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# The Photogenic Cannot Be Tamed: Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's *Trance and Dance in Bali*

Fatimah Tobing Rony

## I.

I watch the bodies in trance in Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's ethnographic film *Trance and Dance in Bali* projected on a screen in a dormitory at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. It is 1982. The film is a vision of extreme otherness: young bare-breasted women with rippling black hair and slim young men in loincloths gyrate as they stab themselves in trance with the jagged swords of the Balinese *kris*. Astonishingly no blood is drawn. Funded by the Committee for Dementia Praecox (or schizophrenia), the film was shot in 1936-39 in the town of Pagoetan, on the island of Bali, in what is now Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> The Balinese are represented as pathological, creatures of an erotic, exotic past, presented by the camera and the voiceover from a geographical and temporal distance. There is an odd tension between the comforting but dry, matter-of-fact nature of Margaret Mead's voiceover and the ritual violence shown in the film.

I am the only Indonesian in a darkened room full of Indonesianists, gamelan heads, and anthropologists (although I am in masquerade: one of my fellow classmates assumes that I am "a quadroon!" (his term). Like the other students I am here to learn

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the Indonesian language and hear an explanation given by a distinguished scholar, who in his crisp short-sleeve shirt is the antithesis of the other historians of my life, my card-playing chain-smoking uncles and aunties back in Jakarta.

The question that I am trying to formulate, then as a 19-year-old American-born Indonesian who is only learning to speak the language, surrounded by older PhD candidates from universities like Chicago or Michigan, is quite simple. Why is it that nobody in the room asks about the possibility that the Balinese men and women in the film are indeed inhabited by spirits or gods? In other words, I seek an explanation for why trance, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty's term, is anthropologized away, "that is, converted into somebody's belief or made into an object of anthropological analysis."<sup>2</sup> Chakrabarty writes: "... these are pasts that resist historicization, just as there may be moments in ethnographic research that resist the doing of ethnography."<sup>3</sup>

These moments are intractable because they challenge the historian's sense of a linear, teleological, measurable sense of time. After all, if a madman's narrative cannot be history, then neither can that of a Balinese dancer whose body is inhabited by a god or spirit. Chakrabarty continues:

Subaltern pasts remind us that a relation of contemporaneity between the nonmodern and the modern, a shared and constant "now," which expresses itself on the historical plane but the character of which is ontological, is what allows historical time to unfold. This ontological "now" precedes the historical gap that the historian's methods both assume and posit between the "there-and-then" and the "here-and-now." Thus what underlies our capacity to historicize is our capacity not to. What gives us a point of entry into the times of gods and spirits—times that are seemingly very different from the empty, secular, and homogenous time of history—is that they are never completely alien; we inhabit them to begin with.<sup>4</sup>

It's this last point which illuminates that impasse that I felt 25 years ago: what will give us entry into the times of people inhabited by spirits is to notice that those times are "never completely alien; we inhabit them to begin with."

The Western notion of a Self that is individual and autonomous is seen as being at odds with the Balinese notion of a Self that may be possessed by Spirits. It was a difference in viewing that the Balinese themselves made note of, for according to anthropologist Margaret Wiener, the Balinese referred to the Dutch as having "white eyes": meaning, with a bluish cast like an old person who has difficulty seeing, but also, meaning blind to the world of the divine.<sup>5</sup> Wiener argues that differing notions of what was visible and what was

invisible are actually “tropes that refer to competing epistemologies and constructions of the real” between the Dutch and the Balinese.<sup>6</sup> Like scholars Chakraborty on history or Akhil Gupta on reincarnation narratives, Wiener writes extensively about the problems of anthropologizing as either a dismissal of “indigenous discourses as false consciousness” or a reinterpretation “to show they are ‘really’ about something we already know.”<sup>7</sup>

My interest here is in *conversion*. Conversion refers to what Vicente Rafael has explained is both “a process of crossing over into the domain—territorial, emotional, religious, or cultural—of someone else and claiming it as one’s own,” as well as translation, “the substitution of a word or proposition for another of equal significance.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, the idea of conversion can be used in other contexts besides that of religious conversion, and thus my investigation will ask two questions: (1) What is the process of conversion of a spiritual act such as trance into what Mead and Bateson saw as the objective recording of reality of the photograph or film? (2) In the historiography of conversion, the Native is often seen as the subjugated Silenced one, and the European, who leaves behind his autobiographies, books, photographs, films, etc. is the Voice. Here I would like to ask: is there any possibility of moving beyond this divide to hear the voices that are not being heard? Like the point that approaches a limit that it will never reach, even as the distance between the point and the limit become infinitesimally more diminished, my essay will approach a limit that it knows it will never reach: to trace the discourse of conversion as both a crossing over and a translation through various different visual media, while simultaneously also engaging in conversation with voices across diverse visual media and historical periods.

## II.

By the mid 1930s, according to historian Tessel Pollman, Bali was already seen as a fashionable tropical paradise, attracting 30,000 tourists a year, often enticed by its reputation as a sexual paradise of nude girls and charming boys.<sup>9</sup> Tourists and expatriates stayed (and continue to stay) for years in Bali, establishing a kind of tropical café society. Dutch art collectors like Walter Spies and Beryl De Zoete, the self-educated anthropologist Jane Belo and her husband musicologist Colin McPhee, the Mexican illustrator Miguel Covarrubias, and the filmmaker Andre Roosevelt all lived a comfortable life in Bali of the 1930s. As Mr. Wijaksuma, a fighter during the Indonesian Revolution explains:

For us Bali is the place where everything is holy—we pray to the gods, as well as to the plants, the animals, the flowers. That's our religion. But for them Bali is a paradise because they have a beautiful house, many servants, beautiful gamelan, a lot of food. And they have the girls with the bare breasts.<sup>10</sup>

Into this milieu came the recently married anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, who after having conducted fieldwork in New Guinea, were thrilled to be able to study a “high culture.” In her autobiography, *Blackberry Winter*, Mead explains the creature comforts and the spectacular picturesque nature of her view of living in Bali:

Only those who have worked in societies where money has no power to persuade people who do not, at the moment, feel like doing something can realize what a paradise Bali was for us. Ceremonies every day—if not in this village, then in another a short distance away. Informants, scribes, secretaries were ready to be trained for the asking. Household help, too, and when we came home at midnight, dinner would be waiting, hot and delicious, when we were ready. And every group—the people walking on the roads, or sitting behind the little roadside stalls in which refreshments were sold, or standing close packed, listening to music—all of them were rewarding for the photographer, their whole stance explicit and revealing to the eye.<sup>11</sup>

The characteristic that Mead refers to as “. . . rewarding for the photographer, their whole stance explicit and revealing to the eye . . .” is one that I will refer to as the *photogenic*. Again and again, anthropologists, writers, artists, and filmmakers, have noted the exquisite *photogenic* nature of Bali, stemming in large part from what they claim are the inhabitants' innate theatricality. It is as if what is seen has become a tableau, a tableau that is already never present to the observer (present that is to say in time). The photogenic involves three axes: a conversion of time (they exist in the past), place (geographically distant from the metropolitan west), and status (they are captured as the object of the photographer's gaze). But of course, if the Balinese are theatrical, there exists the threat that they are always already not real, merely staging a presence for the scientist/tourist/expatriate, and it is this ambivalence which I would like to explore later.

In Mead and Bateson's case, the photogenic involved a gaze which was also medical. Before they left for this paradise of servants, delicious food, and visually photogenic high culture, Mead and Bateson received financing from the Committee for Dementia Praecox (that is schizophrenia), in order to prove their theory that Balinese culture was schizophrenic. In 1934, Mead met up with self-taught anthropologist Jane Belo, an old Barnard College classmate, whose

discussion of Bali sparked the idea within Mead “to plan a project on the cultural aspects of schizophrenia.”<sup>12</sup>

Why pathology as a rationale? In Boasian anthropology, of which Mead was a student, the study of other cultures was often justified as a way of ameliorating what was decadent about the Western body (hence Mead’s earlier hypothesis that Samoan society was more sexually free in order to argue for the need for less sexual repressiveness in American society).<sup>13</sup> Boasian anthropology explained many problems as being of a social not a biological origin, which implied that societies and cultures could be changed.<sup>14</sup> In 1934, Mead’s mentor and lover, anthropologist Ruth Benedict explained that those who went into trance or experienced seizures could be prized as community members who were respected and prized.<sup>15</sup> What could be learned from a culture identified as schizoid could be applied, so Mead’s logic went, to American society which was fearful of this disease. Historian Lois Banner ascribes Bateson and Mead’s description of the Balinese as schizophrenic as stemming from their view of the frequent practice of trance:

Trances could be calm or agitated: Mead was to see young men in trance walking on coals and biting off the heads of chickens. It added up to what seemed to Mead and Bateson a “schizophrenic” pattern, in line with current definitions of that mental condition as involving hearing voices and being removed from personal and social interaction. . . . Ever since the evolutionists of the late nineteenth century had equated “primitive” peoples with the mentally ill, some anthropologists had been interested in concepts of mental abnormality. Jung’s theories about culture were based on his psychiatric patients; the mentally ill were of major interest to Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*.<sup>16</sup>

After conducting research in Bali, Mead and Bateson continued to forward the notion that Balinese culture was schizophrenic.<sup>17</sup> Using psychoanalysis (although they were not trained in that field), Mead and Bateson laid the blame for the schizophrenia of Balinese culture on the mother, who they saw as frigid and cruel. A child’s fear of his mother gets repressed, only to emerge when engaged in theater. Mead and Bateson wrote, “In real life, the European is often at a loss to tell when two Balinese are quarreling, but on the stage, emotions are so accurately delineated that no mistake is possible.”<sup>18</sup> It was a conclusion about mothering that Banner explains bolstered a trend in the United States to criticize women for the neuroses of their sons.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to being “schizoid,” “being fey” was how Mead characterized the Balinese, using as a scaffolding Ruth Benedict’s Culture and Personality School which grouped cultures as psychological

types. In an incredible display of both her deep-seated belief in the empirical nature of film, and in her preconceived racialized notions concerning masculinity and femininity, Mead concluded that the people of Bali were fey after seeing a motion picture on the Balinese in which she remembered, according to Banner, “that their men and women had a similar body type: they were small and wiry; the women had small breasts and the men fatty nipples that resembled breasts.”<sup>20</sup> “Fey” was another way of describing homosexuality, although Mead was to admit later that she was not able to find much in the way of “active/passive homosexuality” in Bali.<sup>21</sup>

It’s significant that only in the late 1980s were the Balinese asked what they thought of Mead and Bateson (by historian Tessel Pollman). Part of the consequences of Mead and Bateson’s view of Balinese culture—of seeing what was photographed as pathologized: fey and schizoid—meant that the Balinese were not seen as being subjects of history or even colonialism, for questions of class, location, poverty, disease, child labor, compulsory labor were elided. Dutch colonialism was not necessarily seen as harmful to Balinese culture in Mead and Bateson’s eyes, and they were blind to the political concept of Balinization, the Dutch attempt to turn the Balinese, as historian Prof. Ide Gde Ing. Bagus put it, into “a living museum.”<sup>22</sup> I Made Kaler, the secretary and informant for Mead and Bateson opined, “The intention was to keep us from changing and to lead Bali back to the dark ages.”<sup>23</sup> In later interviews, I Made Kaler also revealed that he was never totally frank with his employers, because telling the truth was too dangerous. “To Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson I never talked about what was invisible, but very much alive in Bali. Talking was too dangerous, regarding the Dutch. Margaret Mead herself never broached a political discourse.”<sup>24</sup>

At first Mead and Bateson lived among expatriates like Walter Spies and Jane Belo in the south of Bali, but later they decided to find a more primitive Bali, which they claimed to have found in the village of Bajung Gde (an extremely poor, isolated rural village). Because of its high proportion of people with goiter problems (due to extreme poverty and malnourishment), the village was thought to be ideal for the visual study of movement since its inhabitants were slow-moving.<sup>25</sup>

In fact their “slowness” made them more photogenic, according to Mead and Bateson, extolling the quantity and efficiency of filming “slow” villagers. Mead and Bateson wrote:

Having chosen Bajoeng Gede, we also found that everything there went on in a kind of simplified slow motion. An offering that elsewhere would have a hundred items might have only ten in Bajoeng Gede. The entire population suffered from hypothyroidism, and about 15 percent of the people

had a conspicuous goiter. This deficiency of thyroid had the effect of slowing things down so that there was a simplification of action, but without a loss of pattern.<sup>26</sup>

Life in their brand new house in Bajoeng Gede, several times the size of the houses of the other villages, did not make up for the fact many of these poor peasants did not open up to them, and even engaged in blackmail for financial support. Pollman conjectures that this lack of openness between the anthropologists and the villagers would make taking photographs of people acting spontaneously nearly impossible.<sup>27</sup> Banner explains that Mead didn't like Balinese culture, referring to them as "anal feys," charming but cold.<sup>28</sup>

As if to make up for this emotional and intellectual distance from the Balinese, Mead and Bateson became obsessed with filming and photographing the villagers. Mead was upset by criticism that saw her anthropology as journalistic, and Banner argues that this in part fed her appetite to keep "a record of literally everything that happened in the village."<sup>29</sup> And take photographs and films they did, developing both well into the night. Bateson produced 25,000 photographic stills alone.<sup>30</sup> Mead and Bateson worked in a kind of fever, marshalling other expatriates like Jane Belo and Katherine Merson and Colin McPhee, as well as native informants like I Made Kaler, with the idea of creating an archive which could be used for the comparison of different cultures, that involved not only photography but other "new dimensions."<sup>31</sup>

The final crowning of their research, the book, *Balinese Character*, was an attempt to synthesize their visual material:

By the use of photographs, the wholeness of each piece of behavior can be preserved, while the special cross-referencing desired can be obtained by placing the series of photographs on the same page.<sup>32</sup>

In her memoir, Mead explained their methods of inscription:

Gregory also invented new methods of verbal recording that made it possible to follow a whole sequence of both major events and minor incidents, to know just when a new insight occurred, and later to include in the record cross-references and further theoretical ideas. The places where there were still photographs and stretches of film also were indicated. With this kind of record, thirty years later, I can place each moment or write captions that include the identification of a child's foot in the corner of a picture.<sup>33</sup>

What is so fascinating is the idea that one can truly understand a people through the copious use of recording: textual, photographic, and filmic. If it was recorded then it was captured; if it was captured



it can be recalled forever. Mead described her interest in creating a kind of archive of cross referencing, taking “notes made against time”:

Gradually we developed a style of recording in which I kept track of the main events while Gregory took both moving pictures and stills—we had no means of recording sound and had to rely on musical recordings made by others—and our youthful Balinese secretary Made Kaler kept a record in Balinese, which provided us with vocabulary and a cross-check on my observations. We soon realized that notes made against time provided the only means by which the work of three people could be fitted together and which would enable us, later, to match the photographic records of a scene with the notes. For special events, such as trance, we used stopwatches.<sup>34</sup>

This use of the stopwatch is a fascinating example of how American social rationality and efficiency could be yoked on to the idea of trance. Time was also collected here, rigorously archived and noted. Thus for Mead and Bateson, the truth about the Balinese could be graphed, and firmly placed on a xyz axes so that even years later knowledge could be apprehended. The key axes were time and space: if time and space were rationalized, even people in trance can be catalogued, classified, and archived.

However despite their obsession with measuring trance with a stopwatch, the use of cameras and film cameras, the employment of three native secretaries, plus Belo, McPhee, Mershon, that is to say seven people’s records on events, critics have argued that the Balinese in Mead and Bateson’s book don’t come to life, looking dissociated, posed, stiff. Part of the problem is the fact that Mead and Bateson did not speak Balinese well (a language which is incredibly nuanced, hierarchical, often leaning on silence and what is left unsaid as much as the spoken) and relied instead on an exhaustive use of photography and film to record everyday life, as well as dance, ceremonies, and theater. Wiener notes that the scholarly and colonial penchant for voluminous note-taking and empirical detail by colonizers (and as whites, Mead and Bateson were seen as being colonizers) was seen as absurd by the Balinese:

What is striking about this colonial empiricism is that the conclusions officials drew from their often keen observations were based upon preconceived notions and were saturated with cultural assumptions. Often the Dutch do appear blind, for they could not always see what they themselves observed. Such “blindness” is by no means peculiar to colonialism or to Europeans; it is perhaps the most difficult of all things to learn something new. The problem with empiricist theories of knowledge is that they refuse to acknowledge that observations are laden with assumptions. But officials did not make things up, nor is there nothing in what they say. Indeed, because the Dutch were so meticulous, it is possible to read what they wrote against the grain, from a different angle.<sup>35</sup>

Photography and film provided a shield against the dissatisfied, rebellious gaze of the sulky peasants of Bajoeng Gede. In both Mead and Bateson's film and in their ethnography, the Balinese are described in the ethnographic present of the third person, present tense, one which denies the fact that the events that are described occur in the past. There is the textual construction of an ahistorical presence through the use of the ethnographic present, but also distance is also created by the camera itself. The areas of class (the villagers of Bajoeng Gede are very poor peasants), colonialism (which they see as a benign presence that does not disturb but rather preserves culture)<sup>36</sup> and physical illness (goiter issues) are obfuscated in the film and the book, and the Balinese that Mead and Bateson figure are converted into a metonym culture for schizophrenia.

Since schizophrenia was the driving force for their research, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that they should try to study the ways that the Balinese dancer would often fall into trance, a dissociated state. Significantly, footage for *Trance and Dance in Bali* was not filmed in Bajoeng Gede but in Pagoetan, a richer lowlands village which was the home of a spectacularly successful theater troupe that had been "discovered" by Walter Spies. It is Mead and Bateson's edited film *Trance and Dance in Bali*, which drew from two different performances performed at Pagoetan in 1937 and 1939, that lay the groundwork for the cinematic and scientific visualization of Bali as a sexual pathological other.<sup>37</sup> The people of Bajoeng Gede were too rebellious and recalcitrant and poor to be the subject of fascination for tourists, but the southern troupe of Pagoetan, people without goiters, were more tourist-friendly (and richer because of this).

Is it possible to think of the idea of schizophrenia, or the inability to distinguish reality from fantasy, as a projection of the anthropologists' inability to be in the present? The schizoid is seen as being of fantasy, while the modern is seen as the real: what *Trance and Dance in Bali* presents to us is the limits of historiography and cinematic practice, a test of the real. Why were these anthropologists creating this fantasy? Why were the signs of colonialism and expatriate culture that had a significant impact on the trance ritual so assiduously erased from the book and the film?

### III.

In order to find answers to these questions I would like to turn to a discussion of the other cameraperson of *Trance and Dance in Bali*, the amateur anthropologist Jane Belo, the self-trained anthropologist who defied Mead and Bateson's theories that the Balinese were

a schizophrenic society. In *Trance and Dance in Bali*, there are moments that cannot be ethnographicized away by Mead's dry authoritative voiceover which relentlessly typecasts the Balinese as abstractions of a distant primitive past, and these moments are Belo's slow motion footage of dancers arching backward, and then bending forward and stabbing themselves deeply without drawing blood, footage which is rather haunting and unforgettable. I would like to see if Belo provides an alternative to the medical anthropologizing camera gaze of Mead and Bateson.

Belo was Mead's classmate at Barnard, and she spent several years in Bali. Photographs in the Library of Congress' Margaret Mead collection show a young woman who appears to have had friendships with a few Balinese (there's an amazing photo of Belo with her arm around another woman, which is not a posed photo, unlike the many photos of Bateson and Mead which essentially turn the Balinese into objects of study). Although Belo idealized Balinese culture just as much as Mead and Bateson, she opposed their idea that trance was characteristic of a whole people, but was instead a state of mind belonging to a few individuals found across diverse cultures.<sup>38</sup> And to prove this, Belo invited Dutch psychiatrist Dr. P. M. van Wulfften to Bali to dispute what he concluded was Bateson and Mead's ethno-centric psychoanalytical research, and to prove that the Balinese were not schizoid, and that the Balinese who went into trance were normal people in the culture.<sup>39</sup>

Belo explained trance in terms of religion, and her prose has nothing of the dry, clinical tone of Bateson and Mead. Instead of the ethnographic present (third person, present tense) of Mead and Bateson's prose which situates the ethnographer in a time not coeval, to use Johannes Fabian's term, to that of the natives being studied,<sup>40</sup> Belo wrote of her experiences in the past tense, suggesting that she saw the Balinese as existing in a time coterminous with her own:

In Bali trance experience was an experience integrated with the religious life, fully explained in terms of the religious beliefs, and seen as a parallel to the descent of the gods at festival time into the little houses and the little figures which were kept as their "sitting places." The entranced would become just one more receptacle in which the spirit of the god could make his presence known temporarily.<sup>41</sup>

It is also instructive to see that in Belo's book, the people who participated in the ceremonies are actually interviewed, and recounted by name (unlike Mead and Bateson, who speak about the Balinese in generalities). Belo notes the particular idiosyncrasies of several of the Balinese that we see in the film. One of the most intriguing

characters is the villager Rawa, the intermediary between the whites and the Balinese villagers who was obsessed with shaking the hands of tourists and was despised as a toady by his fellow villagers. Rawa was described as “a curious maladjusted, wetly eager person, fawning and hanging on the European as if culture contact would provide the answer to his problems.”<sup>42</sup> Mead and Bateson never mention him in *Balinese Culture* or *Trance and Dance in Bali*, and yet, so disliked was he, that he was stampeded by the other male trancers during the filming of *Trance and Dance in Bali*.<sup>43</sup> This extraordinary moment of violence was filmed, and occurred when Rawa stabbed himself and drew blood, which was seen by the other trancers, who despised him as a kind of Uncle Tom figure, as proof that his trance was fake and that he was defiling their domain. One man, I Neka, even pranced on his wound with his foot.<sup>44</sup> Yet the footage of Rawa and the villager’s extraordinary violent outbreak is edited in *Trance and Dance in Bali* but never explained, anthropologized away by Mead’s voiceover.

Part of the reason for this elision is that the representation of Balinese political violence was taboo. For example, one of the greatest crimes that the Dutch colonialists committed in Indonesia was in the gunning down of the entire court of Badung in Bali in 1906, a fact which was covered up by the Dutch press. However, what becomes standardized in classes of anthropology and Southeast Asia which showed Bateson and Mead’s film *Trance and Dance in Bali* is an image of ritual violence, the trance dance in Bateson and Mead’s. The violence in trance is controlled: literally so as it is commissioned, and the footage can be pored over, rewound and edited to be brought back to the United States.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast to Mead and Bateson, Belo also noted the intrusive presence of tourism. The Pagoetan troupe was so well-loved by tourists, they sometimes performed three or more trance performances in a single week.<sup>46</sup> In a letter to Mead, Belo wrote, “Stop by when you can—we’ll talk about ordering the show. I’m not so very keen for Pagoetan as that place plays altogether too often (. . . the rumor is they play sometimes several times a week.) There’s something horrible about it.”<sup>47</sup>

Edited out of Mead and Bateson’s film are the other Western tourists, as well as the two filmmakers (Bateson and Belo), and the notetakers (Mead, I Made Kaler, and Katherine Mershon). Belo who later made films with Zora Neale Hurston about African American church goers who went into trance, and who later herself suffered from schizophrenia, explains that the *kris* (jagged sword) dance involving the dragon Barong and the witch Rangda was highly successful, with often twenty tourists in the audience. It was advanta-

geous to record the Pagoetan troupe precisely because they were always performing for tourists, “so that we as observers were not forced to wait until a calendrical event came round to see the subjects once more in action.”<sup>48</sup> At the end of the performance as the trancers gyrated (*ngoerek*), the tourists who at first believed it was a hoax

came away breathless and startled, convinced that something extraordinary and unexplainable had taken place before their eyes. In not a few cases, the observers remarked the peculiar sexual undertone of the trance behavior, to them suggestive of sexual activity without being in any obvious or surface way connected with a sexual idea or purpose.<sup>49</sup>

Thus *Trance and Dance in Bali* is not a film concerning the impoverished and malnourished villagers of Bajoeng Gde, but concerning a commissioned theater group from the south of Bali who danced for tourists. The sexualized and racialized photogenic nature of the Pagoetan troupe was paramount, including the choice of young men, and the decision to cast women, which was “unprecedented variation” according to Belo.<sup>50</sup> (It was usually danced by older men, and never women.) Belo comments, “Perhaps it had been suggested to the group by their white patrons that the younger men were more comely in the role, where their bodies dressed only in a strip of loin-cloth showed up to good advantage.”<sup>51</sup> Mead later explained that the trance they filmed was changed in two ways: by holding it in the day (which would allow them to film in daylight) and by allowing the casting of young beautiful women so that they could record: “. . . how women who had never before been in trance flawlessly replicated the customary behavior they had watched all their lives.”<sup>52</sup>

As liberalizing as Belo’s discourse is, like Mead and Bateson, Belo had an explanation for trance which anthropologized it as a kind of “false consciousness”: Belo argued that trance responded to a fascination with the feeling of lowness:

Behavior that would be a degradation—animal-like behavior which the Balinese were careful to avoid in their current manners, and which was even institutionalized as a punishment for incest—becomes in the trance state pleasurable and delightful.<sup>53</sup>

Another aspect which reveals Belo’s deep affinity with Mead and Bateson is her determination to use film to judge who is truthfully in trance, as opposed to those who are performing trance. It was difficult to know when the dancers actually fell into trance, even though filmed.

In a review of Belo’s *Trance in Bali*, dated 1960, the writer J. L. Swellengrebel chastises Belo for not always making it clear which were

what he calls “real” and which were “command performances.”<sup>54</sup> What is acted out, and what is real? The problem, as Mead herself noted, was that the Balinese were in real life genuinely good actors:

When in the temple people went in trance as part of the ceremonial, it was not always easy to decide whether they were acting or genuinely in trance. There was no very fine line drawn between the two states. The Balinese showed great talent for dramatization, and this was amply displayed in the trance practices. In Bali, not only would the entranced behave as if he were acting, but the actor would behave almost as if here were in trance.<sup>55</sup>

Belo notes,

if the preliminary and the secondary kris dances together must be taken as a sequence leading up to the wild outbreak in self-stabbing, then is the point where the men fall on the ground apparently unconscious but one more stylized figure of the dance, and, in its way, a group fake, a simulation of trance in which the entire number takes part?<sup>56</sup>

In underlining this anxiety about the real and the false, Belo uses an example of a boy in the middle of trance who looks up into the camera during another film made by Plessen. Looking into the camera was a sign of consciousness and hence of performed trance.

Though we admit that some are faking when they appear to fall unconscious we would like to know if they are genuinely entranced, for if that is the case, how can they rise in unison and proceed with the dance?<sup>57</sup>

In addition, Belo comments that the older dancer Ni Ngales was not conscious of the brutal attack on Rawa which occurred during her coming-out period, and so was not “performing” trance:

I also came up to her at this very time and took a close-up of her with a cine camera, at three feet. The film shows the man supporting her turning his head in surprise, his attention attracted by the sound of the camera’s mechanism. But on Ni Ngales’s face is no sign of response.<sup>58</sup>

The rule is not to include the look. Indeed, the look back at the camera proves inauthenticity. When the Balinese in trance look at the camera, it can’t be read as an altered state which is passive. What is so telling is this desire to dichotomize the fake from the real: they cannot exist together. And yet the ways that Dutch colonialism, tourism, and anthropology changed the trance performances were not seen as problematic to this ideology of authenticity.

Although Belo acknowledges her own subjectivity unlike Mead, both Mead and Belo use the apparatus of the camera to see, to visu-

alize the photogenic, to rout out the real from the actors. Film tries to contain the subjects' subjectivity. But is it not possible that one can go in and out of trance without defiling the trance? Deities and spirits can refer to one's life in the present, and not some primitive past, another notion not entertained by these anthropologists. One's religious background is adaptable, dynamic, one can go in and out of trance without being inauthentic. There are many levels of conversion going on in the film *Trance and Dance*: the Balinese are being converted by the anthropologists into schizophrenics, the bodies of those in trance are being converted into film so that the real can be distinguished from the fake, but the amazing thing, that the people performing might actually be experiencing a higher spiritual state is avoided, translated by the scientific inscribing of the camera, the secretary, and the anthropologist, and later edited into a racialized, sexualized spectacle that is commonly known as a classic ethnographic film.

#### IV.

The problem of the silenced Native Woman is a gendered story of conversion: how can one track a Balinese woman's subjectivity across seemingly incompatible documents both visual and textual as a rebellious speaking subject and pictured sexual object? Mead only remembers the women in the film as being young and beautiful, which is not true, several are older. Belo notes the names of the women, and puts them in two categories: the old and the young. Of the older ones, Belo, and the film, focus on two: Mangkoe Tegeh, a priestess of the Tegeh temple, and Ni Ngales who had the most extreme coming out period, one in which her spasms were accompanied with visual expressions of "painful ecstasy, very sexual." Ngales is described as the kind of trancer who performed at night:

aged or unattractive women often went into an abandoned trance, surprising in its violence and in the completeness with which they gave themselves up to it . . . These humble, mousy women, who did not sparkle as their sisters in youth or in bright raiment, became all at once aflame with desire and gave themselves up in forgetfulness to conduct which was the more exhibitionistic, because they were denied the minor, everyday exhibitionisms which are every women's need. This at least is the interpretation which I, as a woman, put upon their behavior. It is significant that time after time, at temple festivals, when we had been watching the preliminary ritual for three or four hours, suddenly out of nowhere would appear the mousy women, hurling themselves into the center of things at the very height of the pitch of trance.<sup>59</sup>

These older women, some of whom were temple priestesses, were still sexualized: as failed sexual beings.

As I stated at the beginning of this essay, one can only attempt to approach the limits of the points of conversion in order to begin a conversation with the women and men in the film *Trance and Dance in Bali*. So allow me to delve into the ethnographic writing about the performances in *Trance and Dance in Bali* which provides some point of contrast: the transcribed conversation that the women dancers had before they went on to being filmed in trance.

Surprisingly, considering Mead's dry voiceover which turns the women trancers into grim self-stabbers, it is a dialogue full of coquetish talk and vanity, even though this was no ordinary dramatic performance but a trance that they had never performed.

The older woman priestess, Mangkoe Tegeh, for example, is interested only in how she looks and asks for powder to cover her dark skin.<sup>60</sup> The two young girls Moenet and Soekoen,<sup>61</sup> according to Belo, are concerned with what gestures they should use. Soekoen is described as having "the reputation of a 'naughty' girl, and often varied the fixed pattern of her dance to approach and dance flirtatiously before the foreign guests—showing unheard of independence of a child dancer." Both girls are aware of their sexuality and beauty, but it is Soekoen who at one point comments on their status as objects of the recording for anthropology. She teases Mead and Bateson's secretary, I Made Kaler, who was sent to record their dialogue by looking at his notebook and asking, ". . . are we all to be written down there?"<sup>62</sup>

Later, "naughty" Soekoen uses word play to comment on status, caste, and class in her word play joke on the action of drinking *arak* (rice wine). Soekoen jokes:

It makes my head swim to guzzle arak. [She uses a very vulgar word for to drink.] This 'Sak Adé, she imbibes arak, I delicately partake of it. [A play on words here, she uses first the vulgar word for the drinking of Desak Adé, who is of higher caste, and then, in fun the word applied for the gods' refreshment, for herself].<sup>63</sup>

Is Soekoen naughty, as Belo characterizes her? Or perceptively in the present, her comment seeming to pierce through the lack of transparency of the anthropologist's endeavor as well as to unveil the tenuousness of age, class, caste, and gender.

Belo concludes, "On the whole it is clear that both the older women and the girls anticipated no very personal emotion to accompany their trance act; that whatever nervousness they felt was akin to stage fright and not the result of being keyed up to an intense emotional experience."<sup>64</sup> The girls and the women care more about how



they look and will appear than how they will perform spiritually: they are aware of being photogenic. Not all meanings can be controlled by the ethnographic filmmakers.

By considering the words of these women who are being commissioned to dance before tourists and the scientists' cameras, we can move beyond always seeing them at a sharp distance of time, space, and status. In this way we can tentatively make a connection with Rawa the toady, Mangkoe Tegeh the priestess, Soekoen the flirt, and all the many others, whose names we can find in Belo's accounts. The past does not always stay in the past. The women in the film convert themselves into spectacle, transform themselves for the gaze of an Other: they become their own translation.

## V.

Three months after the October 13, 2002 bombing of a popular Western tourist discotheque in Kuta, Bali, which killed 202 people including scores of Australian and European tourists, a shocking act which also exploded the historical representation of Bali as a tropical apolitical paradise, two fashion magazines—*Vogue* (January 2003) and *Allure* (February 2003)—served up Bali as the antidote and ideal escape for the stressed-out business woman. As the bombing revealed political unrest in what is now the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, these fashion articles extolled being massaged with lulur paste and bathed with rose petals by lithe feminine Balinese women. Even in the face of a violent, political explosion, the image of Bali bolstered by Mead and Bateson's film continues.

Balinese anthropologist Degung Santikarma lays the blame on this stereotype of Bali on the Dutch colonial regime as well as Mead and Bateson who went along with that image: "This is accompanied by the anthropological construction of Mead and Bateson who saw the Balinese themselves as a people who were 'characteristically refined and elegant,' 'emotion without climax,' and who 'prioritize community harmony'."<sup>65</sup> Both science and popular culture conceived of Bali as a topos set in a nostalgic, faraway past, a fairy-tale island where everyone is an artist (or at least every expatriate is), a representation which continues strongly into the present time. It was an image which also served well under the 32 years of New Order dictatorship in which the massacre of 100,000 Balinese during the years '65-'66 were covered up, in order not to scare off tourists. Santikarma notes that hotels were built on land soaked with the blood

of Balinese who had engaged in ritual suicide (*puputan*) against the Dutch. Violence, Santikarma explains, was also part of the image served up about Bali: stories about the evil of rajas, the burning of widows, the stabbing of knives into oneself during trance, as well as the magic of warring shamans, a violence which was acceptable as long as it was sterilized from the realm of contemporary politics.<sup>66</sup>

Even today, the Balinese are concerned with how they appear to the world as Santikarma points out, and are careful to delineate the source of the bombings to outside foreign elements. Whether it's the villagers' stampeding of the toady Rawa, or the political violence of colonialism, or the changes that tourism and expatriate culture wrought on Balinese religion, political and colonial violence is off limits, but violence is part of the image of Bali as long as it is temporalized as ritual and of an earlier primitive era. Mead and Bateson's imaging of the Balinese as schizophrenic is itself schizophrenic: (1) the Balinese are photogenic, but it is precisely because of their "photogenic" nature that the outside viewer can often confuse what is real with what is presented to the eye (what is performed for the eye), hence the need for film as the scientific medium that can rout out the frauds; and (2) violence is a part of the photogenic nature of the Balinese, as long as it is apolitical, non-historical, and placed in some distant temporal realm of otherness, which is the way that trance was pictured in their books and film.

The photogenic can never therefore be fully translated: she is self conscious about being looked at and composes herself. The photogenic *performs*. *Trance and Dance in Bali* is representative of a kind of anthropological imperialist blindness, ironic considering that these scientists believed and promoted the idea of their own superior vision.

The mystery of the trance is never really penetrated. Filmed in slow motion and in fast motion, the naughty voices of the girls and the vain chuckles of the old women, transcribed by the secretary, are never heard in the voiceover or soundtrack: the women become undifferentiated exotic trancers. And the spiritual depths of the older women are not considered. Instead the images are used to invite generations of budding anthropologists, travelers, and ethnomusicologists to consider a place like Bali, where time has stood still, untouched by colonialism, tourism, or now, radical fundamentalist Islam. What treasures would we unearth if we were able to consider how trance might show us the limits of historicizing, the limits of anthropologizing? The dangers of ignoring the young girl Soekoen's gaze by containing her subjectivity—through the archive, through the imaging practice of ethnographic film, through the stories that continue to be told about Bali as an ahistorical fairy tale

place—is that we alienate and isolate ourselves, until we are forced to understand by the horrific destruction of a skyscraper, or a hotel, or a city this one thing: the photogenic can not be tamed.

### Notes

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*Trance and Dance in Bali* was not edited until 1950, and it appears that Mead purposefully played up the medical/pathological appeal of the film. In a letter from Mead to Bateson of September 29, 1950, Mead states that she titled the film “Trance and Dance in Bali” because it “would attract both literary and psychological audiences.” In a letter dated October 27, 1961 to Mr. Daniel Lesser, administrative assistant for the New York University Film Library, Mead asked why her films were not included in their catalogue of Psychology and Mental Health Films. “As you know, they were made under a grant from the Committee for the Study of Dementia Praecox and have been a regular feature of international mental health programs. I think that a heading of comparative films on mental health would be appropriate” (Library of Congress Manuscript Division M20 Folder, Margaret Mead Archives).

The films that Mead produced from Bateson and Mead’s Bali footage of 1936-39 and from their New Guinea footage were quite lucrative. Many of the renters and buyers of the films were not universities, but hospitals, medical associations, institutes for psychotherapy, museums, high schools, clinics, mental health organizations, schools of nursing, libraries, and churches. See Library of Congress Manuscript Division M20 Folder, Margaret Mead Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-13.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret J Wiener, *Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic, and Colonial Conquest in Bali* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 76.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Akhil Gupta writes about competing notions of time in “The Reincarnation of Souls and the Rebirth of Commodities: Representations of Time in ‘East’ and ‘West’,” in *Remapping Memory: The Politics of Time Space*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 161-84.

<sup>8</sup> Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), xvii.

<sup>9</sup> Tessel Pollman, "Margaret Mead's Balinese," *Indonesia* 49 (April 1990): 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), 230.

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Mead, "Preface," in Janet Belo, *Trance in Bali* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), v.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1928).

<sup>14</sup> Pollman, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ruth Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal," in *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict*, ed. Margaret Mead (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959, orig. 1934).

<sup>16</sup> Lois W. Banner, *Intertwined Lives: Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Their Circle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 367-68.

In fact, Banner points out, Bateson had been interested in schizophrenic patients as early as 1932, and had written Mead in 1934 about his interest in studying "incipient schizophrenics . . ." (Banner, 368).

<sup>17</sup> Often blamed for the disease was the mother of schizophrenic children, seen as unloving and hostile. Mead and Bateson themselves used this argument and described Balinese mothers as being harsh and destructive to their children, hence the schizoid nature of the culture. Edward Dolnick, *Madness on the Couch: Blaming the Victim in the Heyday of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 109.

<sup>18</sup> Mead and Bateson explained the importance of studying the Balinese "in which the ordinary adjustment of one individual approximates in form the sort of maladjustment which Americans refer to as schizoid" in order to understand and ameliorate what they referred to as the growing "toll of dementia praecox" in the U.S. (Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *Balinese Character* [New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1942], xvi). Pollman explains that the message for Americans that Bateson and Mead developed from their two years in Bali concerning how to prevent schizophrenia was that Americans perform more in amateur theaters (Pollman, 31-32).

<sup>19</sup> Banner, 372.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>22</sup> Pollman, 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

As I Made Tranta, the interpreter for Belo, ethnomusicologist Colin McPhee and artist Miguel Covarrubias, explained, "To a Balinese every foreigner was equal to a Dutchman." The expatriates who were not Dutch could clearly enjoy the power of being aligned with the Dutch (Pollman, 21).

Ibu Gedong Bagus Oka also commented on the blindness of the anthropologist and the rest of the expatriat community to colonial oppression:

Many of them visited my father when I was young. Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Walter Spiess, Katharine Mershon, Jane Belo, Colin McPhee, they all didn't come to Bali to render us a service. They came only in their own interest, and that means they never integrated, never participated in our society. We as young girls imitated them: oooh, Bali is so beautiful, Bali is such a paradise. We said that they had an illness: the Bali-itis. Look they paid their interpreters and guides and informants, so these people confirmed everything their employers said. All these Europeans were frustrated Westerners who wanted to believe Bali was a paradise. It was their flight from the West which gave them this so-called insight (Pollman, 21).

<sup>25</sup> *Balinese Character*, xiii.

<sup>26</sup> *Blackberry Winter*, 233.

<sup>27</sup> Pollman, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Banner, 371-72.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>30</sup> *Blackberry Winter*, 234-35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>32</sup> Bateson and Mead, in *Balinese Character*, xii. Mead wrote in her autobiography, "When we returned to the United States, we decided to prepare our publication, even though we were already becoming involved in wartime work, that would demonstrate the new techniques of photography and recording notes that we had developed. *Balinese Character*, our only joint book on Bali, involved looking sequentially at a large proportion of the 25,000 frames and selecting from these the key pictures, which Gregory enlarged and from which we chose some 759 for publication. In this book we developed a method of presenting from different scenes—a man asleep, a mother carrying a sleeping child, and thieves falling asleep during their trial—that were thematically related, without violating the context and the integrity of any one event. It was a challenge that no one took up" (*Blackberry Winter*, 231).

<sup>33</sup> *Blackberry Winter*, 235.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>35</sup> Wiener, 95.

<sup>36</sup> Bateson and Mead, *Balinese Character*, 263.

<sup>37</sup> Belo explained that they had records of trances of Pagoetan from November 1936 to January 1938 (Belo, 125).

In a letter by Mead, dated Aug 13, 1936, she describes her frustration at the Balinese refusal to take psychological tests and calls them "schizy":

This village is full of the stupidest, most resistive people in Bali, and I seriously doubt if I can get any tests done here. They are frightened nearly out of their wits. (Letter to Tao dated Aug 13, 1936 from Mead, Bajoeng Gede, Kintamani, S. Bali, from the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box N23, Margaret Mead archives).

Of course, this kind of Kurzian rhetoric, referring the Balinese as "schizy" or "stupid" cannot be used in the actual writing of ethnography, but becomes sublimated.

<sup>38</sup> Pollman, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Belo, 5.

<sup>40</sup> See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>41</sup> Belo, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Mead notes, Kris Dance in Pagoetan, dated Dec. 16, 1937, p.2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead Archives.

<sup>43</sup> Belo, 125.

<sup>44</sup> Mead notes, Kris Dance in Pagoetan, dated Dec. 16, 1937, p.11, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead Archives.

<sup>45</sup> Margaret Mead's notes of January 15-20, 1938 discuss some hypotheses for trance, coming up with several theories including "obsession based on fear of the sexuality of the parent," and "re-inforcement of the obsessional pattern at various periods" including marriage with the "fear that the wife will be the witch-mother," but also she ponders the trance which Belo brings up that involves playing the role of god as a possible other kind of obsession. Her points are

I suggest the point here is not conflict between two possible responses (or more) to the sexuality of the parent but is a question of identification with the parent. AND is the identification with the parent or with the child, or with both—which is right on the Balinese point in which Gods are both parents and children.

AND consider the agonized expression of some trancers which parallels the expression on a woman's face in child birth and pain.

Mead also continues with notes from a discussion of January 15 with Bateson in which they identify two types of trance,

Suggestion that the conflict is between yielding to the mother and fear and hate of her as a castration symbol. Passive trance, yielding, active trance, triumph of the fear and hate position. (Margaret Mead notes dated Jan. 20, 1938, Kintamani, "Research Hypotheses about trance as presented to JB. Jan 18, 1938," N26 Folder, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead Archives).

<sup>46</sup> Belo writes,

In fact, the group became so popular that several different households of foreign inhabitants fell into the habit of taking their guests to Pagoetan as the best place to see a kris dance. Unfortunately these different households were not always in touch with one another's plans, and it would sometimes happen that three or more trance performances would be ordered in a single week. Doubtless it was not particularly good for the health of the participants in the trance performance to be asked to put on their show so frequently. But they always did put one on, and a most striking show it was (Belo, 125).

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Belo to Mead, Sajan, Bali, Nov. 29, from the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, N26 folder, Margaret Mead Archives.

In another letter from Bateson to Belo, dated 26 Nov 1937, Bangli, Bateson explains how to shoot with the exposure meter, and asks how much Pagoetan would cost. Mead reports that they paid fl.15 (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead archives, Mead notes, Kris Dance in Pagoetan, dated Dec. 16, 1937,

N26). She notes that Bateson's film ran out as they were filming the trance, so that it was actually Belo who filmed most of the actual kris trance, and Bateson did most of the coming out of trance action.

<sup>48</sup> Belo, 125.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 154-55.

Jane Belo herself describes Ni Ngales in trance in her notes, "I go back to watch Ni Ngales awhile—she cries, then is quiet, cries again. At one point she arches her body upwards from her sitting position on the ground, on her face an expression of painful ecstasy, very sexual. She is so terribly ugly, she may well be unsatisfied. She took this chance to have her orgy (was not 'supposed to' go in trance)." (Notes by Jane Belo, written up Dec. 16, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead archive, N26 Folder).

<sup>50</sup> Belo., 129.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>52</sup> *Blackberry Winter*, 231. Here Mead alludes to Rawa, the intermediary, as having made this decision, although she does not directly name him.

<sup>53</sup> Belo, 223.

<sup>54</sup> Review of *Trance in Bali*, *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* Part 116, 3rd number (1960) By J. L. Swellengrebel, P. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Belo, 11.

Belo continues:

When people went in trance, they would behave like children. They would cry, call out to father and mother, express urgent and unpredictable desires, and would not be quieted until these desires were satisfied. Being like gods, they would behave like children. In some way the gods themselves were children.

This last sentence is so curious, "In some way the gods themselves were children." Belo's way of writing, suggests the subjectivity of the gods, and yet her overall discourse remains behind that of reality versus the fake (Belo, 12).

<sup>56</sup> Belo, 153.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>61</sup> In her notes Mead describes Soekoen as nakal (naughty). Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Margaret Mead archives, Kris Dance in Pagoetan, dated Dec. 16, 1937.

<sup>62</sup> Belo, 159.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>65</sup> "Ini diikuti oleh konstruksi antropologi Mead dan Bateson yang melihat orang Bali sendiri sebagai manusia yang "berkarakter halus dan anggun," "emosi tanpa klimaks," dan

"mengutamakan kerukunan." Degung Santikarma, ( 29 September 2002). Pecalangan di Bali: "Siaga Budaya" atau Membudayakan Siaga"? *Kompas*. Jakarta, Indonesia.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

The answer to this matter is certainly not simply that the trauma in Bali will ruin the ideals of Bali as the "peaceful island" with a negative pressure to the continuation of tourist capital. Tourists really like to consume violence, as long as violence is sterilized from the germ of contemporary politics. Stories about the violence of the Balinese rajas, the burning of widows, trance rituals where people stab themselves with kris, and magic wars between shaman, become the standard stuff of the tourist outlook in guidebooks. Balinese tourist milestones are built on land where the blood of the Balinese engaged in ritual suicide against the Dutch at the Balinese Hotel. But violence cannot be offered as fresh raw blood only. Violence has to be part of the discourse, in fact this material has to be wrapped in impermeable symbols to fly above currents of assumption about Bali.

*Jawaban terhadap persoalan ini tentu tidak sesederhana bahwa pengakuan di Bali pernah terjadi kekerasan akan merusak citra Bali sebagai "pulau damai" dengan dampak negatif terhadap kelangsungan modal pariwisata. Tamu-tamu asing sebenarnya suka mengonsumsi kekerasan, asal kekerasan bisa disteril dari kuman politik kontemporer. Cerita-cerita tentang keperkasaan raja-raja, pembakaran janda, upacara kesurupan di mana orang menusuk diri dengan keris, dan perang magis antara para dukun, menjadi bahan pokok untuk pemandu wisata dan guidebook. Tonggak pariwisata di Bali sendiri dibangun di atas tanah tumpah darah perang puputan yang disebut Bali Hotel. Tetapi, kekerasan tidak bisa disajikan sebagai darah mentah saja. Kekerasan harus diwacanakan, kenyataan materialnya harus dibungkus dalam simbol-simbol yang kedap air untuk berlayar di atas arus asumsi tentang Bali.*

And after the 2002 bombing in Bali, the governor of Bali stated that although it was a terrible tragedy for Bali, Bali had not changed,

Bali doesn't change. The beaches are still there. Our culture is still there. The friendliness of the Balinese people isn't gone. What is gone is the image. Recovery of the image is the first step to bringing back tourists to Bali.

*Bali tidak berubah. Pantai masih ada. Kebudayaan tetap ada. Keramahan orang Bali tidak hilang. Yang hilang adalah image. Karena pariwisata sangat bergantung pada image. Image recovery adalah langkah pertama untuk mengembalikan pariwisata ke Bali.*