

THINKER, THESPIAN, SOLDIER, SLAVE? ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE IN THE STUDY OF BALINESE SOCIETY

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'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. Sadly enough, academics are seldom as fussy about what keeps their 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 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.

In this essay I want to explore the problem of "meaning" in other cultures (Bali in particular) in view of the importance of context in interpreting speech and action, and the unspoken theoretical presuppositions about a universal human nature that inform much academic discourse.

THE BACKGROUND

A problem raised in the Introduction was, if meaning is partly contextual, how can the infinite range of possible contexts delimit a coherent object of study? Some answers take the form of cutting down the field of possibilities by selecting criteria of relevance.

One can try to focus on what is implied or presupposed in utterances,¹ although this has yet to be done successfully. One can filter possible contexts by appeal to human interests: people are treated as trying to maximize some goal. Apart from the well-known models of Man as an economic or rational animal,² two of the most popular are those of human beings as seeking to gain power, or to render the world meaningful.³ So it is common to talk of "utility" being "maximized," social ties or interpretations being "negotiated," or "meaning constructed." It is in order to cut context down to size that such theories of human nature, or of human purposes and interests, are invoked. Hence confusion over context is intimately linked with confusion over appropriate models of human nature. The four images alluded to in my title are four of the more popular Western construals of who the Balinese "are." Yet we shall see that not only are the models of Western commentators and of the Balinese utterly different, but even their ideas of explanation may be incommensurable.

CONTEXTUALIZATION IN BALI

Much of the existing interpretation of Balinese culture is based on the assumption that language or meaning works in one particular way, so that the Balinese may be adequately explained from a single perspective. There are obvious weaknesses to such a stance and it may be fruitful to explore 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.⁴ Rather than assume that words must denote definitely, we might look at essentializing as a style or strategy. This approach opens the way for a more ethnographically sensitive recognition of the other styles or strategies which may be found. Contextualizing in some form would then be an obvious alternative; so might pragmatizing (after the pragmatic theory of truth) where it is regarded as necessary to take action without the time, or need, to consider the intricacies or the fuller 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.

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

Balinese settlements are often known as *désa*.⁵ The term commonly suggests a physical village and its territory, and is opposed taxonomically and in practice to a ward, or *banjar*, the group responsible for organizing the daily affairs of the residents. In Tengahpadang, as in many other areas, the *désa* tends also to be considered as 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 land, the *tanah désa*. Difficulties naturally arise from these divergent conceptions. *Désa* members are heirs to individual compounds on village land, and as such are collectively under the protection, and authority, of the village's guardian deities, whose sphere of influence is thought of as defined by the boundaries of the *tanah désa*. On the other hand, the *désa* may equally be viewed as the broader area where the villagers live and work (which may extend into fields beyond the *tanah désa* proper). As people migrate, the nature of their ties to, and membership of, the *désa* becomes more complicated. On different occasions, then, the *désa* may be defined as a bounded territory in which certain people live or work, as the zone of influence of a set of deities, or as a place of origin. Which aspect comes to the fore depends on the circumstances, especially when disputes over *désa* jurisdiction occur.

In order to define Balinese village structure, Geertz has attempted to circumvent the ambiguities in terms like *désa* by an appeal to "planes of social organization" which are "a set of invariant fundamental ingredients," the possible combinations of which define the parameters of Balinese society.⁶ His aim was to escape from the misapprehension that a society can any more be epitomized by a "representative" unit than by a synthetic amalgam of materials depicting "social structure." Unfortunately, in steering clear of one essentialism, Geertz has fallen into another.⁷ He writes that the *désa* is part of the "shared obligation to worship at a given temple."⁸ Defining the *désa* as a group of worshippers, however, conceals significant differences in what "worshipping" implies. One may *nyungsung* ("support") a temple, which means to be a full member of a temple group with accompanying ineluctable rights and duties. One may *maturan* ("make offerings, give to a superior"), which refers to the daily offerings each household takes along 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; *mebakti* 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."⁹ It is certainly of a different logical order than some of the other principles, but if its function is an index, cognitive map, or "simplified model of Balinese social structure,"¹⁰ 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.¹¹

The confusion is due partly to there being more than one criterion involved in the principles of incorporation.¹² The same holds for the other "planes of social organization." *Subak*, often glossed as "irrigation association," is defined by Geertz as about the "ownership of rice land lying within a single watershed."¹³ It is quite possible, however, to own rice land within a watershed and not belong to the local, or indeed any, *subak*. Moreover, their charters (*awig-awig*) commonly define such groups in terms of control not of land, use of land, nor labor, but of water, although not necessarily from a single source. On different occasions, and according to circumstance, their sphere of competence may be quite differently interpreted.¹⁴ Similar observations can be made about other Balinese social institutions.

How far one can conclude that one feature of an institution is essential and the others ancillary emerges from a brief look at the definition of marriage in Bali.¹⁵ The *sine qua non* of marriage appears to be the rite of *mesakapan* (a term which also means "to work someone else's land" —but not as an in-law) between two partners. 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 metonymy. By this criterion, however, it is not just human beings who marry: pigs, slit gongs, and drums pass through an identical rite. In what sense would one wish to state these to be married? The point is not as trivial as it might seem. Whether the union of human beings is the essential feature of marriage and everything else metaphoric "extension," or whether, for instance, we are dealing with culturally appropriate forms for the conjunction of complementary opposites—of which humans are one example—is hardly by the way.

The serious difficulties really begin when we consider what "marriage" involves. The rites themselves vary in degree. So the distinction between becoming 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 still be overlooked. Balinese may engage in "marriage by capture" (*melegandang*, as opposed to mock capture, *ngambis*).

If a girl is taken by force, at least from her own and her family's point of view, the rite may be ignored. Matters become still more complex in that 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 in certain groups. For instance, the unit of membership in the ward is normally the *kuren*,¹⁶ comprising an able-bodied male and female, usually but not necessarily married.¹⁷ It is, of course, perfectly possible to tidy all the exceptions away and maintain that there are essential characteristics to Balinese marriage. The result, however, is pretty vacuous, and ignores the kinds of confusion in which Balinese villagers often land and the problems they face in interpreting these confusions. Such an approach might be valid if it could be shown that the Balinese acted as if there were essential features, but no one seems to have asked.¹⁸ It is implicitly assumed that ideas contain consistent essences. What would happen, though, were certain notions contradictory or contrary (as Quarles van Ufford, for instance, has suggested, of the idea of authority in Java)? For what is the essence of a contradiction?¹⁹

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 these actions. The device is as popular as it is pernicious, for 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 precisely the people who deny that context is important at all.

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 on which ethnographers seem to agree is the Balinese ban on sister-exchange, which is usually represented as an absolute prohibition.²⁰ Unfortunately the Balinese have different interpretations of their own kinship "rules." What is an absolute prohibition on one reading, is merely undesirable on another. Different castes, and people expressing different aspects of identity, tend to adhere to different versions of what is proper or possible. So the proscription of sister-exchange may be treated simply as a ban, or it may be seen as a means of protecting people from dangerous liaisons. Since sister-exchange is usually classified as a "hot" (*panes*), as opposed to a "cool" (*etis*) union, it risks damage to the people concerned and to 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 merely the result of 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 differently by different people in different contexts. Rules do not just exist as cast-iron commands 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 with the circumstances under which some people assert and others deny different interpretations in different ways.

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.²¹ Marriage may be romantic, by elopement or mock capture, and is then most likely between kin groups not in alli-

ance.²³ The other kinds of marriage are more likely to be arranged. They may be strategic and designed to forge alliances between groups, or sacred and cemented within a kin group, although this is also "hot" and dangerous among very close kin like first cousins, unless one is strong enough to ward off the peril.

There are serious problems with Boon's model, however. For a start it is ethnographically inadequate. There is no simple connection between ways of contracting unions and the three kinds of relationship he outlines. Important forms, like real capture, are omitted. (It may be illegal, as Boon states, but the illegal is not the impossible and merely gives capture greater impact.) *Mepadik*, formally asking for a woman in marriage, is conflated with the negotiation of agreement between all concerned (*adung-adungan rerama*), and with *alepang 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 relationship which overlooks the extent to which ideals are always asserted contextually.

Boon implicitly assumes that marriage is essentially the same cross-culturally (otherwise his 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 human nature. In describing romantic marriage based on love (for which Boon incidentally is obliged to use the Indonesian term *cinta*),²³ Boon appears to believe that there is an emotion or inner state commensurable cross-culturally. He appeals to literary traditions, like the tales of Prince Pañji, for collateral evidence. This appeal is shaky 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 flavor the Balinese are wont to read into personal attraction fits ill with the usual Western 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, what constitutes "the sacred" and what Balinese word would even roughly correspond to this English term are questions fraught with difficulty.²⁴ The nearest term is probably *suci*, which is often glossed as "pure." The two are clearly not coterminous. *Suci* is understood by the Balinese in very different ways: it may be used descriptively as 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.

CONTEXTUALIZING AND ESSENTIALIZING

The examples discussed so far have hinged on the ambiguity inherent in institutions which are defined in terms of more than one feature. Which feature is to the fore depends upon interpretive style, context, and personal perspective. Obviously life is carried on despite different readings being given by people on different occasions.²⁵ Some collective representations, presuppositions and words, however, may be 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 closure is more likely to happen or not.²⁶

For example, the Balinese have a system of ranking similar in certain respects to

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

In practice, however, not all princes were brave by Balinese standards; and some brave men were not *satriya*. The assertion "(all) *satriya* are courageous, loyal and honest" had two non-identical applications. The one through which the caste hierarchy was celebrated in dynastic chronicles and other texts was an ascriptive reading. It was the official version, an authoritative discourse on how the world should be seen. Yet enough princes were palpable cowards and enough members of other castes were gifted with *satriya* qualities that realities could not be ignored. The scribes of dynastic histories not uncommonly had to face the violent rise and accession to the throne of capable upstarts who could not be passed over in silence. On such occasions the official explanation was usually that the upstart was "really" of *satriya* ancestry, that the gods had intervened, or something similar.²⁷ In this way the essentializing of the attributes of *satriya* could be maintained, though the actual events were far more fluid than such ideological assertions made them seem.

This brief outline should make it clear why it is useful to talk of essential and contextual meanings as being styles or strategies, and not as the ways words in themselves mysteriously relate to the world. Being able to essentialize the "meaning" of *satriya* and to minimize unwanted contextualizations has both epistemological and political overtones. Relevance is not an attribute intrinsic to language so much as a variable aspect of discourse.

Some Balinese terms have been subjected to so high a degree of cultural elaboration that their contextualization in novel ways might seem effectively ruled out. 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, frame the dominant system of spatial representation, according to which the structure of villages, shrines, temples, houses, the layout of offerings and much else is oriented. The result is a totalizing classification, because the extremes of the axis have come to be linked with qualities which are of great independent importance. *Kaja* is associated with ritual purity, and *kelod* with pollution. The two are often 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 *kaja-kelod* classification encompasses a great deal. For example, the arrival of foreign merchants and later tourists could easily be fitted in. Contact with traders was conveniently on the coastline; and more recently most tourist hotels have been built around the few sandy beaches on the island. Both sides, working with quite different models of space, seem to have been happy with this arrangement. Tourists sunbathe, swim and step on stonefish—and the traders push their wares—in the zone of impurity, while the Balinese hold the high ground. Since demons are often thought of as large, red, hairy, and uncouth—just the attributes that Balinese tend to ascribe to Westerners—it was in strict accordance with the classification that the latter should prefer to live by the sea, the cesspit of pollution. In this region of tourist money, fash-

ion, and the vast political resources of the Indonesian state administration (much of it concentrated in tourist areas and the geographically peripheral provincial capital), reprehensible desire runs riot: a gloomy picture, which fits, however, with Balinese and Hindu theories of the entropy of the world.

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; and upstream-downstream. It is linked with the propitious and unpropitious, purity and pollution, life and death, and so forth. Part of this flux is simple scholarly inexactitude, part is variations in Balinese contexts of use. One of the most common referents for this spatial axis is the path of water (parallel to the familiar Malay axis *ulu-muara* [headwater-rivermouth]). Because most water comes from volcanic lakes and springs, *kaja* may refer to the direction of the mountains; but as it is associated with the pure and auspicious, there are contexts in which it can be used for any propitious direction (although I have not met it actually referring to "seaward"). Similarly the attributes of life and death often associated with east and west may be mapped onto the upstream-downstream axis and vice versa. Compared then to our polar axis around notionally fixed points, the Balinese axis is more like the dial of a clock around the island's center.

The classification is not neutral, however, since many types 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 for 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 human beings; moreover, they are identified with the dangerous aspects of high gods. And while the traditional centers of Balinese culture and excellence lay inland, new wealth, new possibilities and new sources of power emerged on the coast. Even the most entrenched classification cannot ensure closure.

Another 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 for processions, ritual lustrations, the order of eating in ritual meals (*nasi agibung*) and even the erection of houseposts, is to the right.²⁸ Usually this practice is recorded in Western ethnographies as "moving clockwise." Observation of Balinese temple ceremonies, however, shows that people quite frequently circumambulate the temple anticlockwise. The link seems not to be to Hindu ideas of *pradaksina* (and reverse movement, *purwadaksina* in Bali), but to different ideas about 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 theater, where the question of right and left, Pandawa and Kurawa, victors and losers,²⁹ is usually defined relative to the puppeteer, not the audience.) So quite different emphases are suggested by motion to the right when seen as egocentric and when seen as focused on the other.

If such classifications are tied to others, could it be that part of the closure is linked with 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, one would have strong grounds 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 conclu-

sions. In order to see how a hierarchy of values may be invoked, we may turn to a brief case study.

A problem arose in one of the wards of Tengahpadang. A woman who owned no riceland used to be one of several traders in cooked meals on 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, and perhaps this accounted for the spate of troubles which had happened.

It was also recognized, however, that erecting a shrine would probably require destroying the woman's stall. Against this view ran the argument that the calamities were sufficiently grave that so serious a step might well have to be taken. In addition, the stall happened to be located on land belonging to the *désa*. Among the issues at stake were whether the misfortunes were connected with the absence of a shrine; whether their continuation would be prevented 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 for a villager, or at least the loss of that part of her capital which had gone into building the stall; and even whether putting a place for making profit in a pure spot had contributed to the misfortunes in the first place.

A high caste geomancer²⁰ was called in, who was celebrated for his knowledge and mystical power (*sakti*). At a full meeting of the local ward he agreed that there might be a link between past troubles and the lack of a shrine, and that further misfortune might be mitigated 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 ward meeting-pavilion. Seeing that the woman's stall was beneath the *waringin*, he warned the village against the wrong-doing which would be wrought by ruining the source of the woman's income. The meeting, however, promptly voted that, to be on the safe side, the shrine should be put up; and, 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.

It is striking that 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. In any case, as discussion wore on over the weeks before and after the consultation, the main issue became phrased in terms of the relative priority of an individual being allowed to pursue her (or his) livelihood and the possible threat thereby created for public welfare. (In addition, the widely accepted principle that the interests of disadvantaged members of the community, such as widows [which the woman was], should be protected wherever possible, had to be weighed.)

In the course of the arguments, hierarchies of values were referred to by several parties. All seemed to operate on the assumption that a correct hierarchy existed, or at least that some principles had greater weight than others. But there was no agreement on which was central. It was apparent that hierarchy did not exist as a fixed system of reference; various elements in it were variably invoked to interpret the situation.

Context was vital in other ways which demonstrate the inadequacy of an analysis

in terms of cultural ideals alone. I note merely the most salient. The woman's personal life was an unmentioned issue, as were the political party aspects of the whole affair. 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 who, while he still wielded political influence, had ensured that the building of her stall slipped through quietly.) The last man was an outsider, bitterly hated for his brutality, and sufficiently infatuated with the widow that it was widely thought that he would pay the costs of demolition and rebuilding the stall for his new mistress.

Several points emerge from this (highly truncated) story. First, any appeal to a definitive hierarchy of values would ignore how such values are actually used. Second, almost everyone did imply, but not always state, 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. Essentializing and contextualizing were obviously part of various political strategies, but was this all? Different participants seem to have understood and argued the dispute in quite different ways. For the geomancer there was an ideal, as well as possible alternative sites according to the criteria laid down in his manuals. For some who were deeply concerned at the spate of inauspicious events, it seems to have been a matter of finding an immediate remedy regardless of the niceties; others were seeking the most fitting, *manul*, solution to conflicting interests. A minority, by their own private account, were as interested in humiliating the woman as in the shrines and were using the latter as an acceptable cloak for publicly unavowable motives.

Yet are there perhaps some 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? It is one thing to trace logical presuppositions (assuming that the logical operations of a culture, in theory and in practice, have been studied) in an intellectual tradition which stresses formal consistency as highly as ours; it is another to explore such presuppositions in cultures where a premium may be placed elsewhere. While inference or empirical evidence may be used to show that the Balinese do recognize and appeal to presuppositions, it remains a matter for research how systematically, and under what conditions, "absolute presuppositions" are actually found (as opposed to how fervently they are asserted).

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 try to establish a set of presuppositions so central that any change in them would produce massive conceptual confusion or endanger the structure of authority. 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.³¹

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 of meaning, might one not instead focus on the agents?³² In other words, can we provide an account of human interests or action which would delimit the goals, and so the effective means, which the Balinese seek?³³ To pull off such a feat,

however, would involve postulating a theory of human nature and human agency.

As Collingwood argued long ago, the various philosophers on whose thought 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.³⁴

Furthermore, models of "society" generally rely on some truth, palpable or implicit, about human nature. Lukes observes:

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.³⁵

The point is not whether Lukes's characterization does justice to these thinkers, nor which of them may be right, but that a vision of human nature is an unacknowledged part of the academic's baggage. The humble ethnographer, panning his chosen backwater for nuggets of empirical truth, cannot safely dismiss the problem as part of the paraphernalia of the armchair theorist. What we find in the field depends largely on what we use to sift our facts.³⁶

The problem may be seen in the seemingly contradictory ethnographic accounts of Bali, which portray its inhabitants as wildly different kinds of human beings. The Balinese variously 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 neighbors, 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 and thereby begs the interesting question.

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."³⁷ To the extent that in the first half of the twentieth century the stress was on a "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. Enough has been said elsewhere about the kinds of assumptions made as to require no further comment here.³⁸

A rather different model of social action has recently been suggested by Geertz, which he claims can 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 that other accounts have tended to take for granted. Geertz places the Balinese within 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."³⁹ He takes it for granted that

a key aspect of human nature everywhere is man's need to make sense of the world, and of his place within it. Accordingly, the focus in analysis must be "an interpretive one in search of meaning."⁴⁰

How is the relationship between human beings and culture-as-meaningful described? On this point Geertz's language becomes strikingly metaphorical. A fascinating gradual shift occurs in the images by which this relation is represented. We start with something close to culture-as-a-kind-of-building.⁴¹ "Our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions" which are, however, "structures of signification" erected on a given "social ground." Once the point has been made that culture is man-made, the images shift to various natural scientific techniques for observing and preserving it: anthropological interpretation is said to consist in "tracing the curve of a social discourse; fixing it into an inspectable form." It attempts to "rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishable occasions."⁴² When cultures have been "inscribed," their study becomes archaeological (if of the object) or archival (if about our inscriptions); for we must "uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts." In other words, we eventually arrive at the meaning, a "pseudoentity" which some anthropologists have "fumbled with" because they ignore the "hard surfaces of life" and "the biological necessities on which those surfaces rest." From all this the anthropologist gleans the answers that those he has studied have given, in order "to include them in the consultable record of what man has said."⁴³

Geertz's metaphors might seem a little out of place in what purports to be a "scientific" approach to culture.⁴⁴ But the real difficulty lies in describing culture as man-made, for such a view is circular, since ideas about what human beings are like are themselves in part culturally formulated. Stress on biological and physical necessities also 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 our 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.⁴⁵

Already we have two transformations: behavior 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."⁴⁶ In the following flood of metaphors, however, the ontological nature of social action, or culture, undergoes a series of further reinterpretations. We are evidently now committed to a particular relation of society and the individual in which culture is created, or invented, by people, through "symbolic interactions" (with all the dubious assumption of voluntarism entailed).⁴⁷ This invented culture in turn takes the form of an inscribed text (Geertz cites Ricoeur approvingly).⁴⁸ (One might note here that Ricoeur's sense of "text" refers to specific inscriptions, not the general presuppositions and conditions of possibility of social action.⁴⁹ It is apparent that however subtle compared to previous views, Geertz's outlook on objects of study remains firmly positivist.) Furthermore, these man-made inscriptions are, it seems, the surface of conceptual structures. By this point we are asked to accept the "existence" of abstract entities we call "concepts" and their having a "structure." Starting with the idea of culture as behavior, then as something man-made, then as inscribed, then as a readable document, which later reveals an underlying conceptual essence, we have made an odd and questionable journey.

One of the most intriguing silences in this progression is the absence of discussion of exactly how the impressions of the anthropologist are related to those of the native. While it is obvious in one way that we are concerned with "our constructions of other people's constructions" (in the sense that interpretation, but *not* all behavior, is 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.

The *deus ex machina* here is, unsurprisingly, 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; they may interpret actions in different cultural styles, but they share essential features of humanity which enable them to do so with identical logics, perceptions, and semantic processes. As Hollis has pointed out, however, these are at best epistemological, and more likely metaphysical, presuppositions, certainly not empirical truths.⁵⁰ In effect, the psychic unity of mankind is 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, it means incorporating in his view of culture the idea of "the knowing subject."⁵¹ This idea gives his interpretation that flavor of individualism and freedom so popular in Western metaphysics of self. Nonetheless, it has not been established that the same idea holds for other people. The fact that we may find his interpretations appealing does not mean they are true; it merely means they fit our 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 cultural constructs, one requires a theory of mind, and the relation of individuals to society, such that they construe collective representations in one way rather than another.

TIME, PERSON, AND LANGUAGE

In Geertz's *Person, Time and Conduct in Bali* we are presented with notions of time and their significance from a reading of indigenous calendars.⁵² In the Javanese-Balinese calendrical system a 210-day year consists of ten concurrently running weeks from one to ten days long. Each week has differently named days and different uses. As Geertz quite reasonably notes, this tends to give particular "combinations of days" an individual flavor. 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," is oddly mechanical.⁵³ 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? Such a model would be 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, and 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 their contextual use.

There is no space here to enter into the largely sterile and ethnographically uninformed debate about the nature of time in Bali.⁵⁴ Suffice it to say here that all the accounts represent time catachrestically.⁵⁵ That is, it is approached through constitu-

tive metaphors, often spatial—time as “linear,” “cyclical,” “zig-zag,” “punctuated,” “durational”—of a kind which Balinese explicitly eschew. Perhaps part of the problem derives from the assumption that there is some essential “time,” which is then measured in different ways. In one sense time is peculiarly contextual, in that it is referred to relative to the situations of its use. For example, the Balinese recognition of stages of the sun’s movement across 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 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 actually used and the relations which its use implies.

In similar fashion Geertz infers a “depersonalization” of Balinese from their notionally distinct “orders of person definition.”⁵⁶ Teknonymy, for instance, denotes a person in terms of parenthood of members of successive generations, and so stresses successors rather than predecessors. Geertz’s interpretation again depends upon a very literal, formal reading of the bypassing of autonyms (personal names). As Feeley-Harnik rightly notes, teknonymy may equally permit a focus upon ancestors and the domination of the ascendant generation.⁵⁷ (Her point is that the “inscriptions” of culture should not be read simplistically.)

Once again we find the habit of postulating 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, with kin terms reaching at least the fifth ascendant generation. Furthermore, teknonymy is not used equally by all social groups. In Tengahpadang it was characteristic of kin groups identifying themselves as smiths (*pandé*), who strove to keep themselves apart from others and to limit the range of their exchanges (including names?). One wonders if it is coincidental to Geertz’s model of naming that his research was largely done in Tihingan, one of the few villages in Bali dominated by smiths. In developing his model of Balinese depersonalization, Geertz goes on to suggest 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.⁵⁸

This may be fine in theory but in the roll-call for village meetings not the teknonyms but the personal names of distinguished old men (even if each is “but a step away from being the deity he will become after his death”) 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.⁵⁹

Before rushing to order Balinese means of referring to others, we might do better to 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, at different stages in their lives, and in different aspects of their personalities or incarnations. It thus appears that the applicability of names is a matter of context. As the Balinese use *Dasanama*, the implications of naming are often the reverse of ours. People and things are not essentially tied to any one label; rather the labels are used to indicate different perspectives on the same phenomenon. Names may denote, but they do much else besides.

Behind the model of the unfortunate “detemporalized” and “depersonalized” Balinese lie several questionable presuppositions. The same assumptions come out in

Geertz's method of interpreting symbols in his recent work on the "theatre state" in Bali.⁶⁰ Having extrapolated from the ethnography certain symbols as definitive, constitutive or descriptive of kingship, he brings his analysis to a close.⁶¹ The assumption is that, having laid out the symbols, we are in a position to grasp how the Balinese understand and use them. This procedure, however, presumes an unstated 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 of some kind of "inner state" (in Needham's terms):⁶² but 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, since describing some of the socially available symbols is thought in some way to describe their meaning for people in that society. Fourth, in using the notion of "symbol" (which is so broad as to be meaningless)⁶³ a specific theory of 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.⁶⁴

HUMAN NATURE IN BALI

How is Geertz's general model of human nature and culture worked out in Bali? He approaches Bali with the general assumption that it is through symbols "upon which men impress meaning" that "man makes sense of the events through which he lives."⁶⁵ 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."⁶⁶ This trait is epitomized in the Balinese cockfight, which is a "melodrama," a kind of "art form" or "text," because it is "a Balinese reading of Balinese experience"—in this instance that social life is "a status bloodbath."⁶⁷ Perhaps the most elaborate use of this metaphor is in his picture of Balinese politics where "statecraft is a thespian art."⁶⁸ 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."⁶⁹ The metaphor could hardly be made plainer. If human beings in general are thinkers, in that they ponder the conditions of their existence, Balinese human beings act this thinking out by being thespians.

Geertz's notion of "meta-social commentary" has rightly attracted attention. It is a timely reminder that cultures may engage in reflexivity. But Geertz believes that one can read meaning more or less directly into the cockfight and learn "what being a Balinese is really like."⁷⁰ The intensity of Balinese involvement is described as "deep play" (a phrase borrowed from Jeremy Bentham), through which they portray their status battles to themselves. The link is through the double meaning of "cock" which, we are told, is the source of much cultural imagery about machismo, and the commentary hinges on complex levels of cock-based metaphor (e.g., "the underdog cock").⁷¹

It is unclear why the recondite image of an English philosopher should provide the key metaphor for Balinese gambling. The parallel may be illuminating to us, but in what sense is it valid? It corresponds with our ideas of the use of metaphor, but does it do so for Balinese? The Balinese, after all, 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* (derived from Sanskrit, via Old Javanese, meaning "image, model;

shadow"),⁷² which is widely used in Bali in the sense of "model," "metaphor," or "analogy." The crucial point about *praimba* is that metaphors, by comparing something to something else, are inherently false, and are therefore treated with great suspicion when encountered.

It is true that 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 phenomena in different cultures.⁷³ Where the one English word links the activities of children, relaxation, story-telling, sport, joking, theater and so on, Balinese designates each by a separate term and, so far as I can tell, these are not treated as deriving from any core, or essential, set of characteristics. Care is therefore required in using such pre-constrained terms in depicting other cultures.

Geertz has no way of establishing that the cockfight is *ipso facto* a meta-social commentary, nor that its object is really a precarious status battle. It is surely 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).⁷⁴ One might note that much Balinese theater and literature develops the theme of fighting, whether it be interpreted as dualistic, agonistic, Manichaeic, or metaphysical. The characters in the shadow-theater, and orators in public meetings, are often caught in conflicts of potentially lethal outcome. What is a commentary on, or reflection of, what?

The themes of conflict or contradiction (both rough glosses of the Balinese *miegen*, which is also "fighting") and violence are too complex to be dismissed as the idiom of status claims. It is noticeable that Western commentators seem to have great difficulty with the role of violence in Balinese society. The editors of the *Śiwarātrikalpa*, an Old Javanese text found in Bali, felt it necessary to excuse "the gruesome methods of warfare which the poet's imagination conjures up" and remarked more generally that:

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.⁷⁵

Ignoring what we see as violence in Bali because we do not like it does not seem a good way of approaching Balinese culture.

In other words, I am suggesting that however interesting Geertz's argument about the cockfight is, it has been seriously essentialized.⁷⁶ Apart from failing to consider cockfighting against the background of violence, the argument also omits other possibly significant contexts.⁷⁷ 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. The idea that the cockfight is about status or prestige is taken largely as an unanalyzable fundamental.

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). Accordingly, animal classifications do not rank mammals above birds, but take each species on merit. So doves, regarded as peaceful and pure, are placed higher than pigs (which are thought to be stupid and to eat their own kind), while cocks, being inclined to fight, are notoriously low. They fight not because they are forced to, but because that is what they

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

What should we then make of Geertz's elaboration on the identification of man and animal essential to this 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," "bachelor," "dandy," "lady-killer," or "tough guy."⁷⁸

The difficulty is that "cock" is usually *siap* in low Balinese and *ayam* in high, while "cockfight" is *tajèn*. *Sabung* is certainly not everyday Balinese. It does not occur in any of the classic dictionaries in Old Balinese, Old Javanese,⁷⁹ or archipelago Sanskrit.

This presents us with a 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 then 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 an erudite way! Furthermore, in writing about Balinese personal names, Geertz describes as "arbitrarily coined nonsense syllables" what are in fact mostly common everyday words.⁸⁰ The linguistic foundations of Geertz's symbology start to seem somewhat shaky.

If we now turn to look at other modern anthropological views of the Balinese, we find Boon distinguishing between two styles of culture, the epic and the 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.⁸¹

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

If pre-Islamic Java were Renaissance-like 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.⁸²

Where Geertz offers 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-à-vis India analogous to that of the *Ida Baguses* and the *pedandas* of Bali.⁸³

How the Balinese combine such different centuries and traditions in being at once Mannerist and Romantic is not explained. But indirectly Boon makes an important point: the German Romantics did use current ideas about India to formulate their vision of their place in the world. Needless to say, they had a curiously Western view of "the Other." Showing that our own tradition once pictured itself 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 in a criticism of Geertz's views on definitions of person and time in Bali.⁸⁴ He argues that while there is evidence that cultures define persons, like interests, goals and even time, quite differently, at another level there are shared conceptions of the way the world really is; 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 objects to the absence, in cultural accounts 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*, if 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 thinker and thespian, we are given shop-keeper or mercenary.

BALINESE VIEWS ON HUMAN NATURE

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

For example, we have seen that Balinese social life is widely portrayed as a kind of theater in which the actors strive to maximize control over the presentation of self, as it were in fear of forgetting their lines, or giving in to "stage fright."⁸⁵ Now whose idea of self and theater is this? The Balinese themselves speak of theater as about reliving *tat-twa* (historical truth), whether grand or squalid, and not as representing something as something else. Geertz is using a vision of theater 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 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 these necessarily explain 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. To conclude, I would therefore like to outline Balinese representations of speech, action and human nature, and suggest that they

are sufficiently different as to vitiate explanations based on alien presuppositions.

The Balinese distinguish between two kinds of speech which people use in everyday life. The differences are important, as they determine 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 the 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, more controlled people speak less and enfold the point (*tetuwek*) beneath the surface—which is just what the young and the foolish 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. It is thus not a question for them of projecting various kinds of image, as Geertz's theatrical metaphor suggests, but rather of expressing degrees of self-control in the kind of language used.

The Balinese also have well-developed views on meaning and communication. For instance, terms like *sekadi* 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 he or she is asserting. These 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 to suggest the degree of likelihood that he or she places on the statement. As noted above, the Balinese express a strong dislike for any avoidable use of metaphor and analogy. It is remarkable that so much of the Western 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 then make about human nature? The formal framework owes much to an adaptation of classical Hindu models. Three schemes are in general circulation.

<i>Triguna:</i>	<i>sattwa</i> purity knowledge	<i>raja(h)</i> passion emotion	<i>tamas</i> desire ignorance
<i>Triwarga:</i>	<i>darma</i> disposition to do good one's duty	<i>art(h)a</i> pursuit of material utility	<i>kama</i> enjoyment of sensual pleasure
<i>Tiga-jñana:*</i>	<i>idep</i> thought	<i>sbda</i> speech	<i>bayu</i> energy

*The last triad is normally given in reverse order: energy, speech, action. I have altered it 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 (see "Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning," in *Agama Tirta*, p. 26). 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's *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*).

The *triguna* are the three constituents of human nature; the *triwarga* are the three aims of human life; and the *tiga-jñana*, the three forces manifest in various degrees in living things, as well as the three kinds of knowledge associated with different living forms. The possible connections between the three sets allows many exegeses. The system

offers, among other things, a comprehensive account of the Balinese Chain of Being. At one extreme, animals (and plants) are capable only of acting as systems of energy, or at best, of simple speech, seek sensual pleasure in eating and sexual intercourse, and live in a state of ignorant desire. At the opposite pole, gods approximate pure thought, are motivated only by a disposition to do good and epitomize knowledge and purity. The higher they are the more remote and ineffectual they become, since they lack the capacity for speech and energy. The Balinese give this set of schemes, which they seem originally to have imported, a twist of their own. For they link this model with their own transformational view of the universe. Everything is thought to be in a state of continuous transformation (*metemahian*). For human beings, therefore, to stress only purity or knowledge is dangerous since it easily leads to excess and madness (or darkness, ignorance). 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). In this way the entire scheme is run through with contextual clauses.

We have here a fairly thorough-going theory of human faculties, goals and "natural" processes. Yet this theory is determinedly tripartite and fits badly with Western dichotomies like pain/pleasure and altruism/egoism or with psychoanalytical models. It is therefore unwise to transcribe our distinctions, dual or otherwise, onto the Balinese without careful prior consideration. Since the scheme is common knowledge, not an esoteric priestly model, and is presupposed—if often unreflectively—in Balinese interpretations of disputes and action in daily life, we ignore their relevance at our peril.

How are such schemes actually used? At this point the possible ways of contextualizing presuppositions become important. Among the more common renderings has been the linking of *triwarga* with caste. For each caste notionally has a different *darma*, or set of appropriate caste duties, which are laid out in various texts offering an authoritative view of proper relations between the different estates. Once again, however, such schemes are open to multiple interpretation. For *darma* is seen as the moral duty incumbent upon all human beings and as an ideal associated with brahmana and priests, whether of high or low caste. In addition, *darma* is characterized in everyday life as reflective thinking (*pemineh* or sometimes *manah*, from the Sanskrit *manas*, the organ, or faculty, of thought) as opposed to thinking about how to fulfill one's desires instrumentally (*keneh*). In these ways *darma* 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 human beings; or it may be the classification of one kind of thinking. Similar styles of contextualizing the classifications are found for each of the other terms. Hence, on the one hand, terms may be contextualized singly; on the other, their interconnections or their possible links with other schemes, like that of a transforming world, may be stressed. When a scheme like the *triwarga* is contextualized in this way, however, its authoritative aspects, stressed in the caste model, may undergo great change. As we have seen, an excessive stress on purity, or duty, may lead the personality to a state of imbalance and the commission of gross acts.

Use of Balinese representations of human nature can thus lead to a quite different interpretation of institutions than those usually given. Cocks fighting for dominance might more easily be examples of what humans should *not* do. Rather than offering an extended theatrical play on Balinese society, they may equally be seen as a dramatic representation of how not to behave. It is instructive that cockfights occur obligatorily at temple festivals and other rites when the destructive and atavistic, expressed as *buta* (demonic, but also what is blind and ignorant), have their moment.

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 early on four commonly used ways of structuring and interpreting collective representations: essentializing, contextualizing, pragmatizing, and elaborating. It may be useful to link these provisionally to popular Balinese words widely used in evaluating words and action. First, Balinese commonly use the term *tattwa* when they wish to indicate how things really are, the true account behind appearances.⁸⁶ So *nattwain* is to work towards the truth of something. *Tattwa* is generally not directly accessible for human beings, who must work through texts, inference, or revelation; and it is often maintained that the Supreme Being, or Intelligence, Sang Hyang Wid(h)i alone knows this truth. In Old Javanese it had the implication of "the essential," "the actual" (as contrasted with the apparent or incidental). On this reading, even if it is one that village Balinese do not often seem to make (as they tend to work in a world of actuality, not of essences), *tattwa* is directly linked to essentializing.

Often, however, things are to be understood in context to ensure they are appropriate (*manut*)—a common word to hear in meetings, and in discussion of interpretations of theatrical performances. Contextualizing is then *nganutang*, "fitting"; and since ensuring that things are fitting is central to making pragmatic judgments, *manut* has very practical overtones. There is another word, *pasti* ("definite," "certain"), which picks up some of the English connotations of "necessity" or "making sure." So *mastiang* may be used with the implications of "making certain that," "determining," or "stating." While theater should be about *tattwa*, it is recognized that most people are sufficiently weak in *darma* that is is necessary to appeal to their *kama*. So *tattwa* must be elaborated and decorated (*kaiyas*) in words and action to make it palatable. It would be possible to refine and add to these terms, but they should be adequate here to make the point that these strategies or styles are not pure analyst's importations.

The advantage of characterizing the Balinese in terms of their own cultural idioms rather than the literary genres of Europe or America, of which they know nothing, is that we do not run the danger of creating a *bengkiwa* ("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. 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? He 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 currently a popular image for how social relations are to be understood, then it might be well to include indigenous ideas of what negotiation is about. One might reasonably expect the Balinese to express the actions of others in terms of styles of transaction which are culturally available. For instance, the bartering image for human relationships, present in so much of the literature, would seem *prima facie* out of place in a society where court intrigue plays so great a part in everyday life and in the theater. I am not saying that there is some mechanical relationship between representations and action: merely that such representations are part of the circum-

stances 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 contrived, by reifying what happens among the people with whom they work.

Despite—or even because of—the amount of research on Bali, it is becoming clear how little we know. The plethora of unexamined, but relevant, indigenous treatises and the degree of local variation alone suggest that generalizations are rather dubious. 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: *Quantum est quod nescimus!*

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, and about the link between thought and action, as well as ideas about what constitutes an explanation, all far from fixed and all dependent on our own cultural fashions. The explanation of action is a notoriously tricky business.⁴⁷ The sheer difficulty of providing an account of ordinary everyday behavior 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 the kind of detailed knowledge of how people use their cultural representations which to date has rarely 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. 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 tendencies in the philosophy of mind and action—are inclined to treat the question of intentions or the 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, I am tilting harmlessly at windmills.

1. See, for example, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "Mutual Knowledge and Relevance in Theories of Comprehension," in *Mutual Knowledge*, ed. Neil V. Smith (London: Academic Press, 1974), pp. 61–85.
2. Anthony Heath, *Rational Choice and Exchange Theory: A Critique of Exchange Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Martin Hollis, *Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
3. Compare Edmund R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (London: Bell, 1954), and Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966), pp. 1–46; reprinted in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 87–125.
4. 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 in which people living on the island of Bali, and calling themselves Balinese, engage. In speaking of "the Balinese" I am really referring to those in the settlement of Tengahpadang, North Gianyar, where I did field research; they include both men and women of high and low castes, unless otherwise stated. How far usage varies between communities in Bali is an empirical issue and is still far from clear. Rather than hypostasize an entity called "Balinese society" and postulate its structural principles, I shall look instead primarily at how the people in one area set about interpreting their own collective representations.
5. The word seems to be from the Sanskrit for country, countryside, region, or place. Petrus J. Zoetmulder, S.J., *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), p. 393.
6. Clifford Geertz, "Form and Variation in Balinese Village Structure," *American Anthropologist*, 61 (1959), pp. 991–1012, at p. 991.
7. For example, he asserts that "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." *Ibid.*, pp. 1008–9. Essentialism also lurks within his ambiguous idea of "social organization," whether one reads this in a Firthian sense, or as a "plane of significance." Cf. Raymond Firth, "Social Organization and Social Change," in his *Essays on Social Organization and Values* (London: Athlone, 1964), pp. 30–58; and James A. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance of Bali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 59.
8. At the same time, there is an intriguing parallel between Geertz's definition of "planes" and the variety of "substance-codes" Inden has suggested are to be found in Bengal. (See Ronald Inden, *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture: a History of Caste and Clan in Middle Period Bengal* [London: University of California Press, 1976], pp. 13–14.) But 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 notion or a distillation of native constructions.
9. Geertz, "Form and Variation," p. 992.
10. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance*, pp. 61–62.
11. Clifford Geertz, "Tihingan: A Balinese Village," in *Villages in Indonesia*, ed. Koentjaraningrat (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 210–43, at p. 239.
12. See my "A Balinese Village and Its Field of Social Relations" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1979), pp. 123–31.
13. Michael G. Smith, "A Structural Approach to the Study of Political Change," in his *Corporations and Society* (London: Duckworth, 1974), pp. 165–204.
14. Geertz, "Form and Variation," p. 995.
15. At times there may well be discussion about what *désa* and *subak* are, or should be; but in the main practical demands require action. Coping with conflicts requires adjustment with other institutions, as does resolving perceived contradictions between collective representations.
16. In the essay on "Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage: With Particular Reference to Sinhalese Customary Law," in his *Rethinking Anthropology* (London: Athlone, 1961), pp. 105–13, Edmund Leach argues the impossibility of providing a universal definition, on the grounds that the

plethora of legal rights which may be conferred is in itself too complex and diffuse.

16. Geertz, "Form and Variation," p. 998, curiously renders *kuren* as "kitchen"—which is properly *paon*.

17. Both sexes are required because of the sexual division of labor 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, "Form and Variation," p. 998). At the same time, owners of compounds on *désa* land are members of most groups regardless of their marital status.

18. A counterargument might run that although marriage may take different forms, it still constitutes a *rite de passage* with the classic features of separation, transformation, and reintegration. Without disputing that these may be a feature of *mesakapan*, 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?

19. Quarles van Ufford, "Contradictions in the Concept of Legitimate Authority: Processes of Local State Formation in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* (forthcoming).

20. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance*, pp. 131 ff.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–30.

22. Boon (*ibid.*, pp. 121–22) glosses mock capture as *ngerorod*, a term used for "moving place" and so colloquially used for elopement (*melaib*, "running away"). *Ngerorod* is in fact part of every marriage rite, when the couple are secluded in someone else's house prior to *mesakapan*.

23. *Cinta* comes from the Sanskrit for thought, care, anxiety.

24. See Christiaan Hooykaas's review of Clifford Geertz and Hildred Geertz, *Kinship in Bali* in *Archipel*, 11 (1975), pp. 237–43, at p. 241.

25. Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality* (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 29–44.

26. I am here arguing, partly on the basis of my reading of the Balinese ethnography, that ideas do not always come singly, but are usually part of more complex, changeable, semantic sets. In other words I am not using a Popperian model, but one closer to the position of Quine, who speaks where possible of words, or terms, to avoid imputing a questionable reality to ideas, concepts and meanings. (Willard V. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in his *From a Logical Point of View* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953], pp. 20–46.) When I use expressions like "meaning," "idea" or "statement," these are my glosses of Balinese words, here *arti pemineh* (opinion) and *sané kebas* (what was said) respectively.

27. See Christiaan Hooykaas, *The Lay of Jaya Prana* (Oxford: Luzak, 1958); and Peter J. Worsley, *Babad Bulèlèng: A Balinese Dynastic Genealogy* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972).

28. Leopold E. A. Howe, "An Introduction to the Cultural Study of Traditional Balinese Architecture," *Archipel* 25 (1983), pp. 137–58.

29. The gloss was first suggested to me by Alice Dewey and is preferable to the crude "good" or "bad" traditionally ascribed to the two sides. Good and bad tend to be (logically) attributive adjectives; that is, they are attributes of a predicate, not full predicates themselves. (For example, a good cricketer is not good and a cricketer.) To gloss the camps in the Mahabharata in the common way is effectively to preempt discussion of the complex issue of what kind of world and what image of humanity is being portrayed in shadow theater. For a more detailed discussion, see my "Is God Evil?" in *The Anthropology of Evil*, ed. David J. Parkin (Oxford: Blackwells, 1985), pp. 165–93.

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

31. 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*.

32. 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 which there is no space to discuss here), and how it would be used.
33. 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.
34. Robin G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 82–83.
35. Steven Lukes, "Alienation and Anomie," in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, ed. Peter Laslett and William G. Runciman (Oxford: Blackwells, 1967), pp. 134–56, at p. 145. Emphasis added.
36. There are two further problems in our own 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 used in existing accounts.
37. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance*, passim.
38. See, for example, Geertz's review of Willem F. Wertheim, ed., *Bali: Studies in Life, Thought and Ritual*, in *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, 117 (1961), pp. 498–502; and Raden Mas Koentjaraningrat, *Anthropology in Indonesia: A Bibliographic Review*, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Bibliographic Series 8 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975).
39. Geertz, "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture," chapter 1 of *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), pp. 3–30, at p. 5.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 19 and 20.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 29, and 30.
44. There are, however, grounds on which they can be justified. Kuhn and others have argued that most scientific paradigms rest upon implicit metaphors. (See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd enlarged edition [London: University of Chicago Press, 1962]; and Margaret Masterman, "The Nature of a Paradigm," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970], pp. 59–89.) Furthermore, the depiction of "theoretical landscapes" in terms of sustained progressions of metaphors is a quite common, if dubious, practice in writing about cultures. (See Anne Salmond, "Theoretical Landscapes: On Cross-Cultural Conceptions of Knowledge," in *Semantic Anthropology*, ed. David J. Parkin [London: Academic Press, ASA Monographs No. 22, 1982], pp. 65–87.)
45. Geertz, "Thick Description," p. 17.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
47. See Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979), pp. 39–47.
48. Paul Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," *Social Research*, 38 (1971), pp. 529–62.
49. Cf. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Poststructuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 73–81.
50. Martin Hollis, "The Social Destruction of Reality," in *Rationality and Relativism*, ed. Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes (Oxford: Blackwells, 1982), pp. 67–86.
51. Cf. Ian Hacking, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 159 ff.

52. His account is taken from Roelof Goris, "Holidays and Holy Days," in *Bali: Studies in Life, Thought and Ritual*, ed. Willem F. Wertheim (The Hague: van Hoeve, 1960), pp. 113-29. The text is reprinted in his *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 360-411.

53. Geertz, "Person," p. 392.

54. On this debate, see Geertz, "Person"; Maurice Bloch, "The Past and the Present in the Future," *Man* (New Series), 12: 2 (1977), pp. 278-92; Michael F. C. Bourdillon, "Knowing the World or Hiding It: A Response to Maurice Bloch," *Man* (New Series), 13: 4 (1978), pp. 591-99; and Leopold E. A. Howe, "The Social Determination of Knowledge: Maurice Bloch and Balinese Time," *Man* (New Series), 16: 2 (1981), pp. 220-34.

55. See Max Black, "Metaphor," in his *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 25-47.

56. Geertz, "Person," p. 368.

57. Gillian Feeley-Harnik, "Divine Kingship and the Meaning of History among the Sakalava of Madagascar," *Man* (New Series), 13: 3 (1978), pp. 402-17.

58. Geertz, "Person," p. 370.

59. 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." Boon suggests that if anything teknonymy may be on the increase, as Balinese adapt status relations to new political ends. See his "The Progress of the Ancestors in a Balinese Temple-group," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 34 (1974), pp. 7-25.

It is almost as if names and words have some very special essence. We are in danger of entering a world where digital watches imply a different sense of time from the old analog ones; or classical Romans have tripartite orders of person definition and Englishmen bipartite since they were/are referred to respectively by three and two names. 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 persons. If this is so, it is not clear how they can be "knowing subjects" in the same sense as we are, nor how their "constructions of the world" could be the same as ours. If not, then what are the implications of

personal names? How misleading a rigid and decontextualized linking of words and ideas can prove may be seen in Wiggins' attempt to grapple with Geertz's model of selfhood. David Wiggins, "Locke, Butler and the Stream of Consciousness: and Men as Natural Kind," in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amélie Rorty (London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 139-73, at p. 155. (Rorty's "A Literary Postscript," in the same volume [pp. 301-23] is far more sensitively contextual.)

60. *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

61. The analysis draws heavily on two texts of Christiaan Hooykaas: "Padmāsana, the Throne of God," and "Śiva-Liṅga, the Mark of the Lord," in his *Āgama Tirtha: Five Studies in Hindu-Balinese Religion* (Amsterdam: Noord Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1964), pp. 95-140 and 143-89. A close reading of Geertz's interpretation of Hooykaas's cautious and scholarly account is revealing.

62. Rodney Needham, "Inner States as Universals," in his *Circumstantial Deliveries* (London: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 53-71.

63. Geertz, *Negara*, p. 155.

64. This said, I should add that I am broadly in sympathy with Geertz's argument for examining the culturally specific forms that human action takes, as against Victor Turner's universalism. (Compare Geertz's "Person," for example, with Turner's *From Ritual to Theater: The Huinan Seriousness of Play* [New York: Performing Arts, 1982].) My criticism is that his argument has not been pushed far enough towards a recognition of the possibility of radically different metaphysical systems.

65. Geertz, "Person," pp. 362 and 363.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

67. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 412-53, at pp. 423, 443, and 436. The latter phrase is taken from Erving Goffman's *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), p. 78.

68. *Negara*, p. 120.

69. Ibid., p. 13, which quotes from Geertz's earlier "Politics Past, Politics Present: Some Notes on the Uses of Anthropology in Understanding the New States," reprinted in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 327–41, at p. 335.
70. "Deep Play," p. 417.
71. Ibid., p. 426.
72. See Zoetmulder, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*, p. 1141.
73. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), pp. 29–45.
74. Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp. 27–31.
75. Andreas Teeuw, et al., *Śiwarātrikalpa of Mpu Tanakṣi*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 3 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 31–32.
76. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance*, pp. 31–34, observes that the cockfight can take on all sorts of significances in different contexts. Other texts exploring the complexities of status and caste include: Andrew Duff-Cooper, "Hierarchy, Purity, and Equality among a Community of Balinese on Lombok," in *Contexts and Levels: Essays on Hierarchy*, ed. Robert H. Barnes, Daniel de Coppet, and Robert J. Parkin (Oxford: JASO Occasional Paper No. 4, 1985), pp. 153–66; Leopold E. A. Howe, "Caste in India and Bali: Levels of Comparison," in *ibid.*, pp. 139–52; and my own "Is God Evil?"
77. A curious omission is Balinese ideas about chance. Instead of treating cockfighting 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 that overlooking it says much about the moral background of ethnographers.
78. Geertz, "Deep Play," p. 418.
79. Rutger van Eck, *Balinesesch-Hollandsch Woordenboek* (Utrecht: Kemink, 1876); Herman N. van der Tuuk, *Kawi-Balinesesch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1897); I Wayan Warna, *Kamus Bali-Indonesia* (Denpasar: Dinas Pengajaran, 1978); J. Kersten, *Kamus Kecil Bahasa Bali* (Singaraja: privately published, 1978); Jan Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia* (Naghpur: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1952); and Zoetmulder, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*.
80. "Person," p. 369.
81. *The Anthropological Romance*, p. 3.
82. Ibid., p. 6.
83. James Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
84. Bloch, "The Past."
85. Geertz, "Person," pp. 401–2.
86. *Tattwa* has complicated philosophical roots which seem to affect its popular usage in Bali. In Indian Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika it is "the nature of things" (Karl Potter, *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977], p. 240). In Sāṃkhya it is the principles or basic categories of reality (Jan Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism: a Comparison* [London: The Athlone Press, 1970], p. 44). In Old Javanese texts found in Bali, the senses of *tattwa* include "what makes something what it is," "the actual facts of the matter, how it really happened, the true story." "Sometimes *tattwa* is the concrete object in its essence, *katattwan* the abstract essence of the concrete object" (Zoetmulder, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*, p. 1962).
87. See Gertrude E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1957); and Alan R. White, "Introduction," to his *The Philosophy of Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 1–18.