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Gambuh: A Dance-Drama of the Balinese Courts

Continuity and Change in the spiritual and Political Power of Balinese Performing Arts

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Introduction

With a few notable exceptions, Balinese performing arts¹ are discussed independent of historical and political developments. Because the ties between religion, spiritual belief, and the arts are so strong, it seems almost acceptable to discuss the performing arts solely as they are related to this realm. While the spiritual power of the performing arts is clearly its most profound inspiration and is recognized by most Balinese artists as its most important function, the arts have not developed independently of other aspects of Balinese life: Balinese performers have been responding to socio-cultural changes for centuries. It is often sufficient to state that a certain style or form developed during a particular period. What is frequently left un-addressed is the context in which these developments occurred.

Discussions with Balinese artists in the 1990's reveals that the larger Balinese social context has an extremely strong influence on the final "product" as well as the process of artistic creation. I would argue that the strong relationship between artists and the communities in which they work and perform has meant that artists have always been responsive to societal changes. Therefore, if we are to consider the current state of the arts in Bali it would be short-sighted to exclude a serious discussion of the Balinese historical context: a context in which dramatic changes in Bali's political-economy in the last century have had an unmistakable influence on the performing arts.

For example, Bali's cultural wealth, in the context of the capitalist world economic system, has become an important source of recognition and income for the island. Often the "traditional" arts are sold as part of a package deal to visitors: Thursday, the art market; Friday, the beach; Saturday, "Trance dance" performance. In the 1990's, forms such as *kebyar* and *sendratari* flourish.² They are performed nightly throughout the island at ceremonies and tourist performances. Tourists get a glimpse of "Balinese culture" and the Balinese economy booms. At the same time, however, the context in which Balinese cultural, and specifically the performing arts, develop has been altered.

In addition to the influence of the tourist market, one must not overlook the pivotal role political powers have for centuries played on developments in the arts. For example, current discourse on Balinese performing arts places much emphasis on the creation of the nation of Indonesia.³ Indonesia's "guided" democracy did away with the many kingdoms of the archipelago, including those of Bali. These kingdoms had been the primary participants in the development of the "court" arts by providing exceptional artists with specialized training, opportunities to perform, as well as financial support. Because of the close association with the courts, these arts developed according to the tastes and needs of the kings and the royal families. When the kingdoms were dis-empowered, the court arts were no longer under the exclusive protection and sponsorship of the royalty. This was a critical, recent, historical development for the performing

arts.

The symbiotic relationship between court and performing arts was severely disrupted by the transition into the world of capitalist nation-states exemplified by Indonesian nationalism and the advent of Western influence through media entertainment and tourism. In the wake of this disruption, Balinese performing arts have been both "preserved" in a classical style and created anew using new literary and choreographic elements resulting in a rich array of styles and repertoire. Balinese performing arts have undergone tremendous changes in form. Yet, within these very changes can be seen a philosophical continuity in which spiritual and religious functions have continued to be central to the very existence of the Balinese performing arts and which, in turn, has allowed for the incorporation and adaptation of new ideas and forms into the already existing layered whole.

In this paper I will consider the nature of continuity and change in Balinese dance-dramas with particular attention paid to the form developed between the fifteenth and sixteenth century that constitutes the oldest extant form of Balinese dance-drama: namely, *Gambuh*. My aim is to give historical perspective to current developments in the Balinese performing arts by illuminating some aspects of Gambuh's history and form. It is hoped that this process will shed some light on the challenges facing one form of the court arts in modern Indonesia.

I will begin with a brief discussion of Bali's general geological and geographic endowments which have played a critical part in shaping political and socio-cultural developments. Then I will look at two cultures that are central to Balinese culture as we know it today: Bali Aga, the "original", non-Hindu Balinese villages; and the Hindu-Javanese courts that established themselves in Bali. Following this discussion, I will look specifically at Gambuh's emergence at the meeting of these two traditions. I will discuss Gambuh's significance in the history of Balinese performing arts and examine some of its dramatic, literary, choreographic and musical elements.

In order to look at the historical developments in Balinese performing arts, I will tread on ground that lacks substantial historical documentation. One of the challenges of Balinese history is the lack of written historical records. Many major texts, such as the *Babad Buleleng* which focuses on fifteenth and sixteenth century, Bali are undated and probably date from no earlier than the mid-eighteenth century.⁴ There are dated copper inscriptions in the main temple of the village of Trunyan,⁵ but, in general, there are few reliably dated historical documents available. Unlike Java, which had extensive interaction with the Dutch and Chinese, Bali was quite isolated, and, thus, there are not extensive colonial documents or trade records that might allow us more insight into Bali's history. For the purposes of this paper, I will look at the group of Bali Aga, the only Balinese who resisted major Hindu influence. Although there are certainly limitations and problems with this method, it will allow us at least some insight into non-Hindu Bali: essential if we are to attempt to understand the significance of the performing arts in Bali.

The point of this discussion is not to reconstruct a Bali without or before Hinduism. Rather it is

to illuminate some cultural and, particularly, artistic and spiritual concepts that are indigenous to Bali in order to create a base from which to continue our discussion of the Javanese influences on Balinese performing arts: particular, dance-drama.

In my analysis and interpretation of the state of Gambuh in the twentieth century, I have drawn upon interviews, conversations, and observations that took place while I was in Bali between August 1994-October 1995 and December 1996-January 1997. These discussions and my observations during these visits were critical in the shaping of my interpretation of the development and the state of Gambuh and the performing arts in the late twentieth century.

Let us turn now to the discussion of Bali's physical geography and the influence that it has had on the social and political developments in Bali.

Geology and Geography

Bali's location on the Java Sea put it in a strategic position to participate in the trade that criss-crossed Southeast Asia for thousands of years. However, the lack of safe natural harbors kept large scale international trade to a minimum.⁶ This is not to say that Bali was *inactive* in trade. It exported cloth, pigs, copra, rice, and later, slaves.⁷ However, as Raffles noted in the early nineteenth century, "having an iron-bound coast, without harbours or good anchorage, [Bali] has been in a great measure shut out from external commerce, particularly with traders in large vessels."⁸

Clifford Geertz also pointed out the fact that the large majority of Bali's population (located mainly in southern Bali) faces onto the relatively dangerous Indian Ocean rather than the gentle Java Sea. Bali's reputation for "seclusion and isolation" is related to this geographical fact.⁹ This was particularly true when Dutch colonial trade restrictions further underlined the isolation brought on by the island's physiography.

A chain of volcanic mountains runs East-West across Bali separating the North from the South. (This is part of the geological formation that also runs through Java and Lombok.)¹⁰ These mountains, including Gunung Agung and Gunung Batur (considered to be the two most powerful), are an absolutely essential part of the Balinese religious and spiritual belief system and are seen as the center not only of Balinese Hinduism but also of the world.

To the north of these mountains lies the hot, dry, narrow strip of Singaraja. It was this area along the Java Sea that saw the most interaction with the outside world and, to this day, is distinct not only geologically but also culturally. This is expressed in the architecture of temples¹¹ and homes, nuances of spoken Balinese, and, of course, the performing arts.¹²

To the south of the great mountains lies most of Bali's land mass, almost all of its wet rice agriculture, and the great majority of the Balinese population. Large streams flow down the

gentle slopes of Southern Bali bearing volcanic ash, regularly replenishing the soil, and allowing the irrigation of the rich alluvial plains of the South.

The physical features of Bali have been important in shaping the nature of interaction not only between Balinese people and outsiders but also between the Balinese people themselves. The mountains separated Bali into distinct physical regions and encouraged regional loyalties which, in turn, were manifest in ways, including styles of dance and music, that clearly "belong" to certain areas.

In addition to being important in the sphere of human interactions, both the mountains and the seas are a central part of the spiritual and religious beliefs and activities in Bali. The natural environment-including mountains, ocean, streams, and trees-is an integral part of the supernatural beliefs that developed prior to the arrival of Hinduism.

Every aspect of Balinese life is literally oriented around Gunung Agung. One is constantly aware of one's position relative to the physical features of the earth. The Balinese concepts of *Kaja* and *Kelod*, or "toward the mountain" and "toward the sea,"¹³ and the supernatural powers of Bali were integrated with Hindu religion and became the distinct form of Hinduism that permeates Balinese life.¹⁴

There are some regions and villages in Bali that pride themselves in their conservatism and have consciously avoided outside influence, whether it be Hindu, Muslim, "Indonesian", or Western. These people are the *Bali Aga*, the mountain Balinese, or the *Bali Mula*, the original Balinese.¹⁵ In order to look at some of the developments in the performing arts of Bali, it is necessary to attempt a basic understanding of some of the non-Hindu-Javanese elements of Balinese dance.

It would be idealistic to think that we can simply study the Bali Aga villages and from that research draw direct conclusions about Bali prior to the periods of Warmadewa and Majapahit influence. Just as we cannot say that Bali is a living museum of Java, we cannot say that Tenganan is a living museum of tenth century Bali. However, the areas of the Bali Aga may shed light on certain aspects of beliefs and perhaps artistic function and aesthetics that are indigenous to Bali.

I will discuss the Bali Aga briefly, including some aspects of dance and music, then look at the Hindu courtly influence in Bali before turning the discussion to the more specific genre of Gambuh

Bali Aga

The Bali Aga have separated themselves both geographically and culturally from the majority Balinese Hindu population and proudly maintain Bali's supernatural belief system. The Asak and Tenganan villages on the southern slopes of Gunung Agung and the village of Trunyan in Bangli are the largest and most well-known.

Let me turn my attention specifically to the area of Trunyan which lies below the rim of Gunung Batur on the edge of the sacred Lake Batur. Geographic location and Trunyan conservatism, including strong rules of endogamy, allowed this area to resist heavy Majapahit influence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Trunyan maintained its independence and experienced only minor Hindu influence. Because of this deliberate conservatism and isolation, these villages offer valuable information about indigenous Balinese social concerns as well as art forms.

James Danandjaja observes that Trunyan, whose subsistence economy is in large part based on swidden agriculture, has two "castes": the *Banjar Jero* and the *Banjar Jaba*. These castes are not based on the Hindu ideas of purity; instead, they are determined by descent during the period of the Gelgel.¹⁶ This is an important example of when outside influence did make headway into Trunyan, for there is a distinction between those of the Banjar Jero, the descendants of those appointed to *rule* by the king of Gelgel, and the Banjar Jaba,¹⁷ those who were the *people* under the Banjar Jero.¹⁸

Danandjaja comments on Trunyanese prestige consciousness in the context of wedding ceremonies which "should be impressive or not held at all." He notes that there are several married couples with children who continue to postpone the ceremonial celebrations because of the expense.¹⁹ For the Bali Aga, as for many cultures, the hosting of a major ceremony is the time when a family can raise its prestige within its community. It is significant that such a small community is so strongly prestige conscious, particularly, considering the difficulty with which wealth is accumulated in Trunyan's "subsistence economy." This consciousness is manifested in an even more extreme form, as discussed later, in the Hindu Balinese communities and kingdoms.

Bali Aga: Spiritual Power and Performance

The most important Trunyanese (and for that matter Balinese) forms of music and dance are associated with religious ceremony and are a way to maintain a balance between the natural and supernatural worlds. According to copper plate inscriptions in one of the *pelinggih*²⁰ in Trunyan, the village's main temple dates to the tenth century A.D. (833 Caka), although the village of Trunyan itself is believed to be much older than the temple.²¹ In this section, I will consider two examples of performance which are strongly associated with religious rite and supernatural power: the *Berutuk* of Trunyan and *Rejang* from Asak and Tenganan. Perhaps by examining these forms we will be able to better understand the elements of Balinese dance that are indigenous to Bali and Balinese beliefs.

Berutuk

The Berutuk is at once performance, ceremony, and rite.²² The performers are a selected group of unmarried men who must undergo a period of ritual purification and isolation prior to performing. During this time they sleep in the temple, abstain from sexual contact, and learn the

prayers for the ceremony from the temple priest. The Berutuk performers don sacred masks and wear two aprons of dried banana leaf fiber; one is tied around the neck and hangs over the torso and the other is tied around the waist. There is no musical accompaniment for the performance.

Berutuk reenacts the historical legend of the Trunyan migration from the other Bali Aga areas in East Bali. However, this is not a mere dramatization. The Berutuk performance requires the purification of the actors and appropriate offerings and prayers which will allow the young men to be possessed by *Bethara Berutuk*. At one point, the Berutuk are presented with offerings and members of the audience barter with the Berutuk in order to take part of the offering. In addition, the banana fiber costumes are now charged with powerful magic and spectators attempt to steal bits of the hanging fibers which become protective amulets.

The king and queen Berutuk engage in a courtship dance inspired by the movements of a bird common to the Trunyan area²³ and the queen must be successfully captured by the king in order to ensure the fertility of both the village of Trunyan as well as that of the performer himself.²⁴ Only after the performance will the young men be eligible for official marriage.²⁵ The performance ends after the queen is captured and the dancers bathe in the sacred Lake Batur.

The performances happen at irregular intervals depending on the needs of the villages and require that the village not be tainted, for example, by plague or crop failure.²⁶

The performers are not trained in the movement of the *Berutuk* but in the necessary prayers. It is not the dance technique but the selection and ritual preparation of the dancers that is important, as they will become temporary vessels for the Bethara Berutuk: *Ratu Pancering Jagat*. Thus, the performance places an emphasis on the ritual readiness of the performers, not technical training. It is a recounting of legendary history, a fertility rite for both land and humans, a passage into adulthood, and a time when the spirits enter humans and the tumultuous interaction between performer and audience mimics the interaction between the human, spirit, and natural worlds.

Rejang

In contrast to Berutuk, Rejang is found throughout Bali, performed only by women, and does not generally involve the dancers becoming possessed by visiting spirits. However, like Berutuk, Rejang is not for human entertainment. It is intended to honor the gods and spirits and, thus, maintain the well-being of the community.

Rejang is a processional dance to entertain the gods and spirits who descend to their *pelinggih* in the temple during a ceremony. In some areas, such as Tenganan and Asak, dancers must be young unmarried women.²⁷ In other areas, any woman who may enter the temple may perform.²⁸

Although, each village has its own style, Rejang is considered sacred throughout the island and is

not performed for tourists or monetary compensation. The women enter and circle around the inner temple approaching the *pelinggih* from which the gods observe the ceremony. The dancers are wrapped in their finest cloth, their hair adorned with gold flowers and fragrant blossoms. They are accompanied by the gamelan whose slow melodies and drum patterns are simple but exquisitely dignified. In some areas the sacred gamelan *selonding* or *gong gede*²⁹ are used. In areas that do not possess such gamelans, any available gamelan is utilized.

Rejang is one of the most ancient Balinese dances. The movements, like the music, are slow, simple, stately, and present a contrast with the dynamic and dramatic forms that are so much a part of more recent forms of Balinese dance. Neither the movements nor music are technically difficult and, again, there is no formal training for participants. One learns simply by following the other women and girls who are dancing in the temple courtyard. What is important is not complexity or virtuosity but rather the solemn and peaceful offering of the Rejang itself: essentially equivalent to prayer. Thus, in both Rejang and Berutuk the ceremonial function of the dances is the most critical part of the performance. Devotion is primary; technical skill is secondary.³⁰

These are considered among the most sacred of Balinese dances. They are one of the aspects of Balinese life that has not been strongly affected by the establishment of a "guided democracy" or the influx of tourists. They remain in the innermost sacred temple; the Balinese people, both Bali Aga and Bali Hindu, refuse to allow these forms to become the secular entertainment in such high demand in the twentieth century.

Hindu Bali and the Majapahit Dynasty

Bali and Java had extensive interaction, particularly, between the ninth and sixteenth centuries, and it was during this period that Bali began to incorporate aspects of Javanese Hinduism into its own already complex culture.³¹ Under Airlangga (r. 991-1049), the Warmadewa dynasty brought Java and Bali under one ruling kingship.³² After the decline of the Warmadewa dynasty, interaction probably subsided into trade and exchange relations, with political and, most likely, cultural influences also being somewhat reduced. However, with the rise of the Singasari and especially the Majapahit period, interaction intensified again. This period was critical, for, as Adrian Vickers points out, "[e]ven today Balinese see their culture as essentially Majapahit culture."³³

If one examines the friezes on the East Javanese temples built during the Majapahit dynasty when Bali became a tributary of East Java and music and dance-dramas were part of major celebrations in the court.³⁴, such as Candi Panataran, Candi Surawana and Candi Kedaton (all fourteenth century),³⁵ one can see that headdresses of the figures are almost identical to those still used and being made for dance-drama throughout Bali today. They are, likewise, virtually the same as those of Balinese wayang kulit puppets. Headdresses are not merely a part of a Balinese costume; certain headdresses are considered holy and spiritually powerful and are handed down from generation to generation. We can see by looking at the reliefs on these

fourteenth century East Javanese temples that headdresses used today in Bali demonstrate a remarkable unbroken continuity of form at least six hundred years old.

Clifford Geertz has discussed the importance of status and pomp in the nineteenth century Hindu courts of Bali.³⁶ Ceremonial display, including the support of large performing arts groups as well as elaborate cremation ceremonies, played an important part in legitimizing the king's power.³⁷ This was not unique to nineteenth century Bali and was clearly a continuation of a pattern well established in the courts of Majapahit and even further back in the Mataram period.

The development of the court arts takes on a different meaning when we examine them in the context of competitive ceremonial display. The *Negarakertagama* gives accounts of festivals where musicians and choral singers accompany the ruler's procession. There are also accounts of the *raket*, a form of dance-drama in which the king himself was said to be an active and talented performer, as were other members of the royal family.³⁸ Thus, from as far back as the fourteenth century, we see that royalty not only supported the performing arts but were themselves performers. This was a pattern that continued in the courts of Bali where much of the Majapahit royalty relocated following the fall of the dynasty. It was in the present regency of Klungkung that the first major kingdom of Bali was established: the kingdom of Gelgel.

The Courts of Bali: Gelgel and Dalem Baturenggong

The "Golden Age" of Bali was under the kingdom of Gelgel. Gelgel is associated with King Dalem Baturenggong who, to this day, remains a legend not only for his political and military prowess but also for his visionary support of the arts. It is believed that under Dalem Baturenggong the arts of Bali began to flourish. Dance-dramas, particularly masked dance-dramas, continue to tell the historical legends of Dalem Baturenggong: the great patron of the arts. It is perhaps his great love of the arts that established the pattern of royal patronage of the arts in Bali, for all kings that followed tried to emulate as closely as possible the greatness and wisdom of the legendary Dalem Baturenggong.

The sixteenth century kingdom of Gelgel held power over an area that included Blambangan, East Java, the island of Bali, and the islands of Lombok and Sumbawa. The king was the "World Ruler" and provided an "epic vision of kingship" for the future kings of Bali.³⁹ It was during the Gelgel dynasty that Hindu ideas became integrally incorporated into the Balinese belief system.

However, as with all "Golden Ages," this one also came to an end. In 1651, following a dispute over succession, Gusti Agung Maruti, a prime minister, declared himself ruler of Bali. This marked the end of the united Gelgel dynasty. The kingdom began to disintegrate. It was not until 1800 that Bali would again become stable: this time with not one kingdom, but nine.⁴⁰

The fragmentation of political power had a significant impact on Balinese arts. If there had been cultural unity under Gelgel, it was split along with political power in 1651. This was the

beginning, or perhaps re-establishment, of regional loyalties and strong competition between the royal families of each region.⁴¹ Since politics, religion, society, and the arts are not independent of one another, the arts now had a competitive arena in which to perform.

Although the original rulers of Gelgel may have been from Java, they were living in Bali and had little further cultural exchange with now Muslim Java. Under Dalem Baturenggong, the courtly arts of Majapahit had met with the supernatural power of Balinese forms. This is when the Balinese courtly arts, which are so familiar to us now, began to take neither a purely Hindu-Javanese, nor purely Balinese form. They became much more complex dramatically, more technically demanding, and a new function was added to the Balinese arts' powerful religious function: to serve a large and powerful court.

Although the ancient ritual performances remained, due to the dramatically changing political and cultural Balinese context, new forms of art began to emerge to serve the needs of royalty. One of these newly emerging forms of dance-drama was to become the base of all dance-drama in Bali. Its name comes from the old Balinese word for "mixture" or "to combine": Gambuh.⁴²

Gambuh and the Balinese Performing Arts

Gambuh is the oldest form of dance-drama in Bali.⁴³ Although it is not clear exactly when the form as it exists today emerged, it was probably between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Bandem and deBoer consider it a "direct descendant" of the *raket* dance-dramas of Majapahit which have undergone very little, if any, change since first developed.⁴⁴

When the dance-dramas of Majapahit came to Bali, they had the new task of *preserving* the tradition of a fallen dynasty. Gambuh is said to preserve the "manners and ideals of the highly civilized Javanese/Balinese court life of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."⁴⁵ Perhaps it is this preservationist function that has encouraged such conservatism in the Gambuh tradition. This is perhaps even more true today in Indonesia's guided democracy, where the courts have been dis-empowered and replaced by the national government.

Gambuh is critical to the study of Balinese performing arts, as it is seen as the source of all Balinese dance-drama that exists today. Gambuh brought a narrative element to Balinese performance.⁴⁶ This narrative form was very quickly adopted and incorporated into new forms, resulting in the great variety of dance-drama forms now so famous in Bali .include: *Arja*, *Wayang Wong*, *Topeng*, *Calonarang*, *Parwa*, *Drama Gong*, and *Sendratari*. They represent a variety of dance and music styles, dramatic forms, literary traditions, and a wide range of ritual necessity and function. Yet, they are all related to the Gambuh tradition.

In addition to its literary contributions to the arts, Gambuh also made significant choreographic contributions to Balinese dance. Gambuh has a rich vocabulary of dance movements which are the basis for much of Balinese dance except, of course, for forms indigenous to Bali (e.g., *Rejang*

and Berutuk). The increasingly complex movements that developed with Gambuh supported the development of the narrative element by providing a greater vocabulary and range of movement which could be utilized in character development. This type of characterization by movement has been developed to a high art form in both Bali and Java.

Also of great importance are the musical contributions that Gambuh made to the Balinese performing arts. The complex melodies and drum patterns of Gambuh became the base from which almost all of the now "classical" forms of Balinese music arose, and the relationship between the music and the dance became a model for forms that were to follow.

Despite its great contributions to the development of Balinese performing arts, in the 1990's Gambuh is extremely rare. There is a clear lack of popularity among even the most dedicated of young Balinese artists who may respect the form but are unlikely to want to study it or even go out of their way to see a performance. The general Balinese audience is even less likely to be interested.[47](#)

Gambuh is a highly demanding art form involving not only demanding dance technique but also dialogue in *Kawi*. It requires that both the musicians and dancers understand a form of music that is extremely complex and subtle. The long performances (originally four to five hours), refined language, complex musical and choreographic form, and, perhaps most significantly, the absence of comic relief are also demanding of the audience.

According to one artist, Gambuh is seldom truly appreciated by the audience; thus, there is little emotional or financial incentive to perform this dance-drama. In addition, according to this artist, few people have the *keturunan* (lines of descent, ancestry) to be able to "feel" and give *jiwa* (spirit) to the form.[48](#)

Another artist, a teacher of Gambuh, noted that when the royalty sponsored artistic groups, including very large Gambuh troupes, they were quite protective of certain roles. Talented non-royal artists were encouraged to dance; however, they were discouraged from taking roles such as the refined princes and princesses. These were reserved for the real royalty. Thus, those who wished to study these roles were forced to *mencuri* (steal) by learning without formal study and without performing these roles in public.[49](#)

This exclusivity may be having repercussions now. There are few who are able to perform Gambuh. At present only one or two villages have active Gambuh groups. In total there are perhaps only four groups that perform in the Gambuh style. This is in contrast to groups that perform *gong kebyar*, the form that at present is the most popular performing art form. These groups very easily number in the hundreds for the regency of Gianyar alone, where the number of *gong kebyar* in one village can easily outnumber the total number of Gambuh groups on the entire island.

Let us look now at the form of Gambuh itself: its literature, dance, and music. Then we can turn

to a discussion of some of its functions: that is where, when, and *why* it was performed in the Balinese courts. This will perhaps shed light on the reasons for the difficult state of Gambuh in Bali today.

Gambuh: The Telling of Literary Legend

There are several sources from which Gambuh derives its dramatic material including the accounts of Amad Mohamad and Rangga Lawe.⁵⁰ However, the most famous and beloved Gambuh episodes are from the Panji cycle which are known as the Malat in Bali.

The Panji cycle, probably composed in the fourteenth century,⁵¹ is a complex and extensive combination of literature and legend that is indigenous to Southeast Asia. Panji is known as Inao in mainland Southeast Asia and is found in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Malaysia.⁵² In Java and Bali, the hero, Raden Panji, is considered to be a descendant of the Pandawas and a reincarnation of Wisnu. His beloved Candra Kirana (Radiant Ray of the Moon),⁵³ is an incarnation of Dewi Sri. On the Buddhist mainland, Raden Panji is a future Buddha.⁵⁴

The Malat chronicles tell of the adventures of Raden Panji who has been separated from his fiancée, Candra Kirana, on the night before their wedding. They spend years searching for one another, venturing through historical East Javanese kingdoms such as Kediri, Mataram, and Kahuripan. They assume a number of different disguises, resulting in their meeting a number of times without recognizing one another. Panji is devastatingly handsome, a talented musician, and a fine warrior. He has numerous romantic and military adventures but is endlessly searching for Candra Kirana.

Candra Kirana is as beautiful as the moon: refined, radiant, and graceful. However, she is also a great warrior. She disguises herself as a man, is clever and skillful, and wages war campaigns throughout East Java until she becomes a great ruler. Finally, she and Panji meet in battle. They do not recognize each other initially, but eventually realize that their seemingly endless search has indeed ended. They are reunited and live peacefully until their deaths reunited them once again in heaven in their original forms of Wisnu and Dewi Sri.

This is of course one extremely short synopsis of a complex oral and literary tradition. Bandem, Robson, and Poerbatjaraka provide interesting versions of the Panji stories, including many of the numerous, confusing, and often contradictory details of the adventures.⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that Candra Kirana in Gambuh is generally depicted as the beautiful princess rather than in her disguise as a warrior. The series of stories about Candra Kirana as warrior has not been forgotten however. It is told in Bali and is performed in the *kebyar* (a more modern) tradition of dance in the piece *Panji Semirang*. In general, the stately Gambuh focuses on the political exploits of Panji. In contrast, other forms such as *Arja*, focus on the romantic drama between Raden Panji and Candra Kirana. This may be one reason that Gambuh is less popular than forms such as *Arja* which have a much more romantic tone. There are strong

political and romantic elements in the Malat cycle, and the differences are a matter of emphasis.

Gambuh: Aspects of the Dance

The movement and choreography of each character in Gambuh reflects Balinese philosophy and ideals. Made Wiratini's fascinating thesis points out that when Gambuh was first developed, women did not participate. Polite women only danced in the temple for ceremonies that included Rejang, etc. Gambuh was developed and performed by men and reflects the values and ideals of men.⁵⁶ The women's roles were choreographed and performed by men and reflect the male ideal of the feminine rather than reality or the female ideal of the feminine. For example, this could be the reason that in Gambuh, Candra Kirana does not appear in her warrior prince disguise.

In Gambuh, as in many forms of Southeast Asian dance, the movements of the performers generally emphasize a connection to the power of the earth. The basic body stance is called *agem*, and each type of character has an *agem* appropriate to the character and genre. Gambuh has a style and quality of movement and *agem* which are distinct and easily distinguishable from other forms of Balinese dance.⁵⁷

In the movements of Gambuh, we see elements that are similar to the ancient Rejang⁵⁸ in some of the female roles as well as movement phrases which imitate the Balinese environs, such as the swaying of palms and lizards crossing water. These choreographic elements are purely Balinese artistic developments that have been created and kept in Balinese performing arts. Thus, much of Gambuh reflects Balinese creativity and aesthetics.

There are, however, significant contributions from outside. One of the most noticeable is the presence of mudras, similar to the movements of the Balinese priests who, of course, learned these mudras as part of the Hindu religion. Certain characters, such as Panji, have special hand gestures that belong only to that particular character. Other gestures are used by several characters, although with stylistic differences.

Balinese mudras, with a few exceptions, do not refer to a specific thing or idea. There are very few mudras used in Balinese dance relative to Bharat Natyam, for example. In Gambuh the dancers/actors speak, the clowns interpret Kawi into Balinese, and a dalang narrates important information that cannot be communicated by the actors/dancers themselves. Thus, there are a variety of ways that the plot can be carried and elaborated upon. Mudras are not used for this purpose. The mudras may have their origins in India, but the meaning was virtually left behind. They became, in some cases purely, ornamental.

However, mudras did greatly increase the movement vocabulary in Balinese dance, and, through Java, there came an increased complexity and formality of choreography. In Gambuh, more than in any other dance-dramas, there is a wide vocabulary of movement for the dancers, but the movements are tightly choreographed and allow little room for improvisation on the part of the

artists.[59](#)

This is true also of the dialogue and other spoken parts of the dance-drama, which are not improvised. The *penasar*, the servant characters in other forms of dance-drama such as *prembon* and *calonarang*, have quite a bit of freedom and are almost required to make a long series of lewd jokes and tales. However, Gambuh *penasar* are much more limited in the scope of their dialogue. This is due to the fact that these performances were originally sponsored by the king and the courts and were usually for court occasions and ceremonies.[60](#) It was risky to allow the actors too much freedom. Thus, both the choreography and spoken texts are restricted and rehearsed.

Characterization in Gambuh

Within this tightly rehearsed choreography, there is a very sophisticated development of character and characterization through movement, language, voice, and music. Each of the main characters makes his/her first entrance with an *igel ngugal* (a solo introductory section in which the dancer and the musicians establish the character of the person entering).[61](#) It is possible that the very existence of solo dancing in Bali may have its origins in Gambuh. The technical training of the dancers and the increased complexity of the choreography itself support solo dance interludes that allow the skill of the dancer, the beauty of the dance, and the nature of the entering character to be appreciated. This is in contrast to the slow, simple movements of Rejang, performed in a group of sixty women, all dancing in one ceremonial gesture.

The costume itself will allow a knowledgeable viewer to ascertain much about a character's rank, age, degree of refinement, etc.[62](#) The headdresses, in particular, are important indicators of character.[63](#)

Most Balinese dance-dramas have four stock-character types: refined female, strong female, refined male, and strong male. All of the main characters fit into one of these four categories which, in their theoretical bases, are identical to the division of characters in Javanese dance.

The refined male and female characters are called *manis* (sweet). They are the princes and princesses, such as Raden Panji and Candra Kirana. Their movements are slow, smooth, fluid, and dignified. They speak in Kawi using high-pitched stylized voices. Their hand gestures are delicate, refined, and deliberate. The dancers who take on these roles must have small supple bodies and nothing less than beautifully delicate faces.[64](#)

The strong characters are called *keras* (coarse, unrefined). These are the lower ranking characters and the high ranking "bad guys." They are usually servants, prime ministers, and soldiers. Their movements are much more outwardly energetic. Their arms, legs, eyes, and faces are thrust up, a sign of arrogance and lack of refinement. Their movements tend to be jerky and sudden. Their hand gestures and language are less polite; they may point at one another, clench their fists, and speak in loud rough voices. The male dancers must have larger bodies than those

of the refined characters.

All characters of high rank whether *manis* or *keras* are costumed in the finest clothes the performing group or its sponsoring court can afford. They are draped and bound in gold painted and beaded cloth. The dancers heads are adorned with fragrant flowers and intricately carved leather headdresses that indicate rank and status.

Language and body gestures are also important indicators of character status. Wiratini points out that in addition to the *keras/manis* and male/female division, there is the division between the Triwangsa and the Sudra characters: that is between the royal characters and the servant/subject characters.[65](#)

Wiratini points out the clear division in Gambuh of the royal characters, who speak only Kawi, and the servant characters, who speak only Balinese. The servant characters interpret the words of the royal characters for the audience, the large majority of whom cannot understand Kawi. The *penasar* take on critical roles as liasons between the heroes and the common audience and must be polite and attentive in language and gesture in the presence of the high ranking heroes.[66](#) Thus, the ideal roles and attitudes of the royalty and the *penasar* are clear through gesture, body posture, costume, and language.

The clarity with which the status of each character is defined and the importance placed on making the social hierarchy clear through language, costume, and movement underlines the importance not simply of caste but also the importance of knowing *how* one's social and caste status should be manifeste in one's daily life and in every aspect on one's existence.

Mudras and the style of headdress distinguish Panji from others such as Arjuna or Rama, but they all occupy approximately the same niche in Balinese dance-drama: the refined, handsome prince. With the prominent use of stock character-types and stock scenes, the individual personality becomes less important than the niche that he or she occupies. One could infer that the message conveyed is that the cultivation of the individual self-that which makes one unique-is less important than the perfection of the roles that one plays relative to others in the community.

As dance and drama are essentially inseparable from the music, I will now discuss briefly the musical aspects of Gambuh.

Gamelan Gambuh

Among the most important changes that came to Balinese performing arts with the development of Gambuh were

1. the increased complexity of musical form, melody, and composition
2. an increasingly tight coordination between the dance and music, and

3. the prominent role of the drums.[67](#)

The musical accompaniment for Gambuh is called simply gamelan Gambuh and is recognized as one of the most complex and difficult genres of Balinese music.[68](#) Gamelan Gambuh is characterized by the prominence of the long bamboo flutes (approximately 90 cm in length), called *suling Gambuh*.[69](#) These flutes, along with the *rebab* (bowed fiddle), carry and elaborate the series of long complex melodies of gamelan Gambuh. Hanging gongs function as colotomic markers. The *ceng-ceng* (cymbals), *kajar* (horizontal gong struck with a wooden mallet), and the *kendang* (drums) have complex rhythmic patterns that are closely associated with the dancers' movements. Other instruments include the *gentorag* (bell tree) and the *gumanak* (pair of bronze tubes that subdivides the gong cycle).

The melodies of gamelan Gambuh have different *tetekep*[70](#) (scales), similar to the modes of Javanese gamelan. Each of the modes has a distinct mood and suggests a different character. For example, the *tetekep lebeng*, the highest of the *tetekep*, is considered sweet and is associated with Candra Kirana.[71](#) Each main character has his or her own specific melody in an appropriate *tetekep*. The melody and *tetekep* establish and support the "character" and the appropriate mood, such as that of the dignified and sweet, but sad, Candra Kirana. Music becomes a key element to character development and is inseparable from the dance and drama.

The *kendang* have an extremely important role in gamelan Gambuh. It is in the interlocking rhythmic patterns of the drum and in its importance hierarchically in the ensemble that we are able to appreciate some of the most important contributions that Gambuh has made to the performing arts of Bali.

Before the development of Gambuh, it seems that the *kendang* had a predominantly colotomic rather than rhythmic role and did not serve as a key intermediary between dancer and musician. In Gambuh, the pair of *kendang*, which are significantly called *lanang* (male) and *wadon* (female), incorporate interlocking rhythmic patterns, establish the formal structure of the *pegambuhan* pieces and are the key link between musicians and dancers.[72](#)

Thus, Gambuh has made significant contributions to the performing arts: the meeting of Balinese and Javanese styles and aesthetics; the incorporation of narrative elements as well as Hindu mudras; the further development of characterization through movement, language, gesture and music; the heightened complexity of the melodic line and structure; and the increased prominence of the drum as a leading instrument functioning as essential link between the music and dance.

Let us look now at the context of the Gambuh performance in the twentieth century and then consider its historic roots in the courts of Bali and how these interact to create a uniquely challenging situation for Gambuh today.

Gambuh: The Performance

A Balinese performance is not merely entertainment. Gambuh's courtly tradition gives it strong roots in the political and spiritual world of the Balinese courts, a world that is slowly giving way to the guided democracy of Indonesia and the unguided economy of Western capitalism.

However, Gambuh and all Balinese arts still have their most fundamental existence in the spiritual world of Bali. This is an existence that began long before the temples of Bali were Hindu. Clearly the oldest forms of Balinese dance such as Rejang and Berutuk are as much ceremony as they are "dance." The spiritual and religious power of the performances are more important than the execution of technique.

With Hinduism and Javanese culture came more elaborate ceremony and more elaborate dramatic forms. It was the meeting of these that was the birth of the complex world of the Balinese arts and Hindu Bali today where each major ceremony is a theatrical as well as religious event.[73](#)

The most important performances in Bali happen in the temple which is generally divided into three areas: the *jeroan*, the *jaba tengah*, and the *jaba*. Bandem and deBoer provide a detailed examination of these parts of the temple, their structural and spiritual significance, and the forms of performing arts that "belong" to each courtyard.[74](#) Each courtyard has certain forms of dance and music that are appropriate for that area. The three divisions of the performing arts in the temple—the *Wali*, *Bebali*, and *Bali-balihan* which are performed in the *jeroan*, *jaba tengah*, and *jaba* respectively are like many aspects of Balinese Hindu philosophy—flexible. Sometimes *Bebali* forms such as Gambuh are performed in the outermost courtyard, although forms such as *Rejang* and *Berutuk* or *Sang Hyang Dedari* are less likely to be moved out of their normal performance context.

The performing arts are a key element, inextricable from the ceremonial and religious activities, of Balinese Hinduism. At times they serve as vehicles through which the spirits themselves perform. Sometimes they serve as offerings and entertainment for the gods who have come to the temple for the ceremony. At other times they are geared towards the human audience serving to entertain the worshippers and, thus, create a bustling and exquisite center of human activity and interaction. A Balinese temple ceremony is religious, artistic, and intensely social.

If there is a large ceremony in a village that has enough money, they may invite a Gambuh group to perform. To invite a Gambuh group is quite expensive as even a "skeleton" group requires about forty musicians and dancers. The groups that still exist are supported by the village community and by their own work. They are not "professional" in the sense that they cannot make their living by performing Gambuh. The quality of the performance may far exceed that of a professional group in the West, but the demand for Gambuh performances is low so that these performances are not a steady source of income.[75](#)

This is where the political situation of the state and the artistic activities in the community meet.

Prior to both the Dutch occupation and Indonesian independence, very large retinues of performers, often in the hundreds, were supported by the courts. The kings supported artists by giving them rice fields to work, providing costumes, and sponsoring regular performances for special occasions and ceremonies, such as tooth-filings, weddings, and cremations, in the palace. Thus, artists had both the financial and artistic support necessary to maintain the art form.

Today, although the artists may be able to find other sources of financial support, the rarity of performance opportunities is problematic. A full Gambuh performance, which was originally four to five hours in duration, is extremely rare. In the 1920's a three hour performance was considered full. Now, it is difficult to find even a two hour performance.

According to Bapak I Ketut Kantor, head of one of the Gambuh groups in Batuan, the king had a significant role in the artistic decisions for the Gambuh groups and wanted only full Gambuh performances.⁷⁶ Now, however, there is no king and the Gambuh audience is composed of tourists and Balinese who are accustomed to half hour television soap operas imported from the United States, Venezuela, and China. Twentieth century Indonesia offers a different audience.

In the nineteenth century courts of Bali, there was intense rivalry between the kings and princes of various areas.⁷⁷ For the performing arts of Bali, this is very significant. The nineteenth century was also the "Golden Age" of Gambuh.⁷⁸ It seems highly unlikely that this is mere coincidence. The arts were part of this competition, and the courts put on the most extravagant ceremonies possible. These ceremonies included the performing arts. The arts were a tool for the political and social status competition between the courts. The performances were a direct reflection of the courts ability or inability to nurture the tradition of the legendary Dalem Baturenggong.⁷⁹

Gambuh was the first of the dance-dramas nurtured by the courts. Through its conservatism and pride in its dignity, it has remained the most courtly of the courtly arts. This presents a special problem in the late twentieth century.

In the 1990's some art forms flourish and ride a wave of great popularity. These include those of the *kebyar* genre: the powerful, exciting style from North Bali. This style is pure dance and music. The pieces may be inspired by a story or legend; however, they are not dance-dramas but rather short pieces of about twelve to fifteen minutes. They require neither the cast of sixty to seventy highly trained dancers and musicians nor the long attention span required by Gambuh.

If we look at Gambuh's function in the courts, we can understand how it has developed into a very complex and demanding art form. It is demanding not only of the performers but also of the audience who must be able to appreciate the subtlety of the musical form and the beauty of the language and literature. Gambuh served an important political function: it glorified the ruler and told the tales of political and romantic exploits of Raden Panji and the courts of East Java. It was part of religious ceremony and part of political competition. As such, it was required to maintain and reflect the dignity of the court and, thus, the highly developed music, the use of

Kawi, and the relative lack of improvisational freedom given to the performers. Even the servants were dignified and would not make remarks inappropriate to a very formal court situation. All of the characters must reflect the ideals of the court.⁸⁰ This is in contrast to later forms of dance-drama such as *prembon* where the *penasar* improvise extensive comedic scenes, interacting with one another as well as the audience members. Talented performers have the audience in tears of laughter with a seemingly endless routine that borders on obscene stand up comedy.

These forms are very popular and are able to compete nicely with the new edition of Star Wars and even televised soccer. They are less formal and more entertaining. At this time in Bali, these forms are able to exist simultaneously with the Gambuh and Bob Marley. However, clearly Gambuh faces stiff competition.

Spies and de Zoete point out that the Balinese are not interested in Gambuh because they can find what they like about Gambuh in newer and more entertaining forms.⁸¹ This keen observation is indicative of an important pattern of development whereby older forms generally do not simply become extinct but are kept in purely ceremonial (i.e., not "entertainment") forms, though elements of these forms may be borrowed by newer forms. Throughout, the arts maintain a critical role in the ceremonial life of Bali, and the religious and powerful spiritual life of the arts in Bali is still the most significant aspect of most of the Balinese arts.

The political and social hierarchy are changing, and the court arts no longer have their place as court jewels. Although forms like Gambuh are performed for weddings, cremations, and other large ceremonies, they have lost their political function. They have maintained their ritual value but have lost their principal sponsor, the royal courts. It remains to be seen what the fate of forms such as Gambuh will be. This is true not only in Bali but in other areas of Indonesia where the courts that once sponsored artistic activity no longer have substantial political power.

In Bali there is a reshaping of the arts, a continuation of the Balinese adeptness at finding creative ways to fit an artistic form with the political, social, and economic situation. The life of the arts in Bali continues with great vitality; however, not all forms are flourishing. There is a strong tendency to cultivate simpler forms of dance-drama that leave out one or more of the more difficult aspects of older forms such as the use of Kawi, singing, dialogue, and highly complicated and refined dance technique like those found in Gambuh.

Summary and Conclusion

The performing arts of Bali have both strong threads of continuity and dynamic elements of change. The Balinese people have developed and refined their arts perhaps since the very beginning of organized spirit worship. The arts of Bali seem to have been born in and from spiritual belief. Balinese beliefs, whether they be Hindu or indigenous, are tied both to the arts and to the physical features of the island itself. The sacred mountains, the powerful sea, the harborless coasts that discouraged extensive outside contact, the banyan trees, and rivers are all

part of the Balinese physical and spiritual world. When the fall of the Majapahit dynasty brought intensified Javanese-Hindu belief and court systems to Bali, many Balinese integrated the new ideas with the old. For most of Bali they became one entity: Hindu Bali, Balinese Hinduism.

Javanese influence was substantial and brought an increased complexity and formal structure to the already well developed Balinese belief system and artistic tradition. The performing arts to the Balinese are innately spiritually powerful. Thus, it is not surprising that a ruler would want to collect the arts and their power. Just as the Javanese kings collected crises, dwarves, and other symbols of power, so they also nurtured the performing arts to heighten their glory, honor the past, and to make their ceremonies more "complete."

Balinese court arts were nurtured over centuries by various kings and kingdoms. One could argue that political competition became one with regional loyalty and style in the performing arts. The arts became powerful political and ceremonial ammunition.

The Dutch occupation and the devastation of the courts of Bali during the *puputans* of the early twentieth century marked a major change in Balinese history. The royalty that had its roots in the arrival of the Majapahit courtiers in the fifteenth century was devastated. *Puput* means "to end", and the *puputan* were indeed a tragically artistic and dramatic ending for the kings of Bali.

Indonesian nationalism and democracy succeeded the Dutch occupation. It has no place for courts and kings, except in cultural museums and in the research of anthropologists. The artists who had been protected and sponsored by the kings are now on their own. Some have fared well; their work found beautiful by the increasingly thick mass of tourists that came to visit Bali. Others have struggled to tell the tales of the heroic Panji and his political exploits, speaking in Kawi, and maintaining the dignity of the courts that truly met their end in the *puputan*.

It is difficult to say what the next generation of artists will bring to their tradition. Many have a deep respect for the practitioners and the history of older courtly forms. However, this does not necessarily mean that they themselves wish to become practitioners of these forms. Today's young Balinese artists never lived under the kings of the Gelgel tradition. Suharto has reigned as president for two generations of artists. Television, movie theatres, discotheques, and music videos are easily accessible not only physically but mentally. Serious artists of the young generation recognize this competition. The challenge that faces them is to maintain, once again, the powerful ties of history and spirituality in the Balinese performing arts and respond to the changing world that will no longer be hindered by Bali's iron-bound coasts.

Notes

1 For the purposes of this paper, "performing arts" will refer primarily to dance, drama, dance-drama, and music. The developments in shadow puppet theatre are fascinating and of great

importance; however, they are beyond the scope of this paper.

2 *Kebyar* (explosion) is the name of the dynamic form of dance and music which was born early in this century in North Bali. It is known for its flashy choreographic and compositional elements and currently dominates the Balinese performing arts. It is popular among the younger musicians and dancers. *Sendratari* is a form of danced drama which was developed after kebyar. However, the two forms are related, and are exceedingly popular with both Balinese and non-Balinese audiences. Unlike many other forms of dance and drama in Bali, in these forms, the dancers are not required to speak or sing, and thus the forms are considerable less demanding than other, less popular, forms which require speaking and singing in addition to dancing.

3 Michel Picard's work includes fascinating discussions of cultural tourism as well as the developments of dance and drama in Bali and their relationship to the ongoing search for a national, Indonesian dance style. See Michel Picard, "Dance and Drama in Bali: The Making of and Indonesian Art Form," in *Being Modern in Bali: Image and Change*, ed. Adrian Vickers, Yale Southeast Asia Studies Monograph series, no. 43 (New Haven: Yale University Press, Southeast Asian Series, 1996).

4 David Stuart-Fox, "Pura Besakih: Temple and State Relations from Precolonial Times to Modern Times," in *State and Society in Bali*, ed. Hildred Geertz (Leiden : KITLV Press, 1991), 11-41.

5 P.V. Van Stein Callenfels, "Epigraphia Balica," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasche Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 66, no. 3: 20-26; Roelof Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1 (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1954), 6-7, 56-59; Roelof Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 2 (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1954), 122-126, 183, 193-194; and James Danandjaja, "The Trunyanese: the People who Descended from the Sky," in *Dynamics of Indonesian History*, ed. Haryati Soebadio (Amsterdam; North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 43.

6 E. Dobby, *Southeast Asia* (London: University of London Press, 1950), 258.

7 Adrian Vickers, *A Paradise Created* (Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1989), 60-91. There is evidence of contact with India as early as two thousand years ago as evidenced by Bellwood and Ardika's work in Sembiran, North Bali. For a discussion of the findings of their work see, I Wayan Ardika and Peter Bellwood, "Sembiran: the beginnings of Indian contact with Bali," *Antiquity* 65 (1991): 221-232.

8 Sir Thomas Raffles, *The History of Java* (London: Oxford University Press, 1817), Appendix K.

9 Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 87-88.

10 Dobby, *Southeast Asia*, 255.

11 Miguel Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937. Reprinted 1965), 185-186.

12 Personal observation. Both people from South and North Bali make the North-South Bali distinction both for geography as well as culture.

13 This concept of "toward tthe mountain" and "toward the sea," is of course, not unique to Bali. For example, Hawaiian also has "Mauka" and "Makai."

14 I Made Bandem and Fredrik deBoer's work *Kaja and Kelod: Balinese Dance in Transition* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995) gives a comprehensive discussion of the concepts of Kaja and Kelod and their manifestation in the Hindu Balinese temples and performing arts.

15 Danandjaja, "Trunyanes," 43.

16 The Kingdom of Gelgel arose in sixteenth century Bali following massive changes in Balinese social and political structure as result of the influence of the Majapahit kingdom and the relocation of much of the Majapahit royalty to Bali following Majapahit's decline in East Java. Vickers, *Bali*, 41-53.

17 Interestingly, the terms *Jaba* and *Jero* are the same terms used by Hindu Balinese to differentiate between the Sudra and the Triwangsa (Brahman, Satria, Wesia). *Jaba* (outside), refers to the Sudra. *Jero* (inside), refers to the Triwangsa. Thus, there has clearly been some outside influence.

18 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 52.

19 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 49.

20 *Pelinggih* are the pagoda-like structures found in Balinese temples. They are believed to be the sitting place of visiting deities. The word *peinggih* comes from the Balinese word *melinggih*. (sit or to be seated).

21 Callenfels. "Epigraphia Balica," 20-26; Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1, 6-7, 56-59; Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1, 122-126, 183, 193-194; and Danadjaja, "Trunyanese."

22 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 9.

23 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 5-8

24 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 57.

25 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*. Bandem and deBoer also note that some participants may actually have been "married" for all practical purposes-some may have children, etc.-prior to the ceremony. However, only after the Berutuk performance were they considered eligible for the official ceremony.

26 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 3.

27 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 16.

28 There are certain times when a person may not enter the innermost courtyard of a temple, such as the twelve days following a death in the family. Women may not enter the temple if they are menstruating. Under these conditions, a woman is considered unclean and may neither enter the temple nor participate in holy worship, including prayer and performing Rejang.

29 Both the *selonding* and *gamelan gong gede* (great or large gong gamelan) ensembles are extremely rare in Bali. The iron selonding are found mostly in the Bali Aga areas, and many of the very large gong gede ensembles have been melted down to make the brighter sounding gong kebyar instruments. For a comprehensive, yet accessible, discussion of Balinese music see Michael Tenzer's *Balinese Music* (Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1991).

30 Personal observation and discussions with numerous teachers and dancers while studying dance and conducting fieldwork in the Gianyar and Badung areas of South Bali in 1994, 1995, and 1996.

31 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 26.

32 Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 66-67.

33 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 46.

34 Theodore Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962)

35 Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, 82-87.

36 These Balinese kings were, of course, descendants of the rulers of Majapahit who fled to Bali after the decline of Majapahit.

37 Clifford Geertz, *Negara*.

38 Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*.

39 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 41.

40 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 53-57.

41 In *Negara* Geertz discusses in detail the seemingly endless struggle for power through shows of courtly pomp that characterized nineteenth century Balinese kingdoms.

42 Personal communication with Bapak I Ketut Kantor, Desa Batuan, Bali.

43 I Made Bandem, "Pandji Characterization in the Gambuh Dance Drama" (Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1972), 47.

44 I Made Bandem and Fredrik deBoer, "Gambuh: A Classical Balinese Dance-Drama," *Asian Music*, 10, no.1: 115-127.

45 Bandem and Deboer, "Gambuh," 115.

46 Bandem and Deboer, "Gambuh," 116.

47 Personal observation; Ketut Gede Asnawa, "The Kendang Gambuh in Balinese Music" (Thesis, University of Maryland, 1991), 27; Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), 135.

48 Personal communication, I Dewa Putu Berata, Banjar Pengosekan, Ubud, 9 January 1997.

49 Personal communication, Bapak I Ketut Kantor, Banjar Pekandelan, Batuan, 11 January 1997.

50 Marianne Ariyanto "Gambuh: The Source of Balinese Dance" *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no. 2 (1985): 221-230.

51 James Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 46.

52 Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, 26.

53 Bandem, *Pandji*, 1.

54 Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, 106.

55 Bandem, *Pandji*; S.O. Robson trans., *Wangbang Wideya* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971); Poerbatjaraka, *Cerita Panji Dalam Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1968). *Cerita Panji Dalam Perbandingan* is one of the texts that is consulted by Bapak I Ketut Kantor for both

Gambuh and other types of performances.

56 Ni Made Wiratini, "Condong and its Roles in Balinese Dance-Drama" (Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1991), 18.

57 Bandem, *Pandji*, 49.

58 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 33.

59 Wiratini, *Condong*, 30.

60 Wiratini, *Condong*, 80.

61 Wiratini, *Condong*.

62 Komang Gede Urip Tribhuana, "Tokoh Putra Halus Drama Tari Gambuh" *Wreta Cita* 3, no. 6 (1996): 19-20.

63 Some headdresses are believed to be especially powerful and may be kept in special places. There is a clear hierarchy even in clothes (this is not only true of dance costumes, but is especially important if a headdress is sacred). A head piece should not be put on the floor and should never be covered by pants or a cloth that is used to wrap the lower part of the body.

64 Bandem, *Pandji*.

65 *Triwangsa* is a Balinese term that refers to the three castes *Brahman*, *Ksatria*, and *Wesia*.

66 Wiratini points out that the word *penasar* comes from the Balinese word *dasar* (base or foundation).

67 For a detailed discussion of Gamelan Gambuh and the role of the drum see Asnawa's, "Kendang," 1991.

68 I Dewa Putu Berata, personal communication, 7 January 1997. This was a sentiment expressed to me by several students at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia, Denpasar who had substantial difficulty learning the dance because the musical accompaniment was very complex and subtle. Exceptionally talented music students who were excellent gamelan gong kebyar performers had great difficulty memorizing the long melodies and complicated drum patterns of gamelan Gambuh. Personal observation, August 1994-June 1995.

69 Asnawa, "Kendang," 29.

70 The five different *tetekep* are: *tetekep selisir*, *tetekep sunaren*, *tetekep tembung*, *tetekep baro*, and *tetekep lebeng*.

71 Asnawa, "Kendang," 36.

72 Asnawa, "Kendang," 106-107.

73 I Wayan Dibia, "Odalan of Hindu Bali: A Religious Festival, a Social Occasion, and a Theatrical Event," *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no.1 (1985): 61-65.

74 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*.

75 There is one group in the village of Batuan that performs twice a month and is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. This is the only such group on the island. The other groups perform quite infrequently, perhaps once every few months, depending on "demand."

76 Personal communication. Bapak I Ketut Kantor, 7 January 1997.

77 Geertz, *Negara*.

78 Ariyanto, "Gambuh," 221.

79 To a certain extent this still happens in the *puri* (palaces) for very important occasions. In January 1997, I witnessed the cremation of the last king of Ubud. The ceremonies and performances, including gambuh, went on for several days and nights. The Gambuh group, however, did not "belong" to the palace; they were visiting guests who were paying their respects to the king rather than the personal retinue of performers that were supported directly by the courts themselves.

80 Wiratini, "Condong," 25-26.

81 de Zoete and Spies, *Dance*, 135.