

Three Transitional Texts: Turn of the Century Balinese Views of the World¹

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Discussions of modernity in Bali have generally taken as their starting point the final conquest of the last of the independent Balinese kingdoms, Badung and Klungkung, that took place in 1906-1908 and led to the full incorporation of the island into the Dutch colonial state. Nevertheless, for over sixty years prior to these final military encounters between the traditional precolonial order and the colonial state, a long, if somewhat unevenly felt, Dutch presence had brought to the Balinese first-hand knowledge and direct experience of the West. Initial contact between Bali and the West took place during the first Dutch voyage to the Indies in 1597. In spite of an initial warm welcome and a vain hope on the part of the Dutch that Hindu Bali would act as a buffer against Islam, for the next two hundred years the Dutch and Balinese virtually ignored each other. Although important in the slave-trade, Bali offered few other economic benefits that would prove attractive to the VOC. Intensive Dutch colonial interest in Bali therefore began only in the 1820s after the Napoleonic wars when Anglo-Dutch rivalry and an expansionist colonial climate more generally set in train a policy of incorporating the outer islands into the colonial state. From the first tentative overtures to the Balinese rulers in 1817-1818 when the Dutch envoy H.N. Van den Broek declared that Bali was of little value to the empire nearly a century would pass before the last of the independent Balinese kingdoms fell under Dutch rule. Yet the Dutch conquest of Bali began in the 1840s when a series of military expeditions between 1846 and 1849 brought the northern kingdom of Buleleng and the eastern district of Karangasem under Dutch administration. The first Dutch administrator of North Bali, P.L. Van Bloemen Waanders, was appointed in 1856. From that time on the Balinese, particularly the ruling (*satria*) elite and priestly (*brahmana*) castes, came into regular contact with Europeans. Even in the kingdoms that retained their independence for another half a century, the presence of the Dutch was a political and social reality that mediated Balinese views of the themselves and the wider world.

The first modern (printed, romanized) publications in Bali did not emerge until the 1920s when the colonial order was well-established. At this time, vigorous debates about modernity, the role of caste and status and of modern education became the focus of local attention. These debates, carefully nurtured by those colonial officials who recognised the imperative of the responsibility both to preserve Balinese culture and to provide the benefits

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of modern administrative and educational systems, had lasting consequences for the legal and social codification of Balinese culture and society.²

Although the documentation of Bali in the nineteenth century by Dutch officials, administrators and visitors is extensive, views reflective of Balinese reactions to new contexts are scarce. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to think that Balinese intellectuals, writers and thinkers were somehow immured in a traditionally-oriented isolation in which Balinese precolonial ways continued to flourish. Throughout this transitional period, much certainly remained of the centuries-old literary and religious traditions; older literary forms continued to be written and rulers continued to be generous patrons of the literary and performing arts, but new Balinese modes of understanding expressed in textual forms are in evidence from the 1850s. Recent research indicates that there existed a kind of early modernity in the second half of the nineteenth century that sought its expression in traditional textual frameworks as Balinese writers attempted to make sense of the expanding world of colonial imperialism. Such texts have generally been depicted as local responses to moments of political and social crisis and there is much evidence to suggest that textual composition and copying were undertaken frequently for a variety of personal and public reasons.³ Most notable amongst the texts that sought to interpret the modern in terms of the traditional is ‘tales of destruction’ (the *Uug* or *Rereg* texts), a series of Balinese poems (*geguritan*) written in the final decades of the nineteenth century dealing with both conflicts against the Dutch and internal Balinese wars.⁴ Only two, the *Geguritan Perang Banjar* and the *Kidung Nderet*, have been analysed in detail.⁵ Another early twentieth century text of note is the *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran*, a rather unusual Balinese *geguritan* written between 13 May and October 1903 in Malay by the last independent ruler of Badung, Cokorda Made Agung (Cokorda Mantuk di Rana) of Puri Satria, Badung, who died in fighting against the Dutch in 1906. This text has attracted considerable scholarly attention because of its ‘unique status’ in providing evidence of early Balinese modernity. The *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran* is the earliest known Balinese text

² For the discussion and analysis of Balinese literary responses to modernity see I Nyoman Darma Putra, ‘A Literary Mirror: Balinese Reflections of Modernity and Identity in the Twentieth Century’ (PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2003).

³ See Adrian Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created* (Ringwood: Penguin 1989), pp. 72-73, and his later analysis in Adrian Vickers, ‘Modernity and Being *Moderen*: An Introduction,’ pp. 10-11, in Adrian Vickers (ed.), *Being Modern in Bali: Image and Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 1-37. Examples of personal responses include the copying of texts while waiting for someone to die, and while waiting for someone gone travelling, as well as at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1942. See Helen Creese, ‘Pieces in the Puzzle: The Dating of Several Kakwin from Bali and Lombok,’ *Archipel* 52 (1996): 143-171; Raechelle Rubinstein, ‘Colophons as a Tool for Mapping the Literary History of Bali: Ida Pedanda Made Sidemen—Poet, Author and Scribe’ *Archipel* 52 (1996): 173-191.

⁴ See Henk Schulte Nordholt, ‘Origin, Descent and Destruction: Text and Context in Balinese Representations of the Past,’ *Indonesia* 54 (1992): 27-58.

⁵ For the discussion of the *Geguritan Banjar*, see Raechelle Rubinstein, ‘Allegiance and Alliance: The Banjar War of 1868,’ in A. Vickers (ed.), *Being Modern in Bali: Image and Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 38-90; for the analysis of the *Kidung Nderet*, see Schulte Nordholt, ‘Origin, Descent and Destruction,’ pp. 42-53.

written in the language that would later become the national language of Indonesia. It was first brought to the attention of scholars by C.C. Hooykaas who noted the text as a Balinese contribution to Malay literature.⁶ It has also been the subject of detailed analysis in an article by Shaleh Saidi in 1985 and, most recently, Wendy Mukherjee has highlighted the Islamic elements in the text and presented it as the author's 'conscious attempt to engage the Balinese audience with Islamic values'.⁷ Malay had been the lingua franca for communication across the archipelago for a very long time and facility in Malay was by no means unusual in the Balinese courts of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the writing of a poem in the traditional Balinese *macapat* metres of the *geguritan* genre using Malay rather than Balinese was certainly noteworthy. Although the *geguritan* genre as a whole tends to focus on the real world of Balinese concerns rather than the mythological worlds of ancient India in the case of *kakawin* and the realms of pre-Islamic Java in the case of *kidung*, perhaps the most unusual feature of this text was the commoner hero of the tale, a shift from the more usual courtly concerns of indigenous literature that situated this work firmly in the arena of 'modern' themes. The poet begins his poem with a lengthy moralizing canto in which he notes the struggle he faces to live as a modern ruler and yet to honour god and to serve his people. Interesting though the *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran* is, as the texts discussed here show, its concerns with the new or the modern can no longer be considered unique.

In this paper, I will discuss three other turn of the century Balinese texts, belonging to three different traditional Balinese genres that illustrate a unique blend of the old and the new in Balinese textual activity: the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* (*Atlas of the World Kakawin*), the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis* (*Situation of the Realm of France*), and the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* (*Tale of the Russo-Japanese War*). All three texts were available to me in romanized transcriptions from the Hooykaas-Ketut Sangka (HKS) collection.⁸ Two—the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* and the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis* are copies of palm leaf

⁶ C.C. Hooykaas, 'A Balinese Contribution to Malay Literature,' *Journal of the Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 67 (2):112-115.

⁷ Shaleh Saidi, 'I Nengah Jimbaran: Satu-satunya Geguritan Berbahasa Melayu dalam Lontar Bali,' in Sulastin Sutrisno (ed), *Bahasa-Sasta-Budaya: Ratna Manikam Untaian Persembahan kepada Prof. Dr. P.J. Zoetmulder* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1986), pp. 240-285; Wendy Mukherjee, 'Nights of Power in Bali: The Story of I Nengah Jimbaran Revisited,' *Sarad* 18 (2000): 33-46; p. 33. The Islamic elements in the text are not particularly striking in the wider context of Balinese literature and textual concerns in which Islamic words, titles and concepts are not uncommon, and they should probably be regarded more as integral parts of shared archipelago culture than as overt interest in Islam on the part of the author.

⁸ Kirya manuscripts are held in the Gedong Kirya Collection in Singaraja, Bali; the HKS Collection are romanized transcriptions made as part of the Balinese Manuscript Project established by C.C. Hooykaas in the early 1970s. See Th. Pigeaud, *The Literature of Java: Catalogue Raisonné of Javanese Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Public Collections in the Netherlands. Vol 4. Supplement* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1980), pp. 92-241. A copy of the collection is held in the Menzies Library at the Australian National University. I have developed a Guide and a searchable Index to the collection accessible via the ANU library website at <http://anulib.anu.edu.au/ebooks/bali/index.html>).

manuscripts belonging to the Gedong Kirtya in Singaraja; the third, the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang*, is taken from a handwritten notebook belonging to the collection of I Gusti Putu Jlantik of Puri Kawan, Singaraja.⁹ Each of these texts is in a different way directly concerned with Bali's place in the wider (European) world. None has previously been described in published catalogues of Balinese manuscripts. As is customary in Balinese textual traditions, all three texts are anonymous and their dating is uncertain. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that they were written in the early part of the twentieth century. Contemporary Balinese traditions attribute the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* to Cokorda Made Agung, the author of the *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran*, although he does not specifically identify himself in the text and a number of other Balinese textual experts and literary figures are known to have been working in Bali and interacting regularly with Europeans in this period.¹⁰ These two 'geographical' texts, the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* and the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis*, are registered in the catalogue of the Gedong Kirtya in 1931, a detail that provides a *terminus ante quem* of 1931 for both of these works.¹¹ The *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* provides no specific indication of dating or authorship, but it can be dated with some certainty to the period of the war itself (1904-1905) since the author mentions that his source is a newspaper report (Stanza 5: *ada tuturan mungguh di surat kabar*). The original manuscript belongs to the collection of I Gusti Putu Jlantik, ruler of Buleleng, North Bali. Gusti Putu Jlantik was the foundation curator of the Kirtya established in 1928, as well as a collector of texts and an author in his own right. These links to Gusti Putu Jlantik suggest a late nineteenth or early twentieth century origin. It is possible he may even have been the author of the text himself.

I was initially drawn to these texts by their extraordinary titles and thematic concerns—a geographical text, the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi*, a geo-political text, the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis*, and a historical text, the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang*, that took as its starting point not the local wars against the Dutch or other rival kingdoms but a distant European-Asian war, the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. These titles are markedly different from those usually encountered in lists of traditional Balinese manuscripts and genres and pointed to a radical shift in the possibilities of textual expression at the turn of the century. Although I had not had the opportunity to read the text, I already knew of the existence of the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi*, a *kakawin* dealing with world geography, an unusual thematic concern in a genre dedicated to the heroic exploits and romantic adventures of the

⁹ The HKS transcription does not indicate if the original is in Balinese or roman characters.

¹⁰ Active literary figures of the period include Pedanda Ngurah of Blayu, Tabanan, Padanda Wayan Kekeran of Taman Intaran Sanur, Badung, Ida Pedanada Made Sidemen of Sanur and I Gusti Putu Jlantik, ruler of Buleleng.

¹¹ *Mededeelingen van de Kirtya Liefrinck-Van der Tuuk* Singaraja, Bali, 3 (1931).

heroes of the great Sanskrit epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*;¹² a *tutur* concerning France (*gumi Prancis*) pointed to a striking new direction in the *tutur* genre since *tutur* are generally concerned with didactic and ethical issues and offer advice and guidance to religious and ritual experts, while the *Payudan Rus-Jepang* was a readily identifiable historical event that might be expected to illuminate Balinese views of the wider world. The analysis of each of these texts revealed a number of surprises.

Kakawin Atlas Bumi (Atlas of the World Kakawin)

- Author: attributed to Cokorda Made Agung
- Date of Composition: c. 1903 (?)
- Manuscript: HKS1292 (Kirtya K496); 13 double-sided leaves (1b-13b)
- Genre: Kakawin

This work is written in traditional *kakawin* style, the style of Old Javanese epic poetry and the oldest literary form known in the Indonesian archipelago. This *kakawin* is therefore a poem written in Old Javanese language, comprising four-line stanzas in fixed patterns of long and short syllables derived from Sanskrit metres; it is divided into eighteen cantos. It begins with the traditional *manggala* or invocation of a deity, in this case the goddess of learning and knowledge Saraswati as well as a number of other manifestations of the supreme god. The poem itself begins with the evocation of the seven continents of Indian tradition (*saptadwipa*) based on the Old Javanese *Brahmandapurana*, a text believed to date from the earliest period of Old Javanese literature, and to be contemporaneous with the tenth-century Old Javanese versions (*parwa*) of the *Mahabharata*. The solar and planetary systems are also described.¹³ From India (Jambudwipa), which has thousands of cities and is greater than China, the poet takes the reader/listener on a journey around the world, where all lands are great and every ruler is wise and all-powerful. In other words the language of the text and the attributes of the geographical and political features described in it conform to the expectations of the *kakawin* genre.

The lesson in world geography begins in Asia (Asya) which lies to the south of Christian Europe. In order, the countries and cities described are Turkey, Abyssinia (Abesi?), Egypt and Alexandria, Tunisia, Tarum (?), and the ‘Islamic lands.’¹⁴ The Turks are said to be

¹² See Helen Creese, ‘The Balinese *Kakawin* Tradition: A Preliminary Description and Inventory’ *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 155 (1999): 45-96; p.70.

¹³ The corresponding description of the seven continents in the *Brahmandapurana* is found in section 22 of the Old Javanese text. The solar and planetary system are described in Section 23. See I Gusti Putu Phalgunadi, *The Indonesian Brahmandapurana* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2000), pp. 298-339.

¹⁴ The poet’s source was probably a Dutch atlas of the period. In addition to contemporary atlases, in attempting to trace and identify the geographical place names, I have made use of two atlases of the period, a school atlas from 1861, A. K. Johnston, *School Atlas of Physical Geography: Illustrated in a*

white-skinned like Europeans. The next group of places named includes Arab(ia), Baghdad, Yemen, Mecca, and Persia. This account is followed by a description of India (nageri Hindu), Sri Langka (Lengkapura), Bengal (Banggala), Siam (Siyam), Malaka, Bharatawarsa (usually the 'realm of Bharata' or India, but here perhaps referring to the Indies as a whole), and the Indonesian islands comprising Sumatra, Java (Yawarajya), Bali (Bahlika), Sumbawa (Sembawa), Flores (Paloris) and Timor (Timur); then north to Malayu, Borneo (Burniya?), Makassar, Moluku, Buru and Ternate. At this point mention is made of Australia (Ostralya) and Papua (Papuwa) before the trajectory turns north again to Manila, China, Japan, Annam and Taiwan (Taikwan?).¹⁵

Canto 3 takes up a description of Europe with a particular focus on Russia, perhaps suggesting that there may be a link between this text and the ongoing tensions in Russian and Japanese relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when this text is assumed to have been written. Other place names within this Russian ambit include Lapland, Kurland (Kurlan), Polan(d), Moscow (Musko), which is described as Christian, Moldavia (Murdapy?) and Bulgaria. Turkey is mentioned again as a nation of conquerors together with its great city Istanbul, before the journey turns northwards again to Serbia (Serpyani), Albania (Ngalabanika), and Bosnia, Prussia (Proesen), Germany (Dwetslan?), Denmark (Danamarika) and Scandinavia (Skanapiya); then south again to Porsen (Prussia again?), the Netherlands (Nederlan), Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal before returning full circle to north Africa with additional mentions of Abyssinia, Algiers, Tunisia, and Egypt, followed by Switzerland (Itserlan), Austria (Ustenrik), Italy and Turyan (?).¹⁶

Canto 4 begins by noting that Greece is subservient to Turkey, mentions the island of Crete (Kandya), and that Russia is comparable to Java in size (!), with Persia to its south and Asia on its perimeter. Across the wide seas (from Bali perhaps) lies the Netherlands and the island of England, Ireland (Nirlan?), Din(ya) (?) and Iceland (Islan), all populated with white-skinned people. North of Din is a wide sea and an island called Transpil (?).¹⁷ At this point the poet seems to have become overwhelmed with the sheer strangeness of the names and places he is describing. He notes that it would take too long to tell of it all, and then goes on to

Series of Original Designs; Elementary Facts of Geology, Hydrology, Meteorology, and Natural History (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1861), and a German atlas from 1905, Adolf Stieler, *Stieler's Hand-Atlas: 100 Karten in Kupferstich mit 162 Nebenkarten* (Gotha: J. Perthes, 1905). My choice of these two atlases was determined arbitrarily by their availability at the time I was writing this paper.

¹⁵ In Johnston (1861) the term Papua is used to designate the island of Papua-New Guinea; in Stieler's 1905 atlas it is termed New Guinea, reflecting German possession of the northern sections of the island between 1884-1914.

¹⁶ The mention of Turyan in the same stanza as Switzerland, Austria and Turkey points to the possibility that this reference may be to the town of Turija in the southern part of the Russian empire in 1905 (Stielers, *Atlas*, Map 18, B25).

¹⁷ I have not been able to identify either Din (Dinya?) or Transpil. The inclusion of Transpil in a list with countries in the Atlantic and its description as an island makes it unlikely that the reference is to Transylvania in spite of the superficial similarity of the names.

complain that he finds reading the lore/literature of Europe very arduous, and we should forgive his meagre and unsuccessful attempts to render it in verse (4.9: *sastra Eropa ya susah gatingkwa wacan/ampun rehnya kalepatanya ring palambang*).

Nevertheless, he perseveres with his description. It seems likely that the author had an atlas open before him as he wrote his poem; the world is presented in flat view. Not only are England, Ireland and Iceland grouped together as they would conventionally be placed on a map of northern Europe, but Canto 5 begins with the description of a great land, the Americas, from whose southern tip Papua can be seen; Africa is then said to balance (*timbang*) the American continent. In the north are Greenland and Japan, then a wide sweep to Madagascar (Abesi is mentioned again) as is trade with India. America is said to be the place where exiles from Europe have taken residence; it has the language, religion and traditions of England but no king. It has mighty armies and in the past there were black-skinned people just as in Africa.¹⁸ It is unable to be defeated. The poet then mentions it would take too long to tell of all this, the customary phrase used to indicate changes of scene and shifts in narrative in *kakawin* poetry.

At canto 10, the poem indeed changes focus in order to draw the earlier global view back to a world familiar to the poet. The ancient links between India and Java are mentioned and then a list of important figures from Bali's shared past with Javanese literary and historical traditions is provided: Kanwa, who is said to be the ruler of Java, although he is remembered only as the court poet of Airlangga (ruled 1016-1049), the heroes of the epics, most notably the Pandawas and Korawas, Krishna and Bhoma, the demons Kangsa and Niwatakawaca, and finally mythical and historical rulers such as Udayana, Aridharma and Janggala. The essential unity of the religious traditions that incorporate Manu, Siwa, Buddha, Brahma and the priests (*pandita*) is stressed. Paramasiwa and Paramabuda are said to be as one.¹⁹ The Hindu religion is practised and the Indians, Javanese and Balinese all adhere to the teachings of Manu; there are no evil-doers. Following the destruction of Manu in Java, the learned ones fled to Bali by way of Balambangan while Islamic rulers seized power in Majapahit (Wilwatikta) from the great rulers, Brawijaya and Harsawijaya.

In the following section of the poem at Canto 14, the poet states he will tell again of Europe and America in which he stresses the splendour of their geographical settings and the power of their people in sailing the world in steam ships (*kapal agöng amawa bahni*, literally great boats bearing fire), their carts (*dokar*) and buildings (*gudang*), their factories (*pabrik*),

¹⁸ This may be a reference to the slave trade and/or the American civil war, but insufficient detail is given in the poem to allow any conclusion.

¹⁹ *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* 13.4. This reference to the essential unity of Buddhism and Siwaism in the archipelago reflects the doctrine of *bhinneka tunggal ika* (though different they are one) found in the fourteenth century *kakawin Sutasoma* (139.5) which, with independence in 1945, became the motto of the Indonesian state.

their houses (*wesma*) and books (*buku*), their languages and art works, their ability to read and write, their knowledge of the world their learned doctors, their laws and their wealth. The final stanza (18.2) contains the customary *kakawin* poet's apology for the mediocrity of his creative efforts.

In spite of this journey around the world, the poet reveals little information about any of the places mentioned. His poem is in fact little more than a geographical roll-call to which is appended a brief history of religion and belief systems in the archipelago and a final appreciative note concerning some of the strengths of Euro-American civilization.

Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis (Situation of the Realm of France)

Author: Unknown

Date of composition: early 20th century

Manuscript: HKS15/25 (Kirtya K390/18); 18 double-sided leaves (1b-18a)

Genre: Tutur (prose treatise)

Like the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi*, the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis* begins by locating the 'foreign' geographically: north of the ocean, across the Channel from England, with Eslan (?) and Switzerland to the east, Belgium to the north and Spain to the south; it is ringed by the Mediterranean (Rumani) Sea and the Bay of Biscay, with its land borders noted as the Urals, the Alps which are shared with Italy and Switzerland, and the Pyrenees shared with Spain.²⁰ Its rivers included the Rhone (Rona), the Dwi (?) and the Diro (?). It is described as heavily populated by the wise who are predominantly Christian, while a few are Jewish. Physically the French are described as white-skinned with black hair; they stand tall and straight (*lansing*). Moreover, they are astute, firm, sincere and well-educated. Their beliefs are very different to those of the Balinese; they are unaware of the existence of the seen and unseen worlds—the *sakala* and *niskala*. Unlike the Dutch they eat horse flesh and their horse butchers are highly skilled (!).

The greatest city is Paris with millions of inhabitants, guarded by soldiers at its great gates; it has wide streets that are well maintained and straight; they are busy by day and by night, filled with men and women. There are crowded markets, shops and eating houses. Along each side of the streets are buildings three, four, five even six storeys high. Performances are held with *wayang wong*, dancing, displays of arms and troops in formation. In fact it is just like the realm of the god Indra (*Indrabhuwana*) in its splendour. There are learned priests (scientists?), the *bhujangga* and *wiku*, who have great knowledge and who discourse on forests, plants, hunting, herbal remedies (medicines?) and languages. There are

²⁰ It is unlikely that Eslan can be Iceland which can hardly be described as lying 'to the east of France.' No other possible interpretations suggest themselves at present.

bhujangga who investigate the earth and the skies, the moon, sun, stars and rainbows and other natural phenomena. These learned ones travel the world to distant lands. In Paris there are those who are expert in the art of hot air balloons that fly through the air made of poles and sails of silk, hold ten or twenty people, and are powered by ground coconut oil which causes them to rise and be blown by the wind. Other craft workers include carvers, painters, weavers and spinners of silk and other fine cloths, as well as painters on cloth, all of whom are as skilled as those in Bali. Outside Paris are other great cities with large populations stretching down to the Mediterranean sea, including Lyons, Bordeaux and Marseilles.

The land has no king but is called a Republic with the greatest dignity in the land called a President. He rules only for four years. Outside the city, crops and vines are cultivated and there are industries of coal, oil, iron; they export furnishings and cloth. The land is well-armed with war ships, steamers and troops; the flag is red, white and black (blue). It has command over other lands, including Corsica in the Mediterranean, Algiers in Africa, the island of Bourbon (Bubon = Reunion) in the ocean, and in Africa and Guyana, Gua Gede Island (?), and the mountain(s) Metir Nitio (?).

Next the writer tells of the greatness of the Europeans, who travel in their ships to other lands and are an example to be followed. In comparison to the Balinese, Javanese, Muslims (*wong Islam*) and Chinese who believe in herbal remedies, *rarajahan* (magical drawings), witches and black magic, the Europeans have set those beliefs aside and go everywhere in their ships bringing knowledge of other places.

The text then turns to Bali where there are reported to be powerful practitioners in rain magic, where the use of magic formulas and plants is common and where there are many irrigated fields planted with rice. But there is drought in Karangasem and Bangli. Karangasem is renowned for its literature and lore and knowledge of mantras, but there are those who turn to the left-path of magic (black magic). A number of rituals are described. In spite of the power of the land it has been overpowered in ferocious battles and is ruled by the Dutch. The lexical problems and obscurities in this part of the text makes it difficult to provide a detailed summary of the next six or seven leaves, but the sense seems to be that the breakdown of religious and social order is responsible for the harsh conditions. At the beginning of 15a the text is marked as complete (*telas*).

The author then adds what can be best described as an appendix based on the *Kanda Bhuwana*, literally the *Treatise about the World* and presumably referring to an atlas, which is said to contain the knowledge to which the Europeans have access. He provides a summary of the contents of this book, including the page numbers of the atlas on which each country mentioned can be found. The list begins with a description of the solar system and comprises the major countries of the world, starting with Europe and Holland on p. 29 and ending in Greece on p. 210. The source text thus appears to be a comprehensive atlas or almanac. The

thematic link to the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* is obvious and striking but there are no direct textual links between these two works. It is possible they share a common authorship, though the references to the district of Karangasem points to an east Balinese origin for this text.

The first part of the *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis* gives a recognisable picture of France in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. In contrast to the *Kakawin Atlas* which must meet the poetical and structural requirements of *kakawin* metres, this prose work allows for a more straight forward, largely factual description. The references to the great city of Paris, to hot air balloons and performances, and the showcasing of France's agricultural and industrial richness points to the possibility that the author may have been drawing on reports of one of the World Fairs held in Paris in this period, possibly those held in 1889 or 1900.²¹ The high rise buildings of up to six stories point to the turn of the century rather than a later decade. Whether the author himself had travelled to Europe is uncertain; the final section of the work with the summary of the atlas points to a written text rather than personal experience. There is a hint that the author finds his own society wanting in comparison to the Europeans.

Awian Payudan Rus-Jepang (Tale of the Russo-Japanese War)

Author: I Kontol

Date of Composition: 1904-1905 (?)

Manuscript: HKS4102; 10 pages

Genre: Geguritan (Durma)

The *Awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* is a *geguritan*, a poem written in Balinese *macapat* metres. The metre used is Durma in which the number of syllables and the final vowel is set in the following pattern: 12a, 7i, 6a, 7a, 8i, 5a, 8i. The text comprises 49 stanzas but there is an indication that it may be incomplete. At the end of the text the narrative is unresolved and a second canto may have been intended or has been lost.²²

The theme of the poem is as the title suggests the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. The author who calls himself I Kontol wrote the poem while ill in bed for six days. He notes that he was inspired by a story in a newspaper (*surat kabar*). The author's non-de-plume is the first indication that this text is not all it may seem, for Kontol in Balinese means 'penis.'

²¹ Balinese performing arts were first introduced to the Western audiences at the Paris Colonial Exposition of 1931, but this event is too late to be a possible source for the author of *Tutur Kahananing Gumi Prancis* which was written before 1931, when it was incorporated into the Kirtya collection.

²² It is common in *macapat* poetry for the metre of the following canto to be indicated in the last lines, often cleverly disguised. The second last line of this poem contains the word *kasinoman*, literally 'a group of young men in service' but used in other historical Balinese texts, including the *Kidung Sunda* and *Rangga Lawe*, to announce the metre of the following canto as Sinom. See P.J. Zoetmulder, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), p. 1775.

On the surface the story concerns a battle between the Russians and the Japanese, fought in the conventional terms of modern warfare. There are steamships (*kapal api*), torpedos (*torpedo*), grenades (*jernat*), and canons (*mariyem*); there is a host of Western military officials—generals, colonels, captains, corporals, sergeants, adjutants and rank and file soldiers. On closer inspection, however, this poem reveals little insight into the actual historical battle that led to Russia's defeat by the Japanese fleet in May 1905, and is instead an erotic text. In stanza 11, two Balinese figures are introduced as participants in the war, Si Pasta who fights for the Russians and Si Baga who takes the side of the Japanese. The battle between these two is ferocious and related in a similar way to countless other battle scenes in Balinese traditional poetry genres. But Pasta and Baga are no ordinary combatants because their names are the *kawi* words (via Sanskrit) for penis and vulva respectively, and the battle is a graphic description of sexual intercourse, a contest between the male principle, *purusa*, and the female principle, *pradana* (stanza 11).²³ The metaphorical battle of sexual activity is a familiar trope from other traditional Balinese literary genres. This text however, draws not so much on poetical tropes as on the sexual manuals which describe the use of sex as a yogic practice for the procreation of children and a means of union with the divine.²⁴

Following the introductory stanzas in which I Kontol describes his illness and how god Widhi has inspired him to compose poetry even though he has not yet been cured. The text begins conventionally enough with a description of the mighty Russian and Japanese armies fighting the war (stanzas 5-10). Both sides are equally brave and ferocious and bring to bear their mighty weapons, including an arsenal of torpedoes and bullets that destroy and sink ships. Like Arjuna gifted with his arrow, the tongue of death (Mretujiwa), they display their power, but no victory is in sight. At his point (stanza 11) the two heroes Pasta and Baga are introduced to fight on the side of the Russians and Japanese respectively. Although Baga represents the female principle, (s)he is not depicted as explicitly female and is portrayed as an equal to Pasta in battle. With a huge and gaping mouth, pointed teeth, chomping jaws and a lolling spitting tongue, dark lips curled in insult this description is reminiscent of Durga in demonic form as Rangda, the evil witch of the Balinese sacred Barong dance. Pasta is renowned in battle; he can enter secret places and holes, he is extraordinarily fierce, as firm as iron, his veins pulse; his skin is black (stanzas 15-17). After this initial description of the two

²³ The term *kawi* means 'the language of poets' and refers in Bali to the languages described in the secondary literature as Old Javanese, Middle Javanese and Javano-Balinese. The mix of Javanese and Balinese lexical units varies considerably, but most *geguritan* including this one are heavily influenced by Balinese. Nevertheless, the language of this text is very difficult and large sections of it have so far defied understanding even with the help of Balinese colleagues.

²⁴ For a discussion of nineteenth-century Balinese erotic literature, including passages in which sexual activity is graphically described in similar ways to the battle in the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang*; see, Helen Creese and Laura Bellows, 'Erotic Literature in Nineteenth-Century Bali,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 33 (2002): 385-413.

Balinese protagonists, the scene then shifts back to a Western perspective and a description of the many ranks of troops all willing to fight. A raging battle ensues, with cannons going ‘dor, der dar’, rifles firing, bullets and grenades in ever increasing numbers falling in the sea, torpedoes making their way into the centre of the ocean to destroy the ships, spinning them round and smashing them to pieces.

On land, general fights against general, colonels stab each other, captains vie with captains, corporals with corporals, sergeants and adjutants come to blows; elephants fight elephants, horses attack horses and camels pit themselves against camels. Carts and chariots clash and their drivers battle ferociously, hacking at each other with spears and swords. In conventional poetical metaphors, the corpses pile up like a mountain, the blood forms an ocean until finally the Sun feeling pity for those below covers himself in his sarong and night falls. Even at night when the troops return to the camps, the fighting continues.

Again the text changes perspective to focus on Pasta and Baga. The language in the following stanzas (31-44) is obscure and presents a number of problems, but the description appears to be frankly erotic. Pasta is described as battling fiercely, repeatedly stabbing with thrusts, mad with lust as he moves in and out. He is said to be naked with no nose, no ears, no eyes, just a mouth. Baga shows no fear, her mouth gapes open, licking and chewing, uncaring when stabbed again and again. As a gift from the gods these two fulfil their purpose, becoming fiercer and fiercer. At the end of the battle Pasta is left spent and exhausted. The text ends at this point.

Modernities and new modes of seeing

In spite of their apparently modern themes and their focus on the world outside Bali, each of the texts discussed in this paper incorporates linguistic, textual, cultural and thematic concerns drawn from traditional literary forms and tropes. Each of them is a composite text that combines the old and the new. None is precisely ‘coherent,’ at least not in the sense that Westerner readers expect a work to be structured around a unified theme. Instead the texts are somewhat disjointed, as if the authors starting out in one direction with perhaps unfamiliar themes, are not sure how to tackle these new ideas within traditional literary contexts. Nevertheless, each of these texts provides clear evidence of new directions in writing. Although set in a wider, global context, each of them also incorporates the familiar world of Balinese experience—the mythological history of Bali in the case of the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi*, the magical supernatural realm of black magic in the *Tutur Kahanaan Gumi Prancis*, and erotic literature in the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang*. The authors draw on the full repertoire of classical references and Indic literary inspiration, but the setting also incorporates the modern world.

Rather than drawing on the literary and textual heritage of their own culture, or recounting personal experiences, each of the authors makes use of a Western source and inscribes on it traditional classical concerns. One particularly striking feature of the two geographical texts is that they represent a physical re-textualization from Western printed sources—atlas or almanacs—back into the form of *lontar* palm-leaf manuscripts.²⁵ In the case of the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* there is no information available to ascertain whether the original composition was recorded on paper, or whether the paper version was itself a copy of a palm leaf manuscript. Of the three texts considered in this paper, the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* juxtaposes traditional Balinese epistemological domains and the modern world in the most unusual way. In the first place the author's source is a newspaper. It is not certain what newspapers may have been available to I Kontol at the time. There were no vernacular newspapers in Balinese and it seems probable the source was a Dutch newspaper. The Indies Dutch language press provided extensive coverage of the Russo-Japanese conflict with daily bulletins in the Telegrammen sections of newspapers such as the *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* and *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* throughout 1904 until the end of the conflict in May 1905, as well as regular feature articles on Japan and Russia throughout the period of the war. These brief journalistic descriptions provide an episodic coverage of the battles that matches well the trope of battle-scenes in Balinese traditional poetical genres. The newspaper coverage contains many of the elements described in the Balinese text—particularly in the descriptions of the Japanese torpedo attacks on Port Arthur that broke out on 8 February 1904, the escalating war that led to the fall of Port Arthur on 2 January 1905, and the final defeat of the Russian fleet by Admiral Togo in the battle of Tsushima on 27-29 May 1905. There appears to be no obvious reason for a Balinese poet to choose the Russo-Japanese war as the setting for an erotic narrative, and the *Awi-awian Payudan Rus-Jepang* should probably be considered an idiosyncratic expression of the author's personal concerns and interests.

Each of these the texts appears to be an individual response to new and apparently interesting stimuli drawn from the wider corpus of textual works that became available in the early twentieth century. Balinese authors were no longer forced to rely solely on traditional themes or literary motifs. In spite of the use of poetical forms such as *kakawin* or *geguritan*, they do not seem to have been written or used for oral performance; in fact they appear to be random, individual textual explorations, preserved serendipitously through their incorporation into public collections in the initial phase of Dutch-sponsored collection and preservation of

²⁵ I am grateful to Professor Campbell McKnight, my co-panelist at the conference, for drawing my attention to this feature of these texts. There are examples of Balinese copyists in the twentieth century making new palm leaf *lontar* copies of published editions of *kakawin*. See the discussion of this phenomenon in S. Supomo, *Bharatayuddha: An Old Javane Poem and Its Indian Sources* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1993), pp. 41-42.

Balinese manuscripts in the 1920s and 1930s. None of these works is known in more than one manuscript, again pointing to individual textual concerns.

What is less clear, and requires further research and analysis, is the purpose these texts may have served. This preliminary analysis suggests that they cannot be seen in conventional analytical terms as responses to ‘moments of crises.’ Other works by Cokorda Made Agung, the author of the *Kakawin Atlas Bumi* have been depicted as responses to crisis. Adrian Vickers, for example, describes the composition of the *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran* as a moral and ethical response to the colonial crisis, although there is actually little in the work itself to support such a view.²⁶ Similarly, Henk Schulte Nordholt suggests that a second poem ascribed to the Cokorda Made Agung, the *Kidung Purwa Sanghara*, probably written in 1905 which relates the deaths of the gods and heroes of Indian mythology, also ‘reflects the premonition of approaching ruin.’²⁷ The period around 1903 and 1904 certainly saw a shift in Dutch colonial policy to a more aggressive stance on the question of Bali under Governors-General Rooseboom (1898-1904) and his successor J.B. van Heutz (1904-1910). The first direct clash that eventually culminated in the military attacks of 1906 and 1908, was a case of widow-burning (*sati*) in Tabanan in 1903, and shortly after, in 1904, the plundering of a Chinese junk of the Badung coast, the very issue that had provoked the first Dutch military expeditions against the Balinese over sixty years earlier in 1846-1849.²⁸ As we have already noted there is clear nineteenth-century evidence of textual activity in Bali in times of crisis, and it is certainly possible that a sense of impending doom prevailed at the turn of the century and may well have sparked a flurry of textual activity. Thematically, however, the three texts discussed in this paper are more outward-looking than these other works; they are imbued more with a sense of curiosity about the world than with a guarded, partially nostalgic, response to events. The analysis presented here must be considered preliminary, a first step in the wider exploration of early twentieth century writing in Bali. Nevertheless, these three texts indicate the existence of a more diverse textual universe in Bali at the turn of the twentieth century than we have known in the past.

²⁶ Vickers, *Being Modern*, p.16. The text referred to as *Geguritan Siang Malam* by Vickers is actually the preamble (stanzas 1-20) to the *Geguritan Nengah Jimbaran* not a separate literary work.

²⁷ Henk Schulte Nordholt, *The Spell of Power: A History of Balinese Politics, 1650-1940* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), p.212.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-12.