

Iconological Analysis of the “Man on a Bicycle” Relief in North Bali Created During the Dutch Colonial Period

Analisis Ikonologi Karya Relief “Laki-laki di sebuah Sepeda” di Bali Utara Jaman colonial Belanda

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Abstract

W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp was the subject of a relief named “Man on a Bicycle” at the Madué Karang Temple in North Bali. The relief was created around 1904, when North Bali was under Dutch colonial rule. It is the first relief created that deviates from Balinese society’s traditional art style. As with other works of art, there is a message and a particular purpose for the creation of this relief. This paper provides a more in-depth study of the relief by using the iconographic and iconological theory of Erwin Panofsky as a method for analysing relief works in relation to the social and cultural context of Balinese society during the colonial period. Panofsky’s three-stage iconographic analysis of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief revealed that it was created as part of the Dutch political strategy to shape Bali’s image as a “harmonious” and “cultured” area, as well as to divert negative connotations to the colonial power regarding the Balinese people’s war.

W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp adalah orang Belanda merupakan subyek yang digambarkan pada relief “Man on a Bicycle,” di Pura Madué Karang di Bali Utara. Karya seni relief tersebut dibuat sekitar tahun 1904 pada saat Bali Utara dikuasai colonial Belanda. Relief “Man on a Bicycle” merupakan relief pertama dibuat yang memiliki perbedaan visual dengan pakem seni tradisional masyarakat Bali. Sebagai sebuah karya seni tentunya ada suatu pesan serta maksud dan tujuan tertentu dibuatnya dari karya relief tersebut. Makalah ini memberikan kajian yang lebih mendalam terhadap karya relief tersebut, dengan menggunakan analisis teory ikonografi dan ikonologis Erwin Panofsky sebagai metode untuk mendiskusikan karya relief yang dihubungkan dengan kontek soisal budaya masyarakat Bali pada masa kolonial. Melalui tiga tahapannya analisis ikonografi Panofsky, karya relief “Man on a Bicycle” menunjukkan karya tersebut dibuat merupakan bagian dari strategi politik Belanda untuk membentuk citraan Bali sebagai wilayah “harmonis” dan “berbudaya” demikian juga makna paling baru adalah untuk melupakan kenangan buruk atau menutup aib colonial dalam perang yang dilakukan terhadap rakyat Bali.

Keywords: Balinese traditional relief, modern, Dutch colonial | Relief tradisional Bali, modern, kolonial Belanda

Introduction

This paper examines the meanings and visual changes of traditional Balinese relief art due to the influence of modernization brought by the Dutch colonials in North Bali. To this day, Bali is a major cultural tourism destination, partly due to the ideas pioneered during the Dutch colonial period. The modernization applied by the colonials to the various social arrangements of Balinese life also impacted the traditional arts. Balinese culture is moving into a new era, with changes to art like reliefs that are different from classical art and the creation of new symbols and meanings that are influenced by Western philosophy.

In general, the relief art forms that are carved on the walls of the *Pura* (a temple or a place of worship for Hindus), *Griya* (the priest's house), *Puri* (the King's palace), *Kori* (the gate), and other buildings in Bali still follow traditional relief art rules. These traditional reliefs were inherited from classical Balinese Hindu art, which was heavily influenced by Javanese Hindu culture elements when the Majapahit ruled Bali around the 13th and 14th centuries CE. This classical art underpins the evolution of Balinese art and has remained the basic identity of its traditional arts to this day.

Relief art, as one of the many other traditional art forms in Balinese society, is part of *ngayah* or *yadnya* (sincerity), which are acts of devotion to ancestors, gods, and/or rulers of the kingdom (Picard 2006: 121). *Yadnya* in Balinese society is not only synonymous with material and food offerings (ceremonies), but basically, they are very understanding in terms of the essence of *yadnya*, focusing more on “work” to achieve “*Siddhi*,” dedicated to *Sang Hyang Widhi* (God) (Matapurkar 2020: 32–35). In traditional Balinese society, there is no artistic profession in the modern (individual) sense, but there is respect for artistic work such as “*sangging*,” which can be equated with “artist.” Traditional arts have always played a role and served as a medium for expressing symbols of faith during various ceremonies. Classical art and religion have become one unit in Balinese society (Laksemi 2013: 101). Therefore, fine arts such as relief art are seen as symbolic, magical, and philosophical. Likewise, the relief scenes always refer to the *Itihasa-Purana* book, a form of literary work in the form of stories that teach the truth (*dharma*) through the great epics of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* (Klostermaier 2007).

In terms of magical powers, the *Pura* (temple) does not serve the same purpose as *Candi* (temples) in Java as a building to worship gods or spirits. *Candi* are monuments filled with various ornate iconographic building rules appropriate to the unity of artistic expression. Reliefs and statues on the temple are tools to appreciate the spiritual meaning of religion for specific groups or layers of society with a meditative approach. Meanwhile, the *Pura* functions as a place of ceremony, a gathering place for all levels of an organisation to obtain blessings from gods and spirits who have come down to the world, with dishes prepared to be purified by the priest (*pedanda*). The atmosphere of the ceremony, with its festive nuance, is the hallmark of the meaning of the temple as a work of religious architecture in Balinese-Hindu culture. Therefore, embellishment elements must be physically present in the temple building complex. Various facilities, equipment, and ceremonies for the implementation of painting, sculpture, and crafts in a series of ceremonies at the temple are elements of the celebration that are enriched with colourful clothes and stretchers of fruit, as well as flowers. The accompaniment of the *Kidung* (*kawi*) voice and choir and various expressions of the people in multiple ceremonies at the “*pura*” also explains the presence of multimedia art in Balinese-Hindu cultural life (Stutterheim 1951; Yudoseputro 2008: 124). A *Pura* (temple) is a collection of buildings arranged according to a system, such as a collection of temples in East Java. The *Pura* follows the concept of Javanese temples, so the relief artwork depicts religious stories.



Fig. 1 Madué Karang Temple with the “Man on a Bicycle” relief, is on the left wall of the photo display; as indicated by the arrow, the relief is not visible from the front view of the temple. Source: Photo by Dwija Putra, 2016.

The presence of foreign nations, particularly European colonisation, specifically the Dutch, had an impact and gave birth to a new chapter in the history of Balinese art. With its modernization, Dutch colonisation altered all aspects of Balinese life, including art and culture. With its introduction, Balinese art was divided into two directions: the continuation of traditional arts and the acceptance of modernism’s influence by introducing new idioms in its visualisation (as commodities). As a result of modernism, artistic activities focused on religious ceremonies and rituals have become more secular. As a result, the group essence of traditional art began to erode, giving way to more unique and individualised approaches. Then, through relief art, modern influences invaded the temples (holy places), which no longer feature story scenes or themes related to moral, ethical, and “*dharma*” teachings. The stories in these newer reliefs would be based on real life or on events that occur on a daily basis.

One of the relief artworks carved on the walls of the *pelinggih* of Pura Madué Karang in Kubutambahan Village is called “Man on a Bicycle”. This is also the book title written by Carpenter for the same relief. The relief is unique to the traditional Balinese relief form. It depicts a more realistic style that deviates from the traditional and classical *Wayang* art style. The “Man on a Bicycle” relief depicts transportation objects in the form of bicycles and foreign figures wearing traditional Balinese clothes, combined with traditional Balinese ornaments. Similar reliefs are also found in several prominent temples in northern Bali, including the Dalem Jagaraga Temple, the

Desa Ian Puseh Temple in Sudaji, and the Beji Sangsit Temple. The reliefs were made from around the 1900s to the 1930s. The objects depicted in the reliefs were airplanes, bandits, cars, cyclists, car repair mechanics, drunken soldiers, Arabs, and others (Covarrubias 2013: 190). This shows that profane themes and modern symbols have penetrated the Balinese sacred realm or places of worship.

The existence of “The Man on a Bicycle” relief can be said to have appeared suddenly in a condition where the community or the artist was still obedient to the rules of traditional art. Therefore, the formation process of this relief raised various conjectures and questions. Is it purely the result of the ideas and creativity of local artists in adopting modern art, or has there been some collaboration between the “*sangging*” (artists) and colonial parties regarding the policies, political vision, and mission of the government? To explore further and deeper into the meaning of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief art, Erwin Panofsky’s art history theory will be used in the socio-cultural context of Balinese society.

Literature Review

So far, there have been a limited number of studies that refer to the objects of relief art in North Bali. The study of relief art during the Dutch period is often mentioned or included in other traditional art studies in the form of paintings and *Wayang* art. Made Pageh alluded to relief art in his dissertation, which was published in a proceeding, and stated that it was created as a form of power relations by Dutch colonial government as a part of their political policy in defending their colonies. The relief was also made to incorporate a new ideology from something spiritual to material things (Pageh 2017: 899–900). According to Made Pageh’s study, which was conducted in a political and economic context using a cultural study and critical culture approach, the reliefs were made in preparation for Bali to be opened as a world cultural tourism destination and as part of a cultural conservation effort.

Studies that indirectly touch on the signs of changes in relief art could be found in Hinzler’s research. The difference in the shape of the reliefs in the 1900s started with the *Wayang* painting. However, the changes in the *Wayang* paintings are not very extreme in terms of the themes and art mediums used. This distinction in classical *Wayang* painting was initiated by a Dutch scholar named Van der Tuuk, who involved 14 Balinese artists in a project to create a Balinese-Dutch illustrated dictionary. Previously, Balinese artists made paintings on cloth or wooden boards. Therefore, new techniques and mediums were introduced, such as watercolours and the use of paper (Hinzler 1986: 5–7).

According to a book entitled “W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp: The First European Artist in Bali” by Carpenter, the object drawn on the reliefs on the temple wall of Pura Madué Karang is Nieuwenkamp. However, the book does not explain why Nieuwenkamp is immortalised in the relief work at the temple. Nevertheless, the book provided insight into the journey and activities of the artist W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp while in Bali. It also had many paintings, drawings, and graphics that depicted the natural beauty of Balinese society and culture (Carpenter 1997).

Panofsky’s Analysis Theory

To analyse the symbolic meaning of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief and the reasons why the relief was made, the iconographic and iconological analysis methods from Erwin Panofsky’s art history theory were used. The theory was formulated in 1955 and is still relevant to the development of contemporary art, as revealed by Kieven, who stated that art is a cultural expression, not only in the autonomous realm of pure art but in how that culture continues to evolve with the times. Lydia

Kieven successfully used this method in her research on the relief arts in the temples of East Java during the Majapahit era (Kieven 2014: 15–16). By using this theory, a new meaning was found for the figure in the Panji hat, as it was found that the relief story was related to the temple’s function at that time. However, even Panofsky’s three-stage theory is insufficient to provide complete details. Therefore, Kieven added two more steps to clarify the context of the relief studied and its relationship to the temple’s function in society at that time.

This theory can be used as a complement or alternative to existing methods in research or studies on other art forms in the Southeast Asian region, as this region experienced similar processes of civilization formation. It was formed from two major cultural elements, India and China, and then Western nations. Previous studies have also indicated the similarities in stories and *Panji* characters owned by countries in the Southeast Asian region, such as Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, and other countries in the area. In Thailand, the *Panji* story is called “*Inao*” and “*Dalang*” (Vickers 2009: 11).

In his 1955 book “Meaning in the Visual Arts,” Panofsky stated that studying and understanding a work of art can be done through a historical approach with three theoretical stages that must be passed. The first stage is a pre-iconographic description, the second is iconographic analysis, and the third is iconological interpretation (Panofsky 1955: 26–40). The relationship between these stages can be seen in Table 1.

No	Object of Interpretation	Act of Interpretation
I	Primary or natural subject matter - (A) Factual; (B) expressional - constituting of the world of artistic motifs.	Pre-iconographical description (and pseudo-formal analysis)
II	Secondary or conventional subject matter - constituting of the world of images, stories, and allegories.	Iconographical analysis
III	Intrinsic meaning or content - constituting of the world of “symbolical” values.	Iconological interpretation

Table. 1 Three stages of analysis of Panofsky’s theory. Source: Panofsky 1955: 40.

Panofsky provides a confirmation framework that can serve as a corrective principle for each analysis stage to gain analytical sharpness. Therefore, it is necessary to control the principle of interpretation through the following steps: First, there is the history of art style (the history of style); second, there is the history of art types; and third, there is the history of symbols (Panofsky 1955: 38). The three stages of analysis were conducted in field research through direct observation, dealing with the visual relief of the “Man on a Bicycle” at Madué Karang Temple, and observing through photo documentation and libraries.

The first stage, also known as the pre-iconography stage, is observing the visual aspects of the artwork. The first stage of identifying the true meaning is identifying the object’s visual form and its changes. This stage is done by observing and reading visual elements, such as lines, colours, shapes, materials, techniques, principles used, objects, and themes. At this stage, the expression of meaning obtained from the observer’s intimacy with and empathy for the observed art object is

described. Observing the relationship between objects and their supporting forms in relation to the setting can reveal the expressive qualities of the object’s character in works of art (Panofsky 1955: 33–34).

For this textual description to be sharp, a confirmation framework with the corrective principle of historical interpretation of the style is required. Relief styles in Indonesia are historically classified based on the entry of foreign cultural elements and acculturation. Generally, narrative reliefs in Indonesia are classified into two styles, namely *Klasik Tua* (early classical) from the 8th to 9th centuries CE and *Klasik Muda* (late classical) from around the 13th to 15th centuries CE (Munandar 2011: 175–179). The reliefs that were developed in the *Klasik Tua* (early classical) era had the characteristics of sculptures or reliefs in their home country, namely South India, known as Ambarawati, Gandhara, and Mathura. Relief shows serenity, majesty, fortitude, and immortality and is described as being parallel to the dominant spiritual values and forms in this style. The shape tends to be realistic but does not refer to nature photography. Examples of *Klasik Tua* (early classical) reliefs can be found at the temples of Borobudur, Prambanan, Mendut, Kidal, and Plaowasan (Yudoseputero 2008: 98–101).

The *Klasik Muda* (late classical) period lasted from the 13th to 15th centuries CE during the Majapahit era, and the reliefs of the era generally provided a more substantial decorative aspect than the naturalistic-realistic style shown in the early classical style. The materials used for the *Klasik Muda* (late classical) style also tend to be denser. This follows the cultivation of the stylized form because it wants to reveal the object entirely. This young classical style is also mentioned in the Javanization period, which is a period where local artists returned to their own culture and left Indian elements out of their work. Claire Holt describes the “*Wayang* style” as flat reliefs that refer to figures in *Wayang* performances that have been around since around the 8th century CE (2000: 100). As Bali was a colony of Majapahit, the art form created during this period also has a close relationship with its culture. Therefore, Balinese reliefs and *Wayang* have similarities in style, shape, and stories related to the teachings of East Java.

The issue of style is not only a matter of composition, medium, and technique but also a matter of convention and the philosophy that underlies the creation of the relief work. The *Klasik Muda* (late classical) style is used to describe the extent to which the signs of change in the “Man on a Bicycle” relief are carved on the walls of Pura Madué Karang. It is used to show the extent of deviation from the aesthetic, meaning, and symbolic aspects depicted—likewise for the technical aspects of the relief from the type of carving techniques used.

The second stage of the research was iconographic analysis. This was done to identify the secondary meaning of the artwork. This process connects the previous formalistic descriptions of visual forms and expressions with themes and concepts. Identifying this relationship requires knowledge, keen observation, and daily practical experience. Sources or references to similar works from various images of other works of art, literary sources, and multiple allegories would be needed (Panofsky 1955: 35). Additionally, a confirmation framework with the corrective principle of type history interpretation was required to sharpen this iconographic analysis. This is important because “type history” is the historical condition that influences the formation of a theme or concept that is expressed in specific objects and events and applies to a time and region (Panofsky 1955: 40). Therefore, due to its impact on interpretation and analysis, type history is highly needed for iconographic research.

The third stage of research is the iconological interpretation stage. This stage is essential to determining the intrinsic meaning or content of a work of art. After the pre-iconographic description and iconographic analyses were conducted, synthetic intuition would be needed to determine the inherent meaning or understand the symbols of the artwork. Artificial intelligence concerns the essential tendencies of personal psychological thought and the *weltanschauung* (view of life) of the work's creator (Panofsky 1955: 41). A symbol is something that is immanently attached to form and structure. In form (art), symbols can represent expressions or feelings that contain various ideas and shared experiences (Cassirer 1987: 211). Traditional relief art has symbols and values in Balinese society; therefore, symbol theory also supports it. The accuracy of this iconological interpretation requires a confirmation framework with the corrective principle of interpreting cultural history in constructing symbols. Thus, a review of the various symptoms that exist around the object and the artist, as well as the supportive community's psychology and life view, is needed (Panofsky 1955: 41).

Results and Discussion

Primary Subjects, Factual, and Expressional Meanings

The first stage of the analysis is the pre-iconography stage, where the visual aspects of the relief are examined. The meaning of the graphic form could be obtained by looking at the shape characteristics of the relief's objects and the changes that occur in the scene. From a physical aspect, the “Man on a Bicycle” relief was carved on the walls of Pura Madué Karang in around 1904 and uses “*batu paras*” (soft rock) as the material. Its size is approximately 250 cm by 150 cm. The “Man on a Bicycle” relief shows a male figure wearing a suit, or coat and trousers. The figure was dressed in pants with a cloth wrapped around the hips and a tropical hat made of cloth that was rolled up. The figure's profile was carved to look sideways, with the characteristics of a sharp nose, a moustache, and a beard. The figure is sitting on a mode of transportation with wheels, a chain, and pedals, which is recognised as a “bicycle.” The man appears calm, with his hands holding the handlebars and his legs pedalling a bicycle. The figure's background is filled with floral and leaf-patterned ornaments. There are sculptures of animals, such as pigs and dogs, running and seeming frightened at the bottom of the bicycle chain (Figure 2).



Fig. 2 The embodiment of the relief in 1904, a photo taken at the Buleleng Museum. Source: Photo by Dwija Putra, 2019.

Secondary or conventional subject matter: the world of images, stories, and allegory

The second analysis stage is the iconographic analysis stage. At this stage, secondary meanings related to the relief’s theme are identified. The ideas and articles in a work of art can also be obtained from various images, literary sources, and allegories (Panofsky 1955: 35). Therefore, this stage was conducted by observing and examining the relationship between relief objects, themes, and socio-cultural concepts in Balinese society.

The “Man on a Bicycle” relief depicts a foreign (European) figure who is traveling. The male figure symbolises Balinese visitors, both scientists and tourists. As mentioned in the previous literature review, the male figure or foreigner (Dutch) referred to in the relief is a Dutchman named W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp, who arrived in Bali in 1904 with the KPM ship, which docked at the Buleleng customs port. The KPM ship was a cargo ship that carried or transported Buleleng produce to the outside world; when the KPM ship docked, the people of Buleleng referred to it as the “*Babi*

Ekspress” (Pig Express), which is a funny name for the carrier as it usually carried a lot of pigs to export from Bali (Carpenter 1997: 43).

Bicycles were the first modern mode of transportation introduced to Bali, and their arrival shocked the Balinese people. The male figure depicted in the “Man on a Bicycle” relief at Pura Madué Karang was known by the local people as Nieuwenkamp. During his stay in Bali, he liked to ride his bicycle to visit temples, beaches, villages, communities, and Bali’s natural beauties for the subjects of his paintings and graphics. As Hinzler wrote, he quoted from the diary of Nieuwenkamp himself:

“It was the first time that Balinese saw a bicycle. Wherever I passed on this vehicle, I caused real turmoil and panic. Men and women stopped along the roads, staring at me in awe. Some took refuge at the roadside; others sat down and made a *sembah*. Some women dropped the stuff they were carrying on their heads. Children, cattle, pigs, ducks, and chickens ran away as soon as they noticed me. No wonder that this terrible white creature on this monster on wheels was depicted on a relief of a temple. It was the Pura Madué Karang in Kubutambahan in north-east Bali.” (2013: 56).

Furthermore, historical records also revealed that Nieuwenkamp was a tourist or foreigner who often visited Bali; he visited the island in 1904, 1906, 1916–1917, and 1936–1937. He was born in Amsterdam in 1874 and died on 23rd April 1950, in San Domenico, Fiesole, Italy. He was a painter, woodcarver, graphic artist, illustrator, collector, and author of many books. In addition, he also visited the island of Lombok for the same mission as his visit to Bali. Upon arrival in Bali on his second visit in 1906, he witnessed the “*Puputan Badung*” war between the Dutch colonial powers and the Badung people in southern Bali. He also saw the defeat of Badung and made illustrations and pictures of the palace of Puri Denpasar-Badung, which was destroyed and charred by the bombing of the Dutch colonial troops (Carpenter 1997: 57).

Bicycles were imported from the Netherlands and arrived in North Bali in 1904. Nieuwenkamp used a bicycle to explore the Bali area. He also researched the island to produce books, paintings, and drawings about Balinese life and culture. Apart from cycling, he also enjoyed travelling on foot and riding on horseback. While camping in Bali, he lived with Dutch officials at Pesangrahan in a palace or a tent. He was also the first foreigner to document an archaeological object, a large drum (*Nekara*), which the local community called “*Bulan Pejeng*,” which was found around the Ubud area in October 1906. Nieuwenkamp also sketched and made cross-sectional drawings of the drums (Hinzler 2013: 51).

The clothes and attributes worn by the subject of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief are traditional Balinese clothes. The patterned cloth worn along the knee is called a “*saput*” in Bali. Nieuwenkamp also wears a head covering made of fabric wrapped around his head. The relief drawings made in 1904 give the impression that Nieuwenkamp is like a brahmin or priest, as the head covering worn by him is similar to that used by Indian brahmins or ascetics. This is related to the story widely circulated in North Bali society because Nieuwenkamp liked to donate or give alms (*dana punia*) every time he visited Bali. However, the image depicted in the 1904 relief is slightly different from the relief in 1917. The figure in the 1904 relief shows a “foreign tourist” figure wearing traditional Balinese clothes.

Furthermore, from the existing literature and references, Nieuwenkamp was never seen wearing conventional clothes during his visit to Bali. He always wore a white shirt with a round hat (a typical European hat). Therefore, visually, the objects of the reliefs made at Madué Karang Temple were deliberately planned to show a positive image for indigenous and foreign people (Figure 3).

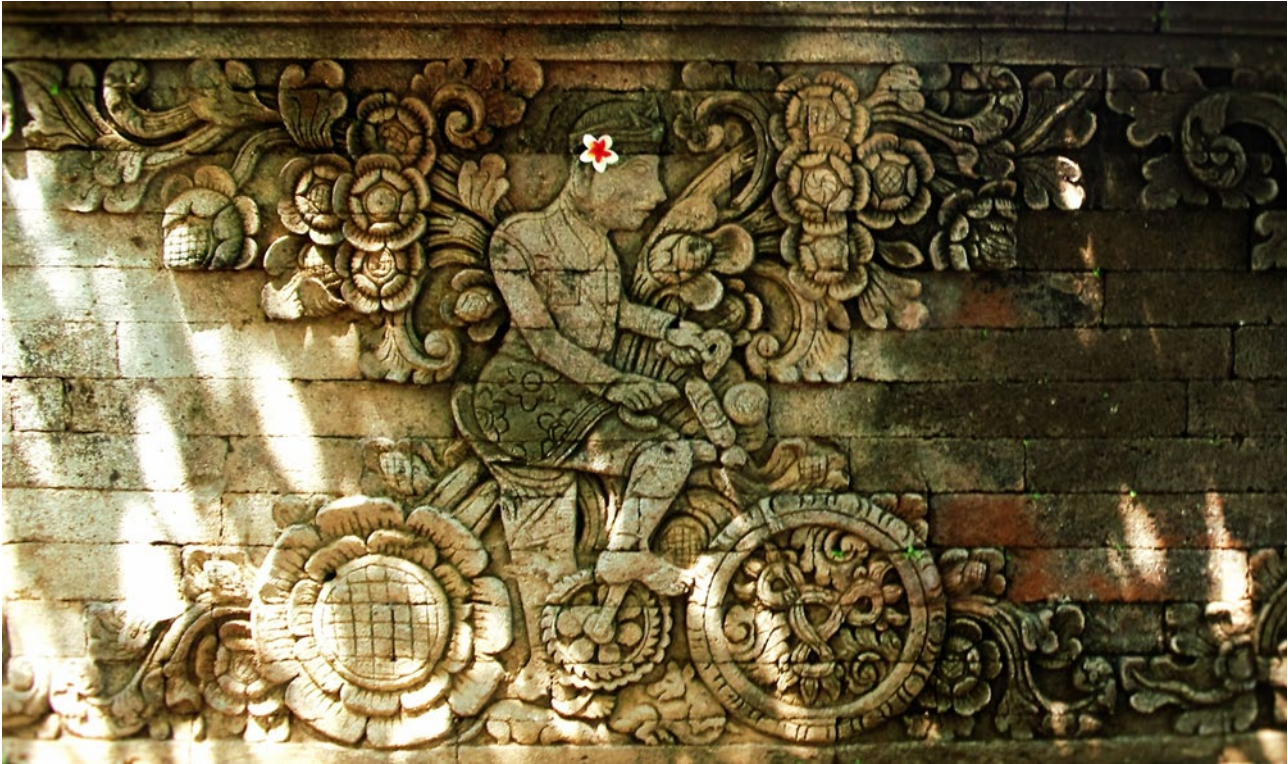


Fig. 3 The embodiment of relief in 1917, after an earthquake hit Bali. Source: Photo by Dwija Putra, 2016.

During all of the activities carried out by Nieuwenkamp’s mission in Bali, Nieuwenkamp received a positive response and sympathy from the Balinese. At that time, indigenous people were still traumatised by the war and feared Europeans. Therefore, Nieuwenkamp approached the community through art by forming dialogues with artists, making drawings and paintings, as well as buying and collecting the works of artists from North Bali to South Bali. He also briefly visited the village of Kamasan, where classical *Wayang* paintings were made (Adnyana 2018: 88). The silk-woven fabric products produced in Singaraja are the first ethnographic collections collected by W.O.J. He also collected ethnic goods or products as deposits and orders from the curator of the German-Dutch Museum (Carpenter 1997: 45).

The 1917 version of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief was renovated and reproduced after the devastating earthquake that hit Bali that year. As a result of the quake, many villages and temple buildings were destroyed, and 1350 Balinese people lost their lives and experienced hardship (Vickers 1989: 134). The reproduction results of the reliefs showed different depictions of bicycle wheels. The front wheels were replaced with ornaments resembling a trident weapon, while the rear wheels were replaced with lotus motifs. The use of ornamental patterns and symbols of Balinese society indicates that the relief was revised to be more decorative, unlike the original version in 1904. The use of traditional signs such as the lotus flower pattern and the pattern of a god’s weapon also makes the relief look more conventional. The depiction of Nieuwenkamp wearing traditional Balinese costumes also depicts relief scenes with more symbolic or metaphorical meanings. The impression that can be interpreted from the relief is that there are “foreign tourists” who enjoy

Balinese culture. The bicycle wheel is depicted with traditional Balinese symbols that indicate a meaning or a message of “a return to Balinese culture”.

The 1917 version of the “Man on a Bicycle” relief generally has the same shape as the old relief. The set consists of a floral design called Patra Sari, which has a shape similar to the Chinese Patra. Both Patras have the same constituent elements, namely flower stylization and leaf arrangements. The motifs formed on the background of classical reliefs can symbolise a particular sight, place, or environment (Kieven 2014: 68). The Patra Sari’s floral pattern on this relief symbolises a flowering plant or tree that evokes an atmosphere of comfort and beauty. Therefore, the impression evoked from the scene is of a tourist taking a “comfortable” and “harmonious” cycling trip around Bali.

The “Men on a Bicycle” relief changes are similar to changes in traditional Balinese *Wayang* paintings. This change was made through the collaboration of Balinese artists with Van der Tuuk around the 1880s. They worked together to create illustrations for the Balinese-Kawi-Dutch dictionary, which Van der Tuuk initiated. Although the paintings retained a thick *Wayang* decorative style, they also demonstrated a shift or change in aesthetics. The difference in the embodiment of these reliefs can be compared with an image entitled “The Musicians Accompanying Barong Performances” by Ketut Gede, which depicts a group of figures playing musical instruments to accompany the barong dance. Some figures wore European-style hats (*tetopong*) and some wore peasant hats (*caping*). The musicians wore jackets and pants, and all had moustaches and beards like foreigners (Europeans), but their eyes were described as the eyes of a female puppet. According to Hinzler, this painting by Ketut Gede depicts musicians who are not Balinese but foreigners (Dutch). Through this painting, the artists wanted to tell a joke to immigrants or invaders to entertain the audience (1986: 190–1920). The painting has a metaphorical resemblance to the relief of the “Man on a Bicycle,” as the figures depicted are foreigners (Dutch) that have similar “tastes,” namely liking Balinese culture. They both also showed that there have been interactions in the arts between foreigners (Dutch) and Balinese people. The figure riding the bicycle was depicted wearing traditional clothes, as were the Dutch musicians playing traditional Balinese gamelan. Overall, both the relief and painting express an atmosphere that represents a conducive and “harmonious” Bali, where tourists or foreigners favour Balinese “culture” and art (Figure 4).



Fig. 4 Painting entitled “The Musicians Accompanying the Barong Performance”. Photo taken from the Buleleng Museum. Source: Dwija Putra, 2019.

Intrinsic meaning, compiling the “symbolic” value of the Synthetic Intuition, and the Cultural History of the Colonial Period

The development of relief art is not only a medium of *da'wah* about religious teachings but also a more pragmatic medium of information. The “Man on a Bicycle” relief carved on the walls of the Madué Karang temple as part of the Dutch construction utilises traditional art media to have a more comprehensive function. The application of new icons with modern features on the reliefs was intentionally done to demonstrate and expedite the distribution of information about the favourable images established by colonials to bolster their influence in the colonies.

The “Man on a Bicycle” relief is a highly symbolic work. The figures “W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp” and “bike” are idioms that represent modern elements brought to Bali through colonialism. The bicycle symbolises the vehicle controlled by the “rider” (the Dutch). Two traditional ornament patterns, namely the Padma and Trisula motifs as seen on the bicycle wheels, can be interpreted as symbols of Balinese cultural elements. Therefore, the relief metaphor can be interpreted as follows: Balinese culture and its people’s lives have been controlled by the Dutch. After that, the Dutch then portrayed Bali to the world as a “safe” and “harmonious” place. This positive image was done in order to attract more tourists to Bali.

Changes in traditional Balinese relief art, as seen in the “Man on a Bicycle” relief, can be traced to the historical development of Balinese sociocultural history. Long before the Dutch colonial era, news about Bali as an island with a high potential for natural and cultural resources had spread throughout mainland Europe. A piece of Balinese cultural news that amazed Europeans was the tradition of “*Mesatya*” or “*Satya*,” which was the sacrifice of the king’s wife after he had died on the battlefield. The king’s wife would also set herself on fire when her deceased husband’s body

was burned in the *Ngaben* ceremony held by the royal party. News also spread in mainland Europe about a prosperous country with friendly citizens through the visit of a Dutch explorer named Cornelis de Houtman in 1579. The government in question was the Gelgel kingdom, which had luxurious and magnificent palaces and a rural atmosphere with prosperous inhabitants (Adnyana 2018: 71).

The news of this prosperous and high-cultured region sparked Dutch interest in making Bali a cultural tourism destination. The idea or issue was initially raised a century ago by Thomas Stamford Raffles in the 1800s, as he stated that Bali is a living museum of the Majapahit kingdom (Vickers 2009: 22). This then created an economic trade competition between the Dutch and the British to control the area of Bali. The Dutch beat the British to control the Bali region through raids and long wars that raged from North Bali (1846–1849) to South Bali (1906–1908).

The defeat of the Buleleng people through the Puputan Jagaraga war in 1849 marked the start of Dutch rule in North Bali. The Jagaraga war was triggered by the Buleleng King’s refusal to abolish the Tawan Karang Rights, a regulation made by the kings of Bali regarding the seizure of cargo and goods from foreign ships that sank in the territorial waters of Bali. Tawan Karang Rights harmed European sailors and traders, especially the Dutch, who wanted to monopolise Balinese trade. The Dutch asked for the rule’s abolition but were refused by the Buleleng King, I Gusti Ketut Jelantik. This resulted in a war between the Dutch army and Buleleng troops, assisted by Karangasem troops. The battle was known as the Jagaraga War and lasted from 1846 to 1849. The Buleleng people were defeated, and the Dutch took control of the Jagaraga fort and North Bali (Sastrodiwiryo 2011: 168).

After the Dutch had taken control of North Bali, the Dutch East Indies government sent many scholars and scientists to investigate and study Balinese culture and arts. At that time, scholars such as F.A. Liefrinck and V.E. Korn would also act as colonial officials. These two scholars laid the foundation of scientific knowledge about Bali through ethnographic, philological, legal, and cultural studies conducted from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The studies later formed the basis for establishing the image and core of Balinese culture today, such as the basics of Balinese customary law, an understanding of the Balinese people, and the authenticity of their culture. Liefrinck’s study of Balinese culture was followed by other scholars and scientists who later came to the island (Robinson 2006: 26). Therefore, scholars and scientists, together with the colonial government, built the image of Bali as an exotic island with the slogan “balance and harmony.” Scholars and scientists purposefully created the concept of a harmonious Bali in order to benefit colonialism, with the hidden goals of scholars and artists acting as agents and acting to meet the consumption of Western tastes or capitalists (Suryawan 2010: 38).

The image of “harmony” and comfort in a “cultured” society became the basis for forming Bali into a tourist haven. This is reinforced in the records of H. van Kol, who is considered to be the first tourist to visit Bali, as stated in his book entitled “*Uit Onze Kolonien*” (Out of Our Colonies) in 1903. H. van Kol was an influential member of the Dutch parliament (*Tweede Kamer der Staten General*) and an influential politician and advocate of ethical politics applied to the colonies. For political reasons, he made an extensive trip throughout the colonies in Indonesia in 1902, which is described in detail in his 826-page book. One hundred and twenty pages of the book told the story of the island of Bali, complete with tips and advice for future visitors. W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp also obtained an overview of Bali from the book (Carpenter 1997: 44).

The image formulated by scholars and scientists sent by the Dutch East Indies government also supported the “Ethical Politics” policy. Many people perished during the process of conquering indigenous territories through wars. The Dutch also admitted their mistakes, still had a sense of “responsibility and morals” towards the indigenous Balinese and tried to restore the welfare of the people. Thus, to cover the shame among Dutch government diplomats for their cruelty and intervention, the Netherlands began to create a positive image through cultural preservation and tourism promotion (Picard 2006: 25–26).

W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp, who worked for the Dutch government, was sent to Bali as a pioneer of the first “positive image” of Bali and published a book containing his paintings and graphics about the natural beauty and life of the Balinese, as well as their artistic traditions. The book drew the attention of the Dutch to the island they had just conquered (Picard 2006: 37). To support and create a positive image of the Dutch army, Nieuwenkamp was used as an object in the reliefs at Madué Karang Temple. This is because after being in Bali for almost a year, Nieuwenkamp could obtain enough sympathy, give a positive impression to the Balinese people, and develop new art. Intervention in traditional art is usually used as a sign of power, so that objects or elements of modern culture in conventional art cannot be separated from how power relations could instil ideological influence (Pageh 2017: 898).

For the “Man on a Bicycle” relief, it can be said that the idea came from the authorities, not Balinese artists. In such a case, the *Sangging* (artists) would only work as the maker or implementer of the order. Another hint or reason that the “Man on a Bicycle” relief was created with Dutch intervention can be found in the position of traditional artists in Balinese society. *Sangging* (professions such as artists) in Balinese society were generally under the auspices of the nobles ruling the “*Puri*” (kingdom), who guaranteed these artists a living as a reward for their services (Parta 2011: 182). Meanwhile, the *Puri* nobles and *Brahmins* had become colonial stakeholders who were very influential in traditional Balinese society. Furthermore, at the time, public knowledge of works of art was still centred on *Wayang* art inspired by myths and symbols of religious teachings as a standard, so that traditional art was collective, and no attempt was made to distinguish individual recognition of the work (Picard 2006: 121). The “*sangging*” in this situation was not familiar with colonial-style depictions, and the artists’ knowledge of the modern world was also minimal. Thus, it was challenging for them to develop an idea outside of their local knowledge and customs. However, modern art intervention was not fully applied to traditional Balinese art. The Dutch tend to direct and encourage local artists to produce works of art that suit the tastes of enthusiasts, which can be used as commodities for the tourism market. This was based on Dutch colonial knowledge of Balinese artists’ abilities to adopt or integrate aesthetic codes not yet known to the local community (Picard 2006: 35).

The success of making modern reliefs in temples cannot be separated from the Dutch government’s strategy of implementing and establishing a “caste” hierarchy and providing a legal basis by restoring the political and religious authority of the royal family to the side of the Dutch. This was all done under the strict supervision of colonial officials. The Dutch granted privileges to three main groups of people, namely *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, and *Weisya*, known as the “*Tri Wangsa*”. This strategy of treating the “*Tri Wangsa*” as allies of masters rather than subordinates and respecting indigenous customs was described by the French traveller Fritz Dubois, who visited Buleleng in 1890. He recorded that there had been good cooperation between the Dutch and the *Brahmins* and nobles (kings) (Robinson 2006: 47). The association in question was that the *Brahmanas* or nobles who sided with the Dutch would be given special rights, while those who opposed them would be exiled and kept away from Bali. The Dutch government carried out indirect government, still using

the king or local aristocrat as an extension of the Dutch colonial government (Agung 2009: 218). Based on alliances with Balinese kings and priests, Dutch authorities would easily influence and control Balinese society, not least in traditional arts such as painting, sculpture, and reliefs.

Madué Karang Temple, where the “Man on a Bicycle” relief is located, is situated in the Kubutambahan Village area in North Bali and is the residence of high-ranking officials, nobles, and courtiers of the Buleleng kingdom who came from Karangasem. The nobles of the Buleleng kingdom from Karangasem were Dutch partners in governance, although nobles and *Brahmins* of the original Buleleng descendants of Panji Sakti’s king were largely deported beyond Bali because they frequently rebelled against colonial rule (Sastrodiwiryo 2011: 211).

Cultural tourism, pioneered by the colonials in 1902, showed significant development. Bali slowly began to be visited by foreigners and Westerners (especially Europeans). Then there was the circulation of photos about Bali taken by the German scientist Gregor Kraus in 1912 of bare-chested Balinese women. The photos in his book, published in 1920, fascinated Western society. Gregor Kraus, as the second image-maker of Bali, successfully shaped the world’s perception of Bali as an island paradise. Beautiful photos of Balinese women with their “breasts” were used as promotional images in various media, such as books, posters, brochures, and tourism literature, from the 1920s to the mid-1930s. The book has shaped the West’s perception of Bali and embedded this exotic image of Bali, neglecting to mention the bloody sacrifices of its kings (*puputan*) (Vickers 1989: 100). Since then, many Western tourists have visited the island of Bali, partly due to the support of the marine travel agency KPM (Koninklijke Plaketaart Maatschappij), which was founded in 1914. The KPM has a fixed itinerary of tourist destinations for foreign tourists to flood Bali.

The flow and development of tourism were swift, and the colonial government was worried that Balinese culture would be lost due to modernization. To overcome the extinction of Balinese culture, the Dutch government initiated a new programme called “Balinization” in the 1930s. The Balinization program was made to save Balinese culture from the aspects of modernization brought by tourists, Islamic forces from Java, and Christian missionaries brought by the colonisers themselves. Since the existence of the cultural conservation programme, similar works have also appeared to support the programme and form an image of “preservation” of culture at several temples in North Bali, including Beji Sangsit Temple, Dalem Jagaraga Temple, and the Desa lan Puseh Temple in Sudaji Village.

The placement of relief artworks in several temples in North Bali was also done for specific reasons and considerations that were tailored to the events and trajectories of the region’s war. The “Man on a Bicycle” relief at Pura Madué Karang Kubutambahan was a gathering place for the nobles and the royal family of Buleleng, who came from Karangasem, the Dutch colonial alliance. The relief, with its depictions of airplanes, jeeps, bandits pointing guns, travellers, anglers, and others, was made at the Dalem Jagaraga temple in Sawan village to divert from memories of the “*Puputan Jagaraga*” war that had occurred there. Then, the placement of reliefs and statues at Beji Sangsit Temple was also chosen to erase the memories of the massive Dutch army invasion that landed at the port of Sangsit. This was because Sangsit was the closest port to attack the Jagaraga fort. Fort Jagaraga is a natural defence to protect the people of Buleleng from the siege of the Dutch army. Next, the depiction of the reliefs at the Desa lan Puseh Temple in Sudaji was made to commemorate the cultural preservation programme (Balinization) and tourism development. The reliefs depicted

scenes of parties, people drinking beer, mechanics, Arab passengers, and celebrations with dancers and musicians in Balinese ceremonies.

Conclusion

The “Man on a Bicycle” relief carved on the walls of the Madué Karang temple was made as part of the construction of traditional Balinese art in supporting the mission and goals of Dutch colonial politics, namely the application of “Ethical Politics” as an effort to restore the good name of the Dutch East Indies government in the terrible war against the people of North Bali, which ended in “*puputan*.” The battle took many lives on the part of the Balinese people and the kings and their families. Therefore, relief efforts are undertaken to restore and promote a positive image as well as to divert negative memories experienced by Balinese people. The process of forming a “positive image” of Bali has been planned and implemented through tourism and cultural preservation programmes established by the Dutch.

The changing shape of traditional Balinese reliefs, such as “Man on a Bicycle,” marks the end of the era of classical Balinese art and the beginning of a new chapter in the development of Balinese culture. Traditional skills, such as relief, have developed their functions and are no longer limited to the expression of symbols, teachings, and beliefs of the local community but have been infiltrated with more secular meanings and purposes. Through the medium of art, secret missions from colonial politics were carried out, including the spreading of their ideologies for specific interests.

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