

Note on Spelling and

Translations



I have not italicized the titles of stories and texts that exist in a variety of tellings. This is to indicate the fluid nature of these oral and written textual traditions. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, or the titles of shadow play stories are thus not italicized. When I refer to the written texts of particular authors, I italicize. When I refer to texts that exist in a variety of inscriptions, I do not.

I have used the spellings for proper names preferred by those who bore them. In the early part of the twentieth century, many Javanese, like Indonesia's first president Soekarno, favored Dutch spellings for their names. There are many inconsistencies in the spellings of Mahabharata and Ramayana characters, texts, and performances; to banish these inconsistencies entirely, I believe, does violence to the nature of these traditions. Because this book argues that Javanese Mahabharata and Ramayana stories are no less "authentic" than Indian ones, and occasionally the Javanese and Indian spellings overlap, it is difficult to maintain a clear separation. An added complication comes with Dutch spellings of these names. Spellings in translated or quoted passages have not been changed. Alternate spellings of names and places from these story-worlds can be found in the glossary at the end of the book.

Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations from Javanese, Indonesian, and Dutch—with all their failings—are my own.