

IN MEMORY OF BARBARA LOVRIC

Barbara Leigh

Barbara Lovric's work on Bali began when her children were already into their teens. Studying at the University of Sydney in the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies, she wrote her honors thesis on Balinese historical literature. Barbara's mature capacity to forge linkages across disciplines was a major strength and was reflected in "The Art of Healing and the Craft of Witches in a 'Hot Earth' Village," published in the *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*.

Barbara's thesis, supervised by Tony Day and Peter Worsley, was submitted to the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies in February 1987 and accepted some months later. Entitled, in her typical writing style, *Rhetoric and Reality: The Hidden Nightmare—Myth and Magic as Representations of Morbid Realities*, it is about Balinese conceptions of disease and the dominance of these ideas in most of Balinese ritual and belief. It is, in her words, an argument that much of Balinese "mythology and constructions of witchcraft and the demonic are associated metaphorically and metonymically with the symptomatology, pathological mechanisms and the perceived aetiology of disease."

James Boon, as one of the external examiners of the thesis wrote of it in his report: "The thesis is a fine, at times remarkable, piece of work. It is the most intensive investigation of Balinese magical practice and ideas of disease and cure to date. It combines interpretations of an impressive array of manuscripts with the results of long-term conversations with an equally impressive array of specialists and practitioners. . . . It tackles many classic and persistent problems in the analysis of Balinese culture and history: some of the claims are certain to be controversial in the best sense of the word. The risks that the thesis takes seem justified by the coherent view of Balinese arts and cure that inform the entire account." Boon went on to say, "My basic concern is that the manifest exuberance and frequent polemic of the thesis occasionally detracts from its basic strengths. These are, again, an expansive and profound reading of the intersection of Balinese manuscripts and ritual practices that articulates the world and forces of demonic disorders, diseases of interior and exterior dimensions, and afflictions of gesture and motion."

Hildred Geertz, in a personal communication, agreed with Professor Boon and expressed to me her deep regret that Barbara had never had time to revise the thesis for publication. "It remains," she said, "an extraordinary compendium of materials on Balinese con-

ception of the body and of disease and mortal danger, together with an array of provocative and original interpretations that should be carefully considered by future researchers."

Barbara struggled not just with categorizing and "making sense" of the data she had collected but also with her own mental processes, her own creation of meaning from her experiences in Bali. Her reflections on this dynamic—one that we all face when we choose to work in another culture—were presented in "How to Think about Thought and Understand Understanding Not Our Own" in the *Asian Studies Association of Australia Review*.

When we from the West examine phenomena of the East, it is possible to lapse into romanticism. The field of "traditional medicine" has received a great deal of critical attention from Western medical practitioners, including her husband, Al. From her intricate understanding of medical practices in Bali, Barbara raised pertinent questions in her paper "Collaboration Between Western and Traditional Medicine: Medical Romanticism?" prepared for the ASAA Sixth National Conference at the University of Sydney in 1986 and in her article, "Race Renounced, Culture Arraigned: The Case of the So-Called Culture Bound Reactive Psychoses," in M. de Lepervanche and G. Bottomly, *The Cultural Construction of Race*, Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture, no. 4, 1987.

Barbara's interest in aspects of theater ("Balinese Theater: A Metaphysics in Action," *ASAA Review*, November 1988) and dance ("Motifs in a Balinese Ritual Dance—Their Mystic References and Metaphorical Truth" in *The Politics of Ritual*, ed. Vivienne Kondos, Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific, University of Sydney, forthcoming) were indicative of a broader interest in Indonesian art and its inherent relationship to its cultural roots.

Her interest in medicine led to her teaching in the medical faculty at the University of Sydney where she brought to her students a breadth of cross-cultural experience. Her work with Balinese masks took her into the realm of beliefs about death ("Bali: Myth, Magic and Morbidity" in *Death and Disease in Southeast Asia*, ed. Norman Owen, 1987).

For the last year of her life, she moved to the medical faculty at the University of New South Wales where she taught in the School of Medical Education, a school that is also the Regional Teacher Training Center for the World Health Organization. Having tutored there for three years myself, I know the stimulation that comes from discussing fundamental health issues with practitioners from the countries of Asia and the Pacific. Barbara's scholarship interested many people. Her seminars in alternate approaches to life and death, her work within the clinical education program with regard to ethical issues, and her overall support to the postgraduate fellows of the program engaged her to the point where she was not as free to write as much as she wanted. The cancer progressed faster than she anticipated so that her death came on the official day of her resignation. After her death, the school recognized her contribution with these words in their newsletter: "The way in which Barbara coped with her illness and dying was an impressive testimony to her profound conviction in and acceptance of an alternative world view of the cycle of birth, life and death."

In those final months, knowing that death was imminent, Barbara was working on a manuscript "Balinese (and 'Other') Perceptions of Body and 'Being'."

Within the chapel, her five children, Michelle, Kathryn, Jenny, Melissa, and Michael all attested to a strong and beautiful mother, friend, and scholar. It was to the strains of Barbara's choice—the Bach Cantata, "Jesu Der Du Meine Seele" that we connected with pieces of our fractured memories and silently reflected on what Barbara meant in our lives.