

PUPPETS THROUGHOUT ASIA

Di Dunlop

One of the crafts that is common throughout Asia, as well as Europe, is puppets. The origins of three-dimensional puppetry and shadow shows goes back beyond record in both Europe and Asia.

They have been used as a form of entertainment, as well as a way of educating the young of a society in the morals and religion of their culture.

There has been considerable continuity in puppetry with, at the same time, fluctuation in public interest and enthusiasm. The oldest traditions are probably Chinese—there are references in Chen Yuan's *Book of Music* to a puppet-master who lived in the tenth century BC. Chinese marionettes are worked by up to forty strings, which allows for refinements such as mobile eyebrows and hands.

In Japan, the *Bunraku* have their roots in the old *Joruri* while puppet groups on the island of Sado in the Japanese Sea were even more tenacious in preserving ancient ways. Development, and greater sophistication in the mechanics lead to these having a more popular appeal. By the seventeenth century play-books were being sold and a folk hero, *Kimpira*, emerged.

In Europe, puppetry is basically considered to be for children, while in Asia it is seen as an art-form for adult entertainment as well. It is very common for puppet theatres to reflect current affairs in society where it is acceptable to include political satire and social drama such as in the *Wayang Kulit* puppets of Java and Bali.

Indo-Asian shadow figures

There is a long tradition of shadow theatre in India and South-East Asia. The puppeteers use leather figures to cast shadows on screens, and some performances may take many nights to complete. The narrator may speak in several languages during a single play. For example, clown figures may translate the old Javanese of aristocratic characters into the colloquial language of Balinese audiences and in Kedah there is a puppeteer who alternates between Malay and Thai.



Ravana, Sita and Hanumana—shadow theatre, Orissa

Music, songs, poetry and commentary accompany the play. Interludes unrelated to the central theme may include everything from comic and political skits to local tales and history. While some forms are primarily religious in nature, entertainment and political education are other uses for shadow puppet theatre, especially in Java.

Religious significance predominates in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, some being attended only by the gods. For example, at the Bhagavati shrines in Kerala the performances are for Kali, who missed the killing of Ravana

because she was slaying Karika.

Some traditions have it that the souls of dead ancestors enter puppets, which are then said to have magic healing powers to cure demonic possession, treat disease, and ensure rain. For example, the *Chalonarang* legend of Bali helps prevent cholera and malaria by placating *Rangda* the witch.

The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the most popular epics used in shadow plays. These stories vary immensely through India, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Shadow theatre is thought to have existed in Java by the seventh century.

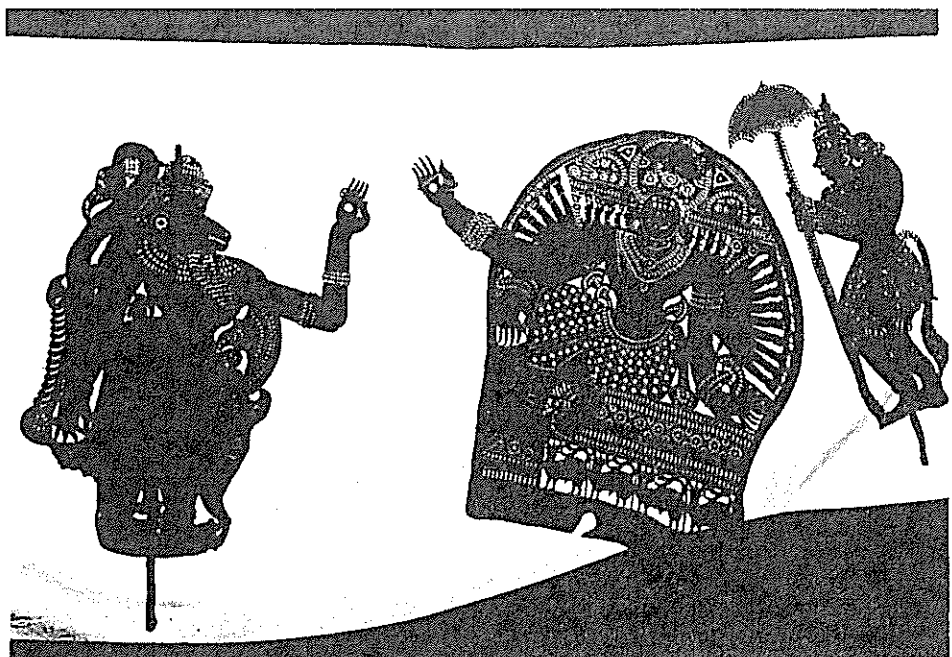
It is believed that the high degree of stylisation was a device to circumvent Islamic stricture against human representation. This is especially evident in the extremely long, thin upper extremities. Conventions of refinement (*alus*) and crudeness (*kazar*) are well defined. The human head is depicted in profile, whereas the face of a demon is drawn to show both eyes.

The head is tilted forward to reflect virtue and other positive qualities. Refined figures have small delicate builds with closed stances; their noses are thin and pointed, they have straight foreheads and elongated 'rice grain' eyes. Large bulbous noses, rounded bulging eyes, fangs, thick lips, and wide stances distinguish the gross bodies of coarse figures. Facial coloration may be used to demonstrate emotion; black symbolises discipline, self-centred and spiritual development; red faces denote emotionality, aggressiveness and strength; white indicates youth, serenity and beauty.

In Thailand, performances were common in the late seventh century. Nang yai figures are very large non-articulated pieces of great artistic power. Group scenes may be as large as seven feet high. Some are blackened by soot or charcoal, others painted with vegetable dyes.

In Kampuchea males are shown in profile, while females are shown full-face with cheeks cut out. There are group and individual compositions. Dancers may hold the figures aloft both behind and in front of the screen. The Nang Sbek touch is also called ayang, after a comic figure resembling Semar of Java. The figures are made of buffalo leather with articulated limbs.

In Malaysia, shadow theatre is most popular in Kelantan province. The puppets are stockier and more crudely made than the Nang Talung and Wayang Kulit figures. Refined puppets have one articulated arm ending in a long-fingered hand held in a curving pose. Comic figures have articulated arms and jaws.

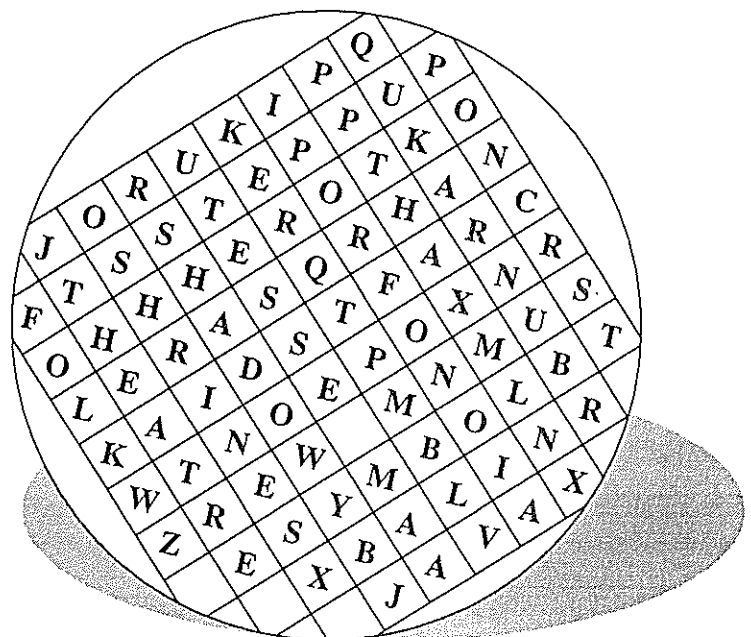


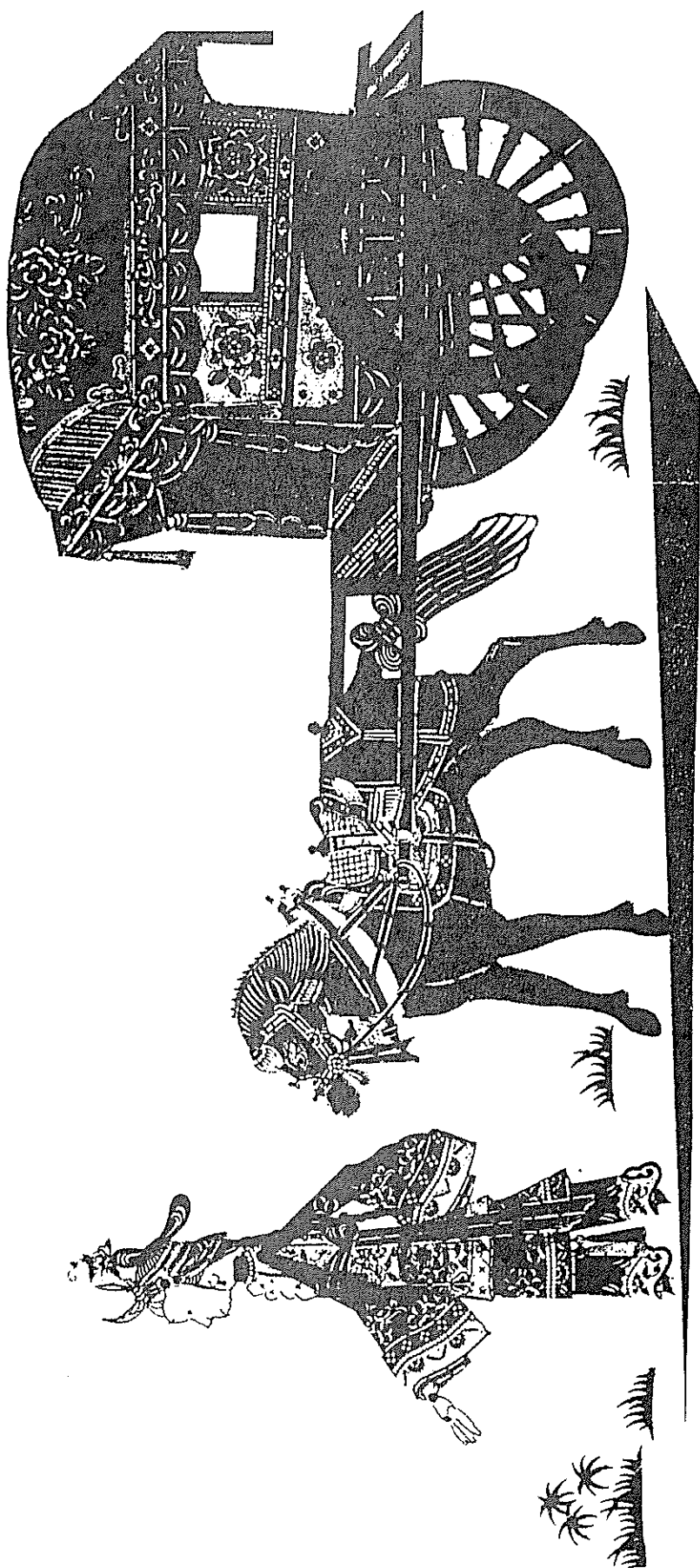
Hanumana, Rama and Lakshmana—shadow theatre, Karnataka

Schools of Shadow Play

	Place	Shadow Theatre
Orissa, India		<i>ravanach haya</i>
Andhra Pradesh, India		<i>kedu bommalatta</i>
Karnataka, India		<i>togalu gombe atta</i>
Kerala, India		<i>tholpava koothu</i>
Tamil Nadu, India		<i>thol bommalatta</i>
Kampuchea		<i>nangsbeik thom nang sbek touch</i>
Bali, Indonesia		<i>wayang kulit</i>
Java, Indonesia		<i>wayang kulit</i>
Malaysia		<i>wayang siam, wayang djawa</i>
Thailand		<i>nang yai, nang talung</i>

PUPPETS	BUNRAKU	CRAFTS	JORUKI
SHADOW	FOLK	SHRINES	THEATRE
JAVA	SYMBOL	BALI	DEMON
HERO			





VOICE AND SHADOW

Kathrine Sorley Walker

Kathrine Sorley Walker, a London critic, author and poet, wrote on the Asian and European traditions of three-dimensional puppetry—glove, rod and string puppets—in Hemisphere, Vol. 20, No. 5.

The shadow of outstretched hands against a white wall . . . the fingers begin to curl, to bunch, to spread, and shapes appear in sequence: a rabbit, a spider, a tortoise, a squirrel . . . a small child watches entranced. This is the genesis of the varied and inventive magic, known all over the world and altering in character with place and time, that we call the shadow show.

All forms of theatrical entertainment have their origins before record, deep in primeval life. Dance, mime, story-telling are basic human activities, and with them surely have to be classed puppet shows. No doubt prehistoric hands created animals on cave walls out of the shadows thrown by campfires; no doubt small shapeless dolls of bone or stone were employed by tellers of tales to add an extra dimension to the spoken word.

Once in the sphere of ancient history, the shadow theatre first finds record in Asia. A cave in Sargura, Bengal is said to have been used as a shadow theatre during the second century BC, but the evidence for this is slender. There is a sturdy tradition that 'shades', as they are often called, were invented in China during the reign of the Han Emperor, Wu Ti (140–86 BC), although Sun Kai-ti, in his book *On the Origins of the Chinese Puppet Theatre*, gives a much later date—the Fifth Dynasty, in the seventh to ninth centuries AD. There is fairly general agreement that Chinese shades were fully developed by the tenth or eleventh centuries AD.

These Chinese shades are of exceptional delicacy, usually about twelve inches high. They are cut, of paper thinness, from the finest hide and painted with translucent colours. At shoulder, elbow and hip they are jointed with silk knots, their waists are hinged, their hands flexible. Alternative heads



Indonesian wayang kulit figure: Bima, one of the Pandawa brothers

can be fitted to a figure by a slot in the collar, and they are worked by thin pins, three to four inches long, in the neck and hands, connected to small rods by thin string or silk.

For the old Chinese shadow plays a linen or silk screen was set up on a strong table, with lanterns on both sides of the screen. With the rods, the manipulators pressed the figures against the screen, themselves invisible to the audience. Gradually the technique was developed so that two or

three puppeteers worked each character.

Nowadays, designs vary considerably between the shadow theatres of different provinces, no doubt according to the puppet master in charge. The plays are completely pictorial, with detailed and charmingly painted settings as well as human and animal figures.

Similar in style, but slightly more robust in appearance and without the exquisite backgrounds of the Chinese plays, are the Javanese shades, the *wayang kulit*, which are first recorded at the beginning of the tenth century. Their original condition was altered, however, after the coming of Islam to Java in the mid-fifteenth century. The veto on representations of men resulted in the shades becoming immovable figures, and only later was movement partially restored, in arms and legs. Balinese shades are more naturalistic and the inference is that they were unaffected by this Muslim dictate.

Seen at their best in informal village settings or in the courtyard of a house, and watched all through the night, the splendidly designed and carved parchment figures of the Javanese *wayang kulit* play out the events of the *Mahabharata Ramayana*, the battles of Arjuna and his heirs. Action and



Cutting and painting figures for a shadow play in Indonesia. Photograph taken about seventy years ago and published by Kleynenberg, Haarlem (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

warfare are an immensely exciting area of shadow plays. It never fails to be thrilling. For instance when, during the abduction of Sita by Ravana, the great King of the Birds, Jatayu, attacks the flying demon. Backwards and forwards, enlarging and diminishing in sweeping movement, the fight rages from one side of the screen to the other with marvellous beauty and vigour.

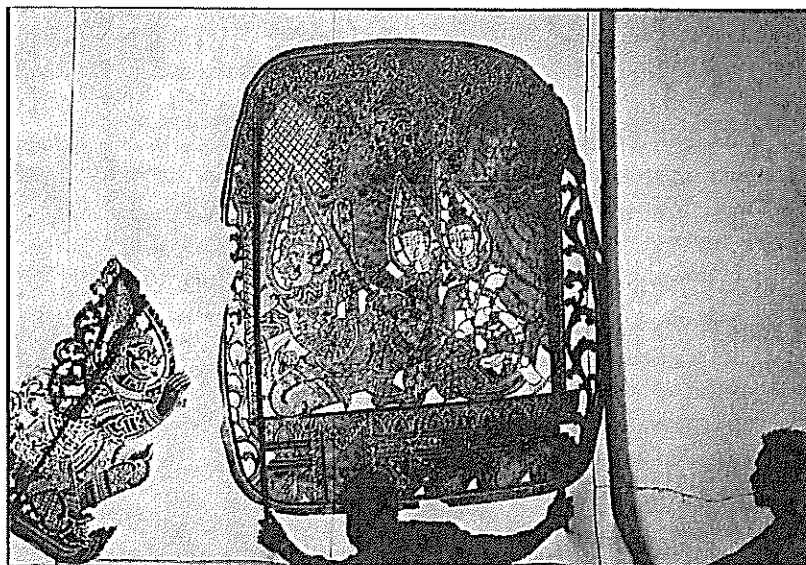
The origins of the Javanese shades may be unknown, but their life is strongly tenacious, maintaining the old traditions and themes while introducing plays based on newer history and even on people's heroes. However the Hindu epics are the staples and the whole entertainment is closely identified with religious feeling. There are offerings and invocations; the *gunungan*, the tree of life, serves as prologue and epilogue to each play; and there is much mystical and theological symbolism. People in the audience themselves believe that while watching a shadow play they are protected from evil...

The personalities of the *wayang kulit* are clearly defined, and sometimes represent four stages in human evolution. Intellectuals are small and slender; the earthier types are the biggest; servants, often comic, are contorted in physique and coloured black and white. A rare fourth type is an animal-headed giant.

Over the centuries Javanese-Malay-Polynesian gods became identified as characters with Hindu deities (the names differ slightly in transliteration) except for the 'divine hermaphrodite', Semar. Retaining his own identity, this important figure was elected into Hinduism for the purpose of the shadow plays as a wise elder brother of Shiva, but exiled from heaven.

Nowadays the *wayang kulit* are popular throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Each group takes its character from the man in charge, the *dalang*, who is the creative genius and master craftsman of the performance, deciding on the form of the play and speaking every role, cleverly interweaving classic scenes with local and topical allusions.

The performance is theatre in the round. The audience chooses whether to sit and watch the manipulation of



A scene from the Ramayana performed some years ago as a shadow play at Siem Reap, the village near the fabled monument of Angkor Wat

the shades or in front of the screen and see the shadow illusions in action. Traditionally this division was by sex; the men sat behind and the women in front of the dividing screen.

Shadow plays spread their fascination and enchantment swiftly and widely. India developed its own shadow theatre and, in the sixteenth century, possibly the largest shades of all—over two metres in height. Nowadays shadow show traditions flourish in Orissa and Kerala, and the puppeteers of Andhra Pradesh present *tholu bommalata*, the dance of the parchment dolls.

'Leather' is the term often used to translate into English Asian words relating to the shades, but 'hide' is a better translation; in the British Museum's account of the Raffles Collection of shadow puppets, Jeune Scott-Kemball [author of an article on the forging of great gongs for the gamelan orchestra in *Hemisphere*, Vol. 20, No. 9] makes it clear that the Javanese shades (and presumably others) are of parchment. The hide is not treated with tannic acid or mineral salts that makes it leather. Leather, unlike parchment, would not allow light to penetrate. Interestingly, the hide used for puppets has local links—asses' hide in China, buffalo-hide in Malaysia and Indonesia, camel-hide in the Middle East.

The Middle East has a very old shadow show tradition, based on one of the most enduring and endearing characters in the puppet world, known

in Turkey as Karagöz and in Greece as Kharaghiozes. 'Black Eye', in translation, is an ugly little man with a pug nose, a round beard and a shaven head. In Ottoman Turkey he was immensely popular as a café and street corner attraction between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

His origins are obscure, but he seems indigenous. One suggestion is the political lampooning of one of Saladin's generals, Karakush, by a jealous rival. This gives a twelfth-century date, for Karakush helped in the building of the Citadel in Cairo and was later in command at Acre when it was under siege by Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Another idea is that Karagöz was a real workman on a Turkish mosque who delayed the work by entertaining his mates, and was executed by order of the Sultan. The Sultan however (so the tale goes) regretted the action, and his vizier had the shadow figure made in memory of the dead man. The story is suspect—there is an all-too-similar one about the origins of Chinese shades, in which the memory of an Emperor's dead concubine is perpetuated by a shadow figure of her. This celebration of the dead by a moving shadow is an interesting thought, certainly; nowadays it is uncanny to watch old films whose stars are now dead, and younger generations who never knew them alive may feel towards them as audiences felt towards Karagöz...

In Greece, as Kharaghiozes, Karagöz took on a different character,

a poverty-stricken rascal who lived on his wits. In both metamorphoses he had a wife, but in Turkey his principal foil was a pedantic educated man called Hacivad. His transfer to Greece from Istanbul came about in the middle of the nineteenth century, but his popularity was particularly great in Athens during the 1930s and 1940s, when a puppet master named Anthony Mollas drew the café crowds.

Western Europe's relationship with shadow shows has never been as well founded as that of Asia, but it has had exciting outcrops. The influence was largely Chinese, and enthusiasm increased as a result of the eighteenth century's love affair with China. There had been earlier and less sophisticated shadow shows—in Italy and Germany during the seventeenth century travelling shades are recorded at the great fairs, and Nicolas Audinot showed some at the Foire St Germain in Paris in the first half of the eighteenth century. The first famous permanent European shadow theatre, however, was started by François Dominique Séraphin at Versaille in the 1770s, and moved later into Paris to the Palais Royal where it continued as a family enterprise until 1879. During that time many famous shadow plays were given, including *Le pont cassé*, *La chasse aux canards*, and *Les deux aveugles*, and the name 'Séraphin' became a synonym in France for 'shadow theatre'. These *ombres chinoises*, which were also popular in Italy and England, differed from the Asian technique by concealing the mechanism from the audience and installing complicated strings and wires to move the figures.

Some years after the closing of Séraphin's theatre at the Palais Royal, in 1887, Paris saw one of the most lively and challenging outbursts of creativeness in the European shadow show. 'Le Chat Noir', Rodolphe Salis' literary café on the Boulevard de Rochechouart in Montmatre, launched a series of shadow entertainments. They were tableau characters rather than articulated ones, cut from cardboard at first but later from zinc, and drawn by the talented cartoonist and caricaturist Emmanuel Poirée, who used the pseudonym 'Caran d'Ache'.

The vogue was established. For

the next ten years, Henri Rivière and other authors wrote plays that combined witty comment and poetry, and appealed to the sophisticated audience who became interested; and other shadow theatres followed suit, until a large number were operating in Paris at the turn of the century.

In London, a French-Italian called Ambroise, the predecessor in business of the famous Astley, had opened a shadow theatre in Panton Street in December 1775 and, like Séraphin, had shown plays such as *The Broken Bridge* and *Duck Chase*. Most of his shows depended more on scenic excitements than on good stories or characters, but they were popular. Later, shadow shows joined the travelling Punch and Judy booths, some of them showing Punch during the day and the shades at night; they had regular pitches in popular centres like Regent Street or Leicester Square. These travelling shades were called Galanty Shows—'fine' shows, from the French *galant*, as in *fête galante*—and Henry Mayhew in his famous *London Labour and the London Poor* (1858) records a talk with a typical puppetmaster of the time.

Germany and Russia (where the great Sergei Obratzsov became director of the State Central Puppet Theatre) included shadow shows in their activities, although perhaps other forms of puppets took precedence with them. From Berlin in the years after the first world war emerged one of the greatest

names in European shadow—or, as she prefers to call them, silhouette—films: Lotte Reiniger. She and her husband, Carl Koch, launched her first full-length feature film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmet*, in 1926. It had taken three years to make.

Reiniger's contribution to this and the many later films she has made is, of course, the artist's. She had drawn the figures and scenes included in the various frames and then built them up from varying thicknesses of layered tissue paper, so that a range of tones from white to black gives depth and interest. Each scene, after being cut out by hand, is photographed on a horizontal glass plate lit from below.

More recently she has worked in colour, using coloured gelatine to build up the picture. The colour films include *The Star of Bethlehem*, a nativity play with music composed by Peter Gellhorn.

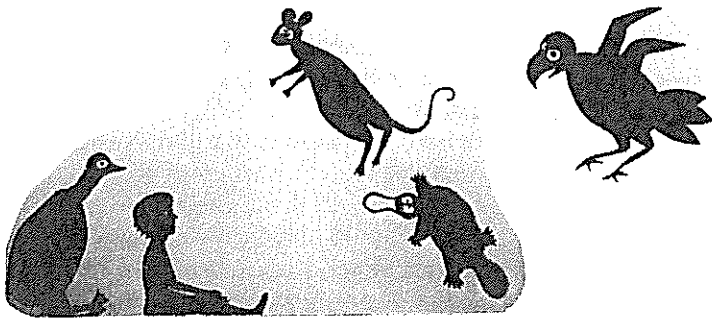
Inventiveness in the use of modern materials, abstraction rather than story-telling, mark the experimenters of today, and keep the art form in a healthy and developing state. Sophistication, and social and political comment, have recurring vogues in shadow shows, although their use in this way has diminished considerably with the increase in popularity of strip cartoons. They are, however, in spite of the rabbit-on-the-wall association with nursery entertainment, predominantly an adult enthusiasm.

Their beauty of design, whether in



The figure of Prince Achmet from a shadow-film by Lotte Reiniger and Karl Kosch, Germany 1923-26

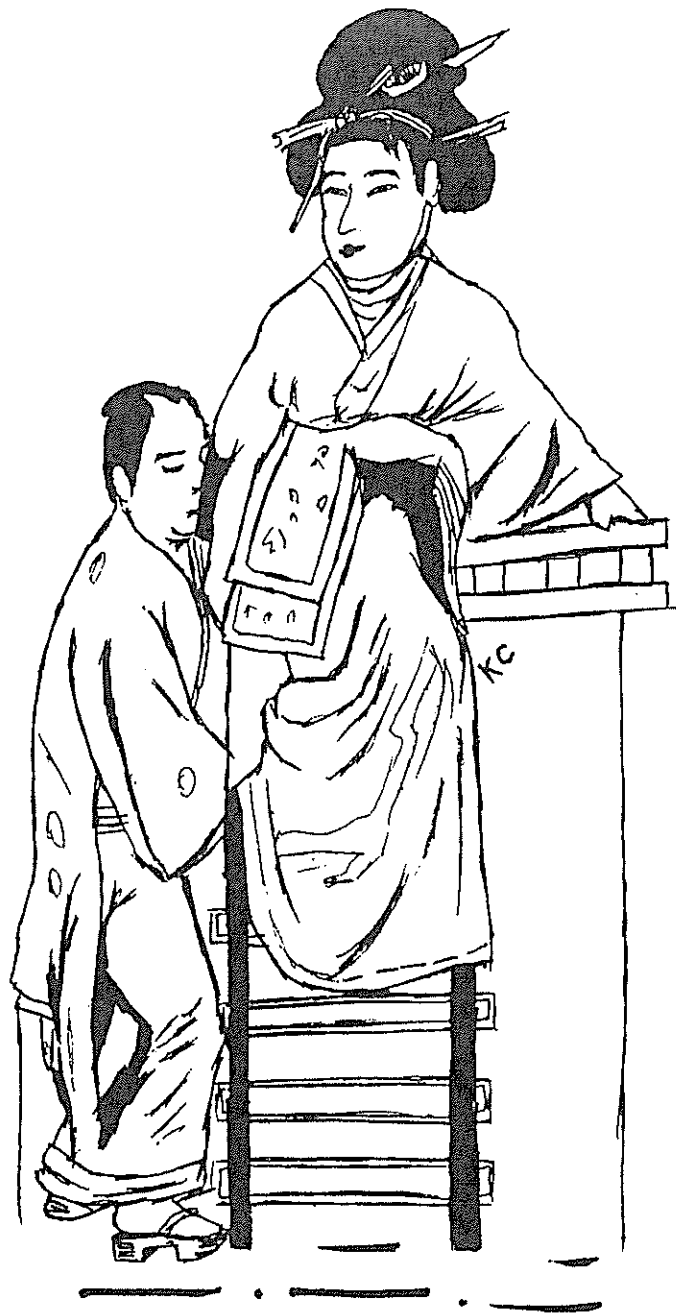
the elegant grace of the Chinese shades, the exciting shapes and forms of the Javanese ones, or the strong fantasy of the Reiniger films, gives them great aesthetic appeal. This, combined with the technique's ability to create imaginatively when it deals with well-loved religious or folk stories and their characters, gives the shadow show, in East or West, an enduring fascination. □



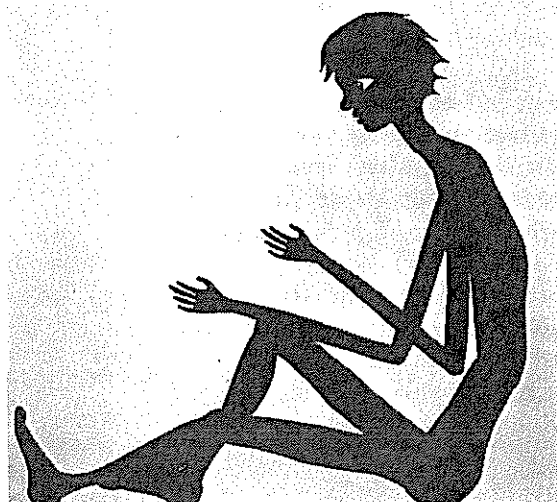
Scene from Richard Bradshaw's Australian shadow-plays. Above, from a version of *Alice in Wonderland*, adapted into Pitjantjatjara, an Aboriginal language, from Lewis Carroll's story by Alice Sheppard.



A Sung woodcut of a puppet show. The extreme stylisation of dress and make-up necessary in puppet shows for easy recognition of characters was a convention in all traditional Chinese theatre.



Bunraku figure, *Chushingura* [drawn by K. Choong]



Another scene from Richard Bradshaw's Australian shadow-play from a version of *Alice in Wonderland*

BUNRAKU

Di Dunlop

Bunraku is a form of Japanese puppetry which originated in the city of Osaka. It was originally called *Ningyo Joruri* after the theatre in which it began in 1805. It developed over a long period of time with a wandering minstrel, and a samisen player who worked with a puppet master who, in turn, chanted the drama.

The puppet handlers are dressed in black and are invisible to the audience. It is said that the beauty of *bunraku* lies in the stories told of ancient love, tragedy and the importance of duty, honour and integrity—which are chanted by the *Tayu* in a high-pitched voice.

Bunraku puppets are different from their European counterparts as they are life-sized. One goes to listen to a *bunraku* play rather than see it.† One hears historical and domestic dramas, which usually end in tragedy.

The term 'bunraku' did not become popular until the twentieth century, where it derived directly from the theatre—the *bunraku-za*.

The puppets are made from a wooden frame, with heads, arms and legs attached. They are worked manually by puppeteers who can move the eyes, head, fingers, etc. Faces of

the puppets can be amazingly complex, as often they are required to show a change in character—for instance, when wounded; or a face oozing blood after being slashed by a sword or a demon who was pretending to be beautiful woman.

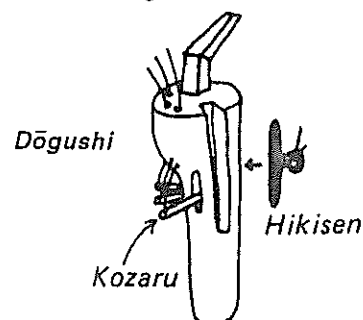
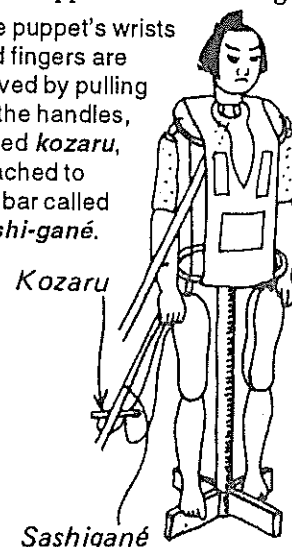
A set of rituals has developed to accompany the performance. The performers eat together to establish a togetherness of spirit. A ritual bath is taken after breakfast, when they change into crisp clean costumes. While dressing, the actor bows to each piece of clothing that he wears, and bows to each of the performers as they prepare.

The greatest *bunraku* playwright was Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724). He developed the five-act form which is still standard for Kabuki theatre as well. The story is introduced in the first act, elaborated on in the second act, and developed in the third. The fourth act is the turning point and the fifth act is the climax or *kiri*, where the 'baddies' are vanquished and the hero triumphs. It is an austere setting on stage, contrasting with the constant sound and activity of the *bunraku* performance.

† Visceral Puppet Drama of Osaka—*Orientalism*, March 1974.

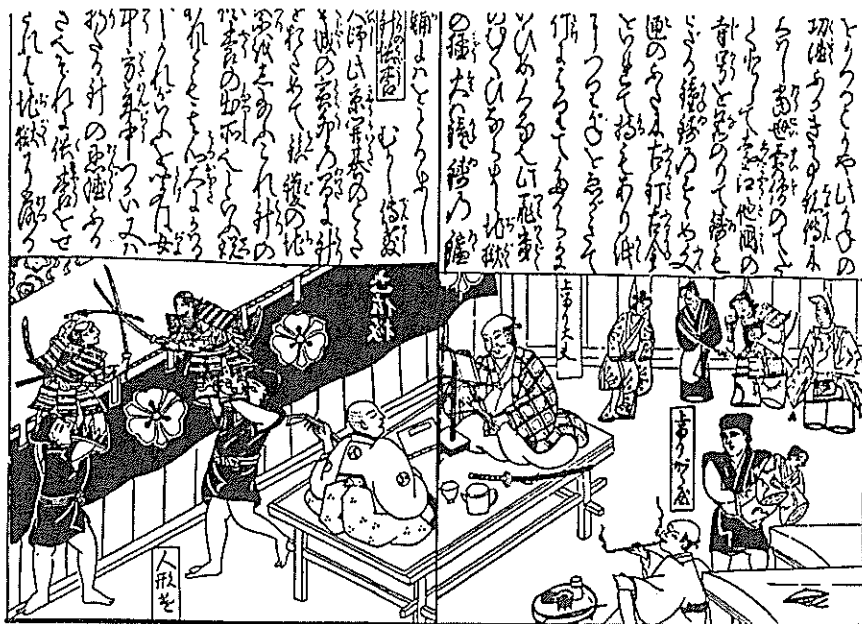
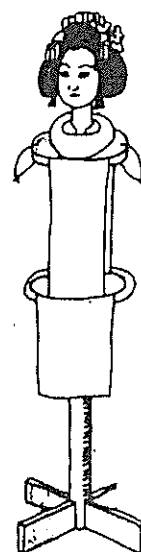
The puppets consist of a head (*kashira*), shoulder-pieces (*kataita*), a trunk (*do*), and legs and arms (*te-ashi*). Various mechanisms operate to give the puppet an extremely lifelike appearance on the stage.

The puppet's wrists and fingers are moved by pulling on the handles, called *kozaru*, attached to the bar called *sashi-gané*.



The main internal part of the puppet's body is called *dōgushi*. The *bikisen*, or cord, inside this moves the puppet's head, and the small *kozaru* handles move its eyes, mouth, and eyebrows.

Female puppets usually have no feet, and walking is indicated by skillful movement of the hem of the puppet's costume.

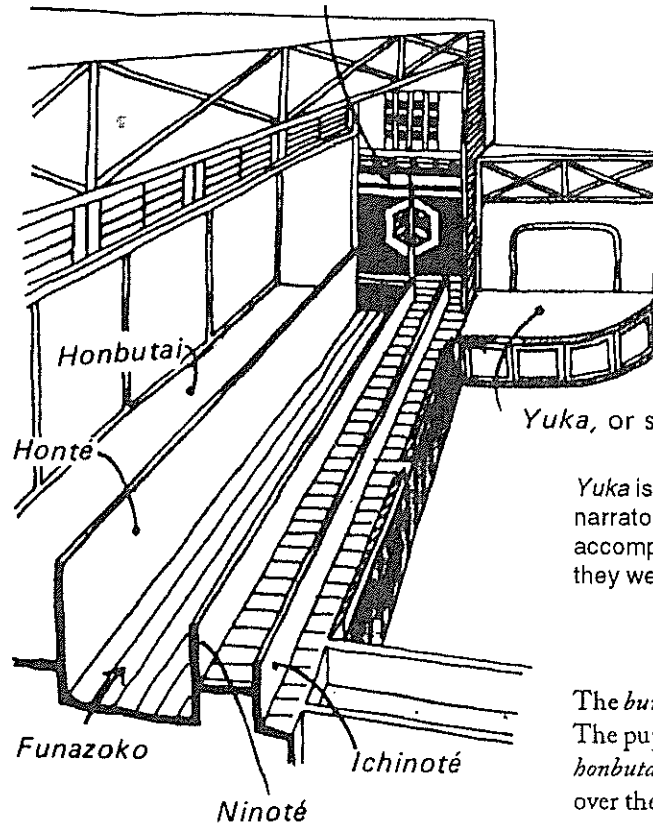


Backstage at a Puppet Theatre—A two-page illustration from the *Jinrin kimmo zui* (Collection of Illustrations for the Cultivation of Morality), a work printed in 1690. On the left appear the manipulators of the puppets, in the centre the musician and reciter, and on the right extra puppets hanging up. The texts above the illustrations in this work contain materials of an encyclopaedic nature.

Bunraku

Bunraku is the traditional Japanese puppet theatre, in which puppets are skillfully manipulated to act out a narrative (called *yoruri*) recited to the accompaniment of the *shamisen*.

Agemaku (entrance curtain)



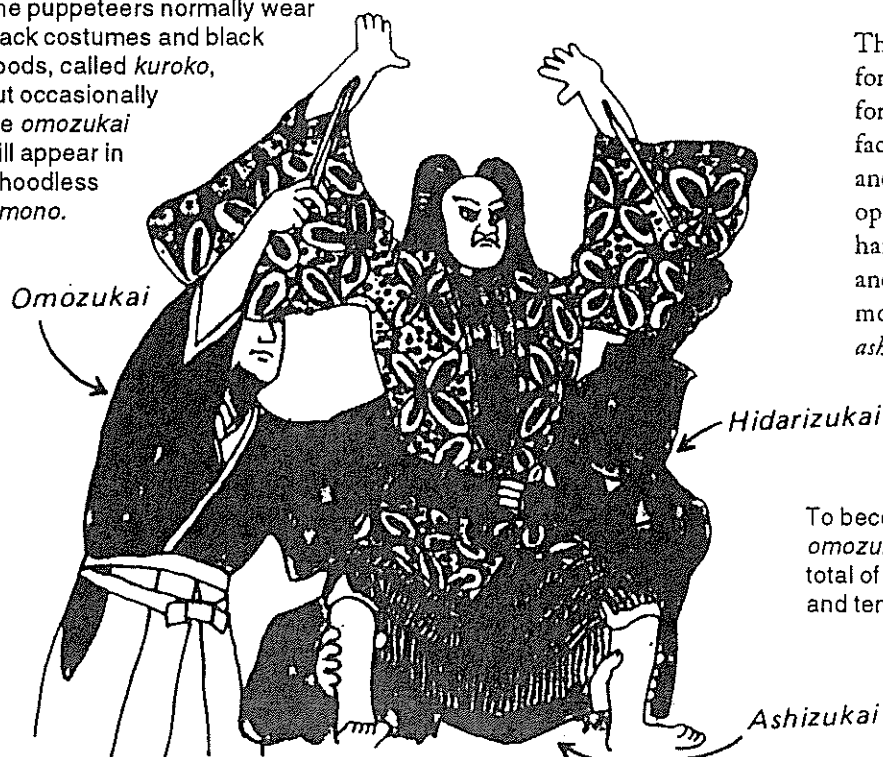
Yuka, or side stage

Yuka is the side stage where the narrator (*tayu*) and the *shamisen* accompanists sit. The costume they wear is called *kamishimo*.

The *bunraku* stage

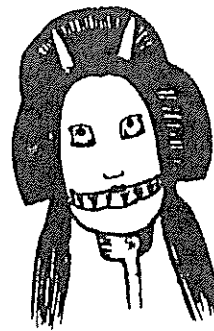
The puppeteers usually stand on lowered parts of the stage called *honbutai* or *funazoko* and hold the puppets so that their feet are over the *honté* or the *ninoté*.

The puppeteers normally wear black costumes and black hoods, called *kuroko*, but occasionally the *omozukai* will appear in a hoodless *kimono*.

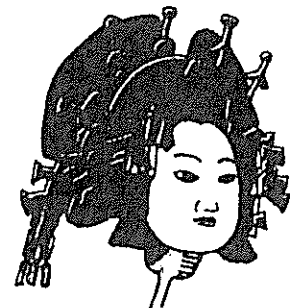


There are usually three puppeteers for each puppet. One is responsible for the expression on the puppet's face and for its right arm and hand, and is called *omozukai*. The next operates the puppet's left arm and hand, and any props it is carrying, and is called *hidarizukai*; and a third moves the puppet's legs and is called *ashizukai*.

To become an accomplished *omozukai* has been said to take a total of ten years as *hidarizukai*, and ten years as *omozukai*.



Gabu—the face of a beautiful woman can be made to change suddenly into the face of a demon.



Keisei
(prostitute)

THE MUSIC TRADITION IN JAPANESE *BUNRAKU* AND JAVANESE *WAYANG KULIT*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Budi Raharja

Budi Raharja is a lecturer at the Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta. His research on 'Shamisen in Bunraku Performance of Kansai Region' was supported by a 1993–94 Japan Foundation Fellowship.

Both Japanese *bunraku* and Javanese *wayang kulit* (puppet shadow) are puppet-art performances. Despite their basic similarity, however, they differ in many elements. In *bunraku*, there are three roles:

- (1) puppet manipulators (in most cases, each puppet requires three manipulators)
- (2) musician(s) (one or more *shamisen* or other instrument players); and
- (3) a story narrator.

In *wayang kulit*, there are two roles:

- (1) the *dalang* (narrator/puppeteer); and
- (2) *pangrawit* (musicians).

Unlike in *bunraku*, the *dalang* both manipulates the puppets and narrates the story. He sometimes even conducts the music ensemble.

In this report, I would like to discuss how music is used in *bunraku* and *wayang kulit*.

Narrative music and music accompaniment

The music of *bunraku* (*yoruri*) can be classified as *katarimono*, or narrative music. *Wayang kulit* music, however, is classified as *musik iringan*, or accompanying music. The difference between narrative music and accompanying music is how the music is used in connection with puppet movements. *Bunraku* puppet movements tend to follow the narration, as it is expressed by the music. Most *wayang kulit* music, on the other hand, follows the puppet movements.

In *wayang beber* (puppet-scroll painting), which is believed to be a forerunner of *wayang kulit*, the narrator tells the story while indicating

figures on the screen. This performance is accompanied by a small ensemble of *gamelan* musicians. The *gamelan* is used to accompany the narrator when he takes the *wayang beber* onto the stage and describes the characters and places.

A similar musical function also exists in *wayang kulit*, but it is more complicated. The *gamelan* ensemble is not only used to accompany the narrator when he takes the puppets onto the stage, and to illustrate the verbal description of characters and places, but is also used as an accompaniment to fighting movements.

Bunraku music, on the other hand, is purely narrative music. It is music that tells a story. With the exception of the dialogue, all *bunraku* narration is framed by melody patterns. Unlike in *wayang kulit*, fighting scenes, descriptions of characters and places, and puppet movements are all accompanied by the music. This is perhaps the salient characteristic of narrative music in *bunraku*.

The performance

Bunraku differs from other Japanese traditional performing arts, especially where *matsuri* (festivals) are concerned. *Bugaku* (Japanese court dance and music), for example, at the Kasuga Shrine's Wakniya On-Matsuri in Nara and at the Shitenno Temple in Osaka, and the *bon-odori* festivals throughout Japan, are performed in the open air. Therefore members of the audience can participate as and when they want to, and enter or leave at any time. They can even enjoy the performance while eating, drinking, smoking, or walking around.

A similar environment exists for performances of the Javanese arts. The *wayang kulit* is performed in the open air, too. Audiences can watch the performance while eating and drinking. They can also sometimes participate in the performance. For example, they can request a specific song to be sung,

applaud a scene they particularly like, and so on. In the scene where clowns are performing, the audience can send a message to the *dalang* requesting their favourite songs. They can leave the performance when they don't like it and rejoin it whenever they want.

In *wayang kulit*, the overture is a very important aspect of the performance. The *wayang kulit* overture is called the *talu*. The literal meaning of *talu* is to be subjected. In this context, perhaps this word should mean to give a border of time before the performance and to express ritual time during the performance itself.

Deborah Wong and Rene T.A. Lysloff argue:

Any overture has the practical function of letting the audience know that the performance is about to begin, but we would also argue that Thai and Javanese overtures do far more. They create atmosphere, a mood, interrupting the everyday flow of time while establishing a special place for the audience . . . In many ways, the overtures are 'about' time and the framing of ritual time . . . it is clearly demarcated or framed in contrast to everyday life.¹

The *bunraku* performances I attended, on the other hand, were held in formal theatres. The performances may also have been influenced by Western performance styles. For example, they use text narration, and are performed inside with audiences sitting in narrow chairs and taking the performance very seriously, without eating, drinking, talking to their neighbours, and so on. In the Osaka Bunraku Theatre, *bunraku* performances are held on a proscenium stage where audiences can only view the performance from the front of the stage.

Another difference is that audiences in theatres must come on time. They sit in chairs and leave the per-

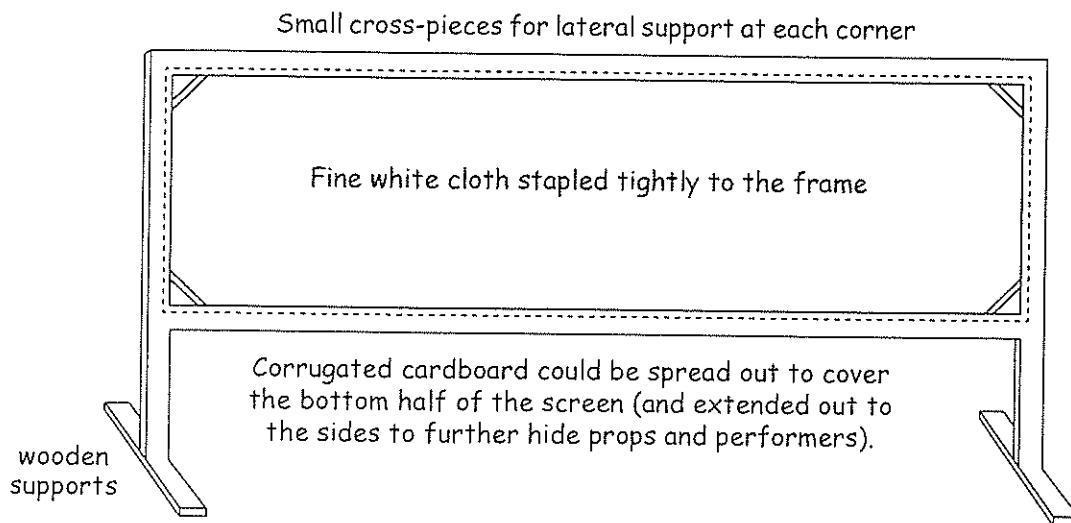
¹ Deborah Wong and Rene T.A. Lysloff, 'Threshold to the Sacred: The Overture in Thai and Javanese Ritual Performance', in *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 315.

WAYANG KULIT by JANINE DAVISON, Mount Nelson

Making Indonesian shadow puppets with a class

BUILDING THE SHADOW SCREEN

You will need a wooden frame standing on legs to roughly waist height. I suggest at least two metres in length so that more students can be involved in working puppets.



THE PUPPETS

Shadow puppets are made from thin cardboard cut into the required shapes.

- (a) Inside shapes must be cut using a craft knife or Stanley knife.
Very thick piles of newspaper are a suitable base for cutting on.
- (b) The puppet is supported down the length of its body by a thin piece of wooden dowel or strong wire (wire coat hangers are fine for this). The supporting stick is taped in place, and should be quite long because the children may need to move the puppet up the screen at some stage.
- (c) Moving parts (usually an arm — but we have also done jaws, tails, etc.) are made by making a separate cardboard piece which is laid over the puppet's body and a hole punched through both using a hole punch.
A split pin is then pushed through and flattened. This holds the pieces together, but allows for easy swivelling movement.
A thin piece of dowel or wire is taped on to allow for movement of this part of the puppet by the puppeteer.
Although we have successfully made puppets with more than one moving part, as a general rule a child can only easily handle two dowels or supporting sticks. If a longer, more complicated puppet is required (eg. a dragon), more than one child would probably be required to work it.
- (d) Colour can be introduced to the puppets by glueing or sticking cellophane over holes. Children have a lot of trouble understanding that what the puppets look like on the surface is NOT important by comparison with how they will look on the screen. This is not helped by how intricately and beautifully the traditional wayang puppets are coloured! This is one puppet where sticky tape can be visible all over, and it doesn't matter.



a split pin

WAYANG KULIT

MAKING INDONESIAN SHADOW PUPPETS (continued)

LIGHT SOURCE

This can be a lamp, but the best is an overhead projector because you can also lay scenes and coloured cellophane on the surface of the projector. As well, it is a reasonably diffused light source. And you can easily turn it off between scenes of your play.

ACCESSORIES AND SCENES

These may be made of cardboard, or any other useful material. A scene can be set up easily by hanging a few accessories onto the top of the screen using a wire hook to hang over the wooden frame.

In this way trees, houses, hills, etc. can be made, used, and changed quickly and easily.

SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC

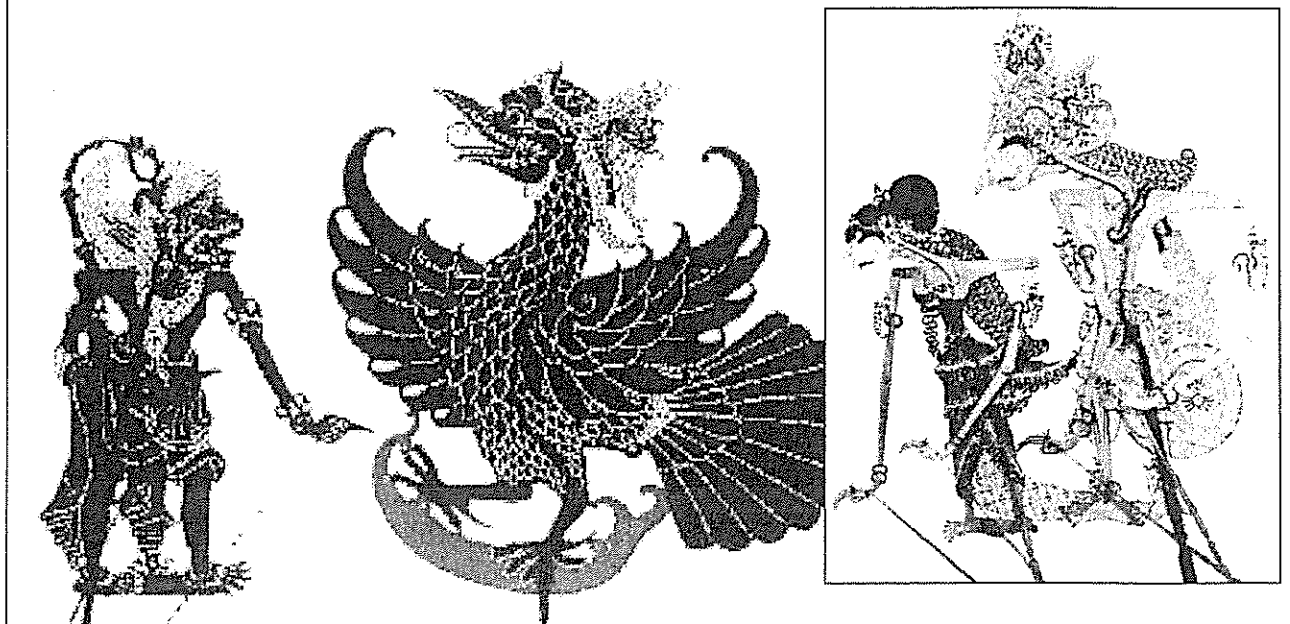
These can add a great deal to the shadow puppet play. Children can use a variety of musical instruments and aim for an 'Indonesian-style' background percussion or simple sound effects for action on the stage.

While all children in a class can be involved in writing the story and making the puppets, only a small number can be puppeteers during the performance. One child can work the projector, a couple can be narrators or main characters' voices (see later), but others may form an orchestra sitting to the front and/or sides of the screen.

THE CHILDREN SHOULD START BY MAKING A 'CHARACTER' SHADOW PUPPET

Then, in small groups, they could write a play set in any time or place, working from the characters they have as a group.

This is actually a much more difficult option for the children, and may be one better suited as an extension activity for children who wish to follow up the earlier ideas.



MAKING WAYANG KULIT PUPPETS

Jill Morrison



ITEMS NEEDED

1. Thick cardboard.
2. Textas and gold paint.
3. Sharp scissors or scalpel.
4. Butterfly pins to joint the arms.
5. Saté sticks to attach to the back of the puppet.
6. A large stick to attach to the back of the puppet.
7. Pictures of *wayang kulit* or the actual *wayang kulit*.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace the puppet or throw an overhead projection of the puppet onto a sheet of cardboard.
2. Cut out the puppet and try to get the lacy effect.
3. Cut out the arms separately so that they can be joined.
4. Paint your puppet in bright colours, trying to the colours correct.
5. Attach the arms with butterfly pins, so that they are jointed.
6. Attach the sticks.

SUGGESTIONS

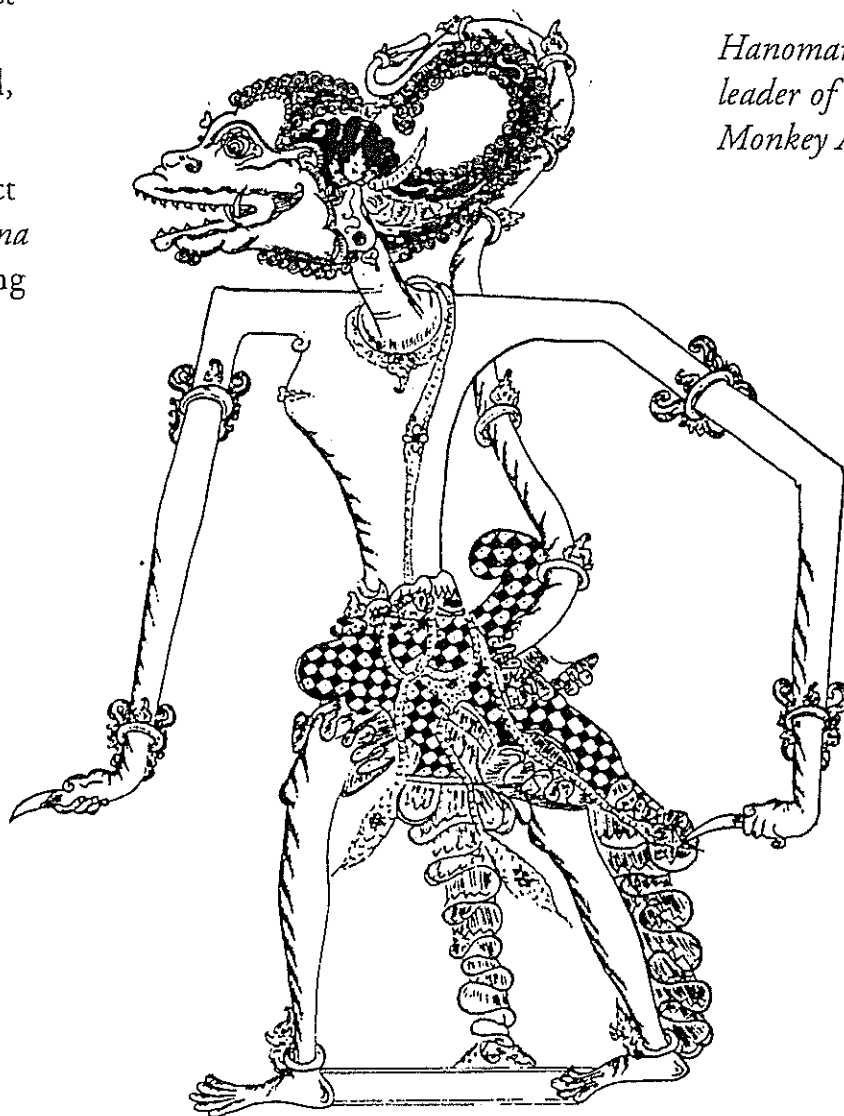
1. Students can re-enact a *wayang* play.
A screen can be used, with a lamp behind.
2. Students can re-enact parts of the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* using their puppets.

RESOURCES

De Jongh (ed.),
Indonesia, Yesterday and Today

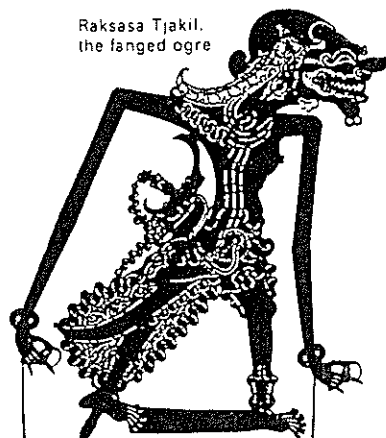
Wayang slide kit,
from Education
Media Australia,
7 Martin Street,
South Melbourne.

Dufty, D. et al,
*The Aware Traveller
in Indonesia.*

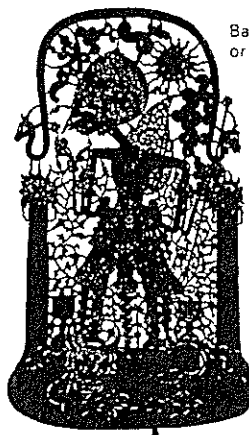


*Hanoman,
leader of the
Monkey Army*

Raksasa Tjakil,
the fanged ogre



Bathara Guru
or Shiva



Semar, clown-servant
of the good side



Wayang Beber