ASPECTS OF THE AESTHETICS OF RICE-GROWING IN A BALINESE FORM OF LIFE ON LOMBOK

> Know that all the shapes and images which you see with your bodily eyes in the world of things that come to be and cease to be are mere semblances and copies of the forms which have real existence in the thought-world...
>
> Hermes Trismegistos

I

Introduction

It has been established recently that Balinese aesthetics does not distinguish between the work of the artist and the work of the artisan. That is to say that the products, as it were, of activities which we might term artistic and those which we might classify as artisan are not distinguished. Both (as we discriminate them)

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are reckoned to be closer or more distant approximations to Ida Sang Hyang Vidhi, the high god of the Balinese. The criteria of assessment of an activity and of the product to which an activity gives rise are empirically different according to the activity and the product in question. No matter what these are, though, two principles inform all assessments of their standing in relation to an ideal, or to what is termed more formally a centre of reference. These two principles are relative height and lowness, and closeness to or distance from a centre of reference (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a: 34-6).

Before we proceed, we should remark parenthetically that centres of reference take many forms. They may, for example, be temples, the compounds of Brahmana and Ksatrya,[1] or one's parents, i.e. one's closest origin-point (*kawitan*). The epicentre of the Balinese world on Lombok is Mount Rinjani, at the summit of which is found, either in analogue or in kind, everything which exists in the Balinese universe. It is at centres of reference that relations of the greatest symmetry are discernible in Balinese life. Perfect bilateral symmetry, though, is found only in Vidhi, as Ida Sang Hyang Sunya, the Void. An index of symmetry is the degree to which any two dyadically related entities are what Leibniz calls 'indiscernible' (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a); that is, the greater the symmetry of the relations which obtain between two dyadically related entities, the greater the number of the same objective statements which can be made about both entities. The greater the symmetry which obtains also, the greater the substitutability of the two entities one for the other. Only where perfect bilateral symmetry obtains are two such entities substitutable wholly one for the other. Perfect symmetry is what is finest, highest and most pure in the Balinese world (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984b: 15-16).

These assertions about the form of Balinese life on western Lombok derive mainly from studies, listed under the author's name in the list of references, which consider various aspects of Balinese life. A question which arises here is, what does 'aspect' refer to? In the next section of this essay, therefore, we try to make some sense out of uses of this ordinary-language term which has appeared sporadically in the literature in quasi-technical senses which are not wholly in accord. Thus in Section II, we consider various uses of the word in the anthropological literature. In the light of this consideration, we then address Balinese rice-growing under the heads: 'Rice'; 'Where the Rice is Grown and by Whom'; 'Male and Female'; 'Circularity and Linearity'; 'High and Low'; 'Odd/Even'; 'Visible and Invisible'; 'Symmetry and Asymmetry'. Finally, some of the possible implications of our study are highlighted.

The present essay has two main aims, namely, to contribute to the process of making sense of the Balinese form of life, and undertaking which, in words which I have relied on before, is part of the central core of social anthropology (cf. Leach 1961: 1); and to see how far the findings of previous studies of Balinese life on

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[1] Brahmana and Ksatrya are the twice-born (*dvija*) estates. The four Balinese estates are: Brahmana, Ksatrya, Vesia and Sudra.

Lombok, and particularly of a study of Balinese aesthetics, are borne out by an enquiry into an aspect of Balinese life which on the face of it is far removed from art and aesthetics.

II

'Aspect'

'Aspect' derives from Lat. *aspectus*, the past participle stem of *aspicere*, look at (Onions 1966: 54 *s.v.*). The *OED* gives ten main meanings of the word, two of which are obsolete. All the meanings which are current concern the action of looking at something, or else the way in which something gives on to something else.

In so far as the anthropological literature is concerned, our brief survey begins with Mauss's *Essai sur le don* (1925). Here, Mauss writes (1970: 1) that in 'primitive' and 'archaic' societies, 'social phenomena are not discrete; each phenomenon contains all the threads of which the social fabric is composed. In these *total* social phenomena ... all kinds of institutions find simultaneous expression: religious, legal, moral and economic. In addition, the pheonomena have their aesthetic aspect ... '

Later, Mauss makes clear what he intends by 'aspect': 'total' social phenomena are legal

> in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality .... They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious; they concern true religion, animism, magic and diffuse religious mentality. They are economic, for the notions of value, utility, interest, luxury, wealth, acquisition, accumulation, consumption and liberal and sumptuous expenditure are all present, although not perhaps in their modern senses. Moreover, these institutions have an important aesthetic side (ibid.: 76-7).

'Aspect', as used here by Mauss, corresponds to the sixth meaning of the word given by the *OED*, i.e. 'the side or surface [of anything] which fronts or is turned towards any given direction'. This use of 'aspect' is contingent upon the idea that society is a whole, and that it should be studied as such. Thus, Mauss writes:

> We are dealing with something more than institutional elements, more than institutions divisible into legal, economic, religious and other parts. We are concerned with 'wholes', with systems in their entirety ... it is only by considering them as wholes that we ... [are] ... able to see their essence, their operation and their living aspect (ibid.: 77).

'Aspect', here, corresponds to the fifth or the ninth meanings of the word: 'the facing or fronting of anything' or 'one of the ways in

which things present themselves to the mind'.

The idea of studying societies in their totality was echoed strongly, of course, by Van Wouden (cf., e.g., 1968: 1-2) and others in the Netherlands in the 1930s, and it was anyway not a new idea. Boas, for example, had said as much as early as 1898 (cf. Hartland 1900: 304). But Mauss's *Essai* voiced this sound point not merely as 'a mystical shibboleth' but with 'concrete illustrations' (Lowie 1937: 216).

The different but related idea that societies should be compared as wholes (cf., e.g., Radcliffe-Brown 1931: 22) did not commend itself, for instance, to Lord Raglan, an extremely acute critic whose observations are always worth taking seriously. His response to this idea is characteristic: 'it is impossible', he declares (1957: 141), 'to compare two societies as wholes; you cannot even compare two peas as wholes. You can compare them [only] for [i.e. by way of such notions as] size, weight, colour and taste', and he adds, rightly in my view, that furthermore 'you will get no results unless you perform these operations separately and with different techniques'.

One can, of course, argue about Raglan's latter contention; but against the first, no argument could weigh, except perhaps in the case of some societies with prescriptive alliance. The debatable point about what Raglan asserts, though, is that the notions which he mentions - size etc. - are technical terms which are imposed on the object of study. The same thing goes for the aspects or sides to which Mauss, and Lowie (1937: 216), refer. That is, their approaches treat society to an extent as though it were like a pea, so that by turning society about, so to say, the anthropologist can study it under its economic aspect, its religious aspect, and such like (cf. de Josselin de Jong 1972: 80), where these aspects correspond in some pre-determined way to the size, weight etc. of a pea.

A difficulty with this approach, of course, is that primitive or archaic societies tend not to discriminate these aspects or sides categorically, so that the use of terms like 'economic' or 'aesthetic', except in the loosest possible way (cf., e.g., Needham 1974: 44), is liable to impose notions upon the social facts or to distort them. This procedure is bound ultimately to result in failure, as the work of, for instance, Tylor and Frazer demonstrates (cf., e.g., Lévy-Bruhl 1910: 6).

Sahlins puts the difficulty which we have pinpointed here as follows:

> No social relation, institution, or set of institutions is of itself 'economic'. Any institution ... if it has material consequence for the provisioning of society can be placed in an economic context and considered part of the economic process. The same institution may be equally or more involved in the political process, thus profitably considered as well in a political context. This way of looking at economics or politics - or for that matter, religion, education, and any number of other cultural processes - is dictated by the nature of primitive culture. Here we find no socially distinct 'economy' or

> 'government', merely social groups and relations with multiple functions, which *we* distinguish as economic, political, and so forth (1974: 185-6.n.1, emphasis added).

The use of the term 'aspect', then, by the writers we have considered so far is, as Sahlins points out, a way of discriminating bodies of social facts which correspond to the social anthropologists' ways of cutting up, as it were, alien and exotic societies, ways which are most unlikely to correspond to the ways in which areas of social life are discriminated indigenously.

In writing about the notion of the 'change of aspect', 'meaning by this the capacity to discriminate in an object of thought as many connotations and uses as can be discovered or contrived' (Needham 1983: 3), Needham does not claim that 'every interpretation reveals an aspect that has a real counterpart among social facts, but only that it may do so ... ' (ibid.: 164). This circumstance is perfectly in accord with the meanings of 'aspect' as 'the point from which one looks' and 'one of the ways in which things may be looked at or contemplated, or in which they present themselves to the mind'.[2] But to adopt this attitude to the analysis of bodies of social facts in various forms of life jars slightly with what I take to be the first task of the social anthropologist, that is, to make some systematic sense of what a particular people does and of what it says (and writes) of what it does.

All this is to say that whereas these writers' views of aspects of society are rooted in the interests of their own discipline, my view is that first of all we should search out a meaning of 'aspect' which allows us to claim that what is revealed through analysis bears some real relation to the object of study. This meaning would correspond to the *OED* meaning: 'the way in which the planets, from their relative positions, look upon each other', not, it should be emphasized, 'their joint look upon the earth'. That is, we should (in the first instance at least) eschew the categories and the resulting presuppositions of kinship studies, of anthropological economics, of the social anthropology of art, and such like, and concentrate on aspects of the society in question from system internal.

Schärer's use of 'aspect' in *Ngaju Religion* has the required sense: he writes to begin with that 'culture is not composed of contingencies and compounds: it is an organic whole ... ', and that all the '"elements"' of which it is composed are fixed with reference to 'the common focal point where life and thought coincide and through which they must be interpreted and to which they constantly refer' (1963: 3). He continues: 'with such a unity in mind, one

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[2] Needham cites Wittgenstein (1953: 200): a right-angle triangle 'can be seen as a triangular hole, as a solid, as a geometrical drawing; as standing on its base, as hanging from its apex; as a mountain, as a wedge, as an arrow or pointer, as an overturned object which is meant to stand on the shorter side of the right angle, as a half parallelogram, and as various other things'.

speaks in anthropology not of the elements of culture but of its aspects' (ibid.).

Schärer goes on to ask where this focal point or centre by which the whole of, in his case Dayak, culture and religion is determined, by which their entire life and thought must be interpreted, and to which everything must be referred, lies. He answers: 'in the conception of God ... The idea of God runs through the whole culture and religion like a scarlet thread, and that in fact is the focus of life and thought' (ibid.: 7).

Schärer admits that this approach may have its drawbacks: 'The objection may be raised', he writes,

> that ... the common people and even many priests will know nothing of this system. It is admitted that this is the case. But when we wish to describe a religion or a religious idea, we are not compelled to begin and end with empirical life and thought. We must not only give a superficial view, but must seek the background of the appearances and the supporting and driving forces which inspire the empirical and which continually renew it. We have to penetrate through the surface to the centre from which everything receives its meaning (ibid.: 6-7).

I do not entirely subscribe to Schärer's views, in that he is at ease (clearly) with 'religion', for this is not a useful analytical term (cf., e.g., Needham 1981: 72-90). But the idea of the centre is resonant; and it receives support both from Eliade's view that every religion has a 'centre' (1969: 10-11), and from Dumont's idea of a society's 'core value' (e.g. 1982: 211), in that both are concerned with what, like the scarlet thread, is pervasive in societies.

In the Balinese case, there is no difficulty in identifying this centre, in all three senses: it consists of Ida Sang Hyang Vidhi, located at the centre of the island at the top of Mount Rinjani. Vidhi takes many forms; and Vidhi is pervasive in the world. All things are contained in Vidhi, so that a Balinese form of life (*dharma*) is a totality which is, so to say, sacred (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). When I speak of 'aspects' of Balinese life, therefore, I refer to the way in which the various bodies of social facts which are discriminable in that life are aspects of Vidhi as sunlight is to the sun-god Surya or, to use another example, as different kinds of lamp are still all lamps.

To consider aspects of Balinese life, understanding 'aspects' in this way, is an exercise in Balinese aesthetics, because Vidhi (as we have noted) is highest, finest and purest, among other things. This goes for such an apparently non-aesthetic aspect as rice-growing, to which we can now proceed. A final caveat, though: most of the people who do the work which we shall address in part would not be able to give the account which follows of the work; nor should they be able to do so, for the ideas to which we shall refer are such as to be appropriate only for senior Brahmana and Ksatrya (cf., e.g., Hobart 1978: 61; Duff-Cooper 1984b: 16).

III

Rice (Pantu / Padi)[3]

Rice-growing activities constitute a major part of a set of different subsistence activities. These activities are only one example (examined later) of exchanges which take place among the various categories with which the Balinese world is populated (cf., e.g., Howe 1984: 218, table; Duff-Cooper 1985a, 1985b).

Rice-growing forms part of a set with the growing of vegetables, the cultivation of fruit and animal husbandry. All these activities are the work (*pakaryan / pagaénan*) of the Sudra estate, usually called 'Balinese people' (*Anak* Bali) on Lombok. The cultivation of fruit is considered appropriate work, though, for individuals of any of the four estates. Whereas the cultivation of vegetables in dry and wet gardens is not accompanied by rites, as also is the case with animal husbandry,[4] the cultivation of fruit trees is accompanied by one rite, that held on *tumpék uduh* (*uduh*, fruiting trees like betel, coconut, mango, but not bamboo),[5] during which offerings are hung on trees.

Rice-growing, by contrast, is accompanied by rites, small (*nista*) or more elaborate (*madya*, middle, or *utama*, biggest), from the inception of the planting of the rice plants out in the fields (*carik / bangket*) from the nursery beds, to the storing of the harvest in the granary.

It has been suggested, in the context of Rotinese bad death, that 'a difference between normal and abnormal is symbolized by the performance of ritual as contrasted with "lack of ritual"' (Fox 1973: 359-62). The performance and non-performance of ritual may be characterized as a kind of reversal or inversion, i.e. an abstention from normal practice (cf. Needham 1983: 100-115, 116). It would be incorrect in the Balinese context, though, to see the 'lack of ritual' associated with vegetables, fruits and animals as

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[3] Balinese consists of various kinds of language (cf. Kersten 1970: 13-25). When words are given in this form, the first word is the fine (*alus*) form, the second the coarse (*kasar*) form.

[4] The only exception to this of which I am aware is that the neck of a calf is draped with white cloth at, and for a period after, birth. The Brahmana estate is associated with the colour white (which includes all colours) and with the cow in stories and in cremation rites (*mukur*, *maligia*).

[5] When the day Kliwon of the five-day week and Saniscara of the seven-day week coincide, then the day is a *tumpék*, one set aside for particular objects, e.g. *tumpék* Landep for weapons, *tumpék* Andang for domestic animals and fowl, *tumpék* Ringgit for the shadow theatre (*wayang*) and money and jewellery etc. The activity associated with the objects of the rites held on each *tumpék* is not performed on the *tumpék* in question: thus on *tumpék uduh*, no wood-cutting or fruit-picking etc. is performed.

being a reversal of this kind, for at least two reasons. First, this 'lack of ritual' is here normal practice; and second, because a good case could be made (though it will not be made here) for arguing that in as much as Balinese life is a sacred totality, every aspect of that form of life, if any, is 'ritual' (cf., e.g., Situmorang 1976: 11, 13; Peacock 1982: 22). Rather, vegetables (and other plants), fruits and animals are not accorded the status of one of the five kinds (*bangsa*) of beings - gods (*déva*), cremated human beings (*pitara*), 'priests' (*resi*), human beings (*manusa*) and demons (*bhuta*) - which warrant the working of rites on their behalf. This fact is correlative with the following: that while these five classes of being are all possessed of the *triparamana* - thoughts and emotions (*idep*), the ability to make sounds (*sabda*) and strength (*bayu*) - animals possess only 'sounds' and strength, while plants possess only strength.

In Balinese life there is no category of rites termed 'agricultural' or something of the kind. Agricultural rites are of the classes *déva yadnya* and *bhuta yadnya*, rites for the gods and for demons. It is well known, of course, that in Southeast Asia rice is the goddess Sri. In Balinese ideology, however, not only is the rice but so are the ricefields, the soil in the fields, the sun, the wind, the rain and the water which irrigates the fields equated with gods and goddesses: Uma, the ricefields as an area; Siva, the soil in the fields; Bayu or Indra, the wind; and Gangga, the rain and irrigating water (cf. Duff-Cooper forthcoming).

Rice and some of the implements which are used in its cultivation are associated with the mystical in other ways. Miniature replicas of the plough-yoke (*uga*), the plough (*tenggah*) and the harrow (*lampit*) are included in the objects and offerings (*étéh-étéh padudusan*) which are placed alongside a Pedanda on the meditation platform (*balé pawédaan*) as he or she makes holy water of various kinds. On certain occasions, when the essence (*sari*) of these objects and offerings is given (*atabin*) to each of the gods in turn (cf., e.g., Swellengrebel 1960: 47; Covarrubias 1972: 296-7), beginning with Vidhi as Surya, men use the miniature implements to pretend to plough and to harrow, while others turn unhusked rice (*beras*) into husked rice (*gabah*) as they process clockwise round the seats of the gods (cf. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp 1961: 24, 25-31, 36). A full-size yoke is used in marriage rites.

Rice, in the form of a *chili* (cf. Covarrubias 1972: 172-81), a palm-leaf cut-out representing a bisexual being, in all probability Ardhanārīśvara, is represented in the holy-water sprinkler (*lis*), which is a god, Bhatara Siva (cf. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp 1961: 5).

Howe reports (1980: 108) that theoretically, *mantra* should be said whenever an operation involving rice is carried out, from harvesting to pounding. That is, rice is at least of a status equivalent to a Brahmana Pedanda, the highest there is among material human beings (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984b: 24).

Two further points should be mentioned finally in this very brief survey to establish the character of rice and of rice-growing in Balinese ideology. First, the goddess Sri may also be called *manik gatih*, the *manik* of a grain of rice (Van Eck 1876: 168; Howe

1980: 183). *Manik* means 'precious stone', and it also refers to the 'essence' of semen and the embryo of a chicken in the egg; it is also the part of a grain of rice or a fruit in which the regenerative potential of the grain or the fruit is located (Van der Tuuk 1912, IV: 502). It is also said to mean 'ovary', while one prays for a walking *manik* (*manik majalan*) if one has no children (ibid.; cf. Warna 1978: 368). The fact that *manik* refers to both semen and the ovaries is in accord with two other social facts: an effigy of Sri called the *nini*, which is made from the rice first planted (commonly called the 'sacred' rice in the literature) (see Figures I, II and III below), and which is placed high up in the granary, is made from both male and female stalks; while Howe mentions that in the part of the rite *nguaba* or *ngantukang nini*, take home the *nini*, called *nyinah* (from **sinah*, light, clear), the god Rambut Sedana and the goddess Sri are married to each other; and that the palm-leaf construction (*tulung*) which is buried among the rice plants in the fields to help them to grow properly consists of two elements in which the bellies (*bacang*) are set together in replica of sexual intercourse (Howe 1980: 122, 130, 132). It would be consistent for the top element to be associated with male, that underneath with female (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985f).

Secondly, the rice is said to be pregnant (*mobot / beling*) while it is growing; and to be delivered (*maluspusin*), the rite during which this is done (*biu kukung*) including all the paraphernalia used normally in deliveries; while the rice matures through the same series of rites used for growing children (Howe 1980: 124, 126).

It is fair to say, therefore, that we are not dealing with simply a crop, or anything of the kind. Indeed, in the nature of Balinese society, we are dealing here with 'total' social facts.

IV

Where the Rice is Grown, and by Whom

Vidhi is both dual and one (*sakalam niskalam tatha*). This unity in duality is thus a principle of Balinese ideas concerned with aesthetics, for it is a way of expressing the two ideas mentioned already (i.e., high / low and closeness to or distance from a centre) which pervade Balinese aesthetics. There are at least six regards in which Vidhi as a duality and a unity is discernible in these aspects of rice-growing.

First, work consists of two kinds, as we have noted: the performance of rites, and work in the fields, often calf-deep in glutinous mud and water. These kinds of work, however, are distinguished one from another by villagers in a number of ways. These ways are dress, language, demeanour, the consumption of food, the embellishment of the activities, and the amount of money properly expended on the work.

Secondly, rites are held in temples and compounds mostly,

though they may also take place on a very small scale in the ricefields; labouring takes place in this context only in the fields, at least until after the crop has been harvested. Temples and compounds on one hand, the ricefields on the other, stand physically and ideationally at two opposed points in the Balinese world. Temples are the purest, where no sex, dead bodies and people who have had contact with them which has not been expunged, or menstruating women, for instance, can enter; the fields are full of what is unclean literally and are thus less pure, rather as the left hand stands to the right hand (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985e). In the fields, people sometimes have sex, fight to the death so that one side wins, and are in constant danger from the physical attacks of Islamic Sasak or the mystical attacks of malevolent Balinese and from giant, hideous ogres like *raksasa*.

Thirdly, the parties to rice-growing are the gods, by which is meant cremated ancestors of varying degrees of distance from an origin-point (*kawitan*), and the empirical individual and the line which own the land and work it.[6] In this situation, the line in question must be Sudra, for it is an aspect of the duty (*dharma*) of this estate to labour. This duty is associated with what is lower and less fine and pure (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985c); the estate and its duty are associated with the area of the Balinese world which is lowest, that is, in opposition to the gardens and compounds. The gods are associated with the purest and finest of these three areas, and they have ultimate control over the success or otherwise of the harvest. These two opposed categories of being are dual, and opposed, but they constitute a unity, in this case in producing rice from a particular area of ricefields.

Fourthly, rights in land vest in the gods, but the land is worked, we have seen, by human beings. Furthermore, these rights are registered in the names of empirical individuals who act, so to say, as trustees for the gods. It is therefore a line of descent or a local descent group which holds the rights in the land. The line or sub-line, here as in other instances, is represented usually by the oldest, material male member of the line. The holders of rights in land, therefore, are both a duality and a unity.

Next, in the relation termed *ngadas*, one line or sub-line holds the rights in land, but another line, sub-line, or 'family' (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985d) works the land. Both parties to the relation, or the party which works the land alone, give(s) offerings to the gods; the owners of the rights (acting through an empirical human being, of course) contribute poison to kill pests which come from the sea sent by the gods, the worker(s) of the land fertilizer. The crop is divided equally between both parties. The same goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for *ngadas* relations, possibly also called *ngandu*, concerning two or more pigs, a number of ducks (*bébék*) etc. The holder of rights and the grower of rice (or the purchaser and the husbander of pigs etc.) constitute a duality which is also a unity.

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[6] The situation where one man and his line or sub-line (for which a number of Balinese words exist; cf., e.g., Hobart 1983: 7-11) own the land and others work it is addressed later in the text.

Finally, when rice is sold, the buyer and the seller are related asymmetrically to varying degrees (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). However, they still constitute a duality and a unity.

All these relations are marked by exchange between two or more of the parties which constitute any dualistic unity. In Balinese ideology, the exchanges are equal, assuming that both parties are acting in accordance with local current conventions (*dêsa kala patra*): that is, in the relations mentioned, what is given and what is received by both parties are equivalents one of the other. But the relations are also asymmetrical to various degrees, in the sense that in the contexts described one party is pre-eminent. This pre-eminence is manifested in various ways in the situations which we have just described.

Rites are pre-emiment in relation to labour. One uses fine language to talk about rites or their prosecution; one dresses in one's finest (sc. newest) clothes and embellishes oneself with gold jewellery or a wrist-watch;[7] one eats communally and very formally (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985e); and one should expend as much money, goods and labour in their performance. Work in the fields employs coarse language, one's oldest clothes, no jewellery, very informal communal eating or eating alone, and the least expenditure possible while not jeopardizing the success of the harvest.

Temples and compounds are pre-eminent in relation to rice-fields, at least in that they are set higher and closer to the village temple (*pemaksan*), physically and ideationally, than the fields.

As is expectable, further, the gods are pre-eminent in relation to human beings, for the gods decide ultimately the fate of the crop. But it should be noted that the gods are not capricious: if the harvest is not a success, human beings must have behaved improperly in some way.

It is also the case that the owner of land or the joint owner of animals who pays for them with money or goods are pre-eminent in relation to the worker(s) or the other's land or the other joint owner who husbands the animals. The former do not work physically, like the highest statuses in Balinese life who are scholars (the Brahman estate) or who (the Ksatrya), before the arrival of the Dutch on Lombok in 1894, were the administrators of realms. It is an honour to carry the baggage of another of such a high status, for example, but a Pedanda or a king is pre-eminent, clearly, in relation to people who porter. The *ngadas* relation is an analogue of this latter situation.

In each case, one category which is pre-eminent is also finer and often higher, physically and ideationally, than the other, less eminent party. It should be emphasized, however, that the parties to *ngadas* relations, and indeed the relations which obtain between employer and employee more generally, are not represented physically in Baturujung. The details of relations of *ngadas* and of *ngandu*

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[7] Howe writes (1980: 179): 'wealth in the form of gold and other precious metals is conceptually related to food', the generic terms for which are *rayunan / nasi*, 'cooked rice'.

emphasize the equality of the two or more parties to the relations. It should be noted, moreover, that the pre-eminence of a category is not linked in any systematic or necessary way to better material circumstances than those enjoyed by the less eminent. Those who are pre-eminent, indeed, and who are also wealthy do far better to give away all that they have, and probably receive mystical abilities (*kesaktian*) in return, than to try to increase their wealth; especially if all they think about when they try to do so is the maximization of profit, a most unbecoming (sc. coarse and ugly) way of behaving (cf. Duff-Cooper 1983b: 371).

The pre-eminent category is also closer to a relevant centre of reference than the less eminent party. Which centre of reference is chosen depends upon the circumstances, but the pre-eminent party is always closer to it. In all cases, also, the relations between the parties to these exchanges, which constitute dualistic unities, are asymmetrical to a degree.

In these dualistic relations, the parties may of course work in concert or in conflict (cf., e.g., Hobart 1978: 79). Conflict is not fine, and is associated with the divisiveness of the witch (*léak*). Similarly deprecated, by some, are the innovations of new varieties of rice, which are said to be less tasty than *pelita*, the variety traditionally grown for consumption as steamed rice; and of motorized machinery, which is particularly divisive, for not all villagers are capable practically of taking advantage of a communally owned tractor, say, and are often hesitant to try to acquire the skills necessary for the use of such machinery at courses run by the agents of the Indonesian government; nor can they afford to buy them privately. Some people also say that such machinery anyway spoils the fields, rather as the province of which western Lombok is a part, once ruled over by the Balinese, has been spoilt by Muslims exercising jural authority over them.

Hobart incidentally, suggests, on the basis of five incidents which led to violence or 'a complete breach of social relations', that there is a tendency, if nothing more, 'for the eruption of disputes to follow the lines of economic difference ... ', i.e., to have arisen between those who held rights in a lot of land and those who did not (ibid.). He goes on to suggest that these conflicts 'derive in part from the disparity in the pattern of land-ownership and public influence', i.e., the biggest holders are not necessarily also the most publicly influential, 'or between the reality of divergent economic interests on the one hand, and the ideology of equality [of the *subak* to which owners of rights in land all fed from one water source belong] on the other' (ibid.: 80).

We cannot, of course, assess these suggestions without being able to consider each incident in detail. But a remark of Collingwood's is apposite here: 'People will speak', he writes (1970: 32-3), 'of a savage as "confronted by the eternal problem of obtaining food". But what really confronts him is the problem, quite transitory like all things human, of spearing this fish, or digging up this root, or finding blackberries in the wood'. The same goes *mutatis mutandis* for these conflicts and their partial explanation.

V

Male and Female (Lanang / Muani *and* Istri / Luh)

Vidhi as male and female is archetypally represented in the bisexual icon Ardhanārīśvara, as well as in the sun and the moon, especially when they appear together, as it were, and in the married couple (*pakurenan*).

The rice-plant, we have noted, is possessed of a *manik*, which is at once semen and ovary. The insemination, as it were, of the earth (the god Siva or the goddess Uma) by water (the goddess Gangga) or by light rays (the sun-god Surya) (cf. Howe 1980: 120) '"in marriage"' (Van Naerssen 1918: 34) activates the *manik*. *Manik* are represented in metaphysics (*sarva-surya*) as fiery wheels (*cakra*) which represent totality. The *manik* of rice contains the whole rice-bearing plant within itself.

This process gives rise to both male and female plants. In the *nini*, the effigy of Sri, both male and female plants - seventeen of the former, sixteen of the latter - are used. In this, as in other but not all contexts, male is pre-eminent.

In the fields, men plant the nursery beds, plough and harrow, and plant the rice used for making the *nini*. Males tend the plants to begin with, and deal with the level of water in the fields. Women plant the fields with seedlings from the nursery beds and make the *nini*. They also give offerings to the rice while it is being dried in the compound after harvesting. Men and women together, who are most often related to one another through one origin-point, or through two closely related such points, hoe, weed and harvest the rice. Men and women also look after the rice while it is drying.

I can as yet discern no system in the employment of males, of females, and of both sexes in these activities, unless it be that the involvement of one or of both sexes is an analogy of the ways in which separately and together the sexes are involved in child-rearing. Which activity in rice-growing corresponds to or is an analogue of which activity in child-rearing must remain to be investigated.

VI

Circularity and Linearity (Bindu *and* Pepet)

Circularity refers to Vidhi as Sang Bindu, the point or dot in which everything in the Balinese universe is contained. Linearity refers, among other things, to the series or sequence of logical progressions from Sang Bindu. These progressions (cf., e.g., Mershon 1971: 32-3) are all replications and transformations of Vidhi. Circularity and linearity are discernible in Balinese dance / drama, music, notions of duration, and in the representational devices employed in traditional Balinese genealogies

(cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a: 23). They are combined also in the designs of the fiery wheel and the swastika which are used in sculpture, as motifs in jewellery, and in tattoos borne by men.

In the rice-growing process, both are present in at least three activities, over and above their presence, naturally enough, in the durational dimension of all rice-growing and other activities. The three referred to particularly are ploughing, hoeing (*ngiskis*) and fertilizing (*ngabot*). One may let the cows down into the fields to start ploughing (*mungkah*) at any time except when the *ingkel* is *sato*.[8] Where one begins ploughing depends upon the snake of the year (*naga tahun*), a mystical creature which sits oriented in a different way in each thirty-day month. On a day such as Redite Kliwon,[9] its tail was in the south. On this day, beginning at the point where the snake's tail is, one ploughs round the points of the compass in an anticlockwise direction thirteen times, i.e., the total numerical value of the day when one begins ploughing.[10] The motion round the points of the compass stops (in this case) at thirteen circumferences of the area of ricefields (*petak*) being ploughed; thenceforth, the motion is lineal, up and down or backwards and forwards across the field.

The most usual direction in which things take place is clockwise, *pradaksina*, the meaning of which may well be turning one's right side first to the south (*daksina*). The question arises here whether the direction of the first numbered ploughing is significant. On the face of it, the anticlockwise is a reversal of proper order. Perhaps it is akin to the sleeping of a menstruating woman on a mat by the bed and not with her husband on it. Both perhaps are considered to be ready for life to germinate within themselves. But this suggestion is a conjecture which I cannot justify here.

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[8] An *ingkel* is a period of seven consecutive days. There are six: Wong, Sato, Mina, Manuk, Taru and Buku, corresponding to people, animals, fish, birds, trees and such plants as bamboo and sugarcane, which are jointed (Ind. *persendian*). The *ingkel* operate as a kind of close-season on activities relating to the character and category of the *ingkel*.

[9] When, at least, it fell on the 4th April 1982, in the tenth Balinese month.

[10] A Balinese day has many names but the most usual way to refer to a day is by reference to the seven-day week (*sapta wara*) and to the five-day week (*panca wara*), which run concurrently. The seven-day week, from Sunday, is Redite, Coma, Anggara, Buda, Wraspati, Sukra, Saniscara, and the days have the numerical values 5, 4, 4, 7, 8, 1 or 6, 9. The days of the five-day week are Kliwon, Umanis, Paing, Pon, Wage, and their numerical values are 8, 5, 9, 7, 4. A day such as Redite Kliwon thus has a numerical value of 13 (5 + 8). When the combination produces an odd value, the day is Pepet, an even value, Menga. These are the names of the two-day week, which are contrasted as night and day.

When one hoes, usually with three or four often closely related people, one moves lineally up the field, moving from side to side. This movement appears to be an example of alternation (cf. Needham 1983: 121-54, esp. Figure 8). Hoeing up the field, one zigzags to the end opposite to where one began. One then moves across from the point at which one arrives, hoeing, for a suitable distance. One then zigzags back to where one first changed directions when hoeing up the field. This sequence of alternating movements constitutes a closed circularity. The line of alternations, through time, is linear.

In fertilizing the fields, a male walks up the field, usually from south to north or from west to east, casting fertilizer with his right hand in front of him from left to right and then from right to left in an alternating sequence. The motion is then repeated back down the field, but across it, as in hoeing. The motion while fertilizing up and down a ricefield is both circular, therefore, and linear. These motions are discernible also in the steps of Balinese dancers (cf. McPhee 1970: 309 Figure 1, 314 Figure 2). The ability to cast fertilizer, like the ability to perform complicated dance steps and other movements, is learnt only after much practice. The man who can cast fertilizer well is a fine worker and hence, in this regard at least, worthy of approbation; the dancer equally.

VII

High and Low (Duur / Tegeh *and* Andap / Éndép)

I want to draw attention in this section only to a few related facts. For example, that the highest part of the rice-plant, when it is full of grain and hence bending over - in the manner, as villagers say, of an older person who does not adopt the proud, but perhaps haughty, bearing of a young man straight against the wind, so to say - is said to be at its best when there is a black hue as one looks across the tops of the plants; the most fertile soil is reddish. Black is associated with Visnu, red with Brahma, and thus with high and low respectively. Further, a head of hair should be as black as possible - ogres and Caucasians, associated with what is low and coarse, have red or reddish hair - and should shine like the sun. As in other contexts, what is high is associated with what is fine.

VIII

Odd / Even (Gasal / Genap)

When men plant the rice from which the *nini* is made in the rite termed *nuasén*, clumps of rice seedlings are planted in the

configuration shown in Figure 1. The numbers in this figure represent both the order in which the clumps are planted and the number of rice seedlings in each clump. The double asterisk (as in Figures 1 and 2) marks the water inlet into the area of ricefields.

6 1 8**

7 5 3

2 9 4

Figure 1. Planting of rice in nuasén

It will be noted that all the lines in the figure total 15. In Balinese ideology, odd is to even as life is to death. A child which gestates for an odd number of months (villagers say) is likely to be strong and healthy; one which gestates for an even number, unripe (*muda*) and fragile. Odd is also to even as male is to female. All these facts are in accord with the odd number of rice seedlings planted in *nuasén* as above. Howe reports (1983: 145), also, that odd numbers mark points of transition. *Nuasén* may be viewed as such a point, as may the odd number (33) of rice stalks used in making the *nini*, which signals the end of a series of activities connected with rice production and the inception of a new series of such production or of the production of secondary crops. '33' is probably made up of 3 times 11.

Forty-two days must elapse between *nuasén* and an unceremonious circuit of the ricefields (*mubuhin*) by villagers to make the rice grow well. Similarly, a rite is held at least 42 days after the birth of a child; and 42 is the number of days, also, for which one performs regimes or disciplines (*brata*) of different kinds. The circuit of the ricefields was said specifically to be similar to the attaching of a baby's umbilical cord (*pungsed*) in a small silver container on a white thread around the child's belly, which is carried out at least 42 days after birth. Hobart reports (1978: 83.n.14) that Hooykaas 'argued that this is, in fact, the common thirty-five day cycle ... with a seven-day week added'. Neither, of course, explains, as I also cannot, this fascination with '42'. But its use, and the two odd numbers making it up, do not conflict with the facts so far mentioned. That even numbers do not figure significantly in rice-growing activities is explicable probably on the ground that rice has to do essentially with life, and not with death; and with the high gods, and not with low demons.

IX

Visible and Invisible (Sakala *and* Niskala)

Visible and invisible refer to two related ways in which Vidhi may be in the world. Both are discernible in the rice-growing process, but not only in the gods and the human beings to which we have referred already. *Mantra*, spoken formulae in this context, are used to protect the crops from thieves, and people guarding the crop at night sometimes wear belts which render them invisible; while many other aspects of the activities are, of course, visible and material.

X

Symmetry and Asymmetry

It has already been demonstrated that both symmetrical and asymmetrical relations are discernible in various aspects of the Balinese form of life in western Lombok (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). This fact was expectable: 'Formal terms such as "symmetry" and "asymmetry" are not peculiar to a particular linguistic and intellectual tradition, but denote properties which must be discernible (either conceptually or in social practice) by any cultural system of thought', so that 'it follows that the terms are intrinsically appropriate to the study of exotic collective representations' (Needham 1983: 64). Symmetrical and asymmetrical relations are discernible also in rice-growing.

In the configurations made up by the 'sacred' rice shown in Figure 1, for instance, both can be discerned. Taking 'true' centre as the centre of reference, then the configuration is clearly symmetrical; but taking '8' or '3' as the centre of reference, then the figure is asymmetrical: projections through these centres result in both odd and even numbers.

The design which results from the path which the planter of these clumps' right hand takes, shown in Figure 2, further, is symmetrical about 'true' centre both in the horizontal and in the vertical planes. Projections from the points standing for '8' and '3' in Figure 1, however, also result in configurations which are symmetrical about these two points. This total symmetry is in accordance with the design being devoid of (numerical) content. Projections through the point at '8' in both the horizontal and vertical planes results in a right-angle triangle within which the configuration is contained. This total configuration is reminiscent of the ideological shape of the Balinese world, deriving from one point, at the top of the triangularly represented Mount Rinjani, which is in principle limitless, i.e., able to place everything, known and unknown, in its place in the Balinese universe (cf., e.g., Covarrubias 1972: Plates 14-19, facing pp. 202-3). It may be significant that the simple right angle is the basic unit of

Balinese geometry; and that the cardboard offering *puspe*, 'flower', given to material human beings as they are being cremated in the rite *ngabén*, is made without a bottom to the cone. Projections through the point at '3' horizontally and vertically lead to a configuration in which the two constituent parts are enantiomorphs. Reading, as it were, the shapes which constitute each half from right to left and from left to right, the first shape in one half is the last in the other half; and the positions of the same shapes in each half correspondingly. This reversal is similar to the one which is discernible in the order in which one refers to or addresses human beings and gods: addressing or referring to human beings, one mentions the pre-eminent category first; addressing or referring to the gods, the pre-eminent category comes last. Further, these two classes of being - usually visible and invisible respectively - can be represented as being one on top of the other, as in the dualistic configuration we have been considering.

In Figure 2, the points are drawn in the form of a rectangle. If, however, these points are arranged in the form of a square (as in Figure 3), then the relative proportions of the movements of the planter's right hand from the point at '1' to that at '2' to '3' and so on are 2:2:1:3:1:2:2.[11] A number of remarks can be made about these numbers. First, they total 13, which is (consistently) an odd number. As the Balinese say that it is imposible to have a number which is larger than nine, perhaps '13' is made up of 9 + 3 + 2 unities which merge to form 1, and hence 13, along the lines of Ambonese arithmetic (cf. Jansen 1933). Secondly, the proportions are symmetrical about '3'. This fact does not conflict with the assertions made above about symmetry, asymmetry and content: the apparent numerical content of these proportions is simply a representational device for movements which, like dance steps, have no numerical or other content in themselves. However, both '3' and the totals of '5' to either side of '3' refer to numerous triads and quintads which are discriminated by villagers as being significant in the Balinese world. Finally, the form of the proportions, which may equally well be represented as A:A:B:C:B:A:A, is termed a retrogade inversion in classical counterpoint. In Balinese music the nuclear (*pokok*) melody, a kind of *cantus firmus*, consists basically of eight fractional beats. These fractional beats, which must be expanded melodically to take on musical meaning, may be expressed as 3:3:2 or as 3:2:3 or as 2:3:3. These forms are used as counter-rhythms in a gong-chime solo (*trompong*), for instance, and they give the solo its vitality and its rhythmical drive. This rhythm, in the form of the eight-beat unit, lies at the heart of Balinese rhythm; and it is a germinal rhythmical unit which can be developed in 'endless' ways (cf. McPhee 1966: 66-7, 74, 78).

If the developments of this eight-beat unit are employed lineally as they are listed by McPhee, then the resultant form of the three eight-beat units is an enantiomorph in a form similar to that

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[11] I am grateful to Dr Gerd Baumann for drawing this fact to my attention and for discussing this and other matters with me at length.

of the proportions described above, i.e., 3:3:2:3:2:3:2:3:3, which is symmetrical if the second '2' is taken as the centre of reference. In such a formation, this centre must be a point which is defined as occurring only once in the series, or else it must be symmetrical. This is explicable, perhaps, by the fact that Vidhi

Figure 2. Path of right hand of planter of sacred rice

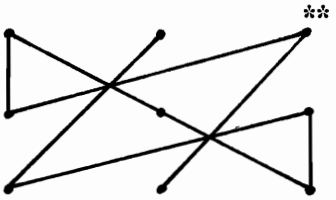
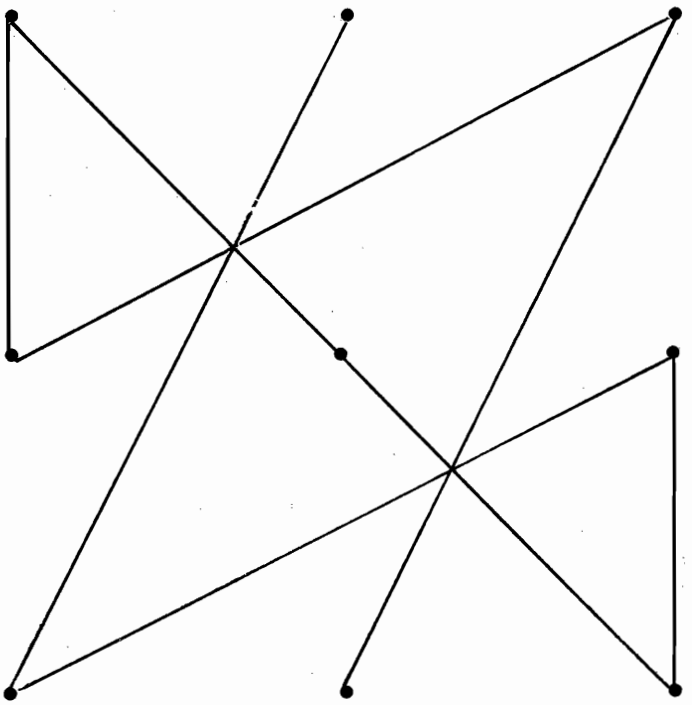


Figure 3. Path of right hand of planter of sacred rice contained within a square



is both a duality, in which the relations between its constituent parts are symmetrical, and a unity.

McPhee does not suggest that this form of the eight-beat unit is used in this way; but that it should spring so readily from McPhee's explication and that it should be so fundamental to Balinese rhythm (as the 'sacred' rice and the *nini* are so important in rice-growing) is perhaps more than mere conincidence.

The two halves of the configurations shown in Figures 2 and 3, like the two forms of reference and of address and the other enantiomorphs which we have mentioned, constitute a totality. Totality in the form of *ongkara* is the colour of rock crystal (*spatika*) which is used to surmount a *padmasana*, seat of Surya, and the mitres and sometimes the walking-sticks of Pedanda. The form of crystals may be different, while their internal structure is identical. This fact applies also to Vidhi. The syllable *ongkara*, Vidhi, the crystals at the top of *padmasana* etc., and the configuration which we have been examining under various aspects, all represent totality. Not surprisingly, in view of the fact that red, like demons, is associated with what is relatively to the left and low, red crystals in the form of the *mirah dlima* best repel the attacks of demons and other malevolent beings.

The shapes which have emerged in Figures 2 and 3, it should be remarked in conclusion, are composed clearly of three elements. It may be that these three elements refer to, among other matters, the three worlds (*loka*) which in some Balinese theological accounts (*sarva-tattva*) comprise the Balinese universe. That the highest and lowest elements are triangular accords with the importance of the notion of a centre composed of two constituent parts deriving from that centre, as children derive from their parents, which is discernible in many aspects of Balinese thought and social life. These shapes are also used in the patterns of batik which many Balinese wear and use for other purposes. Batik patterns have cosmological significance (cf., e.g., Geirnaert-Martin n.d.).

The relations between male and female are asymmetrical, as we have noted. Taken as a whole, the ideas and activities which constitute the rice-growing process show the male pre-eminent in some contexts, the female as pre-eminent in others. But the relations between the men and the women who harvest and carry unhusked rice back to the owners' compounds are symmetrical. Apart from the way of carrying out the activity - men carry sacks of grain on their backs, women on their heads - in all other regards the male and the female are interchangeable, i.e., the relations which obtain between the two sexes are thus far, and in this context, symmetrical. This fact is shown clearly in the teams (*klompok*), usually agnates, who harvest rice (*ngrampék*): each member of such a team receives an equal share of one-tenth (minus one share, which goes to the owner of the equipment, *alat pengrampékan*, used during harvesting) of the rice harvested. The invitation to landless people to harvest their rice by owners of rights in land is a gift. Payment for the labour in the form of one-tenth of the crop to the team is an equal exchange; the relations, though, which obtain between owner and labourers are asymmetrical, for the pre-eminent party (the owner) does not labour, in this context at least. This degree of asymmetry,

though, is very slight, especially as on the ground, as it were, the latter's situation in not in all ways preferable to working in the fields.

XI

Concluding Remarks

The present study, which could be extended lengthily, of course, began (it will be recalled) with a consideration of 'aspect'. In the light of Schärer's classical work, a meaning of this word was decided upon. The rest of this study has demonstrated by recourse to empirical cases how this meaning of 'aspect' can inform profitably the consideration of bodies of social facts.

It has elicited also areas of the rice-growing process which are viewed revealingly under an aesthetical aspect. However, our descriptive and analytical notions have been decided upon according to indigenous views of the matter. This approach orders the material economically, and it also gives rise to questions which need further consideration. Such systematic consideration of social facts I take to be the very essence of enquiry which is scientific. But we have been able to take advantage of the power of this method in the explication of social life because we have not eschewed metaphysics. Of course, there is nothing about metaphysics which should make it necessary for us to ignore it and its teaching (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a: 36). The renewed recognition, indeed, of its sociological import and of what, in this case, Balinese metaphysics teaches, has given rise to a more exact description of the relations which constitute the Balinese form of life, in Pagutan at least. That is, for instance, we can no longer talk properly about asymmetry without specifying in some way (preferably formally) to what degree the relations are asymmetrical (cf., e.g. Howe 1983: 157 n.10; Duff-Cooper 1985a).

Moreover, this truly holistic approach to indigenously defined aspects of a form of life allows us to treat one of a number of activities which are fundamentally important in any form of life in a way which is sound methodologically. It is also a way, I take it, which would be intelligible to a learned Balinese. It therefore has a double utility.

Hampshire writes (1970: 216-7) that there is no doubt that we can sometimes 'contemplate reality, in perception and introspection, without any kind of comment, and even, with far greater difficulty, without in any way acting or intending action, and without even an apparent shadow of a practical interest'. At these times we are 'deliberately enjoying moments of pure aesthetic experience'; this experience is akin, perhaps, to a mystical experience (induced by drugs or not) or to an orgasm of great intensity. This kind of experience is such as to make it worth seeking out; but some social anthropologists will doubtless also want to take part in what Mauss calls 'the conscious direction' of forms of life. These

anthropologists can, of course, try deliberately to derive pure aesthetic experience from their work, as from other aspects of their lives. But in their more practical concerns and activities, studies such as the present one seem more likely to encourage and support their forays into what Mauss terms the supreme art, i.e., thinking politically in the Socratic sense of the word, than biased, unrigorous theorizing, based on a paucity of social facts and unreliable statistical data about, say, the spread of market rationality (cf., e.g., Gerdin 1982; Cederroth 1985).

This approach, further, takes the people with whom we live in the field seriously, and not simply as the purveyors of 'folk models' or something of the kind (cf. Duff-Cooper 1983b, 1985g; Cederroth 1985). It is appropriate, moreover, not only to the description or analysis of societies in South or Southeast Asia, as has been amply demonstrated already in French and Dutch anthropology, but to the description and analysis also of societies in other parts of the world.

The approach, finally, contributes data which are of crucial importance to the grander designs of philosophers of art and of aesthetics, for 'the only aesthetic theory that can now be critical and enlightening is at the same time a history of changing ideals of art that points a way to the future ... ' (Hampshire 1970: 237).

For these reasons (at least) the approach via aesthetics has demonstrably much to recommend it.

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