

Wayang Kulit and Its Influence on Modern Entertainment

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Abstract

Wayang Kulit is one of the oldest forms of puppet based performances, originating from Java, Indonesia. A form of shadow puppetry, *Wayang Kulit* is traditionally performed behind a white cotton screen illuminated with an oil lamp by a *Dalang*, the puppeteer of a *Wayang* performance. These performances usually last throughout the night, serving as both a spiritual ritual and source of entertainment in Java. An ancient art, *Wayang Kulit* has been performed for centuries, and is still being practiced in modern society. As many scholars and articles pointed out, the younger generation are not as interested in *Wayang Kulit* as compared to people in the past. Fadjar (2013) noted that this is caused by a few reasons such as the language used by the *Dalang*, the duration of the performance and the heavy themes surrounding the story. *Wayang Kulit* may have adapted to the times in order to ensure it does not perish along with the people's lack of promulgation within the community. This paper aims to look into how *Wayang Kulit* is performed in the past and how it adapts in modern society. Through these observations, this paper hence seeks to inform how *Wayang Kulit* may have influenced modern artists who later included elements of the ancient performance art form in to their work.

Keywords: Wayang Kulit, Modern, Influence

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Introduction

Wayang Kulit is a form of theatre that employs light and shadow. The puppets are crafted from buffalo hide and held up behind a piece of white cloth during the performance. A light source casts the puppet's shadows on the screen, telling the stories through these shadows (Cliff). In modern times, *Wayang Kulit* is more often performed as a cultural performance for tourists than a form of entertainment or spiritual teaching. A typical *Wayang Kulit* performance takes place at night till morning, taking around eight hours to perform. A *Dalang* is not only required to capably animate and voice every character well, he is also expected to be able to command the *Gamelan*¹ ensemble (usually made up of twenty to forty musicians) to play music specific to each scene and able to tell jokes while giving the audience advice. To the Javanese, the *Dalang* plays many roles, from puppeteer and story-teller to orchestra conductor and spiritual teacher (*The Role of the Puppet Master (Dalang) in Indonesia*).

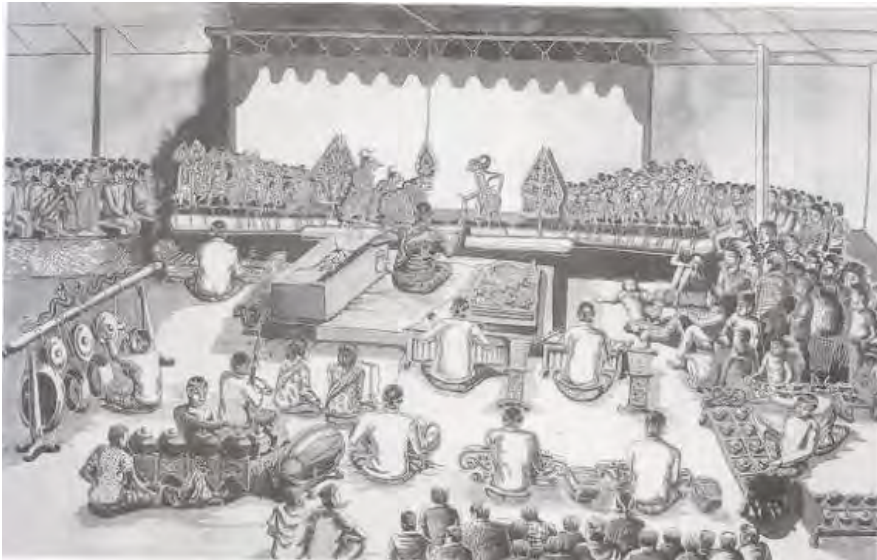


Figure 1: *Wayang* Performance.²



Figure 2: *Wayang Kulit* puppets³

In the past, *Wayang Kulit* performances were held for religious occasions or for a ceremony. Depending on the occasion, the *Dalang* may cater the story to suit the

¹ Gamelan – Traditional instrumental ensemble in Java and Bali

² Keeler, Ward. (1992). *Images of Asia: Javanese Shadow Puppets*. Singapore. Oxford University Press.

³ *Wayang Kulit* puppets. Retrieved from <http://mpunasilemak.blogspot.sg/2015/10/types-of-wayang-kulit.html>

mood. Through his performances, A *Dalang* aims to teach the audience lessons on morality and that good will always triumph over evil. The *Dalang* may also comment on issues faced by the audience and voice political views of common people through the use of jester-like characters. Over the years, Indonesia has changed rapidly and has affected the practices of *Wayang Kulit*. As *Wayang Kulit* performances are slower paced than most modern forms of entertainment, the younger generation are less interested in *Wayang* than people of older generations. To ensure that the practice of *Wayang Kulit* does not die out due to lack of interest, modern *Dalang* have been trying to find ways to add innovations within the practice to attract the younger audience. Originally *Wayang* performances were performed in High Javanese, a dialect which is rarely used now in Indonesia. To cater to younger audiences, some performances are now given in Bahasa Indonesia, which is what most Indonesians learn and use (Jones).

This study aims to look into how *Wayang Kulit* may have influenced modern forms of entertainment, more specifically modern animation. While it is a very old art form, it is believed that many modern forms of animation borrow elements from *Wayang Kulit* or shadow play in general. Many animators draw influence from shadow puppetry, one example is German animator Lotte Reiniger. Reiniger is known as the pioneer of animation, and she did silhouette animation using cut-out puppets from 1918 to 1979. Her works were inspired by shadow puppets, and in turn have gone on to influence modern animation.



Figure 3: *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*⁴

This study also aims to discuss if puppetry is considered animation, a debate that is still on-going among many animators even till this date. Independent animator Tess Martin noted that as separate art forms, Animation and Puppetry have different sets of skill sets, history and context. She compared an animator performing with straight-ahead techniques with a puppeteer. The animator performs in extreme slow motion, breaking every action into twelve or more pictures per second, forming an illusion of

⁴ *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* – Lotte Reiniger. Retrieved from <http://basvanstratum.nl/the-adventures-of-prince-achmed-lotte-reiniger-1926/>

movement when the frames are put together afterwards. On the other hand, a puppeteer's skill comes from being able to effectively move all parts of the puppet at the same time, as their puppets are moving in real-time. She firmly believes that bringing something to life would not always make it an animation, as it would mean an actor bringing his character to life in a play would also be considered animation. However, in her E-mail discussion with director Kevin McTurk, whose work entered the same festival as Martin's, McTurk considers puppetry as animation as the characters are being animated in real-time by a human performer, and because of this it can be considered as animation.

History of *Wayang Kulit*

Wayang Kulit is believed to have been imported from either India or China, due to records of shadow puppetry in their long cultural histories. The first recorded instance of a *Wayang* performance is dated 930 CE, and is still practiced to this day (Rodney). Despite being a largely Muslim country, *Hindu* epics such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are usually re-enacted for *Wayang* performances. Muslims banned the reproduction of the human form, so the characters in the plays are made to be ugly and grotesque to avoid bearing resemblance to them. (Dalton, "*The Mysterious, Phantasmagoric World of Javanese Wayang Theatre*"). Apart from its entertainment value, *Wayang* performances were also used to educate the audience. Most stories portray good triumphing over evil, but never fully destroying it. It takes lessons from Hinduism, where good and evil are necessary and must exist in equilibrium (Ingersoll). The designs also help the characters to display features that represent them, like their status in society and their psychological states. The characters are designed differently from normal humans, this allows the character to move away from reality and religious controversy ("*Islamic Elements in Traditional Indonesian and Malay Theatre*", 87). This would allow the *Muslim* community to accept *Wayang Kulit* better, as the stories do not include *Hindu* and Indian values in them despite having origins from *Hinduism*.

Wayang Kulit performances are usually held at night and last till the next morning. Most of the guests invited to a *Wayang Kulit* performance are male and attendance is by invitation only. The Javanese believe that women should not be staying out all night to watch a performance as many men thought it is disgraceful for women to watch one. It was also believed that women were not interested in *Wayang Kulit* performances ("*Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*", 240). Javanese believe that women are incapable of concentration and self-control and are unable to appreciate the significance of *Wayang Kulit* and assume that they are disinterested and unable to appreciate shadow plays ("*Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*", 240). Javanese women are said to enjoy *Kethoprak*⁵ instead. As *Kethoprak* features live actors unlike *Wayang Kulit*, it was said that it is easier for Javanese women to understand the performance. *Kethoprak* also can be watched at any time of the day unlike *Wayang Kulit*, so women do not have to stay up all night just to catch a performance. ("*Javanese Shadow Puppets*", 39-46).

⁵ Indonesian folk drama

Adapting *Wayang Kulit* to Modern Entertainment

Over the years, Indonesia has changed rapidly, affecting the practices of *Wayang Kulit*. These changes in the performance can be seen with the availability of education and electricity for the people in Indonesia. Most Indonesians are taught Bahasa Indonesia in schools, while *Wayang* performances are performed in Javanese. However, one does not necessarily need to understand Javanese in order to comprehend a *Wayang* performance. It was stated that it is quite difficult to understand what a *Dalang* was saying during a performance, so even people proficient in Javanese would face issues in trying to understand him. In spite of this, the language barrier is still an element driving many young Indonesians away from a *Wayang* performance (“*Javanese Shadow Puppets*”, 66). Access to electricity meant that other forms of entertainment are available to Indonesians, specifically television programmes. As television becomes available to more families, people were able to watch shows on television almost instantaneously, especially *Kethoprak*. The key aesthetic difference between *Kethoprak* on television and *Wayang Kulit* is in the pacing of each performance. *Wayang Kulit* moves at a slow pace, as the *Dalang* has to individually animate each puppet while still giving cues to the *Gamelan* orchestra. In television, scenes switch quickly due to the presence of camera cuts and other filming techniques. With youths used to instant gratification, they lose interest quickly in *Wayang Kulit*, where information is being presented slowly and poetically.

While *Wayang Kulit* is a respected art form, the newer generation is not interested in it enough to appreciate it. This notion of instant gratification is reiterated by Jade Chan in her article “*Engaging with the young is essential in keeping Wayang Kulit relevant (2016)*”. She quoted Prof Hatta, speaker of a seminar which looks into elevating the art of shadow puppetry, stating that changes in lifestyle, behavior, environment and socio-economy are reasons that *Wayang Kulit* needs to adapt to keep it relevant. He also mentioned that having too many choices for entertainment in modern society is also a reason why *Wayang Kulit* has to adapt to appeal to the Younger Generation. To attempt to appeal to younger generations, some *Dalang* explored possibilities for *Wayang* to cater to the younger generation. One example of how *Wayang Kulit* adapted to modern society is *Wayang Hip hop*, an art form which combines traditional *Wayang* puppets with more modernized elements such as hip hop and uses a less polite tone for dialogue compared to traditional *Wayang Kulit* performances. Traditionally, *Wayang Kulit* performances have a comic interlude that takes place in the middle of the performance, known as the *gara-gara* scene⁶. This is probably the most liked part of the performance since it is full of jokes. Most jokes are easily relatable to the audience since the *Dalang* tries to address problems faced by the audience in this part of the performance (Varela, 495). *Wayang Hip Hop* is considered a self-contained *gara-gara* scene because it focuses on the interactions of the characters as they discuss issues. The scenes other than the *gara-gara* scene are omitted from *Wayang Hip Hop*, allowing it to be short and enjoyable to the audience. Unlike traditional performances which take around eight hours to perform, *Wayang Hip hop* usually lasts not more than two hours. This is to cater to the younger generation who are looking more into instant gratification and would not appreciate a full *Wayang* performance (Chan). As Varela wrote, there are a wide range of activities

⁶ *Gara-gara* scene – a part of the traditional *Wayang* performance where *Punakawan* (Jesters or clown servants) give advice to the audience through humour.

for young people to be interested in and take part, so there is little reason for them to want to spend too much time on a monotonous show that they do not understand. On the other hand, as Hip-hop is part of youth culture, it appeals better to the younger generation.



Figure 4: *Wayang Hip-hop*⁷

Practices that attempt to modernize *Wayang Kulit* are received with mixed opinions. A common criticism is that *Wayang Hip Hop* does not convey the same values when compared to the traditional *Wayang Kulit*. Some older *Dalang* say that there are no moral messages to be conveyed to the audience during the *Wayang Hip Hop* performances. In one example, two characters who originated from *Mahabharata*, Gatotkaca and Werkudara, speak to each other in an impolite form, which is never used in a traditional *Wayang* performance. This led people to think that *Wayang Hip Hop* is encouraging young people to question aesthetic and ethical norms which are still followed, but might not be relevant any more. Some critics also criticized the shortened performance of *Wayang Hip Hop*, noting that the shortened length of the performance takes away a large portion of *Wayang Kulit*'s appeal (Varela, 501).

Some modern *Dalang* who practice *Wayang Hip Hop* are aware of, and agree to these criticisms. However, they think of it as a necessity in order to make sure the art of *Wayang Kulit* does not just die out because of a lack of interest. Some believe that instead of competing with *Wayang Kulit*, *Wayang Hip Hop* encourages young people's interest in the traditional art form, ensuring that *Wayang Kulit* is still relevant even though it is faced with a population of uninterested youths.

***Wayang Kulit* and its influences on Animation**

Shadow puppetry is an ancient form of storytelling with a long history in parts of Asia, in places such as Indonesia, China and India. *Wayang Kulit* is one of the earliest

⁷ *Wayang Hip Hop*. Retrieved from: <http://thesecretsofwayang.blogspot.sg/>

forms of silhouette animation. As puppets are usually shown as shadows, the audience can only see the silhouette of the puppets, as well as details carved on them.

In Kelantan, Malaysia, Tintoy Chuo and Teh Take Huat created a modernized form of *Wayang Kulit* known as *Fusion Wayang Kulit*. *Fusion Wayang* re-creates popular titles like *Star Wars* and tells the stories through *Wayang Kulit* puppets which are made to look like the title's characters. In an interview with the New Straits Times (2014), Tintoy Chuo stated that young people did not get to experience the art form of *Wayang Kulit* and hence are not aware of the beauty and craftsmanship behind it. This being his reasoning behind starting this project, with the help of a famed *Dalang*. He was, fortunately met with overwhelming response (NST). In another article, Chuo stated that there are people who are against the idea, but he firmly believed this is one of the best ways to revive the dying art (Krich, Nikkei Aisan Review). Eddin Khoo, founder of Pusaka, an organization that documents and conserves Malaysia's traditional performance arts, calls the project to include *Star Wars* elements into *Wayang Kulit* "gimmicky". He believes that *Wayang Kulit* is constantly adapting to the times and is bothered by the idea of "reviving" or "modernizing" *Wayang Kulit*. They believed that stories are already adapted to serve different functions. In one given example, Khoo explained that while Rama was worshipped as a deity in *Hindu* versions of the stories, his Kelantan counterpart Seri Rama was actually despised by the people due to his personality. This was due to the fact that the story was made more human so it could be more relatable to the audience, and Seri Rama was given flaws to achieve that. He stated that people in Kelantan actually sympathize with Ravana's counterpart: Maharaja Wana, who became the story's main focus, due to his sincere love for Siti Dewi (Sita's counterpart in Kelantan). This shows one example of how *Wayang* performances are already changing and adapting with the times and also depending on who tells the story (Ding. Slate).



Figure 5: Fusion *Wayang Kulit*⁸

Animators at *Walt Disney Studios* introduced Disney's twelve principles of animation. The principles are adopted and followed by most animators even till this date, as seen in both traditional hand-drawn animation and computer animation. Ghani and Ishak

⁸ Fusion *Wayang Kulit*. Retrieved from: <http://2016.vax.asia/fwk/>

came to a conclusion that Disney's twelve principles of animation have a basis in *Wayang Kulit* practices (Ghani and Ishak, 177). They believe that fundamental principles of traditional animation could be learnt from *Wayang* performances, from the movements of the puppets to the staging. *Wayang* was not simply seen as a theatre form but also an animation involving features of performing arts. They also compared the similarities of an animator and a *Dalang*. They show that both Animators and *Dalang* hope to entertain the audience through characters brought to life in a story, as well as being in charge of designing, crafting and staging the scenes. As *Dalang* are required to give each puppets their individual personalities and personal traits, we can see how it is similar as how animators give each characters their personalities, and it affects their actions by extension. The principles may indeed have been inspired by *Wayang Kulit* performances, as the principles of animation can all be clearly seen from the performance. Although the entire performance is made using the same stage with minimal props, *Dalang* probably used careful placements of props and characters to make the setting clear.

Ming-Hsin Tsai, associate professor of Asia University's Digital Media Design faculty, worked with Andi Tenri Elle Hapsari to study how the twelve principles were applied in *Wayang Kulit* (Usage of 12 animation principles in the *Wayang Kulit* Performances). One example they gave was Disney's animation principle of 'Squash and Stretch', in which a character is stretched or contracted to give it flexibility and weight. Tsai pointed out that this principle is practiced in *Wayang Kulit* by bringing the puppet's shadow higher or lower than how it looks at the scene. Ward Keeler pointed out in his book that good *Dalang* will perform using shadows that are dark and shadowy, instead of clear, bright ones ("Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves", 230). By controlling the size of the shadow projected by the puppet, a *Dalang* can cause a 'Squash and Stretch' effect to occur. Another point Tsai pointed out was the use of exaggeration to enhance animation. Animation usually turns to exaggeration as having an exact imitation of reality can make actions seem dull; hence the reactions tend to be exaggerated to give the actions more life. In *Wayang* performance this principle is also applied, especially in fights. The example Tsai provided shows that a character would react as if he has been hit multiple times when he has only been hit once by another character. He believes that the exaggeration of the actions of the puppets were one of the most interesting aspects of a *Wayang* performance.

Possible influences of puppet plays on modern animation

Asian shadow puppetry may have influenced many artists, for example, German animator Lotte Reiniger. Reiniger is known as the pioneer of animation, and she did silhouette animation using cut-out puppets from 1918 to 1979. Her works may have been influenced by shadow puppets, and her works in turn have gone on to influence modern animation. One example is a sequence in the movie: '*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, part 1*' (*Harry Potter*, 2010), a short cut scene of "*Tale of the three brothers*" is told through the use of shadows and silhouettes. In an interview with the sequence's director, Ben Hibon, he stated that the decision to use silhouette animation was due to being influenced by Lotte Reiniger's animation style. Hibon also mentioned that he is fascinated with Asian shadow plays and puppetry (Desowitz, AWN), which probably also influenced him to direct the sequence. Closely following the style of Asian puppetry, they manage to make a silhouette puppet animation using

programs like Zbrush and Maya. In another interview, Hibon stated that the characters in the sequence are made to mimic the style of silhouette animation is to help put emphasis on the performance. As he mentioned, the limited movements of the puppets allows the audience to be drawn to every detail of the characters (LATimes).



Figure 6: *Tale of three brothers*⁹

As character silhouettes are unable to portray facial expressions well, the character's emotions are conveyed through body language, much like in modern animation of any medium. Some modern films which use cutout animation style similar to Lotte Reiniger's show this in their animation. In "*The Mysterious Explorations of Jasper Morello*", the characters are black silhouettes and are unable to show any facial emotions, but the audience can read the character's mood and what he is experiencing. As D.Myers point out, in one scene where the main character finds out that a mad scientist is nourishing a monster by letting it suck blood from his wrist, the character's feeling of fright and disgust can be seen clearly. By slowly distancing himself from the mad scientist, his actions conveyed his sense of fear and disgust without the need of facial expressions. D.Myers also mentioned that the absense of facial expressions not only goes un-noticed, it also allows the audience's attention to be focused entirely on the performance and staging in the scene (D.Myers). This is applied not only to silhouette animation, but to other mediums of animation as well.



Figure 7: *The Mysterious Explorations of Jasper Morello (2005)*¹⁰

The design of the characters are also equally important when it comes to silhouette animation. Much like puppets of Wayang Kulit, the design of the character will affect how the audience percieve as the character's personality. The ending sequence of

⁹ TheIllustrationArt, 2011. The Tale of the three Brothers. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bN1_h_eGitE

¹⁰ Monsterdistributes, 2008. The Mysterious Explorations of jasper Morello. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vORsKyopHyM>

“*Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004)*” is made using a combination of silhouette animation and cut-out animation. Count Olaf is presented as only a silhouette, but one can see that he has angular features and crooked noses, similar to the evil sorcerer in Lotte Reiniger’s *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*. This is because audience usually associate characters with such characteristics as evil and wicked, much like the personalities of these characters, hence they know right away that these characters would likely play the villain’s role (D.Myers).



Figure 8: Evil Sorcerer¹¹



Figure 9: Count Olaf¹²

Puppetry considered as Animation?

Puppet plays such as *Wayang Kulit* have been widely considered as one of the earliest form of animation, with modern forms of animation using mediums such as computer-generated imagery (CGI) and stop-motion. Despite puppetry being seen as an old form of animation, there has been a long debate between animators on whether puppetry can still be considered animation.

Most characters in animation are either drawn from frame to frame or animated using computer generated models, meaning that the characters do not actually exist in reality. However, puppets exist and move in real time, being controlled by actual puppeteers to create movement and carry out a performance. Some argue that animation is supposed to bring about an illusion of movement, rather than actually causing something to move. One animator on a forum stated that puppetry should not be considered animation because they are actually made to move by someone during a performance, unlike in animation where it seems as though the character moves by itself in an actual animation (“*Is puppetry a form a animation?*”).

As animator Tess Martin said, animators and puppeteers use different set of skills in their craft. Animators make their characters perform by breaking down movements into pictures per second, so they are performing in extreme slow motion, taking time to draw the character’s pose in every frame. However, no objects are actually moved while animating the scene. The frames are later stringed together to form an illusion of movement. Puppeteers on the other hand move their characters in real time. Unlike animators who perform in extreme slow motion, puppeteers learn ways to effectively move all the parts of their character at the same time. As puppets move in real time, it

¹¹ The Art of lotte Reiniger: The Adventures of Prince Achmed (1926) Retrieved from <https://thelastdrivein.com/2017/03/27/the-art-of-lotte-reiniger-the-adventures-of-prince-achmed-1926/>

¹² FilmBuff1211, 2013. Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events title sequence Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoBnHYKcCRU>

takes significantly less time to complete a puppet performance as opposed to an animation, which can take as long as months or years to create, depending on the technique used and how complex the animation is (Puppetry is Not Animation).

Steve Tillis (1990) added that puppets are seen as closer to live-action actors rather than animated characters due to how they are being seen by the audience. He stated that unlike most performing objects, it is imagined by the audience to have life, as the puppeteer or *Dalang* gave it life during the performance. A puppet is similar to an actor in a theatrical performance, and that was when the puppets come truly alive in their own theatre. However, it is still perceived as an object rather than an actor, as the puppet merely deploys the signs of life as an actor would, but the puppet itself does not have actual life so it cannot be perceived as a real actor. He quoted Alexandre Bakshy in his thesis, saying that “The puppet can never live unless it acts. The man can never act unless he lives” (161-172). From his statement we can see that while a puppet is not a living actor, it is easily perceived as one due to the similarities it has with a live actor more than an animated character. As a result, an animated puppet would give the audience an illusion of an actor performing live on stage, making it closer to a live action performance rather than a piece of animation.

Chow writes in his book that apart from differences in technologies and practices, another difference between Animation and Puppetry is their contrasting origins. Puppetry has a long history in several cultures, such as in Indonesia and China. There are always deeply entrenched legends around the art form as most stories performed with puppetry are myths and legends. Animation is seen as something born out of nineteenth-century European optical toys such as the zoetrope. It seems to be something which is created after drawing inspiration from puppetry. In his book he quoted from Lotte Reiniger’s book *Shadow Theatres and Shadow Films*, which compare the two arts. She notes that the figures used in the two media are similar, and the same shadow puppet can be used by an animator to create an animation when set on a lightbox and shot with an overhead camera. In another example, Chow writes that puppeteers are performers and spectators at the same time. As he is performing for an audience, he is also looking at the images to adjust the scenes and movements. This allows him to maintain an illusion of the puppet’s movements throughout the performance. Chow noted that this is very similar to how animators working on computer animation manipulate their characters: The way a puppeteer moves strings or rods in a puppet performance is very similar to how a computer animator moves parts of his characters. To him, an animated character is like a digital puppet, as the methods used to deliver a performance are almost similar. (*Animation, embodiment and digital media: Human experience of technological Liveliness*, Chapter 5).

One may argue that puppets perform in real-time and is actually moving, unlike in animation where the movement is an illusion made by piecing frames together rather than making something move, which makes it more like a theatrical performance more than an animation. However, like a computer-generated character model, a puppet is lifeless when not animated, it is only when an animator or puppeteer interacts with the character that it was given a life of its own. In both cases, we are making a lifeless character seem capable of moving without the need of physical interaction and an illusion of movement is created. A character model on the computer is made to move by moving the individual joints on the character to form a pose, similar to how a puppeteer manipulate a puppet’s strings or rods to get the desired

pose for a scene. While the computer generated model may not be able to move in real time the same way a puppet can, the animator is able to see a rough outline of the character's movements as he animates the scene. This allows the animator to manipulate the character to fine-tune his actions for the scene, in a very similar way to how a puppeteer tweaks his performance to show a better pose. Because of the similarities of puppetry and animation, this paper believes that puppetry can be considered a form of animation, each telling stories through a different medium and to a different set of audience. While modern animation may appeal more to children and general audiences, puppetry seems to be more common for religious and mythical performances, but in general both involves telling a story by manipulating a non-living object to fit into a narrative.

Conclusion

As an ancient form of story-telling, *Wayang Kulit* has influenced many modern forms of entertainment in various ways. It may have been the origins of silhouette and cut-out animation, which draws similarity to how *Wayang Kulit* puppets are made and animated. The way the puppets are designed and animated may also have influenced modern animation, as many design and animation principles still follow what was being done in *Wayang Kulit*. However, the ancient art struggles to stay relevant in the modern age of instant gratification, as the younger generation no longer have the interest or time to follow a long *Wayang Kulit* performance throughout the night. Many modern *Dalang* have been looking for ways to cater *Wayang Kulit* for the younger generation, while some methods have succeeded in making people interested in the art, there are people who believe that *Wayang Kulit* is best left as it was performed traditionally.

While this paper mostly compares *Wayang Kulit* to animation, some people see puppetry as having more similarities to live-action theater performance, because of how the puppet is manipulated physically in real time rather than giving off an illusion of movement. This paper tries to disagree and state that puppetry is animation due to the similarities in how they are performed, and because both use non-living objects to tell stories. With techniques which blend puppetry with animation such as stop-motion, the two seem share more similarities than in the past. Given their influence on modern animation, this paper hopes to pose a question to whether ancient forms of puppetry such as *Wayang Kulit* can be considered some of the earliest forms of animation. Although the way these puppet plays are traditionally performed similar to theatrical plays, would the use of lifeless puppets bring them closer to animation rather than live-action performances?

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