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Flat puppets on an empty screen, stories in the round

Imagining space in *wayang kulit* and the worlds beyond

BERNARD ARPS

ABSTRACT

The puppets are flat, the screen against which they are placed and moved is white and devoid of scenery. In what kinds of space do the stories of the classical shadow-play of Java, Bali, Lombok, and the Malay world unfold despite this double flatness? How do performers use not only puppets and screen but also music and language to bring space into being? What must spectators know and do to make sense of these storytelling techniques? As a contribution to the narratological study of the multimodal making of storyworlds, I demonstrate that *wayang kulit* caters for different degrees of interpretive competence, which yield different understandings of the space that *wayang* portrays. An expert way of apprehending space requires seeing *beyond* the screen, puppets, and silhouettes, or even looking *away from* them. At the same time the peculiar ways of narrating space in *wayang* point to a deeply felt spatiality in real-life contexts as well.

KEYWORDS

Space; spatial affect; spatiality; worldmaking; multimodal storytelling; narratology; philology of performance; Southeast Asian studies; shadow puppetry.

INTRODUCTION¹

The stage is brightly lit
By the lamp that is the sun or moon
The screen is an empty universe (*Book of Bima Purified*)²

¹ I wish to thank Will Derks, Marijke Klokke, Susi Moeimam, Jan Mrázek, and *Wacana*'s anonymous reviewers for their critical comments on earlier versions of this article, and Hedi Hinzler and Jan van der Putten for the Sasak and Banyumas *wayang* recordings referred to.

² “[...] / *padhanging kang panggungireki / damar raditya wulan / kelir alam suwung*” (Tanaya

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The puppets look otherworldly, not just to outside observers but also to local audiences, and the background against which the puppets stand and are moved, basically along two dimensions, must be characterized as minimalist. Nonetheless the manipulation of flat leather shadow puppets against an empty white screen in Javanese, Balinese, Sasak, and Malay *wayang kulit* represents complex worlds that can feel thoroughly familiar to audiences because those worlds profoundly resemble their own. In this article I examine how performers and spectators use the three components of wayang narration – the puppets and their *mise-en-scène*, the accompanying music, and the language uttered by the puppeteer – to call up and understand the spaces of these worlds. The screen, conceived as a stage, appears to represent an empty universe. To the extent that it becomes inhabited, it shows puppets and shadows of a consistent size and always in side-view. However, as I shall demonstrate, thematizing techniques in the three components of narration create a rather different world. They guide the spectators through the story's spaces three-dimensionally. They offer various perspectives that can be third-person or first-person, and that range in scope from expansive to minutely detailed. These spaces are not merely a setting or environment for wayang's narrated action but themselves an integral part of the narration. That narration, that making of a storyworld or (with a narratological term) a diegesis, is multimodal. The space of the wayang world is not only imagined visually by puppets on the screen but also through hearing, both in music and in language. Because the semantic conventions at play are not all self-evident and not universally shared, understanding this narrated space requires special interpretive competence and poses interesting challenges to audiences. I will end by suggesting that there are fundamental correspondences between the space narrated in wayang and the lived space of its intended spectators. Perhaps their everyday spatial practice is not as freely three-dimensional as one would expect, and perhaps it is more musical, more language-based, and more distinctly patterned than one tends to think. Wayang's space is constructed by alternating two kinds of space-making, one grounded on motion and another grounded on language use. The same patterning occurs in other performative and ritual genres; it may represent a deep-rooted ideology of worldmaking.

THE *MISE-EN-SCÈNE* AS THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION

The sights and sounds of a wayang performance provide a focal point in the show space (which is created not only by the performers and their equipment but also by the people, furniture, and buildings around it). The visual dimension of a performance, the *mise-en-scène*, consists of the manipulation and placement of the leather puppets with their silhouettes against the screen, which has a pair of banana-tree trunks at its base (see Figure 1).³ The sources of the

1979: 23, spelling adapted). A different translation is in Soebardi 1975: 131. The *Book of Bima Purified* (*Serat Bima Suci*), a famous Javanese narrative poem, is usually attributed to the court poet Yasadipura I (1729–1803) of Surakarta, Central Java.

³ Strictly speaking *wayang kulit* has *mise-en-écran* rather than *mise-en-scène*, but the latter

performance sounds – the puppeteer, the musicians with their instruments and, in Java, the singers – have fixed locations in a confined area directly behind the screen, the puppeteer sitting closest to it. As a rule all performers face the screen, or at least are able to keep an eye on it from where they are sitting, despite the fact that wayang accompaniment techniques have a strongly auditory orientation and it is possible in theory for a performance to be flawless if only the puppeteer and a drum player – who is of crucial importance in all wayang accompaniment except in most Balinese genres – can see the screen. The performers' position has a thematizing function: it helps, by suggestion, to orient the spectators' gaze towards the *mise-en-scène*.⁴



Figure 1. A screen before performance. The puppeteer readying the puppets is the late Ki Ronosuripto. (Mangkunagaran Palace, Surakarta, Java, November 1985).

term facilitates comparison with other forms of puppetry, drama, and life. Needless to say, details of the *mise-en-scène* vary. For instance, the screen and shadows are absent in several kinds of wayang, including a special form of *wayang kulit* in Bali, where, moreover, only one trunk is used in some districts, as is also the case in Lombok. For *mise-en-scène* in film, see Bordwell and Thompson 1993: 145, 495. There it is defined as all elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed, comprising settings and props, costumes and make-up, the visual behaviour of figures, and lighting.

⁴ Up to the mid-1980s the female singers in central and east Javanese wayang were seated behind the puppeteer, looking towards the screen like the musicians, though in the front row. Around 1985 they moved to the right of the puppeteer, facing in his direction. Their gaze did still direct the spectators to the centre of the screen. Later their position shifted further; they are now commonly located next to the puppeteer but facing the musicians and – and this is the point – the majority of spectators. They have become part of the spectacle. See Mrázek 2005: 359–535 for the cultural context in which these changes occurred.

THE REPRESENTATION OF SPACE THROUGH *MISE-EN-SCÈNE*

The screen, the puppets and their iconography, their arrangement on-screen, and their manipulation all play a part in representing space and spaces. The representation is subtle. The visual backdrop of all action is the screen, bounded below by the horizontal band of dark cloth that represents the ground.⁵ Traditionally, if a personage's surroundings are made visible at all, this is done by the puppet's placement and movement in relation to other puppets.

Most of these puppets represent human beings – mythical, but human – while others represent giants and demons, the third major category is deities (all anthropomorphic), and the fourth animals, of which there are only a handful. A small number of puppets are props. Traditionally the main prop is the figure known in Javanese as *kayon* ('tree, wood') or *gunungan* ('mountain'). It has these names (and kindred ones in Balinese, Sasak, and Malay) because of its outline shape and the details depicted in its carving and painting. (A *kayon* stands centre-screen in Figure 1.) As I describe elsewhere, the *kayon* has three kinds of function.⁶ First of all, the puppeteer places it (sometimes in pairs) centre-screen or has it make movements on the screen, up and down, from side to side, pirouetting, etcetera, to mark the beginning and end of a performance and transitions between major scenes. Traditionally this is the sole case of a leather puppet being manipulated not to represent an element in the dramatic diegesis.

A wayang performance consists of a regular alternation of two kinds of segments in which the narrative progresses by different means. A segment lasts from less than a minute to over 30 minutes. In one kind of segment the narrative is advanced by manipulating the puppets with accompaniment of the orchestra. I have termed these M periods, as they combine music and motion. In the other kind of segment the puppets stand still and are made to speak, or the puppeteer gives a description of the scene. These are S periods: kinetically they are characterized by stasis, while the narrative progresses through speech.⁷ Now the specialness of the *kayon*'s use as a narrative boundary-marker is underscored by the fact that it may stand planted centre-screen during a relatively long spell of time in which music and stasis coincide: neither speech nor motion is central to the dramatic progression here, because there is no such progression.

⁵ The wavy band at the top of the screen in Javanese wayang (see Figure 1) is decorative. While sometimes called *plangitan* 'the skies', it has no narrative function. It is also referred to as *plisir* 'edging'.

⁶ Arps 2016: 596.

⁷ See Arps 2002: 317–318, 2016: 72–73. There may be music during S periods, but only soft-sounding, or none at all. The language is primary. Sweeney's analysis of the peninsular Malay *wayang kulit* genre of *wayang Siam* reveals that M and S periods occur in it as well (Sweeney 1972: 56–57). I have observed them also in Balinese and Sasak puppetry, and it seems that they are also part of the southern Thai *nang talung* shadow theatre (Dowsey-Magog 2002: 190) and the *nang pramo* thai of northeastern Thailand (the Isan region), which is performed by several standing puppeteers (Brereton and Somroay 2007: 119).

In the second place, a *kayon* may be fixed against the ornamental row of puppets to the right of the screen and, if there are two *kayons*, against the left-hand row as well.⁸ In this case it is also a boundary-marker, but the boundary is spatial, between the ornamental border and the part of the screen that is narratively functional: the space of the drama. Often at the same time it can be taken as a tree or wall delimiting that space. On the whole this representational function obtains by implication only, although it may be “activated” when a personage runs into such a *kayon* or is cast against it by another in a fight. This usage shades into the *kayon*’s third function, that is its use as a prop. The *kayon* may be used to represent a gateway, mountain, forest, tree, blaze, sea, a wave in the sea, wind, dust stirred up by passing troops, and more.⁹

In classical Javanese wayang there are a few other props which, like the *kayon*, are puppets made of hide. They depict, amongst other things, a horse-drawn carriage complete with drivers, a building, a tree, various weapons, a letter, and a jewelled box. A borderline case between proper puppet and prop is the rectangular figure that represents an infantry unit.¹⁰ On the whole these figures – mostly parts of a locale or objects handled by personages – are used to picture constitutive elements of a narrative event. Save the carriage, infantry unit, and weaponry they are rarely employed.

The main prop, the *kayon*, is multi-interpretable. The spectators must be knowledgeable and attentive to context in order to know what it stands for in any one instance of use. In this and other fields the wayang tradition is continually in flux, and in recent decades this multi-interpretability has been reduced somewhat, in Java at least, by the creation of novel types of *kayon* dedicated to specific purposes. At the same time this has enlarged the range of their functions. The so-called *kayon klowong* ‘outline *kayon*’, is most common (though still by no means universal, unlike the ordinary *kayon*). Its distinctive feature is an empty centre. In combination with the lamp the *kayon klowong* is used in the manner of a frame or spotlight. This is the case in Figure 2, a video still from a rendition by East Javanese puppeteer Ki Rudi Gareng of the famous play *Dewa Ruci* which recounts Bratasena’s heroic quest for purity.¹¹ In the episode depicted in Figure 2 the *kayon klowong*’s shadow frames the emergence of Bratasena’s tutelary deity Dewa Ruci from Bratasena’s body when the latter has lost consciousness after a battle with a sea serpent. The *kayon klowong* was first created to produce shadow effects symbolizing the haze (*kabut*) of doubt that enveloped a particular personage experiencing

⁸ In wayang theory and criticism “left” and “right” relate to the vantage point of the puppeteer and musicians.

⁹ For the Central Javanese case see Arps 2016, Appendix II, s.v. *kayon*, and, more comprehensively and nuanced, Mrázek 2005: 46–49, 155–158.

¹⁰ For photographs of these figures see Angst 2007: 246–255 and Katz-Harris 2010: 182–185.

¹¹ An annotated edition and translation of *Dewa Ruci* performed by another puppeteer is in Arps 2016. This performance took place in 1987 when the *kayon klowong* was still very rare. I will quote from this rendition repeatedly below.

internal conflict.¹² Like that of the ordinary *kayon*, the *kayon klowong*'s narrative meaning is not unequivocal.

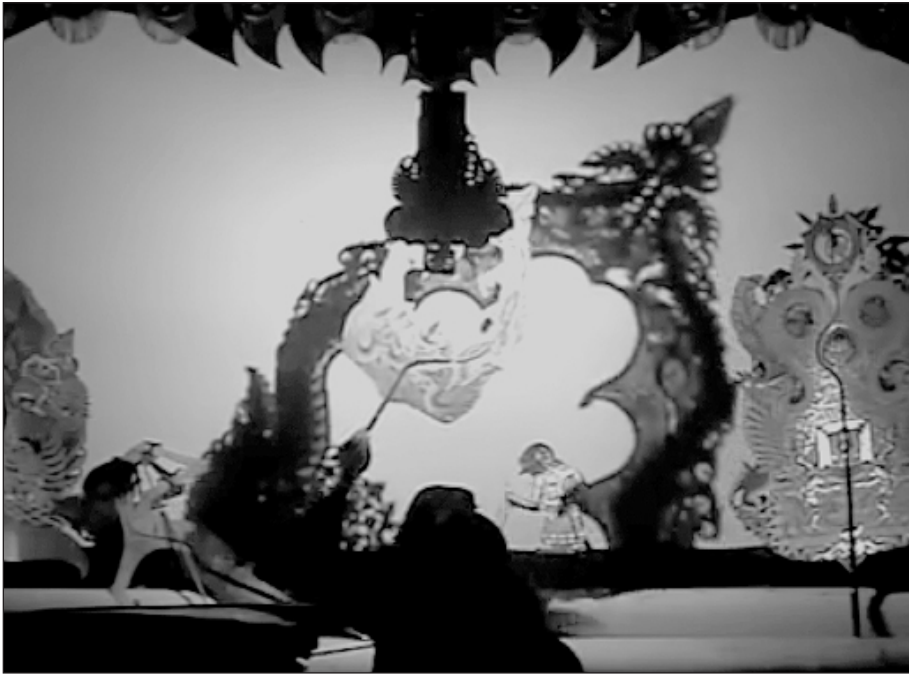


Figure 2. The small deity Dewa Ruci, framed by the shadow cast by the *kayon klowong*, has emerged from Bratasena's body. Other new kinds of *kayon* stand left and right. (Screen-shot from a video recording of *Dewa Ruci* by Ki Rudi Gareng, disk 2, at 03:14:03.)

The ordinary puppets' iconography is relevant to the representation of space as well, albeit on a finer scale. Apart from the arms (and in rare cases mouths), the bodily postures depicted in *wayang kulit* puppets are frozen. Irrespective of the spatial position assumed by a personage in the drama and his or her movements – sitting, standing, bowing, running, flying, crawling, and so on – the puppet's posture is the same. What varies is the place where the puppeteer fixes or holds it against the screen. Whether a Javanese shadow puppet's feet are planted wide apart or close together, for instance, is not a question of the use that the personage makes of space at a particular moment in the drama but rather of its character. Keeping the legs together suggests a more modest and restrained disposition than having the legs apart.¹³ The placement of the legs is related to the use of space in an indirect way, namely via the ways the entire puppet is moved. In combat sequences, for example, the personages whose puppets have their feet close together are not supposed to

¹² This was in 1985, by the innovative puppeteer and puppet maker Ki Bambang Suwarno of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) in Surakarta (Bambang Suwarno et al. 2014: 3–4).

¹³ Javanese *wayang* puppets portraying female personages stand with legs together, with the exception of ogresses.

kick their opponents, while those with feet wide apart (an iconographical type in fact known as *dugangan* 'kicking' in Central Javanese wayang nomenclature) include kicking among their fighting methods.¹⁴

Visually, therefore, the main clue for space in the wayang diegesis is the puppets' on-screen positions, at rest or in motion. Like in much human theatre, the angle and field of view within a scene are constant: there is nothing resembling the alternating of camera angles that is common in film and television.¹⁵ The only viewpoints offered to the spectators are that on the shadow side of the screen and that on the performers' and puppets' side. Because puppets and screen are flat and the dark strip along the bottom of the screen stands for the earth – so that it is not an option to suggest greater distance just by holding a puppet higher up as in the Turkish Karagöz shadow-play – it would seem that the space that is represented visually by the *mise-en-scène* knows only height and width. But this is a mistaken impression. With only a few exceptions, Balinese, Javanese, Sasak, and Malay shadow puppets depict their personages not *en face* but approximately *de profil*. This applies not only to the puppets, but to wayang in general: the encounters that form the core of wayang storytelling are shown in side-view.¹⁶ If several puppets are on-screen they may overlap, and which puppet covers which other, in motion or stasis, is diegetically significant. Overlapping is wayang's primary "depth cue".¹⁷ It indicates which personage or object is closer to the puppeteer and the spectators on his side of the screen.

However, from the shadow side it is difficult to see how puppets overlap. From there the visible dimensions of the presentation are width and height, not depth. This is true also in those rare cases when the puppeteer holds one puppet at a much greater distance from the screen than another. As a rule he presses the puppets' faces against the screen to ensure that the silhouettes of the faces are clear-cut on the other side.¹⁸ Unlike other puppets a *kayon* may be held away from the screen in full, close to the lamp suspended above the puppeteer. This produces a large shadow that is visible on both sides of the screen. But while the *kayon* itself is closer to the spectators on the puppeteer's

¹⁴ A prime example of a *dugangan* puppet is that of Bratasena. See Arps 2016: 220–233, 369–372, and 432–434 for descriptions and photographs of his combating techniques, including kicking. A systematic discussion of character types and movement styles in Javanese dance drama, closely related to puppetry, is in Brakel 1993.

¹⁵ Directing the spectators' attention to one element of the *mise-en-scène* rather than another is possible, but hardly ever by visual means; I will discuss this below.

¹⁶ Arps 2002: 318.

¹⁷ See Arps 2002: 318, 331. The term "depth cue" is from film theory (see Bordwell and Thompson 1993: 166).

¹⁸ There may be several centimetres between the screen and the parts of the puppets other than the face, which causes a somewhat blurred expansion of their shadows. This is the case in Javanese wayang and has also been observed for the Malay *wayang siam* (Sweeney 1972: 58) and, in different ways, for north and south Bali (Sweeney 1972: 58, Hinzler 1975: 38). The greater size of the shadow in comparison with what the shadow-side spectators know of the puppet does suggest a kind of depth, but this has nothing to do with the spatial relations between different personages.

side than another puppet that may be on-screen, this does not represent depth. The aim is to get a shadow of greater width and height, for instance to suggest a dense and expansive forest¹⁹ or, as with the *kayon klowong* in Figure 2, to project a large frame. Foreground and background remain indistinguishable.

Figure 3 schematically illustrates that the *mise-en-scène* has three dimensions nevertheless, as puppets are not only placed or moved next to each other, on the same level or higher and lower, but also overlap. The example is from a performance of *Dewa Ruci* by Ki Anom Soeroto in Amsterdam in 1987,²⁰ although, except for the dramatis personae, it might equally well have been from any other opening audience scene in the classical *wayang kulit* of Surakarta. The puppets' numbers indicate the order in which they are implanted in the banana trunks; the screen is bordered left and right by a *kayon*. The king holding court (represented by puppet no. 1) sits on a seat, attended by two maidservants (2 and 3) seated on the floor. Those whom the king receives in audience are the court scholar (4) and a princely ally (5), both on seats as well, and the chancellor (6), who sits on the ground. View 3a (in Figure 3) shows the silhouettes of the puppets from the shadow side of the screen. Some puppets evidently overlap, but seeing which puppet covers the other would require close scrutiny. View 3b, from the performers' side of the screen, and view 3c, from above, show that puppet (3) partly covers (2) and not the other way round, while (6) overlaps (4).

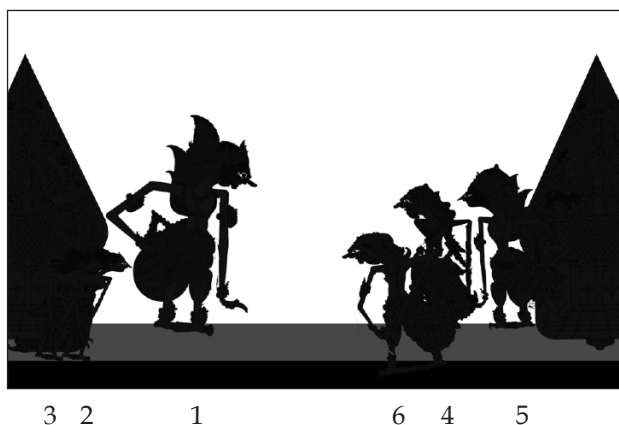
The tableau allows the viewer to draw certain diegetic conclusions. The scholar (4) and chancellor (6) are seated side by side, as are the servants. The scholar sits on a seat, the chancellor sits bent forward on the floor, which is why his puppet is fixed in the lower trunk, slanting towards the right. Though the maidservants are seated next to each other, puppet (3) is planted further right than (2). It is a general rule of puppet placement that faces should be visible in full, preferably on both sides of the screen, but certainly on the puppet side.²¹ Therefore puppet (3), which is physically identical to (2), is not put entirely on top of (2). Slanting one of them more than the other would denote different bodily positions, whereas they are supposed to sit in the same way. Although (4) and (6) should be understood as sitting next to each other, puppet (6) is further to the right. This, too, allows his face to be seen fully and clearly. He is important in the scene and will speak a lot.

¹⁹ See Arps 2016: 394–395, where the *kayon* is used in this way in a performance of *Dewa Ruci* to depict the emptiness in which Bratasena finds himself when he has entered his personal deity's body.

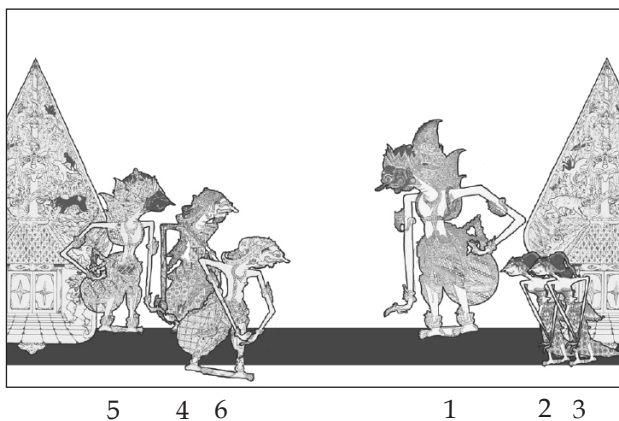
²⁰ Pertaining to pp. 116–140 of the edition (Arps 2016).

²¹ This convention of presentational aesthetics is rooted in a strong precept in Javanese culture (also in force elsewhere in Southeast Asia) to respect people's heads and faces, which *wayang* thus also helps to perpetuate.

(a) View from shadow side:



(b) View from puppet side:



(c) View from above (puppets against the screen):



Figure 3. Three schematic views of a puppet tableau.

To understand how a composition of puppets or shadows on the screen relates to an arrangement of personages in three-dimensional space, knowledge of the mimetic conventions of puppet placement and the proxemics that it draws on is necessary. This is specialist knowledge. Although there are many wayang connoisseurs, not all spectators are familiar with these conventions, which are made explicit in puppeteer apprenticeship and the wayang criticism vented in conversations among adepts. (They are rarely discussed in wayang handbooks and scripts, which tend to focus on technique.) This leads to an important point about the difference between matters presented and matters represented. Attentive spectators who do not know the pertinent conventions

have three options. Firstly, they may infer an arrangement in three-dimensional space that is possibly unwarranted. If, for instance, one is unaware that a puppet planted in the upper banana trunk can portray either someone sitting on a seat or standing, one may think that the ruler, scholar, and princely ally are all standing. Their seats, after all, cannot be seen. And if one does not know how puppet overlapping works as a depth cue, one may infer that one maidservant sits behind the other rather than next to her, because puppet (3) is planted further to the right than (2). Such inferences are not unlikely. It is extremely common, also outside wayang, for a presentation to be recognized as a purposive representation without appreciating what is being represented in full detail, and the diegetic conventions that govern wayang *mise-en-scène* are not all self-evident.

Secondly, it is conceivable that audience members who are quite knowledgeable, nevertheless do not distinguish between sitting on a seat and standing. What matters to them is the *functional, social* difference: having one's head on a higher level than someone else means being accorded (or presuming that one is entitled to) the others' respect. Lay spectators may also sense this distinction. The two differing vertical levels of the puppets are visible, especially on the performers' side of the screen which shows the banana tree trunks into which they are fixed (see Figure 1), while the social meaning of the relative level of one's head is engrained in Javanese culture.

Finally, spectators may not infer a three-dimensional grouping of personages at all: they may accept the layout of the puppets as it comes and not enter the sphere of the represented. Uninitiated spectators may for instance be unaware that the contrast between placement in the lower and upper banana trunks or between placement directly against the screen and against another puppet is significant, depicting different spatial positions and possibly social positioning. They may feel that it is accidental or purely a matter of visual aesthetics.

These ways of making sense of a puppet tableau depend on cultural knowledge, but they are not mutually exclusive, nor inherently linked to certain categories of viewers. I have mentioned lay people because they tend to make up a sizable proportion of the spectators. Those who are aware of the relevant conventions have the same main options where place is concerned – though in their case the realm of interpretation may be more varied. They too may well be attracted to the presentation *per se*. Matters like visual balance and dexterity in handling the puppets are of interest also to those who know that they contribute to a story that takes place somewhere else than the lit screen at the heart of the performance arena. These spectators may attend to representation too, in ways that are justified by mimetic conventions drawn upon by the puppeteer and the makers of the puppets. Even so the diegesis they construct will not be a single, unitary one. Representation has various layers and dimensions. This variability comes into play here. There are two main ways of viewing a tableau like that in Figure 3 diegetically.

For many wayang watchers (including the puppeteer and other performers)

at many moments during a performance, the puppets and their shadows on the screen are the main source for construing a diegesis. The *mise-en-scène* extends an invitation to conceive of the represented as somatically flat personages doing flat things in nondescript space. The personages have the curious physiognomies carved and painted onto the puppets (and they speak in the curious voices that the puppeteer gives them). Their movements and positions are those that the puppeteer has the puppets make and assume. While they are three-dimensional, their depth is minimal.

This is a compelling view; the invitation is hard to decline. The puppets and shadows are so substantive, so undeniably present on the screen, and so alluring, that one has to be obstinate to decline nevertheless, to “see through” the tableau and imagine personages in a space that has greater depth than the *mise-en-scène*'s low relief. It is *possible* to take a tableau of puppets against a screen as the representation of a king, servants, and advisers gathered in conference in an audience hall on an Elevated Ground (*Sitinggil*), the square mound situated to the north of a Javanese palace, just outside the walls of the palace compound. As we shall see, this is indeed the kind of place where the event visualized in Figure 3 is *said* to be located. But there is no necessity to do so, and the *mise-en-scène* considered in isolation from the other components of performance does little to promote this kind of diegesis. In fact it is common for viewers of a stylized expressive form not to proceed this far.

As we watch a Tom and Jerry cartoon, to use an example that is typologically not too distant from the genre discussed here, there is no need to imagine a mouse of flesh and blood harassing a cat of flesh and blood. The animated drawings we actually perceive suffice. We recognize Tom as a cat and Jerry as a mouse nevertheless, and their confrontations do happen in three-dimensional space. In order to make sense of the animated narrative we must take this into account.

Likewise, equipped with the appropriate iconographic knowledge, we recognize puppet (4) of figure 3 as a pandit, and given a basic familiarity with the dramatis personae, as the venerable Durna. If we want to understand his puppet's position *vis-à-vis* that of the chancellor (6), we cannot make do with the spatial properties of the screen and puppets, but must also invoke those of the wayang's worlds.

This is not to suggest that the worlds of wayang (or Tom and Jerry) are mere copies of the worlds of humans (or cats and mice). The relations between the wayang world and the worlds inhabited by its creators, as well as the other worlds they may make in expressive genres, are established by means of typification, by identifying types and assigning phenomena to them.²² Painted pieces of hide and wood or horn can become living personages because their makers have given them faces and legs, because the puppeteer has them speak and walk, and because he has them relate spatially to each other as higher and lower, before and behind, beside, and so on. The puppets have features, are made to act in ways, and go through conditions that one identifies as

²² Arps 1999: 437.

belonging to the same types of things that other substances, too, are thought to have, do, and go through, and that one may give the same verbal labels (“face,” “speak,” “higher”). According to powerful interpretive conventions the *mise-en-scène* of wayang is a selective and stylized representation of matters that might also take place in a human environment.²³ Its dramatic space may be flat or round; it has three dimensions either way.

I have examined a tableau of puppets at rest to elucidate the kinds of diegesis that wayang *mise-en-scène* promotes or allows. The same points can be made about puppet movement, which is predesigned to such an extent that it could be characterized as choreography although many patterns do not represent dance strictly speaking. The direction in which puppets face and move (left or right, inclining upwards or downwards), the speed and rhythm of their movements, their positions on the screen (right, centre, or left, higher or lower), the order in which they are brought on and taken off screen, all these variables are motivated. Many of the conventions guiding puppet choreography serve the iconic representation of movement in three-dimensional space. Kicking, for example, was mentioned above as a fighting method in Javanese *wayang kulit*. A puppeteer usually represents it by rapidly moving a puppet forward (in a straight line or a slight upward arc) so that its front foot is seen to strike some part of the opponent’s body. The target puppet is propelled away or, at the very least, it shakes.²⁴

Puppet choreography is often based on typical or ideal patterns of interpersonal conduct that apply generally in the cultures concerned. Thus the movement patterns that make up a battle between two puppets, kicking among them, may be seen as a stylized representation of typical duelling tactics which are recognized in the culture at large (and which wayang’s *mise-en-scène* helps to memorialize). On a more peaceful note, in Javanese wayang a puppet depicting the host of a meeting enters from the right and is planted on the right-hand side of the screen, facing left, like puppet (1) in Figure 3b, just like etiquette demands that a host enter a reception room from inside the home and sit with his or her back towards the inner quarters (which, in Figure 3b, are located off-screen to the right)²⁵. Not all movement follows such a norm of mimetic realism, though. A 360-degree turn of a puppet’s arm around the

²³ Here I build on my earlier work concerning diegesis or worldmaking. The human world is also the standard of reference for literary interpretation in Java, whose chief goal is contextualization in the here and now; see Arps 1992: 351–406. That the notion of diegesis does not have to be restricted to narrative is argued in Arps 1996. I discuss the roles of typification and categorization in diegesis (in this case the diegesis constructed by the books making up a personal library and the means of accessing it, a thematic catalogue) in Arps 1999. Relations between the narrative world of a wayang play in performance and other diegeses contained by it, intersecting it, and ensphering it are noted in Arps 2016, Chapter 5.

²⁴ The feet part of the puppet does not necessarily come into contact with the puppet representing the target of the kick. A puppeteer normally tries to minimize wear and tear of the puppets. What counts is the illusion of violent impact.

²⁵ For reasons that I hope to examine elsewhere. For anthropological analyses of Javanese norms and practices surrounding visiting and the home see Wolfowitz 1991 and Newberry 2006.

shoulder as it is taken off-screen with vigour, for instance, may be typical and quite expressive.²⁶ However, while it represents something that humans might conceivably do, it is not something they usually do when exiting some space.

Angle of view is constant in wayang and the space represented by the screen is contiguous, but the field of view, that is the extent of the spaces represented by the functional part of the screen, may vary considerably from tableau to tableau and even, during periods of puppet manipulation with musical accompaniment (M periods), from moment to moment. The screen can stand for an audience hall, the left and right margins approximating this hall's boundaries, as in the tableau of Figure 3. It can also stand for a vast area, for instance when a personage finds himself in a plain facing a mountain range (represented by one or two *kayons* planted at the edge of the screen), or the small part of a vast area, such as a forest, where a group of personages happen to meet. In such cases, the screen's margins are irrelevant in terms of representation. One could say that the field size (in camera terms the shot size) varies. Those who do the zooming in and out are the spectators, however, and in doing so they are guided by more than visual data alone. I will come back to this below.

The *mise-en-scène* of wayang, then, depicts both the changing and (temporarily) stable positions of personages relative to each other and to the boundaries of the locale – the ground in any case, but sometimes other boundaries as well. What *mise-en-scène* itself renders visible is spatial relations. Unless props are used, not much more information can be derived from the screen alone than that it represents room for personages to meet in or to traverse. But of course the *mise-en-scène* works in tandem with music and discourse.

PLACE, SPACE, AND MUSIC

The sounds of gamelan and singers and the puppeteer's raps on the puppet box with the wooden mallet in his left hand and his crashing the metal plates suspended from its side with his right foot (as he sits cross-legged) do much more than represent properties of the dramatic space. But they do have spatial significance.

Orchestral music may signify certain properties of locale, albeit in broad terms and indirectly. Spectators must be knowledgeable about wayang mythology and music if they want to make spatial sense of these clues. The various wayang traditions, for example, prescribe a limited set of compositions to accompany the emergence of certain puppets at the beginning of audience scenes. According to these musico-dramaturgical rules, the choice of composition should depend on the personage holding court, and thus on the locale as well.²⁷ In the case of the audience scene from classical Surakarta-style

²⁶ Examples are mentioned in Arps 2016: 190, 191.

²⁷ For the Central Javanese system, in which pieces signal the personage holding court, see Arps 2016: 49, 92. In Balinese wayang the system is less specific. In north Bali there is a piece for accompanying "the audience of a non-refined *ksatriya*" (nobleman) (Hinzler 1981: 296). Hinzler

Javanese wayang discussed earlier, the piece is *Kabor*. It is begun before the puppets are brought on-screen. The spectator who recognizes the composition may infer immediately that that the king will be Duryudana and thus that the audience will take place at the court of Astina. However, the case of *Kabor* is unusually specific. While in the canonical Surakarta tradition, *Kabor* suggests Duryudana of Astina, the second piece available for this scene may be played for two different rulers and places, while the third option covers all other possible locations for the opening scene.²⁸ Moreover, in most cases the information on locale supplied by the choice of musical piece is technically redundant: with the exception of the audience scene that opens a performance (like in this example), the puppeteer will already have mentioned where the event is set before the music begins, in the preceding narration. Additionally, many puppeteers like to bend the rules. Despite all this, however, there is supposed to be a connection between music and place. The connection is indirect: the musical composition signals a principal personage who happens to belong in a place.

In all wayang traditions different categories of musical composition are recognized. Besides having a different musical character, these categories tend to correspond with variables of dramatic action, especially degree of relaxedness versus hurriedness of motion and thus the use the personages make of space. Refined and subdued pieces like *Kabor*, for instance, are used only for princes and courtiers assembling in a deliberate and dignified manner for an audience. More lively compositions are used to accompany travelling at a slow pace, yet others running and fighting.²⁹ By signifying the variable speed of motion and in connection with this the variable distance traversed over time, pieces in these categories indirectly suggest what could be called different spatial gradations, from small and confined to large and capacious.

In some kinds of pieces the sound of the drums (absent in most Balinese genres) and the rapping and crashing sounds produced by the puppeteer against the puppet chest accentuate structural breaks in movement patterns.

1981: 294 refers to pieces in south Bali played to open an audience given by any king or prince (compare Zurbuchen 1987: 212); this is similar to the situation in central Lombok described by Yampolsky 2002: 224. The latter variety of *wayang kulit*, which tells Islamic stories, also has a piece for a prophet descending to earth (Yampolsky 2002: 224). It appears from Sweeney 1972: 62 that the Malay *wayang siam* has a piece signalling the presence of deities; the great majority of pieces, however, accompany the walking of various character types or other actions, but not a personage's, or type of personage's, centrality in encounters.

²⁸ On *Kabor* and the rules that govern its choice, see Arps 2016: 441. Brandon 1970: 361 lists the pieces and the locations they signify.

²⁹ In Javanese wayang these pieces are sometimes called *gendhing lampah* 'movement pieces'. The actual pieces vary in the different regional styles of Java; they have counterparts in the wayang of Bali, Lombok, and the Malay peninsula as well; in several cases different pieces signal the movement of different categories of dramatis personae or even individuals. Hinzler 1981: 293–298 and Zurbuchen 1987: 212 describe the north and south Balinese styles, while the general types of musical composition in Balinese *wayang kulit* accompaniment are briefly described in Seebaß 1993: 165. Yampolsky 2002: 224 gives relevant information on *wayang Sasak*, and Sweeney 1972: 57, 62 on Malay *wayang siam*. The system of Surakarta is examined in Arps 2016: 468 (the categories *Srepegan* and *Ayak-ayakan*), 497, and 548–549 (*Sampak*).

When one puppet strikes another, for instance, the blow is accentuated by means of the crashing sound of the metal plates and a strong slap on the drum.³⁰ Rhythmically regular rapping and crashing patterns, usually in conjunction with drumming, may also accentuate the walks of some personages. In Javanese wayang, for instance, Astina's court scholar Durna walks with a typical swinging arm and wiggling gait that is musically supported in this way.³¹

Insofar as instrumental sound contributes to the representation of space, then, it does so in conjunction with *mise-en-scène*. Most fundamentally it serves to support and emphasize the movement of puppets across the screen and thus of personages through their space. To a degree it makes these movements audible. The music is, in a word, atmospheric. Though indirect, its spatial significance is considerable. The music connotes the energy and speed with which personages move through space, from leisurely to rapid. This in turn may connote the spatial compass of different episodes, which may vary from a single locale to vast and borderless territory. At select but structurally important moments the music even suggests the topographical location of an event. It does this by way of a musical ambience connected to a central personage.

PERCEIVING SPACE AND PLACE IN LANGUAGE

I have pointed to analogies between wayang and Tom and Jerry, but not yet to a major difference: the prominence of discourse. Whereas wayang is certainly not primarily an "oral" genre, compared to this cartoon and many other kinds of western drama on film and television and in the theatre, relatively much of what happens, happens through discourse. The internationally most conspicuous form of drama, the TV-soap, is radically talkative, to be sure, but in this respect it only corresponds to part of wayang discourse. Besides dialogic exchanges between personages, the puppeteer pronounces narrations and sings mood songs,³² which make important diegetic contributions. In fact, given that puppeteers want their personages to do interesting things in interesting places, discourse is a bare necessity because the expressive potential of the puppets and the screen is so limited. Or, to put it in a way that is more sympathetic to *mise-en-scène* (and to placate those puppeteers and spectators who consider *mise-en-scène* the crux of wayang performance), because the expressive potential of puppets and screen is tremendous, but not without discourse. Wayang unseen is feasible and actually quite popular,³³ wayang without language would be inane.

³⁰ The sonic accent tends to come a little after the action peak; see Arps 2016: 443.

³¹ Many examples are mentioned in Arps 2016, for instance, on p. 141.

³² For these categories in classical Central Javanese wayang see Arps 2016: 70-71 and 74-75, respectively.

³³ Arps 2002 discusses the peculiarities of wayang on radio and audio recordings.

The various categories of language in wayang all support the representation of space. A puppeteer often has his personages refer briefly to the setting or to their own or others' movements or bodily positions and attitudes. I suspect that such passing references are more common in wayang than in everyday discourse. Two personages facing each other in an unspecified location – no preceding narration, both puppets fixed in the upper banana trunk, nothing else on-screen – may open their dialogue with an exchange like:

	ANOMAN:	
<i>Bratasena!</i>		Bratasena!
	BRATASENA:	
<i>Hanoman kakangku, apa?</i>		Hanoman my brother, what is it?
	ANOMAN:	
<i>Si adhi jumeneng ana ing alun-alun, ijen tanpa rowang, kuwi arep menyang endi, Yayi.</i> ³⁴		You stand still in the palace square, alone without companions, where are you heading, little Brother?

Without these mentions of pose and location, a spectator could not be sure that Bratasena is standing not seated in a chair, and would not have a clue where this is happening. The reference to an *alun-alun* is diegetically fertile. An *alun-alun* is not only part of the court city of Amarta, from where Bratasena is departing here. *Alun-aluns* are also located north and south of the palace walls of Surakarta and Yogyakarta in Central Java – hence the translation “palace square” – and a place of the type called *alun-alun* exists in nearly all of the approximately one hundred regency capitals in Java, and some outside Java too.³⁵ Most Javanese spectators, including those who have never visited Surakarta or Yogyakarta or seen their *alun-aluns* pictured or heard them described, are able to imagine a space with certain properties – open land with a rectangular outline, vastness and emptiness save two banyan trees in the middle, a road and buildings with people and traffic bordering the square – and the word may evoke such properties even if it does not call up a particular location in one's mind's eye.

Mood songs may be relevant to space as well. Certain mood songs only occur at specific points in a performance, in a particular kind of situation. In Surakarta-style wayang, for instance, *sendhon Kloloran* strongly connotes the inner quarters of a palace, because it is typically sung to round off an encounter between the ruler and his spouse or spouses there.³⁶ Other mood songs are more freely employable. Their melodies and instrumentation invoke general moods that may occur in any place, and often the texts bear little relationship to the place and placements depicted on-screen. But a puppeteer may also choose to sing lyrics that are relevant to the dramatic action. Some texts of mood

³⁴ This stretch of dialogue is from Ki Anom Soeroto's performance of *Dewa Ruci* edited in Arps 2016. See p. 366, also for a photograph of the puppets. In my transcripts, lines denote stretches of language pronounced in a single breath; see Arps 2016:109.

³⁵ An internet search for “alun-alun” will yield photographs taken in different periods and from various angles.

³⁶ For an example see Arps 2016: 163–164.

songs are actually narrations: they may describe mood changes, recapitulate or announce action, and, indeed, mention locales. Such texts may be sung in lieu of spoken narrations or as musico-poetic prefaces or appendices to them.³⁷

Among the different categories of wayang discourse, it is the narrations that are most important for the representation of space and place. They typically describe the aspect of locales and personages, including their placement, postures, and gestures. The narrations that recapitulate or announce action or describe action not visualized on-screen refer to movements as well. I will use the recitative that accompanies the puppet arrangement depicted in Figure 3 as an example. This schematized snapshot is based on the opening scene of Ki Anom Soeroto's Amsterdam performance of *Dewa Ruci*.³⁸ When, accompanied by the gamelan, the puppets have all been brought out and fixed against the screen, the puppeteer signals the musicians to play *pianissimo*. He declaims a long recitative in florid and archaic language and a deep drone.³⁹ The narration becomes increasingly specific, moving from the names and prosperity of the city-state to the names and qualities of its king. The third part describes the situation represented by the tableau seen on-screen:

*Nuju hari Soma, kepareng miyos
siniwaka aneng Setinggil binatu rata
lenggah dhampar denta kinapiting
kancana pinatik ing nawa retna.*

*Kagelaran permadani sinebaran sari-sari
ginanda wida, lisah jebad kasturi.*

*Kahayap para parekan kang ngampil
upacara nata.*

*Arupi bebek mas, menthog mas, banyak
dhalang sawung galing.*

*Hardawalika, kacu mas dwipàngga
ingkang sarwa rukmi.*

*Katingal sang nata kinebutan lar badhak
kanan tanapi kering kongas ngambar
gandaning sang katong ngantya
prapteng Pangurakan.*

*Sirna kamanungsane cinandra pan yayah
Sang Ywang Prabancana ngejawantah,
kahayap para hapsari.*

On a Monday, it pleases him to hold court
on the Elevated Ground evenly paved with
stone while seated on the ivory
throne bordered with gold studded with the
nine gems.

Furnished with a carpet strewn with flowers
scented with perfumes, oil of civet and musk.
Waited on by attendants who are holding
the regalia.

Consisting of the golden teal, the golden
duck, the puppeteer's goose the fighting-cock.
The eagle-serpent, the golden cone the
elephants of solid gold.

One sees the king being fanned with
peacock plumes right and left the
sovereign's scent spreads and disperses
as far as the Place of the Rosters.

Gone is his humanity he may be likened
to God Prabancana incarnate, waited upon
by the heavenly nymphs.

An evocation of the ambience of the assembly follows. All those in attendance remain silent; only the sounds of a gamelan playing, the chatter of birds, and the craftsmen at work elsewhere in the palace complex can be heard.⁴⁰

³⁷ Arps 2016 contains numerous examples, the first one on p. 152.

³⁸ The performance edited and translated in Arps 2016.

³⁹ On this recitative see Arps 2016: 445–458.

⁴⁰ I will discuss this passage below.

<p><i>Wondene ingkang kepareng, sumewa ing ngarsa nata nenggih menika ta warnane: pujangganing praja pandhita saking pertapan Soka Lima peparab Dhahywang Druna.</i></p> <p><i>Ya Dhahywang Kumbayana ya Baradwajaputra ya sang Wipra, ya sang wara Dwija.</i></p> <p><i>Sumambung pungkur, yayah prayitneng kewuh anenggih menika ta, nalendra ing Ngangga, jejuluk sang Karna Basusena. [...]</i></p>	<p>As to those given leave to gather before the ruler, now this is their appearance: the court scholar the sage from the hermitage of Soka Lima named the divine Druna.</p> <p>Or the divine Kumbayana or Baradwajaputra or the noble Wipra, or the eminent Dwija.</p> <p>Directly behind him, on his guard against predicament this then is: the ruler of Angga, named the noble Karna Basusena. [...]</p>
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After describing the third person present before the king, namely Chancellor Sangkuni, the puppeteer concludes the narration by recounting that state officials are seated outside the audience hall in great numbers, and by mentioning the king's reason for convening the meeting.⁴¹

The narration provides spatial information that cannot be inferred from the *mise-en-scène*. It draws a picture of the locale: the Elevated Ground of the capital city of Astina. It specifies some of the spatial relations between personages. For technical reasons a limited number of puppets can be on-screen at any one time, and as we have seen their arrangement allows the spectators to construe the personages' poses and positions in various ways. This interpretive liberty is constrained in the narration. It is stated explicitly, for instance, that the king is seated on a *dhampar* (a stool-like throne). He does not stand, which is a possible inference going solely by the placement of puppet (1) in the upper banana trunk (Figure 3). The narrative also confirms other inferences that a knowledgeable spectator may have drawn from the *mise-en-scène*, for instance that King Karna (5) sits behind Durna (4). The narration supplements the *mise-en-scène* as well, describing elements not shown. Examples are the details about the material of the floor of the Elevated Ground, the carpet, the regalia, and the presence of officials outside the audience hall. Nonetheless many gaps remain in the narration of three-dimensional space. While Karna is explicitly said to be behind Durna, for instance, it is not said that Durna and Sangkuni or the two maidservants sit side by side.⁴² The description is spatially richer than the *mise-en-scène*, but it, too, is selective.

It is unusual for discourse and *mise-en-scène* to contradict each other, but the discourse does sometimes introduce ambiguities. In the example, the king is "Waited on by attendants who are holding the regalia" and "being fanned with peacock plumes right and left". It is unlikely that the personages holding the regalia are waving the plumes as well. But what, then, do the handmaidens represented by (2) and (3) in Figure 3 do? These puppets were

⁴¹ See Arps 2016: 121–124.

⁴² This is a stock scene, and Durna and Sangkuni are sometimes said to sit side by side. If the servants shown are the ones described as fanning the king with peacock plumes right and left, this does suggest that they sit aligned.

the first to be brought on-screen after the extracting of the *kayon* that visually started the performance. They have been in sight for quite a while before the attendants are mentioned in the narration. In the meantime the inquisitive lay spectator has had ample opportunity to wonder who these puppets represent. The connoisseur will have recognized them as female court servants. But the recitative reveals that many attendants are present, doing different things. The pair of puppets may well stand as a visual synecdoche for those holding the regalia and for the two or more people fanning the king, and perhaps others yet, but neither the *mise-en-scène* nor the recitative provide a definite answer.

Central Javanese shadow-play probably contains the longest narrations compared to other kinds of wayang, and the recitatives of the opening scene are by far the most elaborate in this tradition. In the wayang of Cirebon in western Java, for instance, the corresponding narration may describe a meeting of the ruler (King Darmakesuma of Amarta in this case) and his guests in the following terms:

*Wanci enjing linggih dateng
korsi gading kencana.*

One morning he is seated on
the chair of ivory and gold.

In a brief orchestral interlude a female vocalist sings lyrics that describe him as having the neck bent and the hands folded. (This kind of discursive contribution to the diegesis from a performer other than the puppeteer is common in the wayang of Cirebon and the Sunda lands.)

*Sapengkering Darmakesuma
lenggah ingkang rayi saking Mendalagiri.*

At the rear of Darmakesuma
sits his younger brother from Mendalagiri.

A musician asks, "What is his name?" (*Sinten asmane?*) – as is common in Cirebonese (and Sundanese) wayang.

*Arya Bratasena.
Tiyange ageng,
dijaya sakti prawira mandraguna.
Sinten ingkang linggih dateng sowanipun
sang prabu?
Kadangipun malih,
raden kembar,
Nakula kaliyan Sadewa.
Sebanipun kadya mangklung janggane,
kuncup astane,
rekep silane.⁴³*

The noble Bratasena.
He is a robust man,
invincible valorous with manifold powers.
Who are seated in attendance before
the king?
Other brothers of his,
the twin princes,
Nakula and Sadewa.
They attend the audience with necks bent,
hands folded,
legs properly crossed.

This narration is less detailed than the one from Surakarta, but likewise describes elements of the setting and of the bodies, postures, and positions of the personages.

⁴³ Transcribed from the audio cassette album Tomo s.a., vol. 1 side A.

Wayang in Bali, Lombok, and the Malay peninsula does not have the same long standardized opening recitatives describing audiences as Javanese wayang. But here too, narrations paint a picture with elements not shown on the screen. A brief example from a Sasak shadow-play by puppeteer Lalu Nasib of West Lombok:

<i>Cinarita paripolah</i>	We recount the acts
<i>eh andikanira wong agung Jayeng Rana</i>	and words of the great man Jayeng Rana
<i>sumadya metu mare paseban.</i>	who wants to emerge into the audience hall.
<i>Ngumpulin saheganing para wadwa bala.</i>	He has called the troops to readiness.
<i>Arya, demung demang, hulubalang.</i>	The nobles, principals and chiefs, commanders.
<i>Ya Pangeran.</i>	O Lord.
<i>Adadya cinaritra</i>	Now it is recounted
<i>mangsih ngrangsuk punang busananira</i>	that he proceeds to don his attire
<i>kampuh, dastar.⁴⁴</i>	a waistcloth, a headcloth.

Though they come from very different wayang styles, these examples have several things in common. As to place and placement, they name locales and highlight certain properties and components of it. They also refer to the positions and movements of the personages in the locale. This conclusion can be extended to wayang discourse in general. For the representation of locale, language use, as always in conjunction with contextual knowledge, is the main source of information. If the personages are simultaneously depicted on the screen by means of puppets, it highlights aspects of their positions. The discourse enhances the *mise-en-scène* considerably.

Discussing *mise-en-scène* and instrumental music I noted that rather specialist knowledge is required to make spatial sense of the presentation. The same must be said of the discourse. Most mood songs and narrations use formal language, and in fact varieties of Javanese, also in Bali and Lombok (the Sasak narration quoted above is a case in point). Such texts, as well as parts of the dialogues, are not readily understandable to all listeners. Like in the case of *mise-en-scène* and music, this is rarely considered a problem.⁴⁵ The presentational dimension of wayang discourse has an appeal of its own: the voices of different personages, the poetic devices such as alliteration and rhyme, and so forth. In the discursive sphere too a member of the audience may switch back and forth between sensation and interpretation and derive pleasure or unease from both. While the more archaic texts can be semantically quite opaque, there always are stretches of text one can grasp if one wants to make sense of the whole. The practices of paraphrase and repetition also help. The main issues of the drama are usually mentioned often enough over the course of a performance, and indeed in different registers, to allow the interested listener to reflect on them.

⁴⁴ Transcribed from the audio cassette Nasib s.a., vol. 1 side A. For Lalu Nasib see Ecklund 2002: 210–211; Yampolsky 2002: 222.

⁴⁵ In fact it can be a source of pleasure. The philological aesthetics of wayang are discussed in Arps 2016: 42, 47, 53, 85, 91.

THE INTERPLAY OF IMAGE, DISCOURSE, AND MUSIC

The *mise-en-scène* of wayang, flat though it is, has three dimensions and the places, positions, and actions it represents are three-dimensional as well. The personages not only stand, sit, and move face to face, back to back, back to face, and higher and lower, but also side by side. For example, the music signals that the opening audience in Anom Soeroto's *Dewa Ruci* is set at the court of Astina. The narration specifies Astina's Elevated Ground. The king's fragrance can be smelled as far away as the Place of the Rosters. Such places may be known to the spectators, for an Elevated Ground with an audience hall on it and, a few hundred yards north, a Place of the Rosters are part of palace complexes like those of Surakarta and Yogyakarta in Central Java.⁴⁶ Although "he may be likened to God Prabancana incarnate, waited upon by the heavenly nymphs," King Duryudana and his advisers and servants are human. These visual, musical, and discursive data combined invite the spectators to draw on their understanding of halls, courts, and people to imagine a locale with personages in it. This locale is not as flat as the screen and these personages' bodies and placements are not as tightly compressed as the puppets on the screen (view 3c in Figure 3). Figure 4 illustrates the difference between the visually presented and this kind of diegesis by mapping a possible spatial arrangement of the personages represented in the tableau of Figure 3.

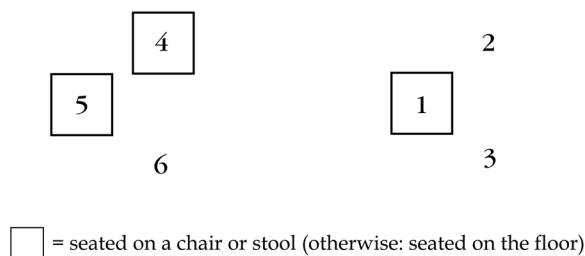


Figure 4. Floor plan of a scene.

The philology of performance could investigate how performances are or were actually interpreted by their audience or how they can be variably interpreted on the basis of their form and the interpretive conventions brought to bear on it.⁴⁷ It should be obvious that I am taking the latter approach here. Wayang dramas are partly set in spaces that are assigned to types that have other tokens which people can themselves be in, including an *alun-alun* or an Elevated Ground but also a seashore, a crossroads in a wilderness, even a battleground. Other places that feature in wayang are unique, but some of them can actually be visited, such as Mecca (in Sasak wayang) and certain caves in Java, or the Southern Sea (the Indian Ocean). Wayang diegeses also include types of places the tokens of which are more difficult to access physically, but which people can still know more about than what is revealed

⁴⁶ For the location of this scene, see Arps 2016: 442-444.

⁴⁷ Arps 2016: 49-50.

in a particular performance or wayang at large. Examples would be Hindu-Buddhist hermitages on mountain tops (found in Bali but rare in contemporary Java), the infinite void inside a deity's body, heavens and hells, or the women's quarters of a palace.

The dramatic personages' attributes, positions, and actions are represented in the same terms in wayang discourse as their counterparts outside wayang: robustness – waist- and headcloths – necks, hands, and legs – front and back – north, south, east, and west – left, right, around – above and below – bowing, walking, running, sitting – to mention a few. Except in humorous allusions to the puppets, the personages are *not* said to have flat physiques and to be destined to act in low relief in featureless, empty space. Part of wayang's diegetic potential, then, is that it enables one to imagine its events happening in places that have some of the same spatial properties as the places where humans live their lives, those events being acted out by personages with some of the physical properties and kinetic abilities that their human spectators attribute to themselves. Although this kind of understanding – a mimetic one – is not necessary throughout for presenting and enjoying or disliking a performance, it is advocated through wayang's own discourse. It is also supported in various forms of Southeast Asian theatre with human actors, which present similar personages and events in kindred places and spaces on their three-dimensional stages and performance arenas, and in wayang comic strips. This mimetic view is espoused, finally, in wayang dramaturgical theory.

The floor plan in Figure 4 is partly based on choices that are not actually warranted by the *mise-en-scène* and the accompanying recitative as such. The presentation of the puppets on the screen (Figure 3) has ambiguity built into it as regards the location of King Karna (5). Though in Figure 4 I have put him mid-way between (4) and (6), the *mise-en-scène* does not specify this particular position, nor does the narration. He might also be imagined as sitting behind or to the left of (4) or behind or to the right of (6). Similar uncertainty exists about the positions of (2) and (3). While the handmaidens are definitely seated next to each other and to the rear of the king, the distance between them is not specified and it is possible to imagine both of them somewhat to the king's left or right. Also, the distance between (4) and (6) is not necessarily the same as that between (2) and (3). That the tableau of puppets represents personages in a three-dimensional place is clear. The side-view offered by the wayang screen shows that there is depth in the scene. But it does not show how much. Indeed, as argued, the *mise-en-scène* by itself suggests persuasively that the degree of depth is minimal. Meanwhile the recitative and the cultural experience that it appeals to suggest, persuasively as well, that the event takes place in a space with concrete physical properties. Combining these performance data with further pieces of cultural knowledge, such as the logics of address and gesturing, one may infer a spatial arrangement like that drawn from above in Figure 4.

I am not suggesting that Ki Anom Soeroto had this particular arrangement in mind at this point in his performance or that his words and *mise-en-scène*

led any of the spectators at the time to envision it. I wouldn't know. Nor am I claiming that the words and tableau are an incentive to visualize the encounter from above or mentally to draw a floor plan. Not at all: as ever in wayang, the meeting is shown in side-view. The recitative zooms in, as it were, on the gathering in the audience hall, having started with a sketch of the city-state of Astina followed by a description of ruler in terms of his qualities; it puts the personages in the verbal spotlight one after another, referring to their appearance (*warnane*) in the order in which their puppets were fixed against the screen⁴⁸ – but it does not do so from a particular spatial vantage point. Nor, I should repeat, do I mean to suggest that imagining a diegesis in the round requires substituting people for puppets and shadows or projecting onto wayang's *mise-en-scène* the universe of humans *tout court*. That would not work because from an ordinary human perspective the dramatic diegesis, be it flat or round, includes some truly bizarre combinations of things, events, circumstances, and ways of being. The visual, musical, and discursive contributions to the diegesis are about properties and insofar as they concern substances, they represent them in terms of certain attributes of those substances. My point is more basic. It is that imagining this kind of diegetic space requires *looking beyond* the screen, puppets, and silhouettes, perhaps even *looking away* from them.

In sum, while the *mise-en-scène* invites the spectators to construct a diegesis in low relief, mostly the discourse appeals to their worldly experience and asks them to imagine a diegesis where the dramatic personages have bodies in the round and, moreover, find themselves in places spacious enough for those bodies to sit or stand around and move about. The discourse does this most of the time, but not always; not all that is said in the course of a performance depends for its intelligibility on a diegesis in the round. At certain moments the flatter one will do equally well. It is conceivable that a deep diegesis is promoted primarily in pre-composed texts, while a flat diegesis may be more common as the puppeteer improvises dialogue or narration with the puppets in view. He, too, may be under their spell.⁴⁹ Some of the pictures painted in wayang discourse are to be imagined off-screen. As a result it is relatively easy to conjure up a diegesis in the round: there is no need to look away from the screen or, metaphorically speaking, to refocus on it and seek stereoscopic vision. The image is outside the spectators' field of vision to begin with.

An example is in order. In the opening recitative of a *wayang kulit* performance by Dhalang (puppet master) Taram, who performed in the coastal Banyumasan style of southwestern Central Java, the four personages facing the king were explicitly said to sit one behind the other. However, it is rather unlikely for four people received in audience by a king to sit in single file. The spatial description must therefore be based on the puppets' two-dimensional

⁴⁸ The maidservants are mentioned generically and after the ruler.

⁴⁹ This is a question that asks for further analysis of wayang discourse in conjunction with *mise-en-scène*.

arrangement on-screen.⁵⁰ But only moments earlier, the puppeteer had said that the king held court in the Great Hall (*Mandhapa Agung*) while officials of various ranks attended in great numbers outside, the crowd extending to the panthers' cages (*kandhang macan*) in the east, the Great Mosque (*Mesjid Agung*) in the west, the Rising Roofs (*Tratag Rambat*) in the north, and the audience place (*penangkilan*) in the south. The puppeteer thus called up the image of a multitude of people in an *alun-alun* with landmarks on each of its four sides. He switched diegetic views in a matter of seconds, within the same recitative.⁵¹

While a *wayang kulit* performance can be seen as a sequence of tableaux and movements of flat puppets and shadows against a plain white piece of cloth, the sounds that are showered on these sights conjure up other places. What they conjure up is spatially richer than the screen and what is on it.

It does not follow that the purpose of music and discourse is to enrich the *mise-en-scène*. By discussing the visual representation of space before turning to music and discourse, I have perhaps created the impression that *mise-en-scène* is primary and sound is there to supplement it. Where the orchestral music is concerned, this impression is correct (of course the music does a great deal more than supplement, but not in the spatial realm). It is also warranted by the fact that in scenes like the audience discussed above, the puppets have been on view for some time before the situation is described in the recitative. But not all narrations and dialogues have this particular temporal relation to a *mise-en-scène*, co-occurring with it or following it. There are also preambles, which announce events that are about to be shown, narrations about events that have not been and will not be shown, and off-screen dialogues. From another perspective, then, the *mise-en-scène* renders some aspects of the discourse visible: *mise-en-scène* can be regarded as an illustration of a story told primarily through language and music. There is no need to consider either of these takes on the interplay between sight and sound as primary. Both perspectives are supported in the course of an audiovisual *wayang* performance, and individual puppeteers vary in the relative importance they accord to the three modal components of narration.

CONCLUSIONS

To round off let me do three things: characterize the vantage points, both visual and auditory, on the storyworld that *wayang kulit* offers its public, summarize the status of space in *wayang kulit*'s technique of narration, and, on this basis, reflect briefly on space in human life-worlds.

⁵⁰ I am not entirely sure because I know this performance from an audio recording and never saw Taram perform. The example comes from Taram s.a., vol. 1 side B.

⁵¹ In the *wayang* of Surakarta, which I know best, this would be frowned upon. Here the puppet movements and placements have been thoroughly rationalized, and in court institutions, where a detailed *wayang* theory has been codified (though only partly written down), mimetically dysfunctional or unlikely *mise-en-scène* tends to be rejected. On this point see Arps 1985: 33–35, 41–42; Arps 2016: 58.

LEADING THE SPECTATORS THROUGH THE STORYWORLD

A wayang performance enables its spectators to attend to a story. They are allowed to perceive the storyworld from a particular point or zone of observation.⁵² Perhaps “perceive” is too bland an expression here. All components of presentation, that is the sights and the lingual and instrumental sounds, invite them not just to see and hear, but to *imagine*. Unlike more naturalistic genres of narration such as most film and television, this goes even for the *mise-en-scène*, minimalist as it is in wayang. (Recall the epigraph of this article.) Where the visual presentation of space is concerned: the opening audience of Ki Anom Soeroto’s performance of *Dewa Ruci*, my main example, displays the puppet tableau that is shown schematically in Figure 3a and 3b. Contextual knowledge about the spatial layout of audiences on the Elevated Ground of Javanese courts allows the spectators to infer that the king and maidservants face due north and those he receives in audience face due south. The spectators on the puppet side of the screen see the audience from the west, those on the shadow side from the east.⁵³ This can be generalized. As noted the field of view frequently changes over the course of a performance, but because the screen forms a straight line in the horizontal plane and the puppets are formed *de profil*, the *mise-en-scène* of wayang kulit consistently affords a side-view perspective on the diegesis.

And then there is language and music. The auditory representation of space is more varied and it interacts in complex ways with the visuals. Music, narrations, and dialogue invoke spatiality of other kinds than the *mise-en-scène*, which is largely confined to proxemics. Sound in the storyworld that is made directly audible consists largely of utterances: the personages’ dialogues, monologues and soliloquies, and the occasional exclamation and animal sound. The remainder of the storyworld’s sound that can be heard directly by the audience consists of the knocks and crashes on the puppet chest that accompany collisions, slaps, and kicks, as well as sonic reverberations of other action peaks. The assumption, then, is that the spectators hear all and only the narratively relevant sounds made by the personages depicted on-screen and occasionally also narratively relevant sounds made by others in the surrounding area, just off-screen. These diegetic sounds originate materially from a single source, the puppeteer. In other words, the constant angle of view discussed above has an auditory counterpart, even if it is not as geometrically specific as the visual and it would go too far to call it “side-hearing”. The sounds offered to the spectators originate from just in front of (or behind) the middle of the screen;⁵⁴ the spectators *overhear* the lingual and kinetic sounds produced in the space represented by the *mise-en-scène*.

Besides through images and sounds perceived directly, the spatial dimension of the events in a wayang performance is represented by description.

⁵² My use of the term “observation” here is inspired by Høier 2012.

⁵³ See Arps 2016: 442 (Figure A.1).

⁵⁴ That the puppeteer’s voice is always amplified through loudspeakers placed elsewhere in the performance arena is a different matter.

While there are occasional references to the sound or aspect of space in the personages' dialogues, this happens largely in the storyteller's narrations. The recitative that introduces the opening audience of a classical Javanese wayang play, partly reproduced above in a rendition by Ki Anom Soeroto, is a case in point. Before the puppeteer moves from the ruler to the people before him, he characterizes the general sonic ambience in evocative words and tone of voice:

<p><i>Re – ~p sidhem permanem.</i> <i>Tan ana baneke walang salisik, gegodhongan</i> <i>datan ebah, angin tan lumampah.</i> <i>Amung lambat-lambat kapiyarsa, swaraning</i> <i>pra pradangga angrangin binarung</i> <i>pangliking widuwati kang nganyut-</i> <i>anyut</i> <i>kasambet ocehing</i> <i>kukila kang mencok ing pancak suji tuwin</i> <i>abdi, kriya gemblak pandhe, gendhing</i> <i>myang kemas.</i> <i>Hanambut karyane sowang-sowang pating</i> <i>calengkrang pating calengkring imbal</i> <i>ganti.</i> [...] <i>Amimbuhi marang asri, renggeping</i> <i>panangkilan.</i>⁵⁵</p>	<p>Tranqui – ~l still and silent. Not a single cricket makes a chirp, the leaves do not stir, the wind does not blow. Just faintly audible, are the delicate sounds of the gamelan played in concert with the alluring high tones of the songstresses. joined by the chatter of birds perched on the railings and by the artisans braziers blacksmiths, gamelan makers and goldsmiths. Each doing their work clanking and tinkling all around in interlocking patterns. [...] Enhancing the lustre and charm of the audience.</p>
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The very architecture of the show space of *wayang kulit* – the set-up of screen, orchestra, and so on – points towards the middle of the screen, where the puppets are and the source of language is located: where the storyworld is built. But the manipulation of the spectators' attention does not end here. How does the same process work within that storyworld itself? With regard to the space called up and established as relevant at the beginning of a narrative episode, how is attention moved through it and perhaps beyond it?

In the above example the field of hearing is the locale shown simultaneously on-screen, but narrations also allow what one might call a “wandering” field and focus of perception. This can be a “long-shot” overview, much more extensive than the space depicted in the tableau. In the beginning of the same recitative the puppeteer says about Astina that “the city is backed by mountains, flanked on the left by a river. Flanked by rice fields to the right. It faces a great port”.⁵⁶ At the other extreme the vision or hearing created in a narration can be concerned with minute details, but the narration always tends to return to the on-screen tableau and the local situation it portrays.

The general process of which these techniques are part may be called thematization.⁵⁷ I have mentioned instances of a kind of verbal zooming and verbal spotlight and sketched one of the functions of a relatively new puppet,

⁵⁵ Arps 2016: 122.

⁵⁶ “[...] nagari ngungkuraken pagunungan, ngeringaken benawi. Nengenaken pasawahan. Ngayunaken bandaran agúng” (Arps 2016: 118).

⁵⁷ Arps 2016: 85–87.

the *kayon klowong*, but there are other kinds of spatial thematization. A mood song may highlight a central character whose state of mind is evoked through the song's melody and allusions in its lyrics. The spectator's attention, including their gaze, may quite simply be drawn to whichever of the personages depicted on-screen is speaking by that very act of speaking. Spatial thematization may also fall outside or beyond the puppet tableau. On the whole, narrations take the form of third-person description from an observing narrator's vantage point, but occasionally spaces are portrayed through the perception of personages being described, and this is more common, of course, in monologues and dialogues, which among myriad other things may be about space and spaces. In these cases the vantage point on space is that of the personage or personages in question.⁵⁸ The occurrence of such "first-person" perspectives confirms once again that the worlds created by the *mise-en-scène*, language, and music may not be identical even though these perspectives may be presented at the same time. A remarkable and famous example occurs in the Javanese wayang play *Dewa Ruci*. Bratasena describes the sequence of forms and lights that he experiences in the boundless void which he has found after entering his tutelary deity's body cavity.⁵⁹ While Bratasena describes this changing space we see his puppet in side-view; usually nothing else is on-screen. In other renditions we hear Bratasena while his puppet is off-screen and we see only the enveloping (and, paradoxically, tiny) Dewa Ruci, likewise in side-view of course.⁶⁰

Orchestral music, finally, is not usually supposed to be heard as coming from the storyworld itself. The music is essentially of the same narrative type as the narrations, although it operates in a more general and impressionistic way. As noted above, it is atmospheric; it may call to mind central personages and is broadly indicative of the relative vigour and extent of movement through space.

In summary, although the stage – the screen – appears unchanging in extent and shape and is often filled with static tableaux, the narrative window that allows the spectators to see and hear the world of the story is in fact extremely dynamic. As part of the more general phenomenon of thematization, the different modes of narration combine to guide the spectators through that storyworld (*diegesis*: a "leading-through"), of course temporally but also, as I have demonstrated, spatially.

NARRATED SPACE AS A PHILOLOGICAL INTEREST

The descriptive passage that opens an audience scene situates the on-screen puppet tableau in a space that can be as big as, for instance, a court-city geographically orientated towards a port, with mountains, a big river, and rice fields around it, and may even locate it in a network of states that extends abroad. However, even though that space may be represented in such a way

⁵⁸ Called "subjective" by Høier 2012 (who is concerned with subjective audition rather than vision).

⁵⁹ This happens later on in the episode shown in Figure 2.

⁶⁰ In most renditions the deity explains the shapes and lights to Bratasena in terms of metaphysical symbolism. For Anom Soeroto's version of this episode see Arps 2016: 394–399.

at strategic points in a performance, it would be misguided to regard that space as a background or environment for the “actual” narrative of a wayang performance. This “setting” is not given in advance. It, too, is narrated: visually against an *empty* screen, auditorily by filling *silence* with language and music. Space is an integral part of the narrative. It is represented partially – if, when, where, and in the manner that it is *relevant* – and continually made, re-made, and modified – compressed and expanded, taken for granted or perceived and even discussed, closed into and backed out of, traversed – in the process of narration. While an analyst or another critical spectator may feel the need to dissect the spatial dimension out of the storytelling (an act I am guilty of in this article), its change over the course of narration and its interaction with other features of the storyworld must be taken into account in making sense of space.⁶¹

The narrated space is brought into being multimodally. Even music, in its own way, is a mode of narrating it. In representing space, piecemeal, the performance modalities interact in complex ways. Quite likely from time to time there are inconsistencies. To understand it, a spectator has to work, and learn. Narrated space is potentially interesting but not easy to grasp. By regular exposure to performance and the critical and theoretical discourse surrounding it, the requisite interpretive competence can be acquired. This competence is of a philological nature: it serves to make sense of an artefact (in this case a wayang performance or part of it), and does this with reference to its nature as an artefact, the meanings and feelings it carries and engenders, its composition, its context, and its historical aspects. Making sense of wayang in this way is potentially a source of pleasure.⁶²

WAYANG REVEALS A SENSE OF SPACE: STRAIGHT LINES, ATMOSPHERIC SOUNDS, SPACE-NAMING, AND SPATIAL ROUTINES

Thus far, one might comment, I have argued that wayang, despite appearances, is spatially much like the “real world”. The opposite perspective calls for attention as well. In turn human life-worlds can be seen or, rather, sensed to have spatial properties and values that are not readily discernible there, but that are much more evident in the wayang world. One thing that wayang does is promote these senses of space and these forms of spatial affect. *Wayang kulit*’s seemingly simple presentation of space – flat puppets on an otherwise empty screen, dialogues in otherwise silent halls or wilderness, musical pieces with spatial connotations, simple and steady alternation between movement and stasis – draws attention to essential properties of lived space.⁶³ Let me offer some observations from Javanese contexts.

⁶¹ For a conception of storyworld as an extra- or pre-narrational background or setting, see Ryan and Thon 2014: 19. This conception is unworkable in wayang and probably other discursive genres as well. It may be based on naturalistic visual representations of storyworlds, as in cinema or television, which create the impression that settings are not narrated.

⁶² See Arps 2016 for the philology of performance, including its aesthetics.

⁶³ There are other ways and fields in which wayang reveals a more generally applicable spatial affect. I hope to address this matter systematically elsewhere.

MISE-EN-SCÈNE

1. Wayang puppets move and stand along the screen. By default and very nearly by necessity, they represent personages moving along a straight horizontal axis and facing either in one direction or the exact opposite. Where the movement and orientation of human beings in three-dimensional space is concerned such restriction may seem unrealistic. But is it? Indicating spatial orientation and relative location with reference to the four cardinal directions is common in Java. Javanese homes face – that is, have their front doors – roughly in one of the cardinal directions.⁶⁴ As noted, a host sits with his or her back towards the inside of the home; guests sit facing the host. Cities and towns are laid out in a grid; streets run north–south and east–west. Schematically conceived, the lanes and paths connecting villages in the Javanese countryside run along the same axes. Movement and orientation in the horizontal plane are far more linear than one might have thought. This is not a matter of conscious considerations but rather of habitus, supported by the conventions of traditional architectural construction and built infrastructure, in turn often justified with reference to cosmology. In lived experience it is a matter of sensibility, of spatial affect.
2. The care that a puppeteer expends on the proper visual composition of on-screen puppet tableaux in audience scenes and the rules governing their arrangement draw attention to the cultural importance of spatial arrangement in analogous situations in lived reality. This importance was taken to extremes at the Central Javanese courts in the high colonial period. For example, in preparation of official visits to the ruler of Surakarta in the 1930s floor plans were drawn which laid out the placement of dignitaries in great detail.⁶⁵
3. Posture is frozen in wayang puppets. I explained that it is related to character. In Javanese cultural sensibility and criticism typical human posture, too, signifies character. Let me mention an example involving a very subtle performative use of space: where a person typically hold his or her eyelids when being observed. It is remarkable that many subjects in posed official photographs especially of Javanese nobility, both women and men, have their eyes half closed.⁶⁶ A major category of Javanese wayang puppets is labelled *liyepan*, meaning, indeed, ‘with eyes half closed’. The personages they portray are characterized by their introvert nature.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ In Bali the system is slightly different, but here too, horizontal orientation follows two notionally straight lines at right angles (Wassman and Dasen 1998). Elsewhere the system is yet different, but still linear. Adelaar (1997: 53) posits that “The fundamental axis of orientation in Austronesian societies is the inland versus the sea”. He discusses the relation with cosmology as well.

⁶⁵ Darsiti Soeratman 2000: 192–200.

⁶⁶ Examples of men are in Darsiti Soeratman 2000: 510–511, 517, 528–529.

⁶⁷ See for instance Brakel 1993: 61.

MUSIC

Spaces and movements sound in individual ways. Upon some reflection this is blatantly obvious; think of acoustics and the phenomenon of ambient sound or noise. Wayang makes one acutely aware of it, because in the wayang world this is even more prominently so.

4. The orchestral music in wayang is atmospheric, as are the mood songs. The musico-dramaturgical rules governing choice of musical piece in connection with the speed and extent of movement or with the central personage reveal a spatial ideology. Wayang demonstrates that the different resonances of spaces are not only a matter of acoustics but also have to do with atmosphere, while that atmosphere is determined to a considerable extent by people. This is, firstly, the character of dominant people. "The home-owner" (*sing nduwe omah* in Javanese) sets the tone, as it were. An unusually explicit, ritualized illustration is the fact that during official events in the great hall of the Mangkunagaran court in Surakarta, the gamelan orchestra will abruptly abandon whatever concert piece it is playing when the prince enters and immediately commence the particular piece that signals his arrival. Secondly, the dynamism with which people move and thereby realize space also contributes to its atmosphere.
5. Wayang highlights that human movements have pace and rhythm, and structural breaks as well as beginnings and ends. Their counterparts in wayang are accentuated and regularized by means of the rapping or crashing and doubled by the drum. Wayang also highlights that the interactions of people can be elaborately patterned in space. I have pointed to the "choreographies" of wayang routines like battles. Everyday Javanese life also knows elaborate spatial interactional routines with a pace and rhythm that is subject to aesthetic norms. A prime example is visits to people's homes. There is much social variation, but they always follow an array of kinetic rules and conventions from arrival outside the home to departure from the home or the nearest street.

LANGUAGE

6. Wayang reminds its audiences that spaces are artefacts and that language plays a constitutive role in creating them.⁶⁸ By means of names and descriptions wayang marks and typifies spaces that are not even distinguishable otherwise (for all there is *to see* is the empty screen, the "vacant universe"). As I have shown, a palace square (*alun-alun*) can be brought into being in the storyworld simply by referring to it as such. Likewise for a 'sea' or 'ocean' (*segara, samodra*), 'audience hall' (*pasowan*), 'wilderness' (*alas*), 'overseas' (*sabrang*), 'hermitage' (*pertapan*), 'inner palace' (*kedhaton*), 'abode of the gods' (*kahyangan*) – these and other space-names are absolutely crucial for the apprehension of space in wayang. I would

⁶⁸ Hence space is susceptible to philological consideration. How else to describe the Western Apache sensibility studied so sympathetically by Basso (1990, 1996)?

suggest that names and descriptions may play a similar spatial role in everyday life.

7. Wayang also points to a peculiar manner in which spaces are typically understood. The spaces most often and most prominently featured in wayang are named after human activities typically conducted there, or types of people residing there. As to the former, 'hermitage' (*pertapan*) is a place for austerities (*tapa*) and 'audience hall' (*pasowan*) is where one goes to offer one's respects (*sowan*), while, in the latter category, 'inner palace' (*kedhaton*) is the place of the king and queen (*ratu*) and 'abode of the gods' (*kahyangan*, from *hyang* 'deity') is self-evident. The spaces of wayang that are not named after activities or types of people tend to be dangerous, even anti-human.⁶⁹ Humans do not reside there and avoid them if they can. "Overseas" is where ogres and demons live, "the wilderness" is frequented by the same evil creatures along with wild animals, and in the "sea" or "ocean" humans are bound to drown. This is in wayang, of course. In everyday life the range of space-names is much broader. It seems that wayang highlights culturally prominent conceptualizations of space. It promotes a spatial affect, the sense that good spaces are where people reside and do typically human things, whereas places where they do not are *a priori* threatening.

INTERPLAY BETWEEN MODALITIES

8. The modalities of wayang storytelling make different kinds of contributions to the narrative creation of space. The same modalities of language, atmospheric sound, and motion occur in everyday human worldmaking.⁷⁰ This draws attention, first of all, to the fact that, like the wayang world's space, lived human space is multimodally construed.
9. The very construction process of the wayang world is multimodally ritualized; its narration is strictly patterned as an alternation of, on the one hand, puppet manipulation onto, across, and away from the screen accompanied by the gamelan (the M periods) and, on the other hand, static puppet tableaux during which the puppeteer pronounces descriptive narrations or dramatic dialogue (the S periods). Qua *mise-en-scène* the two kinds of period are substantially different: in one the narration shows movement, in the other stasis. The narrated world, meanwhile, consists of encounters and travel between them. The alternation of M and S periods means that the personages' arrival at and departure from the encounters and their travelling between them alternate with the encounters themselves, during which they stand or sit together and talk. Qua space, then, the two kinds of period are substantially different as well: in one, space is fashioned into being by personages' movement through it, in the other it is shaped primarily in language. M and S periods correspond to two ways of space-

⁶⁹ The space-name *alun-alun* is in this respect exceptional. It is of Old Javanese provenance and its etymology is unclear.

⁷⁰ As do other modalities, but that is a different matter.

making, kinetic space-making and discursive space-making. The resulting senses of space – “spatialities”, one could call them – are different. M and S periods create two complementary kinds of spatiality, M spatiality and S spatiality. The third kind of space-making, the musical, and the atmospheric sense of space it produces, are co-constitutive of M periods and occur in S periods as well.⁷¹

The same kinds of spatiality are manifested in genres of human performance and ritual, also in parts of Java where *wayang kulit* does not have a revered cultural status at all. For example in the *gandrung* social dance that enlivens all-night ritual celebrations in Banyuwangi, easternmost Java, the *gandrung* female dancer-singer dances with male guests on a stage or dance floor. The dancing alternates with periods during which the *gandrung* sits at guests’ tables and sings songs requested by them.⁷² Javanese weddings – both the neo-traditional variants that came into being in the 1980s and their simpler predecessors⁷³ all over Java – also exhibit an alternation between on the one hand ritual action, including solemn processions with musical accompaniment as well as little rituals in different parts of the ceremonial arena, which spectators approach so that they can watch from close by, and on the other hand speeches and other ritual language.

An alternation of M and S spatiality, then, manifests itself in genres as diverse as *wayang*, *gandrung*, and weddings throughout Java. Whether this elementary spatial aesthetic is specific to ritual⁷⁴ or plays a role also in workaday life and its ideologies is a fascinating question for further research. Also in need of examination is whether and how the remarkable spatial patterns and spatial sensibilities I have pin-pointed with reference to Java – movement and orientation in straight lines, atmospheric sounds that connect human character with places, ways of space-naming that do something similar, and two complementary kinds of spatiality – also occur elsewhere in Indonesia and the Malay world, the Austronesian area, Southeast Asia, and perhaps even further afield.

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⁷¹ I should reiterate that S periods can be accompanied, but the instruments play softly. I am not claiming that M spatiality is alien to S periods or the other way round. A motion-based sense of space may be sustained into the next period of stasis and speech, and *vice versa*.

⁷² Arps 2006.

⁷³ Pemberton 1994: 197-235.

⁷⁴ Analogous to temporality, and more specifically historicity, as discussed by Bloch (1977).

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