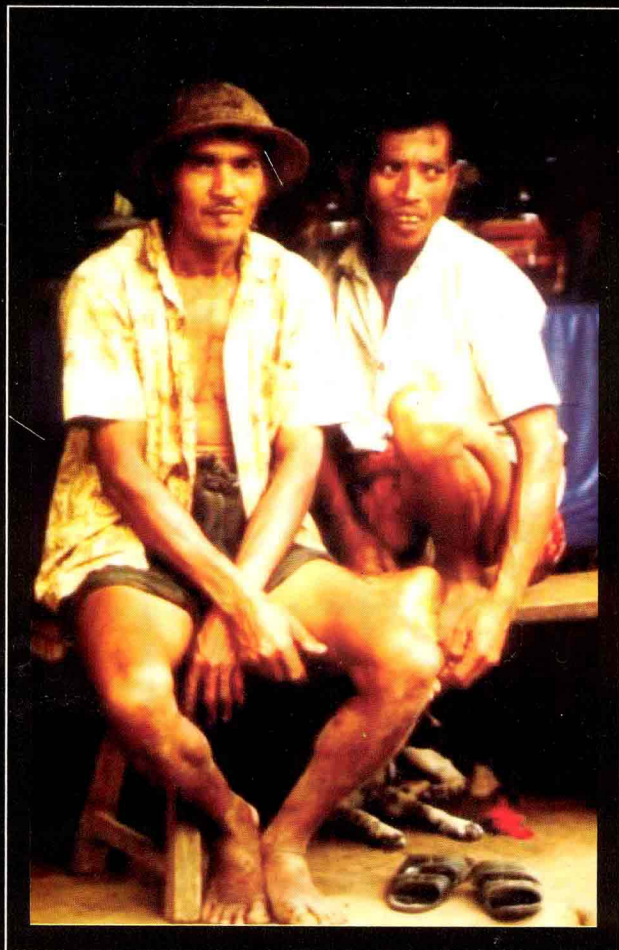


AFTER CULTURE

ANTHROPOLOGY AS RADICAL METAPHYSICAL CRITIQUE

MARK HOBERT



PROGRAM STUDI MAGISTER KAJIAN BUDAYA UNUD
DUTA WACANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Chapter 1 Introduction

After culture: anthropology as radical metaphysical critique.

Cultures...are individual psychology thrown large upon the screen, given gigantic proportions and a long time span (Benedict 1932: 24).

There is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. Men without culture would not be...clever savages...thrown back upon the cruel wisdom of their animal instincts; nor would they be nature's noblemen of Enlightenment primitivism or even, as classical anthropological theory would imply, intrinsically talented apes who had somehow failed to find themselves. They would be unworkable monstrosities with very few useful instincts, fewer recognizable sentiments, and no intellect: mental basket cases (Geertz 1973a: 49).

A culture is an aggregate of divergent and contradictory pictures, and each picture is true (Hidetoshi Kato, cited in Kotkin 1992: 10).

Culture is like gravity: you do not experience it until you jump six feet in the air... The essence of culture is not what is visible on the surface. It is the shared ways groups of people understand and interpret the world. So the fact that we can all listen to Walkmans and eat hamburgers tells us that there are some novel products that can be sold on a universal message, but it does not tell us what eating hamburgers or listening to Walkmans means in different cultures (Trompenaars 1993: 6, 3).

I was inspired to build a project of that sort in Indonesia, only more complete and more perfect, adapted to fit the situation and developments in Indonesia, both materially and spiritually (Mrs. Soeharto on Disneyland as the inspiration for the cultural project of Taman Mini ("Beautiful Indonesia" in miniature) cited in Pemberton 1994a: 241).



0171 407 4433

Does the idea of culture serve a serious intellectual purpose any more? This might seem a curious remark, because culture seems to be everywhere these days. People speak of the culture of business, the market place, of technology, of the workplace, of almost any group of people. Even the construction industry has it. Down the road from where I live, local builders have erected a large notice board: 'Care is Our Culture'. Where countries used to be identified with particular, often dominant, cultures, they now turn out to be compound entities: multi-cultures spawning sub-cultures. Every year tourists spend billions of dollars flying to experience, photograph and take home bits of other cultures. Difference is sanitized and marketed as culture. As we increasingly come to recognize the presence of culture by such visible, consumable indices, modern mass media become implicated in the existence and proliferation of culture in complex ways. Is culture therefore not more important, and therefore more urgently in need of study, than ever? On the other hand, do we need to imagine more to culture than the everyday 'how we do things around here' (cf. Roberts 1999: 16-29)? Is there more than the selective recollection of past practices, the way people have happened to have done things on particular occasions?¹ What is the urge for supplementarity – for a 'something more than' – which invoking culture so often appeals to?

If you stop and think about it, there is something distinctly odd about the whole idea of culture. At first sight though it seems a thoroughly admirable notion. It promises to articulate the range and diversity of human thought and action throughout history everywhere in the world into a single comprehensible, portable and transactable concept. It supersedes earlier

¹ By way of a parallel, for over a hundred years European scientists were convinced that a mysterious substance, phlogiston, was what made matter burn until Lavoisier showed it was merely the presence of oxygen in the air. He was guillotined during the French Revolution, partly for his scepticism.

I would like to thank Richard Fox and Ron Inden for invaluable comments on previous drafts of this Introduction.

and invidious ways of distinguishing humans, such as by religion or race,² which have been turned so destructively in the course of history against other human beings. Culture by contrast is democratic: we all have it and, in principle at least, nobody's is inherently superior to anyone else's. Now, although it may describe someone's customs or way of life, culture is also a Grand Explanatory Concept. On the accounts of the proponents of culture themselves (e.g. Geertz 1973a, 1973b; Sahlins 1976a), it not only ranks up there with Nature, Society, Humankind and even Mind itself, but indeed encompasses all these. For culture, embodied in language and other symbols, is the condition for the possibility of thinking itself and so sets limits to the knowable world. As Wittgenstein put it 'the limits of *language*...mean the limits of *my* world' (1961: 115 [5.62]). Finally culture is a peculiarly cultural idea. Many American human scientists find it quite self-evident; their British colleagues are sceptical; while the French manage for the most part to get along fine without it at all.

If you reflect for a moment, you get the sense that important questions go begging. If it is so self-evident, what exactly then *is* culture? In 1952 Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) noted a hundred and sixty four different definitions. Since then culture has become still more complex and vague. As Raymond Williams remarked:

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is partly so because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible ways (1983: 87).

Are the apparently protean claims of culture really though much more than a play on a mass of partly contingent, historically accumulated connotations of the word in European languages? Asking 'what is culture?' invites an often endless deferral to related ideas. However, to argue 'the explanation of all these phenomena is X, but don't ask me what X is' ceases to be very convincing after a time.

Nonetheless the question 'what is culture?' has been the subject of interminable debate, for over half a century by anthropologists and more

² Race reappears regularly in the sort of inferences people make from genetics. The project to 'map' the entire DNA structure of human beings has given the old argument of explanation by reference to nature as against culture (Wilson 1975; Sahlins 1976b) the semblance of a new lease of life. As Schwartz (1997) noted however, such genetic fundamentalism is the linear successor to Idealism.

recently, among others, by cultural studies' scholars. Explanatory recourse to culture is arguably far more historically and 'culturally' specific or else specious than we usually care to admit (Foucault 1970, 1972a; Clifford 1988a; McGrane 1989; Abu-Lughod 1991; Fabian 1991a; Herbert 1991; Kahn 1995). And, if culture is so 'culturally' specific a concept, does it not run the risk of being either tautological or vacuous?

At this point the suspicion dawns that perhaps we have been asking the wrong questions and so keep giving ourselves the wrong – or simply nonsensical – answers. What sort of concept is culture? If ideas have histories, how does this affect culture? What happens if we stop asking the conventional questions of the order of 'what is culture and how does it work?' and ask instead 'how, and under what circumstances, have people invoked the notion of culture?' Other questions then follow. For instance 'how have scholars actually set about studying culture?' And 'what is excluded by a recourse to culture?' As soon as culture is no longer an innocent and transparent way of understanding the world of human action, we may need to ask what appeal to culture does to the world of those doing the understanding and attribution – not to mention those being understood and attributed with it.

The Argument

When questioning a concept like culture, which is used in so many different senses, the argument necessarily takes twists and turns. So let me outline briefly what I am trying to say. 'What is?' questions about culture invite an endless and barren debate. At best you land up – following cultural studies – treating culture as essentially contested, not just intellectually but politically. Culture is still however largely defined semiotically, as a system of signs or symbols, which represent – something.³ The result is to stress, and often to reify, the 'something', instead of looking at representing as a situated act of transformation (you represent something *as* something else). So the question becomes: 'under what circumstances do people represent something *as* cultural?' As the

³ Popular as it is, this representational model involves all sorts of questionable assumptions. It presumes a dichotomy of mind over matter (mind represents matter and itself, but not *vice versa*). It assumes objects or states as pre-given, to which symbols somehow refer. It privileges the enunciator's interpretation over others. The chapters below address different aspects of the problem.

Another way of phrasing the issue is to stress meaning: symbols mean something. This merely defers the problem of culture, because meaning is a hopelessly obscure, and arguably unnecessary, notion (Hobart 1982a).

possibilities are virtually inexhaustible, in effect culture as a coherent concept explodes.

There is a counter-argument, which runs roughly as follows. Your argument is itself cultural: culture contains the possibility of its own critique. I trace briefly the background to this encompassing account of culture, which takes the central concept of German Idealism, *Geist* or Mind, and relativizes it as Culture. This 'strong' account of culture may be coherent, but it is total. It is closed, self-confirming and begs such questions as who decides what counts as culture and when? The dangers become apparent when we look at what has actually been involved in some of the most famous cultural analyses in anthropology. Invoking culture then emerges as an act of closure and power, a point I develop by considering how culture is used just in one setting: broadcasts on Balinese television. Culture then is a way of articulating events and practices by invoking a particular set of presuppositions. The effect is to hierarchize or disarticulate other ways of appreciating what is going on, articulated using more or less different presuppositions.

At this point there is a good case for letting go of the idea of culture altogether in favour of the notion of practice, which does not assume such a degree of articulation. As practices are situated, diverse and changing, how can we talk about them intelligibly though? Any thought or action presupposes prior thoughts and actions. A study of the presuppositions people have actually made – what I shall call metaphysics – is therefore a way of analyzing practice. As you cannot assume what presuppositions people have actually made in any particular situation, such a study involves a degree of radical indeterminacy, and so limits on the knowledge of academic experts. Whereas culture invites us to share in the fantasy of exclusive insight into the minds of others, metaphysics more humbly invites us into an open and unending dialogue with those we work with.

Culture and Cultural Studies

A newcomer has appeared on the scene, which announces culture as its object of study. Rather than present yet another anthropological or sociological rerun of a very old debate, let us see what they have made of the notion in cultural studies. As it breaks with the mostly synthetic and idealist American accounts of culture, the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies is interesting, not least because its starting point in late Marxism would seem to be quite different.

The presiding figure at the Centre, Stuart Hall, has offered different definitions on different occasions. Writing about the theoretical background to cultural studies, Hall starts from the work of Raymond Williams. Culture is no longer, as Matthew Arnold had it, ‘the best that has been thought and said in the world’ (1932: 6), but include ‘the sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences’ (Hall 1986: 35, summarizing Williams 1981). Note how agency is allocated and the covert rationalism. Note also that experience, far from being, as Foucault noted (1982, 1984, 1986a, 1986b), a necessary adjunct of the modern notion of the subject, is taken as unproblematic. Hall goes on to cite Williams with approval as bringing culture closer to anthropological ideas of culture as social practices, while managing to distance himself from the British culture-as-bits-and-pieces tendency.

Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to tensions and achievements of growth and change (Williams 1961: 55; also cited in Hall 1986: 35).

Communication *is* culture. There are such things as meanings and these are shared. Community is nothing more than representation in its doubled version as the act of producing and the products. Where this culminates is in cheerful assertions by cultural studies’ writers like Agger that ‘at a deeper level, we *are* popular culture’ (1992: 6). Representations become their own objects. They conclude their logical fate by becoming simulacra.⁴

For Williams then culture was the sum of the interrelationship threaded through all social practices, both correspondences and discontinuities, discernible through distinctive patterns (Hall [1980] 1986: 36; Williams 1981: 61-3). However Hall refreshingly recognized that culture is at best a concept essentially contested between different paradigms, which he identified as English culturalism (from Arnold through Leavis) and French structuralism (following Lévi-Strauss). He defined

‘culture’ as *both* the meanings and values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they ‘handle’ and respond to

⁴ The process by which Baudrillard argues that representation produces simulacra is discussed in Chapter 5.

the conditions of existence; *and* as the lived traditions and practices through which those ‘understandings’ are expressed and in which they are embodied (1986: 39).

Culture is both meanings and their expression in practice. There is a distinctive asymmetrical dualism here. There are groups, classes, relationships to conditions of production and power on the one hand; and meanings and values on the other. Culture as superstructure is based, but refracts back, upon infrastructure.

Understanding is expressed and embodied in practices to be interpreted by the analyst. Reflective thinking, on this account, is not itself a practice. Hall takes the relationship between ideal and material forces as a dialectical one between social being and social consciousness (1986: 39). Culture here is close to ideology, which represents the imaginary relation of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1984). Cultural studies aims to intervene, if not remove distortions in consciousness, show them publicly for what they are. Culture no longer serves, as for Parsons and Geertz (see below), to integrate society, but emerges as a site of conflict.

Hall’s account is more theoretically nuanced than its predecessors’. He tends to avoid defining culture substantively, but depicts it instead as a site of convergent interests (1986: 35), so nicely putting academic practices as part of the issue. The fact is that no single, unproblematic definition of ‘culture’ is to be found here. The concept remains a complex one notably for what – and who – it excludes, rather than a logically or conceptually clarified idea. This ‘richness’ is an area of continuing tension and difficulty in the field (Hall 1986: 35). A strength of this critical cultural studies is the range and quality of some of the research it has encouraged. Yet, as an account of culture, it is in many ways the obverse, if preferable, face of a familiar coin. There remains a dichotomy between being and consciousness. Dialectic, for all its practitioners’ disclaimers, requires essences, otherwise antithesis is impossible. As Bakhtin warned, dialectics is a highly idealized notion extrapolated from dialogue as a practice (1986a).

Hall concludes

cultural studies has drawn attention to itself, not just because of its sometimes dazzling internal theoretical development, but because it holds theoretical and political questions in an ever irresolvable but permanent tension (1996a: 272).

For these reasons, with its offshoot media studies, the best cultural studies' debates may well recommend themselves to scholars in Asia, Africa and Latin America as a way of addressing a whole range of issues from commodification and consumerism to popular culture and the role of the mass media in contemporary society. There are problems however. Cultural studies remains a set of theoretical arguments and has not really led to the emergence of a new kind of critical ethnography. In fact it remains worryingly free of discussion about how you bring critical insights into the actual business of inquiring of people and about practices.⁵ For this reason, cultural studies always runs the risk of degenerating into a hermetic, textual exercise for metropolitan intellectuals. Crucially, it threatens to become an élitist game, which ignores the critical thinking of those whose culture it is to begin with.⁶

What is at stake is put with disarming explicitness by Agger.

I conceive of cultural studies in its best sense as an activity of critical theory that directly decodes the hegemonizing messages of the culture industry permeating every nook and cranny of lived experience... Cultural studies is extremely seductive for those of us who grew up with television and the mass movies and recognize their powers of distortion, deception and suggestion (1992: 5-6).

Ordinary people remain incapable effectively of realizing the forms of hegemony to which they are subject, but require cultural studies' experts to identify them. When working on culture,

you have to recognize that you will always be working in an area of displacement. There is something decentred about the medium of culture, about language, textuality, and signification, which always escapes and evades the attempt to link it, directly and immediately, with other structures (Hall 1996b: 271).

⁵ Paul Willis, one of the original members of the Birmingham Centre, has made this point to me on a number of occasions. Interestingly he considers media studies in effect the ethnographic project of media studies. Ethnography is often much more interventionist than the images of neutral – or even sympathetic – representation suggest. Fabian has described it as confrontation (1991b) and elsewhere I have argued that it involves interrogation (1996). Interrogation is not just the Baconian method of rigorous inquiry but, as Foucault noted (1977), a set of disciplinary practices for investigation, examination and torture.

⁶ Stuart Hall assures me that this marginalization was the result of slippage in intellectual practice and that my insistence on the centrality of the critical thinking of the subjects of study is what was at the heart of the original cultural studies' agenda. The problem of writing yet another theoretical critique of culture is that I am aware I run the risk of engaging in such an intellectual exercise myself.

What chance does the ordinary person in the street have, if the cunning of culture requires the wits of the world's finest thinkers to reveal its secrets and displacements?

Now an aim of cultural studies is often 'intervention analysis', that is it sets out not just to explicate of how culture and media work, but to change people's understanding and so make them more active subjects. That is the constitutive presupposition, which justifies the existence of cultural studies in the first place. There are problems however. Who decides the conditions under which readers, viewers, participants in culture become – or are identifiable as – active? And how do you know? We are back to the impenetrable question of how you know what people, as readers or audiences, are making of what is going on? The implicit assumption is that the emancipated subject of culture will look very like the enlightened analyst. There is also an implicit realist premise at work here. What sense does it make to speak of television or films distorting or deceiving without a presupposition that there is a reality there to be truly and accurately represented in whatever medium?⁷

Anthropologists and cultural studies' specialists tend equally to fall into the trap of representationism (Goodman 1968) with their stress on culture as semiotic or symbolic (e.g. Geertz 1980; Milner 1994). The problem is not simply splitting the world (matter) and its representation (mind), and then worrying about how they correspond (Hall 1997; cf. Hobart 1982a). As problematic is the idea that culture consists of messages to be decoded – inadequately by viewers, correctly by intellectuals – a theme made famous by Hall (1980). We are back to the very old and tired model of communication, which glorifies and universalizes practices introduced with the telegraph wire. It is as if nothing had happened before or since. As Bakhtin noted however,

semiotics deals primarily with the transmission of ready-made communication using a ready-made code. But in live speech, strictly speaking, communication is first created in the process of transmission and there is, in essence, no code... Context and code. A context is

⁷ One aim of this book is to argue against the kinds of realism and idealism, which set up a dichotomy between the world and mind. A key issue then becomes how mind is able accurately to represent the world (in realism) or to understand itself (in idealism). By contrast I take it that such a (Cartesian) hierarchization of the knower over the known is unhelpful in the human sciences, where 'reality transcends the knower' (Inden 1986: 402, cited in Chapter 5 below). Some of the problems of idealism I address below. My objections to realism and objectivism owe much the work of Collingwood (1939, 1945, 1992); Quine 1953a, 1953b, 1960; Goodman (1972, 1978); as well as Bernstein 1983; Bhaskar 1979; Fabian 1991b; and Rorty 1980.

potentially unfinalized; a code must be finalized. A code is only a technical means of transmitting information; it does not have cognitive, creative significance. A code is deliberately established, killed context (1986b: 147).

Directly against culture-as-message-to-be-decoded, the shift in critical media studies, which deals directly with the issue, has been away from codes towards an ethnographically sensitive appreciation of context (e.g. Morley 1986; Radway 1988). In other words, there is a move from a representational model of human engagement with the world to one that stresses situated practice. Practice ceases here to be a synonym for social process, what social actors do, but is given ontological priority and becomes a problematic object of study.

Two or three questions I have about culture

In the previous section, I have argued that cultural studies does not have a simple answer to the question ‘what is culture?’ The strength of cultural studies is that it treats the concept not just as problematic, but as political. How useful then is it at all to ask ‘What is?’ questions of culture? These are difficult to answer without reifying, hypostatizing or essentializing the object of inquiry. As a result, culture tends to land up as an abstract substance.⁸ Anyway arguably, as human scientists, we are as much interested, not in what something is ultimately supposed to be, but in how people have thought it to be and acted towards it under particular circumstances. There is no reason our own working concepts should be immune to our constitutive intellectual presuppositions. Doing so changes the sorts of questions we ask.

Instead of asking ‘What is culture?’ then, perhaps we should be asking: ‘When is culture?’⁹ ‘How have people invoked culture, to what ends and under what circumstances?’ Culture is an articulating notion, which is widely used by intellectuals to frame things. On such an approach, academics therefore cease to be privileged knowing subjects, but their own intellectual practices become the object of scrutiny. So first I shall consider how culture came to have such articulatory power. If the question is when and how culture is invoked, then we need to study its situated usage. So I

⁸ On substantialism, see Collingwood 1946: 42-45. As he noted, such substances are commonly mental. An obvious example is Mind, a substance that often overlaps with culture.

⁹ A good way of avoiding reifying is to ask not ‘what is...?’, but ‘when is...?’ Goodman does the same with art, by asking when something is art? (1978: 57-70).

shall examine how the New Order régime in Indonesia has appealed to culture as an articulating idea.

Instead of accepting their idealizations of cultural methods of research, how do anthropologists actually go about studying culture? What do they take as the object of study? How do they relate to it? And how do they infer culture from the object? Once again, I shall draw upon anthropological work on Indonesia. It so happens that one of the most celebrated anthropological exponents of culture, Clifford Geertz, has done most of his analyses on Indonesian materials. So just how *do* you do a cultural analysis?

Third, what is not culture? What is it that is opposed, or antagonistic, to culture? On all but a lunatically encompassing account of culture, there must be something else in the world, to which culture relates either as a competing or antagonistic set of processes or as an alternative explanatory frame of reference. Put another way, what is it that culture keeps at bay? What threatens the world if culture falters? What is displaced, silenced, denied in an appeal to culture?

Introducing culture

First, though, how have anthropologists imagined culture? What sort of object of study is it? I shall address this question by reviewing the work of the leading advocate of an interpretive theory of culture, Clifford Geertz – a theory coincidentally developed largely on Indonesian materials. As Geertz has famously remarked

what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to (1973c: 9)

Cultural analysis is then heterogeneous and hierarchical. Before we have even begun the analysis and interpretation, our raw materials involve scholars' interpretations of the interpretations of their lives by the subjects of study.

What exactly then is the relationship between the anthropologist's and the participants' interpretations on this account?¹⁰ The question is important because cultural analysis claims to be able to access the 'native's

¹⁰ The study of culture in some form concerns language and literature specialists and cultural studies' scholars, for instance, as much as it does anthropologists. The theoretical problems of culture are similar however.

point of view' more sensitively, profoundly and authentically than other approaches. Immediately we encounter problems. Reviewing Geertz's cultural analysis, *Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight* (1973d), Vincent Crapanzano noted the degree of condensation necessary to such a cultural analysis. It requires blurring the relationship between Geertz's and Balinese villagers' subjectivities (Crapanzano 1986: 70). It assumes that 'a whole people share a single subjectivity' (1986: 74), irrespective of differences of gender, class, age, experience of temperament; and, without any evidence, attributing 'to the Balinese all sorts of experiences, meanings, intentions, motivations, dispositions, and understandings' (1986: 72). Crapanzano concludes:

Despite his phenomenological-hermeneutic pretensions, there is in fact in "Deep Play" no understanding of the native from the native's point of view. There is only the constructed understanding of the constructed native's constructed point of view... His constructions of constructions of constructions appear to be little more than projections, or at least blurrings, of his point of view, his subjectivity, with that of the native, or, more accurately, of the constructed native (1986: 74).

As the rest of the present book argues, these charges against cultural analysis, and culture itself, are well founded and may be extended further. The criticisms are the more serious in that they are directed not at weak points, which are inevitable in any approach, but at some of the most celebrated, and supposedly definitive, examples of cultural analysis at its best.

Even this short review indicates grave problems. For a start, cultural analysis does not necessarily provide understanding of how people themselves understand the world about them. Cultural interpretation, it seems, runs the risk of systematically substituting the analyst's interpretations for the participants', while claiming to found the analysis on the latter's authenticity. Further, cultural analysis may easily become not a description or investigation of, or commentary on, other people's thought but, disturbingly, the projection of the scholar's own categories, concerns and current interests onto the subjects of study. How though, crucially, are we to judge the degree of projection or displacement scholars engage in when attributing culture to people? Of what kind are they? What sort of consequences do they have for our understanding, or rather misunderstanding? How are we to address such projections and displacements? Can we counter them? If so, who is best able to do so, and how?

To begin to answer these questions, we have at least briefly to start by asking what sort of constructions or interpretations the study of culture entails. As these involve two quite distinct, but overlapping, sets of intellectual practices – the subjects' and the analyst's – what is the relationship between them?

What kind of object is culture?

What then is culture as an object of study or analytical concept? Is it something immediately apprehensible? Is it an attribute of, or principle, which informs actions and thoughts? Even as people's habits, customs or traditions, it is neither self-evident nor unmediated, but must be inferred from possible evidence by criteria, partly if not wholly, extrinsic to the people in question. This is commonly achieved by recourse to an academic arsenal of abstract ordering notions like products, patterns, rules, ideals, symbols or learning. Are these culture? Or is culture the principle, proclivity, drive, imperative or whatever, which informs these processes, principles or interpretations? And how total, differentiated or coherent must such a concept be? Is culture ultimately accessible? Or is it an abstraction, inferable only through its manifestations? Or is it, as I would argue, a frame of reference, one way of taking the world under a particular description (Goodman 1978)?¹¹ And can you generalize about culture independent of the particular circumstances and purposes of an inquiry? In order to avoid losing sight of the argument as a whole, I shall outline the main possibilities first.

Scholars have embraced each of these possibilities, or indeed more than one at the same time (see Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952), in large part precisely because they like to generalize across different practices of

¹¹ I take it that coherence and difference are inextricably linked with intellectual practices of describing and representing the world, not objective features of it. As Goodman noted, 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 (1972: 24).

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 (1978: 2-3).

For this reason, I argue that we need to consider practices of differentiation, rather than the identification or representation of fully determined differences in the world. To the extent that cultural studies is concerned with the political implications of cultural differences, these differences are inseparable from cultural studies itself as a mode of inquiry.

inquiry. The result is that culture is terminally ambiguous in much usage. It is interpretable simultaneously as the proximate object of study (customs etc.) or as an abstract, relational object of study (patterns etc.). Again it is equally often treated as a mode of human activity (thinking or structuring) and so recursively of inquiry (interpreting that thinking). Most important, culture is imagined as a totality. As such it takes two forms. It may be treated as a set of working assumptions, used to circumscribe and define what kind of thing is under investigation in the first place, a frame of reference, a means of closure. Alternatively, culture may be *a priori*, that is it is prior to, and constitutive of, experience and knowledge themselves. Customs and thinking then tend to emerge as the phenomena, as manifestations of an abstract, but all embracing, reality or noumenon. No wonder culture seems to be everywhere!

‘What then is culture?’ has at least three different kinds of answer. As a frame of reference, paradigm (Kuhn 1970; cf. Masterman 1970), *a* (but not *the*) way the world is (Goodman 1972), it has a history and changes with usage and critical thinking. By contrast, as a transcendental reality, it determines the nature and limits of thought itself. Both possibilities make culture to a significant degree a philosophical issue – or, more precisely, a metaphysical one, in the sense of being about the absolute presuppositions of thought (Collingwood 1940). To the extent that culture is a potential object of study rather than a presupposition of study, it is a distinctive one. However, it is difficult to see how culture could be both the presupposition and the object of study without a degree of circularity. And it is precisely that circularity, which seems to me to bedevil much writing about culture.

The circularity stems, Foucault argued, from the fact that the knowing subject is its own object of study. There are no controls to prevent a limitless, and vacuous, expansion of pseudo-knowledge. The problem arises because Man

is a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible... man is also the locus of misunderstanding – of misunderstanding that constantly exposes his thought to the risk of being swamped by his own being, and also enables him to recover his integrity on the basis of what eludes him (1970: 318, 323)¹²

12 Foucault’s intellectual opponent, Habermas, states clearly the problem Foucault formulated. The human sciences

analyzed the human being as the being that relates itself to objectivations engendered by itself, the speaking and labouring creature. Inasmuch as psychology, sociology and political science on the one hand, and the cultural

Arguments about culture are cultural. And in what it seeks to exclude and suppress, culture hints at its own 'constitutive outside' (Laclau 1990a: 9-41 following Staten 1986: 15-19), that which refuses to be tamed, rational, coherent, productive – the unconscious.¹³

Even as customs or ways of doing things, culture involves multiple extrapolations or serial interpretations. What the ethnographer notices to start with is the product of years of disciplinary training, closure and pre-interpretation. Then she has to note this down, record, memorize, transcribe or translate parts of her shifting field of attention. She then has to talk the results through with 'informants', decide of what events or actions are actually instances and compare them with what she knows. Then just think of all the stages through which writing goes – organizing the field notes, early and later drafts of seminar papers and articles – before a custom appears to the world in print as a custom, let alone culture as their organizing principle. Two points follow. Custom is a concept of a fourth or fifth order of extrapolation and interpretation, 'and "culture" a concept so 'meta-' in its removal from any possible social action that it is best not thought about at all' (Hobart 1996: 9-10).¹⁴ Also, focusing on culture as an object or concept marginalizes the practices by means of which we research, interpret and do whatever it is we do.

sciences and humanities on the other, got involved with object domains for which subjectivity (in the sense of the relation to self of experiencing, acting and speaking human beings) is constitutive, they found themselves in the wake of the will to knowledge, on the escape route of a boundless productive increase in knowledge... The human sciences are and remain pseudo-sciences because they do not see through the compulsion of a problematic doubling of the self-relating subject: they are not in a position to acknowledge the structurally generated will to self-knowledge and self-reification – and thus they are also unable to free themselves from the power that drives them (1987a: 264-5).

Foucault's language (1970) is powerful. Culture is at once about, while busily denying it, compulsion, power, narcissism. We start to see what culture silences.

13 The cultural venture, the celebration of the workings of human Mind, collapses because discovering its own limits threaten the whole venture.

Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration...without thought at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught.' (Foucault 1970: 326).

¹⁴ The weak version of culturalism, which argues that you can have custom and structuring concepts like rules, symbols etc., without being committed to culture as transcendental, fails to explain what it is that makes the diversity into a single coherent object of inquiry, or how you would know it to begin with.

Strong, weak and no culture

Arguments about culture become very confused about what sort of object it is and are potentially circular. There are other major problems. We have to translate other people's interpretations, themselves made under particular circumstances, into widely readable, academically approved interpretive formats. But what is assumed in translation and choosing between possible translational schemes (Quine 1960)? And on what grounds are we to assume there is commensurability between participants' and anthropologists' interpretations (Feyerabend 1975)?¹⁵ Unless we can guarantee, or at least be reasonably assured, of unalterable comparability, understanding other people becomes a remarkably difficult and fraught enterprise – which, after seven years' fieldwork in Bali, is precisely what I happen to think it is.

What form commensurability takes depends on whether culture is imagined as a seamless whole or as a thing of shreds and patches.¹⁶ On a

¹⁵ Work in the philosophy of science has linked the issue of translation to the problem of the relationship between theory and facts. How you can tell if words in different languages refer to the same thing can be treated as part of the more general problem of how theories refer to facts? Quine (1960) argued that theory is underdetermined by facts. That is: facts are not strong enough to determine a single true theory about them. There are always several theories, which can, one way or another, reasonably adequately account for any set of facts. Feyerabend's objection was that in principle proponents of competing, and radically different, theories could not agree upon the terms of the statement of an experiment designed to prove a case one way or another. For Quine therefore, there are always several alternative theories or, for language, translation manuals. For Feyerabend, existing theories are always incommensurable, because there is no way of deciding between them in the last resort. As Hacking noted, the two positions seem antithetical at one point.

Quine told us that translation is too easy, for there are too many translations between languages or theories for 'sameness of meaning' to have any bite. Knowledge consists in the fabric of sentences itself, not in what those sentences mean. Feyerabend reaches a parallel conclusion from the opposite direction. Translation, he teaches, is too hard, and one must master the theory as it stands, not translate it into another (1975: 179).

I would argue that the respective arguments are less incompatible than Hacking suggests. Both recognize the lack of fit between theory and facts, and that there is always more than one theory for any set of facts. And, as Mary Hesse pointed out (1978), you need additional criteria to choose between theories in the absence of any way of deciding the matter in principle. To the extent that there is incompatibility between the two arguments, I would follow Quine.

¹⁶ I would argue that there are no grounds to think that there is any essential coherence or coherent essence to culture isolable from the innumerable circumstances of it being invoked as a concept, whether by experts or others. Some definitions, like Malinowski's, appear to take this on board. Culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values [as well as] social organization (1931: 621, my

strong reading, culture is internally consistent because it is the product of cultural reasoning. That does not mean that the world or the variety of possible human behaviour is necessarily consistent. On the contrary, they are the raw material upon which cultural reason works to produce coherence. It is a powerful approach; and it has duly been worked out at some length. That there may be moments of coherence is hardly surprising. If you are living in a society, it would be very odd – and tiring – not to be able to anticipate, take for granted and then ignore much of what you do. The problem is that, unless you spell out the cultural logic unambiguously and systematically, it is not clear what, if anything, you have shown. You also have to explain, if it is not binding on all members of society at all times, why not (without recourse to categories like madness, Foucault 1967). For this reason, if you wish to keep the notion of culture as coherent, it is best done not by declaring it to be necessary, the case for alternatives unthinkable, but to take culture as one possible frame of reference for the critical analysis of a problem. The problem and our understanding of culture change of course as a result of the analysis. The sort of problem at stake is the degree and kind of consistency and coherence in people's thinking on particular occasions. It leaves translation and interpreting other people's interpretations problematic.

The alternative is, if culture is simply that congeries of customs a people happen to engage in at any time, then there need in fact be no general answer. The problem of this tack is that you cannot generalize about a society, let alone its culture in a broad sense. In fact culture becomes inapplicable because you have no criteria by which to determine that the actions you identify are adequate instances of their kind, let alone of some more general culture. In whose terms do you determine consistency? For

parentheses). The result is a shopping list, the items of which have little in common except being inheritable, a singularly loose criterion. Malinowski's psychological functionalism required him to omit from Tylor's famous earlier definition ('Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society', 1871: 1) complex synthesizing terms like knowledge, which awkwardly refuse to go away (1931: 621ff.) and would have required him to recognize supra-individual processes (which he was determined not to do, see 1931: 623).

What might appear as commendable, even positivistic, caution against imputing abstract mental states and capacities turns out to be nothing of the sort. Malinowski cheerfully presupposed culture to be coherent: 'Culture is a well organized unity divided into two fundamental aspects – a body of artefacts and a system of customs' (1931: 623). Not only did he reiterate a thorough-going mind-body dichotomy, but he took coherence, even unity, to be self-evident and neatly buried whatever principle was presumed to inform that unity. As a result, we are presented with a definition of culture as the products, without recognition of the practices of which they were the products.

this reason, the ragbag theory of culture seems to me incoherent. It leads however to a more radical thesis.

Taken further the ragbag argument dispenses with culture altogether in almost all the senses outlined above. Customs may not be coherent or compatible with one another by any given set of criteria. More important, we need not presuppose the intellectual practices of scholars are necessarily commensurable either. The degree and kind – indeed occasions – of compatibility would become a major problem, which would have to be addressed instance by instance, and would require a great deal of work. Any results would be provisional, because there is no guarantee that how people do things or think about them will remain the same, nor even that everyone will think the same in the first place. On the contrary, understandings are likely to change – the faster for being thought about!¹⁷ It is not a vision for generalists, nor for armchair theorists. And it requires an unnerving ability to live with provisionality, rupture and uncertainty.

There are several conventional answers to the general problem of commensurability. Most consist in postulating *a priori* conditions of thought, which are postulated as being part of human nature (see Chapter 2) like structure (Lévi-Strauss 1970), the capacity for symbolization (Geertz 1973c, 1973a; White 1949), a shared intersubjectivity (Chapter 6).¹⁸ Another version is that we are dealing with the necessary conditions of thought itself (Chapter 3) like reason (Hollis 1970, 1982) or knowledge (Chapter 4). Recourse to culture is peculiar in that its proponents usually manage to appeal to all of these to a different degree on different occasions.¹⁹ Cynically, of course, ‘culture’ in many senses is supposed to be increasingly globalized, as academic and Euro-American popular ideas of culture become imposed, packaged with aid programmes and marketed as desirable as commodities, in music, films and television programmes.²⁰

¹⁷ As Collingwood elegantly remarked: ‘if the human mind comes to understand itself better, it thereby comes to operate in new and different ways’ (1946: 85). I consider the implications of such arguments in detail especially in chapters 2, 5, 6 & 7.

¹⁸ The position is put clearly by Clifford Geertz.

The doctrine of the psychic unity of mankind, which so far as I am aware, is today not seriously questioned by any reputable anthropologist...asserts that there are no essential differences in the fundamental thought process among the various living races of man (1973b: 62)

The problem is that, if culture intervenes, it becomes hard to separate mind from the history of human practice. So you cannot use the psychic unity argument to postulate universals of thinking without claiming mind to be somehow prior to culture.

¹⁹ This should be evident if you read carefully Geertz (1973e, 1983b) or (1976a, 1999).

²⁰ The localization of global terms and trends is a well developed theme, not least for Indonesia (e.g. Vickers 1996; Rubinstein & Connor 1999). For some reason, no one seems

Culture, the story runs, provides a common template, because humans the world over feel the need to order the world about them through the use of signs and symbols, which have meaning because humans share a common subjectivity (although this differs in its culturally specific expression). We can know what others mean when they symbolize because, in the end, however diverse the forms of knowledge, it is grounded in a common rationality. This book takes issue with each of these assumptions. In each case the question arises: who gets to decide what human nature, reason, knowledge and so forth are? Because culture is so hierarchical a concept, and depends so overwhelmingly on the concentration of knowledge remotely from those being known (Fabian 1983), it works amazingly effectively to exclude almost entirely the subjects of study. It is also reactionary and nostalgic

Perhaps contrary to its popular image, cultural anthropology has been a science, not of emergence, but of disappearance. Culture, inasmuch as it served as anthropology's guiding concept, has always been an idea *post factum* [after the event], a notion oriented towards the past (to 'custom' and 'tradition'), descriptive of a state of affairs (and often of a status quo), a nostalgic idea at best (when it mixed the study of exotic societies with regret) and a reactionary ideologeme at worst (when it was used optimistically to explain away as 'variation' what in many cases was the result of discrimination and violence) (Fabian 1991c: 192, parentheses mine).²¹

Before Indonesians – or indeed scholars anywhere – embrace culture as a working concept, it might be wise to consider first what it entails.

From meaning to Mind to practice: meaning

It is not by accident that culture has an extraordinarily wide fan of connotations and perilous circularity. Rather these have arisen from often only partly acknowledged ideas on which culture draws. A brief review is necessary before we can move on to consider ways in which people have invoked culture.

to have considered the possibility of the process working the other way round. In other words, increasing recognition of the scale of regional and local diversification makes a degree of globalization appear imperative.

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all parentheses and stresses in quotations are from the original.

In its more encompassing sense, culture is widely defined as semiotic or semantic.

The concept of culture I espouse...is essentially a semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz 1973c: 5).

The symbol is 'the origin and basis of human behaviour'... In all its dimensions, including the social and the material, human existence is symbolically constituted, which is to say culturally ordered... White used to say that no ape could appreciate the difference between holy water and distilled water – because there isn't any, chemically (Sahlins 1999: 400, citing Leslie White 1949: 22-39).²²

What is distinctive about humans is not just how they have ordered the world around them symbolically, but how they reflect upon it.

Consider the extent to which these statements about culture echo an earlier source.

What is it which makes it possible for us to have [a] distinct, focussed awareness of things, where animals remain caught in the dream-like, melodic flow of experience? It is language that makes this possible. Hence language must be probed from an entirely different point of view. It is not just a set of signs which have meaning in virtue of referring to something, it is the necessary vehicle of a certain form of consciousness, which is characteristically human (Taylor 1975: 19, my parentheses).

Charles Taylor was writing about Herder and his ideas of reflection (*Besonnenheit*) as part of laying out the background of German Romanticism and Idealism (here Herder) necessary to understand the work of Hegel.²³ We also have an inkling as to what culture keeps at bay: the

²² Note the need to make absolute distinctions. Perhaps the question should be: when, to whom and on what occasions did people consider water to be holy. Muslim Javanese do not share Hindu Balinese ideas about the attributes of *tirtha*.

²³ Geertz's first teaching assignment was the German Romantics, including notably Herder (Hildred Geertz, personal communication). Geertz follows Herder in other interesting ways, for instance, his insistence on the inseparability of thought and feeling (Geertz 1966: 4-5).

My own understanding of this argument, which culminates in the work of Hegel, is that human thinking and being is always mediated and inseparable from some medium. This is the theoretical justification, if you need one, of my interest in media studies.

possibility that humans are not always so unequivocally distinct from animals as intellectuals like to imagine.

The more sophisticated proponents of culture like Sahlins and Geertz are however sensitive to being accused of Idealism.

As for the charge of ‘idealism’ that an insistence on the meaningful appears to invite, this, it seems to me, must take its ground in precisely the kind of preanthropological, presymbolic epistemology of subject/object relations whose transcendence was the historical condition of a concept of culture. To return to this language now would be to rob the concept of its determinate properties. It would reduce the problem of culture to the terms of the endemic Western antinomy of a worldless subject confronting a thoughtless object (Sahlins 1976a: ix-x).

Geertz specifies the risk and how to avoid it.

Culture is most effectively treated, the argument goes, purely as a symbolic system (the catch phrase is, ‘in its own terms’), by isolating its elements, specifying the internal relationships among those elements, and then characterizing the whole system in some general way – according to the core symbols around which it is organized, the underlying structures of which it is a surface expression, or the ideological principles on which it is based... Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior – or, more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation (1973c: 17).

This statement is remarkable in some ways because, in practice if not in theory, the work of Geertz himself, and followers like Boon, are notable precisely for stressing the relationship between core symbols, largely detached from social action.

Mind

There are several implicit points at issue here, which we need to follow through. They relate to the impact of German Idealism on ideas of culture in a weird and wonderful mix of Kant and Hegel, with a sprinkle of assorted others.²⁴ The first aspect is traces of Kantianism, for instance in assumptions about the unity of the subject and the nature of phenomena.

²⁴ There are, of course, direct connections between the German Idealism and the genealogy of anthropology stemming from Boas. As Bunzl has pointed out, a key

By transcendental argument [Kant] showed that the subject of experience has to be a unity, that of the 'I think' which must potentially accompany all my representations; and that the necessary connections which Hume wanted to deny the phenomenal world must necessarily inhabit it, for they form its indispensable structure... Thus the Kantian world of experience was distinguished from the ultimate reality. It took its shape from the subject, from the shape of our minds, and these structures could be explored by transcendental argument; but by the very fact that its shape was partly given by us, it could allow us to conclude nothing about the shape of things as they were in themselves (Taylor 1975: 30-31, my parentheses).

On a cultural reading, the unity of the subject of experience remains as a substrate, otherwise we cannot generalize about the psychic unity of humankind. However now this psychic unity is at once transcended by culture²⁵ and left intact. Culture defines the conditions of representation and the connections in the phenomenal world through which objects of knowledge are produced, while humans all share the same capacities for perception, ratiocination and signification.

Culture does more than that though. It provides a way of penetrating through appearances, gestures, words and symbols to their meaning. To understand this, we need to appreciate how this argument develops from Kant, who

thought that what makes nature nature, what gives it the peculiarities by which we recognize it as nature, is the fact of its being phenomenon, that is, the fact of its being looked at from outside, from the point of view of a spectator. If we could get inside the phenomena, and relive their inner life in our own minds, their natural characteristics would, he thought, disappear: we should now be apprehending them as things in themselves, and in so doing we should discover that their inner reality is mind (Collingwood 1946: 96).

Once again, if we substitute 'culture' for the universal, thinking subject, we come close to a statement of what cultural anthropology is about. It is to

mediating figure is Dilthey (1996: 27), who was instrumental in disseminating the distinction between natural sciences and sciences of mind (aka culture).

²⁵ Durkheim makes a similar anti-Kantian argument in *The elementary forms of the religious life*, where he argues for the fundamentally *social* nature of the categories of thought.

see beyond appearances (travelogues, stereotypes, ideology) to appreciate the native point of view in all its lustrous richness.²⁶

We can now start to appreciate why on the stronger reading culture is more than behaviour patterns, or even the models which inform them, and also understand what Geertz was arguing when he wrote:

Culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is not just an ornament of human existence but – the principal basis of its specificity – an essential condition of it (1973a: 46).

Once again we are in the world of German Mind:

man as a living being is not radically different from other animals, but at the same time he is not just an animal plus reason, he is a quite new totality... In order to come to clarity man has to work his way with effort and struggle through the various stages of lesser, more distorted consciousness. He starts as a primitive being and has to acquire culture and understanding painfully and slowly...this transformation over time involves more than the ascent up a hierarchy of modes of consciousness... Human history is thus also the ascent up a ladder of cultural forms (Taylor 1975: 83, 85).

Culture is the means by which humans work themselves from animality into (self) consciousness. And cultural anthropology is reflection on that process. There is a linear evolutionary model here (see the title of Geertz's 1973 article, 'The growth of culture and the evolution of mind'). Cultural anthropology is itself part of the growth of consciousness and helps to explain why Americans and Europeans study, say, Javanese or Balinese; but so few Balinese or Javanese study Europeans or Americans.

What is it however that motivates this search for consciousness? It is Mind, what Hegel called *Geist* (which is why I have taken my citations from Taylor's work on Hegel). Just as Mind has higher self-expression and awareness than individuals and 'posits its own embodiment' in human beings as its vehicles (Taylor 1975: 92, 103), so does culture. Culture is for

²⁶ Geertz is appropriately cautious about the naïvely literal version of getting inside someone else's head. 'The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to' (1983c: 58). Geertz's phrase is typically ambiguous. The implication is that we should work with people's commentaries on their lives. However in Geertz's own analyses, as Crapanzano noted, what we get is Geertz's privileged reading of inscribed actions, so resuscitating a fairly old fashioned version of the native point of view.

many purposes the modern term for Mind or *Geist*.²⁷ Why Sahlins wrote of the concept of culture transcending subject/object relations becomes horribly clear. At last we are in a position to understand what a special kind of substance it is. Like Mind it is self-positing, but can only manifest itself through humans in action. In trying to break free from the universalism of Hegelian Mind, cultural anthropologists, especially the Americans, overlooked the need to come to terms with German Idealism, which is not a good starting point for an empirical inquiry into human difference. No wonder culture seems such a many-splendoured thing. Many of us however would not wish to accept its presuppositions or implications.

Practice

To understand culture then, we need to look at German ideas of mind as at once the subject and the object of study. So far I have gone along with the prevailing assumption that culture is a theoretical object, which determines the sorts of practices needed to investigate it. Let us consider the reverse: the sorts of practices anthropologists came to engage in required a totalized theoretical object, culture.²⁸ James Clifford made the case nicely (although I suspect this is not quite the reading he was thinking of), when he analyzed the conditions for the emergence of ethnography as a professional inquiry from the earlier work of missionaries and administrators. The suitably heroic ethnographer had to be set apart from these other, mere ordinary observers, who had lived there for years, knew the language and so forth. It required an appeal to an interesting kind of authoritative scientific knowledge, which could be applied relatively fast and without a mastery of language, history or the variability of what people actually did. This complexity of action was reduced to culture, which 'was construed as an ensemble of characteristic behaviours, ceremonies, and gestures susceptible to recording by a trained onlooker' (1988b: 31).

The professional ethnographer was trained in the latest analytical techniques and modes of scientific explanation. This conferred an advantage over amateurs in the field; the professional could claim to get

²⁷ My ideas about culture have been worked out over the years in conversations with Ron Inden, who, perhaps not coincidentally, has been a colleague of Clifford Geertz, Marshall Sahlins and David Schneider, three of the most forceful advocates of strong culturalism.

²⁸ Considering that anthropologists' object of study is practice, they are often surprisingly slow to appreciate the significance of the disjunctures between their own theory and practice.

to *the heart of a culture* more quickly, grasping its *essential* institutions and structures (Clifford 1988: 30a; italics mine).

People had therefore to be imaginable as an object of study, culture, effectively reducible to a few essential features.

A key problem therefore was how drastically to simplify and ignore what was not easily recordable, using ‘powerful theoretical abstractions’ to select ‘data that would yield a central armature or structure of culture’ (1988b: 31).

Since culture, seen as a complex whole, was always too much to master in a short research span, the new ethnographer intended to focus thematically on particular institutions. The aim was not to contribute to a complete inventory or description of custom but rather to get at the whole through one or more of its parts... In the predominantly synecdochic rhetorical stance of the new ethnography, parts were assumed to be microcosms or analogies of wholes (Clifford 1988b: 31).²⁹

These wholes in turn have to be imagined as fairly stable and synchronically studiable. To be possible, professional ethnography required an extraordinarily closed and holistic notion of culture, as without it the ethnographer had no idea how what she recorded related to anything else, or what had happened before. It was a brilliant way of articulating a problem, even if it effectively disarticulated those whose lives it depicted.

This diversion leaves us in a position to suggest alternatives. Ideas are linked to practices and have histories. That is why this book is titled *After culture* not *Against culture*. The cultural turn in its time was a very important step beyond the confines of structure, function and its other antecedents. However culture has no better claim to immortality than its equally ambitious predecessors. In the practice of the professionals, culture emerges as ethnocentric and hierarchical. It is above all American scholars (and their disciples) who understand culture and how to infer its mysterious workings. There is also a timelessness about culture, which is curious granted the historicity of its Hegelian ancestry. So great are the powers of Mind and Culture, that the timelessness which is systematically attributed to Bali is largely a projection of our own ideas of culture onto the subjects of study, who are largely powerless to resist (cf. Chapter 6). The adoption of culture as a working concept by Indonesian scholars, for example, is

²⁹ Richard Fox pointed out to me that this whole process works on similar lines to the hermeneutic circle (on which see Chapter 5).

therefore a potentially tragic instance of hegemony, in which people enthusiastically sign up to the conditions of their own domination.

What happens if we dispense with culture as an *a priori* assumption of totality, a transcendent entity or principle? We could then inquire into the circumstances under which different people claim to demonstrate coherence or fracture according to different kinds of criteria without circularity. Culture has been so widely invoked as transcendent though that I prefer to avoid the notion. Sahlins was quite right to complain that weaker-minded uses of ‘discourse’ fall into the same traps and worse (1999: 410). However we could follow Foucault in his recognition that it was not possible to defend *discours* as a grand notion (archaeology) and his shift to the analysis of practices. These practices turn out to be of two kinds. There are the practices by which humans make themselves and others into subjects, objects, agents, patients or instruments. There are other practices in which they comment on practices (and on commentative practices) themselves. We lose little at this stage by dispensing with culture altogether and leaving it problematic – a problem to be investigated – quite how, under what circumstances and according to whom practices do, or do not, cohere or assume the semblance of structure.

Appropriately Geertz himself stumbled over a useful way of rephrasing the problem. He remarked, you will recall, that cultural forms find their articulation in social action (1973a: 17). Removing the totalizing and timelessness, culture is more or less simply articulation as social action. As Stuart Hall remarked,

In England, the term has a nice double meaning because ‘articulate’ means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to one another, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of a connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances *can* a connection be forged or made? So the so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’ (1996b: 141).³⁰

³⁰ In the piece in question, Hall takes issue with the later work of Laclau, from whose work on rethinking Gramsci he derived the notion. Whereas Hall turns articulation into a neat modification of excessively rigid notions of ideology and social or political conditions, Laclau makes articulation part of a theory of radical contingency, in which

The crucial point here is that culture is nothing more than a powerful articulation – mind you one so powerful that, with its allied concepts, it defined the modern world (Foucault 1970). To note how pervasive the idea of culture has become is at once to recognize the extent to which it has become hegemonic, but at the same time to observe its descent into triviality (Sahlins 1999: 403), as it collapses under its own antagonisms (see Laclau & Mouffe 1986: 93-148). Any articulation is in response to some other, prior articulation (as culture is against race or religion), which it aims to disarticulate. So the more powerful and pervasive articulations around culture, the greater the danger that they are disarticulating other ways of thinking about the world and engaging with it. The full force of Crapanzano's critique of Geertz' cultural analysis now becomes clear. In place of understanding of subjects in their own terms, we have multiple constructed understandings, blurrings and projection. Culture threatens irrevocably to disarticulate the subjects of its inquiry.

Cultural analysis as practice

Reviewing culture as practices of articulation requires us to rethink what it is that anthropologists do. This becomes imperative, because anthropologists may disarticulate the people they imagine themselves to be interpreting with accuracy, sensitivity, insight or whatever. I shall draw again on the work of Clifford Geertz, because in print he is more sensitive than most culturalists to the problems of extrapolating from ethnography and his main work is on Indonesia, where I have also worked. Now Geertz's ideal statement of his approach has much to commend it. It is grounded in the detailed analysis of social action, not what goes on in people's heads, it recognizes differences between the participants' and the anthropologist's frames of reference, and includes people's reflexive commentary on their own practices. Crapanzano argued however that there is a serious disjuncture between what Geertz claimed his research showed and the means by which Geertz evidently reached his conclusions. So we need to consider what cultural analysis actually involves.

hegemony consists in the unstable attempts to articulate structure, society, politics, which are continually being undermined by their own antagonisms (1990a). My idea of articulation, society and the subject stand much closer to Laclau's, not least because I have learned a great deal from him.

For this purpose, I shall use the example of Geertz's fullest and perhaps best study, *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali* (1980).³¹ Considering that by his own account Geertz specializes in cultural analysis, it is striking that the first three substantive chapters are fairly orthodox political-economic history. The cultural analysis, which is the centre point of the book, occupies only just over twenty pages (with extensive endnotes). Elsewhere Geertz has justified this split approach. In its search for deep meaning, there is

the danger that cultural analysis...will lose touch with the hard surfaces of life – with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained – and the biological necessities on which those surfaces rest (1973c: 30).

In other words, far from culture being total in any strong sense, its relationship to infrastructure seems to be more about ideological consistency or closure. Strategically Geertz's position avoids bringing him into conflict with the big guns in politics, economics or natural science departments, but it reduces culture to a supplement, not an alternative, to the dominant interest groups in much university life.³²

The thesis of *Negara* is striking. Balinese politics was about theatrical spectacle, not power. 'Power served pomp, not pomp power' (1980: 13). Whose idea of theatre is this? The implication is that we shall have revealed to us the singular – and quite different – ways in which Balinese articulated their lives by theatricalizing the calculating logic and brutalities of power. Nothing, unfortunately, could be further from the case. Geertz so unreflectively adopts an unspecified 'Western' image of theatre that he never even considers whether Balinese might have other ideas (which they do, Chapter 7). This is remarkable because the year before *Negara* was published, Alton Becker had written an important piece arguing that Javanese theatre worked according to presuppositions about space, time, action etc., which differed sharply from Aristotelian principles (1979). It is the more remarkable in that, apparently without realizing the implications, elsewhere Geertz (1983a: 31-32) argued Becker's piece exemplified his own cultural method!

³¹ My comments hold in general terms for Geertz's other analyses of Balinese culture, as the chapters which follow show.

³² Geertz is apparently quite confident that his method will reveal not just the underlying realities, but the relations between them. Cultural analysis, properly done, takes us beyond phenomena to noumena.

Nor is this the only instance. In *Deep Play* (1973d), Geertz likewise used an image from an English Utilitarian philosopher to explain the meaning of Balinese cockfighting to the participants. On this account, not only does cultural analysis fail to engage with people's own categories or commentaries, it fails to imagine they might even have any. Far from culture being a more sensitive concept with which to engage with other people's thoughts, actions and reflections, it is a surrogate, a means of suturing and a simulacrum, because it gives the appearance of engagement, while neatly not doing so. We gain a chilling insight into what cultural analysis is about. Geertz has admitted that he did not speak Balinese (1991); and Sahlins's analysis of how Hawai'ians think (1995) is about people dead long before he was born. The beauty of culture is that you do not have to speak the language, ever meet, speak to, engage, or even be remotely contemporaneous, with your subjects in order to understand them. We start to see what it is that culture negates: it is the very real possibility that other people act in and think about the world in ways which are uncomfortable or threatening to middle class European and American academics.

Contemporary conceptions of culture are semiotic we are repeatedly told. And cultural analysis depends crucially upon both a theory of symbols and a theory of interpretation. As I review both in detail below, I shall merely note some general points. For a start, none of the leading culturalists, as far as I know, seriously considers the possibility that their subjects of study might have their own, distinctive semiotic and interpretive theories or developed theoretical practices. In Chapter 5, I argue that Balinese indeed do and that this requires us to revise how we set about our analyses. Now Geertz's method is to lay out the relevant symbols and then draw comparative conclusions. It assumes signs or symbols are both the necessary and sufficient conditions for action, and so explanation. The approach presupposes that people are the passive subjects of their collective representations. You begin to wonder why culturalists should go to such lengths to deny the potential autonomy of their subjects. What are they frightened of?

The constitutive moment of cultural analysis is interpreting the meaning of other people's words and actions. In this lies the genius of the cultural method. So what is it? In his most sustained analysis to date, of the great symbols of state ritual in *Negara*, Geertz simply cites at length my old teacher, Hooykaas, who was a traditional Dutch philologist, writing about texts, not about social action of which he confessed to knowing or caring little. As I argue in Chapter 5, cultural analysis, it would seem, may be

nothing more than old-fashioned philology with the scholarly *caveats* taken out.

It would seem that symbols, meaning and interpretation are not neutral instruments, but affect or even constitute their object of study. In the chapters which follow, I therefore consider the issues in some detail. One feature of the interpretation of symbols stands out though. The approach implies that there is a secret meaning not known to ordinary people, which the analyst, with his superior knowledge, is able to reveal to us as readers. Apart from making us collusive in this endeavour, cultural analysis reinscribes hierarchical differences in knowledge (see Chapter 4). What sort of post-colonial period are we in, if people are being made if anything more dependent upon Americans and Europeans for knowledge and understanding about themselves (Chapter 5)?³³ And why should people of different backgrounds and religions be obliged to use an interpretive method, originally explicitly designed to address certain Christian concerns? Do Muslim or Hindu Indonesians, for instance, feel entirely happy with this?

Cultural analysis as a set of intellectual practices starts to look then as if it is more closely linked than its promotional claims suggest with perpetuating (an increasingly American) hegemony. It also helps to bring about closure around the familiar and the disarticulation of a whole range of alternative ways of thinking, which cultural analysis ensures we shall never know about. What then are the politics of cultural analysis? This is too large a topic to explore in detail here. I would simply note that, in his analysis of the political presuppositions of Geertz's work, Pecora should conclude that, for all the seeming liberalness of Geertz's stance, in fact it presupposed a surprisingly conservative right-wing political position (1989). To the extent that Geertz has had an impact upon scholarly thinking and policy making in Indonesia, it might be worthwhile to take the time seriously to consider quite what the entailments of adopting anything

³³ Ron Inden argued similar dangers for Orientalism, aka Area Studies.

The knowledge of the Orientalist is, therefore, privileged in relation to that of the Orientals and invariably places itself in a relationship of intellectual dominance over that of the easterners. It has appropriated the power to represent the Oriental, to translate and explain his (and her) thoughts and acts not only to Europeans and Americans but also to the Orientals themselves. But that is not all. Once his special knowledge enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonize, rule, and punish in the East. Now it authorizes the area studies specialist and his colleagues in government to aid and advise, develop and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the so-called Third World. In many respects the intellectual activities of the Orientalist have even produced...the very Orient which it constructed in its discourse (1986: 408).

approaching a Geertzian notion of culture before adopting it.³⁴ While it would be simplistic to conclude that the proselytization of culture is just part of the process of late twentieth century American hegemonizing of the world, it certainly does not get in the way of so doing.

Invoking culture

Under the New Order régime of Soeharto, arts and culture came to be used in a distinctive way. Melani Budianta, for instance, noted two widespread features:

The first is the glorification of cultural heritage, based on an essentialist notion of culture as ideal values to be excavated from the archaeological past and to be sanctified and preserved as a normative structure. Within the sanctification of ideal norms is the preservation of traditional art forms as the highest artistic expressions of the nation. The second is the commodification of arts and culture with an additional bonus. By reducing arts and culture to marketable goods, it represses the function of art to voice social criticism, to be the conscience of the nation, that is its 'subversive' potentials (2000: 116).

As a deeply nostalgic notion, culture is at its best when safely dead, buried, then resurrected under controlled conditions. Significantly archaeological metaphors are constitutive of Geertz's analysis of culture (Chapter 2 below).

If we give up the search for the essential meaning of culture, the issue of the ways in which people have invoked culture becomes important. How then has culture been imagined or claimed to be, under what circumstances, to what ends? Evidently generalizations about culture serve their own purposes and, as I tried to show, academics are certainly not exempt from critical inquiry into their intellectual practices. To ask about the sorts of recourse to culture, it is necessary to become much more specific. So I shall examine briefly the kinds of appeal to culture made in Indonesia in the nineteen nineties. That is still far too broad. As I have been working since 1990 on television in Bali, I shall draw on this research to consider the ways in which culture has been alluded to. The aim of the project was to record and research into programmes about Balinese 'culture' broadcast

³⁴ My realization of the potential importance of Geertz's work in framing New Order ideas of development and culture grew out of conversations with Professor Gusti Ngurah Bagus, who first suggested to me that I write this book.

nationally and from the provincial station of state television (TVRI).³⁵ If culture has any coherence, surely we should find it here.

Culture has been turned into a key articulatory notion in Indonesia under the New Order régime of President Soeharto. Potential differences of religion, language, ethnicity, local law and ‘customs’, and class have been rigorously moulded into ‘culture’. Each region has its own distinctive dress, arts, crafts, ceremonies, food, which together form its culture, *kebudayaan*, from the root *budaya*, a neologism from *budi*, mind, reason, character and *daya*, energy, capacity.³⁶ Culture is instantiated in endless forms, from the dress of television announcers to arts’ festivals and spatialized in ‘Beautiful Indonesia’ in Miniature (Taman Mini ‘Indonesia Indah’) built as Mme Soeharto’s vision of an Indonesian Disneyland, which was that

the park’s centrepiece was to be an 8.4 hectare pond with little islands representing the archipelago. Mini would also include ‘ancient monuments’, representative ‘religious buildings’, a 1000-room hotel and shopping centre (of ‘international standards’), recreation facilities, an artificial waterfall, a revolving theatre, and an immense outdoor performance arena. Particular importance and one hectare of land each would be given to twenty six display houses representing the ‘genuine customary architectural styles’ of each of Indonesia’s provinces. A central audience hall of Central Javanese aristocratic design would be used for large ‘traditional’ (*tradisional*) ceremonies. And all of this could be appreciated in its Mini completeness from an aerial cable car (Pemberton 1994a: 242-43, see the opening quotation).

As Pemberton notes, culture became central to the politics of the period, which was

³⁵ The project is collaborative between STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia) The Academy of Performing Arts, Denpasar and SOAS, and I am grateful to its two directors from 1990 onwards, Professor Madé Bandem and Professor Wayan Dibia, for their help and active support. With permission from TVRI Denpasar, the project has recently digitized one hundred and fifty hours of materials from the project, covering all the genres of broadcast programmes from different kinds of theatre, to documentaries, programmes on development, chat shows and even daily English language broadcasts for tourists. I draw on some of these materials in the analysis below.

³⁶ I am grateful to the late Professor Khaidir Anwar for pointing out to me the probably derivation of the term. As etymologizing is a social practice, we need to look to the uses of *budaya*, not to some originary meaning.

For a good account of how religion (*agama*), custom (*adat*) and culture (*kebudayaan*) have been linked in official discourse in Bali, see Picard 1990, 1996.

founded upon explicit reference to ‘traditional values’ (*nilai-nilai tradisional*), ‘cultural inheritance’ (*warisan kebudayaan*), ‘ritual events’ (*upacara*), and similar New Order expressions that bear an acute sense of social stability. Indeed one of the most distinctive features of New Order rule is the remarkable extent to which a rhetoric of culture enframes political will, delineates horizons of power (1994b: 9).

Pemberton continues:

In light of the unnerving convergence between anthropological disciplinary interests in culture and repressive interests like those manifested under New Order conditions, such an effect [the production of a knowledge called culture] necessarily has numerous implications... My intention here is not to indict the discipline of anthropology as a uniquely pernicious field of modern knowledge – one could scan, for example, departments of history, sociology, linguistics, musicology, and cultural studies for similar culturalist assumptions – but to recognize in anthropology a particularly appropriate site for exploring these implications (1994b: 9-10, square parentheses mine).

Having neatly shown the kind of grave abuses to which culture lends itself – and having steered up to the frightening appreciation that anthropology, cultural studies and others, and the New Order share a common vision of culture – Pemberton refuses to develop his insight and to reflect critically on what the overlap says about anthropology. His conclusion is less that a madhouse is a good site to study madness, but that you have to be mad to study madness. Pemberton touches on what Foucault (1970) identified as the inescapable and fatal philosophical flaw of the human sciences – their inherent circularity – and embraces it.³⁷

Some (non)senses of culture

What forms do recourse to culture on Balinese television in the 1990s take? Working through the transcriptions of the whole range of

³⁷ Margaret Wiener is more percipient when she notes that the New Order required a notion of culture, which was not timeless, because it had to allow the kind of engineering – or suturing – they envisaged as necessary to articulate development with a nostalgic view of custom (1999: 64).

The trick is to perform the transformative work of development – much of which is aimed at everyday practices – without disturbing the peace or losing those elements of “Eastern” culture (as constructed in the colonial era) that authorities regard as essential to national welfare (1999: 63).

broadcasts in the project's archives, I would crudely distinguish at least fifteen kinds of usage.

1. *Language (dance, crafts) as culture* – This kind of metonymic link was clearest in educational broadcasts on Balinese language, culture being at once communication and the product of communication. There were other metonymic links, most obviously Balinese culture being identified with dance and crafts. The New Order régime plugged its cultural credentials (in part to distract attention from some of its nastier military activities) by promoting Bali as culture and sending Balinese dance troupes overseas, to the point that Balinese dancers have probably become the best known icon of Indonesia.
2. *Culture as something to be conserved* – A repeated theme is that Balinese culture is under threat and in danger of deterioration. In one 'Developing Regions' (*Daerah Membangun*) programme called 'Cultural Reserve' (*Cagar Budaya*), Bali was compared to a nature reserve and its culture a resource to be exploited. However, in so doing, it was liable to disappear and would be in need of regeneration.
3. *Culture as heritage* – Another popular theme is culture as what is inherited from one's forebears, tradition, approved ways of doing things.
4. *Culture as a living organism* – Culture is also something which lives (so also 'cultural life' or 'the life of culture', *kehidupan kebudayaan*, e.g. in a programme called 'Culture, custom, religion', *budaya adat agama*). It has roots. Villages, rather than towns, are often referred to as the points where it grows and flourishes.
5. *Culture as potential* – On a number of occasions, culture was listed as a potential (*potensi*) along with the natural beauty and skill at carving.
6. *Culture as capital* – This was perhaps the most frequently used image. Actors in plays spoke of the king's duty being to increase culture, the richness of tradition, the basis of cultural tourism, the need to increase the creativity of Balinese culture or to produce more of it and something to enjoy. The adjectives attributed to culture here are spatial, quantifiable and tangible. Culture is high, thick (Geertz will doubtless be pleased to learn), large and you can – and should if possible – have more of it. Culture in Indonesian, as in English, is something you have and can possess. Bourdieu's symbolic capital has gone native (e.g.1984)
7. *Culture as pre-modern* – Bali is a cultural museum. What brings people on jumbo jets to five star international hotels is the fact that its culture is not (yet) part of the modern world.
8. *Culture as civilization, being civilized* – This is a common usage. Significantly it is often used evaluatively. Mutual assistance and co-operation is *budaya*, corruption is not.
9. *Culture as aesthetics* – To be cultured is to be aesthetic. Once again the arts in Bali exemplify this.
10. *Culture as discipline* – Culture is something you learn in a disciplined fashion, and the learning itself is cultural. Culture induces an attitude of, and should be

the object of, respect. More prosaically, there are exhortations to cultivate (*membudayakan*) a clean and healthy lifestyle.

11. *Culture as influence* – Indonesians in general, and Balinese especially, have to beware of foreign cultures. They bring with them influence, which is invariably imagined as a bad thing, as it seduces Balinese away from their own culture, especially in tourist centres like Kuta.
12. *Culture as an analytical category* – Culture is a means to know the life of a people, what they are really about behind physical appearances. Play was made on the etymology of *budaya* from *budi* and *daya*. The phrase *sosial-budaya*, social and cultural, recognized customs, was often used, mostly in a relatively neutral sense.
13. *Culture as euphemism* – Culture is a synonym or, better, euphemism for religion (*agama*) and race, and the successor to *adat istiadat*, customs and tradition. *Adat* was an articulatory notion used by the Dutch to categorize and explain Indonesians, as in *adatrecht*, customary law. There are a number of references to *agama*, *adat istiadat* and *budaya* forming an indissoluble unity, usually when they do not and when antagonisms threaten to become obvious.
14. *Culture as art* – Balinese culture is manifest above all in the arts, dancing, theatre, painting, sculpture and so on. Perhaps the most common conjunction is *seni budaya*, cultural arts, culture as art. It is something you learn and Bali's unique resource.
15. *Culture as antagonistic* – Culture works through interaction. And the richness of Balinese culture is due to its contacts with others over the centuries. However, if the terms of the relationship are not balanced, then culture turns into influence and exposes the ease with which dialogue becomes antagonism. The relationship of national culture, or Javanese culture as the dominant one, to regional cultures is deeply problematic and the subject of endless suturing on television, often through a play on the different senses noted above, in which culture-as-capital often emerged.

A striking feature of this list is the extent to which the various representations of culture overlap with academic usage, for instance with Williams's historical definitions (: 87-93) or Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) review of earlier anthropological usage. This is not however because of the incredible percipience and applicability of culture as a concept. On the contrary, Indonesians seem at times to articulate themselves using imported ideas. Whatever foreignness is these days in a supposedly post-colonial and global world,³⁸ I find it increasingly hard to justify the role of expatriate anthropologist to myself. Oddly, the sort of intervention analysis proposed by scholars like John Hartley (1992) provides some ground, however fraught and contentious. I can at least see the point in contributing to public discussion in Indonesia and elsewhere

³⁸ For a good critical review of the often utopian claims about globalization, see Hirst & Thompson 1996.

about the part which culture and the media arguably play and have played in Indonesia.

Enunciating culture

The range of uses of culture leaves room for different nuances. How these are combined in public speaking or in the mass media is interesting. In Bali one of the definitive articulatory moments is the annual Arts' Festival, *Pésta Seni*, at which culture is instantiated in all its manufactured glory. By the 1990s, the Balinese arts' festival had attained some importance as the example upon which all regions should model their production of culture. The President, or Vice-President, senior cabinet ministers and their wives attended the official opening, which was the occasion of public speeches by the Governor, the President or his deputy, and an analysis of the festival's parade, usually by a senior figure from the Academy of Performing Arts. A sense of how culture emerges as an articulating device should be clear from my précis below of the address of the then Vice-President, Tri Sutrisno, to the 1996 Arts' Festival Opening on 8th. June 1996.³⁹ (Sentences in italics are a full translation of references at the start of the speech to culture.)

After a brief prayer to Divinity, the Vice-President welcomed all participants from overseas and urged them to use the opportunity of being in the beautiful island of Bali not only to introduce their own cultural arts (*seni budaya*) but also to become acquainted with Balinese and Indonesian social life, and the diversity of their cultural customs (*adat budaya*), the beauty of the natural panorama, the variety of flora and fauna. The Arts Festival, he said, was an occasion for friendship and co-operation, which was increasingly necessary in an era of economic and informational globalization.

*The Arts Festival is one way to construct and develop Balinese cultural arts (seni budaya) and simultaneously a means to promoting tourism*⁴⁰. It was also a means of pushing artists to become more creative. So the theme of this Arts Festival was the realization of the national spirit, because in an era of global competition, the country needed to increase society's enthusiasm to develop and improve on the past. *Included in development are the nation's arts and culture so as to possess*

³⁹ The commentator on the procession was Dr Wayan Dibia, then Deputy Director of STSI. In a fuller analysis I would consider how he spoke about culture which, as might be expected from a distinguished academic and choreographer, was thoughtful and nuanced.

⁴⁰ Pesta Kesenian semacam ini merupakan salah satu wujud upaya pembinaan dan pengembangan seni budaya Bali sekaligus sebagai sarana promosi pariwisata.

*competitive capacity and the highest possible cultural endurance. Ladies and Gentlemen, art is part of the culture (budaya) and civilization of human beings, which is closely connected to creativity, to the will and work striving to the realization of a standard of living, which is better, more orderly and of a higher quality.*⁴¹

He then gave a long account explaining how the arts festival encouraged creativity, productivity and innovation. The production of arts and crafts had great scope for entrepreneurial development (dwelt on at length), but artists were also part of the nation's intellectual wealth, whose work should be protected by copyright. Art promoted health and reduced stress and was an important part of a flourishing nation.

Culture is something all civilized countries have. It is a possession, attribute or skill manifest as the arts and customs, which is part of Indonesia's inherited wealth. Culture however is a key part of the national development effort. Apart from being a treasured tourist asset, it is integral to, and partly constitutive of, the disciplined development of the national spirit (remember the New Order was run by the military) and continued striving towards physical, material and mental improvement. Arts and culture finally emerge contradictorily as both a kind of good to be produced, marketed and sold, and as a necessary and healthy counter-balance in a world increasingly governed by global economic forces. It would be convenient to be able to dismiss Tri Sutrisno's speech as the sort of gobbledegook generated on a daily basis by the New Order. In fact though it is a quite coherent articulation around the idea that the world, especially in a global era, contains disruptive forces, which must be contained by discipline/culture. Unfortunately, the various senses of culture he wove together mostly have impeccable academic antecedents. The problem lies as much with the promiscuity of culture itself as with the New Order.

Anthropology as metaphysical critique

Culture is too powerful an articulation, especially when used by those who are privileged to enunciate (Foucault 1972a: 88-105), like academics, politicians and media figures. I do not see that much is lost at

⁴¹ Termasuk dalam pembangunan seni budaya bangsa agar memiliki daya saing dan ketahanan budaya yang setinggi-tingginya. Saudara-saudara sekalian kesenian adalah bagian dari budaya dan peradaban dari manusia yang erat kaitannya dengan daya cipta rasa karsa, dan karya, menuju ke arah perwujudan taraf kehidupan yang lebih baik, lebih tertib dan lebih berkualitas.

this stage by abandoning the idea altogether in favour of a notion of 'practice'.⁴² To do so leaves the relationship problematic, whether between the various practices people engage in, or between the practices of scholars and our subjects of study. 'Culture' sutures over the incoherences, indeterminacies and the situational nature of practices, as well as questions about who asserts there to be structure, meaning, order, explicability and under what circumstances.

People or groups do not articulate or enunciate in a vacuum. They do so against previous or likely alternative articulations, in a world strewn with the traces of past thinking and what Gramsci called 'the sedimentations' of past practices. Articulation therefore takes place in particular contexts and situations. What is at issue was put nicely by (that widely misarticulated) Oxford philosopher, R.G. Collingwood.⁴³

Whenever anybody states a thought in words, there are a great many more thoughts in his mind than are expressed in his statement. Among these there are some which stand in a peculiar relation to the thought he has stated: they are not merely its context, they are its presuppositions... Logicians have paid a great deal of attention to some kinds of connexion between thoughts, but to other kinds not so much. The theory of presuppositions they have tended to neglect (1940: 21, 23).

What kind of theory deals with presuppositions? And what do they have to do with social action or practices?

In his *Essay on metaphysics*, Collingwood noted that there are two senses of the term, both interestingly first formulated clearly by Aristotle. The first, and familiar, one is 'metaphysics is the science of pure being' (1940: 11), hence popular usage of metaphysics as about highly, indeed irrelevantly, abstract matters.

But the science of pure being would have a subject-matter entirely devoid of peculiarities; a subject-matter, therefore, containing nothing to differentiate it from anything else, or from nothing at all (1940: 14).

⁴² This is not the place to elaborate a full-blown account of practice. Such an account would start not so much with the work of Bourdieu for whom practice is a supplement to a fairly conventional ontology, but would be closer to the work of the later Foucault and of Laclau, where practice replaces notions of structure, culture, the subject and so forth. This evidently requires being able adequately to redescribe explanations in terms of structure, culture etc. in terms of practice.

⁴³ Paul Hirst is interesting on the reasons that Collingwood was so generally and deliberately misunderstood (1985: 43-56). I read Collingwood, as I do the two other key thinkers to whom I am indebted here, Bakhtin and Foucault, as far more pragmatist than is usually recognized.

By contrast, the other sense is that

metaphysics is the science which deals with the presuppositions underlying ordinary science (1940: 11).⁴⁴

Significantly, the presupposition that metaphysics is about pure being or thought distracts attention away from a diametrically opposed kind of study. For

metaphysics is the attempt to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of persons, on this or that occasion or group of occasions, in the course of this or that piece of thinking (Collingwood 1940: 47).

The first part of this Introduction has on this account therefore been a review of the presuppositions of cultural anthropologists, that is what they take for granted in their intellectual practices. We have no ground whatsoever for presuming we can leap from what a particular school of anthropologists presupposed at some stage in the development of the discipline to what their highly diverse subjects of study presupposed. And it is precisely this disjuncture which is the subject-matter of metaphysics in Collingwood's sense.

So what is the object of study of metaphysics and what sort of study does it involve? Presuppositions are those ideas that we take so much for granted that we do not even realize we are assuming anything at all. Many presuppositions are relative. That is they are answers to other, prior questions. Some questions elicit the answer that that is simply how things are: these are the absolute presuppositions on which thought anywhere rests. Far from being remote and abstract however, presuppositions are historical questions, that is they are

questions as to what absolute presuppositions have been made on certain occasions... All metaphysical questions are historical questions, and all metaphysical propositions are historical propositions. Every metaphysical question either is simply the question what absolute presuppositions were made on a certain occasion, or is capable of being resolved into a number of such questions (1940: 49).

⁴⁴ Science here is 'a body of systematic or orderly thinking about a determinate subject matter' and, to avoid circularity, 'ordinary' being what 'is not a constituent part of metaphysics' (1940: 4, 11).

Historical questions are empirical questions because they are about actual practices of asking questions and presupposing. What, if any, is the connection with anthropology?

Anthropology – I refer to cultural, not physical anthropology – is an historical science, where by calling it historical as opposed to naturalistic I mean that its true method is thus to get inside its object or re-create is object inside itself (Collingwood n.d.: 26, cited in Boucher 1992: xxix).

History, anthropology and metaphysics are then part of a distinctive mode of inquiry, which is at once pragmatic and critical. It is through-and-through pragmatic because its object – and its own method – is about practices of thinking about something, and so questioning, answering, presupposing etc.

Collingwood's spatial metaphor may misleadingly suggest the aim is to try to get inside someone's head. Elsewhere, however, Collingwood clarifies what he was trying to say. Such inquiry

does not ask what mind is; it asks only what mind does... it renounces all attempt to discover what mind *always and everywhere does*, and asks only *what mind has done* on certain definite occasions (1942 [1992]: 61).

To get inside an object of study is therefore the difficult task of thinking about it, using the presuppositions and practices of the people who did the thinking in the first place. As our scholarly inquiries are driven by different concerns and presuppositions, we have subsequently to engage in the intellectual practices of re-enacting the thinking and re-creating the object of study in our own terms. However this does not happen once, but is a continuing process.

Re-enactment, in addition to explaining actions, is the means by which the traditional, and for Collingwood false, distinction between theory and practice, and the mind and its objects can be overcome (Boucher 1992: xxviii-xxix).

As we cannot assume the scholar's and the subjects' presuppositions, including how they go about thinking, are the same, it is also a critical inquiry. This is in a singular and strong of 'critical' as not just being critical of your own presuppositions (insofar as you are able to know these), but also because interrogation of the presuppositions and styles of inquiry of your subjects is likely to require you to rethink your own presuppositions. If you are, say, a historian of Ancient Rome, you do

not become an ancient Roman any more than by working in Bali for years I become a Balinese villager. What is at issue is twofold. First it is how far I have learnt to think about matters they regard as important in the way Balinese I have worked with have thought about them. Second, it is how I rethink such thoughts in terms of current scholarly concerns and how this changes my understanding of the presuppositions involved in my own thinking.

Collingwood was thinking of the problems of historical analysis. Does it work as well however, even in principle, for anthropologists, or cultural or media studies' specialists? How do you work out the presuppositions of the people you are working with when different people – or even the same people on different occasions – seem to make different presuppositions? Do you fall back on the usual anthropological suspects: senior males, well informed informants (Harris 1969), those who are articulate and with time on their hands? And how do you infer what people are presupposing, say, when they are watching theatre or television? Am I not assuming, against what I argued earlier, that it is possible to make determinate statements about presuppositions from practices? The problems are formidable, but we need to beware two epistemological traps, which make the problem seem worse than it is. First, there is a sort of either/or logic. *Either* we can determine absolute what people's presuppositions are, what they think and so on. *Or* we can know nothing at all. Understanding in the human sciences is at best somewhere in between. Second, this argument overlooks the fact that people often spend a great deal of time commenting and reflecting on what they and others say and do, and sometimes change their practice as a result. In other words, in different situations people comment on and make various kinds of determinations about actions and what they presuppose.

Ethnography has probably always been to a significant extent about commentary. Significantly, the kind of ethnography I am advocating would of necessity require you to ask the people you work with at various points whether you have understood them as they understand it.⁴⁵ This is still a gross simplification of the congeries of practices in which you engage – and which your subjects engage in with, or to protect themselves from, you (see Hobart 1996). In arguing for anthropology as radical

⁴⁵ In my later work (discussed in a forthcoming monograph), I have more explicitly distinguished at least three stages of work. The second is returning to interrogate the people I was working with about issues and presuppositions, which arose from my critical reflection. The third is discussing with them drafts of the work to be published based on this, or inviting them to lectures or seminars in Bali where I was presenting work in progress to my Indonesian academic colleagues.

metaphysical critique, I am suggesting several things. First, the idea of an anthropology as a growing body of true knowledge is seriously misplaced (see Chapter 4 below; also Hobart 1993a). Anthropology is best as, or if it is to survive destined to be, a doubly critical inquiry. That is it is at once into the conditions under which other people and the knowing scholarly subjects think and act, and the relationship between them. Second, we cannot assume *a priori* when, to what degree and under what circumstances people will share the presuppositions, interpretations or inferences of their anthropological analysts, nor what the significance of divergence (or convergence) would be. In other words, we have to assume degrees, or even kinds, of radical difference at moments, not as some absolute, but as a precaution against attributing our own ideas to, and so re-hegemonizing, our subjects of study.⁴⁶ Third, such inquiry is not just about what people have done or thought as an object in itself, but also about what they presupposed in so doing, including notably their own critical thinking about what they have done and why.⁴⁷ Such an analysis evidently includes silences: what you do not talk about, possibilities and presuppositions people avoid considering, regard as unthinkable or cannot even apprehend. What this exposition shows though, if anything, is how breathtakingly simplistic it is to amalgamate these divergent and often antagonistic practices under the banner of culture.

When I refer to radical difference or radical metaphysics, I am not therefore postulating essential unchanging divergences. Instead I am drawing attention to the practices through which people – analysts and subjects of study – come to think of themselves as significantly or inherently different. Foucault made the point nicely in *The subject and power*, when he argued that he was trying to write a history of the modes by which in Europe ‘human beings are made subjects’ (1982: 208). The

⁴⁶ While I make use of Quine’s arguments about radical translation (e.g. 1960), I reach rather different conclusions. The sort of critical, dialogic inquiry I am arguing for enables you to ask people about the translational manuals they are using, explicitly or implicitly. So the subjects of study cut down the degree of indeterminacy. It does not follow though that indeterminacy is eliminated. On the contrary, what you have shown is that, asked subsequently about their translational schemes, the people you talked to responded to you in a given way. There are no satisfying and lasting syntheses.

⁴⁷ I hope that it should be clear that this approach is neither positivist nor committed to an empiricist metaphysics (a wildly Rococo assemblage).

As one can ask questions without knowing it, and *a fortiori* without knowing what questions one is asking, so one can make presuppositions without knowing it, and *a fortiori* without knowing what presuppositions one is making (Collingwood 1940: 26). Metaphysical inquiry involves inference, which must always be provisional. There is nothing to say that styles of logic are universal or that we can presume to understand others using our own (Chapter 3).

second of these was ‘dividing practices’, by which humans are differentiated from one another in various ways (for example, the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, knowers and the known). Equally people differentiate themselves by objectivizing themselves as subjects of knowledge. People also learn to themselves into subjects in various ways. In so doing, they are learning to recognize themselves as distinct kinds of subjects, quite different from other kinds of subjects.

Incidentally radical metaphysics may offer a part solution to Foucault’s perceived circularity of the human sciences, and with it the fate of anthropology (and cultural studies).⁴⁸ Insofar as we subsume our subjects under articulatory notions like culture, we commit the kind of vicious circularity I noted earlier. Insofar as they stand apart from, and may be critical of, the knowing scholars’ reflections on themselves, they refuse this subsumption. No wonder those untamed native intellectuals need herding into the corrals of culture, by being befriended and overinterpreted by anthropologists. They threaten the whole edifice. The solution is only in part though, because it is humanities’ and human sciences’ scholars who in the end still articulate these intellectuals to the world.

Taking radical metaphysical inquiry this far creates a serious problem. The more reflective scholars recognize that their arguments are not simply timelessly true. Rather they are framed by current paradigms (Kuhn), are part of a process of conjecture and refutation (Popper) or whatever. If not carefully circumscribed however, such arguments threaten to question the authority and authenticity of academia itself. So the developing discourse of ‘western’ academic thinking must constitute the ultimate frame of reference, the yardstick against which all thought must be judged. To relinquish such absolute criteria of judgement would be to imperil the whole edifice of scholarly thought. Without such an *a priori* guarantee, there would be nothing in principle to determine that proper knowledge consists, of necessity, in translating other people’s thinking into the categories of academic thought – rather than, say, *vice versa*, or a

⁴⁸ As Foucault argues at length, it is Kant’s thinking about humans/culture as the subject, object and limiting possibility of knowledge that is central to the project of modernity. It is therefore an anthropological project in a broad sense.

Anthropology constitutes perhaps the fundamental arrangement that has governed and controlled the path of philosophical thought from Kant until our own day. This arrangement is essential, since it forms part of our history; but it is disintegrating before our eyes, since we are beginning to recognize and denounce it, in a critical mode, both a forgetfulness of the opening that made it possible and a stubborn obstacle standing obstinately in the way of an imminent new form of thought (Foucault 1970: 342).

discussion between different ways of thinking. This is why recourse to notions of practice almost always ends up as a strap-on, serving to blunt some of the more glaring deficiencies of categorical thinking.⁴⁹ This is also why Foucault's shift from an archaeology of discourse to a genealogy of micro-practices is far more radical than is often appreciated.

The danger, which understandably concerns most anthropologists, is the dissolution of the unity of their discipline. Not only would we have, for example, Balinese, Maori, Melanesian, Piaroa or Sora accounts of their own actions, but we would have their understandings of anthropologists', 'westerners' or even, as they become more mobile, one another's thinking.⁵⁰ Welcome to a different kind of multicultural world. Against this diversity, academic thinking stands as the bulwark against an imagined confusion and loss of authority.

In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality (Foucault 1981: 52).⁵¹

Can we treat anthropological discourse as a language which is either sufficiently neutral or strong as adequately to encompass the diversity? As one of the noted hard-liners himself put it:

Language functions in a variety of ways other than 'referring to objects'. Many objects are simply not there, in any obvious physical sense, to be located: how could one, by this method, establish the equivalences, if they exist, between abstract or negative or hypothetical or religious expressions? Again, many 'objects' are in a sense created by language, by the manner in which its terms carve up the world of experience. Thus the mediating third party is simply not to be found: either it turns out to be an elusive ghost ('reality'), or it is just one further language, with

⁴⁹ Kuhn introduced the practices of scientists under the rubric of paradigms in order to be able to allow for them and so get nearer to history- or 'culture-' free knowledge. Arguably, taking practices seriously leads either towards a position like Feyerabend's conclusion of radical incommensurability (1975) or to the breakdown of the distinction of theory and practice itself, something long urged by Collingwood (see Boucher 1992).

⁵⁰ The work of Margaret Wiener, Anne Salmond, Marilyn Strathern, Joanna Overing and Piers Vitebsky comes to mind. In different ways, each has questioned European and academic assumptions using the thinking of the people they have worked with.

⁵¹ One way of reading *The order of discourse*, Foucault's inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, is as a sustained analysis of the twists and turns through which academic discourse sets out to control the confusion arising from the sheer contingency of events – and so the diversity of explanations – through various ritualized procedures.

idiosyncrasies of its own which are as liable to distort in translation as did the original language of the investigator (Gellner 1970: 25).

Anthropological discourse simply adds another language to the Babel.

The obvious alternative, that English is so ‘strong’ a language (Asad 1986) and –

by virtue of the sheer investment of capital, effort and thought – anthropological writing in English so dominant as to be unchallengeable is an argument based on power not on critical understanding. What is at issue, once again, is the European hegemony over cultural interpretation. Talal Asad makes it plain what is at issue:

The attribution of implicit meanings to an alien practice *regardless of whether they are acknowledged by its agents* is a characteristic form of theological exercise, with an ancient history (1986: 161).

A genealogical inquiry into anthropology’s claims to authority on the grounds of scientific neutrality throws up interesting ancestors. As Foucault remarked,

we must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity (1981: 67).

A significant feature of metaphysical inquiry is that it is dialogic in the senses used by Bakhtin. That is first that every utterance is dialogic, in that it is a response to another utterance.⁵² Dialogue as an ontological frame of reference replaces abstract totalizing entities like language, symbols, culture and codes (Bakhtin 1984a, 1986b, 1986c; Volosinov 1973), which on this account are terminally misleading.

There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even *past* meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of the subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual

⁵² Note Collingwood’s definition of presuppositional thinking. ‘Every statement that anybody ever makes is in answer to a question’ (1940: 23). You can, of course, have dialogues with yourself, as in reflective thinking or when you imagine yourself in someone else’s position.

meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and reinvigorated in renewed form (in a new context) (Bakhtin1986a: 170).

Human action and thought is always open, changing, uncertain, unfinalizable. Not only is it not predictable, it is not even definitively retrodictable.⁵³

The argument of the book⁵⁴

Many anthropologists would protest that this is what they have been doing all along. However studying other people's categories of thought and even showing how they use them to make sense of the world is much weaker than what I have in mind. For a start it is only too compatible with hegemonic and totalizing articulations. If we are to take anthropology as radical metaphysical critique seriously, we have to start with a thorough review of people's presuppositions in practice about such issues as human nature, reason, knowledge, meaning and interpretation, time and history; power, its use and abuse.⁵⁵ Each of the chapters takes up one of these themes. In the last chapter, from a study of Balinese commenting on their own society, I conclude that cultural anthropology has abjectly failed to engage with people's own reflexive thinking. As far as I know, very few anthropologists have addressed such issues in a sustained manner, let alone

⁵³ On this account retrodiction is problematic for two reasons. First, there are always alternative accounts of any set of events, and so problems in determining which is 'true'. Second, the ever-changing contexts of inquiry change what counts as significant or relevant, and so how to understand what happened.

⁵⁴ Ben Anderson used to tell a story about Clifford Geertz. Anderson asked Geertz, when he was collecting his earlier essays for inclusion in *The interpretation of cultures*, how he could resist the temptation to revise them. According to Anderson, Geertz was puzzled and could not think why anything he had written might need changing.

On re-reading the essays below, I felt the urge not just to tinker, but to start all over again. I have resisted this and just added some clarificatory footnotes for Indonesian readers. I am aware that some of the contrasts, which I drew for purposes of exposition, read in retrospect as if the world was neatly split. Balinese tend to emerge with the virtues of being flexible, dynamic and dialogic, if still subjugated; whereas the academy is the antithesis and hegemonic to boot.

⁵⁵ You could call these their basic epistemological and ontological categories. For obvious reasons however, I dispute the dichotomy implicit here between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge, which shadows the Cartesian distinction of mind and body. The argument that other people do not have such philosophical categories seems to me to be dangerously misplaced. Metaphysics in this sense is part of all thinking. You cannot walk down a road, switch on a light, give an order to someone or whatever, without presupposing some notion of causation, intention, action, meaning.

consider in detail how people use their presuppositions in practice to articulate the world in different ways. As few seem prepared to take the critical step of considering how such intellectual practices might require us to consider our own.⁵⁶

So, in Chapter 2, I start with the presuppositions about human nature and action, which have been imposed on Balinese and contrast this with some of the ways Balinese talk about themselves and others. When I originally wrote this, many anthropologists were still caught up in the argument between rival determinisms such as structuralism, neo-Marxism and culturalism. By contrast, what struck me was the degree to which social life seemed underdetermined and contingent, both as the participants talked about it and as I encountered it as an anthropologist. Determinations are easy to make after the event.⁵⁷ What interested me was the variety of kinds of determination in which people engaged as a social practice. A consequence of anthropologists' self-distraction with abstract substances like culture is that we have barely begun, for instance, to consider critically the styles of argument which people employ in different circumstances, or the link between style and its strategic consequences.⁵⁸ How you are supposed to gain any serious appreciation of someone else's thinking without considering how they argue with one another remains a mystery to me.

A theme that runs throughout this book is how two overlapping congeries of practices, intellectual and otherwise, engage with one another: the anthropologist's and that of the people we work with. One of the ways in which anthropologists implicitly decide between all sorts of possible ways of describing a state of affairs is by imposing an account of human nature – humans are naturally rule-following, creative, searching for the meaning of life, wealth, power or whatever. Labels like society, structure and culture are often shorthand devices for philosophical positions which presuppose a particular theory of human nature. This ignores

⁵⁶ This is not the same as using ethnographic findings to reflect on European or American society. That is the default, and deeply narcissistic, attitude. It is unclear quite why anthropologists imagine other people should agree to be used so instrumentally to such self-serving ends. Of course, they are rarely asked.

The work of a few scholars whom I know seems to me to avoid these traps and to be particularly stimulating. It includes, for example, Fabian 1990a, 1990b; Overing 1985, 1990; Vitebsky 1993a, 1993b.

⁵⁷ After an important election, pundits are quick to rush into print to explain how the outcome was inevitable, clear to see coming and so on. It contrasts notably with their caution beforehand.

⁵⁸ A notable exception is David Parkin, whose work has consistently bridged this artificial and Cartesian divide (e.g. 1975, 1976).

Collingwood's point that as we study human nature so it changes (1946: 82-83).⁵⁹

Anthropologists have a bad habit of talking about 'cultural logics' but still presuppose the basic (i.e. classical Greek) laws of thought. In Chapter 3, I examine in detail some Balinese logical practices and show how they are not reducible to 'ours', whatever that is supposed to be.⁶⁰ We have no grounds on which to assume *a priori* that people always engage in the same kind of reasoning practices (Needham 1972: 152-175; 1976). This holds both between and within societies. Now there is often a startling – and usually unacknowledged (cf. Hacking 1982) – disjuncture between academics' ideal conceptions of their reasoning (about which they disagree anyway) and how they reason in practice in different circumstances on different occasions. Insofar as intellectuals in the society being studied accept or even adopt such accounts themselves, arguably they become hegemonic.

The anthropologists' standard defence (when they can even be bothered with one) is that the sorts of peoples they work on do not have coherent or inscribed ideas about reasoning. For places like India, this argument simply does not hold, because there is a long history of formal philosophical thinking about logic. Do Balinese then, as Nigel Barley jokingly suggested my work implied, walk around with logical primers in their hands? Evidently being descendants of a society, which had a philosophical 'tradition', does not mean that ordinary people formally or consciously apply criteria of rationality in their daily lives – nor, for that matter, do academics. It is a question of carefully analyzing how people actually reasoned on different occasions. You can – and people do – reason in consistent and logically acceptable ways without having a history of formal training in philosophy. Balinese, for instance, may use distinctive styles of reasoning, especially when speaking more formally, which replicate the stages of what Karl Potter, referring to the Indian philosophical school, depicted as 'stock Nyaya argument' (1977: 180-81).

Similar arguments apply to the central resource of academia itself: knowledge. The ostensible superiority – and so the justification for the

⁵⁹ Incidentally this piece appears in its full original form for the first time. The previously published version had, significantly given its theme, been bowdlerized to cater to the imagined predilections of North American academic readers.

⁶⁰ Much anthropology seems concerned in fact with using our subjects of study as others against which to create an imaginary coherent subject, the West, 'us' and so forth. Culture, the idea of totality, then stands as a reiterated denial of the fear of fracture, incoherence, contingency.

exclusive exercise or imposition – of ‘western’ knowledge depends significantly upon it being systematic, formal and propositional and above all an abstract substance (not unlike culture). This conception of knowledge stresses ‘knowing that’, at the expense of ‘knowing how’ (Ryle 1949). In Chapter 4 I argue that the idea of knowledge itself is catachretic. That is knowledge as a system, being abstract, must be imagined using metaphors to constitute it as a sort of thing or mental substance. The deployment of different constructions of anthropologists’ own and their subjects’ knowledge has extensive and unrecognized effects. There is a serious disparity between anthropologists’ ideas about knowledge and their intellectual practices on the one hand, and Balinese knowing practices and ideas about knowledge on the other. Reviewing knowledge as constituting a set of practices produced results which surprised even me.

‘As I lay laughing’ attempts to reconsider knowledge as different historically situated kinds of practices. What emerged while I was writing it was just how hidebound and ethnocentric Euro-American academic epistemological practices actually are. They work by hypostatizing actions and events, so creating the sort of ‘capital’, which Bourdieu presumed he had shown to be at work. By contrast I argue that Balinese knowing practices make much use of dialogue. The effect is to make their ‘knowledge’ much more fluid, situational, historically sensitive and capable of addressing change. And, as with other forms of dialogic thinking from Socrates to Freud, the results of such practices seemed to me far at times far more interesting as a method of inquiry, more critical and less predetermining than the mechanical nature of so much academic thinking, hypostatized as it is.

If there is one central constitutive practice of anthropology, it surely must be interpretation. What grounds do we have however, if any, to assume that the people we work with are interpreting one another in ways which are compatible with, or adequate explicable in terms of, the anthropologist’s?

An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us... what stands there is nothing other than the obvious undiscussed assumption of the person who does the interpreting (Heidegger 1962: 191-92).

One does not interpret what there is in the signified, but one interprets, fundamentally, *who* has posed the interpretation (Foucault 1990: 66).

What effect do our own presuppositions have on how we interpret? To what extent are we locked into the circularities of pre-understanding? And

what steps do interpreters take to escape this circularity? In Chapter 5, I review some well known interpretive studies of Bali, especially the work of Clifford Geertz and Jim Boon. This chapter and the following one probably highlight the differences in approach between Geertz and myself, and so between a cultural and a pragmatic metaphysical approach, most starkly.

The obvious question is to ask whether it ever crossed the cultural anthropologists' minds to ask about Balinese ideas about signification, semantics and interpretation, whether these differed from their own, and what the implications of possible differences might be? I conclude by outlining some common Balinese semantic practices and consider how an appreciation of these affects an analysis. In short, interpretive anthropologists are writing about one thing; and Balinese thinking and talking about another. And never the twain shall meet, it would seem. So interpretivist claims to tell us what Balinese really mean by what they do are largely empty.

Few topics have been as well worked over in Bali as the purported ideas Balinese have about time and the person. In Chapter 6 I review the debate over the nature of time in Bali and consider the full implications of cultural anthropologists like Geertz projecting onto Balinese what they have difficulty in owning themselves. (Foreigners do much the same when visiting Indonesia as tourists, thereby turning wherever they turn up into caricatures of their own nightmares.) Removing a sense of history from Balinese leaves them as passive subjects of their own collective representations, unable to reflect critically on their own intellectual practices. The effect was to make Balinese dependent on outsiders to be able to think reflectively or critically. The implications of this argument are frightening. Fortunately, I would suggest that in fact Balinese have highly developed practices of historical – and, concomitantly, critical – thinking. It is anthropologists and others who have been at pains to deny this who are in deep trouble of their own making. The effect however is to reproduce a hierarchy by which 'western' scholars emerge as capable of a far higher order of critical and also synthetic thinking and empowered to explain people to themselves in terms which are not their own.⁶¹ Once

⁶¹ In the summer of 1996 Indonesian scholars had the chance to debate many of these issues under the rubric of 'Balinese character'. Jensen and Suryani's monograph, *The Balinese people: a reinvestigation of character*, had been translated into Indonesian and its publication was celebrated by a seminar at Universitas Udayana. After a useful critique of Bateson and Mead's generalizations about Balinese character, sadly Jensen and Suryani fell into precisely the same trap by proposing a new set of stereotypes, which once again made Balinese passive subjects of their own 'character'. In two pieces in the Bali Post

again I would ask Indonesian readers: Is this something to which you could seriously consider subscribing?

In the final chapter, I move away from contrasting anthropologists' and Balinese presuppositions to discuss how Balinese articulate the world about them through theatre. I examine a play performed in the village where I work and which I discussed at length with interested members of the audience and also two of the main actors. From their commentaries it was clear that a central theme was the nature of power and how it should be exercised. The play was set in the pre-colonial period about which Geertz wrote in *Negara*. There is virtually nothing in *Negara* which sheds much light on the depiction of pre-conquest Bali. So we are faced to the conclusion that cultural analysis may imagine a world quite different from that which a number of distinguished Balinese live in and reflect on. A central problem for Geertz is that he insists on interpreting using contemporary American categories. This makes his work appealing and accessible to the readership that presumably matters to him. As Margaret Wiener showed in a thoughtful and scholarly analysis of the fall of the kingdom of Klungkung to the Dutch, Balinese understood what happened in quite different terms from the Dutch, and from Geertz (1995a). In Chapter 7, I analyze in some detail excerpts from the play. In so doing, it becomes clear that the divergences between the categories Geertz uses to comment on Bali and those Balinese use have so little in common that they appear to be referring to two quite different islands called Bali. Far from culture helping us understand other peoples, or them their interrogators, on a review of the evidence from Bali, culture seems designed to inhibit such understanding.

A theme of the book as a whole surfaces yet again in Chapter 7. It is the extent to which people are often articulate intellectuals not just in thinking about what is going on in their own societies, but recursively address more general themes, which may require us to reconsider our own presuppositions. I have made extensive use of the notion of articulation, as developed by Laclau and Hall. While their aims are to link – or, for Laclau, to do away with the distinction between – the material and mental, articulation tends to emerge as a highly abstract idea. By contrast, the actors in the play stress the extent to which articulation is always specific: it takes place under particular conditions for particular purposes. And its success cannot be foretold: it depends on what actually happened. Even

(1996), Nyoman Darma Putra outlined incisive arguments by young Balinese scholars who criticized the authors (one of whom is herself a distinguished Balinese psychiatrist) among other things precisely for attributing an entire people with such passivity and unreflectiveness.

that judgement is always open to re-articulation. In performing before a village audience, the actors are trying to change how people understand the political formation to which they are subject and so, in their own small way, to help to change the polity itself.

If the totalizing concept of culture is palpably flawed, is it adequate to think of culture, following cultural studies, as a site of material, technical, economic, political and social contestation, domination or hegemony? I would argue not. The presuppositions about culture as total tend to creep back in. And a concept of culture as no more than a congeries of practices, which is only given momentary and invariably contested coherence by contingent acts of articulation, is pretty vapid. We might as well then turn our attention to the over-invoked and under-analyzed notion of practice instead.

In conclusion then I would suggest that we have run culture for all it is worth. It is too ambiguous, circular, hegemonic, élitist and indeed ethnocentric a term to retain as a working concept. Its articulations are so powerful that they disarticulate other ways in which people think about their society. In place of the largely timeless, over-coherent world imagined by culture, I take it that theory is always under-determined by facts and that an important part of social life is addressing or making use of the slippage, as people strive to remake themselves and others into agents, subjects or objects. As a long-term ethnographer, I am interested in exploring the extent to which social life is analyzable as a congeries of practices. These include practices of articulating events, actions, persons and practices in antagonistic ways under different circumstances.

Becker once argued (1979) that the subtlety of Javanese shadow theatre derived from a coincidence of several quite different epistemologies. Unfortunately he was unable to hold onto the radicality of his own argument (Hobart 1982b), that a single theatre genre, let alone a single society, could have incommensurable epistemologies and that people could imagine a world sufficiently complex as to make contingency a driving principle. At the very least, anthropology as radical metaphysical critique provides a chance not to think the unthinkable – people are already doing that all over the place⁶² – but to recognize and appreciate what is going on,

⁶² The shift is from the closure of extrapolation to a recognition of the complexity and indeterminacy of practice. The result is a stress as much on how people do things as on the final outcome, product, narrative resolution. This is one reason my interest has shifted to the media and mediation, which cease to be mere instruments in the expression of some transcendent or otherwise inaccessible truth. What I am proposing is not a McLuhanesque

and to pause to think how intellectuals, whose job notionally it is to do precisely that, have on the whole so singularly failed to notice what has been going on around them. A preoccupation with culture is significantly to blame. For scholars who have grown bored of rattling round their intellectual cages, metaphysical critique may offer a refreshing change.

reversal of priorities between the medium and the message. That was largely a trick of inverting our conventional hierarchy of message over medium, mind over body.

Chapter 2

Thinker, thespian, soldier, slave? assumptions about human nature in the study of Balinese society.⁶³

Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another...since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged by their powers and faculties. Hume, *A treatise on human nature*. xv.

Monsignor Quixote, according to Graham Greene, believed his car, Rocinante, to run on prayer, care and attention. Academics are, sadly, seldom as fussy about what keeps their idiosyncratic models going. Stopping every few miles to see if, and why, the engine is working is a silly way to drive. To have little clue as to what keeps one chugging along may be still less wise. It may be all right for legendary little old ladies, but it is worrying when scholars relax at the wheel, so to speak, with blind faith in the inexhaustible capacities of the academic machine and ignore what goes on under their intellectual bonnets. The immediate issue is the problem of 'meaning' in other cultures, and in Bali in particular; and the spanners in the works are the importance of context in interpreting speech and action, and the presupposition of some universal theory of human nature. What the connection is between context and theories of human nature forms the subject of this chapter.

The background

If meaning is partly contextual, how can the nigh infinite range of possible contexts delimit a coherent object of study? Answers take the form of cutting down the field of possibilities by selecting criteria of

⁶³ This is the full original text of this piece. A shorter version appeared in *Context, meaning, and power in Southeast Asia*. eds. M. Hobart & R.H. Taylor, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program.

relevance. One way is to focus on what is implied or presupposed in utterances (e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1982), although this has yet to be done successfully. Another is to filter possible contexts by appeal to human interests. People are seen as trying to maximize some goal, to strive for some ultimate end, or *telos*. Apart from models of Man as economic or rational (Heath 1976; Hollis 1977), two of the most popular are humans as seeking to gain power (Leach 1954), or to render the world meaningful (Geertz 1966). So it is common to talk of 'utility' being 'maximized', social ties or interpretations being 'negotiated', or 'meaning constructed'. In order to cut context down to size, a theory of human nature, or human interests, and the ends of human agency, are invoked. The confusion over context is intimately linked with confusions of which model of human nature to appeal to. Sadly such judgements are almost always the observer's. The four images alluded to in the title, for instance, are four of the more popular construals of who the Balinese are. Western commentators' and Balinese models not only differ, but even what explanation is about may be incommensurable. In seeking to 'explain' the Balinese, Western scholars have actually sentenced them to silence and incomprehensibility.

Contextualization in Bali

A difficulty underlying much of the interpretation of Balinese culture turns on the assumption that language or meaning works in one particular way, so that the Balinese may be adequately explained from a single perspective.⁶⁴ There are grave weaknesses with such an approach and it may be fruitful to explore an alternative, namely the possibility that language in its broadest sense has different uses. One might consider then the conditions under which statements seem to impute an essential meaning or close off the range of potential contexts.⁶⁵ Rather than

⁶⁴ Such visual – and often also spatial – metaphors tend to bring all sorts of presuppositions and implications with them. These are discussed in Chapters 3 & 5.

⁶⁵ A *caveat* obviously applies to my use of terms like 'culture' and 'the Balinese'. I do not wish to suggest there is any essential Balinese culture. There are only the myriad statements and actions which people living on the island of Bali, and calling themselves Balinese, engage in. In referring to the Balinese I am referring to those in the settlement and this includes both men and women, and high and low castes, unless otherwise stated. How far usage varies between communities is an empirical issue and is still far from clear. Rather than impute an entity called 'Balinese society' and postulate its structural principles, I shall look at how the people in one area set about interpreting their own collective representations. The significance of this formulation will become clear later.

assume words must denote definitely, we might consider essentializing as a style or strategy (depending upon the emphasis one wishes to place). This opens the way for a more ethnographically sensitive recognition of the other styles or strategies which may be found. Contextualizing would, in some form, then be an obvious alternative. So might making do (or, less elegantly, ‘pragmatizing’ after the pragmatic theory of truth) where it is necessary to take action without the time, or need, to consider the intricacies or the full contextual implications. From the speaker’s, rather than the listener’s, point of view there is also a whole battery of loosely ‘rhetorical’ devices to attract attention and persuade an audience. There are, of course, potentially many others, but these will do for the moment as convenient labels.

One of the seemingly simplest kinds of situation which Balinese villagers encounter in everyday life is in how to apply terms for the groups and institutions, which make up their immediate frame of reference and action. The question is how far such groupings can be unambiguously defined, and so circumscribe their context of use.

Balinese settlements are often known as *désa*, a term which is linked to the Sanskrit for country, countryside, region or place (Zoetmulder 1982: 393). In Bali, *désa* commonly suggests a village and its territory and is opposed taxonomically and in practice to the ward, or *banjar*, the group responsible for organizing not only residence on the territory but also the daily affairs of the residents. In Tengahpadang, as in many other areas, the *désa* tends to be considered a group with mainly religious functions, the foremost of which is the observance of religious law and practice to ensure the ritual purity of the traditional settlement area, *tanah désa*. Difficulties, however, arise over exactly what

Much of my information comes from the settlement of Tengahpadang, in North Gianyar where I did research, but the results have been checked as broadly as possible. James Boon has taken issue with this stance, which stresses the specificity of the objects of inquiry. His argument and my reply are discussed in Chapter 5. Boon and I are both concerned with the implications of the breakdown of conventional notions of the self-evident nature of the object, and the method, of study. We differ on how we deal with the resulting complexity. On my reading Boon tends towards assuming singularity, in the sense that, however complex the phenomena, their source and explanation is ultimately singular. I reject the idea of singular explanation, not least because it is almost invariably a eurocentric singularity. So I am concerned with how to address specificity without being able – or having to – to fall back on encompassing notions. On the significance of the distinction between singularity and specificity, see Hallward 2000.

the *désa* is, and so over the scope of its responsibility. Its members are the heirs to compounds on village land; but everyone on the land is under the protection, and authority, of the village guardian deities. It is commonly thought of as defined by the boundaries of the *tanah désa*. On the other hand it may equally be viewed as a zone of influence over an area where villagers live and work, which extends into the fields beyond the borders proper. As people migrate, the nature of their ties to the *désa* becomes complicated. On different occasions, then, the *désa* may be defined by a bounded territory, in terms of control over whoever lives or works there, as a zone of influence of a set of deities, or a place of origin. Which aspect comes to the fore depends on the circumstances; and disputes over its jurisdiction occur. The problem stems in part from the several ways that the relation of people to land may be understood. So defining a single referent of *désa* is not so simple: an issue which becomes important when the question comes up of which group is responsible for what.

In order to define Balinese village structure, Geertz has attempted to circumvent the ambiguities in the terms like *désa* by appeal to 'planes of social organization' which are 'a set of invariant fundamental ingredients' (1959: 991), the possible combinations of which define the parameters of Balinese society. The aim was to escape from the misapprehension that a society can be epitomised by a representative unit any more than a synthetic amalgam of materials depicts the social structure. Unfortunately in steering clear of one essentialism, Geertz fell into another.⁶⁶ His generative, or transformational, model if anything imputes more still to an essence, in behaviour or in ideas, according to the reading.⁶⁷ Whichever, the *désa* is part of the 'shared obligation to worship at a given temple' (1959: 992).

⁶⁶ 'Clues to the typologically essential may as often lie in rare or unique phenomena as they do in common or typical ones;...essential form may be seen more adequately in terms of a range of variation than in terms of a fixed pattern from which deviant cases depart' (1959: 1008-9).

⁶⁷ For instance, is 'social organization' to be understood in a Firthian sense (1964), or are these 'planes of significance', Boon 1977: 59? There is also an intriguing parallel between Geertz's definition of planes and the variety of 'substance-codes' Inden has suggested are found in Bengal (1976: 13-14). There is a critical difference however. For Inden carefully locates these principles in an indigenous metaphysics; whereas in Geertz's case it is quite unclear how far these are the analyst's or a distillation of natives' constructions.

Defining the group by worship is ambiguous though, as it confuses three different relationships. One may *nyungsung*, ‘support’ a temple, which is to be a full member of a temple group with the ineluctable rights and duties, or one may *maturan*, ‘make offering, give to a superior’, which refers here to the daily offerings each household takes when its members go to pray. Many members of the *désa* are expected to *maturan*, but are not required to *nyungsung*, the latter duty falling only on owners of compounds on the traditional village land. Finally it is possible to pray *muspa* (in high Balinese; *mabakti* in low) without making large offerings. *Maturan* and certainly *muspa* may be done by people with no formal membership of the group, across all sorts of social and even caste boundaries. Boon has suggested that the plane of temple organization is better understood as ‘a meta-mode to index the other modes’ (1977: 61-2). It is certainly of a different logical order than some of the other principles, but if its function is as an index, cognitive map, or ‘simplified model of Balinese social structure’ (Geertz 1967: 239) then it fails abysmally. For the sheer range and diversity of temple congregations is far more complex than the reality of which it is supposed to be the index (see Hobart 1979: 123-31)!

The confusion is due partly to there being more than one criterion involved in the principles of incorporation (Smith 1974). The same holds for the other planes of social organization. *Subak*, often glossed as ‘irrigation association’, is defined as about the ‘ownership of rice land lying within a single watershed’ (Geertz 1959: 995). However it is quite possible to own rice land within a watershed and not belong to the local, or indeed any, *subak*. In their charters (*awig-awig*) such groups are commonly defined in terms of control not of land, nor use of land, nor of labour, but over water, although not necessarily from a single source. On different occasions, according to circumstance however, their sphere of competence may be differently interpreted. Depending on the context one element or another may be stressed. Similar observations can be made about other social institutions. At times discussion may be about what the *désa* or *subak* really are, or should be; but much of the time practical matters demand action. Coping with conflicts requires adjustment with other institutions as does resolving perceived contradictions between collective representations.

To what degree one feature is essential and the others ancillary, or not, emerges from a brief look at the definition of marriage in Bali.⁶⁸ The *sine qua non* of marriage appears to be the rite of *masakapan* between two partners (a term which unfortunately also means 'to work someone else's land', (but not as an in-law)). The practice of low caste girls undergoing the rite, not with a prince, but with his sword or house pillar, can be accounted for by introducing metonymy. By this criterion, however, it is not just humans who marry. For pigs, slit gongs and drums pass through an identical rite. In what sense one would wish to state these to be married is a moot point. This is not as trivial as might seem. Whether the union of humans is the essential feature of marriage and everything else metaphoric 'extensions', or whether, for instance, we are dealing with culturally appropriate forms for the conjunction of complementary opposites, of which humans are an example, is hardly by the way.

The serious difficulties begin when we consider what marriage involves. For rites vary in degree. So the distinction between a woman being a secondary wife, or a concubine, may be hard to fix, and could lead in the past to confused legal claims. It is also possible for a ceremony to occur but to be overlooked. The problem is one of assent. The Balinese may engage in marriage by capture (*malegandang*, as opposed to mock capture *ngambis*). If a girl is taken by force, at least from her and her family's point of view, the rite may actually be ignored. Matters become more complex still, because what constitutes agreement is open to dispute. What one side may consider elopement, the other may treat as capture and act accordingly. In other situations marriage may be a necessary criterion of membership of certain groups. For instance, the unit of membership of the ward is normally the *kuren* (which Geertz curiously renders as 'kitchen', properly *paon*, 1959: 998), comprising an able-bodied male and female, usually but not necessarily married. Both a male and a female are required because of the sexual division of labour in collective tasks. A person's opposite sex sibling may well be an acceptable alternative to a wife or husband. The *kuren* is not incidentally 'the basic kin unit from the point of view of all superordinate social institutions' (Geertz 1959: 998). Owners of compounds on *désa* land are members of most groups regardless of their marital status.

⁶⁸ The impossibility of providing a universal definition is argued by Leach (1961) because the plethora of legal rights that may be conferred alone is too complex and diffuse.

It is, of course, perfectly possible to tidy all the exceptions away and maintain there to be an essential characteristic of Balinese marriage. The result, however, is pretty vacuous. It also ignores the kinds of confusion in which Balinese villagers often land and the problems they face in interpreting these. Such an approach might be valid if it could be shown that the Balinese acted as if there were always essential features, but no one seems to have asked.⁶⁹

One of the most common ways of circumnavigating the complexities of what people actually do is by recourse to the 'rules' which inform their activities. Regularity is not then to be explained at the level of actions, but in terms of the rules or ideals which guide the actions. The ploy is as popular as it is pernicious. The sanctuary of a warm Platonist cave may be comfortable, but it appeals to a questionable epistemology and commits a category mistake by confusing the analyst's and actors' (asymmetrical) frames of reference. There is also a hidden contextual clause in much reference to rules. For is a rule a categorical, or a hypothetical, imperative? Is it an unconscious structural determinant, a legal injunction, an expectation or a regularity? It is common to find different senses being put forward in different contexts by the same people who deny that context is important at all.

For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools.'
Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*.

Such analytical assumptions beg the question of how the Balinese regard and use such rules. A simple example will make the point. One of the few rules over which ethnographers seem to agree is the Balinese ban on sister exchange, which is usually represented as an absolute prohibition (Boon 1977: 131ff.). Unfortunately the Balinese have different interpretations of their own kinship rules. What is an absolute prohibition on one

⁶⁹ A counter-argument might run that although marriage may take different forms, it still constitutes a rite of transition with the classic features of separation, transformation and re-integration. Without disputing these may be a feature of *masakapan* as of many other rites, the universalism often claimed for such rites of transition is a good instance of circular argument: what is transition if not separation, change and reframing?

reading, is merely undesirable on another (see Hobart 1991a). Different castes, and people talking about different aspects of persons, tend to adhere to different versions of what is proper, or possible. Rules may be read as categorical for example; or they read as embodying hypothetical injunctions. So the proscription on sister exchange may be treated simply as a ban, or it may be seen as a means of protecting people from dangerous liaisons. Sister exchange is classified as a 'hot' (*panes*), as opposed to a 'cool' (*etis*), union, which brings a risk of damage to the people and their social ties. In Tengahpadang one man did contract such a marriage. He was politically opposed to the then-dominant local elite, who stressed the religious and social value of observing what they saw as 'traditional' kin ties. Was his action then mere ignorance (as the establishment claimed), was it deliberate defiance, or was it that the girl was attractive? His action could be, and indeed was, interpreted by different people differently in different contexts. Rules do not just exist as cast-iron commands, as constitutive of 'culture' as such. They may be a matter for contemplation, interpretation and rival assertion and challenge under different circumstances. Perhaps we are dealing not with the determination of 'fundamental invariant ingredients' but the circumstances under which some people assert and others deny different interpretations in different ways. Closure of representation is apparently only one possibility, as Balinese ideas of meaning allow for dissemination (see for instance the brief discussion of *Dasanama* below).

This rather open view is at odds with most of the conventional accounts of Balinese marriage. Boon, for instance, notes the existence both of negative injunctions of the kind mentioned above and positive marriage standards. He suggests there may be alternative registers (1977: 12-30). Marriage may be romantic, by elopement or mock capture, and is most likely between kin groups not in alliance.⁷⁰ The other kinds of marriage are more likely to be arranged. They may be strategic and designed to forge or cement alliances between groups; or it may be sacred and within a kin group, although this last is also 'hot' and dangerous among very close kin like first cousins, unless one is strong enough to resist

⁷⁰ Boon glosses mock capture as *ngarorod* (1977: 121), a term used for 'moving place' and so colloquially said of elopement (*malaib*, running away). *Ngarorod* is in many places part of every marriage rite, when the couple are secluded in someone else's house prior to *masakapan*.

the dangers. There is latitude between culturally available alternatives.

There are serious problems with the model however. For a start it is ethnographically inadequate. There is no simple connection between ways of contracting unions and the three kinds of relation involved. Important forms, like real capture, are omitted (it may be illegal, Boon 1977: 121, but the illegal is not the impossible and merely gives capture greater impact). *Mapadik*, formally asking for a woman in marriage, is conflated with the negotiation of agreement between all concerned (*adung-adungan rerama*), and with *atepang rerama*, where the parents impose their will on the children. Externally they may seem the same but, as the last involves coercion (*paksa*), to the Balinese the psychological implications are starkly contrasted. The link of ideals with social consequences suggests a mechanical connection, which overlooks the extent to which ideals are asserted contextually. Collecting genealogies in Bali is a tricky activity because commonly different parties will claim the unions were of different kinds according to their interests, presentation of self, and the social situation. There is a broader lesson to be learned from this, namely that the sort of statistics which anthropologists imitate sociologists in collecting are mostly entirely vacuous and refer to nothing but themselves.⁷¹

It is assumed that marriage is essentially the same cross-culturally (otherwise the reference to alliance theory would make little sense), even if its specific cultural forms differ. There is little consideration of the possibility that, as marriage involves at least two persons, we might require recourse to Balinese ideas of personhood and so human nature. In describing romantic marriage based on love (for which Boon incidentally is obliged to use the Indonesian term, *cinta* from the Sanskrit 'thought, care, anxiety' 1977: 122-23), the assumption seems to be that there is an emotion or inner state commensurable cross-culturally. He appeals to literary traditions, like the tales of prince Panji, for collateral evidence. This is treacherous on two grounds. First it may be tautologous: how do we decide to translate the motivation of characters in literature as 'love' in the first place? Second the robust sexual flavour the Balinese are wont to read into personal

⁷¹ For an elegant account of how a new reality, the average or normal, came into existence in the nineteenth century and made sociology possible, Hacking's book *The taming of chance* (1990) is invaluable.

attraction ('Chaucerian' perhaps, if one is to import alien categories) fits ill with the connotations of 'love'. Romantic lust might be a better gloss!

The dangers of simplistic translation come out clearly in Boon's handling of 'sacred' marriage. As Hooykaas has noted (e.g. 1975: 241), what constitutes 'the sacred' and what Balinese word would even roughly correspond to this is fraught with difficulty. The nearest term is probably *suci*, which is often glossed as 'pure'. The two are clearly not coterminous. *Suci* is also understood by the Balinese in quite different ways. It may be used descriptively as if an attribute, it may be prescriptive as an ideal. It may be treated at times almost as if substantial (although one should note the Balinese generally avoid imputing the existence of matter, preferring to speak simply of particular objects as existing and events as occurring). Introducing a notion of the sacred merely distracts attention from the serious question of indigenous ontologies and styles of argument and interpretation.

About which we cannot speak, thereupon should we remain silent. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*.

Contextualizing and essentializing

The examples discussed so far have hinged on the ambiguity inherent in institutions that are defined in terms of more than one feature. Which feature is to the fore depends upon interpretive style, context, and personal concerns. Obviously life can carry on despite different readings being given by people on different occasions (Wallace 1961: 29-44). Some collective representations, presuppositions and words, however, are asserted to be more critical, axiomatic or necessary to a postulated hierarchy of values than others. Such closure of possibility is arguably an aspect of power. So in this section I would like briefly to consider some of the conditions under which this is more likely to happen or not.⁷²

⁷² I am here arguing, partly on the basis of my reading of the Balinese ethnography, that ideas do not always come singly, but are part of more complex, if changeable, semantic sets. That is I am not using the conventional epistemological model of statements of fact or hypotheses being testable independently of one another, but as being part of a wider

For example, the Balinese have had a system of ranking, similar in certain aspects to the Indian caste system. Kings, as warriors (*Satriya*), were at the apex of the hierarchy, being ranked in purity above everyone except a caste of priests, *Brahmana*. Many of the diacritica of caste status were held to be transmitted by birth. For *Satriya* these were courage, loyalty and honesty, among others. Members of other caste groups were regarded as lacking such attributes, at least by comparison. To speak of someone as being *Satriya* implied having those characteristics. (It will be noted that the word may be used both as a title, or name, and as an adjective.) If being a *Satriya* implied being brave and so on, being brave implied one was *Satriya*. Here we seem to have an example of how qualities may be prescribed of a title, so the proper contexts of use are circumscribed.

There is a catch though. In practice not all princes were brave by Balinese standards; and some brave men were not *Satriya*. The assertion '(all) *Satriya* are courageous, loyal and honest' has two non-identical applications. The one through which the caste hierarchy was celebrated in dynastic chronicles and other texts, was an ascriptive reading. This was the official version, an authoritative discourse of how the world should be seen. Another rendition was, however, possible. For despite the weight and majesty which could be brought to bear upon prescribing and attributing qualities: some princes were palpable cowards and some members of other castes sufficiently brave and gifted with the qualities of *Satriya* that their presence could not be ignored. The scribes of dynastic histories had not uncommonly to face the rise and accession, through war, of upstarts who could not be passed over in silence. On such occasions, the official explanation was in terms of lost ancestry, divine intervention or something similar (see Hooykaas 1958; Worsley 1972). In such a way the essentializing of the attributes of *Satriya* could be maintained,

frame of reference which determines what shall count as a fact in the first place. That position is closer to the Duhem-Quine thesis (see Quine 1953a). I also follow Quine in speaking where possible of words, or terms, to avoid imputing a questionable reality to ideas, concepts and meanings. When I use expressions like 'meaning', 'idea' or 'statement', these are my glosses of Balinese words, here *arti*; *pemineh* (opinion); and *sané kabaos* (what was said) respectively. For a fuller analysis of Balinese terms and ideas about meaning, see Chapter 5.

while events were far more fluid than such ideological assertions made it seem.

This brief outline should make it clear why it may be useful to talk in terms of essential and contextual meanings as being styles or strategies, not as the way words of themselves mysteriously relate to the world. Being able to essentialize the ‘meaning’ of *Satriya* and to minimize its unexpected contextualizations has epistemological and political overtones at the same time.⁷³ Relevance would seem, however, not to be an attribute intrinsic to language so much as a variable aspect of discourse. Not all words may have so much political significance obviously at stake. What kinds of word have been treated as neutral and under what circumstances is an interesting question.

Some terms have been subject to so high a degree of cultural elaboration that it might seem their contextualization in novel ways has been effectively ruled out. Perhaps one of the most systematically and consistently developed distinctions in Bali is the directional axis of *kaja* and *kelod*. *Kaja* roughly denotes ‘towards the interior’, ‘upstream’; *kelod*, ‘towards the sea’, ‘downstream’. These, rather than Western compass points, form the dominant system of spatial representation, according to which the structure of houses, villages, shrines, temples, the layout of offerings and much else is oriented. The result is a totalizing classification because the extremes of the axis are linked with other qualities, which are of great importance. *Kaja* is associated with ritual purity, and *kelod* with pollution; the two often being expressed metaphorically (and used metonymically in ritual) in the flow of water: pure water comes from mountain streams and reaches the sea bearing the detritus of human existence with it.

The classification encompasses a great deal. For instance the arrival of foreign merchants and then tourists could be slotted in easily. For contact with traders was conveniently on the coastline; and more recently tourist hotels have been sited for the most part around the few sandy beaches on the island. Both sides, working with quite different models of space, have seemed happy with this arrangement. Tourists sunbathe, swim and step on stonefish - and

⁷³ This suggests that, in searching to explain context as implied in propositional assertions, Sperber and Wilson (1982) have treated a style, or strategy, as a natural state of language or communication.

the traders pushed their wares - while the Balinese classification of space was upheld, by appeal to the associations of purity and pollution. (There was a possibly contingent bonus in that the most feared centre of destructive magic (*pengiwa*) is little more than a stone's throw from the Intercontinental Hotel.) On one reading, demons are large, red, hairy and uncouth - the attributes the Balinese tend to give to Westerners - so it was in strict accordance with the classification that they should prefer to live by the sea, which is the cess-pit of pollution. Desire, which should be controlled - here for tourist money, new fashions and new political resources in the Indonesian state administration (much of which is focused on the tourist areas and the geographically peripheral capital) - runs riot, a gloomy picture which fits however with Balinese and Hindu theories of the entropy of the world. Such a powerful model seems able not only to cope with new situations, but to structure the Balinese world which is built partly around it.

The *kaja-kelod* axis is described variously in the literature as towards and away from Gunung Agung, the highest volcano, mountain-sea, inland-sea, interior-exterior, upstream-downstream; and is linked with the propitious and unpropitious, purity and pollution, life and death and so forth (Hobart 1978). Part of this is simple inexactitude, part is variations in Balinese contexts of use. One of the most common referents for this spatial axis is the path of water (so linking it to the familiar Malay direction of *ulu* (upstream, headwater). Because most water comes from volcanic lakes and springs, it may refer to the direction of the mountains. But as *kaja* is associated with the pure and auspicious, by a transposition there are contexts in which *kaja* becomes any propitious direction (although I have not met it actually referring to seawards). Similarly the attributes of life and death often associated with east and west may be mapped onto the upstream-downstream one and *vice versa*. It differs then from Euro-American ideas of a polar axis around notionally fixed points, both because the Balinese axis is more like the dial of a clock around the island's centre and because of ways it may be contextually interpreted.

The classification is not, however, neutral in that many other sets of values are linked to it. In so far as the political and religious hierarchy in Bali is underwritten by the presupposition that ritual purity is graded, a differentiated spatial grid may be

more or less tied to hierarchy. The seemingly neat closure of the system is prey however to problems of consistency, and allows unexpected contextualization. If water is identified in some way with purity, then what about the largest body of water of all, the sea? On one interpretation, it is polluted; on another, it is so extensive in its purity that it is able to absorb all the impurities of the world. Demons may be identified with pollution and the periphery, but they are partly divine beings and so probably purer than humans; and they are identified with the dangerous aspects of high gods, who are far from inferior. While the traditional centres of Balinese culture and excellence lay inland, new wealth, new possibilities and new sources of power centre on the coast. So even the most entrenched classification cannot ensure closure.

A simple but elegant example of the problem of context comes out in discussion of which is the proper, desirable or ritually ideal direction of motion. Almost all Balinese agree that the proper direction for movement is to the right for processions, ritual lustration, the order of eating in ritual meals (*nasi agibung*) and even the erection of house posts (Howe 1983: 152-4). Usually this is recorded in the ethnographies as 'clockwise'. Observation of Balinese temple ceremonies shows however that people quite frequently circumambulate the temple anti-clockwise. The link seems not to be to Hindu ideas of *pradaksina* (and reverse movement, *purwadaksina*, in Bali), but to different ideas to the context of 'right of'. Is it to the right of the speaker, or to the right of the subject or object being circumambulated? The problem is familiar to students of Javanese shadow theatre, where the question of right and left, Pandawa and Korawa, victors and losers,⁷⁴ is usually defined relative to the puppeteer, not the audience. So quite different emphases are suggested by motion to the right being egocentric instead of focused on the other. In fact widespread confusion reigned in my area as to which was proper in which situations.

⁷⁴ The gloss was suggested to me first by Alice Dewey and is preferable to the crude 'good' or 'bad' traditionally ascribed to the two sides. For a start, good and bad tend to be (logically) attributive, not predicative, adjectives (Geach 1956). That is they are attributes of a predicate, not full predicates themselves. (For example, a good cricketer is not good and a cricketer.) So we run the risk in saying that someone is good of implying he is good in essence. To gloss the camps in the Mahabharata in the common way is effectively to pre-empt discussion of the complex issue of what kind of world and what image of humanity is being portrayed in shadow theatre. For a more detailed discussion, see Hobart 1985.

If classifications like this are tied to others, could it be that part of the closure is linked with the preservation of key cultural assumptions, absolute presuppositions, which somehow lie behind, or govern, surface manifestations? Were it possible to show there to be such a hierarchy of values, this would be a strong ground for arguing that context can only play at the feet of the towering structure of culturally essential beliefs. There is evidence aplenty of hierarchies being referred to in Bali; but we must be careful before leaping to conclusions. In order to see how a hierarchy of values is invoked, it is informative to look at a brief case study.

A problem arose in one of the wards of Tengahpadang. A woman who owned no rice land used to be one of several traders in cooked meals in the main square. Her stall was an expensive brick building, sited as it happened directly beneath a *waringin* tree, the Balinese equivalent of the Indian *banyan*. Various misfortunes had befallen the village, including the devastation of many families following the abortive Communist coup in 1965. It was remarked by a number of villagers that, unlike many other wards, there was no shrine in the square, so perhaps it could be that this might account for the spate of troubles which had happened.

It was also recognized however that erecting a shrine would require destroying the stall in all likelihood. However, against this view ran the argument that the calamities were sufficiently grave that so serious a step might well need to be taken. In addition the stall happened to be sited on public land (that is belonging to the *désa*). Among the issues at stake were whether the misfortunes were connected with the absence of a shrine; whether they would be forestalled by building one; whether such a shrine should be erected underneath the tree; and whether the spiritual benefits to the community outweighed the loss of livelihood of a villager, or at least that part of the capital that had gone into building the stall; or even whether the stall had contributed to the misfortunes by a place for making profit being put in a pure spot.

A high caste geomancer⁷⁵ was called in, who was celebrated for his knowledge and mystical power (*sakti*). He agreed before a full meeting of the local ward that there might be a link between past troubles and the lack of a shrine. He further assented that misfortune might be mitigated in the future by building one. He confirmed after geomantic measurements of several possible sites that the ideal place was where the stall stood. But he also offered other places, especially one behind the

⁷⁵ In fact a *balian usada*, an expert in medical texts, *usada/wisada*, but by virtue of the effects of space on health and welfare, he needs to understand architectural and geomantic treatises as well.

ward meeting pavillion. Seeing that the woman's stall was beneath the *waringin*, he warned the village against the wrong doing which would be brought about at the woman's expense, by ruining the source of her income. The public meeting, which had been called to hear his decision, promptly voted however that, to be on the safe side, both the shrines should be put up. And that, as the stall was on public land, the responsibility for its removal was the woman's and that she should bear the costs of pulling it down as well.

Several principles were at issue in this case. The link between the shrine and the misfortune was accepted on the geomancer's authority (it is not unusual to seek several different opinions), while his suggestion of alternative sites was ignored. There was the rather unclear question of peoples' rights to make use of public land (it was not mentioned in public who, if anyone, it was who had originally given permission). As discussion wore on over the weeks before and after the consultation, however, the main issue became phrased in terms of the relative priority of an individual to pursue their living against the possible threat to public welfare. Balanced against this consideration was a widely accepted principle that the interests of disadvantaged members of the community, such as widows (which the woman was), should be protected where possible.

In the course of argument, a hierarchy of values was referred to by several parties. The problem is, which exactly was the right hierarchy? The short answer is that, faced with contrary assertions, the different parties made more or less use of the assumption that there was such a hierarchy, or at least that some principles had greater weight than others. No one could agree though which principle was the key one. If everyone agreed that one had to choose between values, or that in principle there was a hierarchy, no one could agree as to what it was. Hierarchy did not exist as a fixed system of reference, but its form and structure were invoked variously to interpret the situation.

Context was vital in other ways, which make the inadequacy of an analysis in terms of cultural ideals alone quite apparent. I note merely the most salient. Ten years later the geomancer had developed so great a pan-Balinese reputation for his mystical power that I doubt anyone would have lightly override his *caveat* about endangering the woman's welfare. At the time his reputation was solid enough for his professional opinion to be

accepted, but not unquestioningly, as reasonably authoritative. The woman's personal life was an unmentioned issue, as were the political party aspects of the whole *débauche*. She had left her husband for the man who had been responsible for his death in 1965; and then deserted the latter for a man deeply embroiled in local politics, who had carried out the savage beating of her lover on political, and probably personal, grounds. (It was this lover, while wielding political influence, who had ensured that the building of the stall slipped through quietly.) The last man was an outsider, bitterly hated for his brutality, and sufficiently infatuated with the widow that it was thought he would pay the costs of demolition and rebuilding the stall for his new mistress. (I omit such issues as the dubious status of widows in Bali, because if we start to consider all the possible relevant contexts of this issue, the account would become extremely complicated. These were not mooted publicly, and I restrict myself to what was said.)

Several points emerge from this (highly truncated) story. First, any appeal to a definite hierarchy of values would reify the situation and ignore how such principles are used. Second, almost everyone did imply, but not always state, at some point that there was such a hierarchy. If some claimed to know the proper order of priorities, others pointed out the issue had further aspects, questioned the essential principle at stake and suggested another, or left the matter open. Here essentializing and contextualizing were part of political strategies, but was this all? Villagers seem to have understood and argued the dispute differently. For the geomancer there were ideal, and alternative possible, sites according to the proper criteria in his manuals. For some, who were concerned at the spate of inauspicious events, it seems to have been a matter of having to find an urgent answer regardless of the niceties; others were seeking the most fitting, *manut*, solution to conflicting interests. A minority, by their own account, were as interested in humiliating the woman as in the shrines and were using the latter as acceptable decoration for unacceptable motives. So the dispute was occasion for different styles of argument over the same set of issues.

Are there though presuppositions in Balinese culture which are absolute for any group at any one time? If there were, would they be free of context for their exposition? Arguably, even the most apparently 'absolute presuppositions' (in Collingwood's sense 1940) may presuppose other issues, so absoluteness here may be

relative!⁷⁶ It is one thing to trace logical presuppositions (assuming the logical operations of a culture, in theory and in practice, have been studied) in an intellectual tradition which stresses consistency as highly as ours. It is another to explore such presuppositions in cultures where a premium may be placed on matters other than consistency. In short, while inference or empirical evidence may be used to show that the Balinese recognize and appeal to presuppositions, it remains a matter for research how systematically, and under what conditions, ‘absolute presuppositions’ are found (as opposed to how fervently they are asserted). For present purposes, my concern is with meaning and context, where recourse to such presuppositions tends to be an essentializing strategy, and the transformation of hierarchy a contextualizing one.

Context and human agency

Is it possible to infer a model from the Balinese material, which would account for the ways context is invoked? I think not, for several reasons. One obvious approach is to establish a set of ‘core’ or key presuppositions, change to which either produces so much conceptual confusion or endangers the structure of authority, that it can be taken as fairly stable. To do so however would be to reify what I have called essentializing and contextualizing styles. Neither is the exclusive prerogative of any group or caste; rather they are two ways of attempting to work out how collective representations should be applied to events and actions.⁷⁷

Relevance and context seem then only to be establishable empirically. If it is not possible to circumscribe the relation between cultural representations and actions in terms of a theory

⁷⁶ Krausz remarks that what Collingwood identified as the Kantian absolute presupposition of the indestructibility of substance, itself presupposed the existence of substance (1972: 236ff.).

⁷⁷ Nor is it simple to extrapolate criteria of relevance from such core presuppositions. The latter do not exist in a timeless Platonic world, they are asserted. One would be assuming consistency in the postulated core, such that alternative criteria of relevance could not be found. And, as the definition of essential meaning is reached through Balinese usage, relevance would have to be inferred *a posteriori*.

of meaning, might one not instead focus on the agents?⁷⁸ In other words, can we provide an account of human interests or action, which would delimit the goals, and so the effective means that the Balinese seek?⁷⁹ In order to pull off such a feat, however, we are involved in postulating a theory of human nature and human agency. Oscar Wilde is supposed once to have remarked,

the more one analyses people, the more all reasons for analysis disappear. Sooner or later one comes to that dreadful universal thing called human nature.

As Collingwood has argued, the philosophers on whose models much anthropological theory is based

assumed that human nature had existed ever since the creation of the world exactly as it existed among themselves...that *our* reasoning faculty, *our* tastes and sentiments, and so forth, are something perfectly uniform and invariable, underlying and conditioning all historical changes (1946: 82-83).

Further, models of society rely on some truth, palpable or implicit, about human nature. For instance,

Durkheim sides with Hobbes and Freud where Marx sides with Rousseau and the Utopians. For the former, man is a bundle of desires, which need to be regulated, tamed, repressed, manipulated and given direction for the sake of social order, whereas, for the latter, man is still an angel, rational and good, who requires a rational and good society in which to develop his *essential* nature (Lukes 1967: 145, my emphasis).⁸⁰

The issue is not whether Lukes's characterization does justice to the views, nor yet who is right, but that a vision of human nature is an unacknowledged part of Euro-American academic baggage. Unfortunately the humble ethnographer, panning his chosen backwater for nuggets of empirical truth, cannot safely dismiss the

⁷⁸ Another way might be to examine indigenous theories of meaning. We are still left with the problem of the relation between such a theory, if it exists (and the Balinese have some shared ideas about meaning, see chapter 5), and how it would be used.

⁷⁹ Unfortunately two different issues often get confused here. Are we trying to explain why people actually did or said what they did? Or are we looking at how they represent such actions and motives? It is one thing to postulate a model of interests or agency, it is another to assume that this provides the necessary and sufficient conditions of all possible action.

⁸⁰ Lukes himself later noted the kinship between Durkheim's and Rousseau's ideas at certain points in a later publication (1973a: 125-28).

problem as part of the paraphernalia of the armchair theorist. What we find in the field depends largely on what we sift the facts with, so to speak.⁸¹

The problem may be seen in the seemingly contradictory ethnographic accounts of Bali, which portray its inhabitants as wildly different kinds of human beings. At once the Balinese appear as driven to establish order and meaning in the world; as fey actors strutting the proscenium of life, worried over stage-fright; as belligerent men of action, poised to attack their neighbours, enslave other islanders, or loot Dutch ships; as slaves to tyrannical rules or to established social and moral conventions. At times, of course, some Balinese may be thinkers, others thespians, soldiers, slaves or much else besides; but there is little point in asking 'would the real Balinese stand up?' For the question assumes the Balinese to have an essential nature.

Am I not caught in a quandary? At one moment I argue for the need to recognize presuppositions about human nature; the next I question whether any such nature can be ascribed to people living in a society. The dilemma is false, however, but its exposure helps clear up some common confusions.

Inquiry into how people *represent* human nature and agency in explaining actions is quite different from assuming that such representations *cause* the actions. My concern is not with what human nature really, or ultimately, is - which I regard, for reasons to be discussed, as a meaningless question - but with how context and meaning is interpreted according to available representations. In other words the issue is about the conditions under which the Balinese act, and explain action, not why they act in a particular way. To search for, let alone assume, the Balinese to have an essential nature begs the interesting questions.

⁸¹ There are two further problems in such representations of human action and nature, which should be considered in a fuller analysis. First, is it possible to produce a model of human nature independent of society? Second, might there be universal aspects of human nature, independent of culture, such that we could produce a two-part model of human interests, one universal one culturally specific? These are important issues in any general explanation of action, but are not immediately relevant to the topic of representations of action in Bali. For my concern is less with the ultimate explanation of action than with the presuppositions that have been used in existing accounts.

The nature of culture in Bali

What kinds of model of human nature have been suggested to explain Balinese society? There are, of course, about as many as there are commentators. As Boon has argued, much of the early work on Bali should be seen in the light of Western, here especially Dutch, constructions of 'the Other' (1977). To the extent that the stress was on a supposedly neutral description of social institutions, the assumptions about human nature and society tended to be those of various schools of anthropology, such as Dutch structuralism. Sufficient has been said about the kinds of assumptions which they made as to require no further comment here (see e.g. Geertz 1961; Koentjaraningrat 1975).

A rather different model of social action has been suggested by Geertz, which claims to explicate the Balinese ethnography. It is worth considering as a text in its own right, because it is the most explicit formulation of a problem which other accounts have tended to take for granted. The problems of explaining the Balinese ethnography are assimilated to a general theory of culture which

is essentially a semiotic one..(where) man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun (Geertz 1973c: 5).

It is largely taken for granted that a key aspect of human nature everywhere is the need to make sense of the world, and peoples' place in it. So the focus in analysis is 'an interpretive one in search of meaning' (1973c: 5).

How is the relationship between human beings and culture-as-meaningful described? At this point Geertz's language becomes strikingly metaphorical. A fascinating gradual shift occurs in the images in which this relation is represented. We start with something close to culture as a kind a building.

Our data are 'constructions of other peoples' constructions', as they are 'structures of signification' which are erected on a given 'social ground' (1973c: 9). So 'analysis penetrates into the very body of the object', this object - culture - being fictive in the sense that it is 'something made', 'something fashioned' (1973c: 15). Once the point has been made that culture is man-made, the

images shift to various natural scientific techniques for observing and preserving. For 'anthropological interpretation consists in tracing the curve of a social discourse; fixing it into an inspectable form' (1973c: 19). We must rescue from the flow 'the "said" of such a discourse from its perishable occasions' (1973c: 20). When culture has been 'inscribed', its study becomes archaeological (if of the object) or archival (if about our inscriptions). For we must 'uncover the conceptual structures' (1973c: 27), in other words the meaning, a 'pseudo-entity' which previous anthropologists have only 'fumbled with' rather unsuccessfully (1973c: 29), because they ignored the 'hard surfaces of life...and with the biological and physical necessities on which those surfaces rest' (1973c: 30). From this the anthropologist gleans answers that those he has studied have given 'to include them in the consultable record of what man has said' (1973c: 30).

Geertz's metaphors might seem a little out of place in what purports to be a 'scientific' approach to culture. There are, however, grounds on which Geertz can justify such a view. For most scientific paradigms rest upon implicit metaphors (Kuhn 1962; Masterman 1970); and, as Salmond has shown (1982), the depiction of 'theoretical landscapes' in terms of sustained progression of metaphors is quite common, if questionable, in writing about cultures. What is of more concern is the principles by which one extracts from all that is said and done, what shall be 'inscribed'. A difficulty in describing culture as man-made is that the view is circular, because ideas about what humans are partly at least are themselves culturally formulated. Also the depiction of biological and physical necessities raises the interesting question of whose idea of biology and the physical world are we dealing with? Arguably a cultural account should consider indigenous ideas rather than postulate any set of contemporary views as universal.

The unexceptionable grounding of Geertz's argument is in ethnographic detail.

Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior - or more precisely, social action - that cultural forms find articulation (1973c: 17).

Already we have two transformations: behaviour becomes action, and from this a specific category of 'social action' is somehow

extrapolated. The next step introduces a significant framing of what anthropology is about. For 'anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens' (1973c: 18). In the following flight of metaphor however the ontological nature of social action, or culture, undergoes a series of further re-interpretations. For it is a construction, made by people. So we are already committed to a particular relation of society and the individual in which culture is created, or invented, by people, through 'symbolic interactions' with its dubious assumption of 'voluntarism' (see Bhaskar 1979: 39-47). This culture takes the form of an inscribed text (following Ricoeur 1971). One might note here that the sense of 'text' is what Barthes has called a 'work', that is specific inscriptions, rather than the presuppositions and conditions of possibility of social action (1979). However subtle compared to previous views, the object of study is firmly positivist. Further these man-made inscriptions are, it seems, the surface of conceptual structures. At this point we are further committed to the existence of abstract entities 'concepts' and to them having a purported structure. Starting with the idea of culture as behaviour, then as something man-made, then as inscribed, then as a readable document, then one which reveals an underlying conceptual essence, we have reached a quite different and questionable vision.

One of the most intriguing silences in this progression is exactly how the impressions of the anthropologist are related to those of the native. While it is obvious in one way that the anthropologist is concerned with 'our constructions of other peoples' constructions' (in the sense that an interpretation, but *not* all behaviour, is a construction), it does not follow that their and our constructions are of the same logical or empirical order, even if ours depends on theirs, nor that they are even commensurable. Anyway, Geertz's whole argument is predicated on the assumption that there is a 'we' clearly distinguishable from another equally essentialized category 'they'. But what is understanding - and the whole point of anthropology in the first place - if not a mutual process which involves 'we' becoming 'they' and *vice versa*? Such a dichotomy is not just a pernicious fantasy, which presumably owes something to the chauvinism of colonial epistemologies. It serves to distance the subjects with whom we work and turn them into objects whom we study. It also creates the illusion of there being a coherent 'we' as a knowing subject - whether that be Euro-Americans, the international world

of scholars or whatever – when its practices make it clear there is no such coherent subject.

The *deus ex machina* here is an assumption about human nature. It is that people everywhere in the world (by virtue, one assumes, of the assertion that people make culture) engage in actions for the same reasons or causes, that they interpret actions in cultural styles, but that they share essential features of humanity which enable them to do so with identical logics, perceptions and semantic processes. As Hollis has pointed out, these are however at best epistemological, or even metaphysical, presuppositions and not empirical truths (1982). The psychic unity of mankind has been assumed. Unfortunately, those who appeal to such a principle interpret it in such different ways that it can underwrite approaches as far apart as hermeneutics and truth-conditional semantics. In Geertz's case his view of culture incorporates the idea of 'the knowing subject' (see Hacking 1975: 159ff.), which gives his interpretation that flavour of individualism and freedom, so popular in much Western metaphysics of self. It has not been established however that it holds for other people. The fact that Americans or Europeans may find his interpretations appealing does not mean they are true, it merely means they fit their present prejudices.

The danger in Geertz's image of culture as being inscribed is that it leads too easily to assuming a mechanical relation between a collective representation and its interpretation by members of a society. Brief reflection on the presuppositions behind his argument about the working of symbols shows what is at issue. In attributing meaning to their cultural constructs, we require a theory of mind, and the relation of individuals to society, such that they construe collective representations one way rather than another.

Time, person and language

In *Person, time and conduct in Bali*, for instance we are presented with different notions of time and their significance from a reading of indigenous calendars (after Goris 1933). The Javanese-Balinese calendrical system of a 210-day year consists of ten concurrently running weeks from one to ten days. Each week

has different named days and different uses. As Geertz quite reasonably notes, this tends to give particular combinations of days an individual flavour. To infer from this, however, that the nature of Balinese time-reckoning is necessarily, or even preferentially, permutational let alone that it reflects 'the very structure of reality' (1973f: 392) is oddly mechanical. Might one not equally read from the system, among the main features of which is the mathematical regularity of combinations, a model of complex order distinct from the variability of human affairs? This would make it peculiarly fitting for describing the doings and prescriptions of divine agencies, which are apart from human contingency. Geertz chooses not to inquire into the vast number of ways in which the Javanese-Balinese calendar is actually used every day, but seems instead to assume that calendars have essential features which may be read out by the analyst independent of, and prior to, detailed study of contextual use.

There is no space to enter into the rather sterile and largely ethnographically uninformed debate about the nature of time in Bali (Geertz 1973f; Bloch 1977; Bourdillon 1978; Howe 1981). Suffice it to say here that all the accounts represent time catachretically (Black 1962). That is, it is approached through constitutive metaphors, often spatial - time as linear, cyclical, zigzag, punctuated, durational - which the Balinese explicitly eschew. Perhaps part of the problem comes from assuming there to be some essential time, which is measured in different ways. In one sense time is peculiarly contextual, in that it is referred to relative to situations of its use.⁸² For example, Balinese recognition of stages of the sun in the sky is particularly appropriate if it is a matter of going to the fields or finishing work before sunset, or before it gets too hot. To say that the Balinese set off for the fields at 5 a.m. and return at 10 or 11 is far less informative. Much of the confusion about time in Bali might be avoided, I suspect, if, instead of asking what time really is, we were to look at how it is used and the relations which its use imputes.

A similar method is used to infer the 'depersonalization' of Balinese from their notionally distinct 'orders of person definition'

⁸² The issue is more complex than this. Measurement of the separateness of events here is by relative differentiation according to some scale. Events are further related to this scale; so more general comments on time scales form third order relations.

(1973f: 368). Teknonymy, for instance, denotes a person in terms of parenthood of members of successive generations, and so stresses successors rather than predecessors. Again the interpretation depends upon a very literal reading of the by-passing of autonyms (personal names). As Feeley-Harnik rightly notes, teknonymy equally permits a focus upon ancestors and the domination of the ascendant generation (1978: 406). Her point is that the 'inscriptions' of culture cannot be read so simplistically.

Once again the focus is upon reading the essence of a system in isolation from its semantic context and the situations of its use. In fact the Balinese have a perfectly workable system, and use it, to refer to ancestors as their kin terms reach at least the fifth ascendant generation. On another score teknonymy is not equally used by all social groups. In my area, it was kin groups identifying themselves as smiths (Pandé), who strove to keep themselves apart from others and limit the range of their exchanges (including names?), who commonly used teknonyms. One wonders if it is coincidental to Geertz's model of naming that his research was largely in Tihingan, one of the few villages in Bali dominated by smiths? In developing the model of depersonalization, Geertz likewise suggests that

as the virtually religious avoidance of its direct use indicates, a personal name is an intensely private matter...when (a man) disappears it disappears with him (1973f: 370, my parenthesis).

This may be fine in theory but in the roll-call for village meetings the personal names, not the teknonyms, of distinguished old men (even if each is 'but a step away from being the deity he will become after his death' 1973f: 370) were yelled out across the village square! Whatever the idealized reading of collective representations, villagers in Tengahpadang invariably referred to their dead ancestors by the personal names they are supposed not to know.⁸³

⁸³ The only exception was one high caste man and, on Geertz's view, such names are caste titles not autonyms. There is no evidence local usage is recent or some strange 'degeneration'. If anything teknonymy may be on the increase as Balinese adapt status relations to new political ends, as Boon has suggested (1974).

It seems almost as if names and words had some very special essence. Pushed a little we are in danger of entering a world where digital watches imply a different sense of time from the old analog ones;

One of the critical features of multiple ways of naming people co-existing is the situational subtleties which one can extract by using one way rather than another. The point is not that the chosen register commits one to a certain set of meanings, but the ways one did *not* address, or refer to, someone give the choice poignancy and unspoken implications.

The question of naming, especially personal names, raises complex theoretical issues of the essential link of name and object. Before we rush to order Balinese means of referring to others, perhaps we might consider Balinese ideas about naming. There is a set of texts, known as *Dasanama*, literally ‘ten names’ which indicate the various names by which heroes in the literature are known in different roles in their lives, at different stages, or in different aspects of their personalities or incarnations. The applicability of names is therefore in a sense highly contextual. As the Balinese use *Dasanama*, the implications are often reversed: things and people are not essentially tied to any one label, rather these are used to indicate different aspects of the same phenomenon. Names may denote, but they do much else besides.

Behind the model of detemporalization and depersonalization of the unfortunate Balinese lie several questionable presuppositions. The point comes out in Geertz’s method of interpreting symbols in his later work on the ‘theatre state’ in Bali (1980). Having extrapolated from the ethnography certain symbols as definitive, constitutive or descriptive of kingship, the analysis is brought to a close.⁸⁴ The assumption is that, having

or classical Romans have tripartite orders of person definition and Englishmen bipartite because they have Christian and surnames. The implication seems to be that the Balinese are not just depersonalized, but have the misfortune to have diffused identities in contrast to our unified ones. If this be so, it is not entirely clear how they can be ‘knowing subjects’ in the same sense, nor whether their ‘constructions’ of the world could be the same as ours. If not, quite what are the implications of personal names? How misleading the rigid and decontextualized link of words and ideas can prove may be seen in Wiggins’ attempt to grapple with Geertz’s model of selfhood (1976: 155). A far more sensitively contextual approach is suggested by Rorty (1976: 301-323).

⁸⁴ For this Geertz draws heavily on Hooykaas’ work on the *Padmasana* and *Siva-Linga* (1964a and 1964b). A careful reading of the differences between Geertz’s interpretation and Hooykaas’s cautious and scholarly account is revealing.

laid out the symbols, we are in a position to grasp how the Balinese understand and use them. This is, however, to presume a theory of the relation of symbols to action. First the argument relies on a denotational model too crude to pick up the nuances of use in utterances. Second the implication is that collective representations are the necessary, or indeed sufficient, conditions of ideas or some kind of 'inner state' (in Needham's (1981 terms) - whether they are the reasons or causes of action (or some less Cartesian relation) is unclear. Third there is an implicit theory of the relation of society and the individual, for describing some of the socially available symbols describes in some way their meaning for people in that society. Fourth, in using the notion of 'symbol' (which is so broad as to be meaningless, 1980: 135) a specific theory of human nature and human action has already been presumed and the ontological problems of the analysis of Balinese culture neatly pre-empted. How Balinese collective representations and Balinese culture are to be interpreted has been determined *a priori* by implicit assumptions about what culture and humans are - in other words, by a theory of human nature.⁸⁵

Human nature in Bali

How is Geertz's general model of human nature and culture worked out in Bali? He approaches the question through the general assumption that it is through symbols 'upon which men impress meaning' that 'man makes sense of the events through which he lives' (1973f: 362 & 363). In different cultures, man's relation to society may be structured in terms of different metaphors. In Bali, as Geertz sees it, the image is somewhere between play and dramaturgy. There is a 'playful theatricality' at work, for 'Balinese social relations are at once a solemn game and a studied drama' (1973f: 400). This is epitomized in the Balinese cockfight, which is a 'melodrama' (1973d: 423), a kind of 'art form' or 'text' (1973d: 443), because it is 'a Balinese reading of Balinese experience' (1973d: 448), in this instance that social life is 'a status bloodbath' (1973d: 436, citing Goffman 1961).

⁸⁵ Having said this I am broadly in sympathy with Geertz's argument for examining the specific forms that human action takes (1973f; 1983a), as against Turner's universalism (see 1982: 105-9). My concern, easy of course with hindsight, is that the argument has not been pushed far enough towards a recognition of the possibility of radically different metaphysical systems.

Perhaps the most elaborated use of this metaphor is in Balinese politics where ‘statecraft is a thespian art’ (1980: 120). For the state in Bali

was a theatre state in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew and audience (1980: 13; also quoted in 1973g: 335).

The metaphor could hardly be made plainer. If humans in general are thinkers, in that they ponder over the conditions of their existence, in Bali they act this out by being thespians.

Geertz’s notion of the ‘meta-social commentary’ has rightly attracted attention. It is a timely reminder that cultures may engage in reflexivity. From the cockfight, on Geertz’s view, it is possible to read meaning more or less directly and learn ‘what being a Balinese “is really like”’ (1973f: 417). The intensity of involvement is described as ‘deep play’, following the English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, through which Balinese portray their status battles to themselves. The link is through a *double entendre* of ‘cock’ which we are told is the source of much cultural imagery about machismo – the Balinese emerge as somewhere between Italian *pappagalli* and characters from Damon Runyan – the commentary hinging on complex, or indeed incoherent, levels of metaphor (e.g. ‘the underdog cock’ 1973f: 426).

There are two initial difficulties, however. It is unclear why the recondite image of a utilitarian philosopher should provide the key metaphor for Balinese gambling. The parallel is illuminating, but in what sense is it valid? It may correspond with our ideas of the use of metaphor, but does it for the Balinese? For they have a very complex vocabulary to describe the relation of signs and symbols to their referents. The term most appropriate here is *pra(tiw)imba* from the Sanskrit, via Old Javanese ‘image, model; shadow’ (Zoetmulder 1982: 1141). In Balinese, it is widely used in the sense of ‘model, metaphor, analogy’. Now the crucial point about *praimba* is that metaphors, by comparing something to something else are inherently false, if illuminating and are treated with great suspicion when encountered. There is nothing to prevent analytic use of metaphor, but it is worthwhile noting that our tradition of use is quite different from the Balinese.

People in Bali are also often described in the literature as ‘playful’. One should not assume however that ‘play’ refers to the same class of discriminable phenomena in different cultures (cf. Huizinga 1949: 29-45). Where the English word links the activity of children, relaxation, story-telling, sport, joking, theatre and so on, Balinese designates each by a separate term and, as far as I can tell, these are not treated as deriving from any core, or essential, set of characteristics.⁸⁶ Care is required in using such pre-constrained terms with heavy connotations in depicting other cultures.

It has not been established, however, that the cockfight is *ipso facto* a meta-social commentary, nor that its object is precarious status battle in which Geertz sees the Balinese as being caught. It is, however, unnecessarily Durkheimian to assume that status relations somehow constitute the reality of which something else is a dramatic representation (especially if one takes Goodman’s point that representations are of something as something else, 1968: 27-31). One might note that much theatre and literature develops the theme of fighting, be it interpreted as dualistic, agonistic, Manichaeic, metaphysical or whatever. The characters in shadow theatre, and orators in public meetings, are often caught in conflict of potentially lethal outcome. What is a commentary on, or reflection of, what?

The themes of conflict or contradiction (both roughly glosses of the Balinese *lawan* or *miegan*, which is also ‘fighting’) and violence are too complex to be dismissed as the idiom of status claims. The former, as the Dutch noted long ago although in a rather different context, is so widespread in many Indonesian societies as to be worth considering as a potential ontological principle. Western commentators seem to have great difficulty with the role of violence in Balinese society. The editors of the *Siwaratrikalpa*, an Old Javanese text found in Bali, felt it necessary to excuse ‘the gruesome methods of warfare which the poet’s imagination conjures up’ (Teeuw et al. 1969: 32) and remark more generally that

⁸⁶ The word ‘play’ seems to have undergone interesting changes during its etymological history, (Onions 1966), although one should beware of dictionaries, especially etymological, as sources of instant essentialism.

Another compulsory feature of almost all *kakawin* is the elaborate, and to our taste exaggerated, descriptions of wars and battles between armies of heroes and demons... The Western reader struggles through these endless scenes with difficulty - in comparison with these the fighting in the *Iliad* seems mere child's play (1969: 31-32).

Ignoring what they see as violence in Bali because they do not like it does not seem a good way of approaching Balinese culture, any more than telling 'the Western reader' what he or she feels.⁸⁷

In other words, I am suggesting that, however interesting Geertz's argument about the cockfight, it has been rather seriously essentialized. (As Boon has pointed out, the cockfight can take on all sorts of different significance in different contexts, 1977: 31-34.) Apart from failing to consider cockfighting against the background of violence and conflict, the argument's impact comes also from omitting other possibly significant contexts.⁸⁸ We are not, for instance, given any idea of Balinese views on psychology to understand what watching or bringing about bloodshed implies. Instead we are offered an implicit Freudian imagery of *thanatos* in the butchery and *eros* in the sexual identifications. While the cockfight is held to be about status or prestige, this is taken largely as an unanalyzable fundamental. There is evidence that the matter is far more complex than this though (Howe 1985; Duff-Cooper 1985a).

Perhaps the most serious contextual omission is any reference to the Balinese 'Chain of Being'. In most versions animals are scaled according to their enslavement to bodily urges as against their capacity for control (see below). Animal classifications accordingly do not rank mammals above birds as taxa, but take each species on merit. So doves, being peaceful and pure, are placed higher than pigs (which are stupid and eat their own kind). And cocks which, also being inclined to fight, are notoriously low. They fight not because they are forced to, but because it is what

⁸⁷ Bourgeois European and American scholars who mostly subscribe to a certain rather vague humanist Protestant moral position have great difficulty appreciating other positions, such as Saivism and certain strands in Islam, without ethnocentrism.

⁸⁸ A curious omission is Balinese ideas about chance. Instead of treating cock-fighting in isolation, it would have been interesting to consider the links with well-developed techniques for cutting down uncertainty and manipulating the world for personal ends, like magic, charms, love potions and so on. The role of trickery and cunning in outwitting chance is so widespread as to suggest its overlooking says much about the moral background of ethnographers.

they tend to do. The homonymic identification of bird and penis to us (e.g. Leach 1964) is made in quite a different classificatory context from the Balinese. Not only were cocks and genitals never compared to the best of my knowledge, but they were held to lie near the opposite taxonomic poles.

What should we make then of Geertz's elaboration on the identification of man and animal essential to the meta-commentary? As he puts it:

The language of everyday moralism is shot through, on the male side of it, with roosterish imagery. *Sabung*, the word for cock (and one which appears in inscriptions as early as A.D. 922) is used metaphorically to mean 'hero,' 'warrior,' 'champion,' 'man of parts,' 'political candidate,' 'batchelor,' 'dandy,' 'lady-killer,' or 'tough guy' (1973c: 418).

The difficulty is that 'cock' is usually *siap* in low Balinese and *ayam* in high; and 'cockfight' is *tajèn*. Unfortunately *sabung* is certainly not everyday Balinese. So on this account they are, at the least, indulging in arcane witticisms, worthy of Oxbridge dons. Nor does *sabung* occur in any of the classic dictionaries (van Eck 1876; van der Tuuk 1897; nor the recent Kersten 1978; or Warna 1978). Nor does the term appear in Old Balinese or Old Javanese, nor yet archipelago Sanskrit (see Gonda 1952; Zoetmulder 1983).

This presents us, with a serious problem. For the word is Malay, the language of trade, and has been incorporated into official Bahasa Indonesia, both being little known until recently by most Balinese. Not only does it seem that the Balinese managed the remarkable feat of expressing their tender sentiments of love in a language which most of them did not speak, but they chose to pun on private parts in a similarly erudite way. Might this be due to some deep psychoanalytic need of the Balinese to speak of the unspeakable in a language few knew in the past? Granted the interest in, and fairly easy-going attitude to, the erotic it seems unlikely. In writing about Balinese personal names, Geertz stated to be 'arbitrarily coined nonsense syllables' (1973f: 369) what are in fact mostly common everyday words. The linguistic foundations of Geertz's symbology start to seem somewhat shaky. The revelation of what it is to be Balinese seems at least in part to be about someone else's symbols in someone else's tongue.

There are, of course, other characterizations of Balinese culture, upon some of which Geertz draws (Bateson 1949 was perhaps the first to elaborate a model using notions of play and drama for Bali). A slightly different image has been developed by Boon. He distinguishes between two styles of culture: epic and romantic.

Epic posits constant, consistently principled, heroic familial aristocracies, whose leaders establish the lawful and the just at the expense of the enemies of right. Romance portrays vulnerable disguised protagonists, partial social misfits who sense surpassing ideals and must prove the ultimate feasibility of actualizing those ideals often against magical odds (1977: 3).

So sweeping is the classification that Bali - if one can legitimately pigeonhole a culture - might be both, either or neither, by turns. To assist us, however, we are offered further bearings in the form of a 'syllogism' (*sic*):

If pre-Islamic Java were Renaissancelike in its elaborate schemes, certainly rivaling Plotinus or Plato, of the interrelation of cosmos, art, and society, then Bali was and is more loosely mannerist (1977: 6).

Where Geertz offered an extended image of Bali as thespian, Boon places it in a classification of literary genres. Either people are heroes battling in soldierly fashion for the good and right, but as slaves of their culture; or they are misfits questioning the system they have inherited and in search of higher (extra-cultural?) ideals. Reference to Western models of man is hardly accidental, for elsewhere Boon elaborates his image of Balinese as Eastern Romantics. Rather than draw any link between the world views of Indian and Balinese literati, he suggests that

a more apt comparison would link Balinese Brahmanas with German romantics: Both have sought to inform their sense of themselves and their exclusive role in society and literature by referring to Sanskrit texts and to Indic ideals of literary priesthood. In a way the Herders, Schlegels, and Novalises of Germany occupy a position vis-a-vis India analogous to that of the *Ida Baguses* and the *pedandas* of Bali (1982: 207).

Quite how the Balinese combine such different centuries and traditions in being at once Mannerist and Romantic is not explained. But Boon makes an important point here: the German

Romantics used ideas current at the time about India to formulate their vision of their place in the world. Needless to say it was a curiously Western view of 'the Other'. Showing that our own tradition has pictured itself at one point in terms of its image of others is not, however, a very good reason for repeating the mistake; this time by reconstructing an entire people in terms of someone else's ideas of how the world, and human nature, ought to be.

There is a final model of Balinese society, which we need briefly to consider. It has been put forward by Bloch (1977) in a criticism of Geertz's views on definitions of person and time in Bali (esp. 1973f). He argues that while there is evidence that cultures define persons differently, as they do such diverse matters as interests, goals and even time; at another level there are shared conceptions of the way the world really is, as otherwise we could never translate or speak across cultural boundaries. What we have here is a dual theory of human nature. There is a culturally specific model underwritten by a necessarily universal account. Bloch's objections centre on the absence in a cultural account such as Geertz's or Boon's, of any way of explaining much of the practical action and political manipulation recorded in the Balinese ethnography. This is indeed a difficulty in Geertz's model of culture and human nature, but it does not follow that the only alternative is a universal account. For Bloch's vision of human nature looks remarkably like Utilitarian Man writ large and it is just as cultural in another sense as is Geertz's, and grounded on equally *a priori*, but different, assumptions. Instead of one account of human nature we have two such that whatever does not fit in the universal model (determined largely by what the analyst can make sense of) fits in the other. In place of the thinker and thespian, we have the shopkeeper or mercenary.

Some Balinese ideas about human nature

The degree to which explanations of action in Balinese society rest upon imported views of human nature should, I hope, be fairly clear from the foregoing account. How much does it matter though if we import explanatory theories or metaphors? Apart from involving us in a very dubious epistemological exercise, it tends to make nonsense of the ethnography.

For example, it has been suggested that Balinese social life is widely portrayed as a kind of theatre in which the actors strive to maximize control over the presentation of self, and fear forgetting their lines, as it were, or giving in to 'stage fright' (Geertz 1973f: 401-2). Now whose idea of self and theatre is this? For the Balinese speak of theatre as about reliving historical truth, *tattwa*, grand or squalid; not with representing something as something else. Geertz is using a vision of theatre from his own culture to explain what he argues to be Balinese ideas of their roles. This is simply a category mistake.

One also wonders how wise it is to define the proper subject matter of inquiry, what is inscribed, prior to an investigation of Balinese categories of speech and action. The point is not that we must be confined to their explicit accounts (for no one is suggesting that is necessarily why they do what they do), but that, as these are the categories in terms of which Balinese evaluate their own and other's speech and actions publicly, they form part of any full ethnographic account. So, to conclude I would like to outline very briefly Balinese representations of speech, action and human nature, and suggest that they are sufficiently different as to vitiate explanations based on alien presuppositions.

Balinese distinguish between two kinds of speech which people use in everyday life. The differences are important, as upon evaluation of these, depends the kind of interpretation which is put upon their 'meaning' (*arti*). Young, stupid and uncontrolled people are likely to speak straightforwardly what is on their minds or, as Balinese put it, speak 'the contents of their stomachs' (*isin basang*). Such immature speech, *raos nguda*, stands in contrast to *raos wayah*, which is what mature adult men and women should properly use. Such wiser, or more controlled people, speak less and enfold the point, *tetuwek*, beneath the surface, which is what fools and the young will read. Those who are more reflective understand how to unravel from hints, structured according to fairly well known cultural standards, what the true reference or purpose (*tetujon*) is. Arguably, it is not a matter of projecting various kinds of image, as Geertz's theatrical metaphor suggests, but of expressing the degree of one's self control in the kind of language one uses.

Balinese also have well-developed views on meaning and communication. For instance, terms like *sakadi* or *satmaka*, normally glossed as ‘like’ and ‘as if’, may be used explicitly not as part of a referential use of language, but metalingually, to express the degree of the speaker’s commitment to the truth of what they are asserting. So the expressions are much used in reporting speech or claims by others, when the speaker needs to make clear that the accuracy of the account is uncertain, and further signifies the degree of likelihood that he or she places on the statement. When I have been working with Balinese, I have been struck by their care in the use of metaphor and analogy, where this can be avoided. It is remarkable that so much of the work on Bali happily assumes the Balinese have the same penchant as we, without considering the kinds of truth conditions the Balinese use in evaluating one another’s statements.

What kinds of assumption do Balinese make about human nature then? The formal framework owes much to an adaptation of classical Hindu, most notably Samkhya, accounts. Three schemes in particular have long been in general circulation.

<i>Triguna</i>	<i>Sattwa</i> Purity, knowledg e	<i>raja(h)</i> Passion, emotion	<i>tamas</i> desire, ignorance
<i>Triwarga</i>	<i>Dharma</i> Dispositio n to do good or one’s duty	<i>Artha</i> pursuit of material utility	<i>Kama</i> enjoyment of sensual pleasure
<i>Tiga- jnana</i>	<i>Idep</i> thought	<i>Sabda</i> speech	<i>Bayu</i> energy ⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The last triad is normally given in reverse order: energy, speech, action. I have altered this here, because of the connection between the qualities in each column. The last triad is also generally unnamed, although as Hooykaas, from whom the term is taken, notes it is of great explanatory importance in Bali (1964c: 26). For it provides the basis, among other things, for a classification of ‘nature’ (in our terms) of a quite non-Aristotelian kind. Other names used for the triad include ‘*tritattwa*’. The glosses in English are crude and designed only to give a rough idea of the kinds of quality at issue (for a helpful translation see Zoetmulder 1982).

The *triguna* are the three constituents of human nature; the *triwarga* are the three aims of human life; and the *tiga-jnana*, the three forces manifest in various degrees in living forms, as well as the three kinds of knowledge that are associated with different living forms. The possible connections between the three sets allow many exegeses. The system offers, among other things, a comprehensive account of the Balinese Chain of Being. Animals (and plants) at one extreme are capable only of acting as systems of energy, or at best simple speech, seek sensual pleasure in eating and sexual intercourse, and live in a state of ignorant desire. Gods at the opposite pole approximate to pure thought, are motivated only by a disposition to do good and epitomize knowledge and purity. The higher they are the more remote, but also ineffectual they become, because they lack the capacity for speech and energy. The Balinese give this set of schemes, which they seem to have adapted from Samkhya, a twist of their own. For they link this model with a transformational view of the universe of their own. Everything is thought to be in a state of continuous transformation (*matemahan*). So for humans to stress only purity or knowledge, for instance, is dangerous as it easily leads to excess and madness (or darkness, ignorance). Rather balance should be preserved between each of the three states, in each system; although the precise point of balance depends upon what is fitting for people from different castes and for different personalities. The entire scheme is run through with several contextual clauses.

Several points need to be made about these schemes. First we have here a fairly thoroughgoing account of human faculties, goals and 'natural' processes. It stands as a theory in its own right, because it is a consistent, systematic and exhaustive account; and fits closely with Samkhya philosophical thinking (Larson 1987). Second, this theory is determinedly tripartite and fits ill with European-derived dichotomies like pain/pleasure, altruism/egoism or psychoanalytical models. So it is unwise to transcribe alien distinctions, dual or otherwise, onto the Balinese without careful consideration beforehand. Third the schemes are common knowledge, not priestly esoteric models, and are presupposed, if often unreflectively, in their interpretation of disputes and action in daily life, so we ignore their relevance at our peril.

How are such schemes actually used though? At this point the possible ways of contextualizing presuppositions becomes

important. Among the more common renderings was the link of *triwarga* with caste. For each caste notionally has a different *dharma*, or set of appropriate caste duties, which are laid out in various texts offering an authoritative discursive view of proper relations between the different estates. Once again, however, such schemes are open to multiple interpretation. For *dharma* was also seen either as the moral duty incumbent upon all human beings or as an ideal associated with *Brahmana* and priests in particular, whether of high or low caste. *Dharma* is characterized as well in everyday life as reflective thinking (*pemineh* or sometimes *manah* from *manas*, the organ, or faculty of internal thought) as opposed to thinking about how to fulfil one's desires instrumentally (*keneh*). So *dharma* may be linked to caste duties of different kinds; it may be seen as the ideal of a few specialized, and dedicated, persons; it may be seen as a legitimate goal for all humans to strive for; or it may be the classification of one kind of thinking. Similar styles of contextualizing the classifications can be made for each of the other terms. So, on the one hand, terms may be contextualized singly; on the other, their connections may be stressed or further their possible links with other schemes like that of a transforming world. When a scheme like the *triwarga* is contextualized in this way, however, its authoritative aspects, stressed in the caste model, may undergo great change. For an excessive stress on purity, or duty, may lead the personality to a state of imbalance and into the commission of gross acts.

Use of Balinese representations of human nature leads to a quite different kind of possible interpretation of institutions than those normally given. Cocks fighting for dominance might more easily be examples of what humans should *not* do: rather than an extended theatrical play on Balinese society, they may equally be seen as a dramatic representation of how not to behave. Cockfights occur obligatorily at temple festivals and other rites, when the destructive and atavistic, expressed as *bhuta* (demonic, but also what is blind and ignorant), have their moment. Importing Goffman fully fledged, before exploring a promising Balinese model, is to gild the tropic lily.

Such schemes, and their possible associations with other cultural representations, offer the Balinese a wide range of ways to contextualize day-to-day issues. In village affairs, for instance, past usage may be brought to bear. In matters to do with gods and custom, there is often concern to do what is appropriate and

Brahmanical example, or advice, may be relied upon. Influential villagers develop clientele, like royal entourages; and striving for political advantage (which may be classified as seeking *artha*) may use the full trappings of princely statecraft in a humble way. When funds accumulate in local treasuries, villagers may eschew local leaders' plans to invest these productively in favour of cash in hand. Orators may be adept at stage techniques for putting their points across in meetings (not infrequently orators are actors to boot). So, perhaps we can characterize recognized roles like the thinker, the soldier prince, the public actor or the poor peasant, slave to his passions, as cultural paradigms in terms of which the Balinese themselves think and depict their society?

Just as it is possible to specify the cultural forms that ideas of human nature take, so we can give a preliminary specification of the styles or strategies of interpretation. So far I have treated these as labels, not as universal essential processes, as they obviously take different forms in different cultures and periods. We noted four commonly used ways of structuring and interpreting collective representations under the rather gruesome labels: essentializing, contextualizing, making do and elaborating. It may be useful to link these provisionally to popular Balinese words widely used in evaluating words and action. *Tattwa* is the term used of 'what makes something what it is' (Zoetmulder 1983: 1962). This is generally not available directly to humans who must work through texts, inference or revelation and it is often maintained that the Supreme Being, or intelligence, Sang Hyang Widhi alone knows this. So *nattwain* is to work towards the truth of something. In Old Javanese it has the added implication of 'the essential, the actual (as contrasted with the apparent or incidental). Sometimes *tattwa* 'is the concrete object in its essence, *katattwan* the abstract essence of the concrete object' (Zoetmulder 1983: 1962). So on one reading, if one village Balinese do not often seem to make, *tattwa* is directly linked to essentializing.

Often however things are to be understood in context to ensure they are appropriate, *manut*; and it is a common word to hear in meetings and discussion of interpretations of theatrical performances. Contextualizing is then *nganutang*, 'fitting'. Obviously ensuring things are fitting is central to making pragmatic judgements, so *manut* has practical overtones. There is another word, however, which picks up some of the connotations in English which is *pasti*, definite, certain, which, as *mastiang*,

may be used with the implications of ‘making certain that’, ‘determining’, ‘stating’. While theatre should be about *tattwa*, it is recognized that most people are sufficiently weak in *dharma* that it is necessary to appeal to their *kama*. So *tattwa* must be elaborated and decorated, *maiya*s, in words and action to make them palatable. It would clearly be possible to refine and add to these terms, but this should be adequate to make the point that these strategies or styles are not pure analyst’s importations.

The advantage of characterizing the Balinese in terms of cultural idioms which they have available, not the literary genres of Europe or America, of which the Balinese know not, is that we do not run the danger of creating a *bengkiwa* (a sterile hybrid, taken from the monstrosity born of mating two local breeds of duck). There are also many occasions on which the Balinese themselves appeal to such models in explaining the actions of others. However, this still remains an essentializing strategy. Other constructions may be put upon events. Ceremonies at which *Brahmana* are called in to officiate often fail to be moments of enactment of cultural ideals, being spoiled by bickering and fights over the division of costs. A sure road to eventual ruin in village politics is to ape one’s betters. Accepted roles may be contextualized in all sorts of different ways. After all, is an orator a thinker, a human version of a fighting cock, a shadow-puppet of some patron, or a man who likes the sound of his own voice? It may be any one, all or none.

Representations of human nature in Bali bear directly on the kinds of interpretation we may legitimately put upon their actions. If we wish to use the image of ‘negotiation’, which is the popular utilitarian and transactionalist image for how social relations are to be understood, then it might be well to include indigenous ideas of what negotiation is thought to be about. One might reasonably expect the Balinese to express the actions of others in terms of styles of transaction that are culturally available. For instance the kind of bartering image of humans, present in so much of the literature, would seem to be *prima facie* out of place in a society where it is court intrigue which plays so great a part in everyday life, and in theatre. I am not saying that there is some mechanical relationship between representations and action: merely that such representations are part of the circumstances under which Balinese act and interpret the actions of others. Omitting such points is to omit a critical part of the ethnographic record. Reflecting on our

own presuppositions is also a first step away from a pervasive ethnocentrism which scholarly studies may subtly perpetuate by searching for an essence, at worst imported outright, at best by reifying what happens among the people with whom they work.

Despite – or even because of – the amount of research on Bali, how little we know is becoming clear. The plethora of unexamined, but relevant, indigenous treatises and the degree of local variation alone suggest that generalizations are pretty spurious. Much of the material has reported assertions in particular situations as fact, and fact as truth. What we have mostly is a smattering of textual sources, partial dynastic chronicles and legal codes, the opinions of well-informed informants (priests, headmen, and marginal men; but rarely women) taken out of context and mapped onto nebulous paradigms of Western intellectual history, without regard for Balinese epistemological criteria. Balinese culture remains largely an invention of its commentators. There is much in Daniel Heinsius of Ghent's motto:

How much there is that we do not know!

Afterthoughts

In taking issue with some of the presuppositions we borrow to account for other peoples' doings, I am only hinting at the tip of an iceberg. When scholars extrapolate a set of symbols, or when they describe another culture in terms of how people there 'construct' or 'negotiate' their culture, what precisely are they doing? Is the implication that the existence of symbols or evidence of negotiation explains why people do what they do? To assume this would be to import further presuppositions of our own, about the relation of collective representations and events, about the relation of thought and action, and ideas about what constitutes an explanation which are far from fixed but a matter of our own cultural fashion. The explanation of action is a notoriously tricky business (see Anscombe 1957; White 1968). The sheer difficulties in providing an account of ordinary everyday behaviour in terms of the available models of intention, reason, cause and motive, suggests the potential weaknesses of our own ideas and another good reason not to impose them on others.

We need a kind of detailed knowledge of how people use their cultural representations which has to date rarely even been considered necessary. There is evidence to suggest, for instance, that the Balinese use their ideas of human nature in different ways than we might be led to expect. The schemes they elaborate are not generally used to provide an efficient, or final, causal explanation of particular actions. These are often held to be effectively beyond explanation. Instead the models are used to provide a general account of the conditions under which actions take place. The Balinese, suitably in the light of recent Western problems in the philosophy of mind and action, tend to treat the question of intentions or reasons for doing something as private, if indeed knowable at all. Where we develop ever more sophisticated techniques for the examination and exposure of the person, under psychoanalysis and legal definitions of responsibility, the Balinese draw a polite veil. Some things they still leave to the person. There may be good professional grounds for our doing the same. For our illusion that we can explain the actions of others is a product as much of our tendency to essentialize and simplify, as it is of any realistic possibility of being able to do so. Context is too complex to allow such certainties. If I am right then the business of explaining others is likely to be much harder than we like to make out. If I am wrong, then, like Monsignor Quixote's illustrious ancestor, Don Quixote, I am tilting harmlessly at windmills.

Chapter 3

Anthropos through the looking-glass: or how to teach the Balinese to bark

So much has been said to so little avail about rationality that to add to it would be pretty pointless. However a curious document has come my way which suggests that disquisitions on rationality reveal more about their authors than about what they claim to speak. I quote briefly.

Sometimes the Tsew really appear backward. Their utter conviction in their superiority can be very straining on an outsider; for they use every opportunity to compare others unflatteringly with themselves. While they display a shrewd mercantile flair, no small technical ingenuity and awesome military might, it is the manner by which they justify their prowess which mystifies one not born with their assumptions and mode of reasoning. Nretsew peoples are thought to excel in the finest human attribute, being *laniotar*, or *Ar* in common parlance. This quality above all they asseverate to be the cause of their success. According to the learned elders *Ar* is so important in Nretsew life that they define humanity by its possession and animality by its absence. I suspect my dilatory and uncertain grasp of this concept has given them ground to doubt whether I am indeed truly human. For unless one is *Ar*, it transpires one cannot understand what it is.

Today was most depressing. As the Tsew constantly invoke *Ar* to account for every institution from agricultural practice to moral injunctions, I returned to trying to understand it. The priests to whom I spoke quite failed to see how contradictory I found their ideas about *Ar*. For humans are defined by *Ar*, but some are more so than others. Not being *Ar* enough opens one to ridicule; and tens of thousands of Tsew have been incarcerated by their fellows, often until death, on the charge of lacking *Ar*. The quality of *Ar* is inferred from speech and action by the priests, but while these persons epitomize this highest of virtues, the same priests are widely treated with contempt by many. Traditionally the truth about *Ar* was revealed by the two great Culture Heroes, Otalp and Eltotsira, who it seems agreed on little else. Texts in esoteric language abound and sects proliferate, each professing the true interpretation and using it to refute the others. Foolishly I remarked that, as every sect's criteria were different, they might argue at cross-purposes

for ever, only to be told scornfully that this showed I did not understand *Ar*. Surely it is inconsistent for each priest to boast an idiolect and disagree with all others, but unite to insist there to be only one true *Ar*.

Squabbles break out constantly. For instance, in the Order of Srenildrah, a young apostate, Sekul, was caught coping with the ambiguities of *Ar*, by preaching that it was of two kinds, *Arwan* and *Artu*. The magnitude of the heresy was brought to light by the archpriest Silloh who reaffirmed the doctrine that there could be only one true *Ar*, because this was the necessary condition of thought itself. This peroration was though promptly criticized by another, Htims Notwen, who opined that the necessity of *Ar* derived from it being the condition of effective action.

When challenged, however, Nretsew priests often resort to arguments of a quite different order. They affirm categorically that the world could not make sense without *Ar*; or point to the material superiority of the Tsew as proof of *Ar*; the very flexibility of their argumentation itself being further proof that...

At this juncture the text, which appears to be a kind of ethnographic diary, gradually becomes unintelligible. Later entries suggest that the anonymous author succumbed to drink, a fate one gathers popular in that culture.⁹⁰

We hold these truths to be self-evident

Recent work on rationality is not unlike a hall of mirrors: it is a dazzling display of possibility - and improbability. Each reflection is so life-like and incontrovertible, and comes framed in its own style of erudition. The trouble is there are so many versions, each right, that one is faced with a surfeit of certitudes, each different. The profusion can hardly be explained away as a matter of interpretation or perspective; for each account claims to state the true and necessary way things are. If there be, as is mooted, a universal 'common core' of rationality and shared perceptions, which vary only according to the 'logic of the situation' (Horton 1982: 257), the diversity of views suggests there are as many situations, or logics, as there are authors. The predicament, read carefully, is that of the Tsew. For how, so to

⁹⁰ I am indebted to Miner (1956) for drawing my attention to the possible existence of the Tsew.

peak, is one sure that what one sees is windows on the world not oneself in mirrors? To continue the metaphor, the only way of knowing is to try to smash through the mirrors to whatever lies beyond. To dally may be to meet the fate of that famous armchair introvert who

‘...weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down on Camelot.’⁹¹

Reason and its discontents

My recourse to metaphor might seem out of place in discussing rationality. Talk of mirrors is not a mere conceit though. For abstract notions like reason tend to be portrayed figuratively through metaphors which are hidden, or are far from as dead as they seem. I wish to explore here some of the presuppositions behind the imagery and consider how far assertions about the universality of rationality are a matter of fashion and cultural style. The point may be made by comparing received wisdom on reason and logic with Balinese ideas and use. The result is intended to be a critical ethnography in the sense that, rather than judge Balinese usage against the ‘objective’ yardsticks of particular academic traditions, I shall try critically to reflect on each discourse by contrast with the other.

Briefly my argument is as follows. The claims by proponents of a universal rationality, whom I shall label ‘universalists’, are mutually inconsistent enough to vitiate their claims to be self-evidently true, let alone offer a coherent set of criteria by which to evaluate other cultures.⁹² Part of the inconsistency stems from the

⁹¹ For Indonesian readers, this is a reference to a famous poem by Tennyson about the Lady of Shalott, who was cursed to weave a magic web of the mythic Arthurian kingdom of Camelot, but who would die should she ever gaze out of the window at the reality. She did – and the mirror cracked, a result referred to at the end of the chapter.

⁹² Clearly terms like ‘rationalism’ and ‘universalism’ are sufficiently broad, if not downright ambiguous, as to allow birds of many a theoretical feather under their wing. Consistently, I hope, with my concern about the dangers of essentializing, I use such terms as loose labels, preferably drawing upon authors’ self-description of their works.

sheer range of uses of terms like 'reason'; part from the degree to which such ambiguous notions disguise the play of metaphor and presupposition.

We easily assume our epistemological categories to be necessary, self-evident or even natural. For instance the link of logic and language with the world tends to be represented visually as one of reflection. Strict universalists are prone to argue that what is mirrored must be *essentially* the same everywhere and be perceived by identically organized minds. I shall question whether it is realistic to assume such universal essences or to regard human nature or 'mind' as if it were some kind of essentially definable object or process.

Given this shared view of the world, activities we can understand are therefore labelled 'rational' and those we cannot 'symbolic' (see Barley 1983: 10-11). Such categories, however, presuppose ideas about the consistency of utterances and their coherence with a notional 'order' in the world. For each category is assumed to be homogeneous and to hold good not only for the collective representations in any one society, but across cultures as well, despite the abundant evidence to the contrary. The issue is not whose presuppositions are right, but whether it is possible to represent what is going on accurately enough in any instance even to begin serious discussion. Appeal to reason, in preference to other ways of interpreting statements and actions, involves selection and power. If we stretch others on the rack of reason, we

Where relevant I indicate whose argument is at issue. In the first instance, it is those analytical philosophers and fellow travellers who have taken part in the 'rationality debate'. At times I have the suspicion, (doubtless unfounded!) that the British seem more comfortable and convincing when arguing in an empirical vein than in handling neo-Cartesian, Kantian, or similar arguments for the necessity of a universal rationality, where their continental or American counter-parts seem more sophisticated (e.g. Lévi-Strauss or Chomsky). This is not to suggest, however, that the latter are without grave weaknesses (see Benoist 1978: 1-88; Ions 1977: 134-148; Goodman 1971; Putnam 1971).

Similar caveats about essentialism obviously apply to my use of terms like 'culture' and 'the Balinese'. I do not wish to suggest there is any essential Balinese culture. There are only the myriad statements and actions which people living on the island of Bali, and calling themselves Balinese, engage in. Much of my information comes from the settlement in North Gianyar where I did research, but the results have been checked as broadly as possible. In referring to the Balinese I include high and low castes unless otherwise stated.

run the danger of reducing them to incoherent screams, and ultimately silence.

Rationality and reason are, anyway, peculiarly difficult notions to review critically because they have so many, and frequently incompatible, senses. They have played the role of key, or constitutive, concepts in much Western discourse since the pre-Socratic philosophers (or better, our retrospective reading of their fragmentary texts). Worse still, reason and other equally ambiguous notions - like thought, truth, nature, law and reality - are usually mutually inter-defined. This makes the application of such ideas to other cultures difficult, and arguably impossible. If it be the hallmark of symbols to be polysemic, then the key concepts of proponents of universal rationality seem to be highly symbolic!

Appeal to the generality of reason has other serious shortcomings. Much of the argument seems to beg the question. The case for the necessity, or inevitability, of a common universal rationality, often relies on the use of just that rationality to argue the point. The position steers dangerously close to *petitio principii*. While philosophers are trained in ways of sidestepping such impasses, the innocent anthropologist may be reminded of another simple man's expostulation:

for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again.
Shakespeare *Henry V*, Act v, ii.

In the recent excited mating of philosophy and anthropology, it is easy to overlook a potential incompatibility. Philosophers are concerned to establish generalities and guidelines, such as how we ought properly to think, or must needs regard rationality, if we are to make the world coherent. Anthropologists, by contrast, are interested in what cultural representations are about and how people use them, not with how they ought to. The more reflective and fungus-infested ethnographers, grappling with the idiosyncrasies of someone else's culture, are often struck by quite how far our own assumptions permeate attempts to 'make sense' of others.

These remarks might seem obvious, but 'the entry of the philosophers' (in Gellner's phrase 1973), into the business of

telling anthropologists what they should be doing and what their data mean, requires us to reflect on whether reason is, as is claimed, the panacea for all cultural confusions or whether it is merely latter-day epistemological colonization. It is remarkable that the model of scientific rationality should be thrust upon others at the time that its presuppositions are under devastating attack from many of its own luminaries (Quine 1953a; Kuhn 1970, 1977; Feyerabend 1975; Rorty 1980). One wonders if the two are unconnected? Be that as it may, anthropologists are being made to dance a lobster quadrille to a rationalist tune, being cast off into the ethnographic sea only to be rejected when we swim back with disconcerting news.

The rationalist case may be presented as a paradox inherent in the 'relativism' imputed to its opponents. It is that:

the best evidence against relativism is, ultimately, the very activity of anthropologists, while the best evidence for relativism seems to be in the writings of anthropologists (Sperber 1982: 1982).

In fact, it is advocates of a universal rationality who put themselves in a self-referential bind. (Why Sperber's paradox need not apply to anthropologists will be reviewed later.) For rationalists of almost any hue must refuse 'to divorce reasons from objective truth' and insist that 'it has to be objectively true that one thing is good reason for another' (Hollis & Lukes 1982: 10, 11). If this be so, it is hard to see how rationalists can then disagree among themselves so sharply as to the good reasons for their own arguments (on which see Hollis & Lukes 1982: 12ff.). The criticisms are not *ad hominem*. If there are so many good reasons for asserting incompatible truths, by the rationalists' own criteria of valid argument, either there is a good deal of slippage between reason and truth, or reason alone cannot provide good reasons, or truth has many facets, or some such difficulty. Whichever is so, reason is not quite what it is claimed to be. Sperber's paradox may be turned back on him simply by substituting 'rationality' for 'relativism' and 'rationalists' for 'anthropologists'!

An equally thorny patch for rationalists is what they mean by 'reason' and 'rationality'. They are remarkably loth to define them; and when they do they usually disagree! This is not surprising as the great champions of reason from Descartes to

Leibniz or Kant differed so deeply over what reason was and could do. As power theorists tend to fall back on force as the *deus ex machina*, so do rationalists in the last resort to logic. It is to pretty palaeolithic ideas of logic though, like the ‘laws of thought’ or a simple logic of propositions, to which they turn. The hesitancy in pinning their epistemological flags to the mast even here may be because the going gets treacherous long before reaching the murky waters of a logic of classes, predicate calculus or non-standard logics aimed at coping with some of the more massive leaks in the ship of reason.

Logic is not then so simple, nor safe. The complexities of the truth-conditions even of elementary ‘if...then’ constructions, which worry semanticists (Kempson 1975; Wilson 1975; Lyons 1977:138-229), have exercised some of the finest philosophical minds (e.g. Russell 1905; Strawson 1950, 1964). If logic is so troublesome why assume it to underwrite the universal efficacy of reason? For such

deductive logic is but a poor thing, being merely a tool for achieving consistency. Rationality *requires more than* consistency’ (Newton-Smith 1982: 110, my emphasis).

At best it seems we need more than logic. What this surplus is varies between philosophers. So does whether the resulting rational brew is an *a priori* condition of intelligibility (Hollis 1982), or an *a posteriori* test of practical, let alone interpretive, success (Newton-Smith 1982; Horton 1979, 1982; Taylor 1982)?⁹³ The further one inquires the more the universalist plight mirrors that of the monocular Tseu in a three dimensional world.

⁹³ It is often unclear whether the claim is that we must assume a common rationality for the purposes of translation, or whether it is some ontological commitment to rationality as a human universal. The going gets rough when one asks of what ‘rational’ is predicated. Is it of collective representations, of persons, of thought, of action, or of criteria of verification? If it be thought, are we speaking of propositions, utterances, semiotic regularities or semantic rules? If it be action, what relation do these have to the actor (for instance, are they causes of action). A problem here is settling what is rationality and what a rationale. The closer the argument gets to postulating rationality as *a priori*, the more it is open to criticisms of the kind levelled against Chomsky for suggesting so much can be bracketed away in a theory of ‘innate abilities’.

Images of knowledge

Rationality is then more than just consistency. For not only is 'our concept of rationality *richer*', but it permits 'a *higher* – or in some sense superior – *view* of reality' (Taylor 1982: 88,89, my emphases). Is it not curious that a rationalist requires recourse to metaphor to explain an idea deeply inimical to the whole notion of metaphor? For rationalists traditionally eschew the figurative. The truth against which reason measures itself is the world and mirrored in language. Tropes have no place in formal logic or empirical truth (see Quine 1979: 159-60); and a deep distrust of rhetoric can be traced as far back as the great Greek systematizers.

This putative ancestry throws light on the claims, and blind spots, of much rationalism. For, it is argued, logic was devised to counter the persuasive oratory used in public debate in Greek city states (e.g. Lloyd 1979: 59-125; Todorov 1982: 60-83). It sets out to be more persuasive still than rhetoric, by grounding its appeal in 'necessity' or 'reality'. It is conveniently forgotten that both rhetoric and logic involve, as we shall see, relations of power.

A more amusing way in which rationalists use figurative language is in depicting their opponents. Critics of the supremacy of reason are labelled 'soft' relativists. These unfortunate woolly-minded romantics are unable to 'rise above' their feelings and prejudices; whereas rationalists are hard-headed, with a higher, clear view of things. The image of intellectual he-men, grappling spaghetti-western fashion with a tough reality, comes out in their imagery of building 'bridgeheads' (Hollis 1970:215ff.) and surviving in a harsh world of 'material-objects' (Horton 1979). Meanwhile your poor relativist is condemned, like the poet Bunthorne, to '...walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily, in your mediaeval hand' (Gilbert & Sullivan *Patience*, Act 1). The more or less loony relativism which universalists ascribe to everyone else presupposes a dichotomy focused upon reason, which skews the potential coherence of everything else. This nicely makes the point that taxonomies of rationality are not neutral, but involve power. Unfortunately the (*autre-disant*) relativists often go along with this ascription and merely read 'hard' as 'rigid', and 'soft' as 'flexible'. My worry about universalism, however, is exactly the opposite. It is not 'hard' enough: it allows in too many questionable assumptions about the

nature of the world, human beings, language, knowledge and order. Deny it as they do, rationalists live in a very 'soft' world, comfortably furnished with the latest concepts and meanings (woolly 'mental' suppositions and 'obscure intermediary entities' Quine 1953a: 22) which, to a sceptical eye, look just as quaint and ethnocentric as do the Tsew.⁹⁴

Apart from striking spatial and tactile images, rationalist argument is often shot through with a visual metaphor of language and logic as a "mirror of nature."⁹⁵

It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions. The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations - some accurate, some not - and capable of being studied by pure, non-empirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself. Without this latter notion, the strategy common to Descartes and Kant - getting more accurate representations by inspecting, repairing and polishing the mirror, so to speak - would not have made sense (Rorty, R. 1980: 12).

⁹⁴ As Hacking has pointed out, the rationalist model tends to assume a complex relationship between four postulated entities. These are a knowing subject (or mind), speech (or ideas), an external reality (note the spatial metaphor) and experience (unmediated by culture and conveniently universal) of that reality available to the knowing subject (1975: 157-87). Each of these entities and the relation between them have come to raise increasingly serious problems. For instance the primacy of the knowing subject is under challenge (conservatively by Strawson 1959, more radically by Althusser 1972 and Foucault 1972a, 1986a, 1986b). The relation between language, experience and reality, let alone the status of each, has been shown to be very problematic (e.g. Wittgenstein 1958; Quine 1960; Kuhn 1970; Goodman 1978). It seems unwise in the light of these difficulties to try to apply the model to other cultures without careful reflection on what it presupposes.

⁹⁵ The image which pervades this model of knowledge is the mind as an internal eye. Knowledge was a showing 'to the eye, the only eye, the inward eye. That which was shown was the principle: namely the origin, the source. The source was the *essence*, that which made the object what it is' (Hacking 1975: 162, my emphasis).

What finally upset this view was the recognition that 'knowledge is public, and is not merely a mode of existence of 'human nature', 'understanding', or 'reason' (1975: 166). The links between knowing as seeing, reason, human nature and essence will be discussed in due course.

To the extent that anthropologists are concerned less with how the world ultimately is than with the forms collective representations take empirically, such presuppositions become a matter for study in ourselves and in others. If rationalism is ‘the story of the domination of the mind of the West by ocular metaphors, within a social perspective’ (Rorty, R. 1980: 13), one might ask what models, if any, are found in other cultures?

Visual metaphors of knowledge seem so obvious as to rule out would-be contenders. Other mammals, however, make more use of sound, smell and touch, than we. How, for example, might the world appear were senses other than sight primary? For olfactory beings (some breeds of dog come to mind) presence would presumably not be a sharp there-or-not matter, but a fairly sudden proximity and a gradual weakening of stimuli (see Jonas and Jonas 1976, for some amusing possibilities). It would be an analog world of subtle degrees, not of clear digital distinctions (see Wilden 1972: 155-201). Logic, of course, is the stereotype of unambiguous division; and attempts to adapt it to the world of uncertainty and shades of meaning in which we live are still in their infancy.

Such reflection is not just barren speculation on the doings of brutes. For Balinese popular ideas about the grounds of knowledge are different from ours, and quite subtle. The visual metaphor of knowledge is pretty explicit. Terms for knowing are mostly linked to sight.⁹⁶ Balinese also recognize a hierarchy of senses. Sight is widely held to be the most reliable guide to the material world, but it cannot deal with the past, the future and what is not visible. Hearing occupies an ambiguous role. Balinese often stress language’s capacity to shape and transmit information, but it is recognized that language is polysemic, and double-edged to boot; for it is moulded by the purposes, perceptions and interests of speakers and listeners. So speech may be used to lie as easily as to say what someone thinks to be the case. As Goethe once remarked: ‘If I make a mistake, anyone can see it, but not if I lie.’

⁹⁶ *Nawang*, and *uning*, the words I gloss as ‘knowing’ in low and high Balinese respectively, are linked to the root *tawang*, and near homonym, *ening*. Both signify ‘clear’, ‘transparent’. Another important term, *meturah-turahan*, ‘guessing’, is literally working out what something is in very poor light.

Balinese epistemology seems not simply to be a folk model. For it is closely parallel to, and historically may well derive from, Indian Nyaya philosophy which recognizes four ways (*pramana*) of obtaining valid knowledge.⁹⁷ This is not to imply that the issue can be ignored if a culture does not have a literate philosophical tradition, as the work of Overing (1985) and Salmond (1985) make abundantly clear. Before trying to bury the corpse of possible alternative rationalities, we might inquire what others do, not just what we think they ought to do.

Ideas of truth

Ideas of truth, like Byzantine contracts, admit of many readings. The view implicit in most universalist arguments is a version of a classical account, again traced traditionally to Aristotle, which runs crudely as follows. Language ‘contains’ meaning in the form of propositions, by referring to reality through some form of correspondence. As a theory of signs, the connection is by virtue of imitation (resemblance), natural association (causation, or motivation) or convention (a cake which may be cut many ways, see Todorov 1982: 15-99). This ‘Correspondence Theory’ of truth and meaning also offers a common-sense account of translation. For the equivalence of sentences in different languages is guaranteed in so far as the propositions they embody describe a single reality.⁹⁸

One of the most thorough-going attempts to restate and defend this traditional (intellectualist) position is by Sperber (1975, 1982). In his view, proper knowledge of the world is represented

⁹⁷ The common Balinese version is discussed below and varies in several interesting features. Only one form of knowledge rests mainly on observation, while two make much use of language. This leaves the Balinese in something of a quandary over their reliability, as we shall see.

⁹⁸ ⁹⁸ In the Romantic reaction to this Classical view arguably all that changes is that language is recognized not as imitating the external world, but as denoting the ‘inner’ experience of a speaker’s or artist’s act of production, or of the working of language itself (Todorov 1982: 147-221). Jakobson, in fact, identified six different functions of language, only one of which was its capacity to refer to the state of the world (1960). The other potential functions of language tend conveniently to be forgotten in most universalist accounts.

linguistically in propositions, all other uses of language being tidied away into a class of ‘semi-propositional representations’ (1982: 169), which are referentially defective, and therefore ambiguous and suspect. At best speakers may express their attitude to what is said and listeners choose the most relevant, or appealing, interpretation. Such spastic propositions include not only poetry and ‘symbolic’ utterances but also, miraculous to relate, most culturally transmitted statements of belief and even the arguments of what he chooses to class as his ‘relativist’ opponents!

What assumptions does such a view of truth make? First, the link of language and truth is expressed in at least two incompatible metaphors. Language is seen here as ‘containing’ meaning, or truth: a ‘conduit metaphor’, which simplifies and distorts the ways language actually works (Reddy 1979). Somehow language also ‘represents’ reality, which assumes a ‘mimetic’ or ‘copy’ metaphor (Goodman 1968). So true knowledge often lands up being represented visually (for instance in terms of spatial metaphors, as a ‘theoretical landscape’, Salmond 1982). Second, introducing reality as the means of equating propositions in different languages merely creates yet another step in translation.⁹⁹

In its extreme form ‘Correspondence Theory’ works by simply shrugging off most kinds of statement which puzzle and interest anthropologists and non-verbal communication (see Goodman 1968, 1978) as emotional ‘attitudes’ (cf. Rorty, A. 1980). Even if a more eclectic view is taken, such theories are part of a particular historical tradition and ignore the question of how other cultures represent the world, or indeed how they hold language or knowledge to work. Correspondence Theory is like a dog with one leg - in bad need of support from a contextual, performative or pragmatic theory of truth and meaning as a prosthesis.

Balinese ideas about truth embody subtly different presuppositions. Yet their views show great consistency and

⁹⁹ Gellner offers a succinct critique of this approach (1970: 24-25). Tarski (1956), whose theory of ‘truth-conditional semantics’ provides the most elegant version of ‘Correspondence Theory’, argued cogently that it would not work for natural languages anyway. Not only does this approach applied to naming and reference lead into a Minoan maze (Lyons 1977: 174-229; but see also a would-be Theseus, Kripke 1977), but it is far from clear what a proposition is anyway, let alone whether it is reasonable (*sic*) to assume such ‘abstract entities’ exist (Quine 1970: 2).

sensitivity to the grounds, and limits, of empirical knowledge, without straining metaphor. They are fashionably up to date in denying anyone, except conceivably Divinity, a privileged access to reality and have a theory of human nature which is not essentially, founded on rationality (unlike Aristotle's definition of Man as a 'rational biped')

Let us start with terminology. Several words may be provisionally glossed as 'true' in one sense or other. For instance, *patut* (*benéh* in low Balinese, cognate with Malay *benar*) implies being coherent, fitting, or appropriate in a given context. The closest term to our notion of empirically true seems to be *wiakti* (in high Balinese, *saja* in low), 'manifest', or *sayuwakti*, evident.¹⁰⁰ What is at stake becomes clearer in the light of the critical distinction between *sakala*, visible, embodied, and *niskala*, invisible, non-manifest. For what is *sakala* may be known far more fully to human beings than what is *niskala*.¹⁰¹

The differences between what I take as the Balinese and universalist presuppositions are delicate but crucial. They pose the Balinese problems too. For the distinction between manifest and non-manifest is equivalent neither to the dichotomy between present and absent, nor true and false. The states are not dichotomous, but overlapping. The non-manifest may be invisible; it may be visible but not present; it may be present as an aspect of, or hidden within, what is visible. There is an ontological and epistemological gulf between *sakala* and *niskala*, from the point of view of humans (who straddle the gap in life, between being visible and engaging in behaviour; and thinking and feeling, activities which are non-manifest in others). As we shall see, Balinese are cautious about making statements that confuse their two categories, a sensibility which, to my mind, keeps them out of a lot of trouble.

¹⁰⁰ The words are found in Old Javanese, the language of Balinese texts and priestly knowledge, as *wyakti*, evidence, clarification, and *sawyakti*, clear, universally known (Zoetmulder 1982: 2347), the last making the point that such knowledge is public. In Sanskrit *vyakti* refers to manifestation, visible appearance, (Gonda 1952: 176).

¹⁰¹ cf. Sanskrit *sakala*, consisting of parts, complete; also Old Javanese, in visible or material form, pertaining to the world perceptible by the senses (Zoetmulder 1982: 1603). Also Sanskrit *niskala*, without parts, undivided (cf. Gonda 1952: 363); in Old Javanese, immaterial, invisible. I do not intend to go here into the issue of the ontological status of the two terms, as they raise complex questions about Balinese ideas about substance or matter, and the existence of particulars and universals (on why this is important, see Rorty, R. 1980: 33-45).

Sakala admits of at least two readings. Narrowly, it is what is visible; broadly, what the senses can perceive. The difference adds to the complexity of Balinese judgements. Knowing about the non-manifest, in its various senses, is as important as it is fraught with uncertainty.¹⁰² The care Balinese villagers show in distinguishing the two realms curtails the dubious use of metaphor to represent the unknown through the known. For example, as time is *niskala*, it cannot be described catachretically by analogy with space, which is *sakala*.¹⁰³ The failure to inquire into Balinese epistemological categories means that the debate about the nature of time in Bali, which is claimed really to be cyclical, linear, durational or punctuational, is largely irrelevant (see Geertz 1973f; Bloch 1977; Bourdillon 1978; Howe 1981).

The part played by the various senses in establishing truth is interesting. To know empirically that something is so, *wiakti*, normally requires visual confirmation. As most cultural knowledge is obviously acquired from others through speech, its accuracy is open to question and so needs careful qualification. Therefore Balinese are wont, with commendable restraint, to prefix unverified statements with qualifiers like *wènten orti*, 'it is said' (literally: there is news), *kalumbrah*, 'it is widely held'. Otherwise where their experience is inadequate to generalize or say for sure they may introduce modal terms such as *minab* or *mirib* (probably, possibly; expressible, perhaps for my benefit, as percentages!). To dismiss such compound statements, as does Sperber, as 'semi-propositional', is to fail to grasp that Balinese in daily life are often more punctilious than we, not less.

While Balinese stress sight as a means of knowing, it does not follow that they draw a dichotomy between phenomena and noumena, nor between appearance and essence. The non-

¹⁰² The disjuncture between the manifest and non-manifest suggests a more consistent explanation than most for the Balinese interest in trance, revelation (*wahyu*, cf. Sanskrit *bahya*, (being) outwardly visible) and the existence of an extensive vocabulary for kinds of manifestation on the one hand; and for the practical problems of inferring intentions and feelings in legal and inter-personal contexts on the other.

¹⁰³ Catachresis is the rhetorical term for representing something abstract in terms of something tangible. It needs handling with care, because it is very easy to start talking about the abstraction as if it were manifest. We do so when we talk of society as an organism or language, or culture as a text. This is different from saying it is useful for purposes of analysis to imagine society *as* like a language in certain respects.

manifest, in whatever sense, is not the essential. Nor is the Balinese Chain of Being simply correlated with the ability to grasp the non-manifest. Dogs, for example, whose place is far humbler than their English fellows, can see, hear and smell what humans cannot including invisible spirits and gods. So their knowledge of the non-manifest is, in many ways, greater.¹⁰⁴ *Sakala* so circumscribes what people can know for sure that any individual's knowledge is inevitably partial (a sensitivity to differences in aptitudes, interests and emotions, let alone the context of utterances, further the Balinese disinclination to take statements at face value). Balinese ideas of what is manifestly so or not cannot comfortably be grafted onto our model of propositions being true or false. Scepticism over human abilities sets Balinese sharply apart from Hellenic, and later, traditions of the omnipotence of reason. Be that as it may, they display a healthy pragmatism, which deserves study not *a priori* dismissal.

So far I have described the most certain means of knowing – about what is manifest. The remainder deals with the non-manifest. At this stage it is useful to consider the parallels and differences between the Balinese and the traditional Nyaya doctrine of the four ways of knowing. These are summarized in the Table below which gives, besides the Nyaya terms, the Balinese equivalents, which derive from Sanskrit and Old Javanese. One might note that ideas about direct perception have much in common. Whereas the priestly sources I know (which is only a small sample from a vast, and largely unexplored, textual tradition) stress *anumana*, inference from observation, popular thinking tends to run this together with *upama*, the use of example in comparison (*upamana* in Nyaya). Most villagers regard both as providing some clue to what has not been witnessed directly. The former, which rely on past observed connections (what we might term ‘inductive reasoning’), are held to be more precise than the latter, which depend on comparing (*nyaihang*) entities which are by definition not the same.

¹⁰⁴ It is humans, if anything, who are defective – a view endorsed in a rather charming myth which runs as follows. Originally humans could see gods and spirits as can animals still. One day, however, a human was defecating at the side of the road and called out a greeting to a passing god. The gods felt that such behaviour was intolerably polluting, so they put whites round the human's eyes in order that humans could never insult them again in such a manner. This is why people now have whites in their eyes and animals not.

Table 1 *Indian and Balinese forms of knowledge*

<i>N</i> <i>y</i> <i>a</i> <i>y</i> <i>a</i> <i>te</i> <i>r</i> <i>m</i>	<i>m</i> <i>e</i> <i>a</i> <i>n</i> <i>s</i> <i>of</i> <i>k</i> <i>n</i> <i>o</i> <i>w</i> <i>in</i> <i>g</i>	<i>Bal</i> <i>ines</i> <i>e</i> <i>Ter</i> <i>m*</i>	<i>means</i> <i>of</i> <i>knowi</i> <i>ng</i>	<i>popul</i> <i>ar</i> <i>ideas</i>
<i>P</i> <i>ra</i> <i>ty</i> <i>a</i> <i>ks</i> <i>a</i>	<i>p</i> <i>er</i> <i>c</i> <i>e</i> <i>pt</i> <i>io</i> <i>n</i>	<i>Pra</i> <i>tya</i> <i>ksa</i>	direct observ ation or percep tion	same
<i>A</i> <i>n</i> <i>u</i> <i>m</i> <i>a</i> <i>n</i> <i>a</i>	<i>in</i> <i>fe</i> <i>re</i> <i>n</i> <i>c</i> <i>e</i>	<i>Anu</i> <i>ma</i> <i>na</i> (<i>An</i> <i>um</i> <i>ata</i>)	inферен ce from observ ations	both infere nce from eviden ce and comp arison treated as exam ples (<i>upa</i> <i>ma</i>) of vario us kinds
<i>U</i> <i>p</i> <i>a</i> <i>m</i>	<i>c</i> <i>o</i> <i>m</i> <i>p</i>	(<i>Up</i> <i>am</i> <i>a</i>)		

<i>a</i>	ar			
<i>n</i>	is			
<i>a</i>	o			
	n			
<i>S</i>	v	<i>Aga</i>	teachi	Any
<i>a</i>	er	<i>ma</i>	ng of	verba
<i>b</i>	b		religio	l
<i>d</i>	al		us	(<i>sabd</i>
<i>a</i>	k		people	<i>a</i>) or
	n			writte
	o			n
	w			(<i>tutur</i>
	le			/ <i>tattw</i>
	d			<i>a</i>)
	g			sourc
	e			e,
				espec
				ially
				histor
				ical
				or
				religi
				ous
				texts

* Terms found in Brahmanical texts or in general use among ordinary village Balinese.

The question of logic

The Balinese use of a kind of inferential reasoning (*anumana*) is critical to an understanding of how they construct and interpret arguments, including those recalcitrant assertions we tend to label 'symbolic'. I shall concentrate on inference here. This is not to suggest other forms of knowledge are marginal. On the contrary, inference is only one of many ways of interpreting texts, theatre and ritual. So I shall suggest later the potential importance of the others.

Knowledge acquired from others puts most Balinese in something of a dilemma. On the one hand, it is how one learns culturally transmitted knowledge and much else besides; on the other, its accuracy cannot be checked. Texts may also contradict

one another, or offer incompatible accounts. Here the tendency is to adopt the version most fitting to the circumstances. In other words, consistency, or coherence, is treated as at least as important as any correspondence to unverifiable past events.

The possibility that something like the Nyaya mode of reasoning, or 'syllogistic', might be used in Bali is interesting enough to look at more carefully. To understand what is involved, it is useful to return to the contrast between Balinese and Greek (or later) ideas of logic. For the rationality debate, at least as far back as Lévy-Bruhl (1926), rests on the purported failure of people in other cultures to observe 'the laws of thought'.

What are these laws then? They are 'the law of identity' (A is A; every subject is its own predicate); 'the law of non-contradiction' (A is not not-A; contradictory judgements cannot both be true); and 'the law of excluded middle' (everything is either A or not-A; no middle judgement can be true, while the falsity of one follows from the truth of the other).

The question is though: quite what status do these laws have? Unfortunately they have been interpreted in different ways by their own proponents, being taken as, roughly, either descriptive, prescriptive or formal. Aristotle is often viewed as regarding the laws as primarily descriptive of 'being as such', rather than as describing the activity of thinking. Prescriptively they have been understood however as stating either absolute or conventional standards of reasoning (Keynes 1884 and Ayer 1936 respectively). Again they have been treated as formal propositions which are true in virtue of their form and independently of any content whatsoever (Leibniz and, in a different way, Kant). The problem for rationalists is which of the readings to take. If they are prescriptive or formal laws, how do they have immediate bearing on the issue of ethnographic variation? If they are descriptive, who is to say before empirical investigation what form they might take? Rationalism shows its colours here in fusing two senses of law. And, one might ask '*sed quis custodiet ipsos Custodes?*'¹⁰⁵

More is at stake here than is often realized. On one reading Aristotle's law of non-contradiction is a defence of the metaphysical principle of identity in face of Heraclitus who is

¹⁰⁵ This is a famous Latin saying. 'But who judges the judges themselves?'

reputed to have maintained it to be possible for the same thing to be and not be, because things were 'becoming' rather than 'being'. The law of identity also raises questions about the status of the copula (cf. Derrida 1979). Does it express equality or identity? Or is it a relation of subject and predicate? If the latter, what does it imply about the subject's existence? Obviously one interpretation of the laws of thought would make nonsense, as the Tseu so avidly did, of other interpretations. Despite the fervent wishes of its supporters, at some point logic involves metaphysical presuppositions (as Hollis has lately conceded 1982: 84). Which of these interpretations should be the yardstick of rationality is partly responsible for the confusion that engulfs the topic.

Even if we overlook these serious drawbacks, how suitable are the laws of thought for evaluating culture? For a start such laws by design apply best to, and have been derived from, not say art or ritual, but language - usually *in vitreo*. On sceptical grounds, rather than assume a transcendent realm of propositions, it is wise to look at how the laws of thought apply to what people say, or presuppose in speaking and acting. For instance, unless speech is very elaborated, speakers tend to assume a measure of common knowledge with their audiences, the nature of which needs study. This raises questions both about the possible contexts and the standards to which speakers conform (see Grice 1975, 1978, on a pragmatic theory of 'conversational implicature'). For rationalists, the catch is that contexts and standards are a pragmatic, and so ethnographic, issue. If so they cannot be circumscribed easily, or *a priori*, by a semantic logic. This is a nasty problem for 'practical reason' which is an empty notion if there are no circumstances for reason to be practical in! Oscar Wilde may have been right when he remarked

I can stand brute force, but brute reason is quite unbearable. There is something unfair about its use. It is hitting below the intellect.

It is hardly surprising therefore that an attempt has been made to claw back context and standards of co-operation into a formal model, amenable to the laws of thought (Sperber and Wilson 1982). The aim is to show that such standards are a necessary condition of communication (I suspect this may beg the question) and that *relevant* context is logically implied by the utterances themselves. Besides such technical questions as whether a logic of implication or entailment is better suited to this task (Kempson

1977: 139-56), relevance has proven hard to pin down. The simplest utterances presuppose far more than is allowed and imply a range of quite different possible circumstances (Moore 1982). The whole exercise is academic anyway, because it assumes a prescriptive view of logic, the universality of which has yet to be demonstrated. Now, if the standards accepted in the culture in question differ, it is not much use telling people that they are wrong because they failed to adopt Sperber and Wilson's criteria!

Balinese uses of inference

It is one thing to argue that yardsticks, hallowed by years of scholarly port drinking, like the laws of thought may be inadequate to explain how people in other cultures reason. It is another to put something in their place. One starting point is the styles of reasoning that people in a culture use and recognize as legitimate. For if statements are made and judged according to invoked canons of reasoning, and presupposition, such canons are empirically part of the ethnography.

So let us turn to the Balinese. If, as we saw, logic involves metaphysical presuppositions, how do they affect Balinese styles of reasoning? The postulate of a non-manifest implies that, however probable an argument, the non-manifest is never subject to empirical verification. *Niskala* enters Balinese representations in another way.¹⁰⁶ In popular Balinese thinking there are three elements: water, fire and air, from which all visible form is composed. Each element moves (typically, water downwards, fire upwards, air laterally or freely) or indeed may change nature. The corollary of this mutability is that composite forms are also continuously transforming (*matemahan*). Villagers were delighted when I protested this did not fit hard objects like steel axes or mountains. They remarked that the hardest metal wears with time, mountains erode and, in Bali, are even volcanic!

¹⁰⁶ Each constituent may be perceptible, invisible or, at least, transparent. So any sensible combination of elements also embodies *niskala*. Old Javanese texts refer to there being five perceptible elements (from the Sanskrit *pancamahabhuta*; cf. *pancatanmatra*, the five immaterial elements from which the former are produced). The Balinese reduce these to three by treating the remaining two, ether and earth, as spatial domains.

The implication for the law of identity is that the Balinese view of the world as transforming, becoming something else, is remarkably close to Heraclitus' supposed position. Further, as the non-manifest is empirically unverifiable, this requires the law of excluded middle to be modified in practice, because a third possibility might always hold. Lastly, the law of non-contradiction is deliberately breached in order to express kinds of uncertainty (see Wolfram 1985), or the play of political power. Even if one allows the laws of thought as the formal preconditions of intelligibility, they still need applying to the world to which utterances refer.

I mentioned Balinese recognize a form of inferential reasoning closely resembling Nyaya syllogistic, which has five stages:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. This mountain is fire-possessing. | -
<i>prat</i>
<i>ijna</i> | (hyp
othe
sis) |
| 2. Because it is smoke-possessing. | -
<i>hetu</i> | (rea
son) |
| 3. Whatever is smoke- possessing is fire-possessing, like kitchen, unlike lake. | -
<i>uda</i>
<i>har</i>
<i>ana</i> | (exa
mpl
e/
gen
eral
prin
ciple) |
| 4. This mountain, since it possesses smoke, possesses fire. | -
<i>upa</i>
<i>nay</i>
<i>a</i> | (app
licat
ion) |
| 5. This mountain is fire-possessing. | -
<i>niga</i>
<i>man</i>
<i>a</i> | (con
clus
ion) |

(from Potter 1977: 180-81)

Balinese may actually use this example, when speaking of volcanoes (where reasoning is supplemented by periodic, and often catastrophic, observation).

Balinese inference differs from Nyaya in stressing the first three stages and in allowing flexibility in the order of citing the reason and the example. If someone fails to understand the first three however, something like stages four and five may be added, as an afterthought. A conversation in a coffee-stall should illustrate Balinese usage.

1. Farmers in Sukawati (a village in the South) use ploughs on their ricefields,	- <i>nerang ang kawènt enan</i>	(describ ing the situatio n)
2. Because the earth is very hard to work.	- <i>kara na</i>	(the cause?)
3. It is like the rice-fields of Jero Mangku Dalem (naming the owner of the hardest fields in the area).	- <i>prai mba</i>	(the exampl e, but not visible to the listener)

Or a father giving a *salak*, a fruit with a skin like a snake's, to a small boy spoke as follows:

1. One can eat <i>salaks</i> .	- <i>kate ran gan</i>	(descrip tion)
2. They are like oranges.	- <i>nyai han g</i>	(compar ing)
(3. Because they contain <i>merta</i> (roughly: nourishment) not <i>wisiya</i> (poison).)	- <i>ma win an</i>	(the reason?)

In the latter case, the example was given immediately and the reason only added when the child seemed uncertain. Unless one is speaking to the young or with formal authority, it is considered arrogant to hold forth, and one waits for suitable interjections from

listeners, or for them to draw false conclusions, before suggesting one's own. The preference for dialogue (*saling masaut; magatik; timbal*) makes much use of the audience's knowledge. So it stresses the pragmatic aspects of this kind of inference.

Speaking of Balinese reasoning as syllogistic may, in fact, be misleading. It has little in common with the Aristotelian syllogism with its stress on consistency between propositions and analytical as against synthetic knowledge. As Charles Lamb summed it up, such 'logic is nothing more than a knowledge of words'. By contrast, Balinese are closer to the kind of inductive reasoning, or 'inference' proposed by John Stuart Mill. As Potter argued, exponents of Nyaya

view inference as consisting of judgements whose referents are existing things, not, as we in the West are prone to do, as relating to words or concepts' (1977: 182).

Rather than spend time arguing whether, or in what sense, Balinese have formal logic, it might be more profitable to consider how they make use of what they have.¹⁰⁷

Several features are worth note. The first stage of argument rests firmly on observation, but commonly has a contextual limit (not all mountains are volcanic, not all farmers use ploughs). This is quite different from the universalistic tendencies of syllogisms of the form: 'All x are y'. In the second stage, why something should be so (the *explanans*) is spoken of as either *karana* or *mawinan*. Whether these can be translated as 'cause' and 'reason' is a moot point in a culture, the metaphysics of which does not draw

¹⁰⁷ Again I have no space to discuss Balinese uses of propositional logic of the 'if...then' kind, although as Example 5 suggests, this exists. One reason behind this omission is that there are awkward problems in trying simply to translate Balinese *yèn* or *yèning* (low and high Balinese respectively) as 'if'. Apart from it not always being clear when the 'then' clause follows, it is not uncommon to produce a statement with two parts *both* prefixed by *yèn*, (not as in Example 5, where one can reasonably infer the consequent). So the effect in crude translation reads like a sentence with "if...if". The use of *yèn* is made more problematic by it being used of present and future action, whereas what is past is spoken of widely using *wiadin*, which is normally translated as 'although' and used in a manner identical to *yèn*. The term therefore appears to be closer to a signal that what follows is provisional or conditional in a broad sense, which would differ from the antecedent-consequent relationship implied in 'if...then'. The problem requires a closer analysis of tapes of Balinese language use than I have been able to complete to date.

a contrast between the physical, and mental, in a Cartesian fashion.

We can also see the singular status of the non-manifest and how inference and comparison are conflated. When the example cited is visible (or otherwise perceptible) at the time to the listener, it is described as a *conto* (Old Javanese, sample). When it is not, it is referred to as a *pra(tiw)imba* (Sanskrit, image, model, shadow), a term as widely used as it is hard to pin down. It is used of absent examples as well as analogies; but it always seems to carry the implication of being an imperfect instance, because something has to be taken on trust, or because the connection is indirect or spurious but useful. Balinese reasoning can as easily be used to compare unlike things (*salak* and oranges) as to draw strict inferences. For instance one old man recalled how he had explained what a plough looked like to his grandchild (ploughs were rarely used in the research village) with the *praimba* of the weapon carried by Sang Baladéwa, a character in the shadow play version of the Mahabharata. Care in specifying the sense of example or comparison is a means of stating precisely the nature of the connection between subject and illustration, and so indicates how reliable the argument is as a whole. Would that most writers on rationality were so fastidious.

Apparently illogical statements

To what extent does Balinese reasoning offer a way of understanding seemingly flagrant breaches of the laws of thought? Below I give examples of how Balinese use inference to interpret cultural statements. For they find many collective representations as puzzling as do we. The point is not to show how rational, or otherwise, the Balinese are in someone else's terms. It is rather to illustrate how villagers set about coping with such representations when they need to explicate them, not just leave them as matters for priests (whose knowledge, as opposed to authority, often adds little to the interpretation).

Many odd statements come about through cack-handed translation. An example is:

1. *Carik-carik urip.* = Ricefields are alive.

The problem is not so much circumscribing ‘ricefields’ as misrendering the contrast set *urip* : *padem*. What is predicated of *urip* is a subject with a capacity for action (*laksana*; see Zoetmulder 1982: 958), or for organized movement or resistance (e.g. large trees). *Padem* is used of things which normally lack such capacities (like stone, metal and non-volcanic mountains). Now anyone who has sat watching a ricefield knows it is a highly mobile micro-environment. The statement sounds odd largely because of a lack of correspondence between the range of terms in different languages.

The difficulties begin, however, when *urip* is predicated of objects as various as buildings, cars or metallophone orchestras, after rites have been performed over them. On one interpretation buildings, for instance, are ‘animated’ by the use of ‘life-substances’ (*pangurip*, Howe 1983: 154-5). This translation, however, arguably ignores Balinese ideas about the nature of being, as *urip* may be predicated of any system of energy (*bayu*; cf. Old Javanese, and Sanskrit, *vayu*). For cars move, metallophones turn movement into sound, buildings react in resisting wind and earthquakes. Without claiming this solves all the problems, study of presuppositions is a sensible preamble to translation.

Statements of belief need handling with care. We need to know something of Balinese metaphysics and their views on well-formed utterances. For instance, in various contexts it is quite possible to hear the following statement:

2. *Pantun kahyangin antuk Batari Sri.*

Which it is tempting to translate as:

The Goddess Sri is incarnated (present mystically) in rice.

Kahyangin is one of several terms Balinese use to express the problematic relationship of the non-manifest to the manifest. It would be easy to dismiss this as a classic example of pre-logical thought; but this hardly does justice to the complexity and subtlety of the relation of *sakala* and *niskala*.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Two of the most commonly found expressions are *kahyangin*, from *hyang*, god, spirit, plus the passive verb form, and *kadulurin*, the active form of which *nulurin* implies ‘to participate in’, as in work activities or a festivity - an amusing parallel with Lévy-Bruhl’s notion of ‘mystic

The Balinese are careful in speaking about deities and tend to avoid, especially if they are speaking formally, expressions like:

2a. *Tiang* ^{*mamanah*} *wènten Batara.* = I ^{think} God(s) exist(s).
 pracaya ^{believe (1)}

but allow

2b. *Tiang ngega wènten Batara* = I believe (2) God(s) exist(s).

Instead they tend to use some expression like:

2c. *Ring* ^{thought.} *tiangé, wènten Batara.* = In my ^{*manah(an)*} God(s)
 exist(s) ^{*kapracayaan*} belief

The issue of belief is too complicated to exhaust here, but when I asked about the statements above, I often received replies along the following lines. The first expression is *solèh*, something akin to a category mistake. For Gods are *niskala*, but believing or thinking is an act, or state, of which the subject (but not others) is aware, and so is *sakala*. The sentence therefore confuses categories. The third expression avoids the problem because thought and belief are abstract, *niskala*. This also makes the sentence provisional, as *niskala* cannot be verified and so does not require the evidence with which assertions about *sakala* should be backed.

Thought and belief are also held to be mediated by desire. This suggests one explanation for there being two words for our ‘belief’. The first, *pracaya* is a difficult word (Sanskrit, *pratyaya*,

participation’. In passing my analysis of language usage suggests that priests and villagers when speaking carefully are more likely to use what is usually called the passive voice, indicated by *ka...in*, than the active in these situations. This raises interesting questions of whether Western grammatical categories are really appropriate here, or whether something else is being implied.

and Old Javanese, *pracaya*, to trust, to be sure, convinced). For Balinese it has the connotation of not knowing, but wishing, or expressing trust. The second, *ngega* is to know something to be the case and also to desire it, or express commitment to it. Statements using *ngega* are most commonly made by priests on the basis of tangible evidence of the presence of Gods (a sudden chill on a hot day; a wind no one else notices). So *ngega* is properly used as a verb because the belief and Gods are both *sakala* in this case. *Manah* is more recondite still. It comes from Sanskrit *manas*, mental powers, and is treated in Nyaya doctrine as a sixth organ of sense and, in the Buddhist Abhidharma as

the subjective disposition that receives the sense stimuli and comprises them, giving them the peculiar subjective admixture that is never absent in either perception or cognition (Guenther 1976: 16-17).

Balinese, whose heritage is Hindu-Buddhist, may use *manah* in either sense. Crude ascription of ‘irrational beliefs’ to the Balinese not only misses the subtleties of use, but also relies on the crassest correspondence approach to translation.

More complex examples bring out villagers’ use of inference and also possible readings of the law of identity to boot. When faced with collective representations which defy observable proof, Balinese may argue as I heard them do over the following statement:

3. *Batara-Batari meraga angin* = $\begin{matrix} & \text{take the form of} \\ \text{Gods} & & \text{wind.} \\ & \text{have the body of} \end{matrix}$

Following the stages of argument discussed above, this is read as:

1. Gods are like air, which is unbounded and invisible.
2. This is because gods are *niskala*, but are apparently capable of action or bringing about effects.
3. Wind is unbounded and invisible, but is capable of action or bringing about effects.

The argument is by analogy and so is inexact (gods are not wind), but the comparison is held to be fitting in other respects.

A more difficult example is one which derives from ritual invocations (*mantra*) and the symbolic classification of compass points with deities, colours, elements and so forth. At first sight this mixes categories of the manifest (e.g. elements) and non-manifest (gods). The point, however, is that *descriptions* of gods are manifest and based on imagery or analogy (as in paintings depicting deities). For instance, the Hindu God Visnu (Wisnu in Bali) is associated with North, black or dark blue, water and other features. It is tempting to render the connections as predicative. Even in the simple utterances of villagers the grounds for so doing are far from clear, as in

	<i>selem.</i>		black.
4. <i>Ida Batara Wisnu</i>		= Lord Wisnu -	
<i>Ida toya.</i>			water.

(In the absence of a copula sign in Bali, I use a dash to avoid prejudging the issue.)

It does not follow from this that black or water can be simply predicated of Wisnu ('Wisnu is black' is a different kind of attribution from 'Wisnu is water'). At various times I have heard inferences using one of the following comparisons (in stage 3 of reasoning):

- a. As a person's thoughts (*manah*), or intentions (*tetujon* which translates equally as 'direction' or 'goal') move the body, so does water move by the intentions or thoughts of Wisnu.
- b. As kings are said to control (*magambel*) their subjects, so does Wisnu control water.
- b. As food contains nourishment (*merta*), so does water contain Wisnu.
- c. As the headman of this village is called such-and-such, so water is called Wisnu.

The last is clearly an equative, rather than a predicative, sentence (on the significance of the difference, see Lyons 1977: 185ff.). All the inferences are, however, treated as speculative by virtue of the distance between the nature of the subject and the comparisons.

Deliberate contradiction is also used to indicate uncertainty. If someone is asked, for instance, whether they are tired, it is not uncommon to reply:

5. *Yèn (ngaraos) lesu, lesu;*
yèn (ngaraos) 'ten lesu, 'ten lesu.
 If (one says) one is tired, one is tired;
 If (one says) one is not tired, one is not tired.

It was usually agreed this cryptic remark should be read as follows. If one is working and is asked if one is tired, one might not be but might become so later, or *vice versa*. Then one is embarrassed by telling what turns out to be a falsehood. So it is better deliberately to equivocate (*ngèmpèlin*) over what is still unsure.

The example may help to clear up another curious construction. The expression runs:

- 5a. *Yèning Batara kabaos alit, alit pisan;*
yèning Batara kabaos ageng, ageng pisan.

If God is said to be small, It is very (too) small;
 if God is said to be big, It is very (too) big.

This was usually explained in terms of the nature of *manah*. Gods are non-manifest; therefore they have no size or form, and can as well be said to be infinitely large or infinitely small. If one says they are big, they are too big to see; if one says they are small, they are too small to see. To speak of gods (a manifest activity) is due to one's *manah*, one's desire or disposition to picture them a certain way. The agent's thoughts or feelings are seen as an active part of knowledge, speculation and speech – a point which suggests that the relationship of representations, or texts, and the audience is quite different from the neutral role we tend to impute to recipients of culture.

There are other circumstances under which deliberate contradiction may be used, as in the following example where a prince was speaking about a very powerful neighbour.

- 5b. *Yèning Cokorda derika ngandika putih selem miwah selem putih,*
bènjang putih dados selem, selem dados putih ring panjak-
panjakidané.

If the Cokorda (the prince's caste title) there says white is black and black white, the next day for the populace (literally: his slaves) white becomes black and black white.

Subsequent explanation made it clear that the prince had in mind his neighbour's power to order convention at will, not to change colours. Contradiction is used to signal an authoritative utterance, here one that is counter-factual or, better, in defiance of general Balinese usage. Among other things, this example indicates the Balinese sensitivity to the role of power in determining convention; and the potential weaknesses of the fourth path to knowledge, speech (*sabda*).

Practical reason

What bearing do Balinese ideas of inference have on the practical use of reason? If *manah* shapes perception and cognition, it is hard to generalize about the relation of means to ends, separate from individual interests in specific contexts. Like many peoples, including ourselves in day to day life, Balinese seem to stress situational logic, in a broad sense, not seeking timeless and dubious universals.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ There is no room to discuss every aspect of so vast a subject as rationality here. Omissions include Weber's distinction of *Zweckrationalität* and *Wertrationalität*, partly because of the degree to which they rest upon an increasingly questionable distinction between fact and value (see Putnam 1981). Of more interest is the stress placed by the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory on the notion that knowledge (and therefore the kind of 'rational' procedures appropriate to its exploitation) depends on the purposes to which it is directed - a view with which the Balinese I know would heartily concur. Habermas, for example distinguishes three such purposes: technical interests served by empirical-analytical sciences, practical interests using historical-hermeneutic methods, and an emancipatory cognitive interest requiring a critical approach (1978: 302ff.). The dangers of confusing these levels and also of mixing rationality and rationales is neatly spelled out.

From everyday experience we know that ideas serve often enough to furnish our actions with justifying motives in place of the real ones. What is called rationalization at this level is called ideology at the level of collective action. In both cases the manifest content of statements is falsified by consciousness' unreflected tie to interests, despite its illusion of autonomy (1978: 311).

Discussion of practical reason often overlooks the degree to which models vary culturally and historically in assumptions about the nature of humans and society. This affects the definition of ends, what means are legitimate or efficient, and even what self-interest is (both 'self' and 'interest' being notoriously hard to define). If one allows too much into context, anything can be made rational or logical (see Gellner: 1970: 26ff.). A simple-minded utilitarianism is still fashionable, despite the serious weaknesses of models of humans as 'maximizing', 'minimizing' or 'satisficing' (see Ryan 1978).¹¹⁰

*Il y a une infinité de conduites qui paroissent ridicules et dont les raisons cachées sont très sage et très solides. (La Rochefoucauld, Maximes CLXIII.)*¹¹¹

One way round these difficulties is to argue that there *must* be some universal 'material-object language', in terms of which humans everywhere approach 'reality' because in practice humans are so adept at adapting means to ends (Horton 1979). On close inspection, however, all this says is that those who still survive have adjusted to their environment enough to have not yet died. To infer from this the existence of a universal practical reason is far-fetched.¹¹² It assumes, for a start, that people necessarily do

My slight concern here is how easy it is to establish real interests, while reference to levels and to consciousness suggests a lingering essentialism at work.

¹¹⁰ Versions vary according to the balance between exclusive self-interest and mutual distrust (see Olson 1965, and an excellent critique by Ions 1977: 38ff.) and embody questionable methodological assumptions about 'individualism' (Lukes 1973b; cf. Rorty, A. 1976; Marriott 1976; and Dumont 1977). Hollis is refreshingly honest about the problems in his view of rationality if recognition of the collective is allowed (1977: 188ff).

¹¹¹ 'There are an infinite number of ways of behaving, which appear ridiculous and of which the hidden reasons are very wise and very substantial.'

¹¹² The shortcomings of reason in dealing with the world are pithily exposed by Ambrose Bierce.

The basis of logic is the syllogism, consisting of a major and a minor premise and a conclusion - thus:

Major Premise Sixty men can do a piece of work sixty times as quickly as one man.

Minor Premise One man can dig a post-hole in sixty seconds; therefore –

Conclusion Sixty men can dig a post-hole in one second.

This may be called the syllogism arithmetical, in which, by combining logic and mathematics, we obtain a double certainty and are twice blessed (1958: 79).

the same things for the same reasons. Worse, it implies that reason is the sufficient condition of action, a curiously idealist assumption for what claims to be a common-sensical stance. After all, it is one thing to trace the rationale behind action *ex post facto*, it is quite another to state that reasons are the causes of action (cf. Hollis 1977: 185ff, who is commendably cautious here). Is such adjustment desirable anyway? For

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man. (Shaw *Maxims for revolutionists* 238.)

Returning to the Balinese, talk about rational means to ends without referring to the situation and to the actor is held to be *gabeng*, ill-formed and incomplete (the word is used of empty ears of rice). In place of a dichotomy of means and ends, Balinese commonly recognize a triad, by adding the agent with his, or her, tastes, perceptions, emotions and interests. Rather than typify some ‘essential’ person (‘the reasonable man’ - but never woman! - see Herbert 1935), the Balinese I know tended to stress the differences between people, even among family and friends. If we assume homogeneity, Balinese come closer to assuming diversity.

For Balinese villagers even apparently basic collective representations, from laws to ritual, are liable to be revised situationally in the light of *désa*, *kala*, *patra*, place, occasion and circumstance, according to the interests, or perspectives, of those involved. Given their presuppositions about the non-manifest, relevant context is likely to include *niskala*, however unverifiable its effects. So what we might dismiss as ‘ritual’ should be seen as linked to the uncertainty that action in the world – say in rice cultivation, at which the Balinese are most technically proficient – is adequate in itself.

Arguably Balinese are at least as consistent as we. Rationality is, after all, hardly a clear concept and, like the Tsew, we invoke it more often to express a commitment to its cultural importance than to say what it is. Far from rationality always being opposed to ritual, we ourselves revel in rituals of rationality: the genre of gangland films portrays excessive or narrow practical reason; exotic tourism is less often an encounter with the Other than a confirmation of superiority; politics is often the dramatic display –

or replay – of class or cultural predilections as rational interest, as perhaps are seminars and books on rationality! ‘Rational’ is ultimately always what we are, or I am; ‘irrational’ is what others, or you, are. To paraphrase von Clausewitz, ‘Reason is nothing more than the continuation of prejudice by other means.’

Implicit Presuppositions

Two other glaring presuppositions in discussions of rationality need brief mention. These are ‘the psychic unity of mankind’ and ‘homogeneity’. The idea that human nature is the same everywhere rests upon a questionable distinction of the individual *versus* society (which led Durkheim among others into a dubious ontology, Lukes 1973a: 3ff.). For it makes little sense to account for variation socially, while holding human nature constant, unless the two are held to be distinct. Arguably individuals and societies are not reified entities but relationships, in which cultural conceptions of one affect the other, or better both are mutually constituted (cf. Bhaskar 1979: 39-47, on a naturalist attempt to retain the dichotomy). The impact of hypostatizing the distinction has been to create endless confusion as to whether rationality is to be predicated of collective representations, individual humans or whatever. It does not solve the problem of rationality: it merely clouds the issue.

Now Balinese commonly start from an intriguingly different set of presuppositions about human nature, which imply the diversity, rather than unity of human beings. The human psyche has three constituents, familiar to Indologists, the *triguna*: *sattwa*, knowledge or purity, *raja(h)*, emotion or passion, and *tamas*, desire or ignorance. These are linked to three goals of human life, the *triwarga*: *darma*, the disposition to do good, *art(h)a*, the pursuit of wealth or prestige, and *kama*, the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The Balinese Chain of Being is founded upon three processes also: *bayu*, energy, *sabda*, speech, and *idep*, thought (see Chapter 2 for a discussion). Plants are energy systems only; animals have both energy and the capacity for simple sounds; humans possess thoughts as well; while Gods shade off into pure thought.

So potential conflict between aspects of personality is built in. For Balinese, knowledge, like logic, is empty and boring without emotion to provide interest (cf. de Sousa on the link of rationality and emotion in salience 1980: 128ff.). The implications for practical reasons are interesting. As Taylor remarks, to the Greeks

to say that man is a rational animal is to say that this is his *telos*, the goal he implicitly is directed towards by nature. To achieve it is to attain happiness and well-being' (1982: 95).

In contrast to the *summum bonum* (supreme good) of happiness reached by reason working on the world, Balinese have to balance different goals, different faculties and different drives. Their world is more complex and, to my mind, psychologically more perceptive, than one where humans strive mono-maniacally, towards a single universally admired *telos*.

A penchant for dichotomies in Western academic discourse has actually created much of the rationality debate. Not only must propositions be true or false, but statements analytical or synthetic, truths necessary or contingent, assertions literal or metaphorical, representations accurate or inaccurate, reason practical or pure, actions rational or irrational, and people objective or subjective. Oddly, dualism is often held to be the attribute of 'primitive societies', not of ourselves – an example of the tendency to displace onto 'the Other' what is uncomfortable or unspeakable in our own categories.

Dichotomous taxonomies further tend to assume a simple-minded reading of Occam's razor. Not only do all peoples' doings and sayings in a culture admit of a single explanation, but every culture presents the same kind of material to be explained in the same way! One can, of course, happily reduce other cultures to homogeneous pabulum to be fed into a universalist mill by suitable selection and translation (as, despite his protests, does Horton 1982). Unfortunately this begs most of the interesting questions and is inimical to empirical ethnography, which might establish whether it has any ground or not. An anthropologist who adopts the homogeneity axiom is liable to find he has slit his own throat on Occam's razor.

The presupposition of homogeneity has another aspect. It leads easily to assuming the possibility, desirability or inevitability of

consistency of thought, a coherence between thought and the state of the world, and order in that world. The concept of order in Western thought is problematic at the best of times (see Bohm 1980; Kuntz 1968; Talbot 1981). So it is worrying when order is presupposed in analyses of other cultures; and not considered as a proper topic for investigation. We have to date precious little idea of how people in other cultures conceive of, represent, or assume order.

The horny old trap of translation still remains. For how does one translate without a translational scheme? A 'bridgehead' of postulated equivalences is not so much necessary and sufficient, as a pragmatic point of departure, to be discarded or modified when it has served its purpose.

Radical translation anyway is never a one-off business. It is a dialectic in which assumptions are modified as knowledge builds up. This will presumably differ for each culture, or its preferred interpretational schemes. So the idea of critical ethnography suggests an empirical way out of the translational trap without destroying 'the Other' with imported taxonomies. The metaphor of mirror equivalences gives way to gradually accumulated knowledge. We might have to start with a view of language and logic as mirroring the world somehow, but we land in trouble if we stop there and do not pass through the looking-glass. If we stay put, we may find 'The mirror cracked from side to side.' And we know what happened to that unfortunate mirror-gazer.

There is a well-known story told by old Balinese hands. In the version I know best, two Dutch scholars, Grader and Hooykaas, were sitting with Miguel Covarrubias, a Mexican cartoonist and ironically author of the best known book on Bali, and talking to a Balinese priest. At one point Grader interrupted to correct the priest's language, according to prevailing Dutch grammatical ideas about Balinese. A few minutes later a dog in the compound began to bark and Covarrubias turned to Grader and asked him why he did not teach the dog to bark properly! The danger of wearing the blinkers of reason is that one lands up teaching the Balinese how to bark.

APPENDIX

Contraries of 'rational' and 'reason', or their synonyms in common English usage.

1. RATIONALITY

intellectuality	v	affectivity
humanity	v	animality
culture	v	nature
objectivity	v	subjectivity
universality	v	particularity
generality	v	specificity
rational	v	empirical
necessity	v	contingency
science	v	arts

2. REASON

reason	v	emotion
-	v	folly
-	v	madness
-	v	intuition
-	v	mysticism
-	v	fantasy
-	v	imagination
-	v	romance
-	v	magic
-	v	superstition
-	v	experience
-	v	instinct
-	v	understanding (Kant)
-	v	cause
-	v	action
-	v	biological drives
-	v	violence
-	v	chaos

3. LOGIC

logic	v	fact
logical	v	empirical

necessary	v	arbitrary
sense	v	nonsense
meaningful	v	meaningless
reflective	v	unreflective
<i>Zweckrationalität</i>	v	<i>Wertrationalität</i>

Chapter 4

As I lay laughing: encountering global knowledge in Bali.

Knowledge is a coffin we carry around looking for a decent place quietly to bury. The image might seem surprising. It is common to imagine knowledge as something immortal, which carries on growing remorselessly. There are other ways to think of knowledge however. Even were knowledge on the increase, what of those who are barred from enjoying it, although they are entwined in its snares? There is a darker side to knowledge: the fear of failing to master it, of being excluded from it, of becoming its object. How knowledge appears, indeed what it is, depends on how you are situated in respect to it. Here academics are in principle in a unique position to reflect upon their own practices. After all, is it not we who discover, advance, teach, disseminate, and even control the growth of, knowledge? Yet we rarely talk about knowledge as such, except to outsiders. And new ways of thinking about something as often destroy previous knowledge as add to it. In anthropology such thinking makes a mockery of its most cherished creations: society, culture, human nature, reason and, I suspect soon, anthropology and knowledge itself. Each intellectual generation owes its being to its forebears and repays the debt by burying them.

The argument such as it is

Every few years an idea which has usually been rumbling away for years somewhere else momentarily convulses the little world of anthropology and threatens to upset the calm progress of research, writing and teaching. The latest tremor is the discovery that we may have been living through a process of incipient globalization for some time. A problem with much globalization theory though is that it is an exercise in retrenchment in the aftermath of post-structuralism and postmodernism. How convenient it would be were the unsettling suggestion unfounded that the modern world and its paraphernalia of nation states and

political economies did not exemplify the epitome of western rationality and was but a thing of shreds and patches. The fear that knowledge of that world might turn out more fragmented, closed and contingent than presumed in academic spin-doctors' accounts could then be allayed by focusing on how effective that knowledge could be shown to be in the globality of its reach. The west, whatever that is, had won. (The malleability of the notion of 'the west' contributes to the apparent success of western, or global, knowledge, which I take not to be one single coherent essence, but the heterogeneous product of a long history of practices.) Globalization theories celebrate the spatialization of history, get on with the cartography of the new world order (aka. hypermodernity) or, with a nod to the pessimists, worry about how to alleviate the unfortunate side effects of the triumph of late capitalism. The argument looked more convincing in the mid-1980s with the collapse of the Soviet Union than it does a decade later. As a seismic event to mark the end of history, it is reminiscent of Cyril Connolly's immemorial headline in *The Times*: 'Small Earthquake in Chile, Not Many Dead'.

Although it is still badly needed, this is not the occasion for an extended critique of globalization theory (on which see, for instance, Archer 1990). I shall confine myself simply to a few remarks relevant to this chapter. Much of the apparent applicability of the notion of globalization relies on the play made of a fan of connotations (see Appadurai 1990; Featherstone 1990a; Robertson 1992). In particular, globalization suggests totality, which always gives academics a *frisson* of delight. A total problem suggests a total, indeed totalitarian, solution. The notion of globalization is hegemonic, because the globality is that of western civilization, variously imagined. Appeal to the self-evident phenomenon of globalization distracts attention from the contrary process of decivilization, by which the world is becoming in many ways a distinctly nastier, more polluted and dangerous place, not least the metropolitan centres that promulgate the utopia. Like its predecessor, world-systems theory, globalization theory's descriptions of the world simplify complex and underdetermined events by imputing to it teleological and systemic properties, such that 'the local' becomes hypostatized as opposed dichotomously to the 'global'. (Whatever happened to regions, attention to which would vitiate simplistic oppositions?) This leads in turn to an endless and vapid play on their 'meanings'

in an attempt to escape the reified and spatialized intellectual *cul-de-sac* created.

The account of knowledge which underwrites ideas of globalization is, unsurprisingly, deeply conservative. It reverts to a representational idea of knowledge as more or less accurately and definitively reflecting the world as it is, independent of those doing the knowing and describing. Its appearance of offering something *more* comes from the promiscuity by which 'global', and its shadow 'the total', refer to a process, an object, a universality and range of purported access, and a totality of scope. Accounts of knowledge are agential. That is they define the objects, or subjects, of that knowledge, empower some people as being able to know but others as not and determine what counts as knowledge itself. In this chapter I wish therefore to consider critically the implications of ways in which Europeans and Americans, whose global knowledge is at issue here, have imagined knowledge and set out to constitute the world accordingly. This is emphatically not an exercise in epistemology in the sense of a search for timeless conditions of truth and privileged access to it. On the contrary, I take assertions about, and uses of, knowledge to be social actions with far-reaching consequences. The supposed neutrality of the knower in representational models underwrites a subtle hegemony. In a post-colonial, or global, world, epistemology has become the means to a new imperialism. For example, constituting much of the world as 'underdeveloped' defines those concerned as lacking, determines what they lack, the preordained goal which they have failed, but must struggle, to achieve and outside expert knowledge as the appropriate means. A consequence of apotheosizing western knowledge is the dismissal of existing knowledges. One person's claim to knowledge is all too often another's condemnation to ignorance. Whatever knowledge is it is not neutral.

Among the problems in discussing knowledge is the fact that it is arguably not a unitary phenomenon and, in most representations, it is abstract. So knowledge is talked about using widely diverging constitutive metaphors. These metaphors are not 'dead' insofar as they have consequences. I sketch out below several partly incommensurable, but often amalgamated, forms widespread in popular and academic usage. I then consider the consequences of constituting knowledge in particular ways,

notably for both knowers and what, or who, is known. Knowledge, on these accounts, emerges as some kind of mental object, state, residue or commodity, usually anchored in the human subject as a fixed, ultimately private, disposition. The following survey of metaphors of knowledge verges at moments on the comical, but their presuppositions are far from innocent or their consequences innocuous.

Treating knowledge as some kind of mental entity has the effect of denying the historically and culturally specific situations in which it is invoked and reflection on the purposes, agents, subjects and objects imputed on particular occasions. For this reason I choose to consider knowledge as a range of situated practices, an approach which I have developed elsewhere (1993b). Recourse to practice does not miraculously solve the problem of knowledge, whatever that might be, not least as we have, *pace* Bourdieu (1977, 1990), no satisfactory account of practice. Reconsidering knowledge as various kinds of practice has several advantages though. So doing situates different uses of knowledge, instead of postulating it as a timeless essence, and highlights the consequences of such uses and of claims to knowledge. Not least for my present purposes, treating knowledge as practice articulates well with how Balinese have publicly represented their own knowledge to themselves and how they deal with their increasingly frequent encounters with global knowledge and its purveyors, which is the theme of the second half of this chapter. For Balinese rarely speak of knowledge as a state, but of knowing and remembering as the acts of agents. Considering knowing as a situated public practice requires revising many of our presuppositions about knowledge. For a start laughing and dying seem to be implicated in knowing in ways I only partly understand at the moment. I intend the effect to be partly counter-hegemonic, in that it allows us within limits to reflect critically on our own ideas through the practices of people who are normally the objects of our knowledge. More immediately, treating knowledge as practice invites us to engage in a little ethnography on ourselves; to think about how, as anthropologists, we talk about and get on with our work. It suggests that what we actually do is engage in highly specific and diverse practices from talking to informants and writing publications to lecturing and marking essays, attending conferences and gossiping. Grand terms like 'knowledge' sit uneasily on such practices, which vary even between disciplines.

The disciplining of metaphor

Despite, or perhaps because of, the lucubrations of epistemologists what western or global knowledge is sometimes seems fairly self-evident. Ideally it is potentially all encompassing, systematic and abstract. Because it is abstract, it must be depicted catachretically, that is it must be instantiated through metaphors, which are – awkwardly for a systematic vision – in part mutually contradictory. Three distinct, but overlapping, metaphors often surface in academic writing and casual talk about knowledge, which I designate as territorial, horticultural and capitalist. Two others occupy a more peripheral place: the revolutionary and the dialogic. The publisher's word limit precludes my giving detailed examples. So I must leave it to readers to exercise their agency in drawing upon examples from their own experience.

My starting point is the representational model, which relies upon a visual metaphor of knowledge as mirroring nature (Rorty 1980). The world-to-be-known is spatially extensive and knowledge of it conceived as a landscape to be explored, conquered, mapped, controlled. As Anne Salmond has noted, spatial and visual metaphors elide in much anthropological usage. So 'understanding is essentially a way of *looking at things*', such that facts appear as objects, given, data (1982: 73). A recent variant is knowledge as flowing (see Appadurai 1990, who also uses the landscape metaphor exhaustively). Process here though is simply how a static model is made to cope with change and indeterminacy. In either case, the greater the superiority of the observer, the more objective and rational the surveilling gaze. By contrast, Maori, on Salmond's account, speak of knowledge as a scarce resource, which should not be squandered.

The play of metaphors is less merely decorative, a simple way of speaking, than constitutive of the argument, and of the world. 'Much of the richness and piquancy of theoretical talk, and many of its new departures seem to arise from the flexibility and ambiguity of such non-literal language' (Salmond 1982: 81). The result may be flexible, but it creates closure. The image is static, timeless, ahistorical. History is just an extra, pseudo-spatial

dimension: the time taken to explore the landscape or chronicle phases of development. Consider how Robertson, a major proponent of globalization, defines the problem in a piece entitled 'Mapping the global condition'. The job is systematically to indicate and *explore* 'the major phases of globalization in recent world history' (1990: 15). History is reduced to the compilation of phases: what Collingwood described as the 'scissors-and-paste' method (1946: 33). It involves no critical questioning which requires re-evaluating our thinking about the past, and so changing our understanding. Most accounts of knowledge sideline understanding, which I take to be dialectical (Hobart 1991b) and incompatible with the prevailing models. As a landscape is something to be seen, it does not answer back. In fact no questions are asked of it. Perhaps geologists, say, can get away with this; but its implications for anthropologists, who work with people, are disturbing. Even where anthropologists recognize that the kinds of facts we deal with are fictions - in the sense of 'something made' (Geertz 1973c: 15) - it is something which *has been*, not *is being* made.

Questioning and answering are activities, which are the exclusive prerogative of the researcher. Things wait to be discovered. They are passive: the activity belongs to the explorers who discover, map and master them. It is the dream of globalization theory 'in which the other culture is largely mastered' (Featherstone 1990b: 9). The model spatializes and objectifies everything in sight, including discourse and meaning into determinable fields, structures, institutions. So 'the general field of globalization must lay the grounds for...the structure of any viable discourse about the shape and "meaning" of the world-as-a-whole' (Robertson 1990: 17-18). In anthropology the corollary of this objectification is that people are still often treated as passive subjects. They are to a degree aware of the collective representations and structures, which determine their actions. They depend on anthropologists to frame, comment on and analyze their actions for them. There is little recognition that people engage in critical thinking themselves and so change the conditions of their own existence, which would require a radical revision of the object (*sic*) of anthropological inquiry. People are

still *informants*, from whom we extract *information*. That is knowledge in its most static, timeless, commodifiable form.¹¹³

The visual or territorial metaphor underwrites much of the idealized activities of the natural and social sciences. The landscape need not be outside, for instance societies to be ethnographed. You can explore inside: within the atom, the body or the psyche. There is a progression however, from the landscape, like nature, as female, there to be explored and represented to the masculine activity of intervening, to strip away and expose, under the *controlled* conditions of the laboratory and, prometheanly, to create. As Hacking has noted, there are fewer phenomena in nature than are created by human intervention (1983: 227). When the natives have been suitably (intellectually) pacified, anthropologists turn societies into field laboratories systematically to test hypotheses, as Bateson and Mead did in Bali (1942: xi-xvi, a work significantly subtitled ‘a photographic analysis’). From this it is an easy transition through the hermeneutic theme park, where we wander at will and admire the differences (Geertz 1973e) to ethnographic museums (Baudrillard 1983a: 13-23) and tourist resorts, where the terminally tranquillized natives enact tableaux of their former selves.

Uses of the territorial metaphor emphasize the object to be known, controlled and exploited rather than the nature of the knowledge involved. Attacking the idea that discovery and experimentation precede inductive generalizations, Popper argued:

on the contrary the theoretician must long before have done his work, or at least the most important part of his work: he must have formulated his questions as sharply as possible. Thus it is he *who shows the experimenter the way* (1934: 107, my emphases).

The shift from an inductive to a deductive view of knowledge parallels a switch of metaphor, neatly encapsulated in *Criticism*

¹¹³ I am, incidentally, neither advocating a return to subjectivism or ‘intersubjectivity’, the loyal opposition to objectivism, nor to constructivism. It is the anthropologist who all too often defines the terms for other peoples’ subjectivity. And the idea that humans invent, construct or constitute culture veers close to voluntarism. Nor am I proposing the fantasy of an access to true knowledge, unencumbered by metaphors and presuppositions. I am interested in how representations are *used* in practice and their consequences, a quite different concern.

and the growth of knowledge, the critique by Popper's successors of Kuhn's revolutionary image of knowledge (of which more shortly). Knowledge is represented as a kind of organism, firmly rooted but continually growing.¹¹⁴ With the landscape now domesticated, knowledge becomes a massive tree which grows to dominate the garden. The image is no longer of a static world of objects, but on the process of emergence of knowledge itself. There is an implicit entelechy in this image: the evolution of the organism is somehow preordained and inexorable. Knowledge, like a growing tree, is powerful. It can, and will, displace whatever stands in its way. It is not just 'the *domination* of experiment by theory' (Hacking 1983: 167, my emphasis), but that images of the power of knowledge come to dominate.

This evolution of knowledge is not entirely without human intervention. The philosophers' job is to manure the tree and prune back adventitious branches, although they are not averse to a little intellectual topiary. They are in the end though glorified gardeners, servants of a force with its own direction and destiny. We must submit to injunctions: 'don't talk about things, talk about the way we talk about things' (Hacking 1983: 167), in order to achieve the 'semantic ascent' (Quine 1990: 81) to an arboreal eyrie from which to gaze from a superior, rational viewpoint. Meanwhile mere scholars of the humanities and some social sciences are the botanists, painters and guides to the garden who describe and celebrate the tree's stages of growth and particularities. The shift, in anthropology, is exemplified in the work of writers like Clifford (1988a) and Boon (1990), who have renounced ethnography for meta-commentary on the nature of anthropological knowledge itself as the significant object of study. The wonder of knowledge calls for suitable paeans.

Knowledge on this account derives much of its power from its being systematic. Notions of system, like stages of growth, are central to globalization theory and its precursor, world-systems theory. 'As systems move towards their natural demise they find themselves in "transition" to uncertain futures' (Wallerstein 1990: 38). Such naturalization first conflates knowledge and its objects, then by a reverse colouration of metaphor turns knowledge as an organism into a knowing organism. The stated aim of

¹¹⁴ Popper's sometime image was of leaping from one bobbing ice floe to another – a sardonic epitaph on the vision of territorial conquest.

Wallerstein's World-Systems analysis is 'with the degree to which this system became *conscious of itself* and began to *develop* intellectual and/or ideological frameworks which both justified it, and impelled its forward movement' (1990: 35, my emphases). Scholars emerge less as agents than as the instruments or immanent intelligence of knowledge itself as a transcendental agent endowed, in the more extreme versions, with its own consciousness.

According to the territorial metaphor, the discoverer or master of the world appears to be the proximate agent. However, as with the colonial conquest of the further expanses of the globe, this depends upon an image of knowledge, which gerundively posits the world as investigable, and so to be explored, and singles out the appropriate willing subjects of such discovery. Professionalizing knowledge distances the knowers from their agency. The texts in which this knowledge is inscribed 'are authorless, so that their truths seem bigger than the authors, transcendent and revelatory. In this way, it is not only agency which is diminished, but also causality, and hence responsibility' (Vitebsky 1993b: 109). As the tree of knowledge effloresces triumphantly and globalizes, it metamorphoses tropically into a banyan, overshadowing everything else.

Once knowledge has expanded so vastly, it becomes increasingly hard to describe as a unitary system or to decide who controls and owns it. As knowledge becomes progressively alienated from its erstwhile producers, it undergoes a further metaphorical transformation into symbolic and financial capital, a capital which itself has the capacity to transform. Capitalism itself often comes to be treated as a transcendental organism and the market as its mind. Organicity moves from knowledge to the object of that knowledge. This leaves the question of whether capitalism is still in its spotty adolescence, strapping adulthood or in its dotage? In any event, growth becomes transformation and division. 'What is occurring now is, in all likelihood bigger, deeper, and more important than the industrial revolution...the present moment represents nothing less than the second great divide in human history' (Toffler 1975: 21). Toffler's future was a world 'where science and technology were utterly synonymous with knowledge and knowledge was completely conflated with the structure of the new Information Society' (Archer 1990: 107). However, in late capitalism, as the emphasis has shifted from

production to consumption (Baudrillard 1975) so knowledge has become a commodity, which may be bought and sold democratically. Its most packageable form is as information, which in much globalization theory forms the vital commodity, generated by the new information technologies. This commoditized knowledge-as-information heralds apocalyptically the advent of a homogenized global culture at precisely the point that culture itself has been commoditized (as experience) and trivialized for mass consumption as tourism.¹¹⁵

In late, disorganized capitalism, so much information is generated that it is not possible to speak of particular groups of individuals as ‘owning’ knowledge any more. As knowledges proliferate and, like trans-national companies, diversify, they need to be managed and marketed. (Significantly, in struggling to find a suitable term to talk about knowledge for the title of the original conference section, *Counterwork: managing diverse knowledges*, my colleague Richard Fardon found himself forced for lack of alternatives into using this image.) Unreflective governments have even taken the metaphor literally. For instance, British universities have been told, in the words of successive prime ministers and secretaries of state for education, that they ‘must enter the marketplace’. In the business of marketing a knowledge which nobody owns any more, it should come as no surprise that universities, including my own, have started to dispense with academics as vice-chancellors in favour of businessmen and bankers, who exhort us to think of students as consumers, to maximize turnover and increase efficiency and productivity.

Where does that leave the people we fondly thought of as in charge of knowledge? The academic as discoverer or producer, like the tree and its surgeon, are endangered species. If professionalizing knowledge distanced its creators from their agency, deprofessionalizing them ushers in the era of Weber’s intellectual proletariat. As the market takes over the function of deciding what it is important to know about, academics become its instruments. And, as images of knowledge have changed, so have the ideas and practices of self-discipline which qualified knowers

¹¹⁵ The trumpeted convergence of previous differences as part of global compression (Robertson 1992: 8) is hardly original. Similar arguments were touted in the 1960s with the thesis of industrial convergence, but hardly achieved their millenarian expectations.

to become expert in their academic ‘discipline’. What, in the territorial metaphor, was once the discipline required of the (typically male) explorer in order to survive the harsh conditions of the wild (honed in England by the privations of public school) became in its later forms the discipline of the controlled, white-coated figure in the laboratory. According to the horticultural metaphor, the world of knowledge reveals itself to the disciplined mind of the scholar, who is no longer the lichen-festooned ethnographer, but the commentator, teacher and professor: the disciplinarians at once of the subject and its disciples. What happens as the capitalist image of knowledge transforms? I suggest that discipline changes from the determination and frugality of the entrepreneur or the skill and industry of the craftsman to surveilling and disciplining the new proletariat through endless reviews of productivity, excellence and customer satisfaction. There is less need for self-discipline: the increasingly impersonal subject must respond to the dictates of the market.

As the supermarket emerges as the exemplary form of late capitalism, the superstore manager becomes the instrument of the new knowledge. As universities ape supermarkets, degrees increasingly resemble shopping expeditions among the competing delights of conveniently modularized, enticingly advertised courses. Teaching is consequently being transformed. For instance, my job over the last two years has changed to become largely about planning courses and organizing packaged course materials (including recording lectures for clients’ convenience), managing teaching assistants (who, like checkout assistants, actually deal with the customers), handling complaints and, of course, filling in forms and submitting to surveys.¹¹⁶ The role of academics as critical thinkers becomes not just irrelevant, but actually subversive of efficient marketing and management. (It is helpful to distinguish management from administration. I take administration to be the kinds of activity, for instance, in which colonial rulers engaged in a past imperial form of government.) The post-structuralist cliché of ‘the death of the author’ may be not just a conceit of the textualization of the world, but the product

¹¹⁶ As electronic technology develops, presumably the Open University will soon have close to a U.K. monopoly as producer of courses based on videos, computerized coursework and examination in a market dominated by the United States and no doubt in due course the Far East. I would like to thank Margaret Wiener and Ron Inden for their comments on the draft of this chapter and Ron Inden for first suggesting the supermarket as the paradigm of late capitalism.

of the new imperatives. Maybe I have grown disabused, but my impression is that academia is rapidly replicating commerce, as output geared to instant ideas or easily assimilable thought-bytes, with short shelf-lives and sell-by dates, supersedes the less marketable critical scholarship. How much work published in the last decade (including this chapter) has actually contributed anything to human understanding, or will be worth reading in a few years? If knowledge is market-driven, will the books that sell in supermarkets and airport kiosks become the sources of knowledge?

How convincing this sketch is I leave to the reader to judge. I am not arguing that there is anything inherent in such metaphors that determine human thinking, nor that people in any particular situation are necessarily constrained by such images. The test of the relevance of my argument is if it helps to explain practices to do with knowing and if it makes sense of the consequences. Sometimes, indeed, the metaphors appear to be adopted quite literally. For instance, the idea that the kind of knowledge needed to run a supermarket is directly applicable far more broadly is instantiated in Mrs Thatcher's decision to delegate key aspects of government policy-making to the executive heads of two foodstore chains. Selling baked beans qualifies you to decide how to determine the fate of patients in mental hospitals. If it were not so terrifying, it would be funny.

Towards a revolutionary dialogue?

There are two other metaphors of knowledge, which fit less easily in the progression outlined above. The first is Kuhn's explicit image of knowledge as a revolution (1962) and Feyerabend's endorsement of nihilism, or Dadaism, as its method (1975), which are too well known to need belabouring. The revolutionary metaphor, perhaps inevitably in the social sciences - which are far more hidebound than its practitioners care to admit - becomes watered down and sanitized ('argument is war', Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 4-5). In anthropology there is supposed to have been an equivalent revolution, from the armchair disciplinarians of collated facts (now in vogue again) to participant-observation, a visual image which overlooks how much fieldwork depends upon talking and questioning. Were we

to take the image of revolution seriously, it would imply that, far from being heirs to a glorious tradition, most existing knowledge is obsolete, if not downright dangerous. If knowledge is not something you accumulate, a great deal of what has been written about, say, Bali is not so much dated as useless or at best seriously misleading.¹¹⁷ Such an insight threatens to put too many people out of business. So revolutionary fervour, which may burst out in the sporadic warfare of seminars or articles, but rarely conferences, is headed off into the set-piece battles fought out in journals and monographs, and is dissipated by the morass of committees which decide who gets to be hired, research grants, tenure and promotion.

The obverse face of the revolutionary image is knowledge as dialogue.¹¹⁸ There is an important difference though. The previous metaphors are all great intellectual undertakings ‘in the key of death’ (to gloss Lévi-Strauss’s phrase *en clé de mort*, 1966: 194). To view knowledge as a landscape requires objectifying it first: turning people into specimens to be pinned to boards. Organisms die: and their growth requires others to. Commoditizing critical thinking as anodyne information leaves it murlled and moribund. Revolutions are rarely bloodless. Dialogue, by contrast, is ‘in the key of life’ (*en clé de vie*): it points to a future, however uncertain. It presupposes someone else with a mind of their own who is likely not to agree with you. Dialogue as an image also has the virtue of specifying some of the different kinds of practice in which we actually engage, like teaching classes, discussing in seminars, talking with colleagues and people during fieldwork. It treats knowing as a diverse set of situated practices. Kuhn’s latter formulation of his paradigm

¹¹⁷ Except, that is, for retrospective intellectual histories. It is interesting to see how authors cope with the rival demands of constructing genealogies to authorize their work and denying their antecedents. Much innocent fun is to be had watching, for instance, how Malinowski lecturers search around for some acceptable link between their argument and the thoughts of the master.

¹¹⁸ As Collingwood noted, the difference between these last two metaphors depends whether one is prepared to recognize the need for divergence in argument. ‘In a dialectical system it is essential that the representatives of each opposing view should understand why the other view must be represented. If one fails to understand this...[one’s interlocutor] becomes...a combatant in an eristical process instead of a partner in a dialectical process’ (1942: 211). The relationship of dialogue and dialectic is complex. Bakhtin argued against a Hegelianism which would monologize dialogue by locating it in a ‘unique abstract consciousness’ (Pechey 1990: 24). Instead he suggested ‘dialectics was born of dialogue so as to return again to dialogue on a higher level’ (1986a: 162).

(1977) as an exemplary way of solving problems suggests knowledge is less an abstract mental entity than culturally and historically changing kinds of activity. The revolutionary and dialogic metaphors suggest in different ways that there is a case for considering knowledge as different kinds of practice which are more contested, confused and fragmented than is implied in the more authoritarian claims of knowledge to be an abstract conceptual system.

Knowing as a practice or event?

What does it involve to talk of knowledge as a practice?¹¹⁹ Negatively, it requires us to pause before assuming knowledge to be a reified, ahistorical abstract entity, a tendency in anthropology that includes depicting local, or indigenous, knowledges as inherently systematic (Brokensha et al. 1980). Although doing so may encourage us to take local knowledges seriously, it is to invite in a Trojan Horse, because the effect is to impose alien categories and to ignore the case for taking knowledges as historically situated practices. Not just local knowledges, but also expert knowledge, may be more about 'knowing how' than 'knowing that'. Even academic writing is in no small part a craft. Local knowledge often exists as rival versions, which are not separable from the social conditions of their being known (Cohen 1993). It does not follow that such kinds of knowledge are irrational. They are subject to testing and modification, and involve theory and presuppositions (van der Ploeg 1993). Knowing, in this sense, requires evaluation by some measure like appropriateness to particular circumstances or adequacy, rather than by its being true as such. Talk of truth is often meaningless, when what one is dealing with may be more like a performance (as in agriculture, Richards 1993), or is so local that it could not be authentically codified as knowledge (Burghart 1993). To encrypt such a pullulation of practices in the coffin of knowledge barely leaves a skeleton.

¹¹⁹ As the contributors to Hobart 1993a have written at length about the relationship of local and global knowledge, and tried to show ethnographically the case for treating knowledge as practice, I shall not repeat the arguments here. I merely note a few points as I assume them in what follows.

To turn at last to Bali, the island has been the refractory object of western knowledge for centuries (Hobart 1990a). Indeed it already had a place in western knowledge before it was discovered according to Boon (1977: 10-34), because somewhere on earth paradise was thought still to exist. The problem was just to find it. Balinese and Europeans have a long history of mutual gazing and misunderstanding (Wiener 1995a). Dutch colonization, the Japanese invasion, Independence, the massacres which followed the abortive coup of 1965, development and finally mass tourism are among the indices of Balinese encounters with the modern world. The relationship is not all one-way. Leaving aside the impact of Balinese music on western music, more prosaically the silver for *Les Musts de Cartier* is now worked in Bali, just as in the eighteenth century were rifle barrels (Vickers 1989: 18), because Balinese have turned out to be more skilled at working metals than Europeans in the respective periods. The book on how Balinese used Europeans (such as Walter Spies) to further their dealings with outsiders still remains to be written.

Such accounts however tell us little about Balinese practices of knowing, teaching, learning, questioning, criticizing and so on. Treating knowledge as a social practice also links rather nicely with Balinese discursive usage. Balinese whom I know commonly explained what we often call states of the world and mind in terms of action, *laksana*, or as work, *karya*.¹²⁰ The roots for 'know' in daily usage, *tawang* or *uning*, apply to both knowing and being conscious or aware. Interestingly, the words are rarely used in noun forms. I am not proposing that Balinese usage has no recourse to metaphor. Balinese themselves on occasion relate *uning* to *ening* 'clean (of water), transparent' and *nerangang* 'to explain' to *terang* 'clear, bright'. Nor am I advancing the crude Whorfian argument that Balinese cannot conceive of knowledge as an abstraction: they have available a range of Old Javanese (ultimately Sanskrit) words. The term most widely used, *pramana*, suggests however '"ways" of knowing' (Matilal 1986: 97), the 'means of acquiring right knowledge' (Zoetmulder 1982:

¹²⁰ Significantly *laksana* in Old Javanese is glossed as both 'action, doing, taking action, proceeding, operating, performing, practice' and 'mark, sign; that by which something is distinguished from other things...way of being or appearing...having the particular form of' (Zoetmulder 1982: 958). The connection, as Balinese put it, is that signifying is an action, as is one's way of being. Incidentally, I take signifying, like other practices, to be public acts, the agents of which need not be individual humans, but may be complex such as groups, public meetings etc. (Collingwood 1942; Hobart 1990a).

1392). And the Old Javanese (and Sanskrit) term for knowing or knowledge, *jnana* in Balinese become *pradnyan*, ‘clever, knowledgeable’, which like the other word often employed, *kawikanan*, implies a demonstrated ability to be able to do something. To start off an analysis by ignoring Balinese usage is peremptory and unwarranted.

Balinese stress on knowing rather than knowledge has parallels in Indian Nyaya accounts of perception and knowledge. Knowing is a process which

is set in motion by doubt and ends in a decision... The end-product takes the form of a mental episode called *prama*, ‘knowledge’ (a knowledge-episode). It is such a cognitive episode (*jnana*) as hits the mark! (Matilal 1986: 100)

Indeed Matilal’s example is the same as the one Balinese used to me: seeing something in unclear light. (In passing, Balinese words for what we call ‘meaning’ imply hitting a target or reaching an objective.) By contrast to much western philosophical thinking, which emphasizes knowledge as ‘a more stable, intersubjectively communicable item’ or disposition (1986: 101), Nyaya philosophers and Balinese stressed believing and knowing as momentary episodes, which are recalled in subsequent acts of remembering.¹²¹ As Matilal put it: ‘Indian philosophers viewed a world or constructed a world of a series of cognitive events rather than collected a mass of true propositions’ (1986: 105-6). Is knowing an act or an event though? Matilal compared Nyaya accounts with Geach’s theory of mental acts (1957) and opted for knowing as a mental episode rather than a mental act on the grounds that acting ‘in ordinary language is ambiguous’, as it applies ‘primarily to physical movement and observable physiological behaviour’ (1986: 112). At this point, I prefer to suspend judgement as to how far his argument applies to Balinese. As they speak cheerfully of thinking, knowing and remembering as *laksana*, there is little point in doing unnecessary violence to their practices by over-interpreting them.

¹²¹ On the significance of remembering and its implications for representations of agency in Bali, see Hobart 1990b: 327-30.

Healing or doctoring patients?

Among the ways of knowing, *pramana*, to which Balinese give serious attention is the speech (*sabda*) of the dead, who do not lie. Unfortunately the mediums (commonly *tapakan*, literally ‘those who are impressed upon’) on whom they must rely are all too capable, in their view, of dissimulation. As doctors and health clinics purveying western medical knowledge have proliferated, become more affordable and less likely to kill patients than before, Balinese healers have had to take account of them. One response has been the rise of highly sophisticated local practitioners, to whom people travel from all over the island. Although most Balinese have now made use of western medicine at some point, the local healers have an epistemological edge over their rivals. Like many of their British counterparts, Indonesian doctors do not explain what they are doing or why. They treat the patient as passive and ignorant. By contrast, the local healers with whom I worked involved their clients as co-agents in inquiry into the causes of their condition.¹²² Healing is a public exercise in knowing, of moving from doubt to deciding whether what was said hits the truth.

Let us consider brief extracts from one case treated by a celebrated healer, who was so popular that clients came to obtain numbered tickets, sometimes days in advance. Her sessions took place before a large audience, anywhere from thirty to seventy-five waiting patients and their families. During the boring parts those waiting watched television. When the healer was in séance, they listened and commented, sometimes in horror or sympathy, more often much with amusement at the sorts of mess peoples’ lives got into. The session, like others, began and ended with the question of responsibility, and so agency, being discussed explicitly. (In the translation that follows, the clarificatory

¹²² As everyone is aware that the ill are easily persuadable, one always takes along an independent person, whose job is to use their critical judgement. To a determined materialist, all this might seem peripheral to the central question of whether the treatment works. According to an old friend and ethno-medical specialist, Ivan Polunin, Balinese pharmaceutical expertise is remarkable broad ranging. In a chemical idiom, you may pay many times more for a remedy in the form of pills from a clinic than for much the same as plant extracts from a healer. Knowledge once again is underdetermined, in the sense that different explanatory practices may achieve similar results. For Balinese specialists, the healer referred to below was a *balian tapakan* from Banjar Lantang Hidung, Sukawati, in Gianyar.

parentheses are mine. Italicized English words have been translated from the Indonesian; the remainder of the text is translated from Balinese.)

He Now whether you will get advice or not is not yet
ale sure. Whether you will be successful or not, we
r: share (responsibility for what happens) together.
 Is that acceptable?

Cli Yes.
ent
s:

The session concluded:

He The *risk* (responsibility for deciding the validity
ale of what was said) belongs to you, the petitioner.
r: If you think it appropriate, write down what
 follows.

Cli It is.
ent
s:

In several of her cases, the healer explicitly questioned the efficacy of Indonesian doctors. She began the séance by indicating that an unnamed forebear wished to speak. (Later to their suitable astonishment she named, apparently correctly, the clients' father who wanted to speak to his children.) The forebear described the (absent) patient's symptoms in detail: she was confused, she failed to hear what was said, her heart pounded, her joints were numb and she felt pain in her bone marrow. Worst of all she, and the other people in the compound, had terrible dreams every night. The healer continued:

He What is more the ill person is unaware of being
ale confused. It is no use referring this to a doctor,
r: the doctor will be at a loss to work out what is
 the problem (i.e. the doctor will be as confused
 as she is). The reason is that there are no clear
symptoms.... When she is out in public, she is
 quite capable of sorting out East from West (to
 be muddled over directions in Bali is the acid test
 of deep confusion); but as soon as she *enters* the
 compound, she is worse than a chicken under a

clay water pot. If you say she is mad, do not think this is sent from God, if so she would be mad both in the streets and at home. She is not mad, but ill. However, this is not an ordinary illness; it is different; it is called 'not well, not ill'.¹²³ So, those are the *nature* of the signs (of something unusual) in your compound now. Have you understood?

Clients:
Yes.

She then went on to explain, apparently speaking as a dead family member, that it was the collected forebears who had sent the illness as a warning that a dangerous device (*pakakas*) had been placed by ill-wishers within the compound.

Healer:
If I can illustrate, it is like a *guided missile* (which has almost reached its destination) because it is about to explode (literally 'it is on your *doorstep*'). In order that it doesn't *reach the point* of your being *blown up*, I, together with the purified dead and the recently cremated dead, have let loose my servants (*bebutan*, Balinese invisible followers) to visit you with disturbances which would make you quickly seek clarification. This was in order that you would not be just *convinced* by a doctor. If you had been *convinced* by a doctor ('s diagnosis), you would now be dead. Now what is the use of dead followers to Me? This is why I sent bad dreams, even to the smallest toddlers. Have you understood?

Clients:
We have.

Balinese had been greatly taken with television footage of missiles pursuing aircraft around the sky during the Falklands war. And the healer made use of such 'modern' images in her

¹²³ This is a way of talking about 'illness of the thoughts' which is considered quite different from insanity, which may now be referred to psychiatrists.

diagnoses. (On another occasion she likened the form of attack on a victim to a radio-controlled device.) She also showed that she was familiar with Indonesian and the basics of clinical terminology, which she encompassed as part of Balinese healing practice. (In Balinese terms, it was the deity who knew about all this. In Bali the dead too can learn.) Here the healer set up a confrontation, which pointed to the limits of western medical knowledge. Where there are no clear symptoms or they fail to fall into pre-set categories, western medicine cannot cope. Its symptomatology is fixed, inflexible and unsituated, a dead monologic code. Doctors could not recognize an unusual sign, because they are bound by the straightjacket of received textbook knowledge. By a juxtaposition (known in Balinese as *masisimbing*)¹²⁴ she elegantly linked the patient's confusion with the doctor's inability to make sense of the symptoms. The picture she drew was of mortal danger impending, as real as a missile just metres from its target, while the doctor ran around in circles clucking furiously, blind to what was going on. Granted the calm, self-important gravitas and superiority to which most Indonesian doctors pretend, especially when dealing with villagers, the alternative image is delightfully ridiculous.

This was only the start. The deity explained that it had to send illness, including dreams, of a kind which doctors could not explain. It was crucial that the clients would be unsatisfied with any western medical diagnosis and would have to inquire further. Otherwise the planted device would have killed them. The deity's whole strategy depended on the limitations of western medical knowledge. Significantly, the healer made the logical crux of the argument hinge upon the doctor not succeeding in *convincing* the patient. Here she contrasted the authoritative, monologic voice of the putative doctor, which aimed at convincing an intimidated patient, with her own – or the forebear's – combination of sinuous logic, practical reason (a deity needs followers and so has a quite different concern for the patient from a doctor who is ultimately only interested in money) and dialogue. Action and signs were closely linked in the healer's speech. The dead had taken the action of sending a sign in the form of an action (making the

¹²⁴ *Masisimbing* is ostensibly to refer to one subject, but the real target is another, which is either indicated in the utterance or made clear by the circumstances under which the utterance is made. The significance of her juxtaposing the patient, doctor and chicken was lost neither on the onlookers nor on villagers to whom I played the recording later.

victims have nightmares), which the victims had to think about to realize it was a sign requiring action. As they did not know the significance of the sign, the action was to seek advice. On this account, hermeneutics is not a limp-wristed preoccupation with textual meaning (it is the doctor who is tied to a closed system of signification determined by textual authority), but a sensitive ability to consider actual events critically and devise an appropriate response to them.

Alternative positions

My second example is from a play performed in the research village in March 1989 by members of the Indonesian State Radio Company, before an audience of over a thousand people. The plot does not concern us here. I take two short extracts. The characters on stage were an Old Retainer, *Panasar*,¹²⁵ a Young Retainer who was his younger brother *Wijil* and the low caste wife of the Prince of Nusa Penida, an island off Bali. This last role, the *Liku* (played here incidentally by a man) is the stock part of a slightly mad and spoiled princess, who breaks polite conventions by saying what is normally left unsaid in public. Only the outlines of the plot were fixed, the rest was extemporized in the light of how the spectators reacted.

The first extract is from the opening scene, in which the Old Retainer entered alone and addressed the audience. (As in the previous example, the clarificatory parentheses are mine. The original was in Balinese, and translation from Indonesian is in italics. Performers drew on two other languages: *kawi*, represented in bold, and English in bold italics.)

<i>Old Reta iner:</i>	... All of us living on this island cherish our <i>artistic and cultural life</i> ... How do we ensure it flourishes? What's the way to bring it about? (For a start) it's kind of you to put on this play. Also, Ladies and Gentlemen, it's good of you to come and watch, because if we aren't going to
-------------------------------	--

¹²⁵ The root is 'base, foundation'. 'Anchorman' is the nearest English equivalent which comes to mind. The piece was in Prèmbon style. That is it resembles, Arja, 'opera, or rather musical comedy' (de Zoete and Spies 1938: 196), except that the actors playing retainers wore masks.

appreciate and look after our *arts*, who else are we to tell to do so? That's the reason that *guests* now come, that *tourists* come **from all over the world**. What are they really looking for? Is it not **solely because of** your *arts*, your *skill* (at crafts), your wisdom and expertise at making **all sorts of art objects**? That's the reason then that *tourists* come. What's this? Two of them have turned up. '*Welcome, good afternoon, thank you. I hope you glad see here.*' I know a couple of words to string together to start up a conversation. Well, now people *from overseas* enjoy watching, but we've all grown *indifferent*. Don't let it be like that. If things are as they are here, I feel happy and proud to address you. Isn't that so? I hope that we may succeed in looking after (what we have) **for ever**, so we can even improve on it...

As a highly skilled professional, the man playing the Old Retainer ranged across four languages even in this brief extract. The effect was to show the capacity of Balinese in theatre to encompass not only the past (in the use of Old Javanese), but the immediate present (Indonesian and English).¹²⁶ He started by referring to Balinese artistic and cultural life, for which he used a recently invented Indonesian expression (*seni budaya*). This framing of practices as 'culture' is part of the Indonesian state's drive to re-present ethnic differences, in Bali's case with the tourist market in mind (see also Chapter 7). What people in a particular part of Bali previously just did is coming increasingly to be constituted self-consciously as 'culture'. The problem, as Balinese often complained, was that the opportunities for making wealth by working in the local tourist and handicraft economies have made people less willing to take time off to keep this new-found culture going. The retainer praised the audience for turning up to watch and noted that what brought tourists to Bali is their *knowing how* to do all sorts of things. (The sentence neatly combined the verb form of being expert, *wikan*, with the new Indonesian vocabulary of 'skill' at making 'art objects'.) Conveniently we were on hand in the audience to point to as an

¹²⁶ The non-Balinese words were known to many adults in the audience, except for the English, which was known to only a few.

example and for the actor to suggest how important speaking English had now become in Bali. The very indifference Balinese had towards their own cultural heritage was implicitly linked to the new Indonesian order by his use of an Indonesian word, instead of several available vernacular ones. Ironically, his hope that Balinese would continue their past practices had already constituted culture in a moribund museological mode.¹²⁷

Immediately before the following extract, the princess had been expatiating upon why the prince married her although she was ugly, and pronounced on what a woman must do these days to become a good wife. She continued:

Princess If I *did not fulfil the specifications*, no one
s: would have wanted to take me. I wouldn't
 have looked for a man. Do you know what
 the first requirement is?

Young Indeed.
Retaine

r:

Princess *Submit a letter of request!*¹²⁸
s:

Young Huh!
Retaine

r:

Princess *Second: be prepared to submit to a trial*
s: *period of three months.*¹²⁹

Old It's very severe to apply for a job with the
Retaine condition that one must *submit to a trial*
r: *period of three months.*

Princess *Be prepared to take up any possible*
s: *position.*¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Apart from this last sentence which is my own commentary, it was clear from a long conversation with the actor that the other nuances were intended.

¹²⁸ This was a sideswipe first at the formal protocols, which are so striking a feature of Indonesian bureaucracy. It also suggested writing a love letter.

¹²⁹ It has become practice in some organizations to engage staff on a trial basis in the first instance. The statement also referred to the increasingly common practice, especially in towns of a couple sleeping together fairly openly before marriage.

¹³⁰ There were two senses. 1) Be prepared to go on a posting anywhere within Indonesia. This is a common requirement of official postings. 2) Be prepared to have to adopt unusual sexual positions.

Old Carry on.
Retaine
r:
Princes Do you know (the significance of) *be*
s: *prepared to take up any possible position?*
 Did you think it was *in the whole of the*
archipelago?
Old Doesn't it indicate *in the whole of the*
Retaine *archipelago?*
r:
Princes No.
s:
Old What then?
Retaine
r:
Princes *Be prepared to take up any possible*
s: *position.'* It means: '*on the right, on the left,*
on top or underneath.'
Old Oh dear! I thought it was to agree to go
Retaine wherever one was posted.
r:

Here the princess made fun of Indonesian bureaucratic protocols by applying them to the sexual attraction between couples. Instead of young people meeting in the many venues available to them, they should submit a formal letter of request. Starting from there she developed an implicit sexual theme to the hilarity of the audience by a play on the Indonesian word 'position' (*tempat*). Finally she subverted the ostensible theme completely by detailing sexual postures. As several spectators pointed out, it was all the more amusing because it was a man who was pretending complicity with the female members of the audience. Like the healer, the actor juxtaposed two themes and left it to the audience to infer how they linked. At various points in the play, the performers made it clear that how the spectators chose to understand what was said was up to them.

The commentators with whom I discussed the play in detail said that most young people probably just enjoyed the double reference. However those who reflected more on what was said could interpret it as ridiculing the pompous, rigid procedures of the Indonesian bureaucracy. There was a third reading, which a commentator made (interestingly, a middle-aged man), namely a

play between the desire for self-advancement through obtaining a government post and the ordeals this might entail, with sexual desire and the ordeals women have to go through to please men. It has become something of a cliché to describe theatre in Bali as didactic. To do so would be to miss much of the point as members in the audience I spoke to took it. Behind all this was an implicit, but sustained, mockery of the institutions of the Indonesian state by the repeated introduction of obscene themes which the actors wove together with quite different themes throughout the play. The humour moved easily between simple poking fun and obscenity to social criticism and to opening up alternative, sometimes deeply unsettling, possibilities. It suggested that there might be radically different understandings, not only about the conventions of behaviour being lampooned, but of the nature of the genres of representation themselves.

Knowing and laughing

Knowledge among western academics is generally a very grave business indeed to judge from the conferences of various anthropological associations I have attended over the years. The ponderous joke while delivering a paper, the occasional moment of levity during discussion just highlight how serious and important the occasion is. When visiting Balinese High Priests, textual specialists, healers and other experts, I have often been struck how often their conversation was interspersed with laughter, as were the healer's séances. When I tried to break the bad intellectual habits of a lifetime, I realized how important laughing was and a motley of occasions came to mind when laughing and knowing seemed linked in some way.¹³¹ No one is above being laughed at under some circumstances. This is a theme familiar to Balinese specialists. In shadow theatre, the humble, fat servants routinely debunk one another, chaff their lordly masters, scoff at terrifying demons, make fun of the gods themselves and of members of the audience.¹³² The people with

¹³¹ My debt to Bakhtin in both his studies of Rabelais (1984) and of dialogue (1986b) should be obvious.

¹³² Vickers (1984) and Worsley (1984) have noted the contrast drawn in traditional Balinese paintings between the energy, noise and – I would add – the laughter of the common people at work by contrast with the relatively cool, restraint of the aristocracy, who hold themselves aloof. Knowledge seems to be set apart here as self-mastery. I have discussed the conjunction of laughing and knowing (and death) with several specialists on

whom I have worked in Bali stressed repeatedly to me that in theatre, as with other activities, you cannot learn or teach unless it is mixed with laughter.

One way to explain the healer's mockery of modern medicine or the fun poked at Indonesian institutions might be that it is a response to the fear of something beyond the capacity of Balinese to understand, let alone control. As the Old Retainer indicated, there is grave concern among an increasing number of Balinese over the effects of tourism and economic development. To reduce laughing to a mechanism for dealing with tensions and their psychic release (the tensions may even be inferred retrospectively from the catharsis itself) involves unnecessary over-interpretation. Appeal to the writings of Freud may not help, because too often they are invoked to underwrite a universalistic, closed and authoritarian theory of the human mind. The emphasis is on control, by which mind is made to mirror certain features of knowledge, of which mind itself is one object. The problem with such explanations, as with so much knowledge, is that they do not tell us very much. It does not tell us what Balinese do in fact laugh at, and what are the implications and consequences. A striking feature of genealogies of organized knowledge such as anthropology is quite how much they exclude rather than include. Human agents are reconstituted as ciphers of a narrow and exclusive anthropological imagination, such that not only are they alienated from their own actions, but the agents become largely unrecognizable, even to themselves on the few occasions they obtain access to ethnographic descriptions of themselves. The fact that laughter, fear, indeed so much of what people actually do and say, are so successfully eliminated or trivialized in most anthropological writings is a pretty damning indictment of our pretensions to knowledge.

The excerpts suggest that, unlike the use of the serial metaphors for knowledge outlined earlier, Balinese do not separate the knower from what is known, nor from the other participants. In theatre, the spectators are notably not passive, but are openly invited to reflect critically on what is being discussed. This hardly squares with the familiar stereotype of passive Asians by contrast

Balinese and Javanese. Each of them agreed they were somehow connected, and some gave examples, but none of us knew how to link it to our 'knowledge' of the societies in question.

with active Westerners. Knowledge is still rarely commoditized and is not objectified in any simple sense. This is not to suggest that there are not specialized writings, which might appear to have objective authority or efficacy. However in my experience such as it is, Balinese paid less attention to the text as a source of objective knowledge than to the qualification of the person, and the study required, to master the practices necessary to realize the text's potential. Attaining such expertise affects your whole being: you do not just acquire texts and so knowledge. And part of knowing is knowing that such texts must always be used in a manner appropriate to *désa kala patra*, the particular place, occasion and circumstance.

Instead of prejudging what knowledge is, I prefer to start with situated practices: what people did and what people said about it. Ernesto Laclau has argued (1990a) that social scientists have been preoccupied with the claims of structure for too long and have signally failed to take seriously the degree to which what happens is historical and contingent. Anthropologists' difficulties over unintended consequences are an obvious example. If we start to look at actual practices, then such unexpected themes as laughing and dying, for instance, seem to be linked in Bali to knowing in complicated ways. For instance, in the village where I work, there is a well-known story of a poor and illiterate man at a wake, who was teased by being asked to read a palm-leaf manuscript in Old Javanese. He fled in tears. On the way home he was summoned by giant figures who appeared, inscribed something on his tongue and told him to go back to the wake. On being taunted once again at his illiteracy, he astounded everyone by knowing how to read (and so to understand) the text. On Balinese telling, the story involves Balinese ideas of pleasure (*suka*) and suffering (*duka*). It also presupposes that, when matters reach an extreme (for instance, being mocked to the point of despair), they transform (*matemahan*) into their opposite. To reduce this story to being about compensation or some such would be paltry. Asserting the superiority of western, or global, knowledge requires ignoring much of what people actually do and say, declaring them ignorant and incapable of commenting on their own actions. This seems rather silly, not to say narrow-minded, when the presuppositions people work with affect what they do and how they understand one another's actions.

One theme, I hope, is clear from the examples. Knowing is not the exclusive prerogative of some superior knowing subject. Both the healer and the actors assumed that the audience also knew what they knew. What was at stake rather was the significance of what everyone already knew and the importance of thinking critically about its implications. Knowing commonly takes place as part of a dialogue, which is how Balinese mostly study and read texts. (Actors deeply dislike appearing on television, because there is no audience and are reduced to working off one another.) What has all this to do with laughter? Laughter is equally dialogic: you laugh with, or at, someone in company. Laughing to yourself is a sign of madness, not only in Bali. Knowing is directed at a target as, in a different way, is laughter. They are both about doing something in and to the world. If we insist on being dazzled by the apparition of global knowledge, we shall miss noticing practices which might tell us something, if only, like the doctors of the healer's image, we could stop running around under clay jars while unbeknown to us trouble looms. Above all, imagining or stating you have knowledge all too easily justifies not inquiring too carefully or critically, lest it upset the illusion. The greater the claim to global dominion, the more such knowledge is likely to ignore what people are actually doing somewhere in the world.

Academic practices to do with knowledge are often *en clé de mort*: grave rehearsals of the traces of our presence. Dialogue with the people with whom we work offers no panacea. At most it is a warning against vacuity. The brief examples may have hinted at the complexities of Balinese commentaries on their own rapidly changing lives. One woman leaving the theatre performance remarked

Pragina kaliwat duweg, tiang atenga mati kedèk.

The actors were so clever, I half died laughing.

To claim I knew what she meant would be laughable.

Chapter 5

As they like it: overinterpretation and hyporeality in Bali.

Bali overflows with meaning. As the illustration below shows, meaning has even found its way into exported Indonesian representations of themselves. A glorious intellectual genealogy climaxing with Bateson and Mead, Geertz and Boon, ends limply in advertising copy for Bank Bumi Daya. In Bali even capitalism has been aestheticized. Or is it aesthetics commoditized? In the advertisement Balinese epitomize Indonesia; while dance epitomizes Bali. And meaning is what motivates Balinese dance. But how did meaning get into the dance? And according to whom?

The right rhythm for your business



Every motion how small it may be
has a meaning and gets the full
attention from this Bali dancer.
If not, she is not a real dancer.

We like Bali dances. And our
executives too pay full attention
to small matters. Real bankers?
See us and you will know.



Bank Bumi Daya

Head Office: Jl. Imam Bonjol No. 61 Jakarta Pusat. Phone: 333721 (60 lines)
Telex Head Office: 61876, 61400, 61896, 61277, 61355 BDPST IA
Telex Operations Division: 61117, 61765, 61340, 61760, 61395
61297, 61421, 61122, 61423, 61624, 61425 BDOPR IA 61891, 61759 BDFX IA
Facsimile: (021) 330153

- **Representative Office: SINGAPORE**
5, Shenton Way # 24 - 08 UIC Building, Singapore 0106
Telephone: 2226277 Telex: 23214 BEDES-N
- **HONG KONG Representative Office & Bumi Daya International Finance Ltd.**
Far East Finance Centre, 7th Floor, 16 Harcourt Road, Central Hong Kong
Telephone: 5-296238-5; 248131; 5-2613761; 5-276611 Telex: 94528 BEDE-HK
Fax: 94542 BDFX-HK Facsimile: 5-298131
- **Agency Office: New York, USA**
833 Main Avenue 2nd Floor, New York N.Y. 10022 Facsimile: (212) 3714122
Telephone: (212) 735-5261 Telex: 177377 BEPE-NY 177185 177186 BDFX-NY

- **Representative Office: LONDON**
Purcell House, 8th Floor, 31/35 Fenchurch Street London EC3M 3DF
UNITED KINGDOM Telephone: (71) 623 3150; Telex: 9413899 BUMIDA G
- **Branch Office: Tokyo**
Akasaka Twin Tower, Main Building 12th Floor
17-22 Akasaka 2-chome
Minato-ku, Tokyo 107 JAPAN
Telephone: (03) 5562-9110; 5151/9152 Facsimile: (03) 5562-9036
Telex: (242) 6608 BDTYO; 242-3030 BDTFX J
- **Branch Office: Cayman Islands**
c/o Bank Bumi Daya New York Agency

The problem these days, to paraphrase Evans-Pritchard, is that there's only one method in social anthropology, the interpretive method - and that's impossible (Needham 1975: 365). It is not however self-evident that social actions are either interpretable or, what follows, meaningful, except in a trivial sense. For instance, there is a well known and very difficult movement in Balinese dance, *magulu (w)angsul*, which involves moving the head from side to side smoothly, while keeping it vertical. I once asked some dancers what the meaning (*arti*) was to be greeted with a laugh and told it had none! It was appreciated because it was so difficult to do well.¹³³ To succeed was to be *tekek*, firm, precise; just as good speech should be *seken*, clear, definite. Only when a dancer has mastered the use of the body can they assume a *sebeng bingar*, an expression of deep inner contentment, radiate light (*masinar becik*) when dancing, so that the audience feels *buka girik*, as if it has been tickled and aroused. It is about achieving an effect. Balinese are highly critical commentators on what is considered good or bad, but do so largely without recourse to meaning. Such Balinese reflections on their own practices though stand in stark contrast to what scholars insufflate into them. Interpretation is so central to the definition of the anthropologist as knowing subject, of the object of study and the required disciplinary practices however that questioning its universal applicability must be rather like questioning the existence of God in the Vatican. The result is to pre-empt inquiry into the conditions under which it is justifiable or appropriate to rely on interpretation or to impute meaning.

On interpretation

In anthropological practice, interpreting has come, profligately, to embrace any activity from expounding the meaning of something abstruse, to making clear, to giving a particular

¹³³ Felicia Hughes-Freeland, a former student of mine, uses detailed ethnography from Yogyakarta to provide a devastating critique of the habit of reading meaning into dance (1986; 1991).

explanation.¹³⁴ In short, it is what anthropologists do. The word has a more specialist sense: the method, goal or subject matter of hermeneutics. This is not just an obscure German philosophical genealogy culminating in Habermas, but by routes as diverse as Weber and Freud has permeated human scientific thinking; and has even had a significant impact via Heidegger on post-structuralists such as Foucault and on Derrida. My interest however is especially in anthropological uses of hermeneutics. It so happens that the doyen of Interpretive Anthropology, Clifford Geertz, has used Bali to illustrate his method. Geertz's work expounds and exemplifies many of the kinds of interpretive methods and assumptions invoked by other anthropologists. So, rather than engage in sweeping generalizations, I confine myself to interpretation as it has actually been practised on Balinese.

Interpretation creates a dilemma for anthropologists. As Dan Sperber notes

the project of a scientific anthropology meets with a major difficulty: it is impossible to describe a cultural phenomenon...without taking into account the ideas of the participants. However, ideas cannot be observed, but only intuitively understood: they cannot be described but only interpreted (1985: 9).

Sperber's task therefore is to get from intuitive understandings to true descriptions, which may be falsified and so are scientific. Taking examples from Evans-Pritchard's *Nuer religion*, Sperber argues the extent to which an anthropologist reworks supposed observations in the course of even the most apparently raw factual account. What mediates is

anthropologists' technical vocabulary...a medley of words to be used where straightforward translations are wanting: 'sacrifice', 'divination', 'priest'...'symbol', 'marriage'... When they seem to be developing a theory of sacrifice, they are, actually, pursuing [the] work of second (or *n*th) degree interpretation' etc. (1985: 25, 27).

This is what makes

¹³⁴ Appositely, one of Wittgenstein's key expositions is on the confused senses of interpretation. Significantly paralleling Balinese usage, he notes that to interpret is 'to do something' (1958: 212).

interpretive generalizations differ radically from descriptive generalizations. An interpretation is adequate when it is faithful, a description is adequate when it is true (1985: 29).

As usual I find myself agreeing heartily with the first half of what Sperber writes and disagreeing furiously with the second. Not only description and explanation involve interpretation in some sense or other, but so do translation and even transcription. The idea, however, that you can drive a wedge between fidelity to ideas and true descriptions looks gently dated and unnecessarily dualistic (Quine 1953a; Davidson 1973), although the vision still seems to excite the occasional analytical philosopher. For some reason, even quite intelligent anthropologists retain a touching affection in the powers of impartial observation, when we spend so much time asking people to explain what it is we have just seen. Sperber attempts to escape by resort to a scientized epidemiology of representations, which is a subtle form of representationism and semiological regression (Fabian 1991c). His 'participants' however turn out to be the usual passive, defanged objects of anthropological inquiry, whose ideas conveniently reflect or instantiate collective representations, the raw materials of the thinking anthropologist.

The prize for good guesses

Considering how broad the claims made for interpretation, it turns out to be quite a difficult animal to track down. When it comes to spelling out what is involved in the approach he has made his own, Geertz becomes rather coy. What does come across though is that an interpretive theory of culture is 'essentially a semiotic one' (1973c: 5). As Geertz relies very heavily for his theory on the work of Ricoeur, it is worth quoting the organ grinder himself:

the primary sense of the word 'hermeneutics' concerns the rules required for the interpretation of the written documents of our culture... *Auslegung* (interpretation, exegesis)...covers only a limited category of signs, those which are fixed by writing, including all the sorts of documents and monuments which entail a fixation similar to writing (1979: 73).

The difficulty is that this interpretation or exegesis is not confined to the analysis of signs in any obviously Saussurean manner. Hermeneutics is redolent of supplementarity: it promises *more* than semiotics, a 'surplus of meaning'. It is this *more* that worries me.

The supplement that is promised derives from the workings of that delightfully arcane notion: the hermeneutic circle. Geertz wields his semiotic trowel with some panache.

Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape (1973c: 20).

This is odd in a way, because there are not many bodies, or people, in Geertz's analyses, except occasionally as props to get the narrative going (Crapanzano 1986: 69-71). Ricoeur is more prosaic.

We have to guess the meaning of the text because the author's intention is beyond our reach...if there are no rules for making good guesses, there are methods for validating those guesses we do make...[which] are closer to a logic of probability than to a logic of empirical verification. To show that an interpretation is more probable in the light of what we know is something other than showing that a conclusion is true. So in the relevant sense, validation is not verification. It is an argumentative discipline comparable to the juridical procedures used in legal interpretation, a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability...we are also enabled to give an acceptable meaning to the famous concept of the hermeneutic circle. Guess and validation are in a sense circularly related as subjective and objective approaches to the text. But this circle is not a vicious one...the role of falsification is played by the conflict between competing interpretations. An interpretation must not only be probable, but more probable than another interpretation (1976: 75-79, my parentheses).

The whole juggernaut is driven by the wet dream of the almost unbelievably probable interpretation. In the last resort though, there is no yardstick for judging the quality of an interpretation, which is not recursively defined by the interpretive method itself.

Ricoeur is admirably explicit and so highlights what tends to be submerged in Geertz's suasive prose. Once again there is a

convenient Cartesian split of truth about the world and what pertains to the higher reaches of Mind. Mind however is oddly passive. On the crucial question of how you decide between rival interpretations, it is 'the conflict' which is supposed to do the work. An approach which purports to clarify the intricacies of forms of argumentation ends up in this instance by muddying the waters to the point that Jonathan Spencer has remarked of this strain of American anthropology that there has been 'the abandonment of *any* consideration of problems of validation' (1989: 159). One of the drawbacks of a post-modern, post-interpretive, post-global world is a tendency to abandon critical thinking to a spurious democracy of argument in which anything goes.

For Ricoeur, the meaning of the text originates in, but becomes detached from, the author's mind. It turns into public property to do with what one will; but few are qualified to do so. For interpretation 'presupposes a discrepancy between the clear meaning of the text and the demands of (later) readers' (Sontag 1961: 6). By postulating an ironic doubling with a wealth of hidden deep meaning (Foucault 1970: 303-387), gerundively hermeneuts create a potentially inexhaustible resource to be exploited and where they effectively exercise unregulated control. A semantic free market is declared, with procedures (guessing and checking guesses) supposed to ensure that all works out for the best.¹³⁵

A difficulty of interpretation is that you cannot begin guessing without some background of prior texts (pre-text or inter-text) and without determining beforehand what kind of object you are dealing with in the light of what you already know (a further determination). In short, hermeneutic methods require preinterpretation, with little restriction on how you procure the results. As we can never approach something innocently, we inevitably introduce assumptions and presuppositions. We begin preinterpreting in the act of listening. The reason so much of this paper is devoted to a critique of interpretation is I am still trying to free myself to the degree I can from yet more unthinking preinterpretation.

¹³⁵ Sontag brings out nicely the implicit connection with the New Right. 'Interpretation is a radical strategy for conserving an old text, which is thought too precious to repudiate, by revamping it' (1961: 6). I develop this point further in the Introduction.

The text instead is passive: it awaits the active resourceful interpreter (commonly male) to prize open and enjoy its riches. Ricoeur's juridical metaphor develops the theme. For the interpreter assumes further powers as judge to interrogate, and conduct whatever forensic procedures he (use of a male term seems appropriate in this instance) will on the objectified products of mind by a mind set apart in judgement, knowing, superior. The findings are not subjective however, for objectivity then grafts itself onto validation in a manner that is far from clear. The connection rests upon the assumption that this mind approaches objectivity through its all-encompassing superiority, which transcends subjectivity and objectivity (unlike Geertz, Ricoeur is concerned to avoid the traps of a 'Romanticist' grounding of interpretation in the subject and intersubjectivity, 1981). But whose subjectivity, whose objectivity and whose criteria of validation are these? The answer is the interpreters'. Finally, Ricoeur leaves the choice between probable interpretations remarkably open, uncontextualized and unsituated. Who decides which interpretation is more probable and by what criteria? On Geertz's and Ricoeur's account, for all their demotic imagery and show of humility, the power quietly abrogated by the interpreter is a dictator's dream. The familiar language of reason and reasonableness clouds an epistemological battlefield, on which, through their own choosing, the odds are stacked in favour of the big battalions.

In trying to defend the unrestrained freedom of the interpreter against all-comers, Geertz's former student and apologist, James Boon, delivers the approach and himself an accidental *coup de grâce*.

Metaphors of text and of reading applied to anthropological fieldwork strike some critics as fancy devices to silence or disempower the interlocutor. I would reply that "read texts" radically construed, certainly speak back; they may, moreover, change their mind's message on each re-reading (1990: 52).

There is a serious problem of agency here. Texts have minds. But this still leaves the question: who 'radically construes' the texts, or rather 'the constructed understanding of the constructed native's constructed point of view (Crapanzano 1986: 74)? Perhaps this is why, in the end, the texts' minds look strangely like their

interpreter's. The autonomy granted to 'the interlocutor', as opposed to a person as agent, resembles a calf reared for slaughter or the icons in an interactive video game or virtual reality machine.

Textuality

What is the object of anthropological interpretation? Famously, it is culture inscribed as a text. Interpreting

the flow of social discourse...consists in trying to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms (Geertz 1973a: 20).

The human sciences may be said to be hermeneutical (1) inasmuch as their *object* displays some of the features constitutive of a text as text, and (2) inasmuch as their *methodology* develops the same kind of procedures as those of *Auslegung* or text-interpretation (Ricoeur 1979: 73).

Social action becomes a text by the act of ethnographic inscription (Geertz 1973c: 19). There is the further extension though that this is possible only if action – or what humans make of events themselves – have some at least of the features of a text (Ricoeur 1981: 73-88). Further, texts (or text-like productions) *contain* meanings, their '*propositional* content' (Ricoeur 1979: 81; invoking the conduit metaphor, see Reddy 1979). Put this way however, meaning as a concept and in its particular ascriptions becomes open to critical consideration. It must be reclaimed and mystified. In a neat sleight of hand, Boon therefore announces that meaning is 'fundamentally transposed, converted, substituted' (1990: 209). Displacing the problem, just as declaring 'culture' to be 'multiple constructions that are *at base* contrastive' (1990: 209), is somehow supposed to resolve the difficulties.

However, 'events only *seem* to be intelligible. Actually they have no meaning without interpretation' (Sontag 1961: 7). There are two senses of 'text' here. In the narrower one, text refers to what Barthes called 'work' which 'is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books' (1977: 156-57). In the broader one, text 'is a methodological field...*the Text is experienced only in an activity of production*' (1977: 157). In the

latter sense, it is of a higher logical order than Ricoeur's text, which is itself a complex whole built out of sentences (1976: 1-23).

There are two obvious problems. First you cannot write an epistemological space. Second, it conflates culture and work/text. Unless you inhabit a peculiarly recondite world, culture is not a text. Before Boon declares me yet again a vulgar positivist, let me explain what I wish to say by this. It may be fruitful to treat culture heuristically (one of my least favourite words) *as if* it were a text. I doubt it. But many post-modernists have made great reputations (and brought about the felling of many trees) to celebrate the catachresis. It has become conventional in the last decade or so among those suffering post-modernist trendiness cheerfully to talk about how texts have constituted people in ever more unlikely ways. Quite what being constituted by a text – be it a book, a methodological field or a condition of intelligibility – would actually involve is charmingly mind-boggling.

The problem with subsuming the whole strange eventful gamut of human actions and events across history under the soubriquet of 'Text' is not only that it hypostatizes and homogenizes whatever has happened, but that, if everything is Text, the notion is vapid (cf. Baudrillard on Foucault's idea of power, 1987). It becomes an abstract substance, empowered with amazing, if largely imaginary, qualities. In short, it becomes a Transcendental Agent, beyond history, and with thrasonical hermeneuts and deconstructionists as its immanent intelligence to tell us what It is up to. Text becomes an excuse not just for pastiche but to make what you please of other peoples' lives and how they represent themselves, to mix and match at will in a consumers' utopia.¹³⁶

There is something pleasantly amateurish, reminiscent of Baron Frankenstein in the horror films, about the attempts of anthropologists such as Geertz (with assistance from Boon) to jolt the decaying corpse of culture into textual life. Since then, however, a consortium of Literary Critics has taken over the

¹³⁶ My argument reiterates part of Foucault's criticism of Derrida (1972b: 602, translated by Spivak 1976: lxi-lxii).

business of transmuting the whole gamut of human and social activities into texts on an industrial scale.¹³⁷

Overinterpreting

Treating culture, or life itself, as a text avoids a recognition of textualizing as a cultural practice. People write, speak, read and listen; textualize events and actions in circumstances, which depend on the existence of previous practices of textualizing. The Literary Tendency is itself part of such practices; but solipsistically its practitioners hypostatize practices into abstract objects (texts) and imagine particular practices to be constitutive, essential or even universal. The sort of approach I prefer however treats practices as particular, historical, situated and varying in degree and kind. I assume that, far from having a determinate, extractable essence, facts are underdetermined by explanation (Quine 1953a, 1960) or, put another way, that ‘reality transcends the knower’ (Inden 1986: 402). On this account, any activity or practice, the agents who engage in them and the patients who are

¹³⁷ I refer to the Lit Crit Mode of (Re-)Production as an industry because it is one of the major growth areas with much sub-postmodernist boilerplate writing. In the social sciences, its forms range from the New Historicism (Veaser 1989) to the work, at its best perhaps, of Spivak (e.g. 1988) and Bhabha (1990) to come full anthropological circle in the writings of people like Appadurai (1990). A more extended critique of this literary tendency will have to wait another occasion; but the discussion below of interpretive practices on Bali covers some aspects. The recidivist skull beneath the svelte postmodernist skin comes out neatly, for example, in the writings of one of its more sensitive practitioners, Homi Bhabha, for all the ironic reflexivity and self-conscious detachment he invests into rethinking the nation as an ambivalent, abstract object. Within four pages of the Introduction, the practice of *narrating the nation* – a self-evidently western idea of narrative, of course – reinscribes itself (significantly in the passive tense, by rounding up the usual suspect semantic and epistemological metaphors of space) into a strategy for ‘a turning of boundaries and limits into the *in-between* spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated’ (1990: 4). *Plus ça change...* The scope for catachresis reaches a giddy apotheosis in Appadurai’s analysis of globalization (e.g. ‘global cultural flow’, 1990: 301) in which an imaginary processual object is built out of a series of constitutive metaphors of knowledge (see Chapter 4 above).

their subjects, are themselves partly a consequence of, but are not fully determined by, past practices and activities. Among practices, some rework past practices (e.g. commenting, criticizing, correcting); others aim at transforming patients (e.g. graduating, curing, managing) and the agents themselves (e.g. crowning, praying, self-disciplining; cf. Foucault 1986a). Yet other practices are concerned with trying to eliminate the underdetermination of actions and events, including much academic writing and 'ritual' (see chapter 7). I choose therefore to treat both explaining and interpreting as often practices of determination, or essentializing, in some form.

What I call overinterpreting is overdetermining one interpretation where alternative equally plausible interpretations are possible, or have in fact been put forward. As a practice, overinterpreting usually starts with preinterpreting prior to any engagement with what is actually to be interpreted and concludes in defending the interpretation against criticism. Evidently Balinese, for instance, may well on occasion also overinterpret for whatever reasons. Where they differ from hermeneuts is that the latter's justification for existing is that they somehow add more to what the locals are perfectly capable of saying for themselves. This something is a logical method for validating probable interpretations, presumed - in a fine example of preinterpretation - to be so superior to Balinese methods that no interpreter has bothered to inquire what they are (cf. Chapter 3 above) or if they even exist.

One of the best ways of clarifying what I wish to suggest by overinterpreting is to put forward a null hypothesis. It is that no act of anthropological interpretation takes place dialogically and dialectically during fieldwork between ethnographer and local intellectuals - let alone centrally involving local intellectuals arguing among themselves - but rather before the ethnographer's arrival in, and after departure from, the field. It is then possible to distinguish anthropologists by the degree to which they breach the null hypothesis in their work. In my experience of an island crowded with expatriate experts, sadly it holds up remarkably well. If it makes a mockery of most anthropologists' and other specialists' pretensions, that is their problem. If you stop and think about how many anthropologists or others speak the vernacular language well enough to engage in the critical exchange necessary to argue through rival interpretations, far less

understand Balinese arguing amongst themselves, the imaginary nature of much interpretation *as a practice* rather than as a posture stands out with grim clarity.

Two practices among others related to interpreting are textualizing and contextualizing,¹³⁸ which I take to be always situated acts. (On this account, context and situation are not Cartesian mental and physical domains within semantics. All actions are situated; and contextualizing is one kind of action.) By contrast to a recourse to Text, or even textuality, (con-)textualizing is a historically situated action aimed at changing the *status quo ante*. To develop Goodman's analysis of representation (1968: 27-31), some agent represents, textualizes or contextualizes something *as* something else, commonly to some subject on an occasion for a purpose. The relevance of this argument here is that it enables us to reconsider interpretation not as a finished product, we are to admire, believe or even criticize, but as a practice which takes place on an occasion for a purpose. Anthropologists very rarely ask what is the purpose of what they do.

They are not alone in this, nor in glossing fast over what it is that they actually spend much of their professional time doing. One practice is textualizing, reworking events into writing through a double process. The author articulates the events in question with previous descriptions and writing practices, in so doing making the events discursive, interpretable and understandable (Hall 1980: 129). The author also reproduces the events, commonly in writing, for the delectation of her peers and the Advancement of Knowledge. Taken to absurd lengths, you end up overtextualizing people (Boon) or the world (Appadurai, Bhabha), and recursively anthropomorphizing the texts. Now there are many occasions when people textualize events and actions, but

¹³⁸ They are not the only ones. Years ago I provisionally sketched out four kinds of practices which Balinese seemed to me frequently to engage in (Chapter 2 above). They were: essentializing, contextualizing, making do (which suggests having to reach a practical decision whatever the exegetical niceties), and elaborating. Some time I hope to get the time to rethink and develop the idea. As with the far more detailed account of named Balinese practices later in this chapter, they are less classificatory sub-species of interpretation (or overinterpretation), but overlapping practices. It would be possible to produce a taxonomy of kinds, and degrees, of overinterpretation, but that itself risks becoming an unnecessary act of essentializing and overinterpreting in turn.

they do much else besides.¹³⁹ As they seem to find texts realer, or at least cosier, than life, perhaps it is not so odd that aficionados of the Literary Turn in the human sciences should project their own practices and predilections onto the rest of the known and, in their case, knowable world. This world is there *to be read* and contextualized. Anthropologists often appeal to context. What appears as an exercise in interpretive charity and anti-essentialism depends, however, on furbishing the natives first with a rich realm of Textuality in which their strange remarks make sense ('Birds are twins' is the paradigm case). Then their utterances and actions can be reinscribed using the familiar language of textual procedures (metaphor, synecdoche etc., the stock in trade among others of both structuralism and hermeneutics). Historians and literary experts specialize more literally in reconstructing how people read texts, and so to constructing Texts.¹⁴⁰

Either way, as anthropologists engage in it as a practice, contextual interpretation often becomes a way of idealizing specific social actions. Contextualizing the text or weird statements shows how the native Mind instantiates or insinuates itself into the world. I am not referring here actual minds on particular occasions: what people did or said. That is purely contingent. It is not clear what contextualizing that would consist of. Contextualizing highlights what is essential, general, indeed

¹³⁹ There is an interesting Balinese practice of *majejangkalan*, highlighting ambiguities often in mundane statements and to the discomfiture of the original speaker. It draws attention to the textual preconditions of speech and understanding, but also to their situatedness. I was told of the following exchange with some glee:

*Misan tiang, demen tekèn durèn.
Yèh! Mirib demenan ia neda padang.
My cousin likes durian.
I thought (she) preferred grass.*

Misan is first cousin; *misa* is a female water buffalo, with a terminal 'n' indicating the genitive, as in 'my water buffalo'.

¹⁴⁰ My thanks to Ron Inden for his comments on the draft of this chapter and, in particular, for a useful discussion on contextualizing as an academic practice. Incidentally, these critical remarks make use of a Balinese rhetorical device: *negakin gedebong*, sitting on the stem of a banana palm. My ostensible target is anthropologists, because I am one and I know their practices best. If anyone else reading this piece finds anything seeping through (in Bali, the image is wet sap through the underpants), then so be it.

generic, not to particular persons, but a Culture or People (the Nuer, the Balinese), which is the politically acceptable synonym for Mind. Anthropologists have long used context as an authenticating and emancipatory strategy. 'Understanding something in context' confirms you were really there, saw and understood. (The idealist rejoinder is to turn 'being there' effectively into a question of literary genre, Geertz 1988.) Contextualizing easily becomes emancipatory from the critical evaluation of evidence; and so permits anthropologists to write themselves interpretive blank cheques. It culminates in inventing quite fantastic worlds, which the authors firmly believe to be real.

Overinterpreting Bali

How does an interpretive analysis actually work as against ideal statements of method? Let us take examples from two of Clifford Geertz's most celebrated essays into interpretive anthropology and one from Boon, who has adapted Geertz's method in a distinctive way.

In *Person, time, and conduct in Bali*, Geertz elaborated upon the work of Bateson and Mead (e.g. 1942). The anonymization of persons and the immobilization of time are thus but two sides of the same cultural process', the third being 'the ceremoniousness of so much of Balinese daily life' (1973f: 398-99). The crucial means in achieving this is *lek*. Geertz argued

that *lek*, which is far and away the most important of such regulators, culturally the most intensely emphasized, ought therefore not to be translated as 'shame,' but rather, to follow out our theatrical image, as 'stage fright' (1973f: 402).

Nearly twenty years later nothing had happened to make Geertz question his interpretation or its assumptions.

Nor is this sense the Balinese have of always being on stage a vague and ineffable one either. It is, in fact, exactly summed up in what is surely one of their experience-nearest concepts: *lek*. *Lek* has been variously translated or mistranslated ('shame' is the most common attempt); but what it really means is close to what we call stage fright... When this occurs, as it sometimes does, the immediacy of the moment is felt with excruciating intensity and men become suddenly and unwillingly creatural, locked in mutual embarrassment, as though they had happened upon each other's nakedness. It is the fear of faux pas, rendered only

that much more probably by the extraordinary ritualization of daily life, that keeps social intercourse on its deliberately narrowed rails and protects the dramatisical sense of self against the disruptive threat implicit in the immediacy and spontaneity even the most passionate ceremoniousness cannot fully eradicate from face-to-face encounters (1983c: 64; cf. 1973f: 401-2).

What though is the ethnographic evidence upon which Geertz validates his guesses? We do not know. How did Geertz know what Balinese felt? Did they participate in this analysis of their essential being? Or was it despite them? We are not told.

The remaining examples are from Geertz's most sustained interpretive foray, *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali*. Epitomizing the king as the centre of the state (a much recycled Orientalist theme in South East Asia), Geertz develops a series of dichotomies around the contrast of inside *versus* outside.

So is body to mind, countryside to settlement, circle circumference to circle center, word to meaning, sound to music, coconut shell to coconut juice (1980: 108).

What is Geertz's evidence, for instance, that body is opposed to mind, or word to meaning? And what word does Geertz have in mind for 'meaning'? Once again the reader is not told, nor can you work it out even if you are familiar with the literature on Bali.

A central part is Geertz's analysis of kingship rests on the link between three symbols or imaged ideas: '*padmasana*, the lotus seat (or throne) of god; *lingga*, his phallus, or potency; and *sekti* [misspelt by any convention], the energy he infuses into his particular expressions, most especially into the person of the ruler' (1980: 104; the second parentheses are mine). Of the *lingga*, he announces:

'On earth, the ruler acts on behalf of Siva, and the essence of his royal power is embodied in the *linga* [which] the brahman...obtains...from Siva and hands...over to the founder of the dynasty as the palladium of his royalty' the image summarizes the deep spiritual connection (Hooykaas calls it an 'indivisible trinity') between the supreme god, the reigning king, and the state high priest (1980: 106; citing Hooykaas).

This seems exemplary stuff. What is Geertz's evidence for his analysis though? It is in fact a quotation from the Dutch

philologist, Hooykaas (1964b: 143) citing another Dutch scholar, Krom (1931: 124). A review of what Hooykaas wrote however suggests matters are not quite so straightforward.

Textual extremities

My last example is from Boon's *Affinities and extremes*, which offers an Aladdin's cave of choice. Given his interest in Balinese textuality, the following passage is apposite.

Outside reformist circles, Balinese textual practices minimize neutralized commentary. Reading groups (*sekaha mebasan*) may discuss distinct episodes from favored narratives; but their busywork is ideally another ingredient of ritual celebrations. To enact, cite, or even refer to a text may unleash its power. Exegesis in any strict sense does not number among the functions of traditional textual and ritual experts... Just as Bali has little ascetic remove from life-in-society, so it demonstrates little interpretive remove from texts that would make them partly alienated objects of exegetical reflection. In Bali's 'interpretive scene' the restricted role of exegesis proper facilitates a play of affinities, analogies, and contradictions across social forms, performance genres, and ritual registers (1990: 84).

I love the smack of the 'strict' disciplinary proprieties, the natives evidently need so badly. But, what are Boon's grounds, first, for this sweeping summation of Balinese textual practices as anti-interpretive and ritualistic? He cites my old teacher, Hooykaas: 'temple priests, exorcists, and puppet masters alike "have some share in the brahman's panoply of magic weapons"' (1990: 84, quoting Hooykaas 1980: 20). This hardly underwrites Boon's assertion. Further, on what evidence does Boon justify his statement that Balinese textual practices are not exegetical but about the melding of genres? It is shadow theatre (*wayang*).

Wayang's epistemology resembles Western examples of so-called Menippean satire, a form of parodic rhetoric that multiplies voices and viewpoints, tongues, citations, pastiches, and etymologies (1990: 86).

Oddly the sources cited are for Java, not Bali at all. Presumably shadow theatre has an essential being which transcends history, place and persons altogether.

Interpreting the interpreters

In *Person, time, and conduct in Bali*, Geertz takes two kinds of calendar (from Goris 1933) and aspects of behaviour he characterizes as ‘ceremony, stage fright, and absence of climax’ (1973f: 398, the last, especially, is from Bateson 1949). In other words, Geertz is working largely with interpretations of interpretations. For an analysis which claims not only to pay close attention to Balinese behaviour, but even to reveal what Balinese experience ‘with excruciating intensity’, curiously he offers no detailed examples of Balinese practice, still less of Balinese talking about and commenting on themselves. Geertz doubly transfixes Bali: on a sustained dramaturgical metaphor and on a pathological general description of personality. He preinterprets, because the analysis rests upon western commonsensical assumptions about the nature of both theatre and the person. Balinese have quite different, highly developed and largely incommensurable ideas (on theatre, see Hobart 1983; on the person, see Connor 1982a; Duff-Cooper 1985b).

The analysis hinges on the cultural associations of the word *lek*. Balinese actors waxed lyric about stage fright, for which however they used the word *jejeh*, plain ‘frightened’. Significantly, when actors talked of stage fright or when people referred to themselves or others being *lek*, they dwelt not on the inner state, but on its manifestation facially, in one’s speech and body movements, which squared with their careful differentiation of the body, expressions and movements. Balinese did indeed refer to *lek* in performing, but as *sing nawang lek*, not knowing *lek*, of actors who played roles like that of the mad princess, Liku, whose part requires groping other actors’ genitals on stage and blurting out the unmentionable. By imposing interpretations upon actions in the absence of – or rather, despite all – the evidence, yet again Geertz overinterprets.

In *Negara*, among innumerable asides, Geertz opposes periphery to centre, body to mind and word to meaning, as if the relationship between these were transitive. The centre : periphery opposition, upon which much of *Negara* is predicated, is a particularly fine, if now rather tarnished, stroke of orientalist genius (see e.g. Heine-Geldern 1942). For someone ostensibly so opposed to the assumptions of Dutch structuralism (1961), Geertz

manages to find dual oppositions where Balinese usually use triadic or quite different schemes altogether. In fact, almost all frames of reference to the self I know of involve at least three overlapping and potentially interacting qualities (e.g. Duff-Cooper 1985b: 68-71 on the *trisarira*; chapter 2 above on the *triguna*, *triwarga* and *tiga-jnana*). Granted Geertz's erudition, we must question whether his blithe opposition of body to mind as if it were quite self-evident is a slip born of a rhetorical flourish. It is unlikely. The whole structure of *Negara* depends upon a (Cartesian) contrast between political geography and 'symbology'.¹⁴¹ An obvious point about the various Balinese schemes for relating thought and action (Chapter 2 above; Wikan 1990) is that they presuppose that body and mind are not dualistically separated. In the light of these evasions, it should come as no great surprise that Geertz should treat the constitutive concept of interpretation, 'meaning', as equally unproblematic. In *Negara*, as his other writing on Bali, Geertz not only skirts round the whole issue of semantics, but also avoids inquiring into Balinese usage, which is intricate. How far has Geertz created the object of his interpretations, meaning, by conflating what Balinese distinguish? It is not a promising start to establishing more probable interpretations. What is rather frightening, especially in an interpretive approach which promises to take 'us into the heart of that of which it is an interpretation' (1973c: 18), is that it may never have occurred to Geertz that Balinese might think and talk about such matters among themselves.

A remarkable feature of Geertz's interpretative approach to the (*ipse dixit*¹⁴²) central symbols of Balinese kingship is that it involves precious little engagement with Balinese thinking in action. It is in fact, in Raymond Williams's phrase (1983), an exercise in identifying keywords. Geertz generalizes from the carefully textually circumscribed analyses of earlier Dutch

¹⁴¹ Despite their claim to radical chic, the Lit Crit tendency remains firmly the loyal opposition within a conservative and dualist epistemology. To achieve this requires transcendent entities, especially 'meaning' to be wreathed with an aura of factuality, commonly through catachresis, involving notably conduit and spatial metaphors of knowledge (Salmond 1982), although rarely as magnificently as in the following example.

The ambivalent, antagonistic perspective of nation as narration will establish the cultural boundaries of the nation so that they may be acknowledged as 'containing' thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated in the process of cultural production (Bhabha 1990: 4).

¹⁴² Latin for 'on his own account', 'on his own authority'.

scholars, such that (to quote Geertz himself in his definition of how religion works, 1966: 4, my parentheses) by ‘formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and...clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality...[the results] seem uniquely realistic’. As with religion, the ‘aura of factuality’ is a product of the process itself. It requires confusing what Volosinov distinguished as theme and meaning.

Only an utterance taken in its full, concrete scope as a historical phenomenon possesses a theme... Theme is the *upper, actual limit of linguistic significance*; in essence, only theme means something definite. Meaning is the *lower limit* of linguistic significance. Meaning, in essence, means nothing; it only possesses potentiality - the possibility of having a meaning within a concrete theme (1973: 100-101).

The timeless phantasmagoric world of Balinese kings is not just the result of the interpretive method and its presuppositions. It is the world the hermeneuts have condemned themselves to occupy.

In the passage cited by Geertz, what he omits, significantly, is that Hooykaas was questioning this simple identification.¹⁴³ Qualifying Stutterheim (1929-30) on the link between *lingga* and ancestor effigies, Hooykaas pointed out that

the Sanskrit neuter word *linggam* in the first place means ‘a mark, spot, sign, token, badge, emblem, characteristic’... The word *lingga*, moreover alternates with *linggih*, staying... Those upright pointed, flat, oblong stones are marks, *lingga*, of the ancestors, and after performances of due ritual they may become their place of descent, their seat: *palinggihan*, *linggih*, *lingga* of their purified and deified spirits (1964b: 175-76).

One might have expected an interpretive anthropologist to have leapt at the possibilities opened up by *lingga* being a mark, sign, token etc., terms which are constitutive of Geertz’s entire project.¹⁴⁴ To do so would have complicated Geertz’s neat

¹⁴³ For a radically different analysis, which is carefully argued from detailed accounts of Balinese themselves, see Wiener 1995a. Hooykaas is quoting Krom who was in fact engaged in an argument with Bosch on the applicability of Cambodian evidence to Java. Bali gets tagged on as the tail to the hermeneutic dog.

¹⁴⁴ To describe [the *negara*] is to describe a constellation of enshrined ideas... Ideas are not, and have not been for some time, unobservable mental stuff. They are envehicled meanings, the vehicles being symbols (or in some usages, signs), a symbol being anything

symbolic closure though; to have followed so obvious a lead into Balinese semiotic categories would have vitiated the entire epistemological grounds for Geertz's endeavour. To judge from Geertz's analysis of the pivotal role of imaginary symbols in the construction of kingship, the doubtless unworthy suspicion arises that at times the interpretive anthropology of Indonesia is simply Dutch philology with the scholarly *caveats*, doubts and qualifications taken out.

While Geertz claims to be able to reach down to the excruciating intensity of Balinese inner states (cf. Needham's 1981 critique), Boon instead identifies Bali as a locus of the intersection of texts, which situates it firmly as an object of Western and Indonesian textuality. He rightly reminds the reader of the risks of isolating Bali as a pure object, free from preinterpretation. The cost however is high. As Johannes Fabian noticed long ago, Boon's method

avoids calling the Knower and the Known into the same temporal arena. Like other symbolic anthropologists, Boon keeps his distance from the Other; in the end his critique amounts to posing one image of Bali against other images... The Other remains an object, albeit on a higher level than that of empiricist or positivist reification... As an ideology it may widen and deepen the gap between the West and its Other (1983: 136-37).

Boon's concentration on the multiple textual constitution of Bali leads to a curious ahistoricity. Note in the extract how Balinese textual practices and their implications are cast throughout in the timeless present (a 'thousand years of familiarity with the art of writing' 1990: 84). In the criss-crossing of metaphors and images, where motley's the only wear, what gets lost is that many Balinese have been to school since the 1930s, now read newspapers and have been watching television since the late 1970s. What would Boon make of the delightful cartoons in the *Bali Post*, which comment scathingly on the doings of Balinese and foreigners? Are these not 'traditional', therefore dismissible? Or are they yet another manifestation of the infinitely adaptable 'Menippean satire'?

that denotes, describes, represents, exemplifies, labels, indicates, evokes, depicts, expresses – anything that somehow or other signifies (Geertz 1980: 135).

Along with this detemporalizing goes a pervasive essentializing. In a few broad brush strokes Boon encapsulates the entire range of Balinese textual practices, past and present in all their diversity, and evaluates the lot as not involving exegesis ‘proper’ or ‘in the strict sense’. As very little has been written on his one example, text-reading groups – and what has recently (e.g. Rubinstein 1992) undermines his argument – Boon is on shaky ground here. It is doubly insecure in that Balinese read and comment on a whole range of kinds of work for different purposes on different occasions (Hobart 1990b; Wiener 1995a, 1995b). Anyway, in my experience works are performed in theatre far more often than they are read. Are we to narrow the definition of text to exclude these? If not, what is Boon’s evidence for his assertion? There are less than a handful of translations of performances and no detailed account of Balinese commentaries, whether by the actors or audiences. Instead of evidence, we are offered another familiar preinterpretation, with a long genealogy: Balinese are ritualistic and, if not incapable of, quite uninterested in ‘neutralized’, let alone critical, commentary. Were they to, not only would Boon have to take account of them, but his variety of exegesis would be dead in the water. Therefore Balinese do not. To succeed in ignoring so much of what is evidently happening suggests quite how important preinterpretation is to much anthropological analysis.

Keeping distance

For all its claim to a radical new insight into Bali, anthropological hermeneutics reproduces earlier approaches to a surprising extent. For instance, Geertz reiterates and even makes central to his whole vision the increasingly rancid old chestnut that Balinese avoid climax (Bateson and Mead 1942; Bateson 1949). As Jensen and Suryani have pointed out (1992: 93-104), the whole argument is implausible and rests on all sorts of preconceptions.¹⁴⁵ We all preinterpret in varying degree. But this implies neither that our preinterpretations are of the same kind, nor that we cannot criticize them or learn better. For this reason, the excuse that all

¹⁴⁵ When Balinese are permitted to speak for themselves a quite different picture emerges. For instance, the *Gaguritan* Padem Warak (the song of killing of the rhinoceros, translated by Vickers 1991) depicts a ‘ritual’ in terms we would by most accounts consider to be sustained and repeated climaxes.

description, interpretation and translation involves ‘betrayal’ (Boon’s reply to my criticisms, 1990: 205, fn 2) is not just limp, it is a defence against engaging with those with whom we work. Boon’s texts that speak back to him do so on his terms. They produce a simulated engagement (Fabian 1991b), which distracts attention from the very real and immediate dilemmas which anthropologists face.

Boon’s approach raises a final point. An interpretive analysis does not require intensive fieldwork, as one might have expected it to. Nor does it require any command of Balinese.¹⁴⁶ That is the extractive function of mere ethnographers like myself. Interpretive anthropology exists to explain to us and to the world what we have found. What distinguishes these brands of hermeneutic anthropology it is the distance – in every sense – its practitioners keep from any engagement with the people who are producing the ‘texts’ and ‘meanings’, and the conditions under which they do so. It sheds a new light on the supremacy of the text over the people who do the writing, speaking, reading, performing, commenting, criticizing and joking.

The purposes of interpretation

Interpretation presumes a double account of knowledge. This account must depict the nature of native knowledge, distinguish itself from this and then explain how it can understand the former. Understanding is possible through the ‘intersubjectivity’ the anthropologist has with the natives, by which he can appreciate their meanings and symbols. Although both sides share a common human nature, its expressions are different; and so the relationship of knower and known. The repeated refrain of Balinese ritualism – ‘extraordinary ritualization’ (Geertz 1983c: 64, cited above), ‘ritual celebrations, ritual experts, ritual registers’ (Boon 1990: 84 cited above) – is crucial to that differentiation. The passages purport to be descriptive. They are however commentative and evaluative. By making Balinese live in a closed and threatened world, incapable of critical reflection on themselves, they justify the intercession of the interpreter, who is more than just endowed

¹⁴⁶ Geertz’s analyses are based on seven months in Bali; Boon sadly had to leave Bali because of illness shortly after starting fieldwork. By Geertz’s own admission his Balinese is minimal (1991). Boon’s problems with Balinese in his writings make it evident.

with superior rationality. He is open, empathetic, critical, well read and with a superior vision. The depiction of Balinese could have come straight from an Orientalist: 'ritual has a strong attraction for the Indian [read 'Balinese'] mind' (Renou 1968: 29; my parentheses). Balinese add an extra twist by being uniquely dramatisitcal as well.¹⁴⁷

To aspire to unchallenged authority, it is vital to preclude the suspicion that interpretive knowledge is at the whim of the hermeneut and his imagination. So the pre-existence of meanings and texts must be established. Boon has to predetermine culture as being text or Text (it varies); and Geertz overdetermine its meanings. Anything less intimates the vicarious nature of the whole enterprise. Text (for Boon) or meaning (for Geertz) therefore becomes not just the object of study, but a Transcendental Agent. Consider 'the systems of ideas which animate [the organization of social activity] must be understood' (Geertz 1973f: 362, my parentheses).¹⁴⁸ Or, texts 'certainly speak back; they may, moreover, change their mind's message on each rereading' (Boon 1990: 52). Boon finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks. Such indulgence might be fine, except that it

¹⁴⁷ There is more in common between the interpreters of Bali and Orientalists (whom they cite so often) than the formers' loud disclaimers would suggest. Consider how applicable the following quotation is, even more so if you substitute 'Balinese' for 'Oriental' and 'interpreter' for 'Orientalist'.

The knowledge of the Orientalist is, therefore, privileged in relation to that of the Orientals and invariably places itself in a relationship of intellectual dominance over that of the easterners. It has appropriated the power to represent the Oriental, to translate and explain his (and her) thoughts and acts not only to Europeans and Americans but also to the Orientals themselves. But that is not all. Once his special knowledge enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonize, rule, and punish in the East. Now it authorizes the area studies specialist and his colleagues in government to aid and advise, develop and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the so-called Third World. In many respects the intellectual activities of the Orientalist have even produced...the very Orient which it constructed in its discourse (Inden 1986:408).

This might be all very well except that, as I have argued in the Introduction, Geertz's work is widely taught, cited and emulated in Indonesia.

¹⁴⁸ Crapanzano's perceptive comments on how the narrative devices by which 'Geertz likens his nonpersonhood to being "a cloud or a gust of wind"' (1986: 71) attain a new significance. I have made use of ideas in an unpublished paper by Ron Inden (n.d.[a]) in this analysis of agency.

silences and denies the thinking of the people with whom we work in the clevernesses of intellectual fashion.¹⁴⁹

Meaning or text, being transcendent, is not available for ordinary mortals to understand – certainly not the ritualistic, non-exegetical Balinese. The ontology requires there to emerge an immanent intelligence of this transcendent agent to explain what is going on, lest the uninitiated miss it. Fortunately the hermeneut is at hand to do so. What though are the subjects through whom this agent exemplifies the workings of its Will? For Boon, as you might expect, above all it is the literati of priests and puppeteers. At first sight, it is harder to see who embodies meaning in Bali for Geertz. A moment's reflection shows why he lays such stress both on anonymization, detemporalization and ceremonialization and on stage fright. All Balinese are on stage: they *all* instantiate meaning, which operates through ritual symbols (hence the crucial role of symbols and ritual in kingship.) Lastly, how does the hermeneutic intelligence work? Proximally, for Geertz, it is by an intersubjective empathy: one that neither requires the anthropologist to be coeval, or even go there. It also leaves the question of 'how can a whole people share a single subjectivity?' (Crapanzano 1986: 74). Ultimately though, it is through a kind of conscious philosophical reasoning, epitomized as the reading of a novel, with its ever 'more detailed reading of episodes, texts, and institutions selected for the multiple counter-types, contradictions, and even ironies they contain' (Boon 1990: ix).

For all the talk of intersubjectivity and explicating the native Mind in its palpable, excruciating intensity, hermeneuts actually

¹⁴⁹ In fairness to Boon, he is not the only, or even the most celebrated, scholar to get his intellectual knickers in a textual twist. Consider the following:

alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytical capacities may emerge – youth, the everyday, nostalgia, new 'ethnicities', new social movements, 'the politics of difference'. They assign new meanings and different directions to the process of historical change (Bhabha 1990: 3).

Note the conflation of possible complex agents (Hobart 1990b; Inden 1990) such as ethnic groups with 'analytical capacities', 'nostalgia', 'the everyday' in a semantic soup. As Sontag has pointed out however of nostalgia (1977: 15), such representations are agentive and self-fulfilling.

pay scant regard to people as subjects or, better, agents. It is not necessary to ask about Balinese criteria of analysis, because Balinese are preconstituted as incapable of self-reflection (except mechanical 'meta-social commentary', Geertz 1973d), criticism and self-transformation. Balinese are objectified into the raw materials to be thought. Gerundively they are not merely describable, but comprehensible, and so to be comprehended. Preinterpretation is enshrined in the disciplinary practices of university courses in anthropology: to train incredulous young minds into the realities of society, culture, kinship, ancestors, ritual, rationality, taboo and what they will find when they finally get to the field. (As with all good discipline, there are lots of exclusions. The authors you are not supposed to read are numerous and far more interesting on the whole.) Postinterpreting takes up almost as much time, not just in textualizing and contextualizing the insights, but in defending the interpretations against criticism (e.g. Geertz 1983b; Boon 1990). Purporting to advance understanding of human action, the human condition, the nature of textuality, by claiming to engage other hearts and minds as no other approach, interpretive anthropology may enshrine a hidden political agenda (Pecora 1989). It certainly offers at once a superior form of surveillance and a reassurance that other people out there are understandable and understood, manageable, controllable. It has also proven eminently marketable back home.

In their actions if not their words, interpretivists stress the relationship of anthropologist and reader at the expense of that between anthropologist and native. They play to the sensitivity of the reader; and in so doing displace the native yet again. The anthropologist's role is double: both inquirer and author. As author, she is the conduit for the ethnographer's experience. But she reworks that experience in writing; and so anticipates the experience for her successors. Volosinov forewarned of the consequences of confusing theme and meaning: the circularities of endless signification and representationism, which have been the hallmarks of the Literary Critical cul-de-sac. In rejecting, rightly, naive realism, the hermeneuts have backed into a hall of mirrors. 'In finished anthropological writings...what we call our data are really our own constructions of other peoples' constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (Geertz 1973c: 9). The problem is that in the writings in question the constructions are of meta-level far beyond Sperber's *n*th degree. Ethnographers do not intuit other peoples' constructions. They elicit informants'

representations or inferences of others' utterances, acts or representations. Only then do they get to what they write in their notebooks, or more often reconstruct afterwards. Crosscutting this process is the imposition of technical terms, in which Sperber detected further levels of interpretation. Interpretation is not sequential abstraction: simply 'trying to rescue the "said"...from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms' (Geertz 1973c: 20). There is a continual to-and-fro in which we select and direct our attention and our informants'. After all that what appears in seminar papers, then the published ethnography, is further reworked. What is more, interpretivists like Geertz and Boon largely work with other authors' constructions. In stressing the value added in western centres of learning, the effect ironically is subtly to reinscribe the extractive mode of ethnography, now you collect constructions not facts. There is no critical dialogue with those whose constructions they are: no engagement with local intellectuals or academics. As an analytical framework it is about as illuminating as soviet production statistics and as stimulating as a sex manual for the politically correct.

However precarious the constructivist tower of Babel, it rests upon familiar substantialist and realist foundations. An interpretive approach is substantialist in that it is concerned with that which is 'unchanging and consequently stands outside history' (Collingwood 1946: 43), here symbols, the 'said' not 'its perishing occasions' (Geertz 1973c: 20). It is realist in the sense that it fails critically to consider the presuppositions of those whose activities are under scrutiny. It is the anthropological equivalent of what Collingwood trenchantly described in history as 'the scissors-and-paste' method (1946: 33; on realism, see Collingwood 1940: 21-48).¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Interpretive anthropologists are less obviously realist than their more positivistic colleagues, in that they recognize the engagement of mind with their object of study. It remains realist to the extent that they condense mind to text, genre and rhetorical device and ignore the presuppositions, notably the purposes, of others' actions and their own inquiries.

Geertz and Boon may be matchless, but they are not alone, in overinterpreting Bali. I cheerfully wrote about how Balinese viewed process sometimes in cyclical terms in my thesis (1979: 24-25). When I subsequently thought to check this, to my mortification I discovered that I had imposed a spatial metaphor on what they talk about quite differently. On some future occasion I hope to consider other styles of overinterpretation in the work of anthropologists like Duff-Cooper and Howe.

The method by which it proceeds is first to decide what we want to know about, and then go in search of statements about it, oral or written, purporting to be made by actors in the events concerned, or by eyewitnesses of them, or by persons repeating what actors or eyewitnesses have told them, or have told their informants, or those who informed their informants, and so on. Having found in such a statement something relevant to his purpose, the historian excerpts it and incorporates it, translated if necessary and recast into what he consider a suitable style, in his own history (1946: 257).

Collingwood's delineation of the scissors-and-paste method is, not coincidentally, a classic description of overinterpretation.

To conclude this discussion, how does the approach I am starting to sketch out differ from an interpretive approach? Oddly enough, in the little world of anthropology, the two approaches share quite a lot in common, not least because I have learned much from the interpretive approach. Some of the divergences emerge in the differences between guessing and questioning. Both involve preinterpretation, but of different kinds. The anthropological hermeneutic approach enshrines a very conservative sense of dialectic: modifying your questions and guesses. In the versions discussed, it excludes any consideration of the participants' categories in use or the need to revise the assumptions of the analysis in the light of these. It does not allow the possibility of attempting radically to rethink the presuppositions and purposes of the analysis. Still less does it consider the continual reworking of one set of discursive practices in the light of another. Nor can it contemplate that this reworking must be done in large part on the spot, where people argue back, criticize the analyst at each point and suggest alternatives. Lastly the criteria for evaluating guesses, circularly, are part of the same logic of validation as those for formulating the guesses. This hermeneutics is, in the end, hermetic.

By contrast the approach I am suggesting (foreshadowed by Bakhtin/Volosinov and Collingwood among others) is quite different. It recognizes that what an anthropologist works with is the historically particular outcome of asking questions, dialectically of materials of all sorts, dialogically of people and that both change, as does the anthropologist, in the course of inquiry. The purposes and circumstances of that inquiry crucially affect the results, both for the ethnographer and those who are

raising questions as part of their own lives: the two not always being separable.

Any true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next... meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding (Volosinov 1973: 102).

Questioning is of two contrastive kinds. One assumes the object of inquiry to be knowable and susceptible to explanation by fairly predictable sequences of questions. It is exemplified in how teachers instruct students in the appropriate moves in inquiry as part of learning a discipline, be it chemistry or law. The other assumes what you know to be conditional in part on the questions, so critically reflecting on provisional answers requires you continually to rethink the assumptions behind the question. Collingwood considered the latter to be exemplified by critical philosophical and historical thinking. I think there is a case for adding critical anthropological thinking.

Such critical thinking is certainly not exemplified in reiterating the absence of climax or the presence of stage fright decades later from the safety of your own university. That is reinventing the wheel as an octagon. It requires expending enormous effort not in critical thinking, but in ignoring what the people you are studying are doing and even trying to tell you. Unless such critical thought involves continually rethinking the questions we ask and reflecting on our own presuppositions through our emerging understanding of other peoples' questioning, it lands up like the hermeneutic circle as the sort of one-legged dialectic, a hermeneutic hop. For this reason, you cannot tidy up the problem of interpretation simply by formulating clear, falsifiable, inductive steps (although that would be a definite improvement), or splitting the process, as does Sperber, into two stages. The effect is to make your own thought stand as yet more hierarchical over those whose thinking you are studying and to deny the fact that they too are likely to be thinking and questioning in ways which the claimed hegemony of closed interpretation would make unknowable.

Some Balinese practices

Any reader who is not terminally committed to existing brands of interpretivism will not be surprised to learn that Balinese engage in all kinds of writing, oral composition, theatre, painting and so forth, which have always been changing (Hobart 1991b; Vickers 1990; Wiener 1995a, 1995b). They have a broad range of overlapping practices, which do not easily match our categories of interpreting, commenting, criticizing or re-enacting. To highlight the differences with the interpretive approach discussed above, let me begin with meaning.

Balinese usage would require a monograph (which I plan to write) to do them justice. For simplicity of exposition, let me begin with my present understanding of the terms Balinese use to evaluate and understand utterances, and even actions. First, there is what is the most important, *pamekas*, in what someone says or does. Second, there is the explanation or clarification of a statement, *teges* (a definition also used by the Balinese scholar, Ktut Ginarsa 1985). Third, there is the *tetuwek*, the objective or target (*sasaran*), the point (*tuwek* is the point of a weapon) of saying something, or a person (or group) pointed to, or to be affected by what is said. Fourth, there is the purpose or the directed aim of speech, its *tetujon*. Fifth, there is *daging raos*, literally ‘the meat’ of what one says, the matter under discussion. Sixth, there is the *arti*, which may be translated as ‘meaning’, but often has connotations of ‘intended reference, significance’ (e.g. Ginarsa 1985: 39). Seventh, there is the *pikolih*, what results from saying something, the manifest outcome, the effect. Finally, there is a *suksema*, which is untranslatable (it suggests subtle, immaterial, fine). Provisionally I think it is something like the subtle effect on the listener after due reflection. Balinese widely make use of at least four (especially *tetuwek*, *tetujon*, *pikolih* and *suksema*) in analyzing speech and action. Something of Balinese usage might be related to a combination of the functions of language (Jakobson 1960) or speech acts (Austin 1975). Balinese stress the purpose of the act – be it speech, dance, painting – and the effect on the listener or spectator.

In Volosinov’s terms, all but *teges* (which significantly is the most literary term) form part of the theme, rather than the meaning. There is a high unbridgeable gulf between Balinese and their interpreters’ ideas about meaning. This may be in part

related to differences in speech practices.¹⁵¹ Balinese has an extraordinarily large vocabulary, consisting mostly of terminal words referring to very specific features, states or movements. (There are at least 22 named eye movements or positions, 46 specific terms for hand movements, 13 named sleep postures for a single person, 6 more for two people etc.) To know a word is to know what it refers to or how it is used. Treating Bali as essentially a problem of deep understanding, of unravelling in English an almost inexpressibly dense and involuted ‘symbology’ (Geertz 1980: 98ff.) centred on a few key words, may be to miss much of how Balinese address their own language is use. Certainly one of my most infuriating, and sadly frequent, experiences is watching theatre and suddenly losing the thread because of the use of a highly specialized word which I do not know. Not infrequently these are puns which leave the anthropologist puzzled as to why, for instance, meticulous agricultural advice on how to plant vanilla should convulse the audience in ribald laughter.¹⁵² The proliferation of terminal, specific words is accompanied therefore by associative assonance, both conventional and extemporized, between words with quite unrelated referents.

Apart from the semantic terms already mentioned, there is also a minimal critical vocabulary which the Balinese with whom I worked insisted that I learn if I were to understand them talking about history and theatre. I apologize in advance for the indigestible litany of terms. As with body movements, Balinese often eschewed general categories that were hybrid (as is the notion of interpretation itself) in favour of more specific kinds of practice, exemplified in the widespread use of what we would call verbs. Some deal with what we would call knowing (*uning*), such as examining (*maréksa*), questioning (*nakènanang*), trying out (*ngindayang*), demonstrating (*nyihnayang*) and proving (*muktiang*). These shade into the more hermeneutic operations of guessing (*nurahang*), illustrating (*ngèdèngang*), understanding (*ngaresep*), explaining (*nerangang*). These in turn linked with more obviously performative practices like embellishing (*ngiasin*),

¹⁵¹ I am grateful to Ernesto Laclau for drawing the implications of Balinese usage to my attention and also for suggesting a more general difference between redescription and explication, see below.

¹⁵² The link follows Balinese conventions on assonance (which are sometimes quite unexpected to an English-speaker), here a well known one between *panili*, vanilla, and *teli*, vagina.

advising (*nuturin*), confirming the truth of (*ngawiaktiang*), commanding (*nganikain*), and pointing to the moral (*ngalèmèkin*).

Besides these, there are two terms which are primary candidates for glossing the English ‘interpreting’. They are *ngartiang*, paraphrasing, glossing, translating; and *melutang* unpeeling, unravelling, disentangling. Both are forms of what Balinese refer to as *ngaraosang indik*, commenting, or talking about. There is another sense of interpret, exemplified by the French use of *interpréter*, as in performing a musical piece. This includes reading in general, *ngawacèn*; reading manuscripts aloud, *ngogah*, *kadundun* (literally ‘to be woken up’) which is usually succeeded by *ngartiang*, translating or paraphrasing them; *nyatwayang*, telling a story, *ngaragragang*, developing or elaborating a plot by actors, a puppeteer or story-teller. This shades into *ngaredanayang*, creating or recreating a story or text. As practices they overlap. Elaborating a plot requires telling a story, illustrating, demonstrating, explaining, embellishing and not least saying what is the moral of it all. As Balinese go to some lengths to treat not just readers and actors, but audiences as active participants in reworking and re-creating what happens (Hobart 1991b), trying to split creation from interpretation is unhelpful.

Perhaps I can best make the point by an example from theatre.¹⁵³ The elder of two servants asks a question of the prince, who replies. They then *ngartiang* his words. The prince is singing in *kawi*, the servants speak Balinese. The parentheses are mine.

<i>Old</i>	To whom should one...(pray for grace)?
<i>Retainer</i>	
:	
<i>Young</i>	That’s right! That’s what we should ask.
<i>Retainer</i>	
:	
<i>Old</i>	That is what your servants beg, M’lord.
<i>Retainer</i>	
:	

¹⁵³ The play was a *prèmbon*, a historical genre in which some of the actors are masked, some not, about the prince of Nusa Penida, an island off Bali. It was performed in the research village in March 1989.

Prince: Praise God.
Young Retainer 'My dear chap! My dear chap!'¹⁵⁴
 :
Old Retainer What's going on?¹⁵⁵
 :
Young Retainer 'Don't fool around when working. Don't listen to idle speech (of people who denigrate the importance of performing ceremonies). I am speaking of acts of devotion. You should never be done with them. There is none other, as you said earlier, than God.'
 :

Note how much was left unsaid. A great deal of interpretation seems to me to be possible only, as Nigel Barley once put it, through the hovercraft effect - passing rapidly and noisily over the subject in hand, with much mystification and to no long term effect. I needed a group of Balinese, including two actors, to argue through this exchange and fill in what *they* thought make sense not just of the gaps, but what was said. Their postinterpretation was for my benefit.

Both actors and members of the audience with whom I worked on this piece were explicit that the retainers were *ngartiang* the prince. At no point in the play did they translate the prince's words *verbatim* or anything near. Instead they paraphrased, explicated or expatiated upon them. The actors, here and in the other plays I have worked on, were not translating the essence of the speech, but elaborating and making what was said relevant to the immediate situation. As royal characters in shadow theatre speak *kawi*, much of the play is taken up by the servants expatiating in Balinese. *Ngartiang* is also used of translating between languages and of giving an explication (*teges*) of what someone said in the same language. On the occasions I have heard Balinese read and *ngartiang* written works in *kawi*, there was usually far more overlap of the original and the translation. Insofar as the aim of a reading may be to clarify and explicate its

¹⁵⁴ The word used was *Paman*, a fond but respectful expression royals use to their ministers and close retainers.

¹⁵⁵ The old retainer acts as if it is the young retainer who is speaking to him, not as paraphrasing (*ngartiang*) his master's words.

meaning in Volosinov's sense, apart from determining its thematic relevance, it makes sense both that this should be the occasion that Balinese used the word *teges*, which is the least situationally sensitive word in the register, and that the overlap should be greater.

One reason for spending time on *ngartiang* is that the root *arti* is the main candidate for glossing 'meaning'. I have heard Balinese use it at times especially in recent years. I cannot tell though how far this usage is affected by *arti* also being Indonesian, where it has been affected by European usage. An example of my own unwitting preinterpretation and its consequences emerged when I checked my research tapes for how Balinese used *arti*. To my chagrin I discovered that it was I who kept using the word, after which the people I was working with would use it for a few sentences, then revert to the other commentative terms for meaning outlined above.

At the risk of oversimplifying, it is possible to distinguish two modes of interpretation, 'metalingual redescription' and 'uncovering' or explicating.¹⁵⁶ The practice of *ngartiang* overlaps with *melutang*, peeling or unravelling what is said to determine as far as possible its matter, point and purpose. The term is used particularly of two styles of speaking: mature speech, *raos wayah*, and veiled speech, *raos makulit*. These two are partly related because mature people often speak indirectly or disguise the point of what they say; and you have to be mature to pull off veiled speech successfully. In listening to mature speech it is often not obvious if you miss the point, because the words also refer, *nuding*, to another manifest or ostensible topic. Listening to the more skilled orators in public meetings and reading many kinds of manuscripts requires one to unpeel them. Some of the latter require great skill, experience and subtlety. By no means all adults have the ability. Even in popular theatre, as in the example above, my own inquiries back up seasoned commentators' views that at times many young people only think about the explicit subject matter and have little idea of there often being a further point or target (*tetuwek*), or particular purpose (*tetujon*) to what is

¹⁵⁶ The clarity of the distinction may owe more to my overdetermination than to Balinese usage. As I understand them, Balinese interpretive practices involve realizing, recognizing, appreciating and acting upon the implications of your reflections, to which redescription and explication are overlapping means.

being said. As very little has been published on these practices, it is not surprising Boon seems not to know of them. It is pretty hard though to get through an ordinary day with Balinese (and certainly not a meeting or play) without needing to unpeel what they say; or more often, if you are an innocent anthropologist, failing to note that there was anything to unravel.

The end(s) of interpretation

As an expression ‘interpretation’ sits uneasily on the plethora of Balinese interpretive, commentative and performative practices. It is referentially ambiguous (*ngèmpèlin*) in significant ways. Rather than try to classify or summarize the range of practices - which would be *cara magemelan yèh* like trying to grasp water - I outline three occasions which, by most standards, we would consider to involve interpretation in some quintessential form. These are interpreting the speech of a deity, reading a dynastic chronicle and explaining a theatre performance to an anthropologist.

One common practice is concerned with understanding the will of powerful, non-manifest agents. One of the most dangerous forms is learning about *sakti*, exceptional kinds of efficacy (often glossed as ‘mystical power’) by reading and unravelling (*melut*) certain manuscripts. I can say little about this, although I have been invited on a number of occasions, because to experiment would have cost me the trust of most Balinese I work with.¹⁵⁷ Having truck with power is always potentially dangerous, especially if it is non-manifest (*niskala*) and so even more indeterminate than usual. So it is wise to reflect on, and sift through, such evidence as you have carefully. Likewise caution is advisable when inquiring about the past, because it too is non-manifest. There are only the traces (*laad*) on the landscape, in written works, in peoples’ memories. They all require inferring what is the case (*tattwa*) from the evidence available.

To try, almost certainly in vain, to lay the ghost of Balinese ritualistic proclivities, I shall consider an example of how Balinese

¹⁵⁷ Having worked in a celebrated centre for such writings, Lovric (1987) is informative. She died not long afterwards. Hooykaas worked on well-known texts involving *sakti*, e.g. the *Kanda ‘mpat* (1974) and *Basur* (1978).

in the research village dealt with a necessary encounter with the non-manifest. As with the reading of a royal chronicle, it was an important occasion, took place in a temple and was accompanied by what Geertz and Boon would call ritual. However, rather than invoke a class, or aspect, of actions designated 'ritual', I prefer to follow Balinese in noting simply there are different forms of propriety and action suited, from past experience, to dealing with different kinds of being (on the problems of ritual, see Chapter 7). What transpired had precious little to do with hermeneutic interpretation, but dwelt at length on the purpose (*tetujon*) of the inquiry, how to go about it, what the outcome (*pikolih*) implied and what action was required, if any.

Understanding Divinity

The temple priest of the local agricultural association had become too old to continue in office. The association decided therefore to inquire about the deity's wishes (*nyanjan*) as to a successor. The first attempt had failed, because the medium of whom they had inquired had come up with a successor's name, but there was no one of that name around. (The old priest gave me a hilarious imitation afterwards of the medium's tremulous speech. What this says about unleashing power or Balinese ceremoniousness I dread to think.) A famous medium was then invited to the temple. After discussion of the purpose of the occasion, the deity duly spoke through him before an audience of thousands. It was, after all, an exciting occasion: anything could have happened. The deity excoriated the village priests for sundry failings (justified according to the onlookers I spoke to), gave a history of the priesthood of the temple, then announced the personal names (correctly) of the two sons of the old priest, as his successors to the two temples where he served. The village leaders convened a meeting to discuss the speech and agreed to implement the recommendations (and they were recommendations, as they could well have been ignored). The question of whether they needed to *melut* (unpeel) what was said was not discussed. The crucial matter was whether the deity's statements of fact about the past were true, and so whether the recommendations were believable and appropriate. The process was less to do with interpretation than a rigorous – and quite juridical – examination of evidence, motives, opportunities and so on. To evaluate what happened required, however, knowing a

great deal of what had happened in the village and assessing its reliability.¹⁵⁸

History for what?

The second example was about a dispute over who owned a temple with extensive rice lands (see Hobart 1990). A senior prince of a powerful dynasty had been invited to repair two ancient masks in the temple in question. On learning that there was a dispute over who should take care of the temple, he said that his family chronicle had details on how the temple was founded. A meeting of senior people in the village decided it would be useful to know what was written there to see if it were relevant. (There was a conflict of vested interests, but that is not directly germane to what follows.) The prince agreed to witness the reading and, on the appointed day, arrived with a large entourage, including the island's most famous writer of such dynastic chronicles (*babad*). A local man was enlisted to read the relevant part of the manuscript, which was in *kawi*, while the writer translated it (*ngartiang*) into high Balinese. My concern here though is not with what was read, but with its purpose. It had nothing to do with being 'another ingredient of ritual celebrations', nor with any 'play of affinities, analogies, and contradictions across social forms, performance genres, and ritual registers'. That is not to say that there was no much of interest to local intellectuals. However, according to the meeting which arranged it, the prince, the reader and translator, and the members of the audience I spoke to afterwards, the purpose was to determine the relevance of what was written to arguments about

¹⁵⁸ In subsequent talk around the village, the key issues were that the medium had not been tested with fire (*kapintonin*) to see if he was conscious (*éling*) and so play-acting (*ngaé-ngaé*); and whether anyone might have leaked details of the past history of the temple. Popular opinion was that it was unlikely (but unprovable), because it did not seem to be in the interests of the few who did know.

My diary entry for that day is interesting. The relevant passage reads: 'It kept running through my head that this was a good case against Sperber and Wilson: whether it is mutual knowledge, shared context or whatever, it certainly isn't couched in a propositional form which permits the kind of inference they draw' (referring to Sperber & Wilson 1982).

who should look after, and so had rights over the land of, the temple.

From my work subsequently with a group of interested villagers, who commented on the reading in detail for me, two points among others arose. First, there was a question whether the history, being written in *kawi*, was opaque (*makulit*) and so required *ngartiang* into Balinese to see if it needed to be explicated (*melut*). On their view, much depended on the skill of the translator and how trustworthy he was: on his rendering they thought that there was little that was unclear. (To establish this obviously required checking carefully for signs, or textual evidence, that it might have been *makulit*.) A bigger problem arose, second, in that it was one thing to read and translate a passage. It was quite another to determine the relevance of that passage to the circumstances in question. The committee had failed to make this clear before the reading. The outcome (*pikolih*) of the reading was therefore uncertain, and so destined to be abortive (*gabeng*). There was no agreed basis (*taledan*) from which to judge what was said.

Foolish anthropologist that I was, I had pressed the commentators to get on with the details of the text and translation. They balked at this and insisted on spending a whole evening discussing the prolegomenon. Conventionally this is called an ‘apology’ (*pangaksama*, see Zurbuchen 1987: 99-100). As I learned, a *pangaksama* is – or rather should be – much more. On such occasions, which also include inviting deities to speak and theatre performances, those responsible for the event are expected to state its purpose, the limits (*wates*) of the relevance or consequences of what is about to happen, and apologize in advance to those whose interests are likely to be affected. Readings and performances do something, or fail to. To attempt to generalize their significance to the participants is as vacuous as it is to argue Bali ‘demonstrates little interpretive remove from texts that would make them partly alienated objects of exegetical reflection’ (Boon 1990: 84, cited above).

So long as they’re happy

The form in which Balinese most often encountered texts was in theatre. Theatre involves a double act of interpretation. The performers interpret a work; the spectators interpret the performance. Neither actors nor spectators treated audiences as passive. In most kinds of theatre the dialogue and scenes were largely extemporized and tailored to the audience's response. The hardest role was that of the first person on stage. They had to gauge the particular audience, while the rest of the cast listened carefully to what was going on to judge how best to play the piece. Some villages had reputations for liking slapstick, others bawdiness, others political commentary extrapolated from the story, others wanted careful exegesis.

From working with actors over the years however, there are certain points that they often alluded to. One of these also came up repeatedly when I worked on recordings of plays with members of the audiences, whether male or female. Again it shows my tendency to preinterpret. I would keep on asking what was the *arti* of what was said (or done), only to be told there was no *arti*. When I rephrased the question to ask what the purpose was, the usual answer was: *mangda panonton seneng*, so that the audience would be happy. I take the following extracts from a commentary by ex-actors and their friends on the play excerpted above.

Once again, the commentators stressed what happens before the event. Anticipation and the uncertainty about who will be performing affect the occasion and the spectators' interest. One old actor summed it up: 'If you are not hungry, you do not enjoy your food. If it is something you have never tasted before, you are excited and afraid.' Shortly after the play began, a well-known television actor, I Midep, appeared on stage. The parentheses are my additions.

Ex-act or: The reason that as soon as the play began people knew that they would enjoy themselves – isn't that so? – is because I Midep is known for playing a servant (a humorous role).

Self : Uh. Huh.

Ex-act or: What's more, when he plays a servant, he is also very funny.

Plays were far from just occasions for jokes though. The ability to induce sad feelings (*nyedihang*) in the spectators was also greatly appreciated. The best plays are *magenep*, they contain a mixture of different elements: jokes, tragedy, historical detail, advice, political criticism. They must above all be performed well; and Balinese standards of critical judgement were ferocious. I have seen troupes famous throughout the island evidently apprehensive on seeing experienced actors in the audience. To say this is all Menippean satire tells us little about the forms it takes and how it is appreciated.

Making people laugh and cry has further importance though.

E x - a c t o r : (If) you often listen to the meaning (*arti*), if you watch (carefully), you need to look for what it reflects.

F r i e n d : Yes, so that it sort of fits, a little like being given advice

E x - That is where you have to keep on searching for instruction.

a
c
t
o
r
 :
F
r
i
e
n
d
 :
E
x
 -
a
c
t
o
r
 :
S
e
l
f
 :
E
x
 -
a
c
t
o
r
 :
F
r
i
e
n
d
 :

That's it.

In theatre, if you are happy, you watch.

Yes.

That's how it is.

Yes, you have to sift it through again and again, what is suitable for you to use. What is bad you throw away immediately.

This makes the point, I trust, that the audience is not presumed to be passive. It also hardly points to exegetical indifference.

A few sentences later on the commentators came to the importance of being happy again.

Ex-actor: There (in the play) it's like - what do you call it? – if the audience's thoughts are happy, don't they understand (*ngaresep*) quickly?

If you are enjoying the play, you pay attention. You are also able to understand much more quickly. What I know of theatre in Bali worked, as did much else, by recognizing and treating people as potentially active participants in thinking about, working on and understanding what was going on. What is interesting the passages above is the realization that the commentators considered the state of being of the participants to be relevant to the success of the occasion. Feeling happy was centrally implicated in understanding. If you were sad, miserable, in pain, you were likely to be distracted, uninterested, unengaged. Rather than wheel out yet again the tired clichés about how ritualized Balinese are, it might be more instructive to follow through what Balinese themselves say, namely that *suka*, happiness, enjoyment and *duka*, suffering, pain are crucial aspects of human action and its consequences, not least exegesis and understanding.

The hyperreal

To take Balinese commentaries on their own practices seriously would entail setting aside many of our deeply beloved assumptions, methods and purposes of inquiry. It would leave a large number of old, and not-so-old buffers in anthropology departments and museums bereft, if they could not opine happily on the meaning of symbols, rituals, pots and unBritish sexual activities, often among peoples who disappeared long ago or who are now more interested in television, computers and income from tourism. Interpretation is, in many ways, the core constitutive practice, without which anthropology's survival may be far less assured than that of its erstwhile subjects. If action is to be

understood in terms of its purpose, as Balinese suggest, then perpetuating our practices and its practitioners looks like many anthropologists' primary concern. Likewise, who is supposed to acclaim the hermeneuts' analyses of Bali? It is not the Balinese – nor theirs' the reward. (These 'interpretations' are, incidentally, not mine but those of Balinese friends. I incline to agree with them.)

Am I then proposing a radical hermeneutics that, if nothing else, might give a facelift to anthropology's sagging jowls?¹⁵⁹ If, as I suspect, anthropology was a 'discipline' made possible by the conjunction of a naturalist epistemology (people and institutions as objects to be studied scientifically) and colonialism (the unreciprocal entitlement of Europeans to intrude upon and write about these objects), then no amount of transplants will help. The ideal of some meeting of free and equal sovereign minds is a delusion, which ignores the degree to which the interlocutors are differently situated. Balinese enter any such hermeneutic exchange on vastly unequal terms, economically, politically, experientially, epistemologically. Not least, we pay our research assistants and 'informants' for their attention, skills and loyalty. Many anthropologists pay lip service to these problems. In their practice, precious few ever realize it.

¹⁵⁹ I am emphatically not suggesting hermeneutics as remedial therapy. This is the view that our problems of understanding stem from a lack of adequate theoretical frameworks, intersubjective empathy or even linguistic competence, which, if remedied, would suddenly render the Balinese understandable and transparent to our knowing minds. Less inadequacy on the part of outside 'expert' commentators is as devoutly to be wished as it is unlikely to come about. It would provide far less excuse for the prevailing cultural myopia (aka ethnocentrism) and would make the scale of the problems of understanding more obvious. Understanding itself however is a peculiarly flabby, frequently tautological, term that refers to no discriminable kind of thinking. It is therefore singularly appropriate to woolly hermeneutics. (If the structure of understanding resembles concentrated gelatine, then doing Interpretive Anthropology waters it down into a lurid-coloured jelly.) Equally, the idea of another culture being, in any sense, 'clear' or 'transparent' indicates the prior determinations both of the kinds of 'object' presumed to be knowable (or rather the process of re-rendering them, as collective representations, symbols, images, so they become knowable, understandable) and of the theory of knowledge invoked.

Practices, being situational, changing, contested, often relatively un verbalized or culturally marked, are not easily squeezed into convenient objects of knowledge or of understanding. Therefore they are ignored. In short, I suggest that, far from the problems of society or culture being more or less wrapped up or even having any workable ontology, we are still largely at sea. So Laclau could write of 'the impossibility of society' (1990b). Reflection on practices are less the solution than a first step away from the massive prevailing hypostatizing and essentializing which has dominated thinking in the human sciences.

What makes it so hard for anthropologists, whose work is notionally to engage in precisely this lengthy, uncertain dialogue of unforeseeable outcome, to avoid a *trahison des clercs*?¹⁶⁰ In the panoply of the human sciences, our appointed job is to remove the cultural lime scale encrusting rationality, to polish away the blips on the cosmic mirror of philosophy, disinfect a few of the running sores on modernity and serve as a foil to postmodernisms. Sanitizing Balinese and others, making them safe for democracy, is what brings the accolades, the respectability and the bucks. We have been firmly contextualized. And, as it takes torture to make a good torturer, we contextualize and textualize those we work with. Whom the hermeneuts wish to destroy they first textualize. It all requires less effort than the alternatives and the results do not threaten our peers or ourselves. A Balinese who could speak would be as unwelcome as Wittgenstein's lion.

Contextualizing articulates what we write about with a world of other, existing texts. As we saw with interpretive analyses of Bali, hermeneuts confine themselves 'not only to what can be reproduced, but *that which is always already reproduced*'. Oddly enough this was Baudrillard's definition of the hyperreal (1983a: 146). Once you make the step of recognizing, as the hermeneuts of Bali do, that the text in whatever form is the primary reality, the corollary is that you are presuming 'the *absence* of a basic reality'. The further implication is that the image created may bear 'no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum' (Baudrillard 1983a: 11), so setting the conditions for the replication of hyperreality. It is of the same order as the dancer with whom I began.¹⁶¹

The difficulty of even some of the clearer postmodernist and post-structuralist writings is that, elegant and persuasive as they may sound, quite how do they translate (sic) into hard argument? To answer a question with a question: how did Bali become identified with ritual? One of the answers is through death. Cremations, especially those that involved the immolation of

¹⁶⁰ 'Betrayal by the educated'. In other words, precisely the people who should be helping, fail to.

¹⁶¹ 'The collapse of the real into hyperrealism' comes about by 'the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another reproductive medium such as advertising or photography' (Baudrillard 1993: 71). For Bali we have both in superabundance, and reinterpretation too.

widows, have fascinated Europeans for centuries before they ever tamed the Balinese beast. Who actually witnessed these, and what if anything they saw through the throng and the smoke, is much less clear than the I-was-standing-right-there-on-the-cremation-pyre accounts suggest. Nonetheless these accounts have been replicated endlessly as testimony to the savage ritual essence of Bali (Connor 1996). And who reproduces these yet again as striking images to support their interpretation of the ritualized Balinese? It is none other than our two hermeneuts (Boon 1977: 176-224; Geertz 1980: 98-120, 231-235).

It would be sad to leave Bali in the maw of Geertz, Boon and their nemesis, Baudrillard, condemned to eternal hyperreality. Despite the two million tourists a year, the Indonesian government (not unaided) making their culture a commoditizable object and the kind attentions of all the Baliologists, Balinese somehow manage to carry on much of the time resisting the pure textuality that Boon (1982, 1990), and the silence and the spectacle that Geertz (1980) and Baudrillard (e.g. 1983b: 9-11, 19-24), join in unholy alliance to foist on them. Between the texts, silences and spectacles, for the moment at least many of them carry on living and even sometimes thriving. What they do is encompassed simply neither by hyperreality, nor even reality (a noose I leave to philosophers to hang themselves). For want of a better word, I shall call it hyporeality. By the expression I am referring to that domain of underdetermined facts which are subject to continued analysts' – and in a quite different way sometimes Balinese – attempts to subdue and determine, and which usually elude them. It consists not least of that myriad of actions, speech, ruminations and their absences, which make up so much of human living. *Pace de Certeau* (1984) we have great difficulty explaining or interpreting the ordinary. A reason, I suggest, is that our theoretical practices are overwhelmingly concerned with singling out – according to predilection – the structural, the foundational, the essential, the determinative, the limiting case, the puzzling, the unlikely, the dramatic; but very rarely the ordinary. It is what Balinese call *biasa* and regard as beyond explanation. Actions *in situ* and their unintended consequences remain sufficiently contingent as to make a mockery of theorizing, even if it is not the fashion of these times. Most of what humans do remains – and I suspect will always remain to the half-honest scholar – delightfully intransigent to explanation if not to overinterpretation.

Chapter 6

The missing subject: Balinese time and the elimination of history.

Some grand narratives

A little-known American television serial, *Sledgehammer*, has a small but dedicated Balinese following. In the opening sequence a large white male hand picks up a big revolver on a silk cushion, points it at the camera and a voice says: 'Trust me. I know what I'm doing.' The gun instantly fires at the camera/viewers, shattering the lens. Reassured that Bali has finally succumbed to global narratives and that I know what I am doing, we may boldly go where some million and a half tourists a year go, guided by narratologists, anthropological and other, whose self-appointed and often remunerative task it is to explain what it going on.

While Pirandello only had *Six characters in search of an author*, there seem to be hundreds of authors in search of the Balinese. In this Chapter I wish to consider one aspect of that search. It is how certain authors (who include, not coincidentally, some of the most professionally celebrated anthropologists) have depicted Balinese time and character and, in so doing, have constituted Balinese as subjects; or more commonly failed to. Whatever the authors' differences, paradoxically by focusing on time they have denied Balinese any sense of history, which I argue includes the capacity to reflect critically on their own actions. They have portrayed Balinese as passive subjects of a transcendental agent: their own collective representations, or culture. This culture in turn is unitary, insular, timeless and ahistorical.

The authors write as if there were some abstract essence, Balinese culture, which forms a logically consistent and sociologically integrated system, isolated from the rest of the world. It is timeless in that its essential features have remained, if not constant, at least constant in their ability to restructure events according to a fixed cultural template, leaving Balinese musing sadly on their inability to match past perfection. Deprived of any sense of dialectical relationship with the past, Balinese culture is ahistorical, unreflexive and unselfcritical. It devotes itself to spectacle and romance. Absorbed in itself, the Balinese state – an instantiation of that

transcendental agent – wobbled along merrily until it not so much collapsed in the face of superior Dutch firepower as it was finally liberated from the vulgarities of power to attain its apotheosis as pure simulacrum. Such a representation of people as passive subjects of their own collective representations is not peculiar to Bali of course. It underpins orientalism and anthropology as the study of collective representations or culture equally. Bali's task in the grand world division of the Other is to exemplify a particular aesthetic cul-de-sac of the human condition.

Should you think I exaggerate, consider this quotation from Clifford Geertz's *Negara*:

The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages, and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power (1980: 13).

Nor was this depiction of a brief, if gloriously self-absorbed, moment. Geertz continues:

The scale of things varied, and their brilliance, as well as the details of their immediate expression. But not, as far as I can see, between, say, 1343 [the conquest by Majapahit] and 1906 [the conquest by the Dutch], what they were all about (1980: 134, my parentheses)¹⁶²

The drawback of this beguiling image is that it bears precious little relationship to Balinese, their neighbours', travellers' and, later, Dutch accounts of what was going on. It is hard to square, for instance, with the scope of Balinese military activities at different times, both within the island in the depredations of Gusti Panji Sakti of Bulèlèng, and beyond in the Balinese involvement in the slave trade and conquest.

What is involved in Geertz's grand, if idiosyncratic, vision of Balinese history as a series of *tableaux vivants*? For a start he chose to eschew the dreary business of investigating the sources which exist and critically evaluating them, a task he left to later intellectual under-labourers

¹⁶² Unless stated otherwise, all italics and parentheses are in the original quotations. I am grateful to Ron Inden, Margaret Wiener and Linda Connor who was the reader for RIMA, where this chapter first appeared, for very helpful critical comments on the draft of this chapter.

(Schulte Nordholt 1988, Vickers 1989, 1995a), whose studies, most effectively if unfortunately, toll the knell for his imaginative reconstruction. Geertz focused instead on the Balinese 'symbolology' of kingship (1980: 98-120). The problem is that, on his own account, symbols are precisely those kinds of cultural 'inscriptions', which are peculiarly timeless and resistant to change (1973c), which act to 'establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men' (1966: 4). The kinds of representations that Geertz selects are those least likely to encourage argument about change: there is no mirror stage, but a stage of mirrors.

What enables Geertz to elucidate with such certainty what Balinese did in the nineteenth century? And what position does he assume as commentator or narrator? Geertz's access to past Balinese thought is made possible by the properties of 'culture' as he propounds it. It is a 'totalizing concept of culture' (Fabian 1983: 156) in which "history" is interiorized into "culture" (McGrane 1989: 114). Achronicity is inherent. By definition, it is enough to study culture to understand history. The interpretation is that of the authoritative, academic commentator at once both immediate, familiar, empathetic and distant, allochronic, omniscient. The interpretive movement (the hermeneutic circle) is less between the whole and its parts than an elision of presence and absence to imply an intimate objectivity.

Culture underwrites Geertz's venture in another way.¹⁶³ For

anthropological understanding is a way of making the world feel safer, a way of extending the edge of order so that we can comfortably say that people are fundamentally the same everywhere and that 'cultural differences' are merely something like different mental images of the same basic reality (McGrane 1989: 118).

Anthropology understanding itself is however a privileged realm. Whereas all other thought is the product of its social and cultural circumstances, anthropological thought – and with it the superior realization of the anthropologist – is exempt. Anthropology lives by seeing and interpreting everything as culture-bound ... everything but itself (McGrane 1989: 125).

¹⁶³ The axiomatic assumptions of wholeness, coherence and the explicability of culture in its own terms however are incompatible with any serious recognition of contingency or indeterminacy. Again 'if "culture" is the radical democratization of difference' (McGrane 1989: 114), such a cultural study may prejudice itself before it begins. Suppose – which seems to be the case – that major Balinese discursive themes included the following: in some circumstances, the present depends upon, and is explicable by recourse to, the past; practices do *not* necessarily form a consistent whole; difference is *not* always to be explained democratically. The scope for misunderstanding is vast.

Geertz's idea of culture is a mythical charter. It underwrites the conditions of his unique, but unreciprocable, insight into long dead others, to make them living – if necessarily passive – subjects of anthropological understanding. This understanding is asymmetrical: it is something the anthropologist does to others, not they to him. So powerful is the technique that it does not even matter whether the subjects are alive or dead, nor even whether Bali has changed between 1343 and 1906 or not.

A brief review of Geertz's approach confirms these suspicions. As he treats them, symbols are multiply detached from social actualities. We are offered no account of their situated use; nor of how Balinese understood them. Indeed, the notion of 'symbol' is not even Balinese (Hobart 1982b: 14-15), but the product of a radically distinct political epistemology, Romanticism (Todorov 1982: 147-221). So the very categories for analyzing their thought are alien. It is incumbent upon Geertz to address the difficulties, rather than by-pass them by suggesting that 'a history of Bali for us' somehow obviates the problems. Dutch and Balinese understandings of events and relations seem to have been irreconcilably divergent (and probably far less concurrent within each side than a retrospective analysis suggests). How appropriate is it for anthropologists to obliterate or ignore what happened among other peoples, so that their readers may enjoy an enhanced – if parochial – consciousness of what it is to be human?

For all his claims to be working from Balinese representations of their own past and politics, Geertz's account is strikingly devoid of any critical consideration of the huge range of Balinese texts which might be relevant to such a study (on which see, for instance, Hinzler 1976, 1986; Rubinstein 1988). That most of the texts have not yet been translated (cf. Berg 1929, 1932; Worsley 1972) is questionable grounds for someone interested in Balinese representations to ignore them. Geertz's dramaturgical metaphor of Bali as a 'theatre state' has tragi-comic resonances, and is strangely hybrid. They are in fact doubly trapped, because their ethnographer and author has condemned them to have lived out their charade within an image of theatre which is contemporary western and not even their own.¹⁶⁴

It was therefore little surprise that a younger generation of scholars should have challenged this vision of the timeless, essentially unchanging Balinese polity. Vickers, for instance, has argued that such an account conflates hegemonic Balinese representations from three different periods.

¹⁶⁴ On Geertz's sense of theatre see Hobart 1983.

In the first, which he identifies with the apogee of the kingdom of Gèlgèl in the sixteenth century, the sovereign, Dalem Baturènggong, portrayed himself as the 'World-Ruler' who articulated a polity which embraced parts of East Java and as far as Sumbawa (1989: 41-53).¹⁶⁵ The second period followed the reputed collapse of Gèlgèl by 1651 into a mosaic of small realms, the lords of which represented themselves as 'romantic princes' (Vickers 1989: 53-64), as instantiating or exemplifying the eponymous hero of the Panji stories. Significantly, in these accounts, Panji is not recognized at first as the rightful incumbent, but must demonstrate his supremacy in war and bed. Whether it was a matter of the scramble of lordlings or fratricide among greater lords' many offspring, protagonists for power or position required criteria of success by which to recognize their own achievements and to command it in others.

With the onset of the nineteenth century there eventually emerged nine kingdoms, identifiable by name and ruler, if not by bounded domains or uncontested power. By this time the inscription of retrospective dynastic genealogies was under way (Vickers 1989: 65-76), although it is less clear if it only began then. What does seem to be evident though is that the scale of celebrations of kingship, at least in Klungkung (1989: 65), began to become particularly spectacular only at the stage that Balinese rulers had to contend with the impending Dutch. The great ritual contests appear as central in colonial and post-colonial representations by Balinese rulers, but were missing in their earlier representations of kingship (Margaret Wiener, personal communication). It would appear that Geertz has retrojected a particular moment in Balinese history and made of it a timeless totality.

Valuable as Vickers's analysis is as a corrective to symbolist ahistoricism, the argument is, perhaps inevitably, partly circular. In correlating periods of the Balinese polity with their textual representation, Vickers is obliged to draw heavily on these very texts for the evidence of those periods. Nor can outsiders' accounts offer an independent yardstick to escape from this circularity, because they are mediated by descriptions, stories and commentaries provided by Balinese themselves.

The critical historiography of Bali has only just started. Given the patchy, heterogeneous and contradictory nature of the Balinese and other

¹⁶⁵ I discuss contemporary representations of Balinese kings, following Gramsci and Laclau, as articulating heterogeneous parts of the polity in Chapter 7. Who actually did the representing in each instance is, as far as I can gather, still a moot point. Insofar as the portrayal was endorsed, if not instigated, by the ruler, or subsequently appeared as being, the representation appears as the product of a complex agent, the court, exemplified in the ruler (see Hobart 1990b: 94-98).

sources, the problems of how to read them, let alone the question of how different Balinese on different occasions have actually read them, I suspect even the adumbration above is far too neat. For the analysis relies upon a simplistic sociology of knowledge in which groups are mechanically linked to world-views (see Geertz 1960; cf. Hobart 1982b). Balinese representations of their own polities have been too many, varied, complex and important to be tidied away in a largely timeless vision of a theatre state. On what occasions were such representations invoked, to whom and with what effects? People do not, after all, simply 'represent' the state as it is or was. Particular persons or groups represent events and relationships *as* something to someone on some occasion, usually for some purpose. Balinese rulers were doing much else besides being 'obsessed' (Geertz's value-laden and rather sneering expression) with their own spectacles. They discussed and worried about the significance of the Dutch and how to deal with them long before conquest was imminent (Wiener 1995a). The obsession, if any, is Geertz's in insisting on reducing the polity, and courts as complex agents, to a floorshow for a handful of Balinese princes. Despite Geertz's desire to distance himself from Dutch representations of Bali (e.g. 1961), he manages in one majestic sweep to echo the Dutch bourgeois bias in favour of Balinese royalty and to interpret them using an allochronic, allotopic, democratic epistemology.¹⁶⁶ Subsequently, Balinese have come on occasion to reiterate images of royalty in theatre and on television which seem distinctly modern. I suspect though that such reworking may owe more to their involvement in post-revolutionary Indonesia and the wider world than to either Leiden or Princeton.¹⁶⁷

On what grounds should we assume that Balinese accounts, even within a notional 'period', necessarily portrayed a single overarching vision, or that there was a single idea of Balineseness? Writers have focused almost exclusively on royal representations of themselves. That other groups, such as *Brahmana*, might have quite different accounts of what had happened was neglected until recently (Rubinstein 1991). Even restricting discussion to representations of royalty at a particular time, how consistent (and by what criteria?) were particular accounts with one another and how monologic were they? Even where dynastic chronicles (or

¹⁶⁶ Anthropologists are much given to this double distancing of the people we work with, as Fabian has argued at length (1983). Interestingly, my first teacher in matters Balinese, Hooykaas, warned me against this bias of his colleagues and advised me not to assume the centrality of either courts or high priests in studying Balinese society.

¹⁶⁷ An example of Balinese reworking their past is the television film *Gègèrnya Semarang*, first broadcast by TVRI on 26th. August 1992, which seems to me retrospectively to introduce ideas of Indonesian Independence into the original colonial conflict.

however one wishes to gloss *babad*) of rival families agreed on certain basic events, they differed sharply at points in the significance with which they were attributed.¹⁶⁸ On the latter question, as far as I know, relatively little work has been done. As they had less chance to inscribe it, the views of the governed remain largely unknown and so, conveniently, are glossed over as if they had had no thoughts at all.

Interestingly, in his analysis of what he argues appears to be a nineteenth century Balinese painting by a commoner, Worsley (1984) suggests the possibility of there being contrary images of the aristocracy and their relationship with their subjects within the painting. Behind all this lurks the vital question of how scholars arrive at definitive-seeming interpretations, in this instance of the nature of long-gone Balinese states. Even where the argument has been made by careful and critical analysis of texts or paintings – and I can find little evidence that Geertz, for instance, studied any originals – what relationship, if any, do the analyses bear to what Balinese have actually made of them? For instance, it is quite possible that the presuppositions according to which Balinese constituted, argued and reworked their polities are sufficiently incommensurable with the analytical models of academic commentators that they cannot simply be characterized as some deviant symbolic or imaginary transformation of European polities.¹⁶⁹ At the least it would seem that far too much was going on to sum up five and a half centuries of political change by stating simply that ‘the scale of things varied, and their brilliance’.

Needless to say Western narratives dwell on other aspects of Bali’s past. Death especially features as a complex trope. Balinese cremations and the immolation of royal widows is obligatory in almost every historical account. It is far from clear how many of the authors actually witnessed and how much they saw of the cremation in Gèlgèl in 1633, which they

¹⁶⁸ An example is the accounts of the *Babad Manggis* about the royal house of Gianyar, and the *Babad Dalem Sukawati* about the powerful lineage of Cokordas. Balinese, who have to live with the consequences of rival enunciations, are often more sensitive to the problems of inscription and generalizing than are their foreign academic commentators. I well recall the late Cokorda Gedé Agung Sukawati’s expostulating to me on reading the résumé of the history of Gianyar in *Kinship in Bali* shortly after it was published (Geertz & Geertz 1975: 119-125). His concern was that what had happened was a matter of dispute between the two *babad*. Even if the purpose was a summary, the effect was to turn one side of an argument, here of the Déwa Manggis, into fact, the more authoritative because of the authors’ celebrity.

¹⁶⁹ Inden (1990: 162-262) has argued forcefully that administrators, academics and other commentators almost without exception have managed to misunderstand the workings of polities in India. Their various imaginings of ‘divine kingship’ and ‘the Hindu type of government’ bear directly on the inter-textual background to analyses of Bali.

described in flamboyant detail and with so much righteous horror. Nor was this crucial solely to travellers' and, later, administrators' depictions of Bali.¹⁷⁰ The same retooled accounts recur from Covarrubias's *Island of Bali* to the later grand anthropological representations of Bali in Clifford Geertz's *Negara*, James Boon's *The anthropological romance of Bali* and Stephen Lansing's *The three worlds of Bali*, synecdochically as the essence and ultimate goal of Balinese culture. I cannot speak about pre-conquest Balinese concerns but, by most subsequent accounts, cremation as part of practices for apotheosizing dead forebears, is widely regarded as an inescapable obligation upon the living, in return for their forebears having undertaken the practices required to transform the young into socially mature beings. (Cremation anyway is only part of one route to apotheosis, even if later stages were appropriate only to the great, and wealthy, courts.) There are serious and irreducible differences between the concerns of alien commentators and Balinese.

It is by no means coincidental that 'ritual' bulks so large in the accounts of the anthropologists mentioned above. Ritual is above all pre-narrative, anti-historical: the means of destroying time and precluding history. By contrast to a vibrant, rational, historically aware West for ever bent upon progress, terminal civilizations like Bali are trapped in myth, moribund, involuted into museums. Fittingly, they act out their own lack of a future – stolidly, absorbedly, compulsively? – in rituals of death. Not only are rituals *en clé de mort* but, according to anthropological wisdom, death forms the paradigm occasion for ritual.¹⁷¹

If Western narratives of Bali rely on uncritical intellectual anthropophagy of earlier writers, death is a theme that articulates representations of Bali with action. For these descriptions were agentive. Widow burning provided one of the main public justifications by the Dutch

¹⁷⁰ Linda Connor's critical analysis of the European preoccupation with death in Bali is important not just as a corrective to repeated misconceptions – for instance 'widow immolation' neither always involved widows nor burning – but, recursively, it probably tells us more about European concerns than it does Balinese (Connor 1996, n.d.). My gloss on her work is that it suggests projection and displacement to be widespread anthropological practices.

¹⁷¹ Are cremations, like cockfights, a kind of 'meta-social commentary' (Geertz 1973d)? What the former lacks in chanciness, it makes up in inevitability and relevance (even the most determined cockfighter cannot avoid his own death). It does not take a great leap of the imagination from the destruction of the body human to the body social. In their cremations, are Balinese enacting the refigurement of their own society? Many people noted at the time of my first fieldwork in 1970 that the costs of cremations were directly undermining much of the old order. One or two jaundiced commentators remarked to me, while watching cremations, that it was as if it were Bali that was being consumed.

for intervening in the affairs of the island. Metonymically, the preoccupation of Balinese rulers with lavish cremations indicated their failure or inability to attend to the 'proper' business of government. Metaphorically Balinese culture was crumbling. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, foreign commentators depicted Balinese as savage and bellicose. By the close of the nineteenth century, the Balinese had become moribund (Vickers 1989: 53). Just as the tigers that reportedly roamed the island were being killed off, Balinese were being narratively domesticated.¹⁷² With colonization, Bali began the next phase of its transmogrification – into a museum, a zoo, a laboratory and, finally, an international theme park and tourist resort – the while miraculously remaining timeless and unchanging. These descriptions have been agentive in that they have affected how the Dutch and Indonesians have administered Bali and have used its image for planning Bali's development. Balinese have not been passive in this process. On occasion some among them have enthusiastically promoted this vision of their essential difference. Nor have they always been uncritical. In *Tengahpadang*, according to the guide books a 'traditional' centre of woodcarving (no one in fact carved there until about 1983), one of the standing jokes is: 'Where can you still find a tree in Bali?' Answer: 'In an art shop.'

In short, as with so much anthropology, for all the determination of its practitioners to do otherwise, the effect of much anthropological writing is to inscribe our own categories onto (even into) others and, in declaring (carefully doctored) difference, at once to exoticize and tame them. For this reason I carefully stayed out of the long running 'time debate' on Bali. My purpose here is not to contribute to the debate, which was a one-sided monologue for several shades of professional opinion mongering. (There are no Balinese or Indonesians involved for instance. I have taught the arguments to postgraduate anthropologists at Universitas Udayana in Bali, who were dumbfounded at what the 'experts' made of them.¹⁷³ Rather, my aim is to examine some of the professional practices of anthropologists. In this instance, these include constituting their object of study, determining what counts as evidence, imposing parochial categories which masquerade as universals, writing evaluations under the name of descriptions and producing accounts which are remarkably detached from, and impermeable

¹⁷² According to Schulte Nordholt (n.d.) colonial philologists, anthropologists, administrators and other caring professions also helped in other ways. You cannot abolish the power of rulers, order the abandonment of important practices, impose Peace and somehow leave the culture essentially unchanged (see Hobart 1983 on Geertz 1980).

¹⁷³ As with any general assertion, there are exceptions. Duff-Cooper (discussed below) was more sensitive than the others to local usage (his essay, 1990, was published in a collection in Bali), as on occasion was Howe (also discussed below).

to, the practices they purport to describe. The effect is to deny that those they write about are self-monitoring agents, instruments and patients, who reflect critically on (the circumstances of) their own and others' actions. The result is to make understanding something which ethnographers do, unreciprocally, to others. Understanding then ceases to be a mutual struggle of beings in the world and becomes objectivized knowledge with a spray-on humanist finish. I argue my case for Bali, but as should be evident, the argument applies more broadly. What indeed is rather frightening is that the time debate has involved a number of the best – or at least the most celebrated – anthropologists of their time.

The problem of narrative

As my concern is representations of the past, before I turning to the issue of time in Bali, it is necessary to consider the issue of historical writing. The reason is that it has been the subject of much recent argument among literary critical specialists, people on the border of philosophy and history, and others. So great are the claims made, fashionably, on behalf of narrative that it is necessary to review what is involved in some detail. Bits of debris from the argument have even landed in the quiet backwater of anthropology in such guises as the reflexive critique of ethnographic writing which stressed the centrality of literary and narrative forms in Western representations of others (e.g. Boon 1982; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988). Indeed Boon has come delightfully close to summing up the whole – or what he regards as the important bits – of Balinese culture in terms of narrative genres. Narrative has been more generally mooted as fundamental to time, history and indeed human experience of the world itself. Balinese themselves also use on many occasions what one might be tempted to call narratives, from popular stories, to *babad*, to the Mahabharata and Ramayana, as available examples (*conto*) or analogies (*pra(tiw)imba*) by which to evaluate the significance of actions and events, and their likely outcome. So, if we are to reflect critically on foreign commentators' or Balinese representations of the past, should we not begin by considering how far, and in what way, problems of history resolve themselves into issues of cultural differences of narrative style? In short, to what degree are debates about Indonesian and Malay ideas about the past (e.g. Soedjatmoko 1965; Errington 1979; Vickers 1990; cf. Sweeney 1987) actually about different conventions of writing and telling stories?

To clear one matter out of the way, recognition of the diversity of narrative genres would seem a useful corrective to two forms of anthropological philistinism. One is to treat cultures simply as abstracted

assemblages of collective representations, symbols, myths etc. without considering how people, whether participants or anthropologists, actually use them. The other is to imagine that ethnographic writing is some genre- and narrative-free enterprise.

It is when we turn to what narrative involves that the going gets tricky. Like many enticingly simple-looking ideas, what what you get is not what you see. For instance, is narrative an epistemological device to organize how we talk or write about events? Or does it have some ontological status, either as a necessary aspect of thought, or even of the world? Or is it because how we appreciate the relationship between events is invariably mediated by, and therefore indissoluble from, narrative? To what extent does narrative appear centrally implicated precisely by virtue of setting up an endless deferment about the dichotomy of what exists and what we can know? Does narrative determine, or merely affect in some unspecified way, what we understand? Narrative is not an innocent idea. It entails a messy metaphysics.¹⁷⁴ Is narrative what people do? Or is it some kind of entity: an abstract substance? In a fairly simple sense, narrating may be considered as the practices of people, who delineate events in speech (or other) acts, while others evaluate and interpret what is said in acts of listening. Narrative in this sense is a congeries of critical distinctions which people have made on different occasions. It is all too tempting however to imagine it to be something more, some transcendent entity or process which structures thought and its many manifestations. In this way, narrative easily lends itself to being invoked as the synonym for, and hypostatized essence of, culture. As we shall see, Bali has been lumbered with more than its fair share.

As an abstract substance, narrative lends itself to endless division and classification. Being abstract, there are few constraints on the imagination of the analyst. Indications that such epistemological essentializing is taking place is that it becomes as easy to narratologists to distinguish and proliferate genres as it is hard to fathom the criteria of differentiation. The reader gets lost in a classificatory maze. When done by a real expert the closure is so total that what one is inquiring about effectively disappears, to be reconstituted as a product of the method. Consider, for example, the following statement by Boon. 'Like any *essentially* metaphorical procedure, ethnology thus resembles the arts of

¹⁷⁴ For example, as the literature makes clear, narrative involves presuppositions about human nature. I suggest that it is the idea of narrative appearing to engage with those difficult Kantian categories of the *a priori* like time and causation that gives it a certain 'buzz'.

visual illusion' (1977: 18, my stress). Having dissolved the complexities and indeterminacies of our engagement with the world into an epistemological game, the self-authorizing author is free, within the broad limits of Western conventions, to imagine the object, now totalized, by an act of will, so as 'to convey a sense of the whole society, to typify it in some vivid, compelling manner' (1977: 18). That the effect is to deny the people studied such agency and will as was still left to them does not emerge as a problem. In this instance, Boon empowers himself magically to dispense with the differences of place, history and discourse, as he sets out to develop 'an extended analogy between Bali's dynamic, lustrous culture and Indo-European principles of "romance"' (1977: 3).

Whether there is much dynamic or lustrous left over, except for the sheen of polished metaphor is apparently not the question. Instead it is whether Bali should be epitomized as 'epic' or as 'romantic'. If you think I was exaggerating in talking of narratology as slicing up an abstract substance, what about the following assertion?

Epic posits constant, consistently principled, heroic familial aristocracies whose leaders establish the lawful and the just at the expense of the enemies of right. Romance portrays vulnerable, disguised protagonists, partial social misfits who sense surpassing ideals and must prove the ultimate feasibility of actualizing those ideals often against magical odds (Boon 1977: 3).

Note the active voice by which narrative genres become transcendental agents which have the power to bring about classes, values, institutions. Where Geertz amalgamated historically distinct Balinese acts of representation, Boon has dispensed with history altogether and recreates sequential political formations as a matter of choice between narrative genres. If Vickers is correct, Boon has succeeded in evaporating a crucial period of a hundred and fifty years of political action and thinking. Bali as a whole becomes, if not reconstituted as a genre, at least refined out of its disorderly existential nastiness into a fit object for literary critical indulgence. What the threats of *jihads*, successive Dutch, Japanese, Indonesian governments, the mass tourist market and even generations of academics have so far failed fully to bring about, Boon seems fair set to achieve at a narrative stroke – the final objectification of Balinese.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Boon has complained that I misunderstand him (1990: 209, fn. 2). He does not address though the probably irreconcilable differences in our respective approaches. One aspect emerges from his remarks on an early piece of mine (1978). In suggesting that Balinese commented on their own cultural link of the flow of water with ideas of purity and pollution by noting that water *did* in fact flow downhill, I was hoping to entice the naive

Is it actually so straightforward to classify and analyze narrative genres in somewhere like Bali?¹⁷⁶ According to what frame of reference would you decide? Utterances which a European or American academic might classify as evidently a statement or request might be treated as an order. A well known example is the Javanese *perintah halus*, an indirect statement or request, which may well be intended and understood as an order (Anderson 1972: 42). And, to take examples from a *Prèmbon* theatre piece about the prince of Nusa Pendia, which I recorded in Bali, what speech genre is involved in exclaiming 'Oh dear!' (*Aduh!*)? Or asking why something is so? Or replying to a statement by adding the name of the person to whom it was addressed? According to the Balinese who were watching with me, in the context of these utterances, they all served to affirm, *ngawiaktiang*, what the previous speaker had just said. Allocating whole swathes of works to grand genres like 'epic', 'romance' or 'genealogy' presupposes not only that the works are homogeneous, but that they contain formal essences which exist independently of commentators identifying them as such. The fact that the attempt largely anticipates detailed critical analysis of the works in question, let alone inquiry into

symbolists then around to leap in and disagree. I had not expected a scholar of Boon's intellectual sophistication to fall for it and reiterate the closed nature of thought (aka. symbolic facts, 1990: 78) by arguing that a

welter of machineries usher "nature" along with everything else into a discourse of irreducibly discrepant codes, posed and counterposed in contests of advantages and rivalry, vanquishings and victimage (1990: 79).

We are offered representation without the possibility of intervention (see Hacking 1983). Hermetic semiotic systems replace argument about the underdetermination of objects and events in the world and the adequacy of past practices of thinking to engage with the problems. Difference is reduced to discrepancy between codes. Discourse, in Foucault's sense of the partly dispersed maze of practices of power/knowledge are emasculated into games of thought without an object. For Balinese have become signifiers in the play of someone else's mind, not agents working in and on a world.

If indeed I misunderstand Boon, which I am not so sure, at least I am in good company. Johannes Fabian arrives at almost identical conclusions. 'Like other symbolic anthropologists, Boon keeps his distance from the Other; in the end his critique amounts to posing one image of Bali against other images... The Other remains an object, albeit on a higher level than that of empiricist or positivist reification' (1983: 136).

¹⁷⁶ What is it about reconstituting events and actions in terms of narrative genres, or treating actions (if not events) as narratively constituted, that leads to hypostatization? For a start, if all public speech is narrative in form, then the notion threatens to become meaningless. And in what ways is it helpful to think of images and icons as narratively structured? Even Todorov, the self-proclaimed founder of narratology, had difficulty subsuming description under narration (1990: 27-28). Many other illocutionary modes (in Searle's sense, 1971) are non-narrative, such as ordering, asserting, asking, questioning, cursing and flattering. Are they then genres, even if not narrative in nature?

Balinese presuppositions, commentaries and practices, suggests it is, under almost any description, yet another short-lived triumph of scientized aestheticism over actuality.

At this juncture I part company with Ricoeur's analysis of narrative, for two reasons. First, although he recognizes that narration is an act which depends for its completion upon a reader or audience (in his *mimesis*₃, 1984: 70-87), Ricoeur has systematically to downplay the role of the agents who commission, write, order a reading or performance of, narrate, listen to, and discuss a work, let alone the purposes and circumstances in each instance. Consequently he has to avoid the implications of Mink's neat point that telling and retelling a story are different (Ricoeur 1984: 157-58; Mink 1968). His search for the essential, universal features of narrative structure requires him, as does indeed his notion of narrative as surmounting or encapsulating contingency (1984: 39-45), to ignore the situational particularities in which narrators and audiences actually deployed, recognized and worked upon different kinds of narratives. Second, in authorizing his account through recourse to a replete, unified genealogy of Western thought,¹⁷⁷ Ricoeur is forced to invoke a massive array of presuppositions about the timeless, essential nature of imitation, representation (which he takes to be the same, cf. Collingwood 1938: 42-43), creativity, meaning, symbols, tropes, rules, types etc. (1984: 52-87), and the industry-standard range of dichotomies with a few added revisions (concordance:discordance::meaning:meaningless::order:disorder::real:imaginary, 1984: 44-46). Approaching, say, Bali with a battery of classical Greek definitions (*muthos*, *poiesis*, *sunthesis*, *teleios*, *mimesis*, Ricoeur 1984: 48), as if these had some perduring essence even within Western thinking, is more epistemological sledge-hammering than critical inquiry.

As the Balinese example above indicates, there was nothing inherent in the utterances which made them identifiable as instances of affirming the truth of what was said. A focus on genres, narrative or otherwise, isolates the text from the conditions of its production and the subsequent situations of its use. It is not self-evident, even in a written

¹⁷⁷ As one would expect, Ricoeur has to salvage the continuity of a constituting consciousness and a 'continuous chronology of reason' (1988: 217-19) from Foucault's sceptical dismissal of it as disrupted and decentred (1969).

While Ricoeur takes myth as 'emplotment', partly I assume as a poke in the eye to Lévi-Strauss, anthropologists have widely treated myth as either pre-narrative, or so strange a form of narrative, as to require radical structural or symbolic surgery. Employing the sobriquet 'myth' for any narrative practice shorn of the situations of their use, of which the anthropologist cannot make sense, suggests a greater failure on the part of the anthropologist than anything inherently mystifying about myth.

work, in what way an ostensibly narrative statement should be – let alone in fact has been – understood. Ricoeur at least attempts to include readers or spectators (1984: 46), but his model of the text and its production as central (1979) make them an afterthought in the hermeneutic circle. Herein lies the rub. Classifications of narratives may appear clear-cut. But this is achieved at the expense of considering the purposes of speakers or narrators and how they are understood by their audiences. Narrative easily becomes an essence, a total phenomenon and a transcendental agent, which replaces the complex or human agents who wrote the account and do the narrating, listening and understanding.

This may, I hope, make it clearer what sort of history anthropologists like Geertz and Boon have in mind. We know precious little about the circumstances and consequences of the reading of historical works in Bali as situated social acts, or even how they are understood by audiences. Nor does it matter for analyses of this kind. For instance, serious problems about the ownership of a temple in Tengahpadang, led in late 1979 to the reading of a short section of the *Babad Dalem Sukawati* (a work belonging to a local aristocratic lineage) to see if it could throw light on the matter (see Hobart 1990b for details). Commentaries on the reading by different interested participants are fascinating, because they bear very little relationship to any received wisdom about what such works are all about.¹⁷⁸ A problem arises: which is the narrative? Is it the script extrapolated for the purpose from one version of the *babad* itself? Is it the ‘translation’ on that occasion from *kawi* (Old Javanese) into Balinese? Is it what the audience understood by the reading? To the extent it is this last, as there were different understandings by rival interest groups, which version are we to take? Had there been public debate afterwards, there would be a case for taking the version which prevailed as the definitive narrative, until such time as it was superseded. However, there was no such public discussion (Hobart 1990b: 110-14). Even this broadening of the field may be inadequate though. Most of the original owners of the temple were excluded from the proceedings. What of their understanding of the *babad*?

A short excerpt from the *babad* illustrates some of the problems of defining the essence of narrative. At one point the reading told of Cokorda (Ida Déwagung) Gedé Karang, who had settled in Padangtegal, some eight kilometres from Tengahpadang. It went something like:

¹⁷⁸ I have over twenty hours of commentaries on tape and I hope in due course to have an opportunity to write at some length about the reading and different commentaries.

‘He resided in Padangtegal. He built a shrine there. He built a shrine in the Pura Dalem Padangtegal.’¹⁷⁹ The *kawi* was even more cryptic than its paraphrasing in Balinese, which is what I translated above.

Ricoeur has stated that, in narrative,

the configurational arrangement transforms the succession of events into one meaningful whole which is the correlate of the act of assembling the events together and which makes the story followable. Thanks to this reflective act, the entire plot can be translated into one ‘thought’, which is nothing other than its ‘point’ or ‘theme’ (1984: 67).

Indigestible as it is, Ricoeur’s point (sic) is that narrative transforms events into a coherent unity (always?) and makes them intelligible. The argument is partly circular and works in reverse. To be intelligible something must be coherent and part of a meaningful whole (the imperative which drives the hermeneutic circle). Events must therefore *be construed as* meaningful and part of a whole, otherwise we could not understand them. As there is nothing about events which makes them *ipso facto* understandable, the world of action has to be presumed to have a pre-narrative structure! This is one reason I said that the approach involves a messy metaphysics.

Whether the *babad* even matches Ricoeur’s minimal definition of narrative is also open to question.

For a simple narrative already does more than report events in their order of appearance. A list of facts without any ties between them is not a narrative (1984: 148).

How many ties are needed to make a list into a narrative? And how far must these be in the work rather than inferred by listeners? What, indeed, would it look like for relationships ‘to be in the narrative’, independently of some reader interpreting it to be so? You begin to wonder whether the whole enterprise is not devoted to

¹⁷⁹ A Pura Dalem is a temple, present in almost every village to Batara Dalem, The Insider, the Goddess Durga, and associated with death, healing and the cures of various illnesses. I give below the original *kawi* (K) and the gloss given immediately afterwards in Balinese (B).

K: Hana ring bumi Padang Tegal.

B: *Sawèntené Ida malinggih ring Padang Tegal.*

K: Sampun sira ngawangun pariyangan.

B: *Sampun makarya naler palinggih Ida irika.*

K: Wongyèng Pura Dalem Padang Tegal.

B: *Irika Ida makarya palinggih ring Pura Dalem Padang Tegal.*

merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative (W.S. Gilbert, *The Mikado* Act II).

The *babad* also breaches Ricoeur's condition of concordance, of completeness, wholeness and the necessity of events to the whole, such that chance appears as design (1984: 38-43), not just in the section read, but in the *babad* itself, which is incomplete, as future chapters remain to be written. So it lacks the 'teleological function' of having a 'conclusion' or 'ending' (1984: 150). One might though consider the *babad* to be a narrative, insofar as the events have been arranged to make the story followable, in Gallie's sense (1968: 22-31; cf. Ricoeur 1984: 149-55), but by whom and in what way? Whether it is a meaningful whole, in what sense it was designed to be, what 'meaning' would be here, what is involved in translation, whether there is one thought, whether this is the point and whether the theme is identical to the point is another matter. On each of these issues Balinese have their own elaborate ideas.¹⁸⁰

Evidently we are dealing at the most with a fairly minimal kind of narrative, which Balinese often label *gi(h)ing*. Whether one chooses to translate the term as 'plot', 'narrative', 'outline', 'skeleton', 'ribs', 'agreed résumé', 'the bare facts' or whatever makes a great deal of difference to what constitutes a 'narrative genre'. I introduced the brief passage above because it gave rise to about half an hour of intense discussion and argument among the Balinese to whom I played the tape back.¹⁸¹ If so much 'inter-text' is necessary to understand the text and what just a few Balinese made of it, what on earth would a notion of narrative confined to the written word look like if you do not include the different backgrounds which participants bring to bear on any occasion? Recourse to some essential 'narrative' itself provides an authorial means of closure of the underdetermined relationships between actions or events, for it is ill-suited to talking about the actual situations in which agents speak and act, and comment on their own actions. A notion which appears to encompass time paradoxically lends itself well, not least by 'universalizing the plot' and

¹⁸⁰ If I may be forgiven for tantalizing, to explicate each of these points would require more background than there is space for here (for a discussion, see Chapter 5 above). I am not, of course, arguing that Balinese do not order events and actions narratively (although whether that is the best term, I am not sure). Granted their interest in the consequences of actions, on all sorts of occasions Balinese retell stories to review what happened, learn from it, instruct others and so forth.

¹⁸¹ Among other themes were why there were two Pura Dalem in Padangtegal (one especially for high caste people) and whether members of the aristocracy could worship at such temples without fear of pollution.

‘the characters’ (Ricoeur 1984: 41), to ahistorical and unsituated essentializing and classifying.¹⁸²

What bearing does this argument have on representations of history and time? On my understanding, in opposition to historians who have argued that history is a disciplined inquiry the goal of which is accurate knowledge, philosophers like Gallie and Mink have claimed that the narrative structures of historical writing of the past differ fundamentally from the past itself. More mildly, Ricoeur proposed that the world of action has its own ‘pre-narrative structure’, which lends itself to narrative configurations, although the two remain ultimately different. ‘The ideas of beginning, middle, and end are not taken from experience: they are not traits of real action but effects of poetic ordering’ (Ricoeur 1983: 67; cited in Carr 1986: 15). However, such arguments presume that narrative constructions of history, which are what make humans really human, are a trans-cultural form of necessity. How delightful to see the old chestnut of human nature as eternal verity popping up yet again.¹⁸³ The implications of evoking human nature are, however, far from democratic. As Fell has noted, to argue that the capacity for narrative construction ‘has been unevenly cultivated in different cultures leads to the unpalatable conclusion that some cultures have been slow to develop their historical sense and their worldview is then evaluated as a less than fully mature human outlook’ (1992: 376). Nothing seems to have evolved much from Confucius: ‘By nature men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart’ (*Analects* 17, 2). Democratic notions of culture turn out to have paradoxical entailments when considered critically.

Even the radical attempt to sever the link entirely between narrative and the past does not escape difficulties. Ankersmit, for example, has argued that historians’ concepts and narratives are sufficiently epistemologically loaded and incommensurable with the past as to be

¹⁸² If one looks at the pedigree of narrative, these attributes are hardly surprising. It is the turbo-charged version of Russian formalism. Todorov indeed was one of the original formalists. As with its successor, structuralism, narratology ‘all but renounces chronology altogether for...synchrony’ and relies upon the familiar and worn ‘dichotomy of “narrative” and “system”’ (Pechey 1989: 43; syntagm *versus* paradigm, *parole versus langue* etc.). It ignores the overlap and transformability of elements from one category to the other. By extrapolating purportedly essential features of social practice, narratologists need not worry what people actually said and did. So it is not surprising to find it much favoured by those who prefer to keep their distance from the rough-and-tumble of ethnography and to pick delicately at pre-pickled facts.

¹⁸³ Consider: ‘Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode’ (1983: 85; cited in Carr 1986: 182). Ricoeur draws here on his reading of Heidegger.

unable effectively to represent that past remotely as it might have been (1983). The focus therefore should be 'no longer on the past itself, but on the incongruity between present and past, between the language we presently use for speaking about the past and the past itself' (1989: 153). The past is not just another land, you cannot get a visa to go there. As with critiques of ethnographic writing (Clifford & Marcus 1986; cf. Hobart 1990a), the unfortunate consequence is an aesthetic preoccupation with the writer and the language of writing, which dismisses the object of study altogether and leaves us with thought about thought without an object. It also fossilizes the past as something dead and unchanging and ignores Collingwood's point that historians and others continually rework the past (1946: 205-334) in a scale of forms (1933: 54-91; Inden 1990: 33-35), so changing that past by thinking critically about it. For 'all thinking is critical thinking; the thought which re-enacts past thoughts, therefore, criticizes them in re-enacting them' (1946: 216).

In an attempt to mediate the differences, Carr has recently defended narrative against the realists (positivists and pre-theoretical historians), arguing that 'narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence' (1986: 9). And, against Ricoeur, he visualized all societies as battling in some way to confront 'time and its inherent threat', because there is 'a genuinely universal human trait: the struggle against temporal chaos, the fear of sequential dispersion and dissolution' (1986: 183, 184). If Ricoeur's argument looks suspiciously teleological and universalist, Carr's additionally faces the obvious charge that chaos is not part of the world, which is simply there, but a function of frames of reference for ordering the world. None of the protagonists in the debate take practice seriously. Past narrative practices both affect subsequent practices and form their preconditions. As I take it here, following Collingwood (1946), history is not simply the cumulative effects of past events, but practices of rethinking and reworking the past in the light of present interests, which are themselves constituted out of past practices of thinking. Nothing, and certainly not the past, stays still.

Collingwood's approach not only recognized, but required, that thinking and discussion at the time of an act differs from subsequent rethinking. They differ in degree and kind; as does the thinking of a European or American scholar about what Balinese thought, or think, about their own texts. Although they are evidently preliminary, the work by Errington (1979; but cf. Tu 1979 and Sweeney 1987) and Vickers (1990) on Malay and Balinese historiographical practices respectively suggests that people may write about and understand their past in ways far more radically different than most narratologists had even dreamed.

What worries me particularly about recourse to narrative as an abstract substance is how far it is removed from the practices of the people to whom it notionally refers. Story-telling in Bali often involves interjections by listeners; shadow theatre and historical plays use dialogues or polylogues, with all sorts of speech genres and subject positions (for Java, see Becker 1979). Following Volosinov (or Bakhtin-as-Volosinov), I take dialogue to be doubly and immediately social, both as public utterances of agents (not individuals), in speech, writing or whatever, and involving ‘the *active reception of other speakers’ speech*’ (Volosinov 1973: 117).¹⁸⁴ By contrast, narrative – as against narratives or stories – is far more thoroughly an abstract and objectivist analytical evaluation, which turns speech acts into ‘language’ and its compounds, into the ‘inert immutability of self-identical norms’ (1973: 63). So narratologists constitute time as durations or sequences, which are determined by the analyst as agent. It remains unsituated and ahistorical. By contrast dialogue is situated, historical and in principle open. Each stage in a dialogue potentially goes beyond, reworks and reframes what was said and done before. How it develops depends on those taking part, not just on the analyst. There is sadly still some truth in that anonymous aphorism: ‘The only lesson history has taught us is that man has not yet learned anything from history’. What I hope we may have learned from this discussion of narrative is to be alert to intellectual practices which claim to tell us about other peoples’ histories.

Time in Bali

If most approaches to narrative turn out to be a- or anti-historical, do anthropological discussions of Balinese time fare better? And why have anthropologists considered ideas of time in Bali in particular to be an

¹⁸⁴ A sustained critique of the presuppositions of narrative by Bakhtin actually predates its apotheosis. Appeal to narrative converts the dialogue and heteroglossia of social action into monologue, in which the speech of agents or subjects is replaced with objects of an author’s discourse. The underdetermined relationships between discursive events become determined and fixed, not by those doing the narrating, still less the hearing, but by the superior knowing subject of the analyst. On this account, narrative is the antithesis of dialogue, the two coexisting uneasily. Bakhtin’s formulation of his approach to the novel at one point was, oxymoronically, ‘the stylistics of genre’ (1981: 259). Regrettably, at times, Bakhtin seems caught up in a similar dichotomy to the formalists, by opposing narrative as social and structural to dialogue as psychological and embodying the voice of individual experience (Hobart 1991b: 213-15), a dichotomy exacerbated by many of his commentators (e.g. Hirschkop 1989).

important issue in the first place? I must be synoptic here. Bali has long been declared different (see Boon 1977: 10-49). Consider the title of an article by the Dutch colonial anthropologist Korn: *Bali is a thing apart, is more delicately strung than any other part of the Indies* (1925, translation from Wertheim *et al.* 1960.) Although they may have owed more to the painter Walter Spies's Romantic image (Vickers 1989: 105-24) than to other genealogies of Bali, Bateson and Mead reiterated how deeply different Balinese were in their studies of Balinese character and history (see below). The stage was set long before for the unembarrassed entry of Clifford Geertz, whose work *Person, time, and conduct in Bali* (1973f, originally published in 1966) started off the subsequent debate by linking cultural ideas about time with Balinese representations of personhood and social action.

The background to the argument is briefly as follows. Some fundamental categories of thought like time are, in a certain sense, not universal and *a priori* (by virtue of how the human mind works) as Kant maintained, but socially determined. Following Durkheim,

human thought is consummately social: social in its origins, social in its functions, social in its applications. At base, thinking is a public activity... The implications of this fact for an anthropological analysis of culture...are enormous' (Geertz 1973f: 360).

Bali is an important test case because 'not only are Balinese ideas in this area unusually well developed, but they are, from a Western perspective, odd' (1973f: 360). Where Geertz is more original is in linking perceptions of time with ideas about personal identity and proper conduct. Such ideas are far from mere clothing on a common humanity.

Any development which would effectively attack Balinese person-perceptions, Balinese experiences of time, or Balinese notions of propriety would seem to be laden with potentialities for transforming the greater part of Balinese culture (1973f: 409).¹⁸⁵

Conveniently though, Balinese have to be imagined as not odd enough to constitute such categories as time, person and conduct in different ways, far less use them in a distinctly different manner. Either would have been distinctly awkward. They turn out to be just like us, even down to the same way of using the same kind of symbols or, shades of Wittgenstein's lion, we could not understand them. Yet they must be sufficiently different

¹⁸⁵ Note the methodological holism. To the extent that culture here consists in significant part precisely of ideas of person, time and propriety, the argument is circular.

(culture, after all, *is* difference), or they would not be worth studying and publishing about.

On Geertz's account, culture not only dominates, but pervades. What to a less penetrating mind might appear odd, to the experienced hermeneutic sensibility exemplifies the cunning of reason. Just as systems of personal naming 'depersonalize' Balinese, calendars 'detemporalize' the passage of time and the 'obsessive ceremonialization' of social life 'anonymizes' Balinese as social actors (not agents). The time-reckoning made possible in Balinese calendars are

clearly not durational but punctual... Their internal order has no significance, without climax. They do not accumulate, they do not build, and they are not consumed. They don't tell you what time it is; they tell you what kind of time it is (1973f: 393).

Balinese might not be punctual, but their time is. As I did field research at a time when Balinese had access to printed calendars, I cannot say how many people previously knew of the Hindu solar-lunar *Saka* system with numbered years or for what purposes they used them. Those I knew relied, however, regularly on well known events – volcanic eruptions, plagues, wars, elections and other miseries – from which to calculate important occasions, a point which Geertz de-emphasizes.

How did Geertz though establish such a definitive reading of Balinese calendars? For instance, on what grounds did he conclude that the Javanese-Balinese calendar of overlapping weeks reflects 'the very structure of reality', as opposed, say, to constructing a kind of mathematical order, or to exploring the possibilities of juxtaposing, or superimposing, different qualitative sequences to create a distinctive compound?¹⁸⁶

As with subsequent contributors to the time debate, Geertz assumed that formalized systems of time-reckoning permit a single, determinate interpretation independent of the situations of their use. They have a meaning that may be extrapolated without regard to the understandings and purposes of the agents and the subjects of actions. As Quine remarked,

¹⁸⁶ Geertz's argument draws substantially upon Mead and Bateson's broader vision of Balinese culture, for instance in their depiction of Balinese character and their avoidance of climax in favour of a 'steady state', because of the supposed Balinese fear of the unexpected and emotion. So, one might ask similarly, by what criteria did Bateson or Geertz determine that Balinese are without climax? They take the argument so far, one wonders how Balinese cope with sexual intercourse. For a critique of the supposed Balinese avoidance of climax, see Jensen & Suryani 1992: 93-104.

‘meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word’ (1953a: 22). There is also a hidden comparison, which is decidedly ethnocentric and idealized. That calendars have a meaning, the notion of meaning itself and the interpretive procedures employed are all presuppositions of certain strands of contemporary western academic discourse, not ones widely used by Balinese. The effect is simultaneously to create a semi-savage essential Balineseness and, recursively, to suggest some consistent entity, the West, which mystically embraces the whole of Europe and America, i.e. civilization.

Subsequent discussion about time in Bali has hinged more on Maurice Bloch’s reframing than on Geertz’s original argument. Bloch’s analysis should be sufficiently well known that I may be brief. Bloch’s expressed aim was to question the Durkheimian argument that ‘the categories of understanding and systems of classification are social in origin’ and so culturally relative (1977: 279). Were they so, then change to social organization would be impossible, because ‘this leaves the actors with no language to talk *about* their society and so change it, since they can only talk *within* it’ (1977: 281). Bloch therefore proposed that culturally specific, especially ritual, conceptual structures (i.e. ‘super-structure’) coexist with practical, non-ritual and universally shared concepts (i.e. ‘infra-structure’) in contexts of ‘uninstitutionalised power’, where ‘where man is in most direct contact with nature’ (1977: 285). The former mystifies exploitation and hierarchy through ‘static and organic imaginary models’ of society; whereas the latter has

its own cognitive system for the actors and its realisation can be, and is, used occasionally to challenge that other consciousness, of an invisible system created by ritual: social structure (1977: 287).

With Bloch we are brought back to universal features of human nature and the attempt to explain the conditions and limits of diversity.¹⁸⁷

Where Geertz and Bloch disagree is over the precise relationship, and the relative importance, of superstructure and infrastructure, and so whether a society is integrated around a single more or less coherent cultural system, or two differentiated, but interlocking, sub-systems. Otherwise Geertz and Bloch share many similar presuppositions. Societies

¹⁸⁷ Although Bloch did not state explicitly why concepts of time are so fundamental, it is necessary to his naturalist approach which, old-fashionedly even for the 1970s, stressed causation, causal processes being only possible within universal, linear and irreversible time.

are closed, bounded entities. What people think is adequately described by reference to unambiguous collective representations. The true nature of time is unproblematic: the problem is accounting for Balinese peculiarities. (What 'Balinese' is here is quite unproblematic.) Both authors describe society in terms of languages, conceptual structures and cognitive systems, each being necessarily unitary, consistent, monologic and closed. For, if they are not, there is no reason one cannot criticize actions or statements by drawing upon others. (I avoid saying '*within* a language or system', because that treats them as bounded entities.) Neither Geertz nor Bloch makes more than a token gesture in the direction of practice, because what individuals think and do is sufficiently socially determined as not to merit detailed study. So both insouciantly refer to people as '(social) actors', who follow the script formed by their collective representations, of which someone else is the author, instead of, say, compound, complex or sometimes singular situated agents of their own actions, among many possibilities. They both displace agency onto some ontological entity.¹⁸⁸ Geertz onto a transcendental culture or meaning, Bloch onto a foundational infrastructure or human nature. But, in either event, it is the knowing western subject who claims to be the immanent intelligence of that entity. The anthropologist therefore emerges as the author who 'authorizes' the terms of Balinese existence (see also Asad 1986: 160-63). Fortuitously the same anthropologists also know exactly what time is, whereas the unfortunate Balinese do not. Indeed the nature of time is so self-evident as not to require discussion (cf. Gell 1992). How pleasant that that most contested and elusive notion should finally turn out after all to be so untroublesome. It was left Duff-Cooper to point out that 'English "time" cannot be relied on for "any precise task of identification, interpretation, or comparison"' (1990: 45, citing Needham 1985: 156).

Several writers have subsequently taken issue with Bloch and, in so doing, by omission if nothing else, have tended to bolster some version of Geertz's position by ignoring Bloch's criticisms. It is not coincidental, I suspect, that of the contributors to the debate, neither Bloch nor Bourdillon ever worked in Bali. On his own account Geertz's fieldwork in Bali totalled seven months and he 'never learned Balinese very well' (1991: 606). It is a strikingly honest and remarkable clarification of what Interpretive Anthropology is about.

¹⁸⁸ Anthropologists are so given to slipping in ontological entities, usually transcendental, sometimes foundational, but commonly supplemental, that I think it is time we gave these a name. I propose the 'Ont'. Just as Sherlock Holmes occasionally encountered a three-pipe problem, so do anthropologists a three-Ont problem, but rather more often.

Thereafter the debate came to be focused more on ethnographic problems than on the grand theoretical issues. Leo Howe, who actually did research in Bali, argued that Balinese do indeed have a single, coherent and distinctive concept of durational time. Taking issue with 'Bloch's claim that the Balinese possess two distinct conceptions of time', Howe stated 'instead that they have a single coherent concept of duration' (1981: 220). This 'is conceived of as being, in the main, cyclical but for all that the people are fully aware of the irreversible flow of time'. Both notions are not confined to ritual but permeate 'all spheres of the culture' (1981: 223). ('Ritual', incidentally, is treated by all these authors as a substantive, identifiable category of action, rather than at most 'an odd-job word; that is, it serves a variety of more or less disparate uses', Needham 1985: 156.)¹⁸⁹ 'Cyclicity seems to be inherent in the system' (1981: 227), all cycles having 'similar properties, namely, segmentation, orientation and irreversibility' (Howe 1981: 229). Balinese representations of duration exhibit 'properties of both cyclicity and linearity' (cycles returning not to the same temporal, but the same logical, point, 1981: 231). That Balinese do not speak in these terms does not matter. The ignorance of the native is axiomatic to most anthropology. I wonder what would happen to our presumptions about explanation were it ever finally to dawn on enough anthropologists that the people we work with may have thought through matters more subtly than have their self-appointed commentators and analysts?

There are several difficulties with Howe's account. First his analysis treated duration as a fundamental property of time, which the philosopher D.C. Williams long ago pointed out rests upon the pernicious spatial metaphor of 'the myth of passage' (1951). Because time, as conceived in such analyses, is abstract, it is constituted as a describable phenomenon by the use of such techniques as metaphor, without which the analysis becomes vacuous. Time is neither cyclical nor linear: such descriptions are, rather, implicated in ways of world-making (Goodman 1978). Nor can definitive interpretations of how people perceive or conceive time be read off collective representations without an act of determination by the anthropologist. What we are left with arguably is successions of events and the ways in which such sequences are variously represented for whatever purposes by people under different conditions. Tautology and catachresis are two great standbys of the anthropologists'

¹⁸⁹ I would go much further and argue that ritual is an imaginary category, required in much academic discourse as the antithesis or foil to give the notion of rationality the semblance of relevance (see Chapter 7).

repertoire, without which many of our preoccupations turn out to be largely imaginary.

Howe also reverted to the *status quo ante* Bloch: a monolithic view of culture as a closed, coherent, unitary system. Collective representations by themselves are sufficient not only to explain what people do, but fully determine not just what Balinese can say, but what they perceive. He also by-passed the question of how people are able to criticize and change their own social arrangements.

Further, through a delightful etymology, Howe returned to the theme of timelessness, which he displaced onto the gods, who are *niskala*. Howe took *niskala* to derive from *nis-*, a negative prefix, and *kala* 'time' (1984: 197). Unfortunately, on most accounts, *niskala* is a Sanskrit and Old Javanese term, deriving from a quite different root, which Balinese commonly employ in a similar sense to indicate 'non-manifest, invisible'. As etymologizing is a popular Balinese style of argument, they may on occasion make such derivations as Howe's. However, to take one such etymology as authoritative and definitive of Balinese thinking would be to be seriously mistaken. On a more general point, it would be fun once to write about the role of misplaced metaphor and linguistic confusion in the constitution of Bali as altogether a most unlikely place.

It was left to the late Andrew Duff-Cooper to argue that previous authors, including Howe, 'did not address Balinese conceptions of time' (1990: 45) and had taken ethnographic titbits out of context. Duff-Cooper's concern was to show the integrity and distinctiveness of Balinese ideas of time as part of Balinese culture as a 'form of life' (e.g. 1986, 1987). Regrettably this led him to flirt with taking closure and coherence as methodologically axiomatic, if not as actually 'there' in some sense (a problem encountered by other Wittgensteinians, e.g. Winch 1958). I must confess to a similar desire to argue the importance in the first instance of approaching Bali in Balinese terms. The questions arise: which Balinese terms? And which Balinese, on what occasions? Balinese practices are diverse and vary situationally; and people disagree over their significance and purpose. This century alone Bali has in many ways been transformed. There is no essential Bali – or Balinese culture – which constitutes the subject of the innumerable predicates given to it. Ironically, you could argue that it is the narratives of anthropologists among others, which have created Bali and Balinese as objects.

To return to Bloch, I suggest the problem is not that he has gone too far, but in many respects not far enough. Heterogeneity is confined by his

opposition of super- and infra-structure to two (more or less dialectically related) sub-systems, which are at least implicitly coherent and correspond to determinate sets of social actions. Instead of one closed system, he offers a closed system coexisting with an open one. As John Peel has noted of Bloch's position:

we are still left with the view that cognition is only dependent on culture to the extent that the environment is itself culturally ordered...[and] the two discourses are treated as *entirely* distinct from one another' (1992: 420).

Johannes Fabian has pointed to the 'naive realism' of Bloch's account (1983: 43); to which I would add a thoroughgoing essentialism, which purports to establish the essence of representations of time, be these cultural or 'real'. It is not just Balinese, but reality itself which has become domesticated and packaged for consumption. As Jean Anouilh once put it: 'I like reality. It tastes of bread' (Catch as Catch Can).

Were one to start instead by considering something of the range of Balinese practices, it is far from clear that these can salubriously be 'boiled down' to, or explained in terms of, determinate properties, be these structural, narrative or whatever. Bloch's critique of holistic accounts of culture (e.g. 1985: 33-46) is itself open to Ernesto Laclau's ('post-Marxist') criticism of Marxist's accounts of ideology that they assumed 'an essence of the social order which had to be *recognized* behind the empirical variations expressed at the surface of social life' (1990b: 90). Arguably there is no such social totality and no '*determinate* object (i.e. society). Rather, the social always exceeds the limits of the attempts to constitute society' (1990b: 90-91). Assertions of the determinate nature of society and the 'meaning' of particular representations are themselves hegemonic acts whether they be made by the participants or by anthropologists.

Perhaps the issue is not about the determination of representations of time, but in more Habermasian vein (1984, 1987b) about the possibility of human communication? Bloch interwove this with his realist thesis. He wrote that surely we could not communicate with 'people with a different concept of time...[whereas] the existence of anthropology itself bears witness to the fact that it is possible, if with certain difficulty, to communicate with all other human beings, however different their culture' (1977: 283). Affirming the consequent in this manner led Bloch to assume that there is such a thing as 'normal communication' and that it is 'based on universal notions of time and cognition' (1977: 287; on ambiguities of the

use of ‘normal’ see Hacking 1990: 160-69). As Fabian argued, this observation

either rests on an equivocal use of *communication* (one that would have to accommodate such instances of patent noncommunication as the denial of coevalness in anthropological discourse); or it is naively positivistic in that it tries to convince us that the success of a project legitimates the means or even explains how it works (Fabian 1983: 42).

There is a certain *ipse dixit* in the comfortable assurance some anthropologists pretend to the worth of our projects. On whose authority do anthropologists declare the success of anthropological ventures?

Quite how sharing a *concept* of time – whatever that might be – guarantees the possibility of effective communication escapes me. Unless, like Fabian, one transforms the problem into one of intersubjectivity, which is to invoke a quite different historical discourse and one I am far from sure Bloch would endorse (1983: 42), anymore than, for quite different reasons, would I. Who judged communication, of what kind and to what degree, to have been successful, by what criteria and under what circumstances?

Bloch’s argument underwrites not only the boor who came away from a party remarking how much people had enjoyed listening to him, but more pertinently colonial and post-colonial hegemonic representations of other peoples. Do not both presume communication to have taken place? Bloch makes explicit a widespread assumption about communication, which the other contributors take for granted or slide round. We have here two vintage and cherished fallacies without which anthropology is in serious trouble. The first, the Myth of Mutual Comprehension, is that, if people exchange words they understand one another. The second is the Conduit Metaphor of Language according to which language (symbols, signs etc.) is a medium or vehicle. So it must contain something: that something being meanings – or the equivalent of your choice – which are shared by virtue of the exchange (Reddy 1979). It is striking quite how often, and to what effect, Geertz uses the term ‘vehicle’ in *Person, time, and conduct in Bali*. For all their trumpeted differences, the participants in the debate about time in Bali dance around much the same epistemological maypole.

Their determination to show how odd or different Balinese ideas of time are tells us, by implied contrast, more about the anthropologists’ own presuppositions about time and history. It goes something like this. Time is really linear and irreversible. And this accurate perception of time, if not

standard in the (highly inspecific) west, is at the least typical of its advanced cognitive development, unlike much of the rest of the world (Hallpike 1979: 340-383). The images of time conjured up resemble the points on a straight line, t_1 , t_2 , t_3 etc., reminiscent of elementary geometry and mechanics. Time may be represented without undue difficulty using spatial metaphors. The point of difference is whether it is linear, cyclical, punctuated and so forth. To varying degree the authors in question have overlooked the fact that metaphors represent something as something else. To treat time as spatial is catachretic. If 'the metaphor is probably the most fertile power possessed by man' (Ortega y Gasset, *The dehumanization of art*), then its abuse is correspondingly dangerous. Anyway how much clearer is it what space essentially is than time? And, whatever anthropologists may choose to do in their analyses, to impute spatial images of time to Balinese is unwarranted. Balinese commonly neither use such images, nor apply measures of distance (long, short etc.) to the relationship between events. Like so much anthropology, the argument depends upon, and largely exists only by virtue of, conflating other people's and western academic discourses in a fine denial of place, history and agency.

The contributors to the debate get more than a little confused over whether time, following Kant, is a category prior to experience, and so universal or, following Durkheim, social in nature, and so variable. Most, unwittingly and inelegantly, do a sort of intellectual splits. *My* understanding of time is timelessly accurate and universally exportable, *your* benighted misunderstanding is social, particular and wrong. That is why it needs explaining and why, by the grace of western science and some gullible funding body, I am on hand to do so. In their post-Durkheimian enthusiasm, the contributors tend to forget that academics' notions of time also have their own particular social history. Now 'time' may be a concept of demonstrable usefulness through which to describe certain kinds of relationships between events for certain purposes, and to quantify differences as matters of degree (e.g. Peirce 1986: 276-78), paradigmatically in physics. Quite what bearing the complex mathematical models of, say, space-time physics have on ethnographic descriptions of culturally elaborated categories of process is unclear, except that it lends pontifications about time an aura of mystifying authoritativeness. It does not follow that there is some identifiable, uncontested essence, 'time', itself unchanging, which encapsulates all aspects of such relationships as one might be interested in. Nor does it follow that there may not be alternative descriptions of these relationships, which do not presuppose some general concept of which the relationships are but particular instances.

In short, there is no such thing as time, as conceived in the time debate. And, in this sense, the participants in the debate are waxing eloquent about nothing. This is not to say that Balinese, as other people, do not represent the relationship between events in all sorts of ways for different purposes. They evidently do. But it does not help anthropologists much to postulate such an eternal essence 'time', which transcends the historical situations of its use and provides an absolute measure. Appeal to such an absolute measure, in these circumstances, turns out to be an act of power, which makes other peoples not just exotic, but misguided.

What is missing from the generalized concept of time, as variously represented in the time debate? In an elegant insight, Geertz himself suggested that, to Balinese, days may be of *different kinds*. Regrettably he does not really pursue his own insight into the qualitative discriminations people make about events and about the relationships between events. Geertz hesitantly moves towards the recognition that there are many different, and incommensurable, kinds of time in Bali, then turns firmly and irrevocably away from the implications of his own thinking to the safer ground of well-turned phrases about an increasingly unlikely island.

Anthropologists are arguably interested by and large not in some recondite *time as such*, but as a condition of explicability of the relationships between events. This touches on the problematic issue of the relationship of time and causation. Bloch takes concepts of time to be so fundamental that, if they are relative, then 'it inevitably justifies the conclusion that *all* aspects of culture are relative' (1977: 282). Quite why this conclusion is entailed he does not explain, nor relative to what. Bloch's argument implies however that, without universal, linear, real time, people could not appreciate causation, which he takes as granted they do in order to engage in practical activities like politics and agriculture. One does not have to step outside a European discourse of physics to discover that the necessary connection is far from self-evident.

In Newtonian physics it is presupposed that some events...have causes and others not... In the nineteenth century we find a different presupposition being made by the general body of scientists: namely that all events have causes... In modern physics the notion of cause has disappeared. Nothing happens owing to causes: everything happens according to laws (Collingwood 1940: 49-50).

Theories of causation, as of time, involve presuppositions, which may seem self-evident at a given discursive moment, but in the light of later critical

argument come to look like questionable assumptions. Time and causation, like nature (Collingwood 1945), have a history.

Dragging time into anthropological explanation creates problems all of its own. I remain unconvinced as to how it helps us to understand other peoples' practices. And it highlights curious features of anthropologists' own explanations. Bloch, for instance, might be surprised to realize that the account of causation he requires, rests upon a Kantian metaphysics (Collingwood 1940: 51).¹⁹⁰ If, as Lévi-Strauss suggested, an 'imperious and uncompromising demand for' causation and determinacy (1966: 11) is a feature of magical thought, it looks to be something anthropologists may be more preoccupied with than are the natives.

Equal problems confront Howe. To lay out the structure of Balinese collective representations does not of itself explain why Balinese do what they do, unless he adds that humans are not just bound, but constituted, by structural laws. Similarly, Geertz's explication of Balinese cultural meanings, even if one accepts his interpretation, do not account for what Balinese actually do, short of reducing Balinese to pre-programmed automata (Hollis's 'Plastic Man', 1977). Meaning becomes the agent in Balinese culture, and they but its conduits. In different ways, we run into a thoroughgoing determinism, which Bloch himself noted of much anthropological explanation (1977: 279-282). Be it society, structure, meaning or relations of production in real time, such deterministic explanations extrude from inquiry, because they cannot deal with or even recognize, chance and the thinking of ordinary people in the heterogeneous worlds of practice. Even less do they engage with historically and culturally different ways of representing underdetermined events. Time does not seriously enter any of these analyses, except as some notionally objective yardstick against which to measure the other and find it wanting.

The contributors to the time debate either equate time with, or treat its segments as the basic building blocks of, history. Insofar as time and history have been largely implicated in different academic discourses, strange as it may sound, time has precious little to do with history. In the strong sense I adopt here, historical thinking is reflective and critical. Re-evaluating one's understanding of past actions and processes changes oneself, one's understanding and what one understands or knows about (Collingwood 1946). So time, on this account, is not then simply a fixed linear scale: humans come to understand it differently. Granted how

¹⁹⁰ His recent work on cognition as a pre-linguistic, fixed, determinant, generic human disposition (1991) has Kantian overtones.

elusive the notion of time is in post-Newtonian physics alone, the authors are remarkably confident in enunciating what time, or its perception, really is all about. And, whatever their disagreements, their vision is strikingly mechanical and ahistorical.

Whether history is the unfolding of time (the lotus metaphor)¹⁹¹ or the invocation of accumulated ancient authorities (ancestor worship I would argue is more a practice of anthropologists than it ever was of their subjects of study), it is curiously transparent. For ‘real’ time and history are apparently extra-discursive and unproblematically appreciable anywhere in the world. If anthropological descriptions of Balinese narratives are peculiarly flattened by their erasure, or closure, of time, the issue of narrativity does not feature at all in accounts of ‘real’ time or history – presumably because anthropologists see it as it is. This is a naive realism: one which shafts Balinese through its uncritical self-assuredness. That talk of time and history might be part of a hypostatization of practices in academic narratives, or that these narratives are a superb means to closure, seems to have passed the protagonists by. Although they may not have realized it, Bloch apart, the contributors have denied Balinese a capacity to be reflective agents and for historical and critical thinking, which is precisely what mostly the same authors have done with personhood. As Collingwood put it,

there is not, first, a special kind of process, the historical process, and then a special way of knowing this, namely historical thought. The historical process is itself a process of thought, and it exists only in so far as the minds which are parts of it know themselves for parts of it. By historical thinking, the mind whose self-knowledge is history not only discovers within itself those powers of which historical thought reveals the possession, but actually develops those powers from a latent to an actual state, bringing them into effective existence (1946: 226).

Significantly, substituting ‘cultural’ for ‘historical’ here produces curious results. While historical and cultural approaches may both claim to be part, not a special kind, of thought, a divergence occurs from the second main clause of the second sentence in the quotation onwards. Whereas historical thinking furthers and actualizes itself, cultural thinking arguably cancels itself out. Cultural self-knowledge becomes *true* knowledge, which transcends the cultural circumstances of its origin. Culture manages at once to be a transcendent, absolute, yet relative, notion. No wonder anthropologists are confused.

¹⁹¹ I am grateful to Professor Richard Davis from Yale University for this neat image.

Consistent with postulating time as an essence, the cultural refractions of which may be mapped, the contributors expatiate merrily about time without any reference to history, as if history were subsumed in a discussion of time.¹⁹² To return to Geertz: as Balinese deny time insofar as they can, *a fortiori* they deny history, an insight he attributes to Bateson.

As Gregory Bateson has pointed out, the Balinese view of the past is not, *in the proper sense of the term*, really historical at all. For all their explanatory myth-making, the Balinese search the past not so much for the causes of the present as for the standard by which to judge it, for the unchanging pattern upon which the present ought properly to be modeled but, which through accident, ignorance, indiscipline, or neglect, it so often fails to follow (1973g: 334, my italics; cf. 1980: 18 for an almost identical passage).

What though *is* the proper sense? And how does Geertz decide so confidently what history ‘really’ is? Most unfortunately, Geertz’s own writings on history in Bali (1980) exemplify beautifully what Collingwood castigated as the conventional ‘scissors-and-paste’ method. It is that method of collating materials ‘drawn from “authorities”, that is, from the works of previous historians who had already written the histories of particular societies at particular times’ (1946: 33). Maybe Balinese are fortunate to lack history in Geertz’s ‘proper sense of the term’.

What though did Bateson actually write?

The modern Balinese is forced to recognize that he lives in a changing world but this is not his ideal, and he does not think in terms of it. He does not think of the past as of a time that was different and out of which the present has sprung by change. The past provides him with patterns of behaviour, and if only he knows the pattern he will not blunder and he need not be tongue-tied (1937: 307).

Just before this passage Bateson made the important point that when ‘we’ renovate a relic, if we do not know its past, we invent one or celebrate the mystery, whereas Balinese carefully eschewed such speculation.

¹⁹² The dismissal is entailed, as I suggested, by the idea of culture as total. As I understand him, this is less of a problem for Bloch, because the essence of ritual, and so ritualized notions of time, is precisely that, being ideological, it remains ‘unchanged when other things are changing’ (1985: 45). History, by contrast, is identified with processes in real, linear, irreversible time, as either the backdrop against which productive forces unfold or as the foundational agent of economic and social change. Bloch’s vision of ritual has many of the same history-free features that culture has to Geertz (Thomas 1989: 24-27).

The myth which they constructed contains no reference to the past; it is a bare skeleton of relationships in the present... The Balinese of Bajoeng are remarkably uninterested in the past as a source of romantic validation for the present... (1937: 306, 307).

A quite different, and more Balinese, re-interpretation of Bateson is possible. As the world is continually changing (*matemahan*), the past is now *niskala*, non-manifest. If one does not have access to evidence of what was actually the case (*tattwa*), it is imprudent to speculate from traces (*laad*), far less treat it as a safe 'source of romantic validation' (cf. Boon's depiction of Bali above, as against the bare facts presented in the *babad*). If Balinese are constituted by their own, and others', past actions, then understanding those actions and their consequences (*karma pala*) is an important, if imperfect, guide in trying to avoid future blunders. Learning from previous actions and what happened is a means to critical reflection. Balinese may have a historical sensitivity of a degree and of a kind Geertz has not imagined.

At no point have any of the authors considered how 'Balinese write texts to illuminate the patterns of historical events' (Vickers 1990: 159). Still less have they considered how these texts are read, performed in plays and used by audiences. Had they done so, they might (but then again they might not) have considered the possibility that Balinese use the past in many different ways in different circumstances for different ends. Among these is the use of past events, in theatre for instance, to comment critically on both past and present, to change matters and peoples' awareness. The denial of a sense of history to Balinese, the lack of inquiry into how the past is used and the reification of time go hand-in-hand not with Balinese detemporalization of person, time and conduct, but with these anthropologists' detemporalization of Bali in a magnificent displacement worthy of the finest moments of orientalism. (The readings of selected collective representations owe more to previous western interpretations – Howe's reliance on Barnes's study of Kédang (1974) and Geertz's idiosyncratic one on Bateson (e.g. 1937, 1949) – than to careful consideration of what Balinese say and do.) Some years ago an American pianist touring Britain performed a piece for *piano versus orchestra*, which seems at times a sadly apt simile of the relationship of ethnographer and the people they work with.

What is the subject?

In depriving Balinese of history, the contributors to the time debate have denied Balinese the capacity to be active, critical subjects,¹⁹³ a theme borne out by how several of the same commentators have represented Balinese personhood. In *Person, time, and conduct in Bali*, Geertz took it that a description of Balinese personal names as ‘orders of person-definition’ (1973f: 368) is adequate and sufficient to establish ‘the meaningful structure of [their] experience’ (1973f: 364). His aim was ‘a scientific phenomenology of culture’ which would determine ‘the conceptual structure embodied in the symbolic forms through which persons are perceived’ (1973f: 364). Geertz’s immanent object of study – concepts, structures, symbols – is timeless, ahistorical and most unsuited to the task of articulating changing practices, not least because of the nature of his transcendent object, culture. Indeed the notion of ‘symbol’ with its fan of ultimately inexpressible meanings (Todorov 1982: 189-98) is what hermeneuts do to signs when they wrench them from their situations of use and let them dissolve gently under the patient scholarly gaze. Geertz set out with the archaeological, if not indeed forensic, presupposition (see Chapter 2 above) that an interpretive method could discern through recently disembodied symbolic forms the underlying conceptual structure of Balinese personhood independent of actual usage. Apart from shooting himself in the head by using a western common-sense notion of names and ignoring rather elegant Balinese epistemological practices (see Hobart 1995), Geertz assumed that ideas of personhood reduce to names. Further, he, Geertz, knew what the meaning really was. He presumed Balinese to be incapable of talking about, reflecting on, still less changing their practices of naming. In other words, to the extent that they are agents or

¹⁹³ The term ‘subject’ is deeply ambiguous and I use it here merely for simplicity, because it links with existing academic discourses. The problem is that the term conflates a whole range of different kinds of usage. At one time or another, it has been used ontologically of an underlying substance (or substrate) and so of which of which all other entities are predicated but which is itself not predicated of anything else. So classically, it is the subject of predication. This easily becomes confused with the logical and grammatical subject. Apart from that people are political subjects, and partly related to this, they may also be ethical subjects. These usages are relatively simple however compared to the complexities surrounding humans as philosophical subjects. For Descartes, the subject was a thinking thing or substance. For Kant, it was ‘the ground of thought’ and so self-constituting. For Hegel, it is what can contain its own contradiction within itself. You will note that the whole discussion is couched within the terms of a particular European philosophical debate and pays no attention to other ways of imagining humans. For instance, Indian Samkhya has elaborated philosophical accounts of the subject, popular Balinese versions of which I discuss in Chapters 2,3 & 7. (For a discussion of philosophical Samkhya, see Larson 1987.). For these reasons I prefer to make use of the notion of agency, which has the additional advantage that some analyses (e.g. Collingwood 1942; Inden 1990) are reasonably commensurable with how Balinese talk about such issues.

subjects at all, not positions or inscriptions of their culture, they are passive: they know what labels apply to them and how to use them, but nothing more.

In a subsequent article, once again Howe supplemented and modified Geertz's analysis of personhood by pointing out that there are other classes of being, by contrast with which humans are defined, namely gods, spirits, animals and witches (1984). This attempt to define beings in a hierarchy of more or less rigid classes involved some delightful ethnographic contortionism. For instance, Divinity, as 'remote and exceedingly abstract' (1984: 195), could be dismissed, as could figures in Hindu epics enacted in theatre. Exit two categories of agent which are important to Balinese in all sorts of situations. Howe's argument underplays the complex relations of interdependence or transformability between kinds of being as well as the degree to which classes are heterogeneous and overlapping. It also fails to address at all the difficulties which Balinese appreciate in trying to ascribe being which may be non-manifest to monothetic classes. Unlike Geertz, appreciating that the structural order he had posited was incompatible with Balinese practice, Howe qualified his argument.

Although everyone I talked to structured the situation using the same set of concepts, there appeared to be significant differences concerning the content of these... the Balinese conceptual structure...provides guidelines, possibilities and potentialities. It rarely, if ever, specifies a particular course of action (1984: 201, 203).

This admirable recognition leaves Howe caught uneasily between conceptual structure and practice. The problem is that, if the conceptual structure is so indeterminate and the 'content' of concepts fluid, Howe veers close to arguing that what Balinese share is less concepts, symbols or abstract structures, than the changing usage of words, utterances and articulatory practices, a quite different approach, which I suggested years ago (see Hobart 1979: 6-10).

As in the time debate, Duff-Cooper complemented Howe's argument, here with a discussion of how humans are constituted as fit to take their appropriate place in the order of things according to certain Balinese collective representations (1985). Howe hesitantly, Duff-Cooper enthusiastically, replicate the idea that there is some essential, general system of collective representations which is necessary and sufficient to define and constitute Balinese. Duff-Cooper put it unambiguously. 'The empirical individual is, in Balinese thought, construed merely as a locus for

the interaction of a number of formal notions' (1985: 82). Thought here is a synonym for a system of cultural categories. Both accounts revert however to the assumption that the conceptual structure has some definite existence that is independent and determinate, not only of the occasions of its use, but as determining what Balinese are and what they think. Balinese emerge as more (Duff-Cooper) or less (Howe) passive subjects of their own cultural categories.

Indeed for Duff-Cooper this passivity is re-affirmed culturally, because 'men are merely receptacles, as it were, for the working of Widhi [Divinity] in many forms' (1985: 71, my parentheses). Without knowing the circumstances under which Balinese stated such a view, it is difficult to judge whether we are to understand this as cosmogonic, anthropogenic, epistemological or simply a blanket assertion.¹⁹⁴ In stating that humans are but the sites where formal notions interact or the instruments of Divine Will, Duff-Cooper has however the virtue of making explicit two ways, analytical and exegetical, by which anthropologists turn their subjects into objects or conduits.

The arguments about Balinese notions of personhood point to a little-considered presupposition about the workings of memory. The 'concepts' which they are reputed to share – like Divinity, animality, evil – are portrayed as being mysteriously and faultlessly reproduced both in Balinese and through Balinese on appropriate occasions. So Balinese emerge less as fallible, self-critical agents than as complicated machines, in which the necessary programmes have been installed by the Ultimate Agent. Whatever that might be varies according to the commentator. Remembering reduces – occasional glitches in the hardware apart – to the exact replication of information by fixed control codes. It has ceased to be an act by agents, instruments or patients in particular situations, in which what was known is reworked in the knowing, telling, forgetting and rethinking. I often cannot remember quite what I wrote a few hours ago, let alone what structural-functionalism is all about. But Balinese amazingly remember perfectly, without reworking in so doing, the shared concepts

¹⁹⁴ There are occasions when dignitaries of the Parisadha Hindu Dharma, the Administrative Council for Balinese Hinduism enunciate similar doctrines, usually to demonstrate that Divinity is unitary and all-powerful, as required under *Pancasila*, the Indonesian state ideology. Otherwise, when I have heard Balinese draw on such images, far from being gross conduits for an agent upon whom they derive such awareness as they have, humans partake of the Divine in differing degrees and kinds such that they have become able to reflect critically upon their origin and to act in defiance of that originary agent. Even this is a gross simplification of the ways in which even I have heard Balinese talk in different situations.

they learned under very diverse circumstances – just as, apparently, do their ethnographers.

Attempts to demonstrate just how strange the Balinese are and, at the same time, to explain, or explain away, the evident extent of personal and cultural diversity by recourse to an underlying essence are nothing new. It has a noble pedigree. Retrospectively it has become fashionable to criticize Bateson and Mead's *Balinese character* as encumbered by questionable theory (in this instance Freudian). As we have seen, much the same could be said of most writing on Bali. My concern is quite different. It is how precisely Bateson and Mead echo prevailing anthropological concerns at the time, when they set out to reduce observable variation in behaviour to 'a culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and emotions of individuals' (1942: xi). The evidence for the crucially different nature of the Balinese character is documented in over 700 photographs. So it must be true.

Balinese culture is in many ways *less like our own* than any other which has yet been recorded. It is also a culture in which the ordinary adjustment of the individual approximates in form the sort of maladjustment which, our own cultural setting, we call schizoid (1942: xvi)... [With the rise of] dementia praecox among *our own* population continues to rise, it becomes increasingly important for us to know the bases of childhood experience which predispose to this condition (1942: xvi, my italics and parentheses).

The argument is less interesting for what it purports to say about Balinese than how an American and a British author use Bali to postulate a shared transatlantic culture: one which dispenses among other things with historical, regional, ethnic and class differences. Balinese eccentricity – and Vickers (1989: 118-24) singles out Mead as a key figure in its propagation – serves as an experimental case, in which Balinese serve as laboratory animals. They also turn out to be essential to unifying some imaginary Anglo-American 'culture': one of the few successful instances of 'the special relationship' much touted by British politicians in moments of desperation. And Balinese are the objects or passive subjects of their own culture, through which this is achieved. Perhaps this is why, for all the writing on them, they remain strangely a spectacle. There is little sense of getting close enough to hear what they are saying to one another.

Some less than happy thoughts

There is a missing subject, in several senses, in the barrage of predicates fired off in the general direction of Bali. In taking 'time' as the proper topic of investigation, anthropologists writing on Bali have eliminated history. In so doing, they have taken the capacity of being subjects – that is self-aware, self-critical, self-disciplining agents away from Balinese. In place of historically situated agents, they have substituted fantasy projections of some unitary subject of predication, 'the Balinese', or the abstract substances of 'time', 'culture', 'conceptual structure', 'symbol', 'ritual' as imaginary discursive subjects. The subject, in the sense of self-critical agent, presupposed in these accounts is the anthropologist who is author of, and authorizes, the putative Balinese in her own terms.

At select gatherings of Balinese specialists (which have mostly tended to exclude all but a few token Balinese), I sometimes hear sage murmurings about how much knowledge there is about Bali these days. Clifford Geertz put it rather better: 'we know them, or think we do, inch by inch, however far we remain from understanding them' (1983d: viii). We know and understand only too well what we want to know about Bali. The cost (and probably the aim) has been that of eliminating Balinese from participating in these processes, except as 'informants', from critical reflection on their own society and history. In this sense, Bali has become so over-known in such stereotyped, but often incommensurable, forms that, conversely, it remains delightfully under-known. I am interested in knowing, or learning, about rather different matters for rather different reasons. Here I wanted to reflect on the implications of anthropologists' writings as part of the transmogrification of these 'savage', 'independent' people into the smiling, docile Orientals of travel fiction, whose function is to service the international tourist industry including, notably, the sexual fantasies of its clientèle. More generally I wish to discuss how Balinese represent their own history to themselves and others, and so reflect critically upon how to act in an increasingly hypermodern society.

As we seem to know so much about Bali, perhaps I ought to end with some questions about this surfeit of knowledge, or at least certainty. What conditions the kind of representations of, or projections onto, other societies, which western authors have made? Is the recourse to 'regional traditions of ethnographic writing' (e.g. Fardon 1990) an adequate explanation? If much history is the history of the Other for us, who are the 'we'? It seems at moments as if the missing subject of many anthropological accounts is ourselves, which we can only constitute narratively as a unitary essence by contrast with some imagined Other. In the writings of Foucault, is the lingering Saussurean dichotomy of empty

and arbitrary semantic oppositions waiting to be filled, not itself the imposition of a historically particular epistemological moment onto the world? And who empowers themselves to colour in the expectant spaces on this world canvas? Is a post-Saidian appeal to the necessities of colonial power and knowledge in constituting 'alterity' a sufficient solution? If European nation states were as powerful as often presumed, what purposes were served in repetitively caricaturing those whom they had conquered, or were about to? How much were representations a striving after recognition and a need to imagine selves and others accordingly? Balinese-Dutch dealings between 1817 and 1908 suggest something of this kind was going on, a recognition in the end partly denied the Dutch as masters by their foremost would-be subjects' suicide in a neat narrative self-termination.¹⁹⁵

Most of the authors on Bali whom I have cited wrote on the post-Independence period. Short of postulating some post-colonial epistemological imperialism, why did these authors, whether compulsively or unthinkingly, cannibalize and reiterate previous representations, under such different intellectual, social and political circumstances? Mead and Bateson stated their aim as the scientific establishment of cultural difference with Bali as the laboratory. Is this an adequate explanation of their successors' purposes? Phrased in these terms, have not Bali and Balinese become mainly important as objects of academic and tourist indulgence? They are above all objects of our not so recondite pleasures. I am not convinced though that one can ask such 'why' questions without falling into the essentialist trap of postulating some originary intention. Perhaps we should think instead in terms of the consequences of motivations, which look quite different in historical retrospect. Sadly, it might be that, with so many descriptive and narrative devices available, it has simply become professional practice to use them. If replicating past, partly forgotten and underdetermined motives and practices is part of professionalizing anthropology, then there is much to be said against professionalization. One of Pirandello's characters in search of an author however gave as good an answer as any:

A fact is like a sack which won't stand up when it is empty. In order that it may stand up, one has to put into it the reason and sentiment which caused it to exist.

¹⁹⁵ I rely here on Margaret Wiener's work (1995a, 1995b 1999, in press), including her nuanced analysis of the extent to which the Dutch strove to obtain Balinese recognition of their power and superiority. On the other hand, she shows quite how far certain Balinese royal representations succeeded in obliterating the Dutch and their claims to agency in Balinese narratives about this period.

Colonial and Indonesian officials, businessmen, visiting dignitaries, scholars, travel-writers and tourists have so thoroughly worked over Bali as to leave the sack turgid. Or is it just very sodden?

Chapter 7

Cabbages or kings? Balinese rulers as articulators of worlds.

‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
 ‘To talk of many things:
 Of shoes – and ships – and sealing wax –
 Of cabbages – and kings –
 And why the sea is boiling hot –
 And whether pigs have wings.’
 (Through the Looking-Glass, Ch. 4.)

A magical state

In an East End market, in which the goods are of notoriously dubious provenance, some years ago I came by chance across a remarkable document. The work, apparently in the form of an intellectual diary, is anonymous but appears to be genuine, judging in part from the stains on many of the pages. As there are no independent sources, and indeed a check in the usual reference works failed unambiguously to identify the society in question, one cannot verify the account according to strict scientific standards. However, apart from some passages which suggest the author was distressed at the time, he or she gives every impression of being an accurate and careful, even pedantic, observer. If but a small part of the account be true, what the author describes must be one of the most primitive, idolatrous, superstitious and irrational societies ever documented.

Consider the following extracts:

[*page torn*]...strikes the traveller to *Taerg Niatirb* is that such a theocracy still survives. There are two Great Gods, *Etats* and *Tekram*, whom the nobles worship and before whom the populace are obliged to grovel. At the heart of the capital (a refuse-littered, disorderly city) stands the ancient and magnificent Great Temple of *Tnemailrap*. There the high priests of the cult of *Etats*, Who is Eternal and Whose Grace is known by the suspension of time, engage in interminable rites of

surpassing bizarreness. The prosperity and the indissoluble unity of the realm, *Detinu Modgnik*, they asseverate, depends crucially upon these elaborate devotions, although even to a casual eye the common people are wretchedly poor and the country perpetually on the brink of fragmenting. So fearful are they of this harmony being disrupted that it is customary for travellers to be searched for magical potions on arrival by the dreaded *smotsuc*, who are vested with powers to search, detain and punish anyone attempting to visit the realm...

Ranged on either side of a sacred bag of animal hair, the priests proceed, after appropriate liturgies, to the great act of divination, *etabed*. This is most startling to the unacquainted observer; for it consists in the antiphonal howling and hurling of abuse by the priests on each side of the bag at those on the other, often in states of evident frenzy. After hours or even days, matters are concluded abruptly by the high priests filing out in two columns, following which the Will of *Etats* is announced as mystically manifested. Thereupon faithful acolytes, or *Stsilanruoj*, rush off to promulgate the Will to the long-suffering populace, who hurry under pain of severe and unnatural punishments to present offerings, often called *sexat* to temples throughout the land, all of which redounds to the prestige and self-importance of the high priesthood.

In vain have I sought to establish some sense, some basis in fact or to comprehend how so whimsical a mode of deliberation is evidence of the infallibility of *Etats*. The sensible observer is struck by the lack of bearing of the proceedings upon the judgement. For whatever transpires, by cosmic decree those who sit on the right are always right, and those who sit to the left are left out: the association working in the native dialect of *hsilgne*, much as it does in our own tongue...(p. 72-3).

The diary suggests however that, for all its majesty and proclaimed infallibility, there is another figure before which the state high priests themselves seem to stand in fear and awe.

Even *Etats* cannot defy *Tekram*, the Omniscient and Omnipotent, the Creator-Destroyer, who possesses the most powerful known magic, *Nosaer*. The initiates of the sect of *Tekram* are among the wealthiest people in *Taerg Niatirb* and, with the irrationality of primitive races, they treat such riches as evidence of the God's bounty to his devoted and willing subjects, who in thanks brag of their riches. The power of the sect of *Tekram* cannot be exaggerated. To it is attributed the success of the crops, trading ventures, even the survival of their rudimentary, dilapidated industries. Fame and fortune accrue to the many seers and diviners who prey upon the simple ignorance of their peers and claim to be able to foretell the Will of *Tekram*. No matter how often the folk of

Taerg Niatirb are proven wrong, it merely serves to confirm the omnipotence of *Tekram*. For their observations are always subordinated to their beliefs and are incorporated into their beliefs to explain and justify them. All contradictions and failures are treated as a temporary failure of faith, *cigol*, and the ultimate beneficence (*ecnerehoc*) of the universe... (p. 89).¹⁹⁶

From reason to ritual

Forgive my imposing the Tsew on you again. The reason for doing so is that European and American academics take it that their own societies and polities are somehow peculiarly rational and the self-evident yardstick against which to judge the irrationality, incompetence and backwardness others. This bias is built into the ideas of progress, development, civil society and so forth to the point that historically particular ideas are naturalized. This vision of modernity is also secular. Indeed it is partly defined by contrast to previous religious world visions (Inden n.d.[b]). Such a rationalist account depicts religion as embodying the superstitious, irrational and emotional, which should be effectively confined to the domain of the citizen's private life, as a matter of personal choice. Even utopias are stripped of their original religious rationales and made immediate and immanent as part of

¹⁹⁶ Even the most despised rejects in this society seem to devote much time to imitating such revelations. Elsewhere our anonymous author writes of

the dark, dank, dirty and unheated cloisters in which these pariahs (*scimedaca*) posture and pretend to the grand sacerdotalism of their superiors. Their shabby surrogate deity is *Egdelwonk*, whom they regularly worship in the rite of the *ranimes*, in which one of their number, as ill-kempt as the rest, is possessed by a spirit and mumbles what is commonly gibberish for up to an hour or more. With one or two evidently deranged exceptions, the rest of these misguided creatures seem to find this as tedious as do I, and promptly fall fast asleep. When the possession eventually grinds to an end, what passes for the grandees of this motley crew in order of seniority chant at length and to little discernible purpose other than enjoyment of the sound of their own voices. When the crowd finally wakes up, they declare *Egdelwonk* to be greater than ever, the rite an enormous success and repair to such hostelry as still welcome them, where they talk endlessly and drink themselves stupid over cheap beverages... (p. 98).

The author evidently had a low opinion of *scimedaca*. Either he bore a particular grudge to this group, or they must have been a very sad and sorry lot.

the project of national development (Inden 1995). In this chapter, I wish to question received wisdom about 'the traditional state' in Bali, by reviewing some recent Balinese commentaries about the pre-colonial polity and its relevance to discussion about the contemporary Indonesian state. The problem is that, for all its purported scholarly impartiality, the best known work on the Balinese state is riddled with ethnocentric presuppositions about what a polity is, or should be, about. In particular, religion and ritual are a problem to be explained. So, if we are to avoid imposing prejudices in the name of scholarship, then we need to be critical of what may appear natural, familiar and self-evident. The play upon the Tsew above is aimed to show how odd, irrational and contingent a set of practices is involved in that well-known polity, Britain.¹⁹⁷

I take it that idea that the modern nation state as a coherent concept, and the epitome and culmination of 'western' rational thought about the polity, was finally put out of its misery in 1977 by Tony Skillen in his aptly titled book, *Ruling illusions* (1977; see also Skillen 1985). Many scholars of course still take it for granted that the nation state as northern Europeans and Americans imagine it is desirable (or inevitable) and that their writings sufficiently accurately represent its workings that other polities may be adequately depicted using the same presuppositions (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). By contrast what interests me here is the elusive Other of the principle of Reason in terms of which, in retrospect, the nation state has been explained, if not indeed constituted, namely Ritual.

The rulers of secular, modern states have claimed that because the modern state is based on the scientifically determined principles of political economy it is different in kind from traditional states, those in which 'religion' played a prominent role. That difference rests on a fundamental opposition which many modernists draw between notions of reason, which they take as the basis of political economy, and of emotion, which they construe as the basis of religion. According to secularists, reason and political economy are properties of both the public and private spheres, while emotion and religion are confined to the private (Inden n.d.[b]: 4).

¹⁹⁷ If the reader is still puzzled by who the Tsew are, she should read all the words in italics backwards. I owe this technique of making the familiar seem alien to Miner (1956).

Ritual, consonant with its purported properties, has however proven far more impervious to the blandishments of reason than proponents of reason would like. What is more, it retains a capacity, virtually inexplicable to the rationalist thesis, to infiltrate, undermine and subvert the modern nation state itself. This, if nothing else, I take to be the significance of our refractory diarist's account of Taerg Niatirb.

Mark Twain once retorted, on reading his obituary in a newspaper, that the report of his death was exaggerated. I suspect the reports of the death of ritual as a part of public life in Europe and the States are equally so. At any rate, scholars are anxious to assure us that mystical ideas and practices surrounding power are alive and well and thriving in the Third World. For instance, in Indonesia, Benedict Anderson has discovered Javanese ideas of *kasektèn* flourishing within the national polity (1990 [1972]). In so doing he engages in Orientalism by conflating two historically discrete complexes of political practices. Similarly

when Anderson makes the colonial and the New Order states in Indonesia equivalent to one another (1983), thus eliding historically distinct entities...and speaks of nationalism as an 'imagined' (rather than some historically documentable and analyzable) 'community' existing in eternal opposition to the state, he is in effect saying that Indonesia will not have proper 'history' until the nation has destroyed the historical state, although both are everywhere else interdependent constituents of the modern world and its history (Day 1986: 3-4).

Many European and American scholars remain determined to imagine other peoples as ineluctably caught up in ritual (Anderson calls it an 'obsession', 1990: 26). This goes along with a similar determination – I am inclined to say 'obsession' – with insisting they are timeless and without history (see Chapter 6 for an analysis of the implications of so doing).

Anderson's is not the only account to do so. Indeed Anderson acknowledges Clifford Geertz's 'brilliant analysis of Balinese cultural tradition' (1990: 18, fn. 4; citing Geertz 1973f) as his model. Geertz has written at length on the pre-colonial state in Bali, which is at once an exemplary instance of the 'traditional' South East Asian state, the starting point for understanding the grip of culture on Balinese – and other Indonesian – minds and, because it is so different, a paradigm case to contrast with 'our'

ideas about power and the polity.¹⁹⁸ Ritual attained its apotheosis in Bali in

a theatre state in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience. The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages, and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power... The whole structure was based...primarily on ceremony and prestige, and it became...the more fragile and tenuous in actual political dominance and subordination the higher up the pyramid one went; so the other simile which suggests itself is of an intricate house of card, built up rank upon rank to a most tremulous peak (1980: 13, 16).¹⁹⁹

He concludes

That Balinese politics, like everyone else's, including ours, was symbolic action does not imply, therefore, that it was all in the mind or consisted entirely of dances and incense... The dramas of the theatre state, mimetic of themselves, were, in the end, neither illusions nor lies, neither sleight of hand nor make-believe. They were what there was (1980: 136).

The priorities and necessities of real political power are not so much sidelined, as denied altogether. Whereas other polities, like say Britain, use spectacle in the service of maintaining power, Balinese did the reverse – or so we are told.²⁰⁰ Such blatant

¹⁹⁸ Both Anderson and Geertz draw sharp and largely spurious contrasts between an imagined Java or Bali and an equally imaginary West, otherwise deictically 'we', 'us'. Quite where this West or we begins and ends is delightfully unclear. I would suggest a primary purpose of such arguments is to give to the mythical beast of the West (which is the epitome of rationality and the starting point for two World Wars this century) a coherence and unity which it otherwise largely lacks.

¹⁹⁹ Geertz has obviously not been stirred, still less shaken, in his vision because he repeats his own earlier writings (1973g: 335 [1967]) virtually verbatim. Nor does he view ritual as having disappeared as the driving force of Balinese public life (see e.g. 1973f: 398-411; 1983c: 62-64).

²⁰⁰ The argument rests more on the whirlwind of Geertz's prose than any sustained and critical analysis of the voluminous historical sources. For this reason, Geertz's account has been very vulnerable to subsequent, more scholarly studies (Wiener 1995a; Schulte Nordholt 1996).

embracing of ritual and refusal of reason could not, of course, last and, with magnificent hindsight, Geertz is able to explain how Balinese states were unable to stand up to political will and might of the modern Dutch. What there was was not enough to survive. (The argument does rather less well at explaining how Bali ran successful slaving and colonial polities, or withstood the Dutch for so long.)

Geertz's conclusion should not be taken to suggest that he is attempting to transcend the dichotomies of the expressive versus the instrumental, nor the symbolic versus the real. The book's structure moves, as Geertz's programme makes clear, from 'the hard surfaces of life – with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained' (1973c: 30) to what rests on them. The fulcrum by means of which Geertz proposes to shift our vision of the Balinese polity, the implicit criterion according to which he contrasts the traditional Balinese state to modern western polities (as if these shared a common essence) remains firmly reason. Just as they have literally become in the tourist trade, Balinese are reduced to waiters at the papal feast of reason and the flow of soul of what was once their lives.

On at least one Balinese account, 'ritual', if one must use the word, is a very effective means of articulating different and partly irreconcilable groups, interests and ideas about the nature and working of power in the world and beyond. The ruler, or better the court, was not the passive instantiation of a transcendental ideal, but a complex agent in the continual reworking of the polity (on complex agency, see Hobart 1990b; Inden 1990: 22-36). Far from being a timeless ideal world, in which anything that did not fit their closed vision had to be reinterpreted as part of the pattern, ignored, 'mystified' or drowned out through the voice of endlessly repeated ceremonial, ritual provided a frame of reference and action, through which rulers and their polities organized their lives, and addressed uncertainties and contingencies. I take it however that there is no single encompassing interpretation, to which all Balinese subscribed, but different, potentially contradictory accounts on different occasions. What interests me particularly is how the past is brought into service to comment on the present, here the New Order régime of President Soeharto. So I shall consider in some detail one theatre play, which is reasonably typical of what was being broadcast on local television and performed in theatre at the end of the 1980s, in part because

the actors in question featured regularly. The play is interesting because it involves a discussion of the nature of the polity – actors imagining pre-colonial Bali as a commentary on contemporary Indonesia. The discussion also clearly indicated how Balinese ideas about ritual differ in kind from their western academic commentators. A central theme of the play was how kings, or courts, were agents of articulation through ritual.²⁰¹

As articulation has a number of senses, let me clarify what I mean by that. As I indicated in the Introduction, I understand articulation as not simply being about uttering or bringing together, but about linking events, actions, relationships and ideas in certain ways under particular circumstances. To the extent that social action is not the mechanical reproduction of some abstract, essential entity, ‘society’ (Laclau 1990b), but rather society is the outcome of powerful or authoritative articulations, articulation becomes an important socially constitutive practice. Such practices however always take place in the context of previous, and often rival, articulations and are themselves subject to subsequent counter-articulation. Articulation, developed as a way of thinking about social action, requires us at once to specify and to cut across conventional analytical distinctions. Articulating as a practice is inevitably situated: an agent articulates some set of events or state of affairs *as* something to a particular audience on a given occasion for one or more purposes. Articulation is therefore specific. It is at once the process by which general categories and ideas are instantiated and also the means by which events and ideas are linked and made general.²⁰² At the same time, articulation is, if you like, both a material and a mental practice. I would prefer though to avoid the dichotomy: any act of articulating takes place under specific material conditions and

²⁰¹ There is evidently a qualitative difference between what the Balinese actors were trying to do and the aims of anthropologists. Geertz is explicit that he is writing a history of Bali for ‘us’, using second- or third-hand generalized accounts, which he reprocesses. Balinese, by contrast, are engaged in representing their past to themselves in the present for a present and future purpose, which raises questions about their uses of history.

²⁰² Articulation therefore turns representation into a situated act. This develops further Goodman’s idea that representing is always an act of transforming, because you represent something *as* something else (1968), a point argued in Chapters 5 & 6. A problem of post-structuralist writing is that in stressing the contingent and situated, it might seem to give up any hope of explanation or addressing general issues. This need not be so, for Hallward (2000) has produced an interesting argument about the difference between being singular and being specific in contemporary theorizing. Articulation, I think, is a means of relating the situated and specific to the general.

involves technological practices in an attempt to mediate and so transform what went before.²⁰³

Suddenly ritual and theatre attain a new significance. Ritual emerges as a key means to try to establish, reiterate or consolidate particular articulations as authoritative, or even as beyond question and challenge. Theatre, by contrast, is the occasion when articulations may be rehearsed, but also thought about, interrogated and reviewed critically.²⁰⁴ It follows that talking about ritual and power in theatre becomes a particularly interesting commentative activity. 'Traditional' media, like theatre, contemporary media like television, the mix of the two as in televising theatre, and ritual are then not simply dismissible as entertainment and symbolic communication or some such respectively, but as crucial means by which articulations are made, questioned, revised and overthrown.

Among the most authoritative articulations are the public pronouncements of experts, especially in places where the subjects in question are often not in a position to enunciate about themselves, but must to some degree accept, or even act upon, enunciations made about them, however ill-conceived or ill-informed.²⁰⁵ The writings of few scholars have had as much impact both on a broad academic public and on the people being written about as Clifford Geertz's writing on Indonesia, especially on Java and Bali. So, to return to the theme of this chapter, it is a matter of some seriousness that between Geertz's image of Bali and Balinese representations of themselves to themselves there is a disjuncture. At issue is the question of who gets to articulate whom, on what grounds?

Geertz's analysis, for all his disclaimers, presupposes a dichotomy between society (including economics and politics) working by means of 'causal-functional integration' and culture (including the ritual and symbolic) characterized by 'logico-

²⁰³ Evidently some conservative articulations appear precisely to deny change by reiterating the continuity of the *status quo*. To claim things are unchanging in an under-determined and partly contingent world is however to engage in a negative transformation.

²⁰⁴ The title of Victor Turner's late book, *From ritual to theatre* (1982) reflecting on the shift in his interests from ritual to theatre, involves the recognition that ritual is never as closed an enunciation as its proponents would like to claim.

²⁰⁵ Drawing on the work of Ron Inden, I discuss some of the things which may be at issue in Chapter 5, *As they like it*.

meaningful integration' ([1957] 1973h: 145; on the pervasiveness of this dichotomy in Geertz's writings on Bali, see Guernonprez 1990). More fundamentally, the narrative genre within which he is writing is secular. Geertz does not and cannot recognize, still less take seriously, the possibility that those he writes about do not treat power and its management as ultimately purely secular matters (nor for that matter, ultimately religious or 'mystical' either, the mistake which Anderson makes). As Margaret Wiener has cogently argued (1995a), Balinese distinguish the world for purposes of action into what is manifest, *sakala*, and so, in principle, more or less knowable, and what is not manifest, *niskala*. What one can know with any certainty about events which are *niskala* is limited. So, from the point of view of humans, what is *niskala* commonly appears as contingent, in the sense that it irrupts in the manifest world at times in unexpected, unpredictable and partly uncontrollable ways. To the extent that religion provides a way of conceiving of powers and processes which humans incompletely understand (Burridge 1969), one way in which you can consider rites is as practices aimed at engaging such powers and processes.²⁰⁶ There is precious little in common between Geertz's rendition of that timeless and imaginary unitary entity 'the traditional Balinese state' and Balinese understandings of their own past and present practices. Just how far must the analyst's interpretation directly contradict the understandings of the people in question before the interpretation becomes suspect?

Imagined communication

Let me briefly dispense with the notion of ritual as it is usually understood by anthropologists. Another distinguished anthropologist, Stanley Tambiah, some years ago invoked a notion of ritual (1985) which, whatever the disagreement over details, shares much in common with Clifford Geertz (1966) and yet another distinguished anthropologist, Maurice Bloch (1989). In the finest traditions of academic essentializing and hegemony, they all presume to give us a universal account of what ritual is and what it does, independent of all cultural or historically

²⁰⁶ I avoid the word 'control' here, both for reasons discussed in Hobart (1990a), and because in this context it falls into the trap of seeing contingencies as something exclusively negative and dangerous to be contained, limited, bound, rather than as opportunities to achieve the otherwise impossible, something new, something different.

constituted differences and oblivious to the participants' commentaries on their own activities. It is not a promising way to start to fight one's way out of the paper bag of intellectual imperialism.

Tambiah's working definition of ritual is 'a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication' (1985: 128).²⁰⁷ Further, ritual is '*conventionalized* action' and, as such

rituals are not designed or meant to express the intentions, emotions, and states of mind of individuals in a direct, spontaneous, and 'natural' way. Cultural elaboration of codes consists in the *distancing* from such spontaneous and intentional expressions because spontaneity and intentionality are, or can be, contingent, labile, circumstantial, even incoherent or disordered (1985: 132, emphasis in the original).

Like W.S. Gilbert's minstrel, it is

A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby. (The Mikado I.)

Tambiah's and similar accounts presume an ontology cluttered with essences: symbols, communication, intentions, emotions, states of mind, spontaneity, nature. The term 'ritual' itself is a fine example of an abstract substance, a distillation from practices, or bits of practices, for which the anthropologist can find no immediate instrumental rationale.²⁰⁸ Little wonder ritual emerges

²⁰⁷ As I argue in the Introduction, to define symbols, and so symbolic communication, as culturally constructed is largely tautologous, because culture is usually defined semiotically in the first place.

²⁰⁸ The term 'ritual' is so overladen with dubious connotations that I prefer to avoid it, except perhaps where it is specified as the English gloss of a vernacular commentative word or phrase. 'Rites' at least avoids imputing the existence of an abstract substance. Balinese, who eschew such substances, specify the purpose of the activity: *odalan* 'birthday' (often of a deity), *ngabèn* 'cremation' and so forth. The two more general terms they use, *karya* and *upacara*, do not apply exclusively to rites. In fact *karya* is the usual High Balinese for 'work', what should properly be done. The sense of both words is close to their Old Javanese homonyms. *Karya* is 'work to be done, duty, religious performance, feast; enterprise'; *upacara* is 'the proper conduct of rites, etiquette', and also 'requisites, accessories, paraphernalia, the proper

as a universal essence, designed performatively to essentialize the world around it by all manner of ingenious means (see e.g. Bloch 1974).

Anyway, how does Tambiah know what rituals are ‘designed’ or ‘meant’ to do?²⁰⁹ We are left to presume something to the effect that anonymous, long-forgotten persons in each society, ‘abstract individuals’, have decided that it shall be thus, or that some other transcendental agent – society, culture, structure, the mind – has been busy at work. Culture emerges as the sugar-coated, symbolic icing on ‘the hard surfaces of life’, or ritual as the straight-jacket on originary, pre-cultural human ‘spontaneous’ experience. It is a familiar and dreary tale.

Long before Tambiah conflated the world and discourse, Goodman had pointed out that he was not alone.

Philosophers sometimes mistake features of discourse for features of the subject of discourse...Coherence is a characteristic of descriptions, not of the world (1972: 24).

Disorder is no more an inherent property of reality than is order, spontaneity or naturalness (Collingwood 1945).

There are several problems of assuming that there is an essentially discriminable class of phenomena, ritual, and that this class is distinguished by a special mode of communication. For a start, it elevates one strand of a historically particular phase of western European discourse, Romanticism to the status of universal truth and ignores both that, as a theory of signification, it is a latecomer (Todorov 1982) and contested (e.g. Sperber 1975). The idea that rituals communicate tends to be circular. Communication is what communities ideally do, notably when their members engage in communion, which is a rite. Symbolic communication assumes people to share broadly similar attitudes to symbols. However they must also share not only a common subjectivity, but be able to communicate this intersubjectively.

adornments’ (Zoetmulder 1983: 813, 2128). Both have strong practical overtones.

²⁰⁹ Tambiah attributes to rituals an essential intentionality, the intention of being indirectly intentional. It is designed to instantiate in actuality the dichotomies the writer draws analytically between the constructed (or coded) and the spontaneous, or between the ordered and the contingent.

Quite how you establish the communicability of this subjectivity without a further circularity is unclear. The catch, of course, is that it is the analyst who determines what is symbolic as against practical communication, and what constitutes subjectivity in his or her own terms. As Wallace noted, not only does one not need to assume humans communicate meanings to one another, but that social interaction would be largely impossible if they did (1961: 29-44). As I am interested in how Balinese constitute themselves as subjects (for want of a better word), I cannot assume their subjectivity without both *petitio principii* and ethnocentrism.

The shreds and patches' nature of the argument become evident when it comes to the *ad hoc* explanations for the massive redundancy of treating ritual as essentially communicative. Much of the message gets lost each time due to 'noise'. Natives, believers and such like are so stupid that they have to tell themselves something endlessly each time before they miss the point anyway. You can never assert authority too often. Were we instead to consider what Balinese say, and imply, about the matter, the redundancy vanishes. And we are left with the serious question of what exactly it is that the performance of rites addresses and, indeed, whether there is any one thing which such performances are about for all people at all times.

The entire analysis disinters a tired Cartesian dichotomy of body versus mind. Or else it reifies the Kantian distinction of hypothetical and categorical imperatives into an opposition between the instrumental versus expressive, the efficacious versus the symbolic, and so to spawn a seemingly endless series of dichotomies.²¹⁰ The argument works by a continual deferment from one half of the dichotomy to the other and by suggesting a transitivity between oppositions of like ancestry. One does not have to accept Derrida's entire work to see that this looks something suspiciously like the workings of *différance*.

A Balinese representation of a rite

²¹⁰ Among these are: ordinary behaviour: ritual behaviour (Tambiah 1985: 132); symbol: reality; expression: instrumentality (communicative action: practical action, shades of Habermas 1984,1987); convention : nature; spontaneity : distance (control); tradition : progress (and its alter (schizoid) ego authority : creativity, Bloch 1974).

Rather than generalize about the nature of ritual in Bali, I propose to look at an actual set of practices. Instead of ignoring what Balinese said about their own practices, I shall consider how they represented a particular rite to themselves on one actual occasion. In Geertz's liturgy of the forms of court ceremonialism, he lists temple dedications and pilgrimages. I propose to look at what Balinese actually had to say in a play about the pilgrimage of the Prince of Nusa Penida, a small island off Bali. In the play the prince had gone around the temples of Bali praying for a son and heir. The play deals with the fulfilment of his vow to dedicate a temple when his prayer was answered. I do not assume that what was said and done in the piece exemplifies any essential set of concepts, beliefs, values or underlying meanings. On the contrary, I start from the position that interpretations are underdetermined by facts and that there are different ways in which Balinese explain and interpret their own practices. The degree and kind of similarity between different interpretive practices I take to be at least in part an empirical matter.²¹¹

The obvious question arises of how I reach my own translation and interpretation of the play. Over several weeks I went through the original audio tape of the play, which I had recorded live, with a group of villagers, including two actors, all of whom had attended the performance.²¹² I then worked through the tape once

²¹¹ I am not however suggesting that anthropology can, or should, consist simply of reporting peoples' acts and their commentaries on these acts. In translating the play, in selecting parts of the commentaries, in commenting critically on what happened, I am relating Balinese discursive practices to contemporary academic ones. What I consider incorrect is to confuse or conflate the two. They are, of course, related because, even though they live on an island, Balinese have not been isolated from the world. Nor is my account without conditions of, and consequences for, power. Not least is my privileged status as 'foreign scholar', which enabled me to elicit commentaries from audience and actors, and to write for a broad readership, not available to Balinese themselves. The writing itself poses dilemmas. As Johannes Fabian has pointed out, such theatre is a form of political criticism under conditions of censorship; and writing about it potentially exposes the performers to danger (1991b).

²¹² Transcription is, of course, itself a major interpretive act. The audio tape was transcribed by a school teacher, Wayan Suardana, who was working for me. All ensuing discussions however were based on listening to the tape, which resulted in successive modifications to the original transcript. Unsurprisingly, professional actors (both

more with different people. These consisted of the actress who played the prince; the actor who played the senior servant (the Panasar, the anchor role); a group of village males; and, separately, a group of women from the village. Evidently the translation and comments are mine but, unless indicated otherwise, they draw upon extended commentaries from these different Balinese sources.

With no more ado, let me turn to extracts from the play. It was performed on the night of 11-12th. March 1989 in the research village of Tengahpadang in South Central Bali, during a festival at a local temple, Pura Duur Bingin, one of its deities being famous for granting the boon of children to supplicants. A local prince had promised to pay for a performance of *Prèmbon*²¹³, if his prayer for a son were answered. The performers were members of the local station of Indonesian State Radio and professional and well known actors. The plot centred around the Prince of Nusa Penida, Sri Aji Palaka, building a temple and organizing its dedication, to fulfil his own vow. The first extract is from the opening scene in which a court retainer, the Panasar and his younger brother, Wijil set the scene. It starts after the Panasar has explained how the island of Nusa Penida (here just Nusa) has thrived under its wise king. There is a deliberate, but implicit, comparison with the then President of Indonesia, Soeharto, which is not so much flattery as setting the standard by which all rulers are to be judged. Extracts 2 & 3 are from the next scene, when the two servants attend their prince and ask him to explain the importance of rites. Extracts 4 and 5 are from the penultimate and last scenes of the play, when the prince is making ready to oversee the rite. The Old Village Head in Extract 4 happens also to be the father of the prince's low caste wife (Luh Wedani).

Notes

The original performance was in Balinese, see the end notes. Where I have used the Balinese original, or a Balinese word, in the text, it is italicized.

performers and members of the audience) were the most acute at hearing what was actually said.

²¹³ *Prèmbon* is a genre of partly sung theatre by actor-dancers, some but not all of whom are masked. Otherwise it resembles romantic opera, *Arja* (for an account, see de Zoete & Spies 1938).

Words in bold type are *kawi* (or Old Javanese), a literary register of Balinese;

Words underlined are Indonesian;

Words both bold and italicized are from the special vocabulary of actors. Parentheses are mine. For ease of reading and explication I have cut out a few brief exchanges which do not bear directly on the matter under discussion. The excisions are indicated by [...].

Statements in quotation marks are where the servants speak on behalf of the king, as if using his words.

Extract 1: The purpose of ritesⁱ

- Wijil:* Everyone who is ruled by Sri Aji Palaka in the land of Nusa is free to follow their own religion.
- Panasar:* What is right should be taught and broadcast to the whole of society.
- Wijil:* The basis of the religion we share is in ideas about reality. Having ideas about reality in itself doesn't produce results though. There should be a moral code to implement those ideas.²¹⁴
- Panasar:* That's not yet enough.
- Wijil:* That's not yet all that's necessary. There should be art (here, theatre) and there's something else, which we call 'rites'.
- Panasar:* That's so.
- Wijil:* (He starts a folk etymological analysis of the word '**upacara**', ceremonies.) What's the significance of '*upa*'?
- Panasar:* What does it mean?
- Wijil:* '*Upa*' resembles what we call 'energy' (effort), '*cara*' means 'each to his own'. The ways we achieve it are different, but the aim for all of us is to serve the Almighty.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ The word he uses, **tattwa**, tends these days to be glossed as 'philosophy', Indonesian filasafat. The commentators considered it here to be referring more specifically to the background to religious doctrine (**agama**). The word is from Sanskrit and *kawi*. **Tattwa** is "thatness", what makes something what it really is, being, reality; the essential, the actual (as contrasted with the apparent or incidental); the various categories of reality according to Samkhya doctrine; doctrine concerning reality, philosophy; the writings containing this doctrine' (Zoetmulder 1983: 1962-63).

²¹⁵ 'Each to his own' is gloss of the Balinese proverb: '*Bina paksa bina paksi*', 'different birds, different foods'. Its sense is similar to the French '*Chacun a son gout*' (Each person has his own taste), or the

- Panasar:* Oh!
- Wijil:* This is the reason there are acts of worship (*yadnya*).²¹⁶ That is what religion in Nusa is about. We are both astonished at – what’s the word? – at our Lord’s **organizing ability**. Acts of worship have their origin in the Three Obligations (**Tri Rena**).
- Panasar:* There are three debts.
- Wijil:* There are three. Gratitude is due because of God’s grace, which is why one can never be free of the debt. This is the Three Causes of Well-Being (**Tri Hita Karana**).
- Panasar:* These three should properly be articulated.
- Wijil:* Properly be articulated with one another.²¹⁷

The extract began with a clear statement that the ruler actively tolerates diversity of religious affiliation, a diversity which an able king can encompass and articulate.²¹⁸ Coming after a description of a well-ruled polity, the point was not accidental. As the village commentators stressed, it is difficult enough to rule fairly and well a people whose interests are basically congruous. How much harder then is it to rule justly a real country in which the interests and needs of different groups are almost invariably partly incompatible and at times antagonistic? The test is not whether a ruler can run a polity by favouring various interests, whether based on class, race, religion or whatever, at the expense of others. The criticism here, initially implicit later explicit, was that that is precisely what the New Order régime consistently did as the means of staying in power.²¹⁹ The test of that rare personage, a

German ‘*Jedes Tierchen sein Pläsirchen*’ (Every little animal its little pleasure).

²¹⁶ *Yadnya*, which I have given as ‘acts of worship’ is a wide-ranging term.

²¹⁷ *Wijil* is affirming (*ngawiaktiang*) the truth of what the *Panasar* has said. The Balinese word is *adung*, which connotes being compatible, commensurable, appropriately adapted. It is the root of a whole range of words for deliberate, discuss with the aim of reaching agreement, reconcile, accommodate, adjust, adapt, bring together into a single coherent entity or frame of reference. So its senses overlap with the notion of articulation.

²¹⁸ In the context of the play, it is also admonitory advice (*panglèmèk*) that the members of no religious group should have exclusive rights to worship, a reference to Balinese sensitivities to what they perceived as the encroachment of Islam.

²¹⁹ A repeated phrase in the play was ‘the temples in Nusa are finished’ (*Telah pura di Nusa*). In context it sounded at first as though the reference is to the prince having exhaustively visited all the temples to pray for an heir. This was the reading that the male commentators made. When I noted that the phrase was repeated several times and suggested a quite different interpretation, they agreed that it fitted, but doubted that was

good ruler, is whether he or she can address and balance fairly these antagonisms.²²⁰

Wijil then turned the discussion explicitly to religion. Almost as if answering those western scholars who treat religion and ritual as some ‘cultural’ or semiotic superstructure divorced from, and precariously perched on top of ‘the hard surfaces of life’, he stressed that its basis is in what is real. One cannot separate the mental or symbolic from the material and practical. Religion consists in practices which produce tangible results. Theory without practice is vacuous (*gabeng*).²²¹ Wijil continued to discuss how one puts ideas into practice. Theatre is one form, **upacara** are another. He gives the etymology as the work of serving Divinity, each in his or her own way and to their own ends; such that rites provide a means of articulating the diverse, potentially incompatible, interests of different people and groups.

How anthropologists reach their interpretations of practices is often arcane, and rarely explained, as I note in the Introduction. My interpretation of the king as organizer and articulator of diverse interests and groups in the manifest and non-manifest worlds rests not on an elaborate theory of ‘symbolology’ (Geertz 1980: 104-20), but upon what, by almost any translation, Balinese

what the actors had intended. I discussed this subsequently with two of the actors, who immediately confirmed that they had indeed been referring to the run-down state of many of Bali’s great temples. They recognized that they were indicting government policy, which provided funds for religious purposes, in their view inappropriately discriminatory in favour of Islam and against Hinduism. These and other criticisms, notably discrimination against the poor, make it clear that the actors were developing a sustained critique of government by partiality.

²²⁰ ‘Antagonism’ I use in a broad sense to refer to the underlying oppositions and contradictions, which are part of any polity. Following Laclau & Mouffe (1985: 93-148) and Laclau (1990a), my concern is to avoid being caught a Eurocentric dichotomy between opposition as a real relationship as against contradiction, which is logical. Theoretically, antagonisms are what prevent any social or political structure from working itself out to completion, and so are the limits of attempts to objectify any given structure. ‘Antagonism, as the negation of a given order is, quite simply, the limit of that order, and not the moment of a broader totality’ (Laclau & Mouffe 1995: 126). Every polity has its distinct antagonisms, which its intellectuals struggle to identify. What is significant here is that it is Balinese actors who are doing so to a large and mixed audience.

²²¹ Obviously, had I translated **tattwa** as ‘philosophy’ throughout, the actor might have appeared to be talking about the basis of religion being in philosophy. However that is a rather western academic conception of philosophy as properly about ideas independent of their objects. Not only is **tattwa** arguably about what is actual, but that is how the commentators certainly took it, as does the actor from his subsequent remarks.

themselves stated publicly. For Wijil promptly linked the diversity of acts of worship to the prince's skill at organizing (*pikamkam*, on which more below). Fairly obviously, the ability to organize a great ceremony and bring it to a successful conclusion involves not just a command of resources and logistics. It requires the capacity to create trust in others, to foster a vision in which they can appreciate that they are a valuable part, and to get them actively to participate throughout. Finally, it requires that intangible quality: actually succeeding in doing what you set out to do. The contrast with ideas of management promulgated by the New Right could hardly be starker, as the actors expatiated as the play developed.

Wijil then linked three sets of dogmas, which had recently been promoted by the Parisada Hindu Dharma, the Administrative Council for Balinese Hinduism. The first, the **Tri Rena**, the Three Obligations, is the debt of our lives to Divinity, the debt of honour to our forefathers, and the debt of knowledge to teachers (**rsi**). Wijil then related these to the **Tri Hita Karana**, the Three Causes of Well Being, the three elements, which make possible the emergence of good. In humans these constitute spirit which enables humans to live; capacities in the form of *bayu sabda idep*, energy, speech and thought; and the body composed of the **pancamahabhuta**. In the universe these constitute **paramatma**, Divinity as pervading everything; energy in 1,001 forms (e.g. electricity, planetary motion, tides etc.); and the totality of matter (once again, the **pancamahabhuta**, the elements of which all matter is composed). The five kinds of acts of worship (*yadnya*, *kawi* & Sanskrit **yajna**) are the means of acknowledging, or repaying, the debts. They centre on three sites: temples, homes and humans themselves. Humans must constitute and look after each appropriately. In each case, a great deal of organization is required to direct effort to articulate diverse concerns, sites and subjects.

Already, on this account, ritual might be 'conventionalized action', in the sense that any practice is. However, to classify it simply as 'a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication' (as did Tambiah 1985: 128) is to overlook not only the complex ways in which Balinese now relate rites to their lives. The problem lies largely with anthropologists' determination to find some essential, originary purpose or cause of rites, which conveniently determines their authentic meaning. It

is, I suggest, far more interesting to consider how people imagine, and what they do, with traces of previous practices.

Extract 2: the subjects of ritesⁱⁱ

- Prince:* (Sings.) Praise God. [...]
- Wijil:* (Paraphrasing the prince at length) ‘Don’t fool around when working. Don’t listen to idle speech (denigrating the importance of performing ceremonies). It is rites I am speaking of. You should never be finished with them. There is none other, as you mentioned earlier, than God.’... (There follows a detailed specification of rites appropriate to the dead, then to ghosts (*buta*) and spirits (*kala*).)
- Prince:* (Sings.) In the world, effort can bring about **good deeds**. The **manifest** and **non-manifest worlds** are really... (what is important and inseparable).
- Wijil:* Yes! There’s a lot to that. (Paraphrasing (*ngartiang*) the prince’s words.) ‘My dear chap, if you are going to perform rites to the unseen world, if you do not do so in this world first, you can’t succeed’.²²²
- Panasar:* That’s so.
- Wijil:* Ceremonies (to) the unseen world require effort first. You require good deeds first.²²³
- Prince:* So the world will be prosperous.
- Wijil:* Lord, Lord. Yes.
- Panasar:* That is why good actions in this world and the other (depend) of course **on the proper conduct of He who commands the world** (i.e. the king).

This extract begins with the appearance of the prince on stage. Significantly, throughout the play the servants do not translate the words of the prince (which are almost exclusively in *kawi*), but elaborate upon them. I have argued elsewhere (1990b) that it may well be mistaken to focus, as does for instance Geertz, on the figure of the king to the exclusion of the court, which acts as a

²²² Rites are of this world, only their result is immaterial, **niskala**. It is not just the rite, which takes place in the manifest world, but also all the organization and agreement needed to complete a ceremony. If this is not properly attended to there are quarrels, which happens quite often.

²²³ You cannot perform ceremonies without work first!

complex, differentiated agent. It is not the prince alone who is the agent that organizes the dedication of the temple. As the play makes clear, it is never even conceived that the prince could do this without the dedicated activity of his wife, his close retainers and lesser local functionaries, here represented by a village head and an old villager. This last is from a lineage whose hereditary job it is to oversee and take on key tasks (*ngukuhin*, to make the work firm, solid). Similarly, in this play as in others, the servants are not mere mouthpieces of the prince, but are partly agents in their own right in elaborating and developing statements made by the prince. The puzzle is less about the strange nature of Balinese (and, by extension, other South East Asian and 'oriental' ideas) of leadership and power than it is about why anthropologists are so determined to foist a strange and distinctly ethnocentric idea of agency upon their subjects of study.²²⁴

Just before the extract begins, the two servants asked the prince what they should do in order that their lives should not be wasted. He replied that they should praise God. Wijil took this as referring to two things. First, one should not to be dilatory when taking part in the work for religious festivals. Second, one should not listen to the sort of people who say that making a living is more important than performing rites. (From what I can judge, this is less a reference to any organized contemporary secularism in Bali than it is to the recognized danger of peoples' effort going increasingly into making money with the massive growth of the tourist and art industries.) The centrality of God is absolute and the success of all activities hinges upon this. Besides devotion to Divinity, humans should perform acts of offering.²²⁵ The prince referred to rites to demons or the elements, and to the dead. The *Panasar* and Wijil specified what this was using immediate examples, which had taken place during the previous week. The most important was Panca Wali Krama, a very large set of rites held in the 'central temple' of Besakih as a preamble to

²²⁴ The vision of the individual-as-agent has, of course, a long history of (ritual?) celebration, exemplified nicely by that most American of culture industries, Hollywood, where complex historical and social processes are reduced to, and identified with, the actions of heroes. The extraordinary closure and narrative simplification necessary to credit a single individual with agency over world-historical processes continues to permeate supposedly impartial academic judgement.

²²⁵ Of the five kinds of *yadnya*, apart from those to Divinity (*déwayadnya*), there are also *resiyadnya*, rites for priests (not discussed here); *pitrayadnya*, rites for the dead; *butayadnya*, rites to demons or element(al)s; and lastly *manusayadnya*, rites for the living.

déwayadnya in the form of Batara Turun Kabeh, the Descent of all the Gods. Significantly the actors stated explicitly that this was for prosperity of whole country. In other words, it was presented as neither some purely spiritual activity, nor exclusively for the well being of one religious community.

The actors also demonstrate the vacuity of the kinds of dualism popular in anthropological interpretations of Bali, notably here the dichotomy between the real (objective, practical, effective) and symbolic (subjective, cultural, imaginary, in need of explanation). A repeated theme of the play is that this does not fit Balinese practice, in which the reality and power of Divinity is crucial. So action in both the manifest (*sakala*) and non-manifest (*niskala*) worlds is inseparable, as the prince promptly spells out.²²⁶ For humans, as primarily part of the manifest world, action must start there. A major Balinese ceremony requires a vast range of activities, skills and people to be co-ordinated, which, as the Panasar points out, is why success depends upon the king.

Extract 3: Organizing the participantsⁱⁱⁱ

- Wijil:* When taking on such work, one needs to be **thoughtful**. To be efficacious (one must fit in with) the place, occasion and circumstance.
- Panasar:* Circumstances. [...]
- Prince:* **The high priests** also take part.
- Wijil:* That's as it should be.
- Panasar:* (*Sings.*) (If led effectively) **the populace** will be prepared to participate.
- Prince:* (*Sings but inaudibly.*)
- Wijil:* Well.
- Panasar:* How's that?
- Wijil:* My dear chap. If one performs rites, there are three (tasks), which are called **the Three Key Roles (Tri Manggalaning Yajna)** in ritual.
- Panasar:* Ah! **The Three Key Roles**. First?
- Wijil:* There is the person who does the work of organizing the ceremony, the person who makes the offering.

²²⁶ As I indicate in Chapter 3, the distinction between *niskala* and *sakala* is not a dichotomy, because the non-manifest permeates the manifest and what is manifest to one person (i.e. what they are thinking) is not manifest to another.

- Panasar:* Second?
- Wijil:* There is the person who takes responsibility for (the work), the offering expert and society working for the common good.
- Panasar:* Yes, and third?
- Wijil:* There is the **high priest**, who is known as **spiritual teacher**, upon whom it depends to bring the results about (**ngelarang phalasraya**), who completes the ceremony.²²⁷
- Panasar:* There should be all three. Every time one carries out work, there should be the **Three Key Roles**.
- Wijil:* That is why Hinduism teaches there are steps. Even if there are high priests, even if there are offering specialists, (if) there are no people to take on the work, it still won't work out right.
- Panasar:* Whoever you talk it over with (will say the same). Isn't that so?
- Wijil:* Ask! That is why we ask. (So one can understand what lies behind performing rites.)
- Prince:* (*Sings.*) Don't run about aimlessly.
- Wijil:* Don't be confused.
- Panasar:* Don't go crashing about all over the place in confusion (but direct your thoughts to the practice of religion).

Just before this extract starts, the actors had listed the ranks of officials necessary to the execution of such an undertaking.²²⁸ The servants then returned to the favourite theatrical theme of specifying the qualities required of a leader. First any leader should have *lokika* (or *pangunadika*) 'thoughtfulness'.²²⁹ *Lokika* is a vital quality of a successful organizer, a theme upon which both commentators and actors waxed lyric. For villagers, it is being thoughtful about the future and about others. To invite people to work on your ricefields and not give them food and

²²⁷ The village commentators, with whom I went through the play in detail, explained **phalasraya** to me as like making an electrical contact, here to the non-manifest (**niskala**).}

²²⁸ Compare what the actors said with Geertz's *ex cathedra* pronouncement (1980: 132): 'as there was virtually no staff there were virtually no officials'.

²²⁹ The *kawi* term *lokika* (Sanskrit *laukika*) refers to 'worldly, belonging to ordinary life; ordinary men (opposed to the learned or initiated), the customary forms, how to behave, etiquette', Zoetmulder 1982: 1044). The more elegant term is *pangunadika* (or *pangunakika*, cf. *kawi unadhika* 'the pros and cons (of an action), what to do or what not to do', Zoetmulder 1982: 2119). In the play a synonym of this quality is *siksa* or *iksa* 'learning; skill; instruction'.

drink for hours is not to have (*pang*)*lokika*. If leaders are, or have, *lokika*, they fit the tasks to the people according to what they are good at and enjoy. A leader who is not fully familiar with the kinds and degrees of capability of those under his command, what must be done, the resources available, or who fails to consider possible courses of action before deciding on the most appropriate, lacks *lokika*. So intelligently planned and co-ordinated action is likely to be botched and the outcome to be a mess.

Again the actors dwelt upon the issue of agency. *Panglokika* or *pangunadika* is the ability to appreciate and work with other people's capacities and limits for effective thought and action. The actors spelt out that the planning and execution of anything significant depend crucially on the circumstances. This is an account of leadership, which is very sensitive to the particularities of the context and the situation in question. But, as the actors often reiterated, above all it is sensitive to the complex motivations of people, even 'ordinary' Balinese. Instead of being dismissed as 'human resources' or the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience (Geertz 1980: 13), the undertaking is likely to be successful to the extent that every person is able actively to participate to the best, but within the confines, of their ability. That nothing happens if people don't want to do the work and the distractions to which people are prone are themes the play kept returning to.

The success of a rite cannot be achieved by organization alone. To deal with the non-manifest requires specialists who understand the right procedures. So only when kings are advised correctly by *brahmana* high priests – as the Panasar noted – will the populace be prepared to participate. The actors do not represent them as tokens to be ordered around, but as part agents who choose whether and how well to participate.²³⁰ Wijil then outlined the Three Key Roles: the offering specialist (usually a woman), the prince and key members of society as witnesses, and the high priests.²³¹ Wijil though returned to a popular theme in theatre:

²³⁰ In the summer of 1992, the same local prince who paid for the play organized a cremation. The villagers objected to how he set about planning and inviting them to participate, so most refused to have anything to do with it. The result was a fiasco, which much of the village sat around and watched with amusement.

²³¹ In later discussion with the actor playing the Panasar, he said that properly the roles are: the officiating priest, the witness (the prince) and the offering expert. The act of

even if all the required offices are fulfilled, without a willing labour force nothing will happen. All must concentrate their thoughts on the venture for it to go well.

In the course of the play, several different words were used to specify different aspects of organizing, which the commentators explained to me and added others. The main ones are:

1. *Ngadegin* is the task of a king, prince or senior person, in village society of local leaders. It is to take the initiative in planning and the overall responsibility for the entire execution of some major work, and being the aegis under which the work is undertaken. It is therefore not 'managing', but constituting the conditions for the realization of some enterprise. There is a link to the idea of 'witnessing'. No major undertaking can occur without a senior or royal person being present. As I have argued elsewhere, the witness may be regarded as the agent of what happens and those who carry out the work his or her instruments (1990b: 107-14).²³²
2. *Mapaitungan* is the discussion of the case for and against embarking on some undertaking, including questions of who is in favour, its advisability, as well as the main details of planning as to whom will be in principle responsible for what. The word is also used for deliberation, as when the Panasar and Wijil talk over things before waiting at court.
3. *Mapidabdab* is the more detailed planning of the resources, timing, the division of labour, work schedules etc.
4. *Niwakang* is giving of instructions to the personnel concerned as to what has to be done, after proper discussion with them of the organization of work.
5. *Madabdabang* is managing the actual execution of work on a day today basis, and for rites consists of two related tasks. These are:
6. *Ngétangang* is to be in charge or responsible for the organization and running of some public activity.
7. *Ngawasin* is supervising or over-viewing work, and is distinct from *ngétangang*, the two commonly requiring different people who must work closely together.²³³ The vision that the actors and commentators

witnessing is not passive, but suggests taking ultimately responsibility for what happens, see Hobart 1990b: 107-20.

²³² *Ngadegin* connotes to command (*magambel*) something and is often used with special reference to rites. *Adeg* in verb form connotes 'to stand, exist, establish', cf. *kawi adeg* 'standing erect, being in function, reigning, being established'.

²³³ For example, during temple festivals in Tengahpadang it is the *klian dinas*, the government-recognized ward head who is responsible for *ngawasin*, while the head of the ward as a religious group, the *klian désa* is said to *ngétangang* the work (*karya*).

present of the functions of kingship certainly involves rites, but not of 'the immobility, the impassivity, and the placidity' (Geertz, 1980: 130) of rulers as 'divine kings'. Geertz confuses calm mastery with inactivity, ritual with ineffectiveness. The Balinese actors in this play do not concur.

Extract 4: Admonishing the prince^{iv}

- Headman:* (*He addresses the prince.*) Your old retainer begs your indulgence. I, the village head here in Nusa, am old only in years. I have been full of awe to see how my noble Lord has governed, together with my daughter, whom you have elevated. (*He seeks implicit affirmation from the Panasar*) Is that not so, my friend? I have heard news that your revered Majesty **who rules the country** is to fulfil your vow, **because** you have received a gift from the God in the Bat Cave. What are your actual plans? Should you be bantering with one another like this? Should you be playing around like this? It is time for the temple festival. Are you going to complete the task by fooling around with each other? It is important that this old man...²³⁴
- Panasar:* Good Heavens! You are correct to mention this. My Lord, your minister has a reminder for you.
- Prince:* (*Sings.*) This is just the preamble.
- Panasar:* I say, old man!
- Headman:* What? What?
- Panasar:* (*He paraphrases the prince's previous words.*) 'Do not draw the wrong impression from my being here with my wife. You say we are just bantering, but that is not so. I have thought through the matter of paying off my debt, because I have succeeded in begetting an Heir.'
- Prince:* (*Sings.*) **Because** everything has been prepared.
- Princess:* Father, do not be sad. Everything has been made ready. I've done it all. What's more, I've planned it down to the last detail.
- Headman:* **I now understand, having heard what** (the prince) **said**, my friend. (*Then to the prince.*) I beg your indulgence, do not let your anger rise, my honourable

²³⁴ The job of reminding the high and mighty of their serious obligations is a well-established role of servants in life.

Lord. I am old only in years. If these years (of experience) are worth anything, **may I be bold enough to indicate to you...**

Panasar: That's right.

Headman: ...Just that **humans are engulfed by passion and ignorance**. If they were all overcome by **goodness**, that would be fine. Just so long as they are not irrevocably overwhelmed by **desire and sloth** and forget their worship. People just say that they will do the work, but nothing gets done. Now, if **my turn** to help has come, if it is time to press ahead, I shall ask for assistance from my kith and kin.

Panasar: Yes!

Headman: All your subjects in Nusa should come and perform service.

Panasar: So that they may also participate **while it is the right moment** to complete the fulfilment of the vow.

Close to the end of the play, the old village head (*Bendésa*) of Nusa Penida, a low caste man but of some status, came on stage. After some obscene wordplay on the fact that he kept on missing his stroke when pounding his betel-nut mortar, he turned to address the prince. He spoke with great respect, in elegant high Balinese mixed with *kawi*, to his elevated son-in-law. His clear rebuke to the prince, and to his daughter, was less that of a parent castigating the young for carelessness than of a man whose standing permitted him, however courteously, to admonish them to stop playing around and attend to the work at hand. That his advice was timely was confirmed by the Panasar.

In theatre, ministers and close servants often correct and may even rebuke their lords in private or before audiences of family and close courtiers. I cannot say how far they did so in the pre-conquest period. There are of course no longer royal ministers, but I have heard closer personal servants reprimand their masters or mistresses, albeit using appropriately elevated language. From the play however it is evident that there is more to it than this. First, one should not confuse the elegance of form – what Geertz depicts as Balinese ‘ceremoniousness’ – with what people actually say or what the listener understands by what is said. Second, the officials and even servants remain partly agents, not just the instruments or subjects of their superiors’ commands. Most important the last two extracts make it abundantly clear that

priests, ministers, personal servants and even the populace are, in varying and subordinate degree, co-agents in the performance of the rite. Western writing about Balinese politics tends to dwell on the person of the king, rather than on the court as the exclusive agent. A sustained theme of the play is the extent to which many people contribute differentially to a hierarchical and heterogeneous 'complex agent' on occasions such as decision-making or organizing rites. An still greater failing of much of the anthropological literature²³⁵ is to underestimate the importance of Divinity as the supreme agent, not just in performing rites – a point the actors repeatedly stress.

To return to the excerpt, the prince (more fully explicated by the Panasar) accepted the criticism and explained that all the preparations were complete. The reference to the preamble was that one should not proceed straight to work without discussion first. When starting on a major undertaking to which guests are invited, one does not proceed straight to the activity to hand, but one should chat, joke and offer food first. The old village head turned the discussion round to offer a warning (*panglèmèk*) to the audience about the dangers of empty words. The sort of people who profess to be religious (*maagama*) may be very lazy when it actually comes to doing anything.

Finally the old headman said that he would organize his kin and the prince's subjects. Here he acts as a subaltern in Gramsci's sense of the role peculiar to a sub-lieutenant, who is positioned between officers and lower ranks, and so by extension who mediates between the élite and the masses (1971: 14). However he does far more than just convey orders from the prince, or officials, to those who do the work. He has to explain to those under him what the rite is about and convince them of the desirability of participating actively. Equally he has to inform the court about the feelings of the political subjects. If the populace think the prince is fooling around, they are hardly likely to want to divert their labour and attention from, say, productive work enthusiastically to prop up what they take to be a layabout. Without detailed discussion nothing worthwhile can be achieved. However either words or actions by themselves, as the actors

²³⁵ There are notable exceptions of course. Most immediately the work of Linda Connor (e.g. 1982a, 1995; Connor, Asch & Asch 1986) and Margaret Wiener (1995a, 1995a, in press) comes to mind.

repeatedly reminded the audience, are not enough. Any major work requires co-ordinating people and projects in practice.

This is the simplest form of articulation. The notion however extends easily to more complex activities. In this sense, articulation is not so much about expressing ideas, whether about ritual, leadership or power. Nor is it simply the business of bringing people together, administering, still less managing them. As the play makes clear, minimally it involves the activity, classically assumed by rulers, of bringing together on particular occasions, resources, labour, expertise, experience, disparate sections of society and competing interest groups to forge a common purpose and to ensure its successful completion. Doing so is not just an act of framing, but at once a public act of mind and practical action, which is far from easy to accomplish. Such an act is less theatrical spectacle, than the feat of linking the possible and ideal with the achievable and actual, where non-manifest Agency may always make mockery of the plans of mice and men.

Pulling off one of these great rites before a highly critical audience of Balinese exemplifies and instantiates – rather than expresses – the ruler's capacity to make the manifest and non-manifest worlds work together successfully for a moment. In so doing however, rulers are not just engaging in a complicated feat of social mechanics. They are reiterating how they imagine the world should be and their role in making it as it should be. As circumstances are continually changing, and rulers and their experts interpreting what is necessary or appropriate differently, such articulations are never static. So, Geertz is way off the mark when he wrote that, in Bali,

the scale of things varied, and their brilliance, as well as the details of their immediate expression. But not, as far as I can see, between, say, 1343 and 1906, what they were all about (1980: 134)

How, after all, did Balinese themselves learn about such definitive articulations? Few participated directly in any given rite, most learned about them subsequently by word of mouth or by their re-enactment in readings and theatre²³⁶ – that is in subsequent

²³⁶ A good example of the textual articulation of a rite is in Adrian Vickers's 1991 study of the *Geguritan Padam Warak*, about the sacrifice of a rhinoceros at a great royal

articulations, which inevitably re-interpret events and ideas for different audiences.

Extract 5: Witnessing the rite^v

- Elder:* Come on and arrange to tell the assembled Ladies and Gentlemen.²³⁷ Come on, so we aren't late.
- Panasar:* (Sings an extract from a *kakawin*.) **Om. I offer homage to God and may it be witnessed by The Wise Ones in the Three Worlds.**²³⁸
- Elder:* It's (already) crowded inside the temple, very crowded.
- Panasar:* (He continues singing from the *kakawin*.) **Outwardly and inwardly, your abject slave is faithful to (your Lordship) and there is nothing else.**²³⁹
- Elder:* Let us concentrate our thoughts on God, now that we can be said to be ...(finished).
- Panasar:* In the visible and invisible worlds, I offer my homage, I hope that the redemption has been witnessed by our Lord (and by God).²⁴⁰
- Elder:* Yes.

cremation. The text notably draws attention to the different ways in which different Balinese, including the author, understood what was going on.

²³⁷ This seems to be a multiple reference. Within the play, it suggests they are going to speak to members of the congregation. In the context of the performance, it indicates that they are nearing the end and, further, that it is time to tell the play's audience that the vow has been fulfilled. The commentators thought that this was also an invitation to the audience to prepare to worship, although most of them would have done so before the play, rather than afterwards.

²³⁸ There was a difference between the Panasar's and the commentators' account of what **Trilokasarana** referred to. The commentators said they were only guessing, but they took it to be three worlds' (namely **swargaloka**, heaven (the place of souls, *burbuah*, *suah*); **mercapada**, the world of men, earth; and **kawah**, hell. The Panasar said that he understood **Trilokasarana** to be the Supreme Being (*Sang Ngawisésané*), protector of the three worlds, namely Divinity.

²³⁹ The commentators' and the Panasar's explication of this passage coincided. A problem arose for the commentators however over how to gloss **tanana waneh**. They took it initially as referring to having no other master. When I discussed the passage with the village's recognized *kawi* expert, he parsed it as 'there is no other, there is nothing else,' in the sense of 'I have no other hidden feeling which I am not showing, my inside hides nothing not shown by my exterior'. The commentators agreed this seemed a better translation.

²⁴⁰ Here the Panasar is paraphrasing the *kawi* in Balinese and also confirming (*nyekenang*) that the act has been fully witnessed both by those in this world and those beyond it.

- Panasar:* Because it is fitting according to the promise.
Elder: **The Three Who Act as Witnesses. (Tri Pinaka Saksi).**
Panasar: Ah! The witness of fire.
Elder: The sun is **like** a great light (which illuminates the world).
Panasar: That's so!
Elder: Humans are witnesses in the form of society.
Panasar: Correct.
Elder: Demons witness the occasion (of the payment).
Panasar: It's so.
Elder: In that case, let's go.
Panasar: Indeed! That is all. For any omissions and commissions, we beg your forgiveness.²⁴¹

Should the reader still doubt that such ceremonies hinge on the relationship between the manifest and non-manifest, the actors spelt it out once again at the end. The Panasar, as key figure in the play, then uttered the crucial phrase which followed: 'because it is appropriate according to the promise'. The point is that the actors confirmed publicly to both the invisible (divine) and human audiences that the terms of the Prince of Nusa Penida's promise – and the local prince's vow – had indeed been met. Were this not done, the play and the redemption of the local prince's vow would have been in vain. This is not about 'expressing' a world-view, but about getting something done and ensuring before witnesses that it has been made clear that it has been.

Accordingly, the play concluded with explicating precisely who these witnesses are. The actor playing the village elder produced an unusual triad. The commentators and the Panasar agreed that the Tri Pinaka Saksi in the manifest world is usually the work force, the leaders and the priests. In the immaterial world, they are fire, water and smoke (or air). The Panasar did not contradict him publicly on stage however. The Panasar then concluded with an apology (*pangaksama*) for any excesses or shortcomings. Once again, this is not yet more Balinese ceremonial 'etiquette', but the serious business of deflecting the spectators' – and far more

²⁴¹ This is the second, and more formal *pangaksama*, apology. To be complete the actors among the commentators were insistent that the first part should properly be '*Wantah amunika ti(ti)ang nyidayang ngaturang ayah*', 'That is all that I am able to offer by way of service'.

important – Divinity’s displeasure for any failings on the actors’ part. The play, itself a necessary part of such religious events (*aci*), is used to articulate ideas about reality (*tattwa*), art and ritual.

Conclusion

Writers and scholars on Bali – Clifford Geertz being the acme – have often presented Balinese as more or less ‘obsessed’ with rank and ritual, with ceremoniousness, grandeur and etiquette (1980: 102), with symbols more than their content. In all this, rulers engage in a ‘cultural megalomania’ (1980: 19) of pomp and pretension, leaving kings as prisoners of their own thespian extravaganzas, in a ‘paradox of active passivity’ (1980: 131). The king in Bali is reduced to ‘an icon’ (1980: 109), ‘a locked-in chess king, separated from the intricacies of power mongering by the requirements of his own pretensions: a pure sign’ (1980: 133). The presuppositions of Geertz’s own argument drive him to the conclusion that

the state ceremonials of classical Bali were metaphysical theatre, theatre designed to express a view of the ultimate nature of reality (1980: 104).

Whose view? What reality?

The problem of such essentialized accounts is that they commonly extrapolate one interpretation – often of dubious provenance – from a changing and under-determined state of affairs, which are endlessly contested and subject to rival representations by different groups of people. Even in the moments of tight articulation and so closure, we are dealing with what is perhaps better imagined as an argument between protagonists. For most purposes however, even this overstates the degree of coherence and agreement about what is at issue, which ‘argument’ suggests. It also intimates that it is clear precisely who is entitled to articulate, enunciate or participate, and under what circumstances. This is not to suggest that pre-colonial Bali was a postmodernist free-for-all, but that the accounts we have are mostly aristocratic articulations of how Bali ought to be.²⁴² Even

²⁴² Among the groups hierarchized or marginalized by aristocratic accounts – and also, interestingly, in the play, where they are treated as functionaries – rather obviously are

within the framework of a single play, matters are far more complicated. Above I only outlined a few sections dealing with rites and the role of leader. Other parts of the play advance quite different ways of understanding what was and is going on. That is such theatre is notably polyphonic (Hobart 2000).

Accounts like Geertz's rest upon an increasingly quaint-looking vision of society.

Against this essentialist vision we tend nowadays to accept the *infinitude of the social*, that is, the fact that any structural system is limited, that it is always surrounded by an 'excess of meaning' which it is unable to master and that, consequently, 'society' as a unitary and intelligible object which grounds its own partial processes is an impossibility (Laclau: 1990: 90b).

Part of this rests, as Margaret Wiener has pointed out, on why there is extraordinary closure at work in such anthropological accounts.

Anthropologists have long been concerned with representations – with objects, images, tales and activities that are treated as symbolic of something else. At the base of many anthropologies, whether Durkheimian or Marxian in inspiration, is a Hegelian presupposition: namely, that the things people say or do or create are really objectifications of who they are, that most human activity is a process of self-representation. Just as Hegel regarded art and religion as expressions in disguised form of historically specific forms of consciousness, anthropologists have commonly treated what appear to Euro-Americans to be similar phenomena as ways groups express their social reality (as defined by the anthropologist) (1995b: 499, parentheses in the original).

We have no grounds for assuming identical criteria of representation inform the creative and critical thinking of the peoples anthropologists work with. Geertz's ideas of representation and theatre are plain Eurocentric. He also necessarily trivializes metaphysics, because a stronger account would undermine his entire approach, let alone argument.

Balinese Brahmins, a point made by Rubinstein (1991). The retrospective articulation of Bali – by the Dutch drawing upon British imaginings of India (Inden 1990) – as a caste society, neatly disposed of the problem of what other groups of intellectuals had an active interest in what was going on (cf. Connor 1982a on the crucial importance of peasant intellectuals).

Metaphysics, as I note in the Introduction, is too important and useful a notion to anthropologists to be dismissed as a simple synonym for the ultimate nature of things. As Collingwood noted, history and anthropology are singular disciplines, because they require not only analyzing their subject-matter using whatever the current academic frame of reference is. At the same time they depend upon understanding their object of study, using the presuppositions and practices of the people whose thinking it is, or was (Boucher 1992). The study of the presuppositions, which people actually use in their thinking, is what Collingwood meant by metaphysics (1940). Such a study goes in a diametrically opposite direction from the work of Geertz, which ends up being narcissism-by-proxy, as we have no grounds on which to impose our presuppositions upon our subjects of study.

In her study of the Great Door of the old court capital of Klungkung, Wiener neatly avoids the temptation of reducing her analysis to interpreting the door as a set of symbols in which Balinese depict their condition. She recognizes that there are many possible kinds of articulations. Far from being reducible to Balinese representing themselves symbolically, instead she argues they may offer ‘a crack in ordinary reality’ (1995b: 500). Wiener is particularly interested in Balinese ideas about power. She suggests that the door may form

a pragmatic bridge to a place where ordinary perceptions and understandings dissolve, a place where new possibilities are assembled... For Balinese, such spaces are places of power (in the sense of potency), places that provide access to mastery over efficacy, to the capacity to make things happen through intent (1995b: 500).

Are the extracts from the play about power of this kind? In part I think they are. Certainly the play presupposes that mundane political power is dependent upon intangible potencies, which rulers must master if they are to be successful. In one sense, the extracts are about how to set about harnessing such potentialities. ‘Ritual’ is therefore not some symbolic spectacle or game but, granted the awesome power of the non-manifest, rites are among the most important kinds of action of all. However, as the actors kept reiterating, power is not just dependent on efficacious relations with the non-manifest world. An intertwined theme was the crucial part ordinary people play in sustaining the polity and

the ruler. The image villagers used was of a lion without a forest. Such a beast is too vulnerable to survive long. Equally a forest without animals is a lifeless and incomplete place. They need each other. In another sense, the extracts, apparently paradoxically, use the example of an ostensibly feudal régime, to advance a demotic argument: the dependence of all rulers upon the wills and active participation of ordinary, able people. Kings are then not just nostalgic memories. Rather their actions set the standards by which presidents, ministers, generals, governors and local bosses should be judged and, if need be, found wanting.

It is however quite what it is a ruler is supposed to do, which shows up the difference in the presuppositions of Balinese and scholars like Geertz, who implicitly equates power and efficacy with action – as if rulers did not have all sorts of functionaries to do this for them. So Geertz is reduced to imagining the ideal ruler to be a sign, an icon, a ‘paradox of active passivity’ (1980: 131). As the play makes repeatedly clear, power is about articulation.²⁴³ Lesser officials act as subalterns, while the ruler’s task is to articulate different worlds in two senses. First the ruler must bring together the manifest world of human action and the non-manifest world of power and thought. Second, the ruler must bring together all the different worlds, manifest and intangible, of his or her various subjects, conflicting and potentially incommensurable as they are.²⁴⁴ There is another articulation, of which the actors were quite conscious – that is their own. Traditional and modern media have enormous articulatory potential. That is why the New Order régime has engaged in draconian censorship, not just of film and television, but of popular theatre. Under these circumstances then, it is hardly surprising that actors and film directors have been among the leading protagonists of reform in Indonesia. But you do not produce counter-articulations from thin air, but work with what there is that people know. So, according to the play at least, kings were not just ornamental cabbages.

²⁴³ The actors also made a more theoretical point. Articulation is a material, economic and political act, not just a matter of fitting ideas together.

²⁴⁴ Evidently, although the play does not dwell on this, the worlds of potential allies and enemies are at least as important.

Endnotes

ⁱ Extract 1:

- Wijil:* Nénia pidabdab Ida Déwa Agung, Sri Aji Palaka, di tanah Nusa agamané kènkèn?
- Panasar:* Ento anak patut kapalajahin kalimbakang di masyarakat.
- Wijil:* Dasar iraga maagama abesik ada tattwa disubané ada tattwa sing masih ia mapikenoh. Ada lantes tata susila laksanang nyen tattwané, totoa?
- Panasar:* Kondèn masih genep.
- Wijil:* Tondèn masih adung, apang nyak ada seni, ada ané madan buin abesik ané madan ‘upacara’.
- Panasar:* Nah!
- Wijil:* Apa ento artiné ‘upa’?
- Panasar:* Apa artiné?
- Wijil:* ‘Upa’ ané madan iraga maekin bayu, ‘cara’ ané madan jalan ‘Bina paksa bina paksi’. Jalané malènang tatujon iraga ngarastitiyang Ida Sang Hyang Widi.
- Panasar:* Uh!
- Wijil:* Mawinan ada yadnya ené suba agamané di Nusa bengongan icang beli tekèn apa adané, pikamkam Ida Déwa Agung yadnya wit sangkaning Tri Rena.
- Panasar:* Utangé ané tatelu ento.
- Wijil:* Tatelu ento. Rena wit sangkaning asung, mawinan sing dadi lepas anak suba Tri Hita Karana.
- Panasar:* Ané tatelu ento patut adung.
- Wijil:* Patut adung.

ⁱⁱ Extract 2:

- Sri A. Palaka:* Ngastawa Ida Sang Hyang Widi.
- Wijil:* Paman! Paman! Paman!
- Panasar:* Kènkèn? Kènkèn?
- Wijil:* Apa eda nyen paman salah ulat. Apang eda nyen paman ningeh ané tuara. Ené-ené yadnyané ané baosang, acé. Apang eda nyen paman suwud, sing nyen ada lèn, patuh cara raosé tunian ring Ida Sang Hyang Parama *Kawi*...
- Sri A. Palaka:* Sakalané kala angèrti. Sakala niskala sujati.
- Wijil:* Inggih! Madaging. ‘Paman. Paman. Yèn paman mayadnya niskala, yèn sing sakalané malu, sing nyidang nyen mayadnya.

Panasar: Aa.
Wijil: Yadnya niskala ‘dana punia’ ené anggo malu. Kèrtiyané anggo malu.
Sri A. Palaka: Jagat, mangda rahayu.
Wijil: Déwa Ratu, Déwa Ratu, Men? Men?
Panasar: Mawanan makèrti sakala niskala. Mula dharmaning Sang Angawa Rat.

ⁱⁱⁱ Extract 3:

Wijil: Di ngelah gaéné apang ngelah iraga siksa. Pangelah iraga sakti désa kala patra.
Panasar: Patra.
Sri A. Palaka: Sang Putus sareng miletin.
Wijil: Patut. Patut.
Panasar: Sang suta sida nyarengin.
Sri A. Palaka: (Inaudible.)
Wijil: Men.
Panasar: Kènkèn ento?
Wijil: Paman. Yèn mayadnya telu ané madan kabaos Tri Manggalaning Yadnya.
Panasar: Uh! Tri Manggalaning Yadnya. Abesik:
Wijil: Ada anak ngaé gaé yadnya mapidabdab, Sang Yajamana.
Panasar: Daduwa?
Wijil: Ada maan nyanggra tukang banten, masyarakat secara sosial.
Panasar: Aa, tatelu?
Wijil: Ada dang ané madan Brahmanacarya ané suba ngelarang palasraya.
Panasar: Apang buka tatelu ada, kasal anak nangun karya Tri Manggalaning Yadnya apang ada.
Wijil: Mawinan Agama Hindu ajaran berjenjang, api ada padanda, api ada tukang banten, anak ngelah gaé sing ada, sing masih pangus.
Panasar: Nyènja ajaka maitungan, sing kèto?
Wijil: Aduh ento mawinan matur.
Sri A. Palaka: Eda carat curut.
Wijil: Eda nyen paling.
Panasar: Apang sing pati kaplug paling.

^{iv} Extract 4:

Bendésa: Mamitang lugra, titiang parekan werda, titiang. Titiang I Bandésa Nusa tuaé tua tuwuh titiang ring Nusa. Bengong

-
- titiang ngantenang pidabdab anggan Palungguh I Ratu kasarengin antuk pianak titiang, Wang Jeroné, Pan Cening. Miragi titiang orta anggan Palungguh Dalem merdhaning jagat jagi naur sasangi, dèning sampun paican Ida Batara Gua Lawah. Unteng kairing? Ené dadi macanda-canda? Ené dadi maplalian? Puraé suba bakal odalan. Ené gaéné pragat ben macanda dong kènten? Sarat Bapa tua...
- Panasar:* Aratu Déwagung! Patut nganika anaké. Cokor I Déwa wènten pawungu paman druwén.
- Sri A. Palaka:* Anggèn titiang panglengkara.
- Panasar:* Aduh! Bapa.
- Bendésa:* Men? Men?
- Panasar:* 'Eda nyen Bapa salah sengguh, adan tiangé dini ajak I Adi. Raosang Bapa macanda, sing ada kèto. Suba anaké tiang minehin lakar mayah penauran tiangé, sawirèh suba prasida tiang ngawetuwang preti santana.'
- Sri A. Palaka:* Dèning sami sampun puput.
- Luh Wedani:* Bapa, eda Bapa sebet. Anak suba pragat, ento baan tiang makejang. Apa buin, anak suba madabdab baan tiang.
- Bendésa:* Pan Cening, mamitang lugra, sampunang mungguh piduka anggan Palungguh Cokor I Déwa, titiyang, tua, tua tuwuh, yèn enyakja tua lingsir luwung, titiyang ten jaga rinungu mapainget,
- Panasar:* Patut.
- Bendésa:* Kéwanten manusa kaliput dèning rajah mwang tamah. Yèn nyakja satwamé ngaliput ia melah, apang eda kadung rajah tamah ngaliput engsap tekèn yadnya. Ngorang dogèn magae sing bakat jemak. Nah! Yèn suba sangkaning sumedia, yèn suba sarat lautang, Bapa lakar madiolas tekèn nyama braya.
- Panasar:* Nah!
- Bendésa:* Apang enyak panjak Nusa sami buka onyang lakar aturang.
- Panasar:* Mangda nyarengin naler rimempeng jagi ngalaksanayang panauran puniki.

^v Extract 5:

- Elder:* Jalan dabdabang matur ring Ida Dané, jalan apang eda kasèp.
- Panasar:* Wong sembahning anatha tinghalana dé Trilokasarana.
- Elder:* Ento ramé di Jero, ramé.
- Panasar:* Wahya (a)dhiyatmika sembah ingulun ning jeng tanana waneh.
- Elder:* Pangacepé ring Ida Sang Hyang Widi Wasa, ané jani suba madan...
- Panasar:* Sakala niskala pangubaktin titiang, dumadak sampun kasaksinin panauran Ida Déwagung.

Elder: Aa.
Panasar: Duaning sampun manut kadi semayané.
Elder: Tri Pinaka Saksi
Panasar: Aa! Saksi geni.
Elder: Surya suba pinaka sinar agung.
Panasar: Nah!
Elder: Manusa masaksi suba masyarakat.
Panasar: Beneh.
Elder: Buta saksi galahé.
Panasar: Aa.
Elder: Yèning kèto, jalan.
Panasar: Ainggih! Wantah amunika. Kirang langkung nunas ampura.

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, L. 1991. Writing against culture. In *Recapturing anthropology: working in the present*. ed. R.G. Fox, New Mexico: School of American Research, Santa Fe.
- Agger, B. 1992. *Cultural studies as critical theory*. London: Falmer Press.
- Althusser, L. 1972. Marx's relation to Hegel. In *Politics and history: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx*. London: New Left Books.
- 1984. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In *Essays on ideology*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, B.R.O'G. 1990 [1972]. The idea of power in Javanese culture. In *Language and power: exploring political cultures in Indonesia*. London: Cornell Univ. Press; originally published in *Culture and politics in Indonesia*. eds. C. Holt, B.R.O'G. Anderson & J. Siegel, London: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Ankersmit, F.R. 1983. *Narrative logic: a semantic analysis of the historian's language*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- 1989. Historiography and postmodernism. *History and theory* 27, 2.
- Anscombe, G.E.M. 1957. *Intention*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Appadurai, A. 1990. Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. In *Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity*. ed. M. Featherstone, London: Sage.
- Archer, M. 1990. Theory, culture and post-industrial society. In *Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity*. ed. M. Featherstone, London: Sage.
- Arnold, M. 1932 [1869]. *Culture and anarchy*. London: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Asad, T. 1986. The concept of cultural translation in British social anthropology. In *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. eds. J. Clifford & G. Marcus, London: California Univ. Press.
- Austin, J.L. 1975. *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ayer, A. J. 1936. *Language, truth and logic*. London: Gollancz.

-
- Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. Discourse in the novel. In *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, ed. M. Holquist, Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.
- 1984a. *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Trans. C. Emerson, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- 1984b. *Rabelais and his world*. trans. H. Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- 1986a. Towards a methodology for the human sciences. In *Speech genres and other late essays*. trans. V.W. McGee, eds. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.
- 1986b. From notes made in 1970-71. In *Speech genres and other late essays*. trans. V.W. McGee, eds. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.
- 1986c. The problem of speech genres. In *Speech genres and other late essays*. trans. V.W. McGee, eds. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.
- Barley, N. 1983. *Symbolic structures: an exploration of the culture of the Dowayos*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Barnes, R.H. 1974. *Kédang: a study of the collective thought of an Eastern Indonesian people*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Barthes, R. 1977. From work to text. In *Image-music-text*. trans. S. Heath, Glasgow: Collins; reprinted 1979 in *Textual strategies: perspectives in post-structural criticism*. ed. J.V. Harari, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Bateson, G. 1937. An old temple and a new myth. *Djawa* 17: 291-307.
- 1949. Bali; the value system of a steady state. In *Social structure: essays presented to A.R. Radcliffe-Brown*. ed. M. Fortes, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bateson, G. & Mead, M. 1942. *Balinese character: a photographic analysis*. New York: Academy of Sciences
- Baudrillard, J. 1975. *The mirror of production*. trans. M. Poster, St.Louis: Telos Press.
- 1983a. *Simulations*. trans. P. Foss, P. Patton & P. Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e).
- 1983b. *In the shadow of the silent majorities...or the end of the social and other essays*. trans. P. Foss, P. Patton & J. Johnston, New York: Semiotext(e).
- 1987. *Forget Foucault*. New York: Semiotext(e).

-
- 1993. *Symbolic exchange and death*. trans. I.A. Hamilton, London: Sage.
- Becker, A.L. 1979. Text-building, epistemology and aesthetics in Javanese shadow theatre. In *The imagination of reality: essays in Southeast Asian coherence systems*. eds. A.L. Becker & A.A. Yengoyan, Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Benedict, R. 1932. Configurations of culture in North America. *American Anthropologist* 34: 1-27.
- Benoist, J-M. 1978. *The structural revolution*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Berg, C.C. 1929. *Kidung Pamancangah: de geschiedenis van het rijk van Gelgel*. Javaansch-Balische Historische Geschriften I, Santpoort: Mees.
- 1932. *Babad Bla-Batuh, de geschiedenis van een tak der familie Jelantik*. Javaansch-Balische Historische Geschriften II, Santpoort: Mees.
- Bernstein, R.J. 1983. *Beyond objectivism and relativism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bhabha, H. 1990. Introduction: narrating the nation. In *Nation and narration*. ed. H. Bhabha, London: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. 1979. *The possibility of naturalism: a philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Bierce, A. 1958. *The Devil's Dictionary*. New York: Dover.
- Black, M. 1962. Metaphor. In *Models and metaphors: studies in language and philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Bloch, M. 1974. Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation: is religion an extreme form of traditional authority? *Archives Européennes de sociologie* 15: 55-81.
- 1977. The past and the present in the present. *Man* 12, 2: 278-92.
- Bloch, M. 1985. From cognition to ideology. In *Power and knowledge: anthropological and sociological approaches*. ed. R. Fardon, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- 1989. *Ritual, history and power: selected papers in anthropology*. L.S.E. London: Athlone.

-
- 1991. Language, anthropology and cognitive science. *Man* 26, 2: 183-98.
- Bohm, D. 1980. *Wholeness and the implicate order*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Boon, J.A. 1974. The progress of the ancestors in a Balinese temple-group (pre-1906-1972). *Journal of Asian Studies* 34: 7-25.
- 1977. *The anthropological romance of Bali: dynamic perspectives in marriage & caste, politics & religion*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1982. *Other tribes, other scribes: symbolic anthropology in the comparative study of cultures, histories, religions, and texts*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1990. *Affinities and extremities: crisscrossing the bittersweet ethnology of East Indies history, Hindu-Balinese culture, and Indo-European allure*. London: Univ. of Chicago Press
- Boucher, D. 1992. Editor's introduction. To R.G. Collingwood, *The new Leviathan or man, society, civilization and barbarism*. Revised edn., Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. trans. R. Nice, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1984. *Distinction: the social critique of the judgement of taste*. trans. R. Nice, London & New York: Routledge.
- 1990. *The logic of practice*. trans. R. Nice, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bourdillon, M.F.C. 1978. Knowing the world or hiding it: a response to Maurice Bloch. *Man*. 13, 4: 591-99.
- Brokensha, D.W., Warren, D.M. & Werner, O. eds. 1980. *Indigenous knowledge systems and development*. Lanham, M.D.: Univ. Press of America.
- Budianta, M. 2000. Discourse of cultural identity in Indonesia during the 1997-1998 monetary crisis. *Inter-Asia cultural studies*, 1.1: 109-128.
- Bunzl, M. 1996. Franz Boas and the Humboldtian tradition: from *Volksgeist* and *Nationalcharakter* to an anthropological concept of culture. In *Volksgeist as method and ethic: essays on Boasian ethnography and the German anthropological tradition. History of anthropology. Vol. 8.* ed. G.W. Stocking, Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 17-78.

-
- Burghart, R. 1993. His Lordship at the cobblers' well. In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.
- Burridge, K. 1971. *New heaven, new earth: a study of millenarian activities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Carr, D. 1986. *Time, narrative, and history*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- de Certeau, M. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. trans. S. Rendall, London: Univ. of California Press.
- Clifford, J. 1988a. *The predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*. London: Harvard Univ. Press.
- 1988b. On ethnographic authority. In *The predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*. London: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. eds. 1986. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. London: California Univ. Press.
- Cohen, A.P. 1993. Segmentary knowledge: a Whalsay sketch. In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.
- Collingwood, R.G. 1933. *An essay on philosophical method*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1938. *The principles of art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1939. *An autobiography*. Oxford: Univ. Press.
- 1940. *An essay on metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1942 [1992]. *The new Leviathan or man, society, civilization and barbarism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1945. *The idea of nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1946. *The idea of history*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- n.d. *[Fairy tales.] Three methods of approach: philological, functional, psychological*. Unpub. ms.
- Connor, L. 1982a. Balinese therapy in theory and practice: the unbounded self. In *Cultural conceptions of mental health and therapy*. eds. A.J. Marsella & G.M. White, Dordrecht: Reidel.
- 1982b. *In darkness and light: a study of peasant intellectuals in Bali*. Ph.D. thesis in the University of Sydney.
- 1995. The action of the body of society: washing a corpse in Bali. *JRAI* 1, 3: 537-559.

-
- 1996. Contestation and transformation of Balinese ritual: the case of *ngaben ngirit*. In *Being modern in Bali: image and change*. ed. A. Vickers, New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies 43.
- n.d. Dying by fire and kris: speaking to women in the realm of death. Unpub. paper to the Third International Bali Studies Workshop, Univ. of Sydney 3-7 July 1995.
- Connor, L. Asch, P. & Asch, T. 1986. *Jero Tapakan: Balinese healer, an ethnographic film monograph*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Covarrubias, M. 1937. *Island of Bali*. New York: Knopf.
- Crapanzano, V. 1986. Hermes' dilemma: the masking of subversion in ethnographic description. In *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. eds. J. Clifford and G. Marcus, London: California Univ. Press.
- Darma Putra, N. 1996. Bagaimanakah karakter orang Bali? And Orang Bali, pendendam atau tidak? *Bali Post*. 1st. & 2nd. August 1996.
- Davidson, D. 1973. On the very idea of a conceptual scheme. *Presidential address delivered before the seventieth annual eastern meeting of the American philosophical association*, reprinted 1985 in *Post-analytical philosophy*. eds. J. Rajchman & C. West, New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Day, A. 1986. How modern was modernity, how traditional tradition, in nineteenth-century Java? *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs* 20, 1: 1-37.
- Derrida, J. 1979. The supplement of copula: philosophy before linguistics. In *Textual strategies: perspectives in post-structuralist criticism*. ed. J.V. Harari, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Duff-Cooper, A. 1985a. Hierarchy, purity, and equality among a community of Balinese on Lombok. In *Contexts and levels: essays on hierarchy*. eds. R.H. Barnes, D. de Coppet & R.J. Parkin, JASO. Occasional Paper No.4, Oxford: JASO.
- 1985b. An account of the Balinese 'person' from Western Lombok. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 141, 1: 67-102.

-
- 1986. A Balinese form of life in western Lombok as a totality. *Journal of the anthropological society of Oxford* 17, 3: 207-30.
- 1987. Living with the structure of a Balinese form of life in western Lombok. *Philosophy* 84: 193-226.
- 1990. Leopold E.A. Howe and Balinese conceptions of duration. In *Shapes and images: aspects of the aesthetics of Balinese rice-growing and other studies*. Denpasar: Udayana University.
- Dumont, L. 1977. *From Mandeville to Marx*. London: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Durkheim, E. 1915. *The elementary forms of the religious life*. trans. J.W. Swain, London: Allen & Unwin.
- van Eck, R. 1876. *Balineesch-Hollandsch Woordenboek*. Utrecht: Kemink.
- Errington, S. 1979. Some comments on style in the meanings of the past. *Journal of Asian studies* 38, 2: 231-44.
- Fabian, J. 1983. *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- 1990a. *Power and performance: ethnographic explorations through proverbial wisdom and theater in Shaba, Zaire*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin.
- 1990b. *The 'vocabulary' of Elizabethville by André Yav: text, translations and interpretive essay*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- 1991a. *Time and the work of anthropology*. New York: Harwood.
- 1991b. Dilemmas of critical anthropology. In *Constructing knowledge: authority and critique in social science*. eds. L. Nencel and P. Pels, London: Sage.
- 1991c. Culture, time and the object of anthropology. In *Time and the work of anthropology*. New York: Harwood.
- Fardon, R. ed. 1990. *Localizing strategies: regional traditions of ethnographic writing*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press and Washington: Smithsonian Institute.
- Featherstone, M. ed. 1990a. *Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity*. London: Sage.
- 1990b. Global culture: an introduction. In *Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity*. ed. M. Featherstone, London: Sage.

-
- Feeley-Harnik, G. 1978. Divine kingship and the meaning of history among the Sakalava of Madagascar. *Man* 13,3: 402-17.
- Fell, A.P. 1992. Epistemological and ontological queries concerning David Carr's Time, narrative, and history. *Philosophy of the social sciences* 22, 3: 370-380.
- Feyerabend, P. 1975. *Against method: outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London: Verso.
- Foucault, M. 1967. *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*. trans. R. Howard, Tavistock: London.
- 1969. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard.
- 1970. *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences*. London: Tavistock
- 1972a. *The archaeology of knowledge*. trans. A.M. Sheridan, London: Tavistock.
- 1972b. *Histoire de la folie*. Paris: Gallimard.
- 1977. *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. trans. A. Sheridan, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- 1981. The order of discourse. trans. I. McLeod. In *Untying the text: a post-structuralist reader*. ed. R. Young, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 1982. The subject and power. Afterword to *Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. eds. H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow, Brighton: Harvester.
- 1984. *The history of sexuality I*. trans. R. Hurley, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- 1986a. *The use of pleasure: volume 2 of the history of sexuality*. trans. R. Hurley, Harmondsworth: Viking.
- 1986b. *The care of the self: volume 3 of the history of sexuality*. trans. R. Hurley, New York: Pantheon.
- 1990. Nietzsche, Freud, Marx. In *Transforming the hermeneutic context: from Nietzsche to Nancy*. eds. G.L. Ormiston & A.D. Schrift, Albany, N.Y.: New York State Univ. Press, pp. 59-67.
- Gallie, W.B. 1968. *Philosophy and the historical understanding* New York: Schocken Books.
- Geach, P.T. 1956. Good and evil. *Analysis* 17: 33-42.
- 1957. *Mental acts*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Geertz, C. 1959. Form and variation in Balinese village structure. *American anthropologist* 61: 991-1012.

-
- 1961. Review of Bali: studies in life, thought and ritual. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 117: 498-502.
 - 1966. Religion as a cultural system. In *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion*. ed. M. Banton, London: Tavistock.
 - 1967. Tihingan: a Balinese village. In *Villages in Indonesia*. ed. R.M. Koentjaraningrat, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
 - 1973a. The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man. In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973b. The growth of culture and the evolution of mind. . In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973c. Thick description: towards an interpretive theory of culture. In his *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973d. Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight. In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973e. *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973f. Person, time, and conduct in Bali. In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973g. Politics past, politics present: some notes on the uses of anthropology in understanding the new states. In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1973h. Ritual and social change: a Javanese example. In *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books; originally published in *American anthropologist* 59: 32-54.
 - 1980. *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali*. Princeton, N.J.: Univ. Press.
 - 1983a. Blurred genres: the refiguration of social thought. In *Local knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 1983b. *Local knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.

-
- 1983c. 'From the native's point of view': on the nature of anthropological understanding. In *Local knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- 1983d. Foreword. To J.S. Lansing, *The three worlds of Bali*. New York: Praeger.
- 1988. *Works and lives: the anthropologist as author*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 1991. An interview with Clifford Geertz. *Current Anthropology* 32, 5:603-613.
- Geertz, H. & Geertz, C. 1975. *Kinship in Bali*. London: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Gell, A. 1992. *The anthropology of time: cultural constructions of temporal maps and images*. Oxford: Berg.
- Gellner, E. 1970. Concepts and society. In *Rationality*. ed. B. Wilson, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1973. The entry of the philosophers. In *Cause and meaning in the social sciences*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 1983. *Nations and nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ginarsa, K. 1985. *Paribasa Bali*. Bali: Kayumas.
- Goffman, E. 1961. *Encounters: two studies in the sociology of interaction*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Gonda, J. 1952. *Sanskrit in Indonesia*. Naghpur: The International Academy of Indian Culture.
- Goodman, N. 1968. *Languages of art*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- 1971. Symposium on innate ideas: (c) The epistemological argument. In *The philosophy of language*. ed. J. Searle, Oxford: Univ. Press.
- 1972. The way the world is. In *Problems and projects*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- 1978. *Ways of worldmaking*. Hassocks: Harvester Press.
- Goris, R. 1933. Bali's hoogtijden. *Tijdschrift voor Indische taal, land- en volkenkunde* 73: 436-52; translated as 'Holidays and holy days.' In *Bali: studies in life, thought and ritual*. ed. W.F. Wertheim, The Hague: van Hoeve.
- Gramsci, A. 1971. The intellectuals. In *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. eds. & trans. Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

-
- Guermonprez, J-F. 1990. On the elusive Balinese village: hierarchy and values versus political models. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs*. 24,2.
- Habermas, J. 1978. *Knowledge and human interests*. 2nd. edn, London: Heinemann
- 1984. *The theory of communicative action: reason and the rationalization of society. Volume 1.* trans. T. McCarthy, London: Heinemann.
- 1987a. *The philosophical discourse of modernity: twelve lectures.* trans. F. Lawrence, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 1987b. *The theory of communicative action: the critique of functionalist reason. Volume 2.* trans. T. McCarthy, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Hacking, I. 1975. *Why does language matter to philosophy?* Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1982. Language, truth and reason. In *Rationality and relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1983. *Representing and intervening: introductory topics in the philosophy of natural science.* Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1990. *The taming of chance.* Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Hall, S. 1980. Encoding/decoding. In *Culture, media, language: working papers in cultural studies, 1972-79.* eds. S. Hall *et al.* London: Unwin Hyman.
- 1986. Cultural studies: two paradigms. In *Media, culture and society*. eds. R. Collins *et al.* London: Sage, originally published 1980 in *Media, culture and society* 2: 57-72.
- 1996a. Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies.* eds. D. Morley & K-H. Chen, London: Routledge.
- 1996b. On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall. In *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies.* eds. D. Morley & K-H. Chen, London: Routledge.
- 1997. The work of representation. In *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* ed. S Hall. London: Sage.
- Hallpike, C.R. 1979. *The foundations of primitive thought.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

-
- Hallward, P. 2000. The singular and the specific. *Radical philosophy*. 99: 6-18.
- Harris, M. 1969. *The rise of anthropological theory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hartley, J. 1992. Tele-ology. In *Tele-ology: studies in television*. London: Routledge.
- Heath, A. 1976. *Rational choice and exchange theory: a critique of exchange theory*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and time*. trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heine-Geldern, R. 1942. Conceptions of state and kingship in Southeast Asia. *Far eastern quarterly* 2: 15-30.
- Herbert, A. P. 1935. The reasonable man. In *Uncommon law*. London: Methuen.
- Herbert, C. 1991. *Culture and anomie: ethnographic imagination in the nineteenth century*. London: Univ. Chicago Press.
- Hesse, M. 1978. Theory and value in the social sciences. In *Action and interpretation: studies in the philosophy of the social sciences*. eds. C. Hookway and P. Pettit, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Hinzler, H. 1976. The Balinese babad. In *Profiles in Malay culture: historiography, religion and politics*. ed. Sartono Kartodirdjo, Yogyakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, Directorate General of Culture.
- 1986. The *Usana Bali* as a source of history. In *Papers on the fourth Indonesian-Dutch history conference, Yogyakarta 24-29 July 1983, Vol. II, Literature and history*. ed. T. Abdullah, Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada Univ. Press.
- Hirshkop, K. 1989. Introduction: Bakhtin and cultural theory. In *Bakhtin and cultural theory*. eds. K. Hirschkop & D. Shepherd, Manchester: Univ. Press.
- Hirst, P.Q. 1985. *Marxism and historical writing*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hirst, P.Q. & Thompson, G. 1996. *Globalization in question*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hobart, M. 1978. The path of the soul: the legitimacy of nature in Balinese conceptions of space. In *Natural symbols in South East Asia*. ed. G.B. Milner, London: SOAS., 5-28.

-
- 1979. *A Balinese village and its field of social relations*. Ph.D. Unpub. thesis in the University of London.
- 1982a. Meaning or moaning? an ethnographic note on a little-understood tribe. In *Semantic anthropology*. ed. D.J. Parkin, London & New York: Academic Press, 39-63.
- 1982b. Is interpretation incompatible with knowledge? The problem of whether the Javanese shadow play has meaning. *The interpretive study of Java*. Univ. of Bielefeld: Second Bielefeld Colloquium on South East Asia.
- 1983. Review of Geertz, C. *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali*. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic society* 1983, 1.
- 1985. Is God evil? In *The anthropology of evil*. ed. D.J. Parkin, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1990a. Who do you think you are? the authorized Balinese. In *Localizing strategies: regional traditions of ethnographic writing*. ed. R. Fardon, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press and Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 303-38.
- 1990b. The patience of plants: a note on agency in Bali. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs* 24, 2: 90-135.
- 1991a. The art of measuring mirages, or is there kinship in Bali? In *Cogitation and social organization in Southeast Asia*. eds. F. Hüsken and J. Kemp, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 145, Leiden: K.I.T.L.V. Press: 33-53.
- 1991b. Criticizing genres: Bakhtin and Bali. In *Voice, genre, text - anthropological essays in Africa and beyond*. eds. P. Baxter & R. Fardon, Manchester: Bulletin of the John Ryland Library, Univ. of Manchester 73, 3, 195-216.
- ed. 1993a. *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* London: Routledge.
- 1993b. Introduction: the growth of ignorance? In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.

-
- 1995. Engendering disquiet; or is there kinship or gender in Bali? In *'Male' and 'female' in Southeast Asia*. ed. W.J. Karim, Oxford: Berg.
- 1996. Ethnography as a practice, or the unimportance of penguins. *Europaea* II-1: 3-36.
- 2000. Live or dead? televising theatre in Bali. In *The social practice of media: anthropological interventions in an age of electronic reproduction*. eds. L. Abu-Lughod, F. Ginsburg & B. Larkin, Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Hollis, M. 1970. The limits of irrationality. In *Rationality*. ed. B. Wilson, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1977. *Models of man: philosophical thoughts on social action*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Hollis, M. 1982. The social destruction of reality. In *Rationality and relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hollis, M. & Lukes, S. eds. 1982. Introduction. In *Rationality and relativism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hooykaas, C. 1958. *The lay of Jaya Prana*. London: Luzac.
- 1964a. Padmasana, the throne of God. In *Agama tirtha: five studies in Hindu-Balinese religion*. Verhandlingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde. Amsterdam: Noord Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschaappij.
- 1964b. Siva-Linga, the mark of the Lord. In *Agama tirtha: five studies in Hindu-Balinese religion*. Verhandlingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde. Amsterdam: Noord Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschaappij.
- 1964c. Sarasvati, the goddess of learning. In *Agama tirtha: five studies in Hindu-Balinese religion*. Verhandlingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde. Amsterdam: Noord Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschaappij.
- 1974. *Cosmogony and creation in Balinese tradition*. Bibliotheca Indonesica 9, The Hague: Nijhoff.

-
- 1975. Review of H & C. Geertz, *Kinship in Bali*. *Archipel* 11: 237-43.
- 1978. *The Balinese poem Basur: an introduction to magic*. Bibliotheca Indonesica 17, The Hague: Nijhoff.
- 1980. *Drawings of Balinese sorcery*. Leiden: Brill.
- 1979. Material-object language and theoretical language: towards a Strawsonian sociology of thought. In *Philosophical disputes in the social sciences*. ed. S.C. Brown, Sussex: Harvester.
- 1982. Tradition and modernity revisited. In *Rationality and relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Howe, L.E.A. 1981. The social determination of knowledge: Maurice Bloch and Balinese time. *Man* 16, 2: 220-234.
- 1983. An introduction to the cultural study of traditional Balinese architecture. *Archipel* 25: 137-158.
- 1984. Gods, people, spirits and witches: the Balinese system of person definition. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 140, 2/3: 194-222.
- 1985. Caste in Bali and India: levels of comparison. In *Contexts and levels: essays on hierarchy*. eds. R.H. Barnes, D. de Coppet & R.J. Parkin, JASO. Occasional Paper No.4, Oxford: JASO.
- Hughes-Freeland, F. 1986. *The search for sense: dance in Yogyakarta*. Ph.D. thesis in the Univ. of London.
- 1991. Classification and communication in Javanese palace performance. *Visual anthropology* 4: 345-366.
- Huizinga, J. 1949. *Homo ludens*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Inden, R. 1976. *Marriage and rank in Bengali culture: a history of caste and clan in middle period Bengal*. London: California Univ. Press.
- 1986. Orientalist constructions of India. *Modern Asian studies* 20, 1: 401-46.
- 1990. *Imagining India*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1995. Embodying God: from imperial progresses to national progress in India. *Economy and society*. 24, 2: 245-278.
- n.d.[a] Social scientific thinking; or four ideas (and more) of human nature. Unpub. paper.
- n.d.[b] *The illogic of the polity as a modern nation*. Unpub. paper.
- Ions, E. 1977. *Against behaviouralism*. Oxford: Blackwell

-
- Jakobson, R. 1960. Concluding statement: linguistics and poetics. In *Style in language*. ed. T. Sebeok, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- Jensen, G.D. & L.K. Suryani, 1992. *The Balinese people: a reinvestigation of character*. Singapore: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Kahn, J.S. 1995. *Culture, multiculture, postculture*. London: Sage.
- Kempson, R. 1977. *Semantic theory*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Kersten, J. 1978. *Kamus kecil bahasa Bali*. Singaraja: Privately published.
- Keynes, J. N. 1884. *Studies and exercises in formal logic*. London: MacMillan.
- Koentjaraningrat, R.M. 1975. *Anthropology in Indonesia: a bibliographical review*. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Bibliographical Series 8, The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Korn, V.E. 1925. Bali is apart...is fijner bezenuwd dan eenig ander deel van Indië. *Koloniaal tijdschrift* 14: 44-53.
- Kotkin, J. 1992. *Tribes: how race, religion and identity determine success in the new global economy*. New York: Random House.
- Krausz, M. 1972. The logic of absolute presuppositions. In *Critical essays on the philosophy of R.G. Collingwood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kroeber, A.L. & Kluckhohn, C. 1952. *Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions*. Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum.
- Krom, N.J. 1931. *Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis*[2] The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Kuhn, T.S. 1970 [1962]. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. 2nd. edn. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- 1977. *The essential tension: selected studies in scientific tradition and change*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- Kuntz, P.G. ed. 1968. *The concept of order*. London: Univ. of Washington Press.
- Laclau, E. 1990a. New reflections on the revolution of our time. In *New reflections on the revolution of our time*. London: Verso
- 1990b. The impossibility of society. In *New reflections on the revolution of our time*. London: Verso

-
- Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. 1985. *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. trans. W. Moore & P. Cammack, London: Verso.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. London: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Lansing, J.S. 1983. *The three worlds of Bali*. New York: Praeger.
- Larson, G.J. 1987. Introduction to the philosophy of Samkhya. In *Samkhya: a dualist tradition in Indian philosophy*. eds. G.J. Larson, & R.S. Bhattacharya, Princeton, N.J.: Univ. Press.
- Leach, E.R. 1954. *Political systems of highland Burma: a study of Kachin social structure*. London: Bell.
- 1961. Polyandry, inheritance and the definition of marriage: with particular reference to Sinhalese customary law. In *Rethinking anthropology*. London: Athlone.
- 1964. Anthropological aspects of language: animal categories and verbal abuse. In *New directions in the study of language*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 1966. *The savage mind*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- 1970. Overture. In *The raw and the cooked: introduction to a science of mythology I*. trans. J. & D. Weightman, London: Cape.
- Lévy-Bruhl, L. 1926. *How natives think*. trans. L.A. Clare, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Lloyd, G.E.R. 1979. *Magic, reason and experience: studies in the origins and development of Greek science*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Lovric, B.J.A. 1987. *Rhetoric and reality: the hidden nightmare. Myth and magic as representations and reverberations of morbid realities*. Unpub. Ph.D. thesis in the University of Sydney.
- Lukes, S. 1967. Alienation and anomie. In *Philosophy, politics and society*. Third series. eds. P. Laslett & W.G. Runciman, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1973a. *Émile Durkheim: His life and work*. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane.
- 1973b. *Individualism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lyons, J. 1977. *Semantics*. 2 vols, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Malinowski, B. 1931. Culture. In *Encyclopaedia of the social sciences*. New York.

-
- Marriott, M. 1976. Hindu transactions: diversity without dualism. In *Transaction and meaning*. ed. B. Kapferer, Philadelphia: ISHI.
- Masterman, M. 1970. The nature of a paradigm. in *Criticism and the growth of knowledge: proceedings of the international colloquium in the philosophy of science*. London 1965, volume 4. eds. I. Lakatos & A. Musgrave, London: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Matilal, B.K. 1986. *Perception: an essay on classical Indian theories of knowledge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- McGrane, B. 1989. *Beyond anthropology: society and the other*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Milner, A. 1994. *Contemporary cultural theory: an introduction*. London: UCL Press.
- Miner, H. 1956. Body ritual among the Nacirema. *American anthropologist* 58: 503-7.
- Mink, L.O. 1968. Philosophical analysis and historical understanding. *Review of metaphysics* 20: 667-98.
- Moore, T. 1982. Comments on Sperber and Wilson's Paper. In *Mutual knowledge*. ed. N. V. Smith, London: Academic Press.
- Morley, D. 1986. *Family television*. London: Routledge.
- Needham, R. 1972. *Belief, language, and experience*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1975. Polythetic classification: convergence and consequences. *Man* 10, 3: 349-69.
- Needham, R. 1976. Skulls and causality. *Man* 11, 1: 71-88.
- 1981. Inner states as universals. In *Circumstantial deliveries*. London: California Univ. Press.
- 1985. *Exemplars*. London: Univ. of California Press.
- Newton-Smith, W. 1982. Relativism and the possibility of interpretation. In *Rationality and relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Olson, M. 1965. *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Onions, C.T. ed. 1966. *The Oxford dictionary of English etymology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Overing, J. 1985. Today I shall call him 'Mummy': multiple worlds and classificatory confusion. In *Reason and morality*. ed. J. Overing, London: Tavistock.
- 1990. The shaman as a maker of worlds: Nelson Goodman in the Amazon. *Man* 25, 4: 602-19.

-
- Peirce, C.S. 1986 [1978]. The doctrine of chances. In *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: a chronological edition: Volume 3, 1872-1878*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- Pemberton, J. 1994a. Recollections from 'Beautiful Indonesia': somewhere beyond the postmodern. *Public culture* 13: 241-262.
- 1994b. *On the subject of 'Java'*. London: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Parkin, D.J. 1975. The rhetoric of responsibility: bureaucratic communication in a Kenya farming area. In *Political language and oratory in traditional society*. ed. M. Bloch, London: Academic Press.
- 1976. Exchanging words. In *Transaction and meaning: directions in the anthropology of exchange and symbolic behavior*. ed. B. Kapferer, Philadelphia: ISHI.
- Pechey, G. 1989. On the borders of Bakhtin: dialogisation, decolonisation. In *Bakhtin and cultural theory*. eds. K. Hirschkop & D. Shepherd, Manchester: Univ. Press.
- 1990. Boundaries versus binaries: Bakhtin in/against the history of ideas. *Radical philosophy* 54, Spring 1990: 23-31.
- Pecora, V. 1989. The limits of local knowledge. In *The new historicism*. ed. H.A. Veaser, London: Routledge.
- Peel, J.D.Y. 1992. Review of M. Bloch *Ritual, history and power: selected papers in anthropology*. *Man* 27, 2: 419-20.
- Picard, M. 1990. Kebalian orang Bali: tourism and the uses of 'Balinese culture' in New Order Indonesia. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian affairs* 24: 1-38.
- 1996. *Bali: cultural tourism and touristic culture*. trans. D. Darling, Singapore: Archipelago Press.
- van der Ploeg, J.D. 1993. Potatoes and knowledge. In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.
- Popper, K.R. 1934. *Logik der Forschung*.; trans. and expanded as *The logic of scientific discovery*. New York: Basic Books.
- Potter, K.H. 1977. *Indian metaphysics and epistemology: the tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa*. Princeton, N.J.: Univ. Press.

-
- Putnam, H. 1971. Symposium on innate ideas:(b) The 'innateness hypothesis' and explanatory models in linguistics. In *The philosophy of language*. ed. J. Searle, Oxford: Univ. Press.
- 1981. *Reason, truth and history*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Quine, W.V.O. 1953a. Two dogmas of empiricism. In *From a logical point of view: nine logico-philosophical essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- 1953b. On what there is. In *From a logical point of view: nine logico-philosophical essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- 1960. *Word and object*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- 1979. A postscript on metaphor. In *On metaphor*. ed. S.Sacks, London: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- 1990. *Pursuit of truth*. London: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Radway, J. 1988. Reception study: ethnography and the problem of dispersed audiences and monadic subjects. *Cultural studies* 2, 3: 359-76.
- Reddy, M. 1979. The conduit metaphor – a case of frame conflict in our language about language. In *Metaphor and thought*. ed. A. Ortony, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Renou, L. 1968. *Religions of ancient India*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Richards, P. 1993. Cultivation: knowledge or performance? In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.
- Ricoeur, P. 1976. *Interpretation theory: discourse and the surplus of meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian Univ. Press.
- 1979. The model of the text. In *Interpretive social science* eds. Rabinow, P. and Sullivan, W., London: California Univ. Press.
- 1983 [1984]. *Temps et récit*, Tome 1. Paris: Seuil; trans. K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, as *Time and narrative, Volume 1*. London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984.
- 1988. *Time and narrative. Volume 3*. London: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Roberts, J. 1999. Philosophizing the everyday: the philosophy of praxis and the fate of cultural studies. *Radical philosophy* 98: 16-29.
- Robertson, R. 1992. *Globalization: social theory and global culture*. London: Sage.

-
- Rorty, A. 1976. A literary postscript. In *The identities of persons*. ed. A. Rorty, Berkeley: California Univ. Press.
- 1980. *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rubinstein, R. 1988. *Beyond the realm of the senses: the Balinese ritual of kekawin composition*. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sydney.
- 1991. The *Brahmana* according to their *babad*. In *State and society in Bali: historical, textual and anthropological approaches*. ed. H. Geertz, Leiden: K.I.T.L.V.
- 1992. Pepaosan: challenges and change. In *Balinese music in context: a sixty-fifth birthday tribute to Hans Oesch*. Amadeus, Forum Ethnomusicologicum 4: 85-113.
- Rubinstein, R. & Connor, L. eds. 1999. *Staying local in the global village: Bali in the twentieth century*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press.
- Russell, B. 1905. On denoting. *Mind* 14: 479-93.
- Ryan, A. 1978. Maximizing, moralizing and dramatizing. In *Action and interpretation: studies in the philosophy of the social sciences*. eds. C. Hookway and P. Pettit, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Ryle, G. 1949. *The concept of mind*. London: Hutchinson.
- Sahlins, M. 1976a. *Culture and practical reason*. London: Chicago Univ. Press.
- 1976b. *Uses and abuses of biology*. London: Tavistock.
- 1995. *How 'natives' think about Captain Cook, for example*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- 1999. Two or three things that I know about culture. *JRAI* 5, 3: 399-421.
- Salmond, A. 1982. Theoretical landscapes: on cross-cultural conceptions of knowledge. In *Semantic anthropology*. ed. D. J. Parkin, London: Academic Press.
- Schulte-Nordholt, H. 1988. *Een Balische dynastie: hiërarchie en conflict in de Negara Mengwi 1700-1940*. Ph.D. thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.
- 1996. *The spell of power: a history of Balinese politics*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- n.d. The making of traditional Bali: colonial ethnography and bureaucratic reproduction.
- Schwartz, J. 1997. The soul of soulless conditions: accounting for genetic fundamentalism. *Radical philosophy* 86: 2-5.

-
- Searle, J. 1971. What is a speech act? In *The philosophy of language*. ed. J. Searle, Oxford: Univ. Press.
- Skillen, A. 1977. *Ruling illusions: philosophy and the social order*. Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester.
- 1985. Politics re-entered: the state in its place. *Radical philosophy* 41: 23-27.
- Smith, M.G. 1974. A structural approach to the study of political change. In *Corporations and society*. London: Duckworth.
- Sontag, S. 1961. Against interpretation. In *Against interpretation and other essays*. New York: Octagon.
- 1977. *On photography*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Soedjatmoko, ed. 1965. *An introduction to Indonesian historiography*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- de Sousa, R. 1980. The rationality of emotions. In *Explaining emotions*. Ed. A. Rorty, Berkeley: California Univ. Press.
- Spencer, J. 1989. Anthropology as a kind of writing. *Man* 24, 1: 145-164.
- Sperber, D. 1975. *Rethinking symbolism*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1982. Apparently irrational beliefs. in *Rationality and relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1985. Interpretive ethnography and theoretical anthropology. In his *On anthropological knowledge*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 54, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. 1982. Mutual knowledge and relevance in theories of comprehension. In *Mutual knowledge*. ed. N.V. Smith, London: Academic Press.
- Spivak, G.C. 1976. Translator's preface to *Of grammatology*. London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- 1988. Can the subaltern speak? In *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*. eds. C. Nelson & L. Grossberg, Basingstoke: MacMillan Education.
- Staten, H. 1986. *Wittgenstein and Derrida*. London: Univ. of Nebraska Press.
- Strawson, P. 1950. On referring. *Mind* 59: 320-44.
- 1959. *Individuals: An essay in descriptive metaphysics*. London: Methuen.
- 1964. Intention and convention in speech acts. *Philosophical review* 73: 439-60.

-
- Stutterheim, W.F. 1929-30. *Oudheden van Bali I, het oude rijk van Pèdjèng*. Singaraja: Publicaties der Kirtya.
- Sweeney, A. 1987. *A full hearing: orality and literacy in the Malay world*. London: Univ. of California Press.
- Talbot, M. 1981. *Mysticism and the new physics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Tambiah, S.J. 1985. *Culture, thought, and social action: an anthropological perspective*. London: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Taylor, C. 1975. *Hegel*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1982. Rationality. In *Rationality and Relativism*. eds. M. Hollis and S. Lukes, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Teeuw, A., et al. 1969. *Siwaratrikalpa of Mpu Tanakung*. Bibliotheca Indonesica 3, The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Thomas, N. 1989. *Out of time: history and evolution in anthropological discourse*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Todorov, T. 1982. *Theories of the symbol*. trans. C. Porter, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1990. *Genres in discourse*. trans. C. Porter, Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Toffler, A. 1975. *Future shock*. London: Pan.
- Trompenaars, F. 1993. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding cultural diversity in business*. London: Economist Books.
- Tu, W-M. 1979. Shifting perspectives on text and history: a reflection on Shelly Errington's paper. *Journal of Asian studies* 38, 2: 245-51.
- Turner, V. W. 1982. *From ritual to theatre: the human seriousness of play*. New York: Performing Arts.
- van der Tuuk, H.N. 1897. *Kawi-Balinesesch-Nederlandsch woordenboek*. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij.
- Tylor, E.B. 1871. *Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom*. London; John Murray.
- Veesser, H.A. ed. 1989. *The new historicism*. London: Routledge.
- Vickers, A. 1984. Ritual and representation in nineteenth-century Bali. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*. 18 (Winter), 1-35.
- 1989. *Bali: a paradise created*. Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin.
- 1990. Balinese texts and historiography. *History and theory* 29: 158-78.

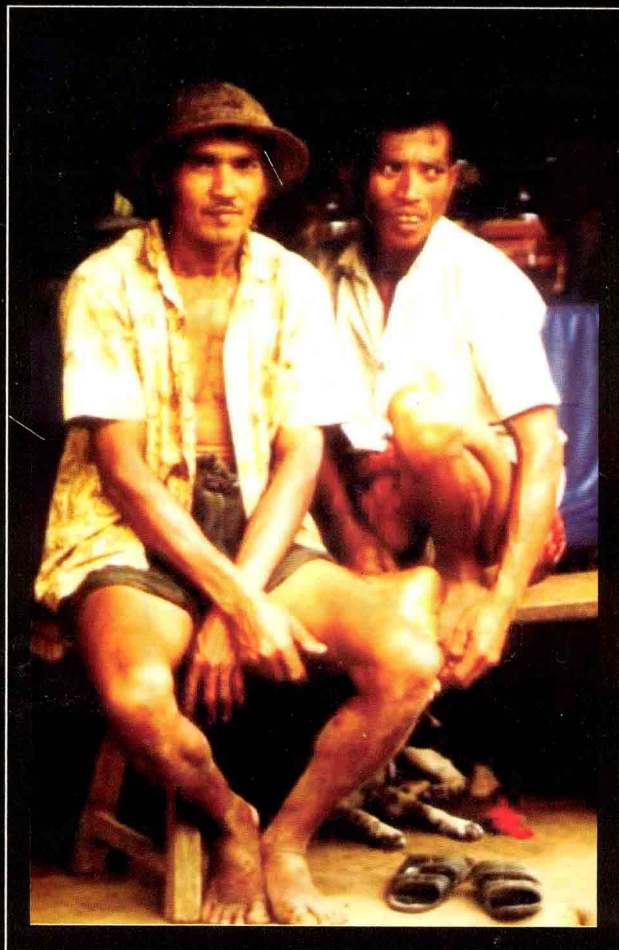
-
- 1991. Ritual written: the song of the Ligya, or the killing of the rhinoceros. In *State and society in Bali: historical, textual and anthropological approaches*. ed. H. Geertz, Leiden: KITLV.
- ed. 1996. *Being modern in Bali: image and change*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies No. 43.
- Vitebsky, P. 1993. *Dialogues with the dead: the discussion of mortality among the Sora of eastern India*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- 1993. Is death the same everywhere? contexts of knowing and doubting. In *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance?* ed. M. Hobart, London: Routledge.
- Volosinov, V.N. 1973. *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. trans. L. Matejka & I.R. Titunik, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Wallace, A.F.C. 1961. *Culture and personality*. New York: Random House.
- Wallerstein, I. 1990. Culture as the ideological battleground of the modern world-system. In *Global culture: nationalism, globalization and modernity*. ed. M. Featherstone, London: Sage.
- Warna, W. *et al.* 1978. *Kamus Bali-Indonesia*. Denpasar: Dinas Pengajaran.
- Wertheim, W.F. *et al.* eds. 1960. *Bali: studies in life, thought, and ritual*. The Hague: van Hoeve.
- White, A. R. 1968. Introduction. In *The philosophy of action*. Oxford: Univ. Press.
- White, L.A. 1949. *The science of culture*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.
- Wiener, M.J. 1995a. *Visible and invisible realms: power, magic, and colonial conquest in Bali*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- 1995b. Doors of perception : power and representation in Bali. *Cultural anthropology* 10, 4: 472-508.
- Wiener, M. 1999. Making local history in New Order Bali: public culture and the politics of the past. In *Staying local in the global village: Bali in the twentieth century*. eds. R. Rubinstein & L. Connor, Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press.
- in press. Hidden forces: colonialism and the politics of magic in the Netherlands Indies. In *Magic and modernity*.

-
- eds. P. Pels & B. Meyer, London: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Wiggins, D. 1976. Locke, Butler and the stream of consciousness: and men as natural kind. In *The identities of persons*. ed. A. Rorty, London: California University
- Wikan, U. 1990. *Managing turbulent hearts: a Balinese formula for living*. London: Chicago Univ. Press.
- Williams, D.C. 1951. The myth of passage. *Journal of philosophy* 48:457-72.
- Williams, R. 1961. *The long revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- 1983. *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Flamingo.
- Wilson, D. 1975. *Presuppositions and non-truth-conditional semantics*. London: Academic Press.
- Wilson, E.O. 1975. *Sociobiology: the new synthesis*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Winch, P. 1958. *The idea of a social science*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wittgenstein, L. 1958. *Philosophical investigations*. trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 2nd. edn, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1961. *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. trans. D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinness, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wolfram, S. 1985. Facts and theories: saying and believing. In *Reason and morality*. ed. J. Overing, London: Tavistock.
- Worsley, P.J. 1972. *Babad Bulèlèng: a Balinese dynastic genealogy*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- 1984. E74168. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*. 18 (Winter), 64-109.
- de Zoete, B. & Spies, W. 1938. *Dance and drama in Bali*. London: Faber.
- Zoetmulder, P.J. 1982. *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*. 2 Vols. (with S. Robson) The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Zurbuchen, M.S. 1987. *The language of Balinese shadow theatre*. Princeton, N.J.: Univ. Press.

AFTER CULTURE

ANTHROPOLOGY AS RADICAL METAPHYSICAL CRITIQUE

MARK HOBERT



PROGRAM STUDI MAGISTER KAJIAN BUDAYA UNUD
DUTA WACANA UNIVERSITY PRESS