

# Space and Ambiguity in the Javanese Novel

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A striking feature of narrative in the Javanese novel is the prominence it gives to certain spatial categories. The Javanese novel seems to be shaped, structurally and thematically, almost wholly by reference to a grid of spaces embracing the Javanese domestic dwelling and its surrounds. The house is a richly diverse yet rigidly organised microcosm. Its structures seem, on the face of it, to be homologous with those of Javanese society and the Javanese thought world at large, and through those structures the Javanese author speaks with the special authority of one who is on home ground.

## I.

No more than a glance around Central and East Java will serve to impress upon the observer that domestic dwellings in the Javanese culture area are very diverse in form. Even within traditional architecture there is considerable variety of style, and this is complicated today by a very significant intrusion, in country areas as well as in cities and towns, of forms and styles adapted from or imitating those of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, underlying this variety there is a structure common to most Javanese domestic dwellings.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, apprehension of this structure's existence rests on the more or less deliberate discounting of variations, or, to put it another way, Javanese houses are to a greater or lesser degree variations on a fundamental theme. There is, to seize upon the very commonly used analogy from structural linguistics, a "phonemic" structure which lies behind the "phonetic" diversity of houses. In everyday life its existence is evidenced in the use of the same or similar terms to refer to what, at first sight, appear to be vastly different objects.

The Javanese house, in its "phonemic" form, consists of two main parts, the front and the back, each of which may be further divided.<sup>3</sup> Each of these divisions is deemed to encompass not only the appropriate parts of the house but also adjacent structures and spaces.<sup>4</sup> The front part of the house

embraces the front yard (*pakarangan* or *plataran*), the garden (*patamanan*) and the front chamber of the house proper, the *pandhapa*. The back part embraces the "inner chambers" (*dalem*) of the house proper, the back or side chambers and galleries (*gadri*, *gandhok*), as well as the "*buri*", the courtyard and wings of various rooms and lean-tos at the back. The house proper is constructed on a solid, quadrangular foundation of stones and is physically higher than the *pakarangan* at the front and the courtyard with its enclosing wings at the back.

The distinguishing feature of the front division of the house is that it is regarded as being exterior and outward-looking in character. Traditionally it is open, that is to say, physically open to view from outside the house complex. The main component in the built part of the traditional house's front division, the wide portico called *pandhapa*, is open around three of its sides and its interior is visible from without. Even where the "open" part of the house is not, in fact, immediately visible from without (for example, where the garden is surrounded by a high wall, or where the *pandhapa* takes the form of an enclosed front room in a European style house), the way it is referred to and inhabited seems to indicate that it is still *perceived* as being open and remains structurally part of the front, open division of the house. The back of the house is enclosed, that is, it is regarded as being separate and not visible from outside the house complex, or indeed from the front part of the house. And even where it is visible from without or from the front (as, for example, in the case of a village house consisting of only a single interior space where the back part of the space is visible from the front part of the house), the distinction is apparently regarded as still applying.<sup>5</sup>

The front part of the house consists of three principal components, not all of which may be present in all houses. They are (i) a hall, portico or room called the *pandhapa*, also variously called (depending on the architectural style embodied in the house) the *ngarepan* (literally "the front"), *emper* or simply referred to by the Indonesian terms *kamar duduk* (sitting room) or *ruang tamu* (room for the reception of guests); (ii) the front yard, called *plataran* or *pakarangan*; and (iii) the ornamental garden, called *patamanan* or just *taman* and sometimes *kebon*.

In traditional houses the *pandhapa* takes the form of a raised, tiled square in which are set wooden pillars varying in number according to the size of the structure. The pillars support a roof with the shape of a low pyramid.<sup>6</sup> The structure is open at the front and normally on the left and right sides as well. At the back it abuts on the *paringgitan*, a kind of verandah or vestibule between the *pandhapa* and the enclosed interior of the back part of the house (*dalem*). The *pandhapa* is usually furnished sparsely, the most important items of furniture being a low table surrounded by wooden armchairs. In smaller traditional houses or in European style houses the *pandhapa* takes the form of an enclosed "front room", and it is this that is called the *ngarepan*, *kamar duduk* or *ruang tamu*.

The *pakarangan*, located between the *pandhapa* and the road or street in front of the house, is a yard of swept earth or sand, sometimes decorated with beds of ornamental flowers, but more commonly planted with large, shady, fruit bearing trees. The *patamanan* is located ideally at the side of the house. In it are to be found ornamental flowers and shrubs, and in more

elaborate instances, arbours and bowers, or at the very least a bench under a tree. Where, as is frequently the case, there is no room for a separate *patamanan* it may simply occupy a corner of the front yard. The *patamanan* is a purely recreational space to be enjoyed primarily for its natural beauty, whereas the *pakarangan* is a working space, used for the passage of people between the street and the house, as a place to park vehicles and as a place of play or work.

The principal component of the back, or inner, part of the house is the *dalem*.<sup>7</sup> In larger, traditional style houses, this is conventionally divided into a number of smaller chambers: a kind of ante-chamber extending the full width of the house called the *jrambah*, and to the rear of this and opening on to it, a row of small rooms, usually three in number, called *senthong* (sometimes *senthongan*) or *kamar*. Normally, the right and left *senthong* are used as bedrooms, but the middle one, the *senthong tengah* or *patanen*, can have several special functions. It may be used as a storeroom for rice, family heirlooms and other valuables. It is also the focal point of the intimate ceremonial life of the household. It is conceived of as a resting place or bedroom for Dewi Sri, the female deity of agricultural and household plenty. The room is (or traditionally should be) arranged and decorated as a bridal chamber for the deity and her consort Sadana. To the right and left of the *dalem*, chambers or open galleries may be located called *gadri* (sometimes *gladri*) or *gandhok*, and a similar chamber or space may be found at the back.

In many smaller houses, and in European style houses, the bedrooms are usually located differently. The house is often split, as it were, lengthways, with one half taking the form of a large oblong chamber used at the front as a sitting room and at the rear as a dining room. The bedrooms may occupy the other half of the house, being arranged in a row down the length of the house and opening onto the large chamber which faces them, like a *dalem* which has been rotated 90 degrees. Significantly, this lengthways split into left and right divisions does not express any clear structural or cultural distinction. The front of the large chamber is effectively part of the front or open division of the house and the back part of it effectively part of the back or enclosed part. Similarly, the bedroom at the front which opens on to the sitting room element (i.e. functionally *pandhapa*) of the large chamber is not structurally part of the front of the house but is categorised with those parts which constitute the back or enclosed part.<sup>8</sup>

In the back part of the house proper, or very commonly in the area behind the house proper, lies the kitchen (*pawon*), bathroom (*kolah* or *jamban*), servants' quarters and storerooms. Access to this portion of the house may be had through the main part of the house by way of the *pandhapa* or front door, but this would normally be appropriate only for members of the family. Servants, vendors, and lower status guests would gain entry to the back down a side path or alley, or perhaps through a back gate (*butulan*).

In some houses there are areas which seem to be intermediate between front and back. In the traditional house, for example, the area between the *pandhapa* and the *dalem*, called the *paringgitan* (the place of the shadow play) is used for the reception of guests, but guests with whom the householder is on intimate terms. In non-traditional houses this area may

correspond to what it often called the *ngongrongan*, a space contiguous with and somewhat to the rear of the front sitting room.

## II.

The Javanese novel occupies and is shaped by eight spatial domains, three in the front division of the house and five in the back. As will become apparent, these domains, *topoi* if you like, align with remarkable consistency elements of the narrative relating to character, event, discourse and time. In summary their characteristics are as follows.

**PANDHAPA/NGAREPAN** (Front Portico). The dominant persona here is the authoritative male, usually with a senior position in the household, or at the very least with high status in the community. Events here involve the assertion of authority, delineation of social roles, establishment or reinforcement of relative status. It is a place of meeting or assembly, invariably of a public or semi-public character involving persons from outside the immediate household. It is the place for reception of guests, discussion of problems (especially problems with ramifications in society at large), ceremonies and celebrations.

The dominant discourse elements in the *pandhapa/ngarepan* are those of commencement and conclusion, formality, seriousness, order and dissimulation. Measured, formal, honorific, addressive High Javanese (*krama*) is frequently used. In literary terms, the discourse is often that of *jejer* (formal audience) scenes in *wayang* theatre, with the language of the *janturan* or formal, addressive narrative. The dominant times are late afternoon (for discussions, formal relaxation etc.) and evening (for performances, ceremonies and celebrations).

**PAKARANGAN** (Front Yard) The dominant persona is the adviser/helper, usually a nanny or older female servant-companion. It is also the place of the male servant and the low-status petitioner. The dominant events are the giving of advice by servant to master or mistress, children playing with servants, and the welcoming or farewell of guests accorded special honor. The dominant discourse is that of "good advice" and moralising delivered in a register of semi-familiar cordiality and involving the citing of or allusion to traditional aphorisms and moralistic poetry. Allusion is made to *gara-gara* scenes in the *wayang* theatre in which knightly characters are advised by the *panakawan* or clownish servants. The dominant time is late afternoon or night.

**PATAMANAN** (Ornamental Garden) The dominant persona is the young lover, especially female, and the dominant event type, consistent with the garden's semi-public character, rather emotionless, decorous wooing or courting. The discourse is that of romantic love, though rarely extravagant or exaggerated. There are frequent allusions to the discourse of romantic fiction in the Indonesian language and to popular romance movies, as well as allusions to romantic love in traditional Javanese literature. The time is late afternoon and (moonlit) night.

**GADRI/GANDHOK/PANDHAPA BURI** (Back and Side Chambers/Galleries) The dominant persona in this space is the

authoritative female, usually with a senior position in the household or with high status in the community. Problems relating to family matters are resolved here and it is a space for meeting or assembly, usually of family members or close relatives and friends. The dominant discourse is that of semi-formal conversation with some playfulness or joking and allusion to *angedhaton* (retirement by the king to his inner chambers) scenes in *wayang* theatre. The dominant times are late afternoon (for discussions, formal relaxation, etc.) and evening (for meals).

**KAMAR** (Bedroom) The dominant persona in the bedroom is the hero or heroine, and in particular a younger female like a young wife or unmarried daughter. Dominant types of event are solitary rumination, emotional release, usually in tears or *sambat* (complaint, cry from the heart), withdrawal from social or family pressures, and illness, usually as a consequence of psychological or emotional stress. It is also one of two places (the other being the mountain resort town) where intimate violation (usually rape or robbery) can occur or be attempted. The dominant discourse is that of theatrical soliloquy (expostulation, apostrophe, etc.). The language used is conversational (but not slangy) Low Javanese (*ngoko*). There is frequent reference to personal desires and the thwarting of them, together with the emotional concomitants of this in grief, despair, anger, compassion, frustration and confusion. The dominant time is early afternoon (when people usually take their post-luncheon siesta) and night.

**PAWON** (Kitchen) The dominant persona is (in wealthy households) the female helper or servant, or (in poorer households) the daughter, mother or wife. The dominant event here is observation and discussion of events in other parts of the house, principally the *pandhapa/ngarepan*. The dominant discourse is that of observation "from the wings of the stage". The language is gossipy, colloquial and slangy, especially in conversations among servants or female equals. The dominant time is early morning or early afternoon.

**CENDHELA/BUTULAN** (Bedroom Window/Back Gate) The dominant persona is the escapee or intruder, the former usually being a young, unmarried woman, and the latter a male felon. The dominant event types are escape or surreptitious exit by a young woman and intrusion by a man with malevolent intent. The dominant discourse is that of melodramatic danger or threat. Events here occur at various "transitional" times, for example mid-afternoon and the hours before dawn.

**CITY, COUNTRYSIDE, MOUNTAINS/FOREST** The dominant personae are the criminal or lout, the disappointed lover (male or female), and the high status male. Event types include criminal attack or threat of criminal attack, accidents, aimless wandering (*lunga saparan-paran*) by a disappointed lover, a quest for spiritual or intellectual strength through withdrawal from society and communion with nature in solitude, as well as through consultation with a person whose special wisdom comes from communion with nature and withdrawal from society. The discourse elements are varied and include allusion to forest (*wana*) or hermitage (*pertapan*) scenes in the *wayang* theatre, melodramatic challenge and riposte, confusion and disorientation, the discourse of romantically depicted natural beauty, and some reference to the "nature in turmoil" (*gara-gara*)

portions of *wayang* plays. It is difficult to perceive any particularly dominant time for events in this space.

### III.

Perception and construction of space are culturally conditioned. Space defines people and people define space. This simple but suggestive insight has generated an extensive body of studies on the sociology and symbolism of domestic space.<sup>9</sup> Many of these studies conclude that, or more accurately perhaps, are predicated on the assumption that, in the culture concerned there is a straightforward homology between structures of space and structures of perception, symbolism and especially, social relations. "The layout of the house," says Shelley Errington in an analysis of houses in the Buginese area of South Sulawesi, "mirrors social relationships."<sup>9</sup> Errington's article makes reference to the binary oppositions which are the stuff of structuralist studies of domestic space; front/back, public/private, outer/inner, outsiders/intimates, formality/informality, threat/security. Especially prominent in such studies is analysis of the use patterns of domestic space to illuminate male/female asymmetry. In many, perhaps most cultures, it seems, open public areas of the house are perceived as being masculine. These spaces and the men who find their social place within them are accorded high status in the dominant value system. The closed, private portions of the house, on the other hand, are of lesser value. The women who inhabit these spaces are aligned with them in the symbolic order and are valued accordingly.<sup>11</sup> In short, as Shirley Ardener puts it:

Structural relationships, such as hierarchies or other ranking patterns, and systems of relationships like those of kinship, are (. . .) 'social maps', which are frequently, but not necessarily, realised on 'the ground' by the placing of individuals in space.<sup>12</sup>

The "map" I have given of spatial organisation and its social concomitants in the Javanese novel suggests that many of the binary oppositions as identified by Ardener and many others, which are said to structure space and social relations at the deepest level in a variety of cultures, are operating also in Javanese society. The Javanese novel appears to align the front division of the house (particularly the *pandhapa*) with order, loyalty to form, authority, absence of reflection, conservatism, communal values and so on. The back division of the house (especially the *kamar*) expresses radical values, turbulence, individualism, egalitarianism, reflection and spontaneity. The front of the house is ordered, superior in value and male. The back is disordered, inferior and female. To illustrate, take this passage from Esmiet's *Tunggak-Tunggak Jati* (Trunks of Teak, 1977) in which the chaos of the female rear of the house spills into the order of the male front.

Suwaji was in the middle bedroom at a loss what to do. He ran to his wife's room. Muslikatun had just woken up and was sitting with a blank look on her face. Her father was there too. "Pak!" Suwaji called. His father-in-law looked round startled. "What is it? What's happened? You look as if something's

gone wrong!"

Suwaji sank into a chair near the bedroom table and muttered in the direction of his wife.

"It's happened again and it's all her fault. She never does what I say. I'm her husband but she just won't listen to me. What am I going to do about this now? I'm the one who's got to face the humiliation."

He thrust his hand into his hair and savagely wrenched it, glaring in fury at his wife.

"Lien Nio's disappeared, now what do you say to that?" he announced.

"Disappeared?" Muslikatun's father half rose in shock from his chair. Without another word he sprang to the door and sprinted out to the second bedroom. A moment later he burst back into the room looking desperately at his son-in-law.

"What are we going to do? Ohh . . . what are we going to do? What a disaster!" Now it was the father-in-law whose face expressed despair. He had, after all, lived through Dutch colonial times, and in those days when a high ranking official called on one of his subordinates his every wish and whim had to be satisfied.

"What are we going to do? You could get the sack for this." He turned grimly on his daughter, brought his finger up to her face and pressed her nose down with it.

"You're the one who's caused all this! You've managed to bugger things up again, damn you!"

He rushed out and ran to the front of the house. At the pandhapa door he peered out. In the pandhapa their guest sat patiently waiting. There was nothing on the table before him except an ashtray full of butts. The old man's panic mounted. He scurried back to Muslikatun's bedroom. Suwaji emerged from the room and disappeared out the back. His father-in-law went in and again levelled his finger at his daughter's nose.

"Look! Look out the front there! It's your stupidity that's brought this on us! The gentleman out there is your husband's guest, not just some ordinary visitor! And he's no ordinary guest either—your husband's whole career and future is in his hands. And what do you do? Nothing! You don't even give him something to eat and drink..."

The old man stopped. It suddenly occurred to him that serving refreshments to guests was the kitchen's job, the responsibility of Mbok Sikah, his daughter's servant. He ran to the back of the house but Mbok Sikah had gone to fetch Muslikatun's mother. Recalling that he had told her to do this himself the old man slapped his head.

"I'm really getting old. Ahhhh, senile already and still no grandchildren!"

Galvanised by the consternation of the two men over Lien Nio's disappearance from the room where she had been confined, Muslikatun decided to try and correct her blunder by talking directly to Pak Karmodo. She left her room and headed for the front of the house, picking up a tray of refreshments as she went.

Muslikatun came out into the pandhapa with a friendly

smile. As she served the refreshments she apologised for the shortcomings in her hospitality. Karmodo just nodded. After taking the empty tray back inside, she returned to the *pandhapa*.

"I want to apologise, Pak, for the little misunderstanding just now," she said to Karmodo. "My husband and I . . . well . . . we had a little argument. You know how it is, husband and wife sometimes . . ." Muslikatun could not stem her tears. She began to cry.

Her father, spying into the *pandhapa* from within, ground his teeth in anger.

"The silly woman!" he groaned to himself. "Telling the whole world our private affairs. Idiot! And she tells it to her husband's boss . . . how silly can a woman get!" He was on the point of jumping out into the front to try and rectify his daughter's blunder, but, hearing Muslikatun talking through her tears, he checked himself. (pp. 86-87)

Such images of female-inspired disorder in the interior/rear contrast with the ordered formality of the male dominated exterior/front. To illustrate, it is a convention of Javanese novels that the ritualised reception of guests in the *pandhapa* is invariably interrupted momentarily. The interruption comes from within, from the rear. For an instant the problematic female interior materialises in the *pandhapa* in the guise of a daughter, wife or female servant, who serves drinks and food then retires with courteous submissiveness. Her appearance demonstrates that, in this household at least, male authority has established its mastery over female disorder to the extent that the interior can be cautiously displayed in the public place of the *pandhapa*. In the *pandhapa* men are masters. Through formal address and courtesy they establish a sense of ease, an atmosphere in which there is no threat and no shock. Women are summoned from within and appear bearing food and drink, the natural symbols of their natural character. These refreshments are served in an ordered, submissive manner and the *pandhapa* imposes its constraint on the consumption of them. The following typical example of such a scene comes from Soetarno's *Tape Ayu* (The Pretty Tapai Vendor, 1966).

"Kulo nuwun . . ."

"Come in . . ." said Mr Karto.

"Excuse me, I wonder if you would be kind enough to tell me, is this *Mas Kartorejo's* residence?"

"Oh, yes it is. May I know your name?" *Mas Priyo* stood and extended his hand.

"Permit me to introduce myself. My name is *Priyomartono* of *Lawayan*. And this is my wife." Mr Karto shook his hand.

"I am *Kartorejo*. Please come in and sit down." He gestured toward the chairs in the front room.

"Allow me to introduce myself too," said Mrs *Priyo* interposing. "I am *Mbok Mas Priyomartono*." And she extended her hand.

"Pleased to meet you, *Mbok Mas*," Mr Karto replied. He called within to his wife. "Eh, mother we have guests!"

Mrs Karto came out to greet the guests.

"Permit me to introduce my wife, *Mbok Kartorejo*," said Mr Marto.

"How do you do. I am Priyomartono of Laweyan."

"I trust you had a safe journey here," Mr Karto enquired.

"Perfectly so, thank you. . . ."

"Sum!" called Mrs Karto to her daughter. "Drinks child!"

A moment later Sumirah emerged with a tray of drinks. As she served them, Mr and Mrs Priyo looked in admiring astonishment at her. She was wearing the simplest of clothes, but she was so beautiful! How much more beautiful she would be if she were better dressed. She would be the equal of a princess in a palace. After serving the drinks Sumirah went in again. She had plenty to do, cooking the family's meal and preparing the *tapai* baskets to be taken to Legi Market.

"Well, Mr Karto, I am delighted to have met you and your wife," said Mr Priyo. "I very much hope this will be the beginning of a long acquaintanceship." (pp. 27-28)

The Javanese novel is largely a novel of domestic melodrama. It tells of man and woman in the most elemental of societies, marriage, and it is set in the most elemental of physical and psychological shelters, the family home. The house itself, as I hope I have suggested, is a marriage of male and female. Indeed the very word for house in Javanese, *omah*, is synonymous with the institution of marriage. "To marry" is *omah-omah*, literally "to set up house", that is, to found an intimate domestic community. A word for "wife" is *somah* (most commonly heard in its High Javanese form *semah*), "the one who is of the same house", and the term *somahan* or *sasomahan* means "to be married, to have a family, to have a household, to be a household". Within this dwelling with its clearly defined male and female realms, man interacts with woman, generating the events of the plot. In the interaction of man and woman, whether husband and wife, lover and lady, father and daughter, molester and victim, manservant and mistress, brother and sister, stepmother and stepson, we see the dialogue of those immutables of Javanese society, principally the contest between the ideology of order and the reality of disorder, which, at the deepest level, are arrayed in a structure of binary opposition.

#### IV.

Having sketched the equation of spatial and social structure in the Javanese novel my observations might well stop at this point. But there is a fly insistently buzzing in the tautological ointment of such an analysis. As Robin Horton, discussing analyses of the contrast between "traditional" and "modern" modes of thought, bluntly puts it, "the 'closed/open' dichotomy is ripe for the scrap heap".<sup>13</sup> If the Javanese novel says anything at all it says that the contrastive categories so beloved of social anthropologists—open/closed, public/private, ordered/disordered, outer/inner—are profoundly ambiguous. The assumption that such oppositions are absolute and are workable tools of analysis seems to involve

certain value judgements which may be valid in the anthropologist's culture but are not necessarily so in the culture in which the oppositions are perceived to operate.

Let me illustrate. I have characterised the front division of the Javanese house, specifically the *pandhapa*, as, among other things, open, public, ordered and exterior. But the *pandhapa* is also "closed" in the sense that it permits only a restricted range of behaviour and represents a rigid, unchanging value system. Far from being exclusively "public", the *pandhapa* is arguably the place in which personal privacy is most assiduously cultivated, in the sense that the necessity to conform to public norms makes essential the cultivation of a "public face" which is different from one's "private face". The formality of *pandhapa* discourse is an elaborate device to ensure that one's idiosyncrasies and one's personal, private integrity remain private and therefore intact in the public arena.<sup>14</sup> The "order" of the *pandhapa* too is not without its ambiguity, for the imposition and maintainance of order at the very least implies repression and compulsion, with their companion spectre, violence. Even the "exterior" character of the *pandhapa* is ambiguous. The world beyond the house, as I have indicated, is seen as threatening, violent and disordered. In this respect it is categorically congruent with the disordered, female interior of the house. There appears to be no clear classificatory boundary between the house's interior and the chaotic world beyond the house. So the *pandhapa* is "surrounded" like a clearing in the jungle and can thus be seen as a kind of interior.

Conversely, the back division of the house, specifically the *kamar*, exhibits a similar symbolic ambiguity. In the privacy of the bedroom, the "making public" of one's private self is possible. Far from being "closed" and "interior" the *kamar*—place of "natural" expression, behaviour, events—is categorically congruent with the natural world outside.<sup>15</sup> And the disorder of the *kamar*, as well as of nature at large, conceals a deeper, truer order than any embodied in the *pandhapa*. The troubled heroine may seek refuge and renewal in her bedroom, but may also "*lunga saparan-paran*", that is go off aimlessly wandering, extinguishing all personal will and casting herself into the "natural" turbulence of city and countryside confident that she can thereby renew her integration with the order she has lost.

The Javanese novelist "speaks from the *pandhapa*", that is he articulates the dominant ideology of his community, the idea of order epitomised and symbolised in the conservative male seated with his peers in his *pandhapa*. The discourse order of the novel, especially the consistent organisation of story within the rigid spatial matrix of the house and its surrounds, is the novel's (as opposed to the story's) *pandhapa*. The novelist not only speaks from the *pandhapa*, he ultimately "speaks the *pandhapa*". The hierarchy of the novel's discourse is topped by that of the *pandhapa*.

Traditionally, histories of polities in Java begin with, and constantly refer back to, a primal, formative event—the clearing of the forest. The phrase "*mbabad tanah Jawi*" (clearing the land of Java) has even become a general title for the great complex of narratives chronicling the history of Mataram and its predecessors. The word "*babad*" (to slash down

and clear away) is today the usual term in Javanese for "a written history" of the traditional kind. The ambiguity of the "*babad*" act and "*babad*" genre is obvious, for to establish an ordered community demands a violent assault on the domain of nature, just as the writing of an ordered literary narrative demands a single-minded ideological and discursive assault on the "natural" realm of events.

In its adherence to a Javanese order embodied in the spatial matrix I have described, the Javanese novel asserts, in the firm, authoritative, masculine address of the *pandhapa*, the superior and enduring value of Javanese culture. At the same time, like a neat clearing surrounded by jungle, the *pandhapa* of the novel's ideology and discourse is isolated and threatened. In many ways Javanese dominate the artistic, social and political life of contemporary Indonesia but today they find themselves within a larger, far more diverse polity than any their history has prepared them for. Their culture now is just one among many. Indeed, for many Javanese their mother tongue and its literature, while still cultivated, are increasingly viewed as "isolated", that is, provincial in the wider, restlessly changing context of the nation state. It is this ambiguity that the Javanese novel articulates in the spatial character of its ideological and discursive forms.

## Notes

- 1 Clifford Geertz (1963) p. 75 refers to this phenomenon and observes that a shift of status value seems to have occurred from the "classic open porch country house" to the "stucco bungalow". See also Jay (1969) p. 48 and Gatut Murniatmo (1979/1980) p. 33. Nevertheless, familiarity with and occupation of traditional style houses still appears to be the norm particularly in the countryside, see "Arsitektur Rumah Jawa" p. 124.
- 2 Jay p. 46 describes the domestic architecture of rural Java as "highly standardized". See also *ibid.* pp. 48, 49.
- 3 Explicit and extended reference to the front/back distinction is not prominent in descriptions of Javanese houses. For the most part, analysis of the forms of Javanese domestic architecture employs categories derived from the various shapes of the roof (*joglo*, *limasan*, *panggungpe* and others). My description relies mainly on "Arsitektur Rumah Jawa", Jay Ch. 4, H. MacLaine Pont (1923/24), Gatut Murniatmo (1979/1979) and my own observations. The reader should bear in mind that in the description which follows, generalities have priority over variations and details.
- 4 It should be borne in mind that the built parts of the Javanese house are not necessarily enclosed or shut off from adjacent spaces, though the boundaries between spaces *are* perceived to exist. The *pandhapa*, for example, is not physically shut off from the front yard (*pakarangan*) but the boundary between them is clearly marked by the raised edge of the *pandhapa*.
- 5 For example, in a house consisting of a single interior space, the front part of the space may still be called the *ngarepan* (front part) and will function in the same way as a *pandhapa*, for the reception of guests, say, rather than for sleeping, while the back part of the space might still be referred to as the *buri* and be used for purposes structurally assigned to

the back or interior, such as *ngoko*. The diagram in Jay p. 50 gives some indication of the validity of *ngoko*.

6 "Arsitektur Rumah Jawa" gives a short description of the various roof styles of Javanese architecture, including those to be found in the *pandhapa*.

7 The word *dalem* means both "house" (in *krama inggil* or High Javanese) and (in ordinary *ngoko* and *krama* usage) "the interior of a house, the inner rooms". It can also mean simply "within" or "inside", usually with reference to periods of time.

8 The front bedroom in houses of this type is sometimes ambiguous in its character. If the house is large enough or its occupiers wealthy enough to have a special bedroom set aside for guests, usually it is the very front bedroom adjacent to the sitting room which is so used rather than one more to the rear of the house. In other words, this bedroom sometimes partakes partly of the front, open world of the guest and the public, and partly of the back, enclosed, private world of the family. See also Jay p. 50.

9 See for example Ardener ed. (1981b) and its bibliography.

10 Errington (1979) p. 9.

11 For an interesting example of such a study see Hirschon (1978).

12 Ardener (1981a) p. 13.

13 Horton (1982) p. 226.

14 Geertz (1960) pp. 248-260 analyses Javanese linguistic etiquette utilising a "wall" analogy to describe how the Javanese protect themselves inwardly by use of formal speech registers.

15 Gaston Bachelard, referring to European literature, describes the congruence of these two spaces as follows: "It would seem, then, that it is through their 'immensity' that these two kinds of space—the space of intimacy and world space—blend. When human solitude deepens, then the two immensities touch and become identical." See Bachelard (1958) p. 203.

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