

FALL and WINTER 2015 Issue #38

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL



WAYANG:
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PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

issue no. 38

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Puppetry International is a publication of UNIMA-USA, Inc.



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On the COVER:

Wayang Golek Lenong Betawi
and Tizar Purbaya

(see article, page 25)

Editorial

Wayang conjures images of epic battles, gods and monkeys, all night performances in tropical splendor, the clangorous beauty of the gamelan. The word likely derives from the ancient “bayang,” meaning “shadow,” though some make a case for “sanghyang” (defined by Professor Kathy Foley as “spirit, divinity in a vague sort of ancestral way”). Today, not all forms of wayang include shadow puppetry (*wayang topeng* uses masks, *wayang golek* rod puppets, *wayang beber* painted scrolls and so on), so how has “shadow” persisted as a unifying concept? The shadow has deep resonance in the cultures where wayang has flourished—primarily Indonesia and Malaysia. It can represent the spiritual aspect of existence, which we cannot see directly but only mediated by the screen—as “through a glass, darkly.” In the traditional wayang shadow shows, audience members sit both in front of and behind the screen and are encouraged to move between the two worlds, experiencing, symbolically, as Foley puts it: “the mixed up everythingness of existence.” [page 4]

Wayang is an ancient form of storytelling—the earliest references (according to some sources) go back to the 9th century—but not as ancient as the stories at its roots: the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. One must exercise caution when putting a date on these epics. Some scholars believe the 3rd century BCE is likely, their origins lost in Indian antiquity.

You will learn something of wayang’s origins here, but this is NOT a history lesson! Wayang is alive today, and although some forms appear to be dying out, others are evolving and adapting to modern times. A number of articles are by Westerners who have studied wayang and have developed new work out of its forms and techniques, riffing on traditional wayang [Cohen, page 8], creating new forms [Reed, page 23], or using wayang as the philosophical underpinnings for a world view that has informed the rest of their lives [Haverty, page 16].

We cover forms with which many readers may be unfamiliar—the ritualistic *wayang kulit* of Central Java performed by “*dhalang ruwat*” [Susilo, page 12] and *wayang golek lenong betawi*, a rod puppet genre that performs traditional Batavian stories [Smith, page 25]. We have two essays on the Malaysian form of *wayang siam*, now called *wayang kelantan*, a form that practically disappeared due to pressure from an Islamic government anxious to prove the depth of its piety [Condee, page 32 and Foley, page 28].



WAYANG KULIT – KOTA TUA, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

There is much more (including a fascinating non-wayang account of Peter Blancan, a puppeteer and showman who toured widely in the colonial United States [Howard, page 42]). As always, we've reserved a number of articles for our website, including a primer on wayang, a glossary of terms and an interview with Sam Gold, whose production of *Hamlet* was done as wayang shadow show in the style of E. Gordon Craig. There you will also find I Nyomen Sedana's account of presenting Greek Myths with wayang shadow puppetry.

A big *THANK YOU* to our supportive board of directors, our peer review editor Dassia Posner and all her reviewers, historian John Bell and, in this issue, Karen Smith and Kathy Foley, whose deep knowledge of wayang has enhanced these pages in many ways.

We hope that you'll come away, as we did, with a renewed respect for this mosaic culture spread out over many islands, where there are no hard boundaries between the artistic, spiritual, political and quotidian lives of its people, and where contradictory concepts can co-exist without a sense of cognitive dissonance.

-Andrew C. Periale



SEMAR, ONE OF THE PUNAKAWAN (CLOWNS), BUT IS DIVINE AND VERY WISE

Note: The term "dalang" (Indonesian, Malaysian) is also spelled "dhalang" (Javanese) and refers to the puppeteer/storyteller/priest at the center of every production. Dalang, (however it is spelled) is both singular and plural.

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by Kathy Foley
with Karen Smith

The Tree of Life/Cosmic Mountain:

Kayon/Gunungan in Wayang

This large shadow puppet figure is usually made of perforated water buffalo hide with a horn rod. It symbolizes the “tree of life” (*kayonan* [from “*kayon*” or “tree”]) or the cosmic mountain (*gunungan* [from “*gunung*” or “mountain”]) and is used in *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), of Kelantan (Malaysia) and Indonesia (including Kalimantan, Sumatra, Java, Bali and Lombok), *wayang golek* (rod puppetry) and *wayang klitik* (flat wooden figures) of Java and Sunda (West Java). It is used in three major ways during a performance: ritually, structurally, and narratively. The exact movement stylization and iconography will differ according to area. More than ever, one sees considerable innovation in *kayon* iconography, but the overall idea remains

the same. Symbolically, the figure represents everything in the cosmos, as well as all the characters or energies that are displayed or played in the story. In a practical way these are equated with the macrocosm and all are part of the dalang—the microcosmic individual who, as a solo performer, represents all these forces.

Iconography and Ritual Function

There is great variation in what is depicted on the figure, and contemporary makers can be very creative in working with an individual dalang to help him, or sometimes her, to manifest a new version. If we accept the thesis that areas further from Central Java may have preserved an older style of *kayon*, this would lead us to think that in an older period the image may have been less figurative with just patterning of stylized foliage that might remind us of batik *pola* (patterns), a number of which resemble plants. Kelantan (where the art is said to have begun in the 18th century) has only foliage for its image which is called *pohon beringan* (banyan tree). Bali, where the puppet is called *kayon*, but seldom *gunungan*, likewise does not include the animal figures as are found on most Central Javanese models. Traditional patterns in Cirebon are usually foliage with a single elephant figure (Ganesa, son of Siwa [Shiva] and god of beginnings) in the place where a gate or pool would be found in the *gunungans* of Central Java that will be described below. It is possible that these outlier areas, further from the palaces of Central Java, are retaining older traditions that the courts gradually elaborated and further innovated.

The Balinese figure is somewhat different in that it has at the bottom the representation of the five elements in a purely abstract form and is oval and small compared to the Javanese figure. This lightweight figure is much easier to manipulate. This allows the Balinese *kayon* (usually not called *gunungan*) to dance more dramatically, with twirls and swirls that make its opening sequence considerably more dynamic. Its first dance represents the coming together of the elements that created the cosmos. The pounding of *genders* (the bronze keyed metallophones) that play percussion for this scene along with the tapping on the puppet chest by the hammer held in the dalang’s toes in some ways creates the explosive sound that we call the “big bang.”



WAYANG SULUH

DEPICTS EVERYDAY LIFE AND SYMBOLS OF THE NATION.

COLLECTION: TIZAR PURBAYA AND FAMILY
PHOTO: REZA PURBAYA



WAYANG WAHYU

DEPICTS CHRISTIANITY /CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS SUCH AS JESUS, ANGELS, AND LOVE BETWEEN HUMANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMANS WITH FELLOW HUMANS.

COLLECTION: TIZAR PURBAYA AND FAMILY
PHOTO: REZA PURBAYA

The Central Javanese *kayon* has two major variations. The *blumbangan* pattern has a pool of water in the lower half in which fish swim and the tree rises above it. This is sometimes said to be the female *kayon*. The *gapuran* figure has a “flying gate” (two doors from which wings fan out, representing a *garuda* or eagle, the vehicle of Wisnu [Vishnu] the preserver). The gate is said to be “male.” At the bottom, especially with the gate pattern *kayon*, one often sees two *raksasa* (ogre) figures holding *gada* (mace). They represent the element earth. Rising from the pool (water) and/or winged gate (fire) is the tree with branches extending to each side (air). Two facing animals (often a tiger and bull) are frequently seen just above the gate; in higher branches there are sometimes small figures (monkeys, birds, etc.); a snake often twines around the trunk. Usually there is one or sometimes multiple Kala head(s). Kala is the demon “time,” who eats us. The Kala head represents points of transition or power centers (chakras), but these are also points of potential blockage. One must persevere to break through them, and if one can, consciousness can rise to the top, the lotus bud (ether), representing enlightenment. The *gunungan* “tree of life,”

depicts the gates to self-realization. So earth (base/ogres), water (pool), fire (winged gate/eagle), air (top branches), and ether (lotus bud) are all present. On the flip side of the figure, the face of a large Kala is often painted and dalang will normally show this side when negative forces (fire, hurricane, etc.) are needed in the story.

The Javanese dalang may use one *kayon* (usually the *gapuran*) or both of the male and female figures in his opening. For the start, the traditional Yogyakarta dalang will touch the figure at three points on the screen as part of the opening and then twirl it as it moves off. The three stops may represent the three stages of life or the *tribuwana* (“three worlds”—underworld, earth, heaven—which make up the cosmos). Dramatic movement is not as likely to be found with more conservative dalang. But today as the *kayon* are made thinner and ever more flexible, they flutter beautifully and add evocative shadow images, in the hands of young, innovative dalang.

The Sundanese (West Javanese) dalang, at least since the 1950s, have used the Central Javanese gate-type *kayon*. Here there are no shadows, but the ritual dance of the figure at the opening of each play persists. The dalang draws three “x” figures with the sharp, pointed horn at the bottom and he punctures the banana log stage five times (representing the four directions and the center)—to the right, then the left, and finally the center. He writes the name of Allah in Arabic. Next he holds the *kayon* up, pulling the tip over the top of his head, almost as if he were sheltering under it, and visualizes the face of his teacher, parents, and older siblings. Then he holds it at a 45° angle to himself with his arm extended, pointing the tip at the base toward his mouth as he prays that the power to perform will flow into him. The pattern of this dance is gathering power (from right and left and above) to the place that the performance will occur (hence making it the empowered “center” of the four directions). He pulls the energy and teaching from the past (teacher, parents) and all that is latent in the cosmos (divine) to help charge his performance.

In some ways, the *kayon* is an analog for the dalang: if you hold up a Javanese *kayon* to your body, you will see that it “fits” human torso-to-head measurement. The “tree” is your spine and the snake twined is the spinal cord/kundalini energy spiraling up. The movement is from more demonic and figurative below—danger lurks around genitals, stomach, bowels—to the facing animals near the shoulders/arm area, and represents strength. The lotus bud lodges where the “third eye” is between the eyes. The *kayon* represents the *buana agung* (cosmos), but we access and understand it through the *buana alit* (little world), the microcosm of our individual human body. The path from the demonic to self-realization is the length of a spinal cord.

Structural Marker

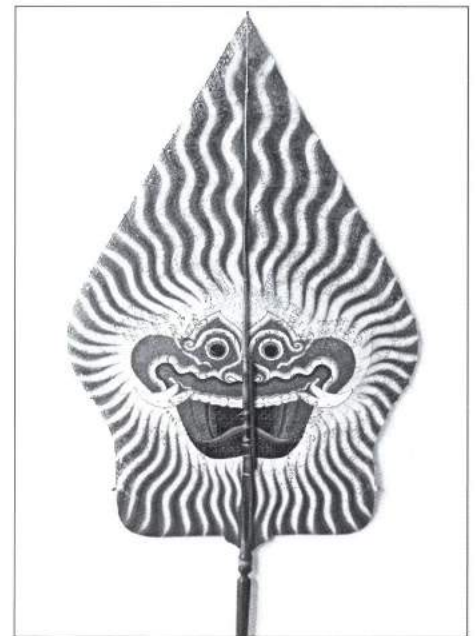
The *kayon* can be used to frame the playing space when not needed at the center to indicate the dalang speaks as narrator. As the Javanese puppeteer progresses through the three parts of the story and musical structure of the play, he will point it at different places on the screen, using it as a chronometer of sorts, to remind viewers which third of the play is concerned. When it is planted in the



WAYANG KULIT PURWA JAWA

GUNUNGAN GAPURAN (FRONT VIEW).

PUPPET REPRESENTING THE COSMOS, WITH THE GATES TO HEAVEN GUARDED BY TWO RAKSASA (OGRES).



WAYANG KULIT PURWA JAWA

GUNUNGAN GAPURAN (BACK VIEW)

CONSIDERED TO BE A MALE PUPPET AND TO DATE FROM THE KARTASURA PERIOD.

COLLECTION: KAREN SMITH
PHOTO: SAM HEESSEN

center at the end of the performance, audience members know the cosmos has been balanced and the play is done.

As noted, the puppeteer holds it in front of his face when he speaks in the narrative voice. The *gunungan* is also brought out to separate scenes and when the dalang delivers information or comment. He does this to announce that we have moved from a palace to a forest and employs it to speak in his omniscient voice; for example, revealing that a tiger we are about to see is a transformation of a human. One might consider the *kayon* as a visualization of Brecht's *Verfremdung*. The dalang, like Brecht's epic actor, has the ability to emote inside the character/*wayang*, but also *qua* narrator is always able to see and comment on and about the "puppet."



GUNUNGAN (BETAWI/JAKARTA)

DEPICTIONS OF BETAWI ARTS (ONDEL-ONDEL [RED MALE AND WHITE FEMALE FIGURES ON BOTTOM], KEMBANG GOYANG AND TRANSPORT [BECAK/RICKSHAW, HORSE CART]). THE SPINE BECOMES THE WHITE NATIONAL MONUMENT (MONAS) WITH ITS GOLD TOP. THERE IS A KALA (DEMON HEAD) AT THE TOP.

COLLECTION: TIZAR PURBAYA AND FAMILY
PHOTO: REZA PURBAYA

Structurally, the *kayon* marks when the dalang speaks with the distance that places the story in a wider frame.

Function in the Narrative

Finally, the *kayon* can be used as a multipurpose set piece: a bed, a weight, a cloud, or even an actual mountain or tree. The hero Gatotkaca's demonic uncle Brajamusti plans to throw a 20,000-pound weight to kill him—the dalang reaches for the *kayon* and traps Gatotkaca beneath it. The hero Arjuna does a meditation to gain a magic weapon for the great war that is to come—he leans back on the *kayon* and crosses his arms in the position indicating meditation. A god floats on a cloud—the figure rides the *kayon*. A monkey leaps up a tree—he scrambles up the side of the *kayon*. Blood pours out of a hero—the manipulated shadow of the *kayon* creates the image of life ebbing.

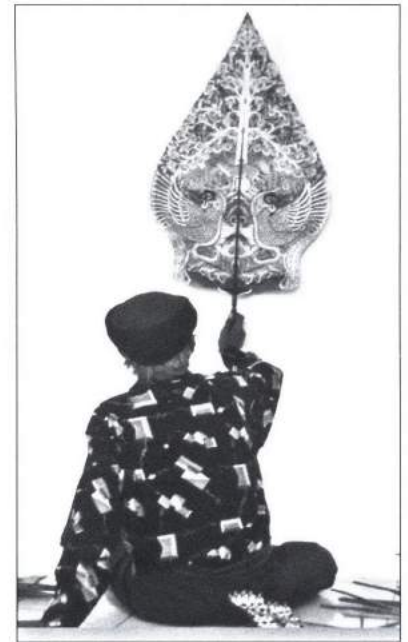
Conclusion

Perhaps the most important function of the *kayon*, traditionally, is to act as a symbol—something for the puppeteer to contemplate. It reminds him that in the moment of performance he is not just one thing or the other—not just the hero or the demon. He is all the elements, all the characters, and all the forces, good or evil. This is a truth of being in the world—there is no "othering" in the philosophy of the *kayon*. We have met the enemy and he/she is us; no "he or she" but "both-and". Divine and demon both sound from one body and live from one breath.

Though there are many types of *kayon*, a new image can be created by an innovator any time; though the imagery may be transposed, the message is the same. For example, *wayang wahyu* ("divine power" *wayang*) was introduced by Christian missionaries to tell Bible stories. The cross in this instance becomes the "tree of life," and Bible imagery teaches the miracle of Jesus' death as life. *Wayang klithik* (flat wooden wayang) sometimes has a *kayon*

made of wood with an ogre face and luxurious peacock feathers rising above. The image is probably related to *reog ponorogo*, a performance genre of East Java that has a *singabarong* (animal/ogre figure) with peacock headdress. It shows the combination of demonic (ogre) and positive (peacock) in the human soul/experience.

One sees the *kayon* imagery borrowed for ecology campaigns and printed on the national currency. The *kayon* participates in ritual thinking. It serves as a narrative and structural marker, and is the all-purpose set piece. The reason that it has this versatility and is both the beginning and the end, is that it represents the mixed up everythingness of existence. It allows us to see in one take the pattern of the cosmos and ourselves.



WAYANG KANCIL (YOGYAKARTA, CENTRAL JAVA)

DALANG KI LEDJAR SOEBROTO WITH HIS ORIGINAL GUNUNGAN (BOTH SIDES VISIBLE HERE). HE BECAME ATTRACTED TO WAYANG KANCIL LATER IN HIS CAREER. THE TINY MOUSE DEER, OR KANCIL, IS THE HERO OF OLD JAVANESE FABLES ADAPTED IN SURAKARTA FOR WAYANG KULIT PERFORMANCES IN 1925 BY RADEN MAS SAYID AND BAH BO-LIEM.

PHOTO: KAREN SMITH

For many more pictures and descriptions of *gunungan*, go to our website: unima-usa.org/publications



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by Matthew Isaac Cohen

Performing Wayang Internationally:

One Dalang's Perspective

Wayang puppet theater in Java— whether *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theater) or *wayang golek* (rod puppet theater)—centers on a solo puppeteer or *dalang*, who provides all the puppet voices and narration, sings “mood” songs (*sulukun*), conducts the accompanying musical ensemble, utters incantations and enacts associated ritual actions, and often performs as MC—introducing and interacting with guest artists and relaying messages from hosts. It is also eminently a social art form, a whole art world involving the cooperation, complicity and tacit support of many. Any performance is contingent upon collaboration between the *dalang* and a raft of individuals and groups. Performances are occasioned by important life cycle events or anniversaries of organizations, and the decision of which story episode to enact is negotiated between the *dalang* and sponsor. Plays often bear a relation to the event; wedding stories, for example, are popular fare at weddings. The host normally builds or rents the stage and provides banana logs (the playboard for puppets), ritual offerings and other accoutrements. Sponsors not only provide fees but also are expected to offer a *dalang* and his/her crew meals, snacks and cigarettes. Audience members participate by requesting songs or by performing songs or dances before or during a play as guest artists. Musicians not only play instruments and sing, they also carry equipment, run errands, repair puppets and give back rubs to the *dalang* when required. Drivers, sound technicians, puppet makers and puppet wranglers are indispensable. The *dalang*'s family is particularly important. Brothers will often share musicians and a set of puppets inherited from their father. An elderly uncle no longer actively performing might be called

upon to perform the sacred *Origin of Kala* play, which follows or precedes all-night shows to exorcise misfortune. Children are a *dalang*'s apprentices and heirs and, starting in childhood, will perform matinee shows and short battle episodes that precede night-time plays. The *dalang*'s spouse will greet and entertain sponsors visiting the house and make bookings in a spouse's absence.

Radical adjustments are thus required when wayang is transplanted to contexts outside of Southeast Asia, where customary networks, social expectations and cultural knowledge are attenuated or absent. This article examines the modulation of the constraints that define *wayang kulit* and *wayang golek* through my own international wayang work, with a particular focus on my last four years of activity.¹ I will show how performing traditional art outside of its customary frame not only poses challenges but might also be grasped as a creative opportunity.

“Traditional” Wayang in Non-Traditional Contexts

As noted, in Java and other parts of the Indonesian archipelago, potential wayang sponsors normally approach a *dalang* and ask him or her to perform for a planned event—the anniversary of a factory,

a village thanksgiving rite, a wedding. The puppeteer is then customarily charged with contracting musicians, a sound system and technicians, puppets and gamelan instruments, assuming full responsibility for all artistic aspects of the performance. The situation is different abroad. The wayang performance often is the event, rather than being occasioned by one. I have performed over the years at gamelan, theatre, puppet and



ICELANDIC POP STAR BJÖRK (C) EMERGES FROM THE TARDIS (L) TO MEET PATIH CADASKARA (R). REHEARSAL FOR LOKANANTA: THE GEMELAN OF THE GODS (UNIVERSITY OF YORK, APRIL 29, 2012) PHOTO: SOPHIE RANSBY

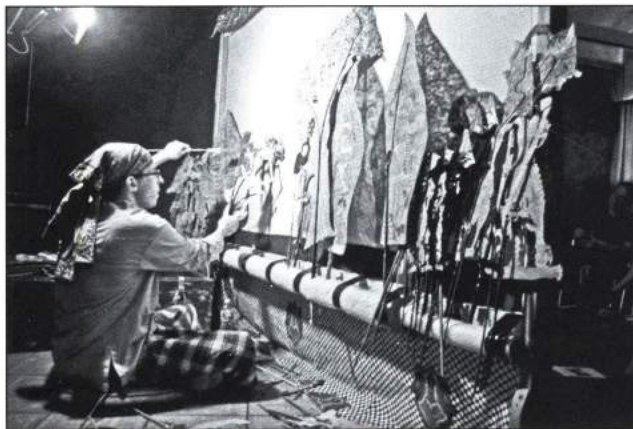
arts festivals; universities, academic institutes and schools; academic conferences; and museum exhibitions. A dalang is more often approached to perform with a gamelan group than the other way around. Wayang is sometimes billed as a gamelan concert with puppets and in advertisements and programs the puppeteer's name is commonly less visible than the name of the gamelan group or even its musical director.

It is common abroad to lack players for the softer gamelan instruments, which require bespoke training; drum players are key to wayang, but most drummers outside Java lack training in accompanying puppet movement or interpreting the verbal, percussive and kinetic signals a dalang gives in performance to start and stop pieces and indicate changes in tempo and dynamics. Musicians more accustomed to *klenengan* (musical concerts) than drama need to learn to adapt established musical repertoire, condensing or expanding structures, altering tempos, thinning or thickening textures, changing the order of sections, altering lyrics.

Sutrisno Hartana, a Javanese gamelan musician and dalang writing a dissertation on wayang in Canada, invited me in 2011 to perform with Gamelan Madu Sari at "Gong!" The Vancouver Gamelan Festival. Sutrisno taught me over a week or so of rehearsals not to fret over any loss of authority but to grasp a wayang performance as a collaborative opportunity to share and grow artistically. Through working with Sutrisno, a gamelan player as well as composer, I realized that each gamelan group has its own repertoire of pieces, old and new, which must be acknowledged and harnessed in wayang. A dalang must "work with what exists" – *bertolak dari yang ada*, in the words of Balinese writer-director Putu Wijaya. This might mean using repeatedly the same three pieces for a one-hour wayang with a novice gamelan group. It also means discovering and exploiting the distinctive pieces in a group's repertoire and building scenes and plays around these. Some of my favorite moments in wayang over the years have involved inventing theatrical contexts for *Gamelunk*, a jazz composition for solo flugelhorn and gamelan written by Simon van der Walt of Gamelan Naga Mas; Ben Rogalsky of Gamelan Madu Sari's vocal duet with gamelan accompaniment, *From Heaven to Earth*; Jody Diamond's gamelan adaptation of the traditional Jewish melody *Lekhah Dodi* titled *Sabbath Bride*; and Andy Channing's punk-rave gamelan classic, *Pig in the Kraton*. Performing wayang means field research for a dalang—listening to gossip, reading the news, learning local landmarks that can be woven into dialogue—research that I have discovered is best facilitated by resident musicians.

Javanese nobility once constructed purpose-built pavilions called *paringgitan* for wayang performances, while ordinary *joglo* houses in central Java had panelled front walls that could be dismantled for mounting wayang screens. Few such bespoke wayang spaces exist

outside of Southeast Asia: every performance involves a process of spatial exploration and negotiation. Gamelan groups accustomed to performing in rehearsal-room configurations need to adjust to novel spatial layouts that might take more account of audience sightlines than the acoustic needs of players. Non-Indonesian audiences often believe that it is more "proper" to view wayang from the shadow side of the screen. Spectators need to be encouraged to circulate during performances and not remain fixed in place, viewing *either*



JESUS CONFRONTS THE MEDITATING ARJUNA IN *ARJUNA'S MEDITATION* (HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MAY 3, 2015). PHOTO: JUNGMIN SONG

shadows or puppets but not both. I have found that this can be done by strategic placement of bars and food or creating open spaces for children to play. In a 2002 performance in The Arches in Glasgow with Joko Susilo and Gamelan Naga Mas, we employed "ringers" – friends of gamelan members – to play cards during the show in order to generate a more relaxed ambience. The American dalang Marc Hoffman told me in 1988, when I assisted him in a wayang at the University of Hawai'i, that he preferred performing in hotel ballrooms over theatre venues.

Performing wayang abroad also

means frequently working with unusual sets of puppets, sometimes eclectically collected and in various states of disrepair. The short supply of wayang puppets might necessitate substituting one puppet for another. But a poverty of means can also be seized for theatrical opportunities. The "Temptations of Arjuna" scene in *Arjuna's Meditation*, a shadow play I performed with Harvard University's gamelan group and Jody Diamond's personal set of antique puppets in May 2015, is illustrative.² With Arjuna sitting cross-armed underneath a beautiful antique banyan tree puppet (probably from East Java), Jesus enters with his crown of thorns—a puppet from a rare Christian wayang form called *wayang wahyu*, which had been gifted to Diamond when she spoke at a Christian university in Java. Bearing his crucifix (a pair of crossed clubs), Jesus instructs Arjuna to stop meditating as Jesus has suffered sufficiently for all mankind. Then follow Ki Brayut and Ni Brayut, a peasant couple each bearing the load of many children. These puppets once were fertility symbols and were used in post-independence Indonesia for family planning propaganda, but are now rarely found in wayang sets in Java. They coax Arjuna to stop his meditation as meditating leads to an excess of sperm— and look how saving up sperm has ended up for them. A comical Chinese figure, missing an arm, implores Arjuna to help him repair his bicycle. A troop of soldiers of various periods and ethnicities, mostly missing at least one limb, castigate Arjuna for meditating as his quest for power will lead to war, and all wars are evil. These "bits" were devised in response to the many damaged puppets in Diamond's unique set. The apparitions' pathos would not have manifested if I had not discovered the figures when rummaging through Diamond's unorthodox collection.³ The diverse ages and origins of the puppets visualized the collapse of time and space in this cosmic moment.

Conversations with Wayang Tradition

In early 2011, I was invited by one of my graduate students who had recently founded an art center in Thessaloniki, Greece, to give a lecture and “small demonstration” of wayang at the inaugural edition of an Asian theater festival. There are no gamelan groups in Thessaloniki, and until that point I had always rejected requests to perform unaccompanied. Gamelan music is not just a backdrop for wayang—it is the pulse that gives the puppet life and defines the world in which wayang’s characters live and its kingdoms are built. But having studied contemporary wayang in Indonesia over the previous two years, participating in a gallery performance based on the underground cartoons of Eko Nugroho and observing rehearsals and performances by a number of innovative Indonesian puppeteers, I was interested in devising a solo performance in the form of a dramatic monologue with puppets. This would be my own contribution to an emerging field of practice which I have called post-traditional wayang, theatrical productions and performance projects that are grounded in the conventions of tradition but do not heed its restrictions and taboos.

Inspired by experiments in lighting and staging by the radical Javanese puppeteer Slamet Gundono (1966-2014), the reflexive puppet plays of Iranian playwright-director Bahram Beyzai and the performance of failure in the British experimental theater company Forced Entertainment, I decided to create *A Dalang in Search of Wayang* about my own dilemma of performing wayang internationally. I open the show with a confession. I identify as a dalang but, living in Europe, I am often without a gamelan to perform with and am bereft of a knowledgeable audience who understands wayang’s conventions and find personal and communal meaning in its performance. I “hang without a hook,” *gumantung tanpa canthelan* in Javanese, situated between two worlds, lacking connection to both, feeling inauthentic. Surrounded by wayang puppets, I seek guidance from Semar, wayang’s principal clown servant, who quickly identifies me as akin to Cugkring, who in the Cirebon shadow puppet tradition, which I studied in the 1990s, is often questing for mystical insights and resolutions to paradoxes. Lit from the front by a bright theatrical lamp, I become a character in the shadow play: my shadow has equal status with those of the puppet characters who I turn to for help—Semar, Bathara Guru, Kresna, Anoman. I

shift frequently from dialogues with the puppets to direct address to the audience, explaining the conventions of wayang and riffing on my own life in the manner of stand-up comedy as I go along. The performance questions my authority as “puppet master,” and I find myself frequently abused by the wayang puppets—at one moment, Anoman even transforms me

into an ogre and beats me up. As is often the case in Cirebonese wayang, there is no resolution to the story, though hopefully there is greater awareness at the end of not only my dilemma, but of traditions in global contexts more generally. A suitcase puppet show – with all the puppets, my dalang costume and equipment (including the stage light) packed in a single case – this production has proved highly portable, and since its Thessaloniki debut I have performed it internationally in conferences, universities and festivals, with changing topical references depending on the context.

A Dalang in Search of Wayang was the first of a trilogy of new wayang plays responding to wayang’s peculiar situatedness internationally. The next installment was *Lokananta: The Gamelan of the Gods* (2012), which I created together with the composer and gamelan musician John Pawson for the 30th anniversary of the University of York’s Gamelan Sekar Pethak, one of the first university gamelans in the United Kingdom. Many of the UK’s gamelan teachers and players are York graduates and, in discussion with the program’s founder Neil Sorrell and current graduate students, we hatched the idea of creating an all-night wayang that would bring together players from different Javanese gamelan groups from around the United Kingdom. From fragments of Javanese myth and a number of different wayang plays, I collated a narrative, tracing the mythic origin and development of gamelan. A war in the heavens results in the self-exile

of the smith of the gods, Empuh Ramayadhi, who brings to earth the secrets of metal work. On earth, the courtier Patih Cadaskara sings songs and dances in feigned madness to gain access to an ogre kingdom and retrieve a kidnapped princess. The gods learn of these mad techniques and incorporate them into the gamelan that they bring to the earthly kingdom they establish once the war in the heavens has ended. While the original gamelan, named Lokananta, played by itself without the need for humans, subsequent sets of instruments made by Empuh Ramayadhi and his heirs were played by musicians.



PIPER HAZEN METRO MAKES A DRAMATIC ENTRANCE IN *IRON PIPES*, A NEW PIECE FOR BAGPIPES AND GAMELAN CO-CREATED BY MARGARET SMITH, BARNABY BROWN, AND GAMELAN NAGA MAS, PERFORMED IN A COMIC LIMBUKAN INTERLUDE IN *LOKANANTA: THE GAMELAN OF THE GODS* (UNIVERSITY OF YORK, APRIL 29, 2012). PHOTO: ZEYNYTA GIBBONS



THE BATTLE OF SAN JUAN HILL PITTING THE CUBAN FORCES OF SEÑOR BANANA AGAINST TEDDY ROOSEVELT’S ROUGH RIDERS. A SCENE FROM *WHY UCONN’S COWS SMELL LIKE BANANAS* BY UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PUPPET ARTS STUDENT MARK BLASHFORD (ON BANJO) AND COMPANY (UConn, MARCH 26, 2015) PHOTO: JUNGMIN SONG

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

Pawson and I divided the story into 5 segments, and in the weeks and months before the performance, we travelled around the UK rehearsing 170 musicians from 15 different university and community gamelan groups who were brought together into 5 regional “collectives.” Some moments brought together multiple ensembles, and all musicians sang in a choral number at the play’s conclusion. Pawson and I had worked with many of the groups previously and were able thereby to draw on their distinctive repertoires and interlace musical and dramatic insider references and in-jokes. We could include a piece for gamelan and bagpipes from the Scottish contingent. An arrangement of the *Dr. Who* theme song by the group from Wales (where the BBC television show is produced) introduced a stream of time travellers who emerged from a Tardis—the California composer Lou Harrison (who influenced many gamelan composers by his novel intercultural compositions), the Icelandic pop star Björk (who performed with the Southbank Gamelan Players on the television show *MTV Unplugged*) and the composer and musicologist Neil Sorrell, who still leads the York gamelan program. New puppets were commissioned from the Indonesian puppet maker Ledjar Subroto, who specializes in such “portrait puppets.” The performance was not just an anniversary celebration in the end, but also a celebration of the whole British gamelan scene.

The third piece in the trilogy was a more modest play for *wayang golek* titled *Dewi Gegurit*, which I created for the Gamelanathon Festival at London’s Southbank Centre in 2013. This emerged from my recent practical studies in the *wayang golek cepak* tradition of Cirebon and Indramayu

and conversations with Marisa Sharon Hartanto, an MA composition student from Jakarta interested in adapting gamelan melodies to non-gamelan idioms. The score she composed for piano, soprano, flute, percussion and double bass interwove pop songs, jazz and classical Western music with gamelan motifs and songs. The thinly-veiled autobiographical plot concerned an unhappily married prince named Raden Gambuh (Sir Puppeteer) from the hermitage of Bukit Pasugihan (Mt. Rich) in search of a new wife. The beautiful and cultured Dewi Gegurit (Lady Song) from the nation of Nyugoni (Stoke) tells him she will marry him on the condition that he can provide a wayang performance for their wedding. Finding it impractical to import a troupe from Java, he makes his own show with an ad-hoc pickup band and thereby wins Gegurit’s hand. Spectators commented on the joyfulness of the allegorical drama and were impressed that the ensemble could sound “authentic” despite the absence of any gamelan instruments or gamelan-trained musicians.

Performing within a traditional puppet art such as wayang requires not only a mastery of codes and conventions; it demands a surrender of autonomy, a reversal of normal subject-object relations. A puppet has “a life, law, and logic of its own, which it imposes on the manipulator.” The puppeteer courts the energy of a puppet that embodies a force “which has nothing to do with him, so he goes out to meet it” (Foley qtd. Orenstein 2008: 180). This relation to

wayang does not disappear, even when far away from Java’s art world. One might question, subvert, and even mock tradition’s restraints, but it still *feels* wrong when a friendly clown is cast as an ogre in a student production, or Arjuna is given an effeminate voice. Tradition retains its affective hold.

The once-distinct art worlds of wayang in Java and wayang internationally are today becoming increasingly mixed. Many of the problems and opportunities outlined above will be familiar to Javanese puppeteers performing or teaching wayang in cosmopolitan Jakarta or one of Indonesia’s “outer islands.” Experienced puppeteers know they cannot depend on a five-star hotel to provide banana logs. A long period of isolation of Indonesian artists is over. While under the authoritarian New Order regime (1966-1998) foreign tours and visits were strictly controlled by the government and the development of foreign language skills discouraged, today Indonesian puppeteers are full participants in international puppetry. Few

perhaps benefit directly from Indonesia’s membership in the ASEAN Puppetry Association (since 2006) or UNIMA (since 2009), but many have participated in cross-fertilizing intercultural collaborations that often operate outside the official cultural sphere. Involvement of Balinese puppeteers in productions by Californian dalang Larry Reed and the Australian-Indonesian touring production *The Theft of Sita*, for example, have yielded flexible mirror puppets, innovative lighting, projected imagery and trolleys for multi-puppeteer spectacles in Bali. Indonesian puppeteers are increasingly adept in completing funding proposals, planning workshops, and

repurposing wayang techniques for intermedial projects. Mobile internet technologies allow Indonesian puppeteers to follow each other’s innovations and study the work of foreign puppeteers. The pace of change of contemporary wayang today is hard to reckon.

Matthew Isaac Cohen is a Professor of International Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is also a dalang in the *wayang kulit* tradition.

Works Cited

Orenstein Claudia. “Coming Full Circle: Performing Objects, New Media and Interculturalism in New Puppetry.” *Indian Horizons* 55.2-3 (2008): 172-188.

Endnotes

¹ Consult <https://kandabuwana.wordpress.com> for an overview of my wayang performances.

² This is a classical play episode, often performed abroad and first redacted in poetic form as *Arjunawiwaha* (Arjuna’s Marriage) by 11th century Javanese court poet Mpu Kanwa.

³ This scene concluded—as in many renditions of this canonical play—with various spirits (*setanan*) manifesting to frighten Arjuna, and heavenly nymphs (*widadari*) enticing him with their beauty.



ANOMAN CURSES THE DALANG, WHO TRANSFORMS INTO AN OGRE. A SCENE FROM *A DALANG IN SEARCH OF WAYANG* (BUXTON PUPPET FESTIVAL, JULY 30, 2011)
PHOTO: KAORI OKADO



by Dr. Joko Susilo

Religious Performance in Java:

Ruwatan, Gamelan and Shadow Puppets

On October 14, 1963 I was born at our family home in the village of Mojopuro in Central Java, Indonesia; my dhalang father was away performing in another village at the time. My four sisters and I were taught Javanese dance and how to play the gamelan instruments. My father, having come from a dhalang family, began performing at the age of twelve years and studied shadow puppetry at the Kraton Kasunanan, Solo in 1952.

When I was three years old my father began to take me to his performances and I began to develop a knowledge of the wayang stories, wayang characters and gamelan melodies. At ten years of age I performed my first all-night *wayang kulit* play.

This article is about the history, myths and rituals of the Javanese *ruwatan* ceremony. The *ruwatan* ceremony is performed as a form of exorcism for people (*sukerta*) who have fallen victim to personal disaster and are considered magically vulnerable to the evil god Bathara Kala. The *ruwatan* is a very ancient tradition of performance that dates back to the 10th century if not earlier and combines many different strands of Javanese religion: animism, Hinduism, Tantric Buddhism and Islam.

Central to *ruwatan*, and to Javanese ritual life in general, is *wayang kulit*.¹ Rituals involving *wayang kulit* are held regularly in Java, and the hosts enjoy a temporary position of authority and importance for a variety of reasons. In hosting a grand event, a family's status and impression of wealth is maximised despite the mutual assistance from neighbors and family. A host's status in the

village may increase with an elaborate and expensive ritual celebration (Susilo 1996, 4). *Wayang kulit* theatre and gamelan music are closely associated with the festivals and rituals in which all Javanese participate. Circumcisions, weddings, births, national holidays, anniversaries, house building, exorcising evil spirits and many other ceremonies are occasions for *wayang kulit* performances. Walton (1987, 5) acknowledges that: "Indeed, entertainment and ritual are not as clearly separated in Javanese culture as in our own."

The Dhalang Ruwat

The most important figure in *ruwatan* is the *dhalang ruwat*, or puppeteer. The dhalang conducts the orchestra, manipulates the puppets, sings, narrates and speaks the dialogue.² Most dhalang are able to trace their genealogies back through several generations of dhalang.



Those dhalang who have a long line of descent are believed to possess *ngelmu pedhalangan* (the esoteric knowledge of the dhalang). The different lines of dhalang families in Java are expected to inherit variants in the tradition, and any member of such families retains at least a little of his father's style, as well as eventually adding his own variations. Years of training and practice are required to master puppet manipulation and attain the knowledge and techniques of the dhalang. It is generally accepted that a dhalang should be a skilled singer to sing the *suluk* (mood songs), he must be able to manipulate the puppets skilfully (*sabetan*) and he must be at least a moderately skilled musician in order to direct the *gamelan* orchestra. The dhalang must have knowledge of the characters' genealogy as well as the stories of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics in order to perform successfully. Becker (1993, 7) maintains:

Quality craftsmanship, careful execution have always been highly valued; inferior products or performances are routinely rejected. Javanese dancers, musicians and critics can and do talk endlessly about technique, about execution and about the degree of polish of a performance, and they do so with an extensive technical vocabulary. In Java and Bali it is a given that performances, especially ritual performances, will be of as high a quality as possible given the skill and experience of the performers and the monetary resources of the sponsors.

Kayam (1994, 105) says that one of the most important factors for the popularity and extension of the dhalang is his auditive power. Important elements of the performance that increase the auditive power of the dhalang are: the appropriate characterisation of the various characters (*antawacana*), the use of refined language (*udanegara*), *gendhing* accompaniment and timing, as well as the intensity of *keprakan* (the clanging of the *keprak* against the wayang box on the left of the dhalang). Other elements that increase the auditive power of the performance are the word play and humour of the dhalang. His ability to produce refinement, dignity and excitement in his characterisation of the puppets is important.

The music and techniques of *wayang kulit* performance are transmitted in many ways. In addition to studying *wayang kulit* with a teacher, dhalang may listen to the performances of their colleagues over the radio, watch *wayang kulit* plays on television and attend live performances. Ki Anom Suroto, one of the most popular and well paid dhalang in Central Java, admits that the role of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) was vital in supporting his growth and popularity.

However, RRI does not record *ruwatan* plays, as they are performed specifically as an integral part of the sacred, exorcism ritual.

Thus *ruwatan* performances have not been standardised in the same fashion as all-night *wayang kulit* performances. A *ruwatan* ritual is a rare and important event, and another *ruwatan dhalang* must be invited to attend. A dhalang who wishes to learn *ruwatan* must apprentice to an older puppeteer. The apprentice dhalang accompanies his mentor to performances (*nyantrik*) and may learn the unique style of the older dhalang. The apprentice puppeteer becomes a servant to his mentor during the rainy season when the dhalang does not perform and learns from his wisdom and experience.

The spiritual training of a dhalang is not standardised and depends upon his teacher's style. There are many different ways for a dhalang to learn strength of *batin* (spiritual strength).

Among the many types of asceticism Javanese value are fasting, going without sleep, sexual abstinence, doing vigil at the site of a holy man's grave or under a large tree, soaking in a stream after midnight, eating no salt on Monday and Thursday, and walking about without any goal. (Keeler 1987, 41)

The spiritual training *laku* (step) of the dhalang continues throughout his life.³ The dhalang must have great stamina to be able to sit in one position for an eight to nine hour period without a break while manipulating the puppets, directing the orchestra and using his voice throughout the night to dramatise the story.

The dhalang is considered the "king" of the *wayang kulit* performance. The *ruwatan* dhalang is not only the "king" of the performance, but is perceived to have esoteric knowledge and power. He serves as an "exorcist" with an ability to heal and prevent disaster.



PHOTOS: RUWATAN PERFORMANCE BY KI. TOYO CARITO, RITUAL OFFERINGS

Types of Ruwatan Performance

The *ruwatan* ritual may be performed in the context of *wayang kulit* theatre led by a *dhalang ruwat* or as a ritual that is conducted by a *dhukun* (traditional healer). In the case of *wayang kulit ruwatan*, the *dhalang* is the exorcist who is entrusted to rid *sukerta* people of their vulnerability to Bathara Kala.



A. Ruwatan Negara (*ruwatan* performance for country/kingdom)

Evidence of the existence of *ruwatan* performance is found on the reliefs of the twelfth century Javanese temples such as the Candhi Suku and the Candhi Surowono.⁴ The reliefs dramatise the Sudamala story which depicts the events in the lives of the youngest Pandhawa brother Sadewa and the goddess Dewi Uma (Haryoguritno 1996, 20).⁵ Until the year 1949 *ruwatan negara* rituals were hosted by the rulers of the state to prevent danger and epidemic. According to Mugiarto (1980, 1) the last known *ruwatan negara* was hosted by the ruler of the Mangkunegaran kingdom on Monday, 23 October, 1949. The ritual was performed by the *dhalang* Ki Rangga Wignyasutarna in the great hall of the Mangkunegaran palace. The *ruwatan* was carried out in an attempt to solve the many problems in the country at that time.

These present days, a *ruwatan negara* ritual (the cleansing of an area such as a village or suburb) is one of the most important ceremonies that is performed in the villages of Java. Village cleansing (*bersih desa* or *dekah desa*) ceremonies are generally held at the end of the rice harvest (*musim panen*) when people are more likely to have enough food to share with their neighbours.

Haryoguritno (1996, 44) says the village cleansing ceremony involves all the village inhabitants irrespective of their religious beliefs. The celebration involves competitions in art, sport and games that are held a week before the *wayang kulit* performance. Awards for the winners of the competitions are usually presented an hour before the all-night *wayang kulit* play (which follows the eight hour *bersih desa wayang kulit* play). The story of either Sudamala or Bathari Sri Mulih (Sri Mantuk) is generally chosen for the village cleansing ceremony.⁶ Bathari Sri is the Goddess of rice and *mulih* or *mantuk* means return (to the village).

Although a form of exorcism is carried out, it is not necessary for a *dhalang ruwat* to perform a *bersih desa wayang kulit* play. However, the community members of some villages in Central Java prefer to hire a *dhalang* who is a descendant of several generations of puppeteers. It is believed the genealogy of the *dhalang* will influence the productivity of the local farms. The only offerings presented at a *bersih desa* ceremony are the *sajen wayang* (offerings for the *gamelan* orchestra and *wayang* figures), which are presented at every *wayang kulit* performance.

B. Ruwatan Sukerta

(*ruwatan* for *sukerta* people)

The Javanese term *sukerta* comes from the word *suker* (a disturbance). Javanese people believe that certain people are magically vulnerable and must have a *ruwatan* play performed in their honour to remove the disturbance. The *ruwatan sukerta* ceremony is hosted by a family who has a magically vulnerable (*sukerta*) member.⁷ People who have a *sukerta*

person in their family may believe that they must host a *ruwatan* performance to save the life of that person. The *ruwatan* play is performed to protect people from the influence of the evil spirit of Bathara Kala (Soetarno 1992, 16).

C. Ruwatan Bumi (*ruwatan* for land)

Ruwatan bumi are performed to cleanse, safe-guard and bring prosperity to a certain area, for example, a farm, field, yard, mountain, river, beach, sea or building. The *ruwatan bumi* ceremony is performed to release the negative influences of the spirits and bring peace to the area. A Javanese person who needs to remove trees and foliage in order to build on a section will host a *ruwatan* ceremony called *mapak tunggak* (to remove the supernatural spirits who dwell there). Haryoguritno (1996, 45) mentions that, prior to building on the section, an offering called *tolak bala* (to reject negative influences) is given.

During a *ruwatan bumi* ceremony, a sacrificial offering of an animal such as a buffalo, horse or cow is made. The head of the animal is buried where the new building is to be built. If the *ruwatan* ceremony is held at the beach, the buffalo head and other offerings are thrown into the sea. The story for the *mapak tunggak* ceremony is generally Babat Alas Marta (Bima builds a kingdom for his family). Another story may be chosen by the *dhalang* and host. It is not necessary for a *dhalang ruwat* to perform the *ruwatan bumi*, although a popular and expensive *dhalang* is generally chosen (pers. comm. Murtiyoso, 15 October 1996). In 1995 Ki Timbul Hadiprayitna from Yogyakarta performed a *ruwatan* for the University of Gadjah Mada. The *ruwatan* was performed for the whole university including students, staff and buildings.

D. Ruwatan Hewan (*ruwatan* for animals)

The *ruwatan hewan* ceremony does not involve a *wayang kulit* performance, but rather is a ritual ceremony to remove either animal or insect pests. A rice farmer may perform a *ruwatan hewan* ceremony when the crops are being damaged by insects. The rice farmer will recite a chant, present an offering and leave a scarecrow in the field where the crops are being damaged. In some villages of Central Java, *ruwatan* ceremonies called *budha*

cemengan/rebo wagen (black Wednesday) were performed to protect domestic animals. These ceremonies were held in the fields with many shepherds and cattle farmers (Haryoguritno 1996, 46). A *sajen bancakan* (food offering) was given at the ceremony to protect the animals from other dangerous animals such as tigers, lions and poisonous snakes. *Ruwatan hewan* ceremonies were performed until the 1970s, but are not very common today. Some *ruwatan hewan* ceremonies are still performed in the more remote areas of Central Java.

Despite many changes during the modern period, this form of ritual expression is still a culturally meaningful ritual to control supernatural phenomena in Java today. During the 20th century, *wayang kulit* has become more a secular rather than religious form of entertainment, and the interpretation of performance content has become more important. However, fieldwork and analysis of the *ruwatan* performances in Central Java during the 1990s shows that Javanese people still value traditional *ruwatan* ritual and often sponsor its performance to relieve the ill-fortune of *sukerta* children, for personal spiritual beliefs, as a source of entertainment and social gathering, and to preserve the ancient cultural traditions of Java.

Dr. Joko Susilo studied shadow puppetry at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI) in Solo. He graduated in 1986 and became a lecturer in the pedalan-gan department at STSI in 1987. He continued to perform all-night *wayang kulit* plays and lecture at STSI until he travelled to New Zealand in 1993. He finished his doctorate at Otago University in 2000.

[A much longer version of Dr. Susilo's article is on our website (www.unima-usa.org/publications) including the entire story of Murwakala, a story told by a dhalang performing a ruwatan sukerta. There you will also find cited references, footnotes, more citations within the article and additional photos. Editor]



A Wayang Kulit Shadow Puppet Show in 1919
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVELyG1H2Ug

“Take a trip back in time and discover the ancient art of the Indonesian Shadow puppet theater. Wayang Kulit has been part of the mystical cultural heritage of Indonesia since before time, and has been designated by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.”

Errata in PI #37

In “How Toy Theater Shapes the Future” by Jessica Thebus, we switched 2 captions (Anna Wooden is depicted on page 21 and Se Oh is on page 20)

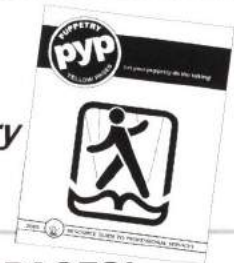
In Honey Goodenough’s article “Enhancing Medical Education with Puppetry Techniques” (page 16) we left out photo credits (by Octavio Kano-Galvan) and captions.

Page 16: BCH General surgery OR team prepare to perform open-heart surgery on Surgi-Sam, an open-heart surgery mannequin, Jan 2015.

Page 17: BCH Simulation Technician, Katie Fitzpatrick, uses a stethoscope to listen to SIMbaby’s heart rate and breath sounds.

Also, Alissa Mello should have been listed as a peer reviewer.

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by Kristin Haverty

Seperti Sangu:

Becoming Modern in Bali



In manipulating the forms and devices that have been reiterated through time, the dalang speaks the language of the past; in the unique verbal form and performance context of each play, he utters the meanings of the present.

-Mary Sabina Zurbuchen (Zurbuchen 1987: 253)

On the 8th of April 2001, I accompanied dalang I Wayan Nartha to a performance near Peliatan, Bali. As a student entranced by the tradition, I eagerly asked what story he would tell. After a moment, he said he did not yet know, as only after sitting with the family for whom the performance took place, hearing local gossip and taking into account the significance of the evening, would he decide the story that *needed* to be told. The Balinese term *desa kala patra* speaks to this essential approach to performance. It is an acknowledgment that no two performances are alike, but must continually be influenced by the context of place and time, by those watching and those performing. Through this, the shadows cast a familiar reflection.

Long before rock and roll, hip-hop or heavy metal found their way to the airways of Indonesia, a musical form termed *kebyar* took hold of the Balinese imagination. Characterized by ethnomusicologist Tilman Seebass as possessing a “restless drive,” and containing in musical form an “uncertainty appropriate to an uncertain world” of Dutch colonialism, this new style transformed Balinese music in the 1920s and 1930s. (Vickers 1996:84.) To accommodate *kebyar*’s growing popularity, gamelan ensembles were melted down and the bronze recast to produce the new popular sound. In this can be found a fitting metaphor when speaking of traditional shadow theater, *wayang kulit*, in the Bali of the 21st century.

Cross-cultural exchange, internal political and social movement and the influx of products and ideas brought by an ever-widening world of mass communication and commerce bring about a need to melt down traditional constructions of meaning, yet the base materials remain the same. The *wayang kulit* tradition, itself a product of an 11th century exchange between the Javanese court culture and Balinese artists, has served as a mediator between tradition and contemporary experience for centuries. As a visual landscape of inter-subjective truths find physical form in the shadows of a Balinese dalang’s screen, the world created becomes a new experience

that transforms perceptions and births new creations in a continuous process. Questions regarding the wayang evoked a myriad of responses from the Balinese people. One in particular continually arose during my tenure on the island. What is the role of traditional performance in this modern world?

In the threefold world of the *wayang kulit*, the figure of the *kakayonan*, always appearing



at the beginning and end of a performance, represents balance. In between this state one finds the ever-present battle between opposing forces, *rwa bineda*. The physical setup of a wayang represents the world; The flickering lamp symbolizes the sun, the banana trunk in which the puppets, or *ringgits*, are placed the earth, the screen the sky, the *ringgits* everything animate in the world, and the dalang the invisible mover.

In Sanskrit the shadows are called *maya*, literally "illusions." While the dalang plays out the right and left sides of the screen in a medium in which orientation is crucial, those watching in front of the screen see merely the mirror reflection of truth, much like a human's experience in the world.

Within a given performance of the wayang, the dalang will employ Sanskrit, Kawi (Old Javanese), and high, low and middle Balinese, along with the occasional English or Japanese phrase, depending on the audience. Those watching rarely understand Sanskrit and Kawi, spoken by the refined characters of the wayang. It is therefore the role of the *panasars*, or clowns, to translate. While the use of languages incomprehensible to most of one's audience may seem an odd practice, it is in fact a fascinating complement. In this world of illusion, in which much remains elusive, understanding must always remain mediated. In the case of the wayang, this role of mediator belongs to the earthly *panasars*.

"If you want to learn about wayang, pick up a travel brochure," the director of a contemporary Balinese art and culture periodical wryly stated to an eager American student attempting to know the "real Bali." (Student of the School for International Training, Personal correspondence, 20 April 2001.) Skepticism abounds within Balinese intellectual circles regarding the traditional. This state is only exacerbated by the economic value of tradition in this "cultural paradise."

Lelox, my contemporary and a member of the younger generation of Balinese, questioned my interest in wayang, telling me he did not like *wayang kulit* because he did not understand it. At a later date, he returned from temple duties wearing his black and white sarong. Naively using my knowledge of a Balinese phrase, translated into Indonesian, I likened him to Twalen, a comic retainer of the Pandawas. While representations of Twalen always include the black, white and gray cloth worn by those who possess the power to say what is right and what is wrong, his ungainly stomach is perhaps not so desirable. Now among his peers, Lelox countered by saying, "*Saya tidak seperti Twalen, saya seperti Arjuna*, (I'm not like Twalen, I'm like Arjuna)." Arjuna is, of course, the incredibly handsome, valiant Pandawa prince. Seeing I had sparked interest in a young Balinese group otherwise indifferent to dialogue about the wayang, I jokingly sported that I was "seperti Sangut." Sangut, the

unfortunate panasar of the left, has a hunched form and is commonly played with a humorous lisp-like quality to his voice. In colloquial terminology, if one is like Sangut, "*Nyangut*," one lacks consistency, following only what one feels is right at the moment: like a weapon with two edges, it cuts wherever it goes. Yet some dalang will sometimes choose to play Sangut on the right side to show his mental alliance with the honorable Pandawa clan. After this claim, much protest ensued and each member threw out characters with whom he wished to be identified. After this brief interlude, I was asked to write down the lyrics to their favorite Green Day song so they could correctly sing them as one strummed the familiar chords on his guitar. Is wayang now a fleeting analogy? The question troubled my mind as Western tunes and clove smoke filled the air.

A few days later, in the Pura Dalem of the village of Ketewel, one of the most highly respected and popular dalang in Bali, I Wayan Wija, performed (29 April, 2001.) In the story, two priests come, purportedly able to prove the existence of God, Sang Hyang Widi. Brought to the court of Duryodana, they are called upon to reveal His existence. Yet to find clear water, calm must reside, and the priests reveal Duryodana's true form, that of a demon king. Whoever can defeat this impurity, they claim, will see the elusive Sang Hyang Widi. Yudistira, the eldest of the five Pandawa brothers, takes the challenge, and, aided by Dharma, defeats the demon king. Sang Hyang Widi appears, and the priests ascend, as do the spectators of the night's *wayang kulit*.

Through this story, the dalang delivered a powerful social critique on the popular practice of gambling at the temple and community responsibility. But as a spectator that night I found a particular message resonated with my own experience as an outsider intent on grasping this foreign tradition. In the first scene between the *panasars*, Twalen and Merdah, they begin to discuss the two famous priests. Merdah decides he too wants to prove His existence. Twalen then comments he only goes to the temple to see how many crazy people will come. When Merdah expresses his wish to study hard, Twalen responds that only when he stops studying will he become clever. Ask yourself who you are. When Merdah responds with his name, Twalen rejects his answer, no, not your name, who are you? Study yourself, he responds, not things outside yourself. In this moment, I found light in shadow.



The crowd of people attending Wija's performance that night enjoyed the great versatility and biting social commentary, laughed at the antics of the *panasars* and marveled at the brief but magical appearance of Sang Hyang Widi. During this night, the traditional form seemed alive and well, an experience no travel guide could give. Yet the discourse of the younger generation must continue, and the melting and recomposition of previous

forms must always occur to create something that is congruous with the *desa kala patra* of contemporary Balinese life.

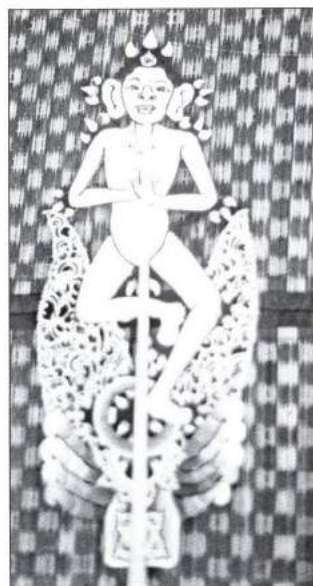
Cultural exchange and adaptation are not new phenomena, but rather have been the strength of wayang performance since its inception. On my many visits to Pak Nartha's home, I had the opportunity to see his eight-month-old grandson Wayan incorporated into the world of *wayang kulit*. When I asked whether he would become a dalang like his father and grandfather, Pak Nartha smiled and nodded yes. Through play with his grandfather and the songs of his mother, this smallest of future dalang was learning the language of the past. Like his ancestors, Wayan may physicalize contemporary perceptions in a form grounded in the past, creating an open dialogue between the two. In this way, those watching the shadows may find orientation in the world and clarity of existence as well as some entertainment along the way.

It has now been over a decade since those nights among the *panasars*, but Twalen's words still resonate. I have melted that experience into my own forms, seeking to speak to the *desa kala patra* of my own time, my own place. I attempt to study myself, and those around me, seeking to find what story *needs* to be told. As I find my path and struggle with my own *rwa bineda* on the other side of the world, I am at times *seperti Sangut*—but the lessons learned during those humid nights remind me that we are all in a perpetual state of melting our past down and reconfiguring it to speak to what it means to be modern—wherever we are.

Kristin Haverty is a puppeteer, stop-motion silhouette animator and musician. She has toured with Tears of Joy Theatre and studied with Dan Hurlin at Sarah Lawrence College and I Wayan Nartha in Bali, Indonesia. She currently serves as the Associate Producer at the Center for Puppetry Arts and serves as a councilor for UNIMA-USA.

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by Marianna Lis

Wayang Bocor

Cracks. Flaws. Since time immemorial, people have been fascinated by the imperfect, and the abnormal have fascinated people with their attributes of dissimilarity and otherness. Similarly fascinating are the explorations of artists that contest the existing order, who are continually seeking and in whose works the familiar and the shocking meet head-on. That which is most interesting arises in contradiction, at intersections, on borderlines, in confrontation. In this case, it is at the intersection of the worlds of art and performance, where tradition confronts modernity.

Wayang bocor is the result of an experiment. The name itself warns the audience about possible imperfection, about moving away from well-known form and content towards “search” (*bocor* = leaky, porous). Eko Nugroho, one of the most important Indonesian artists of the younger generation, is its originator and founder. He moved the characters that appear in his paintings into the world of contemporary wayang. When designing puppets he used themes, content and forms from his earlier works: “Peculiar figures, such as stone-headed man, diamond-hearted man and pincer-handed man, are common in his paintings, drawings, and embroideries. Combining fantasy and daily life is his way to represent a world view that values ambiguity and contradiction. In *wayang purwo*—classical wayang depicting stories derived from

the epics *Mahabarata* and *Ramayana*—contradiction is constantly underlined. The difference is, where the figures in classical wayang have fixed characteristics, Eko Nugroho’s wayang figures are designed to be free of any specific characteristics. This flexibility was intended to make these puppets available to be used by any one with any story” (Swastika 2009).

The first *wayang bocor* performance was in December 2008 in Teater Salihara in Jakarta. *Bungkusan Hati di dalam Kulkas* (A Wrapped Heart Inside the Refrigerator) is based on a black-and-white animation by Eko Nugroho. Unlike in traditional wayang, next to dalang Ki Catur “Benyek” Kuncoro, screenwriter and director Joned Suryatmoto (associated with Teater Gardanella in Yogyakarta) also played an important role in the performance. “The performance is about domestic violence and how it is influenced by events in the wider world... It is about family

tragedy, when violence is seen as the way to solve the problem: a couple faces crisis in their marriage because the wife had an affair with a man, a situation complicated with his transgender son. After many conflicts, the jealous husband kills his wife; and in the end all the characters die.”¹ The very plot summary shows that the drama is constructed, not according to the principles governing the *lakons* (“plays”) of *wayang kulit*, but rather by patterns drawn from Western theater traditions, both ancient and Shakespearean, and alien to Indonesian shadow theater. With each of their deeds, characters come closer to a tragic end, and their deaths are also the punishment for previous transgressions of the taboo.

At the same time, the authors of *wayang bocor*, despite the inspiration of European dramatic theater in its narrative layer, applied formal solutions in order to remind the audience of the form’s roots in *wayang kulit*. The space in which the performance was played, in contrast with most contemporary performances, was arranged in a very traditional way: the audience could only see shadows, not the puppets or the dalang animating them. By this simple formal solution, artists not only referred to the history and origin of this form of theater, but restored the forgotten meaning of the term wayang (in old Javanese “shadow” or “an-





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Cracks. Flaws. Since time immemorial, people have been fascinated by the imperfect, and the abnormal have fascinated people with their attributes of dissimilarity and otherness. Similarly fascinating are the explorations of artists that contest the existing order, who are continually seeking and in whose works the familiar and the shocking meet head-on. That which is most interesting arises in contradiction, at intersections, on borderlines, in confrontation. In this case, it is at the intersection of the worlds of art and performance, where tradition confronts modernity.

Wayang bocor is the result of an experiment. The name itself warns the audience about possible imperfection, about moving away from well-known form and content towards "search" (*bocor* = leaky, porous). Eko Nugroho, one of the most important Indonesian artists of the younger generation, is its originator and founder. He moved the characters that appear in his paintings into the world of contemporary wayang. When designing puppets he used themes, content and forms from his earlier works: "Peculiar figures, such as stone-headed man, diamond-hearted man and pincer-handed man, are common in his paintings, drawings, and embroideries. Combining fantasy and daily life is his way to represent a world view that values ambiguity and contradiction. In *wayang purwo*—classical wayang depicting stories derived from

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cestor"). Putting emphasis on the role of shadow and light, *wayang bocor* creators also evoked the symbolic meaning of the elements that shape the space in wayang. A special role was played there by a screen (*kelir*), made of white canvas, symbolizing the universe (*jagat raya*), in which people lived both as individuals and members of society (Moerdowo 1982:59). The color of the canvas symbolizes the beginning of everything—the air. The white screen before the beginning of the performance was empty, uninhabited. With time, along with the story, the screen filled up, just as the Universe filled when God created human beings, animals, plants and other creatures. Above the screen there was the lamp (*blencong*)², symbolizing the life-giving rays of the sun, without which the universe would remain in the darkness (Moerdowo 1982:59).

In the *Bungkusan Hati di dalam Kulkas* performance, three screens were used, arranged side by side, filled not only with common characters, but also with elements building scenography. In addition, light and lighting effects, designed by Ignatius "Clink" Sugiarto (associated with Teater Garasi), became important elements. The audience witnessed the game of contrasts played out between "the object and the shadow, the light and the dark, the real and the unreal, the hidden and the exposed" (Swastika 2009) that is so important in the works of Eko Nugroho.

Puppets designed by the artist were made of leather and measured between 90 and 100 cm. "Whereas *wayang purwo* figures have remarkable details in ornamentation, the ornamental forms in Eko Nugroho's wayang figures were executed with the ordinary inlay technique, but the inlays became the ornaments. For coloring, Eko Nugroho used acrylic paint on leather to produce brighter colors. The figures were only painted on one side to maintain transparency, in order to enhance the colors of the shadows. Even though these are not new ideas, in the end, these wayang figures created by Eko Nugroho represent a unique form and fresh visualization" (Swastika 2009).

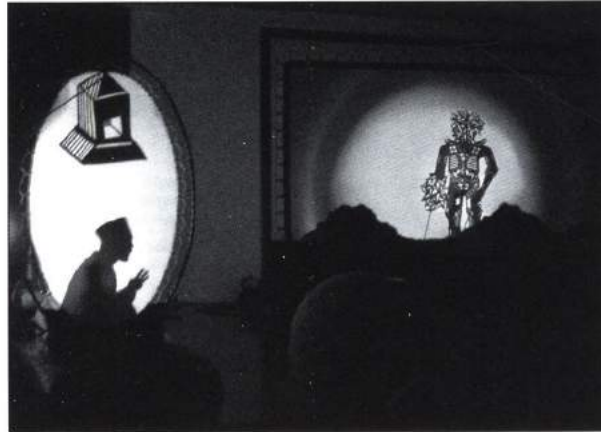
The same set of puppets appeared in the next performances of *wayang bocor*. In 2009, in Yogyakarta, in Rumah Seni Cemeti Gallery, on the occasion of the vernissage of Eko Nugroho, *Berlian Ajaib* (The Wonder of Diamond) was shown. The exhibition and the performance were under the curatorial care of Alia Swastika. The same artists were invited to participate, with the guest appearance of professor Matthew Isaac Cohen, who was one of the performers. The framework of the performance changed slightly; along with the puppets, actors also appeared, although dalang Ki Catur "Benyek" Kuncoro still played the dominant role.

In *Berlian Ajaib*, the anthologies of comics *Wart* (*Daging Tumbuh*) by Eko Nugroho served as the basis for the play. Additional inspiration came from the carnival nature of night-markets (*pasar malam*), which was also the leitmotif of the exhibition, the center of which was the installation "carousel with wayang puppets," by Eko Nugroho. "On one hand, for most Indonesians, especially those who live in kampongs or small villages, night fairs are occasions of collective joy, moments for life celebrations. On the other

hand, the night fairs also present an interesting picture of how this society absorbs many other cultural traditions and art practices, and assimilates them into their own social contexts. The modern and the contemporary encounter artifacts of the past. Something new and shimmering is presented side-by-side with something old and moldy" (Swastika 2009).

Upon closer inspection, the carnival carefree atmosphere of the night bazaar revealed a significant imperfection, or crack. Characters created by Eko Nugroho were not ordinary residents of Indonesian cities or villages. Instead of heads and faces, they had strange structures; they seemed more like aliens from other planets than persons from *pasar malam*, the neighbors and friends with whom we would like to spend an evening. As Alia Swastika wrote earlier, they are without characters, but instead of hands they often have pliers or other tools that have connotations—not of fun, but of violence, pain and death.

The character of carnival, broken by this element of alienation in the performance, was emphasized by the style of puppet animation and by the music composed by Yennu Ariendra.



The puppets, unlike in earlier performances (and unlike in the traditional wayang), were animated by standing puppeteers. Thanks to handles that allowed the puppets to keep some distance from the screen, it became possible to "juggle" with puppets among screens or to perform other stunts. The puppets, although "hidden" behind screens, in certain moments were visible, like puppeteers who came out from behind the screens during the prologue, forming a second performance plane.

The performance was accepted with enthusiasm, and any faults resulting from the short rehearsal period, or the preparation or addition of new elements in the last moment, were accepted as part of the formula of *wayang bocor*, from the imperfection present in its name. Some other performances such as *Skandal Jeruk Purut* (Scandal of Limes) shown in Padepokan Bagong Kussudiardjo in Yogyakarta in 2010, or *Dilema Generasi Sawi* (Mustard Generation Dilemma) shown one year later in ARK Galerie in Jakarta, were prepared by Eko Nugroho and his regular collaborators. After that latest release, *wayang bocor* suspended their activities to return in a new, refreshed form in 2014.

This time Eko Nugroho invited new artists to collaborate: playwright and director Gunawan Maryanto and Muhammad Nur Qomaruddin, actor (both associated with Teater Garasi); Theresia Wulandari, dancer and choreographer; Ari Wulu, musician and Banjar Tri Andaru Cahyo, responsible for light and projections, among others. Each of the artists, regardless of their field of art, could participate on an equal level in the artistic search conducted by Eko Nugroho, and were given the space necessary to express their own emotions and ideas. The starting point for the two performances presented in 2014 was once Eko Nugroho moving into the world of wayang. For both, *Hikayat Agar-Agar Bertanduk* (The Tale of Horned Jelly) shown in Institut Français Indonesia (Lembaga Indonesia Prancis, LIP) in Yogyakarta, and *Di Miss Call*

Leluhar (Miscall by the Ancestor) presented during Pesta Boneka #4 Festival, the most important inspiration again became a game of opposites—the opposition between light and shadow and emerging at the intersection: cracks, imperfections. This time, unlike previous performances of *wayang bocor*, the main focus was put not on dalang, but on a combination of the “puppets and actors game” and the “game of light and music.” The shadows were created not only as a result of puppet animation at one of the three screens (this time a single, rectangular screen was placed in the middle of the scene with a tall, oval screen on either side), but also as a result of the use of the “actors’ game” and shadows built with their own bodies. So the actor became the shadow puppet, and his body—like the bodies of puppets designed by Eko Nugroho—was deformed by the costume. In *Hikayat Agar-Agar Bertanduk*, the main character Ali (Muhammad Nur Qomaruddin), whose purpose in life was to make a trip to Afghanistan for jihad, wore a structure that is located mostly on the tops of the Indonesian mosques (*kubah masjid*), which deformed his head while partnering him with Seroja (Theresia Wulandari), abandoned by her husband and working as a maid in Malaysia. She wore a colorful costume combined with a flower mask that covered her face, modeled on one of the sculptures of Eko Nugroho.



The story of their meeting in Malaysia, full of absurdities and bitter humor, was commented on, as happens in the traditional *wayang kulit* performances, by Punakawan, Bagong, Petruk and Gareng appeared on stage at the end of the performance, and although their forms resembled traditional puppets, their bodies were deformed by colorful bubbles, which created a background for their heads. Scenes with their participation were the only ones that were largely improvised. The rest of the play was based on a scenario written by Gunawana Maryanto.

According to the participating artists, writing the text and rehearsals take the team about two months now, and the sense of searching and improvisation is often included in the final form of the performance. Dancing, singing, acting - all elements other than the shadow create the effect of “*bocor*.” Additional emphasis is placed on

the “game of light,” which, compared to previous performances of *wayang bocor*, plays a greater role now. Currently, lighting effects reflect what is happening on the stage, the light is no longer a component of the mood, but an equal participant in the performance.

Wayang bocor, as a concept, is constantly evolving. The artists seek inspiration in the works of Eko Nugroho, in the history of wayang, in stories drawn from everyday life. Be it *The Tale of Horned Jelly* or *Miscall by the Ancestor*, the audience will get a fascinating mix of tradition and modernity. No one will apologize for any imperfections or roughness that emerge while creating new forms at the intersection of wayang with theater, dance, music and visual art, for this has been a hallmark of *wayang bocor* since its inception

Marianna Lis is a Ph.D. candidate in theatre studies at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where she is currently completing a dissertation on contemporary wayang. She received her M.A. in theatre studies from the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Arts in Warsaw in 2011, where since 2012 she has given lectures on Intercultural Performance for M.A. students.

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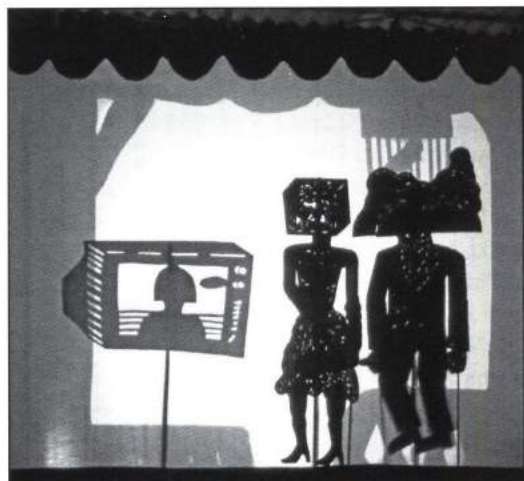
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Endnotes

¹ The description is from the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide.

² Oil lamps were used in the past. Today electric lamps are used, placed in stylized casings in the shape of Garuda, the mythical bird.



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by Larry Reed

On Wayang

My Life With Shadows

I have been an actor since kindergarten, working professionally since high school. In college I studied film, photography and languages. I can't remember when I first noticed shadows, but it was very early on. Growing up, I spent a lot of time in the woods, imagining things. Once I woke up from a nap and found myself watching the shadow of a bug on a leaf, inches from my nose. My first photographs were of shadows in the snow.

In the early seventies I travelled to Indonesia. I wanted to go someplace that wasn't being ravaged by war or tourism. I had just graduated from film school, and I set off to the Far East, camera in hand. Within weeks my camera was stolen and I found myself in a small village, revising my plans.



LARRY REED REHEARSING A SCENE FROM PORO OYNA

I didn't understand a word I heard. I was in audio space, watching energy flow around the room as people were talking. One night everyone set off in the dark through the rice paddies with flashlights blinking like fireflies. There was a cacophony of frogs, and distant music. We came upon a clearing filled with people crowded around a small screen with a flame behind it making flickering shadows. A single performer was manipulating scores of puppets, creating incredible sounds with his voice, leading the orchestra with a mallet between his toes, and making the audience laugh and cry.

Four years later I was back, sitting behind the screen next to the shadow master night after night, watching him perform, studying with him all day long. I began to understand how powerful mythology can be when it is alive to somebody. I learned music,

singing and dance. I used a tape recorder to study the rhythms and inflections of the various characters, and once in a while I would be allowed to handle a puppet.

I found out that an Indonesian meaning for "shadow" is close to our idea of "imagination," and that shadows are a link between the small world inside us and the larger outside world. In fact, mythology functions as a kind of public dream that goes back to the beginning of humanity. It is a repository for deep information about the psyche. The language of mythology is close to the language of nature and has to do with reading signs and seeing relationships. When you bring a myth to life, it has a power that goes beyond mere storytelling.

The plots for wayang are drawn from a Hindu myth about five brothers who are pitted against one hundred jealous cousins in a struggle for power involving gods, demons, magical weapons and the inevitable beautiful princess. Performances are improvised following traditional strategies. The main characters speak an ancient language (Kawi), which is translated into the modern language for the audience through the mouths of servant and clown characters in the play. Popular performers continually invent new episodes and reframe old ones in contemporary terms.

The flame of an oil lamp casts flickering shadows of silhouette puppets onto a cloth screen. The crowd buzzes with anticipation heightened by the live gamelan music. There is the whole village attending. Philosophical sections for adults, slapstick for the children that gives the adults freedom to laugh like a child, and romance for the teenagers at the edges of the crowd. People watch the play from the front, move around to watch from behind or pull back to a refreshment stand for an overview.

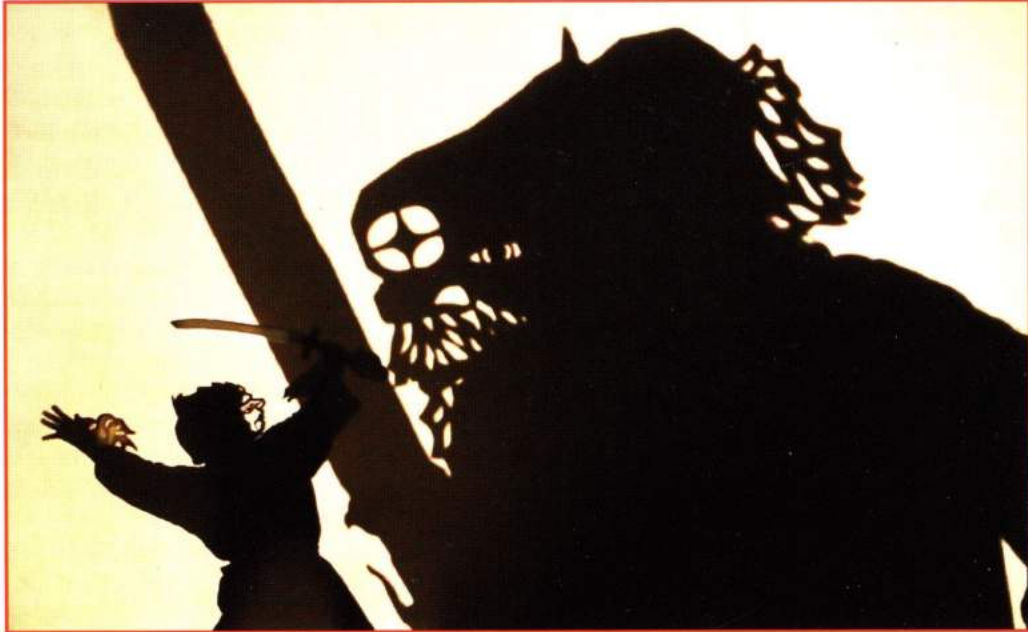
Since the stories are improvised, even the most ancient story is new every night.

One of the dalang's skills is to understand the prevailing taste of each village. Some are excited by battle scenes, while others want new stories or want comedy to be emphasized. Before the performance, dalang listens to the conversations of his hosts and will often incorporate what he hears into the show. If there is a problem to be addressed, he will do it through the characters in the show without naming names. My teacher said it is like putting out a whole lot of shoes: people will put their own feet into the ones that fit.

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

After returning from Bali in the late seventies, I formed the first Western group to study and perform wayang. For Americans, this was a totally new type of theater experience. The required silence of a concert hall or theatre gives way here to a relaxed enjoyment and timeless sense of togetherness. A wayang performance is truly

In the process of developing this method, I wanted to carry over certain values from my Indonesian training: 1) the story is often told in more than one language; 2) the music is always live and able to respond to nightly differences; 3) the target audience is a “village” of people of all ages; and 4) there is a respect for tradition and a



A SCENE FROM PORU OYNA: THE MYTH OF THE AYNU (2014) PHOTO: GERARDO PEREZ

a social event. We performed in public parks, for community organizations, churches, schools and universities around the country. Beyond presenting the little-known form of theatre from across the seas, we believed it was a living demonstration of the fundamental unities of the human spirit.

After twenty years of performing wayang, I began to think about ways to engage the American audience on a much deeper level. I wanted to give people a better sense of the mythological experience I witnessed in Bali. I wanted to give people an experience of their own mythology. Then I thought about Drive-in Movies – a modern shadow play for the village!

I challenged myself to integrate the traditional with the modern by experimenting with a variety of light sources and materials, and delving into history as it relates to shadows, cinema and storytelling. After much experimentation (and many failures), I arrived at a style that I now describe as “live animation.” Using multiple electric light sources, this method orchestrates a team of shadowcasters projecting shadows of landscapes and puppets, and performing with masks to create cinematic effects live on a giant 15' x 30' screen.

contemporary point of view. I quickly found out that this framework could be applied to any culture in the world — just like cinema.

After the technical and stylistic aspects of my work became firm, I turned ShadowLight Productions into a non-profit organization with the intent to make theater and video that would contribute to cross-cultural understanding. I am particularly interested in making works that can serve as a bridge between underserved groups and general populations by highlighting their languages, mythologies and music. For example, I created *Coyote's Journey* (2000) with the Karuk and Hoopa tribes of Northern California and *Poro*

Oyna (2014) with the Aynu tribe in Northern Japan. *Ghosts of the River* (2009) was our joint effort with playwright Octavio Solis and activist/artist Favianna Rodriguez to put a human face on the contentious US/Mexico border issues. I am always aware that I am working in a continuum that embraces the most ancient of forms and its modern permutations. It is my hope that my work provides opportunities for my collaborators and audiences to cross “borders” to new domains of cultural enrichment, social contemplation, artistic inspiration and mutual understanding.



AYNU MUSICIANS PERFORMING LIVE BEHIND SCREEN IN PORU OYNA PHOTO: GERARDO PEREZ



by Karen Smith

Wayang Golek Lenong Betawi and Tizar Purbaya

Wayang golek lenong betawi – a Betawi style of Indonesian rod puppetry that emerged in Jakarta – is a newcomer on the *wayang* stage. It was created as recently as 2000 by the Jakarta-based dalang, Tizar Purbaya.

There is the local shadow theater form, *Wayang kulit betawi*, which has been performed in the Jakarta region for some time. The repertoire of this regional style of shadow theater, however, comes from the classical canon of stories based on the Indian Hindu epics – the *Ramayana*, *Arjuna Sasrabahu* (stories prefiguring events in the *Ramayana*) and the *Mahabharata*. In its style of performance and in its figures, *wayang kulit betawi* more or less resembles the Javanese form of shadow theater. It is thus not particularly Betawi in language, style or content.

It was up to Jakarta-based dalang, Tizar Purbaya, to develop a new form of rod puppetry, or *wayang golek*, that would take its stories not from the great epics of Indian origin but from local legends and history: Betawi stories.

The Betawi are the indigenous people of present-day Jakarta, capital of the Republic of Indonesia. The Dutch called the place that would become the capital of the Dutch East Indies “Batavia” (from “Betawi”). After Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands in 1945, the city would be renamed “Jakarta,” one of the most populous agglomerations in the world. Tizar Purbaya would call his new puppet form *wayang golek lenong betawi* as it was based on the repertoire of traditional Betawi theater, the *lenong*.

Recalling this early period of his career as a dalang, Tizar Purbaya had this to say: “I was a young dalang and also a member of the theater, and the way I did my shows was considered a bit controversial. There was satire, and social and political criticism were featured in my shows. I was named one of the dalang that had to be closely monitored.” (*The Jakarta Post*, August 1, 2004) During the difficult years following the fall of Indonesia’s first leader, President Sukarno, and the establishment of the new government of President Suharto, at a time when poverty was rife and street demonstrations



a frequent part of life, artists who criticized the Suharto government in their works were blacklisted. In this environment, the idealistic young *dalang* had no interest in performing old legends that had little to do with contemporary reality. Instead, he would perform his own versions of these stories so that they were relevant to the problems that Indonesians were then facing.

Over the following four decades, Tizar Purbaya would perform his Sundanese style *wayang golek* shows, and from 2000, his own, new wayang form, at events and festivals in his home town Jakarta, across Java, in Bali and on other islands and regions of Indonesia. Since 1979, Tizar Purbaya had also performed outside of Indonesia, including more than a dozen tours to Japan, among them a month-long tour of that country when he trained with a *Bunraku* master puppet builder, as well as performing in Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and India. Among these tours was a 1984 performance in Thailand for refugees fleeing Laos and shows for disabled children. In 1988, he represented Indonesia at the UNIMA World Puppetry Festival held in Japan.

As government and public interest in wayang waxed and waned over the decades since Indonesian independence, Tizar Purbaya continued to perform. By the 1990s he had also developed a new technique for creating *wayang golek* rod puppets and in the process created, in 2000, a new and local wayang tradition – *wayang golek lenong betawi*.

He had begun this process by creating portrait puppets that were realistically and beautifully carved by himself and his team of master craftsmen using photographs of actual people as models for the puppets' faces. He would also create portrait *golek* of world leaders, for example George Bush and his wife Barbara (which he would use in a performance during President Bush's visit to Jakarta in 1994), and more recently of presidents Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela. He began incorporating these puppets into his shows.

And thus Tizar Purbaya's *wayang golek lenong betawi* was born, with its stock of stories set during the Dutch colonial period and a stock of characters based on historical figures and local heroes and heroines of the struggle for independence against the Dutch colonizers. "I use the *bule* [foreigner] puppets I have as Dutch soldiers," Tizar explains. (*Jakarta Globe*, 31 January 2010) He would also

adapt local folk stories and urban legends for his wayang performances. "I wanted to create an original Betawi art form, so I adopted the *lenong* as a theme, only this time the *lenong* would be visualized by the puppets." (*The Jakarta Post*, August 1, 2004)



A share of Tizar Purbaya's repertoire of stories is based on well-known Betawi folk tales, such as the adventures of Si Pitung and Si Jampang, the principal characters of popular Robin Hood-style stories that were also made into stage plays that centered on extraordinary men (referred to as *jago*) who, though living as outlaws during the Dutch colonial period, generally fought for the common populace. These are local Betawi heroes.

Another of Tizar Purbaya's *wayang golek lenong betawi* plays is based on a Jakarta urban legend, a local ghost story called *Si Manis Jembatan Ancol* (The Sweet Maiden from Ancol Bridge). Jembatan Ancol (Ancol Bridge) is an actual bridge in Ancol, today a neighborhood of Jakarta. There are several versions of this story which is purported to have taken place in the early nineteenth century (c.1817) when Jakarta was called Batavia by the Dutch colonial government. These versions are based on the story of a sixteen-year-old maiden named Siti Ariaiah (in some versions called Arie, and who would later also be known as Maryam) who flees her home rather than become a rich man's concubine, only to fall into the clutches of another wealthy man, a playboy from Ancol, who plans to abduct her. This urban legend is so well known that it has been made into at least two movies.

In Tizar Purbaya's wayang version, the girl runs away from home because she does not want to be the concubine of a Dutch man. She reaches the Ancol bridge where she is discovered weeping by a demon that lives under the bridge. In the meantime, another man with evil intentions arrives at the bridge, planning to rape the girl. In order to save her, the demon turns into a human and fights this man. The man-demon then takes her under the bridge, and the two marry. The *golek* specially created for the role of the demon is painted green and has large ears.

Tizar Purbaya's *wayang golek lenong betawi* repertoire, to date, consists of three plays. Besides the 90-minute-long *Si Manis Jembatan Ancol*, there is the two-hour long *Jampang Jago Betawi* (Jampang, the Betawi Hero) and *Beningnya Hati Seekor Macan* (The Good Tiger).

PHOTOS: DAVE HEESAN AND KAREN SMITH

All the images are of Pak Tizar's private collection, or wayang he sells from out of his shop. You will notice the more realistic wayang golek figures (including President Obama!). These are his own creations, wayang golek lenong betawi.

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Jampang Jago Betawi is a Robin Hood-style local legend. The story told by Dalang Tizar Purbaya of the legendary Betawi hero goes as follows. Returning home after many years in prison for inciting rebellion against the Dutch, Jampang sees a thug named Jun, who works for the Dutch colonialists, and his assistant beating up an old man for not paying them extortion money. Incensed by this injustice, Jampang attacks and drives away the thugs, who vow revenge as they flee. Led by Jun, the gang has been perpetuating atrocities on Jampang's village. The villagers call on the local hero to destroy the gang and free them from its oppression. Jampang uses his wits and his machete to topple the criminals and in the process saves the village. In the show, Tizar combined drama with comedy, delivered through dialogue and the gestures of his *golek*, which include a puppet that can smoke, a puppet that bleeds from excruciating wounds, as well as charming puppets that dance.

The third play, *Beningnya Hati Seekor Macan* (The Good Tiger), is a recently created wayang show, designed for children, that tackles the question of deforestation. The plot is as follows. As there is no food in the forest anymore for the tigers, these carnivores are forced to enter the village to seek their food, and end up eating goats and buffalo. Humans and tigers inevitably come into conflict, but eventually make peace after the humans promise to no longer destroy the tigers' habitat but, instead, preserve it.

While the plots of his *wayang golek lenong betawi* plays are based on historical, legendary or local folk characters and their tales, Tizar Purbaya would adapt these stories to relate to or comment on current events. This of course is an important part of a dalang's art; Master dalang are adept at weaving current references and connections into a set story that is not based on contemporary events (such as stories based on folk tales, legends, or the Hindu and Arabic epics). As Tizar Purbaya explained, "As long as you know the basics of the story, with all the characters, you can change the setting to today."

Pak Tizar attributed the success of his new art form, *wayang golek lenong betawi*, to the fact that it speaks to Jakartans: It's created in Betawi, the story is from Betawi, the gamelan comes from

Gambang Kromong Betawi with Betawi [songs and Indonesian] language." (*The Jakarta Post*, August 1, 2004)

Tizar Purbaya was concerned about the future of the wayang form he had created. "My worry for the *wayang golek lenong be-*



tawi is its continuation. I do not want it to start and end with me. I'd like to see the city government become more involved, maybe making a course for Betawi youngsters on the art of puppetry."

He held the opinion that native Betawi culture – including the dances, the wayang and the storytelling traditions – in Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta, has been passed over and is in danger of being forgotten. "Efforts should be more intensive because many aspects of the Betawi culture have either been lost or pushed to the periphery." (*The Jakarta Post*, August 1, 2004)

Tizar Purbaya wanted to see new Betawi puppeteers follow in his footsteps. "I did not create this for myself; this is for everyone," he said. His three sons, Mario (b.1980), Ricky (b.1981) and Reza (b.1987), worked alongside their father at home or at their two Jalan Surabaya shops. The three sons also love and respect Indonesia's many wayang traditions. Over the past several years, Tizar Purbaya's middle son, Ricky, has become a dalang, performing stories from the *wayang golek lenong betawi* repertoire. Both he and his brother Reza assisted their father in his performances. His sons appear to be fully committed to carrying on the new tradition founded by their father had. Only the future will tell whether Tizar Purbaya's legacy will be a new, living tradition – that of *wayang golek lenong betawi*.

Tizar Purbaya died on April 23, 2015, after suffering a stroke.

Karen Smith lived for many years in Indonesia. She is a past president of UNIMA-USA (and UNIMA-India!), and is currently overseeing the translation of the World Encyclopedia of Puppetry into English.

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by Kathy Foley

Wayang Kelantan Beyond Borders

With Malay annals, Thai theatre, Javanese stories
passed down and played to the crowds
by the original master puppeteer, passed
within the dalang lineage
of the first dalang, Mak Erak.

Mebawa hikayat Melayu, Wayang Siam, Cerita Jawa

Dari bawa bak kelolongan

Asal dalang, turun temurun

Daulat dalang, titih menitih

Asal titih dalang Mak Erak. (Dain bin Othman 2011: 17)



This mantra is part of the opening passage of puppet masters (dalang) in the lineage of Tumpat, Kelantan, Malaysia, and points toward multiple influences (Malay, Thai, and Javanese) for *wayang siam*, a shadow puppet genre of peninsular Southeast Asia whose very name advertises its mixed roots. The genre is now, for political reasons, usually called *wayang kelantan* to identify it as Malaysian. During Fulbright-supported research in 2014, I visited Tumpat, on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, a site that for generations had the most puppeteers in the Malay states.

Wayang as a genre is a pan-Southeast Asian art, which, though linked to Hindu-Buddhist heritage, is from the colonial era beginning around the fifteenth century, heavily entwined in Muslim

communities. *Wayang kelantan*, like other forms, combines local idiosyncrasies with cross-border influences that probably moved along trade routes linking Fujian in China, through the South China Sea, around the Gulf of Thailand, to north coast Java (*pasisir/pesisir* [shore]). This area is prime puppet territory, while the Southeast Asian coasts toward India and the west are not. Though most histories have emphasized puppetry's east-west routes from India or the Middle East to Central Java as a hot spot, this view is limited. Wayang and its related arts in Thailand (*nang talung*, leather puppets of Pattalung Province) and Cambodia (*ayang*, named after the main clown) fit a pan-Southeast Asian puppet tradition that crosses language borders. These genres differ from palace traditions of

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mainland Southeast Asia (Thai *nang yai* and Khmer *nang sbek*, using large puppets moved by multiple manipulator-dancers). The small puppet genres, as with Indonesian *wayang kulit* forms, use modest-sized puppets and are largely performed by a single manipulator (*dalang* in Malay languages; *nang nai* in Thai). These are primarily rural entertainments of commoners that, traditionally, had ritual implications. They share the concept of the god-clown (as exemplified by Java's



Erak, who elaborated the art (Dain bin Othman 2011: 13). Malaysia has other wayang arts, which emulate Javanese sources more clearly; *wayang kulit purwa* was performed in diasporic Javanese communities and *wayang kulit melayu* was a now defunct genre of the Kelantan court which historically sponsored *dalang* to study in

Java to present stories (about Panji, prince of East Java) for aristocratic entertainments. Compared to these genres, *wayang siam/kelantan*—
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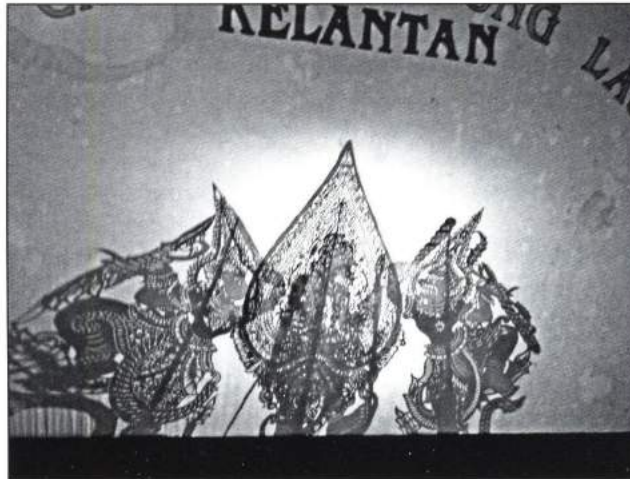
Today, political and religious changes are reducing some of these once lively genres to museum artifacts. Forms like *wayang kelantan* are caught between the Scylla of Wahabi style Islamic thinking from the modern Middle East (see Wright 1981; Matusky 1993; and Ghulam-Sawar 2012 and, contrast with Sweeney 1972a and 1972b) and the Charybdis of ethnocentric national heritage that prefers pure Malay products. Today Kelantanese performers lament their decline from 300 dalang in the 1960s (Sweeney 1972b: 3) to less than ten performers in 2014, with the youngest approaching fifty. Interviewed 20 July 2014, Dalang Rahim bin Hamzah, son of the National Artist Dalang Hamzah bin Awang Amat (1940–2000) predicted: "Already by 2020, there won't be any [*wayang kelantan* performance]—it will only sit in a museum!"

Cross Cultural Flows

Crossing borders is part of the origin story of *wayang kelantan* told by puppeteers of Tumpat. Abang Mat (9 June 2014) claimed in an interview that the first Kelantanese dalang was Mak Erak, a Chinese-Thai woman from Tumpat. She is said to have studied wayang in Java about ten generations of dalang back (mid to late 1700s) and then set sail for home with her puppets. When the ship sank in a stormy Gulf of Siam, Mak Erak held onto the figure of the Javanese god-clown Semar (here known as Pak Dogol), climbed onto a floating plank, and, with Semar as sail, magically reached Kelantan.

Local lore tells that Mak Erak performed with only two figures made of leaves, without musical accompaniment, using Javanese language until returning to Java for leather puppets and instruments; then, after her death, her husband became the second dalang, Tok

Erak, who elaborated the art (Dain bin Othman 2011: 13). Malaysia has other wayang arts, which emulate Javanese sources more clearly; *wayang kulit purwa* was performed in diasporic Javanese communities and *wayang kulit melayu* was a now defunct genre of the Kelantan court which historically sponsored dalang to study in



Java to present stories (about Panji, prince of East Java) for aristocratic entertainments. Compared to these genres, *wayang siam/kelantan*—like *wayang gedek* ("Thai-style wayang")—is a much more hybrid, localized mix.

The origin story above, of course, credits a mixture of local genius with Thai, Javanese, and Chinese influences. While Central Java has been a powerhouse in puppet creation for hundreds of years and developed a deep, sophisticated, religio-philosophical understanding of the art, the rougher, village puppetry without Central

Java's aristocratic overlay unites a wider area where this art was a medium of communication, entertainment and ritual protection.

These puppet genres often originally focused on Indian stories (especially the *Ramayana* on the mainland) using small figures manipulated by a solo artist, often accompanied by bronze keyed or gong-type ensembles. The performer is often believed to have an exorcistic or protective power that makes him (or occasionally her) a shaman (*bomoh* in Kelantan) as well as an entertainer. Majapahit (thirteenth to sixteenth century) had trade connections with Champa (an Islamic kingdom on the coast of Vietnam, the Fujian region of China from which the Muslim admiral-explorer Cheng Ho sailed in the fifteenth century), and Cambodia. This particular trade route may have been important for the development of arts that blended tantric Hindu and Islamic Sufi thinking. While puppetry was part of earlier Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, the period of the fifteenth to the eighteenth century brought Islamic reformulations. Indonesian traditions credit the arts to the *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints) who converted the island to Islam. While some of the saints (i. e. Sunan Gunung Jati) are locals, many were merchant-immigrants settled on the *pasisir* coast of Java. For example Malana Malik Ibrahim (d. 1419?) came from Champa and was the father of Sunan Ampel (Chinese name Bong Swi Hoo, born 1401 in Champa), who was the teacher of the mythical first dalang, Sunan Kalijaga. This Islam-South China Sea-Gulf of Thailand trade connection is something that may have bound this area together economically, artistically and religiously. And puppetry became important in coastal areas where these Islamic traders moved.

The tendency to have a solo puppeteer with bronze instruments performing in a raised stage house, usually with puppets with a single movable arm, may indeed have been carried as part of the Islamization process—such traits we find in Kalimantan (Borneo), Kelantan (Malaysia), and the Islamic areas of Southern Thailand and Cambodia. Since the Muslim revival in the late nineteenth century, fundamentalists have found fault with this theatre of images that

invokes ancestral spirits, and tells stories of what modern Islamicists consider to be about Hindu gods and hence *syirik* (worshipping a god other than Allah). But these “problems” were no more a part of the older traditional Southeast Asian Islam than the unlikely ideas that women should be veiled or Sharia law must override *adat* (local custom). Islam in Southeast Asia was a religion promoted via the puppet theatre. The *wali songo* were artistically led by Sunan Kalijaga, creator with the other saints of wayang, mask, dance, and other arts. Sunan Kalijaga is often called Shek Melayu because he supposedly went to peninsular Malaya and spread religion there. These are stories, not history, but they attest to interplay of puppetry and religious diffusion in Islamic areas.

Cross-fertilization of the arts continued across borders in *wayang kelantan* in the nineteenth-early twentieth century. Tok Yaakob introduced the Thai-style *comprong* (crown/headdress) and epaulets for noble figures like the heroic Prince Rama, borrowing these costuming features from the Thai-language *manora* dance theatre. Music, credited to Tok Samun in that same period, was borrowed from *manora*, *mak yong* (a Malay female dance drama) and *main puteri* (a Malay healing music/dance/theatre genre). These genres continue to share repertoire and ritual ideas with *wayang kelantan*; music, performers and aesthetic elements (stories, costume images) are shared across genres that traverse the Thai-Malay border. Indeed, in the 1960s Sweeney (1972b: 31-32, 38) found that 60% of Malaysia’s *wayang kelantan* dalang over thirty-five earned additional income as *bomoh* (shaman) and were especially likely to perform *main puteri*, a musical trance healing form.

Creating Borders

The politics of the colonial and the post-colonial eras have led to hardening borders more porous in the past. For example, the former Sultanate of Pattani included Kelantan along with southern Thai-Malay provinces. Various Anglo-Thai agreements in the nineteenth century gave the British concessions in Kelantan, resulting in Kelantan joining the British Malay states that developed into contemporary Malaysia. Hence *nang* and *wayang siam* have increasingly diverged linguistically and performatively. Meanwhile additional political struggles that pitted Indonesia against Malaysia have, for purposes of nationalism, caused the cultural establishment in Kuala Lumpur to want to see *wayang kelantan* as a purely Malay tradition. The National Cultural Policy implemented in 1971 after 1969 ethnic rioting (Malay vs. Chinese) led to the declaration of Malaysia’s national culture as based on Malay-ness and Islam. This definition and the post 1980s movement toward an ever more narrowly defined Islam with a Wahabism imported from Saudi Arabia (ideas

of veiling, sharia, etc.) has made the lives of contemporary dalang more difficult. While distinguishing the art from Thai, Indonesian, and other ethnic strains has been only modestly successful fundamentalism, which disparages ritual aspects, such as the use of the Hindu god Rama as character and the idea that Pa Dogel could be a “god-clown,” has had powerful impact.

By the 1990s the 1960s “*wayang siam*” had been renamed *wayang kelantan*. Rather than emphasizing the similarities with Indonesian or Thai forms, Malay aspects were highlighted. As the Islamic revival grew and Malaysia’s Malay-dominated government sought to keep its rule through distancing from Indian or Chinese culture (the other major groups that make up the nation), wayang (which might have Hindu or Buddhist elements) became inconvenient. Nationalism wanted local genius.

In 1993, Dalang Hamzah (see Osnes 2010: 158-162) was named first Malaysian National Artist, an honor for *wayang kelantan*. Ironically, almost simultaneously (1992) the Islamic party won the government of Kelantan state and banned *wayang kelantan* and sister arts due to “un-Islamic” rituals and stories. Wayang could only be allowed for tourist display or the university classroom. Thus began an on-going battle in Kelantan between safeguarding the art as national heritage and banning it as un-Islamic.

Today, the Kelantan government sees that the art is almost dead and the ritual elements have long been discarded by performers. Thus, some of the restrictions have been lightened. But current dalang are unlikely to present traditional *Ramayana* characters/stories and they have cut the sections that use traditional ritual language. Performers do not undergo the ritual initiations. Ironically, the only dalang who can do ritual performance with impunity is a Chinese-Malaysian, dalang Eyo Hok Seng (b. 1955)—as a Buddhist he is exempt.

Today the borders that *wayang kelantan* confronts are borders of the nation (its support depends on it being

defined as pure Malay) and borders of religion (it must fit Islamic parameters increasingly defined in the Middle East). These forces have moved dalang to identify what they do as pure secular entertainment. Successful dalang like Dalang Nik Mat (Hasim Kemasin, b. 1951) just multiply the clowns and turn the performance into a concert of new music. They cut any talk of Pak Dogel as the god Sanghyang Tunggal, and Rama is out. This is, of course, wayang, but recognizes performing is a minefield that only the brave enter.

While fusion, in the past, served as *wayang kelantan*’s strength, the mix is today its undoing. Racial, religious, and ethnic purity force the form to jettison its history, and a once thriving puppet genre struggles for existence. In such an environment few young people feel the *angin* (wind, enthusiasm) to take up the art.



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Kathy Foley's scholarly pursuit of South-east Asian puppetry has taken her through most of that region. She is a professor of theater arts at UC Santa Cruz, the editor of "Asian Theater Journal" and has performed as a dalang of *wayang golek* rod puppets and *wayang orang* dance drama for more than twenty years.

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by William F. Condee¹

Wayang and Political Islam in Malaysia

While in Malaysia last year, I was told that *wayang siam* (a form of shadow puppetry) had been outlawed in the Malaysian state of Kelantan twenty-five years ago by PAS, the Islamist party, based on religious objections. While these facts are true, the context is more complex. A long process of Islamization in Malaysian politics, with two major parties seeking to trump one another in their Islamic piety, has led to the suppression of shadow puppetry. *Wayang siam* became one small player in a broader power struggle among political parties. The goal here, of course, is not to criticize Islam. The focus is on how political manifestations of religion have affected puppetry.

Wayang siam is now in a perilous state. I estimate that there are now five to eight active puppet masters (dalang) in Kelantan. Almost all are over seventy, and many predicted to me that *wayang siam* could disappear in five to ten years. While in Malaysia, I was able to interview five of the surviving dalang and to witness three performances.² In order to understand the present condition and possible futures of *wayang siam*, therefore, we need to understand its relation to Islamization and political Islam.

Wayang kulit, as practiced across much of Indonesia and Malaysia, uses flat, intricately carved leather puppets and an electric or oil lamp to cast shadows onto a muslin screen. A single puppet master, most often a man, controls all aspects of the performance, accompanied by a musical ensemble. I am focusing here on the most widely known Malaysian form, and once the most frequently performed, known variously as *wayang siam*, emphasizing its relation to neighboring Thailand, or *wayang kelantan*, referring to the Malaysian state where it is performed.

In addition to providing entertainment, *wayang siam* has spiritual dimensions. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, widely considered to be the foremost scholar of traditional performing arts in Malaysia, sees a "combination of ideas, concepts, images and symbols" reflecting the layering of religions that has occurred over centuries on the Malay peninsula, with "elements derived from animism,

Hinduism and Islam" (*Malay* 59). *Wayang siam*, prior to the ban, comprised many rituals, and in some cases the entire performance was devoted to a specific ceremony. Some rituals specifically related to Islam, but the animism was evident: "in ritual performances the gods and spirits themselves descend to possess the bodies of shamans or dalang.... Thus descended, they literally consume the offerings placed for them" (Yousof, *Panggung* 127).

Through the mid-twentieth century, *wayang* was extremely popular in Kelantan. In the 1960s there may have been up to three hundred dalang (Yousof, *Panggung* 104). Pak Rahim told me about a golden age of *wayang siam* from the 1950s through the '70s, with performances happening in neighboring *kampungs*, or villages, almost every night. The decline probably began in the 1970s and '80s, with increased prevalence of television and growing electronic media. According to dalang Daim, by 1990 there were only fifteen troupes left, about half of which performed traditional *wayang*. The death stroke came in 1990, when *wayang* was banned by the Islamist party.

Islam is specified in the Malaysian constitution as the sole official state religion, though freedom of religious worship is also guaranteed. The latter point is especially important given the large minorities of people of Chinese and Indian heritage. Religion is also intertwined with what is referred to in Malaysia as "race": the constitution defines "Malay" as one who is Muslim (along with other traits). Islam also has special legal status, in that, for Muslim citizens, *Sharia* law has equal status with civil law. According to Liow, Islam is the "organizing principle of Malaysian society and politics," and Islam has "supplemented and supplanted race and ethnicity that previously were the basis for Malaysian political discourse" (*Piety* xii).

This centrality of Islam is the result of a process of "Islamization," beginning with lead-up to independence in the 1950s and accelerating since the 1970s. While Islam as a religion entails varying degrees of political engagement around the world, "Islamism" has been defined as "the ideological politiciza-



tion of Islam,” and “political Islam,” as “a political order that is articulated in religious terms” (Liow, *Piety* 6). According to one Malaysian activist: “Islamization is that process by which what are perceived as Islamic laws, values and practices are accorded greater significance in state, society and culture” (qtd. in Liow, *Piety* 43).

The Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), the most prominent Islamist party in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, is explicit about its Islamist agenda, with a stated goal of achieving an Islamic state, and in that sense its agenda is both religious and political (Noor, *Malaysian* 10, 43). While its electoral fortunes have varied, PAS has remained a consistently popular party, garnering roughly 30% of the vote in peninsular Malaysia (Liew Chin Tong 202). While some see PAS as being intransigent, Noor and Liow argue that PAS, like any political party, is flexible and sensitive to political change. PAS’s very success is based on its ability to relate Islam to current issues and to “accommodate, negotiate and compromise on its agendas” (Liow, “Exigency” 360). Liow describes PAS as “a complex, politically sophisticated party” (“Islamist” 403).

PAS has competed with the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the mainstream Malay-Muslim party and the dominant force in the government since independence, in a process that Liow has called “the Islamization race” and “piety trumping” (“Exigency” 359, *Piety* 15). As each party stakes out a position regarding the politicization of Islam, the other is forced to outdo its rival in Islamic piety for “legitimacy, popularity and electoral support” (Liow, *Piety* 43). Thus, while PAS is often characterized as the hardline Islamist party, Liow argues that “the ruling UMNO regime has proven equally strident in its Islamist predilections,” with “little to differentiate the regime from the Islamist opposition” (*Piety* 14). According to Noor, the “gradual Islamisation” of Malaysia was “not the doing of PAS,” since it did not control the central government, but was accomplished by the UMNO-led governments (*Malaysian* 193).

In this process, PAS transformed from what had been a moderate Malay-oriented “Islamist-nationalist” party in the 1960s and ‘70s to a more “radical and fundamentalist” party in the 2000s (Noor, “Blood” 200). In this race, “Islam had come to dominate the discursive space of the public domain” (Noor, *Malaysian* 114). The result is a more conservative and religious Malaysia (Liow, *Piety* 10).

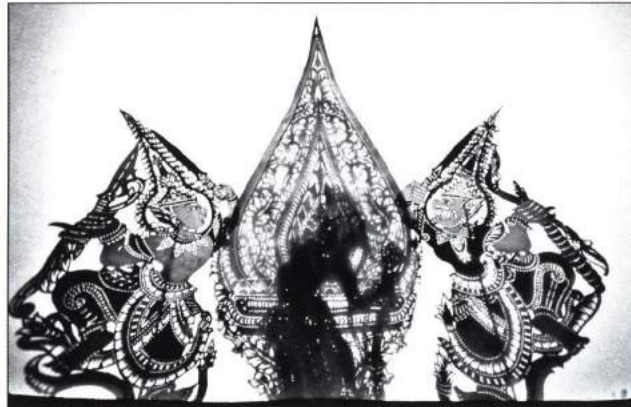
The 1990 election was a turning point for PAS. In Kelantan, a culturally conservative state with an overwhelmingly Malay-Muslim population, PAS won all the seats in the state assembly and had the ability to control the state without opposition. Kelantan would

become a state “where their experiment with Islamist governance and social engineering could be put to work” (Noor, *Malaysian* 144). PAS had the opportunity to “implement its version of the Islamic state it had been dreaming of for so long” (Noor, *Malaysian* 221). Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, appointed Chief Minister in Kelantan, was considered a “charismatic religious teacher” with impressive Islamic scholarly credentials (Hooker, “Still” 29). Nik Aziz wanted to purify Muslim culture from aspects he considered to be “un-Islamic,” and he made clear to others that many traditional Malay practices previously allowed by the *ulama*, or Islamic scholars, were *haram*, or forbidden (Noor, “Localization” 207).

Shortly after the election, PAS instituted sweeping cultural restrictions in a form of political Islam, including gambling, advertising, events at which men and women might mix freely and many forms of traditional performance. The suppression of *wayang siam* occurred, therefore, as part of this broader cultural Islamization. *Wayang* was a particular problem because of its animist rituals, the depiction of the human form in the puppets and the use of the Malay version of the *Ramayana*, with its Hindu-derived stories, characters and even gods (Yusof, *Panggung* 11). Pak Rahim told me how, faced with these restrictions, many *dalang* ceased to perform, and many sold their puppets.

PAS was extraordinarily successful in corralling *wayang*, with performances restricted to the Cultural Center (a tourist venue in central Kota Bharu and ironically the site of a former *wayang* stage popular with local residents), the *Wayang Gallery* (a museum and workshop run by a retired teacher) and universities. *Wayang* was for tourists and scholars only and could not include spiritual aspects.

Supporters of *wayang* have reacted with a variety of defensive strategies. One is to diffuse the apparently animist and Hindu aspects into a broader universal mysticism. According to a book published by the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, the value of *wayang siam* is “most importantly to understand the life of human beings created by God as well as being able to know, evaluate and feel it themselves.” In addition, defenders contend that *wayang* has its basis in Islam: “the philosophy brought into the performance is based on the deep and rich understanding of Islam.” Another argument is that *wayang* can help support Islam: “The shadow play began a renewed spread as a vehicle to propagate religion, even Islam” (*Wayang* 110, 14, 15). And its advocates maintain that *wayang* is compatible with Islam: “In conformity with Islamic teaching, the *dalang* generally explain that the ‘original’



dalang is in fact God, the Prime Mover and the provider of life and movement" (Yusof, "Feasting" 99). Wayang represents "The real puppeteer... the true Creator" (Wayang 22).

Dalang have navigated through these complex problems and accommodated to the Islamic objections. According to Beth Osnes, dalang have been "subtly eliminating the spiritual power and importance of the form" (51). One approach has been to offer wayang as pure entertainment, devoid of any religious, spiritual or mystical aspects. Abang Mat, a musician, tries to safeguard wayang by referring to it as "just" stories, music and entertainment; the puppets are not "idols," but just "symbols" to tell "old stories." Dalang Yusof spoke about the healing aspects of wayang, but only in narrowly defined and historical terms. Dalang Daim suggested that, with experience and knowledge, one can learn what is forbidden according to Islamic officials, and then just leave that out.

This situation may currently be in transition, with PAS seeming more flexible and accommodating. Pak Rahim told me that the government has declared that wayang could

be performed as long as it does not go against Islam. I was told about four dalang who can readily obtain licenses to perform because the government feels confident that their performances are sufficiently secular, without any threat to Islam. Dalang Nazim told me that it is now "pretty easy" to get a permit, and he does so regularly, though one has to go to

the right government office, and one can't get a permit for "old stories." That he is a government employee may also account for his easier access.

When asked about this apparent change, Pak Rahim speculated that the government sees wayang—correctly—as nearly dead. According to dalang Nazim, PAS now views wayang simply as entertainment, and therefore not a threat. Dalang

Daim reports that the government now even sponsors its own performances, and Ghulam-Sarwar Yusof told me that wayang has been used to present Islamic stories, with puppets in Islamic dress. PAS may now see that the surviving form has been stripped of the spiritual aspects they found objectionable. Wayang may be seen now as an innocuous part of local culture, which should not entirely disappear and should in fact be preserved in a vestigial form as a cultural artifact.

Returning to the issue of Islamization, this change may be a result of PAS's electoral standing in recent years. In the 2004 election, PAS did poorly and barely held onto control of Kelantan. In response, PAS emphasized its moderation and toned down its rhetoric (Liow, "Islamist" 388). Currently, PAS needs to soften its Islamist public image as part of an opposition coalition that nearly brought down the ruling UMNO-led coalition in the 2013 election (Noor, *Malaysian* 215-16). Therefore, having successfully controlled and contained wayang *siam* as secular entertainment that is representative of Kelantanese culture, PAS can afford to be more accommodating and allow performances to resume—limited, licensed, secular and for entertainment.

So what is the future of wayang *siam*? Will it be dead in five to ten years, as many predicted? My impression is that the wayang of the past, with its rituals, ceremonies and traditions, may not survive. But if, along with some dalang, one views wayang more expansively, wayang *siam* may endure.

William Condee (Hamilton/Baker & Hostetler Professor of Humanities, Ohio University) is author of *Coal and Culture: Opera Houses in Appalachia* (Ohio, 2005), and *Theatrical Space: A Guide for Directors and Designers* (Scarecrow, 1995). He served as Fulbright Senior Specialist at the University of Malaya and the University of Leipzig, and has studied and performed shadow puppetry in Bali.



Personal Interviews

Abang Mat, 9 June 2014.

Abdul Rahim Che Hamzah, 11 June 2014.

Mohd Nizam bin Othman, 10 June 2014.

Muhammad Dain Bin Othman, 10 June 2014.

Ghulam-Sarwar Yusof, 2 June 2014.

Yusuf Kampung Laut, personal interview, 9 June 2014.

Endnotes

¹ A version of this article was presented at the Association for Asian Performance in Montreal, Canada, in July, 2015. The author wishes to thank Kathy Foley for her help with the interviews and to thank the artists of wayang *siam*.

² All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from personal interviews.

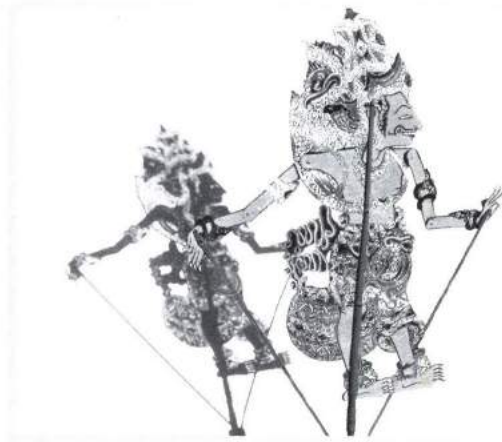
(Works Cited can be found on page 45)



by Professor I Nyoman Sedana, Ph.D

Wayang Adaptation in Cross Cultural Education

Greek Mythology in Wayang



KRESNA PLAYS THE PART OF PROMETHEUS

WAYANG GOLEK ROD AND KULIT LEATHER PUPPET IN WESTERN THEATRE HISTORY

While pursuing a Masters degree in theatre at Brown University (Fall 1990, Fall 1991-1993) along with Robert Peterson, I presented a wayang shadow puppet show recounting the Greek myth at the center of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* as a class project for Western Theater History under Professor Don B. Wilmet. At the time, Robert Peterson had studied and performed the wayang golek rod puppetry of west-Java, Indonesia, but he became interested in wayang leather puppetry as I, his classmate, as a performer and instructor of wayang puppetry at the college of Indonesian arts (STSI, now ISI) Denpasar Bali. While I shared wayang aesthetic concepts and methods to all interested students, Robert was equally generous in giving me his time, lending me some of his wayang golek rod puppets and teaching me the specific manipulation techniques for few weeks.

I really enjoyed how Robert meticulously taught me to insert my right hand inside the puppet's *sarong* skirt to hold the hidden bamboo stick; while the hidden three bigger fingers twist the body from side to side to make the puppet look around, or take right or left position, while coordinating the movement with the left hand, which controls the puppet's hands. I particularly enjoyed the way that the puppet's left hand bounces its shawl to the side each time it is about to take a position, either right or left or sitting.

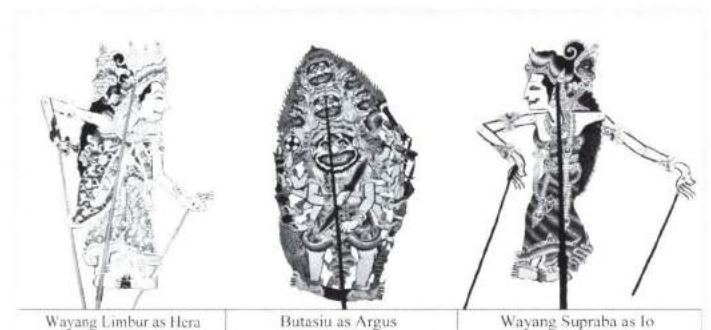
To achieve a walking movement, the hidden fingers under the skirt twist the puppet to the right to lead the body in a little bounce to the right until an emphasized step on the sound of the foot rattle

is concluded. Similarly, fingers twist left to lead the body bouncing to the left until the same emphasized step to the rattle's sound, while the hand swings right and left to complement the body's footsteps. An easier method is to move only one hand and plant the other on the puppet's waist, elbow akimbo. The fingers can move the body up and down slightly to indicate that the puppet is breathing or angry.

Previously, my intense exposure to wayang golek rod puppets came from Professor Kathy Foley at the University of California Santa Cruz; when I sat in her Non-Western Theatre class she introduced and showed us many videos of Asian theatre, including Indonesian wayang kulit leather puppetry and wayang golek rod puppetry. While I taught Balinese kecak choir, gender wayang music, and some dances,¹ I was permitted by Prof. Foley to stay at the Porter Provost House for about eight months (Winter-Summer 1991) where I often observed her teaching wayang golek and eventually played the gamelan to accompany her performances in many elementary schools and kindergartens around Santa Cruz, San Jose, San Francisco and nearby areas. Professor Foley's extensive knowledge and rich aesthetic perspectives on non-Western theatre often inspired me to connect and see the similarities between Western theatre (especially in Greek theater) and the mythology that I was learning from Prof. Don Wilmet at Brown University.²

To read the rest of Professor I Nyoman Sedana's fascinating account of performing Greek myths wayang style (as well as other web-exclusive content), go to unima-usa.org/publications.

I Nyoman Sedana is an artist, professor and researcher at the Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI) Denpasar, Bali.





by Peter J. Wilson

A Letter from Oz

Dear Andy,

You asked about the work I've done that has involved wayang. I first stumbled across the *wayang kulit* (Indonesian shadow puppetry) on my first trip to Indonesia way back in 1981. It was partly one of the reasons that I travelled to Bali and Java during my early days at exploring all things puppetry.

We know shadow puppetry dates back a very long time. The Karagoz from Turkey dates back to the Ottoman period and spread through the empire, including Greece. The Chinese have been doing shadow puppetry since the Han Dynasty (the 2nd imperial: dynasty- 206 BC- 220 AD). It's an amazing history.

Back in 1999, I began to develop a work titled *The Theft of Sita* based on the *Ramayana*. The work was done in Australia but in association with a dalang. The work actually came to NY in 2001—just after 9/11—and played at the Hervey Theatre in Brooklyn. It played around the globe for two years and was a great success.

The music combined Balinese gamelan with Western jazz musicians (twelve musicians in total: five Balinese and seven "Ozzies,") as well as five puppeteers (one Balinese and four

Western). What I found fascinating was not only to be working in a traditional Balinese art form, but that we also explored Western-style shadow puppets. On a stage with 9m x 9m of playing space, we operated the shadow puppets on trolleys low to the floor—under the light source but with puppets placed into the light. The so-called ballet on wheels was as interesting to watch as the show itself. The proscenium width was an 8m x 6m screen: very large shadows. The back of the stage also was used as a shadow, so lights were used from the rear to play on the front curtain and, when the downstage curtain was "Kabuki'd," the upstage screen behind the musicians was also used as a show surface.

It was one of my favorite performance works—I was associate director and puppeteer on the show. The performance was a one-act show that ran about eighty minutes. It was an example of a collaborative enterprise between traditional and contemporary shadow artistry. The Balinese typically perform on a screen about 1.5 meters high by 3 meters wide, have other puppeteers passing them puppets and are always seated—never moving from a central position. I learned about



the main characters from the Ramayana, in which I operated a traditional-style shadow puppet. At the same time, I passed on Western skills to the Balinese puppeteer who was keen to embrace a contemporary performance style.

The puppeteer I worked with was I Made Sidia—a wonderful dalang from Bali. In a few days I'm flying off to start work with Made on a new show in Bali. This will eventually be performed in a venue that is like no other ever used—a dry stage 12m wide by 10m deep by 7m high. The backstage wall is made of glass. It opens up to reveal a water world that is the same size as the dry stage. It will be a mighty challenge to tell a story with this type of mixed performance area (and, yes, I will have some mermaids!).

The puppeteer, I Made Sidia, has established an incredible training school in his village in Bona-Gianyar. I have been supporting him in various financial ways to purchase land so that he can develop a training program, and we have built up his arts community from around 150 five years ago to close to 600 artists learning dance-mask (topeng), puppetry, gamelan (all instruments), makeup—it has been an exciting venture, and a privilege to have been able to support my dear friend. I am very much welcomed into the village and they are like family to me. Many of the artists from the community have been involved in shows that I have directed at Bali Safari and Marine Park (where Bali Agung—a large scale theatre piece—is playing daily). These local artists are terrific to work with and the show has had wonderful success.



I hope the above is helpful of sorts. It's late and I'm currently working on four scripts, so best dash—hopefully, some work for the next year or so. These are busy days, as I prepare to head off to the island of the Gods—Bali!

Wishing you well, Andy, and good health to you.

Best, Peter

Peter J. Wilson is a busy puppeteer and director. He was interviewed by Elizabeth Ann Jochum in PI #34 (Directors), and pictures of his Bali Agung can be seen at his website: <http://pwilson.com.au/theatre/bali-agung/>

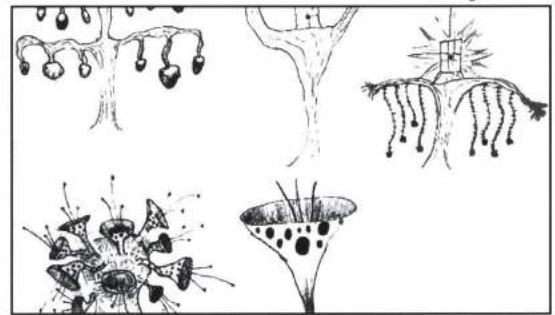
JAVANESE GAMELAN AND THE WEST



BY SUMARSAM

The author is happy to inform you that a paperback edition of the book is now available. *Javanese Gamelan and the West* studies the meaning, forms and traditions of the Javanese performing arts as they developed and changed through their contact with Western culture. urpress.com

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by David Harnish

Wayang Sasak:

Historical, Religious, and Social Forces in Lombok

Wayang sasak (wayang of the majority Sasak) has obscure origins. Embedded in the cultural and Islamic history of the Sasak people in Lombok, a neighbor island of Bali in Indonesia, this form represents sophisticated narrative, literary and aesthetic development and is intertwined with early Sasak identity. Legends state that Pangeran Sangupati, emissary of the Wali Songo (Nine Saints) in Java, spread a Sufi-style Islam with wayang serving as a tool of conversion in the 16th century (Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1993). Stories derive from the Persian/Indic *Serat Menak* involving Amir Hamzah, the uncle of Prophet Muhammad, generally as Jayengrana, who clears the path for Islam and conquers or converts non-believers. Because the stories emerged in late 17th to early 18th century Java, wayang likely presented Hindu stories until *Serat Menak* appeared (Goris 1936); local officials concur, though no clear documentation exists. Malay versions of *Serat Menak* came to Java in the 16th century and “Javanized” en route to Lombok over the next two centuries (Yampolsky 1997: 9). New stories composed in Java and Lombok (tales of Jayengrana’s descendants) were added to the repertoire. Epic performances featuring heroes and Islam seduced impoverished audiences with imageries of splendor, nobility, wealth, and tables and cutlery made of gold (Harnish 2001).

The accompanying ensemble, gamelan *wayang sasak*, features the meter-long *suling* bamboo flute, along with gongs, drums, and cymbals (Figure 1). Though similar to Balinese and Javanese traditions, *wayang sasak* and its music are unique to Lombok. Once an agent of *dakwa* (bringing people to Islam), wayang has sometimes been forbidden on the grounds that it depicts human forms

and maintains pre-Islamic elements. As dalang struggle to find venues, the form begins to secularize. Dalang have had to negotiate pressure from reformist Islam while mediating government efforts and attempting to attract modern audiences. Few groups are self-sustaining; many can organize performances, but some have had to sell puppets or instruments for foodstuffs. No dalang remain from the 1930s–1950s, when they were highly respected and performance opportunities were numerous. This essay is based on my research off-and-on over 30 years (particularly in 2001) and explores the music, puppets and narratives of *wayang sasak*, its problematic historic position and sociocultural context, and the challenges in sustaining the form in 21st century Indonesia.

Histories and Religious Forces

Islam entered Lombok in North Lombok (Javanese Sufism) and East Lombok (Orthodox) in the 16th century; Respective followers were later the Wetu Telu (Three Stages [of spiritual development and prayer], nominal Muslims) and Waktu Lima (Five Times [referring to five prayers per day], Orthodox Muslims). As differences widened, Sufic Islam and wayang were vulnerable to reformist scrutiny. Associated with earlier practices, wayang presents human images (sometimes a

puppet for the Prophet), narrative hero worship, and Hindu-related spirituality and practices, while performances invite intermixing the sexes and consumption of alcohol. Further, the water that cleans the puppets is often used for medicinal purposes, and the lamp oil is coveted for magic (Ecklund and Yampolsky 2002). For these reasons, reformist authorities have often scrutinized and prohibited wayang performances.



FIGURE 1. KOMANG KANTUN (*SULING*) LEADS A REHEARSAL OF GAMELAN *WAYANG SASAK*, GUNUNG SARI, 2001. PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

Antagonism toward *wayang sasak* and Wetu Telu derives from attempts to overthrow Hindu Balinese rule (1740-1894). Islam became the rallying point in the 19th century; it was distinct from Balinese practices and offered liberation. The movement fashioned reformism. Religious leaders invited the Dutch, who defeated Balinese in 1894 and established their own occupation. Shortly before the Dutch period (1894-1945), charismatic religious leaders, *tuan guru*, rose to authority. Held as participants in the original Javanese missions, modern *tuan guru* spend years in Arabia or Egypt to legitimize their authority and determine if art forms are *haram* (forbidden) or *halal* (permitted). The current governor is a *tuan guru* and prohibits traditional Sasak arts at state events. *Tuan guru* reject *adat* (customary law) practices, including ceremonies and arts diverging from scripture. With the removal of contexts conflicting with Islam (rites honoring ancestors, heirlooms, harvests, feasts, puberty), venues for traditional arts decreased. In the 1950s, the Masjumi party criticized *wayang* as a distraction and an inappropriate medium for Islamic messages. Then came the 1960s. As farmers, Wetu Telu were sympathetic to issues of land reform, and thousands were killed in the 1965-66 political upheaval that targeted communists. Survivors often sought refuge in orthodox Islam and *tuan guru*. It “quickly became politically unwise to stage a wayang performance” (Ecklund and Yampolsky 2002:203). Nevertheless, some dalang persevered and the regional government, fearing its demise, worked to support wayang by organizing festivals and competitions from 1970s-1990s.

Lalu Nasib of Central Lombok has been the most popular dalang since the 1970s. He is credited for adjusting wayang to gain popularity with youth, though often criticized for too many lurid jokes and anatomically correct puppets (huge-breasted women and well-endowed male puppets, all clown characters). Dalang Nasib’s increasing popularity led others to distinguishing two kinds of plays: “classic” (longer) and “modern” (shorter), the latter with humor and commercial endorsement. Since 2000 these styles have combined into shorter plays with humor and emphases on language, story and philosophy.

Puppets and Characters

Nine *Serat Menak* volumes are on *lontar* (palm inscriptions), written in Kawi, Sasak, and Balinese languages; a performed episode is a small fraction of one volume. Not all dalang know each volume.



FIGURE 2. KI SIWARTI, REVERED DALANG OVER 100 AT THE TIME, DEMONSTRATES MANIPULATING THE GUNUNGAN WITH JAYENGRANA AND MUNIGARIM AS ADAM AND EVE. BONGOR, 2001.

Some are illiterate but receive oral training from teachers or fathers (often dalang). Few own the *lontar*; some use *bel*, texts published in Java, or *takapan* (excerpts from *lontar*). Dalang Nasib includes a third source: original plays (*kekawin*) (Yampolsky 1997:13). A few minor differences exist between the performance styles of West, Central and East Lombok (few dalang in the East, which is more reformist). Interestingly, some of the finest 20th century dalang were Balinese, whose families have lived for generations in Lombok. Several dalang

have joined PEPADI (Association of Indonesian dalang) and have performed nationally or even internationally.

Apart from some unsuccessful 1980s-1990s experiments (new puppets, stories, lighting, accompaniment) intended to help sustain the form with a new generation, wayang has not changed significantly in perhaps 200 years. Dalang have 12-140 puppets: Islamic/righteous characters enter right of the screen; non-Islamic characters and demons enter left; clowns enter both sides. In the inevitable battles, the Islamic side wins. Some that oppose Islam are killed; many become converts and switch to the right. With two exceptions, puppets are dissimilar from those in Bali, and are believed to be related to those in Cirebon or in Central Javanese *wayang gedhog* (puppets for/performance of the Panji cycle of stories). Like elsewhere, the central puppet is the *gunungan* (mountain), which has a triangular shape and is more similar to Javanese than to Balinese counterparts. This puppet represents beginning and end, nature, a forest, the night, the divine, death, and more. Many puppets are standard, though small differences exist in shape and color. Unlike in Bali and Java, no color is required for any character. All puppets are painted to the whims of the puppeteer.

The major puppets are *wayang prabu*, noble characters from various kingdoms. The lead character is Jayengrana (Jayaprana), dressed not as a king but as a commoner to reflect his humility; he is Amir Hamza, carries other titles and is called *wong agung menak* (great noble). Most *wayang prabu* speak Kawi. Umar Maya and Umar Madi, shaped like Mredah and Twalen in Bali, speak Sasak and Balinese, respectively. Umar Maya, close to Jayengrana (often related), can fly, disappear, and prepare medicines, and carries various titles. Umar Madi has 44 siblings and provides occasional comic relief consuming mass quantities of food. Ecklund and Yampolsky (2002: 201) discovered these characters were named from figures in Prophet Muhammad’s entourage (Table 1).



FIGURE 3. DALANG BUDIMAN MANIPULATES BANJARANSARI, WAYANG PRABU AND SON OF JAYENGRANA, ON HIS RIGHT, AND A RAKSASA ON HIS LEFT. THE ASSISTANT ON HIS RIGHT ADDS GALUR, A WAYANG RERENCEKAN, CARRYING A WEAPON. MATARAM, 2001.

The two major left *wayang prabu* are Prabu Nusirwan and Patih Baktak. The former (king) and latter (prime minister) hail from the Madayin kingdom and have flaws that doom them to defeat. Prabu Nusirwan is Jayengrana's father-in-law, sometimes setting in motion family rivalry. He is easily deceived by Patih Baktak, who is conniving and ensures the left side instigates battle. Also entering from left are demons (*raksasa*). Other characters, called *wayang rerencekan*, are commoners. These puppets (sometimes called *punakawan* like in Bali and Java) are mostly clown characters and almost all speak common Sasak, though they can speak any language. The two best-known characters, Rurah and Kembang, come from the left side and speak Balinese and Sasak, respectively. Other *wayang rerencekan* are non-standard and often made by dalang; thus, no two puppeteers have the same set. Unlike counterparts in Java and Bali, these rarely translate dialogue of *wayang prabu* into Sasak. Though some dialogue is recapped, the audience misses details of *wayang prabu* interactions.

In performance

The dalang signals the gamelan to begin. Led by *suling*, the ensemble performs "Rangsaran" ("Stimulate") three times, symbolizing fire, air, and water. After cycles, the dalang plants the *gunungan* (mountain) in the middle of the banana trunk (*gedebong*), symbolizing Earth. He lights the oil lamp, *labakan*, symbolizing the sun, and brings forth the two main puppets, representing Adam and Hawa (Eve) (Figure 2). He recreates the world and universe and weaves narratives encapsulating morality heroism and triumph of good/Muslim forces over non-believers to educate and entertain. The dalang represents Allah while assistants represent Gabriel and Gabriel's helpers. He balances the white center (holiness) and black border (physical earth).

Techniques are similar to those in Bali. There are two assistants, one on either side of the puppet-boxes, and the ensemble sets up behind the dalang (Figure 3). The audience almost exclusively sits on the front side of the screen, watching the shadows of the puppets. Narratives unfold similar to those in Bali, though rules are not rigid and voice or puppet manipulation is open to interpretation. Event sponsors might request a story; other times dalang choose those he knows well or fit the occasion. In complete control, the dalang leads entrances, actions, speech, songs, and exits of all characters and action (e.g., battles, romances), while narrating. He signals transitions to musicians via *keketak* (the wooden piece struck against the puppet box) or through text or a song. Performances begin between 8 and 9PM and run five to six hours. Shows rarely end as late as dawn and nowadays conclude as early as 1AM. The structure of performance often follows a 3-part scheme: idyllic (a peaceful palace scene), chaos (upcoming conflict or internal disarray), and resolution (battle/victory for the right side).

Table 1: Short List of Puppets, Languages, and Character Types

<u>Right-Side Puppets</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Character Type</u>
Jayengrana	Kawi	Humble prince, hero; various titles/powers
Umar Maya	Sasak	Nobleman, various titles and powers
Umar Madi	Balinese	Nobleman, comic relief
Maktal	Kawi	Advisor, warrior
Taptanus/Santanus	Kawi	Brother advisors, warriors
Selandir	Kawi	Warrior
Munigarim	Kawi	First wife of Jayengrana
<u>Left-Side Puppets</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Character Type</u>
Prabu Nursiwan	Kawi	King with flaws
Patih Baktak	Kawi	Sinister prime minister
Raksasa	Kawi	Demons
Rurah	Balinese	Clown sidekick
Kembang	Sasak	Clown sidekick

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

Music is sequenced. "Rangsang" ("Excite") is performed three times as the dalang lights the lamp and removes puppets from the puppet-box. "Telaga Dundang" ("Awakening") accompanies the arrangements of puppets on the trunk, and "Kabor" is played as the dalang dances the *gunungan*. The first scene is often a meeting (*sangkep*), and the *suling* leads the gamelan in "Balik Rondon" (Figure 3). Dalang call upon pieces for walking ("Jangel"), departure ("Lederan"), battles ("Batel"), weeping ("Nangis") and for demons ("Cirebon") as needed.

Though endangered, *wayang sasak* has endured scrutiny from religious reformists, government efforts of preservation, and apathy from a tech-savvy generation. Related to Java in terms of puppet shape and storylines, and related to Bali in terms of technique and staging, *wayang sasak* remains a unique art form that represents the spirituality, language competence, social values, and morals/ethics of pre-modern Lombok, repackaged with greater humor and contemporary reflection. Dalang. Lalu Nasib among them, have taken action, adapted and sustained *wayang sasak* into the 21st century.



FIGURE 4. DALANG DUMARSIH PERFORMS A CONDENSED WAYANG SASAK PERFORMANCE FOR AN ARTS FESTIVAL. MATARAM, 2014.

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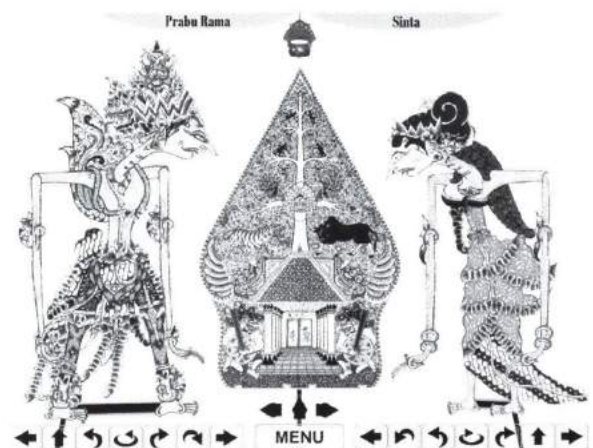
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The Picturesque and Mechanical Theater of Peter Blancan – Part I

by Ryan Howard

Peter C. Blancan was an important early nineteenth-century showman in the United States about whom improved research technology has revealed quite a lot of information, in addition to the brief account that Paul McPharlin could provide in his *Puppet Theatre in America* in 1949.¹ McPharlin was aware only of two advertisements for Blancan's shows, in Boston in September 1808 and New York in December of the same year, but we now have records of him in Charleston, South Carolina, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia between c. 1801 and c. 1814.

Blancan was the fifth great-grandfather of Wendy S. Hockenberry of Dayton, Ohio. Ms. Hockenberry has compiled a family tree going back six generations, and she has very generously shared with me the information she has gathered about Peter C. Blancan. He was born in France, c. 1764, probably at Bordeaux (in a passport of 1806 issued to him in Bordeaux to return to Charleston, his age is given as 42 and his place of origin as Bordeaux²). However, in an ad published in 1803, he stated that he was "from Paris."³ It is not known when he settled in the United States, or whether he became an American citizen. In 1851,⁴ his daughter, Catharine Massicot, stated in a passport application that her father had been naturalized in Charleston, South Carolina, but it is unclear why he would have required a French passport to return to the United States from Bordeaux if he was an American citizen.

In his youth, he was a seaman. This strengthens the likelihood that he was a native of Bordeaux, which was an important shipping center from ancient times. He was recorded as the master of the *Young Isaac* in October 1788 when she set sail from Charleston for Curaçao,⁵ and as late as 1808 he was still given the title "Captain."⁶ Another of Blancan's maritime connections was the marriage of his daughter, Catharine Eugenie, to the sea captain William Massicot, in 1813.⁷ Wendy Hockenberry discovered that Capt. Massicot was a French privateer during the War of 1812.

By 1802, Blancan had established a home in Charleston, South Carolina, another important seaport. He was recorded in the city directory between 1802 and 1806, first at 195 King Street and then at 89 Queen Street. However, he apparently kept up his seafaring life: in April 1808, his name was included in the list of letters remaining in the post office at Savannah, Georgia, another seaport.⁸

Peter C. Blancan had at least four children: Catharine Eugenie⁹ Blancan and Peter Chery Blancan and another son and daughter whose names are unknown. Peter Chery Blancan survived his father by many years, and he was extensively documented as a businessman, dealing in fabrics, wines, and real estate. At least one of Blancan's children participated in his shows: a performance on 8 August 1808 was "for the Benefit of Miss Blancan. Attached to the Theatre Picturesque and Mechanique."¹⁰

Between 13 June and 8 August 1808, Blancan presented his Theatre Pitoresque & Mechanique at the Vauxhall Garden in Charleston.¹¹ The Vauxhall or Vaux Hall was a pleasure garden at the corner of Broad and Friend [Legare] Streets, operated by the French-born dancer, acrobat, actor, tightrope walker, and theater impresario Alexandre Placide and his wife, the English-born singer and actress Charlotte Wrihten. The establishment maintained a troupe of actors and a complete small orchestra and offered regular concerts with singers from the city's theater,¹² and these artists presumably participated in Blancan's performances.

In September 1808, Blancan was in Boston, where he informed the public "that his new and elegant Picturesque & Mechanical Exhibition will be performed in the Lower Hall, under the Columbian Museum, Tremont street—and as he does not expect to tarry in town but a few days, he will perform every evening, on different subjects, which will be each night mentioned in the Bills. First Seats 1 dollar—2d do, 50 cents—Children half price."¹³ In December 1808 and

January 1809, he appeared in New York, "in a very convenient new building in Broadway, opposite the Hospital."¹⁴ The hospital mentioned in this ad was the Old New York Hospital, which was on the west side of Broadway between Duane and Worth Streets. In other ads, the location of this "new built hall" is given as "in Broadway near Magazine-street."¹⁵ When the building burned down on 30 April 1812, arson was suspected. The fire was reported in the *Columbian* on the next day:




Fantocchini.

Fire. Last night, at half past 11, fire broke out in the "Theatre Pittoresque et Mechanique," nearly opposite the Hospital, and burnt it down, besides nearly destroying Mr. Jones's malt-house adjoining, with a considerable quantity of malt, and injuring a distillery, Mrs. Martin's dwelling-house, and Mr. Parcell's coachmaker's shop. The fire is supposed to have been intentionally communicated, as there was neither stove nor chimney in the room, and the building had not been occupied for two or three weeks.¹⁶

Between 1810 and 1813 Blancan is recorded in Philadelphia, in the 1810 Federal Census and the 1813 Philadelphia directory, at 36 Walnut. No evidence has yet been found that he gave performances there. It is assumed that he died in 1813 or 1814, because the 1814 directory lists his wife as "widow of P. Blancan." Since the building opposite the Hospital in New York was still called the Théâtre pittoresque et mécanique when it was destroyed by fire in 1812, it could be that Blancan's helpers continued to work there after Blancan moved to Philadelphia.

Most of Blancan's ads include a two-inch round design showing the figures of Punch and Pierrot, encircled by the words "Theatre Pittoresque & Mechanique"; McPharlin notes that this is the first known American illustrated advertisement for a puppet show. According to McPharlin, the design was probably brought from France, but it was copied either in engraved wood or type metal by Alexander Anderson, an important American engraver. McPharlin, who was very knowledgeable about the history of printing, found the original proof of the design in one of Anderson's many scrapbooks in the New York Public Library, and used this in his book in place of the rather worn example that appears in the newspaper ads.¹⁷ However, if Blancan acquired the design in France, it is difficult to account for the



MR. BLANCAN,
RESPECTFULLY informs the public, that he has of late arrived in this city with a kind of amusement entirely new to this country. These performances consist in Fantocinis or Artificial Comedians, Arabesk Fires, small Chinese Shades and Animated Pictures, Imitating those of the celebrated Pet-r's, in Paris. These four kinds of amusements take place every Mouday, Wednesday and Friday of every week, at a very convenient new building in Broadway, opposite the Hospital.
 Price of admittance—Boxes 75 cents—Pit 50 cents—and gallery 25.—Children under the age of twelve, half price.—Smoking is particularly forbidden.
 Jan 11


misspelling of the French words *pittoresque* and *mécanique*. In the latest ads that have come to light, the appearance of the circular device was altered: in that of 6 March 1809, the figures were eliminated, leaving a blank space (I have not found any indication that Pierrot and Punch were actually in Blancan's show) and the circle was rotated so that the word "Theatre" is at the top of the circle. In the ad of 9 May 1809 the device was omitted altogether.¹⁸

Blancan was proud of the variety of his performances, hoping to "attract the ap-

plause of the spectators, and prevent that disgust which a sameness of scenes generally gives."¹⁹ He changed his program from night to night, announcing the attractions in playbills.²⁰ His productions required a large amount of bulky equipment, so that transportation from place to place was expensive, but he informed the New York public that "many having complained that the price of admittance to the Pictoresque [*sic*] and Mechanical Theatre prevented them from seeing this amusement, Mr. Blancan being proud of pleasing the public . . . he will lower the price of places. . . . The expenses which are necessary for the movement of the mechanical part of the theatre are the only motives for not more reducing the price."²¹ It seems likely that his travel between Charleston, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia was accomplished by ship; sailings to and from these ports were regularly announced in the press.

Music was a prominent component of Blancan's presentations, at least in Charleston. On 8 August 1808, for example, there were a full orchestra, songs by Miss Thomas, and a clarinet concerto by Mr. Dubois.²² I assume that these musicians were part of the regular personnel of the Vauxhall.

The effectiveness of Blancan's productions depended to a great extent on an impressive display of technical skill, and in this Blancan carried on a general tendency of later eighteenth-century European puppetry. Charles Magnin bemoaned this trend in the French puppet theater, which by the 1770s, he wrote, showed a constant diminution of "spirit, invention, and malice" and a corresponding reliance on "the effects and surprises of the mechanical."²³ Blancan was a highly skilled craftsman. In the passport that he received in Bordeaux, his occupation is given as *négociant* (merchant), but he was listed in city directories of Charleston and Philadelphia and in the census of 1810 as a turner, and in ads he published in Charleston newspapers in 1803 he touted his skills at turning "all kinds of work in Metals, Ivory, Tortoise Shell and Wood." He offered snuff and trinket boxes and picture frames as fine as anything available in Paris or London. In



For Curacoa,
 The SLOOP
Young Isaac,
 Peter Blancan, Master;
WILL sail the 6th of October;
 has one half of her cargo
 engaged, for freight of the remain-
 der or passage, apply to
G. F. Newman,
 No. 226, Meeting street.
 September 6. 3t eod

addition, he repaired air pumps and electrical machines, and furnished brass wheels for models of mill work and other machinery. He said he was authorized to state that "his honor the Intendant [mayor], accompanied by some gentlemen, having lately examined his performances, was pleased to express his entire satisfaction; and recommend to the notice and encouragement of the public, as a most ingenious and able artist." He also offered to give lessons in turning and wished to take on one or two apprentices.²⁴

The section of Blancan's performance most like a traditional puppet show was that with string marionettes, which he called French *fantoccini* or artificial actors. The word *fantoccini*, "little puppet" in Italian, was adopted throughout Europe to refer to certain Italian string puppets that became popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is not clear how Blancan's "French *fantoccini*" differed from the original Italian variety. Charles Magnin noted that there were several puppet theaters at the Parisian foire Sainte-Ovide in 1776, including the *Fantoccini italiens* and the *Fantoccini français*, but that he knew nothing about the plays that were performed there.²⁵ Henryk Jurkowski defines the *Italian fantoccini* as complicated string marionettes capable of tricks and transformations, in shows featuring the characters of Harlequin and Columbine, and he explains that in the seventeenth century, the Italians had made a present of their Pulcinella figure to European puppetry, and that in the eighteenth century they popularised another commedia dell'arte character, Harlequin, who until then had dominated the live troupes of the Italian comedy.²⁶

Harlequin played an important role in this part of Blancan's show. Sometimes he was the stage manager or master of ceremonies, and sometimes he did a dance to the accompaniment of a stately chaconne. Harlequin was an extraordinarily popular figure on the regular American stage during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, either as comic relief during the main play or as the leading character in an afterpiece in the form of a pantomime farce. This was a common feature of the performances at Charleston's Theater during the period when Blancan was working at the Vauxhall.

At least once, Blancan's marionettes put on a little play, *Cadeaux de nocces*, in French,²⁷ but his most characteristic marionettes were trick puppets, capable of performing complicated actions, in a series of individual turns or acts. This was an example of the technical emphasis of Blancan's shows and an important early appearance of the typical nineteenth-century marionette variety show. Paul McPharlin opined that "the variety show done with string-puppets, abounding in acrobatics, dancing, and transformations," was the predominant type of puppet show in nineteenth-century America.²⁸ Some of these puppets of Blancan's show were a scene of Harlequin's grandmother, who entered with her grandchildren, fourteen in number, in two baskets; an American jockey, dancing and playing with his hat; an automaton figure, performing extraordinary feats of activity and suppleness, accompanied by his clown; a Saxon

[or Prussian] Lady dancing with a vizor [*sic*: mask?], which she alternately removed and replaced; a Chinese dance, by a Chinese beau and his sweetheart; a Moor, dancing and playing his tambourine; a hornpipe danced by an English beau; a drunken man, who repeatedly filled his glass and drank; a sailor who pulled off his clothes to fight; and a cudgel player, dancing and executing several feats with his stick. The number of dances in this list implies that Blancan's shows included music, although it is not usually mentioned in the ads.

To be continued in our next issue

Ryan Howard, Ph. D., is an emeritus professor of art history at Morehead State University. He is the author of *Paul McPharlin and the Marionette Theater and Punch and Judy in 19th Century America*, as well as numerous articles and reviews related to the puppet theater.

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² Archives départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux, 22 November 1806

³ *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, Charleston, S.C., 21 May 1803, 3-3, in the Craftsman Database of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, NC.

⁴ Ancestry.com, U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1855, Roll 036. Catharine Eugenia Massicot, 12 May 1851.

⁵ "For Curaçao, The Sloop Young Isaac, Peter Blancan, *Master*, Will sail the 6th of October; has one half of her cargo engaged, for freight of the remainder or passage, apply to G. F. Newman, No. 226, Meeting street. September 6." (*Charleston City Gazette*, 10 Sep 1788, p. 4).

⁶ "List of Letters Remaining in the Post Office, Charleston (S.C.), September 1st, 1808." *Charleston City Gazette*, 7 Sep 1808, p. 3); Blancan, Capt. Also 1 Sept (*City Gazette*, 14 Sep 1808, p. 4; 21 Sep, p. 4)

⁷ Massicot—Blancan [*sic*], the 22d [of May], by same, William Massicot and Catharine Eugenie Blancan [*sic*]; witnesses—René La Roche and Frances Eugenie Duché. (*Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, Volume XX. Published by the Society, 1909. "Marriages of 1813," p. 138).

⁸ "List of Letters Remaining in the Post Office, 1 Apr 1808: Peter Blancan—2," *Savannah Republican*, 5 Apr 1808, p. 4.

(notes continued from page 34)

- ⁹This name is spelled Eugenia in some documents and Eugenie in others.
- ¹⁰Charleston *City Gazette*, 6 Aug 1808, p. 3.
- ¹¹Charleston *City Gazette*, 13 Jun 1808, p. 3; 6 Aug 1808, p. 3; 8 Aug 1808, p. 3.
- ¹²Preservation Society of Charleston: (www.halseymap.com/flash/window.asp?HMID=22). There was only one playhouse in Charleston during this period, and it was usually called simply the Theater.
- ¹³Boston *Democrat*, 28 Sep 1808, p. 3.
- ¹⁴New York *Mercantile Advertiser*, 26 Dec 1808, p. 3; also other dates.
- ¹⁵New York *Mercantile Advertiser*, 31 Dec 1808, p. 3; 4 Jan 1809, p. 3 .
- ¹⁶*Columbian*, New York, NY, 1 May 1812, p. 3.
- ¹⁷McPharlin, op. cit., p. 93.
- ¹⁸New York *Commercial Advertiser*, 6 Mar 1809, p. 2; 9 May 1809, p. 2.
- ¹⁹New York *Mercantile Advertiser*, 31 Dec 1808, p. 3.
- ²⁰Boston *Democrat*, 28 Sep 1808, p. 3.
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- ²²Charleston *City Gazette*, 6 Aug 1808, p. 3.
- ²³Charles Magnin, *Histoire des marionnettes en Europe depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours*. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1852, p. 168.
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- ²⁵Charles Magnin, op. cit., p. 177.
- ²⁶Henryk Jurkowski, *A History of European Puppetry from its Origin to the End of the 19th Century*. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996, Vol. 1, pp. 174, 202.
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Ety Fefer's *Grumildos*: Yearning for a World without Prejudice



From 25 Sept. to 11 Jan. 2015, Manhattan's Museum of Sex (MoSex) was home to *Grumildos*, an evocative and multifaceted exhibit by the Peruvian-born artist, Ety Fefer. An online press release by MoSex describes *Grumildos* as "Part kinetic theatre, part art installation, and part puppet performance." In addition to discussing the fusion of genres that animates Fefer's puppets and create a site-specific context for the show, I will consider the sociopolitical dimensions of her work. In a recent email, Fefer explained the significance of her exhibit's title:

Grumildos is a name I invented when I was very young. My father used to draw strange faces and monsters on napkins every time we were in a restaurant. I admired [them] so much that I started to copy him, and gave them that name. Now, I think *Grumildos* represents a world with no prejudice. A world without conventions, where beings rejected by society can belong. (Fefer 2015a)

Rooted in the curiosity of childhood, Fefer's shocking puppets reference their origins through the artist's choice of plasticine and Super Sculpey as primary mediums of composition. In her email, Fefer recalled herself as "a little girl who used to love to play with dolls and Barbies" (2015). The problem, she explained, was that "I was a very bad student, so I was punished all the time and my dolls were taken away" (2015). Determined to preserve the beloved companions exiled from her bedroom, Fefer began drawing the dolls from memory, then remaking them in plasticine as "very small puppets." They were easy to hide and only came out to play when her parents were not around.

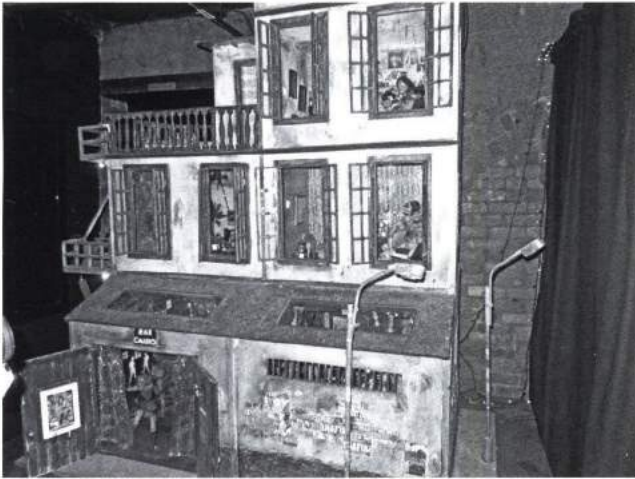
Like the forbidden dolls of Fefer's past, her exhibit envisions furtive spaces where those on the fringes of mainstream culture can find acceptance, entertainment, or even sex among fellow outsiders. Every puppet presented here is a visible misfit. They often combine human and animal body parts, not to mention arachnid legs and crustacean claws. *Grumildos* are monsters in a literal sense, yet the exhibit's power lies in how it challenges the negative and moralizing connotations of this term.

CITIES OF DESIRE, SITES OF MEMORY

Visitors enter Fefer's installation by descending into the nightclub-like basement of MoSex. Uneven brick walls, exposed pipes, and Fefer's own props quickly establish a rough yet exotic milieu. A string of lights encased in test tubes suggests a dicey experiment. A leather chaise invites reclining. This makeshift parlor prepares us for the edgier world just beyond it, where puppet musicians and sex workers stage various erotic shows. In part, *Grumildos* strives to recreate what Fefer recalls as "strange bars in the center of Lima: very raw places where it was almost dangerous to go." In 1999, when she returned to Peru after studying puppetry in Prague, these bars were the heart of Lima's prostitution district. Intrigued by that subculture's mysteries, Fefer began "recreating the characters I was curious about [...] trying to understand but also being part of that world in my own way." Today, those bars are all shuttered. Their status as memories may be why the red-light districts reconstructed in *Grumildos* are simultaneously dreamlike, and visibly rooted in the realities of race, class, and gender.

The installation consists of two rooms. The first one features six discrete groupings of performing *grumildos*. Although encased in glass, their routines are not tableaux presented by silent and motionless participants. Fefer's puppets jolt, grind, thrust, and whirl as they dance or play musical instruments. Ragtime tunes fill the dark space, alternating with blues and retro pop. The first *grumildo* on display is a fly-like creature with leathery wings and four legs in cowboy boots. His black body includes breasts. Screw eye hooks hold together his many joints. Instead of hands, he displays giant, bristly claws. Next to the cowboy are three exotic dancers. One puppet's muscle-bound torso attaches to crustacean legs. He reveals an enormous penis by flexing his crab-like pelvis. His costars are a woman with an Afro and eight hairy spider arms, and a grinning man in a fedora, proudly hoisting his genitals into the air. The next ensemble includes a leopard lead singer with three sets of breasts. She constantly tries to shield her androgynous face with a big furry paw. A black anteater plays drums, his penis casually protruding. A sponge-like puppet plays keyboard, occasionally glancing at viewers as if to test our reactions. The most unnerving *grumildo*, enshrined in a separate glass case, is a naked pink pig on a chair, tapping one leg to the music. Dressed in shiny gold boots, he appears to be an urbane spectator, like other MoSex patrons and me. His pig face is intelligent and thoughtful. His penis rises up and down with his tapping leg. The puppets' movements are repetitive, yet unique. Fefer uses small, low-speed motors attached to crankshafts. By trial and error, she finds suitable motions for each: "Each puppet is different. I try to understand the weight, the possibilities, the balance, and slowly you see their magic. It is a beautiful process where I concentrate a lot; a millimeter can break the movement's smoothness."

A dark curtain demarcates the exhibit's second room. It houses a meticulous, three-level structure called "Bar Cairo" that resembles



toured Europe and the Americas for a decade. MoSex will be its last stop for a while, but Fefer has premiered a new exhibit in Lima, titled *Warriors, Monsters, and Beasts* (2011).

Fefer likes to be present in the installation space, because she enjoys hearing peoples' reactions. However, she noted during our interview that many comments overheard at MoSex were disrespectful of the work. American discomfort with nudity, body hair, race, and sex work may contribute to this rudeness. For me, though, the eerie magic of *Grumildos* is how it invites New Yorkers to remember the gritty histories of our city, and to reflect on changes that have sanitized the global landscape as a whole. Just as Lima's red-light bars have closed, so have meatpacking kink clubs like Hellfire, and Lower East Side dive bars like The Cock and Meow Mix, whose sexually fluid patrons presented alternatives to the heteronormativity that dominates more upscale parts of Manhattan. As real sites of possibility are lost, puppets are left to reenact them and to rekindle our monstrously liberating memories.

-review by Theresa Smalec

Theresa Smalec is an Assistant Professor in Communication Arts and Sciences at Bronx Community College/CUNY. She is a 2015 fellow in CUNY's Faculty Fellowship Publication Program, and a recent recipient of a PSC-CUNY Research Grant. Her forthcoming book is titled *Ron Vawter's Life in Performance*.

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From Hua Hua Zhang's *Who Are You?* Photograph by Bill Hebert

UNIMA-USA Citations 2014-2015



HAND TO GOD

Since 1975, UNIMA-USA has awarded Citations of Excellence (the “UNI”) that recognize and reward the best of the puppetry arts in this country. In addition to encouraging worthy puppeteers, the goal of the Citations program is to provide credible recognition that will aid puppeteers as they seek audiences in this country and abroad. The Citations are awarded to shows that touch their audiences deeply; that totally engage, enchant and enthrall. In meeting the criteria for excellent puppetry, Citation-worthy shows must also stand as prime examples of excellent theatre.



THE NARRATIVE OF VICTOR KARLOCH

LIVE THEATRE

Hand to God—a Broadway production by Robert Askins, directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel. “A thrilling night of theatre begins with a prologue, a blasphemous hilarious rant by the darkly sinister sock puppet Tyrone speaking from a simple puppet booth.” “Excellent cast, great script, theatre at its best.” photo: JoanMarcus



BEING ELMO

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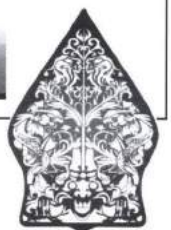
The Narrative of Victor Karloch—a Victorian ghost story by Kevin McTurk of Spirit Cabinet Films.. “The design of the puppets and sets are amazing! They set a definite mood for the piece, like a classic Gothic horror story.” A “fine film—worthy of an award.”

Being Elmo—a documentary directed by Constance Marks. “An inspiring film!!” “As soon as the screening finished, Kevin received a standing ovation.”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHbW2BKjKgc

Star Wars Wayang Kulit

Pak Daim, a master puppeteer in the field of *wayang kulit*, teamed up with visual artist Tintoy Chuo to produce a fusion wayang kulit performance using the storyline and characters from “Star Wars.”



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Jack Fields at Godnick Slam Host
Photo by Julie Harbers

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Congratulations to Kevin McTurk for winning a UNIMA citation of Excellence for his IBEX-produced film, *The Narrative of Victor Karloch!* See it at THESPIRITCABINET.COM

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Victor Karloch from *The Narrative of Victor Karloch*



Puppethappenings.org

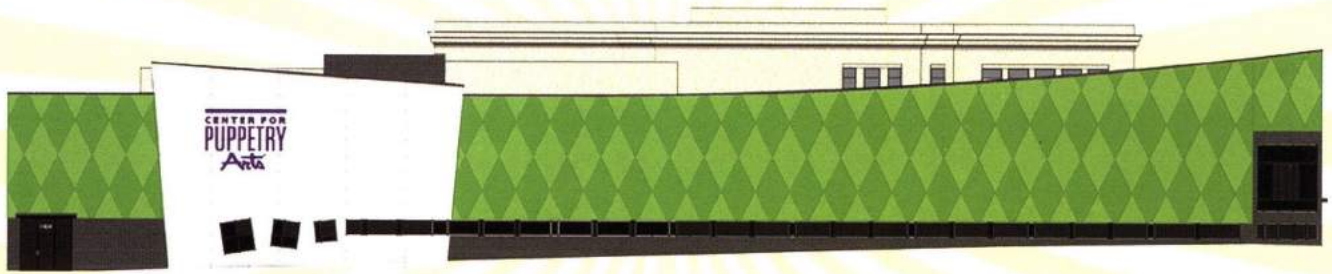
Find out what is happening in contemporary puppet theater



Shank's Mare is the recipient of two Jim Henson Foundation Grants - 2015 Project & 2010 Seed
Photo: Ayumi Sakamoto

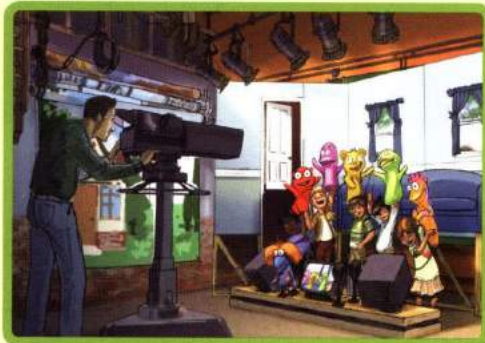
Coming Up: La MaMa Puppet Series November 5-22, 2015
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