture the “secrets” of “exotic Bali,” the photography used here plays a major role in the fieldwork. The photographs taken were themselves analyzed. Said Bateson, “[w]e tried to shoot what happened normally and spontaneously, rather than to decide upon the norms and then get Balinese to go through these behaviors in suitable lighting. We treated the cameras in the field as recording instruments, not as devices for illustrating our theses.” (Bateson and Mead 1942: 49). This is arguably the first time in Bali that photography had itself been used as a scientific tool.

Balinese Character is, as the title suggests, a study of what creates and constitutes the character of the Balinese people. Keeping in mind Benedict’s influence on Mead, this was a study that considered the impacts of culture on character and personality. Bateson and Mead argued that the social organization of the Balinese, the fact that they spend so much of their time doing things communally, as members of a community, strongly impacts and, itself, constitutes part of what it means to be “Balinese.” (Bateson and Mead, 1942: 3) As members of the community, the Balinese celebrate together, worship and engage in ceremonial work together, and in doing so, live and grow together as individuals and as part of a greater community. “Spatial orientations and levels” also play an important part of the Balinese character for Mead and Bateson. How the Balinese orient themselves within their community—how they see themselves within the caste system—help to define who they are as part of the community and as individuals. (*ibid*: 6-12) Further, how the Balinese view the body and different parts of the body impact their character. How all of this information is passed down and shared between the members of the community, family members, and from parents

to their children, along with how family and village members interact with one another, impact how the Balinese view themselves, their society, and their place within the society. These ideas are explored through both the use of text and photography.

The second book, Mead and Macgregor's *Growth and Culture*, focuses specifically on the development of children within Balinese society and considers "in which human growth rhythms are patterned within human cultures." (Mead and Macgregor, 1951:18). The book is based upon analysis of photography taken by Bateson during fieldwork in the 30s.

The areas of research for the book, as described by the authors, are: the nature of the human growth process; the degree of individuality within this process; and the way in which these growth processes are interwoven into the process of learning how to be a human being within a culture, in this case, within Balinese culture. (*Ibid*: 14) The book considers how Balinese babies and parents communicate with each other, noting that deeply rooted effects of culture determine how this communication occurs.

Importantly, Mead and Macgregor also consider the differences between the growth process of Balinese babies and American babies, babies that, for the researchers, show considerable differences as they grow "regardless of the fact they were born with the same capabilities." (*Ibid*.: 17) In this way, they were concerned with what impact cultural settings would have on the growth of children. A child whose cultural lineage was in Eastern Europe but who grew up in America, for example, would be heavily influenced by American culture, regardless of their lineage. No one could expect the child to grow up in the same way as his or her relatives in Eastern Europe did. To further explain this, the authors use a simplified

example. “While the demonstration that members of the same human group can grow to be savages in a G-string or doctors in a consulting room is reassuring, this statement of limitations is repugnant to Americans whose optimism often overflows into a belief that one can have one’s cake and eat it too.” (Mead and Macgregor, 1951: 18)

The research for the Mead and Macgregor book was based on research initially done between 1936 and 1939. It involved the study of eight children and their families living in poor villages in the mountainous Kintamani region as they engaged in everyday activities. Villages within the Kintamani region would have, at the time, been less accessible to tourists than the bigger, more urban areas of Bali. To this day, the villages within the Kintamani area are less accessible, although the district has seen more activity in the past several decades than it arguably would have in the first half of the twentieth century.

Mead was long interested in comparative studies of different cultures and, in particular, how different cultures compared to her own American one. Mead and Macgregor argued that in cultures, such as American culture, where children were encouraged to have control of their own environments quite early on in their development, movement became a sign of autonomy and control. (Mead and Macgregor, 1951: 32-34) This could be witnessed, they argued, through play in where young boys had a passion for playing with guns, and girls a passion for horses. In Balinese culture, on the other hand, children were not encouraged to be autonomous or have control from such an early age and, instead, became more dependent on their mothers and those around them, including family members and members of their

community. Balinese children adapted to movement and their surroundings, instead of attempting to control or manipulate them.

Mead and Macgregor also pointed out that the amount of physical contact a child has with people plays a significant role in their development. American babies were more likely to find themselves sleeping independently in cribs, where Balinese babies would fall asleep in their mother's arms and then be placed down to sleep on a mattress, wrapped in a light blanket and beside the mother all night. (*ibid.*: 44) American babies were also more likely to be carried around as if objects, perhaps strapped to cradle boards, where Balinese babies were held lightly, and treated as an extension of their mothers: "treated as part of the self, well attached but lightly attended to." (*ibid.*: 33) The Balinese child, they noted, learns life within its mother's arms. (*ibid.*: 42)

Mead and Macgregor felt that American society did not promote communal relations that were as strong as the ones found in Bali, and arguably were too hasty in nurturing independence at such an early stage in development. Balinese children were found to be less active than their American counterparts and developed lower muscle tone due to the fact that they were not encouraged to move their legs and arms as much as growing American children were, but they also developed closer familial and communal bonds. The Balinese belief that reincarnation occurs every four generations within individual families strengthens these connections, and intimately connects older generations to younger ones. (*ibid.*: 30) Mead and Macgregor also noted that Balinese children were not encouraged to crawl or to play on the ground as behavior perceived as animal-like, such as crawling, was (and still is) discouraged,

pointing to the importance of communal values and acceptance. (*ibid.*: 47) Mead and Macgregor did, however, note that in American society, children could learn through doing and exploring their own environments individually, as opposed to “fitting each child to the procrustean bed of cultural expectations,” as they argued occurred in Bali (*ibid.*: 185)

Although the works of Mead and Bateson are cited often in the anthropological literature on Bali, their approaches were not initially viewed favourably within the expatriate community of artists and writers within which they lived. Beryl De Zoete was a vocal critic of their work, describing it as too scientific. (Pringle, 2004: 151) Belo herself is also said to have not initially supported their research approach, calling it “cold and analytical.” (*ibid.*) The books themselves are quite physically cumbersome in size and weight, and are presented in quite a scientific way which would likely not hold the same appeal to most in the general, non-academic population as their earlier works, such as *Growing Up in New Guinea* and *Growth and Temperament*, which were published as chapter books. Bateson and Mead address this issue by noting that their work in *Balinese Character* is different from many of their works that came before it. They explained that their past works often used “ordinary English words...with all their weight of culturally limited connotations.” (Bateson and Mead, 1942: xi) The most serious of these limitations for Bateson and Mead was the fact that words created and used within the scope of English speaking societies had been, to this point, unfit to describe other cultures adequately. Described as “experimental observation,” these new writings about Bali relied heavily on photographic images. Introductory chapters presented vigorous description and analysis of the fieldwork and their findings, leading up to an extensive presentation of photographs, accompanied with text both describing and analyzing the photos. The

contributions made by Bateson and Mead, however significant, were, like the works of Belo and others from this era, limiting in that their findings were applied to Balinese culture as a whole. Case studies were found to further support their theories but the fact that these findings were often applied to all of the Balinese makes them potentially problematic.

Film in the First Wave

Mead and Bateson were very interested in presenting Bali through visual media. And, like many of their contemporaries, they were also very interested in film as a medium in which to present Balinese culture to the world (Jacknis, 1998: 170). They would produce six short films in Bali, based on Bateson's field footage, all edited, written and narrated by Mead. Several of which, such as "Trance and Dance in Bali," continue to be used in undergraduate anthropology classrooms. Three of the films "Bathing Babies in Three Cultures;" "Karba's First Years;" and the classic "Trance and Dance in Bali," along with a fourth film, "First Days in the Life of a New Guinea Baby," made up a series called *Character Formation in Different Cultures*. (1952) Three other films, "A Balinese Family" (1952); "Childhood Rivalry in Bali and New Guinea," (1953); and "Learning to Dance in Bali" (1979) were also produced. All these films further illustrated Mead and Bateson's interest in the influence of culture on the development of character, and in cross cultural analysis and comparative study.

Arguably the most popular of all the short films produced by Bateson and Mead, "Trance and Dance in Bali," is both visually stunning and cinematically beautiful. As the title suggests, it depicts Balinese dancers who appear to be in various stages of trance. The dances,

Mead explains, are ritualistic and deeply connected to religious ceremony and festival. As dancers prepare to move into trance, they are blessed with holy water by village *Pedandas* (priests). Both women and men participate in these rituals. One of the most dramatic scenes of the film depicts Balinese women of various ages plunging *krisses* (ceremonial daggers) into their chests. However, being in trance and already blessed by the *Pedandas*, who are overseeing the rituals, participants are not hurt no matter how violent their actions, toward themselves and others, may appear. This film, as noted above, was taken from field footage shot by Bateson. It includes footage shot at two different events and as well as footage made by Belo. (Jacknis, 1988: 171) As Ira Jacknis points out, upon viewing the film, one would not know that it included footage from two separate different events. Nor would the viewer know that the 20-minute film was a mere snapshot of the three and a half hour dance commissioned for the filming. (*ibid.*) It is, Jacknis argues, “easy to slip into the belief that the film *is* the ritual.” (*ibid.*) My own experience when watching the film coincides with what Jacknis suggests. It is presented as if the dance has been shot once and is being shown authentically as such. Mead’s own narrative also seems to suggest this, as it attempts to give a complete story of the dance. Of course, it would likely be very difficult to present a full three hour sitting of the dance, with all of its highs and lows, as a documentary. Most documentaries are arguably snapshots of a much larger story. Mead and Bateson have made a strong film which does give some insight into the drama, grace, and, at times, shock-appeal of this traditional art form.

Regardless of any perceived shortcomings, the Bateson and Mead films were unlike any others being produced about Bali at the time. This is important to note because Mead, already recognized in America as an established yet media accessible anthropologist, would have the

clout to garner attention for her films. Other commercial films at the time depicting Bali included such so-called “goona goona” films as *Virgins of Bali* (1932), *Goona Goona* (1932), and *Legong: Dance of the Virgins* (1935). Although these were commercial films, many of the filmmakers had ties to the expatriate community of this era, in particular to Walter Spies who helped several of these films get off the ground. Many of these filmmakers were also very influenced by earlier images they would have seen about Bali, such as those published by Gregor Krause. These are also important to note because, unlike much of the scholarly work, films, particularly commercial ones, were arguably more accessible to the greater public. Although these films do not represent how anthropologists present Bali, they serve as good examples of how early presentation of Bali influenced film and, further, how Bali was potentially to be perceived within the general public.

The term “goona goona,” an Indonesian term referring to an Indonesian aphrodisiac, has been used to describe films showing “exotic,” foreign and otherwise non-white peoples, specifically women, in sexualized, essentialized ways, often times bare breasted. (Rony, 1998: 148) These films were not documentaries but rather movies with created story lines, using Bali and Balinese culture as a backdrop, and some, such as Rony argue, exploiting the Balinese people and the island’s beauty. In his book *The Romance of K’Tut Tantri and Indonesia*, Timothy Lindsey describes such films as “important aspects of the creation of the Western romance of Bali as paradise.” (Lindsey, 1997: 79) The film “Goona Goona,” by André Roosevelt and Armand Denis, was shot with the assistance of Walter Spies and was one of the only goona goona movies to be shown in America, so it would, as Lindsey notes, have had significant influence on how Americans would come to view Bali in the 1930s.

The current webpage for Milestone Films, which has distribution rights for the 1935 film *Legong: Dance of the Virgins*, directed by Henry de la Falaise, describes the film as “a tragic tale of love denied,” showcasing a “a frank sensuality that embraced both the lush scenery of the exotic setting and the glowing bodies of his half-nude subjects.” It “plays on the Western audience’s fantasies of the South Seas as a kind of innocent Eden, free of sexual inhibitions and guilt.” However, the website states that de la Falaise shot the fictional film in a form of documentary style claiming that the film theme is much more than simply melodrama. “[The real theme] is the delineation of Balinese culture. Henry de la Falaise captured religious rituals including frenetic dances and mystical parades, everyday dealings at the local marketplace, a cockfight... and, in the final scene, a mass cremation.” The film also shows “elaborate rituals... during a pre-tourism period when they still had their integrity and purpose,” clearly suggesting that these rituals no longer have such integrity or purpose. This is a suggestion that most academics and Balinese alike would likely take great issue with. Yet, at the same time, it is interesting to think of how the earliest writings and images of Bali attracted and influenced such filmmakers in the first place.

Conclusion

The first wave of Balinese scholars were largely also the first travelers to Bali. Their writings and images would have a significant effect on tourism and on attracting future scholars to the island. Although arguably the contributions of the earliest scholars created quite an essentialized image of the island, it was their work that would both attract future scholars and

would set the groundwork for future scholarship. Some theories were developed during this period that would be explored and reinterpreted in future scholarship. These included investigations into what seemingly made Bali uniquely Balinese, such as religious customs, practices and beliefs. The notion that Bali, or at least certain aspects of Balinese culture, such as its religious practices, was not susceptible to change or outside influences, were explored and developed. This notion had been explored in pre-twentieth century theory, although the notions introduced by pre-twentieth century theorists, such as the belief that Bali was a museum of Hindu Javanese history, were refuted by these early 20th century scholars. Most of these scholars were presenting their theories based on first hand observation. However, later scholars, such as Mead and Belo, would introduce deeper analytical and theoretical applications to the discourse. These earliest anthropologists would be a bridge between the earliest first wave scholars and the second wave scholars, investigated in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Second Wave Scholars

This chapter considers those that I categorize as second wave scholars. At this time, the post-WWII period, Bali became a province in the newly formed country of Indonesia. Scholars such as Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz and J. Stephen Lansing were doing fieldwork in Bali and were introducing new theories and ideas about the island and its people. They were not only bringing their own new concepts and ideas to the discussion, but seeing Bali in a way that others before them had not: Bali was no longer under the control of the Dutch.

In 1950, Indonesia would gain independence after years of Dutch colonization and later Japanese occupation during World War II. The "country of Bali" would now be part of the republic of Indonesia. Taking its lead from the Dutch, Indonesia was content with Bali remaining a Hindu island, assuming that all islanders who considered themselves "Hindu" would legally declare themselves as such. This was very difficult for the Balinese as, although seeing themselves as Hindu, they also saw themselves as quite different--as being "Balinese."

As Leo Howe (2001) explains, the Balinese Hindu religion was highly criticized within Indonesia during this time, as the religion did not seem fully organized, and it lacked both a holy book and acknowledgement of a monotheistic God, two important markers for the largely Muslim officials that a religion was valid under Indonesian law. Hence, it was initially not considered an official religion. This was a "very urgent" problem for the Balinese, now faced with having to claim an official religion. The only officially recognized religions at this time were Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism and Buddhism. To rectify the problem, Balinese intellectuals

traveled to India to associate themselves with Indian forms of Hinduism and to translate many of the texts into Indonesian. They were also trying to find ways in which to support the notion that, although Balinese Hinduism appeared to be polytheistic, it was actually monotheistic. Presented with text and the claim that the Balinese religion was indeed monotheistic, President Sukarno would finally accept Balinese Hinduism as an official religion within Indonesia, a religion they would name *Agama Hindu*. This was, indeed, a major reformation for the Balinese. Many new ideas and rituals were presented that would have to be learned by the Balinese. However, the Balinese did not abandon their own long held beliefs and, instead, were “aligning Balinese religion with the ethical and theological tenets of Indian Hinduism.” (Howe, 2001: 146-149) In so doing, they were also trying to represent the tradition as one that had been developed over several centuries on the island, hence materials were made widely available so that people could “reacquaint” themselves with their traditions. Programs were implemented in primary schools that would teach students about Hinduism, yet at the same time about how *to be* Indonesian. This was, of course, not the first time that the Balinese were forced to make changes to their religious systems and beliefs, changes that would impact their own identity. As has already been discussed, the Dutch in the early 20th century had stratified the caste system in an attempt to make the Balinese more “Hindu.”

The result of the stratification of Balinese religion, notes Howe, has had two profound effects on the Balinese. (*ibid.*:150-151) First, it has cultivated a “critical and questioning stance to religions practices and beliefs in general,” something that has been further impacted by the appearance of more devotional forms of Hinduism on the island to which they can compare *Agama Hindu* to. Second, it has made the Balinese very aware that they possess a religion

which is not Islam or Christianity, the majority religions of Indonesia, and has given them a “marker” for Balinese identity. Based on a 2000 census, 86.1% of Indonesians were considered Muslim, 5.7% considered Protestant Christians, 3% were Roman Catholic, and only 1.8% considered Hindu.⁶ In recent years, notes Howe, “‘Balinese-ness’ (*kebalian*) has been defined by reference to Hinduism (Howe, 2001: 150-151)

It is within this climate that a new “second wave” of anthropologists, such as Clifford and Hildred Geertz, Stephen Lansing, James Boon, and many others, would come to “understand” Bali. This new group of writers were influenced by the earlier writings of scholars such as Covarrubias, and were following in the footsteps of Mead and Bateson, taking a more theoretic look at Bali through their fieldwork.

Clifford and Hildred Geertz would arrive in Bali in 1957 with the intention of doing anthropological research on the island. According to Hildred Geertz, they would spend a total of nearly 10 months on the island between 1957 and 1958, a period of research that she describes as “fragmentary,” due to the fact that this was not a consecutive 10-month period.⁷ This relatively limited period, however, would lead to some of the most influential writings on Bali within the anthropological canon, writings that would have a great influence on scholarship and that would appear predominantly when the topic of Bali was considered within undergraduate anthropology textbooks.

⁶ Statistics retrieved March 29th 2011 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html>

⁷ In his paper “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” Clifford Geertz would say that he and Hildred arrived on the island in 1958. However, in my own personal correspondence via email with Hildred Geertz in July 2008, I was informed that the research took place over 9-10 “fragmentary” months between 1957 and 1958.

Both Hildred and Clifford had previously engaged in research in Java and Morocco. Clifford authored several books on these studies including *The Religion of Java* (1961) and *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (1968). Hildred and Clifford Geertz together wrote *The Javanese Family: a study of kinship and socialization* (1961). Hildred Geertz coauthored *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three essays in cultural analysis* (1979), with Clifford Geertz and Lawrence Rosen. She also wrote an article on the cultural meanings of the mental disorder latah in Java in a paper that appeared in the journal *Indonesia*, entitled "Latah in Java: A Theoretical Perspective," (1968) based on a field study she conducted from 1952-54.

Interested in the symbolic behaviour present within cultures and what this symbolism was saying about the cultures themselves, the Geertzes offered an intriguing look into the daily lives of the Balinese. Several influential essays on Bali by Clifford Geertz have been collected in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (1973). These include arguably his most influential contribution to anthropology, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" (Geertz, 1973: 412-454). In this paper, Geertz took an investigative look into the Balinese cockfight and considered how the practice was symbolic of deeper meanings. The cockfight, Geertz maintained, was symbolic of the relationships Balinese men had with one another. The cocks, he would claim, were representative of the men who fought them and of the hierarchy present within Balinese society.

Clifford Geertz was also very interested in the Balinese religion. He was interested in traditional Balinese custom and belief outside of Hinduism. He did much research into those

aspects of *Agama Hindu* that make it decidedly Balinese, such as the uniquely Balinese rite of passage of the tooth filing ceremony, and the rituals surrounding their funerary practices. He took a great interest in how the Balinese organized and governed themselves locally and how this governance is based on and symbolic of their traditional religious beliefs and customs. Geertz would deal with this subject matter often in his work. (Geertz, 1973, 1980)

One of his most influential ideas was that Bali was a “theatre state.” (Geertz, 1980) The state, Geertz argued, centred around the King and his court. The divine order of the society, then, would be played out within the community, through theatrics, which for Geertz meant ritual symbolism. “It was a theatre state in which the kings were the impresarios, the priests the directors and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew and audience...Ceremony was not form but substance. Power served pomp, not pomp power.” (Geertz, 1980: 335)

Geertz based this very much on his study of pre-colonial and colonial Bali. Rightfully critiquing pre-20th century thought that Bali was, in fact, a static “museum,” representative of pre-Majapahit Hindu Java, as suggested by such writers as Thomas Raffles, Geertz was himself essentializing the Balinese with his notion that the Balinese sense of identity was intimately connected with communal identity. Geertz’s notion of the “theatre state” was criticized by Henk Schulte Nordholt who, in his 1996 book *The Spell of Power* would argue that Geertz’s theory was flawed as it assumed “too close a parallel” between the imagined divine order and the political reality of the state; presented the elite and the lower castes as if they existed in two separate realities; and, arguably most significantly, his theory did not leave any room for or explanation of the “conflict and violence inherent in Balinese society.” (Schulte Nordholt,

1996:6-7) Schulte Nordholt raises a valid point as Geertz's notion that Balinese culture was a rather fluid one, where everyone knew their place within the state, and where roles within the drama of Balinese society were played out peacefully and with order, is rather idyllic.

Further, Geertz's vision of Bali does not leave room for the individual outside of the cultural fabric in which they seem eternally intertwined. Geertz argued that within Balinese society, individual identity was almost non-existent, and certainly less important than communal identity. Further, sexual differentiation, he argued, was downplayed, resulting in what Geertz saw as a rather unisex society. He has been harshly criticized in more recent times for these views by researchers such as Unni Wikan (1990), whose own field work and experiences in Bali suggests that gender plays an important factor within Balinese society and that rather rigid gender roles do appear to exist. Other more recent research seems to corroborate Wikan's findings and has shown that quite a defined notion of Balinese gender roles certainly is evident. (Hobart, 1995; Miller and Branson, 1989; Pedersen, 2002)

The influence of Clifford Geertz, and of his wife Hildred, whose most recent book on Bali, *The Life of a Balinese Temple*, was published in 2004, is unquestionable. But the Geertzes were certainly not the only scholars to influence the literature at this time. Fellow anthropologist James Boon also presented alternate representations of Balinese culture. Boon would travel to Bali from May to July 1971 to assist Clifford Geertz in a social science survey in Java and Bali, and then later for his own fieldwork in 1972. (Boon, 1977: viii) Like Geertz, he was interested in symbolism and built on Geertz's earlier works while presenting new ideas. In his publication *The Anthropological Romance of Bali 1597-1972*, Boon explained, "such isolated

facts as history, subsistence, population, pressure, and political tragedy will be related to complex patterns of values and actions in Balinese culture...To lend the whole a thematic coherence, we develop along the way an extended analogy between Bali's dynamic, lustrous culture and Indo-European principles of 'romance.' " (Boon, 1977: 3)

Boon defined the anthropological construct of Balinese "culture" as a "romance of ideas and actions which, like any romance, implicitly plays against an alternative self-image." (Boon, 1977: 7) He looked at the history of Bali and then outlined and critiqued the works of earlier 20th century scholars and their techniques, viewing many of their notions as essentializing. He was particularly critical of Belo, noticing the shortcomings of her research when compared against his own research or the research of his contemporaries, Clifford Geertz and Hildred Geertz, who he viewed as having a more thorough handle on the complexities of Balinese culture. However, the Geertzes themselves did not spend any considerable amount of time on the island when compared with Belo, who lived for extended periods on the island. They were also unable to speak Balinese, and depended on an Indonesian translator, while Belo, along with Mead and Bateson, relied on a Balinese translator, I Made Kaler.

Considering Belo's study of opposite-sex twins, Boon applied his own findings. Twins of either opposite or same sex, Boon notes, are seen to the Balinese as an unnatural contradiction to the birth order, which dictates one order per birth. Due to the importance given to birth order status within Balinese kinship, Boon notes that all twin births, not only opposite-sex births, are seen as contradictory to Balinese communal and familial structure. (Boon, 1977: 138) Belo, as has already been noted, only discussed the taboos surrounding same-sex twins.

He also notes Belo's shortcomings in understanding *dadia* (Bln.), or ancestral groups. In 1936, he argues, Belo "stumbled upon a self-conscious ancestor group" but "hedged in by analytical injunctions of her day to report only typical microcosmic 'Jonesville' of family life, she failed to generalize the principles of *dadia* formation or to appreciate the importance of their optional nature." He argued that the Geertz, on the other hand, researching several decades later, were able to recognize the importance of this system and would thoroughly present this understanding, with vigorous analysis, in several of their publications.

J. Stephen Lansing started his fieldwork in Bali in 1971. The book *Evil in the Morning of the World* was the result of his earliest fieldwork. He was very interested in systems, such as irrigation systems, within Bali and he turned to the work and the assistance of Clifford Geertz while researching. The work of Geertz, along with Belo, and Bateson and Mead are cited and analyzed extensively throughout this first book, as well as the work of Dutch scholar, Christiaan Hookyas, who had studied Balinese religion and its symbols extensively. (1964, 1973)

Lansing published *The Three Worlds of Bali* in 1983, which takes a detailed look at Balinese religion and customs, and how religious beliefs influence systems of organization, such as the temple and irrigation systems. He would take a further look in the 1980s at how temple and irrigation systems were intimately connected through religion. His ground-breaking study of the *subak* irrigation system in Bali, a study that was discussed in the 1987 article "Balinese 'Water Temples' and the Management of Irrigation," and the 1995 book *The Balinese*.

In the 1970s, notes Lansing, the Green Revolution had made its way to Bali. It was a project, started in the Philippines, to upgrade irrigation systems throughout Southeast Asia and, ideally, increase crop production. The Balinese *subak* system, which was based on centuries old

temple calendar schedules to ensure water would be equally distributed throughout the island and to stagger rice cultivation, was eradicated as a result. Farmers were now adhering to a new system of irrigation, and were using fertilizers to increase crop yield and develop a so-called “miracle rice.” Government officials no longer allowed them to plant their own native rice, which would take longer to grow, would yield smaller crops, and was less responsive to fertilizers. (Lansing, 1995: 90)

After several successful years, the Indonesian government made further changes to the program which would profoundly impact rice cultivation in Bali. They shifted the cropping patterns throughout the island, encouraging the Balinese to cultivate a rice variety known as IR-36. They also implemented a plan called the Bali Irrigation Project to further improve the productivity of the irrigation systems on the island. The main water temples that traditionally controlled the irrigation system were no longer being used for such purposes. The result was that water availability was good only in the wet season but unpredictable in the dry seasons, which led to infestations of both insects, and rats, a problem the Balinese had not faced before. (*ibid.*: 91-92)

In 1987, Lansing began a new phase of research with Dr. James Kremer on the ecological role of the water temple irrigation system and its impact on the island. (*ibid.* 93) In consulting with the farmers, he learned they believed part of the biggest problem was that the staggered irrigation schedules they once used were no longer being adhered to. Lansing also studied the systems implemented by the government. Upon thorough comparative analysis, including quantitative statistical analysis and intensive fieldwork, Lansing determined that the traditional Balinese irrigation system was, in fact, the best system of irrigation ecologically for the Balinese.

Further study in 1993 that tested the theoretical results of Lansing's studies through computer technology would come to the same conclusions and would also map out patterns to determine the best ways in which irrigation should occur. Surprisingly, these technologically enhanced programs would present very similar cropping patterns as those traditionally used through the temple irrigation system. These results would serve as evidence for the Indonesian and Balinese governments that the original system was the best option, and would also assist the Balinese in better understanding how their own system worked and in planning island-wide irrigation. (*ibid.* : 93-99) Lansing would also produce several films on this research and its implications: *The Goddess and the Computer* (1988), as well as three short films (*Farmers Meeting, From the Mountains to the Sea* and *Aftermath of the Green Revolution*) for a travelling exhibit on sustainable technology called "The Great Technology Challenge." (1994) Lansing continues to make contributions to the anthropological canon, both through writing and film.

Conclusion

The second wave of scholars of the mid-twentieth century, were conducting research in Bali in a time of post-colonialism, and during a period where Indonesia as a country was still defining itself. The Balinese people had faced much change and were, once again, being defined by others, as they had often been in the past. During this period, they were being forced to redefine their own belief system, bringing Bali into accordance with Indonesian regulations.

Scholarship on Bali was also being redefined. The first wave scholars were being largely critiqued for both essentializing the Balinese people and culture, and for perceived

shortcomings in their research abilities. Second wave writers were applying further analysis and were bringing new skills and theories to their field work. Scholars such as Lansing were investigating new topics, such as irrigation in Bali, and seeing their findings affect change on the island that would further support Balinese traditional customs. Yet scholars, such as Clifford Geertz were, in their deconstruction of older essentializing theories, creating their own essentialized images of Bali, while at the same time adding immensely to the scholarship with their findings.

First and second wave scholars have had an important impact on the development of anthropological pedagogy within North America. The next chapter will consider the way these scholars have been presented, and have affected the presentation of Bali, within undergraduate anthropology textbooks.

Chapter 4

The Representation of Bali through Undergraduate Texts

While the ethnographic record on Bali is extensive, the presentation of Balinese culture in introductory textbooks in cultural anthropology has been quite limited. These texts have left the impression that both the island and its people are “unique,” due to the perception that the Balinese have been able to largely keep their traditional customs intact, and to withstand cultural influences of “invaders,” including other groups of Indonesians, Dutch colonizers, and, more recently, international tourists, and globalization. Yet, texts have come to these conclusions by presenting only a very limited scholarship on Bali.

Like all cultures Balinese culture has never been tightly bounded. Nonetheless, changes associated with globalization and with the re-emergence of a tourist industry in the seventies have been especially rapid. Recent scholarship correctly acknowledges the Balinese as engaged in social, political and economic relationships with other peoples, letting these new relationships influence Balinese culture and integrate into, without changing its essential character. (Picard 1990, 1997; Hitchcock and Putra 2007),

This chapter presents findings from the Significant Others: Iconic Ethnographic Cultures project directed by Thomas Abler and Pamela Stern. This project considered how different cultures (i.e. the Balinese, Inuit, Samoan) and themes (i.e. warfare, the presentation of magic) have been considered and presented in undergraduate anthropology textbooks. For this study, a quota sample of 59 textbooks, published between 1923 and 2006, and selected randomly by

decade were reviewed. Initial findings were presented at the American Anthropological Association's Annual meeting in New Orleans in November 2010.

Despite the extensive anthropological interest in Bali of scholars such as Mead, Clifford Geertz, and many others only 20 (slightly more than 1/3) of fifty-nine introductory socio-cultural textbooks assembled for the *Significant Others* project mentioned Bali. Of these twenty texts, half were written primarily by three authors: Victor Barnouw; E Adamson Hoebel, and Richard H Robbins, with Hoebel and Barnouw each contributing four texts. These textbooks relied on a limited number of ethnographic sources, and as Pamela Stern noted in her discussion of the presentation of Inuit (Stern 2010), the ethnographic sources rarely include the most recent information available. Further, what has been covered within undergraduate anthropology textbooks has been minimal.

It would be naïve of anyone to assume that the totality, or even a significant proportion, of the vast amount of material available on Bali could be adequately covered within introductory undergraduate anthropology textbooks. The purpose of anthropological pedagogy is, arguably, to present information that best helps to support and illustrate theories and ideas to students in a clear and digestible manner. Its goal, specifically in introductory undergraduate classes, is to enhance the students understanding of anthropology, and theories that have been important to the development and current state of anthropology. Hence, it would be equally as naïve to assume that *any* one culture could be presented thoroughly enough to give students more than a cursory understanding of that culture. It is often anthropological ideas and theorists—and not specific cultures alone—that have been the focus. The presentation of any

culture is generally in relation to and support of a larger idea within the teachings of anthropology. However, the lack of information presented on Bali in comparison to the vast canon available outside of pedagogy, is worth investigating. This is particularly interesting because Bali has been a topic of interest for some of the most influential anthropologists of the 20th century.

Not surprisingly due to their influence on Balinese scholarship and within anthropology in general, the ethnographers most commonly cited are Jane Belo, Margaret Mead, Miguel Covarrubias, and Clifford Geertz. What does seem surprising, however, is that Geertz, who published on Bali in the 1960s and 70s, is not only the most cited but also the most recent scholar cited, with two notable exceptions. Barbara D. Miller's *Cultural Anthropology* (1999) makes brief mention of *Video Night in Kathmandu*, Pico Iyer's 1989 discussion of Bali as a tourist paradise heavily impacted by globalization. This two paragraph discussion, however, is minimal compared to textbooks that spend several pages discussing the earlier Balinese ethnography. The second exception is a brief discussion of J. Stephen Lansing's research on traditional Balinese irrigation in Daniel G. Bates *Cultural Anthropology* (1996). This discussion was limited to one brief paragraph within the chapter "Economics, Resources, Production, and Exchange." Bates noted Lansing's important role in making the Indonesian government aware of the economic and ecological value of this uniquely Balinese irrigation system. Lansing has long been considered an eminent source on the Balinese irrigation system and its deep connection to Balinese religious practices and customs. He has written extensively on the subject since the 1970s and has produced several important videos (*The Goddess and the Computer* (1988); *The Three Worlds of Bali*, (1988) among many more) that have been shown in

anthropology classrooms, so it is surprising to discover that he was only cited once throughout the sample.

I do not mean to suggest that the work of Geertz, Mead, and the others mentioned above should be disregarded or simply viewed as dated. All of these works provide important information on Balinese culture and laid the groundwork for important future scholarship. But the omission of more recent scholarship potentially leaves students with a distorted picture of Bali as timeless and unchanging. For example Michel Picard (1990, 1997), and Adrian Vickers (1996) have written extensively on how Bali, and Balinese character, has been affected by tourism and globalization. Unni Wikan (1990), Megan Jennaway (2002), and others, have written about the changing experiences of Balinese women. Further, in the past several decades, Balinese scholars such as Luh Ketut Suryani (Jensen/Suryani, 1992; 2004), I Gde Pitana (1999), and others have published works on Bali which have not yet been considered within the framework of introductory anthropology textbooks. Although it is not possible to expect that the works contributed by Balinese scholars in the 21st century could be considered in the anthropological canon up to this point, it is important to acknowledge these writings as being potentially important to future publications as they offer a Balinese perspective that has not yet been presented.

How has Balinese culture been presented in introductory anthropology textbooks? The earliest text in our sample that deals with Bali is Hoebel's 1949 *Man in the Primitive World: An Introduction to Anthropology*. This text and its later editions, along with other early textbooks written by Victor Barnouw (1971, 1975, 1978) and Ralph Beals and Harry Hoiijer (1959) and

Introduction to Anthropology edited by James A. Clifton (1968), cite some of the earliest and most influential ethnographers of Bali: Belo, Mead and Covarrubias.

Belo is considered extensively within the sample. She is not the most cited scholar, in terms of the number of textbooks her work appears in, but her research has arguably been given more thought and consideration within pedagogy than that of the other cited authors. Her research is the subject of relatively lengthy discussion within several of the textbooks. Belo primarily studied Balinese character and familial relations (“The Balinese Temper,” 1935b; “A Study of a Balinese Family,” 1937). Two of Belo’s earliest articles received a significant amount of attention in textbooks by Hoebel (Hoebel 1949, 1966; Hoebel and Frost 1976; Hoebel and Weaver 1979) and Barnouw (Barnouw 1975, 1978): “The Balinese Temper” (1935b) and “Study of a Balinese Family” (1936). For example, Hoebel found “Study of a Balinese Family” to be a useful illustration of a cultural response to the violation of incest taboos.

In ancient Bali, the punishment [for incest] was poetic and devastating. The hapless couple were adorned with yokes customarily worn by pigs. They were then made to crawl on all fours to drink from the swill trough from the hogs. After this humiliation, they were banished forever from the village, and their lands were confiscated. No other village would take them in for fear of ill luck and disaster. They were doomed to a fearsome existence alone in the jungle. (Hoebel, 1949: 195; Hoebel, 1972: 398; Hoebel/Frost, 1976: 173; Hoebel/Weaver, 199: 371)

Hoebel’s presentation, however, is somewhat problematic. Belo states that according to ancient Balinese records, known as *adat*, punishments for “first degree incest,” include “immediate banishment from the formal limits of the village, a great purification ceremony,” (Belo 1936: 29-30) and only *sometimes* included the punishment described by Hoebel. Belo reported that banishment and purification ceremonies were only for “first degree” incest offences, which she describes as a sexual relationship between a man and “his mother, his

sister, his half-sister, or the mother of his half-sister or half-brother (that is, his mother's co-wife)". Less severe penalties, such as temporary banishment, were levied against those guilty of second degree incest, cases in where a man has sexual relations with his aunt or with his mother or father's first cousin. Hoebel did not make this distinction nor did he note that these incest prohibitions relate, at least in part, to Balinese perceptions of appropriate gender and generational relations, that prohibit a male from marrying a female kinsman of a generation senior to him. Although I would not expect he would deal with this topic at length in an introductory textbook to the same extent Belo did in her work, Hoebel would have been more precise to note that the punishment he was describing was one of several, and not *the only* punishment for incest.

Hoebel again turns to Belo (1936: 30) when discussing the relationship of opposite-sex twins, a scenario that Hoebel legitimately describes as both "special and very peculiar." Keeping in mind that Hoebel's work is influenced by Boasian thought, such an observance would be important in illustrating the differences amongst the cultures he was considering (cultural relativism) and to illustrate how unique this particular belief was to Bali. Because of the belief that opposite-sex twins became too intimate in the womb, "temporary banishment of the parents and the 'erring' twins, followed by a ceremony of purification and atonement, negates the sin," and makes it possible for this intimate contact in the womb to "be completed as a true marriage in later life." (Hoebel 1966: 335; Hoebel 1972: 397; Hoebel and Frost 1976: 172). This account is supported by Belo's article.

Victor Barnouw reported Belo's interpretations of Balinese personality (Belo 1935b), which he described as "cognitive patterns in Balinese religion" (1978: 245). These patterns

include shared distinctions between castes and notions of hierarchy; notions of purity and danger (i.e. mountain as symbol of holiness, height as symbol of purity, head associated with purity; feet and ocean associated with danger and evil spirits); spatial arrangement of family compound and temples (i.e. family shrines toward mountains; kitchens and latrines toward the sea); and the disapproval of children crawling on the ground or otherwise engaging in what the Balinese consider animal-like behaviours.

Another important scholar considered by Barnouw is Margaret Mead and her work in Bali alongside Gregory Bateson. In the 1971 edition of *Introduction to Anthropology: Ethnology*, Barnouw cites Mead and Bateson's film, "Childhood Rivalry in Bali and New Guinea," (1954). The film appears to show the fostering of sibling rivalry in Bali, contrasting it with the de-emphasis of such behaviour among the latmul of the Sepik region of New Guinea. While the latmul children played quietly with a doll presented to them by Mead, a Balinese child showed no interest in the doll and became jealous when its mother pretended to suckle the doll. Similarly, when an latmul child showed sympathy to a younger sibling having its ear pierced, an older sibling of a Balinese child being pierced seemed unconcerned about the younger child's pain.

Interestingly, for his next several editions, Barnouw abandons Bali as depicted by Mead, turning to a discussion of arts and artisans, and to the work of Covarrubias (1937) He would return to Mead again only in his 1979 edition, citing Mead and Macgregor's 1951 argument that Balinese children have less active early childhoods, due to the fact that they are "habitually carried" for the first year of life, due to the disapproval of "animal-like" behaviours such as crawling. (Barnouw 1979: 192).

Beyond citing Belo and Mead, Barnouw turns his attention to Balinese art and artisans. Balinese, like the Kwakiutl and the Zuni, he asserts, represents “a high level of art production and keen interest in the arts, reaching unusually high levels of aesthetic interest” (Barnouw 1971: 295). He also turns to Miguel Covarrubias’ *Island of Bali* for further discussion of the arts. Covarrubias, notes Barnouw, argued that everyone seemed to be an artist in Bali. In fact, Covarrubias, who was an artist and illustrator, viewed a Balinese as creating art only “to serve his community,” and not for money or fame (Barnouw 1975: 324; 1978: 294). Barnouw, however, makes the important point that, since Covarrubias’ time, the island had changed dramatically and the onslaught of tourists have affected change “in the social context and motivation of the Balinese.” Although this is an important observation and one I would agree with, Barnouw does not provide any more recent works to support this claim or to illustrate how the island had changed, which would have given the reader some important perspective into what was happening on the island and with its people at the time of his writings.

Several other pre-1990 texts in the sample also briefly discuss the Balinese culture, turning to such topics as reincarnation and karma (Cohen, 1968: 408), ethos as a recurring theme in Balinese dance and drama and how this theme carries into relationships (Price-Williams, 1968: 326-327), the analysis of dance as an indicator of passivity (Ember and Ember: 1981, 261), and the use of sympathetic magic . (Beals and Hoijer: 1959) These texts primarily cite works by Belo, Bateson/Mead, and Covarrubias.

In the more recent texts considered, those printed between 1994 and 2006, a shift of focus takes places. No longer citing Mead, Belo and Covarrubias to the same extent, if at all, these more recent texts largely refer to the more recent works of Clifford Geertz and his

ethnographic style of writing even to the point of making Geertz, the ethnographer, rather than Balinese culture, the subject of discussion.

In their 2004 text *The Tapestry of Culture: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, 8th Edition, Abraham Rosman and Paula G Rubel differentiate Geertz from the ethnographers before him. "Rather than putting himself in the place of the other or conducting psychological tests, as did earlier anthropologists," they argue, "Geertz preferred to analyze the series of symbolic forms that people in a culture use to represent themselves to themselves and to others" (Rosman/Rubel, 2004: 88). Similarly, Mari Womack explains the importance of Geertz and his new style of ethnography, arguing that it puts the anthropologist "into the picture," and, in doing so it produces a "more accurate image of what life is actually like for the people being studied" (Womack, 1998: 62). This, she maintains, is a far cry from the ethnography of Radcliffe-Brown in their reconstruction of the lives of Andaman Islanders, largely based on memories of what life was like before foreigners arrived (Womack, 1998).

In her 1994 textbook, Serena Nanda writes an "adaptation" of Geertz's "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," speaking in great detail about the multi-layered activity that, while on the surface pits cock against cock, on deeper levels pits man against man. Her adaptation, when compared alongside Geertz's own, captures much of what Geertz himself describes and does not stray far from his original telling.

Nanda notes the "intense identification" Balinese men have with their cocks and the amount of time they devote to caring for the birds. (Nanda, 1994: 398) She also points that the cock fight not only serves as a struggle pitting man against man but also pitting good (man) against evil (the "beast"). The Balinese, Nanda notes, hold revulsion toward any animal-like

behavior: a revulsion that a Balinese man identifies with and faces through his cock. The exchange of money between gamblers is, on a deeper level, a “migration of the Balinese status hierarchy into the body of the cockfight,” and intentionally a simulation of the “social matrix: the villages, kin groups, ‘castes,’ in which its devotees lived.” (*ibid.*: 400) For the Balinese, heaven is like a man who has just won a cockfight, whose status within the village rises with each win, and hell like the man who has just lost.

Robbins (1993) uses the Balinese cockfight to illustrate how the interpretation of something “cultural” can lead to perhaps misplaced assumptions that stem from the observers own cultural upbringing. He then proceeds to illustrate how the Balinese might “analyze” the American football game incorrectly, erroneously assuming that they understood it from an American perspective. In the 2001 edition of the book, he removes the analogy of the football game altogether and instead directly asks “What Can Learning About Other Peoples Tell Americans About Themselves.”

It is not at all surprising that Geertz’s “Deep Play,” a paper long seen influential within anthropology, is presented in introductory textbooks. The paper, considered one of his most influential works, is also, according to Philip Smith, “the single most celebrated attempt in the literature at fixing the meaningful quality of social life, receiving a quantity of attention altogether disproportionate to its length or even thematic centrality in Geertz’s extensive oeuvre.” (Smith, 2008: 170) Nor is it surprising that Clifford Geertz as an anthropologist and his contributions to the further development of anthropology are considered.

What is surprising, based on the vast scholarship on Bali and the influence Geertz had on that scholarship, is that more of his work was not covered. His work on Bali inspired further

research of, and critique into, many of Geertz's ideas and theories, and it is still cited in many twenty first century publications. "Deep Play" is only one of several significant essays Geertz printed on Bali in his groundbreaking and oft cited book *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (1973) His 1980 publication *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali*, discussed many themes that interested Geertz, including political systems, religious practices, and traditional customs. It presented Geertz's main thesis: that Balinese society was that of a so-called "theatre state," centered around the king and courts, and played out through dramatic rituals and performances.

Likewise, as illustrated already, the other authors featured predominantly through pedagogy were also presented in quite limited ways. Covarrubias' 400 page book *Island of Bali* (1937), a book credited as influential by both Mead and Belo among many others, covered many topics at length, including religion and ritual, communal organization, and family relations. Belo's research on twins was not simply a look at legal customs but how those customs were deeply influenced by and entrenched in traditional beliefs. This included a lengthy discussion of religion, including the impact of Hinduism on the culture. Both Belo and her then husband Colin McPhee, were well aware of the far-reaching impact of religion within the society and would discuss this several times within the scope of their research. Mead and Bateson were also well aware of this, and made mention of traditional practices many times. Trance was also of specific interest and was documented extensively, both in written text, and through pictures and film. Overall, the lack of discussion of religion, whether it be based on traditional Balinese practices or the influence Hinduism has had on the island, seems rather perplexing as it is a topic that has been covered extensively throughout the canon.

Beyond the presentations of Geertz's work, the Pico Iyer citation noted in the Miller text, and the J. Stephen Lansing discussion, none of the works reach far beyond the earliest research done on Bali in the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, none of the texts cite any research later than 1989. This is quite surprising as the sample of texts considered for this study include texts printed in the first decade of the 21st century. If these texts are any indication, it may be some time before twenty first century scholarship on Bali is represented in the undergraduate classroom.

While pedagogy should not abandon some of the earlier, and most influential, scholarship on Bali, the inclusion of more recent works would likely add to the diversity of the texts, deepen the understanding of why Bali serves as such an interesting society for anthropological investigation, and provide a more up to date telling of the continuing story of Balinese life.

Chapter 5

Rethinking Identity in Modern Scholarship

Recent publications reveal several trends that are worth noting within current scholarship on Bali. The first, and arguably most notable trend, is the discussion of Balinese identity. This raises questions such as what impact has tourism and globalization had on the Balinese and their culture. Other scholars have been interested in the representation of Balinese women within scholarship. Often, scholars in the last several decades have been highly critical of earlier works and have set out to challenge many theories that were developed in the first and second wave.

Scholars such as Michel Picard have taken a look back at the development of Balinese “identity,” and consider the impacts of tourism, globalization, and even scholarship. They argue that Balinese identity is as much a creation of those who come in contact with the Balinese as it is a creation of the Balinese themselves.

This chapter also pays particular attention to the development of an indigenous Balinese scholarship, particularly when it relates to Balinese identity. This is still a rather limited area of study and one that has not yet seen vigorous analysis or critique. This chapter will present some of these Balinese scholars, their ideas, and will attempt to analyse and critique their contributions.

One powerful collection of essays on the topic of Balinese identity published in 1999 century is *Staying Local in the Global Village*. Edited by Raechelle Rubinstein and Linda H.

Connor, the book showcases essays by Michel Picard, Mark Hobart, and, Balinese scholar, I Gde Pitana, among others. In their introduction, Rubinstein and Connor make several important observations. Throughout the 20th century, they say, the Balinese have ambivalently engaged with global processes that in various ways have been interpreted as opportunities and threats.” Rubinstein and Connor 1999: 1) They argue this included “a scholarly preoccupation with the ‘exotic’ that has produced an inward-looking gaze that has blinded observers to broad critical and comparative perspectives.” However, they also claim that, in more recent times, there has been a shift away from this. Scholars are more frequently, they argue, moving toward an investigation of how the island and its peoples have been transformed throughout the twentieth century, along with consideration of the impacts of globalization. (*ibid.*)

Picard’s contribution to the collection is “The Discourse of *Kebalian*: Transcultural Constructions of Balinese Identity.” With this essay, Picard traces the history of Balinese identity as it has been influenced by social and political change. Picard’s essay considers several of the issues presented already in this thesis. Balinese identity, he claims, has been impacted by Dutch colonialists who, believing that Bali was a “living museum” of pre-Majapahit Java, set out to further stratify the island to make it appear more “Hindu.” Since Dutch occupation, Picard notes, the Balinese intelligentsia have “engaged in formulating their identity in terms of religion, tradition, and culture,” concepts that were foreign to the Balinese and had to be imported and introduced into their society. (*ibid*: 41)

He also noted the impact that the Indonesian government would have on the Balinese as they attempted to legitimize the Balinese Hindu religion, and, in turn, what impact this

would have on their identity. A sense of both religious and ethnic identity was being cultivated, Picard notes, something that the Balinese, who traditionally were engaged in largely localized practices, were not accustomed to.

Tourism, Picard claims, has left a lasting impact of the Balinese notion of “culture.” Money was brought in by “cultural tourism,” such as dances designed specifically for the tourist, and, in turn, money would preserve Balinese “culture.” It is as though through tourism, Picard continues, that the Balinese discover they “have a culture... Thus tourism cannot be conceived of apart from Balinese culture: it is inevitably bound up in an ongoing process of cultural constructionism.” Their Balinese-ness—their *Kebalian*—hence has become a new yet very sensitive issue for the Balinese. As Picard points out, this means the continued recognition of religion (*agama*), tradition (*adat*), and culture (*budaya*)⁸ which for the Balinese is most closely connected with the arts and artistry), all very new notions for the Balinese, will ensure that their *identity* remains intact. Picard goes even further, suggesting that the Balinese-ness of modern times is of a self-conscious variety, “a Balinese vision of themselves generated by their dealings with powerful and significant Others.” (*ibid.* 16-17) This is a phenomenon, Picard notes, that is not isolated to the Balinese, but one that is the “common lot” for many indigenous peoples when faced with the notion of self-identification.

Within this collection of essays, one in particular can be set apart from the others as being significant, due to the fact that it is authored by I Gde Pitana, a Balinese. In his chapter *Status Struggles and the Priesthood in Contemporary Bali*, Pitana looks at the caste related

⁸ The three terms listed are Indonesian terms, largely adopted by the Balinese. The origins of the word *adat* are actually Arabic.

power struggles that exist between the *Brahmana* caste priests, referred to as *pedande*, and their lower caste counterparts, referred to as *mangku*. Traditionally, Pitana notes, certain *jaba* caste (the Balinese equivalent for *sudra* caste, often translated as outsider caste) clans have not used high caste *pedandes* for their ceremonies, even when they would otherwise be required. Instead, they have viewed their own *jaba* caste priests as high caste and, therefore, able to officiate over religious ritual that otherwise low caste *mangku* would not be able to. This is known as the *warga* (caste) movement and it has become more active throughout the island. (Pitana, 1999: 182-183)

The problem stems back to the need of the Balinese people to validate their traditional belief system as official religion during the early years of Indonesian independence. This was not only an issue of legality but also identity. As Pitana explains, the Balinese had to take several steps in order to proclaim their religion official and, as a consequence, they had to recognize that “all human beings are equal before one god and, hence, that everyone should be entitled to attain the highest level of religious authority—that of the twice-born priest.” (*ibid*: 183) On the surface, this seems as though it would be a movement forward for the Balinese people. However, the problem that existed now was that the *Brahmana* caste priests, traditionally born into this high caste lineage, were not, and arguably still are not, acknowledging the *jaba* priests as equals, hence not allowing them to officiate over certain rituals typically required of a *Brahmana* priest. This has caused discord within the system. Pitana described this as “the seemingly rigid hierarchy of the Balinese social structure...[continuing] to undermine true egalitarianism in the religious domain: *jaba* priests are treated as second class priests.” (*ibid*.:183) This situation, Pitana continues, has provided a

lens through which to view “the transformation of status forms in Bali.” Most people when asked, explains Pitana, will say that there is no difference between a *Brahmana* and *jaba* caste priests. Yet, his research findings suggest that, in practice, most people consider the twice-born priesthood to be a two-tier hierarchy, with *Brahmana* priests at the top tier and *jaba* priests down below. In particular, those Balinese belonging to the *triwangsa*, or three higher castes of Bali, do not consider *jaba* priests to be second-born priests, and therefore, view them as unequal to *Brahmana* priests. One’s opinion, thus, of the second-born status of the *jaba* priest is based largely on one’s own status within the caste system. Further, much of the struggle is played out within the temples. (*ibid.*)

Pitana applies Anthony Giddens theory of structuration, or the belief that social phenomenon in any particular community is not simply the result of the structure of the particular community, but also the result of human action and intention. Therefore, people do not automatically follow a system of codes but are, rather, engaged in creating these systems. It further concludes that “social life is episodic” and therefore subject to change. Sociocultural change influences people’s willingness to conform to such systems. Pitana notes that the members of lower caste groups have, in recent years, gained status socially and financially, and not through birth. This has led members of these castes to “try to overcome the structural injustices” they see as present in their society. (*ibid.*: 194) Further influences, such as local, national and global changes associated with equality, social justice and human rights impact how the Balinese view their own positions within such systems.

Pitana is not the only Balinese voice present within scholarship. Another notable contribution is “The Impact of Tourism in Three Tourist Villages in Bali” (2003), written by I Wayan Geriya.⁹ Tourism, notes Geriya, “has had an intense impact on Balinese social life and culture.” All of the changes brought by tourism and development, such as a shift from an agrarian based to an industrial based system; a widening of “social networks” that has allowed for exposure to people and ideas on an international scale; and the introduction of “mass culture and new values” that have influenced the people and the culture. Balinese society and culture, Geriya argues, is being “transformed in a ‘melting pot,’ in which the Great [Hinduism] and Little [Balinese] traditions, the traditional and the modern, and local, national, and global cultures all come together.” (Geriya, 2003: 81.)

Balinese culture, he argues, has a “clear identity based on Hinduism.” This identity, Geriya adds, “Has very deep historical roots, as well as religious, communal, educational, and recreational functions.” (*ibid.*: 81) This is an intriguing observation as we have noted several times within this thesis that, according to scholars who are not Balinese, a cultivation of Balinese-ness, based on traditional belief systems, seemed to be more important to the Balinese than a connection with Hinduism. It has been argued in this thesis that the Balinese integrated Hinduism into their belief system, rather than replacing their belief system with Hinduism. This is something Geriya himself notes. (*ibid.*: 82) Geriya is correct, of course, that the Balinese have had a long association with Hinduism. However, as has been illustrated, Hinduism was not simply “selectively adapted,” as Geriya argues (*ibid.*). It is true that the

⁹ I have listed the authors name as I Wayan Geriya here. It is printed, however, as Wayan I Geriya. I believe this to be an error. This “I” is not the first initial of a name. It is a gender indicator. For example, I Wayan would indicate that this was a male, whereas Ni Wayan would indicate the person to be a female.

Balinese have been able to integrate Hinduism alongside their own beliefs, which was likely accomplished much more effectively in pre-colonial times. But, it was also largely imposed onto the Balinese, first by the Dutch and then the Indonesian government. Geriya takes a historical look back at the development of tourism, starting in the first half of the twentieth century, but does not discuss the stratification of Hinduism through either colonialism or federal pressure. He does go on to say that the culture is supported by “established traditional institutions,” (*ibid.*), but he does leave the impression that Hinduism (not Balinese Hinduism, as it is often described) seems more significant to Balinese identity than the practices described as being traditionally Balinese.

In his critique of tourism on the island, Geriya argues that interaction between tourists and the Balinese is motivated by “different but complementary motives.” The tourists are looking for “aesthetic experiences” and the Balinese are looking for “economic benefits.” He sees two ways in which the Balinese are responding: the first is that they are taking advantage of the economic opportunities promoted through tourism; the second, is that there is an increasing resistance to negative “outside” influences, and a desire to protect and maintain Balinese culture itself, “on which, ultimately, cultural tourism is based.” (Geriya, 2003: 83) He poses three main questions as the focus for his paper: To what extent has tourism had an impact on Balinese culture?; How far has Balinese cultural resistance been successful in dealing with the impact of tourism, and what factors have played an important role in shaping this resiliency?; and what are the main patterns of participation by village communities in the economic opportunities opened up by the growth of tourism? (*ibid*)

Upon completion of his investigation, Geriya came to several conclusions. He determined that the impact of tourism on local culture has been, thus far, still quite “superficial.” The Balinese culture, he maintains, is still strongly protected by those within the community and by their social institutions. In fact, Geriya argues that tourism has led to cultural revitalization. But he does note that the processes of Balinization and globalization have continued. It is unclear what is meant by Balinization in this context, but it can arguably be assumed to mean that the state of Balinese identity is always changing, developing and being exposed to various influences. Opportunities for the Balinese as a result of tourism include an increase in employment, along with “an increase in income, the extension of social relations, the [further] development of creativity, and cultural revitalization.” (*ibid.* 92)

Geriya also notes some challenges that have resulted from tourism, which include the “varied problems arising from increasing density of development, a strong current of commercialization, the rise of value conflict, and the transformation in the ownership of land and other natural resources.” (*ibid.*) He argues that the Balinese culture is in itself strong enough to cope with these challenges, yet also stresses that the resiliency of culture is strongly supported by “responsive human actors, established traditional institutions, strong tourism development policy, and the solid identity and spirit of Balinese culture.” (*ibid.*)

Tourism in the future, he concludes, must continue to be sustainable and culturally significant; must continue to provide a high level of economic benefit and increased level of service, without compromising Balinese culture and environment; should encourage

community engagement; and should “maintain the existence and integrity of Bali...in accordance with the motto: ‘Tourism for Bali, not Bali for Tourism.’”

Luh Ketut Suryani and the Balinese Woman

Balinese psychologist and scholar, Luh Ketut Suryani has made several contributions to the canon. She co-authored the 1992 book *The Balinese People: A Reinvestigation of Character* with Gordon D. Jensen. In 1984, she wrote a paper on the relationship between culture and mental health, “Culture and Mental Disorder: The Case of *Bebaian* in Bali,” which considered how culture, particularly sociocultural changes within the society, impact mental health within the Balinese community.

A more recent contribution by Suryani, a paper entitled *Balinese Women in a Changing Society* (2004) is particularly interesting. In the 1990s and into the 21st century, scholars such as Unni Wikan (1989, 1990), Megan Jennaway (1996, 2002a, 2002b) and Lene Perdersen (2002, 2006) started publishing books and papers that look specifically at Balinese women and, particularly, women’s agency within Balinese society. Books, such as *Managing Turbulent Hearts* (1990), by Unni Wikan, critique the representations of Balinese women within scholarship that had arisen out of the writings of first and second wave writers such as Mead and Bateson, Belo, and Clifford Geertz. These authors were coming to new conclusions about the role of Balinese women.

Wikan cites Belo from 1935, who argued that:

“The women accept without rancor the role of an inferior...The system of stratification works smoothly as a rule, and all those individuals who conform to it seem happy...The

immutability of all the laws of conduct relieves the individual of any responsibility except that of obeying them... And since they are his habits, he does not even have to think about them.” (Belo cited in Wikan, 1990: xv)

Wikan’s account of the lives of Balinese women is different. It was Clifford Geertz’s presentation of the lives of Balinese women, in particular, that Wikan, at one time a student of Geertz, seemed most critical. Research by Geertz (1980) suggested several controversial notions for Wikan. As we have already discussed in the second chapter, Geertz presented the idea of the “theatre state” and argued that within that state, individual identity was trumped by communal identity. Further, Wikan notes, Geertz argued that within Balinese society there were not any great discernible differences between the roles men and women played within the society. (*ibid.*: 67) He considered Bali to be rather unisex and felt that this observation was supported through Balinese customs and symbolism. Wikan strongly disagreed with Geertz, arguing that her research pointed to “extreme gender differentiation both in ritual and symbolic activity and in more mundane life.” (*ibid.*) Through her scholarship, Wikan argued that Balinese women were in fact repressed by Balinese society, its systems, and, in many cases, by Balinese men.

In her 2004 paper, Suryani offered an alternative presentation of Balinese women that neither affirmed Geertz or Wikan, however it arguably appears to be more in line with Geertz’s view of a harmonious Balinese society based on an individual’s larger commitment to the community. Suryani argues:

In Bali, the primary female role is one of fostering balance and harmony within families. The Balinese people view women not from the vantage of career success but rather from the vantage of whether they can produce good quality children and can work as part of a family team. Balinese men and women work together as partners. Indeed, men are not enemies; the genders help and need each other. Values underlying

emancipation for women clash with traditional values, leading to frequent misunderstandings. Emancipation advocates neglect those elements necessary for complementing Balinese values. (Suryani, 2004: 213)

She also notes that in Bali women and men are regarded as equal yet as different.

Suryani points to several influences that, she maintains, have had a detrimental effect upon Balinese society and, more particularly, on Balinese women. Tourism, Suryani argues, has had a “serious destabilizing effect on Balinese culture,” including an unprecedented shift away from a decidedly rural way of life, to urbanization. The traditional rural organization of agricultural activities has deteriorated due to the large number of Balinese working within the tourist industry who can no longer tend to the rice fields. Further, Suryani argues, tourism tends to “accentuate social inequalities,” which widen the gap between the rich, who have access to tourist money, and the poor. (*ibid.*: 220) Tourism, alongside globalization and mass media, has “engendered a plethora of serious problems...[C]onsumption oriented lifestyles, individualism, and competition are at odds with the Balinese values of balance, community, and harmony. The weakening of social ties and liberalization of morals is contaminating the youth.” Social problems like alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, and the spread of AIDS she attributes to these changes.

Suryani makes some very valid points here, but her discussion of two terms, in particular, are clearly at odds with scholars such as Wikan. The fact that Suryani views both individualism and emancipation as negatively impacting Balinese society seems to be in considerable contrast with Wikan, who has been arguing for the acknowledgement of individual identity, specifically for women. Wikan’s research can itself be viewed as supportive of emancipation for women and, further, as a vehicle for emancipation. It is important here to not

only note these differences but also the differences in the ideologies between these two scholars. As already indicated, Wikan's goal has been to, first, challenge theories on Balinese culture, such as those proposed by Geertz, which implied that individual identity, including identity based on gender, was less significant, and in fact muted by, communal roles and identity. Second, she has presented differences, based on gender and individuality, that indicate that Balinese people, in particular Balinese women, do not simply fulfill harmonious roles within, for example, a theatre state. In this way, she has been able to not only present ideas but also advocate for change in the ways women are viewed and valued within Balinese society. Suryani, meanwhile, is presenting her findings based on case studies from her work as a psychologist. She is very influenced by her training and experiences with her clients, but also by her "insider" or emic perspective on Bali, the island she was born and raised on. The objectives of these two scholars in their presentations, then, are markedly different.

Suryani also notes that "outside influences, particularly from "the West and Java" have "generated a lot of confusion for Balinese women." Women's rights activists, she argues, try to apply a value system on Balinese women that is vastly different from their own traditional one. "The problem is that the values underlying these ideas for emancipation clash with Balinese values and lead to confusion and misunderstanding." The role of the Balinese woman is, as Suryani points out, to be a good mother, a good wife, a good woman, and to maintain harmony and balance within her household. Although Suryani does not refer to scholarship here and, in fact, does not cite any scholars, outside of herself in the article, these views can be interpreted as a direct, and opposing, response to the scholarship on Balinese women undertaken by Wikan and her colleagues. I would argue that, indeed, this is the case.

Suryani uses two case studies from her own practice as a psychologist to support her views. Since divorce, as Suryani explains, is legal but frowned upon and results in many confusing family dynamics and problems for the woman and her own biological family, her approach to counseling families has been overwhelmingly one of working toward resolution. The dangers of divorce, Suryani notes, include women losing their children to their husbands, due to the patriarchal slant and traditions of the society, and women having difficulty being reaccepted into their biological family's home.

Her first case study, "Nobody Loves Me," (*ibid.*: 224) concerns a woman who lives within her husband's family compound, as is standard in Bali. This woman is having some disagreements with her mother-in-law around the making of offerings, a very important part of Balinese ritual and custom and one which women play important and active roles. It is the women who generally both make the offerings and place them daily within temples and family compounds. The mother-in-law is frustrated at her husband's lack of support for her position, but is also afraid to express her true feelings about the situation. The mother-in-law herself is depressed because she feels isolated from her own family and does not have a fulfilling relationship with her own husband. To complicate things further, the patient's adult son is having his own problems.

After spending some time speaking with the patient, her husband, and her son, Suryani suggests that the patient take medication to "help her have better control of herself, and also to make the home situation more peaceful... I tried to make her understand," Suryani continues, "the importance of good karma. 'If you want your children to have a good fortune,

and have your future daughter-in-law respect you, it is important to make a good relationship with your mother-in-law...If you respect her, you can stop the bad karma in your family.” (*ibid.*: 225) It is interesting here to note the combination between scientific advancement (i.e. medicine) and tradition (i.e. karma) in Suryani’s treatment of the patient. It is also interesting to note that the patient, the woman, is assumed responsible for correcting the behavior and, as such, changing her family’s destiny. Her husband, on the other hand, is asked to be more attentive, by taking her out and not leaving her at home with the household responsibilities, and by making love to her regularly. (*ibid*) He is, however, not advised on what he can do to assist in changing the dynamic between his wife and mother-in-law.

The second case study, referred to as “It’s Hard to Be a Woman,” (*ibid.* 226) concerns a young woman who becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Her fiancé of one year says he does not want to marry her and does not love her anymore and urges her to get an abortion, saying she is “only a bother to him and she has disturbed his life.” Dewi, the young woman, decides she will keep the child.

Suryani advises Dewi to keep on loving the child. “She should not disgrace the child with confusion: for the sake of the child, she needs to calm herself. She must be close with God...[and] must stay active and happy...and keep her mind and will strong.” (*ibid.* 227) She also advises Dewi to engage in meditation and relaxation practices that will allow for “self-healing.” She then advised the boy, Bagus, to be brave and think about his responsibilities. Suryani noted that the couple already had plans to marry. She felt that Bagus only wanted to change the plans now because something unexpected had happened. “Try to think clearly for a minute,”

she told him, “The baby is already made, your ancestor has already come. Are you willing to sacrifice the baby? Don’t you realize that abortion is the same as murdering someone?” (*ibid.* 227) After further counseling and over time, Bagus finally does agree to marry Dewi. But, two days after the wedding, Suryani notes, Dewi came to the office crying, saying that Bagus, jealous that she was talking to someone in her meditation group, dragged her out of the group, and referred to her as a whore, among other things. Soriano’s did not advise Dewi to leave Bagus, nor did she note the violence that had taken place. Rather, her advice to Dewi was that she should remember that her husband’s family still loved her [due to the fact that they accepted the marriage and Dewi into their family]. “Now is your time to change yourself and grow up; because what happened is the result of both your actions and your husband’s actions. You are the one who is aware—conscious—so through your peaceful heart you can influence your husband to make him aware.” (*ibid.*: 229) There are similarities between Geertz’s Bali of a peaceful theatre state and what Suryani is presenting. Suryani clearly encourages peaceful encounters and sees them as benefitting not only the individuals involved but also the greater harmony of the community. In this way, her theories are arguably closer to Geertz’ than Wikan’s.

For the non-Balinese reader, particularly for the “Western” reader, Suryani’s presentations may seem quite startling. Suryani is, after all, using these cases to support her own argument that notions of independence and emancipation, among other non-Balinese values, are potentially harmful to them. Neither case study seems to have anything to do with “outside” influences seen as detrimental to Balinese women. Although through these case studies, Suryani is attempting to illustrate the fact that the Balinese have their own value

system and ways of dealing with problems that are based largely on traditional beliefs and that should be respected, her argument may potentially backfire on her. In both of her case studies, Suryani illustrates that much of the responsibility for solving the problems, and the origins of the problems themselves, lay with the women. It was also interesting to note the role that guilt seemed to play. Guilt was seemingly used as a tool by Suryani as she advised her clients on what action to take. This may, however, be the conclusion of the “Western” reading of these cases. Suryani may argue she was not using guilt at all, but was rather giving advice based on traditional Balinese beliefs and even religious tenets. These are, in fact, Suryani’s illustrations of acceptable versions of emancipation within Balinese society.

Suryani concludes her article by reminding the reader that the Balinese are faced with the challenge of how to integrate new ideas and influences into their culture without losing their identity as “Hindu Bali.” It is essential in a time of such rapid change, she argues, that Balinese women can adapt while also maintaining their traditional roles and values. On the other hand, she argues, “it is equally essential to come up with understandings of emancipation in ways that are congruent with Balinese values...It means utilizing the strength and resilience typical of Balinese culture to prevail in the face of the current crisis with its surge of social and mental health problems.” This requires, she argues, both “education and innovative preventive and therapeutic methods applied in all levels of society.” (*ibid.*)

Conclusion

The most recent scholarship on Bali, that which started in the late 1980s and has inspired further investigation into the 21st century, has vigorously challenged notions of Balinese identity that were first introduced by first and second wave theorists. The world has dramatically changed in the past several decades, with the development of the worldwide web, exposing Balinese people and culture to the international community while exposing the greater international community to the Balinese. Tourism has had a great impact on the island, offering opportunities for financial gain, while also changing the landscape of the historical agrarian island itself.

Scholars such as Michel Picard have been particularly interested in the changes that have taken place in Bali over the past several decades and in how these changes have impacted Balinese identity. He argues that the effects of tourism have profoundly influenced and even changed Balinese culture. Balinese scholars themselves have also engaged with such issues, presenting their own views on how Bali has changed and arguing that tourism and development have had both negative and positive implications for the Balinese and their culture.

Balinese women, and their roles within Balinese society, have also been extensively covered. Western scholars, such as Unni Wikan and Megan Jennaway, have vigorously critiqued the work of Geertz, Belo, and others who argued that gender identity was muted within Balinese culture. Wikan has noted significant gender based differences, as well as arguing that Balinese women have largely been repressed within Balinese culture. Other scholars such as Luh Ketut Suryani, herself Balinese, have argued that women and men are seen

as both equal and different in Bali, largely disregarding much of the concerns that scholars such as Wikan present.

Clearly, many theories have contributed over the past few decades, all of which present Bali in very different ways. The one common thread in all of these theories, however, is that Bali has certainly not been shielded from change brought on by globalization, development and tourism. The Balinese have had to adapt to such change but, as has been the case throughout the 20th century, they have not abandoned their own practices. Rather, they have learned to integrate change into their culture, alongside their long held traditional customs.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Based on what has been presented within this thesis, it is clear that there are several major themes within scholarship which have been present throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. Arguably, the issue of identity, and how identity has been impacted by tourism, globalization, and other factors as discussed in this thesis, is an important topic and likely will continue to be so over the next decade. Interestingly, this issue of identity has been largely fueled by the non-Balinese agent. Since the 16th century, the Balinese have been subject to discussion of “who they are.” In fact, they have long been *told* who they are. Hence, it can be argued that the notion of Balinese identity, at least from an academic perspective, is simply the result of scholarly construct. The notion of culture itself is also largely a construct, making it hard to understand or identify exactly what *culture* is. The problem however is that if all of these constructs are stripped down, or completely deconstructed, considered nothing more than construct, we are arguably left with no way to come to any conclusions about the subject, as any further attempt to do so would then largely be construed as construct and subject to the same deconstruction. This is one of the difficulties scholars face when they engage in such discourse.

The notion that Bali was a “living museum” of pre-Majapahit Hindu Java, first suggested by early British and Dutch traders and travelers, would be accepted as probable for over 400 years. During colonialism, the Balinese would be reminded again of just *who they were*, this time by colonizers who felt that the Balinese system was not rigid, not “Hindu,” enough. As a

result, their social structure—based loosely on the caste system—was stratified and reorganized. Their belief system would, again, be tested by Indonesian independence when, under pressure from federal regulators, the Balinese were required to validate their own beliefs, and remold them into what would be acceptable under Indonesian law. Balinese intelligentsia largely reinvented Hinduism for the Balinese by consulting Indian Hindu scholars and Brahmins and by revisiting ancient texts. They were, at the same time, attempting to create a history substantial enough that it would be accepted as tradition by Indonesian officials, regardless of the fact that such a rigid history did not exist. The Balinese were now learning about what their Hindu history and tradition *should* have been, according to those outside Balinese culture, leading to a reinvention of Balinese identity, taught largely through unfamiliar sacred texts. These new notions about Balinese Hinduism were also implemented within the school system and taught to children from a young age, the result being that children were given a manipulated version of Balinese history.

What scholars have concluded about Bali has also impacted how the Balinese view themselves. Baliologists have long been attempting to recreate the past of Bali, while analyzing the future. The earliest scholars were creating images, oftentimes very essentializing ones, of a culture that would capture American and European imaginations, and directly influence the development of tourism on the island. In turn, tourism would impact the Balinese, forcing them to adapt to unfamiliar and new influences, and swift change. This would lead to an economic boom on the island as tourists flocked to buy art, watch dance and drama, and to witness exotic rituals and ceremonies. Balinese “culture,” in the forms of market level

handicrafts, and refined and highly developed artwork, drama and dance, was, essentially, for sale.

This is still happening today, as scholars like Michel Picard have noted. In modern times, the Balinese are exposed to technology, such as the internet, which brings the world much closer together in the sense that allows for greater exposure to information available throughout the world. Tourism has continued to affect Bali, both negatively and positively, presenting the Balinese with both new opportunities and obstacles. As the Balinese are further exposed to the development of continued and fast-paced ideas, more discussion around identity, particularly in light of continuing globalization and advancement in technology, will take place.

In the past several years, the Balinese themselves, who have been largely absent within the scholarly discourse throughout most of the 20th century, have begun to present their own analysis of Balinese culture. Scholars like Suryani, Pitana, and Geriya have offered new notions based on an emic viewpoint. Many of these scholars have been able to further affirm the belief that Balinese culture and people have felt the effects of rapid world change, and have had to both adapt to them and integrate them into their own lives, without sacrificing long held customs and beliefs. Other scholars, such as Suryani, have presented ideas that are often contrary to that of other contemporary scholars. The discourse will certainly include more contribution from the Balinese themselves as they continue to both witness and live the changes influencing Balinese culture today, and to engage in further scholarship.

Has scholarship come any closer to identifying what it means to be *Balinese*? This is a difficult question to answer with any certainty as, as we have seen, notions of Balinese culture have been subject to constant critique throughout scholarship, and notions of what “culture” actually is can be varied. What this study has illustrated is that, as times change, ideas that were once accepted and, even, thoroughly respected within scholarship, are often challenged as new ways of approaching and analyzing the subject changes. Of course, academic debate and critique is arguably the heart of scholarship and is what fuels its continued development. Yet, this debate does not always result in theories that are any less subject to critique than the ones that come before them. In other words, it can be argued that scholarship does not always bring us any closer to the “truth,” in this case surrounding the issue of what makes the Balinese so *Balinese*. It has also illustrated that Balinese culture has constantly been viewed and defined through the lens of the “Other,” whether it be the earliest 14th century European traders, the Dutch colonizers, other groups of Indonesians, or through the lens of the anthropologists themselves. This is possibly connected to the fact that a thorough understanding of what Balinese culture was like prior to European contact does not exist. Instead we have relied on the interpretation, and imagination, of what non-Balinese theorists, oftentimes with their own agendas, have presented. The Balinese, in fact, have had little influence over the conclusions made about them and have, in several cases, been forced to accept. Therefore, it can be argued that, although we have a very thorough understanding of how Balinese culture has been viewed and, essentially, constructed throughout history, we seem to be no closer to understanding what truly constitutes Balinese culture itself.

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