



Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic, and Colonial Conquest in Bali.

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from the British, Indians are shown significantly to have moulded the contours of orientalist discourse. In remaining alive to indigenous agency, this study complements a growing body of work that has grown weary of the limitations of Edward Said's 'textualist' brand of discourse analysis and shows that Orientalist discourse was much more of a historically contingent, dialogic phenomenon that developed by process of opportunistic bricolage than previously appreciated.

The heart of the book consists of a multifaceted analysis of the changing relationships between different groups in (and beyond) Sirohi up until Independence as they were informed by newly emergent notions – deriving from Enlightenment ideas about the nation-state and civil society – of territorial sovereignty, political legitimacy, and criminality. The introduction of Western institutional regimes such as the census and revenue assessment are given due consideration in this process. In this inquiry, however, Vidal eschews the blunt instrument of the familiar analytic dichotomy between 'the colonizers' and 'the colonized' and instead charts significant social fault lines within each of these categories, with the creative possibilities for shifting alliances entailed therein, in order to interpret some of the more curious incidents of Sirohi's later colonial history. To this end, Vidal carefully distinguishes among the interests of different levels of British colonial administration as he does among Sirohi's reigning dynasty, Rajput nobility, tribal population and merchant community, and he shows how these varied interests sometimes combined in alliance and sometimes were opposed. In adopting this fine-grained analysis, Vidal shows how each group was differentially positioned in its interactions with the new regimes of truth that emerged in Sirohi and, thus, he is able to explain why some groups managed the colonial encounter with greater degrees of skill and success than others.

If there is a missed opportunity in this stimulating book, it lies in the author's reluctance to trace the implications of his research for understanding the development of various forms of political discourse in Sirohi (and Rajasthan more generally) after Independence both within the Congress Party and, perhaps more importantly, among the parties of the Hindu right. After masterfully proving the need for deeply contextualized analyses of local politics during the later colonial era, Vidal curiously abandons his commitment when it comes to the post-colonial era with his suggestion that politics in Sirohi became inconsequential with the growing importance of the Rajasthan-wide Praja Mandal and the nationalist administration (pp. 248–50). However, we know that the discourse on kingship did not disappear after Independence but has been reinvigorated yet again with new meanings. As Peter van der Veer

(*Religious nationalism*, 1994) has shown, the discourse on the righteous Hindu monarch has become a central organizing trope for India's main Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, and as Rob Jenkins argues ('Where the BJP survived: Rajasthan Assembly Elections 1993': *Economic and Political Weekly*, 635–41, 1994), this discourse has developed in rather different ways among the BJP in Rajasthan than elsewhere in India. Vidal's close-to-the-ground analysis of the changing politics of kingship could help illuminate the regional diversities within the Hindu right as well as the divergences between various levels of organization (local, regional, national). But perhaps this analysis is best kept for another book.

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WIENER, MARGARET J. *Visible and invisible realms: power, magic, and colonial conquest in Bali*. xiv, 445 pp., illus., bibliogr. Chicago, London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995. £55.95 (cloth), £20.75 (paper)

Anyone interested in Bali, Southeast Asian kingship or historical anthropology should read this important book. Based on intensive fieldwork, direct access to Balinese texts and additional data from colonial archives, Margaret Wiener offers a detailed and challenging analysis of the power of the rulers of Klungkung, the smallest but most paramount Balinese kingdom, from the early nineteenth century till 1908 when it was conquered by the Dutch.

In an elegant style Wiener offers a new perspective on the nature of Balinese kingship. Her argument is twofold. First, Dutch colonial officials have failed to understand the power of the ruler of Klungkung, the *Dewa Agung*, and since then there has not been much improvement in this matter either, because of a persistent misinterpretation that makes a wrong distinction between a questionable 'spiritual' authority of the *Dewa Agung* over the rest of Bali, and his limited 'political' power. Wiener argues that this image was part of a colonial discourse that aimed to dismantle the true power of Klungkung.

Secondly, Wiener tries to demonstrate what this true power was about by emphasizing the mediating role of the ruler of Klungkung between the visible world of human beings and the invisible world of gods and spirits. It is in this invisible world that the hegemony of the *Dewa Agung* was rooted. More important, however, is her claim this hegemony was more 'real' than has been assumed thus far. The image Wiener presents is that of a ruler-cum-sorcerer who was at critical moments obeyed by the other Balinese kings.

In order to demonstrate her point Wiener summarizes in Part 1 the Dutch misrepresentation of Klungkung's ruler, and presents the

Balinese ideological conception of royal rule based on Klungkung's key text, the *Babad Dalem*. This chronicle explains the divine origins of Klungkung's power and tells how in a distant past Javanese noblemen established a new hierarchy in Bali which was embodied in the court of Gelgel and how, after a period of disorder, hegemony was re-established in Klungkung. To my knowledge this is one of the most challenging discussions of the theory of Southeast Asian kingship since von Heine-Geldern (who is, strangely enough, not even mentioned by Wiener), and Clifford Geertz's well known *Negara*.

In Part 2 Wiener shows the *Dewa Agung* in action in his dealings with the Dutch and we witness Klungkung's power in practice. To me, one of the highlights of the book is Wiener's description and analysis of the encounter between the Klungkung court and the Dutch envoy Huskus Koopmanin 1840, who was unable to understand what was going on during his visit to Bali.

Soon conflicts between the Dutch and Balinese kings resulted in military expeditions which found their climax in the battle at Kusamba, near Klungkung, in 1849, during which the Dutch commander was killed. Klungkung was eventually not conquered by the Dutch who left Bali after signing peace treaties. Wiener argues that at that moment the theoretical hegemony of Klungkung was realized in practice, because Klungkung was, for instance, able to mobilize manpower from other realms. A separate chapter is devoted to oral histories Wiener collected during her fieldwork about the sacred bullet *I Seliksik* from Klungkung, that is said to have killed the Dutch commander, in order to elaborate on the way the magical power of the *Dewa Agung* is nowadays imagined. It is regrettable though that Wiener does not refer to the work of the late Barbara Lovric who pointed in this respect to a connexion between this bullet, warfare and cholera (B. Lovric, 'Bali: myth, magic and morbidity', in N. Owen (ed.), *Death and disease in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

During the second part of the nineteenth century the Dutch gained ground in northern Bali and pressure on Klungkung increased. In South Bali internal warfare erupted and the Klungkung court lost its grip on the course of events when several kings and lords put themselves under the protection of the Dutch. Eventually Klungkung was conquered in 1908 and together with his entourage the *Dewa Agung* was killed in a *puputan* (litt. 'ending'; a kind of human sacrifice). According to local oral histories the *Dewa Agung* had lost his crucial connexion with the invisible world, which was why his sacred heirlooms were powerless.

After 1908 Klungkung seemed to be an empty land, that gradually disappeared in the

periphery of the Dutch colonial state and the Indonesian nation-state. A closer look reveals, however, that Klungkung is still stuffed with stories about magical powers and spirits and that in oral history at least the glorious past is kept well alive.

Despite the powerful way Wiener constructs her analysis I am not fully convinced that the *Dewa Agung* was in practice indeed as powerful as he was – and is – imagined. Sometimes the author becomes a lawyer who wants to win her case and in order to do so she selects her evidence rather one-sidedly and omits data that contradict her point. When, for instance, another king did send troops to support the *Dewa Agung* (p. 174), she forgets to mention that these men arrived deliberately too late; she mentions in passing that a *Dewa Agung* was killed in a battle against another kingdom in 1809 (p. 139) but fails to explain how this total negation of the hierarchical order could happen. She does not mention that in the 1880s royal servants of a neighbouring kingdom ridiculed the *Dewa Agung* by kicking a straw puppet, representing the paramount ruler, at the entrance of the local market. There was, in other words, more disobedience than the author is ready to admit. Wiener's perspective on Klungkung's past is very much influenced by a particular genre of oral histories which stress the magic qualities of the former rulers of Klungkung. These should primarily be seen in their present context: they are in the first place nostalgic stories about the loss of a golden past (the fall of Gelgel and the fall of Klungkung) and are therefore not always the best guides to discover how complicated and contradictory power relationships in the past may have been.

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YELVINGTON, KEVIN A. *Producing power: ethnicity, gender and class in a Caribbean workplace*. xvi, 286 pp., tables, bibliogr. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1995. \$49.95 (cloth), \$22.95 (paper)

The Caribbean, in many's view the first truly modern part of the world – a region of displaced persons, contested identifications and commodified labour since the late fifteenth century – is, decades after the classic 'plural society' studies of politics, ethnicity and culture, re-emerging as an important ethnographic area. Trinidad, perhaps especially, has received considerable attention from anthropologists in recent years, and important monographs on topics ranging from religious cults to consumption and individualism, ethnic relations and East Indian 'identity politics' have seen the light of day during the early 1990s. Kevin Yelvington's study of power and identification in a small Trinidadian factory is a timely contribution to Trinidadian and Caribbean studies, as well as