

## Wayang in Museums: The Reverse Repatriation of Javanese Puppets

Matthew Isaac Cohen

Puppets are theatrical devices or tools enabling the creation of dramatic characters in performances. Though inanimate objects, they are "given design, movement, and frequently, speech, in such a way that the audience imagines them to have life," as Steve Tillis states in his seminal overview of puppet theory.<sup>1</sup> Puppets take on this semblance of life in a theatrical apparatus: posed in a tableau with other puppets, framed in a puppet booth or projected onto a shadow screen, situated in a narrative, interacting with music, shifting position, filled out or lifted up by a puppeteer's hand, and projecting outwards to spectators. A puppet is a "handy" object, in a Heideggerian sense--available, accessible, and ready for the trained puppeteer attuned to the puppet's affordances.

At the same time, puppets possess agency in performance and behave in unpredictable ways. This was noted more than two decades ago by Bruno Latour, whose theories of the agency of objects and networks of humans and non-humans are increasingly informing puppetry scholarship. Latour observed that "[i]f you talk with a puppeteer, then you will find that he [*sic*] is perpetually surprised by his puppets. He makes the puppet do things that cannot be reduced to his action, and which he does not have the skill to do, even potentially. Is this fetishism? No, it is simply a recognition of the fact that we are exceeded by what we create."<sup>2</sup> Puppetry as an art form thus serves "to induce an attentiveness to things and their affects," to draw on political philosopher Jane Bennett.<sup>3</sup> By virtue of the puppet's liminal position as both bodily prosthesis and surprising object, puppetry can train what Bennet calls "a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body."<sup>4</sup>

The intimate bond between puppet and puppeteer is usually severed when puppets are accessioned by museums. Puppets are generally collected to illuminate the past and present of

the societies that produced and enjoyed them. Museums open puppets to analysis and reflection by placing them side-by-side with comparable objects. Thus, depending on the museum and puppet type, figures might be juxtaposed with children's playthings, masks, ancient statuary, votive icons, satirical prints, fairground amusements, or (more rarely) contemporary art. Only rarely are puppets collected along with the full range of objects enabling their performance (scenarios, booths, lights, musical instruments, repair kits, etc.). It is even less common that exhibitions demonstrate puppets' performative affordances by staging them within a theatrical apparatus. Instead, a viewer confronts mute, unmoving figures enclosed in glass, often dangling limply or posed by designers who impose their own sense of theatricality upon them.

Even puppets decommissioned from performance duty and re-sited in museums can nonetheless activate memories of past performances and connect viewers once more to larger-than-human forces. In a recent overview of American puppetry, critic Laura Collins-Hughes recollects how moved she was by the puppets displayed at a *Sesame Street* exhibition (New York Library for the Performing Arts, September 18, 2014 to January 31, 2015). Encountering the lumbering and bashful Mr. Snuffleupagus in all his furriness Collins-Hughes explained "was like coming upon a mythical creature."<sup>5</sup> Puppets, in the theatre and out, manifest what Jane Bennett calls "thing power": they call out to and provoke affects in viewers.<sup>6</sup>

Viewers who do not come with prior knowledge of the traditions from which puppets in museums spring, however, are likely to experience difficulty in understanding and responding to their specific calls. When disembedded from performance traditions and re-moored in museums, it is difficult to gauge a puppet's theatrical potential. Instead of encountering objects imbued with agency and dramatic power, viewers "confront passive objects and their law-governed mechanisms."<sup>7</sup> Passive puppets might be appreciated for their

sculptural qualities, transformation of materials, or humorous confabulations. But it is challenging to attend to the affects of things and sense the non-human forces moving puppets, animators, and spectators in performances unless one is already intimate with originating traditions.

There are thus generic quandaries faced when confronting puppets in museums. Ethical, political, ethnological, and aesthetic issues and considerations are magnified when figures originating from religious traditions, like those of Southeast Asia, transfer to museums. These puppets are not only tools of the trade, but are means for communing with ancestors and the sacred, and are themselves hallowed and insistent of a degree of respect not always accorded when disembedded from traditional contexts. Over the last five years or so, I have had opportunities to visit, study, handle, and work with public and private collections of *wayang* puppets from Indonesia as a visiting performer, consultant, curator, and practice-led researcher. I collate here reflections on my sojourns with these puppets, Artaudian "gods that sleep in museums," with particular reference to Javanese puppets in British, German, Canadian, and Indonesian museums.<sup>8</sup> The four case studies show how museum puppets index histories of theatrical practice as well as colonialism and imperialism, serve as focal points for maintaining relations with ethnically diverse local communities, figure into narratives of migration and multiculturalism, serve as calling cards for contemporary practitioners, and have potential to influence contemporary practice.

Wayang in Indonesia refers simultaneously to puppets-as-objects, a set of cultural practices that can be applied by a group of artists to create a performance (or articulated elsewhere, for example in a sermon or a manuscript illustration), and a class of performance-events, among other definitions.<sup>9</sup> In this same multivalent spirit, this essay is not limited to analyzing particular wayang puppets in museums, recounting histories of collections, or describing exhibitions. Rather I investigate how museums containing wayang collections

enable certain kinds of performances and particular discussions grounded in traditional approaches to animating objects.

I take it as given that wayang's network of relations is now global; once rooted and routed in almost-exclusively Southeast Asian locations and networks, wayang has been practiced and exhibited in extra-regional contexts for more than 130 years.<sup>10</sup> Museums have historically been significant sites for boundary crossing, transnational flow, hybridization, and exchange. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Austrian puppeteer Richard Teschner and the Russian puppeteers Nina Simonovich-Efimova and Ivan Efimov independently discovered Indonesian rod puppetry through *wayang golek* in museums. Teschner's and the Efimovs' innovative syntheses of wayang and European puppet technologies fundamentally changed the course of the art: Jim Henson's Muppets are descendants of these fertile encounters.<sup>11</sup>

Museums worldwide are custodians of the tangible heritage of wayang and responsible for caring for individual and sets of puppets and associated objects which map the history of the art form. Indeed, museum wayang have been used as data or illustrations for historical and ethnological studies since the nineteenth century, and there are many catalogues of museum collections and exhibitions of wayang and other puppet forms.<sup>12</sup> In recent years, museum collections are gaining new prominence through online platforms and digital photography. With the circulation of images via websites and social media, puppet experts and puppeteers in Indonesia and internationally are increasingly aware of the latent power of museum collections for researching wayang's past; archaic figures provide models for innovative puppet designs. But there is still much scholarly work to be done on museum practices--the means and modes of collection, storage, conservation, interpretation, exhibition, and cultural programming--for wayang and other puppetry forms.<sup>13</sup> This essay can only scratch the surface of this field.

An extensive critical literature exists on the modus operandi of collecting Indonesian arts and artefacts, the motivations of collectors, and the threats institutional and private collecting have caused for sustaining traditions.<sup>14</sup> This essay endeavors to move beyond standard narratives of imperialism and expropriation to consider the potential of museum wayang to fuel creative expression, collaborative scholarship and art making, arts diplomacy, and multi-national cooperation. With Edward Said in mind, I read puppets contrapuntally, that is, as objects travelling "across temporal, cultural and ideological boundaries in unforeseen ways to emerge as part of a new ensemble *along with* later history and subsequent art."<sup>15</sup> I take particular inspiration here from James Clifford, who speaks of how museums might "become way stations rather than final destinations," and Nicholas Thomas, who discusses a process of "reverse repatriation" by which artists and other agents can bring home *to* objects in museums far from their sites of origin.<sup>16</sup>

Recent studies of the articulation of museum and theatrical practice have tended to focus on the theatricality of exhibition and museum design, the performance of museum interpretation, and the collection and curatorship of performance ephemera.<sup>17</sup> This essay is in line with "the new museology" with its critical inquiry into the societal purposes of museums and their modes of constructing and questioning histories and identities. It follows shifts in status, value, and agency of performance artefacts through their circulation over time, and examines the social relations and performances these objects entail or engender.<sup>18</sup> Wayang re-sited in museums, archives, or libraries, or displayed in private homes as interior decoration, are stripped of narrative function and dramatic purpose and are thus no longer strictly performing objects, defined by Frank Proschan as "material images of humans, animals, or spirits that are created, displayed, or manipulated in narrative or dramatic performance."<sup>19</sup> They possess, however, latent potential for re-theatricalization. Through their

extraction, resituating, and "transformation" in museum contexts, museum puppets offer things that puppets encountered "in the wild" typically cannot.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Raffles Collection in the British Museum**

The first systematic European collector of wayang was Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826), lieutenant-governor of Java during the five year interregnum of 1811 and 1816, when Holland's colonial possessions were under British control, who went on to author the encyclopedic *The History of Java* and found Singapore.<sup>21</sup> Raffles' 416 Javanese puppets were donated to the British Museum by his heirs, arriving in two tranches in 1859 and 1939 with a trove of ethnographic objects ranging from ancient Javanese magical coins to Japanese ritual masks.<sup>22</sup> Individual puppets from Java had already reached Europe via circuitous routes and were displayed in museums and private collections before Raffles. One of the oldest wayang in existence was once housed in the world's first museum, the Chamber of Art and Curiosities of Ambras Castle in Innsbruck, Austria, and is now in the World Museum Vienna. Though its colors are faded and it is missing its arms, this flat wooden figure is immediately identifiable as a *wayang krucil* puppet of Yudhistira, the king of Amarta in the Mahabharata story cycle.<sup>23</sup> It was likely acquired by European merchants visiting the trading entrepôt of Banten on the north coast of western Java circa 1600.<sup>24</sup> Puppets, like many Far Eastern *kunstammer* objects, arrived without documentation or records of acquisition. It was left to subsequent generations of curators, scholars, and visitors to make their own sense of these unusual figures, which differed so much from the familiar glove and string puppets of Europe that they were often not even recognized as puppets. For example, an 1821 inventory describes the Ambras wayang as "a Hindustani (or Mexican) female idol."<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to prior European collectors, Raffles collected with a solid understanding of how Javanese puppets were used in performance and wayang's significance in society. He

had a clear purpose for collecting. As a scholar-administrator of the Enlightenment, Raffles was convinced that knowledge of Javanese history and local conceptions of the past was essential to proper governance. In *The History of Java*, Raffles analyzes wayang performances as "spectacles connected with national recollection" and an oral depository of Javanese beliefs about the past. Wayang for Raffles was a means to "keep alive the recollections of 'days long since gone by,' and to disseminate a general knowledge of native legendary history among many, with whom, from the ignorance of letters, the stories might otherwise have been irretrievably lost or more grossly distorted."<sup>26</sup> The repertoire of each puppet form, Raffles reports in *The History of Java*, focuses on specified historical epochs. Shadow puppets (*wayang kulit*) chiseled from buffalo hide were used to dramatize ancient mythological tales derived from the Mahabharata and Ramayana or legends of the East Javanese knight errant Panji and kin. Wooden puppets (*wayang krucil*) were deployed for telling more recent stories set in the legend-enshrouded Javanese kingdoms of Pajajaran and Majapahit.<sup>27</sup> The puppets he collected thus not only illustrated the stylistic diversity of Javanese puppetry, but, more importantly to Raffles, the strata of myth, legend, and history recollected through the medium--what Paul Ricoeur calls "mnemonic representations."<sup>28</sup>

Literary scholar Bernard Arps has demonstrated how wayang is an indexical art; enactments "point to and call up . . . aspects of history and context."<sup>29</sup> Wayang was a mature art and today's conventions of carving, painting, and jointing puppets were well established by Raffles' time. Indeed, many of the puppets collected by Raffles would not call attention to themselves if incorporated into a wayang performance today. But close inspection reveals material signs of the period of collection, as well as indexing 200 years of transformation and adaptation to a non-Indonesian environment. Wayang puppets recollect distant pasts through standard iconographic features--Indian trade textiles, *mahakala* and lotus motifs, Buddhist prayer beads, and Ottoman slippers--and represent the moment of construction through their

unique forms. Raffles' puppets readily index the years up to the present through signs of use, repairs, and alterations--sawed-off control rods, detached arms, gilding, application of surface consolidants, labelling. They evoke the present in the ways current-day users resonate with them and press them into service, and offer models for future cultural activities.

Raffles' puppets were initially indifferently treated by the Museum. In an 1861 visit to the Museum, Raffles' nephew and heir, the Reverend William Charles Raffles Flint, found them "piled in a heap" at the bottom of a glass case located "in a dark and ill-favoured" part of the museum.<sup>30</sup> Their antiquity, connection with Raffles, and emplacement in the British Museum contributed to a gradual recognition of their merit and significance. They have been included in both temporary and permanent exhibitions, published as picture postcards, and sent out on loan around the world. Possession of the puppets and knowledge of their provenance establishes the British Museum as an authority on Javanese culture. Blythe House, the offsite storage facility in West Kensington where the puppets are kept, is a site for cultural diplomacy where diplomats, bureaucrats, collectors, curators, scholars, and artists can be impressed by the Museum's imperial bounty and continuity of care over the decades. In exchange for the privilege of access to the puppets, which requires accompaniment by a Museum Assistant or Curator, expert visitors provide comments to be entered into the Museum's catalogues or inscribed in the collective memory of the museum (embodied by curators, conservators, and other museum employees); others might be courted for donations or other courtesies.

While access is limited, the puppets have been scrutinized by numerous scholars over the decades and have informed the study of Javanese cultural history in crucial ways. In one exemplary study, visual anthropologist Anthony Forge examined the ornaments and batik cloth patterns on the puppets, along with a set of wooden statues commissioned in Java by Raffles, to determine how dress signaled social status in Java two centuries ago.<sup>31</sup> Particular

puppets are "hidden transcripts," proffering subtle social commentaries. Wayang's clown-servants are known to "step among the heroes and demons and gods like wide-awake men in a dreamworld," in the oft-cited words of linguist A.L. Becker. They escape the monadological constraints of wayang mythology to index the contemporary through their use of jargon, awareness of trends and crazes, and allusions to gossip and news.<sup>32</sup> Among Raffles' puppets, Togog, the clown-servant who routinely accompanies overseas invading kings, including Rahwana from the Ramayana epic, is twice depicted in ethnic drag. In one puppet Togog is costumed as an Ottoman mercenary with a bright-red Ottoman-style battle helmet and a red, buttonless jacket with gold piping. In another puppet, he is a Balinese slave, with a striped bandana, plug earring, checked black-and-white *poleng* skirt, and a pair of flowers in his hair.<sup>33</sup> Togog's sartorial styling speaks volumes about how certain foreigners in Raffles' time were considered untrustworthy and fickle in their loyalties. Ottoman mercenaries had a long history in Southeast Asia. Balinese slaves were ubiquitous in Java until Raffles abolished slavery; the 1684 large-scale revolt against the Dutch colonizers led by the Balinese ex-slave Surapati left a legacy of distrust. Togog today is much more likely to wear a rounded skullcap of the sort worn by men for Islamic prayers, a sly contemporary reference perhaps on the capricious expression of piety.

The same puppet can speak in vital ways to the 1810s and the present. In a 2014 visit with me to Blythe House, Javanese puppeteers Ledjar Soebroto and Ananto "Nanang" Wicaksono were most impressed by central Javanese shadow puppets representing the character of Bima from the Mahabharata epic.<sup>34</sup> To the British Museum director Neil MacGregor, who featured one of these Bima puppets in his radio series and blockbuster exhibition *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, Bima is "lifeless and fragile now."<sup>35</sup> But in the company of Ledjar and Nanang in Blythe House, Bima made a quite palpable impact. Two of these Bima puppets are magical puppets--talismanic figures that can be used by

puppeteers or wizards to avert plagues or change the weather. They are labelled with both character names and the princely titles of "Kyai Mimis" (Sir Explosive) and "Kyai Lindu" (Sir Earthquake). "Explosive" and "Earthquake" refer obliquely perhaps to attributes of Bima, who causes the ground to shake when he walks and is prone to explosive outbursts of temper. The other Bima puppet in the set is also a very potent and impressive figure with deeply carved magical signs incised on its chest. Nanang was so impressed by this third Bima, in fact, that he asked to be photographed with it and fervently touched it to his face as an act of devotion and magical contagion before putting it back in its drawer. Wayang to date are offered ceremonially as prestations to dignitaries, so the preponderance of puppets of Bima--a character known for his strength, power, height, hairiness, bluntness, and straight-speaking--might have something to do with the way that central Java's nobility saw Raffles, or Raffles' own self-fashioning. Sometimes the choice of puppet will be a sly comment on the recipient's character faults or an aspirational model for how the recipient ought to behave.<sup>36</sup>

Contrasting display strategies have accented wayang's indexicality in different ways. A small selection of the Raffles puppets were included in the Museum's permanent exhibition, *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century* (opened 2003), which intentionally recreates a historic cabinet of curiosities to demonstrate the logic behind the collecting of art and artefacts from around the world in the age of imperialism. These puppets are displayed indifferently in recessed oak shelving. More recently, the temporary exhibition *Shadow Puppet Theatre from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand* (September 8, 2016 to January 29, 2017), which I co-curated with Dr. Alexandra Green, the Henry Ginsburg Curator for Southeast Asia at the British Museum, allowed for more dynamic display--with tableaux based on episodes of well-known plays, use of a puppet screen, and video. Groupings and labelling acknowledged the puppets' historicity and particularly their connection to Raffles, as well as the sacred qualities of some of the figures, and functions in

performance. Anticipating the interpretive difficulties visitors might experience in reading wayang's contemporaneity from Raffles' figures, we commissioned a set of four contemporary clown-servant puppets--variants of the central Javanese figures Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong dressed in hop-hop attire with sneakers, track suits, baseball caps, jeans, t-shirts, and a hoody, sporting accessories such as a chain with an American dollar sign medallion and a pair of 3D glasses, and fashionable haircuts and tattoos.<sup>37</sup> These puppets regularly excited the most avid commentary from museum visitors who recognized in them the signs of a living tradition coeval with their own popular culture.

There is hope that bringing modern wayang to live as permanent neighbors of Raffles' puppets will challenge any future use of them to prop up what Richard Schechner calls "the normative expectation" of wayang.<sup>38</sup> That is to say, the insertion of *wayang hip hop* into the British Museum relativizes Raffles' wayang and prevents them from being viewed through Orientalist lenses as expressions of eternal Javanese values. Wayang can be appreciated as an ever-changing tradition, and Raffles' puppets can be understood to be as embedded in the 1810s as the hip hop puppets are in the 2010s.

### **Wayang in the Linden-Museum Stuttgart**

Wayang is above all family art form. Plays have inter-generational appeal. Members of troupes are usually related to each other. Sets of puppets are not only treasured inheritances, heirloom puppets are also used to instruct aspiring puppeteers in the family through play and participation in their maintenance. Puppeteers routinely trace their descent back five generations or more, and the most magically potent of plays, *Murwakala* (The Origin of Kala), which lifts curses, can only be performed by a pedigreed puppeteer, who recites his (more infrequently, her) genealogy in performances. So when wayang puppets are re-sited in museums this effect not just a single generation, but posterity.

However, museums have the capacity of creating different sorts of inter-generational dialogues, as a 2016 wayang performance at the Linden-Museum Stuttgart, the ethnological state museum of the southwestern German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, illustrates. The Museum has a significant collection of more than 200 Javanese puppets, many dating back to the nineteenth century. In fact, the Museum has one of the most broad-reaching collections of shadow puppets in Germany, with significant holdings from China, India, Thailand, Turkey, Greece, Indonesia, and the Middle East. Most important, perhaps, are its twenty-six ancient shadow puppets collected by the German Orientalist Paul Kahle in 1909 in a village outside of Damietta, Egypt, recently estimated to date back to the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> The distribution of shadow puppets across the museum's geographical units inspired the Linden-Museum's curators to collaborate in mounting the exhibition *Die Welt des Schattentheaters: Von Asien bis Europa* (The World of Shadow Theatre: From Asia to Europe, October 3, 2015 to April 10, 2016).

Inscribed in the Museum's contemporary mission statement is an aim to be "a living venue for intercultural dialog and a meeting place for an increasingly culturally diverse city."<sup>40</sup> This aim was dutifully implemented in the exhibition and associated programming. The exhibition involved technical advice and loans of European shadow puppets and specialist lamps from the International Shadow Theatre Centre in nearby Schwäbisch Gmünd, a world-leading institution since 1988. Special attention was paid to *karagöz*, the Turkish shadow theatre, to involve Stuttgart's sizeable Turkish community. A colorful set of *karagöz* puppets from the early 1960s was purchased from a German collector, leading Turkish puppeteer Cengiz Özek was invited to deliver a workshop and performances for children, and contemporary video work responding to *karagöz* was compiled, commissioned, and screened in the exhibition. The exhibition emphasized how shadow theatre crosses cultural boundaries. In the exhibit one saw pages of the avant-garde art journal

*Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* featuring Kahle's Egyptian puppets, which inspired European artists including Kandinsky. There was a video documenting a Chinese shadow puppet performance by the German puppeteer Professor Max Bühmann (1904-1976). One alcove profiled anthropologist and shadow puppet collector Friedrich Seltmann (1912-1997), who sold many of his Asian puppets to the Linden-Museum. Malaysian wayang representing characters from *Star Wars*, evidencing contemporary cultural fusion, were especially commissioned for the exhibition. There were interactive stations throughout the exhibition that allowed visitors to animate traditional shadow puppets on screens, move lights about, and construct and enact their own scenes on overhead projectors.

The sixteen Indonesian puppets exhibited, nearly all in the dominant Central Javanese *wayang kulit* style associated with the court center of Surakarta, were collected in Java in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the heyday of German collecting of Asian puppets. Java and other Dutch colonial possessions in Southeast Asia were returned by the British to the Dutch following Napoleon's defeat, and Indonesia remained solidly under Dutch control until the outbreak of World War Two. But despite the flourishing of Dutch scholarship on Java starting circa 1830, colonial wayang collections were rarely as systematic as Raffles'. Up until the 1960s, Dutch museums gradually built up collections unsystematically, primarily through reliance on donations of souvenir puppets from retired colonial civil servants, with the occasional set gifted by one or another of Java's sultans.<sup>41</sup> Instead, among the European countries, it was Germany that took the lead in collecting wayang through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Significant numbers of puppets entered into art museums and *theaterwissenschaft* study collections, including the Theatre Collection of the University of Cologne, but most wayang were acquired by Germany's numerous ethnological museums as vehicles for understanding and representing Indonesian cultural technologies, stylized representation, myth, ritual, and archaic society.

The two major collectors responsible for the Javanese wayang displayed were Theodor Heinrich Thomann and Max Buchner. While Thomann was a "professional treasure hunter" who supplied Asian art and ethnographic artifacts to many German museums, Buchner was a conscientious museum anthropologist who understood the necessity of systematically collecting wayang for ethnological purposes.<sup>42</sup> Buchner, who headed Munich's ethnological museum Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde from 1887 until 1907, visited Java on a long Asian-Pacific collecting trip undertaken in 1888-1890.<sup>43</sup> He acquired on this visit not only a full set of 125 *wayang kulit* puppets but also performing accoutrements such as *kepyakan*, the metal plates the puppeteer strikes with the sole of his foot, and *tapak dara*, the spiked stands into which the banana logs that serve as wayang's playboard are planted. He even purchased a set of toy puppets cut from playing cards, testifying to a long-standing connection between wayang and gambling. Buchner's taste in objects--which also included aboriginal weapons and Buddhist statues--was mocked upon his return to Munich. As one critic wrote: "what do we want with these jagged sticks and this desert idol junk?"<sup>44</sup> Buchner, however, collected neither for display nor the entertainment of the masses. Like other German ethnologists, he acquired materials for scientific comparisons aimed at understanding cultural universals and constructing total histories of the world, under the influence of Alexander von Humboldt's theories.<sup>45</sup>

Due to the fragility of objects, lack of curatorial expertise, perceptions of popular taste, or the whims of a museum director, large wayang collections in many museums are often entirely unrepresented in permanent exhibitions. The huge volume of Indonesian puppets collected by Thomann, Buchner, and their contemporaries, and a shortage of Indonesia expertise, have not induced sustained attention to wayang in most of the dozen or so German museums with world-class wayang collections. The cords bundling the toy

puppets appeared never to have been untied before I examined them in a 2011 visit to Munich's ethnological museum; no puppets from Indonesia were on display there.

The possibility of seeing a substantial percentage of the Linden-Museum's shadow puppet collection exhibited in *Die Welt des Schattentheaters* was thus something special. I visited the exhibition in my capacity as a puppeteer to present two *wayang kulit* performances together with the local gamelan group Kridha Budaya Sari (KBS). I took the Museum's invitation to perform as an opportunity to research the re-mooring of wayang and gamelan—the gong-chime ensemble which is a core component of wayang performance-- in a European diasporic context, as well as to share something of wayang with Stuttgart audiences and KBS.

KBS, one of about two dozen groups active in Germany, had begun in the late 1980s as an ensemble in residence at the Linden-Museum and had rehearsed and performed on the Museum's antique gamelan until remodeling excised these instruments from the permanent display and they became unavailable for playing under new conservation policies. The group had been established by an amateur Javanese musician and puppeteer named Soetanja Dirdjoesanto and his wife, a classically trained dancer named Rukiah Kartini Murjanti, and had been mostly run by their daughter Ira since Dirdjoesanto's passing.

When I first visited KBS's rehearsal space in a community music center on February 24, 2016, three days before our performances at the Linden-Museum, I was touched to observe that it doubled as a shrine to Dirdjoesanto, who had passed away in 2008. There were photographs of him on the wall, treasured objects associated with him decorating the space, and a small alter in the corner. As he was infirm in later years, Dirdjoesanto had been unable to perform *wayang kulit* sitting cross-legged on the ground, and the shadow screen had been modified to allow him to sit before it on a stool. Although KBS had performed *wayang kulit* since Dirdjoesanto's passing with an amateur Indonesian puppeteer

who studied briefly in Stuttgart, the modified screen and stool were still set up to accommodate the late Dirdjoesanto.

Ambitiously we had decided to prepare two linked plays--*Kangsa Lair* (The Birth of Kangsa) and its sequel *Kangsa Adu Jago* (Kangsa's Cockfight)--for the afternoon and evening performances in the Linden-Museum. These were selected these because of their relatively small casts and straightforward narratives, the puppets available in KBS's collection, and as a response to a sensitively-staged tableau in the exhibition--also reproduced in the exhibition catalogue sent to me in advance--showing puppets collected by Thomann of the refined knight Arjuna and his devoted wife Sumbadra from the Mahabharata cycle looking soulfully into each other's eyes.<sup>46</sup> The second play dramatized the first liaison of the couple.

Our performances not only reunited KBS with the museum, but also introduced the younger of Ira's two sons to wayang. Although he had grown up regularly attending gamelan rehearsals and seeing his grandfather's performing equipment, he could not recollect attending, let alone participating in, a wayang performance. Handing Dirdjoesanto's puppets to me and observing from close up during rehearsals and performances, Dirdjoesanto's grandson absorbed the tradition and assumed ownership of his inheritance. After each of our performances when the audience was invited onstage, he proudly demonstrated the puppets and explained--to the best of his abilities--the wayang tradition as he knew it. Dirdjoesanto's wayang were in mostly pristine condition when I visited in early 2016, but from his grandson's rough and eager handling I would wager they no longer are in 2017.

### **The Chen Family Wayang Collection at Simon Fraser University**

Wayang puppets in Java, Bali, and other islands of Indonesia are traditionally stored and transported in wooden puppet boxes that also serve as percussion instruments in performance. These boxes contain a variety of other instruments as well--repair kits for puppets, notebooks, small percussion instruments, and so on. Puppets are stacked on other puppets, often interleaved with layers of slatted bamboo to prevent warping. Boxes are packed tight and filled to the brim so that the puppets are stable during moves. There is a close identity between puppets and the boxes in which they "live." In performance, puppeteers pound and bang on these boxes for sound effects underlining puppet movement and in order to cue accompanying musicians. A complete performance collection is conventionally known in Javanese as a box-full of wayang (*wayang sakothak*). In Bali, a special ceremony called *mesakapan* is performed by a priest to "marry" a puppeteer to a newly-acquired box.<sup>47</sup> Puppet sets that are not in regular use are aired out monthly in a maintenance ritual known as *ngisis* in which puppets are taken out of a box, mended if needed, hung from a cord, exposed to the air, and returned to the box. In short, the puppet box is not just a means to safeguard and transport puppets, but an ecosystem and symbolically charged object.

Some museums maintain this traditional system of storage--although few have the time or cultural knowledge to *ngisis* puppets regularly. This recognizes that storing puppets from the same performance collection together maintains the integrity of the set and allows users to understand individual puppets in relation to larger ensembles. It also shows understanding that the box is itself a performing object. More commonly, in both public and private collections, boxes are discarded, puppets sorted according to non-Indonesian classification systems, and stored flat on tiered shelves for ease of access.

One of the fullest performance collections of Javanese puppets--a set of 583 figures built up by a Chinese-Indonesian family between the 1870s and 1920s as they moved around

Java--also has one of the most unique storage situations in its current home at Simon Fraser University's Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in British Columbia, Canada. The puppets were treasured heirlooms for the Chen family--used on family celebrations which, according to the family, often involved sponsoring wayang performances until at least the 1920s. This was a period when Chinese were increasingly involved in Javanese performing arts as patrons, collectors, and (less frequently) performers.<sup>48</sup> While the puppets originated in different parts of Java, and thus have different carving styles, they have stylistic uniformity through repainting. When the family's patriarch, a Chinese-Indonesian doctor named Ferdinand Chen, migrated to Canada in 1966, fleeing the wave of anti-Chinese persecution that marked the beginning of Soeharto's so-called New Order regime, the puppets accompanied him in steamer trunks. According to Chen, "when we were decided to move to Canada, then comes the question, what can we bring with us? So aside from the normal things as clothing and so on, and my medical books, there was one treasure that I really nurtured very highly and that was the *wayang* . . . I inherited from my father."<sup>49</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Chen approached the Museum to discuss donating the set. His wayang were then scrutinized intensely by international experts over a two-year period (1996-1998) to assess provenance, monetary value, and cultural and historical significances.<sup>50</sup> Boediardjo (1921-1997), the former Minister of Information and a prominent Indonesian wayang collector who chaired the national wayang association Senawangi, was flown in to provide an initial assessment. In an internal report, Boediardjo is quoted as describing the performance collection as a set of "people's wayang" (*wayang masyarakat*), "naïve" (*naif*) and "plastic" (*plastik*) in its aesthetics, an unusual "find."<sup>51</sup> A panel of four wayang experts from Cirebon determined that many of the puppets were made in Cirebon (even identifying by name two of the carvers) and provided character names. Indonesian ethnomusicologist Endo Suanda and Helen Ibbitson Jessup, an American art historian and curator, both provided

expert statements and monetary valuations. Suanda suggested the set would be a valuable resource for research on wayang history. Jessup determined that not only is the set's range of figures practically unrivalled, it was also well-enough maintained to be performed, as well as used for teaching and exhibition.

Indeed, among the terms of their acquisition by the Museum in 2006, was that the puppets would not only be studied and displayed but also performed, as they were in an inaugural 2006 ceremony of blessing cum *wayang kulit* performance puppeteered by Sutrisno Hartana, a Javanese gamelan music, dancer, and puppeteer teaching at Simon Fraser University. The Museum's curator spoke of the puppets being "awoken," while the former owner said he was "happy and fulfilled" to see them performed after almost seventy-five years of inactivity. Around the time of this ceremony, Sutrisno used the puppets in an interdisciplinary arts course he taught; a group of archaeology students undertook a project to measure the puppets and assess conservation needs, and a group of advanced communication students produced a short documentary about the wayang set, *The Journey of the Wayang*. Since then, they have been the subject of exhibitions titled *Crossing Oceans, Crossing Cultures* (2009) and *Wayang Kulit: Mastering the Shadows* (2016) and an online resource for language arts teachers to instruct their students about "the stories of the cultures that make up Canada" titled *Multicultural Canada: Wayang Kulit*.<sup>52</sup>

What struck me immediately when I visited the Museum in 2011 in the company of Sutrisno were not the puppets' scope, age, or history of use in Java. While I was impressed by the carving's cartoon-like immediacy, the naturalistic brush strokes of the painting, and the many unusual figures, most remarkable was that the wayang were still stored in steamer trunks.<sup>53</sup> These trunks marked the puppets as representative of immigrant experience. The application to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board enabling the acquisition in lieu of taxes had to demonstrate that the objects were Canadian. Simon Fraser's press

office reported that Chen was "donating the collection as an expression of gratitude to Canada for the opportunities the country has given his family."<sup>54</sup>

Wayang in museums register not only points of origin but often complex journeys. Museum puppets are imprinted with the paths of itinerant puppeteers, as well as puppet collectors. Wayang collected in Singapore, Surinam, and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands shown in museums in Oxford, Amsterdam, and London demonstrate the powers of recollection and the fanciful invention of diasporic Javanese puppeteers called upon to fashion wayang without visual references at hand, sometimes from such unlikely materials as shark skin. Our reflex is to think about traditions such as wayang in terms of emplacement, continuity, and descent. But its powers to delight, persuade, and awe are even more visible under conditions of displacement, disjuncture, and making-do.

### **Rumah Wayang 2 in Tegal**

The custodial mission to conserve objects embraced by most museums belies wayang's ephemerality and contingency. Novelty puppets which might be of use for only a single performing season are preserved for posterity. Puppets crying out for repair or repainting languish in storage. A tableau with a mannequin puppeteer and puppets purporting to depict a live performance can remain in a permanent exhibition for decades. Other museum models are emerging in Indonesia and elsewhere, however, which are more attuned to the ways that wayang continually updates tradition. One of these is Rumah Wayang 2 in Tegal, established in 2014 by Ki Enthus Sumono, who is well known in Indonesia as a puppeteer, politician, preacher, puppet designer, and puppet collector, not necessarily in that order.<sup>55</sup>

Traditionally, puppeteers in Indonesia maintain a single, unitary performance collection, primarily for their own use, but also for occasional borrowing by family members

or other puppeteers. In addition, there are, and perhaps always have been, puppeteers like Enthus who are puppet collectors and vendors, and are constantly acquiring full sets, groups of puppets, and individual figures for study, use, and resale. Starting during the New Order it has been a standard practice among the rung of "superstar" puppeteers who appear frequently in the mass media and command huge performance fees to sell off their performance collections on a regular basis.<sup>56</sup> Sets are purchased by aspiring puppeteers desiring the cachet of association with famous puppeteers. Sales provide superstars capital for creating new sets, very important for the close-ups of television and the modern market's demands for constant innovation. Some superstars, including Enthus, permanently employ a stable of wayang craftsmen who churn out new sets annually. These same puppeteers tend to have interests in antique puppets, as these provide alternatives to the fixed forms of current-day tradition, and purchase, photograph, or trace them as "seeds" (*bibit*) for generating new puppets.

Enthus, who performs both *wayang kulit* and *wayang golek* and holds a high political office as regent (*bupati*) of Tegal, has been the most active collector among the superstar puppeteers. Enthus rose in popularity in the 1990s during the waning years of the New Order, courting mass audiences by giving voice to the discontents of the "little people" and expressing Islamic piety. His work in radio and collaborations with local modern artists in Tegal provided new artistic perspectives. He treats wayang not as a ritual but as a "concert" and regularly breaks wayang's mythic frame with metatheatrical hijinks. Enthus is a versatile and creative puppet maker: among the creations included in a groundbreaking exhibition of his puppets in 2002 were spacemen, aliens, Osama bin Laden and George Bush, Batman, the Japanese television superhero Kamen Rider Black, and a *kayon* (tree-mountain puppet) shaped as a mosque.<sup>57</sup> Enthus achieved early notoriety for his television-style self-publicity--for years every performance involved him or one of his guest artists mouthing the rhyming slogan "*Ki Enthus paling bagus*" (Enthus is the greatest), while giving a thumbs up. While in

2000 conservative guardians of wayang charged him with contaminating the art form with a "*virus Enthus*," today he is generally celebrated as one of wayang's great innovators.<sup>58</sup>

A solo exhibition of his wayang creations at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam under the title "Wayang Superstar: The Theatre World of Ki Enthus Susmono" (January 29 to August 2, 2009) inspired Enthus to build a private museum of his wayang creations and collections adjacent to his home and studio in Tegal. Rather modestly, he called this space, which opened in 2012, Rumah Wayang (Wayang House). In 2014, not long after being elected as Tegal's regent, he created a satellite museum called Rumah Wayang 2 on the grounds of his official residence. Other wayang museums in Indonesia tend to be fairly isolated, both geographically and socially, from communities of interest.<sup>59</sup> Enthus's two wayang museums are located strategically where he lives and are regularly visited by the constant stream of callers to Indonesia's most highly paid puppeteer. Enthus envisaged his museums as social spaces where he could host workshops and spark discussions of wayang. Except for the occasional school group, I suspect that few visitors to Enthus' museums arrive with the singular intention of studying his collection. Instead, guests chance upon the museums, loiter there to kill time before a gamelan rehearsal, or visit to demonstrate respect for the puppeteer-politician before or after a meeting with him. The surprises within are all the more affecting because of this chancing.

I visited Rumah Wayang 2 on June 2, 2016 in the company of my friend and colleague Purjadi, a puppeteer from Cirebon, and Purjadi's two young sons. While we had an appointment with Enthus, it turned out that he was still on his way back from a meeting in the provincial capital of Semarang when we arrived in the early evening. We thus had spare time to explore Rumah Wayang 2. The small museum is located just inside the gate to the mansion, where one would normally expect a guardhouse to be located. But in line with Enthus's populist ethos, there were no security officers checking visitors at his official

residence. The museum we learned is always open to visitors, who can come at any time of the day free of charge. Likewise, the gamelan in the large *pendhapa* (open-air pavilion) of the residence is freely available for local musical groups to play. On the day of our visit, a local high school group was rehearsing for an upcoming gamelan competition, providing a subtle soundtrack to our visit.

The first display encountered at Rumah Wayang 2, beneath a sign reading "entrance" in Indonesian, is a large *wayang golek* caricature puppet of Ki Enthus, dressed in the manner of a wayang clown, with a traditional head wrap, open vest, magical amulet around his neck, and faded batik skirt. The control rods of the puppet can be grasped, allowing visitors to puppeteer Ki Enthus, or perhaps *become* Enthus, on their way to his collection. Enthus' performances are intensely reflexive. They interweave autobiographical anecdotes, gossip, random discussions with others on stage, comments on the audience, and reflections on wayang as a medium, and often feature puppets representing the puppeteer himself. Though wide-eyed and with a clownish, toothy grin, the puppet's affixation to a post reminds me incongruously of a crucifix--a martyring of the self to art? A Christ-like personal gate to the spirituality of wayang?

Inside the thatch building are a variety of objects and artifacts related to wayang and allied arts, including numerous puppets designed by Enthus. Shadow puppets are pinned to backboards to prevent warping and rod puppets are mostly in glass cases. There is no attempt to be geographically inclusive--the objects instead derive from Enthus's own experimental practice or proximate sources of influence. Neither is there a master narrative tracing the development of the art or contrasting traditional and modern wayang. Instead, visitors encounter the living variety of wayang and its derivatives, each set of objects manifesting distinctive "thing power." On display include:

- nine shadow puppets representing the *wali sanga* (the legendary "saints" said to have brought Islam to Java), each saying his name in a cartoon dialogue bubble
- a cartoon of Ki Enthus dressed in Javanese costume and sitting cross-legged, holding a *kayon* with Tegal's coat-of-arms in one hand and with the index finger of the other pointing up ("we're number 1!")
- a pair of shadow puppets depicting cartoon characters Tom and Jerry. Tom is poised to hit Jerry on the head with a wooden hammer, while Jerry sports a cowboy hat and a cape and is sticking a finger up at his rival
- *Diorama Perang Bharatayudha*, a large tableau of the cataclysmic Bharatayudha war concluding the Mahabharata epic, featuring nineteen Sundanese *wayang golek* puppets with realistically human faces of the sort popularized by the late superstar puppeteer Asep Sunandar Sunarya.<sup>60</sup> A painted backdrop shows the blue sky with white clouds, flying projectiles, and fluttering standards
- a large poster advertising (in Dutch) Enthus's 2009 performances at the Tropenmuseum and the associated exhibition, with a photograph of Enthus's Batman shadow puppet
- the four clown servants of central Javanese *wayang kulit* (Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong) in the costumes of the Teletubbies, facing a set of the same characters in traditional garb
- various kites with wayang characters suspended from the ceiling
- a caricature puppet of a smiling Jokowi, with a baggy, open-neck white shirt, crumpled pants, and a short, Solo-style, batik skirt<sup>61</sup>
- a display case showing the process of carving a traditional Tegal-style *wayang golek* puppet, with a carving knife and heads and torsos in various stages of completion
- an oil painting of Semar, the chief clown-servant

- up near the rafters: shadow puppets of Superman and the wayang hero Gatotkaca flying at each other against a backdrop of a clouds, a ringed planet, and a rainbow.

Our meeting with Enthus later that night brought some context to this museum.

Enthus was multi-tasking throughout the two hours or so with us. Dressed comfortably in a black t-shirt and pink loungewear trousers, he received a group of Tegal bureaucrats and considered their development and infrastructure proposals as he watched a livestream of a wayang performance, worked with one of his craftsmen on the design of a new puppet for an upcoming show, and entertained Purjadi and me. While Enthus was talking to the officials, Purjadi and I combed through the stacks of puppets cluttering the room, picking some up and playing with them. Occasionally Enthus would call me over to the coffee table where he sat with the officials to point out something in the livestream--"look, that's one of my *kayon* designs. Everyone imitates me these days." He brought out and demonstrated new shadow puppets of his design--a highly articulated dancer with a dance sash around her waist, a pregnant princess (explaining how the puppet depicts the different anatomical changes of pregnancy)--and an old puppet of a female ogre he had recently purchased for her emotion-filled face. As he conversed, he absent-mindedly played with a newly-designed Gatotkaca puppet, repeatedly making it take off and fly through the air. He told us that he had premiered this puppet, which hybridized iconographic features of different regional wayang traditions, at a performance in Jakarta and a spectator promptly offered 19 million rupiah (\$1400) for it. Enthus explained that he turned down the offer as he was intending to include this and other puppets in a wayang exhibition in Jakarta to raise funds for his next election campaign. The puppets in Rumah Wayang 2 are thus only wayfarers--recently retired from active use and on their way to becoming part of other collections, elsewhere.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

In my travels, I have had the opportunity of handling some of the oldest and rarest shadow and rod puppets. Edward Gordon Craig states in his programmatic 1912 essay "Gentlemen, the Marionette!" that a puppet "will wait anywhere for any length of time--hidden in a box--in a cellar--or even in a century. But he will wait--and when he is brought forward and made to feel at home he will still wait; then he waits upon you and all of us like a true servant."<sup>63</sup> Reversing Craig's master-servant dyad, I aim to put myself at the service of puppets, discovering past usages to give agency and character to these mute figures. Grasping the control rods, I can sense the subtle indentations where past puppeteers' fingers once were wrapped. Moving the figures I can detect their balance and thus judge how they were to align vertically. As I move arms I detect the paths of flow and resistance which show the gestural range and habits of the figure. Within moments, a puppet dormant for decades, perhaps even centuries, is reanimated and assumes agency--telling me how it wants to be held, how it has been moved, whether it is ponderous or light-footed, assertive or docile, nervous or serene, wild or calm. In the process of sussing out these puppets from another time and place, I connect to a performance lineage and with that interconnectedness "a certain humility becomes appropriate, tempered by the dignity or joy of being part of something much bigger."<sup>64</sup>

These practical explorations, on more than one occasion, have become mini-performances when curators, objects handlers, and museum officials who might be very familiar already with the provenances and visual appearance of Indonesian puppets in their collections gather to observe how they are animated. The eruption of fully-formed characters, full of personality and desire, in the somber orderliness of storage felt transgressive, even carnivalesque in their manifestation and imaging of collective ancestral bodies full of life and "brimming-over abundance."<sup>65</sup> Even though puppets accessioned by a museum might be

incapacitated for future use in performances, the experience of handling, communing, and playing with these puppets inculcates respect for wayang's thing power.

A Simon Fraser University representative spoke of his hopes for the Chen family wayang in fertilizing and enriching other arts at the university. He desired the performance collection might "really be used . . . as in its home in Java as a way of making good things happen."<sup>66</sup> Forward-facing museums such as the ones described in this article are open spaces for convivial interactions. The wayang in them are significant less in their own terms than in their relational aesthetics, that is, in "the inter-human relations which they represent, produce or prompt," and the ways they induce attentiveness to nonhuman forces and our relation to bigger things than ourselves.<sup>67</sup> Wayang in museums potentiates communal reflection on past values and craftsmanship and the veneration of spirits ineluctably co-present with them, and us. Museum puppets, even those perform static, can inspire nonetheless plays conducting heritage awareness among participants. In the ways they index complex itineraries, wayang in museums prompt those who encounter them to attend to their own life journeys.

The digitizing of museum collections worldwide is sometimes seen as a panacea for democratizing access to rare treasures collected under conditions of political inequality, economic exploitation, and religious persecution. But it is truly only in the collaborative performances and dialogues produced in proximity and close relation to wayang that these puppets come into their own as surrogates for other-worldly beings, representing both the good and bad of human existence. Wayang in museums are a starting place for learning stories about others who have relations to them, or might have in the future.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Tillis, *Toward an Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 28.

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<sup>2</sup> Bruno Latour, "On Interobjectivity," *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 3, no. 4 (1996): 237.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010): 4. While Bennett does not reference puppetry, her work is being increasingly referenced by puppetry scholars.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Collins-Hughes, "Give Them a Hand: Puppet Artists Are Having a Moment," *New York Times*, January 31, 2017, available at [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/theater/puppet-artists-chicago-international-puppet-theater-festival.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/theater/puppet-artists-chicago-international-puppet-theater-festival.html?_r=0).

<sup>6</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010): 4.

<sup>7</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, xiv. On the disembedding and re-mooring of tradition see John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 183-191.

<sup>8</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove, 1958 [1938]), 11.

<sup>9</sup> The term *wayang* in Indonesia and its diasporas in fact refers to a plethora of expressive forms, including puppetry, storytelling with picture scrolls, dance-drama, social dance, and even Chinese opera. Indonesia's two most common puppet forms are *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre, with figures made from perforated hide) and *wayang golek* (rod puppet theatre, with wooden figures). I have been studying wayang on-and-off since 1988 with lengthy stints of fieldwork and practical studies in Cirebon, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Isaac Cohen, "Contemporary *Wayang* in Global Contexts," *Asian Theatre Journal* 24, no. 2 (2007): 338-369.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 345-346; Inna Solomonik, "The Oriental Roots of Soviet Rod Puppets," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 1, no. 1 (1992): 37-40.

<sup>12</sup> An early Dutch monograph on wayang based upon the famed National Museum of Ethnology collection is Lindor Serrurier, *De Wajang Poerwa, Eene Ethnologische Studie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1896). Recent catalogues of Indonesian puppets include Walter Angst, *Wayang Indonesia: The Fantastic World of Indonesian Puppet Theatre* (Konstanz: Stadler, 2007) and Felicia Katz-Harris, *Inside the Puppet Box: A Performance Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (Santa Fe, NM: Museum of International Folk Art and Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Critical reflections on puppets in museum contexts include Phyllis T. Dircks, ed., *American Puppetry: Collections, History and Performance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004); Brunella Eruli, ed., Special issue on *Collections et Collectionneurs, Puck: La Marionnette et les Autre Arts* 19 (2012); and Fay Tsitou, "Puppetry in Museum Interpretation and Communication" (Ph.D. diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> See particularly Paul Michael Taylor, ed., *Fragile Traditions: Indonesian Art in Jeopardy* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1994) and Reimar Schefold and Hendrik Frederik Vermeulen, eds., *Treasure Hunting?: Collectors and Collections of Indonesian Artefacts* (Leiden: Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Edward W. Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (London: Verso, 2004), 24.

<sup>16</sup> James Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology: Interviews* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 35; Nicholas Thomas, *A Critique of the Natural Artefact: Anthropology, Art & Museology* (Wellington, NZ: Art History, School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2015), 42.

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd, eds., *Performing Heritage: Research, Practice and Innovation in Museum Theatre and Live Interpretation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Susan Bennett, *Theatre & Museums* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Teresa Calonje, ed., *Live Forever: Collecting Live Art* (London: Koenig Books, 2013); Georgina Guy, *Theatre, Exhibition, and Curation: Displayed & Performed* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion, 1989).

<sup>19</sup> Frank Proschan, "The Semiotic Study of Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects," *Semiotica* 47 (1983): 3-46, quote on 4.

<sup>20</sup> On the transformation of museum objects, see Paul Michael Taylor, "Collecting Icons of Power and Identity: Transformation of Indonesian Material Culture in the Museum Context," *Cultural Dynamics* 7, no. 1 (1995): 101-124.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1830 [1817]).

<sup>22</sup> Enumerating puppets can be a tricky. I base my figure on a count performed by Museum Assistant Imogen Laing in 2010 at my request. The count does not include weapons or props, which Laing numbered at 44, but does include animals, which are sometimes not counted as puppets in Java. Earlier registers have different numbers of figures. On Raffles' collections, see Nigel Barley, ed., *The Golden Sword: Stamford Raffles and the East* (London: British Museum Press, 1999).

<sup>23</sup> Flat wooden puppets of this sort are known generically as *wayang krucil* or *wayang klithik* in contemporary Indonesia, but typically are referred to in earlier literary sources as *wayang kayu*. The Mahabharata, which was imported from India in the first millennium along with Hinduism, is the most significant source of stories for puppetry in Java.

<sup>24</sup> A. H. Vickers, "From Bali to Lampung on the Pasisir," *Archipel* 45 (1993): 65-66.

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<sup>25</sup> H. Dimt, "Vom 'Fisle pulse' zum Wayang-Puzzle," *Ö.O. Museumsjournal* 9, no. 11 (1999): 2.

<sup>26</sup> Raffles, *The History of Java*, 1, 377-379.

<sup>27</sup> Raffles collected both flat wooden puppets (*wayang krucil gepeng*) and round ones (*wayang krucil gilig*). The latter form is now extinct in Java, but appears to be an ancestor of *wayang golek*. Further research is required on the evolution of rod puppetry in nineteenth-century Java.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Bernard Arps, *Tall Tree, Nest of the Wind: The Javanese Shadow-play Dewa Ruci Performed by Ki Anom Soeroto: A Study in Performance Philology* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016), 56.

<sup>30</sup> Barley, *The Golden Sword*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Forge, "Batik Patterns of the Early Nineteenth Century," in *To Speak with Cloth: Studies in Indonesian Textiles*, ed. Mattiebelle Gittinger (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press), 91-105.

<sup>32</sup> Alton L. Becker, *Beyond Translation: Essays toward a Modern Philology* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press), 39.

<sup>33</sup> These puppets are As1859,1228.578 and As1859,1228.577 in the British Museum's catalogue. Images can be viewed on the online catalogue at [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx).

<sup>34</sup> Ledjar Soebroto (also spelled Subroto) is one of the foremost puppet carvers in Java, best known for the revival of *wayang kancil*, a wayang form that narrates simple animal fables. Ledjar and Nanang were travelling in 2014 in the company of the Dutch wayang scholar-practitioner Dr. Hedi Hinzler to study European wayang collections, give

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performances, and install an exhibition of animal shadow puppets in Den Haag's glass-topped Atrium City Hall.

<sup>35</sup> Neil MacGregor, "Shadow Puppet of Bima," *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, episode 83, aired September 30, 2010, transcript available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/transcripts/episode83>.

<sup>36</sup> An example of such a prestation are three Balinese shadow puppets given to Queen Elizabeth II which have been on permanent loan to the British Museum since the 1970s-- Arjuna, Kresna, and a battle chariot. These puppets not only recognise the Queen's equestrian passions, but also are emblematic of the *Bhagavad Gita*, an episode of the Mahabharata and the core work of Hindu philosophy which teaches the importance of following one's *dharma* or duty.

<sup>37</sup> The puppets were designed by the Yogyakarta-based puppeteer Catur "Benyek" Kuncoro for his *wayang hip hop* performances. See Miguel Escobar Varela, "Wayang Hip Hop: Java's Oldest Performance Tradition Meets Global Youth Culture," *Asian Theatre Journal* 31, no. 2 (2014): 481–504. Since Varela's article appeared, Kuncoro has responded to criticism of his radical reinterpretation of the four clown-servants by saying they are children of the original quartet and renaming them Sammy, Gary, Patrick, and Bogie. Of the four, Sammy and Patrick were selected for display.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Schechner, "Wayang Kulit in the Colonial Margin," *TDR* 34, no. 2 (1990): 25-61.

<sup>39</sup> Marcus Milwright, "On the Date of Paul Kahle's Egyptian Shadow Puppets," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 28 (2011): 43-68. Stuttgart holds the largest number of so-called Kahle puppets in a public institution.

<sup>40</sup> "The Linden Museum: The World in Stuttgart," available at <http://www.lindenmuseum.de/en/about-us/story/>.

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<sup>41</sup> Sadiah Boonstra, "Changing Wayang Scenes: Heritage Formation and Wayang Performance Practice in Colonial and Postcolonial Indonesia" (PhD diss, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2014), 64-66.

<sup>42</sup> Hans-Bernd Zöllner, "Germans in Burma, 1837-1945" *Journal of Burma Studies* 7 (2002): 45. Thomann famously was kicked out of Burma by the British colonial authorities for chiselling paintings off the wall of a pagoda.

<sup>43</sup> The museum is now known as Museum Fünf Kontinente (Museum Five Continents). The Buchner puppets in the Linden-Museum were likely the product of an exchange of objects between the Linden-Museum and Munich's ethnological museum. Such exchanges were common among continental ethnological museums around the turn of the twentieth century, without regards to the integrity of object sets.

<sup>44</sup> H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 142.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 2, 14, 18.

<sup>46</sup> Jasmin Ii Sabai Günther, "Schatten und Farbe: Das Indonesische Wayang," in *Die Welt des Schattentheaters*, ed. Jasmin Ii Sabai Günther and Inés de Castro (Stuttgart: Linden-Museum Stuttgart and Munich: Hirmer), 100-123, illustration on 123.

<sup>47</sup> Angela Hobart, *Dancing Shadows of Bali: Theatre and Myth* (London and New York: KPI, 1987), 33.

<sup>48</sup> Matthew Isaac Cohen, *Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 26-28.

<sup>49</sup> Stephen Kline, producer, *The Journey of the Wayang* (2006), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czFaiO7yfVw>.

<sup>50</sup> I refer here to extensive correspondence in the archive of the Simon Fraser Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Chen withdrew his offer to donate the set and looked for a

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buyer after 1998. After years of unsuccessful searching, and coping with the death of his wife and his own serious health problems, he returned to negotiations with the Museum circa 2005 and the donation was completed in 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Christopher J. Dagg, "Wayang Collection Preliminary Report: Inquires in Indonesia," unpublished manuscript, July 8, 1996, available at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Simon Fraser University, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Lynn Copeland, "Multicultural Canada: Wayang Kulit," available at <http://www.teachersfirst.com/single.cfm?id=12436>.

<sup>53</sup> After 2011, the puppets were removed from the trunks and are now stored in "plan drawers with ethafoam and acid free tissue," according to a June 20, 2017 e-mail to the author from the Museum's Director, Barbara J. Winter.

<sup>54</sup> Marianne Meadahl, "Rare Puppets Donated to Museum," *SFU News Online* 35, no. 7 (April 6, 2006), available at [http://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/sfu\\_news/archives/sfunews04060604.shtml](http://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/sfu_news/archives/sfunews04060604.shtml).

<sup>55</sup> On Enthus, see Boonstra, "Changing Wayang Scenes," 191-218. The title "Ki" is customarily prefixed to puppeteers' names as a mark of respect. I dispense with this formality here, except when "Ki Enthus" is a puppet character.

<sup>56</sup> On "superstar" puppeteers, see Andrew N. Weintraub, *Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004).

<sup>57</sup> Sugeng Nugroho, ed. *Wayangku Rohku Pakeliran Duniaku: Pameran Wayang Karya & Koleksi Enthus Susmono* (Tegal: Sanggar Seni Satria Laras, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> Cohen, "Contemporary Wayang in Global Contexts," 361.

<sup>59</sup> Other wayang museums in Indonesia include the Wayang Museum in Jakarta (established 1975), Museum Wayang Sendang Mas in Banyumas (1983), Museum Wayang

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Kekayon in Yogyakarta (1987), Setia Darma House of Masks and Puppet in Bali (1998), and Museum Wayang Sasana Guna Rasa in Magelang (2001).

<sup>60</sup> On Asep's numerous innovations, see Weintraub, *Power Plays*.

<sup>61</sup> Joko Widodo, known affectionately as Jokowi, was mayor of Solo from 2005 to 2012 and a major advocate of its batik heritage. He was elected as Indonesia's seventh president in 2014 after a short term as Jakarta's governor.

<sup>62</sup> Significant collections of puppets made or designed by Ki Enthus are in the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, and the Yale University Art Gallery.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, "Gentlemen, the Marionette!" in *Craig on Theatre*, ed. J. Michael Walton (London: Methuen, 1991 [1912]), 24-26.

<sup>64</sup> Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1972, 462f).

<sup>65</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 19.

<sup>66</sup> Kline, *The Journey of the Wayang*.

<sup>67</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, and Mathieu Copeland (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 112.