

Marrie, seaworms, and song; riutalized responses to cultural change in Sasak Life

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Abstrak

I chose to do fieldwork among the Sasak of Lombok, Indonesia, and to study aspects of ritual. Many idioms of experience which have repercussions in everyday life frequently are expressed most clearly in a ritualized context. I focussed my research wherever possible on the language of ritual and on explicitly ritualized forms of language as symbolic media that provide structural continuity to social interaction. However, in order to understand exactly what ideas were being expressed in ritual form, and why and how, it was necessary to gather considerable sociocultural material as background. This background occasionally came to overshadow the ritualized behavior that was the original focus. The reasons for this were clear, though, because the example of ritualized behavior and language I had selected to analyze, *bau nyale*, was one which exemplified, articulated, and even paralleled conditions found in the more general cultural context.' Ritualized events that were less spectacular visually and which involved little or no explicitly structured speech, or even silence--normal courting or elopement, for example--actually had more radical consequences for everyday social life than did *bau nyale*; but together they all formed a single complex of thought centered on the fundamental issue of the nature of social relations. Ritualized events often attract attention because they are unusual and dramatic,