

of the *Darangen* offer us a great deal of precious information which is difficult to obtain from ordinary ethnographical sources.

Lastly I must say a word about the book's design by N.S.J. Alfonso. The cover is decorated with a unique and exotic native pattern. This design will not fail to impress the reader. Not only will it increase the pleasure of reading, it will also give a feeling for the atmosphere of the Maranao's *Darangen* the moment we pick up these rewarding volumes.

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DASZENIES, JUTTA. *Geistervorstellungen im javanischen Überzeugungssystem* [Conceptions of spirits within the Javanese system of belief]. Kölner ethnologische Studien, Band 12. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1987. 122 pages. Tables map, illustrations, glossary, bibliography. Paper DM 34.—; ISBN 3-496-00918-7. (In German)

This small book is the published version of an M. A. thesis submitted at the University of Cologne, West Germany. It aims to give a systematic description of *wong kejawan* spirit beliefs, i.e. the spirit beliefs of that section of the central and southern Javanese population which is not strictly Muslim but holds syncretistic beliefs derived from Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Javanese folk religion. The description is based on the available literature as well as on interviews with three Javanese key informants, who had been living in West Germany for seven and ten years respectively. Unfortunately, the biographical information provided on the latter is insufficient to indicate to what extent their views are representative of the average *wong kejawan*.

The list of spirits and types of spirits discussed looks fairly comprehensive: the large class of *wong alus* ("immaterial people") is subdivided into two major categories (comprising altogether fifteen sub-categories) as well as thirteen separate types or individual spiritual beings. Thus, as far as classification is concerned, this work is probably more complete than any one previous publication dealing with the Javanese spirit world, and for this reason it will certainly be welcomed by scholars interested in South East Asian belief systems. On the other hand, the information provided in the thirty-four descriptive sections on spirits and spirit classes is disappointing, not only quantitatively (if one subtracts blank spaces, illustrations consisting of repro-

ductions of children's playing cards, and matrices which summarise the descriptive text, the thirty-four sections altogether comprise no more than twenty-seven typewritten pages), but also on account of the superficial, non-analytical mode of presentation. Not surprisingly, the concluding paragraphs on human interaction with spirits and on the functions of Javanese spirit beliefs yield hardly any remarkable insights.

The lack of detailed, vivid description and of differentiated analysis is in part due to the incompleteness of the published information on the subject. This applies, for instance, to the paragraphs devoted to traditional beliefs concerning spirits in Clifford Geertz's classic monograph, *The Religion of Java* (1960). Geertz did not seek to give a comprehensive inventory of Javanese spirits but concentrated instead on conceptions of those spiritual beings which were of particular importance in the everyday life of *abangan* (*wong kejawen*) informants in his research area. (These conceptions, as he argues convincingly, did *not* form a cognitively standardized system—a point which the author under review fails to acknowledge.) On the other hand, the accounts given in Geertz's work of five principal kinds of spirit are of far higher quality than the corresponding sections in the book under review; and in spite of the author's reservations concerning certain ethnographic details in Geertz's account, the latter could have served her as a model for her own descriptions, including those of spirit beliefs not yet covered in the published literature. Incidentally, she unfairly criticizes Geertz for restricting his account to the spirit conceptions of a single informant (13): although it is true that the initial *classification* of spirits is that of "a young carpenter" (it is introduced as a mere example of varying individual conceptions), Geertz's subsequent detailed *descriptions* are based on multiple sources.

Among other weaknesses which could be elaborated upon, the present reviewer will confine himself to just one: the use of a pretentious methodological label for a relatively simple, common-sense research procedure. The descriptive main body of the book deals with the appearance of the various spirits, their sex, typical character traits, abode(s), ascribed origin and position within the spiritual cosmos. In the short chapter on "research methodology" this procedure is announced as an application of the (in fact highly sophisticated) method of *componential analysis*—a gross exaggeration, to put it mildly. No information is given as to how the author arrived at this set of descriptive categories (which could be considerably improved), and few of these categories are referred to in the final "analysis." These critical remarks, however, are not directed against Daszenies in particular: rather, they are meant to point to a terminological abuse widespread in modern anthropological literature. There is simply no point in referring to a sophisticated methodological approach unless the research findings in question are demonstrably the result of this specific scientific procedure and could not have been arrived at by more simple means.

To sum up, this book contains a valuable, comprehensive classification of traditional Javanese spirit beliefs, followed by disappointing descriptive sections. The quality of the latter is probably at least in part attributable to the fact that the author did not have the chance to do fieldwork in Indonesia. It is to be hoped that a pre-doctoral grant will enable her to collect more differentiated and descriptively "thicker" data on a similar research topic in the field. If anything, her book demonstrates that our ethnographic knowledge of "native" Indonesian religious beliefs is still far from adequate.

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KEELER, WARD. *Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Xv+282 pages. Black and white plates, illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$37.50, ISBN 0-691-09425-X; Paper US\$17.25, ISBN 0-691-02836-2.

*Wayang kulit* or simply *wayang*, which means "shadow play" and at the same time puppets made of the leather of water buffaloes, is one of the most popular art forms in Java. *Wayang* means shadow and *kulit* means leather. The revered ancestors of Javanese *wayang* stories are the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, the great epics of ancient India. They have been developed and brewed in, or adapted to, the peculiar Javanese culture for hundreds of years. In addition to so-called *lakon pokok* or principal plots that relate events in the two epics, now Javanese people have a great many so-called second plots which have been created by many of the *dhalang* or puppeteers. During the performance, which usually lasts about eight or nine hours from evening until early next morning, some hundreds of puppets are manipulated by only a single *dhalang*. The *dhalang* is also responsible for making up the plot, and then for narrating the story, reciting the verses, and talking for the puppets. He also leads his *gamelan* or orchestra musicians including *pesindhen* or female vocalists.

Why does the *wayang kulit* enchant so many Javanese? This question may be directed more specifically to the *dhalang* himself as he is the center of the performance. The author writes in the conclusion as follows: "The peculiar fascination of the *dhalang* in Javanese culture stems from this fact: that he is at once a dissembled authority, one whose power is great, non-coercive, and unworldly, and a dissembled interpreter, one who mediates between an unreal but persuasive, and distracting world, and our own" (268). In the sentences just cited the word "dissembled" appears two times. This is one of the key words of the book. The author frequently uses terms such as "dissembled self," "dissembled center," and "dissembled authority" together with the adjective "dissimulated."

During the performance all those things and beings that relate to the *dhalang* such as plot, puppets, *gamelan* musicians, sponsor, sponsor's guests and neighbors, and even spirits are brought under his authority. Although the outline of the plot is determined conventionally, the details are left to him to create at his own will. Puppets are made to talk, sing, dance, and fight as if directed by the *dhalang*. The *dhalang* is authoritative in the eyes of the sponsor and his guests and neighbors because he is believed to grant them spiritual benefit.

Keeler's attempt to understand a performance as a relationship, and to look for similar features that that relationship implies in other social domains, is very unique. In fact, such kind of authoritative relationship can be observed repeatedly between a father and his sons, a village headman and his villagers, a *dhukun* (a magical specialist) and his patients, and a king and his subjects. Authority stems from *kekuwatan batin*,