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# Summer's Days and Salad Days: The Coming of Age of Anthropology?

*Mark Hobart*

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date . . .  
Shakespeare. Sonnet XVIII

In dingy stores in the shadier streets of Singapore, for a few dollars over the counter, one used to be able to obtain a small bottle from the Chinese pharmacopoeia. It contained a wondrous elixir which could be sniffed, smeared on, or drunk. The label guaranteed its efficacy against all manner of ills, including (as I recall) old age, typhoid, cholera, headaches, kidney failure, sexual impotence, constipation and flatulence. To obtain the intellectual equivalent fortunately one need not go to the corners of the earth — indeed this is liable to bring the panacea into disrepute — it is available at one's local department of anthropology, without prescription. If learned and inwardly digested, the comparative method claims to solve the myriad problems of man in society by mulching them into suitable pap for consumption or for the lustration of later generations.

Non-anthropologists might wonder what all the fuss is about. What is so special about comparison? Briefly, it underpins — explicitly or implicitly — almost all the ways of talking about other cultures. Whether we study agriculture or food, narrative or myth, Divinity or witches, we are comparing our popular or technical categories with other peoples'. Analysis in terms of economic 'infra-structures' or self-interest assumes the shared reality of production or the utilitarian nature of human action. Discussions of 'political systems' presuppose the generality of systems and that forms of power are comparable. 'Ritual', 'religion' and similar terms commonly imply universal

criteria of rationality by which to distinguish true knowledge from symbols or ideology.

So what is wrong with comparing? The answer is that it depends on what one understands by comparing and how one uses it. The trouble is that the comparative method is linked to claims that anthropology should be 'scientific'. Unfortunately recent debate suggests not only that science is often not scientific, but also that it is not facts we compare, but discourses, each with their own presuppositions. Exporting our models has serious and insidious implications for how we understand, talk about and treat other peoples. As a method in anthropology, comparison tends to confuse several distinct processes and overlook the degree to which comparison and translation are acts on the part of the analyst which involve culturally available alternatives. Anthropology also faces the curious problem that our categories are 'second-order', as they depend on (possibly incommensurable) native discourses. So analysis may require multiple perspectives — a sort of poetic, rather than scientific, realism — and reflection on how discourses overlap. Perhaps we are closer to the poet above who recognizes the implications of his analogies and medium, than we are to neutral scientific observers peddling panaceas.

### STONE AGE SCIENCE

Anthropology by its brief is concerned with exploring and, in a sense, 'explaining' variation between societies or cultures. According to a classic view this requires the comparative method. For 'without systematic comparative studies anthropology will become only historiography and ethnography. Sociological theory must be based on, and continually tested by, systematic comparison.' (Radcliffe-Brown 1958a: 110) Comparison is viewed as the anthropological equivalent of the controlled experimentation of natural scientists.

For social anthropology the task is to formulate and validate statements about the conditions of existence of social systems (law of social statics) and the regularities that are observable in social change (laws of social dynamics). This can only be done by the systematic use of the comparative method. . . .

(Radcliffe-Brown 1958a: 128)

Social facts are held to have essences discernible independent of observers and frames of reference. Behind such an inductive approach, however, lurk far-from-empirical assumptions about the degree to which societies, systems and facts exist untainted by, or extricable from, rival interpretations, heuristic models and values.

Use of the comparative method is not just a convenience, but is closely linked to the question of whether the subject is a natural science or not, a matter over which there has been much controversy.' What then do its proponents understand by science? Even at the time of its proposal, Radcliffe-Brown's vision was an unlikely fossil left over from schoolboy notions of natural science (cf. Losee 1980: 145–220). So, before hailing their subject ('discipline' smacks of an order, a rigour, even a regimentation replete with boots and leather) as scientific, anthropologists might well reflect on changing understandings of what science is. The difficulties in Radcliffe-Brown's simple use of induction, for instance, have been exposed by Popper's critical rationalism; and interest has shifted to evaluating research programmes by results, or to evolving sets of logically coherent theories (Lakatos 1970), although here only the most marginal results are empirically falsifiable (Quine 1953). The wheel has nearly come full circle. Scientists themselves have begun to appear as unwitting subjects of cultural history, ripe for anthropological examination (Feyerabend 1975: 223–85) and their practice as depending on historically specific presuppositions (Collingwood 1940; Kuhn 1962) or on customary ways of solving problems (Kuhn 1977). The anthropologist hoping to play natural scientist may be like an intrepid explorer who sets off to discover new continents only to find himself in his own back garden.

Some habits still linger. Induction relies on a prior judgement as to what will count as similarity, through selecting out 'essential' features from contingent ones. The rest looks spuriously simple:

The postulate of the inductive method is that all phenomena are subject to natural law, and that consequently it is possible, by the application of certain logical methods, to discover and prove certain general laws, i.e., certain general statements or formulae, of greater or less degree of generality, each of which applies to a certain range of facts or events.

(Radcliffe-Brown 1958b: 7)

The reference to natural law begs the question of the basis of regularity, but the method yields apparent results by having already classified the 'facts' (particulars). Unfortunately, as Barnes has pointed out, in the world

there are no clearly identical, indistinguishable particulars to cluster together. For all the complexity and richness of language, experience is immeasurably more complex, and richer in information. Physical objects and events are never self-evidently identical or possessed of *identical essences*.

(B. Barnes 1982: 28, my emphasis)

The comparative method draws attention away from how the data (note these are 'given') to be compared are constituted in the first place. One may postulate a realm of ('etic') social facts independent of indigenous models, but most anthropological data are mongrel, as they involve two discourses and sets of 'learned similarity relations' (Kuhn 1977: 307–19). So it is far from straightforward to tell to what ostensible regularities are due. The passion for general laws involves an appeal to a stone age notion of natural science which in the meantime has arguably become more concerned with uniqueness and 'exciting particularities' (Ions 1977: 9).

#### STEAM AGE SCIENCE

These difficulties have led to a new scientism — rationalist rather than empiricist — structuralism. The certainty of fact is replaced with assumptions about how mind classifies experience by virtue of its innate structure. The relation of comparison and general laws is reversed, as ethnography reveals how mind (both as genus and species) constrains cultural possibility.

In anthropology as in linguistics, therefore, it is not comparison that supports generalization, but the other way around. If . . . the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing form on content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds — ancient and modern, primitive and civilized . . . it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions. . . .

(Lévi-Strauss 1968a: 21)

There are some big 'ifs' here. The fundamental laws of culture reduce to the unconscious structuring of mind; and structure is the necessary and sufficient condition of human neural organization. Ethnographic evidence no longer underwrites generalization: rather comparative work confirms the universal working of mind.

To its detriment, the argument presupposes a classification of relevant facts; and 'mind' is treated as an entity independent of the contexts of its activity. 'Structure' also has several potentially different senses. It may be anatomically or physiologically neural (so producing 'structure' as form or as process); it may refer to ideals, rules or regularities in society (vaguely conceived); or a *pot-au-feu* of the lot known as an 'underlying structure' — an obscure, transcendental and largely unfalsifiable notion. We do not need such postulates to account for what people say and do anyway (Bourdieu 1977). As Ions put it succinctly, we are dealing with 'Positivism in the French mould'

(1977: 135).<sup>2</sup> The argument for comparing structures based on the universality of the human mind is circular (1977: 138–9). As the notion of structure begs the question, it may be tautologically true but uninformative.

How exhaustive and exclusive is a structural explanation of ethnography? Because it seemed to make sense of some of the perplexities of myth, kinship and symbolic dualism, it has been treated, like the Chinese medicine, as a cure-all. It cannot deal, however, with simple utterances like sentences, let alone texts (Ricoeur 1971; 1976), discourse (Foucault 1972; 1979) or style (Donoghue 1981), which depend on predication and implicit presuppositions, except by breaking these down into rudimentary units to be treated as if they were signs (the fallacy of division). If it is not exhaustive, by the same token it is not exclusive. Myth lends itself to subtler analyses (Girard 1978: 178–98; Culler 1981: 169–87); classification may be more sensitively understood (Karim 1981); and the ethnography more fully explicated by recognizing metaphysical presuppositions (Inden 1976; 1985; Overing 1985b). The human mind is more complex and subtle than structuralism can allow.

Sufficient has already been written about the epistemological problems of structuralism that they do not bear repeating.<sup>3</sup> At the best of times reliance on analogic reasoning is problematic (Lloyd 1966: 304–420); and not only does structuralism presuppose criteria of likeness, but things which are analogous are not identical. So comparison is invariably skewed and inaccurate *ab initio*. By admitting only two forms of association (from the 'four master tropes', themselves dubious essences of diverse figures of speech) everything is reduced by a further, and false, dichotomy so that what is not metaphor is *ipso facto* metonymy. If the former covers a multitude of sins, the latter is positively promiscuous (Levin 1977: 80–2). (One might note that metonymy has been linked to scientific reduction and metaphor to poetic realism (Burke 1969: 503–7), in which case Lévi-Strauss tries to have his cake and eat it.) By depending upon the method of division and the choice of concepts and logical operations appropriate to it, the world appears structured in a binary fashion. However, this is not a result of Mind at all, but of the categories allowed in the analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Structuralist analyses are more often the showcase for *virtuoso* prestidigitation than for strict method or ethnographic enlightenment. On a lighter note, one can produce delightful absurdities as easily as purported profundities. For example, Lévi-Strauss's classic analysis of the Oedipus myth (1968b: 206–19) has a 'structure' identical to the Dracula legend, as any aficionado of Hammer Horror films may attest. Briefly, the four themes in Oedipus (1968b: 214–15) are recapitulated in the story of Dracula as follows:

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Overrating of blood relations	:	Underrating of blood relations	:	Denial of autochthony	:	Persistence of autochthony
Dracula sucks victim's blood	:	Dracula kills victim by draining blood	:	Dracula destroyed by men	:	Dracula always rises from grave again

There is also an interesting 'transformation' in the other classic Gothic tale of Frankenstein (both said to have been originally conceived on the same evening in 1816 beside Lac Léman). The relation of the two structures may be described as follows:

a : b :: c : d		becomes	a : b :: e : f			
Overrating of blood relations/ affinity	:	Underrating of blood relations/ affinity	:	Spontaneous (male) creation of life	:	Denial of spontaneous creation of life
Frankenstein mixes parts of humans	:	Frankenstein kills people to do so	:	Frankenstein creates life without birth	:	Frankenstein is himself killed

One could elaborate the details *ad nauseam*. For example, if Frankenstein is Promethean, Dracula is a superlative autochthonous being who returns to his native soil each night and may only be killed by a wooden stake moving downwards, the reversal of the natural (plant) growth of autochthony. The two stories also display the ambiguity in Lévi-Strauss's account of how myths 'resolve contradictions'. Dracula works by providing an alternative to the serious human problem of death, in the still less palatable possibility of becoming an eternal and miserable 'undead', for whom death is a merciful release ('the Asdiwal solution' where Asdiwal's fate is worse than the inconveniences of matrilocality: Lévi-Strauss 1967). Frankenstein resolves the problems of the bodily and social integrity of persons by converting the problem into a less serious and academic one, namely the possibility of exclusively male creation of life ('the Oedipus solution'), where a similar problem is converted into a juxtaposition of rival ancient Greek accounts of reproduction. Without too much ingenuity multiple 'oppositions' may be discerned between the two heroes:

Dracula	:	Frankenstein
Destroying life	:	Creating life
Ascribed status	:	Achieved status
Nature carried to excess	:	Culture carried to excess
Anti-Christian as diabolic	:	Anti-Christian as Jewish

If my analysis is trivial or wrong, the onus is on structuralists to provide criteria of method; something they are loth to do, perhaps because such analyses are notoriously idiosyncratic.

#### INCOHERENCES

'Descriptions of indubitable facts conflict with one another.'  
(Pepper 1942: 25)

When we compare, what exactly are we, or should we be, comparing to what? At this point serious problems of the comparative method become apparent. Confusion arises when we imagine we are comparing facts from different cultures instead of comparing frameworks or discourses. As M. Jourdain spoke prose all his life without realizing it, we may have been comparing unawares in a potentially informative manner. First, however, it is necessary to consider what comparison involves and why the common-sense view — that it is facts we compare — is inadequate. In the next section, I consider the dangers in applying standard anthropological discourse to the interpretation of other cultures and conclude by suggesting ways of obviating the difficulties.

The impression that we compare facts assumes that

knowing is tacitly conceived as a processing of raw material into a finished product; and an understanding of knowledge is thus supposed to require that we discover just what the raw material is.

(Goodman 1972: 26)

The corollary of this is that facts do not simply determine theory. Theories are remarkably resilient to contradictory evidence where it rears its ugly head (Quine 1953: 42 ff.) but are wretched in verisimilitude because

observational reports, experimental results, "factual" statements, either *contain* theoretical assumptions or *assert* them by the manner in which they are used.

(Feyerabend 1975: 31)

To the extent that different theories are incommensurable, so may be their 'facts'.

What then is meant by comparing? In the simplest version it connotes likening, that is 'to speak of or represent as similar', or more specifically 'to mark or point out the similarities and differences of (two or more things)' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, parentheses in the original). There are several separate issues here. Social acts or representations are not things with essences which can be simply abstracted from context. The definition is already discomfiting. Similarity is not sameness; and pointing to similarities begs the question of the criteria anyway. Representing as similar is a commentator's act and is not given in things themselves.

In representing an object, we do not copy . . . a construal or interpretation — we *achieve* it. In other words, nothing is ever represented either shorn of or in the fullness of its properties. A picture never merely represents *x*, but rather represents *x as a man* or represents *x to be a mountain*, or represents *the fact that x is a melon*.

(Goodman 1981: 9)

This approach allows one to ask under what conditions people represent something as something else and so bring context and power back into the study of collective representations.

Matters are just as bad if we look at how we establish what things have in common.

The essential feature it seems would be what one might call a specific experience of comparing and of recognizing. Now it is queer that on closely looking at cases of comparing, it is very easy to see a great number of activities and states of mind, all *more or less* characteristic of the act of comparing. This is in fact so, whether we speak of comparing from memory or of comparing by means of a sample before our eyes. . . . The more such cases we observe and the closer we look at them, the more doubtful we feel about finding one particular mental experience characteristic of comparing.

(Wittgenstein 1969: 86)

If this is so, as Wittgenstein argues for cloth samples, how much more intricate is the kind in which anthropologists indulge? At best we see complex forms of behaviour; more often we deal with interpretations of behaviour and statements about abstractions, like roles, institutions and values.

What then underwrites Radcliffe-Brown's, and others', assuredness that it is facts we compare? Usually it is some assumption about natural law, or the nature of human beings. The antecedents of the former view draw upon the distinction between *phusis* and *nomos*, nature and convention, where natural regularity is unmediated by culture (although 'law' itself is a metaphor from

*nomos!*). As Collingwood pointed out as long ago as 1945, inconveniently the conception of these laws has changed at least twice in Western scientific thinking. A subtler version involves the further assumptions that human perception and mutual intelligibility are universal because there is (a) a psychic unity and (b) a necessarily shared rationality of mankind (see Hollis 1970; 1982). Recent variations on this theme include assertions about the generality of 'material-object language' (Horton 1979) and propositional thinking (Sperber 1975; 1982). Both arguments are open to serious criticism (see the contributions in Overing 1985a). Now what would happen if people in other cultures explained regularities or universals in different ways such that it affected their actions and so was not just an issue of interpretation? To consider these questions, we must turn to ethnography.

The explanation of order and accident is a matter of textual and popular concern in Bali. Balinese seem largely to lack a dichotomy between nature and culture: all regularity — be it the seasons, plant or human life, or the pattern of daily existence — is due to Divinity, *Ida Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*. *Widhi* is 'rule, law, ordering, regulation': *karwidhi* 'to command, order'; *was* 'power, force, dominion'; and *widhiwasa* 'the power of fate or destiny' (Zoetmulder 1982: 2262–3, 2213–14). So this is not a mere name (as Duff-Cooper suggests, 1985: 71) but arguably Divinity *as* order, in the sense both of what orders and the power of order(s) or fate. In another aspect Divinity is the power (*sakti*) available to people to affect one another's lives. So order and power are both determinate of, and yet affected by, human actions. In place of a dichotomy we have overlapping classes, aspects or perspectives on a complex reality.

Where anthropologists are prone to focus on concomitant variation (A. Cohen 1969), Balinese stress the particularities of evolving forms. Everything in the world is changing (*matemahan*) into something else. In this Heraclitean universe regularity is a sign of potential disjuncture or rupture. Also, concern is less with explaining the normal than the idiosyncratic or unexpected, when chance or fate (*ganti*) operates. Where we stress the regularity of the diurnal cycle, the unending succession of days and nights, Balinese are more struck by the differences between days, and between what happens by day and night. The facts are not in dispute so much as what one makes of them.

The universality of perception — and so the grounding of comparison in identical appreciation of facts — has recently been debated using Balinese materials (Bloch 1977; Bourdillon 1978; Howe 1981). Bloch raises two interesting and important questions: are perceptions of natural process, or time, universal? And how do such perceptions relate to action? There must, he argues, be a difference between culturally specific 'ideologies' and

'knowledge' of a shared reality 'available in all cultures' (1977: 285), a view confirmed by the possibility of communication and translation, and guaranteed by a felicitous conjunction of logic and nature. For a universal 'concept of time' is both logically necessary to language *and* naturally determined (1977: 283, 285). Apart from the startlingly idealist assumption that, if people do not share a cognitive model, they are incapable of registering what happens let alone responding, one does not need a concept of time to act. The assumption that 'linear, irreversible time' is universal and therefore real merely dignifies an ethnocentric spatial metaphor.<sup>6</sup> Far from being radical, as suggested, Bloch's argument is profoundly conservative, embracing an equally dated rationalism and positivist utilitarianism at once. With charming epistemological ingenuousness, its Marxism is fraternal rather than philosophical.

Balinese, in fact, rarely refer to time (*kala*) as the generalized essence of qualitatively different processes, preferring to stress their particular attributes. They explicitly eschew the spatial metaphors their commentators so readily impute to them. Bloch's examples of agriculture and politics serve to make the point. Rice cultivation is not spoken of in terms of cycles: for each differs and has its own entelechy. Nor can one simply treat the ritual 'cycle' as mystifying relations of production in real time because ritual and labour are inter-related in various ways (Hobart 1978). Balinese speak of labour and technology as necessary but not sufficient conditions of successful rice-growing. Cultivation is explained transformationally: labour, raw materials and technology must be controlled to produce an appropriate outcome, instantiated in one form in ritual. So the use of odd-looking things like torch batteries as fertilizer (see *sari* below) is justified by a processual paradigm, quite different from, but just as workable as, a model of material causation.

Public politics in Bali has been claimed to be a form of theatre (Geertz 1980), which contrasts with 'real' power relations (Bloch 1977: 284). This rests on a mistaken, if suggestive, importation of metaphor. Balinese ideas of the relation of theatre or performance and reality differ sharply from ours. The relation of public and private politics is often expressed in the image of puppets and shadow puppeteer, just as the style of political negotiation draws upon the tactics of royal statecraft. 'Practical' goals are as culturally mediated as are 'symbolic' ones (Durkheim 1933: 200–19; Parkin 1976: 163–74). The semblance of comparability comes from imposing alien metaphors and metaphysics on unsuspecting others.<sup>7</sup> Like those gentlemen who live off ladies of easy virtue in other streets in Singapore, it brings in a good living but does little more than pander to depraved, or perhaps deprived, tastes.

It should be evident how uninformative it is to talk about facts free from observers or commentators. For.

frames of reference . . . seem to belong less to what is described than to systems of description. . . . If I ask about the world, you can offer to tell me how it is under one or more frames of reference; but if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all frames, what can you say? We are confined to ways of describing whatever is described. Our universe, so to speak, consists of these ways rather than of a world or of worlds.

(Goodman 1978: 2–3)

If we are not simply comparing facts, on what does the feasibility and intellectual coherence of comparison rest?

Philosophers sometimes mistake features of discourse for features of the subject of discourse. . . . Coherence is a characteristic of descriptions, not of the world: the significant question is not whether the world is coherent, but whether our account is. . . . What we must face is the fact that even the truest description comes nowhere near faithfully reproducing the way the world is. . . . (no true description) tells us *the* way the world is, but each of them tells us *a* way the world is.

(Goodman 1972: 24, 29, 31)

So we are comparing, not facts or the world, but descriptions or discourses. Does it then follow that, in comparing 'data' structured according to different frameworks, we are involved in a kind of category mistake? It is to this issue I now turn.

#### IMPORTANT ARSENALS

Comparing is one of several ways of relating attributes or things — preselected by some (often implicit) criterion — like contrasting, illustrating, elucidating, weighing, evaluating and representing. We also compare differences, illuminate by contrast, elucidate by analogy and so on.<sup>9</sup> Comparison is sometimes used of relating things which differ in degree but are of the same kind; and contrast where they differ in kind but have some similarity of degree (e.g. Crabb 1974: 178). This is inadequate, however, where neither classification into kinds nor the distinction between degree and kind can be assumed. The problem is related to the traditional difference between what is distinct — ideas, concepts, or values which are discrete and differ — and what is opposite — where categories overlap. The qualities of being just, generous or courageous are distinct; good and bad are opposites and may be related dialectically. Whether differences are of degree or of kind depends on the style of analysis being carried out (see Collingwood 1933: 26 ff.). Whatever their personal proclivities, anthropologists are not justified in jumping to assumptions about how such categories are viewed in other cultures. The

relationship between the analyst's and the actors' classifications of the world in any instance should not be decided *a priori*.

Although anthropologists observe behaviour, more than is often credited depends on native statements in interpreting what constitutes significant behaviour and in defining the relevant context before such statements can be checked against the observer's constructions of the behaviour. In other words, we relate indigenous and anthropological systems of description or discourse. So much is obvious. What may be less so are the preconstraints and presuppositions of the technical arsenal we bring to bear. When we invoke the language of social structure, systems of relations, institutions, symbols, beliefs and collective representations, we must watch out for what we assume for ourselves and our informants, in so doing. Two simple questions come to mind. How do the observer's categories relate to indigenous ones? And how does our technical language affect our translations?

Society is often spoken of as 'structured'. Insofar as structure is a feature of discourse we are comparing models of the world. The potential problems emerge in discussions about the Balinese state, which is often said to have a 'feudal', or 'patrimonial' structure. The divergences from Western ideal types are held accountable in terms of economic, local political or symbolic structures (the 'Asiatic mode of production', cross-cutting ties or the 'symbology of power'; see Geertz 1980). Now it is one thing to use Western models to gain insight into Balinese politics, it is another to anticipate indigenous representations.

Some of the problems are plain. Definitions of 'the State' presuppose structure in the first place. Powers are dispersed in all sorts of ways; and the State should perhaps be seen as part of a discourse of contested political claims, as an aspect of social relations, rather than a structure in and of itself (Skillen 1985). Granted the labile and disputed nature of Balinese power relations, it is difficult, even meaningless, to isolate and compare the 'traditional' and modern structures of the State. Political argument in Bali dwells not so much on structure as on whether power flows down from Divinity through an ordered hierarchy or is competitively open to all. So our language of 'kings', 'ministers', 'priests' and 'subjects' is curiously inappropriate to a discourse where the metaphors are not static and material (the State and power as something one holds, has, wields), but are about transformation and the control of change. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*.

As with 'structure', it is easy to assume 'system' — kinship systems, naming systems and so on — where this exists solely in the anthropologist's frame of reference. The rationale for the comparative study of kinship terminology and relations is partly that one can compare different indigenous models of the natural phenomena of human reproduction. So far so good, but it does not

briefly. As Barley has remarked, 'the decision to interpret behaviour as "symbolic" is often the product of the failure of the anthropologist to comprehend something, plus a dogmatic commitment to the rationality of primitive man.' (1983: 10) Symbolism is what appears irrational to the analyst. Being defined negatively, it is a suitably amorphous category to act as an explanatory *deus ex machina*, with a generality stemming from an appeal to a dubiously universal notion of rationality. What is rational to think constitutes knowledge; what isn't makes up ideology or belief.

Charting imagined worlds is no substitute for ethnographic inquiry. One may ask the Balinese if something is symbolic by using the Indonesian *simbolis* (from the Dutch *symbolisch*), but as they do not recognize such general terms one is politely invited to ask a coherent question. The Balinese recognize instead a whole range of terms. For instance, *ciri* covers much of what strict Saussureans might call a sign; but where a sign is mnemonic, it is a *painget*. The difficult domain of exemplification, metaphor and allusion is commonly handled by contrasting *conto* and *pra(tiw)imba*, which one might gloss as 'example' and 'analogy' respectively. The distinction depends on complex criteria of verification (which include whether the connection is manifest and whether it is intrinsic or imputed). Balinese also distinguish two kinds of believing: *pracaya* and *ngega*. The former implies some kind of commitment in the absence of certain knowledge; the latter suggests a similar commitment but with grounds for knowing (*uning*) something to be so. This is not to replace vapid Western concepts with equally nebulous Oriental ones, but simply to point out that such indigenous classifications in use are part of the empirical evidence. Anthropologists rarely lose sleep, or reputations, over such issues: Clifford Geertz's study of the symbolism of the Balinese state blissfully ignored the categories Balinese actually use (see 1980: 135), or even the possibility that they might not conform to his!

Similar problems pervade even that hardest anthropological perennial 'collective representations'. Originally a heuristic device to argue the irreducibility of social phenomena to individual, or psychological, choices, it has come to confer a spurious generality to what others say and do in their putatively 'closed' and cosy worlds. How many people, though, have to share a representation before it is collective? Sharing language, in the sense of using the same words (or 'tokens'), does not entail people extracting the same meanings from them — if indeed they extract meaning at all — any more than they represent things in the same way. 'Sharing' is a notion fraught with ambiguities. The countless ways in which people may use words, interpret, dispute and rephrase others is boiled down into a contextless essence which provides suitable grist to the comparative mill.<sup>13</sup>

Cultural representations have recently been resuscitated by Sperber in

defending his view that true knowledge consists of propositions about the world. 'Ignoring the difficult philosophical problems this raises' (1985: 76), he postulates a *pot-pourri*, of natural and psychological universals, spiced with innate cognitive dispositions and held together by an oddly antic causal ribbon. Representations are reduced to simple correspondences between 'mental forms', brain patterns and 'concrete, physical objects' (1985: 77). Representation, however, is not a closed field — people portray things in particular ways on different occasions — and torturing it on the Procrustean bed of naive realism merely leaves one with useless appendages. What lives on as fact in monographs are the ethnographer's representations of people often long since dead or, strictly, recollections of a few of the ways a handful of people spoke about the world on a few occasions. Such realism is an unfortunate heritage of our own peculiar scientism and essentialism. If it comes as a surprise to contemporary social scientists, it did not to our literary betters and forebears. My opening quotation concludes:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men shall breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

#### ARMCHAIR ATLASES

One of the best arguments for some kind of comparison turns on the problem of translation. It is the familiar thesis that we cannot translate between languages unless there are perceptual and logical processes common to all humans: 'the inquirer must presuppose shared percepts, judgements, concepts and rules of judgement in the making of his empirical discoveries about beliefs.' (Hollis 1982: 73) This is not all. There must also be a

"massive central core of human thinking which has no history" and it has to be one which embodies the only kind of rational thinking there can be. The "massive central core" cannot be an empirical hypothesis, liable in principle to be falsified in the variety of human cultures, but luckily in fact upheld. . . . There has to be an epistemological unity of mankind.

(Hollis 1982: 83–4)

Translation presupposes both comparison and a battery of human universals.

The weakness of the non-universalist stance, on this view, is that it

inadvertently assumes universal rationality and order to establish a 'bridgehead' into other cultures. This is a reasonable point. But quite what does the bridgehead involve? Crucially, there must be a correspondence, or equivalence, between native and analyst's utterances (see Hollis 1970: 214). Matters are not so simple, however. Such 'equivalence structures' do not guarantee identity of mental, or logical, processes. All that is needed is for those concerned to be able to read an interpretation of actions, events or words, which does not violate their own particular standards. Wallace, with salutary scepticism about the positivist pretensions of this whole line of argument, has pointed out that it is doubtful if any but the simplest society could work without widespread miscommunication (1961: 29–44). The rationalist dream of the conditions of translation is likely to prove a practical nightmare.

One reason why the argument looks so plausible is that it rests upon the long-in-the-tooth, but popular, presupposition that either translation is possible and propositions true across languages, or we could never understand other people at all. This 'myth of perfect communication' presumes that understanding cannot be partial, even within our own culture: an odd observation from academics who so often offer quite different accounts of what happened at the seminars they attend. Behind the myth are several pernicious and related dichotomies. Either one understands people or one doesn't. Either statements are true or they are not. Either native beliefs accord with the universality of logic, perception, classification or what not, or they are culturally specific. Either native utterances are factual (propositional or rational) or they are symbolic. Like Morton's fork there are two convenient categories. If we think we understand a native statement or infer intelligible-looking motives for action, this is evidence of a shared reality. If we cannot, it must be culture-specific. The armchair analyst is always, if tautologously, right.

If realism is top-heavy with metaphysical presuppositions (some of which Hollis concedes, 1982: 84), how does one translate without a bridgehead? In trying to make sense of another culture, the use of postulated equivalences — be they perceptual, evaluative or logical — is simply a useful starting point, not a conceptual crucifix. We use all sorts of information to try to grasp what our informants tell us about what we see. Call these 'bridgeheads' if you will. Translating is not so different from interpreting and poses analogous problems of validation (Hirsch 1967). As knowledge and understanding gradually increase, previous assumptions are modified. Radical translation is not an all-or-nothing venture; it is a dialectic (the parallel in interpretation being the hermeneutic circle) between our informants' and our own varying representations.

Recognizing these problems would make anthropology a more sensitive and

intellectually demanding subject than most practitioners would wish to allow. Adopting the ostrich option will not spirit them away, however, as a glance at three widely used Balinese expressions and their vocabulary of comparison shows.

### *Eating*

Everywhere animals and people eat. Is this not a universal which underwrites translation? Now Balinese has several lexical levels with ranked terms for the same object or act. Words for ingesting include *miunan*, *marayunan*, *ngajengang*, *madaar*, *ngamah*, *ngaloklok*, *neda* and *nyasèksèk*. The first two are used of high priests and Brahmins, or when inferiors address princes. *Ngajengang* is used for most other high castes. *Madaar* is used with strangers, where status is unclear, for politeness, by some ambitious people about themselves, but also of the sick. *Ngamah* is used of lower castes and, by them, for people they know well. It may also be used loosely of animals. Different animals are distinguished by their way of feeding. So *ngaloklok* is said of beasts which gulp, like dogs and pigs (*neda* is used of dogs owned by high castes); *nyasèksèk* describes how a chicken picks at the ground, and how people pick out items from a collection. There are many others.

Is there a basic act, say *ngamah*, with synonyms? But how synonymous are these if they connote respect, or other attitudes? Or is it a matter of style? How we interpret usage, however, depends on prior assumptions. Propositionally, the words may be treated as synonymous predicates; as sentences or utterances, they are not. For they are not substitutable, both because terms are fairly fixed for certain castes and because their extensions differ. We may decide that we are dealing with an activity common to humans and animals, to be explained *prima facie* as a single phenomenon. Do the Balinese, though, regard it this way? Classically, members of different castes are different kinds of beings; and animals are quite apart in the Scale of Being. It is easy to assume low Balinese to be 'basic' and everything else 'respect vocabulary'. Regrettably, words cannot be ranged according to a single criterion: they may indicate distance, insult, hostility, power and much besides. So it is impossible to provide simple rules of use. It would in fact be more in keeping with Balinese taxonomic styles to treat each term as the appropriate habit of a specific class of beings, without recourse to essentialized generic concepts like 'eating' at all.

### *Nourishment*

The purpose in eating in Bali is said to be in order to *ngalih merta* (*ngarereh*



*merta* in high Balinese). *Ngalih* may be glossed as 'fetch' or 'search'. *Merta*, however, presents serious difficulties. If one asks what *merta* is, one is liable to be told that it is what has *sari* (see below). What has *sari* is what has *guna*. What has *guna* is what brings *suksema*, which is what one has (is, feels or thinks?) when one *ngalih merta!* I am not being deliberately awkward in avoiding translating these terms (one could render them as 'nourishment', 'goodness', 'use' and 'a good feeling' at the risk of giving Sanskritists apoplexy). The difficulty of mutually defined terms is that several quite different kinds of gloss make sense of some expressions and nonsense of others.

The term for cooked rice in low Balinese is *nasi*; *daar* in middle; and *ajengan* in high. It is also used more generally of food to be eaten. What is nourishing to humans, however, is *merta*; whereas *merta* for dogs includes human faeces. So the term's extension is species specific. Now (*a*)*merta* (also Sanskrit *amṛta*, *amṛita*) has complex mythical and philosophical senses which include the elixir of immortality and the vital fluid of the body (Weck 1937: 40 ff.). It may be regarded as a special substance, as an attribute of certain things, or as an *ex post facto* judgement upon predispositions. Now rice may also be referred to as *merta*. In his discussion of early textual references, Bosch notes that 'we do well to remember that the conception of *amṛita* originally did not imply the notion of an eternal life. . . . "Immortality to man means to live a complete life and to be happy" ' (1960: 62–3). So can Man live by rice alone?

Depending on one's preconceptions, *merta* may be simply 'food'; it may be a nourishing substance or the abstract idea of nourishment; it may apply only to humans or to animals as well: it may even be used of plants and some inanimate objects in other readings. So the Balinese may appear as simple savages who have not yet worked out a set of falsifiable propositions about energy exchange; as ingenious *bricoleurs* or early empiricists; as speculative natural philosophers: as lost in search of a mythical holy grail; or, in getting 'early' usage right, hide-bound traditionalists. It is always possible to read one's predilections about the Other into such translations.

### Essence

In discussing nourishment, a key term seemed to be *sari*. Will this submit to translation more easily? In the dictionaries *sari* is often defined as 'essence' (Kersten 1978: 455; Warna 1978: 502), but also as 'flower', 'yield' and linked to the Indonesian homonym for 'core, essence, nucleus, gist. . . pollen' (Echols and Shadily 1961: 316).<sup>14</sup> Textually it may be traced to Old Javanese *sari*, 'quintessence, the best of something, most precious part. . . pollen, flower' (Zoetmulder 1982: 1693). Van der Tuuk is earlier, but more cautious

on Balinese usage. It may refer to smell, to an egg, to the 'quintessence' of an edible offering, to the brain of shrimps, what makes the earth fertile; while its verb forms include *masari* 'to have luck' and *nyari* 'to breathe in the scent of offerings' or 'to eat sparingly' (1897, vol 3: 52–3). Its compounds are manifold. When I asked what it meant, on several occasions villagers made an analogy (*praimba*, see above) with 'vitamin'!

Of what is *sari* used? Most animate beings and inanimate things contain it. It is said to be in offerings to gods until the ritual is over. (Some people report that such offerings afterwards are less nourishing than ordinary food; others that they are more so.) All food (*sic*) has *sari*, as do humans, animals, plants, car batteries, buses and much else. The common translation as 'essence' is misleading, because it does not imply essential qualities in any of the usual Western philosophical senses. A better rendering might be 'vital force', which would at least make some sense of offerings or how plants derive *sari* from the ground. In fact, transformations may be expressed in terms of *sari*, rather as we use 'energy' or 'force'. A more sensitive gloss might be 'what something requires to keep it being what it is, or is required for its development'. It is far from clear, though, that there is much in common between different uses of *sari*. Once again, in a stroke the Balinese may be transformed from rather odd mystics, gravely mistaken philosophers or unrepentant Aristotelian entelechists, to nineteenth-century vitalists in a world full of fascinating forces (cf. Needham 1976).

These examples show some of the obvious difficulties in imagining that translation is simple or that one can compare words or propositions because they deal with a shared reality. A bridgehead does not tell us which reading is the right one (none fits all the statements made by Balinese). The retort that I have managed to translate quite well despite my disclaimers overlooks the fact that, in this case, the contents of the 'bridgehead' are so vague and flexible as to be meaningless. As Overing has remarked, the problem is what is one to put in the bridgehead anyway (1985b: 154). A more serious issue is that it may be hard to choose between versions because they are articulated in terms of indigenous ideas which are mutually defined and far from the periphery of experience. These two concerns reflect grave criticisms of naive realism and empiricism. Facts do not easily determine theory or translation (Quine 1960: 26–79). And different 'translation manuals' make equal sense. Anyway, words arguably do not come singly, but as part of complex sets which are open to falsification only in the limiting case (Quine 1953: 37–47). But how is one to falsify the link between, say, *merta* and *sari*?

Matters are not quite so desperate, though. Some cultures have their own highly developed views on such matters as language or comparison. Ignoring such sources at times looks dangerously like intellectual arrogance. Balinese

vocabulary for comparison, for instance, recognizes nuanced differences of degree and kind. The nearest equivalent to 'compare' is probably *nyaihang*, from the root *saib*, 'resemble or be equal'. It tends to imply sifting or searching carefully for something amid other things, which links it to the near-homonym *nyai pang*, 'to sift or sieve'. Where we might use 'contrast', the Balinese term is *ngalênang*, from *lên*, different, other, distinct. There are further terms, two of which are relevant here: *masib*, looking for resemblances of a weaker kind than implied by *nyaihang*; and *matetimbangan*, from *timbang*, to weigh, which is more or less explicitly evaluative. The words are used in daily life, often with more care than we show.

Balinese precision in other respects is striking. Asking if something can be compared to something else, or whether it resembles it, is not a well-formed utterance unless one specifies the attribute or term held to apply to both. I once inquired if two full brothers were alike, only to be told sharply that the question was meaningless. Was I asking about their facial or bodily form, their character traits, inherited or acquired idiosyncracies, the distance from a common origin (here mother and father), their strength or energy, or what? Different kinds of feature require different terms for similarity, according to both degree and kind. Two men with similar character traits are *masaih* (from the same root as 'compare', *nyaihang*), in other words alike in that respect. But if they look alike, they are *nampek* (seemingly a spatial metaphor) or 'near'. Kin, however, are held to resemble one another strictly only in caste and descent group membership. Here the term is *pateh*, the same or equal with respect of that criterion alone. While it is possible to speak of 'comparing' features which are not *masaih*, but say *nampek*, Balinese tended to avoid using *nyaihang* in this sense by circumlocution. So attention to indigenous discourse does suggest an interesting means of weighing the relative merits of different interpretations. Our home-grown language of comparison gets short shrift in a world as subtly differentiated as the Balinese. Armchair atlases are best left to armchair Atlases.

#### SCALY FORMS

Contemporary anthropologists have been described as mice gnawing on the bones of dead dinosaurs.<sup>15</sup> Is there a coherent alternative, though, to a Rabelaisian repast of Rationalism and Realism? For, if we follow Quine, how are we to choose between different translations, or interpretations? Are we left in relativist dreamtime where anything goes; a Romantic world where the creativity of the ethnographer is the only constraint; where ethnography is an elegant fiction or a series of more or less ingenious and informative sketches?

Or have we reduced other cultures to silence by being able to say too much about them? The alternatives are humbler, but there is something to be said for small furry mammals rather than moribund reptiles.

Relinquishing reason and reality as sufficient, if still useful, guides need not pitch us into loony relativism, nor make ethnography into the creative act of a novelist. If it did, the account of anyone who wrote about Bali without reading about it, doing fieldwork or knowing the language would be as valid as the most informed analysis. Needless to say, this has not stopped many people from trying! We are not quite dealing with the eponymous individual champing at the creative bit, because the notions of 'individual' and 'creativity' are part of available social frames of reference (which change, of course — they are not prisons). It is in this sense that I understand the contributions of Overing and Parkin in this volume.

A popular tack by malcontents with existing approaches is to embrace a perspectival metaphor, in one of two senses. One may counter-balance different views of the same events, or look at the different ways in which events present themselves. For,

it is customary to think that objective reality is dissolved by such relativity of terms as we get through the shifting of perspectives. . . . But on the contrary, it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality. . . . Indeed, in keeping with the older theory of realism (what we might call "poetic realism", in contrast with modern "scientific realism") we could say that characters possess *degrees of being* in proportion to the variety of perspectives from which they can with justice be perceived.

(Burke 1969: 504)

Are all perspectives or translations equally valid? Clearly a reasonable fit with observable actions, utterances and indigenous exegeses is a necessary condition; while interpretations which are consistent with indigenous pre-suppositions and criteria of explanation, economy, elegance, coherence or whatever (see Hesse on the requirements for translation manuals, 1978) would deserve close attention. An account would be suspect to the extent that it incorporated alien pre-suppositions or pre-empted discussion by *a priori* claims about what culture, language or the world must be. If there is no such thing as a perfect translation or interpretation, there are still better, worse and idiotic ones. What, then, is one to make of misplaced metaphors like 'the theatre state' or 'linear time'? Are they illuminating or ultimately misleading? I leave the matter to the reader's judgement.

Perspectival approaches, however, have a serious drawback. They tend to ignore the overlap and broader historical changes in discursive traditions. Anthropological writings, for example, too often add to the spatial distance of

those they study by displacing them in time too (see Fabian 1983), and so dismiss the extent to which Others have always impinged more or less upon us, and we on them. The Balinese had a significant impact on Western European music in the late nineteenth century; as Europeans did on them even before colonization. An alternative to such exclusive scientific classes of 'distincts' are overlapping classes of 'opposites' or, to be precise, of 'differences of a peculiar kind, which are differences at once of degree and kind' (Collingwood 1933: 73).

Not only can cultures or discourses incorporate new information about the world, but previous knowledge is continually being reworked in the light of experience. So knowledge is partly both archaeological and contextual. The resultant dialectic has been called a 'Scale of Forms' (Collingwood 1933: 54–91). This is not to suggest any necessary evolutionary progress, or internal consistency. Discourses, in this sense, are not static, exclusive or exhaustive. As the Balinese have encountered large-scale tourism, their image of Westerners has tended to change from seeing them as powerful, dangerous figures to over-sexed, extravagant and crude; while our images of Bali run the gamut from cultural museum to Pacific isle. Now something interesting happens when we reconsider 'radical translation', which rarely turns out to be as clear-cut as was implied. To the extent that discourses overlap, they affect one another. In encountering or talking about other peoples we modify our own categories. As we come to know more about the Balinese, we are also learning more about ourselves, or understand ourselves in different ways. The Balinese, of course, are doing something similar from a different starting point. The process is a kind of mutual, if partly incommensurable, critical ethnography of people in one culture on people in another.

The debate about comparison and translation is not just an esoteric academic argument. The commonest theoretical approaches dismiss much of what the rest of the world has to say. They reduce others to silence, while obscuring this behind a miasma of metaphor. Such pretensions are as Cretaceous as they are hegemonic. Peddling an outdated scientism is not just pushing a dubious panacea, but is frankly totalitarian. I hope those were for anthropologists, as one absolute ruler put it,

My sallad days,  
When I was green in judgement: cold in blood. . . .  
*Antony and Cleopatra*, 1. v. 73–4

You will recall what happened to her after embracing a scaly form,

## NOTES

- 1 The *loci classici* are Radcliffe-Brown 1958a [1952] and 1958b [1923] and Evans-Pritchard's reply (1950; 1961; 1965) drawing heavily, it seems, on Collingwood's detailed distinctions between natural scientific and philosophical, or historical, methods (1933 and 1942). A far more sophisticated protagonist of a scientific approach to culture is Bateson (1958; 1973). There is no need to discuss here the extensive literature on formal comparison (e.g. Murdock 1957a; 1957b; 1967), now largely rejected but implicitly revived, often under the guise of 'structure' by Lévi-Strauss (1969), despite long-standing criticisms (e.g. Schapera 1954; Goody 1956; Leach 1961a; Needham 1971; Ions 1977: 134–42). In retrospect, Evans-Pritchard emerges rather well from the debate.
- 2 In Anglo-Saxon usage, structure takes on a more empirical or positivist flavour (Kuper 1975), or stresses 'conscious models' (Ward 1965, exemplified by R. H. Barnes 1974: the latter's focus on indigenous categories avoids some nasty confusions of the former).
- 3 On a questionable understanding of dichotomy, see Lloyd 1966: 156–62; P. S. Cohen 1975; Hallpike 1979: 224–8. On confusions of differences in degree and in kind ('opposites' and 'distincts', Croce 1948), see Collingwood 1933: 64–91. On more general criticisms of structuralist assumptions and method, see Hayes and Hayes 1970; Derrida 1972; 1976; Macksey and Donato 1972; Culler 1975; Sperber 1975: 51–84; 1985: 64–93; Benoist 1978; Wilden 1980.
- 4 As Nagel has noted, for any sequence of events whatsoever, it is possible to construct a mathematical function, even when they are notionally random (1961). The unhappy moral for lovers of system is that it is possible to imagine and argue order where none exists: a problem which Simpson raises (1961: 5) and round which Lévi-Strauss tiptoes on highly questionable grounds (1966: 9–10). On further problems in the nature of systems, see Collingwood 1933: 176–98.
- 5 Hacking has pointed to a difference in Quine's and Feyerabend's theses: 'Quine urges that there is *too much* possibility for translation. The opposed doctrine maintains there is *too little*. Two human languages could be so disparate that no system of translation is possible. This is the spirit of Feyerabend's doctrine of incommensurability' (Hacking 1975: 152). For 'translation' one can also read 'comparison'. While Hacking reasonably notes some of the different stresses in the two approaches, in other ways they are less diverse than he implies. Both recognize the theory-laden nature of evidence and the underdetermination of fact by theory; but both develop different aspects of the argument.
- 6 Recently Bloch has asserted that a statement is metaphoric or literal depending on which a speaker indicates to his audience (1985: 632). Does it follow that, if Bloch indicates time is metaphorically linear it is so only in a manner of speaking, but if literal then it really is linear?
- 7 Despite their ostensible differences, Bloch and Geertz are intellectual bed-fellows. Their stated commitment to ethnography disguises a massive burden of a

- priori* assumptions. Both assume, for instance, the psychic unity of mankind and the ultimate adequacy of Western reason and (positivist) ontology to explain culture and all its variations. Both assume a Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body, expressed as the centrality of the distinction between the instrumental and the expressive (as 'practical' and 'symbolic', a false dichotomy and an odd reading of Kant's strictly analytic, not substantive, distinction between 'hypothetical' and 'categorical' imperatives) and — Geertz explicitly, Bloch implicitly — the dependence of action on ideas and ideologies. They differ merely in the relative stress on the opposed dogmas of Utilitarianism and Romanticism, seeing humans epitomized in the Western metaphors of Napoleon's English shopkeeper and the self-conscious aesthete respectively. It is a domestic tiff exported to Bali.
- 8 Collingwood is interesting and careful on the differences between what can be compared and what measured (1942: 24); and on the role of evocation in contrasting (comparison appropriately being defined as finding out 'what contrasts with what'; 1942: 49–50).
  - 9 It is often assumed (for example in the structuralist focus on *signifiant* and *signifié*) that the word-object relation is uncomplicated or universal. On the contrary, class terms, proper names and descriptions are a minefield for the unwary (e.g. Strawson 1950; Kripke 1977). If words or names do not have the same sense or reference in all cultures (and there is evidence that they do not), then we cannot compare what is referred to in different languages without prior investigation of use.
  - 10 Nadel's reflections were typically more sophisticated than those of many of his successors, the statement above being hedged about with *caveats*. For example, he noted that activity implies intention, but this was made a potentially empirical matter which did not postulate inner states, as the 'purposive aspect refers only to the task-like nature of organized behaviour . . . not to any ulterior or ultimate purpose which the investigator might claim to have discovered in them' (1951: 109).
  - 11 The expedient invocation of metaphor is a hallmark of realism *in extremis*. Apart from indulging in many of the fallacies discussed above, it exports a naive metaphysics. Even such ostensibly fundamental 'biological' relationships as, say, mother and son presuppose ideas about causation, substance or influence, continuity, similarity and personal identity. On what grounds, for instance, should we assume the cosmos, deities, and culturally important objects to be represented in terms of metaphoric extensions of family relations, rather than family relations being exemplifications of the same metaphysical principles which are held to inform the cosmos etc. (Goodman 1984: 59–60)?
  - 12 This kind of power is generally known as *kasaktian*, and so *manusa sakti*, people with such powers. 'Witches' is a poor gloss for the richly nuanced terminology available. Much of the ostensible oddity of such figures comes from taking them out of the context of the many kinds of being and agency which the Balinese recognize.
  - 13 H. P. Grice to J. S. Mill might be more appropriate, if ironic. For, as part of his grand programme of re-treading the footsteps of the Logical Positivists, Sperber

has, rightly, been concerned with developing a theory of context (Sperber and Wilson 1986). Unfortunately, although it starts by modifying Grice, the argument seems to owe more to Mill's inductive metaphysics than to Grice's cautious pragmatism.

- 14 Dictionaries illustrate unregenerate essentialism *par excellence* at work. And one might be wise not to inquire how their decontextualized 'meanings' were reached. Balinese was fortunate, though, as it was documented by Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (1897). In one of the great works of Orientalism he gives sentences and contexts of use more often than a translation, a caution which has stood later generations in good stead. He has been followed to some extent by Zoetmulder (1982) for Old Javanese, the language of many texts, but one which has percolated into everyday Balinese speech.
- 15 I am grateful to Nigel Barley and Edwin Ardener for the suggestive image and retort respectively.

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