

THE LOGIC OF RASA IN JAVA

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Intuitive Consciousness and Charisma

We may have the adage that "knowledge is power," but beneath it lies an epistemology implying that "knowledge" is primarily a matter of intellect, of qualities of thought and quantities of information. Closely linked to this is a sense of "person," profoundly conditioned by Enlightenment notions of equality, which results in sharp resistance to suggestion that there may be qualitatively different orders of consciousness. Yet as Louis Dumont points out, ". . . it is only in our egalitarian ideology that reality appears on a single plane and as composed of equivalent atoms."¹ Through work such as his, which explores the pervasive implications of hierarchy and inequality in the Indian context, we become fully conscious of the degree to which our thought is shaped by a one-dimensional ontology. If we are aiming to understand the logic which underlies the nexus of mystical consciousness and social power, as those are conceived and expressed within cultures which attend to it, then we need to consider the implications of differing epistemologies.

Insofar as the social sciences are disciplines of intellect, it is natural that the dimensions of life and forms of logic most accessible to the intellect are the ones most easily subjected to analysis. So, in attempting to unveil the logic of social and cultural systems, we may also be seduced by the tendency to treat symbolism as an autonomous realm, then attempting to discern the pattern of relationships between symbols in cerebral terms. But Malinowski's injunctions, which underlie much contemporary ethnography, include emphasis on the fact that:

. . . the foundations of magical belief and practice are not taken from the air, but are due to a number of experiences actually lived through, in which man receives the revelation of his power to attain the desired end.²

This statement points us toward the new emphasis, I am inclined to say "revival," of concern with "praxis" in contemporary social theory.³ In any event, an

1. *Homo Hierarchicus* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. xxx.

2. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 82.

3. For a discussion of the new "practice" orientation within anthropology, see Sherry Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, 1 (January 1984): 144-57. The sense of "praxis" which underlies my approach here is at a tangent from those discussed

emphasis on contextualizing beliefs not only in their social but also in their personal and experiential contexts is especially pertinent if we are attempting to interpret the logic of the relationship between consciousness and power.

In the Javanese traditional context, and among those now still experiencing a continuity with it, "knowledge" in its significant form is "ngelmu." Though in Indonesia "ilmu" now closely approximates Western senses of "knowledge," the Javanese term clearly refers to gnosis, to a mystical or spiritual form of knowledge which is not just intellectual but also intuitive. Another way of clarifying what is meant by "ngelmu" is that, in the end, it is the whole body, and all organs within it, rather than just the mind that "knows." This sense of knowledge underlies Javanese mystical theory not only of consciousness, but also of its relationship, which is essentially reflexive, to social and political power. "Rasa," my focus in this paper, is among other things the cognitive faculty which, as Javanese mystics understand it, we use to "know" the intuitive aspects of reality. It is, in Javanese terms, through intuitive experience and knowledge that people may sense the "wahyu," the charismatic glow, of a person of power.

The Javanese mystical idea of power may be unique in some of its particulars, but it is clearly also part of a wider pattern of belief. Wolters has recently suggested that one of the underlying patterns within Southeast Asian cultures may be the notion of "men of prowess," of the existence of "unequal souls" in Kirsch's terms.⁴ Errington's essay on "Embodied *Sumange'* in Luwu" shows that in the Malay world the central concept of "*semangat*" is linked to mystical senses of power.⁵ There is clearly a resonance between these ideas of "power" and the concept of "*mana*," which entered the vocabulary of English after Codrington identified it in the Melanesian context. Anderson's treatment of "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" is the definitive exposition of the theory, both explicitly and implicitly, which in Javanese terms links political expressions of power to magical and mystical cosmology.⁶ But by stressing "beliefs," and the way they contribute to conditioning of social actions, it remains possible for Javanese notions to be considered as simply another ideological formulation, different from ours but another gloss of the same "reality."

Anderson's essay builds on Weber's work in that he has clarified both the systematic coherence of the political theory implicit within Javanese tradition and the substantive differences between the underlying conceptions of power in traditional Java and the contemporary West. Weber himself had

by Ortner, but remains related: in both contexts emphasis is shifted to what people "do."

4. O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), pp. 6-7.

5. Shelly Errington, "Embodied *Sumange'* in Luwu," *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, 3 (May 1983): 545-70; on the centrality of the notion of "*semangat*" within Malay thought see Kirk Endicott, *An Analysis of Malay Magic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970). Also closely aligned to this "school" of thought is Michelle Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). In her discussion of Ilongot society Rosaldo speaks of the sense her informants had that "*liget*," energy experienced in the heart, fluctuates through experience and constitutes a major focus of attention within the culture.

6. In Claire Holt et al., eds., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).

already highlighted the essential logic of charismatic modes of authority:

The holder of charisma seizes the task that is adequate for him and demands obedience and a following by virtue of his mission. His success determines whether he finds them. His charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent. If they recognize him, he is their master--so long as he knows how to maintain recognition through "proving" himself.⁷

Weber's formulation, based in part on Chinese theories of the "mandate of heaven," draws attention not only to the circularity of logic underlying this sense of "supernaturally" bestowed power, but also to the fact that it reflects a linkage between leader and following which, in the ideal, is "felt" on both sides. The term "charisma" has since entered popular vocabulary, and Weber's explanation has been used as a way of outlining, in phenomenological terms, the manifestations of charisma. His concept has been criticized, in some quarters discounted, for lacking an explanation of the mechanism which links leader to follower within a charismatic system.

In this essay I am suggesting that within the terms of *kejawan*, of traditional Javanist culture, the logic which underpins ideas of power is that of *rasa*. In Javanist terms "rasa" is not only a term applied to sensory experiences, implying a particular aesthetic, but also a cognitive organ, used actively within mystical practices. From the perspective of practicing mystics within the culture, the "ideas" of power within it are secondary reflections or statements which are logical and sensible in that they are reports of what may be experienced when *rasa* is activated as a tool within *ngelmu kabatosan*, the "science of the spirit." As mysticism underlies much of Javanese cultural theory, the perspective of those expert in it does offer grounds for uncovering the "logic" which may elude us at the ideological level. Though I am arguing that the "logic of *rasa*" underlies central patterns of ideology and experience, this is not to say that *rasa* explains the whole orientation of the culture. Important as it may be within the complex of the culture, it remains only an element.

Given the resonance of the word "intuition" with popular cliches of a "spiritual East," with romanticism about the qualities of traditional cultures, a number of caveats are essential. In the first place, my argument does not require a particular ontological position. It is simply an attempt to explicate the significance of *rasa* in Javanese terms, as can be observed in social practice and through Javanese statements about it. Second, it is crucial to distinguish between discussion of orientation and emphasis and conclusions about everyday realities. In arguing that Javanese culture encourages cultivation of intuition I am simply pointing to an orientation, not making conclusions about the degree to which intuitive sensitivity may be present in social practice. Finally, though I am dealing with the role of intuition in Java that is not meant to imply that the Javanese are either unique or typical.

I will build out of description of the way intuition is perceived, understood, and placed within one Javanese mystical movement. Through the Sumarah case my aim is to draw attention to the "rules of *rasa*" or "logic of intuition" as they apply within meditation practice and group interaction. Then I will turn to suggesting some of the ways in which those same rules can be seen

7. In Hans Gerth and C. W. Mills, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 246.

to underlie, and hence elucidate the logic of, general patterns of Javanese belief and action. The link between the case and its context does not rest on assumption that Sumarah is a perfect microcosm of the whole, nor even on suggestion that the sense of *rasa* within it is perfectly representative. It rests rather on the degree to which the logic and rules which we can observe within the case can be used as a key to unlocking the underlying logic of general patterns.

Rasa in Sumarah Practice

Within Indonesia there are literally hundreds of movements, ranging from informal local groups to formally organized national associations, which see themselves primarily as extensions of an indigenous tradition of spiritual wisdom, rather than as derivative of imported religious models. These mystical movements, generically termed "*kepercayaan*" or "*kebatinan*," are to varying degrees national in orientation, but most are primarily Javanese in both origin and composition. Sumarah is among the more prominent national organizations, one of the dozen or so most active at the national level. The Javanese word "*sumarah*" simply means "the state of total surrender," and it is a name not only for the organization, but also for the practice which provides its focus.*

Sumarah was founded in the mid 1930s in the court city of Yogyakarta by Sukinohartono. Together with his friends Suhardo and Sutadi, he attracted a following of about 500 by the end of the Japanese occupation. In the midst of the revolutionary fighting of the late 1940s the membership expanded to several thousand; at the end of that period it became formally organized under the leadership of Dr. Suroso, with its center still in Yogya. Under his leadership, until 1966, it grew to include roughly 6,000 members throughout Java, with regional organizations existing in all the major towns of the island. Since 1966 the organization has had its center in Jakarta under the leadership of Drs. Arymurthy, and it currently has a membership of perhaps 10,000.

The practice of *sujud sumarah*, as the meditation is called, is carried out both individually and in group meetings by a guide, or *pamong*. Individually, members spend periods of time in "special meditation" (*sujud khusus*) but they are also supposed to be integrating meditative awareness into their everyday lives. Members are "socially invisible," as is the case with most Javanese movements, in the sense that they lead ordinary social lives, have no distinctive dress, and use no special symbols. Individual members are not bound by any outward rules, and their participation is conditioned only by the degree to

8. The following treatment of the Sumarah case is based on my fieldwork, over the period from early 1971 to early 1974 and during four brief visits since. Very little has been published, providing insight into practices within Javanese mysticism. General introductions to "*kebatinan*" can be found in Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); in Niels Mulder, *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978); and to teachings in Harun Hadiwijono, *Man in the Present Javanese Mysticism* (Baarn: Bosch and Keuning, 1967). Full treatment of Sumarah history is in my thesis, "The Sumarah Movement in Javanese Mysticism" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1980); Sumarah practice has also formed the focus for a separate thesis--see David Howe, "Sumarah: A Study of the Art of Living" (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1980).

which they internalize, within their consciousness, the commitment to total surrender which, in principle at least, brings them together in the group.

Group meetings are held regularly, usually in the homes of people who act as guides or in those of organizational leaders. There are no special places associated with the practice, no particular buildings are especially appropriate for it, nor is there concern with sacred sites. The atmosphere of meetings is relaxed and informal, including extended discussion of practice mixed with periods of collective meditation led by the guide, or *pamong*. The guides have differing styles and approaches, but despite considerable variation the principles of Sumarah guidance are consistent. Although the individuals who serve as guides are called *pamong*, in principle guidance does not come from them, but through them, and only when the true function of guidance is activated by the right spiritual circumstance.

There is consistent emphasis within Sumarah on the fact that "*pamong*" are not "*guru*" (teachers). The "teaching" is a function only activated when the circumstances are right and not one that can be attached to the personality of the guide. As Arymurthy has said:

. . . Duty as a guide, as a *pamong*, only happens in the instant that the task is given by *Hak* [truth]. A person is a *pamong* only in that instant of duty, otherwise we only call him a *pamong* for administrative convenience. Whether he then actually performs as one or not depends on the functions that arise within him. Outside of that he had no special rights or authority over others.⁹

Even if the Sumarah system of guidance has been expressed differently over time and from guide to guide, and can also vary in accordance with regional styles, in all cases a mechanism of "contacting" or "attunement" forms part of the interaction.

In Sumarah it is axiomatic that the inner life flowers through introspection (*mawas diri*) and self correction, that no "faith" in the authority of an external teaching or teacher is necessary, and that the only significant verification of an external statement is the individual's direct recognition of its truth within his or her own conscious awareness. To quote Arymurthy again:

Within Sumarah a *pamong* does not announce himself as such. He becomes *pamong* through signs from the guide in which the reality of it is simultaneously obvious. A person could say a thousand times that he is a *pamong* and yet not be one. It cannot be faked. In spiritual things this is evident even if the person says nothing. . . .¹⁰

Nevertheless, the understanding within the practice is that the guides, whether in leading group meditation or in responding to individual questions, are

9. This statement of Arymurthy's was made in the context of a formal meeting in September 1973 in Surakarta. In Arymurthy's terms this statement, and the others by him which follow, came through reception of *Hakiki*, that is, it has authority beyond that of personal knowledge. At the time of the meeting, with Western followers of the practice in Solo, I was interpreting. Subsequently I was asked to provide an English translation based on the tape recording of the session. My translation is reproduced in my *Selected Sumarah Teachings* (Perth: Department of Asian Studies, W.A.I.T., 1977). This quote is from p. 22.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

"tuned" to the inner psychic condition of those they are leading. This is directly related to the notion that there are distinct levels of consciousness, that not all individuals are equally aware, and that some may be aware of the inner state of another person. The transmission of "sumarah" is based on this sense of experiential contact rather than on a specific technique or ritual practice. The guides are emphatic in reminding people to take nothing on faith, but rather to "test" within themselves whether a statement or suggestion is appropriate.

This mechanism was implicit within the very first exchange which led to the movement. After Sukino's individual experience, the "revelation of Sumarah" (wahyu Sumarah) in 1935, he explored it with his longtime friend, Suhardo. In Suhardo's subsequent description of the encounter, he related that he had first spoken with Sukino, then experimented on his own. During his own meditation he felt the validity of Sukino's experience and so went back to him to check. According to the official Sumarah history, based on Suhardo's own recollection, their conversation went as follows:

Suhardo: Is this the correct way to surrender to God?

(And then Suhardo practiced meditation.)

Sukino: Aha, you really can meditate correctly. Who taught you how?

Suhardo: I heard a voice from within saying,

"Sukino's way of worshipping God is correct. If you want to do the same then calm your senses and desires, center your mind and feeling in the heart, and repeat the name of God." I did follow the advice from within and it genuinely did lead to calm and peaceful feelings.¹¹

Suhardo's narration clearly implied, though it drew no special attention to, the understanding that a spiritually advanced person may have the capacity to "know" the inner state of another.

The general pattern of guidance within the first phase of Sumarah, up to 1949, followed the same pattern. Everyone who received instruction in the practice had explicit one-to-one corrective guidance, called *nyemak*, from a pamong. Practice has changed, and nowadays guides make their comments more often in general terms, leaving it to the individuals present to assess whether a statement is specifically relevant to them or not. Within some groups the practice of one-to-one correction is still common, in others it is implicit, and in most of the branches of the organization at times it is explicit. From the Sumarah perspective, it is important to emphasize that the capacity for contacting is something anyone can develop; it is not seen as the preserve of unique, special, or gifted people. Instead, it is understood as an extension or normal byproduct of the meditation all members practice.

The fact that contacting is related to normal practice is linked to one feature of Sumarah meditation that does distinguish it from many other practices:

11. The Indonesian version of Suhardo's explanation is: "Saya mendengar suara batinku demikian: 'Sukino berbakti kepada Tuhan memakai cara (laku) yang benar. Kalau kau mau, tenangkanlah pancaindra dan nafasmu, kumpulkan cipta (angen-angen) dan rasamu, dudukkan di indraloka dengan dikir Nama (Asma) Tuhan.' Anjuran dari suara batinku itu saya jalankan dan ternyata membuat hatiku benar-benar menjadi tenang dan tenteram." The above is recorded in *Sejarah Paguyuban Sumarah 1935-1970* (Jakarta: Direktorat Pembinaan Penghayat Kepercayaan, Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, 1980), pp. 59-60.

it emphasizes openness to, and reception of, awareness of the environment, even in the initial stages of practice, rather than withdrawal from or exclusion of stimuli from "outside" the individual. Although some members feel that the Sumarah use of contacting is unique, most see it as simply a systematic cultivation of a faculty which is present within many traditions of spiritual practice.

Rasa is at once the key to individual entry into Sumarah meditation and the initial agent for the contacting through which guides lead people into meditation. In Indonesian the word "rasa" means "feeling," both in the physical and emotional sense; in the more spiritually resonant Javanese it also means "intuitive feeling." Rasa is at once the substance, vibration, or quality of what is apprehended and the tool or organ which apprehends it. I will return later on to the spectrum of meanings associated with this Sanskrit term in Java, but for the moment will concentrate on the specific sense of it most relevant to Sumarah practice.

In this context the sense of "rasa" I am concerned with is that of the "organ" or "agent" of perception, or, if you like, the "function," of "intuition." Within Sumarah "rasa" is considered an organ or constituent of our psychology in precisely the same sense as "thought" is. In fact it is commonly said that "mind" is the tool through which we register and process information received through the five senses from the outer world, *alam lahiriyah*, while "rasa" is the tool through which we apprehend inner realities, that is *alam batiniah*.

Sumarah practice begins with relaxation of the physical body and with the stilling of the senses and thoughts. In itself the shifting of attention from outer events and thoughts to releasing the tensions within the physical body implies a shift from thought to feeling. Stillness of the senses and thoughts means, in Sumarah terms, not "turning off," "freezing," or "repression" but rather an open and receptive state within which attention is not focused on sensory perceptions or thoughts. Instead "attention," the point at which we are aware, is supposed to enter into rasa so that there is not simply increasing awareness of feeling but rather awareness *through* feeling. "Feeling" in its turn may in the first instance mean awareness of physical sensation within the body, but that gross-level rasa becomes progressively more subtle—it shades through inner physical sensation into awareness of the emotions and ultimately into *rasa sejati*, the absolute or true feeling which is itself mystical awareness of the fundamental vibration or energy within all life.¹²

The necessity of making the transition from "thought centered" to "feeling centered" awareness is repeatedly emphasized during meditation sessions. Sudarno Ong, one of the most active Sumarah pamong in Surakarta during the 1970s, stressed that:

As we speak of all these things we need to be aware that none of them can be grasped concretely with the mind or senses. The closest

12. More extended treatment of the concept is provided later in this paper. Howe ("Sumarah," pp. 71-72) also emphasizes the significance of *rasa* within Sumarah. He says: "The fundamental element in Javanese psychology is *rasa*, and it is probably the most difficult concept in the Javanese language . . . (and) . . . *Rasa* is the experiential context of human life . . . (and) . . . *Rasa Murni* is the feeling of feeling and as such does not constitute any particular affective response."

we can get to picking up on them is with our intuitive feeling. As we are asking questions there is no use doing so simply to satisfy some mental curiosity. Our question should be based on whatever concrete experience we are having in our meditation. Then as we ask it we need to be genuinely grappling with it inside ourself. In receiving answers we have to be following with our feeling so that we can experience rather than simply understand what is meant. Not only do we need to be understanding and experiencing, but we also need to be aware what we are experiencing so that it does not just pass right through us. The most important thing is to learn directly in our own consciousness so that we are not just noting down theoretical points but actually making the realization ourselves.¹³

In somewhat different terms Arymurthy, then the national leader of the movement, explained:

Frequently we become tools of our own tools. Take the mind for example. We might have hopes which are useless so that then the whole self becomes oppressed by the mind. It is not enough just to know the mind, but we need to know how it functions within the whole. If you want to learn Sumarah then you have to do it with the whole self, to receive the impact of experience on the total framework of being. Unless you do that then the human being is becoming a tool of his own tool. . . . Within the *sanubari* we have been referring to there is opportunity to calmly and clearly know your own identity. The point is that then aspects which are not good can be purified. We cannot cleanse ourself, but we can become purified through the guidance of *Hak*. This develops through the natural course of events. Purification only becomes possible as an experience when we are located in the *sanubari*. . . . You have probably frequently heard *pamong*s speak of the '*sanubari*'. It is just a term but there is no way to relate to where it really is unless we begin with entering the realm of meditation . . . here we use the work "*dirasakan*" meaning to feel the state rather than to understand it. To begin with the meditation has to be felt in much the same sense that we feel when we are physically enjoying something, listening with pleasure or eating tasty food.¹⁴

The "*sanubari*" is also related to the chest area, within which the function of *rasa* is located. Within that lies the *kalbu*, the inner or esoteric heart which is the center of yet more highly refined spiritual awareness.

Though *rasa* is the tool or vehicle through which individuals enter into awareness beyond the mind and senses, it is in the end seen only as a pathway toward a final awareness in which no distinctions exist between inner and outer or between one tool and another. It is a pathway through the fact that individuals direct their attention into *rasa*, becoming aware then of the blockages and resistance within their own make-up so that these barriers can be removed. According to Sumarah theory, as blockages are released there is increasing

13. This conversation with Sudarno, in the context of a meditation session, took place in Surakarta on December 11, 1973. This is a reconstruction recorded in my field journal on the following day.

14. Stange, *Selected Sumarah Teachings*, pp. 18-19.

surrender or openness to the Absolute which is at once everything and nothing that can be "known" in the ordinary sense. Most people within Sumarah use the term "God," some avoid terms and speak only of union and oneness. In any event, and this is all that matters here, *rasa* is not the endpoint or object, even though it is fundamental as a step on the Sumarah path.

The "processing" of individual awareness through Sumarah practice leads toward the condition in which it is possible to function as guide. The general understanding is that normal consciousness is dominated by an attention which is focused in thoughts, filled with attachment to the data received through the senses, and directed, for the most part subconsciously, by desires and emotions. With increasing stillness and receptivity of the thoughts and senses, through surrender, attention becomes more and more firmly rooted in *rasa*. If the practice reflects commitment, then this will mean not only a change within "special meditations," but also an increasing awareness of *rasa*, and an increasing openness within everyday life. Beyond the senses and thoughts there lies a cleaning of internalized subconscious blockages, so that gradually perception is less filtered through subjective structures. As a person becomes open, as even inner blocks are released, he or she becomes increasingly conscious of precisely what information enters the sphere of awareness--it becomes possible to distinguish "inner noise" from messages received. A *pamong*, or guide, is a person who is, at least when the "function" of guidance is activated, fully aware within *rasa* and clear enough in consciousness of what happens within his or her individual meditation to relate it to others. This is not an adequate definition of *pamong*, nor does it clarify the range of qualities of guidance, but it is sufficient in this context.

There are a number of analogies used within Sumarah to suggest how progress in individual meditative consciousness relates to the practice of guidance. Arymurthy has used the imagery of "mirroring." He suggested that it is as though in our normal awareness, our "internal mirror" is clouded. As a result, we benefit when facing a clear mirror because we can see ourselves better, hence realizing our inner limits so that we can release them. In explaining the process of guidance to Western followers of Sumarah in Solo Arymurthy clarified that:

Once this has happened, once you are relatively blank, you become like a mirror. You can see your own identity more clearly: that you are grey, or very black, or red, or that you are becoming rose. You can see it all yourself. When I say that you become like a mirror I mean that then you become aware of your total identity. This means that functioning as a *pamong* is also directed within the self, that a *pamong* is headed in healthy directions internally. A mirror takes shape within which we can see our own reflection. . . . What we can do is to give witness. Once the mirror within us had begun to clear enough so that we can see ourself, then when it is turned toward others they can see themselves reflected to whatever extent their own mirror has not cleared. If we do not have the use of our own mirror then it is as though we can borrow that of another. At the same time that other mirror does nothing except reflect. A *pamong* is only truly one when we see ourselves more clearly in his purity of consciousness. Ultimately those who make use of a *pamong's* guidance can cleanse themselves to the point that they can see with their own mirror. But while our own mirror remains scratched we can benefit from willingness to temporarily borrow the mirror of another.

In any case it is the spirit rather than body of the *pamong* which provides the mirror.¹⁵

Sudarno has suggested an analogy with the gamelan orchestra. He points out that, if two identical gamelan are side by side and only one is played, precisely the same notes will resonate on the other gamelan. The guide, in these terms, is the silent gamelan, ordinary awareness a state of "being played," which eliminates awareness of resonance. In the same vein, Joyosampoerno compares guides to finely tuned radio receivers. The radio waves are there to be received by anyone, but most tuners are either turned off (e.g., people unaware of *rasa*) or confused by static (e.g., too much inward noise or not enough sensitivity).

The analogies draw attention to several characteristics of *rasa* and guidance as they are understood within Sumarah. The mirroring image highlights the fact that, even when experiencing guidance, it is what the meditator sees for and of himself that increases awareness. The gamelan image clarifies the guide's characteristics. The radio analogy emphasizes that the information is available to anyone and that the differences between people are simply questions of reception. In all three images it is clear that *rasa* is conceived as an organ present within all people, even if only consciously developed in some. While the process of "reading" another person's inner state in Sumarah guidance is at first glance a leap into the paranormal, the emphasis in these images, and indeed in Sumarah understanding generally, is on the fact that it simply involves refinement, through conscious discipline, of an intuitive facility possessed by everyone.

Attunement and Authority in Sumarah

So far I have been focusing on individual awareness of *rasa* and the way that relates to meditation guidance. If we turn now to the principles which are related to the role of leadership and process of collective decision making, we see the same logic applied to a larger stage. On the surface, the Sumarah organization has been structured in the same way as most modern organizations. Ever since it was formally organized in 1950 it has had a constitution, clearly defined leadership and branch structures, conferences and congresses, minutes, membership lists, and most of the other trappings of "formal" associations. At the same time, leaders are supposed to function for the collective in very much the same way that guides function for the groups they lead in meditation. Collective decision making is based, insofar as practice approximates the ideal, on consensus achieved through group meditation--that is on what is confirmed through *rasa*, though once again this does not mean that "*rasa*" is the "source" of the decision.

From the inception of the organization it has been emphasized that the basis for all important decisions must lie in *Hakiki*, that is, in Truth. The Javanese word "*hakiki*" derives from the Arabic "*khak*," meaning "right" in the sense of privilege, and "*haqiqah*," which in Islamic terms refers to basic or absolute Truth, to what is incontrovertibly correct. Suhardo, the second of Sumarah's founders, confirmed that the Sumarah sense of *Hakiki* is identical to the "*guru sejati*," the true teacher, and to the figure Dewaruci in Javanese mythology.¹⁶ It refers, in other words, to direct inner reception

15. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

16. Interview with Suhardo in Yogya, during July 1972.

of the highest order of Truth. Constitutionally, the highest authority in Sumarah lies in congress decisions based on Hakiki.

Naturally there are in practice difficulties in recognizing Hakiki. On the one hand everyone in the movement accepts that individuals are of varying degrees of consciousness and by implication that some are more capable of receiving and recognizing Truth than others. Conversely it is understood that Hakiki is only confirmed when it "meshes" with collective experience during the attunement achieved through group meditation. The distinction between these two principles helps explain some of the problems and tensions which have surfaced in organizational history. In any case, the confirmation that "Hakiki" exists is meant to work in the same way as a pamong's guidance of meditation does. During discussions of the group decision-making process at the initial congress of Sumarah in 1950, Dr. Surono, who became the first leader of the reformed movement, explained:

Even if it is *Hakiki* it also has to be proven. It is up to us to experience the Truth in all these matters, not just to adopt suggestions on faith. We differ from religions, within which people accept God on faith and without knowledge. Even Sukino asks us for our agreement.¹⁷

Thus, though individuals, usually those of high spiritual standing, may be the receptors of Hakiki, only the collective could certify it as such.

Hakiki does not, in Sumarah terms, come from *rasa*, nor is *rasa* finally even the tool of awareness through which it is apprehended. Nevertheless, the recognition of a fully harmonized feeling within *rasa* is one of the key indicators that a consensus based on Hakiki has been achieved. As a consequence it is understood that the organization's correct functioning depends on a meditative atmosphere achieved both through group guided meditation and continuous awareness of *rasa* on the part of all present. This explains why the frame for group meetings, including business sessions, is collective guided meditation. At points of doubt, deliberation, crisis, or division, the group returns to deep meditation, and, in addition, everyone aims to remain centered in *rasa* and thereby "tuned" to the collective "sphere."

Underlying this meditative approach is the conviction that the "correct" decision, insofar as there is one, is implicit in the situation. If the context is one of division, then that is thought to reflect attachment to surface forces rather than surrender to divine will—which is itself of course understood to be unitary rather than divided. Ultimately there is conviction that God's will is actually being expressed through natural law within all events—men need only open themselves to align their awareness and actions fully with it. These convictions frame and in one sense explain Sumarah actions. But focus here lies on practices rather than on the beliefs to which they may be related. The point is that exercising awareness of, and receptivity within, *rasa* is not only a key to Sumarah meditation but also a basis for organizational processes and finally an approach to everyday life.

So while the format of Sumarah meetings is defined on the surface by standard modern patterns of representation, regulation, and leadership, the process of decision making is meant to follow a logic which is only perceptible through *rasa*: the focus of attention is not exclusively intellectual. This does not

17. In Ismoe Soebagyo, *Rentjana Tjatatan Konggres Paguyuban Sumarah* (np/nd [Yogya, 1951?]), p. 38.

mean that mental and critical facilities play no part in the proceedings. On the contrary, they are meant to "speak for themselves," and this is implicit in the Sumarah understanding of consensus. Statements which offend reason are seen as automatically leading to division in "feeling" as well. It is understood that people react spontaneously if they are being open. This, however, is to speak of principles, while in practice there is a tendency to repress criticism due to "belief" in the need for unanimity. But leaving aside deviations from principle, achieving consensus, a verification of Hakiki, is seen as occurring when a statement or directive emerges from group meditation and leaves the collective "feeling" right.

It may be impossible to explain fully the dynamics of attunement within Sumarah, but it is possible to suggest the "direction of attention" involved. What Sumarah people "do" when "centering in rasa" is aptly suggested by thinking in terms of everyday experiences to which we can relate. Perhaps, while attentive to a tearful friend, we have noticed empathetic tears, stemming from sympathy rather than from any grief of our own. We may notice the difference between the atmosphere of an argumentative committee session and a spring celebration in a sun-flooded park. Surface events do not always correlate to inward qualities of feeling, and we can recall times when we have been aware of registering feelings originating beyond ourselves. For the most part we notice them only in an extreme situation, where they seem to "intrude" into our awareness rather than constitute a focus for it. Albeit imperfectly, we can grasp something of what it means to approach life through rasa if we imagine continuous awareness of this inner feeling and of the changes within it in response to the fields of our interaction. Sumarah practice implies, as one step on the spiritual path, exercising continuity of awareness within, and refinement of sensitivity to, this sphere of rasa.

If by this point the role of rasa within Sumarah meditation is clear, and also how it extends from individual practice into social situations, then we already have the basic point on which I wish to build. Before shifting to discussion of the ways in which this intuitive approach relates to general Javanese practices and ideas, several additional points need to be drawn from Sumarah experience. These points are particularly useful in making the transition to the general level, because, within Sumarah, practice of surrender which begins through rasa is explicit. As a result, it also relates more explicitly within the group than in other contexts to social patterns and historical evolution. From the micro level of individual practice, then, we can extend first to the functioning of leadership within the movement, and from there to the relationship between the movement and its context--only then considering rasa in the general context of Javanese culture.

Organizational leadership within Sumarah is not directly correlated to degrees of spiritual awareness. Nevertheless, there is a close correspondence between a pamong's relationship to those he is guiding in meditation and that of a leader, at any level, to those to whom he is responsible. The function of pamong is only genuinely activated when, among other things, there is a "sphere" indicating contact in rasa. Once that precondition is met, it may be possible for the guide to speak on the basis of a direct link to the actual inner condition of others present. If that happens, then it will be as though the guide is a receptor, highlighting forces which had been only subconscious in others. At the same time, confirmation that the "contact" is genuine depends on the practical relevance of what is said to those receiving guidance.

Similarly, the appropriateness of a leader can be, and within Sumarah is, tested by the degree to which he is tuned both to the inner condition

of the collective and to the outer circumstances to which it relates. When leaders are appropriate then they will be doing and articulating what feels right to the group. It was a confirmation of Arymurthy's leadership, for instance, when his guidance of the opening meditation at the 1973 conference touched on and clarified all of the major issues which had been preoccupying the branches.¹⁸ On the other hand, when leaders have been increasingly preoccupied with matters which do not concern, or are in conflict with, the corporate experience, such a situation has led to rejection. In the years preceding Dr. Surono's replacement in 1966, the break between leadership and collective was clearly reflected in Surono's unwillingness even to hold the meetings which would have "tested" the Hakiki he claimed. To function properly, a Sumarah leader needs to be tuned to and speaking for the collective.¹⁹ While in one sense this could be said of any theory of representative leadership, the implications here are different. In Sumarah the underpinning is conviction in an immediacy of contact and directness of intuitive awareness that is not normally entertained.

Insofar as leaders have articulated what may have been latent within the collective, then the source of action, leaving aside teleological questions, lies in the clarification of what "already is"—not in innovation or expediency, though each of those also has a place in Sumarah interpretation. Leaders are not so much pioneers, pointing the way to new ground, as "focalizers."²⁰ As such they are meant merely to crystallize, and thereby raise consciousness of, developments which have already been taking place.

This stance is especially evident in the way Sumarah leaders have spoken of the emergence of new phases in spiritual practice. So far there have been six distinct phases, and in announcing them the leadership has generally aimed to draw attention to changes which have been related at once to the Javanese context and to the maturation of individual practice. The movement from one phase to another is presented as a sequence of evolutionary stages rather than as a shift in direction.

Two points about the changes, especially the depth of change within Sumarah, are relevant here: the first concerns the Sumarah interpretation of the changes, and the second the general relationship between changes within Sumarah and changes in its context.²¹ After Sumarah came into existence in 1935, significant

18. This point is based on my own participation in the 1973 Sumarah annual conference held in Surakarta. At that point I had been involved with the organization intensively for two years. Immediately prior to the conference I had completed a circuit of visits to all the major regional centers, spending several weeks in each. During the course of the visits I became aware of the issues which preoccupied regional groups—issues differed from place to place, although, of course, some concerns were common. I was therefore especially struck, during this opening meditation, both by the degree to which and the way in which Arymurthy touched on all of these issues.

19. Further details of the problems which surfaced in the mid-1960s can be found in my thesis, or in my "Javanese Mysticism in the Revolutionary Period," *Journal of Studies in Mysticism* 1, 2 (1978).

20. My use of this term is drawn from the way it is used within the Findhorn community in Scotland, where precisely analogous principles are used. See David Spangler, *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age* (Middleton, Wisc.: Lorian Press, 1977), pp. 173-77.

21. For the nature of these changes, which constitute the major focus of

changes in its organizational structure occurred in 1950 and 1966; distinct phases of spiritual practice are associated with the years 1935, 1949, 1956, 1974, and (less clearly to me) the late 1970s. It is not surprising that major organizational changes coincide with the attainment of national independence, the transition to Sukarno's Guided Democracy, and the coup which introduced Suharto's New Order. What is striking, however, is how thoroughly changes have ramified through the organization, with the movement paralleling national changes profoundly rather than just at its surface levels.

Within Sumarah the interpretation of this parallelism is that the movement stands in precisely the same relationship to the nation as leaders within it do to the collective, or as *pamong* to those they guide: as a focalizer or receptor of unusual clarity throwing into relief the murky or hidden realities around. Here we are simply moving up the scale from the microcosm of the individual, through the group as a collective, to the nation. Within the group it is thought that the degree to which, at any of these levels, a structure reflects its environment can be related in practical terms to how "open" it is to "whatever is."²² Since Sumarah defines itself by commitment to increasing openness, its sense of union involves not only a remote and abstract absolute, but also a dissolution of the boundaries between people, and thereby an increasing interpenetration between individual, collective, and society.

For my purposes, that is in using the Sumarah case to make suggestions about Javanese culture, we can leave aside discussion of whether Sumarah in fact "mirrors" national events, or whether it does so more or less than other movements. We can ignore the question of whether leaders in Sumarah are actually attuned to the collective; nor is there any reason to be concerned with whether a *pamong* is actually able to "know" the inner state of another. All we need to note is that there is a consistent structure within those three relationships, and that the interpretation within Sumarah links them all through a *systematic* understanding of the way consciousness relates to social interaction. The key to that structure lies in an approach to meditation through *rasa*, or intuitive feeling, thus emphasizing a different psychological facility in approaching both cognition in general and social life in particular. Sumarah people are not just interpreting reality through a different theory; they are cultivating *rasa* within their meditation and approaching interactions through it. While we might devote energy to fine analytical distinctions; they are refining and sharpening awareness of intuitive feeling.

Rasa in Javanist Theory

Sumarah is profoundly rather than incidentally Javanese. It is unique only in the sense that individuals are unique, or in the way that particular villages might present variations in the general pattern of rural life. While

my thesis, see Stange, "Sumarah Movement in Javanese Mysticism."

22. "Mysticism" and "religion" interpenetrate, but in this we may have a way of identifying different characteristic emphases. Within mystical styles of spirituality there is usually emphasis on the fact that all forms, including those of the movement or practice itself, are simply vehicles for, or pathways of, the ultimate; within the religious approach there is a tendency to identify the ultimate with its manifestation through specific forms—whether doctrinal, personal, ritual, or corporate. While the latter may lead to resistance to change, the former (insofar as practice reflects ideals) may be more open to it.

this means we cannot assume that Sumarah is a perfect microcosm of the society, it also implies that we need not. The usefulness of the case lies in the explicit and elaborate understanding of *rasa* existing within Sumarah. Through that we can draw out patterns which remain implicit within general thought and practice. In making this transition, I will begin by considering the meanings attached to the term "*rasa*" both within other mystical movements and within the culture as a whole. Then I want to show how *rasa* is interlocked with other key ideas within Javanese culture. Finally, I suggest how the logic underlying Sumarah practice corresponds to traditional patterns of social relationship and political power.

The special potency of the concept of *rasa* stems in part from the spectrum of meanings attached to it. Because *rasa* links the physical sense of taste and touch to emotions, the refined feeling of the heart, and the deepest mystical apprehension of the ultimate, it provides a continuum which links surface meanings to which anyone can relate to inner levels of experience which normally, at least within our context, appear discontinuous. At the same time it is central not only to Sumarah "spiritual psychology," but also to Javanese mystical theory in general, and through that it is related to Javanese perceptions of society and politics.

Gonda comments that the Javanese have combined the original Sanskrit meanings associated with "*rasa*" ("taste, flavor, essence, enjoyment, sentiment, disposition, meaning, etc.") and "*rahasya*" ("secret, mystery") within their use of the term "*rasa*." Javanese interpretation certainly does involve an emphasis different from that within Sanskrit, where "*rasa*" is primarily aesthetic rather than psychological. Nevertheless, there has been a remarkable continuity of interpretation, extending from Sanskrit through Kawi and into contemporary Javanese usage. This continuity combines with the resonance of "*rasa*" in Javanese language and thought to provide one measure of the degree to which the Javanese have interiorized Indian patterns of thought. In commenting on the use of the term within old Javanese texts, Gonda clarifies both the varieties of usage and depth of meanings associated with it:

... it is not easy exactly to say what connotations were meant by these mystics when resorting to the favourite term *rasa*. It often served to translate the Arabic *sirr* "secret, mystery," which refers to the most subtle and most hidden and latent elements in the human heart in which God is said to reside, the "spot" where God and the soul are in contact. . . . In Javanese mystic texts this divine principle is also called *rasa*, "but not the ordinary *rasa*," "it is not the *rasa* ('feeling') which we feel in our bodies, but the *rasa* which is felt in the heart." The clear and pure heart receives the supreme *rasa*, which is pure and without any defect . . . [and] . . . On one hand *suksma* and *rasa* are regarded as related, but not identical principles . . . on the other hand they may be interchanged or *suksma* is called the true *rasa*, the *rasa* of the body.²³

In the same context, Gonda goes on to point out that in Javanese mysticism there has been a special emphasis on the heart, which is associated with *rasa* (from Sanskrit) but also with Sufi stress on the *qalb*, which in Javanese is "kalbu."

23. J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1973), p. 256.

If we trace back through the esoteric lore of Java, we can relate emphasis on the heart, and with it *rasa*, to the importance of Vishnu, as represented by the inclination of rulers such as Airlangga to be associated with him. This is not to suggest that "paths of the heart," either in the form of Vishnu cults or Sufism, have been developed to the exclusion of others in Java, for there have, of course, been many different forms of mystical practice in Java. Although each cult or spiritual practice tends to emphasize a particular occult center of perception (referring here to such centers as they are understood within either Tantrism or Sufism, both of which apply in Java), each also carries awareness that the center it may emphasize is but part of a complex system. While it is possible to identify a variety, even the full range, of potential "emphases" among Javanese spiritual paths, it can be argued that both historically (as reflected in texts such as the *Dharmasunya*) and in contemporary spiritual practice, emphasis on the heart (whether as the esoteric locus of Vishnu, as *kalbu*, or as the locus of true *rasa*) is a characteristic of Javanese spirituality.²⁴

This emphasis, and its association with those senses of *rasa* I have been detailing above, is represented clearly in the teachings and practices of contemporary Javanese mystics, as scholars of the subject have noted. One of the larger Javanese sects is called "Rasa Sejati," or "the absolute, pure, inner feeling." Hardjanta, a leader of a Hindu sect in Surakarta, has confirmed that emphasis on the heart is a characteristic approach in Java.²⁵ In the teachings of Sapta Darma "the radiance of God in man is called *rasa* or spirit" and its understanding of the network of inner psychic centers is called "*tali rasa*," literally the "rope of inner feeling."²⁶ In Bratakesawa's teachings the "*rasa djati*" is the organ unique to man through which he can contact his essence.²⁷ Within Pangestu, as Hadiwijono puts it:

Rahsa Djati is not something organical, it is a definite sphere in the psychological life. It is also indicated as the essence of the emotional life. It is the entrance or the threshold to the immaterial possibility of being. . . .²⁸

In his report, based on the understandings of his informant Pak Dwidjo, Weiss says the "feeling of the heart" is called "*rasa khodim*," and he places it

24. On the *Dharmasunya* I am drawing from G. Forrester, "The Dharmasunya: The Philosophy of the Void" (Honors subthesis, The Australian National University, 1968). This is a basis on which we could construct a useful comparative mysticism. While in Sufism there is an emphasis on the heart; within Zen or Taoism the stress falls on the navel. Different centers within the body are given different emphasis by variant practices.

25. Based on discussions with Hardjanta in Surakarta. He is the leader of a Javanese-based association called "Sadhar Mapan," and was previously a regional leader within the national structure of Hinduism. Details of his career are treated in Julia Howell, "Vehicles for the Kalki Avatar" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1977).

26. The quote is from Hadiwijono (*Man in the Present*, p. 165), but for the rest I am relying on instructions about the practice from Ibu Sri Pawenang in Yogyakarta during 1972 and 1973.

27. Hadiwijono, *Man in the Present*, p. 194.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

on the gradient of *rasa* leading to "*rasa sejati*." Pak Dwidjo immediately linked "*rasa*" to "*elmu rasa*," that is "the science of intuition," and for him this was coterminous with *kebatinan*, or Javanese mysticism as a whole. At the same time, he presented his theory that many psychic powers are extensions of *rasa sejati* and that, if *rasa* is developed, then there is no need to rely on tools of divination, such as the *primbon*.²⁹ Leaving aside questions of relative emphasis, it is clear that Sumarah is not alone among Javanese mystical groups in attributing great significance to *rasa*.

In their general interpretations of the Javanese world view, Clifford Geertz and Niels Mulder point to *rasa*'s significance within it. As Mulder puts it:

The Javanese high road to insight in reality is the trained and sensitive *rasa* (intuitive inner feeling). In mysticism, the essence of reality is grasped by the *rasa* and revealed in the quiet *batin*. . . . It is only by training the *rasa* that man can bridge the distance to "God." . . .³⁰

Mulder goes on to relate the Javanese emphasis on *rasa* to the principles of harmony, oneness, and even coincidence, which are expressed in Javanese social life.

In a similar vein, Geertz gives us an extremely useful outline of some of the many uses and permutations of *rasa*. He stresses the dual meanings of "feeling" and "meaning," and also points to its association with the heart. Although he provides an excellent statement, the emphasis on "meaning" within it is at the expense of the more appropriate "essence," and the term "intuition" is unfortunately absent from his vocabulary. His greatest contribution on this point was to clarify:

The three major foci of *prijaji* "religious" life are etiquette, art, and mystical practice . . . these factors are so fused as to make their separate consideration nearly meaningless. . . . The connecting link between all three, the common element in them all which ties them together and makes them but different modes of the same reality, is what the Javanese . . . call *rasa*. . . . By taking *rasa* to mean both "feeling" and "meaning," the *prijaji* has been able to develop a phenomenological analysis of subjective experience to which everything else can be tied. . . .³¹

He goes on to point out that the concept is used to link subjective experience and objective religious truth and to explain that, through the emphasis on "feeling," there is implied a direct link between *rasa*, ultimate spiritual knowledge (in Javanese terms), and the quality of "*halus*" or extremely refined feelings cultivated through Javanese etiquette. While Geertz accurately, in my opinion, pinpoints the centrality of *rasa* within Javanese cosmology, while he shows great sensitivity to its permutations in mystical theory and the social etiquette to which it is bound, the logic evident within Sumarah practice provides a basis for extension from his point.

29. Jerome Weiss, "Folk Psychology of the Javanese of Ponorogo" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1977), pp. 278 and 285-89.

30. Mulder, *Mysticism and Everyday Life*, pp. 15 and 30.

31. Geertz, *Religion of Java*, pp. 238-39.

Rasa and Social Relations

The logic of *rasa* is the mechanism underlying the interpenetration of "etiquette, art, and mystical practice"; it is the mechanism underlying the complex of Javanese ideas relating to the nature, manifestations, and ideals of power (*kasekten*) in the political realm. *Rasa* occupies a fundamental place within the Javanese map of spiritual consciousness, and that in turn is fundamentally related to notions of power and authority. In this context there is neither the possibility nor the need to catalog complexes of Javanese thought and action which relate to *rasa*. Instead, my aim is to concentrate on just a few examples to identify the "logic of *rasa*" as a substructure underlying Javanese cosmology and actions. If the "logic" becomes apparent, then it will be possible to conclude that the "fundamental" rules we are dealing with are not simply those of a "thought system," but rather extensions of perception resulting from practical cultivation of sensitivity to *rasa*, as is suggested in the Sumarah example.

Within Javanese village society there is a consistent emphasis on harmony, peace, balance, and consensus. This is, of course, characteristic of peasant cultures in general, it is not unique to the Javanese case.³² Justus van der Kroef speaks of it in terms of a "stasis-seeking mechanism," virtually an obsession with balance, one that has its natural counter in the prevalence of millenarian movements.³³ Geertz identifies the *selametan*, or communal feast, along with its associated offerings to the spirits, as the basic ritual of rural society.³⁴ The word "*selamet*" means "peace" or sometimes "safety," and is closely paired with "*rukun*" or "harmonious," as an ideal of village life. These concepts are related to an emphasis on "smoothness" in social relations, on the importance of cooperation (*gotong-royong*) within village enterprise, and on the ideal of consensus (*mufakat*) as a model for decision making. Individual behavior is guided in theory by the imperative to harmonize, and collective decisions are meant to reflect achievement of a "corporate" union of wills which is supposed to be simply articulated, or brought to the surface, by the village head. Despite the degree to which these may be merely ideals, often in stark contrast with behavior, there can be no doubt that they are widely held and invoked as ideals, even by ordinary villagers.

At the national level, the same ideas entered most forcefully into synthesis with other ideologies through Sukarno's political philosophy, especially during the period of Guided Democracy. Sukarno's thought is simply the most powerful and accessible example--there are many others with a similar bent, and those who follow him in "spirit" remain numerous up to the present. Sukarno referred actively to village values and sought to construct a national ideology which had an indigenous, for him mainly Javanese, basis. As this feature of his

32. For instance see Eric Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965) or Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

33. "Javanese Messianic Expectations," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, 1 (1958-59).

34. On the *abangan* see: Geertz, *Religion of Java* (Part One: The "Abangan" Variant); and on forms of village cooperation see Koentjaraningrat, *Some Social-Anthropological Observations on Gotong-Rojong Practices in Two Villages of Central Java* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1961).

enterprise has been repeatedly outlined, even filtering into press coverage of Indonesia, only brief suggestions bear repeating here.³⁵

Consensus through deliberation (*musyawarah-mufakat*) was taken as an ideal to replace the notion of representative democracy through elections. Sukarno presented himself as the "mouthpiece of the people" (*penyambung lidah rakyat*), implying that through his attunement to popular consciousness he spoke for the whole. The national motto of "unity in diversity" (*bhinneka tunggal ika*), is in this context explicitly linked by many to the mystical sense that "union" lies in the realm beyond forms, just as is the parallel pronouncement that "all religions lead to the same goal." Whether in the statements of Sukarno and Suharto or in critiques of them, it is suggested that the fundamental basis of power lies in the *wahyu*, the cosmic sanction which bestows both legitimacy and a spiritually charged authority.³⁶

The classical notion of the ruler held that the king's heart (*sanubari*) needed to be "oceanic," embracing the realm so that his consciousness became a pure embodiment or reflection of the collective. Conversely, criticism becomes justified when it begins to seem that *pamrih*, selfish motive or self-interest, rather than collective interest, guides government. These notions are still current, even contributing to the framing of dissent within Suharto's New Order.³⁷ The leader is supposed to have, and this is a closely related conception, "keenly attuned inner feelings"--implying capacity to "receive" and register the qualities of sentiment moving through the public, so that direct consciousness rather than simply an intelligence system contributes to awareness of the kingdom.³⁸ Finally, explicit traditional ideology of kingship attributes higher qualities of spiritual awareness, in the end merging into ideas of

35. Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), ch. 3; Anderson, "Idea of Power"; Bernhard Dahm, *Sukarno and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence*, trans. Mary F. Somers Heidhues (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); and many others.

36. Anderson, "Idea of Power"; and Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1968).

37. Criticisms of the Suharto regime are concentrated on its moral qualities. Incidents such as the Sawito affair of 1976 underline the significance the regime itself attaches to these forms of criticism. On the Sawito affair, see David Bouchier, *Dynamics of Dissent in Indonesia: Sawito and the Phantom Coup* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1984). Bouchier's analysis suggests that the "mystical" aspects of the affair were magnified by the government to discredit the challenge implied by it (pp. 7-8 and 94). I do not see an opposition but rather a convergence between the framing of dissent in cosmological and moral terms and the "reality" or "substance" of the political challenge--which is what his analysis implies. In terms of the point I am making in this article, it is in any event incidental whether the challenge was in substance "moral" or "political." In either event the framing of the challenge and the government's response confirm the existence of an idea of power which relates it to the presence or the absence of a cosmological mandate.

38. The quote, "to be a leader you must have keenly attuned inner feelings: (*"dadi pemimpin mono kudu duwe rasa rumangsa kang landep"*), is from Elinor Horne, *Javanese-English Dictionary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 495. It is not incidental that this appears as her final illustration in defining "rasa."

incarnated deity to the ruler. The highest ideal of traditional kingship called for a consciousness through which rulers could demonstrate attunement both to the natural world, through the mediation of the ancestral spirit realm, and to the social world of the realm.³⁹

This emphasis on the *spiritual* consciousness of the ruler is directly related to the sociopolitical sensitivity of mystical men and movements. The structure of that relationship is clear in Anderson's discussion. He points out, following Schrieke, that the prevalence of politicized mysticism has been viewed in Javanese society as a "barometer," increasing incidence indicating growing imbalance and ill-health in the state. Conversely, if those who are thought to have spiritual awareness of a high order, and, by direct correlation, a high degree of actual attunement to the social realities of the time, are aligned with the ruler, then this is interpreted as an important confirmation that the wayhu indeed rests with those in power.⁴⁰

Insofar as the logic which is evident in Sumarah does underlie general Javanese beliefs, either in the case of the village ethos or in terms of ideologies of power, the implications are obvious. Mystical practice is precisely concerned with dissolution of ego and, in the Javanese case at least, with an increasing sensitivity of intuition which makes people directly aware of currents of energy, sentiment, or vibration beyond the ego. Whether as leaders, advisors, neutral people, or critics, mystics are thought to have direct access to and awareness of the *actual* conditions of individuals, the collective, and the natural world. Their power, because that is implicit in this quality of consciousness, is presented as a consequence of attunement to objective realities, an openness and clarity which hence "allows in" and registers events which remain confused or unclear to most. One paradox in this lies in the fact that it is precisely through transcendence of ego, self, and the concern for material gain that access to influence increases--this explains the Javanese preoccupation with pamrih in those exercising influence over others.

Finally, just as a village head or national leader is analogous, in the terms outlined above, to a Sumarah pamong (a term which, not incidentally, is of course also used for the bureaucracy), the significance of individual mystics or their movements as "barometers" is explained by the fact that they are believed to have not just an unusual consciousness of the ineffable, but also a particular clarity, as receptors, about the environment. Javanese kings were supposed to be "warana," "screens" registering neutrally; Sumarah leaders, such as Sukino and Arymurthy, apply the same concept to themselves.⁴¹ As receptors they do not simply register, but also internalize and embody the forces around. So the pamong is meant to experience consciously what

39. The classical, though now also dated, discussion of kingship in Southeast Asia is Robert Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1956).

40. See Anderson, "Idea of Power"; and B. J. O. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, vol. 2 (The Hague: van Hoeve, 1966), pp. 76-95. In general Schrieke emphasizes succession as a basis of legitimacy, as opposed to the cosmological mandate; however in this section he deals with the ideal theory of royal power and the way that relates to protests which have been directed against rulers. He also points to the particular emphasis on Vishnu in Javanese ideals of royalty.

41. See Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 35 on "warana" and kingship.

his follower does; the leader to feel precisely what is implicit in the collective; the collective to mirror the currents within society. "Mystical union" is once again conceived here as having a practical implication--and it is this that underlies Javanese thought.

The Javanese conviction that there is a parallelism, even an identity, extending from microcosm (*jagad cilik*) through to macrocosm (*jagad gede*) becomes in this context a secondary reflection of practices of union cultivated through *rasa*; it does not remain simply a philosophical belief inherited from India and carried by tradition.⁴² The mirroring suggested between *pamong* and student, leader and group, or Sumarah and nation is of course identical to that of ruler and realm. Each is explicitly linked, through the mediation of *rasa*, to meditative consciousness. The ideal ruler is then one who *practices* awareness attuned to the collective he rules--and, as we would expect, there are a variety of ways in which rulers are said to have, or according to traditions supposed to have, actively exercised meditation.⁴³ Insofar as the ideals are embodied, then the understanding is that leaders have actually *been* aware of their environment, directly experiencing currents of feeling from the collective of those ruled.

Conviction concerning the fundamentally unitary nature of reality and, from the perspective of "realized" mystics, the actual experience of it is then *reflected into* the dimension of cosmologies and beliefs in the form of the idea that microcosm and macrocosm correspond. The underlying logic within Javanese cosmology is an expression of its experiential basis. But if we merely suggest that Javanese have been shaped in their actions by their beliefs and leave it at that, our image is incomplete--the dialectic of belief and experience proceeds both ways. At a simpler level, we can observe in this logic a more practical bent than is normally associated with the Javanese world view. Within Sumarah the validity of a *pamong's* guidance or a leader's *Hakiki* is tested by whether it strikes home in the group. By implication the measure of a ruler's *wahyu* lies not simply in debates about hypothetical imponderables, but quite practically at the level of whether the leader does in fact act on the basis of a recognized consensus, one that is spontaneous and rooted in well-being.

The practical implications of this suggestion are not confined to the dimensions of formal authority and power, but also extend to everyday social relations. While my focus here has been on the special sense of *rasa* which applies within Sumarah practice and mystical perceptions of power, I have also been suggesting that Javanese culture is generally characterized by an emphasis on intuitive modes of knowing and relating. The Javanese language is in itself an indication that this may be so, as fine distinctions in the realm of emotions and feeling contribute so much to its vocabulary, and the word "*rasa*" itself has so many permutations. If we are concerned with interpreting the nature of everyday social transactions in Java, awareness of the significance of *rasa* within them provides a new angle for insight. Without an understanding

42. On the centrality of the notion of correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm see Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship*, p. 3. As an element within the structure of Javanist ideology, this notion deserves more emphasis than it has generally been given.

43. For example see Prof. Zoetmulder's discussion of Kertanagara's spiritual practices in "The Significance of the Study of Culture and Religion for Indonesian Historiography," in *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, ed. Soedjatmoko et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

of its significance, we might conclude that endless repetition of formulae within ordinary social discourse is a way of avoiding "meaning"; once we are aware of *rasa*, we can see that the transaction finds its substance not in words, but in the establishment of a harmonious "feeling contact" between the parties. Instead of concluding that discourse draws consciousness to the "surface," as though devoid of content, we will see the locus of substance in communicative exchange, in intuitive feeling.

To conclude suggestively, and at the most general level, one of the implications extending from this argument is that we need to pay more attention to the cognitive and psychological differences of emphasis between cultures.⁴⁴ If we "read" cultural systems as primarily consisting of different ideological glosses on the same "reality" then we have only noted part of the matter. Cultures clearly do involve different ideological formations which then condition or shape perception and behavior. At the same time, however, these cultures may also direct "attention" and awareness to different cognitive functions, to different aspects or dimensions of the exchanges involved in social discourse.

44. Here I am thinking of suggestions such as that of Robert Ornstein, in *The Psychology of Consciousness* (London: Cape, 1975), that traditional Asian cultures give more emphasis to the intuitive mode of awareness—a suggestion clearly convergent with mine here.