Shadows, Strings & Other Things
LEARNING THROUGH PUPPETRY & PLAY

TEACHER’S RESOURCE
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BIG IDEAS
  • Puppetry is shared through movements of the body and an intimate connection between hand and puppet.
  • A puppet’s character is reflected in its materiality, its movement, and the manner in which it is performed.

UNDERSTANDINGS
  • By exploring the puppets in this kit, students will learn about the relationship between a puppet’s character and how it is constructed and performed.
  • Taking inspiration from the puppets in this kit, students will begin to imagine their own puppet characters.
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### Storytelling

**BIG IDEAS**
- Puppets embody the rich storytelling traditions of the cultures from which they originated, which often date back thousands of years.
- Puppet theatre provides a way to express ourselves and to share our stories with others; all kinds of stories can be imagined and performed using puppets.
- Puppetry encourages creativity, innovation, and collaboration in a variety of contexts.

**UNDERSTANDING**
- Students will learn that storytelling is central to puppet theatre, and will begin creating their own stories.

### Artist Voices

**BIG IDEAS**
- Artists can honour tradition while continuing to innovate with new stories, materials, and techniques.
- Through puppet theatre, we can think and learn about pressing issues and themes, including sustainability, cultural continuity, and social justice.
- Through creative expression, puppet makers and performers can explore identity, community, and belonging.

**UNDERSTANDING**
- Students will learn about contemporary puppet makers and performers, and reflect on the larger themes of their work.

### Chapter 4 Animating Puppets

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Dear Teachers,

This teaching kit offers educators a unique opportunity to learn about the rich histories and cultures of puppetry around the world. We have provided you with background information on puppets, past and present. We have also included big ideas, guiding questions, detailed descriptions, and an array of examples of stories and storytelling.

Puppetry is founded in imagination, creativity, and play. We hope that these puppets will inspire and encourage you and your students to create your own stories and performances together. Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the traditions and value of puppetry, while creating opportunities for new puppet traditions to emerge.

GOALS

- Explore the potential of storytelling through puppets, inspiring students to imagine their own stories
- Learn about and take inspiration from contemporary puppet makers and performers
- Learn about the thriving world of puppetry from diverse global traditions

Getting Started

To begin, familiarize yourself with the contents of the kit. There are puppets, activities, storybooks, and a pop-up theatre for creating and sharing your own performances!
OVERVIEW

KIT CONTENTS

Box 1

LID
- Teacher's Resource
- Puppet Cards
- Ashley Bryan’s Puppets (storybook)
- The Monkey King: A Classic Chinese Tale for Children (storybook)
- Shadows, Strings, & Other Things: Puppet Makers & Puppeteers (Museum Note)
- Rama (shadow puppet)
- Sita (shadow puppet)

LAYER ONE
- Teaching Kit Welcome (1 panel)
- Box Contents/Care + Handling (1 panel)
- Stage Pieces/Stage Assembly (1 panel)
- Monkey King (glove puppet)
- Wu Song (glove puppet)
- Young Lady (glove puppet)
- Gareng (rod puppet)

LAYER TWO
- Punch (glove puppet)
- Judy (glove puppet)
- Roland (marionette puppet)
- Spotted Cat (marionette puppet)

LAYER THREE
- Rama (rod puppet)
- Sita (rod puppet)

Box 2
- Stage pieces
  - 15” pipes (x10)
  - 13” pipes (x4)
  - Couplings (x4)
  - Tee fittings (x4)
  - Elbow fittings (x2)
  - Fabric stage (x1)
Puppets: An Introduction

*Learning Through Puppetry + Play* is a teaching resource for students and teachers. The twelve puppets in this kit are from different countries: Taiwan, Indonesian, England, India, and Italy. They were collected in different ways. Some were given as gifts from families, others by visiting puppeteers, and others purchased for use in this kit. They represent only a few of the many, many kinds of puppets found and created across the world.

**In the Teacher’s Resource**

In this resource, you will find information about various types of puppets and tricks for how to move and manipulate them. Background information is also included for specific characters and traditions as well as classroom activities that incorporate stories, storytelling, and students’ imaginations.

**In the Kit**

In addition to this resource, the puppet teaching kit includes physical puppets and matching cards that students are encouraged to explore. Further, a storybook with ideas for creating puppets and a pop-up theatre support short performances activities in the classroom.
Stories

Stories are told in every language, every tradition, and every corner of the world. Through stories we learn about the world and ourselves. Stories can tell histories, they can imagine other worlds, and they can make us laugh, cry, and protest. Stories are real or imaginary. They teach us. They tell of personal journeys and personal experiences. They share collective wisdom. Stories are oral, written, or visual and instruct, inspire, and entertain us.

Puppeteers tell stories of all kinds with their puppets. As you explore this teaching kit, use the puppets to tell stories from their traditions and use them to inspire your own stories.

Many of the puppets are from traditions that date back hundreds of years—some even thousands. Puppets also travel from place to place. As they travel, their stories change and adapt to new places. Puppets may adopt new appearances or new performances; sometimes they take on political roles and other times are used just for fun and entertainment.

While there are poems and epics that are created specifically for puppets, many of the stories used in puppetry are adapted from oral traditions. Ancient stories are now written and are performed using music, dance and puppetry.

Making + Performing Puppets

Puppets come in various styles, from shadows and strings to rods and hand puppets. Depending on their design, puppets can change their facial expressions. However, most emotion and characterization is expressed through the movement of the body. Given the long tradition of puppetry, styles of emotional expression have been developed over the years. They are complemented by other aspects of the theatre, such as lighting, music, and sound effects.

The art of puppet manipulation requires years of training and specialization; nevertheless, it is not the only aspect of the discipline that requires time and commitment for refining skills. The fabrication of puppets, costumes, and stages involves a high degree of specialization and artisanship, too. For this
reason, the art of puppetry is multidisciplinary and requires the teamwork of a community of people who are passionate about puppets. Fabrication can take months to complete, and the craftsmanship is passed down from generation to generation. Due to the high standards of quality, the labour intensity, and the difficulty of puppet fabrication, the number of traditional puppet makers is decreasing with time. Noted people and troupes have made and continue to make and perform puppets. See the *Shadows, Strings + Other Things* booklet in this kit for profiles of different puppet makers and puppeteers.
Bringing Puppets to Life

Puppets move in many different ways. Using hands, strings, rods, and other mechanisms, puppeteers move puppets and bring stories to life. There are many different types of puppets and many different ways to animate puppets. Puppeteers can hide themselves behind a curtain, or stay in full view of their audience. Some puppets are only seen as shadows, and others are larger than life.

The puppets in this kit are glove, rod, marionette, and shadow puppets. Each has its own special history and unique way of being animated.

Tips for New Puppeteers

Movements need to be exaggerated. The personality of a puppet is communicated through the look of the puppet, its movement, its sound, and the stories it tells. You can express emotions by moving puppets in certain ways. Try these:

**GLEE**
Hold up the puppet’s arms
STUBBORNNESS
Aim the puppet’s head up high

SADNESS
Hunch the puppet forward

FEAR
Vibrate the puppet slightly

DISBELIEF
Tilt the puppet’s head
THINKING
Hold the puppet’s hand on its chin

SURPRISE
Have the puppet do a double-take by looking forwards and backwards quickly

EMBARRASSMENT
Make the puppet glance slowly away from the audience

CONCERN
Move the puppet’s face back and forth
Puppet emotions can be expressed with body movements, too! Practice moving puppets, and try to make them:

- hop, jog, run, slide, skate, or jump
- climb, walk, creep, or crawl
- limp, bounce, swing, or sneak
- bow, peek, fly, or swing
- point, clap, rub hands, or wave
- yawn, sneeze, cry, or cough

Don’t forget to practice, practice, practice!
Class Activities

Puppet theatre is among the most ancient forms of theatre, and some identify it as the origin of drama itself. While it is impossible to know if this is true, it is clear that puppetry and theatre have developed alongside each other. Puppet theatre is steeped in legend and folklore. Puppets represent a range of characters and archetypes. Anyone can manipulate a puppet, but professional puppeteers are usually trained in technical and dramatic skills.

Puppets are objects of performance, play, and discovery. Theatre and performance are important avenues through which cultural information and stories are shared. Puppeteers present cultural values through their stories. Two important parts of a puppet performance are movement and emotion; the type of puppet determines how thoughts, feelings, and actions are shown, and this affects the story.

Theatrical performances often use language in creative and innovative ways. Language allows us to express ourselves and to share our stories with others. Theatre allows us to play with language and words and to effectively communicate ideas. Puppet theatre, like any theatre, also relies on other dramatic mechanisms: lights, sound, stage, and setting are all important parts of creating an atmosphere and effects in a puppet show.
Puppet Cards

Included in the teaching kit are cards with images, information, and guiding questions for each puppet. These cards are written in the first-person perspective and are intended to introduce each puppet’s character.

The puppet cards help to familiarise students with the theatrical and playful nature of puppetry. Presenting the puppets as a cast of characters provides historical and cultural context for their origins and also encourages students to think about the voice and personality of their own puppet creations.

Care + Handling

While the puppets are in your care, we trust you and your students will provide them with a safe home. Please review these care-and-handling instructions before sharing the puppets with your class.

- Ask yourself: If this was my belonging, how would I want others to treat it?
- Be mindful and concentrate on the puppet while you handle it. Observe its features carefully as if you were a detective looking for clues.
- Use gentle hands when holding and using the puppet; many of them are very fragile and can easily break.
- Make sure you are properly supporting the puppet to prevent it from dropping, using two hands if necessary.
- Take turns holding the puppet and ask before taking it from someone else.
- Use pencils when drawing or taking notes near the puppet, as markers, pens, and paint can mark or stain them.
Meet the Puppets

BIG IDEAS

- Puppetry is shared through movements of the body and an intimate connection between hand and puppet.
- A puppet’s character is reflected in its materiality, its movement, and the manner in which it is performed.

UNDERSTANDINGS

- By exploring the puppets in this kit, students will learn about the relationship between a puppet’s character and how it is constructed and performed.
- Taking inspiration from the puppets in this kit, students will begin to imagine their own puppet characters.

ACTIVITY — Puppet Characters

Divide students into groups and distribute the puppet cards with their corresponding puppets. Encourage students to engage with their puppet by looking closely, examining the texture and weight of the material, and discussing their observations and thinking with their group. Students can read introductions, answer questions on the back of the cards, and share their findings with the rest of the class.

Questions provided are meant to inspire students’ own investigation of the puppets. We encourage you and your students to consider “Why?” after each answer or shared thought. When starting a discussion, ask the students:

- What do you notice about these puppets?
- How do you think these puppets were made?
- Can you think of how your family or community would share the story of these puppets?
- How could these puppets be connected? Be creative!
- If this was your puppet, how would you want others to treat it?
ACTIVITY — I See, I Do

Demonstrate how to animate each type of puppet, highlighting how character and emotion are expressed through form and movement. Invite students to compare and contrast the different ways the puppets are moved and the benefits of and limitations to their movement.

Starting with a glove puppet, invite students to mimic the movements of each puppet category, paying attention to how their heads, bodies, and limbs are manipulated or remain static depending on the type. Ask students to creatively imagine how their bodies would move if they were the puppet (e.g., strings extending from their limbs). Conclude by inviting students to reflect on how they use their own faces, bodies, and movements to communicate emotions.

ACTIVITY — Puppet Stories

Two storybooks are provided in the kit. Use these stories or others found in your library or online to animate the puppets. As you share the stories, invite students to offer predictions for how the plot will unfold and to help the puppets problem-solve when they encounter challenges. After sharing, guide a class discussion to reflect on the content and messages of the stories.

ACTIVITY — Character Elements

Lead a discussion about the character elements of the puppets, identified by observing their physical form and learning about their traditions and backgrounds. If you haven’t already, read Ashley Bryan’s Puppets to the students and ask them to write a poem for a puppet in Ashley’s style. Have each student share their poem through their puppet, emphasizing movement and emotion in their performance.

When creating a performance, keep in mind:

- Each puppet has its own unique character. What makes each puppet special? What is different about how they move or how they speak that makes them stand out?
- There are many elements of theatre, like design, lighting, sound, and setting. What can you do to help
create an atmosphere for your performance?

- Each performance tells a story. What are the elements of storytelling (character, plot, etc.), and how can you effectively communicate these using puppets?

**Storytelling**

**BIG IDEA**

- Puppets embody the rich storytelling traditions of the cultures from which they originated, which often date back thousands of years.
- Puppet theatre provides a way to express ourselves and to share our stories with others; all kinds of stories can be imagined and performed using puppets.
- Puppetry encourages creativity, innovation, and collaboration in a variety of contexts.

**UNDERSTANDING**

- Students will learn that storytelling is central to puppet theatre, and will begin creating their own stories.

**ACTIVITY — Conflict Resolution with Punch + Judy**

Introduce students to the Punch + Judy puppets, drawing from the background information provided in the Appendix (page 30) and the online Punch + Judy Teacher’s Resource Guide ([https://moa.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Punch-Judy-FINAL-427.pdf](https://moa.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Punch-Judy-FINAL-427.pdf)). Explain how traditionally there was no set script for Punch + Judy puppet shows, though the plot typically centred on Punch physically and verbally fighting with Judy, the Devil, and many other characters.

Lead a class discussion using the following questions:

- How does the flexible storyline and long list of characters in a Punch + Judy show affect the final production?
- How do Punch + Judy’s appearance represent their character traits?
- What other ways could Punch + Judy resolve their conflict?
Ask students for alternative strategies that Punch + Judy can use to settle their disputes, either in your own voice or in character as either Punch or Judy. Use the puppets to act out their suggestions, having students compare the impact of non-violent strategies with the characters’ typical behaviour. Invite students to share interpersonal challenges that they may encounter with their peers. Brainstorm suggestions for their resolution, using Punch + Judy to illustrate their suggestions.

**ACTIVITY — Collaborative Story**

Have students sit in a circle. Write a “starter” sentence on a piece of paper, like “Once upon a time, there was a king who...” Fold the page in such a way that you can’t see the words. Pass the piece of paper around and have each student write one sentence that builds on the previous ones. Have them fold the paper each time so that they cannot read more than the last line written.

Once everyone has had a turn, read the story out loud. Discuss the components of the story – plot, character, setting – and talk about what makes a good story. Using the puppets, have the students act out the story as it is written.

**ACTIVITY — Script Development**

Divide students into groups and distribute two puppets per group. Provide each group a prompt; include a setting, character descriptions, and a basic plot starter in the prompt. Ask the students to write a script based on the information they have been given. Once everyone is finished, ask the students to have two representatives perform the story in front of the class.

**ACTIVITY — Favourite Scenes**

In groups, have students pick a favorite scene from a movie, play, or book, or from a list of scenes that you have pre-selected. Have them act out these scenes, and ask other students to guess who the characters are, based on the performance.
Artist Voices

BIG IDEAS
- Artists can honour tradition while continuing to innovate with new stories, materials, and techniques.
- Through puppet theatre, we can think and learn about pressing issues and themes, including sustainability, cultural continuity, and social justice.
- Through creative expression, puppet makers and performers can explore identity, community, and belonging.

UNDERSTANDING
- Students will learn about contemporary puppet makers and performers, and reflect on the larger themes of their work.

ACTIVITY — Ashley Bryan’s Puppets
Anyone can make a puppet out of any material they choose. There are very simple puppets, like finger or paper puppets, and there are extremely complex puppets, like marionettes. Some puppets are life-like and meant to represent real people, while others are more fantastical and bizarre. Creativity and inventiveness are required to create a puppet and to bring it to life. By making their own, students will understand that puppets are diverse and that there is no wrong way to make them. They will also understand that making things by hand can help to create a special connection with the final product.

Ashley Bryan is a renowned African-American artist, author, and illustrator who has dedicated his prolific career to imagining, animating, and sharing enchanting stories. Read Ashley Bryan’s Puppets with your class. Discuss what Ashley uses to make his puppets and the significance of him using recycled materials.

Provide a variety of materials (paper, scissors, felt, etc.), including recycled materials for your students to create their own puppets. Ask them to consider how the materials and appearance of their puppet might influence their character.
To prompt a group/class discussion, ask students:

- What materials will you use to make your puppet? How do the materials you use influence the final product?
- What are the benefits of making art using recycled material? (Encourage students to reflect on such themes as sustainability, inspiration, and innovation.)
- Have you ever made something by hand? Share something about the process of making it or how you felt about the finished product.
- Think about the movement of your puppet. How will you animate it?
- What kind of stories do you want your puppet to share? Where do your family or cultural stories come from?

**ACTIVITY — Amanda Strong’s Stop-Motion Films**

Stop-motion animation is created by capturing the incremental movement of puppets on film. Slight changes in the puppets’ poses are captured one frame at a time, which gives the illusion of movement when played in sequence.

Amanda Strong is a Michif filmmaker and owner of Spotted Fawn Productions. As an interdisciplinary artist, Amanda uses stop-motion animation to tell powerful stories set in ethereal worlds, drawing on pressing themes including language, resilience, and resurgence.

Either in class or for viewing at home, share one or more of the following films by Amanda Strong with students. Film descriptions can be found at [https://www.spottedfawnproductions.com](https://www.spottedfawnproductions.com).

**Biidaaban** (19 min)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWjnYKyiUB8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWjnYKyiUB8)

**Four Faces of the Moon** (14 min)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWe--sysNkk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWe--sysNkk)

**Flood** (5 min)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6pvvYxyvpM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6pvvYxyvpM)
Use these questions to lead a class discussion about the film(s), or to structure small group conversations or individual reflections:

- What are your first impressions about the film(s)? What stood out to you?
- Who was the protagonist and who was the antagonist? Were there more than one?
- How do you think this film created? What techniques and materials might have been used?
- How did Amanda and her team use symbolism through the film’s imagery, characters and events? What was she trying to communicate to the audience?
- How did this film make you feel? What emotions were evoked by this film? How did the filmmakers inspire these emotions?
- How was time represented (e.g., linear, cyclical, jumping forward and backward)? What was the relationship between the past and present in the film?

ACTIVITY — Local Artists

Many puppeteers offer school performances, allowing students to experience the full artistry of a puppet show in person. Look for individuals, collectives, or organizations in your city or region that perform in schools.

The following performers are active in the Greater Vancouver area:

Sutrisno Hartana, Wayang (Shadow) Puppeteer
hartana.sutrisno@gmail.com

Kelle Jaines, Ventriloquist
http://kelliehaines.com/

Viktor Barkar, Vancouver Puppet Theatre
http://vancouverpuppet.com/
Chapter Four

Animating Puppets

Glove Puppets

Glove puppets, also referred to as hand puppets, are worn on and rely on manipulation by the human hand. In most cases, there are no strings, wires, or rods involved. These puppets can be elaborate and fragile. Usually, though, glove puppets are simple, lightweight, and as portable as the shows they are part of. Glove puppet performances often appear in street shows, festivals, and other public spaces, and puppeteers are concealed by booths as they manipulate the characters with their hands.

How to Move Glove Puppets

Glove puppets rely on puppeteers’ hands and fingers for movement. Place the glove puppet on your hand, just like a glove. Move your wrist and arm to have the puppet walk or bend. Your thumb acts as one arm, and your little finger acts as the other. Use your pointer finger to control the puppet’s head, directing the puppet’s face towards the audience.

See Also:

Appendix — Puppet Backstories
- Sun Wukong, the Monkey King (page 25)
- Wu Song, the Pilgrim (page 27)
- Young Lady (page 29)
- Punch + Judy (page 30)

Marionette Puppets

Marionettes, or string puppets, are complex puppet forms. For these puppets, strings, wires, or lines are attached to different body parts like heads, arms, and legs. Sometimes joints at the knees, elbows, feet, or hands, or parts of the face like the eyelids, mouth, or chin, are also attached to strings. By pulling, loosening, or vibrating the strings, puppeteers move their puppets and express emotions.

These puppets are usually manipulated from above: strings are threaded, looped, or knotted through a control device held in the puppeteer’s hand. Puppets with more strings allow for more variation in movement and expression. Their faces can express different emotions, from happiness to surprise and from anger to sorrow. Likewise, their bodies can move, rotate, gesture, and dance in sophisticated and dramatic ways.

HOW TO MOVE MARIONETTE PUPPETS

Marionette puppets rely on the manipulation of strings for movement. Theoretically, a puppet can have dozens of strings; however, puppeteers only have two hands! Sometimes puppeteers can work in tandem and are able to then move more strings.

Hold the puppet’s control device out in front with one hand. Use your other hand to pull the strings in order to bend, lift or shake the puppet’s appendages. Move the puppet’s arm to move the entire body.

SEE ALSO:

Appendix — Puppet Backstories

• Roland (page 32)


Shadow Puppets

Shadow puppetry is an ancient form of storytelling found in many parts of the world. It entertains both adults and children with popular stories. In China and India, the tradition is over two thousand years old.

The shadow puppets of India, China, Indonesia, and Turkey are flat and made of hide or paper. Many are intricately cut and dyed or painted with beautiful colours. Depending on what the story requires, there might be large or small shadows or dark or colourful ones. In a shadow puppet show, the puppeteers are concealed behind a screen of white cloth with a light source hung overhead. The puppeteer is skilled at moving the figures behind the screen, walking, fighting, dancing, or playing—often animating more than one puppet at a time. Moving the puppet closer to the screen or further away can make the puppets grow or shrink in size. The puppeteer also brings music, singing, and many voices to the characters to differentiate and animate them.

HOW TO MOVE SHADOW PUPPETS

Shadow puppets rely on the presence of light to make shadows. Puppeteers hold the flat puppets by a stick, manipulate their arms with rods, and situate the puppets between a light and a screen. Because of this, puppets can appear, vanish, shrink, or grow quickly. Hold the center stick with one hand. Use your other hand to hold the rods that control the arms. Move the rods to point, touch, or gesture with the puppet’s arms.

SEE ALSO:

Appendix — Puppet Backstories
- Rama + Sita (page 34)


Rod Puppets

Unlike a marionette puppet, a rod puppet is typically operated from below. A rod puppet’s head is generally attached to a central wooden or metal rod; the puppeteer holds the rod at the base or rests it in a block. This rod is usually hidden by the puppet’s costume and upper body. Smaller rods may be attached to the puppet’s arms to allow a wider range of movement and gestures, from the sharp and jerky to the elegant and refined.

HOW TO MOVE ROD PUPPETS

The central stick of a rod puppet takes the place of its legs, and the puppeteer moves the character by carrying the stick. Hold the center stick from the bottom, and support the body of the puppet with one hand. The puppet’s clothing may obscure your hand like a glove puppet. Use your other hand to hold the rods that control the arms. Move the rods to point, touch, or gesture with the arms. Push or twist the center stick to turn the head without moving the body.

SEE ALSO:

Appendix — Puppet Backstories

- Rama + Sita (page 34)
- Gareng (page 36)
Puppets in the Kit

- **PUNCH**
  - GLOVE PUPPET

- **JUDY**
  - GLOVE PUPPET

- **MONKEY KING**
  - GLOVE PUPPET

- **WU SONG**
  - GLOVE PUPPET

- **YOUNG LADY**
  - GLOVE PUPPET

- **ROLAND (ORLANDO)**
  - MARIONETTE PUPPET
SPOTTED CAT
MARIONETTE PUPPET

RAMA
SHADOW PUPPET

SITA
SHADOW PUPPET

GARENG
ROD PUPPET

RAMA
ROD PUPPET

SITA
ROD PUPPET
Puppet Backstories

Sun Wukong, The Monkey King (China)

The Monkey King can be traced back to the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279 CE), though the figure is perhaps most famous for his inclusion in *Journey to the West*, one of the Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese literature published during the 16th century. Attributed to the writer Wu Cheng’en, the epic chronicles the pilgrimage of a Buddhist monk and his three disciples as they seek to reclaim stolen texts from the ‘West’, or India.

**THE MONKEY KING + HIS MAGIC STAFF**

According to legend, Sun Wukong (meaning “Monkey Awakened to Emptiness”) was born from a stone atop the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. He befriended other monkeys on the mountain, and after completing a challenge to find the source of their local stream, the others declared Sun Wukong their king. To grow his power, the Monkey King sought the magical golden staff of the Dragon King of the Eastern Seas, called the Ruyi Jingu Bang. Its magic meant it could grow, shrink, multiply, or fight according to its wielder’s wishes. The Monkey King shrank the staff and stored it behind his ear when he wasn’t using it.
THE JADE EMPEROR

Supported by his enchanted weapon, monkey followers, and other beasts on the mountain with whom he had an alliance, the Monkey King grew cocky in his abilities and sought immortality. Fearing his increasing power and confidence, the Jade Emperor invited the Monkey King to Heaven so that he could keep a watchful eye on him. However, the Emperor insulted the Monkey King by giving him the lowest-status job in Heaven, that of the horse stables manager. When he found out that he was also excluded from a royal banquet, the Monkey King revolted. He assumed the name “Great Sage Equal to Heaven” and used supernatural powers to overcome the Army of Heaven.

THE BUDDHA

The Jade Emperor appealed to the Buddha for help controlling the defiant Monkey King, so the Buddha proposed a test: Buddha challenged the Monkey King to escape from the palm of his hand. The Monkey King accepted but was fooled when pillars he stood upon were transformed into the Buddha’s fingers. The Buddha’s hand became the Five Element Mountain, and there the Monkey King was trapped for 500 years.

MONKEY KING TODAY

Today the Monkey King is recognized for his independence, cunning, playful attitude, and rebelliousness. Further, his clumsiness, loyalty, and bravery also provide inspiration for puppet shows, television, and other Chinese media. His character reflects the hubris, contradictory tendencies, and personality traits of human nature.

REFERENCES


Wu Song, The Pilgrim (China)

Wu Song is a literary figure best known for defeating a man-eating tiger. He is a character in Shi Nai’an’s *Water Margin*, one of the Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese literature, which tells of a band of outlaws that resisted the forces of foreign invaders. Readers come to know Wu Song as “the Pilgrim” and apprentice of martial artist Zhou Tong, and he can often be identified by the staff and pair of sabres he carries.

**ORIGINS + ESCAPE**

*Water Margin* introduces Wu Song as a handsome orphan from North China. Because of his parents’ death, Wu Song was raised by his dwarfish older brother, Wu Dalang. One night, after drinking too much alcohol, Wu Song assaulted a man. He fled in fear of having killed him, and to avoid arrest, Wu Song took shelter in a nobleman’s residence. When he realized that no one was looking for him, Wu Song decided to return home.

**THE MAN-EATING TIGER**

On his return journey, the orphan passed a tavern with a sign that warned, “After Three Bowls, Do Not Cross the Ridge.” Curious, Wu Song stopped for a break to eat and drink. He learned from a waiter that the restaurant served wine so strong that guests were unable to walk straight after a few cups. Though he had been drinking wine, Wu Song did not feel drunk. But as he went to leave, the waiter warned of a man-eating tiger out on the ridge.

Wu Song left, not believing the waiter until he saw an official notice confirming the tiger’s presence. Out of embarrassment, he did not turn back out, but the effect of the alcohol began to hit him. He decided to nap on a nearby rock, but the tiger surprised him before he could get comfortable. Wu Song tried to use his staff to beat the tiger, but he broke it on a tree as he swung it. Left without a weapon, the orphan had to use his fists. Locals found Wu Song and the dead tiger the next
morning and were surprised at his achievement. News of his feat spread, and a magistrate in a nearby county offered him a job as a peace officer, which he accepted.

**WU DALANG + PAN JINLIAN**

Wu Song’s brother, Wu Dalang, happened to live in the county where Wu Song took the job. When visiting his brother’s home one day, he met his sister-in-law, Pan Jinlian, whose appearance differed drastically from her husband’s: Wu Dalang was ugly and short, but Pan Jinlian was beautiful. She tried to seduce Wu Song, but he resisted and left town for a work trip. Upon his return, he learned that his brother had died. Suspicious of Pan Jinlian’s account that his death was due to illness, he investigated and found that Pan Jinlian and her lover had poisoned Wu Dalang. Wu Song brought this information to the magistrate, but the case was dismissed; the judge had been bribed. Seeking justice for his brother, Wu Song threatened Pan Jinlian with a knife until she confessed to the murder. He killed her after she admitted the truth, then confronted her lover and killed him, too.

**SHI EN**

After the killings, the magistrate exiled Wu Song to a prison camp. The warden’s son, Shi En, found him and asked the famous fighter for help taking back his restaurant from the gangster Jiang Zhong, who had forcefully taken control. Shi En protected Wu Song from prison beatings and ensured that his life was comfortable in jail. Wu Song agreed to help if Shi En gave him wine every time he went by the restaurant, since he fought best when drunk. He confronted and defeated Jiang Zhong, ordering him to apologize and return control of the restaurant. Jiang Zhong bribed men to assassinate Wu Song, but Wu Song killed them all first. He fled and was advised to join a band of outlaws at Mount Twin Dragons. So he disguised himself as a Buddhist pilgrim to avoid recognition, and was then called “the Pilgrim.”

**WU SONG, THE WARRIOR**

Later, Wu Song and others from Mount Twin Dragons joined a group of outlaws from Liangshan Marsh in East China. He became a leader and fought against invading rebel forces seeking to dismantle the Song Dynasty. After losing his arm
in a fight against the sorcerer Bao Daoyi, Wu Song became a Buddhist recluse until he died as an old man.

REFERENCES

**Young Lady (China)**

This puppet serves as a supporting character and does not represent any specific historical or literary figure. Such roles are typical of other forms of Chinese theatre such as Peking Opera.

**ORIGINS + TRADITION**
Glove puppetry originated in the 16th century in Zhangzou of the Fujian province in southern China. Though glove puppet facial expressions remain static, the mobility of the glove puppets is dynamic, and they are known for their intricate movements and acrobatics. Usually two puppeteers perform, where one is an apprentice to the other, in turn passing down the mastery and techniques of the puppet tradition. The faces are carved out of wood, with special attention to facial expression. Some artisan carvers specialized in glove puppets due to the popularity of puppet theatre in the 18th and 19th centuries. The cloth that the puppets are made out of vary in quality, with some made out of fine silk adorned with intricate embroidery.

**TAIWAN**
Glove puppetry has established itself as a popular art form in Taiwan, beginning in the late 17th century when Taiwan was integrated into the Chinese Empire. Taiwan was colonized by Japan in 1895, and in the late 1930s the Japanese colonial government forbade Taiwanese puppet performances. After the occupation ended in 1945, traditional glove-puppet shows were once again performed, continuing to the present day.
REFERENCES


Punch + Judy (Great Britain)

Punch + Judy is a traditional, comedic British puppet show about the escapades of Punch and his wife Judy. Punch is an Anglicized iteration of the Italian “Pulcinella”, a character made famous from the Italian Commedia dell’arte. He is known for his unique voice, vibrant jester’s costume and sugar-loaf hat, hunchback and hooked nose, and the slapstick he carries to hit other characters.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Punch + Judy performances and booths dominated street shows in London, where both glove and marionette puppets were used to extol Victorian virtues and morals. These shows were typically performed by a solo puppeteer called a ‘professor’ or ‘punchman,’ though he may have had an assistant who roved the audience and collected money. Since their beginnings, Punch + Judy shows have evolved from being primarily adult entertainment into kid-friendly fun, though many adults still appreciate the slapstick humor and contemporaneity of episodes.

FAMILY TRADITIONS

In the Victorian Era (1830s-1900), Punch + Judy productions became family enterprises. Some, such as the Codman and Magg families, continued into the 20th century, while other individuals created their own shows. Because of the portability
of the performance booth, Punch + Judy shows cropped up all over Great Britain. They spread from busy city streets to seaside towns in England and Wales, but they could also be booked for private parties.

**FROM STREETS TO SHORES**

When cars were invented in the early 20th century, Punch + Judy were pushed out of the streets and toward the coastline. As time passed, glove puppet shows overcame marionette versions, and the red-and-white puppet booths of Punch + Judy became synonymous with English beach holidays. Dozens of Punch and Judy shows were performed for Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887, and England celebrated the show’s 300th and 325th anniversaries with festivals in 1962 and 1987.

**AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT**

Punch + Judy shows are unique in that they encourage audience participation, stemming from their origins in loud, highly-trafficked areas. Punchmen must adopt absurd voices—Punch himself is known for his distinct, kazoo-like voice—and create wild storylines to keep audiences’ attention, especially when shows take place on streets where noise and distractions compete. To keep them engaged, Punch + Judy shows support interaction, conversation, and heckling among viewers.

**NARRATIVE**

There is no fixed script for a Punch + Judy show; the principal characters are usually featured, but supporting characters may be included as fits the story. In addition to Punch and Judy, MOA’s collection includes the Baby and the Constable, but there also exist a Crocodile, the Devil, and a Doctor, among others. A typical Punch + Judy show involves a series of encounters between the title characters and the secondary figures: Punch will usually manhandle the Baby, argue with Judy, assault the Constable, and harass other characters with his stick before facing and overcoming the Devil. The episodic nature of the show worked well to allow pedestrians to easily join or leave the audience, especially in the Victorian Era. At the same time, publishers began to print scripts of shows for private enjoyment. Plots and dialogues changed with each publication, demonstrating that each Punch + Judy production reflected the era and spirit of the times within which it was performed.
Roland (Sicily)

Roland (or ‘Orlando’) is a historical and literary figure whose achievements were chronicled in the epic poem, *Chanson de Roland* (or ‘The Song of Roland’). The poem is the oldest surviving piece of French literature, likely written between 1040 and 1115 CE.

In the poem, Roland fights under the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (or ‘Carlo Magno’), in a war against the Muslim King Marsile. Roland is betrayed by his stepfather Ganelon, a Frankish general who informs the Saracen army of Charlemagne and Roland’s plans. When Roland’s men are overtaken by the enemy, he blows his signature olifant—a horn made from the ivory of an elephant tusk—to call Charlemagne for back up. However, he blows the horn so hard that his temples burst; Charlemagne arrives to find that Roland died a martyr, and Ganelon is eventually drawn and quartered for treason. The poem ends as Charlemagne’s men continue on their next crusade.

ROLAND IN SICILY

*Chanson de Roland* was further adapted throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, and in the 1400s Roland appeared as the title character ‘Orlando’ in a series of Italian verse romances. These epic poems, *Orlando Innamorato* by Matteo Maria Boidardo and *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto, found an outlet in the opera dei pupi, the traditional puppet theatre of Sicily. Though likely influenced by older puppetry traditions, Sicilian puppet theatre originated in southern-central Italy in the 1800s. Shows were performed in episodes, which, if produced...
nightly, may have run for weeks or months. Stories touched on tales of chivalry, historical events, Renaissance literature, and Shakespearean plays, in addition to popular Italian works.

**ORLANDO INNAMORATO**

In *Orlando Innamorato* (‘Orlando in Love’), Orlando and fellow knight Rinaldo enter a contest for the hand of Angelica, daughter of the king of Cathay, in which they must defeat her brother Argalia. Argalia dies in the course of the competition, and Angelica flees to the Ardenne forest, where she drinks from the Stream of Love and falls in love with Rinaldo. As they give chase, Rinaldo drinks from the fount of hate and despises Angelica, but Orlando falls in love with her. When she is kidnapped and held in a fortress by the King Agrican, Orlando frees her. Orlando and Rinaldo duel over conflicting interests: romantic love of Angelica and duty to their King, Charlemagne. On their way back to France, Angelica and Rinaldo drink from the opposite founts. There the story ends, as Matteo Maria Boidardo died before he could finish writing it.

**ORLANDO FURIOSO**

The story was taken up by Ludovico Ariosto in the 1500s, and he continued to tell of Orlando's unrequited love for Angelica in *Orlando Furioso* (‘Raging Roland’). The romantic epic, told in episodes, touches on the subjects of duty, honour, and chivalry. Orlando pursues Angelica, but when she falls in love and elopes with an enemy knight, Orlando rampages across Europe and Africa. A trip to the moon clears his senses, and he joins with Charlemagne’s men again to fulfill his chivalric duties.

**AUDIENCE APPEAL**

The lives of the paladins—chivalric knights of medieval France—appealed to poor theatre audiences as opportunities for escape. The stories of Orlando, Carlo Magno, and Rinaldo reflected social obligations, human relationships, and faith, and though they did not appear in every show, their histories were among the most appealing. Audiences could identify them by the emblems on their armour. Floral and geometric designs, in addition to colours and gems, are also unique to regions of Italy but their consistency among operators helped audiences recognize figures quickly.
20TH CENTURY
In the mid-1900s, Sicilian Puppet Theatre suffered from the rise of television. Puppeteers had to change their shows from long, published works to single-evening excerpts for tourists and children to view. Puppeteers today still continue from long lines of family companies.

REFERENCES


Rama + Sita (India)
Rama and Sita are central figures of the Ramayana, one of two Hindu epics authored by the poet Valmiki, who wanted to carry the essence of the lessons of Vedas (religious texts of Hinduism) to the common people by singing Rama’s virtuous deeds. In this way, those who were illiterate could know the themes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Valmiki’s second epic. The Ramayana depicts the values of truthfulness, morality, and nobility as supreme ideals of life. It also reflects the spirit of that time, the people, the nature of ideal monarchy, and patriotism towards motherland and human relations.

RELIGION IN INDONESIA
It is believed that the Indonesian version was written during the Medang Kingdom (732 – 1006 CE) in Central Java. Buddhism was dominant in Sumatra, West, and Central Java at the time. Through wayang (‘puppet’) performances, however, the story of Ramayana brought a resurgence of Hinduism, which has a long history in the archipelago of Indonesia. The
Strait of Malacca, a sea lane linking the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean, has been the main shipping channel for seaborne trade between China, India and the Middle east. Sumatra’s coastline is conveniently located next to this sea lane, causing merchants between India and China to stop over here. However, the spread of the religion was catalyzed by indigenous kings using religious doctrine to increase prestige.

**RAMA + SITA**

Among puppets in MOA’s collection are two rod puppets and two leather shadow puppets of Sita and Rama, the heroes of the *Ramayana*. Sita is the wife of Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu on Earth. They are both considered ‘refined’ characters and thus have white faces and are associated with the divine. According to the *Ramayana*, Sita and Rama marry before they are both banished to the Dandaka forest. Sita lusts for the demon-king Ravana and follows him to the kingdom of Lanka, drawing the ire and military might of Rama. After Ravana is killed, Sita returns to her husband but is judged in a trial by fire. The couple are crowned king and queen, but when Rama learns of Sita’s pregnancy, he questions its legitimacy. He abandons Sita in a forest where she births twins Lava and Kusha. When her sons reach adulthood and reunite with Rama, Sita returns to her mother, the Earth’s womb.

Sita’s puppet is usually smaller and more delicate than male puppets from the *Ramayana*. Today, she is seen in India and Asia more broadly as a model of female and wifely virtues. Like Sita, Rama’s clothing is richly ornamented, and he usually carries a bow and arrows. The character may appear androgynous with make-up that accentuates his eyes.

**WAYANG**

Wayang, from the term *bayang* meaning ‘shadow’, is the traditional theatre puppetry of Indonesia and Malaysia influenced by Javanese culture. These theatre shows are performed by a dalang, or solo puppet master, who narrates the story, directs the music, and moves the figures. There are dozens of characters in the Wayang tradition, but each usually falls under the category of five recurring types: the refined male, refined female, strong male, demon, or clown.
Gareng
(West Java, Indonesia)

MOA also has three puppets of the Punokawan (or ‘the clowns’), who are sons of Semar, the most important god-clown. In the Ramayana, Semar serves Rama, but in theatre his character represents the voice of the dalang (puppet master). He is wise, comical, and has the ability to directly address the audience. Like his sons, his appearance is androgynous; his character combines male with female, divine with human, and performer with puppet. Semar and the Punokawan are companions, servants, and jokesters to heroes in Javanese versions of Hindu epics.

GARENG + HIS BROTHERS

One of the four comedic figures in the tradition is Gareng, Semar’s eldest son, who has a deformed leg and broken hands as a result of his arrogance. Petruk, the middle child of Semar, serves to provide comic relief and to convey opinions of the puppeteer. Petruk has long legs and a large nose, which is his most distinctive feature. The final child is Cepot, also called Astrajingga. Cepot does not exist in the Mahabharata or Ramayana and stems instead from Sundanese Wayang. Like his brothers, Cepot is funny and easy-going, using slapstick humour. He is noted for his innocence but ignorance of
manners. The four Punokawan figures make appearances in a wayang show to lighten up the stage while touching on present political issues.

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Websites

MOA CAT
http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/home
Explore MOA’s rich collection of puppets from around the world.

World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts (WEPA)
https://wepa.unima.org/en/
Established in 1978 by the Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA), WEPA offers in-depth information about global puppetry traditions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Browse UNESCO’s Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage for more information about inscribed puppetry traditions, including recordings of performances.

Asian Art Museum (San Francisco, CA)
https://asianart.org/
The Asian Art Museum offers many digital resources for learning about and teaching puppet traditions from Asia, including lesson plans, slide show presentations, performance outlines, and classroom activities. Most of their collection, including hundreds of puppets, is also available online.

Museu da Marioneta (Lisbon, Portugal)
https://www.museudamarioneta.pt/en/
Portugal's only puppet museum offers an online collection of global puppets and props.
‘Puppets Talk, Children Listen’ (TEACH Magazine article)
https://teachmag.com/archives/5618
Christie Belfiore discusses the benefit of using puppetry in the classroom for students from kindergarten to high school.

‘Balinese Shadow Puppet Theater with a Twist’
(performance recording)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ2L-CsSylg
Performed at TEDxUbud, acclaimed Balinese wayang puppeteer Made Sidia and his team of over fifty performers bring the Ramayana epic to life, integrating traditional practice with modern innovation.

Books

Puppetry in Theatre and Arts Education: Head, Hands and Heart
In this workbook, author Johanna Smith argues for the inclusion of puppetry in classroom pedagogy, offering lessons and activities for teachers to incorporate into their practice.

Show Me a Story: 40 Craft Projects and Activities to Spark Children's Storytelling
https://www.emilyneuburger.com/show-me-a-story
Author Emily K. Neuburger provides activities for engaging young learners in creative storytelling and imaginative play. Use this resource to inspire your students to make stories for their own puppets.
Museum of Anthropology
Jill Baird
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