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Loy Chee Luen, Gan Eng Cheng & Marina Ta

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Conceptual Puppetry in Malaysia

Loy Chee Luen

Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia, Union Internationale De La Marionnette Malaysia
Malaysian Puppetry Association

Gan Eng Cheng

Union Internationale De La Marionnette Malaysia, Malaysian Puppetry Association

Marina Tan

Malaysian Puppetry Association

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to introduce (i) traditional puppetry, (ii) contemporary puppetry, (iii) educational puppetry, (iv) puppet house and puppets in museums and (v) puppet festivals, carnivals, conferences, workshops and associations in Malaysia. This study uses library research methods that aim to carry out about puppetry activities and research in Malaysia. Previous studies about puppetry were conducted by researchers to support conceptual puppetry in Malaysia and provide sources for reference. Studies have found that traditional puppetry encompasses *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, *Wayang Kulit Gedek*, *Wayang Kulit Purwa*, *Teochew rod puppetry*, *Hokkien Potehi* and marionettes or string puppets. Contemporary puppetry encompasses shadow puppets, glove puppets, rod puppets and string puppets that perform by puppet theatre group, children's theatre and adult theatre groups to entertain audience. Educational puppetry encompasses puppet shows, puppetry workshops, puppetry in community, university, college, academy, school and kindergarten puppetry for television and video program. Puppet exhibitions and interactive activities in puppet houses and museums, puppet festivals and puppetry associations in Malaysia help in Promoting and maintaining traditional and contemporary puppetry; Organizing exhibitions, seminars, workshops and professional training and festivals; documenting and conducting research and education on puppetry; Infusing the spirit of unity through puppetry, as well as Arranging collaborations between local and international puppeteers. Recommendations to puppetry lovers, puppeteers, performers, educators, and researchers should be emphasized in looking forward to the development of puppetry in Malaysia. For the future of puppetry, we need to review the National Cultural Policy and the National Creative Industry Policy. This includes short-term and long-term planning for promoting puppetry for national and international levels. Education plays an important role in promoting and preserving puppetry in Malaysia.

Keywords: Puppetry, Traditional Puppetry, Contemporary Puppetry, Educational Puppetry, Puppet House, Puppet Festivals.

Introduction

Puppetry in Malaysia encompasses Traditional puppetry in Malaysia encompasses *Wayang Kulit Kelantan, Wayang Kulit Gedek, Wayang Kulit Purwa, Teochew rod puppetry, Hokkien Potehi, or glove puppets*, and marionettes, or string puppets. Contemporary puppetry encompasses shadow puppets, glove puppets, rod puppets and string puppets that are used in performance by puppet theatre groups, children's theatre and adult theatre groups to entertain audiences. Educational puppetry encompasses puppet shows, puppetry workshops, puppetry in community, universities, colleges, academies, schools and kindergarten puppetry for television and video programmes. Puppet exhibitions and interactive activities in puppet houses and museums, puppet festivals and puppet associations in Malaysia help in promoting and preserving traditional and contemporary puppetry; organizing exhibitions, seminars, workshops and professional training and festivals; documenting and conducting research and education on puppetry; infusing the spirit of unity through puppetry; as well as arranging collaborations between local and international puppeteers.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this paper is to presented conceptual puppetry in Malaysia encompasses (i) traditional puppetry, (ii) contemporary puppetry, (iii) educational puppetry, (iv) puppet houses and puppet museums and (v) puppet festivals, carnivals, conferences, workshops and associations in helping promote and preserve puppetry *in Malaysia*.

Methodology

This study uses library research methods that aim to review the (i) traditional puppetry, (ii) contemporary puppetry, (iii) educational puppetry, (iv) puppetry in puppet houses and museums and (v) puppet festivals and puppetry associations in Malaysia.

However, this method is limited in terms of information related to puppetry in Malaysia. This study only relies on reference materials in libraries. However, this methodology was felt the most appropriate to carry out this study about puppetry activities and research in Malaysia. Researchers have used library services in several places encompassing the National Library of Malaysia, University of Malaya, University of Science Malaysia, The National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage, as well as the Resource Centres at both the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia.

In addition, previous studies about puppetry were examined by researchers to support the conceptual puppetry in Malaysia, to render this study a valid and useful reference source and ensure that it does not merely repeat the previous studies. It also aims to contribute to recognition of puppetry researchers including Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, with his research on wayang kulit, Tan Sooi Beng and her work on Potehi glove puppetry, and Loy Chee Luen's work on educational puppetry in Malaysia, as well as the work by Janet Pillai and her associates on using puppetry in community projects. The previous studies examined encompass largely research conducted in Malaysia as well as selected studies from China.

Literature Review

According to history, Wayang Kulit Kelantan originates from Cambodia and was brought in through Patani, Southern Thailand. Wayang Kulit Purwa originates from Java Island, Indonesia. Wayang kulit was introduced to Kelantan in 1834 by a Malay puppeteer after learning wayang kulit performance techniques in Java. Wayang Gedek is famous in Kedah and Perlis using northern accents (Amin, 1972; Huang, 1981; Ghulam-Sarwar, 1997).

There are conflicting accounts regarding the origin of Potehi glove puppetry. Some sources claim its emergence as far back as the Jin Dynasty (265-420 AD), or the Song Dynasty (960-1279). However, other sources also exist claiming that Potehi originated during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) from Fu Jian, China. What is clear is that Potehi was brought in from China to the Malay Archipelago around the 16th to the 19th century, and then specifically to Malaya by immigrants during the 20th century. Since then, the Chinese in Malaysia have started up several Potehi groups (Kang, 2006; Tan, 2016; Tan & et al., 2017; Loy 2018).

Since the 1980s, the national libraries of Malaysia, state and district libraries, Institute of Language and Literature of Malaysia, and the Ministry of Health Malaysia's Oral Health Division have begun to promote contemporary puppetry performances for children. The library initiatives are aimed at enhancing children's interest in reading. Stories for the puppet performances are taken from children's storybooks, available on the bookshelves of these same libraries. The Institute of Language and Literature of Malaysia occasionally uses puppetry to promote language teaching and learning. The Ministry of Health's Oral Health Division started a Malaysia Dental Health Puppetry project to deliver messages on dental care. Public broadcaster Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM), as well as private broadcasters TV3, NTV7, and ASTRO have or had educational television programmes featuring puppetry for educational activities. Puppets are also widely used at university, college, academy, school and kindergarten levels for educational purposes (Loy, 2004; Darwish, 2016).

Conceptual Puppetry in Malaysia

Studies have found that puppetry has been in active practice in Malaysia. There have been two puppetry records in The Malaysia Book of Records. First, The Longest Non-stop Puppet Show over 12 hours by Oral Health Division of the Ministry of Health in 2013. Second, The Most Puppets at One Show with 300 local trainee puppeteers. This project collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism, Sarawak Tourism Board, Sarawak Convention Bureau and Malaysian Convention Bureau in 2015.

The international award won by Malaysian puppeteers and educationists encompasses Best Arts in Education Teaching Project Award 2014 by PuppetKu's Theatre in Harmony World Puppet Carnival, Bangkok, Thailand. Best Music Award 2016 by PuppetKu's Theatre and Orang Drum Theatre and Art Baiduren in AnimArt World Puppet Carnival, Poland. The Best Puppet Musical Award 2017 Award 2017 and Rainforest Puppet DIY Workshop Award 2017 by PuppetKu's Theatre and Orang Orang Drum Theatre and Art Baiduren in Rainforest World Puppet Carnival, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Puppetry organizations, ministry, community, university, college, academy, school, kindergarten and nursey, puppet group and individual artist work hard to advance puppetry in Malaysia.

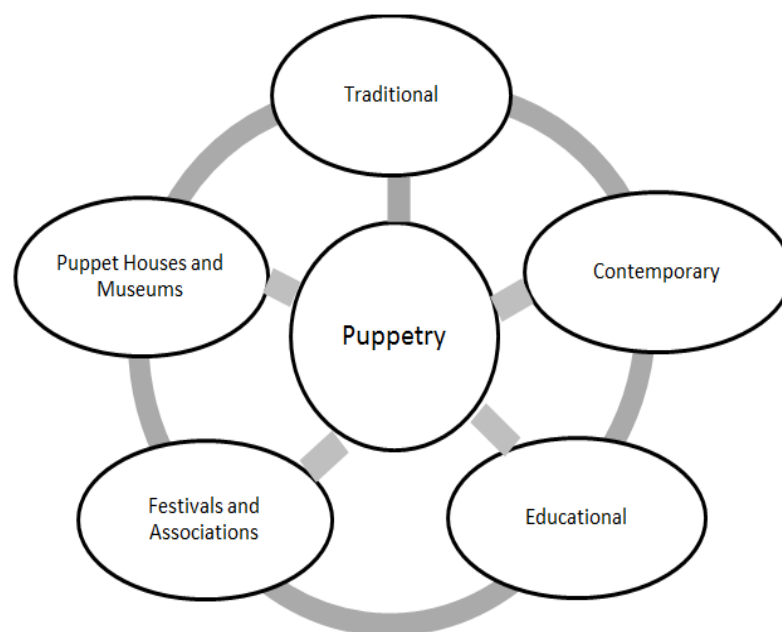


Figure 1: Conceptual Puppetry in Malaysia

Figure 1 illustrates and presented conceptual puppetry in Malaysia encompasses (i) traditional puppetry, (ii) contemporary puppetry, (iii) educational puppetry, (iv) puppet houses and puppet museums and (v) puppet festivals, carnivals, conferences, workshops and associations in helping promote and preserve puppetry in Malaysia.

Traditional Puppetry

Traditional puppetry in Malaysia includes shadow puppets, glove puppets, rod puppets and string puppets. The origin of shadow puppets is often attributed to either Thailand or Indonesia. The origin of glove puppets, rod puppets and string puppets is China. Shadow puppets are known as Wayang Kulit in Malaysia. The name Wayang Kulit is literally translated as 'Skin Puppet', referring to the rawhide material used to make the puppets. Shadow puppets include Wayang Kulit Kelantan or Wayang Kulit Siam, Wayang Kulit Gedek, Wayang Kulit Melayu and Wayang Kulit Jawa (also known as Wayang Kulit Purwa). Wayang Kulit Kelantan or Wayang Kulit Siam was traditionally performed in the north-eastern state of Kelantan. Wayang Kulit Gedek, often with puppets featuring a slightly more contemporary look as well as contemporary themes and stories, is performed in the north-western states of Perlis, Kedah and Perak. Wayang Kulit Melayu is performed also in Kelantan and its neighbouring state of Terengganu, while Wayang Kulit Jawa or Wayang Kulit Purwa is performed in the southern state of Johor.

Chinese traditional puppetry in Malaysia is similar to Chinese Opera in style and content. The performances include glove puppetry, string puppetry and rod puppetry. Glove puppet and string puppet performances use the dialect of Hokkien and are performed in Penang and Johor. Rod puppet performances use the Teochew dialect and are performed in Penang. Puppet troupes usually perform during Taoist religious festivals such as the Hungry Ghost Festival and to celebrate the birthdays of deities.

The state of Kelantan has had more than famed wayang kulit groups, including *Sri Cahaya*; Pak Dain; Pawalit; Pok Nik Mat Suara Emas; Sri Campuran; Sri Cindayu; Sri Cenderawasih; Che Leh; Pewaris Kuala Krai; Sri Gerong; Geng Wak Long; Kelab Kebudayaan Pulau Tebu; Sofi Bunga Andani; Wali; Dollah Baju Merah; Seri Wayang Kulit Merak Mas; Seri Wayang Kampung Paloh; Seri Wayang Jusoh Mamat; Seri Kuala; Seri Setek; Che Omar; Che Ibrahim; Isa and Melayu.

Famed wayang kulit groups of Terengganu include Seri Apal; Usul Terengganu; Sri Latjuna and Saupi Bunga Adani. Johor wayang kulit groups include Sri Wahyuni and wayang kulit group from Belia Parit Raja Warisan Uttag and Setia Budi. Kedah wayang kulit groups include Wayang Gedek Seri Asun and Sri Nerang. Malaysia's new administrative capital of Putrajaya has also established its own puppet troupe, Beringin Emas. Meanwhile, educational institutions such as the Center of Traditional Performing Arts (*PuTRA*), National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage, University of Malaya, Sultan Idris Education University, and the University of Science Malaysia, have also established shadow puppet studios to perform and promote traditional puppetry.

Penang Potehi groups include *Ming Yu Feng Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Xin Feng Ying Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Xin Jin Feng Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Yue Bao Feng Zhang Zhong Ban* and *Xin Feng Ying Zhang Zhong Ban*. Johor Potehi groups include *Huan Zhong Zhen Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Jin Yu Tang Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Jin Peng Bu Dai Xi*; *Xin Zhang Chun Mu Ou Tuan*; *Xin Feng Ming Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Si Ji Hong Ju Tuan*; *Jin Qi Lin Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Zhong Xing Bu Dai Xi* and *Mei Hong Zhang Zhong Ban*. Selangor Potehi groups encompasses *Xiao San Yuan*; *Jin Long Feng Min Ju Tuan*; *Jin Long Feng Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Bao Qing Zhang Zhong Ban*; *Xin Yu Sheng Zhang Zhong Ban* and *Xie Kang Guat*. Rod puppet groups from Penang, Malaysia include *Kim Gaik Low Choon Puppet Show*. String puppet groups in Malaysia include *Xue Long San Jiao Tang Mu Ou Tuan* and *Huan Zhong Zhen Zhang Zhong Ban*. A key player in Penang taking action to revive and promote appreciation for traditional glove puppetry is Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio, with its Ombak Potehi project headed by Tan Sooi Beng.

Contemporary Puppetry

The national libraries of Malaysia, state and district libraries, Institute of Language and Literature of Malaysia, and the Ministry of Health Malaysia's Oral Health Division have begun to promote contemporary puppetry performances for children. The Institute of Language and Literature of Malaysia (commonly known by its Malay term, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, or DBP) promotes language teaching and learning through occasional performances. Ministry of Health's Oral Health Division began a Malaysia Dental Health Puppetry project to deliver messages on dental care. Other theatre troupes and performers using puppets for storytelling and performances include Teater ABROS established by Malay-language theatre practitioners Bustam Kamri, Mohd Yusof Ismail, Abd Rahim Taman and Sudiro Sukirman, NR Nurul & Rahim, the ventriloquist troupe Allan and Friends, ventriloquist puppeteer Wan Rul Magic, ventriloquist puppeteer Sumarli and Gaman, Grup Teater Ngoncong Sarawak and PuppetKu's Theatre Malaysia.

In addition to these, children's theatre and theatre troupes which often present puppetry and/or shadow play activities and performances include Gardner and Wife Theatre, The Jumping JellyBeans, Dou Dou Children's Theatre, Ants Children Theatre, Greenhopper Children's Theatre, ACX Productions and Plasticity Theatre Troupe.

Theatre groups and individual performers began exploring and experimenting with puppet theatre to attract children and adult audiences. The Wayang series by Masakini Theatre Company includes offerings such as *The Story of Lumpur* (2012), *Malaysian Stories* (2015), and *Wayang Malaysia Kita* (2016). Director (and company founder) Sabera Shaik focuses on Malaysia and on telling

Malaysian stories. The troupe also aims to push the envelope with more experimental techniques such as using projections and kaleidoscopic visuals for a blast of colour amidst the traditional monochromatic landscape of shadow play. In recent times, “fusion wayang kulit” has been popularized by Tintoy Chuo Yuan Ping, a designer who has conceptualised shadow puppetry inspired by the Star War movies and presented them in shadow-play performances in collaboration with director Teh Take Huat and master puppeteer Muhammad Dain Othman. Chuo has also designed shadow puppets inspired by Superman, Batman, and other superheroes, for exhibitions. “Main Wayang: Hikayat Sang Kancil” by Fairuz Sulaiman explores shadow play using video animation, live acting and music. This play highlights a popular Malaysian folklore character, the trickster Sang Kancil. The concept of “main” or “play” is seen through the clever and creative use of combining different mediums in this performance. The shadow play “Hoong Siamang Hooong”, produced and presented by Hongjieje Work Station, features a comedic performance on the theme of courage, aimed at entertaining and educating children. Malaysian young wayang puppeteer Kamarul Baihaqi demonstrated his proficiency in performance, reveals a glint of the possibilities that can be achieved when parents play a role in inculcating their children in traditional arts. Young Kamarul Baihaqi’s visibility as puppeteer performing in front of kindergarten children notably drummed up his equally youthful audience’s interest in the arts. Fasyali Fadzli Saipul Bahri, a lecturer from the same national academy, experimented with iPads and puppetry, taking his performances to Penang and Indonesia. “Wayang Panggung” by Gan Eng Cheng from MUKA Space and the Malaysian Puppetry Association features street puppet theatre on wheels. Moving with a modular cart to various locations throughout downtown, the performance allowed audiences to reimagine the story of historic figure Ah Loy and his travels into the past to save a dystopian Kuala Lumpur. The Association of Clowns Malaysia has explored clowning in conjunction with puppetry and Clown promoted by Malaysian clown association. Meanwhile, Allan and Friends as well as John Kit and friends show with ventriloquism and clown performances.

Educational Puppetry

Puppetry at University, College, Academy, School, Kindergarten and Nurse levels: Local universities such as the University of Malaya, University of Science Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, University Technology MARA, New Era College Universiti, Segi Universiti College, *KDU University College*, The National Academy of Arts and Culture and Heritage and The Actors Studio Academy have introduced puppetry courses to their students (Loy, 2004). Puppets have been included as a teaching aid in Malaysia’s National Curriculum. Private and government primary and secondary schools; kindergartens and their umbrella group the Malaysia Association of Kindergartens, as well as day care centers; the Association of Early Childhood Education; Sultan Idris Education University; as well as various teacher training colleges in Malaysia have recognized puppetry as a pedagogical tool. The uses of puppetry include to enhance students’ creativity, aesthetic and imaginative skills and to improve children’s development in the areas of language, sociability, emotional growth, cognition, and movement. Puppets are also sometimes used in counselling and as prominent tools for children with special needs (Loy, 2004: 2007; Darwish, 2016).

Malaysia dental health puppetry: In 2013, the Ministry of Health’s Oral Health Division began a Malaysia Dental Health Puppetry project through puppetry workshops, forums, seminars, puppet shows, and dental health puppetry modules for preschool children, to deliver messages on dental hygiene, dental care and nutrition for dental health. Puppetry project by Oral Health Division Ministry of Health and Educational Technology Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia collaboration with

Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. Consult by puppetry expert Associate Professor Dr. Loy Chee Luen.

EduWebTV puppetry educational video programme: In 2018, the Ministry of Education's Educational Technology Division created a puppetry educational video programme named EduWebTV to deliver literacy skills in Malay-language subjects and numeracy in mathematics subjects for children. Radio and Television Puppetry Program. Television puppetry educational programmes on the government broadcaster Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM), as well as private broadcasters TV3, NTV7, and even satellite broadcaster ASTRO have also through the years promoted education-driven puppet-based activities.

Prominent puppetry research in Malaysia includes the exploration of wayang kulit by Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, the research and development work by Tan Sooi Beng on Potehi glove puppetry, Loy Chee Luen's work on educational puppetry in Malaysia, as well as the work by Janet Pillai and her associates on using puppetry in arts-based community projects.

Puppetry and religion: Once upon a time, the Wali Songo, 15th-century Islamic saints based on Indonesia's Java Island, used puppets to convey the values in Islam. However, there were concerns about the creation of images of humans and deities, as Islamic laws forbade idolatry. Islamic scholar Al-Qardhawi, in an excerpt from his book Halal and Haram determined that puppets can be used as a toy for children as they are not for glorification. This is because the Prophet's wife Aisyah herself had played with dolls or sculptures during childhood. Sunday school in church and children's classes at Buddhist centers such as Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia commonly use puppets for storytelling to convey religious messages to children. A table-top puppet show, *A Journey with Master Cheng's Way*, was directed by Goh You Ping for religious purposes.

Puppet House and Puppet in Museum

The PuppetKu House's facilities include a mini puppetry library, a mini puppetry theatre as well as a space for puppet exhibition. The Puppet House will exhibit a collection of world and Malaysian puppets encompassing the different types of puppetry in the country. The Puppet House will also run a series of exchange programmes and residencies to encourage Malaysians and foreigners to collaborate and exchange ideas. The Malay Cultural Village located near Johor Baru (state capital of the southern state of Johor) has presentations showing not just wayang kulit performances, but also allows visitors to see how they are conducted from behind the stage. Teochew Puppet and Opera House located Lebuhr Armenian George Town, Penang Malaysia has presentations showing Teochew puppet opera performance, with live musicians backstage. National and state museums regularly conduct interactive shadow puppet exhibitions to promote puppetry in Malaysia. The Sarawak Textile Museum also exhibits traditional costumes using marionettes.

Puppetry Festivals, Carnivals, Conferences and Puppet Associations

Puppetry Parade: Arts and cultural carnivals in Malaysia commonly present puppets to the public, be they traditional or contemporary creations. One example is the Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival held at the Kuala Lumpur Performing Art Centre, which prepared giant puppets for parade along the main road of Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah (then Jalan Ipoh).

Malaysia International Puppetry Festival (MIFP) 2014: This event was organized by the Malaysian Puppetry Association (MPA) and supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Peru, High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Sultan Idris Education University, MUKA Space,

PuppetKu's Theatre Malaysia and venue Theatre Lounge Café. Professional puppeteers from Peru and Sri Lanka were among those who participated in this festival.

MIPF 2015: This event was organised by MPA in collaboration with the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPAAC). It brought together professional puppet troupes from Thailand including Sema Thai Marionette and Phuket Marionette; puppet troupe Wanlu and his Puppets from the Philippines; and puppet troupes ACX Productions, PuppetKu's Theatre Malaysia and Orang Orang Drum Theatre from Malaysia. The festival presented puppetry performances of all genres, from wayang kulit and hand puppets, to ventriloquist puppetry and marionettes.

"Pentas Wayang" 2016: This puppetry staging at the Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival (YSDAF) 2016 encompassed performances, workshops and a puppetry exhibition *organised by* Yayasan Sime Darby (the Sime Darby Foundation) and KLPAAC with a team of art industry practitioners and experts. This festival involved PuppetKu's Theatre Malaysia, Orang Orang Drum Theatre, Art Baiduren, Pusat Seni Kebudayaan Belia Warisan UTAG, and Johor. Presentations included a modern version of shadow puppetry based on Shakespeare's *The Taming Of The Shrew*, directed by KLPAAC director-in-residence Mark Beau de Silva, and performed by theatre artists Deda Abdullah, Ho Lee Ching and Thomas Alexander, *Bunny's Adventure* by Lee Yee Han of Good News Art Space, *A Journey With Master Cheng's Way*, a table-top puppet show performed in Mandarin with live singing by Master Cheng's Way Puppet Group, and *Sarung* by the Oral Health Division of the Ministry of Health. Puppetry workshops were also presented by practitioners Mei Yee and Amelia Tan from ACX Productions.

Rainforest World Puppet Carnival 2015. This carnival in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia took place on 2-6 November, 2015, and was organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Sarawak Tourism Board, Sarawak Convention Bureau and Malaysian Convention & Exhibition Bureau. It involved 30 puppeteers from Argentina, Japan, Finland, Australia, Singapore, Bulgaria, Turkey, Belgium, France, Poland and Malaysia, showcasing and sharing their puppetry skills through performances and puppet workshops.

Rainforest World Puppet Carnival 2017. These events in Kuching, Sarawak, were organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Malaysia and the state of Sarawak. Forty-three professional puppeteers from New Zealand, Argentina, Japan, Finland, China, Kazakhstan, India, Belgium, Russia, Tunisia, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, Ireland, France, Poland and host Malaysia participated in these events, held at the Old Courthouse. There were also workshops to hold at the adjacent historic venue of Plaza Merdeka.

ASEAN Puppet Festival in Malaysia: In 2011, Malaysia and the University of Malaya organized the 3rd ASEAN Puppetry Festival and Seminar, themed Tradition and Modernity in Southeast Asia Puppetry. In 2015, as part of Hari UNESCO Malaysia, arts organization Kakiseni organised and hosted the ASEAN Puppetry Conference in Kuala Lumpur to enable practitioners of traditional puppet theater to exchange ideas and practices about puppetry.

Puppetry associations in Malaysia include the Malaysian Puppetry Association (MPA), Union Internationale De La Marionnette (UNIMA) Malaysia and The ASEAN Puppetry Association (APA) Malaysia.

The Malaysian Puppetry Association (MPA): The MPA was founded by Loy Chee Luen and Gan Eng Cheng in 2014. The Mission of MPA is (i) Promoting and preserving traditional and contemporary puppetry in Malaysia (ii) Organizing exhibitions, seminars, workshops and professional training and festivals (iii) Documenting and conducting research and education on puppetry (iv) Infusing the spirit of unity through puppetry (v) Arranging collaborations between local and international puppeteers.

Union Internationale De La Marionnette (UNIMA) Malaysia: In 2016, UNIMA President and General Secretary confirmed the effective opening of a National Centre in Malaysia. Since August 2016, UNIMA Malaysia has been functioning to fulfill its duties in *contributing to* the development and dissemination of the art of *puppetry* around the world. Malaysia's representation is managed by Loy Chee Luen and Gan Eng Cheng.

The ASEAN Puppetry Association (APA) Malaysia: Malaysia is a member of the APA, which was formed in 2006. Malaysia's representative is the eminent veteran arts scholar Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof. APA was established to allow and enhance regional cooperation among ASEAN's member states in puppetry activities. APA works to coordinate cooperation for puppetry in ASEAN countries; execute puppetry documentation; organize puppetry exhibitions and festivals; and arrange or facilitate exchanges of puppeteer and experts in puppetry. APA also connects with Union Internationale De La Marionnette (UNIMA) for the development of puppetry activities from ASEAN to world.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a basic conceptual framework for puppetry in Malaysia. The contribution of the framework is to provide a clearer picture of (i) traditional puppetry, (ii) contemporary puppetry, (iii) educational puppetry, (iv) puppet house and puppets in museums and (v) puppet festivals, carnivals, conferences, workshops and associations in Malaysia. Recommendations and communication to and from puppetry lovers, puppeteers, performers, educators, and researchers should be emphasized in looking forward to the development of puppetry in Malaysia. For the future of puppetry, we need to review both the National Cultural Policy and the National Creative Industry Policy. Short-term and long-term planning are needed, for the promotion of puppetry at national and international levels. Education plays an important role in promoting and preserving puppetry in Malaysia.

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Corresponding Author

Dr. Loy Chee Luen
Associate Professor
Department of Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Human Development
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
Perak Malaysia

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