

The Problem of Bunraku: A practice-led investigation into contemporary uses and misuses of ningyo joruri.

Royal Holloway,

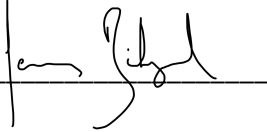
University of London

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Jeremy Bidgood

## Declaration of Authorship

I, Jeremy Bidgood, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

Dated: 8th March 2015

## **Abstract:**

Contemporary global theatre practice makes regular reference to ningyo joruri (*ningyō jōruri*), a traditional form of Japanese puppet theatre, in particular the now world famous Bunraku Theatre (*bunraku za*) in Osaka. It has become commonplace amongst practitioners and critics alike to describe certain contemporary puppet forms as 'bunraku' or 'bunraku-style' (capitalisation and italicisation vary). This begs the question, are these puppets truly descendants of and/or equivalents to the practice of the Bunraku Theatre or ningyo joruri more broadly? If not, then many practitioners and critics frequently and erroneously invoke the authority of the Osaka Bunraku Theatre for no better reason than to add an exoticised 'authenticity' to their performances and writing.

This thesis explores this problem through close analysis of historical interactions with Japan's puppet theatres and contemporary puppet practice. It is contended that consistent misrepresentation, both circumstantial and ideological, of ningyo joruri has created a near homogenous Bunraku-centric view of Japanese puppetry in English-language literature and practice. This mythologisation and essentialisation of the Bunraku Theatre has both enabled its easy appropriation and severely disenfranchised Japan's other, extant ningyo joruri troupes. It is argued that the labelling of contemporary puppets as 'bunraku' is the result of and in turn perpetuates this erroneous myth.

Implicit in this is a failure to recognise and acknowledge the multiplicity of other technologies and techniques at play in this modern 'bunraku'. Through examination of contemporary puppet practice this thesis identifies and explores the 'atoms' from which these puppets and their performance are built. Understanding and identifying these 'atoms' enables us to see the true extent to which the technologies and techniques of ningyo joruri are used outside Japan. It is argued that these modern 'bunraku' puppets are, in fact, wildly heterogeneous: showing a wide range of ideas and influences that extend well beyond the confines of the Bunraku Theatre in Osaka.

## Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the invaluable financial support of Royal Holloway University of London, The Puppet Centre Trust, The Japan Foundation, The Japan Foundation Endowment Committee and the Institut International de la Marionette. Without their support this thesis would never have happened and I am very grateful for all their contributions.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Professor Matthew Isaac Cohen for his encyclopaedic knowledge and imaginative suggestions for my work as well as his endless enthusiasm and support. My second supervisor Emma Cox has also provided invaluable insight into my work and I am very thankful for her input.

A huge thank you to all the practitioners who took the time to talk to me, show me their work and share their practice. In particular I want to thank the people of Awaji Island for their warm reception in a cold and frosty February and the energy and effort with which they shared their practice of ningyo joruri with me.

A special thank you to Richard Rowlatt for sections of Russian translation and Emily Barass-Chapman for her help with some of the trickier bits of Japanese.

Finally I want to thank my family for all their encouragement and in particular my wife Léonie for her undying support, love and loyalty and for putting up with all the puppets.

# Table of Contents

<b>Declaration of Authorship</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A Note on Transliteration</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Chapter 1 – The Problem of Bunraku</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>The Rise of Bunraku:</i>	16
<i>A (Bunraku) Puppet Revolution:</i>	20
<i>A Sustained (dis)Interest:</i>	24
<i>The Problem of Definition:</i>	30
<i>What’s in a Name?</i>	35
<i>Brand Bunraku:</i>	37
<i>Aims of this Study:</i>	39
<i>Conclusion and Outline of Chapters:</i>	41
<b>Chapter 2 – Atoms of Interculturalism and the Weaver</b>	<b>44</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	44
<i>The Fossil Record:</i>	45
<i>The Atomisation of the Puppet:</i>	48
<i>The Macro-signs and Micro-signs of the Puppet:</i>	51
<i>Atomic Interweaving and the Weaver:</i>	54
<i>Conclusion:</i>	61
<b>Chapter 3 – From Ningyo Joruri to Bunraku</b>	<b>63</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	63
<i>The Breadth of Puppetry in Japan:</i>	65
<i>The Origins of Ningyo Joruri:</i>	72
Joruri	74
Shamisen	76
Ningyo	78

<i>Ningyo Joruri Matures:</i>	79
<i>The Osaka Renaissance:</i>	88
<i>The Downfall of Ningyo Joruri and the Rise of Bunraku:</i>	90
<i>Conclusion:</i>	97
<b>Chapter 4 – The Atoms of Ningyo Joruri</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	100
<i>Watch and Learn:</i>	102
<i>Steal the Art:</i>	105
<i>The Puppet of Contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri and its Atoms:</i>	108
<i>Construction of the Puppet:</i>	111
The Body	113
The Head	115
Legs	124
Arms and hands	128
<i>The Rehearsal and Performance of Contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri:</i>	132
The Theatre Space	132
Training	136
Rehearsing and Staging the ‘Jurobe’s House’ scene of <i>The Courtesan of Naruto</i> :	138
<i>Videos and Books as ‘Authenticated’ Repositories of Knowledge:</i>	144
<i>Conclusion:</i>	147
<b>Chapter 5 – Bunraku in Britain</b>	<b>149</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	149
<i>Part 1 – A Modernising Agenda: Creating the Myth of the Unique, Ancient, Classical</i>	
<i>Bunraku:</i>	150
Establishing the Myth:	152
<i>British Motives for Mythologisation:</i>	166
<i>Myth to Mantra:</i>	169
<i>Part 2 – British ‘Bunraku-style’ Puppets:</i>	172
The Rise of ‘Bunraku’ in Britain:	175
A More Complicated Story:	185
‘Ameriku’ and other ‘Bunraku-style’ Intrusions:	193
<i>Conclusion:</i>	204
<b>Chapter 6 – Two ‘Bunraku-Style’ Case Studies</b>	<b>206</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	206
<i>Blind Summit Theatre:</i>	209
<i>Handspring Puppet Company:</i>	216

<i>Technologies &amp; Techniques:</i>	222
The Macro and Micro-signs of Blind Summit Puppets:	223
i) Overview:	223
ii) The Head, Neck and Head Control:	225
iii) The Torso:	228
iv) Shoulders, Arms and Hands:	229
v) Hips, Legs and Feet:	230
<i>The Macro and Micro-signs of Handspring Puppet Company's Puppets</i>	230
i) Overview:	231
ii) The Head, Neck and Head Control:	233
iii) The Torso:	235
iv) Shoulders, Arms and Hands:	236
v) Hips, Legs and Feet:	238
<i>Focus, Breath and Fixed Point:</i>	238
<i>Conclusion:</i>	242
<b>Conclusions – Beyond Bunraku</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>251</b>

## List of Figures

All images are my own unless otherwise specified in accompanying captions.

Figure 1 – Jeremy Bidgood in <i>Haözklá</i> , 2006 .....	13
Figure 2 - Image from Japan Arts Council's website .....	16
Figure 3 - Blind Summit performing <i>The Table</i> (photo Erich Matler) .....	17
Figure 4 - Adrian Kohler with the Young Mr A puppet in <i>Or You Could Kiss Me</i> , National Theatre London 2010 (photo Simon Annand).....	23
Figure 5 - The author outside the Bunraku Theatre in Osaka .....	64
Figure 6 - The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, Fukura.....	65
Figure 7 - Map of extant ningyo joruri troupes in Japan (from Kikukawa 2002) .....	67
Figure 8 - A contemporary Ebisu Mai performer puppet performing kubi-kake .....	69
Figure 9 - Members of the Nose Ningyo Joruri Theatre rehearsing .....	73
Figure 10 - Narrator Takemoto Tomokazu performing in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre.....	75
Figure 11 - Tsuruzawa Tomoyo (shamisen) & Tsuruzawa Tomokichi (narrator) performing in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre.....	77
Figure 12 - Headgrip trigger systems .....	85
Figure 13 - The logo of Yoshida Denjiro on the proscenium curtain of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre.....	96
Figure 14 - Nandan Junior High School students rehearsing .....	103
Figure 15 - Nandan Junior High School Students rehearsing in time with a video .....	105
Figure 16 - Images of puppet parts from the 1800 book <i>Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre (shibai gakuya zue)</i> by Shokosai Hanbe .....	107
Figure 17 - Ueda Yashuhiro in his workshop holding the head of Otsuru .....	109
Figure 18 - Ueda Yashuhiro's homemade saws .....	110



Figure 19 - A male puppet body without its head and clothing.....	112
Figure 20 - Image of 'naked' puppet from 1800 book Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre by Shokosai Hanbe .....	113
Figure 21 - A male shoulder board made by Ueda Yashuhiro .....	114
Figure 22 - A female shoulder board showing the small piece of bamboo ( <i>karasusu</i> ) that slides across to lock the head control in place .....	115
Figure 23 - Amari Yochiro holding lengths of whale baleen .....	116
Figure 24 - Kenbishi head from Awaji, also called kadome on Awaji.....	117
Figure 25 - Amari Yochiro showing the relative sizes of Awaji and Bunraku heads.....	118
Figure 26 - The inner mechanisms and face of an unfinished Kenbishi head by Amari Yochiro .....	119
Figure 27 - A half finished Kenbishi head with a trigger system control in the workshop of Amari Yochiro. In the background examples of the burari and the draw-peg system can also be seen. ....	120
Figure 28 - The worn and cracked back of an Ebisu head in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre .	122
Figure 29 - Design for fukeoyama head by Ueda Yashuhiro.....	123
Figure 30 - A partially finished Bunshichi leg in Amrai Yochiro's workshop .....	125
Figure 31 - Intercepted thigh legs in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Museum.....	126
Figure 32 – Ueda Yashuhiro’s Leg Making Instructions .....	127
Figure 33 - An unfinished 'grasping hand' made by Amari Yochiro .....	128
Figure 34 - A set of 'grasping hand' arms showing the use of sashigane on both arms .....	129
Figure 35 - Various arms on the floor of Amari Yochiro's workshop .....	130
Figure 36 - Some broken shamisen hands in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Museum.....	131
Figure 37 - Auditorium of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre.....	132

Figure 38 - The sunken stage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre with the second partition on the right .....	133
Figure 39 - Drums backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre .....	134
Figure 40 - Dogugaeshi in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre .....	135
Figure 41 - Puppeteers from the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre work with the students of Mihara Senior High School .....	136
Figure 42 - Yoshida Shinkuro studying the 'Jurobe's House' scene's text backstage .....	139
Figure 43 - The puppeteers of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre rehearsing .....	140
Figure 44 - Tsume puppets backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre .....	142
Figure 45 - Puppet arms being repaired in the old Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre .....	143
Figure 46 - The wooden puppet of <i>I Love You When You Are Breathing</i> (photo Handspring Puppet Company) .....	207
Figure 47 – Cardboard headed Moses in <i>The Table</i> (photo Lorna Palmer) .....	208
Figure 48 - Nick Barnes head control (left) and ningyo joruri head with draw-peg system (right) .....	227
Figure 49 - Drawing of puppet by author based on the puppets of <i>Or You Could Kiss Me</i> .....	232
Figure 50 - Pistol grip control by Hansjurgen Fettig .....	234

## Foreword

Standing on Edinburgh's Royal Mile on a grey August lunchtime in 2006 I attempted to flyer a passer-by. Unlike the majority of pedestrians who try and navigate the section of the Mile from North Bridge to George IV Bridge during the Edinburgh Fringe, he neither refused the flyer nor passively accepted it. Instead, he stopped dead in his tracks. I assumed my excellent sales pitch (something along the lines of 'cutting edge, darkly comic, adult puppet show, 5 stars') had reeled him in and now I would be able to persuade him with my savvy repartee and the fresh press cuttings, to come see our show at an unearthly hour of the morning, probably bringing his extended family and friends along as we galloped towards a sell-out run, celebrity and fame.

'I've already seen it', he said.

Ah, I was preaching to the converted, well no harm there, it's always nice to find a fan. I asked him if he had enjoyed the show.

The man paused, explained that he was a puppeteer and then exclaimed, 'You're messing with things you don't understand', before promptly disappearing into the throng of slightly damp, bikini-clad students advertising their reinterpretation of Macbeth, set in the Playboy mansion.

I was momentarily taken aback. I was proud of our show and, although it was the first show I had created solely using puppets, the responses we were getting from critics, the public and the few other puppeteers we knew were largely very positive. We had a string of five and four star reviews, good audiences and had even persuaded the Scotsman to run a double page spread entitled 'The New Age of Puppetry' that placed my very nascent opinions on puppetry alongside those of Brian Henson (Cox 2006).

Full of the arrogance of youth, my initial reaction to the man's comment was that he represented a type of old-school puppeteer who could not cope with our 'new' and 'dynamic' interpretation of his art form and yearned for some imagined past when puppet theatre was dominated by marionettes and twee fairy-tales.

But after reflection I knew that he was referring to something far more specific. In our costly thirty words in the Fringe Guide we had described our show as 'blending hand, rod and Bunraku puppets.' It was the last of these that I suspected he had taken issue with. Even then, with my limited understanding of global puppetry, I knew that technically our puppets were not Bunraku. In fact the puppets we referred to as 'Bunraku' were largely derived from

marionette designs I had found in the 2004 David Currell book *Making and Manipulating Marionettes* in the local library.

I had never seen a Bunraku puppet, beyond some cursory Internet images, let alone a performance by the Bunraku Theatre. I acquired the word from some more experienced puppeteer friends who helped us during the show's development and frequently referred to our puppets and manipulation techniques we had devised as 'Bunraku'. I had also seen Blind Summit's *Low Life* at the 2005 Edinburgh Fringe and was powerfully taken with the skill, humour and theatricality of the show and, in particular, the beautiful design and, what Jan Mrazek terms the 'instrumental quality' of the puppets (2005: 53): so alive yet clearly made of hard lifeless materials, only given agency through the hands of the performers brazenly holding them. At the time I was directing my first and largely disastrous foray into puppetry and *Low Life* seemed to be a critique of exactly what I was doing wrong. In the twelve months between seeing *Low Life* and this encounter on the Royal Mile, I had been avidly researching Blind Summit and kept finding that this exciting new word 'Bunraku' in their work. *Low Life* was a reference point for me during the creation of our show. So it seemed logical that if Blind Summit were doing 'Bunraku' and we were inspired by Blind Summit then we were also doing 'Bunraku'. So we described our puppets as 'Bunraku' and obediently reviewers regurgitated the description. Suddenly we were performing 'Japanese Bunraku' for all the world to see (Cooper 2006). Given the boldness of such claims and our very limited understanding of Bunraku, it was entirely fair to say that we were messing with things that we did not understand.

Sitting in London in 2014, a little older and hopefully wiser, I look back at this incident with a twinge of discomfort. At the time we laughed it off but I knew then and I know now, even more, that there was something genuinely disingenuous about our use of the word 'Bunraku'. As this study explores the influence of Japanese puppetry, one aspect of which is Bunraku, on contemporary British theatre practitioners and the issues surrounding that relationship, I start with this recollection to show that I have been as guilty as any other practitioner of failing to engage seriously with and seek to understand Bunraku, let alone Japanese puppet theatre more broadly, on its own terms. Like many other practitioners both past and present my reference to 'Bunraku' in the 2006 Edinburgh Fringe guide was cheap, lazy exoticisation primarily in the name of selling tickets.

This study seeks to unravel some of the misuses, confusion and mythologisation of Bunraku and the Japanese puppet theatre in general during the last 150 or so years. In particular I am interested in the formal development of the technologies and techniques of puppets now

labelled 'Bunraku' of 'Bunraku-style' in contemporary theatre practice, criticism and academia. Inevitably this study is critical of some attitudes, projects and individuals within British theatre past and present, but this criticism is necessary for us to honestly situate ourselves in relation to the puppet arts of Japan and to understand the specificities of our own practice. I hope this foreword serves to demonstrate that I plead guilty to many of the accusations and problems that the following study discusses and that this study is as much a self-critique as a critique of others.

Jeremy Bidgood

June 2014



Figure 1 – Jeremy Bidgood in *Haözkla*, 2006

## A Note on Transliteration

Transliteration of Japanese into English often varies from text to text and as a result the inconsistency in Romanji (Japanese words transliterated into the Roman alphabet) in different texts can be confusing for the reader. I have adopted a very certain set of transliteration rules in writing this thesis, which I seek to explain and justify here.

My intention in writing this thesis is to make the text as accessible as possible to the non-specialist without being imprecise and therefore laying myself open for attack from the more knowledgeable reader. To this end I have translated as many Japanese terms into equivalent English terms as possible. So, for example I will usually write chanter or narrator rather than *tayū*. Where words do not directly translate I have used the simplest Romanji possible: this means that I have not used macrons, circumflexes or extra letters to indicate long vowels and I have avoided italicising Japanese words in the main body of the text. So, for example *jōruri* is written joruri. My one big exception to this rule is 能, which I transliterate as noh rather than no, in order to avoid confusion with the pre-existing English word.

Precedents for this are abundant. We do not use italics, macrons or circumflexes for Japanese words that have been adopted into the English language. 東京 is not habitually transliterated as *tōkyō* (there is no equivalent of the capital letter in Japanese) but Tokyo. It seems illogical then to insist on transliterating 浄瑠璃 as *jōruri* rather than joruri. In fact to do so seems counterproductive as it deliberately others and exoticises a term that we want the reader to become familiar with. There are many texts dealing with the puppet theatre of Japan that do precisely this. In some cases, such as 太夫 *tayū*, perhaps the author(s) do not feel that narrator or chanter are sufficient translations, although 太夫 is hardly a precise term in Japanese without the appropriate context given its multiple potential meanings. In other cases it seems downright churlish not to translate Japanese words into plain English. An obvious example is 座 *za*. Like 太夫 *tayū*, 座 *za* has multiple potential meanings and therefore applications in the Japanese language. However, within Japanese theatre studies it crops up regularly in a very particular context with a very particular meaning. The kanji 植村源之丞 and 文楽座, for example, are often transliterated as Uemura Gennojōza and Bunrakuza (or other similar variants (such as Uemura Gennojō za and Bunraku-za). In these contexts *za* is simply a suffix that means theatre or troupe. It seems obtuse not to give a plain English translation. Like the English word theatre *za* can refer to either a building or a theatrical company, which is made clear by the context, just as in English. The pointless retention of Romanji, such as *za*, in many

English language texts can only reflect a slight laziness, intellectual snobbery or a delight in the gentle exoticism a liberal sprinkling of Japanese words brings to the author(s) work.

I realise that this flies in the face of much academic writing in the field of Japanese studies. However, I do not believe that this position will confuse or lessen the accuracy of this thesis' argument but rather enhance the text and make it more accessible and easier to read for its intended primary audience. As someone who came to Japanese studies through theatre practice rather than the study of Japanese language and culture I have much sympathy with the non-Japanese speaker who shows an interest in Japan's many fascinating theatrical arts. I also intend and expect that this study will mainly be read by non-Japanese speakers many of whose primary interest will be theatre studies not Japan and the Japanese language.

In order to satisfy more specialised Japanologists whenever pertinent italicised Romanji, with macrons to indicate long vowels, is included in brackets. For reference a glossary with Romanji terms is also included at the end of the thesis.

All transliterated Japanese names and proper nouns are given capital letters. The names of Japanese people are written in the Japanese fashion: family name followed by personal name - so Chikamatsu Monzaemon not Monzaemon Chikamatsu.

The final bit or transliteration I must explain is the nomenclature I use for Japan's various theatrical forms. Generic forms such as 歌舞伎 (*kabuki*) and 能 (*nō*) are not given capital letters but instead written as an equivalent generic form, such as ballet, is written in English i.e. kabuki and noh. Many readers will probably expect me to treat 文楽 (*bunraku*) in the same manner. However, as one of the central arguments of this thesis is that it is incorrect and damaging to use bunraku as an umbrella term for 'Japan's traditional puppet theatre' as publications such as the 2007 *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre* do (Saltzman-Li 2007: 578), 文楽 is always transliterated as Bunraku, with a capital letter in order to denote that it is a proper noun and the name of a single theatrical troupe: the Bunraku Theatre of Osaka and not a generic term. As will be explained ningyo joruri is the name used for the theatrical form of which Bunraku is just one example.

Any aberration from these rules is either deliberate, and will have an accompanying explanation, or is an editorial oversight for which I apologise.

## Chapter 1 – The Problem of Bunraku

### The Rise of Bunraku:

‘If the day comes when our [puppet] drama, which is peculiar, yet possess unique merits and characteristics, is widely recognised, appreciated and digested by Western literary circles... it may be that the Western drama, influenced by ours, will make a new departure in form and technique.’ Tsubouchi Shoyo writing in 1924

Sitting in the dark confines of London’s Soho Theatre in 2012, nearly a century after Tsubouchi Shoyo, a prominent early twentieth-century Japanese theatre academic, wrote these words, I am struck by how truly prophetic but blissfully naïve they are. On the stage is a corrugated cardboard and cloth puppet, standing on a table telling me, and the rest of the audience, that he is a ‘Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet’. Bunraku as described by the Japan Arts Council is ‘the traditional puppet theatre of Japan, a high-level stage art of which Japan can be very proud’ (2004). The accompanying photo on the Arts Council’s website shows two static, posed puppets (resting on stands for display rather than held for performance) who are awkwardly superimposed onto an image of a lush and colourful stage set, replete with bamboo houses and cherry blossom.

### ■ What Is Bunraku?

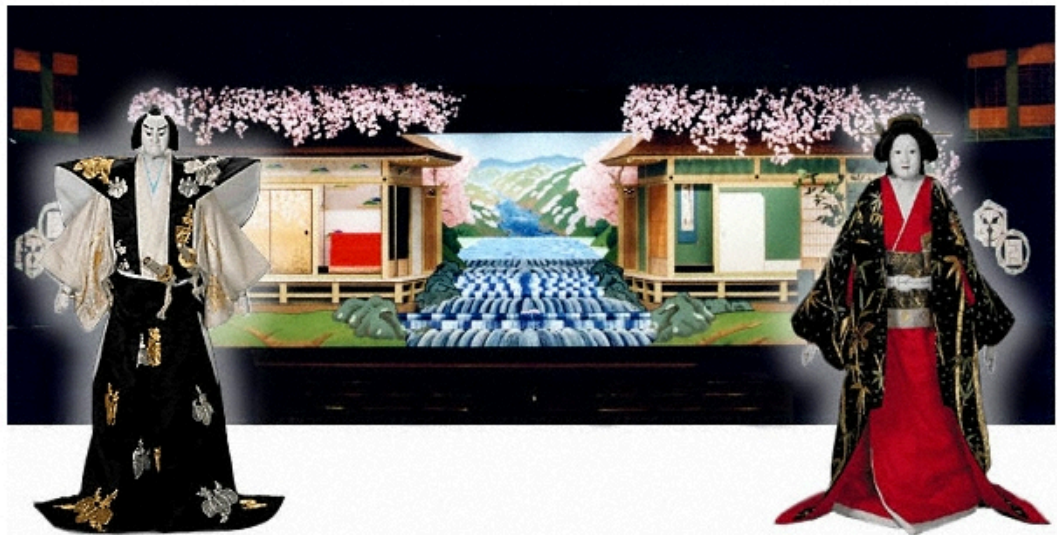


Figure 2 - Image from Japan Arts Council's website<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Source <http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/bunraku/en/contents/whats/> accessed 20.05.2014



As this thesis will discuss, the Japan Arts Council and others' presentation of Bunraku is highly essentialised and, in many ways, a direct product of Japan's post World War II push to enhance its 'international prestige' (Pyle 1979: 3) through the ambassadorship of state-approved cultural treasures including the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. The word Bunraku can only really be said to refer to a single theatre that, since 1872, has existed in various locations in the city of Osaka, the capital of Kansai Prefecture. As will be explored, the sustained use of Bunraku (capitalisation and italicisation vary) by theatre practitioners, critics and academics as a generic label for Japanese puppet theatre and/or a label for a range of contemporary puppets performed across the globe, is deeply problematic.

Back in Soho, it is clear from even this most cursory of encounters that the 'Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet' that I am watching in central London is *at least* as different as it is similar to the Japan Arts Council's staged vision of oriental splendour.



**Figure 3 - Blind Summit performing *The Table* (photo Erich Matler)<sup>2</sup>**

The puppet also claims to be about to re-enact the last twelve hours of the life of Moses in real-time, and given that I know the running time of the show is sixty minutes there is a high chance that not everything this paper prophet says should be taken literally. The show in question is *The Table* by Blind Summit Theatre and much of it is firmly tongue-in-cheek.

---

<sup>2</sup> Source Internationales Figurentheater Festival [http://www.figurentheaterfestival.de/2013/daten/fotos/BlindSummitTheTable\\_Malter8872.jpg](http://www.figurentheaterfestival.de/2013/daten/fotos/BlindSummitTheTable_Malter8872.jpg) accessed 27.06.14

Moses expands on his declared association with 'Japanese Bunraku' telling us 'I am a three-man operated Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet with interchangeable parts, that means I'm operated by three people, I live on top of a table and I can change all my parts, oh yes madam all my parts'. What is interesting about this explanation is that all of his initial statement is explained except for 'Japanese Bunraku', the one part of his speech that was not already clear. From night-to-night Moses' speech also varied between 'Bunraku' and 'Bunraku-style', suggesting he saw no great difference between the two terms, yet still offered no real clarification of either. Whether this is to give an air of exoticism to Blind Summit's practice or claim some sort of authority by association with this 'high-level stage art of which Japan can be very proud' (2004), such invocations of Bunraku, although at times facetious, are primarily given as an explanation, and the implication is that puppets like Moses have some marked ontological connection with this 'Japanese Bunraku'. Nor is this a one-off piece of showmanship. References to Bunraku frequently reoccur in Blind Summit's company publicity and in contemporary theatre practice, criticism and academia more broadly.

In fact, as Penny Francis, British puppet advocate, critic and researcher says 'the type and technique of puppet currently favoured with more attention than any other, most of all in the west... is [that] variously referred to as 'tabletop', 'Bunraku-style' or 'rear-rod'' (Francis 2012: 70), although she could easily have added 'direct manipulation', 'marionnette portée', 'black theatre', 'black-raku' and of course plain old 'Bunraku'. All these terms are used to describe a series of puppets that are frequently lumped together despite marked differences in their technologies and techniques. For example, a 'tabletop' puppet, such as Moses, necessarily exists on a table or other similarly raised surface whereas the 'marionnette portée' of Philippe Genty may float legless across the stage. Regardless of the exact terminology used, the prevailing reference that these puppets make, and still the most common appellations used, are 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'.

In this sense Tsubouchi Shoyo truly was prophetic. Certainly, as this thesis discusses, 'the Western Drama' did make 'a new departure in form and technique' in response to encounters with Japanese puppetry during the twentieth century,<sup>3</sup> and as this particular invocation of Bunraku shows the impact was at least enough to illicit the adoption of 'bunraku' into common theatrical parlance. However, as mentioned before, there is a naivety to this

---

<sup>3</sup> And Japanese theatre more broadly. The interest of European theatre makers in Japan's theatre arts has been widely examined., from Max Reinhardt's use of the hanamichi in the early twentieth century to Arianne Minouchkine's experiments with elements of kabuki, ningyo joruri and other aspects of Japanese theatre in the later twentieth century.

prophecy. Tsubouchi assumed that once the West understood the merits of Japanese puppet theatre it would be 'widely recognised, appreciated and *digested*' (emphasis mine). Here sits the nub of the problem: although puppet Moses can stand on his table and *tell* us he is 'Japanese Bunraku', what does that really mean, how do his technologies and techniques relate to those of this 'Japanese Bunraku', and have Blind Summit Theatre or other members of 'Western literary circles' truly *digested* Bunraku rather than just sniffing at it gently? Further, when the multitudes of Moses-like puppets and the puppeteers that control them talk about Bunraku, are they directly claiming to be performing this 'Bunraku', or merely footnoting an influence on their work? If the latter, is the framing of their work in the context of this one reference a fair reflection of their practice and 'digestion' of 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan'? Finally, what implications do such claims have for 'Japanese Bunraku' and Japanese puppet theatre more broadly?

In the broadest terms these are the questions at the heart of this thesis which primarily deals with British interactions with ningyo joruri, a highly developed theatrical form, of which large (c. one metre tall) puppets, primarily controlled by three people, are a central constituent, from the late nineteenth century to the present day. As will be made clear throughout this thesis, in particular in chapter 3, the Bunraku Theatre of Osaka, since 1963 a ward of the Japanese state and a 'national' theatre, is only one example of the much broader and older theatrical form, ningyo joruri, which in turn is only one example of the many pre-modern puppet theatres of Japan. Whilst this is not new information for those with a moderately developed understanding of Japan's puppet arts, the extent to which the plurality of ningyo joruri has been largely ignored by academia (especially the English language literature), criticism and practice and the damaging effect this has had on the understanding and status of other ningyo joruri troupes and contemporary puppet practice through a frequent and sustained mythologisation of the Bunraku Theatre, is a timely and necessary discussion.

The primary focus on British theatre and its interactions with ningyo joruri is a necessary limitation of an otherwise global topic. However, due to the international nature of theatre practice and scholarship especially from the 1960s onwards, 'British' is defined loosely as work that takes place in Britain and therefore has affected the UK's theatre scene. As a result, many non-British artists and productions, and their relationships to ningyo joruri, will be discussed. The rise of 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' puppetry is a truly global phenomenon and one that has affected theatre practice the world over. This study provides some insight into how and why this has happened in the British context and what this has meant for global theatre practice and Japan's ningyo joruri troupes. As well as offering criticism, this thesis also aims to

suggest possibilities for better and more honest interactions with the many puppet theatres of Japan.

### **A (Bunraku) Puppet Revolution:**

The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw repeated paradigm shifts in many areas of the arts in Europe and North America, not least in theatre practice. From the experiments of the Bauhaus to the radicalism of the 1960s to the intercultural collaborations of the later twentieth century, change in global theatre practice was frequent and seemed to be answering the cry of George Fuchs and others to 're-theatricalize theatre' (Fuchs 1904 in Fischer-Lichte 2002: 289). One theatrical element that increasingly became a part of this project was the puppet, and in particular, the puppet arts of Asia. Across the twentieth century Asian puppet forms, in particular wayang kulit, wayang golek and ningyo joruri, continually attracted attention from the great theatre makers and visionaries of the time such as Edward Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antoine Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Louis Barrault, Peter Brook, Arienne Minouchkine and Julie Taymor, and became part of a broader adoption and understanding of Artaud's concept of a 'total theatre' (2010: 61). In early twenty-first century Britain the puppet is now a frequent and sometimes prominent participant in the London stage, not just in fringe theatres, but also in large production houses such as London's National Theatre and the great playhouses of the West End. What is more a large number of these puppets are regularly labelled or linked to Bunraku.

The prominent use of puppets in contemporary British theatre would certainly elicit a raised eyebrow from any time-travelling 'fin de siècle' London theatregoer, who happened to wander into one of these puppet-heavy productions. Whilst puppetry, in its broadest sense, is not revolutionary or new, humanity's investment in the agency of the object has been with us since our earliest days in 'social and religious applications: idol, fetish, talisman, magic doll, child's toy' (Jurkowski 1996a: 20). Its inclusion in the theatrical mainstream and the forms which it now takes are a great departure from what our hypothetical late-nineteenth / early-twentieth century time-travelling Englishman would expect to be labelled as a puppet and the puppet-stage. This is not to say that the puppet did not exist in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, on the contrary: famous British puppeteers such as the D'Arc troupe run by Lambert D'Arc (1824-1893) and then his son George toured the world initially with their 'trick puppets and melodramas' and then more dramatic plays such as *Dr Faustus*, *Bluebeard* and *The Arabian Nights* (Jurkowski 1996a: 358-360). However, the puppet was consistently a theatrical

outsider situated within the context of an isolated puppet theatre where companies performed on specially built stages, booths and bridges utilising puppets alone, the manipulators masked and hidden, and did not interact with the wider theatrical realm. The puppet would only escape these formal constraints within the context of street theatre, such as the jiggling puppets of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and later in cabaret and music halls as in the work of artists such as the American Bob Bromley (Speaight 1955: 238, 296). Many British puppeteers led largely itinerant existences roaming the counties of England such as the renowned marionettist Clunn Lewis who 'pushed his theatre on a hand-barrow in front of him' (Speaight 1955: 250). Although Lewis' performances captured the imagination of more mainstream and visionary theatre artists such as George Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton and Edward Gordon Craig (Speaight: 1955: 252; Craig: 1921:33) this did little to elevate his place in society. In the 1920s he was still to be found performing in Battersea Park, despite the protestations of Craig (1921: 33)

Roughly a century later puppets and animated objects and those who perform them are regular and often prominent features in the British theatrical scene. As I write this in 2014 there are multiple long-running productions in the UK that either star or make prominent use of puppets. The globally successful co-production between London's National Theatre and Cape Town's Handspring Puppet Company *War Horse*, which wrested praise from even London's most puppet-averse critics<sup>4</sup> is still running at The New London Theatre with similar global success; Disney's *The Lion King*, directed by Julie Taymor with puppets designed by Taymor in collaboration with Michael Curry, continues to play at the Lyceum Theatre, admittedly an American import but now in its fifteenth year as an undisputed major player in the UK's theatre scene; the runaway success *Avenue Q*, another American import, resident in London for seven years and touring the British Isles; and *The Elephantom*, another National Theatre production, is about to start at The New London Theatre. This is not to mention the host of limited run productions, in both large and small production houses that will this year

---

<sup>4</sup> Several prominent critics went out of their way to say how surprised they were to like a show containing puppets. So, for example, Charles Spencer in the Daily Telegraph wrote: 'But how on earth do you put a life-size horse on stage, and make it the most important character in the show? When I heard the answer was going to be puppetry, my heart sank. Puppets are often an embarrassment, involving a lot of effort and fuss for negligible returns' (Spencer 2007). Spencer's self-declared 'longstanding aversion to puppetry' (2010) makes him, amongst other prominent critics with similar prejudices such as Michael Billington, top of whose 'hate-list is anything to do with puppets or marionettes' (1983: 15), a questionable choice of critic to send to a production that so prominently uses puppets. Sadly mainstream British theatre criticism has not developed a sufficient critical language to keep apace with developments in British puppet theatre.

feature puppets, and the visits of foreign companies such as Compagnie Philippe Genty, Hotel Modern, Dimity Krymov Lab and, now regular visitors to the UK, Handspring Puppet Company.

*War Horse* could be considered a recent watershed in the prominence and acceptance of puppetry in the UK, and, coupled with other prominent shows such as *The Lion King*, it has created a situation where it is now an advantage for British actors to have puppet experience on their C.V. Often this will mean attending a few short puppet courses or workshops, but like stage-fighting, multiple accents and devising, puppetry is now a bona fide skill desired by British actors, in part due to potential stable employment in shows such as *War Horse*. In the decades preceding the 2007 debut of *War Horse*, many other puppets, British and foreign, graced London's stages: Improbable Theatre's *Satyagraha* at the Coliseum, Blind Summit's puppets in Anthony Minghella's *Madame Butterfly*, a host of shows by Simon McBurney's Complicite, repeated visits by Compagnie Philippe Genty, the ambitious adaptation of *His Dark Materials* at the National Theatre, with puppets designed by Michael Curry, as well as countless smaller but prominent productions from companies such as The Little Angel Theatre, Faulty Optic, doo Cot and Green Ginger.

This growth in the use of puppets in British Theatre has run parallel with the growth in references to Bunraku. Many of these shows and companies are diverse in theme, form and content but throughout the publicity, interviews and criticism that surrounds them Bunraku is a recurring reference point. For example, apparently *War Horse* uses 'the Japanese Bunraku 'exposed' style of puppetry' (V&A Network 2013), the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Little Angel Theatre's 2004 co-production of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* had 'lovely, doll-like puppets manipulated (bunraku-style)' (Taylor 2004) and in The National Theatre's 2003 production of Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* 'The puppeteers, in the Japanese Bunraku manner, dressed all in black, are presumed to be invisible' (Tanitch 2004). Admittedly these are comments from individuals external to these productions. However, puppeteers and other theatre makers involved in contemporary productions, just as in the case of Moses in *The Table*, are also quick to make such claims and in doing so feed the copy of British critics. For example, Finn Caldwell, one of the performers in the 2010 co-production between the National Theatre and Handspring Puppet Company: *Or You Could Kiss Me*, describes the show 'like a westernised version of Bunraku (Japanese puppet theatre)' (Caldwell 2010:15). Caldwell is a talented actor-puppeteer who also worked on *War Horse*, eventually becoming an associate director on the production, as well as on several Blind Summit Theatre productions. Given his experience and performance talent Caldwell's views on puppetry are valuable (see Mello 2008), but again his invocation of 'Bunraku' highlights both the widespread adoption of 'Bunraku' as a descriptor in contemporary theatrical parlance as well as demonstrating the

widespread confusion about what 'Bunraku' actually means. The implication of Caldwell's statement is that 'Bunraku' is both a generic term for all Japanese puppet theatre and is also directly comparable to the puppets used in *Or You Could Kiss Me*.



**Figure 4 - Adrian Kohler with the Young Mr A puppet in *Or You Could Kiss Me*, National Theatre London 2010 (photo Simon Annand)**

This first assumption aligns with the Japan Arts Council's problematic declaration that Bunraku is 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan' (2004) and flies in the face of the reality of Japanese puppet theatre that is, and has been for centuries, widespread and varied (see chapter 3). The second, however, as with Blind Summit's *Moses*, seems questionable given obvious formal disparities between these puppets and those of the Bunraku Theatre. This raises the question of what denotes sufficient 'bunraku-ness' to warrant such comparisons? There are many situations in which Bunraku is invoked, however there appear to be two primary signifiers of 'bunraku-ness' in contemporary theatre: first, the use of visible manipulators (meaning manipulators who are not hidden behind a playboard or physical barrier but whose faces may be covered by a hood or cowl); and second, multiple manipulators controlling one puppet (anything from two people upwards). These signifiers can override other contradictory evidence found in the puppet's technologies and techniques that tell another, less Bunraku-centric story.

Such claims of 'Bunraku-ness' are multitudinous and varied. Some are gleefully proclaimed by practitioners, others are applied in retrospect by critics or commentators wanting to appear 'in-the-know'. This is not to say that every show now made in the UK either aspires to be 'Bunraku' or is labelled as such. However, 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' have become so common-place as terms that even the industry organisation Puppeteers UK offers a 'Tabletop/Bunraku style' option, alongside 'Marionettes', 'Shadows', etc., in its members' performance and making skills listings (Puppeteers UK 2011) and many British puppeteers and actors now list 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' puppetry as a skill on their C.V.s. This expansion in references to Bunraku has run in direct parallel with an expansion of puppet practice in British theatre but, as will be discussed further in chapter 5, this was clearly not the result of, nor has it led to a serious 'digestion' of, Japan's puppet theatres and references to Bunraku are consistently confused and vague.

### **A Sustained (dis)Interest:**

International interest in Japanese puppetry is not a new phenomenon and neither is confusion surrounding the term Bunraku. The assumption that Bunraku is an umbrella term for Japanese puppetry and that there are many puppeteers working across the world in a comparable 'style' to Bunraku is frequently voiced. Often, erroneous assumptions such as these come from a lack of knowledge and understanding of Bunraku and ningyo joruri: a result of the limited encounters non-Japanese puppeteers have had with Japanese puppetry. Whilst practitioners have absorbed terms like 'Bunraku-style' into their vocabulary, few European or North-American practitioners have sought truly to understand what Bunraku means and how their work relates to it beyond a vague understanding that Bunraku means 'visible puppeteers' and/or 'puppets manipulated by multiple puppeteers': the two primary signifiers of Bunraku-ness.

Accusations of exoticism too often seem justified. Bunraku becomes a name to drop that conjures up images of an exotic 'other' (Said 1977) – an Orient, not of impossibly beautiful and sexually available slave-girls, but of beautiful, serious, adult puppetry that is as highly regarded as the great text based acting traditions of Europe. As, Basil Jones, one half of Handspring Puppet Company, says:

[Bunraku's] biggest influence for me was their professionalism because we were coming out of the Fifties and Sixties where it was almost the nadir of puppetry... So the discovery of this ancient tradition, almost fascistic form of training of ten years



apprenticeship on the legs. That really impressed us hugely and was a big inspiration to us as people who were thinking of becoming professional puppeteers. (Kohler & Jones 2010)

This fascination with Bunraku's professionalism, is evident from the earliest British encounters with the Bunraku Theatre. Through reports and photographs we find an excitement in the proof that puppetry can be a serious adult art. A Times article from 1919, written by an unnamed correspondent in Tokyo, describes Bunraku as a 'jewel of art' suggesting 'the marionettes of the West need all the support and encouragement their elder brothers and sisters in Japan can give them' and even speculating that 'it would not be surprising if this old art, buried in Japan for centuries, should one day inspire the actors of the whole world' (The Times 1919: 10). These prophetic words found immediate fulfilment in individual enthusiasts in the UK and continental Europe, such as Edward Gordon Craig and Paul Claudel. In 1921 Craig wrote of his admiration for the Bunraku puppet believing that 'it must silence those who imagine that a Puppet is something silly and not to be considered seriously as a fine means of expression' (Craig 1921: 32). Craig had previously published images of and information on ningyo joruri in his journals *The Mask* and *The Marionette*, in particular illustrations from the 1800 publication 'Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre' (*shibai gakuya zue*) by Shokosai Hanbe (*shōkōsai hanbe*) (active 1789-1818), sent to him by a Mr Porter Garnett copied from a book 'owned by Dr Arnold Genth of San Francisco' (Craig 1915). Craig's plea was indicative of a desire amongst British puppeteers from the early twentieth century onwards to create puppet theatre that escapes the confines of children's theatre as expressed by George Speaight's exultant cry for 'recognition that the puppet is an adult art' (Speaight 1955: 269). As we will see in chapter 5, the discovery and appropriation of ningyo joruri and particularly the Bunraku Theatre's practice has been linked to this project of creating a puppet theatre for adults in the UK.

Interest in the Bunraku Theatre continued to grow during the mid-twentieth century. However, this was limited to newspaper and magazine reports from Japan, a smattering of books on Japanese Theatre that mentioned the Bunraku Theatre in some fashion and an even smaller selection of books that focussed specifically on Japanese puppetry, but still usually meaning the Bunraku Theatre alone. There were also occasional film reels that were shown at events such as the 1963 International Puppet Festival held in Colwyn Bay (Sommerville 1962: 13). However, it was not until 1968 that British theatre makers saw ningyo joruri first hand. 1968 saw the first visit to the UK by the Bunraku Theatre as part of the World Theatre Season organised by Peter Daubeny. It was at this point that Bunraku really started to become part of the British theatrical consciousness. Although some critics were cautious in their response to

'the weird pattern of noise and the mixture of realism and artificiality' (Hope-Wallace 1968: 6) most were full of praise for the 'peculiar magic of Bunraku' (Wardle 1968: 15) that 'crowned the World Theatre Season at the Aldwych' (Trewin 1968: 33). Awe-struck puppeteers, such as John Blundall, rushed backstage at the Aldwych to meet Kiritake Monjuro and the other masters of the Bunraku Theatre (Blundall 2011) and other up and coming theatre makers, such as Peter Brook, also took a deep interest, fascinated by Bunraku's novel balance of realism and artificiality that helped further move theatre away from its nineteenth century naturalistic constraints: 'in the Japanese marionettes, the *bunraku*, where the actions are incredibly realistic... There is no attempt at illusion. I think this is always a balance one has to find' (Brook in Moffit 1999: 90).

However, the positive reception of the Bunraku Theatre in 1968, presented as 'The Bunraku National Theatre of Japan', was in part due to the mythologisation and essentialisation of the Bunraku Theatre that had taken place in the preceding century since the reopening of Japan to the wider world in the 1850s. The positive reactions of Brook and others to the Bunraku Theatre were already framed by an understanding of Bunraku's supposed 'thousands of years of tradition' and the authenticating power that carried (Brook 1988: 218). Since the first British encounters with Japanese puppet theatre the Bunraku Theatre that been repeatedly characterised as the unique, ancient, classical puppet theatre of Japan (see chapter 5 for a full discussion of the development of this essentialised understanding of Bunraku) created by both British and Japanese sources that created a situation where 'What foreign audiences most want to see and what the Japanese government most would like to show them seem to have meshed perfectly' (Thornbury 2001: 220). This meant that in 1968 British theatre makers were already primed to be receptive to the Bunraku Theatre as a professional, adult theatre and the sole puppet theatre of Japan.

Following the 1968 World Theatre Season, British theatre professionals started to make use of ideas seemingly inspired by the Bunraku Theatre. Christopher Leith's 1971 production of *Beowulf* used visible puppeteers in combination with 'actors seated with a musician at a special lectern' to recite 'the text in Japanese *jōruri* style' (Jurkowski 1996: 366). Kenneth Macmillan's 1975 ballet *Rituals*, in Covent Garden, presented human dancers as 'life-sized dolls... manipulated throughout by two groups of four men' (Percival 1975: 14). These experiments were encouraged by further visits from the National Bunraku Theatre in 1976, 1983 and 1991. Widely available illustrated publications, such as Barbara Adachi's 1978 book *The Voices and Hands of Bunraku*, updated in 1985 as *Backstage at Bunraku*, furthered practical interest in Bunraku and helped to cement Bunraku as *the* Japanese puppet.

The Bunraku Theatre made multiple tours in continental Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century and in 1995 and 1997, one of the company's puppeteers Yoshida Minotaro (now Kiritake Kanjuro III) led month-long workshops at the Insitut International de la Marionnette in France. Although many other Japanese puppet companies, including the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, Hitomi Theatre (including their Women's Bunraku group (*otome bunraku*)), Dondoro Theatre, and Hachioji Kuruma Ningyo, have toured in continental Europe, the only Japanese puppet companies to have visited Britain other than the Bunraku Theatre are Hachioji Kuruma Ningyo<sup>5</sup>, Saibata Puppet Theatre (a rod puppet troupe) and Sarkara Puppet Theatre (a glove puppet troupe), during Puppet Theatre 79, a festival of international puppetry organised by Penny Francis in London in 1979, and the Takeda Marionette Theatre, which came to the Edinburgh International Festival in 1986. More recently, individual performers such as Ito Shiro and Katami Emei visited London for the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mr Punch's birthday in 2012. These were all smaller events than the 1968 World Theatre Season and, as a result, had far less impact on the British theatrical landscape. Coupled with the fact that relatively few British puppet practitioners have visited Japan or actively sought to explore ningyo joruri, it is not unsurprising that, as the Bunraku Theatre was the first and most frequent point of contact between Britain and the puppet arts of Japan, the British have developed a Bunraku-centric view of Japanese puppetry and the word Bunraku has become synonymous with Japanese puppetry in general. Many puppeteers' and other theatre professionals' knowledge of the ningyo joruri of the Bunraku Theatre is based upon books, YouTube and the recollections of the few who have had direct contact with ningyo joruri. The result, as Penny Francis says, is that we learn from a 'tenth generation photocopy' (Francis 2007). The more we 'photocopy' the more distorted our idea of Bunraku becomes.

This photocopy can be explained though comparison with the work of the contemporary German sculptor and photographer Thomas Demand. Demand creates intricate paper sculptures designed to replicate real life. He then photographs the sculptures and displays the prints in galleries. The viewer expects the image to be a photograph of the 'real' scene, *indexically* linked to the subject that it represents, but in fact it is a carefully constructed subterfuge. Demand's work is a conscious act of translation or photocopying but not a photocopy of the original object but of a fabricated ontologically different substitute. The link to the original subject is broken but imitated. Part of our enjoyment of the piece is the discovery of the subterfuge and the enjoyment of its intricate success. However, with

---

<sup>5</sup> Kuruma ningyo (*kuruma ningyō*) is more recent derivation of ningyo joruri – see chapter 3 for further discussion.

'Bunraku-style' our delight is not in translation and trickery but in believing that there is a direct ontological connection to the original – we fail to see that it is actually just a construction of paper.

Such uninformed Bunraku-centric thinking is problematic. Bunraku is not synonymous with the wide and varied range of pre-modern puppet arts in Japan. However, this is often the attitude of British commentary on Japanese puppet theatre. A review of the 1979 showing of Japanese Puppets at the Young Vic, as part of Puppet Theatre 79, failed to mention Hachioji Kuruma Ningyo by name, instead referring to them as the 'wheeled version' of the 'beautiful, ancient "bunraku"' (Carter 1979: 14). In one sentence a journalist with a Bunraku-centric view of Japanese puppetry relegated kuruma ningyo, a distinct and refined theatrical form, to being a subset of Bunraku. It is unfair to blame the journalist in this instance, as the festival organisers also repeatedly characterised the troupe as the 'Bunraku Theatre Company on Wheels' (Illustrated London News 1979: 5). In many ways kuruma ningyo is a far greater formal development from ningyo joruri than any the Bunraku Theatre produced, given that the formal characteristics of ningyo joruri were largely all firmly in place before the arrival of the Bunraku Theatre. Through ignorance of the wide range of Japanese puppetry we fail to recognise other distinct art forms and further confuse our understanding of Bunraku by assuming anything that bears resemblance to it must be the same.

In the past few decades such Bunraku-centricity has been bolstered by an influx of predominately North American and European theatre that has made prominent use of puppets that are labelled and received as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'. In particular the work of Philippe Genty, Julie Taymor, Robert Lepage and Handspring Puppet Company (notably South African) have inspired an increase in the use of puppets in theatre that has frequently brought with it a similarly sustained misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Japanese puppet theatre. As in the UK, Bunraku has become a largely undifferentiated term in North America and Europe and the success of such artists in the UK has added further fuel to the 'Bunraku-style' fire.

The result is that some British practitioners have gone beyond simple admiration and the desire to imitate a romanticised idea of Bunraku, and have adopted a less celebratory, perhaps even neo-colonial, relationship to Bunraku. For example, London-based Blind Summit Theatre are purportedly 'doing for ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry what South Park did for cartoons. They subvert the medium to make cutting edge, puppet-led theatre' (British Council 2010). The use of the word 'Bunraku' in promotional material of this nature further demonstrates the extent to which the word has become a part of the consciousness of the

British theatre world – a buzzword for selling seats. But this statement goes beyond using Bunraku as an exotic marketing tool. Instead the implication is that Blind Summit are not just equal to 'ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry' but above it as they have the requisite understanding and mastery of the art to be able to 'subvert' it. This is done using the double edged sword of the word 'ancient' that both characterises Bunraku as venerable and old, implying a set of skills and techniques refined over generations, and at the same time tells us that Bunraku is old-hat, ripe for updating and even tongue-in-cheek mockery. Whether Blind Summit are referring solely to Bunraku or using the word to mean ningyo joruri in general, it is inescapable that the word 'Bunraku' refers specifically to Japan and not some westernised 'bunraku-style'.

This quotation is clearly publicity talk and Nick Barnes and Mark Down, in conversation, play down Bunraku as an influence instead stressing the influence of Philippe Genty, Faulty Optic and Handspring Puppet Company on Blind Summit's work (Barnes 2011, Down 2011). So why does Blind Summit talk about subverting Bunraku rather than one of the other companies? Criticisms of exoticism seem relevant but the truth may be more to do with proximity: it is far easier to claim mastery over an art-form from the other side of the world, that few people in the UK have a developed understanding of, than to claim mastery over companies far nearer to home, who could easily object. It seems unlikely that Blind Summit could comfortably replace the word 'Bunraku' in this passage with 'Philippe Genty', despite Genty being a far clearer and more direct influence on their work, as Genty's work is well known and understood in the UK, and many commentators would pick up the automatic hubris of such a claim and judge Blind Summit's work accordingly. Because Bunraku has entered British theatre discourse as a vague and undifferentiated term it is possible for Blind Summit to get away with using it in this way. It is telling that in the programme notes for Tokyo performances of *Shunkin*, a Complicite show made in collaboration with the Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo for which Blind Summit made the puppets, this passage was altered so that Blind Summit were simply subverting 'puppetry' rather than 'ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry'. A bolder but less specific claim presumably made in response to a sense that they might not get away with such rhetoric within Japan where, certainly on an official level, Bunraku, i.e. the ningyo joruri of the Bunraku Theatre, is 'the most highly developed puppet theatre art in the world' (Japan Art's Council 2004).

## The Problem of Definition:

Part of the issue is that there has been a sustained supply of misinformation and half-truths about Japan's puppet theatres in academia, practise and criticism so that as interest in puppetry has increased in the UK (in particular in Japanese puppetry) the 'go-to' sources of information have disseminated a simplistic and often erroneous understanding of the Japanese puppetry and the Bunraku Theatre in particular. English language studies of Japanese puppetry focus almost exclusively on Bunraku.

Few non-Japanese academics have done serious research into Japan's puppet arts and those that have almost universally focussed on or framed their work within the context of the Bunraku Theatre. As Michiko Ueno-Herr expressed in 1995, the majority of this research has been around the plays of ningyo joruri, in particular the works of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) sometimes dubbed the 'Japanese Shakespeare' as a result of their equally prodigious outputs, with work also being done on the music and history of ningyo joruri (Ueno-Herr 1995: 2). Ueno-Herr's own thesis explored the training and practice of the puppeteers of the Bunraku Theatre and is the last and only significant text to be published on the practice of ningyo joruri in English. The only other English language book dealing with ningyo joruri to have appeared since is Jane Marie Law's 1997 book *Puppets of Nostalgia*, a specific study of ritual puppetry of Awaji Island and only deals briefly with its theatrical ningyo joruri tradition. The great corpus of work on Japanese puppetry published in English has solely dealt with the history and literature of ningyo joruri, even then only through the lens of the Bunraku Theatre.

The majority of English-language publications produced on ningyo joruri are by academics or semi-academic Japan enthusiasts. In academic circles interest in Japan's puppet theatre has primarily come from Japanologists who study ningyo joruri as part of the broader cultural, literary and social history of Japan, with a smattering of additional texts by other non-academic Japan enthusiasts but no significant works by puppet and theatre practitioners. The academic Japanologist literature, such as the work of Donald Keene, James Brandon, Charles Dunn, Ando Tsuruo, Faubion Bowers, Kenny Don, Adolphe Scott, Samuel Leiter, Stanleigh Jones, Andrew Gerstle, Michiko Ueno-Herr, Patricia Pringle and Jane Marie Law has looked at parts of Japan's puppet traditions, almost exclusively ningyo joruri and in particular the Bunraku Theatre, from primarily historical, socio-economic and literary perspectives with a considerable corpus of works on the development of ningyo joruri (usually labelled Bunraku) in the Takemoto and Toyotake Theatres and the plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Many authors provide some description of the practice of ningyo joruri and the construction of the puppets, but only Michiko Ueno-Herr gives any great detail on the performance practice of ningyo

yoruri. All of this work is valuable and has contributed considerably to understanding of Japanese puppetry, however, it is limited in its field of enquiry only engaging with certain aspects of ningyo yoruri's performance. As will be explored in chapter 5, with some notable exceptions, such as Jane Marie Law, the almost universal Bunraku-centricity of much of this work has, often unintentionally, contributed to the mythologisation and essentialisation of the Bunraku Theatre as the 'ancient', 'unique' 'classical' puppet theatre of Japan.

The literature produced by non-academic enthusiasts, such as the books of Barbara Curtis Adachi, have been no less influential. Adachi's books in particular have provided a wealth of imagery and basic description of the history and practice of the Bunraku Theatre and have been widely available across the English speaking world and important visual and textual resources for practitioners. There has been no substantial literature produced by puppet and other theatre practitioners bar a few articles and mentions of Japanese puppet theatre in other texts, again primarily the Bunraku Theatre. Paul Claudel, Jean-Louis Barrault, Peter Brook, Theodora Skipitares, Julie Taymor amongst others have all discussed Bunraku but in a limited fashion almost always in relation to their own work and interests. The result is that there has been no sustained engagement with Japanese puppetry by a non-Japanese practitioner.

Thus, when someone interested in Bunraku or Japanese puppet theatre more generally tries to explore the subject, the immediately available sources are confusing and often simplistic. It is reasonable to assume that standardised volumes of knowledge, such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias, will supply a definition that is at least sufficient for the purposes of discussion. However, sadly Bunraku-centricity is widespread and nearly universal across dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other similar publications. For example, the word Bunraku became common enough in the English language to reach the hallowed territory of the Oxford English Dictionary in the 1972. The OED contains the following entry:

bunraku, n. Pronunciation: /'bunraku/ Etymology: Japanese.

A kind of traditional Japanese puppetry practised at the Bunraku-za marionette theatre by its company; also, a contracted name for this company; hence, the Japanese puppet theatre in general. (Oxford English Dictionary 2014)

The five references that the Oxford English Dictionary quotes in support of this claim all date between 1920 and 1959 and make bold and certain claims such as 'There are two schools in the marionette art [in Japan]: Yuki School, which manipulates the dolls by strings and Bunraku School, which makes the dolls act by holding them.' (Kure 1920: 30) and 'The title Bunraku has

now come to mean the [Japanese] doll theatre as a whole' (Scott 1955: 56). Presumably we are meant to understand that between 1920 and 1955 the 'Yuki School', apparently the sole Japanese puppet theatre other than the 'Bunraku School', disappeared to leave a Bunraku-only puppet theatre in Japan, hence the OED considering 'bunraku' to be the name for 'the Japanese puppet theatre in general' ignoring or, more probably, ignorant of the hundreds of other instances of puppet theatre in Japan. The OED is of course a generalist not a specialist publication and its definitions are based upon the use of the word in English language sources that are available at the time of publication rather than extensive research, although even in 1972 there were sources that could give an alternative viewpoint such as Charles Dunn's 1966 book, *The Early Japanese Puppet Drama*. However, based upon the OED's five limited sources (two of which are from the same author and book and two others are magazine articles) this definition seems reasonable although ultimately incorrect.

Surely more specialist volumes provide a fuller definition of Bunraku? The *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*, published in 2007, unsurprisingly provides a far greater level of detail and the entry for Bunraku is situated within a section entitled 'Puppet Theatre: Japan' and does offer some broader and largely correct information on Japanese puppet theatre past and present.<sup>6</sup> However, the whole of this section is framed within the context of Bunraku, which early in the entry is defined thus:

**Bunraku.** *Bunraku* is Japan's traditional puppet theatre, created in the late fifteenth century when three pre-existing arts came together to form what is now called *bunraku* but which grew out of *ko-jōruri* and was formerly known as *ningyō shibai* ("puppet theatre") and *ningyō jōruri* ("puppet *jōruri*"). These arts were puppet manipulation (*ayatsuri*), storytelling (*katari mono*), and *shamisen*. (Saltzman-Li 2007: 578)

Whilst the entry does acknowledge that Bunraku grew out of pre-existing forms and has had other names, the broad implication is that there is no traditional Japanese puppet theatre other than Bunraku and it came in to being in the late fifteenth century. This is three hundred years before a theatre in Japan would bear the name Bunraku and roughly one hundred years before *ningyo joruri* is widely thought to have originated (see chapter 3).

---

<sup>6</sup> Although it makes some suspect claims such as confusing *kuruma ningyo* with *otome bunraku* (Thornbury 2007:583)



Anachronisms such as these may be excused by cries to simplify a subject for the less-informed observer but the *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre* is a specialist volume and as such should provide specialist knowledge. In this it often succeeds and even provides brief information on a few of the other puppet forms found in Japan. It also does admit later that ‘the term *bunraku*... became common *after* the establishment of Osaka’s Bunraku Theatre (Bunraku-za 1872)’ (Saltzman-Li 2007: 581) (emphasis mine). However, the entire ‘Puppet Theatre: Japan’ entry is framed within the context of ‘*bunraku*’. Even the Awaji ningyo joruri tradition, (see chapters 3 and 4) a prolific and vital centre in the development and proliferation of ningyo joruri, is described as performing ‘*bunraku*-style puppets’ (Thornbury 2007: 583).

Such anachronisms are also rife in the 2006 *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Traditional Theatre* by Samuel Leiter. Again, as a specialist publication it is reasonable to expect it to provide a balanced definition of Bunraku, which it half does. The dictionary does not actually contain an entry for Bunraku. Rather, there is an entry for the Bunraku Theatre providing an overview of its life from its 1872 foundation through to its present home in the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka. There is brief separate entry for ningyo joruri: ‘The classical Japanese puppet theatre, which only became known as *bunraku* in the 1870s’ and which refers readers to the entry on joruri which gives some more detail on the formation of ningyo joruri. Another brief entry for Awaji states ‘where a folk version of the traditional puppet theatre has thrived since the 17<sup>th</sup> century... See also BUNRAKU’ (Leiter 2006: 38). However, the whole dictionary, as outlined in the introduction, is framed in the context of the now standard triad/quad (depending on whether noh and kyogen are listed separately) of Japan’s classical, traditional theatre: Kabuki, Noh & Kyogen and Bunraku: ‘the four great performing arts of Japan’ (Kawatake 1971: 1). Leiter explains that ‘although the traditional puppet theatre was usually called *ningyô jôruri* – *bunraku* not becoming common until the 1870s – *bunraku* is used to refer to it from its inception in earlier forms, such as *jôruri* and *kojôruri*’ (2006: xv) and that ‘This book is concerned with the four principal traditional – or classical – genres, *nô*, *kyôgen*, *bunraku* and *kabuki*. These genres were not always known by these names, but they are those by which the world knows them today and are how they will usually be referred to in the following pages, even when discussing periods prior to their emergence in popular usage’ (2006:1). This is the same Bunraku apologetic that the *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre* uses along with many other academic publications. The question that arises is *who* calls all ningyo joruri, joruri and old joruri (*kôjoruri*)<sup>7</sup> *bunraku*? Leiter implies that there is a global consensus

---

<sup>7</sup> Joruri performed before the development of the gidayu style of joruri by Takemoto Gidayu (*takemoto gidayû*). 1686 is standardly used as the year that marks this shift (Ueno-Herr 1995: 28)

that *bunraku* is the appropriate nomenclature. Are we to assume then that all other ningyo joruri troupes after the 1872 establishment of the first Bunraku Theatre in Osaka willingly started referring to themselves and their forebears as Bunraku, and are happily doing so today? Are we to accept that the world is content to say that the history of the hundreds of ningyo joruri troupes that have existed in Japan and the fifty-two that still exist today is actually the history of Bunraku? Do all roads really lead to Bunraku?

As will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4, confusion around definitions and understandings of Bunraku, ningyo joruri and other Japanese puppet theatre has led to a wealth of misrepresentation. Rather than just being an historical anachronism, the Bunraku-centricity of the examples above and a host of other publications has repeatedly disenfranchised all other Japanese puppetry, and in particular other ningyo joruri troupes. This is a clear example of the 'wiping out of distinctive collectivities under an undifferentiated term' (Griffiths 1994: 168) and although often driven by a worthy desire to promote the Bunraku Theatre on the world stage and so help preserve it, this rhetoric has made other ningyo joruri troupes the victims of repeated acts of 'liberal' discursive violence' (Griffiths 1994: 166).

This scarcity of English Language sources on Japanese puppetry mean that relatively few books have become the 'go to' resources for information on Japanese puppetry, which has nearly always meant the Bunraku Theatre alone. This affects other academics who use these 'go to' books as sources of information. The result is that otherwise highly nuanced works and their authors have ended up making uninformed and regrettable pronouncements about Japanese puppetry and Bunraku because the information readily available to them was fundamentally flawed. Confusions and misrepresentations are rife within contemporary academic circles. So, for example, in their acclaimed 2007 book *Performing and Cosmopolitics* Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo offer a nuanced and detailed analysis of cross-cultural performance in Australian theatre that uses theatre as a model to explore 'cosmopolitanism as material praxis' and in doing so challenge ideas of 'cosmopolitanism as a knowledge formation [that] has largely circulated at elite levels' (Gilbert & Lo 2007: 212). Primary to this is an analysis of indigenised and Asianised Australian theatre in which the authors argue that there has been a shift from Orientalist representations of the Other to a more 'sustained, long-term engagement' in which the former Other becomes 'a vital partner in the production and projection of Australian culture and identity on the international stage' (Gilbert & Lo 2007: 111).

However, the 'sustained, long-term engagement' that such partnership requires seems to be lacking in their discussion of Australian interactions with Japanese puppetry. Gilbert and Lo offer a familiarly confusing set of references to Japanese puppetry referring to 'the bunraku',

'bunraku' and 'bunraku-style rod puppets' all within one page (Gilbert & Lo 2007:91). Is the selective use of the definite article some attempt to distinguish between the Bunraku Theatre of Osaka and the use of 'bunraku' as a generic term for ningyo joruri? It is unclear. Certainly the authors' definition of 'bunraku' as 'a traditional Japanese form accompanied by chanting and live shamisen music' suggests they are using 'bunraku' as a generic term for a style of performance rather than the name of a particular company performing ningyo joruri but there is no indication given as to what 'the bunraku' might mean and how it differs from 'bunraku'.

'Bunraku-style rod puppets' is the authors' term for Australian puppets influenced by ningyo joruri but again there is an inconsistency as Australian puppets are also referred to simply as 'bunraku' (Gilbert & Lo 2007:93). The authors argue that 'bunraku... has been digested and naturalized as part of contemporary Australian puppetry' but suggest that there has only been a selective incorporation of the performance tropes and technologies of 'bunraku' (Gilbert & Lo 2007:91). Given this acknowledgement of selective incorporation it seems strange that Gilbert and Lo continue to refer to Australian puppets as 'bunraku' at all.

### **What's in a Name?**

Gilbert and Lo's confused references to Bunraku are not unique within academia or practice but such confused uses are problematic. The appropriateness of referring to Bunraku when describing puppetry in contemporary British and North American theatre has not gone unnoticed and has been questioned by several commentators including Penny Francis and Nancy Staub (Francis 2007 and Staub 1997). The most common critique is that because we fail to understand the word's true meaning we use it as an 'exotic' label to spice up publicity and make our puppets sound more interesting and alluring (Edwards 2006: 4; Francis 2007): a process that Rustom Bharucha identifies as the promotion of interculturalism as 'a philosophy and a business' in wealthy European and American capitalist societies (Bharucha 1993: 1). Another common critique is that misuse of Bunraku impinges upon the 'copyright' of the Bunraku Theatre i.e. that Bunraku is essentially a trademark that represents the Bunraku Theatre alone and to apply it to another theatre denigrates the image of the Bunraku Theatre:

We seem to aim too high with 'Bunraku', and if I were an aficionado of the Japanese company I think I'd be indignant at some of the modern work calling its puppets or its shows 'Bunraku-style'. Is it not like saying of a writer who writes in iambic pentameters, 'he/she writes Shakespeare-style'? (Francis 2007)

Francis attacks American and British artists who, in her eyes, sully the good name of the Bunraku Theatre by describing their work as 'Bunraku-style' on the basis of copyright and misrepresentation. However, she then puts forward Blind Summit's puppet in Anthony Minghella's production of *Madame Butterfly* as 'an almost authentic copy of the Bunraku style'. As will be discussed in chapter 6, Blind Summit's puppets have remarkably little to do with those of the Bunraku Theatre either in technology or in technique. Francis' suggestion that this puppet is 'authentic' seems to primarily be based on the broad orientalist staging of the show, including the puppeteers dressing in clothes approximating the black clothes and hoods of ningyo joruri (*kurogō*), and a personal judgement that the manipulation of the puppet was skilful enough to be worthy of comparison with the Bunraku Theatre. Whilst Francis is right that an un-differentiated use of Bunraku is problematic she approaches the problem from a Bunraku-centric viewpoint and so fails to realise that un-differentiation is just as problematic for other ningyo joruri troupes, of whom she is rather dismissive: they 'are far less refined as to the puppets and the playing'. However, her assessment of Blind Summit as 'authentic' based upon an assessment of the skill of their performance, whilst problematic for the reasons outlined above, does fit with ningyo joruri's competitive artistic history.

Other critics and commentators have taken a less critical approach to the 'Bunraku-style' label and have sought to minimise such critiques claiming that the word Bunraku has been 'lifted... from its traditional context' and given a new meaning: 'puppetry with visible manipulators' (Kominz 1990: 46). Even critics of terms such as 'Bunraku-style' argue that, whilst inaccurate, such terms at least acknowledge the North American and European 'debt to bunraku' suggesting that 'it should be taken as a compliment' (Staub 2005: 232) or that it is too late as "'bunraku-style" is already the most widely used term for puppetry that is directly influenced by the Japanese form' (Bell 2014) so we are stuck with it.

All of these responses are simplistic and reductive. The first oversimplifies the many puppets it tries to encompass by assuming that the use of visible manipulators is the principle characteristic that defines 'Bunraku-ness'. It also fails to take into account the multitude of other puppet forms predating global awareness of ningyo joruri that make use of visible manipulators, such as cabaret puppetry, ventriloquism, wayang golek and wayang kulit, nor does it acknowledge the host of other technologies and techniques at play. It also disenfranchises the intricate ningyo joruri performance practice of the Bunraku Theatre as well as failing to allow space for other ningyo joruri to exist at all. The second, whilst reverential, implies that all puppets commonly labelled 'Bunraku-style' primarily derive from the technologies and techniques of the Bunraku Theatre. As we saw in Blind Summit's Moses, and we will see in many other puppets, this is rarely the case. Rather, the great majority of puppets

labelled 'Bunraku-style' are derived from a wide range of sources only one of which is ningyo joruri and that does not necessarily mean the Bunraku Theatre. The third is defeatist and disinterested in the debate around the issue. However, perhaps most destructively, all of these 'Bunraku-style' apologies operate within the context of an undifferentiated Bunraku passing as a synonym for Japanese puppetry: Bunraku as the 'official name of the puppet theatre' (Japan Art's Council 2004). This is the greatest problem created by misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Bunraku in contemporary theatre practice, academia and criticism as it fails to allow space for other ningyo joruri troupes (and indeed any other forms of pre-modern Japanese puppetry) to exist, other than as, at the most, poor relatives of the Bunraku Theatre.

### **Brand Bunraku:**

At this stage it is worth pre-empting a potentially obvious counter argument to my proposed characterisation of Bunraku. Has Bunraku not just become a proprietary eponym: a brand so successful that it becomes a catchall term for all such products? There are endless cases of commercial brands that have become proprietary eponyms such as hoover, coke, zipper, and aspirin (some of these are nation specific, for example in the UK Kleenex is not a proprietary eponym but it is in the USA). Could Bunraku be just one more example of a brand being so successful that it comes to represent all enunciations of a particular product, in this case ningyo joruri? Certainly this fits with the approaches of the Oxford English dictionary, the Japan Arts Council and a host of other sources.

Proprietary eponyms have two stages of development. The first is the adoption of a trademarked name as a generic label in quotidian language. This does not change the word's legal status and it remains the trademarked property of a company or individual. For example, Kleenex in the USA, although widely used as a generic label for facial tissues, is still a registered trademark and as such competitors cannot use Kleenex as a descriptor for their own facial tissues. The next stage in what is termed 'genericide' is that the brand name becomes so common a descriptor that 'the law withdraws the protection it once granted. "Aspirin," "thermos," and "escalator" are all terms that were once trademarks but suffered this "genericide"' (Dinwiddle & Janis 2008: 85). In one sense this is tacit reflection of the brand's success, however, the result of genericide is not necessarily positive as the dilution of the brand's image can lead to financial loss or even bankruptcy, for example Duncan Toys held the rights for the word yo-yo until a 1965 ruling that said the term was now too commonly used to be a trademark (Scott 2010: 90).

It is the fear of the fate of Duncan Toys that drives defences of the 'copyright' of Bunraku as outlined earlier. If anyone can be Bunraku where does that leave the Bunraku Theatre? The comparison of Bunraku with these brands is not absolute as the Bunraku Theatre is not totally at the whim of market forces as it receives large amounts of funding from the Japanese state. However, can Bunraku reasonably be considered to be a proprietary eponym and if so for what exactly? Ningyo joruri within Osaka? All ningyo joruri within Japan? All puppet forms that have been influenced by ningyo joruri in some fashion? In order to be a proprietary eponym it needs to be seen as the go-to generic label for a product and be adopted as such by the public who access the product and manufacturers who make equivalent products. However, as is discussed further in chapter 5, this is not the claim that is made for Bunraku by the myth of Bunraku. Rather Bunraku is both defined as 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan' and therefore by implication and by omission of any mention of other puppet theatres the *sole* puppet theatre of Japan and also as the contemporary 'name of the art [ningyo joruri] itself' (Japan Arts Council 2004). Stemming from this, if we start to try and apply the Bunraku label to other ningyo joruri troupes, it fast becomes clear that there is an issue with using Bunraku as a proprietary eponym. What we find in the rhetoric around Bunraku is that a Catch-22 situation has been created from which Japan's other extant ningyo joruri troupes cannot escape and as a result cannot assume 'Bunraku-ness'. The logic of this Catch-22 goes as follows:

The national, traditional, classical puppet theatre of Japan is called Bunraku.

Bunraku is now the name for ningyo joruri.

Bunraku is only performed by the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka.

This framing of Japan's puppet arts leaves no room for the existence of other ningyo joruri troupes, certainly not on the same level as the Bunraku Theatre. No matter how another ningyo joruri troupe approaches this Catch-22 they cannot break into the circular authority of the nationalised Bunraku Theatre. If they claim to be ningyo joruri then, according to this logic, they must be Bunraku (a label that other ningyo joruri troupes do not necessarily want) but of course Bunraku is only performed at the National Bunraku Theatre so they cannot be Bunraku. At which point what can they be? The result of this is that the nationalised Bunraku Theatre exists in a different realm to the rest of Japan's ningyo joruri tradition despite performing the same art form. As one person on Awaji Island told me, the Bunraku Theatre does not attend the annual ningyo joruri festival organised by The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre because they consider themselves 'above' the other ningyo joruri troupes. Of course, this is only one person's perception, but it is indicative of a broader frustration that this Catch-22 situation has

engendered. This Catch-22 logic has carefully subsumed the entire history of ningyo joruri into that of the Bunraku theatre whilst also leaving no way that other ningyo joruri troupes can become part of the Bunraku narrative, even if they wanted to, which many do not, given that they have their own distinct identities.

This does not mean that Bunraku cannot or should not become a proprietary eponym. Following the closure of the Bunraku Theatre's last Osaka-based rival, the Chikamatsu Theatre, in 1914, it is not unreasonable to say that Bunraku became the name of Osaka ningyo joruri. However, in order for Bunraku to be a true proprietary eponym it has to become separated from the Bunraku Theatre and become lowercase bunraku rather than uppercase Bunraku. Further that label needs to be accepted by the other extant ningyo joruri troupes in Japan, which given their distinct identities and histories seems unlikely.

### **Aims of this Study:**

The principle aim of this research project has been to unravel the influence that the Bunraku Theatre and ningyo joruri more broadly has had on contemporary British theatre practice, specifically theatre that makes use of puppetry. This necessarily entailed both historical research of the interactions between British practitioners and Japan's puppet arts and exploration of contemporary puppet-practice that is labelled 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'. This is not a story that has been told before and as such is a timely and original piece of research.

Two further areas of exploration were important to this study. The first was writing a more balanced history of the development and contemporary reality of ningyo joruri. The Bunraku-centric nature of the pre-existing literature necessitated a restitution of the plurality of ningyo joruri. As this was a sidearm of my research, but one necessary for the broader discussion, the re-authored history I present in chapter 3 draws heavily on the extant English language literature, which although Bunraku-centric is not void of information on the broader history of ningyo joruri. As much as possible I have sought to incorporate new Japanese sources that have not entered into previous histories of ningyo joruri, especially research on ningyo joruri troupes other than the Bunraku Theatre. This enquiry led to two research trips to Japan. The first, in 2011, was primarily to observe some of the contemporary reality of ningyo joruri in Japan and the great richness of Japanese puppetry more broadly. The second much longer trip in 2013 was spent working with and observing the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and the culture of ningyo joruri performance found now on Awaji Island. Both these trips afforded opportunities to gather documentary evidence and Japanese sources unavailable outside

Japan. As a result of these trips the study of the Japanese language has also been a part of this project and a necessity both for my trips to Japan and for processing Japanese sources. The challenges involved in learning a new language alongside conducting fulltime research meant that I have not been able to incorporate as many Japanese sources into my work as a full re-evaluation and survey of ningyo joruri necessitates. However, as this has only been a supporting part of my research this does not hamper the discussion and arguments made within this thesis and the discussion of ningyo joruri I present is a valuable and original contribution to the field. A full study on the plurality of ningyo joruri in Japan is another thesis, or more likely a lifetime's work.

The second is the position of the puppet maker within the creation of the theatrical production. As a puppet practitioner who spends a lot of time fabricating puppets I have natural sympathies for the plight of the often-overlooked puppet maker and the need for recognition of his/her artistic practice. Basil Jones' 2009 essay *Puppetry and Authorship* has been of import to this study, in particular in providing a motivation for the study of the puppet's technologies and the puppet maker's role in authoring them in the discussion of the development of 'Bunraku-style' puppets. The issue of authorship, in particular that of the puppet maker, runs through this study and is key to my conclusions about how we can better position our contemporary puppet practice in relationship to ningyo joruri.

Whilst this study is not situated as practice-as-research, it is practice-led. By which I mean that practice has been integral to the direction and shaping of the research but not a primary output of the research. In particular my methodology has involved the use of practical puppet building and manipulation as part of my research. Jan Mrázek argues that 'the instrumental function of the puppet is... a more important criterion for judging a puppet than its 'gem-like beauty' (2005: 56) i.e. that there is a tacit knowledge that can only be gained through a practical engagement with the puppet, through using it as an instrument. Richard Sennett identifies that this knowledge functions best when there is a constant dialogue between 'tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as a critique and corrective' (2008: 50). This is a driving philosophy behind my desire to involve making and manipulation in my research, supported by documentary and archival qualitative research and observations of practice, workshops and interviews with practitioners.



## Conclusion and Outline of Chapters:

I am not the first commentator to comment on the dominance of Bunraku and the lack of attention paid to other forms of puppetry in Japan. As Jane Marie Law points out 'the Bunraku theatre is by no means the most representative of Japan's puppetry traditions... Bunraku puppets... stand on the shoulders... of the widespread ritual and folk puppetry traditions that preceded this tradition' (Law 1999: 124). However, this study is the first to seek to understand the prominence of Bunraku within contemporary theatre and the mythologisation of the Bunraku Theatre during the twentieth century, by both Japanese and non-Japanese parties, which led to this situation.

Back in Soho, Moses has finished his musings on his life on a table. Tonight's show is over but Moses and his three puppeteers will go on to tour mainland Europe, the USA, Israel and China and in each place Moses the 'three-man operated Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet with interchangeable parts' will tell his tale and fail to explain exactly what he means by Japanese Bunraku, and the question of the appropriateness of this invocation will remain. As has been suggested, the use of another's specific cultural heritage for financial gain through exoticised references and publicity as a means to authenticate contemporary performance has uncomfortable connections to colonial exploitation, albeit in a non-militaristic form. Continued confusion around the word Bunraku fails to accurately represent the Bunraku Theatre, instead aligning it with a variety of other puppet-theatre forms some of which have few similarities to Bunraku. Even if we dismiss these issues and say that British practitioners only refer to Bunraku to acknowledge their 'debt to bunraku' meaning it to 'be taken as a compliment' (Staub 2005: 232) there is still one glaring problem. By continually aligning their work with Bunraku, British practitioners often misrepresent their own work and in doing so denigrate it. Descriptions like 'Bunraku-style' frame work within a specific and limited remit that because of its Bunraku-centric focus neither recognises other influences in that artist's work nor the artist's own creative contributions.

However, perhaps the greatest and most problematic appropriation that has taken place in the West's encounter with Japanese puppet theatre is not the appropriation of a smattering of formal characteristics that are now labelled 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' by western theatre practitioners, but the appropriation of the entire history of ningyo joruri as the exclusive history of the Bunraku Theatre. Even a relatively cursory encounter with Japanese puppet theatre and the extant English language literature on it should give the reader a clear indication that there is far more to Japanese puppetry than Bunraku alone. Yet the Bunraku monoglots persist and prevail in contemporary practice, criticism and academia. However, this

appropriation has not been a solo effort nor does it fall into the oft-cited binary of East/West. Agents within Japan, in particular Japanese cultural policy has been complicit in this appropriation that has transformed the Bunraku Theatre from being one example of ningyo joruri to being '*The Puppet Theatre of Japan*' (Japan Arts Council 2004) (emphasis mine).

This chapter contains many statements that will be substantiated in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 offers a theoretical basis for the analysis and discussion of these so-called 'Bunraku-style' puppets. In particular Henryk Jukowski's notion of the atomisation of the puppet is discussed and expanded to propose two shifting layers of signification at work in these puppets. This is combined with a discussion of Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of the interweaving of cultures through theatre in the twentieth century. The suggestion is that objects, when analysed on the micro as well as the macro level, have far more meanings and resonance than when seen solely on the macro level. Closer analysis gives us examples of interwoven cultures as mediated through the figure of the weaver.

Chapter 3 offers a resituated and restituted history of ningyo joruri that seeks to establish a narrative that escapes the Bunraku-centricity of the majority of English language literature on Japanese puppetry. This is a necessary intervention and background for discussion in later chapters. This chapter discusses the errors made in earlier histories and aims to present and much more balanced history where the Bunraku theatre is only a small part of the broader story of ningyo joruri which in turn is only a part of the broader story of puppet theatre in Japan.

Chapter 4 introduces the 'atoms' of ningyo joruri through the contemporary practice of ningyo joruri on Awaji Island – both in the professional theatre and the wider community.

Chapter 5 discusses interactions between Japanese puppetry and British theatre practice, in particular focussing on how a mythologised understanding of the Bunraku Theatre developed in the early- to mid-twentieth century and how this led to an almost exclusively Bunraku-centric interpretation of Japanese puppetry in the second half of the twentieth century. In particular the importance of the adoption of the Bunraku Theatre by the Japanese state and its use as a cultural ambassador is suggested as a reason for the Bunraku Theatre's success. This ambassadorship was played out in tours to the West that sparked interest in the minds of young theatre makers leading to a series of practitioners imitating what they had seen and labelling the results Bunraku-style. This Bunraku-centricity was then bolstered by a series of important influxes of puppetry, primarily from the USA, in the last few decades.

Chapter 6 offers case studies on two of the most influential puppet companies in contemporary British theatre – Blind Summit Theatre and Handspring Puppet Company – both of which are regularly linked to Bunraku or Bunraku-style. Handspring is, of course, a South African company but their long relationship with the UK and in particular the success of *War Horse* makes them one of the most prominent puppet companies in contemporary British theatre. This chapter focuses on the construction and movement of the so-called ‘Bunraku-style’ puppets of these companies, the aim being to delve into how these puppets are constructed and show that their roots are diverse through the application of the theoretical model of analysis developed in chapter 2.

Chapter 7 provides conclusions on this study and seeks to suggest ways that we can reorient our relationship with Japan’s many puppet theatres and represent both them and our own practice more fairly and constructively.

## Chapter 2 – Atoms of Interculturalism and the Weaver

### Introduction:

In his preview of *Or You Could Kiss Me*, the 2010 co-production between London's National Theatre and Cape Town's Handspring Puppet Company, Nkosiyati Khumalo, states that 'The style of puppetry is similar to Japanese bunraku but with slight technical differences' (2010). This enunciates an uncomfortable approach to puppet criticism, highlighted in chapter 1, where the technologies and techniques of contemporary puppets are assumed to have significant, if not direct, ontological equivalence to those of an ill-defined understanding of 'Bunraku'.<sup>8</sup> Khumalo offers a moderately refined comparison by pointing out that there are 'slight technical differences' and then stating that 'the puppets are constructed with a combination of Bunraku and eastern European influences'. Khumalo is likely repeating information gleaned from either the company or other sources connected to the show (the article is based on an interview with Craig Leo, a South African puppeteer and one of the cast). Certainly Bunraku and European rod puppetry are both influences that Handspring's directors Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler have claimed themselves, as Kohler tells me: 'Bunraku was a big influence, the ancient puppetry tradition of Mali in West Africa was a very important... And the third, if I can say there was a third, was the rod puppet figures of Central Europe' (2010). However, the phrasing of Khumalo's article goes further than just citing influence. The 'similarity' of Bunraku and the puppets from *Or You Could Kiss Me* is said to be absolute bar 'slight technical differences', which raises the obvious question: what are these 'slight technical differences' and how has Khumalo identified them? Are they merely the equally ill-defined, Eastern European influences that have been combined with this 'Japanese bunraku'? In which case, are we to presume that in essence these puppets are 90%-98% 'Japanese bunraku'? I am being deliberately facetious. Obviously this is a puff piece for the show and the author is a journalist, not a puppet theatre expert. However, how are we to measure and examine 'Bunraku-ness' in the many contemporary puppets that today claim to be 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'? Whilst I stated in Chapter 1 that many of these puppets are created from wide and heterogeneous sources: a veritable Barthesian 'tissue of quotations' (1977: 146); how are we to engage with, evaluate and identify these sources in order to ascertain their provenance and semiotic intent beyond the two vague signifiers of 'Bunraku-ness' outlined in

---

<sup>8</sup> His variation in capitalization between 'bunraku' and Bunraku' suggests a lack of specificity in his understanding suggesting that he is using Bunraku to refer to an idea of a Japanese puppet theatre rather than the Osaka Bunraku Theatre specifically or ningyō joruri more broadly.

Chapter 1: visible manipulators and multiple manipulators; and are these smaller, more hidden, sources really relevant in the face of the aforementioned more visible and performatively prominent signifiers of 'Bunraku-ness'? Further, what does it mean to start to analyse the puppet and the puppet theatre in terms of its origins and provenances in the post-modern or as Nicolas Bourriaud proposes the era of 'Post-Production' (2002) where narratives of origin, authorship and modernists idea of linear progression are increasingly being abandoned?

### **The Fossil Record:**

Theatre is in essence an ephemeral and intangible form: 'performances are created through the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators, and in their interactions with each other. Every performance is unique and unrepeatable.' (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 128). Performances of the same production are subject to a multitude of variables that will cause each performance to differ from the others. Some of these variations are obvious aberrations from a preconceived plan that even a first time audience member will spot. Others are subtle variations that only members of the cast and crew will notice, whilst subtler still are the tiny variations in intonation, movement and timing that will probably pass by even the most careful observer. Conventionally we are happy to accept that there is an acceptable parameter for variation before the overall form and agency of the performance is integrally altered or the change becomes uncomfortably noticeable. The entire production run, an entity made up of many individual ephemeral performances, as an entity is also transient: all the major agents and participants of a production i.e. the actors, production crew and audience will disperse as soon as the final curtain falls. If the production is later remounted these active agents, all slaves to the march of time, will necessarily have changed. In all likelihood practicalities will mean that there will be cast changes and perhaps changes in direction and set in response to the reception of the production's first run. The audience is guaranteed to be different and changes in social attitudes and contemporary politics may render the same production redundant or conversely give it new meaning. In truth the variables are limitless. This ephemerality makes theatre studies, especially studies of historical performance, challenging, as often we are unable to study a production first hand and even when we can the changeability of performance makes our experience of it and ability to record it distinctly subjective and unverifiable. We are forced to rely on diaries, private correspondence, reviews, interviews, production scripts and notes and any other physical ephemera that might help the

researcher piece together the actualities of an historical performance or provide verifiable information on a current production.

Puppet theatre is perhaps then uniquely placed in the theatrical arts, as at least one of its primary agents is largely immutable: the puppet. This is not a universal maxim as some puppets are deliberately ephemeral and are not designed to last beyond the confines of an individual performance. Improbable Theatre's 1996 production *Animo*, for example, in which puppets were constructed from the materials and objects lying on the stage and then destructed once more as the show moved on to its next improvised segment. However, a great majority of theatre that uses puppets involves their creation as physical performance tools or as Jan Mrazek terms them 'instruments' (2005: 46) that represent and embody the characters of the play and that can continue to exist long after the end of the production's run, just as costumes and stage props do. While the human performers and production team will age and die, the puppet, if well cared for, will remain, leaving us with a singular and immensely powerful *icon* and *index* of the performance: an *icon* because the puppet's physiognomy directly signifies the character it represents and an *index* because the act of performance leaves physical marks and imprints on the puppet's body through the wear and tear of the use of the puppet as a performance tool.

Although the puppet has a certain physical permanence it is not free from the vicissitudes of time. A constituent part of any puppet production is inevitably repair and maintenance of puppets. Puppeteers are forever cursed to spend the time between shows attending to their puppets. On a larger scale this can lead to the retention of a puppet maker to attend to the puppets 'welfare'. In the Bunraku Theatre an onsite puppet maker maintains and repairs the theatre's collections of puppets and in large-scale productions in London's West End, such as *The Lion King* and *War Horse*, puppet makers and 'wranglers' are employed to fulfil a similar function. However, the puppet's effectiveness as a performance tool can also increase with age. As the puppet is used and parts loosen it becomes more fluid and subtly responsive to the puppeteer's touch. This is especially true of handcrafted puppets made from natural materials, such as wood, that take time to 'wear-in', for the wood to achieve certain consistencies, texturisation and polish that can only be arrived at through the puppet's specific performance use. So, for example, ningyo joruri puppeteers prefer older puppet heads (*kashira*) because they move more smoothly. This I saw enacted in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre where older heads, even if in need of a lick of paint, are preferred by the puppeteers for their enhanced performance ability.

The performance use of the puppet leaves an *index* of the puppeteer's performance on the puppet just as the puppet can leave an *indexical* mark on the puppeteer in the form of callouses and other physical alterations. The puppet does not fully embody the character and its performance but its *iconic* and *indexical* links to the character in performance gives it more direct ontological connection to the performed character than other physical adornments such as a prop or costume or than a photo or video of an actor in performance. Whereas props and costumes are accoutrements to a character and a video/photo is a limited *indexical* view of a performance, the puppet is part of the physical being and agency of the character and the puppet's physiognomy, form and technologies set the constraints within which the character can be described.

On this level we can start to see the puppet as a 'fossil' of the character and performance and more broadly as part of a 'fossil record' of the development and changes that have taken place within the puppet theatre and the puppet over time. Each puppet offers us valuable information on multiple aspects of the production it was made for as well the broader history of puppetry. Through research we can uncover more of this 'fossil record' and use it to understand narratives of change in global puppet theatre.

The puppet removed from performance is a 'fossil' in the sense that it describes the physical form of the character but lacks the 'anima', derived from the puppeteer's hands that made it live during performance. However, the ability of the physical image of the 'fossil' to still embody and transmit part of the 'life' of a particular character is very real. The images that puppets and other performance objects project give us powerful insights into the character within the object. Keith Johnstone, British theatre maker and pioneer of modern improvised theatre, makes this observation in relation to his experience of using masks and their ability to 'compel certain sorts of behaviour'. He relates multiple instances where the same mask, worn by different, unconnected people in different workshops, produced the same character (Johnstone 1989: 165). Similarly the puppet has a real ability to transmit character through its image; this is bolstered by the technologies of the puppet. In addition to the exterior visual signification of the puppet these 'fossils' contain valuable information about the character and its performance inside their form. In fact, inscribed into the very fabric of the puppet's being is part of the 'text' of the performance. This 'text' is the animation potential of the puppet written in the technologies and materials from which the puppet is made. By reading this 'text' we are able to ascertain, not just construction decisions made by the puppet maker but part of the very performance 'text' of the puppet, including, to some extent, the puppet's characterisation as described though its movement across and within the performance space. This information we ascertain by tacit experience of the puppet in performance that enables

us to analyse the limitations of the puppet's construction imposed on it by the technologies and materials from which it is made.

The puppet is far less technologically advanced than the human body and as a result potentially both more limited and/or freer in its movement. This can be enunciated in a range of ways. Sometimes the puppet's form will lack part of the human anatomy – it may only have one arm for instance, or no legs – on one level this limits its ability to emote by decreasing its points of emotion, but on another level the lack of legs, for instance, may free it from the constraints of walking on the ground and gravity allowing it to glide, float and fly. Often such limitations will occur more subtly in the jointing and mechanisms that the puppet maker has or has not chosen to 'write' into the puppet. The result is that as much as the puppeteer *wills* the puppet to move in a certain way, these inbuilt limitations will determine how the puppet is *able* to move. Such limitations of movement help define the puppet's character in the puppeteer's hands. This is an inherent trait of the puppet inscribed in its being through what Basil Jones of Handspring Puppet Company describes as the authorship of the puppet maker:

'The designer/maker of the puppet is partially responsible for the life the puppet possesses in performance. The jointing (or lack of it) and the structure of the puppet allow for certain forms of expressiveness and not others. The expert designer is acutely sensitive to the movement required by the puppet. So, a large part of the liveliness of the puppet is the responsibility not only of the puppeteer but of the puppet's designer/maker as well.' (Jones 2009: 254)

Unlike the character embodied by a human actor, the puppet gives us both a fixed sign of the character through its physiognomy, as well as a rich performance 'text' written into its technologies, even long after the performance took place. In no other area of theatre are the main characters so well preserved after the performance with so much 'textual' information on offer for the researcher.

### **The Atomisation of the Puppet:**

As well as being part of a broader 'fossil record', the puppet affords us another layer of analysis: the 'atom'. The puppet is 'fossilised' in the sense that its 'anima', the puppeteer(s) hand(s), is removed once the performance finishes. In this sense it is like the fossilised remains of an animal or plant where the structure is intact but life has gone. The 'fossil' analogy ultimately breaks down because the puppet is not a lump of calcified rock. Beyond its loss of



'anima' it has not changed since the moment it was put down after performance. Where the fossil can only give us an impression of the creature through the parts that were calcified, usually the endoskeleton or exoskeleton, the puppet's form remains in its entirety and its intricacies: the detailed 'text' of the individual technologies of the puppet are intact and waiting to be 'read' by another hand. These technologies, these building blocks of the puppet we might term its 'atoms' and they reside inside each puppet ready for analysis.

In his 1983 essay, 'The Sign Systems of Puppetry', Henryk Jurkowski writes about the multiplicity of influences in contemporary puppetry in terms of the 'atomisation' of the puppet, puppet theatre and puppeteer during the twentieth century as practitioners have moved away from defined puppet styles – disassembling the puppet, the puppet theatre and the human performer's relationship to both and reassembling them as they saw fit – so that 'In each production, 'the pieces' enter into new relationships among one another' (Jurkowski 2013:112). Jurkowski primarily discusses this in relationship to the destruction and reconstruction of the broader formal characteristics of the puppet theatre: the puppet, puppeteer, playboard, staging etc. He proposes that 'contemporary puppet theatre may scarcely be called puppet theatre as such. It is a heterogeneous art form with an extremely abundant system of signs' (Jurkowski 2013: 111). These signs are constructed from the 'unlimited number of 'atoms' just waiting to be introduced as components in new theatrical 'units'' (Jurkowski 2013: 97). This is as much an historical observation as a bit of theory – during the mid-twentieth century the puppet theatre in Europe and North America did atomise in Jurkowski's sense as the playboards, booths and bridges were torn down and the formal relationships of the puppet theatre redefined so that 'The puppet theatre has become a theatre characterized by the constant pulsation of the means of expression and their relationships.' (Jurkowski 2013: 112).

This fluidity and multiplicity of signs aligns with Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of post-production 'which is characterised by the invention of paths through culture' with artists becoming "'semionauts" who produce original pathways through signs' (Bourriaud 2002: 18). Puppeteers and puppet makers have become amalgamators of signs from across the world, each one rich with meaning. The twentieth century saw the increased but selective harvesting of puppet 'atoms' from further and further afield as European and North American puppet theatre practitioners looked outside of their home culture and towards other cultures, in particular Asia, for new forms and inspiration. This is certainly true of twentieth century interactions with the Bunraku Theatre and other ningyo joruri troupes, as will be discussed in chapter 4, selective technologies and techniques were taken and then recombined with technologies and

techniques from other sources (see Cohen 2007: 340 for a comparative study of the selective use of technologies and techniques of wayang kulit by contemporary theatre makers).

The 'atoms' of the puppet signify the building blocks from which the puppet is made and which, in turn, are potentially loaded cultural and socio-political signifiers. The puppet maker must navigate through these many atomised signs of global puppetry when creating a new puppet and in doing so be aware of their many significations. Through a close reading of these 'atoms' we are able to identify the constituent materials and technologies from which the puppet is made and their individual provenances and significations. Rather than being a purely formal, technical exercise only of interest to the puppet maker, these technologies are the 'record' of the puppet's evolution, devolution and reconstitution. From them we are able to start to see provenance and the origins of the puppet's performance language that can be re-animated through the 'fossilised' form of the puppet. Where perhaps contemporary puppet theatre diverges from Bourriaud's vision of Post-Production, which seeks to define creativity when society's over-production renders innovation no longer possible, is in the continued ability of puppet maker to insert new and innovative technologies, at least within the framework of global puppetry, into their puppets and so embody creative production as well as post-production.

'New' and 'innovative' in this context might be seen as problematic in the context of Bourriaud's writing and others like him, such as Roland Barthes, who have advocated theoretical shifts away from a homogenous conceptualization of the work of art and its 'Author-God' (Barthes 1974: 146), especially when we are dealing with 'atoms' from other cultures being characterised in this fashion, as has happened with some of the atoms of ningyo joruri. It would be easy to defer to Barthes 'tissue of quotations' as a way of characterising the assimilation of 'atoms' in the puppet by the puppet maker (Barthes 1974: 146). While we will discuss the puppeteers' and puppet-makers' authorship later in this chapter, it is worth pointing out at this stage that, certainly in relation to the 'Problem of Bunraku', some of the atoms waiting to be found in 'Bunraku-style' puppets are the creation and innovation of the contemporary puppet-maker rather than any particular pre-existing form. Within the realm of puppet theatre such creativity truly does seem to inhabit both the realm of production and post-production.

Jurkowski's atomisation of the puppet theatre is both the observation and theorising of an historical trend. However, by extrapolating it out to include all puppets throughout history and the technologies from which they are built we arrive at a useful tool for analysing the multiplicity of technologies and techniques hidden away with the puppet, fossilised or not.

## **The Macro-signs and Micro-signs of the Puppet:**

So far two levels of analysis of the puppet have been proposed: the 'fossilised' puppet and the 'atomised' puppet. These could be characterised as embodying two levels of semiotic signification: the macro-sign and the micro-sign. The macro-sign is the puppet in performance and/or as a 'fossil', seen only from the exterior with its inner workings and technologies, depending upon design, partially or completely hidden. The reception of the macro-sign is based upon the surface aesthetics of the puppet, the visible performance techniques used to manipulate it and the broader theatrical setting. The micro-sign is hidden in the 'atoms' of the puppet – the technologies inside the puppet, including the materials used to create the puppet, and the micromanipulation of the puppet by the puppeteer's hand.

Basil Jones discusses the idea of the micro in performance through the micromovement of the puppet (2009: 256). Jones suggests the 'the puppet's Ur-narrative... is the quest for life itself... it forms the impulse behind every move and every gesture the puppet makes. This quest is one in which no actor can engage as it lies outside an actor's ontological purview.' (Jones 2009: 255). Jones argues that, as a result, 'minor quotidian functions, like getting out of bed in the morning, or reaching for a cup just beyond one's grasp, or avoiding the clash of spectacles when kissing a friend can take on epic proportions for many observers when performed by a puppet' (256). Even the smallest of the puppet's movements can be both interesting and semiotically significant. Jones argues that in the case of the puppet these micromovements become even more significant and impacting than the 'macroaction on stage, the action that would normally fall under the heading of choreography.' (Jones 2009: 256). However, Jones' micromovement is still part of the visible macro-sign of the puppet. The micro-signs, the atoms are not the visible micro-movement but the technologies hidden inside the puppet that enable these micromovements in the macro-sign of the performance space.

Frequently the micro-signs of the puppet are difficult for the audience to access as they can be hidden beneath the cloth, foam, paper or similar covering of the puppet's form. As a result the micro-sign is rarely considered in relationship to the macro-sign. So to what extent can the micro-sign be considered as an effective part of the signification of the puppet?

In his analysis of the Great Mosque of Damascus, built during the reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I in 706 C.E., Barry Flood observes that 'Umayyad artisans appear to have delighted in playing games with scale, employing decorative motifs which wax and wane between the

macro-architectural and the micro-architectonic' (2000: 49). Flood uses the macro and micro as a way of describing the flow of repeated decorative motifs from the smallest ornamentation up to the macro-architectural form of the building. Flood argues that through this 'a visual coherence was thus established by the transition from micro to macro, from the apparently incidental detail to the monumental' (2000: 55). Flood then extends this 'visual coherence' of the micro and macro to the wider realm of Umayyad architecture found across the Umayyad Empire noting that 'The array of formal features common to the mosques included in the Umayyad building programme range from the micro-architectonic to the macro-architectural' (2000: 192). This flow between the micro and the macro creates an impressive visual unity that helps reinforce the power and authority of individual buildings, such as The Great Mosque of Damascus, as well as a wider imperial building project. These buildings were as much declarations to the Syrian people of nascent Umayyad imperial power as places of worship. The micro-sign in this instance is clearly indicative and a necessary part of a much larger thematic project. However, it is necessary to read the macro and micro together otherwise we end up with a limited and distorted view of these buildings. For example in the case of The Great Mosque of Damascus the macro-sign in many ways indicates a hypostyle mosque, similar to those already built in Mecca and Medina and alien to the largely Christian inhabitants of Damascus. However, the use of Byzantine decorative motifs and techniques such as mosaic on the micro level made the Mosque a more approachable form for the local populous. The macro and the micro feed and rely on each other: reading one alone creates misunderstanding.

Another performative tool we make use of regularly that relies on the interdependence of the macro and the micro is the car. If I buy a Ferrari, I want more than just the macro-sign that the exterior of the vehicle provides, I also want the micro-signs hidden within the car that enable its performative ability. My use of the car as a performance tool also necessarily relies on these micro-signs, the technologies hidden within the car. If for example the engine is swapped and replaced with that of a different car the performance function of my Ferrari will have changed. The macro-sign may still partially suggest Ferrari but the micro-signs and the expressive movement of the macro-sign, that is dictated by the text and movement potential of the micro-signs, tell a different story.

Although puppetry, architecture and cars are different forms of visual and performative expression, there are clear semiotic parallels between the three. Buildings and puppets both lead dual lives as art objects and performance tools. We can admire and analyse a puppet or a building without necessarily engaging in its performative function but it is in performance that we discover much of the puppet or building's purpose and as agents of that performance we

discover many of the micro-signs of the puppet/building. However, some aspects of the puppet's micro-sign are not directly accessible to all agents of a theatrical performance. Whereas in architecture, an individual is both the performer using the performance tool that is the building, by moving within it, and the audience on whom the performance of the building's architecture is enacted, in theatre the audience and performer are usually split. The audience therefore does not have direct access to all of the micro-signs of the puppet but does see the results of the micro-sign in the performance of the macro-sign by the puppeteer. However, as researchers and commentators on puppet theatre, we should not let the inability of the audience to directly access the puppet's micro-signs limit us. The analysis of theatre, its practices, history and signs is reliant on more than just the moment of performance. The atoms of the puppet are another bit of physical ephemera, like rehearsal scripts, audition tapes, interviews etc. that give us information on a performance and in the case of the atoms of the puppet, as outlined above, the information is pertinent and highly relevant both to understanding the performance practice of the show and the full signification of the puppets within it.

Mrazek has identified a similar relationship between the macro and the micro-sign in wayang kulit, arguing that 'the instrumental function of the puppet is... a more important criterion for judging a puppet than the 'gem-like beauty'' (Mrazek 2005: 56). This 'instrumental function' constitutes the puppet's micro-signs, the technologies within the puppet that allows it to function correctly within a performance situation and act as an 'extension of his [the puppeteer's] 'living warmth'' (Mrazek 2005: 148). The puppet's 'gem-like beauty' is its exterior form, part of its macro-sign, which only comes to dominate when the puppet becomes an art object rather than a performance instrument. The puppets' success as an instrument can only be gauged through performance by the puppeteer; our examination of the micro-sign necessitates some experience and understanding of how the puppet works in performance from the perspective of the puppeteer. Use, as much as intention or description, defines the success of the performance tool. As with The Great Mosque of Damascus, use of the puppet allows us to gain an understanding of the flow between the micro and the macro-signs. This can be supported by direct observational analysis of the puppet in performance where the micro-signs will to some extent be displayed through what the macro-sign can and cannot do, as in the case of the Ferrari with the swapped engine.

The use of Byzantine motifs in the Great Mosque of Damascus shows that when we are dealing with 'atoms' from a range of cultures these atoms can have particular meanings and resonances. The atoms of a puppet are the same and may signify a range of cultural forms from wayang kulit to contemporary robotics to ningyo joruri. Flood's work highlights the

importance of how signs are read across the macro and the micro, with different socio-political and cultural contexts.

When we fail to read the macro and micro-signs together we get a distorted view of the performance. As audience members or critics viewing contemporary British puppetry through our 'tenth generation photocopy' (Francis 2007) understanding of Bunraku, the slightest similarity between the macro-sign and the performance practice of the Bunraku Theatre can lead us to label the puppet or puppetry 'bunraku' or 'bunraku-style'. The misunderstanding of the macro and the micro-signs of puppets used in contemporary theatre can lead to misrepresentation that causes issues for communities, in the particular communities of ningyo joruri performers in Japan (chapter 3). The selective reading of signs can lead to specific and misguided interpretations. This is coupled with a sensitivity and awareness of what particular signs mean in certain contexts. The success of the broad macro-signs of Bunraku-ness is in part the result of a cultural and social change that has introduced an understanding of Bunraku-ness, albeit a heavily mythologised and essentialised understanding of Bunraku, as we shall see in chapter 5.

However, if we take a more thorough approach and also engage with the puppet at the atomic level and start to analyse the micro-signs of the puppet as well as the macro-signs such labels fast become redundant. The hidden nature of the micro-sign is only an issue if the only moment in which we critically engage with a production is in the liminal moment of performance, which for practitioners, critics and academics is rarely the case. In all three approaches, the interested parties will want to engage in other events and information that surround and frame the performance. This framework of the macro and micro-sign will be used extensively in the rest of this thesis as a tool for dissecting the structure and semiotics of the puppets discussed.

### **Atomic Interweaving and the Weaver:**

If Jurkowski's atomisation of the puppet is correct then it seems likely the technologies and techniques of the puppet have become sites of interculturalism. In particular the recombination of the multitude of puppet 'atoms' available to the contemporary practitioner suggest the physical entity of the puppet, its fossilised form and the atoms within, as much as its performance, have come to embody the 'interweaving' of cultures that Erica Fischer-Lichte proposes within the theatre of the twentieth century (Fischer-Lichte 2009:391). Interweaving is a powerful metaphor for the creation of the atomised puppet. Puppetry is already integrally

an act of interweaving: 'in puppet theatre there is a shared authorship. Like opera, a puppet piece is by its very nature a *gesamkunstwerk*. The authors are the scriptwriter, the director, the puppet designer, the puppet maker and of course the audience' (Jones 2009: 267). The increase in 'New technologies of transportation' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 2) allowed 'Goods and people from alien cultures' to be imported to Europe: 'Distance was obliterated as remote cultures became immediately accessible' (Cohen 2010: 10). European puppeteers were increasingly exposed to the technologies and techniques of global puppet theatre. This was bolstered by increasing accessibility of books and photographs followed by VHS, DVD and now the prevalence of online video, especially YouTube. This has afforded opportunities for European puppeteers to weave ever-new atoms into their work. The recombination of atoms within contemporary puppets is integrally an act of weaving and the plurality of signs now found in the puppet resonate with the image of the intertwining of the weft and warp as 'strands are plied into a thread; many such threads are then woven into a piece of cloth, which thus consists of diverse strands and threads' (Fischer-Lichte 2014:11).

Fischer-Lichte's interweaving is still a nascent term and, as it stands, it appears to be more metaphorical observation than theory. Certainly no theoretical framework has yet been outlined by Fisher-Lichte or her on-going project based at the Freie Universität Berlin. Perhaps a reflection of Patrice Pavis' suggestions that 'There is something presumptuous or at best naïve in proposing a theory of interculturalism in contemporary *mise en scène*, given the complexity of factors at stake in all cultural exchange and the difficulty of formalizing them' (Pavis 1992: 183). Fischer-Lichte states that 'interweaving' was adopted to offer an alternative term to 'intercultural', which she argues is laden with baggage (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011). The original German word is 'Verflechtungen' which Fischer-Lichte translates as 'a kind of "braiding"', but she suggests that 'the metaphor of "weaving"', which in turn led to calling the Centre "interweaving performance cultures", or, as we sometimes put it, an "interweaving of cultures in performance" is a better fit in English (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011). Fischer-Lichte's development of the term is deliberate and purposeful. She hopes that the change in nomenclature 'opens up new possibilities and gives us the opportunity to leave some of the baggage behind which... comes with the term "intercultural"' (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011). For Fischer-Lichte this baggage is the continued binary of West and non-West integral to intercultural theatre and theorising that arose in the 1980s with the work of artists such as Peter Brook, Arianne Minouchkine and Robert Wilson and the writings of theoreticians such as Richard Schechner (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011). Fischer-Lichte argues that the use of 'Intercultural' in what is a predominately Western academic discourse 'referred to those

theatre forms that positioned the West against the rest' (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011) as opposed to more optimistic understandings, proposed by other theoreticians, of 'interculturalism' enabling 'the possibility of interaction across a multiplicity of cultural positionings' and so 'avoiding binary codings' (Knowles 2010: 4).

As part of this perpetuation of the old binary of West and non-West, predominately meaning West and East, Fischer-Lichte argues that intercultural theory has failed to take into account exchanges that do not involve the West in some fashion, 'that 'intercultural' here refers to a notion of equality that almost always requires the West to be involved' (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 5) and suggests that 'The concept of "intercultural" theatre makes the false assumption that cultures are sealed entities... [whereas, in fact] The difference between cultures are dynamic and continually shifting.' (Fischer-Lichte 2013: 130). This fluidity of 'The difference between cultures' is important to our discussion of the atomised puppet and its macro and micro-signs. As will be discussed in later chapters the cultural specificity of certain technologies and techniques alters over time as they become 'digested and naturalized as part of contemporary... puppetry' (Gilbert & Lo 2007:91). The heart of the problem of Bunraku, as outlined in chapter 1, is that despite the naturalisation of certain ideas and their inevitable adaptation and recombination, they are still labelled with the broad brush of a misunderstood notion of Bunraku. Fischer-Lichte's highlighting of this more fluid description of cultural interaction and her rejection of 'intercultural' in favour of 'interweaving' is a conscious move to reorient the debate away from such dualities as Bunraku and non-Bunraku, enabled only by an abstraction of the moment of encounter between cultures away from its source participants or 'atoms'.

This she achieves by arguing that it is in the moment of 'in-betweenness' that 'performances become particularly suitable sites for processes to take place between people within but also outside of the same milieu, religion, social status, gender, ethnic group, nation, or culture' (2009: 392). By reducing the focus of analysis to this liminal moment of performance, Fischer-Lichte abstracts the cultural exchanges taking place from their real social, political and economic contexts. Of primary importance are the new diversities created in this 'in-betweenness' rather than the hard-to-define source cultures and their representative participants. Although she does admit that 'Each and every performance creates both an aesthetic and a political situation' (2009:400), she argues that her model of interweaving creates 'something completely new and beyond the scope of any single participating culture' (2009:400).



Fischer-Lichte acknowledges the socio-political in her desire that the 'utopian and transformative aesthetic experiences' she proposes will be examined 'both from the perspective of the artistic processes that allow for their emergence in performance as well as from that of their ethical, social, and political implications in and beyond performance' (2014: 13). However, her migration of the moment of analysis to focus primarily on the liminal moment/space of performance (2009: 392) as the environs in which interweaving can take place, creates a discourse that can be largely depoliticised through its liminality. This allows her to make bold claims about the potential impact of interweaving suggesting that interwoven 'performances, as sites of in-betweenness, are able to constitute fundamentally other, unprecedented realities – realities of the future, where the state of being inbetween describes the 'normal' experience of the citizens of this world' (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 12). This is a grandiose claim and one that does run the risk of so abstracting the act of performance from its context that it fails to acknowledge what Rustom Bharucha asserts, that 'It is naïve, if not irresponsible to assume that a meaningful confrontation of any culture can transcend the immediacies of its history' (Bharucha 1990: 1).

These bold and optimistic visions of the impact of interweaving have run throughout Fischer-Lichte's writings on interculturalism and the 'interweaving of cultures in performance'. She proposes intercultural activity as an 'aesthetic beacon of Utopia' of a more integrated 'future world culture-to-be' (Fischer-Lichte 1996: 38) envisioning that 'The results of such [interwoven] experiments, carried out in liminal space of theatre, one day might have the power to induce significant changes in societies affected by processes of globalisation' (Fischer-Lichte 2011b: 31). In this optimism Fischer-Lichte aligns herself much more closely with the intercultural theoreticians and practitioners who she otherwise criticises for perpetuating the duality of West and non-West. Those for whom the term "'intercultural' evokes the possibility of interaction across a multiplicity of cultural positionings, avoiding binary codings' (Knowles 2010: 4) as reflected in the celebratory attitudes of Richard Schechner, one of the very proponents of interculturalism that Fischer-Lichte is seeking to problematize:

People didn't question too much whether or not this interculturalism... was a continuation of colonialism, a further exploitation of other cultures. There was something simply celebratory about discovering how diverse the world was, how many performance genres there were, and how we could enrich our own experience by borrowing, stealing and exchanging. (Schechner 1982: 43-4)

Schechner's optimism is wide-eyed and more concerned with individual gain than Fischer-Lichte's bold ambitions for humanity. In the light of Schechner's admissions of 'borrowing, stealing and exchanging' it is hard not to agree with Fischer-Lichte that intercultural theory needs some rebalancing despite the prior interventions of non-Western voices such as Rustom Bharucha's 1990 book *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture* and the increasing enactment of and interest in intercultural projects that do not involve Western partners. In the sense that interweaving has problematized some of the binaries of interculturalism and, as Bharucha says, is 'trying to articulate an unease with the term "intercultural" and the baggage of "interculturalism" is, I think, a useful intervention' (Bharucha & Fischer-Lichter 2011).

However, how can Fischer-Lichte's metaphor of interweaving intervene effectively if its primary focus is on the liminal moment of performance abstracted from its socio-political context? Nor does Fischer-Lichte's metaphor fully absent itself from the 'binary codings' of interculturalism (Knowles 2010: 4) that she seeks to criticise. Her metaphor of interweaving sets up a clear binary that she almost entirely fails to acknowledge. For, what is glaringly omitted from Fischer-Lichte's argument is the figure of the weaver, who naturally has a binary opposition to the weave – the material that s/he produces. This seems an odd omission as logically the presence of the weaving/interweaving necessarily infers the existence of the weaver/interweaver and the weaving is, of course, an *index* of the weaver's anima. Fischer-Lichte has only included the weaver in her project in her most recent and fullest description of the metaphor of interweaving, telling us that interweaving 'is backbreaking work under often deplorable conditions that can wear out and enrage the weavers and drive them to despair, even to the point that they destroy what they have woven so far' (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 11). This first reference to the weaver(s) by Fischer-Lichte in her writings on interweaving is little more than a footnote buried amongst a broader unpacking of her metaphor. However, it is clear from this passage that the metaphor is directly based on the physical act of weaving rather than just an abstract notion of recombination and intertwining. This passage does not further explain the role of the weaver(s) in her metaphor and how s/he relates to the interweaving. The logical inference of the metaphor of interweaving is that the weaver(s) are the participants in the moment of interweaving. However, the suggestion that the weavers conduct 'backbreaking work' that can 'drive them to despair' seems at odds with the reality of most contemporary theatrical work other than funding applications. Here Fischer-Lichte seems to let the metaphor run away with her and she ends up in the mills of the industrial revolution rather than the rehearsal and performance space of most intercultural or interwoven theatre. Part of the reason for Fischer-Lichte's lack of focus on the weaver is her ideological desire to

escape the binaries of interculturalism, as outlined above, and even move *'beyond postcolonialism'* (Fischer-Lichte 2014: 13). This is a worthy ideal but one that in our globalised but endlessly unequal and imbalanced world in which the effects of colonialism are ever present is likely to remain a fantasy for the time being. She supports this position with the argument that although 'the actors set the decisive preconditions for the progression of the performance – preconditions that are fixed by the process of creating the mis-en-scene. Nonetheless, they cannot fully control the course of the performance. In the end, all participants generate it together. This not only minimises the possibility, but actually makes it impossible for one individual or a group of people to entirely plan its course, steer and control it. The performance is removed from the control of any single individual' (Fischer-Lichte 2011: 24). This pluralisation of the agents of the performance problematizes the existence of the weaver(s) who in essence is the author of the interweaving. This makes the discussion of the weaver and his/her role in interweaving fundamentally a discussion of authorship and what role it plays within this process.

The weaver(s) is logically the author of the weave. However, Fisher-Lichte's interweaving is almost Barthesian in its rejection of the 'Author-God'. Her state of in-betweenness is comparable to Barthes' proclamation that it is only in the act of reading that the text has meaning (1977: 148). For Barthes the destruction of the author was a deliberately antagonistic attempt to refocus literary criticism away from the biographical, and his 1967 essay was as much a 'polemical statement' as a theoretical text (Rampley 2005: 158). By contrast, Fisher-Lichte does not attempt to rid us of the weaver, s/he is simply never discussed bar the brief mention cited above. Barthes' banishment of the author was far from final and its impracticality led Barthes to duly reintroduce the concept of the author 'with the hauteur kings reserve of their vanquished' (Burke 1998: 28) in his 1974 book *S/Z*. Here he claims that the author can become a 'text like any other' by relinquishing his claim to be the ultimate signified and becoming part of the miasma of signification and thus being caught up in the 'plural of its [the de-deified author's] own text' (Barthes 1974: 211).

This is a foreshadowing of Fischer-Lichte's project where the weaver becomes one of the many 'participants [who] generate it [the performance] together' (Fischer-Lichte 2011: 24). This foreshadowing is echoed further in Barthes' 1971 essay *From Work to Text* where he refines his notion of the 'tissue of quotation', originally found in *The Death of The Author* (1974: 146), replacing it with a 'weave of signifiers' (Barthes 1977: 159). This is an important notion for within any act of interweaving the many threads or 'atoms' are all signifiers. Fischer-Lichte critiques intercultural theatre for assuming 'that is it possible to separate one's "own" theatre from "other" theatres: in other words, that French audiences would necessarily identify

specific elements in Mnouchkine's *Henry IV* as "Japanese" and thus "foreign," while Japanese audiences would recognise the "Western" elements in Suzuki's productions of *Three Sisters* as "foreign" (Fischer-Lichte 2013: 129). It is important to remember that whilst 'specific elements' do not necessarily signify certain cultural origins they *can* and frequently *do* signify a range of meanings, one of which can be "'other" theatres'. Perhaps even more importantly the framing of productions, in particular the rhetoric of the production team, can have huge impact on how these signs are received. These are important points to which we will return in our analysis of the development of 'Bunraku-style' puppets.

Issues of authorship are more of a concern for under-represented or disenfranchised groups than already established, dominant groups. Barthes' disruption of authorship challenged the established bloated, white, male author-god who had no need of enfranchising. Conversely for authorial subalterns the omission of the weaver can be seen as an innately political and problematic act. Such oversight or deliberate omission denies the author/weaver agency, placing the interwoven apolitical new diversity above and beyond the weaver's very existence. For the 'Author-God' that Barthes was challenging, this shift was a wakeup call, but for disenfranchised subalterns such a loss of agency is devastating even if it is borne out of a 'worthy liberal desire' (Griffiths 1994: 166) to move the intercultural debate away from repetitive binaries that bog down the discussion. Puppetry, despite its rise in prominence outlined in chapter 1, has long been such a subaltern in British and indeed global theatre, sidelined by the theatre and critical establishment. Despite the rise in use of puppetry in British theatre in the last twenty years, including runaway successes such as the National Theatre's *War Horse*, the agency of the puppeteer and puppet maker as author and, I would suggest, more appropriately, as weaver, is still largely unrecognised and misunderstood. For example, when Handspring Puppet Company, the creators of the puppets of *War Horse*, were rightly honoured at London's Olivier Awards, they somewhat patronisingly received a share of the Best Set Design gong.

Basil Jones, one half of Handspring Puppet Company has eloquently argued for the recognition of the authorship of the puppet maker and puppeteer whose tacit knowledge of the technologies and techniques of the puppet is essential for 'writing' scenes in which a puppet is central (Jones 2009: 258). Jones situates this recognition within the context of an 'authorial process' that is 'multi-generational semiotic system with numerous authors... including the authority of the audience' (Jones 2009: 260), which is reminiscent of Fischer-Lichte's interweaving by multiple 'participants'. However, Jones and Fischer-Lichte differ in Jones' championing of the individual authorial voices and therefore the agency of these participants. This does not mean that these authorial voices are the ultimate signified of the performance,

but they are integral parts of the weave and in fact the very agents of the interweaving. Further Jones' description of the multiple authors of the puppet theatre allows for multiple layers of interweaving that will then be interwoven with other interweavings. So, the puppet maker weaves together the atoms of the puppet and the interwoven puppet will be interwoven with the other formal aspects of the production: music, light, actors, text, audience etc. Maintaining the specificity of the weavers in this process is necessary in order to avoid the disenfranchisement of any individual's authorship.

The puppet maker, in particular, inhabits a unique position, as s/he will mediate the reconstitution of the many 'atoms' that go into the creation of the puppets for a production, physically interweaving them as s/he works. In contemporary puppet theatre these atoms can come from a multitude of sources and as such can have multiple significations. These may not all be read in Fischer-Lichte's liminal moment of 'in-betweenness' (2009: 392) but that is precisely why it is important to include the micro-signs in the wider examination of the macro-sign of a production, as the liminal moment of 'in-betweenness', which will usually only be a partial reading of the macro-sign, may signify something that runs contrary to the story written in the micro-signs of the puppet, especially in the context of the broader framing of the production, including such inauspicious interventions as programme notes and press releases, which can heavily influence or predetermine the signification of the macro-sign. It is my belief that this authorship is an act of interweaving both in Fisher-Lichte's sense of the 'in-betweenness' of the performance but also in the formulation of the technologies of the puppet, through which the puppet's 'semiotic grammar' (Jones 2009: 258) is defined and that this process is clearly directed by a weaver. This does not make the weaver the 'ultimate signified' that Barthes so feared but part of the 'weave of signifiers' (Barthes 1977: 159) of the production. In relation to the categorisation and naming of contemporary puppets I also propose that it is both necessary and right to remember the authorship of the puppeteer and not lose him/her in the weave of the puppet. For, by doing so, it is possible to start to bypass misused and exoticised labels, such as Bunraku-style, and instead foreground the creative practice of current practitioners.

## **Conclusion:**

Returning to where this chapter started, declarations of contemporary puppets as 'a westernised version of Bunraku' seem frustratingly pointless if these puppet are in fact the

careful interweaving of many different 'atoms' from multiple sources. Such limited interpretations miss the richness of these puppets, as Basil Jones says:

There's a sense in which three people working together kind of mirror a real human better than an ordinary actor on stage, in that we always have several trains of thought working together in our heads... it's kind of more like a real human being than a real human being. Or certainly it highlights aspects of that multiplicity that is us.  
(May 2010b)

Just as three people manipulating one puppet creates a more representative complex, perhaps interwoven, character, so our engagement with the technologies and techniques of the puppet must allow for multiple agents of influence and a complex 'atomic' structure. In doing so we start to recognise that the puppet can be a site of positive and respectful cultural interweaving, dispelling brash comparisons with Bunraku, and becoming a complicated, intriguing character in its own right. Nicolas Bourriaud proposes that 'the contemporary work of art does not position itself as the termination point of the "creative process" (a "finished product" to be contemplated) but as a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activities' (Bourriaud 2002: 19). The contemporary puppet as a site of interweaving should embody this position as a 'portal', not limit itself within the remit of only one of its many atoms, such as Bunraku. Further it is both necessary and right to acknowledge the role of the weaver, the puppet maker, in this blending and assemblage of forms and whilst s/he is not the 'ultimate signified' it is perhaps useful to reorient our discussion of the contemporary interwoven puppet away from a focus on particular signs and onto the multiplicity of signs that are brought together by the artistic practice of contemporary puppet makers: "'semionauts" who produce original pathways through signs' (Bourriaud 2002: 18).

## Chapter 3 – From Ningyo Joruri to Bunraku

### Introduction:

As was previously stated in chapter 1 there is a frequent and pervasive misunderstanding of ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre in both non-Japanese and Japanese sources. For most twentieth and twentieth-first century scholarship Bunraku is and always was *the* de facto traditional puppet theatre of Japan. This is especially true of non-Japanese scholarship, which has almost exclusively focused on the Bunraku Theatre. Seminal English-language books such as Barbara Adachi's *Backstage at Bunraku* (1985) and Donald Keene's *Bunraku* (1965) do mention the existence of ningyo joruri other than Bunraku but always within the context of a Bunraku ūr-narrative that subsumes the entire history of ningyo joruri into that of the Bunraku Theatre. This reductionism deprives other theatres and puppet forms of their agency and perpetrates the myth of the unique, ancient, classical Bunraku as the sole proponent of Japanese puppetry (see chapter 5 for discussion of this myth). Such anachronistic usage of the word Bunraku is perhaps the most ubiquitous and damaging way in which scholarship has sidelined other ningyo joruri troupes in favour of the Bunraku theatre. Repeatedly scholars have co-opted the history of ningyo joruri into that of the Bunraku Theatre relegating other ningyo joruri troupes to little more than a footnote in their homogenous Bunraku epic. This chapter seeks to introduce a more balanced narrative history of ningyo joruri to shift the field away from its Bunraku-centric approach.

In order to unpick this Bunraku-centric narrative this chapter first situates ningyo joruri within the broader context of Japanese puppet theatre and then provides a more balanced history of ningyo joruri, including the Bunraku Theatre's place within that narrative. This clarifies the history of ningyo joruri, suggesting that although the art form we understand as ningyo joruri today originated in Osaka it was dramatically affected by interactions with other areas. Further the establishment of the Bunraku Theatre was a revival of the art form within Osaka rather than its commencement. This chapter is paired with chapter 4, which provides a description and discussion of the technologies and techniques of ningyo joruri and their contemporary transmission on Awaji Island. Both of these chapters will provide a basis for the discussion of the mythologisation of Bunraku in Britain in chapter 5. This information will also enable discussion about the relationship between the technologies and techniques of so-called 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' puppets now found across the world and ningyo joruri.

The heavy focus on Awaji ningyo joruri throughout this and the following chapter is meant to offer an alternative and parallel example of ningyo joruri rather than to supplant the Bunraku

Theatre from the history of ningyo joruri or suggest that there were/are no other ningyo joruri troupes in Japan. As the dispersion of the 148 theatres shown in figure 7 demonstrates, ningyo joruri was and still is a truly national art form. Of those 148 theatres 52 still remain in operation today, although all but two (The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and the Bunraku Theatre) are amateur troupes. I have chosen to focus on the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre partly because I was able to conduct fieldwork there in early 2013 and also because Awaji was and is



**Figure 5 - The author outside the Bunraku Theatre in Osaka**

a very important centre of development for and dissemination of ningyo joruri. It has also had an involved relationship with the ningyo joruri theatres of Osaka both before and after the advent of the Bunraku Theatre. During my research in Japan I was also fortunate enough to visit the Nose, Imada, Kuroda, and Awa ningyo joruri troupes. Sadly it is not possible in this thesis to explore them all but as many as possible will be acknowledged.

It is worth acknowledging that this chapter draws on many secondary sources. Whilst there are specific issues with much of the English language scholarship on ningyo joruri the majority of it is primarily sound: dates, names and other facts are corroborated by multiple sources. My critiques are often aimed more at the selection, framing and interpretation of these facts rather than the facts themselves. Sometimes such errors are the result of an author having limited information available at the time of writing and I fully acknowledge that the history I



present here may, in the future, suffer similar criticisms. However, I hope that for the time being it serves to highlight that the pre-modern puppetry of Japan is wildly heterogonous and that the Bunraku-centricity of much English-language scholarship is reductive and erroneous and has disenfranchised not only hundreds of other ningyo joruri troupes but also the plethora of other puppet forms that cover this 'island of puppets' (Genty & Tresgot 1969).<sup>9</sup>



Figure 6 - The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, Fukura

## The Breadth of Puppetry in Japan:

There is so much puppetry in Japan, past and present, it is hard to give a satisfactory impression of the wide range of puppet technologies and techniques and the many different arenas in which they are used. The purpose of this section is to provide sufficient context for

---

<sup>9</sup> This description comes from Philippe Genty's 1969 TV series *La Tour Du Monde des Marionnettes*. When Genty visited Japan in the mid-sixties many of the nation's performing arts were still recovering from World War II. Predictably Genty primarily focuses on the most prominent company of the time the Bunraku Theatre, although he also shows the Takeda Marionette Theatre, at that time still based near Tokyo and where Genty spent nearly six months. This serialization was based on an earlier film from 1965 *Rites et jeux : marionnettes d'orient et d'occident*, which Genty made for UNESCO and which features footage of ningyo joruri, labelled as Bunraku. However, some of the footage is clearly not the Bunraku Theatre. There are shots of children performing and the use of larger puppet suggesting that some of the footage was shot either on Awaji or near Tokushima.

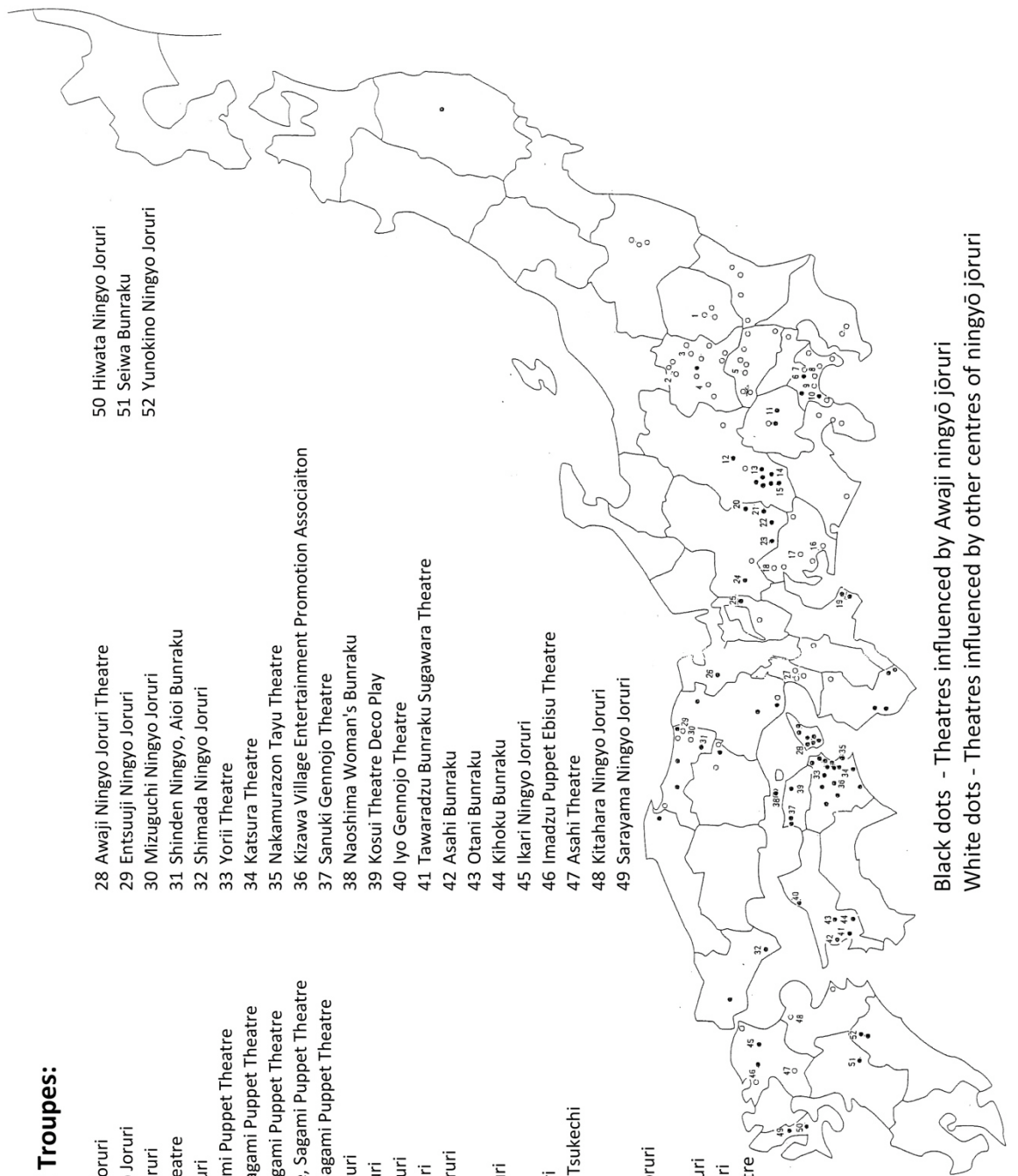
the discussion of ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre that follows. Situating ningyo joruri within the broader context of Japanese puppetry is very important for while it is the most internationally famous pre-modern Japanese puppet form, it is only one aspect of the 'incredible variety of Japanese puppetry that is little known abroad' (Staub 1997: 21).

The first known references to Japanese puppeteers date from the eleventh century (Lancashire 2011: 103; Keene 1990: 130). It is unknown what puppets these itinerant performers used. However, similarly itinerant sixteenth century puppeteers performed with a box hanging from their neck to act as a stage (*kubi kake*) potentially giving us an indication of their forebears' performance practice (see Law 1997: 106-108). Japanese puppetry increased exponentially from these humble beginnings. In addition to ningyo joruri troupes, 'the island of puppets' also has a long history of marionettes, rod puppets, glove puppets, automata, ritual effigies, giant puppets, firework puppets, flying zip-line puppets as well as more recent derivations of ningyo joruri such as kuruma ningyo (lit. cart puppets) and otome bunraku (lit. girl bunraku). The lines between puppet, doll and effigy are far more blurred in Japanese than in European theatrical traditions (*ningyō* can refer to all three) (Law 1997: 32). Thus all figures with some form of agency are seen as part of the same family. So when we talk about Japanese ningyo we must include the scarecrow ningyo of Fukase, Ishikawa prefecture and the firework puppets of Annaka, Gunma prefecture alongside ningyo joruri and other more obviously theatrical forms (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981:143). Whilst many historical troupes have disappeared, representatives of multiple forms survive, or have been revived, in Japan today and are increasingly gaining official recognition as Intangible Folk Cultural Properties either at 'national, prefectural and local government levels' (Thornbury 1997: 55).

The simplest and possibly oldest of these forms are found in modern day Kyushu, at the Hachiman Kohyo shrine, Yoshitomi town, Fukuoka prefecture and the Koyo shrine in the Itoda area, east of Nakatsu city in Oita prefecture (Lancashire 2011: 104, Pimpaneau 1978: 13; Staub 1997: 25). These puppets are uncomplicated wooden, full-bodied, doll-like forms. One of the legs of each puppet extends into a short rod, which the puppeteer can hold to control the puppet. In addition a simple string-pull system moves the puppet's arms in a basic up and down motion. These crude puppets are only performed once every four years and fulfil both ritual and entertainment functions (Lawrence 2011: 104). Other simple one-person rod puppets are found on Sado Island, Nigata Prefecture, where three types of puppet still exist: sekkyo ningyo, bunya ningyo and noroma ningyo (Staub 1997: 25). The crude, both in form and subject matter, Noroma ningyo perform comic interludes in-between the more serious Sekkyo ningyo, which relate 'the miraculous powers of the Buddha' and other spirits, accompanied by music and narration (Lawrence 2011: 101). Noroma ningyo were once widespread and used as

### Extant Ningyo Joruri Troupes:

- |   |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Nasahara Ningyo Joruri                  | 28 Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre                        | 50 Hiwata Ningyo Joruri   |
| 2 Shimomaki Ningyo Joruri                 | 29 Entsuuji Ningyo Joruri                             | 51 Seiwa Bunraku          |
| 3 Tsukuda Ningyo Joruri                   | 30 Mizuguchi Ningyo Joruri                            | 52 Yunokino Ningyo Joruri |
| 4 Yashiro Jowaka Theatre                  | 31 Shinden Ningyo, Aioi Bunraku                       |                           |
| 5 Deushi Ningyo Joruri                    | 32 Shimada Ningyo Joruri                              |                           |
| 6 Hase Troupe, Sagami Puppet Theatre      | 33 Yorii Theatre                                      |                           |
| 7 Hayashi Troupe, Sagami Puppet Theatre   | 34 Katsura Theatre                                    |                           |
| 8 Zentori Troupe, Sagami Puppet Theatre   | 35 Nakamuraon Tayu Theatre                            |                           |
| 9 Shimonaka Troupe, Sagami Puppet Theatre | 36 Kizawa Village Entertainment Promotion Association |                           |
| 10 Ashigara Troupe, Sagami Puppet Theatre | 37 Sanuki Gennojo Theatre                             |                           |
| 11 Oiwake Ningyo Joruri                   | 38 Naoshima Woman's Bunraku                           |                           |
| 12 Furuta Ningyo Joruri                   | 39 Kosui Theatre Deco Play                            |                           |
| 13 Kuroda Ningyo Joruri                   | 40 Iyo Gennojo Theatre                                |                           |
| 14 Imada Ningyo Joruri                    | 41 Tawaradzu Bunraku Sugawara Theatre                 |                           |
| 15 Waseda Ningyo Joruri                   | 42 Asahi Bunraku                                      |                           |
| 16 Yoshida Bunraku                        | 43 Otani Bunraku                                      |                           |
| 17 Chiryu Ningyo Joruri                   | 44 Kihoku Bunraku                                     |                           |
| 18 Island Bunraku                         | 45 Ikari Ningyo Joruri                                |                           |
| 19 Anori Ningyo Joruri                    | 46 Imadzu Puppet Ebisu Theatre                        |                           |
| 20 Old Man Dance of Tsukechi              | 47 Asahi Theatre                                      |                           |
| 21 Ena Bunraku                            | 48 Kitahara Ningyo Joruri                             |                           |
| 22 Oi Bunraku                             | 49 Sarayama Ningyo Joruri                             |                           |
| 23 Hanbara Ningyo Joruri                  |   |                           |
| 24 Makuwa Bunraku                         |   |                           |
| 25 Tomita Ningyo Joruri                   |   |                           |
| 26 Wachi Ningyo Joruri                    |   |                           |
| 27 The Bunraku Theatre                    |   |                           |



Black dots - Theatres influenced by Awaji ningyō jōruri  
 White dots - Theatres influenced by other centres of ningyō jōruri

Figure 7 - Map of extant ningyo joruri troupes in Japan (from Kikukawa 2002)

interludes in *Osakan ningyo joruri* until 1715 (Lawrence 2011: 102; Staub 1997: 26). Now they are only found on Sado. *Bunya* was originally a story-telling form accompanied by shamisen originating in Osaka in the seventeenth century. It gained one-person rod-puppets in the nineteenth century (Lawrence 2011:101). Many other one-person rod-puppets forms exist in Japan. These puppets are neither homogenous in form nor scale for example the *Shittaka ningyo* of Gunma Prefecture are small (c. 45cm tall) theatrical puppets that perform *ningyo joruri* whereas the *Hinkoko Festival* puppets of Gifu Prefecture are crudely made parade-puppets roughly three metres in height (Asahi Shinbun 1981: 105, 23; Yamada & Kukuda 1980: 202-3). Two-person rod puppets are also widespread especially in the many forms of *Sanbaso* still enacted across the country (see Lawrence 2011: 104, Yamada & Kukuda 1980: 222). *Sanbaso* also exists in one-person rod-puppet forms and in three-person forms as in the *Bunraku Theatre*. Jane Marie Law provides an informative discussion on the uses of *Sanbaso* in several local areas including *Awaji* (1997: 171).

Hand puppets are widely used in *Amori* and *Iwate* Prefectures, amongst other areas. There are three main types of Japanese hand puppet: first those where the puppeteer's middle finger is inserted into the puppet's hollow neck and the puppet's arms slot over the puppeteer's little finger and thumb, for example the *Yamanobe Puppet Theatre* in *Yamagata Prefecture*, (Lancashire 2011: 108; Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 106); second those where the puppet's neck is solid and gripped between either the puppeteer's index and middle fingers or the middle and ring fingers, for example the *Sarukura Puppets* of *Aikita Prefecture*, again the arms slot over the puppeteer's fingers (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 106, 137, Staub 1997: 30); and third those where the puppet's arms are controlled by rods creating a hand-rod puppet, for example *Saibata Puppet Theatre*, *Kochi Prefecture* (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 106). Some of these puppets are performed to *joruri* accompaniment others are solo performances (Lancashire 2011: 108).

*Marionettes* (*ito ayatsuri ningyō*) have a long history in Japan and were certainly in use in the seventeenth century when, like *noroma ningyo*, they were used in *ningyo joruri* performances. Unlike *noroma ningyo* they were integrated into the main performance (Keene 1990: 160; Lancashire 2011: 107). Marionettes probably came to Japan from China during the *Tang Dyanasty* (618-907) (Ueno-Herr 1997:19) and certainly some Japanese marionette controls are similar to Chinese controls (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 105). Today marionettes are found in several sites in Japan including *Okinawa*, Japan's southernmost island, where simple two-string marionettes perform lion dances (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 89, 141). The most prominent extant Japanese marionette troupe is the *Yuki Theatre*, founded in 1635, which performs in *Tokyo Prefecture* (Boyd 2009: 217; Ueno-Herr 1997: 19). Others include the *Takeda Theatre* in



Figure 8 - A contemporary Ebisu Mai performer puppet performing kubi-kake

lida, Nagano Prefecture and the Masuda Puppet Theatre in Shimane Prefecture (Lawrence 2011: 107; Yamada & Kukuda 1980: 222, Pimpaneau 1978: 82).

It is in festivals that some of Japan's most wild and wonderful puppets occur. Automata (*karakuri ningyō*) have long existed in both theatrical and parade settings where they appear on floats (*dashi*). It was from the *karakuri* of the Takeda family that *ningyo joruri* developed the technologies for facial and finger movements. In festivals automata are still used in a range of festivals including Hitachi Fuyumono, Ibaraki Prefecture, inscribed on UNESCO's list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, which consists of giant floats featuring multiple levels of puppet performance on fold-out stages. Outdoor festivals also afford the opportunity for night-time performance and the firework puppets of Gunma and Ibaraki prefectures. These puppets are suspended over the audience on zip lines. As fireworks erupt from their forms the puppeteers pull them along the zip lines with ropes (Pimpaneau 1978: 70; Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 140).

Many of these puppets are formally diverse from *ningyo joruri* but share theatrical conventions, such as black clad puppeteers (*kurogō*) and even the use of the same *joruri* texts and styles of narration. The interplay between these forms shows the fallacy of a mono-directional narrative with the Bunraku Theatre as the end point of Japanese puppetry. Since the full development of *ningyo joruri* other, related forms have emerged, such as one-person *otome bunraku* and *kuruma ningyo* and even five-person puppets. *Otome bunraku* makes legitimate use of the Bunraku label. It first appeared in the 1930s when the majority of the Bunraku Theatre were in Manchuria entertaining the troupes. Younger members of the company, who were left behind in Osaka, formed the Shingzi Troupe initially just to perform *joruri* and *shamisen (sujōruri)*. However, they also started to perform with female puppeteers who manipulated the Bunraku Theatre's puppets singlehanded thanks to the technological innovation of a torso brace (*dogane*), courtesy of puppet maker Oe Minnosuke (Ashmore 2005). *Otome bunraku* is still performed in Osaka by the Mistuka Theatre and in Kawasaki by the Hitomi Theatre, amongst others. *Kuruma ningyo* is older first appearing in the mid-nineteenth century following Nishikawa Koryu's (real name Nagaoka Koryu 1824-97) creation of a rolling stool seat and an elaborate left-arm control allowing the puppets to be manipulated singlehanded. Koryu had trained in *ningyo joruri* both in Osaka and Edo (Coaldrake 1997:193; Lancashire 2011: 108-9). Initially *kuruma ningyo* was accompanied by *sekkyo-bushi*, rather than *gidayu*. Kimi Coaldrake suggests the universal adoption of *gidayu* did not take place until the 1970s when Nishikawa Koryu IV asked the *Gidayu* Association for financial support (1997: 194). *Kuruma ningyo* is still performed by Nishikawa Koryu's descendants at the Hachioji *Kuruma Ningyo* Theatre, Tokyo Prefecture as well as at

Chikumazawa, Saitama prefecture and Kawano, Tokyo Prefecture (Yamada & Kukuda 1980: 222). Finally, there is an elephantine descendant of ningyo joruri requiring five-person manipulation in the towering form of the demon Shutendoji found in Tokushima prefecture (Asahi Shinbunsha 1981: 139).

All these puppets can be described as the traditional Japanese puppetry in the same sense that Bunraku is labelled as 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan' (Japan Arts Council 2004). Traditional, in this instance, is a problematic word. What is actually meant is pre-modern or really pre-1945. As such it covers a huge period of time. The end of World War II brought such fundamental change to Japanese society that many older aesthetics and art forms were either replaced with newer popular culture, such as Manga and Disney, or adopted as symbols of 'traditional' Japan: 'For the Japanese, it was important to construct a clear demarcation between the pre-1945 and post-1945 Japan because it needed to separate the 'polluted' past from the new present, as a springboard to construct a new narrative of postwar Japan' (Shimazu 2003: 101). This process of traditionalisation and institutionalisation provided the impetus 'for subtly altering existing performing arts to make them more appealing' in order to gain recognition and funding (Lancashire 2011: 114). As we will see in the case of Bunraku and the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, this process runs the danger of partly neutering an art form in the name of preservation. What generally qualifies Japanese puppets as traditional is the embodiment of perceived traditional/old-Japan aesthetics, mainly stemming from the Edo period. As a result twentieth century creations, such as otome bunraku, are aligned with older puppet forms because they fit aesthetically (see Asahi Shinbunsha 1981). This is despite the fact that creating a women-only form of ningyo joruri, which women were banned from performing in the early seventeenth century (Leiter 2006: xxi) was a thoroughly modern and anti-traditional act.<sup>10</sup> In addition the desire to preserve traditions through the creation of institutions, such as the National Bunraku Theatre is also, in some senses, a modern act.

This introduction to pre-modern Japanese puppetry is not exhaustive. However, it illustrates the breadth of Japanese puppetry past and present and the contemporary reality that many of Japan's pre-modern puppets exist alongside more recent creations. So today, the frequently urinating noroma ningyo of Sado island sit alongside the cutesy puppetry of contemporary companies such as PUK Theatre in Tokyo and the robotic experiments of Japan's finest engineers in the bustling pantheon of Japan's ningyo. Ningyo joruri is only one part of the

---

<sup>10</sup> The edict against female performers was lifted in 1870 (see Ashmore 2005).

varied flora and fauna of Japanese puppetry and as we will see the Bunraku Theatre is only one example of the great wealth of ningyo joruri in Japan's history.

### **The Origins of Ningyo Joruri:**

It was claimed in chapter 1 that the word Bunraku is not a label for a form of theatre but the specific name of a theatre in Osaka and the troupe it houses. This section substantiates this claim by demonstrating the broad plurality of ningyo joruri and the specificity of Bunraku. Ningyo joruri roughly translates as 'puppet storytelling'. Ningyo means puppet or doll, the same word is used for both in Japanese, and joruri is the name of a narrative storytelling form that developed in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century. Other labels are sometimes used for ningyo joruri including ningyo ayatsuri (lit. puppet manipulation) and ningyo shibai (lit. puppet theatre). Whilst these are acceptable terms they can also be applied to other forms of Japanese puppetry and therefore lack the specificity of ningyo joruri. To be completely precise this thesis is primarily interested in sanninzukai ningyo joruri. Sanninzukai (lit. three-person manipulation) is the system of three people controlling one puppet developed in the eighteenth century.

Ningyo joruri's history is extensive and not all of it will be covered here. We know that at times Japan was littered with ningyo joruri troupes, for example in 1741 there were thirty-eight troupes on the small island of Awaji alone (Kikukawa 2002: 383). Figure 7 is a map showing the distribution of known, named sanninzukai ningyo joruri troupes throughout Japan. It shows a total of 148 troupes spread out across nearly the whole length of the country from Iwate prefecture in the north to Nagasaki prefecture in the south, 52 of which still exist today. The development of the Bunraku Theatre is only one part of this extensive and varied history.

Ningyo joruri is made up of three constitutive elements: joruri (chanted narration), shamisen (a three-stringed plucked instrument) and puppets that since the mid-eighteenth century have predominately been three-person puppets. The word Bunraku comes from the stage name of Masai Kahei (1750-1810) an amateur joruri narrator/chanter (*tayū*) from Kariyaura on Awaji island who, around 1789-1801, moved to Osaka and subsequently opened a small hall in 1805 for the performance of sujoururi (Keene 1990: 143; Ueno-Herr 1995:18, Nakanishi 2012: 2-3, Umazume 2000: 133). Sujoururi is the performance of joruri and shamisen without the accompaniment of either puppets or actors. Masai Kahei's stage-name was Uemura Bunrakuken and his hall, possibly no more than a 'sitting room', bore that name: Bunraku's hall (*bunraku no koya*) (Ueno-Herr 1995:18).



Masai Kahei's Awaji origins are laid bare in his choice of stage name. Uemura is the name supposedly given to a renowned puppeteer, either from Awaji or the Nishiomiya shrine but who settled on Awaji, by a delighted prince in Kyoto around 1570. On Awaji this tale is connected to a man called Hikida and sometimes Hikida Gennojo, who is said to have later become Uemura Gennojo the founder of the great Uemura Gennojo puppet dynasty (Law 1997: 153-155). Jane Marie Law highlights the contradictions and problems these various accounts of the origins of Awaji puppetry present and proposes that their main purpose was legitimising Awaji's puppeteers rather than record historical accuracy: 'having a history and being a tradition was a form of legitimation in its own right' (1997: 155). When Masei Kahei



**Figure 9 - Members of the Nose Ningyo Joruri Theatre rehearsing**

moved to Osaka it seems it was legitimacy he was after when he chose the stage name Uemura. First, through an association with the Uemura Gennojo Theatre, which, at the time, was by far Awaji's biggest theatre and probably the most prolific and successful ningyo joruri theatre that ever existed with at least five different troupes, one of which always stayed on Awaji at the company's permanent theatre in Sanjo town, whilst the others toured throughout the country (Law 1997: 163). Second, through an inherited aura of authority and tradition stemming from the tales of direct Imperial blessing that Hikida supposedly received in Kyoto in the sixteenth century. Through his choice of name Masei Kahei was claiming lineage, artistic rather than literal, from the very origins of Awaji puppetry. It perhaps seems odd then that it was the personal name Bunrakuken and not the family name Uemura that was handed down to future generations. Perhaps the association with Awaji and in particular the very active

Uemura Gennojo Theatre, who were a direct competitor to the future Bunraku Theatre, was too strong and it was necessary to forge a new, Osaka-based identity. This Uemura Bunrakuken certainly did, by also claiming lineage from earlier Osaka ningyo joruri, in particular the Takemoto Theatre. He hired 'the last surviving students of the old Takemoto-za masters and used positive public signification of that connection as justification for styling his Bunrakuken-za as the successor to the great theatre of Takemoto Gidayu' (Ashmore 2013). This claim is continued today by the contemporary Bunraku Theatre, which claims descent from the great eighteenth century Osakan ningyo joruri theatres. This is most prominently seen in the Bunraku Theatre's use of the Takemoto and Toyotake Theatres' logos in its auditorium, publications and publicity. Neither Bunrakuken's hall nor the contemporary theatre have any 'direct connection with the Takemoto-za, either through lineal descent or legal inheritance' (Ashmore: 2013). Ultimately it was the name Bunrakuken that was handed down to Masai Kahei's descendants. However, it was not until 1872 that the first Bunraku theatre was founded by Uemura Daizo Bunrakuken IV and the name Bunraku started to be used as shorthand for the performance of ningyo joruri at the Bunraku Theatre (Keene 1990: 143; Adachi 1985: 5, Ueno-Herr 1995: 19). Note that the use of this term was specific to the Bunraku Theatre in Osaka and not applied to similar troupes elsewhere in Japan.

Bunrakuken did not invent ningyo joruri in 1805 or introduce it to Osaka, a claim sometimes made by the inhabitants of Awaji who frequently situate Awaji as the birthplace of the now world famous Bunraku Theatre claiming authenticity for their own revived, but now much smaller, ningyo joruri tradition through what Jane-Marie Law calls a 'geography of value' (1997: 228). Ningyo joruri had a connection with both Osaka and Awaji that was far older than Bunrakuken. In order to explore that connection we must go back to the origins of the constituent parts of ningyo joruri.

## **Joruri**

Joruri is a form of narrative story telling originating in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century. It is named after Princess Joruri, the fictitious heroine of a popular mid-fifteenth century romance *The Tale of Princess Joruri in Twelve Episodes (jōruri junidan soshi)* (Keene 1990: 135; Hironaga 1976: 10; Noma 1996: 62-63, Leiter 2006:142).<sup>11</sup> At the time narrative storytelling was the purveyance of biwa-hoshi, itinerant story-telling priests who played the

---

<sup>11</sup> See Plowright 2002 for a fuller discussion of Princess Joruri.

biwa, a kind of lute (Noma 1996: 60; Keene 1990: 135). The tale of Princess Joruri proved popular thanks to its more human subject matter, which contrasted strongly with the then dominant heikyoku style. Heikyoku was a storytelling form that dealt almost exclusively with the tragic downfall of the Hei-Shi clan in the late twelfth-century as told in the medieval war chronicle *Tale of the Heike* (*heike monogatari*) (Awa no Bunka Kenkyukai 2007: 10; Noma 1996: 63; Leiter 2006: 143). Joruri kept the tuneful nature of heikyoku and blended it with a love story to create a more approachable storytelling form (Noma 1996: 62). Other stories were soon performed in the same style and by the late sixteenth century all these performances were labelled joruri (Leiter 2006: 143). Other narrative forms also influenced joruri, including shomyo (Buddhist ceremonial songs), fushidan-sekkyo (a sung Buddhist preaching style) and sekkyo, (a secular form) giving joruri both religious and secular roots (Noma 1996: 62). Keene tells us that by the end of the sixteenth century joruri was so popular, especially in Kyoto, that it appeared prominently on posters advertising popular entertainment (1990: 136).



**Figure 10 - Narrator Takemoto Tomokazu performing in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

However, this was not the same joruri we now associate with ningyo joruri. The joruri of the early and mid sixteenth century is now referred to as old joruri (*ko jōruri*) in order to mark the paradigm shift in joruri that Takemoto Gidayu enacted in the 1680s at the Takemoto Theatre in Osaka, ushering in new joruri (*shin jōruri*) or simply joruri (Leiter 2006: 94; Ueno-Herr 1995: 28; Kikukawa 2002: 384). Old joruri had many competing rival schools embodied by chanters such as Inoue Hariamanojo (1632-85), who was Osaka based and had a large influence on Takemoto Gidayu; Satsuma Joun (1592-1672) who was dominant in Edo and who also

performed puppets whilst he chanted; and Uji Kaganojo (1635-1708), based in Kyoto, who is seen as the bridge between old and new joruri and taught Takemoto Gidayu (Leiter 2006: 15, 131, 190-192, 337 414; Ando 1970: 73, Nakanishi 2002: 66). By the 1620s old joruri was widespread and there were rival schools of chanters in Kyoto, Osaka and Edo (Letier 2006: 190).

It is testament to the brilliance of Takemoto Gidayu's performance that his style of joruri, known as *gidayu* (*gidayū bushi*), is still the narrative bedrock of ningyo joruri. So much so that *gidayu* and joruri are synonyms. Takemoto Gidayu's style did not appear ex nihilo. It was the careful amalgamation of many pre-existing styles combined with Takemoto's own ideas that made it so successful. As Leiter says, *gidayu* 'fused the boldness of Inoue Harimanojo and the delicacy of Uji Kaganojo with the mournful elegance of Yamamoto Tosanojo' (an Edo based chanter who introduced greater sentimentality and contemporary themes into his chanting) (2006: 94, 191). Takemoto's success was due to the connection his style had with the common person: it cleverly fused the most populist elements of several old joruri styles that the person-on-the-street would readily know (Leiter 2006: 94) with the introduction of dramas that dealt with contemporary issues. This trend is most obvious in the introduction of domestic dramas (*sewamono*) that openly dealt with contemporary events but also in historical dramas (*jidaimono*) – epic tales, set in Japan's medieval past, but with themes and narratives that are directly related to Edo Japan (Leiter 2006: 136).<sup>12</sup> The development and success of *gidayu*, however, was not due to Takemoto Gidayu alone. *Gidayu* was part of the maturation of ningyo joruri that was also reliant on the development of the other formal constituents of ningyo joruri: the shamisen and technologically advanced puppets.

### **Shamisen**

The second element of ningyo joruri, the shamisen, was introduced from China, sometime around 1557 (Noma 1996: 63), either initially to the Ryuku Islands (Okinawa) and then on to mainland Japan around 1568 (Kikukawa 2002: 382) or possibly through Kyushu in the 1590s (Leiter 2006: 349). The shamisen is a three-stringed plucked instrument. The body is a wooden frame over which animal skin is stretched. The strings run from the top of the neck to the bottom of the body and they are plucked with a large ivory plectrum (*bachi*) (now usually

---

<sup>12</sup> The necessity for such disguise was a government prohibition on plays dealing with affairs of the state during the Edo period (Leiter 2006: 136).

wood or synthetic) (Noma 1996: 63; Keene 1990: 137). The forceful plucking of the shamisen's strings produces both a resonant tone from the strings and a strong percussive sound when the plectrum hits the surface of the body. The neck is fretless allowing for fluid movement and a sound full of slides, bends and quartertones. The fluid notes of the shamisen echo the wide range of the chanter's sound, a mixture of singing, chanting and narration, while the percussive slaps serve to create points of emphasis as well as keeping time and giving signals to the chanter and puppeteers. The stamping of the ashizukai, the puppeteer who operates the feet in sanninzukai ningyo joruri, follows these percussive sounds. The shamisen's strings run over a removable bridge on the sound box called the koma (Leiter 2006: 349). Some shamisen also dismantle with the neck disassembling into several pieces, making it serviceable for the mobile performer.



**Figure 11 - Tsuruzawa Tomoyo (shamisen) & Tsuruzawa Tomokichi (narrator) performing in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

The shamisen soon replaced the biwa as the principal accompaniment for joruri. It was considered to be a more subtle expressive instrument that better matched the emotional intensity of the new, more human joruri texts (Noma: 1996: 63; Keene 1990: 137). Few changes have been made to the Chinese instrument, over the years, beyond replacing the snake-skin on the frame of the body, with more readily available cat or dog skin, and a gentle enlargement of the instrument (Noma 1996: 63). The shamisen used in ningyo joruri is the wide neck shamisen (*futazao*) also referred to as the 'gidayu-style shamisen, which is larger in size and has deeper tones' than other types of shamisen (Ueno-Herr 1995: 15).

There are varying different early accounts of the shamisen's adoption into joruri (see Leiter 2006: 349) but it seems that joruri with shamisen and puppet accompaniment probably made its debut in Kyoto in the 1590s. Some accounts claim these puppeteers were from the Nishinomiya shrine (Leiter 2006: 349). However, it was not until over a century later that the shamisen and joruri would be combined with the fully developed puppets of sanninzukai ningyo joruri.

## **Ningyo**

The third aspect of ningyo joruri is perhaps now the most instantly recognisable globally: the puppet. When ningyo joruri was first performed, the puppets we now see in ningyo joruri theatres across Japan did not exist. Instead it was either glove puppets or simple rod puppets that first performed with joruri and shamisen (Noma 1996:64; Keene 1990: 136). The earliest Japanese puppeteers were itinerant performers called kugutsu (Law 1997: 89) or karaishi (Leiter 2006: 15). Leiter suggests these performers originated from the Asian mainland, in particular Korea (2006: 15). Whilst the documentary record for these puppeteers is relatively scant it does seem clear that these puppeteers would frequently perform for ritual purposes in shrines. Some would also go from house to house, as in the case of the itinerant ritual puppeteers of Awaji, the Dokumbo Mawashi, and offer both religious and secular entertainment in homes, shrines, and fields performing the solemn Sanbaso and the comical Ebisu rituals (Law 1997: 164-165). Many of these puppeteers performed kubi-kake in which the puppeteer hung a box from his neck that doubled as a stage for performance and a storage container for the puppets during transit (Law 1997: 108). These puppeteers might perform with a musician or simply sing and narrate their own stories. This was probably the style of puppetry first used in ningyo joruri in the late sixteenth century; we certainly know that by this time various forms of rod, marionette and glove puppets existed in Japan.

One example of puppetry that was popular in the sixteenth century and has survived to the present day (although it is doubtful their performance is unchanged), are Ebisu Kaki. These puppeteers were originally associated with the Ebisu Shrine in Nishinomiya (near modern day Kobe) (Leiter 2006:15). Ebisu Kaki performed adaptations of noh and kyogen, in particular the tale of Ebisu, kubi-kake style (Leiter 2006: 15). There are accounts that also link them to the earliest performances of ningyo joruri in Kyoto. It is said that 'Nishinomiya puppeteers manipulated puppets between curtains stretched from the top and bottom of stage', showing that they were not just performing kubi-kake (Leiter 2006: 349). Certainly by the mid to late

seventeenth century it is clear that puppeteers were performing in a more theatrical setting with one-person rod puppets manipulated behind cloth play boards. This was the puppet form that was used in the early days of gidayu

By the mid-sixteenth century these puppets were widely performed by both established touring puppet troupes, such as the Uemura Gennojo Theatre of Awaji (Kikukawa 2002:382), and troupes based in the major urban centres of Osaka, Kyoto and Edo. These troupes quickly adopted new trends as they developed, meaning that when gidayu and then fully-fledged sanninzukai ningyo joruri arrived there was already a network of skilled puppet troupes to adopt and spread these new technologies and techniques across Japan. By the late seventeenth century ningyo joruri was fully formed: a skilful combination of storytelling, music and puppetry. However, it was not until the early eighteenth century that ningyo joruri matured into a form we would recognise today.

### **Ningyo Joruri Matures:**

The first performance of ningyo joruri in Kyoto in the 1590s marked a shift from itinerant to theatrical puppetry. This early form of ningyo joruri soon spread to Osaka and then to Edo when Ieyasu Tokugawa (1542-1616) the first Tokugawa shogun moved his court there in 1603 (Noma 1996: 64). With the government's move to Edo it is likely that the new capital would have become the artistic centre of ningyo joruri. However, in 1657, a devastating fire in Edo killed over 100,000 people and burnt most of the city to the ground. After the fire, many Edo puppeteers returned west, but to Osaka not Kyoto. Whilst Edo was the political capital of Japan, Osaka was the financial and trade centre, with money enough to support puppet theatre (Noma 1996: 64; Keene 1990: 139). However, Edo did not disappear from the history of ningyo joruri. As ningyo joruri blossomed in Osaka, in the early eighteenth century, some performers saw untapped opportunity in the rebuilt Edo and left their jobs in Osaka to found new theatres in the capital. The famous puppeteer Tatsumatu Hachirobei, for example, once a prominent member of the Takemoto Theatre, left Osaka with his son in 1719 to found the Tatsumatsu Theatre in Edo (Leiter 2006: 17).

Interest in the fledgling ningyo joruri was not limited to Japan's major urban centres. Awaji, a small island in the inland sea to the south of Osaka had possessed a strong puppetry culture since, at least, the mid sixteenth century. By the early seventeenth century Awaji puppeteers

were performing both for Tokushima lords and the Imperial family in Kyoto.<sup>13</sup> The aforementioned Uemura Gennojo Theatre was now a well-established touring troupe and courting favour with Tokushima dignitaries. In 1693 the troupe performed for fourteen days in Tokushima presenting a mixture of joruri, kyogen and the ritualistic puppet performance Sanbaso (Kikukawa 2002:383). Awaji's relationship with Tokushima continued through the centuries and the Uemura Gennojo Theatre eventually relocated to Tokushima in 1920 (Kikukawa 2002:384). Over the next three centuries Awaji was home to many puppet troupes but the Uemura Gennojo Theatre was always the leading company. Other principle companies include the Ichimura Rokunojo Theatre, the Kobayashi Rokutayu Theatre, the Yoshida Denjiro Theatre, and the Awaji Gennojo Theatre. Most of these troupes were in operation by the mid-seventeenth century and happily adopted the earliest forms of ningyo joruri into their performance practice.

In old-joruri the chanter was the centre of attention: the shamisen music was still underdeveloped and the puppetry far simpler (Leiter 2006: 15) but in new joruri the three parts became equal components of a finely-tuned, interconnecting triad of performance. This was the maturation that took place in ningyo joruri in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The foundation of the Takemoto Theatre in 1684 by the narrator Takemoto Gidayu (1651-1714) was a pivotal moment as was the transition from old-joruri to new-joruri (Adachi 1985: 4; Keene 1990: 140; Hironaga 1976: 12). Coupled to Takemoto Gidayu's formal developments in joruri performance were Chikamatsu Monzaemon's (1653-1724) advances in playwriting.<sup>14</sup>

In 1686, following the success of *The Soga Heir* (*yotsugi soga*), the first play staged in the Takemoto Theatre in 1684, Takemoto Gidayu commissioned a new play, *Kagekiyo Victorious* (*shusse kagekiyo*), by the same playwright, a certain Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724). Chikamatsu was already a well-known playwright for kabuki and had written for puppets before, creating scripts for old joruri artists, such as Uji Kaganojo (Leiter 2006: 16; Ando 1970: 126). *Kagekiyo Victorious* sounded the death knell for Kaganojo and the other old joruri artists,

---

<sup>13</sup> In 1614 they performed *Amida's Riven Breast* (*amida mune wari*) for the then retired Emperor Go-Yozei (*go-yōzei*) at his place in Kyoto (Kikukawa 2002: 383).

<sup>14</sup> Perhaps even more has been written about Chikamatsu Monzaemon than the Bunraku Theatre. In the last century he was rediscovered as a great stalwart of Japanese literary history. Often referred to as 'the Shakespeare of Japan' by twentieth century commentators he has attracted so much attention partly because he is a object of interest for Japanologists working in several different fields: history, literature, theatre and performance; and his links to kabuki as well as ningyo joruri have furthered his fame. Whilst 'the Shakespeare of Japan' is a problematic title it does communicate the reverence in which he is held in Japanese literature.



within the confines of Osaka. Inoue Harimanojo II had died two years earlier (1684) leaving only Uji Kaganojo, Takemoto Gidayu's one-time teacher, to compete with the younger artist's new style. In 1685 Kaganojo had staged a new play in Osaka, *The Calendar (koyomi)*, which flopped after unfavourable criticism and competition from the more successful Chikamatsu play, *The New Calendar and Lessons Learned by a Wise Woman (kejo no tenari narabi ni shin goyomi)* at the Takemoto Theatre. Kaganojo had one final success in Osaka with *The Triumphal Return to Yashima (gajjin yashima)*. However, the theatre burnt down and Kaganojo returned to Kyoto, leaving Osaka to Takemoto Gidayu and his new playwriting partner Chikamatsu Monzaemon (Ando 1970: 93-4).

Chikamatsu wrote over 120 scripts for ningyo joruri (Hironaga 1977: 13; Noma 1996: 65), transforming it into a great literary form. Chikamatsu was both aware of and intended the heightened literary value of his new plays. He had scathing words for his previous old joruri plays:

The old joruri was the same as those tales sung by scandalmongers in the streets today; it had neither fruit nor flower. After I left Kaganojo and began writing plays for Takemoto Gidayu, I took more care with my words, so my plays were a cut above those of the past (quoted in Hozumi 2002: 349)

These words are from an interview published fourteen years after Chikamatsu's death, by Hozumi Ikan (1692-1796) a ningyo joruri devotee who was a consultant at the Takemoto Theatre and worked with Chikamatsu Monzaemon in his final years (Brownstein 2002: 347-8). It is clear from this interview and Chikamatsu's plays that he had a deep understanding of theatrical language married to a desire to realistically represent contemporary events but without losing the heightened theatrical essence of the puppet theatre. This has contributed to the interest he garnered in the twentieth century. Chikamatsu proceeds to describe the importance of realism, logic and theatricality in his writing:

Some playwrights, thinking that sadness is essential to joruri, often put in words like "How sad it is!" or the lines are chanted tearfully, as in the Bunyabushi style, but that is not how I write plays. The sadness in all my plays is based entirely on reason. Since the audience will be moved when the logic of the dramatization is convincing, the more restrained the words and the chanting are, the more moving the play will be... if we duplicate a living person exactly... we will become disgusted with it. For this reason, whether painting an image or carving it in wood, there will be places where the artist takes liberties, even while copying the original form, on the grounds that it is a

fabrication; but in the end, this is what people love (quoted in Hozumi Ikan 2002: 350-351)

These are the exact sentiments found in the landmark 1703 play *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (*sonezaki shinjū*), which established the aforementioned 'new genre of theatre *sewamono* (domestic plays), based on true current events,' making ningyo joruri a truly contemporary art-form (Ueno-Herr 1995:16). *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* is the true tale of the tragic double suicide of Tobukei, a soy sauce merchant, and Ohatsu his courtesan lover. The events Chikamatsu describes took place only a month before the first performance at the Takemoto Theatre in Osaka (Keene 1998: 39). This was the start of a great canon of works that have formed the bedrock of ningyo joruri through to the present day and these texts are still performed by troupes across Japan. However, many of Chikamatsu's works fell out of favour during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially his domestic dramas, and were only readopted in the mid-twentieth century. These texts range from domestic tragedies to great historical epics to slapstick comedies but they are all firmly rooted in the contemporary culture and customs of the Edo period.

The puppets used, at this time, had developed from the small puppets used in kubi-kake performance or by Ebisu-kaki, but were still different to those used today. Woodblock prints show that one-person short-rod puppets were commonly used, possibly with the same head rocking mechanism that survives today. The première of *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* in 1703 certainly used these puppets (Ueno-Herr 1995: 17). These puppets were relatively small and held above the puppeteer's head, as in rod-puppet traditions the world-over, with the puppeteers, shamisen player and narrator partially hidden from view behind a semi-opaque cloth playboard. One-person tusme puppets, still used for minor characters in ningyo joruri, are the closest surviving descendants of these puppets.

1703 saw another major change in ningyo joruri. Whilst the performers were still hidden behind a translucent cloth playboard, the famous puppeteer, Tatsumatsu Hahirobei, performed *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* with his face uncovered. This started the practice of visible manipulation where especially skilled, lead performers dress in formal kimono (*dezuaki*) rather than the black clothes and headgear puppeteers usually wore (Leiter 2006: 71). Two years later the puppeteers, narrators and shamisen players completely dispensed with the playboard and all started to perform in full view of the audience (*degatari*) (Noma 1996: 65; Adachi 1985: 5; Keene 1990: 140). The Takemoto Theatre's chanters and shamisen players then moved from the back of the stage to the front stage-left corner of the stage and then, in 1728, to 'their own auxiliary stage, the *yuka*' (Adachi 1985:5; Kikukawa 2001:384).

In 1703 the Takemoto Theatre gained a new competitive rival the Toyotake Theatre founded by Toyotake Wakatayu, a chanter who originally worked at the Takemoto Theatre. This was Toyotake Wakatayu's theatre was initially unsuccessful and he was forced to close it. However, in 1706 he joined forces with renowned puppeteer Tatsumatsu Hachirobei and recruited Ki no Kaion as resident playwright (Leiter 2006: 405). The Toyotake Theatre then became an alternative and viable school in its own right. Toyotake's style of narration was strongly influenced by Takemoto Gidayu but was different enough to offer the theatre-going public of Osaka a real alternative to the Takemoto Theatre. The result was a fierce artistic rivalry between the two theatres that drove a series of rapid developments and changes in ningyo joruri over the next three decades. However, not all changes were adapted by both theatres at the same time, for example, the Toyotake Theatre only moved its chanters and shamisen players onto their own auxiliary stage in 1734 (Leiter 2006: xxxvii).

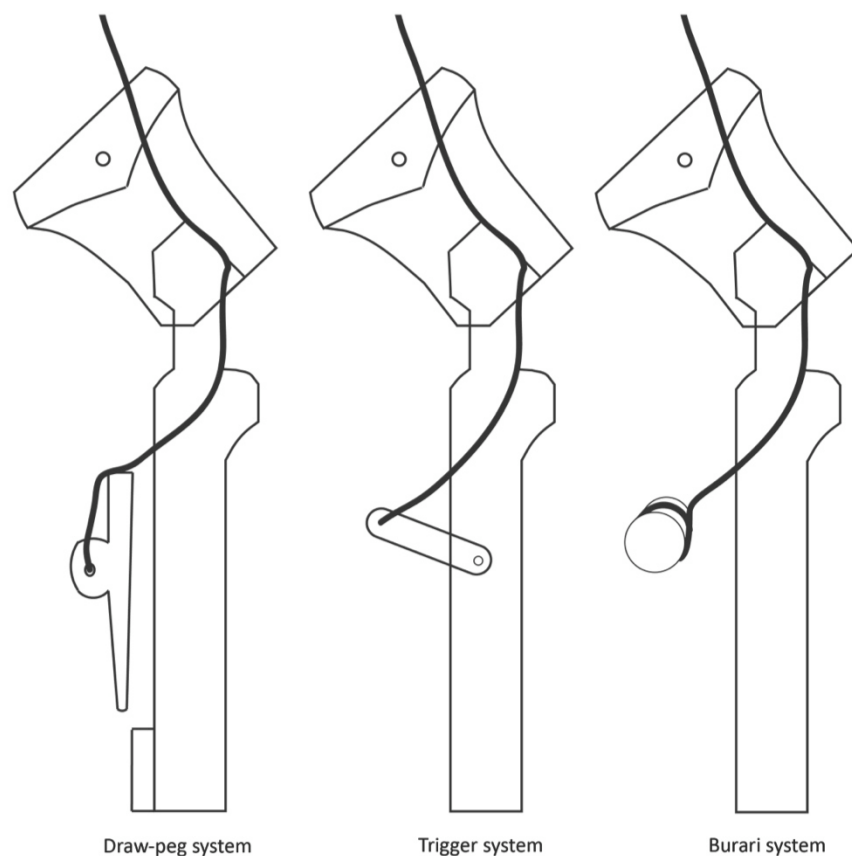
In 1705 a still teenage Takeda Izumo (1691-1756) took over the leadership of the Takemoto Theatre as Takemoto Gidayu's poor business skills had almost destroyed the theatre (Leiter 2006: 387). Under Takeda Izumo's leadership, several major technological developments took place in the Takemoto Theatre's puppets. Takeda's family ran a karakuri theatre in Osaka, the Takeda Theatre (Leiter 2006: 385; Noma 1996: 65). Karakuri shows, as discussed earlier, are displays of automata using a range of complicated mechanisms to create intricate movements. It is therefore unsurprising that under Takeda's leadership ningyo joruri puppets adopted some karakuri tricks and became increasingly technologically complicated. By 1727 they had gained eyes that opened and closed, moving mouths, articulated arms and legs and hands that could hold objects. In 1729 rolling eyes were added, in 1733 fingers were fully articulated, in 1736 eyebrows were made to move and in 1739 a more refined left-arm control was introduced (*shashigane*) (Keene 1990: 140; Adachi 1985:5; Hironaga 1976:16, Leiter 2006: xxvi). 1736 also saw puppet's size become largely fixed, based upon a puppet made by Fujii Kosaburo (Ueno-Herr 1995: 154-5). The ningyo joruri puppet's technologies were now as technically advanced as any in use today. Michiko Ueno-Herr contests whether these technologies were regularly used in the eighteenth century and it appears that simpler one-person puppets continued to be used for major characters throughout the eighteenth century (1995: 353). However, we know these technologies were widespread enough to be recorded in the 1800 book *Backstage at the Theatre (shibai gakuya zue)* by Shokosai Hanbe (active 1789-1818), which contains detailed illustrations and instructions on puppet construction. Puppet manipulation was also codified during the eighteenth century, as we know from a text found both on Awaji Island and in Tokushima Prefecture called *An introductory scroll of manipulation techniques from the oral tradition (sōkyoku nyūmon kuden kan)*, of unknown authorship but originally composed

sometime before 1790 with the Awaji copy produced for the Uemura Gennojo Theatre in 1801 (Nakanishi 2002: 220), the Tokushima version is possibly older (Kume 1988: 334). The scroll gives fifty-three short directions on puppet manipulation, such as 'It is said that the man steps forward with the left foot and the woman with the right in this there is a difference between male and female puppets' and 'When it is time for a man to stand, he should look out at the audience for a moment. This is the sign'. Whilst the origin of the scroll's composition is unknown we know the Awaji copy was inscribed in 1801 and that the scroll was previously revised in 1790 meaning its origins probably lay in the mid-eighteenth century. The re-copying of these rules in the early nineteenth century indicates that they were probably already widely spread across Japan by this point.

The development of these manipulation rules followed the technological advances of ningyo joruri puppets. These technological developments allowed for greater control and more refined mannerisms. In a way the technology demanded more refined manipulation as much as that refinement was actively sought. As a result, the Takemoto and Toyotake theatre's 'performers vied to outdo each other in skill and dramatic effect' (Adachi 1985:5). Three-person manipulation (*sanninzukai*) was probably introduced in 1734 during a performance at the Takemoto Theatre of *The White Fox of Shinoda* (*ashiya doman ouchi kagami*) written by Takeda Izumo I. Puppeteer Yoshida Bunzaburo is commonly credited with this innovation (Adachi 1985:5, Don 1974:13; Hironaga 1976: 16; Leiter 2006: xxvii). Again it is contested whether this truly marked the development of sanninzukai ningyo joruri as we know it today: there is only fragmentary documentary evidence (Ueno-Herr 1995: 347). Regardless, it is clear that from around this time Osakan puppeteers were experimenting with three-person manipulation and the puppet's construction was altered to accommodate such experiments. Puppet maker Chikamoto Kuhachiro is thought to have made new puppets specifically for Yoshida Bunzaburo's sanninzukai debut (Lleiter 2006: xxvii). This was another pivotal moment in ningyo joruri as three-person manipulation allowed for new levels of refinement and naturalism in the puppets' performance. It also caused the puppets' enlargement to their current size (roughly half to two-thirds life-size) to allow for easier manipulation.

This does not mean that different ningyo joruri theatre's technologies and techniques were or are homogenous. Just as the Takemoto and Toyotake's narration styles were markedly different so different troupes also vary in their puppets' construction and manipulation: competition created diversity not homogenisation. There are and were many differences in technology and technique between different ningyo joruri schools. Two examples of this are differences in the size of the puppet's head (*kashira*) and the trigger mechanism used for the head's tilting motion (*unazuki*). In the eighteenth century the Takemoto Theatre used the

‘draw-peg’ or ‘groove’ system (*hikisen kei*) to control the tilt of the puppet’s head (figure 12) (Nakanishi 2012:3). By contrast the rival Toyotake Theatre used the ‘trigger’ system (*chioi kei*) (figure 12). This was also used on Awaji until the early nineteenth century when Awaji puppeteers switched to the ‘burari’ system (*burari kei* lit. dangling system) that uses a rolled-up piece of thick paper (*washi*) as a toggle (see chapter 4 for fuller descriptions of these technologies). The ‘draw-peg’ system is used today by the Bunraku Theatre and the ‘trigger’ system by the Imada troupe in the Iida valley. A fourth trigger has been developed recently. Amari Yoichiro, a professional puppet maker in Tokushima, at times uses a leather loop in place of the rolled-up *washi*. Amari developed this trigger as an easier system for the amateur Nose Ningyo Joruri Theatre near Osaka.



**Figure 12 - Headgrip trigger systems**

The next thirty years are often described as ningyo joruri’s golden age when its popularity far surpassed kabuki. Many plays were written during this period by writers such as Takeda Izumo (1691-1756), Namiki Senryu (1694-1751), Miyoshi Shoraku (1695?-1770?) and Chikamatsu Hanji (1724-1784). They continued to expand the canon of ningyo joruri plays after Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s death in 1724. In particular three of the most popular ningyo joruri plays were written during this time by the acclaimed writing team, Takeda Izumo II, Namiki Senryu and Miyoshi Shoraku: *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees* (*yoshitsune sembon zakura*)

(1717), *Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy* (*sugawara denju tenarai kagami*) (1745) and *The Treasury of the Royal Retainers* (*kanadehon chusingura*) (1748) (Hironaga 1976: 388-9; Jones 1985: 9). On Awaji puppetry also blossomed. By 1741 there were thirty-eight Awaji troupes (Kikukawa 2002: 383). The most famous was of course the Uemura Gennojo Theatre. At the height of its influence Gennojo was used as a synonym for ningyo joruri in the same way Bunraku sometimes is today (Kikukawa 2001: 174). As a result many theatres in the west of Japan, in particular, called themselves Gennojo. Some survive today, for example the Sanuki Gennojo Theatre and Iyo Gennojo Theatre both near Tokushima (Kikukawa 2002: 129). Ningyo joruri also blossomed in Edo and Kyoto. During the early to mid-eighteenth century Edo ningyo joruri was stylistically dominated by gidayu. While plays were written in Edo at this time the majority of plays performed originated in Osaka (Bunzo 1989: 56). For example, following the successful debut of *Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy* in 1746, the Hizennojo Theatre of Tokyo sent 'one of its puppeteers and a narrator down to Osaka to study the performance first-hand' (Jones 1985: 1). Several Takemoto Theatre puppeteers and narrators then travelled to Edo to help the Hizennojo Theatre stage the production

In the mid-1760s this golden age ended and Osakan ningyo joruri declined, largely due to kabuki's resurgent popularity. The Toyotake Theatre stopped performing ningyo joruri in 1765 and started performing kabuki instead. The Takemoto Theatre followed suit in 1767 (Leiter 2006: xxvii; Kikukawa 2002: 384). This was partly due to the increasingly homogenous performance styles of the two theatres following the chanter Takemoto Konotayu's 1748 defection to the Toyotake Theatre after an argument with puppeteer Yoshida Bunzaburo (Leiter 2006: xxvii). Despite attempts to reopen the two theatres the tide had turned against Osakan ningyo joruri.<sup>15</sup> Kabuki once more captured the public's imagination and the Takemoto Theatre soon became a Kabuki theatre (Noma 1996: 66). Ningyo Joruri continued to be performed in smaller theatres in Osaka and more widely outside the city. The advanced technologies and techniques developed in Osaka had spread across the country (Noma 1996: 66; Keene 1990:143). In particular Edo ningyo joruri flourished in the late eighteenth century partly due to an influx of Osakan performers, following the closure of the Takemoto Theatre (Bunzo 1989:56). This precipitated a burgeoning of new plays in Edo dealing with Edo rather than the Osaka culture. Plays such as *Miracle at Yaguchi Ferry* (*shinrei yaguchi no watashi*)

---

<sup>15</sup> Both theatres jointly reopened in 1769, presenting ningyo joruri together. Later the same year the Takemoto Theatre opened by itself. The Toyotake Theatre followed suit fully reopening in 1770 but both theatres closed for good two years later (Leiter 2006: xxix)

written by Fukuchi Kigai in 1770 or *Colour Prints of Kagamiyama (kagamiyama kokyō no nishikie)* written in 1782 by Yo Yotai (Bunzo 1989: 56; Keene 1990: 190; Jones 2002: 285).

In areas such as Awaji, where puppetry was already established it seems the innovations of Osaka ningyo joruri were quickly incorporated into local performance practice. When exactly these Osakan advancements reached other centres of puppetry such as Awaji is hard to ascertain. However, we know there were active, professional puppet troupes on Awaji from the late sixteenth century and that these troupes increased in number during the eighteenth century. Many of them toured extensively during the eighteenth century including to Kyoto, Tokyo and Osaka (Awa no Bunka Kenkyukai 2007: 14). These tours provided ample opportunity to encounter the technological advances of Osaka. The Awaji troupes were well regarded nationwide, and even performed at the Imperial Palace in Kyoto (Awa no Bunka Kenkyukai 2007: 14). The 1799 manuscript *An account of the Origin of the Theatre* provides evidence of direct exchange between Osaka and Awaji in the late seventeenth century. When the Uemura Gennojo Theatre performed at Higashitomita, Tokushima Prefecture in 1693 they hired extra performers from Osaka. The troupe played to audiences of up to 3,000 people for fourteen days. Not only did the Uemura Gennojo Theatre use some Osaka-based performers they also performed Takemoto Gidayu's new joruri and six Chikamatsu Monzaemon plays including *Yoritomo Izu's Diary (yoritomo izu nikki)* (1686) and *Tsunoto of Saburo (tsunoto no saburō)* (1689) (Nakanishi 2002: 80-83; 2012: 4).

Awaji puppetry was a pre-established business. There were thirty-eight operational troupes in 1741. Some, such as the Uemura Gennojo Theatre, dated back nearly two hundred years. As these companies spent most of the year touring, it is unsurprising that when they adopted new Osakan technologies and techniques they also spread them across the country. Despite the decline in ningyo joruri's fortunes there were still twenty Awaji theatres in 1887: twenty-five troupes in total as Uemura Gennojo had five (Kikukawa 2001: 383): Awaji was a veritable puppet empire. Even in the late nineteenth-century when Osakan ningyo joruri was again starting to struggle Awaji outnumbered Osakan troupes ten to one. Figure 7 shows the wide influence of Awaji's touring troupes. Of the 148 theatres shown, seventy-seven were established under the direct influence of Awaji troupes. For example, an Awaji puppeteer founded the Kuroda Puppet Theatre in the Ina valley during the eighteenth century (Law 1997: 157; Umazume 2000: 140). The ningyo joruri performers of Awa, south of Awaji, also trace their craft back to professional Awaji troupes who brought sanninzukai to Awa in the late eighteenth century (Awa no Bunka Kenkyukai 2007: 14). The other seventy-one theatres shown in figure 7 relate to the influence of other centres of ningyo joruri such as Osaka.

Whilst Osaka was the birthplace of gidayu and the technologies and techniques of three-person manipulation it was not ningyo joruri's endpoint. Awaji troupes were vital to its distribution across Japan alongside direct transmission from Osaka to Edo and Kyoto. The prominent eighteenth-century Osakan theatres had no need to tour as they had a captive, affluent audience in the city's merchants. At the start of the eighteenth century Osaka was Japan's main trade and distribution centre with around seventy percent of the nation's wealth concentrated in this one city with '24 wholesale guilds in Osaka, compared to only 10 in Edo' (Röpke 1999: 16). As Ian Röpke points out 'The immense wealth and relative independence and freedom of Osaka's merchants created the perfect circumstance for the rise in mass culture' (1999: 17). By contrast, Awaji troupes lacked a local wealthy audience and so toured out of necessity. The larger Awaji theatres had multiple troupes so they could both tour and maintain a presence on the island (Law 1997: 150).

### **The Osaka Renaissance:**

Given ningyo joruri's proliferation on Awaji it is unsurprising that the man who started Osaka's first ningyo joruri revival was born and raised there. By the start of the nineteenth century Osakan ningyo joruri was severely depleted. However, the Takemoto and Toyotake theatres' demise had not spelt the complete annihilation of Osakan ningyo joruri. The remaining performers fragmented into smaller theatres, such as the Wakatayu Theatre, Takeda Theatre, Kita Horie Theatre, Shinchi Theatre, Higashi Theatre, and Onishi Theatre as well as performing in shrine compounds (Leiter 2006: 18; Hironaga 1976: 86, 109). All of these venues continued to present ningyo joruri, although on a far smaller scale. New plays also continued to be written in Osaka and Edo such as *The Vow of Rokusuke* (*hikosan gongen chikai ni sukedachi*) (1785) by Umeno Shitakaze and Chikamatsu Yasuzo and *Masakiyo's Loyalty* (*hachijin sugi no honjo*) (1807) by Nakamura Gyogan and Sagawa Tota (Hironaga 1976: 86, 109). When Masai Kahei moved to Osaka in 1805 to establish his furniture business he brought with him the Awaji fervour for ningyo joruri. Under his stage name Uemura Bunrakuken he started a renewed interest in joruri and later three-person puppet performance. The re-establishment of Osakan ningyo joruri did not happen overnight. As mentioned earlier Bunrakuken's hall was probably very small and only presented joruri and shamisen without puppets, but it managed to secure performances from renowned professionals and so gained a strong reputation (Ueno-Herr 1995: 18). This was not a professional theatre as it relied on the family's furniture business for financial subsidy (Ueno-Herr 1995: 18). This continued until the Shochiku Entertainment Corporation bought the theatre in 1909.



Uemura Bunrakuken died in 1810, only five years after opening his performance hall in Osaka. His son, Bunrakuken II (1783-1819), moved the hall next to the Inari Shrine and so performances became known as plays at the Inari Shrine (*inari shibai*). Bunrakuken's descendants stayed here until 1872, performing both sojoruri and ningyo joruri throughout the year, apart from a twelve-year hiatus when only sojoruri was performed. In 1868 a change in licensing laws evicted Bunrakuken's descendants from Inari but also allowed Bunrakuken IV (1812-1887),<sup>16</sup> also known as the Great Bunraku (*bunrakuo*), to build a proper theatre in Matsushima district on Osaka's outskirts (Ueno-Herr 1995: 20). The first Bunraku Theatre was born and its descendant, the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka, still bears Bunrakuken's name (Ueno-Herr 1995:20).

From this time onwards people started to refer to the ningyo joruri of the Bunraku Theatre as Bunraku. It was not yet a catch-all term for Osakan ningyo joruri as other rival companies still operated in the city, most notably the Hikoroku Theatre, formed by disgruntled ex-members of the Bunraku Theatre in 1884 (Keene 1990: 143; Ueno-Herr 1995: 21). The rivalry between these two companies forced them to refine their performance styles leading to a creative competition similar to that between the Takemoto and Toyotake theatres in the preceding century (Keene 1990: 143). The revival of Osakan ningyo joruri did not go unnoticed in Awaji. Indeed links between Awaji and Osaka were never stronger. Many Bunraku performers came from or lived on Awaji (Nakanishi 2012: 7) and during the late nineteenth century Osakan and Awaji theatres even collaborated. In 1875 the Uemura Gennojo Theatre worked with Bunraku Theatre performers to stage a new play on the edge of Dotombori in Osaka (Nakanishi 2012:7). The Uemura Gennojo Theatre clearly saw Osaka as a viable location for expansion and twice attempted to enter the Osaka marketplace by buying failed incarnations of the Hikoroku Theatre. At this stage of the nineteenth century the Uemura Gennojo Theatre still had five troupes and could easily have relocated one of them to Osaka. In 1888 the Hikoroku Theatre burnt to the ground and after several key performers' deaths the company finally disbanded in 1893 (Ueno-Herr 1995: 22). Until 1914 various incarnations of Hikoroku reappeared under the names Inari Theatre, Meiraku Theatre, Horie Theatre and Chikamatsu Theatre. When the Inari Theatre closed in 1898 the Uemura Gennojo Theatre made its first move to enter the Osaka market. However, its attempt to buy the Inari Theatre fell through, possibly following the Bunraku Theatre's intervention. The Uemura Gennojo Theatre tried again in 1902, attempting to buy the Meiraku Theatre, but again the deal fell through (Nakanishi 2012: 7). However,

---

<sup>16</sup> Bunrakuken IV was Bunrakuken II's adopted son. Bunrakuken II's biological son, Bunrakuken III, was deliberately overlooked (Ueno-Herr 1995:19).

although the Uemura Gennojo Theatre wanted to be in Osaka the climate there was becoming increasingly difficult for ningyo joruri as audiences were again drawn away by kabuki. All of the Hikoroku Theatre's derivations struggled financially, as did the Bunraku Theatre. For years the Bunraku Theatre was propped up by the family's furniture business. However, following Bunrakuken V (1841?-90) and VI's (1869-1915) disastrous mismanagement of the theatre and the furniture business, the company ran into trouble (Ueno-Herr 1995: 24). By 1909 Bunrakuken's descendants could carry on no longer and the theatre was sold to the Shochiku Entertainment Corporation (Adachi 1985: 6; Keene 1990: 140).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offered some new and contemporary performance opportunities for ningyo joruri. In 1885 the Kobayashi Rokutayu-za of Awaji performed *A True Account of the Kagoshima War* in Tokyo, an account of the bombardment of Kagoshima by the British in 1863. This reportage theatre continued during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) with the Awaji Gennojo Theatre performing *Russo-Japanese War Chronicle* at the Chitose Theatre in Kobe in 1906 (Kikukawa 2002: 387). Then, during World War II, the Bunraku Theatre became part of the state's propaganda machine performing a series of nationalistic plays starting with *Three Glorious Human Bombs* in 1932 (revived 1940). At least ten new shows were produced before 1945 with such catchy titles as *Departing for The Front* (1941, revived 1942), *Invigorating National Prestige* (1942) and *Spirit of Brave Wild Eagle Pilots* (1944) (Brandon 2009: 391).

### **The Downfall of Ningyo Joruri and the Rise of Bunraku:**

Following the Chikamatsu Theatre's closure in 1914 Bunraku started to become a by-word for Osakan ningyo joruri simply because the Bunraku Theatre was the only remaining company in Osaka. It is worth stressing that Bunraku only became the name for Osakan ningyo joruri. When Bunrakuken VI opened the first Bunraku Theatre in 1872 there were still twenty active troupes on Awaji and many more in other parts of the country (Law 1997: 150). As with the Osakan ningyo joruri theatres, the Awaji troupes started to decline towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, compared with Osaka they were multitudinous. After the 1909 take-over, Bunraku was only ever a loss-making venture for the Shochiku Company. By contrast, there were still seven professional Awaji troupes in 1926. Sadly these were all but obliterated by World War II (Law 1997: 163).

The early twentieth century was not good to Awaji or Osakan ningyo joruri. A fire in 1926 destroyed the Bunraku Theatre, which since 1917 had been in the precincts of the Goryo

Shrine, and many of the company's antique puppet heads (Keene 1990:144). In 1945, as World War II drew to a close, the rebuilt Bunraku Theatre, now based in Yotsubashi, and the company's remaining puppets were destroyed in bombing raids (Boyd 1986: 19; Keene 1990:143). A similar fate befell the Uemura Gennojo Theatre. During a bombing raid in 1945 it lost all its puppets, sets, props and costumes that burnt inside the company's theatre in Tokushima, where the group had moved in 1920 (Kikukawa 2002: 387). The post-war years were difficult as many ningyo joruri performers were killed or physically weakened during the war (Boyd 1986:24). Ningyo joruri troupes were also troubled by censorship from the occupying American forces and in urban Osaka the rise of the labour unions led to a split in the Bunraku Theatre, in 1948, over pay and work conditions and the establishment of two rival companies: the Shochiku controlled Chinamikai troupe and the independent Mitsuwakai troupe (Boyd 1986: 38).

Yet despite these setbacks, by 1963 the Bunraku Theatre was being heralded as one of Japan's great traditional, classical theatre arts, alongside kabuki and noh. The Bunraku Association had been established and large sums of government funding were being poured into the reunited Bunraku Theatre (Hironaga 1976: 23; Adachi 1985:6; Boyd 1986: 104). This repositioning of the Bunraku Theatre elicited the second great revival of Osaka ningyo joruri and established the Bunraku Theatre's dominance.

Both Patricia Pringle and Julianne Boyd have eloquently written about the Bunraku Theatre during this period of transition in their PhD dissertations and subsequent work.<sup>17</sup> Their research offers insight into the remarkable turnaround in the Bunraku Theatre's status and fortunes during this time. At the start of the century the theatre, still owned and run by the Uemura family, was nearly bankrupt leading to the sale of the theatre to the Shochiku Entertainment Corporation in 1909. It was Shochiku who largely facilitated this dramatic change in the theatre's standing in Japanese society.

Unlike the Uemura family, Shochiku tried to run the Bunraku Theatre for profit. However, this proved impossible. Industrialisation and its more rigid work schedules meant fewer people could attend performances, which ran from ten in the morning until late in the evening (Boyd 1986: 10). Cinema and shingeki also dragged audiences away and the retirement of many older and well-loved performers compounded these problems (Boyd 1986: 9). As a result, Shochiku, run by twin brothers Shirai Matsujiro and Otani Takejiro, started to look to the

---

<sup>17</sup> See Pringle 1999 & 2009 and Boyd 1986.

government to make up the shortfall (Pringle 1999: 202). Shirai, in particular, took it upon himself to promote and further the Bunraku Theatre's reputation and standing in Japanese society in order to gain government subsidy.

The Bunraku Theatre's elevation in Japanese society was no mean feat. At the start of the century the theatre was incredibly localised to Osaka. The ruling classes were far away in Tokyo and largely ignorant of the Bunraku Theatre and ningyo joruri more broadly, which was considered a popular art form 'patronized for its entertainment value alone' (Pringle 1999: 172). Shirai was clever in his development of the Bunraku Theatre and played a very long game investing his time and money in the infrastructure and framing of the company. When the old Goryo Bunraku Theatre burnt down in 1926, Shirai boldly decided to build a modern, Western-style concrete theatre, seating 850 in Yotsubashi (Pringle 1999: 75). This was a marked change from the dingy, dirty Goryo Bunraku Theatre and finally made the Bunraku Theatre a place that guests of note could be invited. When the Yotsubashi Bunraku Theatre opened in 1930 there was also a new rhetoric surrounding the theatre. In publicity materials Shochiku stated that it 'had built the Yotsubashi theatre as a museum to preserve Bunraku' (Pringle 1999: 77). Shirai was setting up the idea that Bunraku was something that needed to be preserved, an art form of enough standing and tradition to warrant institutionalised protection. This rhetoric was enhanced by an increased interest in ningyo joruri and especially the literary merit of Chikamatsu Monzaemon by academics. This attention allowed the Bunraku Theatre to start to 'transition from popular to classic culture' (Pringle 1999: 172).

Shirai set about raising awareness of the Bunraku Theatre in all sections of society. Whilst the Yotsubashi theatre was being built Shochiku made the Bunraku Theatre undertake national tours that greatly 'enhanced national awareness' (Pringle 1999: 75; Ortolani 1995: 227). From the mid 1920's Shirai started courting and lobbying people of influence, who could benefit the theatre's standing both within Japan and globally. Government officials (including military leaders), the social elite of Tokyo and foreign dignitaries were all entertained (Pringle 1999: 83). Shirai also masterminded a shift in the patronage of the theatre from local Osaka businessmen to Tokyo's social elite, whose greatest gift to the theatre was not money but 'the exertion of their influence with the pre-war Japanese Government. They showed the government and the military that supporting Bunraku was useful to the country's political agenda' (Pringle 1999: 203).

Before the completion of the Yotsubashi theatre Shirai organised private performances for court nobility and gala performances for invited foreign audiences in western-style theatres (Pringle 1999: 86). Shirai went to great lengths to bring foreign visitors to the Bunraku Theatre

hoping 'that international admiration for Bunraku would cause a re-evaluation for the art within Japan itself' (Pringle 1999: 84). The decision to rebuild the Bunraku Theatre was in part inspired by the enthusiasm of foreign visitors. Paul Claudel, in particular, pleaded with Shirai to rebuild and Shirai 'was particularly pleased by Claudel's evaluation of Bunraku as "equal to Noh in mysterious dramatic impact"' (Pringle 1999: 90).

Shirai's attempts to ingratiate the Bunraku Theatre with the Japanese establishment fitted well with Japan's increasing militarism as 'The militarists aligned themselves with Japan's past glories, with both its military and artistic successes. They advocated a return to all things purely Japanese, including the traditional art forms. Bunraku was no exception' (Boyd 1986: 11). This desire to glorify and preserve the past had started in the late nineteenth century. In 1897 The Meiji government introduced the system of National Treasures (*kohuhō*) for tangible artefacts (Conant 2006: 16). Whilst this did not include intangible art forms it marks a shift towards a desire to preserve the Japan of the past that Shochiku could tap into.

Shirai's courting of dignitaries and careful framing of the Bunraku Theatre paid off. In 1931 lobbying by members of the Tokyo elite persuaded the Ministry of Education to subsidize the Bunraku Theatre's school performances on the basis that 'history plays would provide guidance to moral and patriotic conduct for Japan's youth' (Pringle 1999: 162).<sup>18</sup> Following this, in 1933, the Diet passed a bill calling for the preservation and subsidization of the Bunraku Theatre (Boyd 1986:13; Leiter 2006: xl). In 1935, Shirai and his brother Otani also persuaded the Ministry of Education to fund regular Bunraku performances as they aligned with 'patriotic notions of "national purity" and "traditional Japanese values of loyalty and sacrifice"' (Pringle 1999: 80; Boyd 1986: 13).

As the war escalated so did the Bunraku Theatre's involvement with the military and the government. As well as performing new propaganda plays the theatre started 'offering group performances for active-duty soldiers, and benefit performances for the families of war dead' (Pringle 1999: 80). In 1935 Shochiku also sent a group of its top performers to Manchuria to entertain the Japanese troops (Boyd 1986: 14; Ashmore 2005).

As mentioned earlier, the end of the war brought disaster for the Bunraku Theatre with the 1945 bombing of the Yotsubashi theatre. After the war, the Bunraku Theatre could easily have

---

<sup>18</sup> As a condition of this funding the Ministry of Education wanted new productions extolling the virtues of a modern militaristic Japan. This was the start of the wartime propaganda plays with *Three Glorious Human Bombs* debuting in 1932 and becoming a regular feature of school performances (Pringle 1999: 78).

faded into oblivion. However, Shochiku had successfully lodged the Bunraku Theatre in the minds of the nation and the world. On July 11<sup>th</sup> 1945 the Bunraku Theatre held a comeback performance at the Asahi Hall in Osaka (Boyd 1986: 23). The performance was a great success with the public as the 'microcosmic view of feudal life which Bunraku offered was a refreshing change from the destroyed city that surrounded them; it allowed their thoughts to wander back to the eighteenth century and see Japan at the height of her glory' (Boyd 1986: 24). With the end of the war Shochiku rushed to rebuild the Yostubashi Bunraku Theatre. Shirai and Otani's desire to rebuild the Bunraku Theatre demonstrates the importance it now held for the brothers, and Japan, as a symbol of Japan's great past. As James Brandon points out 'Otani had the foresight to see that traditional culture could be the immovable rock to which the Japanese might cling' (Brandon 2006: 8).

In hindsight, Shochiku's willingness to financially support the Bunraku Theatre in this troubled time was all that kept it from extinction. However, Shochiku gave the theatre more than money. Shirai's pre-war and wartime lobbying now paid dividends. In June 1947 the emperor attended the Bunraku Theatre for the first time (Boyd 1986: 29, Leiter 2006: 353). Whilst Shochiku successfully courted many other officials before the war, including members of the royal family, the emperor was always out of reach. The emperor's visit was both a sign of a more humble and accessible emperor and a great social boost for the Bunraku Theatre. As the narrator Takemoto Tsudayū IV said 'Bunraku was reborn as a dignified traditional theatre. I could not imagine such a thing before the war' (in Pringle 2009: 196).

The official preservation of Japanese culture, started in the late nineteenth century, gained a new fervour in the post war climate. In 1950 the cultural properties protection law (*bunkazai hogo hō*) was passed (Lawrence 2011: 127). The law had bold aims - 'to preserve and utilize cultural properties, so that the culture of the Japanese people may be furthered and a contribution be made to world cultural understanding' (in Coaldrake 1997: 139). This rhetoric led to the use of perceived traditional culture as cultural diplomats in the second half of the twentieth century (see chapter 5). Following this, in 1954, the government created the designation Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties (*juyo mukei bunzokazai hojisha*), which came to be known colloquially as Living National Treasures (*ningen kokuhō*) (Coaldrake 1997: 140). This law recognises both individuals and groups as guardians of important cultural knowledge. Thanks to the careful lobbying and positioning of Shochiku, in 1955 the Bunraku Theatre became the first traditional performing art to be designated an important cultural property (Thornbury 2001: 219). This new recognition excused the Bunraku Theatre from paying tax (Havens 1982: 67). The same year, three Bunraku Theatre performers were also individually recognised as Living National Treasures: Takemoto Sumitayu VI (1886-1959),

Toyotake Yamashironoshojo (1878-1967) and Takemoto Tsunatayū VIII (1904-1969). Such accolades are great reputational boosts for performers and the theatres they work for and have provided another way for members of the Bunraku Theatre to gain establishment recognition and national fame.

However, the 1955 tax break was not enough for Shochiku which was still battling with the fragmentation of the Bunraku Theatre into the Chinamikai and Mitsuwakai troupes<sup>19</sup> and in 1962, only a few months before the Bunraku Theatre left for its first foreign tour to the USA, Shochiku announced it was giving up the management of the theatre. This had little impact on the Bunraku Theatre as plans for its protection were already in place. The government was committed to protecting it and the new National Theatre in Tokyo, with a dedicated performance space for ningyo joruri was being planned (Thornbury 2001: 219). The USA tour also helped reunite the theatre and in 1963 control of the reunited Bunraku Theatre passed to the newly established Bunraku Association, with considerable financial backing from the state (Hironaga 1976: 23; Adachi 1985:6; Boyd 1986: 104). This absorption of the Bunraku Theatre into the establishment was furthered in 1966 with the opening of the National Theatre in Tokyo. The National Theatre is run by the Japan Arts Council part of the Ministry of Education, the same ministry that Shochiku had successfully courted earlier in the century. In Osaka the Bunraku Theatre was housed in the Asahi theatre until 1984 when it moved into a custom built venue – the National Bunraku Theatre (Adachi 1985: 6). High levels of government funding and the establishment of the Bunraku Theatre as an important cultural property hugely helped the struggling Bunraku Theatre become the world famous troupe it is today. However without Shochiku's backing and determined advocacy the Bunraku Theatre would almost certainly have suffered a similar fate to Japan's hundreds of other ningyo joruri theatres: near or complete annihilation.

Awaji ningyo joruri was also resurrected after World War II. At the war's end there were still, in theory, five puppet troupes on the island but with few remaining performers. The re-establishment of Awaji ningyo joruri meant merging these theatres' resources and was driven by the enthusiasm of one man, Umazume Masaru, who cycled around the island gathering a troupe of performers from survivors of the war (Law 1997: 205). He was partly driven by an invitation to perform in Moscow and Leningrad that was extended to Awaji ningyo joruri by the director of the National Museum of Moscow (Law 1997: 204). The tour took place in 1958

---

<sup>19</sup> See Boyd 1986 and Pringle 2009 for more information on this turbulent time in the Bunraku Theatre's history.

under the banner of the Awaji Gennojo Theatre and was in fact the first foreign tour by any ningyo joruri troupe, pre-dating the Bunraku Theatre's first foreign tour, to the USA, by four years.<sup>20</sup>

Awaji ningyo joruri's revival has also received help from the state through small loans and grants from the National Theatre in Tokyo and local government. In 1976 it was formally designated an 'important intangible folk-cultural property (*juyo mukei minzoku bunkazai*)' by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Law 1997: 206). This acknowledgement supplies a small amount of funding to the theatre. It is notable that the Agency for Cultural Affairs actively sought to define Awaji ningyo joruri as different to Bunraku: part of 'folk-cultural' heritage not just 'cultural' heritage.



**Figure 13 - The logo of Yoshida Denjiro on the proscenium curtain of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

The current theatre is seen as a continuation of the Yoshida Denjiro Theatre Yoshida Denjiro's logo is emblazoned across the theatre (see figure 13) as some sort of invocation to the past of Awaji ningyo joruri. According to Jane-Marie Law the theatre had over thirty full-time paid performers in 1997 (1997: 207). When I visited the theatre in 2011 they only had eighteen and

---

<sup>20</sup> The Shochiku owned Bunraku Theatre had actually toured to China during World War II but they only played to the Japanese troupes (see Ashmore 2005). So the 1958 Awaji tour to Russia was the first time ningyo joruri was seen outside of Japan by a foreign audience.



the theatre's managers were not happy with the levels of funding they were receiving. When I returned in 2013 they had moved to a new theatre, for which they had attained a large amount of local government funding, and their numbers had risen to twenty-two including two new trainee chanters and one new trainee puppeteer, their first female puppeteer in recent history.<sup>21</sup> The theatre is still going strong thanks to international tours and the performance of a thirty-minute section of *The Courtesan of Naruto* (*keisei awa no naruto*) five times a day for passing tour groups. The theatre also stages full-length productions throughout the year but it earns its bread and butter from the daily bouts of *The Courtesan of Naruto*. Given the disparity in funding levels between the Bunraku Theatre and the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre it is unsurprising the Awaji theatre cannot afford to stage as many full length shows. However, their performance level can be very high. It would be very interesting to see what would happen to Awaji ningyo joruri if it were given the same financial and logistical aid. Many other ningyo joruri troupes still operate all over Japan today. There is no uniformity between these groups in either style or ability and apart from the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and the Bunraku Theatre they are all amateur, community groups.

## **Conclusion:**

It is clear from this history that the Bunraku Theatre is not the limit of ningyo joruri's story and there is an inherent problem in reducing it to Bunraku alone. The vibrancy of ningyo joruri's development and the many companies that have contributed to its history are too frequently sidelined, ignored and subsumed into the history of the Bunraku Theatre. Part of this Bunraku-centricity is the assumption that the Bunraku Theatre is the final evolution of ningyo joruri or Japanese puppetry in general and therefore it is acceptable to frame all discussions of Japanese puppetry as the history of Bunraku, even when discussing Japanese puppetry prior to the 1872 establishment of the first Bunraku Theatre. This is a reductive way of considering the diversity of Japanese puppetry based upon a mono-directional understanding of development and change. Genealogy is a bad analogy for the development of an art form. Ancestors are by definition outlived by their descendants. With this thinking new joruri supersedes old joruri. In reality old joruri continued and survives today in places such as Sado island. In the same way Masei Kahei's move to Osaka in the early nineteenth century did not signal the end of the relevance of Awaji ningyo joruri or any other centres of ningyo joruri. This narrative of descent

---

<sup>21</sup> Unlike the Bunraku Theatre the Awaji troupes employed women, primarily as chanters and shamisen players but also at times as puppeteers.

is also inversely manipulated in the contemporary context by those who seek contemporary relevance by describing themselves as the ancestors of Bunraku. This is seen in the 'geography of value' that Jane Marie Law suggests the contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatres claims through emphasising Awaji puppets as the ancestors of the Bunraku Theatre: 'Awaji puppets... are to Bunraku puppets what ancestors are to those of us in the modern period – our true selves, less sophisticated, dead, but participating in a reality that we moderns can only approximate' (Law 1997: 229) i.e. association with the nationalised Bunraku Theatre is kudos enough that it is worth Awaji ningyo joruri essentialising itself as the 'less sophisticated' ancestor of the Bunraku Theatre. This is only partially true. As much as the contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre is keen to emphasise that Bunraku comes from Awaji, the theatre also goes to great lengths to stress that Awaji ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre are equals. As Masai Yoshinori, the chair of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Association, told me in 2013 'Awaji ningyo joruri and Bunraku are both of a high level. The three skills of movement, shamisen and narration are the same'. For many contemporary companies such Bunraku-centric way of thinking has had very damaging results. Following the destruction of World War II only the Bunraku Theatre was given significant support and funding to recover quickly and fully. The other major theatres of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, in particular the Uemura Gennojo Theatre, simply faded into oblivion following the destruction of their puppets, performers and livelihoods.

It has been shown that Bunraku is only one part of the bigger story of ningyo joruri. All the elements of ningyo joruri (chanted narration, shamisen music and the technologies and techniques of three-person puppet manipulation) were firmly in place before Uemura Bunrakuken arrived in Osaka and widespread across Japan. The developments that took place during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were very much the result of multiple ningyo joruri troupes including the Hikoroku Theatre, the Bunraku Theatre and the Uemura Gennojo Theatre amongst others. The present day use of Bunrakuken's name for the ningyo joruri of Osaka is a reflection of the successful revival his family brought to Osakan ningyo joruri and testament to the careful management and Bunraku evangelism of Shochiku between 1909 and 1963. However, the name extends no further than the confines of the Bunraku Theatre. If another ningyo joruri troupe set up shop in Osaka they would be no more Bunraku than the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company..So it seems clear that Bunraku is ningyo joruri, but ningyo joruri is not just Bunraku.

Thanks to high levels of funding and the dedication of the artists, both past and present, the Bunraku Theatre is perhaps the finest example of ningyo joruri in the world today. Thanks to Shochiku's efforts and multiple, government funded, international tours it is now a globally

recognised theatrical treasure, leading to UNESCO proclaiming it part of 'World Intangible Cultural Heritage' in 2003 (Sasaguchi 2004). However, it is unfair on the many other ningyo joruri companies to deny them their identity and subsume them into Bunraku as it is equally unfair to the Bunraku Theatre to directly equate all other ningyo joruri troupes, most of which are amateur, with its high level of performance skill.

## Chapter 4 – The Atoms of Ningyo Joruri

### Introduction:

Whilst we have dealt with ningyo joruri's history and development, primarily to demonstrate its plurality, we have yet to discuss its technologies and techniques in detail. Understanding some of the art form's formal features is essential for our discussion of 'Bunraku-style' puppets. In particular we must analyse the three-person puppet that is primarily used in contemporary ningyo joruri. Whilst ningyo joruri is a drama of threes, or 'shifting triangles' as Barbara Curtis Adachi terms it (1992: 42), where the three components of puppets, chanted narration and shamisen are interwoven, feeding each other and shifting the performance's focus between them, it is the triad of the three-person puppet that contemporary 'Bunraku-style' puppets primarily claim a connection with and which will be the main focus of this section. The broader staging of ningyo joruri will also be discussed but the finer technical points of joruri and shamisen performance will not. This discussion focuses on the contemporary ningyo joruri of Awaji. This is primarily because Bunraku Theatre's contemporary practice is comparatively well documented. Barbara Curtis Adachi's *The Voices and Hands of Bunraku* (1978) and the updated version *Backstage at Bunraku* (1985) offer insight into the Bunraku Theatre's working practices in the 1970s and 1980s. Michiko Ueno-Herr's 1995 thesis *Masters, Disciples, and the Art of the Bunraku Puppeteer's Performance*, provides a wealth of information on the Bunraku Theatre past and present, its performance practice and puppets. No equivalent study exists of any other ningyo joruri theatres in the English-language literature. There is not space in this thesis to provide the same level of detail about Awaji ningyo joruri's performance practice as Ueno-Herr does for the Bunraku Theatre (that was after all the primary focus of her research). Also to do so would cover much of the same ground. Although ningyo joruri is diverse, at the foundations of all these variants is fundamentally the same performance practice. Instead this chapter aims to introduce the formal features of ningyo joruri from the perspective of contemporary Awaji practice both in the professional Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and in the wider community, as much a part of Awaji ningyo joruri as the professional theatre. The technologies and techniques of the three-person puppet will be introduced focussing on points where Awaji ningyo joruri differs from other ningyo joruri as well as giving enough information on shared features to facilitate later discussions. The secondary reason for focussing on Awaji ningyo joruri is that, in an echo of its role in spreading ningyo joruri across Japan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it has been equally important to the international spread of ningyo joruri in the twentieth, although it is frequently received as 'Bunraku'. As is discussed in chapter 5 the few performers from

Europe and North America who have travelled to Japan to study ningyo joruri have almost exclusively done so at the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre. Further the Awaji Gennojo Theatre's 1958 tour to Moscow and St. Petersburg contributed to a broader shift in European puppetry in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is important to see this study, alongside Adachi's and Ueno-Herr's, as studies of contemporary theatres. Although it is partially possible to compare current performance practice with that of the recent past through individuals' recollections, videos and photographs, these are imperfect and limited resources. Once we go back further in time the available information gets increasingly vague. As a result, when we talk about the performance of ningyo joruri we can only discuss its modern enunciations with any certainty. The specific performance practices of the nineteenth century Uemura Gennojo and Bunraku troupes, for example, are lost to us beyond the few morsels of imperfect information that survive in written and pictorial record. Failure to assert the contemporary nature of these theatres leads to an essentialised understanding of 'Japan's living theatres' (Ingrams 2005:10) and Japan as 'the world's greatest museum of theatrical entertainment' (Keene 1971: 8) where supposedly what we see today is what was 'originally performed...by the family that originally performed it' (Ingrams 2005: 10). As previously discussed, ningyo joruri is a tradition of continued revival and redevelopment rather than unbroken lineage. Although some idea of ningyo joruri has been passed down since the late sixteenth century, inevitably what exists today is radically different. By assuming the past is accurately reflected in the present it is very easy to over privilege contemporary theatres in the historical record, as happened with the Bunraku Theatre in twentieth century.

The image of the atomised puppet discussed in chapter 2, is particularly appropriate for the discussion of the technologies and techniques of ningyo joruri where each character is fractured between the puppeteers, the narrator and the shamisen player and the puppet itself is fractured between three manipulators. Further, the puppets are modular and continually broken down and reassembled in different combinations. This did not escape Jurkowski and he discussed the Bunraku Theatre in his original exploration of atomisation (2013: 96). As discussed in chapter 2 the framing of the puppet's atoms is as important as the intrinsic signification of those atoms and therefore dictates how they are read. This is just as true in ningyo joruri as in contemporary 'Bunraku-style' puppets and the atoms of ningyo joruri are frequently framed as signifiers of Bunraku alone. This chapter seeks to show that the formal characteristics of ningyo joruri are largely universal to the art form rather than theatre specific.

## Watch and Learn:

Standing in a drab 1960s school building in rural Japan on a cold February afternoon I suddenly remember how unusual it is for school students to gather daily after lessons and study puppetry let alone the heavy and highly complex three-person puppets of ningyo joruri. The school is Nandan Junior High School, perched on the south end of Awaji island. My habituation to seeing fifty plus children studying the three constituent parts of ningyo joruri: shamisen, chanted narration and three-person puppet manipulation, results from spending several weeks on Awaji both with amateur groups, such as this, and the professional Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, a short drive from Nandan in the sleepy town of Fukura. In addition to the Nandan Junior High School group there are two other similar ningyo joruri clubs in Mihara High School and Mihara Junior High School, as well as the independent Young People's Ningyo Joruri Group. Each of these has sizeable collections of puppet heads, arms, legs, clothes, scenery and other essential elements for the staging of ningyo joruri such as the stage clogs (*butai geta*) worn by the lead puppeteer (*omozukai*). All, except Nandan Junior High, have their own, custom-built ningyo joruri rehearsal and performance space. There is also a group for former students who meet one night a week in Mihara Junior High School as well as three amateur puppet-making groups on the island, members of which make and repair puppets for the school groups, other amateur ningyo joruri theatres across Japan and even, on occasion, for the professional Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre. These puppet makers are older members of the community. Some have made puppets for years others take it up as a hobby, and sometimes an obsession, in retirement: people 'who "need something to do with their hands"' (Law 2010:121). The total number of islanders actively involved in the performance and manufacture of ningyo joruri numbers over two hundred, not including the many people who perform extracts of joruri in danjiri uta.<sup>22</sup>

Awaji ningyo joruri is exceptional in its current level of community involvement but far from alone. During my two research trips to Japan in the course of my PhD studies I saw similar examples of community involvement in the Imada and Kuroda Ningyo Joruri Theatres, Nagano prefecture, the Awa Ningyo Joruri Theatre, Tokushima Prefecture and the Nose Ningyo Joruri Theatre, Osaka Prefecture. However, the training method deployed in Nandan makes me pause. The students, in groups of three, stand in front of televisions watching videos of the play they are learning. They watch a section, pause the video, try to mimic the performance,

---

<sup>22</sup> Danjiri uta (festival float songs), also called 'bits of joruri' (*jōruri kuzushi*), is the performance of extracts of joruri to musical arrangements either in a concert setting or during festivals.

sometimes in front of a mirror, analyse their success amongst themselves, rewind the video and start the process again. Some of these videos show professional performances from the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre but many are videos of past performances by the Awaji school groups recorded over the last twenty years or so since the advent of affordable domestic video cameras. External analysis of the students' rehearsals is minimal. The professional puppeteers of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre only visit the school groups to offer instruction and critical feedback roughly once a month. The teachers that run the groups are not trained performers. The result is that the majority of the students' training comes from their own observations and discoveries.



**Figure 14 - Nandan Junior High School students rehearsing**

Shortly after my afternoon in Nandan Junior High School I find myself backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre watching a video of the Bunraku Theatre performing *The Courtesan of Naruto* (*keiesi awa no naruto*). The performance was recorded in late 2012 when the Bunraku Theatre came to Awaji to celebrate the opening of the new Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre on the dockside in Fukura, an event shamisen player Tsuruzawa Tomoshige described to me as Bunraku 'coming home', displaying the strong 'geography of value' (Law 1997: 228) Awaji's inhabitants enact through their frequent pronouncements that Bunraku came from Awaji.<sup>23</sup> *The Courtesan of Naruto* was originally written in Osaka in 1768 for the Takemoto Theatre by

---

<sup>23</sup> As discussed in chapter 3 this claim is entirely true, in the sense that Uemura Bunrakuken came from Awaji. What this statement fails to say is that sanninzukai ningyo joruri originally came from Osaka. However, Awaji residents are more concerned with claiming authority for contemporary Awaji ningyo joruri by association with the more famous Bunraku Theatre, than strict historical veracity.

Chikamatsu Hanji, Takemoto Saburobei, Yoshida Heizo and others (Hironaga 1976: 229). However, due to its setting in Naruto (a city immediately across the Naruto straits from the south end of Awaji Island) it has become synonymous with Awaji and Tokushima ningyo joruri.<sup>24</sup> Whilst watching the video it soon transpires that the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's performers are watching the DVD for the same reason as the Nandan Junior High School students: to learn through observation.

Of course, the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's performers have a different relationship with the video than the school students. They are well-trained professionals, skilled performers with a deep knowledge of their craft. As a result they watch with a more critical, analytical eye. This was clearly demonstrated on another occasion when the assembled puppeteers, watching a different video of the Bunraku Theatre, burst out laughing. I ask why and they say that one of the Bunraku puppeteers made a mistake. The hilarity they find in this moment is a direct result of the differential statuses of the two theatres: it is always funny to see those of a more elevated status fail. As a less informed observer the 'mistake' passed me by. However, it served to highlight that as well as being an instructional tool, the codification of performance in video can also serve to replicate errors, and potentially over privilege the performances and troupes that happen to be videoed. Alongside DVDs, the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre also uses YouTube videos, audio recordings of joruri and photographic books as reference and instructional material, again primarily of the Bunraku Theatre.

Back in Nandan Junior High School, as I observe groups of students in a continuum of watching, manipulating, rewinding, watching, I realise I am witnessing a series of complex, interconnected semiotic relationships that throw up a range of questions about the genealogy, authenticity and authority of ningyo joruri, what place it has in the contemporary world and what shape it might take in the future. As videos and books increasingly become authenticated repositories of the atoms of ningyo joruri and so sources of knowledge for training whilst also becoming more available to those outside the immediate circle of, what Anthony Giddens calls, the authenticated 'guardians' of the tradition (1994:79) can and should the outsider make a claim to this 'authenticated' knowledge? Throughout my time on Awaji my introduction to local ningyo joruri practice is repeatedly framed by both professionals and

---

<sup>24</sup> In particular the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene (*junreiuta dan*). The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre have for decades performed this twenty minute scene up to five times a day for groups of tourists who want to see Awaji puppetry, which for them means this one scene (Law 1997: 225). Currently the theatre performs five times a day at 10.00, 11.00, 13.00, 14.00 and 15.00, everyday of the week except Wednesday. Jane-Marie Law offers an excellent discussion on why this particular scene became integral to the Awaji puppetry revival (1997: 221-6).



amateurs seeking to expand their craft through what might be seen as ‘untraditional’ means, often to great effect. What implications do these training methods have for the dispersion of ningyo joruri within in Japan and, more pertinent to this study, abroad? If the inhabitants of Awaji can learn much of their art from videos and books could not the ‘Bunraku-style’ artists of Europe and North America have done the same?



Figure 15 - Nandan Junior High School Students rehearsing in time with a video

### Steal the Art:

Although the use of video seems alien to pre-modern performance forms, ‘learning through observation’ has a strong precedent in ningyo joruri as a way of transmitting the atoms of the form. In her 1995 thesis Michiko Ueno-Herr outlines four basic thematic principles found in early twentieth century Bunraku Theatre training: 1. ‘Learning from observation’ (*mite oboeru*).’ (81); 2. ‘The stage as the place of training (*butai ga shugyo*)’ (84); 3. ‘Learning in the body (*karada de oboeru*)’ (92); 4. ‘Steal the art (*gei o nusumu*)’ (95). Ueno-Herr explains in detail how these practices were utilised through reference to accounts given by performers who grew up with this system. In essence the principles at play here are:

1. The student will not receive direct instruction from his/her superiors but must learn the routines and methods of the company's performance through observation of his/her elders performing.
2. The student learns on stage both by watching the performance of others and by receiving critical feedback from his/her superiors when the student is part of the performance.
3. There is 'no single "right" way to manipulate a puppet' (Ueno-Herr 1995: 95) as a result the student must discover his/her method of manipulation and refine it according to the critical feedback s/he receives. The student's methods are refined through critical feedback to a point where techniques are deeply ingrained in the student's body through kinaesthetic rather than intellectual learning.
4. The student will not receive direct tuition so must 'steal' instruction, knowledge and opportunities to practice from any sources available.

In many ways, the use of videos and books in contemporary Awaji ningyo joruri training and rehearsal, is a continuation of these four ideas. The students in Nandan Junior High primarily learn through observation, stealing the art from the recordings they watch, and discovering their own methods of manipulation through kinaesthetic experimentation that enable them to recreate the performance. Rather than being a creatively inert experience, learning through observation and imitation requires strong creative independence as every method and move must be devised through experimentation and the best version discovered through experience, leading to more refined experimentation, rather than didactic instruction. This requires the student to be creatively engaged in order to discover techniques that produce similar enough results to those observed but that may differ in the particularities of method. In short the student replicates the Benjaminian 'aura' (1968: 221) of the performance more than the exact technique, which varies from puppeteer to puppeteer and performance to performance.

Obviously there is a trade-off between learning through observing live performance and watching a video. Video presents a limited view of a performance, defined by the camera(s) framing and the edit. However, it can be easily repeated multiple times. Observing live performance is also limited as it is liminal and cannot be exactly repeated. Also the moment of performance will only offer a limited view defined by sightlines. A ningyo joruri student's only experience of a production may be from the perspective of performing basic stage tasks, such as handing props to more senior puppeteers. This offers a unique but limited view that still requires heaps of creative intuition by the student to successfully replicate the performance. Live performance can be viewed more than once and from different viewpoints but each

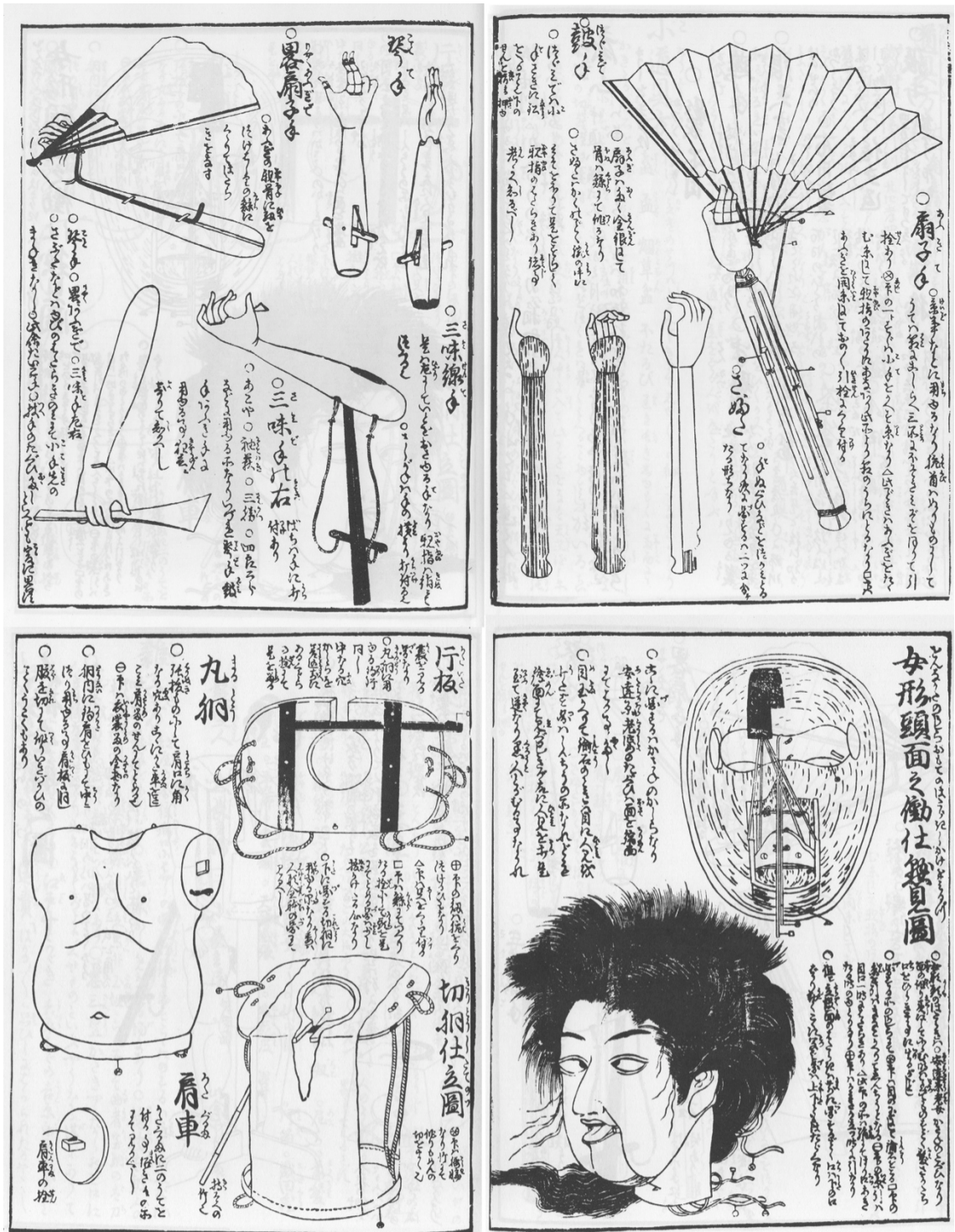


Figure 16 - Images of puppet parts from the 1800 book *Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre (shibai gakuya zue)* by Shokosai Hanbe

performance will be different. Similarly, if a piece is performed multiple times it can be videoed multiple times. Whilst each video suffers from a selective viewpoint, a broader range of videos offers the student the chance to engage with different aspects of the performance so forming a more pluralistic understanding of the performance in his/her mind.

In light of these four principles, media, such as videos, books and photographs, seem a natural extension of the tools available to the ningyo joruri student. These tools' reproducibility mean ningyo joruri's atoms can potentially reach a wider audience, enhancing the art form's national and international profile. Although observing video and live performance are semiotically different processes both foreground personal intuition and creative discovery as the primary training method. Ningyo joruri's atoms are readily 'stealable' and have been since its inception thanks to books such as 1800 book *Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre* by Shokosai Hanbe. In the twentieth century they become increasingly accessible as travel became cheaper and technology better at documenting performance. As a result it seems reasonable to expect that some of the atoms described below will have been actively 'stolen' by European practitioners in their creation of 'Bunraku' and 'Bunraku-style' puppets.

### **The Puppet of Contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri and its Atoms:**

On the southern end of Awaji, not far from the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, I am sitting in a small room in a typically compact Japanese suburban house. Opposite me is Ueda Yashuhiro, a retired engineer who first encountered Awaji Ningyo Joruri while working on the construction of the Large Naruto Memorial Hall in the 1980s, which was the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's home from 1988-2012. Ueda is not an Awaji native but you would never know that from his enthusiasm for and knowledge of Awaji ningyo joruri. He is one of many amateur puppet makers now found on the island. Whilst I sip green tea he shows me various puppets that he has made including the heads(*kashira*) of Gabu, who at the flick of a trigger transforms from a beautiful woman into a horned demon, and Otsuru, the gently featured tragic heroine of *The Courtesan of Naruto*. His dedication to his hobby is clear. He has amassed a collection of chisels, saws and other making tools specifically for making puppets as well as manufacturing several necessary custom tools and wooden forms. He passes me a small hand-drill used to create the holes through which the strings that control the puppet's various expressions run. It is little more than a thin iron spike set into a wooden handle. Next, two saws specially made to cut out puppets' jaws, such as Gabu, whose mouths open. I saw similar tools two years earlier in Tokushima prefecture in the home and workshop of Amari Yoichiro (b.1945) a professional



**Figure 17 - Ueda Yashuhiro in his workshop holding the head of Otsuru**

puppet maker who studied with Tamura Tsuneo (b. 1926) a puppet maker of the Tengu Hisa line, and one of a few concentrated in the north of Tokushima Prefecture. Amari makes performance puppets for many different ningyo joruri theatres, including the Bunraku Theatre, the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and amateur groups such as the Nose Theatre, Osaka Prefecture. Amari has a similar, but more expansive, collection of handmade tools that help him create the puppets that are his livelihood. All the puppets Amari and Ueda show me I also

find in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and the other ningyo joruri theatres I visit and their basic form and technologies are replicated in books going back to the early nineteenth century. The three-person puppets of ningyo joruri embody a form and set of technologies that are largely uniform and so possible to identify and copy if you have the time and inclination. There is precedent for this amongst professional puppet makers as well as amateurs. Although there are lineages of puppet carvers, such as the Tengu Hisa line and the



**Figure 18 - Ueda Yashuhiro's homemade saws**

Minosuke line, where individuals are apprenticed to older more experienced puppet makers (see Law 2010) the model of master/apprentice does not always apply. The most famous twentieth century puppet maker, Oe Minosuke (1907-1997), was a puppet maker's grandson from whom he learnt some carving but Oe was never apprenticed. Rather the Bunraku Theatre persuaded him to help repair some heads on an informal basis during a visit to Osaka in 1930. As a result he started carving new heads leading to a long, productive career (Adachi 1985: 94). Oe clearly had an aptitude for his craft but devoid of direct formal instruction he necessarily had to intuit and devise many of the technologies he was copying.<sup>25</sup>

What is more, there are many friendly and approachable individuals in Japan making these puppets who are happy to discuss their craft with inquisitive visitors. There is also now a range

---

<sup>25</sup> Perversely his career was hugely helped by the destruction of World War II. The annihilation of the Bunraku Theatre's puppet collection meant Oe had plentiful work after the war.

of books, such as Tada Kenji and Tada Hironobu's *How to Carve Joruri Puppets (jōruri ningyō no horikata)* (1985), that detail aspects of ningyo joruri puppet construction and are frequent reference points for Awaji's amateur puppet makers. Given this, it seems reasonable to expect British 'Bunraku-style' puppeteers to have made at least semi-serious enquiries into these puppets' technologies and techniques in their pursuit of 'Bunraku-ness', to have 'learnt through observation' and 'stolen the art'. In order to ascertain whether British practitioners did so we must now discuss these puppets' makeup in more detail.

### **Construction of the Puppet:**

Sitting in a theatre on the top floor of a shopping centre in Himeji, a large city in Hyogo prefecture, I am watching the Bunraku Theatre perform *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees*. The Bunraku Theatre is touring, hence the less glamorous environs, but their performance is no less powerful or skilful than in their purpose built theatre in Osaka. What strikes me most about this performance is my reaction to it. I find the puppets odd looking. In particular the puppets' heads seem too small for their bodies. Yet they are no smaller than when I last watched the Bunraku Theatre perform in Osaka. However, after a month of only watching Awaji ningyo joruri I realise I have become accustomed to the Awaji puppets' larger heads and perhaps even prefer their boldness to the deliberately diminutive Bunraku visages. This realisation highlights for me that the slight variations in scale found in different ningyo joruri theatres predominately affects the aesthetic impact of the puppet rather than its general signification. All ningyo joruri puppets' macro-signification is the same: a full-bodied humanoid form. The technologies within the puppets are also largely identical. In fact the bodies of the largest Bunraku Theatre puppets, mainly samurai characters, can be just as tall as Awaji puppets, it is only the head that is smaller. Whilst the Bunraku Theatre's smaller heads can look elegant on more diminutive characters, they seem almost grotesque on larger figures. Ultimately the audience's response to such differences is primarily a subjective aesthetic response, although as described below certain formal features do affect the puppets' performance. Larger puppets, for instance, are more visible in larger venues. However, as we break apart these puppets it fast becomes clear that three-person ningyo joruri puppets are all built to the same basic plan. These puppets are not the full-bodied forms they appear to be on stage but figures of absence whose presence comes from the careful combination and manipulation of a few specific points of expression rather than a naturalistic, anatomically correct, sculptural form.

Underneath the puppet's clothing there is no humanoid skeleton or body. Rather the puppet's body is primarily described by its bulky clothing. Without this, these puppets are just five (or three in the case of many female puppets) specific points of expression loosely connected by string and a simple wooden shoulder board. These five points of expression, the constituent components of the puppet, are the head, the right arm, the left arm, the right leg and the left leg. As the majority of the puppet's form is hidden underneath clothing not all of each limb is described. For example, many female puppets have no legs as their feet can be suggested by the foot-puppeteer manipulating the hem of the puppet's kimono. This means that if a puppet is laid down the humanoid form it inhabits so gracefully on stage disappears. The puppet literally deflates and flops. Therefore three people must always operate the puppet



**Figure 19 - A male puppet body without its head and clothing**

otherwise it will look dead and its arms and legs flail around unnaturally. By contrast many contemporary 'Bunraku-style' puppets are full-bodied and if dropped or laid down maintain their intrinsic humanoid shape.

This less defined form has fewer restrictions allowing the puppet's movements to be incredibly fluid and dynamic. This also makes the puppet intensely hard to manipulate as each point of expression can inhabit so many variables. As discussed in chapter 2 the limiting of the puppet, through its joints, helps define the puppet's movement potential. Not limiting the puppet leaves more room for the performer's creativity but makes achieving a successful performance harder. We might expand Jan Mrazek's image of the puppet as a performance instrument to see the three-person ningyo joruri puppet as comparable to a fretless instrument, such as a violin, where the performer has infinite positions that s/he can place his/her fingers but only a



limited set of positions that produce the correct sound. The full-bodied limited puppet we more frequently see in the West is like a fretted instrument where it is easier to find the note because the player's fingers are limited by frets. As a result the five points of expression must be controlled very carefully and the three puppeteer's communication and synchronisation highly developed if the puppet's macro-sign as a humanoid form is to work.

Ningyo joruri puppets are fully modular. The puppet disassembles into separate body parts:



**Figure 20 - Image of 'naked' puppet from 1800 book *Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre* by Shokosai Hanbe**

the torso, head, arms and legs. There are many variants of each part, for example, there are well over one hundred different puppet heads and these can be combined with any of the many arms, legs and bodies of ningyo joruri to create a range of characters. This is a different way of working with puppets to many other global forms where figures are created for specific roles and designed to be permanently assembled. Of course many arms or heads were originally created for specific roles but have since come to represent character types and so can be 'cast' in a variety of roles. In the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, the day

after the Himeji Bunraku performance, I am watching a performance of *The Courtesan of Naruto*. I can see the same puppet heads, arms, legs and costumes, as I saw in Himeji, but used in different combinations in a different play: cast in different roles. The scale of the puppets is different but the basic form of the theatrical experience is the same and for my now Awaji attuned senses what I am seeing feels normal once more.

### The Body

Standing backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre I am holding a puppet of Oyumi, the mother in *The Courtesan of Naruto*. This puppet is heavy. My left hand is in the puppet's back

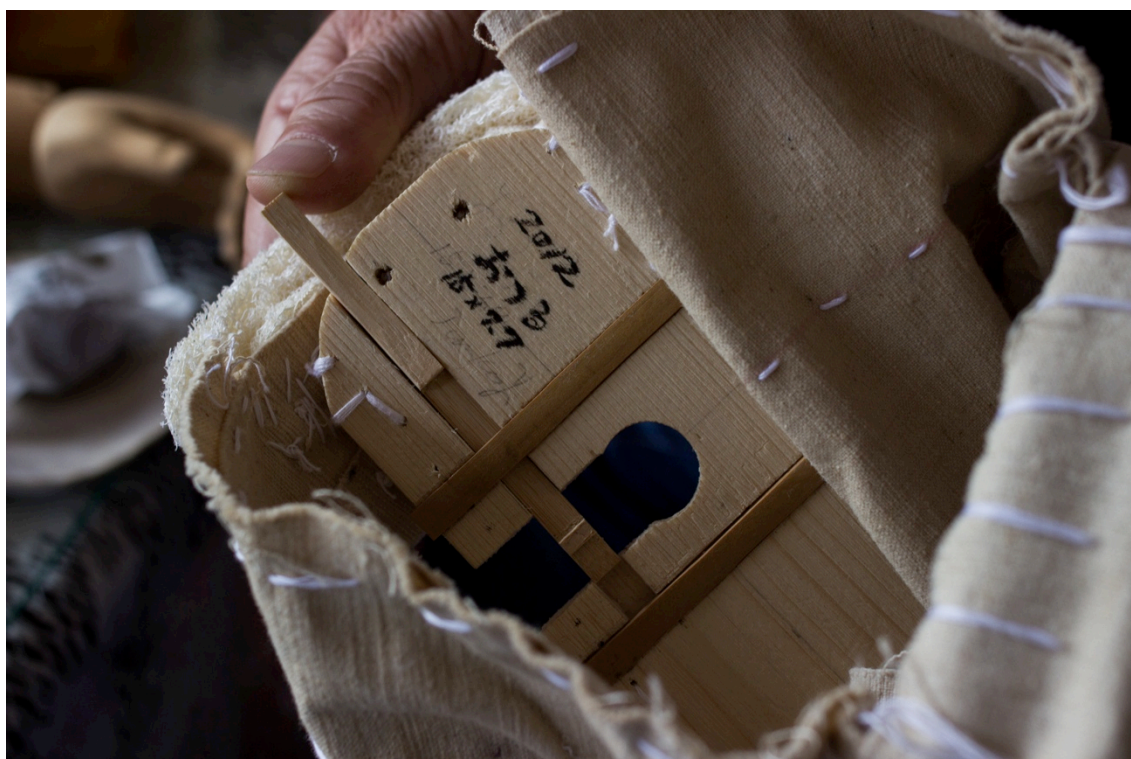
gripping the puppet's head control hidden in its chest. Whilst these puppets are largely bodies of absence when fully assembled they certainly pack a punch. Two of the theatre's puppeteers hold the puppet's left arm and feet respectively, gracefully allowing me to briefly be the head-puppeteer. Bypassing years of training I am in control of the puppet and the more experienced puppeteers must take my lead. I fast become aware that although structurally there is little inside the puppet's body I can feel the connection of the puppet's various parts radiating out from one point, holding the form together: the shoulder board (*kakaita*). From here the five points of expression emanate. The shoulder board is the simplest part of the puppet but also the most vital, providing stability to the figure.



**Figure 21 - A male shoulder board made by Ueda Yashuhiro**

There are only two ningyo joruri shoulder boards. Both are flat wooden rectangles with rounded corners around 200mm long and 100mm wide. The first is for male characters (figure 21) and has a square cut out at its centre. Within this, suspended on thick string, is a smaller wooden square (*tsurikata*) with a round hole in the middle and a gap on the front side through which the head control (*dogushi*) is inserted. A small piece of bamboo (*karaus*) slides across to lock the head control in place. The second is slightly smaller and used for women and children (figure 22). The major difference is that the head control is inserted directly into the shoulder board. With both shoulder boards the arms attach to its shorter edges with thick string. The legs also attach to the shorter edges via two loops of string hanging down either side to which the leg strings are tied. The only other descriptor of the body underneath the

clothing is a piece of canvas hanging down front and back. At its base is a hoop of bamboo (*koshiwa*) forming the puppet's waist. Sheets of thick paper (*washi*) are sewn to this canvas to firm up the torso. The puppeteer's arm enters the body underneath the waist hoop pushing the back of the hoop upward resulting in the shoulder board slanting forward. The puppet's clothing is also sewn on to this canvas and is essential to the puppet's form. It gives the puppet volume, masking the lack of upper arms and legs. The puppet's clothes are made of silk and are the most expensive part of the puppet.



**Figure 22 - A female shoulder board showing the small piece of bamboo (*karasu*) that slides across to lock the head control in place**

The puppet's shoulders are built up by sewing pieces of loofah onto the shoulder board using holes drilled into the boards surface. This means the same shoulder board can be used for broad or slim shouldered characters. During my time on Awaji I see many shoulder boards of varying age and stature – some only recently made by amateur puppet enthusiasts others by great puppet makers of the past. They vary only in their minutiae. It is a simple but effective design that performs an essential function in uniting the other more complicated aspects of these puppets.

### **The Head**

Amari Yochiroi's workshop is tiny. He may be one of, if not, the foremost living ningyo joruri puppet makers but he works out of a room the size of a small study in his home in an eastern

suburb of Tokushima. As I sit on the tiny sofa pushed up against one wall of the room, Amari happily sits on the floor, where he makes all his puppets, surrounded by heads, arms and legs. He passes me different heads to hold and try and shows me the intricate mechanisms inside. The head (*kashira*) is the most technologically advanced and diverse part of the puppet's form. However, in essence the head, when mounted in the shoulder board, is little more than a short-rod puppet with a simple nodding mechanism allowing the puppet to look up-and-down and left-to-right in a fluid, lifelike manner. There are well over a hundred known ningyo joruri heads and many theatres have large collections. The Bunraku Theatre has around 300 heads (Adachi 1985:87) and Yoshida Tukocho tells me the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre have around 200 in their store. Not all of the Awaji heads are in use, some are in great need of repair. Most of the Bunraku Theatre's heads date from the mid-twentieth century as its collection was all but destroyed during World War II. These heads were nearly all carved by Oe Minosuke (1907-1997). Many of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's heads, however, are nineteenth century and a number of them were made by the famous maker Tengu Hisa (1857-1943).



**Figure 23 - Amari Yochiro holding lengths of whale baleen**

Most puppet heads in ningyo joruri represent a character type not a specific character. As a result they can be 'cast' in different roles. So for example, the Fukeoyama (*fukeoyama*) head, used for older women, plays both Kanshiusai's mother in the 'The Village School' scene

(*terakoya no dan*) of *Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy* and Oyumi in *The Courtesan of Naruto*. On Awaji a version of the Kenbishi head with a moving mouth (referred to as Betsushi on Awaji) is used for the character of Jurobe in *The Courtesan of Naruto* but the Kenbishi head can also feature as Genzo, the school teacher in *Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy*.<sup>26</sup> All these heads were designed for a particular character but have since become used for a range of characters (Ueno-Herr 1995: 135). There are often multiple variations on each head each offering slightly different expressions. So for example the Bunshichi head, which depicts a powerful male lead, has many variations (Adachi 1985: 89) including one with an opening mouth (*kuchi aki bunshichi*), usually cast as a villain (Ueno-Herr 1995: 135), and another with a large black mole for the part of Nuregami Chogoro (*nuregami chōgorō*) in *The Two Butterflies* (1749) (Yoshida 2006: 11).



**Figure 24 - Kenbishi head from Awaji, also called kadome on Awaji**

Each theatre may have multiple instances of the same head variation. The differences between these will be minor – only the slight variations that result from manually replicating an object. Even so these differences are noted and one particular instance might be preferred for a certain scene. There are at least sixty-two male heads, twenty-two female heads, eight children and thirty-eight special heads in existence. Special heads encompass a range of heads with specific rather than general uses, such as the expanding cranium of the elderly male head

---

<sup>26</sup> The Bunraku Theatre uses the Bunshichi head for Jurobe.

Fukurokuju (*fukurokuju*) and the chomping boar's head Chohakkai (*chohakkai*) (Yoshida 2006: 100,102). Whilst these heads are diverse in their characterisation and often in their technologies, underlying all of them is the same basic construction.

Most Bunraku heads are c.100-135mm in length (Ueno-Herr 1995: 156). The puppets heads of Awaji and Awa can be up to c.180mm. The puppet heads of Iida sit in the middle at c.150mm. Examples of all three lie before me on Amari's workshop floor, many only half-complete but almost more beautiful in their semi-finished state. The main form of the head is carved from either paulownia wood (*kiri*) or Japanese cypress (*hinoki*). Japanese cypress is relatively light but still quite hard, and takes sharp chisels to carve effectively. Paulownia is a much lighter but softer and easier to work. Amari tells me that these days only Bunraku heads are carved from Japanese Cypress as it is too heavy for the larger heads. The head is carved from a solid block of wood, although some amateur makers on Awaji carve their heads from two halves pegged together. The block is methodically cut down following a careful sequence of measurements and directions. Initially the block's sides are cut flat and simple shapes representing the most



**Figure 25 - Amari Yochiro showing the relative sizes of Awaji and Bunraku heads**

prominent features painted on. Extraneous wood is then cut and chiselled away. For a long time the carving process is regimented, dictated more by measurement than eye. Ningyo Joruri puppet heads are precise and usually symmetrical. This very mathematical process is the only way to achieve such precision. The later carving stages necessarily rely on the accuracy of the carver's eye and chisel. However, regular measurements with rulers, compasses and callipers are still made to ensure accuracy. As Oe Minosuke says 'A sculptor is probably not so

fussy about measuring, but since my pieces will be used on headgrips by puppeteers operating from the back, the line from the top of the head down through the neck is very important. It must be absolutely straight or the head will never look erect' (Oe in Adachi 1985: 96).

Once the exterior form is carved the head is split in two. Amari uses a small hatchet. The more cautious amateurs on Awaji use a saw. The advantage of the hatchet is that the two halves will automatically register when placed back together, but it takes a certain confidence to attack your carefully carved head with an axe. Once split the head is hollowed and any required mechanisms, such as moving eyes or mouths inserted.



**Figure 26 - The inner mechanisms and face of an unfinished Kenbishi head by Amari Yochiro**

The head attaches to the small wooden neck (*kubi*) with a bamboo pivot that goes through a hole underneath the ear. From one side of the top of the neck a length of whale baleen protrudes and is secured to the back of the puppet's head by a short length of string. Ningyo joruri and *karakuri ningyo* have used whale baleen as a spring for centuries. International controversy around whaling has not seemingly halted its use.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Jane-Marie Law claims that use of baleen has ceased because it is no longer available and puppet makers now use piano wire instead (2010: 114). Whilst Law may have encountered contemporary puppet makers using piano wire all the puppet makers I have encountered, including Amari Yoichiro, still

The neck attaches to the headgrip (*dogushi*), a straight shaped length of Japanese Cypress. Built into the headgrip are the various levers that control the head's expression. All ningyo joruri heads, bar the simplest one-person puppets (*tsume*), have at least one mechanism – the ability to rock backwards and forwards. This is controlled by a chord that runs from the back of



**Figure 27 - A half finished Kenbishi head with a trigger system control in the workshop of Amari Yochiro. In the background examples of the burari and the draw-peg system can also be seen.**

the head down through the headgrip and attached to a toggle, which takes one of three forms: the 'draw-peg' system (*hikisen kei*), the 'trigger' system (*chioi kei*) and the 'burari' system (*burari kei*). All three of these are technologies that allow the head-puppeteer to pull down on the string that connects to the back of the puppet's head making the head rock up and then, when the pressure is eased, rock down again dragged by gravity and the baleen spring inside

---

exclusively use whale baleen and these makers do not see the use of baleen as an issue. Baleen's use in ningyo joruri continues to be part of the defence of whaling by bodies such as The Japan Whaling Association (see Takahashi et al 1989; Toshikazu 2005; Watson 2014). The amount of baleen on puppet needs is miniscule. Both Ueda Yashushio and Amari Yoichiro had enough to create hundreds of puppets. The Bunraku theatre has a stockpile to last them decades (Ueno-Herr 1995: 162). There is certainly no urgency to hunt whales to make puppets given the lack of contemporary demand for new puppets except as collector's items, at which point the use of baleen is moot as such puppets are destined for the display cabinet not the stage. Whilst some puppet makers have experimented with different materials (Ueno-Herr 1995: 162) there has not been any great enquiry into alternatives, probably as baleen is still available.



the head. The 'draw-peg' system achieves this with a small lowercase 't'-shaped piece of wood, with a rounded cylindrical vertical that sits in a semi-circular groove in the front side of the headgrip. The bottom tip of the 't' slots into a round hole at the headgrip's base, to stop the 't' from sliding around uncontrollably during use. The puppeteer can then pull on the 't's crossbar and the puppet's head rocks up.

The 'trigger' system uses a small wooden trigger that sticks out perpendicular to the headgrip's front. One end sits inside a recessed channel in the headgrip and pivots on a small length of bamboo. The other attaches to the head string. When the puppeteer pulls down on the lever the head string is also pulled down and the head rocks up. Smaller versions of these triggers are used by all three headgrip systems for other facial movements.

The 'burari' system is the simplest of the three but just as effective. The headgrip has no grooves or other mechanisms. The head string is simply tied around a small roll of thick paper (*washi*). The puppeteer then grips the string between his/her middle and ring finger or sometimes middle and index fingers and by pulling down on the paper toggle the head rocks up. In all these systems the puppeteer generally uses his/her middle finger for the head-nod trigger so the thumb and index finger can access any other triggers on the headgrip. The headgrip's shaft is held between the palm of the hand and the ring and little fingers.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ueno-Herr suggests the 'trigger' system is less precise than the 'draw-peg' system as the string moves in an arc rather than straight up and down. She claims this means the Awaji puppet head is not 'as smooth as the head movement of the *bunraku* puppet' (1995:162). Whilst Ueno-Herr's work on Bunraku is excellent this demonstrates a lack of understanding of Awaji ningyo joruri. Since the early-mid nineteenth century Awaji ningyo joruri seems to have used the 'burari' system. Certainly the contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre exclusively uses this system. Like the 'draw-peg' system the 'burari' system allows the string to move straight up and down. Ueno-Herr is right that the trigger system, which is still used in the Imada Theatre, Nagano Prefecture, creates an arc when pulled. There is also potential for movement depending on the placement of the finger on the trigger as the finger makes direct contact with the string and the tension of the finger on the string will also make the head tilt. However, as with any performance tool there is a necessary amount of time needed to adjust to a new system and learn to be responsive to it. It is also worth noting that all the triggers that control the head's expressions, such as eyebrows and eyes, are controlled using the 'trigger' system. These triggers' movement is not considered lacking in smoothness, which suggests the use of the 'trigger system for the head tilt can be just as effective with practise. Just because you are master of one system it does not mean you will automatically be master of another. This point is illustrated by the Bunraku Theatre's brief adoption of larger puppet heads in the 1950s. The larger heads were not deemed a success by the puppeteers 'the performance was physically impossible because the puppeteers' views of each other and the stage was obstructed by the large puppets' (Ueno-Herr 1995: 157). These puppets were of a similar size to those still used in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, who are able to move them very effectively, again emphasising the importance of adapting to a new performance tool. Ueno-Herr's judgement that Awaji Ningyo Joruri is intrinsically inferior because of the technologies used does not stand up to scrutiny. Rather it reflects a tendency in much Bunraku-centric scholarship to automatically see the Bunraku Theatre as superior to all other ningyo joruri.

The other major difference between Bunraku Theatre heads and those of Awaji and Tokushima is the angle of the neck in relation to the headgrip. In Bunraku heads the angle is more acute requiring the puppeteer's forearm to be completely vertical and act as the puppet's spine (Ueno-Herr 1995: 240). In Awaji and Tokushima the angle is more obtuse. As a result the head-grip can be held at a slight angle and the head still maintain the correct posture. This is called *teppozashi* (lit. gun pointing) a reference to nineteenth century rifles.

*Teppozashi* is a term with a dual meaning. In Awaji and Tokushima it is a description of correct technique. In the Bunraku Theatre it is a pejorative term 'implying lack of strength and discipline in the puppeteer's arm' (Ueno-Herr 1995: 240). This difference is purely a reflection of different technologies rather than any innate superiority of technique. The angle of the Bunraku head necessitates the head-puppeteer's arm be completely vertical whereas the angle of the Awaji and Tokushima necessitates the grip be held diagonally. This enables the



**Figure 28 - The worn and cracked back of an Ebisu head in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

puppeteer to hold the puppet out from his/her body and so make larger motions in moments of high drama. This is called *keren* and is as much loved in Awaji Ningyo Joruri, as it is hated in the more sedate Bunraku Theatre (Nakanishi 2012: 4). Whilst some see the form they are used to as superior, for example 'Yoshida Minosuke says that he believes the bunraku puppet

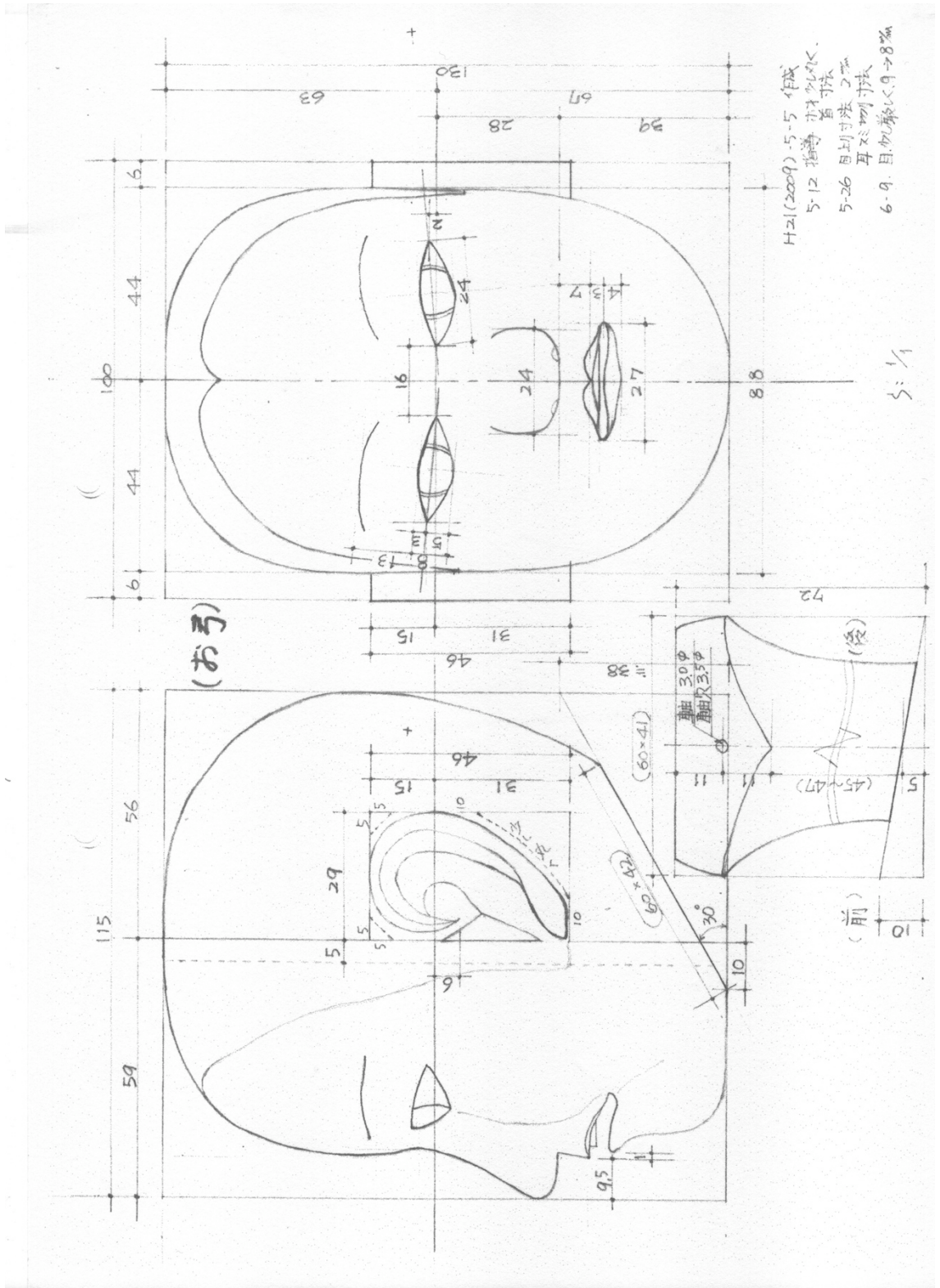


Figure 29 - Design for fukeoyama head by Ueda Yashuhiro

cannot be structured any other way, acknowledging the perfection achieved by his predecessors (*senjin*)' (Ueno-Herr 1995: 155), this is purely subjective. When held these heads do feel different. The Awaji heads are significantly larger and the headgrip's slight forward angle gives them a lively agency, urging the puppet forwards to action. Bunraku heads are much smaller, finer objects and their vertical position gives them a more static, reserved existence. The weight differential between the heads is not as great as might be expected due to the use of paulownia wood for larger heads. Nevertheless Awaji heads are slightly more top heavy than Bunraku heads, although some of the larger samurai heads in the Bunraku Theatre, with their elaborate hair, can feel just as unbalanced. Ultimately these are slightly different variations on the same instrument and as a result they suit certain techniques better and each requires the acquisition of a slightly new, but largely comparable skillsets.

All the heads in Amari's workshop are brand new and whilst they move beautifully some of the older heads that live backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre are even smoother. Years of use compresses and smoothes the wooden joints and pivots rendering their movement more graceful and controlled. These are attributes even the finest craftsman cannot create.

## **Legs**

Back in Ueda Yashuhiro's house I am being shown how to make male puppets' papier-mâché upper legs (see figure 29 for Ueda's instructions). What strikes me about Ueda and several of the other amateur puppet makers I meet is the intense level of knowledge they have accumulated, primarily through their own research and observation. Whilst the more experienced makers on the island share their knowledge with new enthusiasts there is no ultimate, authentic source of knowledge, no professional like Amari Yoichiro to pass on his/her knowledge. These makers primarily learn through studying codified sources of knowledge, mainly books, and observing the island's many puppets as well as using their own intuition to devise and discover the techniques required to make these puppets.

There are only two basic variations in the legs of ningyo joruri. The first involves a carved wooden lower leg and foot, made without a pivot at the ankle. Above this is a papier-mâché lower thigh, which attaches to the lower leg with a bamboo pivot at the knee. The upper leg has a string that protrudes from its top that attaches to the puppet's shoulder board. The lower leg has an L-shaped metal handle (*ashigane*) protruding out of the middle of its calf. This is how the foot-puppeteer primarily controls the puppet's legs. Both the upper and lower leg are coated with a smooth gesso and isinglass finish. There are five versions of this type of leg.

Bunshichi (used for the largest male characters), Marume (also for male characters but slightly



**Figure 30 - A partially finished Bunshichi leg in Amrai Yochiro's workshop**

shorter than Bunshichi), Genta (thinner more delicate legs), Mononaga and Chuashi (both medium-sized and used for medium-sized puppets) (Ueno-Herr 1995: 186). The second leg type, called 'intercepted thighs' (*kiremono*) replaces the upper papier-mâché section with a stuffed cotton tube. This makes the hinging of the knee less predictable and overall weaker, so

this leg is used for older characters (Ueno-Herr 1995: 188). There is also a pair of children's legs constructed in the same fashion just smaller.

Nearly all these legs are for male characters. As described earlier female characters' feet and legs are generally hidden underneath their thick kimono. So rather than giving the puppets physical legs the foot-puppeteer suggests them by the placement of his/her hands and arms.



**Figure 31 - Intercepted thigh legs in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Museum**

There are a few occasions when a female character has legs and for such instances there is one set of female legs called 'string-feet' (*itoashi*). Like the male 'intercepted thighs' legs they have stuffed cotton thighs but are overall thinner and more delicate (Ueno-Herr 1995: 192). In other situations where a woman's leg must be shown for narrative reasons a leg 'not connected to the puppet's body is pushed out from the puppet's skirts by the third operator at appropriate moments but discarded as soon as it is no longer needed' (Keene 1990: 164). In Ueda's tiny workroom legs of different sizes hang from the wall waiting to be united with other puppet parts. Unlike many of the other amateur makers on the island Ueda is not interested in puppets as art objects. He seeks to make performance tools that can be used in training and performance, primarily in the puppet club of Nandan Junior High School.

### **How to make upper male legs:**

The upper legs are made of thick fibrous paper (*washi*) that is layered onto a wooden form using a papier-mâché technique. The form is carved from either the wood of the paulownia tree (*kiri*) or Japanese cypress (*hinoki*). Japanese cypress is better and will last longer as it is denser and stronger. The wooden form must be painted with water before applying the first layer of paper to stop the paper sticking to the wood. Tear the paper into c.2.5 cm square pieces. Do not cut the paper with scissors. Tearing produces fibrous edges to the paper, which helps it, form a better bond. Mix together wallpaper paste and PVA glue in a ratio of 6:4 or 7:3 depending on the consistency of the glue. Add water and stir until the mixture is a smooth, liquid paint-like consistency. Use this to laminate the paper onto the form. Do three layers of thick paper making sure that each new layer overlaps to joints of the previous layer. Let each layer dry for a day before adding the next. After the third layer leave the leg for a week or until it is bone dry. Then repeat the lamination process for a fourth layer but this time using a much thinner but still fibrous paper (*usui*). Once the leg is fully dry fill any dents and irregularities with an air-drying resin filler. Once dry, take the paper leg off the form. Next cut three discs of copper sheet c.2cm in diameter. Two of these should be laminated (using the above glue mix and the thicker paper) inside the leg shape either side of where the knee pivot will be. The third should be laminated, inside, at the top of the leg where the leg will hang from the shoulder-board string. Leave to dry. The leg is now ready for coating and polishing. The white final coat is made from a mixture of ground up seashells or whiting (*gofun*) with water and isinglass (*nikawa*) mixed in a ratio of 40grams whiting: 40ml water : 4g isinglass. First cut the isinglass and leave to soften in water overnight. The next day heat the isinglass and water in a water bath until the isinglass dissolves. Make sure the water does not go above 60°C. Once the isinglass is dissolved, take the glue off the heat and start adding it to the whiting bit by bit constantly grinding the mixture in a pestle and mortar. Once all the ingredients are mixed the result should be a liquid paint. This is then painted onto the exterior of the leg shape. Do six layers, allowing each to dry before the next is applied. After the sixth layer has dried the leg should be sanded with 80-120 grit sandpaper. Then do 6 more layers of the paint mixture. Then sand the leg with 240-300 grit sandpaper. Next mix a finer paint by allowing the whiting to settle in a glass of water for 30 minutes. At the end skim off/pour out the finer particles that are still suspended and filter them through a coffee filter. Add the resulting whiting to the isinglass water mix. Use this paint for another ten layers. After which the leg should be sanded with 400-600 grit sandpaper and then buffed with a dry, soft, cotton cloth. If desired it is possible to polish the leg to a shine.

**Figure 32 – Ueda Yashuhiro's Leg Making Instructions**

## Arms and hands

As I stand to leave Ueda picks up a puppet arm lying on his desk and with a little smile says 'Janken!' as he pulls the lever on the arm-control and the wooden fingers flick back. Janken is the Japanese name for rock-paper-scissors. It transpires that Ueda uses the arm to play Janken with his grandchildren. These arms are examples of the 'grasping hand' (*tsukami te*) arm and are lying on the desk (and being used for Janken) because they are not deemed good enough for performance: the strings inside the arm that control the fingers keep catching. These arms were Ueda's first attempt at making the 'grasping hand' arm and like many other experiments they will never leave his small workshop even though aesthetically they look the part.



**Figure 33 - An unfinished 'grasping hand' made by Amari Yochiro**

Ningyo joruri arms are varied in their technologies and appearance. There are two versions of each type as the left arm and right arm nearly always have different controls. The right arm often does not extend beyond the forearm at the end of which is a small rocking lever that pulls the hand backwards and forwards. The head-puppeteer's right hand holds the forearm at the elbow joint, which is connected to the puppet's shoulder board by a length of string. The upper arm is only described by the bulk of the puppet's kimono. The left arm generally has some form of upper arm, usually a stuffed cotton tube, but this only extends halfway up the arm, the final section is string. The left-arm puppeteer is necessarily more removed from the puppet to allow space for the head and foot-puppeteers. As a result the left arm is controlled using a square rod-control (*sashigane*) extending from the puppet's forearm. At the end of this



rod is a rocking control similar to that found on the right arm except the string is thicker and longer so the left-arm puppeteer tugs on the string rather than the lever directly. Otherwise the left and right arms tend to mirror each other in technologies, except for certain special arms, such as those that play musical instruments. For many larger male arms the right arm has a shorter version of the left arm's rod-control to allow for the head puppeteer to fully extend the right hand. These larger arms also often have some form of stuffed upper arm



**Figure 34 - A set of 'grasping hand' arms showing the use of sashigane on both arms**

above the elbow. All of these different arms have a small loop of white leather (*yubikawa*) attached to the inside of the puppet's wrist. This is used when the puppet needs to hold a prop. The puppeteer slips his/her own fingers through the loop and holds the object for the puppet.

The most common male puppet arm is the 'shackle hand' (*kasete*) where the hand hinges at the wrist. The hand is a single solid shape with the fingers curved over. The right-arm 'shackle hand's control is built into elbow end of the forearm. For women the 'maple-leaf hand' (*momijite*) is almost exclusively used. This has a static thumb but the other four fingers bend at the knuckles moving together as a single block, forwards and backwards. The wrist also flexes backwards and forwards. The fingers hyperextend slightly, giving the hand an exaggerated gracefulness. These fingers also lack a knuckle – they only bend at two, rather than three, points. The right-arm 'maple-leaf hand's control is built into the puppet's elbow. The left arm uses the rod-control described above.

Whilst these are the two commonest arms there are many more, although primarily for male puppets. There is a male version of the 'maple-leaf hand' called the 'fox-hand' (*kitsunete*), with similar long elegant fingers flexing back-and-forth. From here male hands get progressively complicated. In the 'iris-hand' (*kakitsubata*) the thumb and fingers all hinge where they meet



**Figure 35 - Various arms on the floor of Amari Yochiro's workshop**

the palm. Other than the thumb, all the fingers are carved as a single block. The palm is angled at roughly ninety degrees to the forearm so when the fingers are pulled back the puppet's hand opens in a dramatic gesture. This is the same with the 'grasping-hand' (*tsukamite*), where the palm is similarly at right-angles to the forearm. The 'grasping-hand' also has individually articulated fingers. The index and little fingers both lack a knuckle but the middle and ring fingers bend at all three. The thumb only bends at the knuckle nearest the palm. The 'octopus-grasping hand' (*takotsukamite*) is the same as the 'grasping-hand' but also flexes at the wrist. In all these hands, even when the fingers are articulated separately they cannot move independently. The rocking-control only permits the fingers to move backwards and forwards together.

There are various trick hands that fulfil specific functions and so only appear in certain scenes. Ueno-Herr describes how these hands are hidden within the puppet's clothing and when needed swapped with the regular hand otherwise used during the scene (1995: 185). The 'shamisen-hand' (*shamisente*) and the 'plectrum-hand' (*bachite*) go together and are used for shamisen playing puppets. The 'shamisen-hand' is left-arm only and is designed to imitate the

placing of fingers on the shamisen's neck. Its index and middle fingers hinge at the lowest knuckle, moving in opposition to each other. The ring and little fingers are fixed. The 'plectrum-hand' holds a large shamisen plectrum (*bachi*) but has no articulations. There is also a hand for koto playing (*koto-te*), with fully articulated index and middle fingers.

Backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre are several examples of fully functioning 'grasping hands', whose fingers respond delicately to the pull of the rocking-lever control. They are a delight to handle, if still rather tricky, especially the left arm with its long rod-control. As with many of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's heads these arms are old and well worn in, and they are used to great effect by the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's performers.



**Figure 36 - Some broken shamisen hands in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Museum**

Whilst there are many combinations of these different puppet parts the basic structure of the three-person ningyo joruri puppet is remarkably uniform between characters and theatres. Other than slight variations in scale and differing head-controls all ningyo joruri theatres make use of nearly identical technologies. Information on them is readily available for the inquisitive, waiting to be 'stolen'. When I next see Ueda Yashuhiro he gives me copies of some of his schematic drawings for the fukeoyama (*fukeoyama*) head used for Oyumi, the mother in *The Courtesan of Naruto*, and his Janken-playing 'grasping hand'. They are beautiful drawings, truly the product of an engineer, full of information and precision. Ueda and others like him are concertedly 'learning through observation' and 'stealing the art' of puppet making. In

doing so they help sustain Awaji ningyo joruri, particularly through their support of school groups. During my time on Awaji I do my best to ‘learn through observation’ and ‘steal some of the art’ I see, including attending a head making class. After two months it is clear to me that although I can copy what I see, and receive instruction from others, the task of discovering how to form a head more about my own personal discovery than being ‘told’ how to do it.



**Figure 37 - Auditorium of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

## **The Rehearsal and Performance of Contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri:**

### **The Theatre Space**

The current Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre opened in autumn 2012. It is an architecturally striking post-modern building designed by the Endo Shuhei Architect Institute. The theatre is an artwork in its own right, more reminiscent of Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao than the temporary bamboo theatres of Awaji’s former touring troupes or even the wooden theatres of urban Edo Japan. As such, it is as likely to draw architecture enthusiasts as puppet fans. Like so much of contemporary ningyo joruri the building brazenly contrasts the old with the new – a contemporary, up-to-the-minute theatre for a ‘traditional’ art form. This emphasises the inherent contemporaneity of Awaji ningyo joruri - a theatre working in and engaging with the present as much as the past. The new building houses a well equipped, and in many ways very

modern theatre space. The theatre comfortably seats 162 on wooden benches in a gently raked auditorium.

There is also a balcony where more audience can sit on the floor if necessary. The performance space is fitted with all the benefits of a modern theatre: stage lights, air conditioning and excellent soundproofing. However, the stage is true to the design of ningyo joruri stages throughout Japan: wide with a low proscenium low creating an extreme landscape composition. As with all ningyo joruri this is an end-on stage and like many proscenium traditions the play's universe is initially hidden behind a curtain (emblazoned with the Yoshida Denjiro Theatre's logo) that is pulled back to reveal the play. On the auditorium's right (stage-left) is the yuka, the small auxiliary stage for the shamisen player and narrator. Unlike in Bunraku Theatre there is no turntable to spin the performers out at the show's start. Instead they enter the through doors in the yuka's rear wall.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 38 - The sunken stage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre with the second partition on the right**

The main stage is raised roughly one metre above the auditorium, As with many other global puppet theatres a series of playboards and partitions demarcate the performance space. Slightly set back from the stage's front is the first partition, serving no performance purpose at

---

<sup>29</sup> The turntable is not an integral part of ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre dispense with it when on tour.

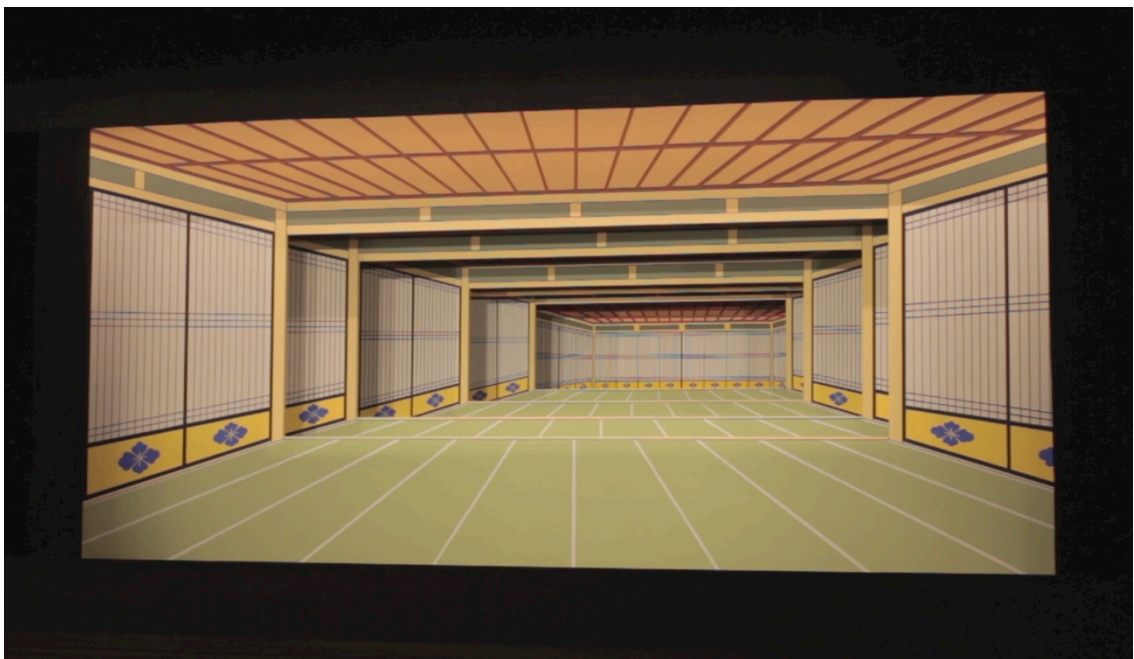
only 150mm. Slightly behind this is the second partition, demarcating the puppet's floor level and masking the puppeteers from the waist down. Behind the second partition is the sunken stage (*funazoko*), where the play's foreground action takes place. The sunken stage is roughly 350mm lower than the rest of the stage and about two metres deep. Behind this is the main stage (*honte*). Sometimes a third partition is inserted at the main stage's front. Currently in the



**Figure 39 - Drums backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre this is not the case as the house set used for *The Courtesan of Naruto* acts as a partition stage-left with stage-right left open so characters can move between the two levels. At either end of the sunken stage are hanging curtains (*yomaku*) through which characters enter and exit. The main stage's entrances are left open. Above the sunken stage's curtained entrances are two balcony-rooms behind bamboo screens. The stage-right balcony-room (*hayashibeya*) houses musicians who create sound effects with drums, gongs and other instruments. However, the room is currently only used for special performances. Day-to-day sound effects are produced at stage level, in the stage-right wings, by shamisen players and narrators not currently performing on the yuka. The stage-left balcony-room (*misunouchi*) houses a shamisen player in some scenes. This is used during daily displays of dogugaeshi (*dōgugaeshi*). Placing the shamisen in this room makes its sound distant and constrained, like it is coming out of a speaker, and creates a stark contrast to the shamisen's powerful sound when played in the main auditorium.

The theatre also has a fly tower for quick scene changes. At the back of the stage an elaborate metal frame supports the dogugaeshi panels that form the second half of the five daily performances. Dogugaeshi, also called sliding-screen mechanism (*fusuma karakuri*), is a display of sliding scenic panels that quickly transition between different settings. This display slowly reveals an Edo-period castle's great banqueting hall (*okusenjo*). As each layer is revealed so a new section of the room is displayed until, through the careful use of forced perspective a huge room is shown. This theatrical device is particularly associated with Awaji and Awa ningyo joruri. Currently in Awaji it is used as a separate display but members of the theatre tell me that sometimes dogugaeshi is used in performance with puppets. Certainly this is still the case in Awa (Awa no Bunka Kenkyukai 2007: 44).



**Figure 40 - Dogugaeshi in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

The contemporary ningyo joruri stages of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre and the Bunraku Theatre are as much modern creations as continuations of tradition. Before the advent of electric light ningyo joruri was markedly different for both the audience and the performers whose visibility was dramatically reduced, as small oil lamps were their only light source. Now electric stage lights flood the stage illuminating everything. In Awaji ningyo joruri's past many performances took place in great, temporary outdoor theatres that travelling troupes would carry with them. Some were open air, others were fully enclosed with a straw matting roof. The audience sat on mats on the ground not comfortable seats. Given current Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatres' contemporary construction, it is unsurprising that some of the troupes rehearsal and performance practice feels equally contemporary.

## Training

While Nandan Junior High School's students can endlessly study video recordings what they lack is regular critical feedback. Opportunities for their work to receive expert analysis are limited. When they do occur, the feedback received is very different to that of early twentieth century Osaka. On another occasion I am watching the Mihara Senior High School puppet group. Three girls hold aloft a large Ebisu puppet. Like the students in Nandan, they manipulate it in sync with the video playing in front of them. Today, however, the video is not the students' primary source. After a quick run through, three of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's puppeteers, Yoshida Shinkuro, Yoshida Kotaro and Yoshida Koji, arrive to watch and



**Figure 41 - Puppeteers from the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre work with the students of Mihara Senior High School**

critique the students. They spend an hour and half with the students, first working with the Ebisu puppet trio and then with students learning the Otsuro's movements in the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene of *The Courtesan of Naruto*. The professionals watch the students perform a section, then offer verbal corrections. If the students still struggle then one or more of the professionals demonstrate a particular move to the students. This is truly learning through observation but the session is partly because the students are already familiar with the moves from studying video recordings. The critical feedback is essential but it is only through watching the professionals perform the movement correctly and then trying again that the students really gain access to this information. The professionals' demonstrations are



particularly revealing because they perform with their heads uncovered, so it is possible to see where each puppeteer's focus goes. The left-arm puppeteer and foot-puppeteer constantly look at the puppet's head to get their timing from the head-puppeteer's movements.

This training method is replicated in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre. Younger members of the troupe are given instruction by and opportunities to practice with more experienced performers. During my 2013 visit, a recent Mihara High School graduate, Tanima Chisato, joined the theatre as a puppeteer, their first female puppeteer for many years. As a former member of the Mihara Senior High School ningyo joruri group she was already familiar with much of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's repertoire. However, she needed to work on her performance style and technique. In the school groups students are given opportunities to perform all three of the puppeteer's roles: the head and right-arm puppeteer (*omozukai*), the left-arm puppeteer (*hidarizukai*) and the foot puppeteer (*ashizukai*). When a student joins the professional theatre they must start at the bottom again moving props and performing exclusively as a foot-puppeteer. It is only now that the student can regularly learn from direct observation and receive continual verbal critical feedback.

During my time with the theatre the puppeteers teach Tanima Chisato several parts of their repertoire. I watch them tackle the 'Ferry landing' scene (*watashiba no dan*) from *The Cherry Trees along the Hidaka River* (*hidakagawa irai zakura*) written by Chikamatsu Hanji, Takeda Koizumo, Takemoto Saburobei in 1759 for the Takemoto Theatre. The puppeteers rehearse as a team. All of them are present and will offer comments or step in to demonstrate a particular action. They start with Tanima on the feet, Yoshida Shinkuro on head, and Yoshia Koji on left arm. Yoshida Hironosuke watches and comments. The rehearsal is done to a tape recording of the narration and shamisen. Like school students they perform with the pre-recorded version, stop, assess their performance, rewind and repeat. They spend much time on the foot-stamps Tanima must make to emphasise the puppet's footsteps as well as the two small backwards steps the puppet takes before starting to walk, a movement that gives the puppet momentum. Whilst the more experienced puppeteers happily joke with each other throughout the rehearsal (their manipulation is truly instinctive) Tanima concentrates hard, carefully placing each foot and stamping the floor in time with the shamisen. Near rehearsal's end the puppeteers have a debate over the position of the Gabu puppet's hem when the puppet is seated – several puppeteers step in to demonstrate different versions. Whilst there is an element of hierarchy here there is a great fluidity and democracy to the rehearsal process and a desire to share. They are equally happy to show me how to move the puppet's legs and wedge my arm into the head puppeteer's waist and feel for the changes in his motion or demonstrate the puppet's head and arm manipulation. Such training is not didactic nor is it

the exact mirroring of another's actions. Instead it is a personal discovery based upon kinaesthetic experimentation, aided by moments of critical feedback, and guided by a deep knowledge of the texts they are performing

### **Rehearsing and Staging the 'Jurobei's House' scene of *The Courtesan of Naruto*:**

The impetus for the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's performers watching the video of the Bunraku Theatre performing *The Courtesan of Naruto* that afternoon in Fukura was their upcoming performance less familiar scene from the play. As stated earlier *The Courtesan of Naruto* has become synonymous with Awaji ningyo joruri. However, since World War II this has largely meant the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene (*junreiuta no dan*). The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Troupe has performed this scene, in its various incarnations and locations, four to five times a day for the past fifty years. It has become the 'iconographic centrepiece of the revival' of Awaji ningyo joruri (Law 1997: 225) and now a burden around the theatre's neck who feel unable to stop performing this scene for the bus loads of tourists who demand it (Law 1997: 225). Like the convenience store pre-packed sushi I ate for lunch during my stay in Fukura, the five daily bouts of the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene offer an accessible, commoditised version of Awaji ningyo joruri for the tourist industry. The decision to regularly stage a different scene, 'Jurobei's House' (*jūrobei uchi no dan*), is a significant if small step away from the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene's dominance. It represents a break from Awaji ningyo joruri's received contemporary tradition and a desire to expand the theatre's regular repertory. Bando Chiaki, the theatre's current director, tells me the troupe intends to perform a different thirty-minute scene every month, although alongside the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene rather than instead of it, in a ratio of 2:3 performances daily. During my first month with the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre they rehearse the 'Jurobei's House' scene for performance the following month. The company has performed this scene before but it is not at the forefront of their minds in the same way the 'Pilgrim's Song' scene is. Therefore the troupe spends about ten hours, spread over two weeks, rehearsing this forty-minute scene. The necessity to rehearse this much indicates the troupe's lack of familiarity with the piece. Many sections have to be broken down and worked on in detail. The theatre's performers are skilled professionals but the troupe is small (currently twenty-two, including five administrative staff) and relatively young. Although the troupe was born out of Awaji's rich ningyo joruri heritage, it is essentially a mid-twentieth century revival movement that is partially still rediscovering its craft. This makes research a necessary part of the theatre's contemporary practice both as inspiration for and justification of their performance practice. However, as with the school students, recourse to videos or books is

not a magic pill. Any unfamiliar movement must be 'stolen': discovered through observation and kinaesthetic experimentation. The effectiveness of this stealing is judged by the resulting performance.

The Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre is not alone in this. Since World War II the Bunraku Theatre has also relied on research to bolster its contemporary 'tradition'. For example, the 1955 staging of *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (*sonezaki shinjū*) by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, first performed in the Takemoto Theatre in 1703, was actually a reimagining of a play unperformed for 250 years. Historical documentation only offered limited information on the puppet's gestures (*furi*) (Keene 1990:167) and the play's debut predated the development of three-person puppets so there was never a staging that corresponded to contemporary ningyo



**Figure 42 - Yoshida Shinkuro studying the 'Jurobe's House' scene's text backstage**

joruri. As a result the current staging and choreography is a 1950s creation, devised and intuited by the Bunraku Theatre's skilled performers, and is now a regular feature of the troupe's repertoire. Like the Awaji troupe's rediscovery of the 'Jurobei's House' scene, the authority of *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki's* contemporary staging, is not based upon exact replication of the past but the contemporary application of skilled performance practice.

In the weeks leading up to the 'Jurobei's House' scene's debut the puppeteers are regularly found studying the scene's text in-between their daily bouts of the Pilgrim's Song' scene. As Bando Chiaki, the troupe's director, tells me, even though the puppeteers never speak, it is

essential they have a thorough knowledge of the text. The puppeteers must learn and understand the text so they can follow the narrator and shamisen and manipulate the puppets appropriately. Although Bando tells me the troupe currently knows over thirty plays, the staging of any one of these requires rehearsal. Frequently this takes a form that feels very contemporary, with a director, discussion/analysis and repetition of difficult sections.

The puppeteers practice without the black hoods they wear on stage (*zugin*) and they frequently stop to discuss the rehearsal. Bando Chiaki, stands in the auditorium watching, offering occasional direction. On the *yuka*, also rehearsing, are the narrator Takemoto Tomosho and the shamisen player Tsuruzawa Tomoyu. They initially practice separately but later join the puppeteers. There is much discussion amongst the puppeteers as they rehearse,



**Figure 43 - The puppeteers of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre rehearsing**

especially when there is limited space for all six and they must negotiate a complicated movement. Six is comparatively few puppeteers to have on stage at once, the Bunraku Theatre may have three times that many, but the Awaji theatre is a smaller enterprise. In 2013 the troupe only had eight fulltime puppeteers including new recruit, Tanima Chisato. Bando Chikai the troupe's director is also a puppeteer but he does not perform day-to-day. He is kept busy with the theatre's administration. Given that even the simplest scenes require six puppeteers the company has little leeway to stage larger scenes. The 'Pilgrim's Song' scene only requires six puppeteers. As a result the puppeteers can work in rotation, each taking one day off per week. However, with 'Jurobe's House' all eight are needed, six working the two puppets and two more performing other stage duties such as passing props and moving scenery. At one point they are forced to enter the stage with only two puppeteers performing Oyumi, the

mother character, as the third puppeteer runs round the back to join them. This does not mean the performance is ramshackle, it is very skilled, but there is some creative 'making do' with the resources available.

Six puppeteers allows for only two three-person puppets to be on stage at any one time. Whilst one-person (*tsume*) puppets are used for minor characters, all the important characters are portrayed by the large three-person puppets developed in the Takemoto Theatre during the eighteenth century. The puppet's head and body is supported by the head-puppeteer (*omozukai*), who also controls the puppet's right arm with his/her right hand. The head-puppeteer stands above the other puppeteers on stage clogs (*butai geta*). These are hollow cuboids ranging from 100-200mm in height that the head puppeteer wears like sandals. The variation in height is to accommodate the puppeteers' different heights so keeping the puppet at a constant level.. The puppet's left arm is controlled by the left-hand-puppeteer (*hidaritezukai*) who stands slightly away from the puppet, controlling the arm by means of a rod-control (*sashigane*). Finally the puppet's feet are controlled by the foot-puppeteer (*ashizukai*) who, despite the head-puppeteer's elevation is forced to bend over, hold the puppet's legs by the small handles extending from its calves. This is an involved method of manipulation requiring determined focus and sensitivity to the other puppeteers. The head-puppeteer always leads the performance. The other two puppeteers follow his/her lead. The foot-puppeteer keeps his/her right arm wedged into the head-puppeteer's waist to feel changes in tension in the head-puppeteer's body as s/he moves. The foot-puppeteer also looks at the back of the puppet's head to glean indications of the head puppeteer's intent. The left-arm puppeteer is necessarily more physically removed from the puppet to allow space for the foot-puppeteer. This means s/he cannot be in direct contact with the head-puppeteer. Instead s/he also watches the back of the puppet's head. The head-puppeteer intentionally gives signals with the puppet's head. Yoshida Hironosuke demonstrates such a signal for me that indicates the puppet is about to move or look in a certain direction. The head is momentarily leant, slightly diagonally forward in the direction that the puppet will go/look, then brought back diagonally the other way and held momentarily before the actual move is made. This happens as one quick, fluid and subtle movement. It serves two purposes: first, to inform the other puppeteers a move is about to happen; second, to give the audience time to process that the puppet is about to move. It creates intention in the puppet, imitating a shift of weight as the puppet prepares to move/look. Ueno-Herr describes a similar move in the Bunraku Theatre (1995: 259). Many such moves are not codified in books. Bar the 1801 manuscript *An introductory scroll of manipulation techniques from the oral tradition*, mentioned earlier, there

have not been many attempts to codify the rules of ningyo joruri puppet manipulation. Learning through observation is still the primary method of transmission.



**Figure 44 - Tsume puppets backstage in the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

The puppeteers share jokes during rehearsal. Whilst the senior puppeteers are in charge offer critique there is none of the quasi-fascistic hierarchy of the early twentieth century Bunraku Theatre. The senior puppeteers happily move from controlling the puppet's head or left-arm to moving props or performing a one-person puppet. The success of the overall performance is more important than individual status. Once they start rehearsing with the chanter and shamisen player there is no stopping. When the puppeteers make an error they only briefly discuss it whilst simultaneously keeping pace with the narrator. This continues until narrator Takemoto Tomosho loses his place. Shamisen player Tsuruzawa Tomoyu starts laughing and the rehearsal breaks down. Now Bando Chiaki steps in and directs and mimes some of the Jurobe's gestures from his seat in the auditorium. The rehearsal restarts and the scene progresses to Jurobe's climactic fight with two gang members, portrayed one-person puppets (*tsume*). The fight scene is accompanied by shamisen music from the small stage-left balcony-room. The choreography is still slightly static and time is devoted to making the fight scene more dramatic. Backstage another, younger shamisen player, Tsuzawa Tomoshige, watches the performance intently miming along to the shamisen music. After rehearsal I ask the puppeteers how it is going. They are clearly not satisfied and continue to work on the scene over the next few days prior to its first performance.

On the morning of the first performance the puppeteers arrive early for one last run through. They are still in their casual clothes but their focus is clear. They run the entire scene without interruption, then set about tweaking the puppets, including re-sewing Oyumi's kimono onto her shoulder (it is cut off during the scene). The puppeteers are responsible for the theatre's sets, props and puppet maintenance, so there is regular work to be done backstage. One morning I arrive to find Yoshida Shiko deftly remaking the chord for the sign that hangs around Otsuru's neck in *The Courtesan of Naruto*. Whilst a piece of string would suffice, Yoshida Shiko makes the chord from scratch, carefully weaving together dry reeds. When I visited the theatre in 2011 the puppeteers were also repairing various arms and legs of the theatre's puppets.



**Figure 45 - Puppet arms being repaired in the old Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre**

The first two performances of 'Jurobe's House' go well. Usually one of the puppeteers gives a short introduction to ningyo joruri before performances. However, there is too much to prepare before this scene so it is reassigned to narrator Takemoto Tomokazu. For these performances Yoshida Shiko is Oyumi's head-puppeteer and Yoshida Shinkuro Jurobe's head-puppeteer, Takemoto Tomosho narrates and Tsuruzawa Tomoyu plays the shamisen. Yoshida Shiko and Yoshida Shinkuro are the troupe's most senior puppeteers. For this performance they wear the same black garb (*kurogo*) as the other puppeteers. In other shows they appear in formal kimono, with their heads uncovered (*dezukai*). In a few shows, such as *The Nine-Tailed Fox* (*tamamonomae asahi no tamoto*) written in 1751 by Namioka Kippe, Asada Itcho and Yasuda Akei for the Toyotake Theatre (Hironaga 1976: 369), they wear a formal kimono

specially designed for rapid changes in colour (*hayagawari*), that coincide with transformations in the puppet. As all the puppeteers are on stage the dramatic slaps of the wooden claves (*tsukeuchi*) that add emphasis to points of the performance, often coinciding with the foot-puppeteer's stamping, are done by narrator Takemoto Tomokazu.

After the day's final show the puppeteers meet backstage to discuss the performances. It is decided the fight sequence in the Jurobe scene needs work. They then spend another thirty minutes experimenting with different choreographies. Over its first week of performance the puppeteers continue refining the scene, including making further reference to books and videos of past performances.

### **Videos and Books as 'Authenticated' Repositories of Knowledge:**

What implications does the use of books and videos in ningyo joruri's training and rehearsal have for the 'authority' of the art form's traditional 'guardians'? If these media can be conceived of as equivalent pedagogical tools to direct observation in effect they also become authenticated 'guardians'. How does this affect the perceived 'authenticity' of the art form and those who perform it? Can the student who 'steals' knowledge of ningyo joruri by watching YouTube videos, reading books and learning in the body through repetition and kinaesthetic discovery make the same claims of authoritative knowledge as the student who trains in closer relationship to more traditionally acknowledged 'guardians'? Understandably the Awaji school groups do not claim equivalence with the professionals of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, whereas the performers and spokespeople of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre do claim equivalence with the Bunraku Theatre. As Masai Yoshinori the chair of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Association tells me 'Awaji ningyo joruri and Bunraku are both of a high level. The three skills of movement, shamisen and narration are the same'. Indeed, despite the vast differentials in their sizes and resources, the Awaji theatre has highly skilled performers who, at times, produce comparable performances to the Bunraku Theatre's. However, does, the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's use of video, books and photographs to supplement their performance knowledge diminish their authority, especially as these sources are inevitably of the better-funded Bunraku Theatre?

Authority in tradition is frequently circular and self-supporting and as such can easily account for and incorporate contemporary innovations into the narrative of the 'tradition'. In Salman Rushdie's 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses* the Persian scribe Salman starts to question the veracity of the prophet Mahound's revelation. In order to test the inerrancy of his spiritual



leader Salman deliberately starts to change certain words of Mahound's revelations as he writes them down: 'If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as *all-hearing, all-knowing*, I would write, *all-knowing, all-wise*' (Rushdie 1988: 367). Then, when he reads the text back to Mahound, he watches to see if Rushdie's fictional prophet will notice the changes. Mahound does not. So Salman continues changing his words: 'there I was, actually writing the Book, or re-writing, anyway, polluting the word of God with my own profane language' (Rushdie 1988: 367). With each change more of Salman's faith is chipped away, until the alterations are so extreme that Mahound does query one and Salman is forced to flee, his faith destroyed and convinced that Mahound will have him killed for his interventions - as he later quips to his friend the poet Baal: 'It's his Word against mine' (Rushdie 1988: 368). Salman seeks to test the tradition by deliberately changing it but as long as Mahound keeps authorising the changes the tradition's authority is not disrupted. Anthony Giddens proposes that tradition is governed by authenticated 'guardians' who, like Rushdie's prophet, alone 'have privileged access to truth,' a truth that can only be demonstrated 'in so far as it is manifest in the interpretations and practices of [the] guardians' (Giddens 1994: 79). As with Mahound's revelations the authority of Giddens' 'guardians' is circular. Only the 'guardians' have access to the requisite 'privileged... truth' necessary to judge that their actions, pronunciations and interpretations are representative of that truth. What Rushdie's scribe attempts is a disruption of this circularity by deliberately changing the 'guardian's 'truth' but the 'guardian's' authority is not displaced so long as the 'guardian' authenticates the altered truth.

As such the authenticity of the 'guardian's 'truth' does not require factual veracity or strict adherence to a codified truth. Rather authority is derived from what Walter Benjamin terms 'aura' (1968:221): as long as the 'guardian' alone appears to have access to the 'truth' it does not matter exactly what that 'truth' is. Within an inherited tradition, such as ningyo joruri, this means the present practices of the 'guardians' can be presented and/or understood as that of their forebears. In some cases this means the present is interpreted as analogous with the past. Or to say it another way: the past, the *authenticated tradition* can be written by and for contemporary concerns. External forces, financial and/or political, can necessitate the adoption of self-essentialised and self-authorised 'truths' that can sustain the art form in the contemporary world by re-authoring the present as the 'tradition' sustained by an 'aura' of authenticity.

As we saw in chapter 3, and will see further in chapter 5, such a re-authoring has happened in the tradition of ningyo joruri over the last century as it was revived following the devastation of World War II: the restaging of *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* for example. Much of ningyo joruri's postwar image was built on a rhetoric of authenticity deriving from age that seeks to

legitimise troupes through association with and descent from an often semi-fictionalised past. The Bunraku Theatre's co-opting of ningyo joruri's history has been so successful and pervasive that Awaji now regularly situates itself as the 'birthplace' of Bunraku, deriving 'aura' by association with the modern 'tradition'. This is not a new phenomenon in Japanese puppetry as seen in the 1638 document Dokombo Denki (*dōkumbō denki*) a quasi-mythic, quasi-historic account of the origins of puppetry on Awaji. As Jane Marie Law discusses the primary purpose of the document is that it 'creates and legitimates Awaji puppetry as a tradition in its own right' (Law 1997: 156). According to Law, Awaji puppeteers carried this scroll with them as they travelled across the country as an authenticating token. The factual accuracy of the document was irrelevant. What was important was the 'aura' of age, lineage and authenticity the scroll provided.

This is furthered by the inability of historical sources to provide sufficient detail on the performance practice of the past to warrant informed comparison. Whilst the 1800 book *Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre* offers extensive schematic drawings of ningyo joruri puppets, and *An introductory scroll of manipulation techniques from the oral tradition* (c.1790) provides general principles of puppet manipulation, neither source gives us serious insight into late eighteenth century performance practice. Both these sources are of great interest to the historian but neither provides a detailed performance record sufficient to compare with present day practice or to recreate eighteenth century performance practice without large amounts of contemporary intuition. So the circular authority, outlined above, continues.

But how could increased use of video affect this? Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* outlines the disruptive effect mass production can have on the artwork's 'aura': 'the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence' (1968: 223). Certainly the wide availability of video footage of ningyo joruri has the potential to disrupt the 'aura' of the live performance through demystifying and desensitising audiences. Ningyo joruri has already had to survive the cinema's disruptive effect in the early twentieth century that drew audiences away, providing them with cheaper, more accessible entertainment. However, the wide availability of videos of ningyo joruri offers a different challenge to the art form. Like Rushdie's scribe, video disrupts 'The orthodox chain of inspiration [that] should go from archangel to prophet to scribe' (Corcoran 1990: 159), i.e. a linear descent of 'aura' from one self-authorised 'guardian' to another. Video disrupts the standard line of descent by offering at least some of the authorised 'truth' to anyone who watches it with the advantage that the experience of 'learning through observation' can be repeated whenever and wherever the student chooses.

This disruption is not necessarily negative and video, despite its flaws, can effectively communicate ningyo joruri's techniques, just as books can effectively communicate the technologies of the art form. As videos become increasingly widespread, the potential for others to reproduce ningyo joruri increases. This represents a challenge to the 'aura' of institutionalised hegemonic centres, such as the Bunraku Theatre. However, this challenge could help return ningyo joruri to being a plurality rather than a singularity. Most importantly, it forefronts contemporary performance skill as the ultimate guarantor of 'authenticity'. This fits with ningyo joruri's competitive roots that created such great variation and innovation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, this will only take place if the marketplace is levelled. Currently the Bunraku Theatre's funding is disproportionately high in comparison to all other ningyo joruri theatres.

Video does, however, have a negative potential. Proliferation of video as codified 'authentic' performance could further homogenise and stagnate ningyo joruri, especially if the current, near exclusive dominance of video of the Bunraku Theatre continues. This will happen if video is set up as an immutable, didactic, authoritative source rather than just an *index*, a shadow of a performance. To be a useful pedagogical device video must be a tool, not a 'holy book'. It should disrupt auratic hegemonies not replace them.

## **Conclusion:**

It is clear that the contemporary Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre's performance practices largely align with other centres of ningyo joruri, such as the Bunraku Theatre. Further it appears that the 'atoms' of ningyo joruri, in particular its technologies, are eminently 'stealable' and that the use of video, books and photographs as sources of learning is a continuation of older training methods not a violation of an immutable tradition. What these methods do disrupt is the fetishisation of authority based on an 'aura' of authenticity through an imagined uninterrupted lineage, i.e. tradition. All processes of performative replication, no matter how exact are creative learning processes. In ningyo joruri every move must be kinaesthetically intuited and discovered by the student. This personal discovery can be bolstered by external sources but primarily the student must 'steal' the art, rather than the master teach the art. Learning through observation is one way to aid this personal discovery. Although they are semiotically different the observation of live and videoed performance both offer the student chances to 'steal'. Further, video's reproducibility offers a chance for many more people to observe the art form as well as the potential to disrupt current hegemonies of power and

create 'a plurality rather than a singularity' (Benjamin 1968: 223). Ningyo joruri was born out of fierce competitive rivalry and its significant forward steps have always resulted from competition. This has been disruptive as well as creative. For example in 1898 the Bunraku Theatre intervened to prevent the sale of the Inari Theatre to the Uemura Gennojo Theatre (Nakanishi 2012: 7). At the time the Uemura Gennojo Theatre was a powerful theatrical force with five different touring troupes. A permanent base in Osaka would have presented a serious commercial threat to the Bunraku Theatre. The Uemura Gennojo Theatre was sadly eradicated in the bombing of World War II, whereas the Bunraku Theatre was saved and subsequently nationalised providing it with its current elevated status and funding. Videos and books offer a chance to disrupt this modern day hegemony. Whilst a more level playing field could be enacted through rebalanced funding, primarily what solicits the recognition of authority in ningyo joruri is contemporary performance skill. The proliferation of video and books offer more companies the opportunity to intuit and discover their own 'authoritative' skillsets that may one day compete with the Bunraku Theatre's artistic prowess. They also present clear examples that Western theatre-makers, during the twentieth century, could have used to 'steal' the atoms of ningyo joruri. To what extent this happened is discussed in the following chapters.

A few days after my visit to Nandan Junior High School I am sitting in the Hyogo Performing Arts Centre watching the same students perform on stage in front of hundreds of people. Also on the bill are students from the Mihara Junior High School and Mihara Senior High School as well as the professionals of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre. This is worlds away from the far larger scale Bunraku Theatre performance I see the following week but there are moments of great skill and exciting performance, even in the children's work, that hint towards a further renewal of ningyo joruri as a performing art in Japan and maybe one day abroad.

## Chapter 5 – Bunraku in Britain

### Introduction:

We have dealt with ningyo joruri's origins and some of its technologies and techniques; however, this discussion has so far only focussed on ningyo joruri within Japan. This chapter and the case studies that follow, focus on the reception and supposed use of ningyo joruri in British theatre practice. Given the principles of knowledge transmission, outlined in the previous chapter, and the availability of the atoms of ningyo joruri, in books and video, it seems reasonable to expect that British practitioners making 'Bunraku-style' puppets would have actively sought to 'steal the art' by observing live performance and where that was not possible bolstering their study with video, books and photographs. If such an exploration was undertaken in earnest the atoms of ningyo joruri will be present in the contemporary 'Bunraku-style' puppets of British theatre practice. However, as this and the following chapter discuss, increased interactions with ningyo joruri did not lead to a greatly increased absorption of its atoms. In fact, from the earliest encounters with ningyo joruri it is what the Bunraku Theatre represents, as a signifier of serious, adult puppet theatre, that is valued more than specific technologies and techniques. British fascination with 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan' is integrally interwoven with an essentialised and mythologised understanding of the Bunraku Theatre that develops in the mid-twentieth century.

The first half of this chapter deals with British interactions with Japanese puppet theatre up to the first Bunraku performance at the Aldwych Theatre, London in 1968, part of the fifth *World Theatre Season* organised by Peter Daubeny. This period charts a process of mythologizing the Bunraku Theatre that laid the foundation for a highly essentialised reception and understanding of Bunraku in the second half of the twentieth century. This mythologizing changed the Bunraku Theatre's status and framing from being one example of ningyo joruri to being *the* unique, ancient, classical Japanese puppet theatre. The second half of this chapter describes how Bunraku's essentialised status enabled British practitioners to harness and appropriate its 'aura' to fulfil their own artistic needs, without needing to seriously investigate ningyo joruri's technologies and techniques. British understanding of Bunraku is reduced to visible and/or multiple manipulators, which become the macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness', used to channel the 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku. This enabled the widespread adoption of 'Bunraku-style' puppetry as an example of serious adult puppetry that could bridge the gap between 'puppet' and 'mainstream' theatre. However, this is an undifferentiated term that

covers a diverse set of technologies and techniques, few of which have any serious connection to Japan's ningyo joruri theatres.

## **Part 1 – A Modernising Agenda: Creating the Myth of the Unique, Ancient, Classical Bunraku:**

On June 10<sup>th</sup> 1968 the 'Bunraku National Theatre of Japan'<sup>30</sup> gave its first British performance as part of the World Theatre Season at the Aldwych Theatre, London, organised by the theatre impresario Peter Daubeny. Over thirteen days the Osaka troupe performed twelve shows equally split between two completely different midori programmes (compilations of scenes from different plays) featuring extracts from plays such as Chikamatsu Monzaemon's domestic tragedy of doomed lovers, *The Love Suicide at Sonezaki (sonezaki shinjū)* (1703) and Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Sosuke's epic story of feudal revenge, *The Treasury of the Royal Retainers (kanadehon chushingura)* (1748). London's critics were largely full of praise for this 'exotic form of puppetry' (Shulman 1968) with its 'peculiar magic' (Wardle 1968b) that 'crowned the World Theatre Season at the Aldwych' (Trewin 1968: 33). Much of the credit for these cries of exaltation must be given to the entrancing performances of the Bunraku Theatre's puppeteers, chanters and shamisen players. However, these performances were not received in isolation. Rather they were framed by years of gradual mythologizing, both in Japan and abroad, that had shifted perception of the Bunraku Theatre from being one example of the popular art of ningyo joruri to a 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' high art form: Bunraku. This myth sought to highlight and accentuate Bunraku's authenticity on the international stage and neither acknowledged the broader past history and contemporary reality of ningyo joruri nor the wide variety of other Japanese puppet-forms. Instead a reimagined Bunraku, shaped for a modern global world, but ideologically rooted in the past, was presented and received as a state-approved, cultural treasure to be exported abroad and enhance Japan's 'international prestige' (Pyle 1979:3)

As discussed in chapter 3, it was less than a century earlier in 1872 that the very first Bunraku Theatre opened its doors in Osaka's western outskirts (Ueno-Herr 1995: 21). The Bunraku Theatre was only one of many ningyo joruri troupes spread throughout Japan at the time. Other centres of ningyo joruri, such as Awaji, were still very active (Law 1997: 162) Even in Osaka the Bunraku Theatre was not the sole ningyo joruri troupe until the Chikamatsu

---

<sup>30</sup> This is the nomenclature that the Bunraku Theatre and the World Theatre Season used in 1968.

Theatre's closure in 1914 (Ueno-Herr 1995: 22). The early twentieth century was a period of great challenge for Japan's ningyo joruri troupes. Already beset by audience losses to kabuki, the glamour of foreign and domestic cinema and the novelty of shingeki (lit. new theatre) only compounded the problem. These ninety-six years brought huge change to Japanese society as the nation strove for modernity, fought two World Wars, then struggled to recover from their destruction. Yet, by 1968, far from facing extinction the Bunraku Theatre had left behind its middle-class origins and been adopted as part of Japan's triad of traditional theatres, along with kabuki and noh, by the same ruling elite who once spurned it. This was how the Bunraku Theatre's appearance at the *World Theatre Season* was framed. In the run up to the shows, a broad promotional campaign appeared in the British media with large photographic puff pieces in British newspapers and magazines advertising 'the Japanese classic puppet theatre' (London Illustrated News 1968: 13) and a BBC television documentary on 'the Bunraku puppet theatre of Osaka' put forward as 'a highly sophisticated art form unchanged since the eighteenth century' (Mace 1968:22) screened just a week before the Aldwych shows began.

In many ways the newfound establishment credentials that framed the nascent 'Bunraku National Theatre of Japan' in 1968 as an 'art of more than three centuries history' (Shinkokai 1968) seem at odds with London at the time. 1968 is often described as 'a watershed year for British theatre' (Kershaw 2004: 306). It was when British theatre escaped the purview of state censorship allowing the prolific nudity of *Hair* and the disquieting social commentary of Edward Bond's *Saved*<sup>31</sup> to grace the London stage. Outside the theatres, while the Beatles continued to preach peace and love from Indian, yogic retreats, the streets of London, Paris and many other cities witnessed violent anti-Vietnam War protests and student riots as the flower-power generation became politicised. Against this backdrop of anti-establishment social and theatrical change the mythologised and state-endorsed and funded Bunraku Theatre seems rather out of place. However, despite its establishment credentials, and in some ways because of them, the Bunraku Theatre was received with enthusiasm by British theatre-makers, puppeteers and theatre critics many of whom were the very people espousing an alternative theatre. For the Bunraku Theatre's establishment credentials, as part of the 'triad of Japan's classical stage' (Wardle 1968b: 15), confirmed it as a representative authentic, traditional performing art that many avant-garde theatre-makers were searching for to help revitalise British theatre.

---

<sup>31</sup> Originally performed in 1965 at the Royal Court as a private members performance, having been refused a licence by the Lord Chamberlain, *Saved* was revived in 1969 following the end of theatre censorship.

The first half of this chapter describes and analyses the development of the myth of the 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' Bunraku, the reasons for its creation in both Japan and abroad and its willing, complicit reception by British theatre practitioners and critics that created a situation where 'What foreign audiences most want to see and what the Japanese government most would like to show them seem to have meshed perfectly' (Thornbury 2001: 220). It will be argued that political and cultural ideologies as well as circumstance led to this creative 'misreading' (Bloom 1973:14)<sup>32</sup> of Japanese history allowing the history of ningyo joruri to be subsumed into that of the Bunraku Theatre. Anthony Giddens claims that 'the past is not preserved but continually reconstructed on the basis of the present. Such reconstruction is partly individual, but more fundamentally it is social or collective' (Giddens 1994: 63). In the case of the myth of Bunraku the present was the post-war struggle of a defeated nation trying to redefine itself on the international stage and the collectivity was national, political and most intriguingly intercultural: providing an example of symbiotic trans-global exoticisation and essentialisation of a cultural property for artistic and political gain. It will be shown that the decisive preconditions for the mythologised 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' Bunraku were firmly in place by the time of the 1968 tour and had been put there by both Japanese and British sources. Graham Huggan asks whether authenticity is 'better seen as the symbolic representation of what is felt to be missing from one's own [life experience] – the simulacrum of loss, the manufactured nostalgic moment?' (2001: 172). This chapter will show that in the case of British interactions with the mythologised Bunraku the invocation of the authentic was used to revitalise the fortunes of both Japanese and British cultural and sometimes political interests.

### **Establishing the Myth:**

Although ningyo joruri's earliest mention in a British publication dates from the 1870s, the Bunraku Theatre is not mentioned in any British accounts until 1919 and a fully mythologised

---

<sup>32</sup> Bloom's description of *Clinamen* 'poetic misreading' (1973: 14) posits that 'strong poets make history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves.' (1973: 5) in other words they 'swerve' to avoid repetition of their precursor's creations and create a space in which their own creativity can be recognised. Bloom was obviously discussing creativity in poetry but the principal of 'misreading' in order to re-orientate focus on oneself applies to the case of Bunraku in Japan very neatly. History has been continually misread and swerved around to allow the Bunraku Theatre to become the sole representative of not just ningyo joruri but, for many people, all Japanese puppet theatre.



Bunraku does not appear in Britain until the 1960s.<sup>33</sup> Similarly in Japan the Bunraku Theatre's adoption as a representative national art form and the mythologising that accompanied this was not fully realised until 1966. Given ningyo joruri's widespread popularity and artistic achievement in Japan, during the mid-nineteenth century, it is perhaps surprising that following the reopening of Japan in spring 1854, ningyo joruri was all but ignored by foreigners until the mid-twentieth century. Understandably the bombardment of Edo harbour by Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1854, which precipitated Japan's reopening, was not driven by a burning desire to experience Japan's puppet theatres. The length of time it took for British commentators, in particular, to engage with Japanese puppetry more than likely betrays prejudice against puppetry as a theatrical art as much as mistrust of the 'other'. Indeed both noh and kabuki had a far quicker impact on European and British theatre.

The earliest reports of ningyo joruri to reach Britain come from occasional travel journals by 'individuals whose main activities and interests were in other fields' than theatre (Eppstein 1993: 147) and as such 'not necessarily authorized theatre spectators' (Fischer-Lichte 2001: 6). These reports are often characteristic of late nineteenth century 'triumphant imperialism' (Tschudin 2001: 48) and these writers' attitudes can seem 'patronizing and often arrogant' (Eppstein 1993: 147). As Sholz-Ciona and Leiter point out in these reports 'Japanese theatre is for the first time perceived as a foil, as "the other," the opposite of European values and forms' (2001: 6) an attitude that remains prevalent in twentieth century interactions with Japanese theatre and is key to the romanticised mythology of Bunraku that presents an exotic 'other' (Said 1977) – an Orient, not of exotic, beautiful and sexually available women, but of beautiful, serious, adult puppetry authenticated by centuries of tradition.

#### **i) The 'unique' Bunraku:**

Whilst ningyo joruri was widespread in the mid-nineteenth century, a solipsistic view of Bunraku as *the* Japanese puppet theatre was not yet established. As a result the first British description of ningyo joruri in Arthur Drummond Carlisle's 1872 travel book *Round the World in 1870* makes no mention of Bunraku or Osaka. Carlisle's trip took him to Nagasaki, nearly 400 miles from Osaka. Here, near a Shinto temple, he encountered a performance of 'Several large dolls, about half the size of life, dressed to represent the characters of the play' (Carlisle 1872:

---

<sup>33</sup> Whilst this chapter concentrates on British interactions with Japan it should be noted that Britain was not alone in mythologizing the Bunraku Theatre during this period see, for example, Tschudin 2001 for an account of French interactions with Japanese theatre in the early twentieth century.

167). Carlisle's brief account succinctly demonstrates his position as an '[un]authorized theatre spectator' (Fischer-Lichte 2001:6) he apparently lasted a mere 'half an hour' of the 'unintelligible performance' before finding his 'way back to the Foreign settlement,' (Carlisle 1872: 167). He compares the puppeteers to 'mutes', the black-clad professional mourners of Victorian London (May 1996: 6) somewhat unhelpfully presenting his readers with a mental-image of top-hatted, black-cloaked, severe-looking men playing with dolls.

The new century brought new reports from Japan. Whilst the frequency of accounts mentioning ningyo joruri increased, the information provided continued to be limited. In 1901 Osman Edwards attempted to write a comprehensive study of Japanese theatre including a brief discussion of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's plays, which Edwards was shocked to discover were 'written for marionettes' (Edwards 1901: 73). This textual focus was repeated by Alfred Bates and James Boyd in Volume III of their extensive 1903 work *The Drama its history, literature and influence on civilization*. Their attempt to deal with 'Chinese, Japanese, Hindoo, Persian, Arabian and Hebrew' drama in one, fairly slender volume on 'Oriental theatre' is, unsurprisingly, not entirely successful, but it is the first British publication to link Japanese puppetry to Osaka providing some information on the history and development of the Osaka 'Ayatsuri Shibai or marionette theatre' and accurately rooting the development of these puppets in the Takemoto and Toyotake theatres (Bates, Boyd, et al. 1903: 69). This link to 'the Takemoto Za' is repeated in an overview of Japanese theatre published in 1910 in *The Times*, the author focusing on 'The popularity of these marionette theatres in Kyoto and Osaka' (*Times* 1910: 56). Whilst Osaka is mentioned throughout, the Bunraku Theatre is not.

Osaka appears again in a 1914 article by 'a Japanese' published in Edward Gordon Craig's periodical *The Mask*.<sup>34</sup> The author describes in relative detail many of ningyo joruri's key aspects including three-person manipulation (*sanninzukai*) based upon viewing the Osaka 'Chikamatsu-za' who were performing at the Yuraku Theatre, Tokyo. The author seems unaware of ningyo joruri troupes outside Osaka erroneously claiming that 'at present the doll theatre can only be seen in Osaka' (*Mask* 1914: 217). The author describes how the art of the Osaka puppeteers 'is unique' and whilst s/he is not writing directly about the Bunraku Theatre by starting a rhetoric of Osaka as the last refuge of the 'unique' Japanese puppet theatre s/he sets the stage for the Bunraku Theatre to claim that title after the Chikamatsu Theatre's demise in 1914. Craig published a significant number of articles with illustrations of ningyo

---

<sup>34</sup> Craig is quite probably this article's author – he frequently wrote under pseudonyms – but his source was clearly based in Japan but sadly unknown.

yoruri in *The Mask* and *The Marionette*. Although all were Osaka-centric Craig's only direct mention of Bunraku is in a special edition of *The Chapbook* he guest edited in 1921. Craig placed great importance in the traditional and ritual aspects of the Japanese puppet theatre (by which he only ever means ningyo joruri) as authenticated sources of inspiration through which 'the forgotten laws of European theatre can be rediscovered' (Lee 2000: 221). As Olga Taxidou points out: Craig 'approaches the Orient as a late Romantic, seeing it as the last salvation from the ever-increasing modernization of the age' (Taxidou: 1998: 83). However, whilst Craig spoke about the 'Japanese puppet' in exultant tones, stating that it 'must silence those who imagine that a Puppet is something silly and not to be considered seriously or a fine means of expression,' (1921) he was wary that 'admiration must not lead to imitation' (Lee 2000: 222). For Craig, the Orient was 'something that is too sacred to set the new style, as happened in areas ranging from fine art to popular fashion' (Taxidou 1998: 108). In fact, in place of imitation Craig places a primacy on the contemporary artist's creative spirit. He cuttingly tells those of his compatriots who might be tempted to imitate ningyo joruri that 'Impotence detests creation for obvious reasons...' (1915: 105). Instead he sees Japanese puppets as food for 'long meditation' that might lead to a new creative 'vision, however, vague, however "impossible"' (1915: 105), characterising them as an almost divine and therefore intangible and inimitable source of inspiration. He is equally critical of and far more patronising towards the 'dear little Japanese man' who comes to Europe to "'study and imitate" our Arts' telling him that 'What is great in you is what remains over in spite of your attempt to rid yourself of the influence of the Past. You are great only in so far as you venerate and keep alive the Past' (1913: 91). Although, Japanese puppets 'were amongst his favourites' he 're-writes or re-reads' them 'in a manner that best suits his needs' completely ignoring the chanter and shamisen player (Taxidou 1998: 86-87),<sup>35</sup> and emphasising what he saw as their thematic significance: ancient, ritualistic tradition. This is partly because his engagement with ningyo joruri was purely theoretical: he never saw a performance nor encountered a puppet in the flesh. As a result he never explored ningyo joruri as 'performing objects' unlike other Asian puppets such as the wayang of Indonesia (Cohen 2010: 41). His emphasis on ningyo joruri's traditionality and his hyperbolic pronouncements about it, including claiming the Bunraku Theatre could hold 2000 people (Craig 1921: 30), served to enhance the mythical prestige of Bunraku in the British theatrical consciousness. Throughout his writings he consistently cited Osaka as the focal point of the 'unique' Japanese puppet theatre and even though he rarely referred to Bunraku by name he did much to raise Osaka puppet theatre's status and enhance

---

<sup>35</sup> This response is repeated by many European observers on first contact with ningyo joruri.

its perceived uniqueness by characterising it as unique, traditional, and inimitable to his readers.

From late 1919 to early 1920 The Times ran a series of articles on Japanese theatre all of which mention puppetry. An article from December 18<sup>th</sup> 1919, probably written by Zoe Kincaid,<sup>36</sup> a resident of Toyko's foreign colony and amateur Kabuki enthusiast affectionately known as 'Kabuki Kincaid' (Leiter 2001: 64), focuses exclusively on 'the doll-theatre of Japan,' describing it as 'unique in the world' and stating that although it 'has been alive in Japan for more than 250 years... it is at present crystallized in the small theatre in Osaka, called the Bunraku-za' (The Times 1919: 10). This is the first example of Bunraku being mentioned by name in a British publication. The article's Bunraku-centric tone is unsurprising given the its main source was 'Yoshida Bungoro, one of the chief doll-handlers of the Bunraku-za' (The Times 1919: 10). Bungoro effuses about Bunraku but fails to mention other extant ningyo joruri troupes, including seven on nearby Awaji Island that were in operation right through until WWII but did not located in an important urban centre and so accessible to foreign visitors (Kikukawa 2002:387). What Kincaid starts here, probably unwittingly, is the exclusion of other ningyo joruri troupes from British understanding of Japanese puppet theatre by ascribing authenticity to the Bunraku Theatre as the sole representative Japanese puppet theatre. To borrow from Gareth Griffiths: whilst this 'may be in part the unintentional product of a worthy liberal desire to recuperate' a culture or cultural property it 'frequently results... in a media construction of the "authentic"... in opposition to the "inauthentic"' (1994: 166). The exclusivity of Kincaid's writing starts to create a hierarchy of Japanese puppet theatre. By creating a unique representative – the authentic voice – it is implied other voices, assuming they are recognised at all, are inauthentic. This has meant that either other ningyo joruri companies have to be satisfied to be read within the context of Bunraku, and therefore often seen as a lesser Bunraku, or, in order to be seen as a distinct entity, they have also creatively misread their own history in order to chip out their own unique space. So, for example, the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre emphasises its ritual, folk roots over and above its long history of touring and its relationship with urban centres, in particular Tokushima and Osaka, to be seen as distinct from the characteristically urban Bunraku Theatre. Only by doing this was it able to gain recognition from the Japanese government as an intangible folk-cultural property.

---

<sup>36</sup> Several sections of the article are identical to sections in Kincaid's 1925 book on kabuki. Given this article was published six years earlier either Kincaid copied the sections verbatim or she was the author of both works. As there were relatively few theatrically interested British correspondents in Japan at the time it seems probable that Kincaid was author of both.

An almost identical Bunraku-centric rhetoric pervades Zoe Kincaid's brief mentions of ningyo joruri in her 1925 book *Kabuki, the Popular Stage of Japan*. Kincaid identifies Osaka and the Bunraku Theatre as the last centre of Japanese puppetry (1925: 144). She repeats a similar description in the *London Illustrated News* in 1931, although this time only referencing the Bunraku Theatre through the accompanying photographs and captions, where she highlights what she perceives as the difference between the Western 'marionette-show' that 'parodies and caricatures rather than raises serious emotions,' and the Japanese 'marionette-stage' that 'touches the deepest feelings of its audience' (1931: 1057): highlighting the Bunraku as an exotic 'other' to its Western counterparts and starting its extensive fetishization in Britain as a serious, adult puppet theatre.

A similar characterisation is featured in Peter Quennell's 1932 book *A Superficial Journey*, in which he recounts a visit to a show in Osaka. Like Kincaid and Craig, Quennell situates Japanese puppetry exclusively in Osaka, although he does not mention the Bunraku Theatre by name (1932: 150). Writing a few years later Cyril Beaumont, an English dance writer, publisher and a British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild member, also locates 'the traditional "THREE-MAN" PUPPET' of Japan in 'the famous Bunraku-za theatre at Osaka' (1938:18). 1939 saw the first English language publication on Bunraku by a Japanese author: Yoshio Watanabe's *Bunraku Japanese Puppet Play*. Watanabe explicitly describes Bunraku as *the* puppet theatre of Japan declaring it 'unique' and stating that:

The puppet-play in Japan is represented by a theatrical company named the "Bunraku" which belongs to the famous puppet-theatre at Osaka, the Bunraku-za. It was by this troupe that the art of Japanese puppetry was brought up to its present perfection. Hence the name "Bunraku" has become synonymous with the puppet-play in Japan. (1939)

Watanabe, was a celebrated photographer not a theatre historian. Consequently his book is primarily a collection of beautiful photographs: the first such resource available in the UK and greatly admired by British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild members (Philpott 1964: 22). Watanabe acknowledges, but dismisses, other extant ningyo joruri troupes as 'folk-art,' claiming the theatrical tradition only survived in the 'Bunraku-za Theatre'. As discussed in chapter 3, although other extant ningyo joruri troupes were more itinerant than the Bunraku Theatre several had permanent theatre bases, including the Uemura Gennojo and Ichimura Rokunojo theatres on Awaji (Law 1997: 142). Their performance practice was also very theatrical and after the great eighteenth century developments in ningyo joruri they used the same texts, technologies and techniques that were later adopted by the Bunraku Theatre.

Again it seems Osaka's prominence as a large urban centre helped keep the Bunraku Theatre in the limelight whilst more rural troupes were forgotten.

Faubion Bower's 1952 book *Japanese Theatre* continues this Bunraku-centricity. Bower's presents Bunraku as the only theatre to have 'survived the vicissitudes of history and the changing tastes of modern Japan' also claiming that since 1914 there had been 'no rival puppet theatre in Japan' (Bowers 1952: 32), again ignoring the five extant Awaji troupes (Kikukawa 2002: 387) as well as the wealth of other Japanese puppet forms. Bowers was writing in a different world to Wanatabe. By 1952 Japan was recovering from the devastation of World War II that left the Bunraku troupe with no theatre, no puppets and few puppeteers (Pringle 2009: 188-9, Boyd 1986: 19-20) and the Awaji troupes severely depleted (Scott 1973: 18). Bunraku re-established itself relatively quickly thanks to the financial resources of its owners, the Shochiku Corporation (Pringle 2009: 189). By contrast although theoretically there were still five troupes on Awaji in 1951 (Kikukawa 2002: 387), they were severely depleted, lacking in performers and without money to rebuild the island's theatre tradition. A functioning Awaji troupe would not reform until 1957, spurred on by an invitation to perform in Moscow and a small loan (not a grant) from the National Theatre in Tokyo (Law 1997: 204-5). However, Shochiku's financial support was unable to prevent the Bunraku Theatre splitting into the rival Chinamikai and Mitsuwakai troupes in 1948 over a pay dispute (Pringle 2009: 185). So whilst extant ningyo joruri troupes outside Osaka were admittedly struggling and less prominent than before World War II, the Bunraku Theatre itself was fractured, not to be reunited until 1963 (Boyd 1986: 38), in stark contrast to the homogenous Bunraku Bowers presents.

The publication of *Masterworks of Japanese Puppetry - Sculptured Heads of the Bunraku Theatre* by Yoshinaga Takao, Saito Seiji and Yamaguchi Hiroichi in 1958 offered the first chance for British theatre makers to see colour photographs of ningyo joruri. The book presents colour plates of many puppet heads (*kashira*). Interestingly though, while the book is framed in the context of the Bunraku Theatre many of the images are of puppet heads from centres of ningyo joruri other than the Bunraku Theatre, such as Awaji, Iida, and Tonda. The specificity of these other centres is simply subsumed into a broader homogenous vision of Bunraku.

European practitioners also made trips to Japan in the mid-twentieth century. In 1958, German puppeteer Harro Siegel, director of the Brunswick School of Arts, visited Japan 'for the purpose of studying the theatre' and wrote a report of his visit, which made its way into British publications. During his trip, Siegel presented a letter to Yoshida Bungoro of the Bunraku

Theatre on behalf of UNIMA. Yoshida Bungoro was later made a UNIMA Member of Honour, as a reflection of his artistry but also a European desire to include Japanese puppetry in UNIMA. Siegel predictably did not venture outside of Osaka and Tokyo. He does make mention of the Yuki Theatre in Tokyo and acknowledges that there 'are also a few amateur theatres'. These he primarily situates 'on the island of Awaji in the Japanese inland sea' their perceived amateur status made clear by the suggestion they 'are maintained by peasants and fishermen' (Siegel 1959: 15). However, despite acknowledging the existence of other Japanese puppetry Siegel primarily provides a narrative of the 'unique' Bunraku writing that it 'cannot be compared with any other form of puppetry in the world – it is a class of its own and is artistically very highly developed' (1959: 15).

Although Bunraku was troubled by internal division after World War II repeated references to its uniqueness cemented its brand internationally. From the late 1950s Bunraku is almost universally characterised as 'the puppet theatre' of Japan in British publications (Times 1958b: 3). This was furthered by a series of more academic publications by those who would become the 'founders of the field' of English-language Japanese theatre studies (Jortner 2011: 309) such as Earle Ernst and Donald Keene. In his 1959 book *Three Japanese Plays from the Traditional Theatre* Ernst states that 'The doll theatre... survives today only in the Bunraku Theatre of Osaka' (35). This Bunraku-centricity was strongly reinforced by the first significant English-language study of ningyo joruri, Donald Keene's 1965 book *Bunraku*. Keene's book has been incredibly important for English-language ningyo joruri studies. Since its publication it has been a major resource for puppeteers and scholars. Whilst this book marks a more serious engagement with Japanese puppetry including discussing puppets that predate sannin-zukai ningyo joruri, such as kugutsu (Keene 1965: 129) it does not escape culpability for Bunraku's mythologisation. In fact, its forceful intellectual weight makes it a major participant. Although Keene discusses ningyo joruri's broader development he frames the whole book within the context of Bunraku. So in all the passages that discuss ningyo joruri prior to 1872 Keene consistently uses Bunraku as the nomenclature for these puppets. This is anachronistic and, as discussed in chapter 3, implicitly and more subtly propagates the myth of the unique Bunraku by reorienting the history of ningyo joruri to be read as Bunraku's history alone. This is a clear act of "liberal" discursive violence' (Griffiths 1994: 166) an example of the 'wiping out of distinctive collectivities under an undifferentiated term' (Griffiths 1994: 168). No longer was Bunraku just the name of a particular theatre, now it was a genre of performance of which the Bunraku Theatre was the unique representative.

## ii) The 'ancient' Bunraku:

This conflation of ningyo joruri's and Bunraku's history is also key to the mythologizing of the 'ancient' Bunraku. When Bunraku came to London in 1968 it was less than one hundred years old. The World Theatre Season programme's claim of 'three centuries history' (Shinkokai 1968) only fits with ningyo joruri's earliest forms, prior to the development of gidayu narration, three-person puppets and even the shamisen's arrival. It was not until 1734 that ningyo joruri developed into a theatrical form close to what the Bunraku Theatre performs today (Adachi 1985: 5, Kenny 1974: 13, Hironaga 1976: 16). Again this conflation is anachronistic and fails to acknowledge that ningyo joruri has been widespread throughout Japan since its inception and has survived in many places other than Osaka. Bunraku only exists from 1872 onwards and then only as a new brand name for a largely pre-existing product.

Despite this, a rhetoric of age was fast adopted by British discussions of Bunraku. A report in the Times from 1919 (a mere 47 years after the first Bunraku Theatre's establishment), claims that Osakan puppetry has 250 years of history but is 'at present crystallized in the small theatre in Osaka, called the Bunraku-za' (Times 1919: 10). This rhetoric is inflated by Zoe Kincaid in her 1925 book on Kabuki in which the 'Doll-theatre' of the Bunraku Theatre becomes 'an art that has been alive in Japan for more than three hundred years' (Kincaid 1925: 144) a claim she repeats in 1931 (Kincaid 1931: 1058). This age inflation reaches new heights in Watanabe Yoshio's 1939 book *Bunraku The Japanese Puppet Theatre* which states that 'the exquisite dexterity of this "three-man" puppetry is one of the traditional arts – it is ten centuries old – of which Japan is justly proud.' A 1958 report in the Times continues this exaggerated ancientness placing the origins of 'Bunraku, the puppet theatre' in the 'Keicho Era' (Times 1958b: 3). The Keicho Era ran from 1596-1615 more than a hundred years before the development of three-person puppet manipulation and nearly three hundred years before the first Bunraku Theatre's establishment. It is perhaps unsurprising that with such consistently confused dating that British commentators came to believe that Bunraku, *the Japanese Puppet Theatre*, was of immense age. Not all these statements are wildly inaccurate in isolation. In 1919 the Bunraku Theatre was indeed one representative of a performance practice that was nearly 200 years. However, these statements fast become false as they amalgamate the ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre's histories. As with the 'unique' Bunraku's mythologising the creation of the 'ancient' Bunraku relied upon a misreading of history: ningyo joruri's history is subsumed into the Bunraku Theatre's history. By the time of the 1968 Bunraku visit to London the rhetoric was exclusively of the 'three-century-old art' of Bunraku (Hope-Wallace 1968: 6). Not only was the concept of the 'ancient' Japanese puppet theatre established by 1968 but as previously shown it was solely associated with Bunraku as



one of Japan's 'three traditional theatres along with the Noh and the Kabuki' (Variety 1968: 66).

### iii) The 'classical' Bunraku:

Bunraku's labelling as Japan's 'classical' puppet theatre is the last aspect of the Bunraku myth to develop. 'Classical' can be read in two distinct ways. First, it is fundamentally a Western European term carrying with it connotations of ancient Greece and Rome as paradigms of artistic creativity and perfection. Second, it denotes a fossilised, non-living theatre, rooted in received tradition. Both these readings link to the 'ancient' Bunraku but add an implicit notion that age equates to a greater, former unsurpassable time that should be replicated. Whilst it is true that, since World War II, the Bunraku Theatre has primarily sought to repeat and preserve already established productions this is far from the whole story. Since 1945 many new works and collaborations have been produced (see Staub 1990; Keene 1965) and some of the 'classical' productions, such as *The Love Suicide at Sonezaki* (*sonezaki shinjū*), are actually modern restagings.<sup>37</sup> No British commentator refers to Bunraku as a 'classical' theatre until 1958 when The Times defines Bunraku as the 'classical Japanese puppet drama' (Times 1958b: 3). By 1968 such a description was commonplace with Bunraku being seen as part of the 'triad of Japan's classical stage' (Wardle 1968: 6) a description supported by the Japan Cultural Society at the time (Shinkokai 1968) and maintained by the Japan Arts Council today (Japan Arts Council 2014).

The classicised, in the sense of frozen, nature of ningyo joruri is often overstated. For example, Andrew Gerstle and Sakurai Hiroshi claim that 'After 1800, when *bunraku* became a truly national tradition, creativity flourished in performance rather than in the writing of new texts' (1997: 60).<sup>38</sup> Though it is true fewer new texts were written during this period new productions were staged throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and even after World War II. *The Miracle at the Temple of Kannon at Tsubosaka* (*tsubosaka kannon reigenki*)<sup>39</sup> was written by Kako Chika, a resident of Awaji and wife of the famous shamisen player Toyozawa Danpei II, in the late nineteenth century and first performed in 1887 at the

---

<sup>37</sup> *Sonezaki Shinju* was revived in 1955 after over 200 years of non-performance. The current staging is essentially a twentieth century innovation, especially as the play was originally staged before the introduction of sanninzukai (Keene 1965: 167).

<sup>38</sup> Of course by '*bunraku*' the authors actually mean ningyo joruri.

<sup>39</sup> A tragic love story in which a married couple are driven to leap to their before being magically restored to life.

Hikoroku Theatre, Osaka. An earlier version of this play was actually staged in 1875 in Osaka in a collaboration between members of the Uemura Gennojo Theatre, a Bunraku Theatre narrator, shamisen player Toyozawa Danpei II and some Osaka-based puppeteers (Nakanishi 2012: 7). *The Subscription List (kanjinchō)*<sup>40</sup> was not adapted for ningyo joruri until 1895, this time at the Inari Theatre, the successor to the Hikoroku Theatre (Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai 1968; Hironaga 1976: 217).<sup>41</sup> These are only two of more than twenty plays that were written for ningyo joruri after the golden age of the Takemoto and Toyotake theatres. As David Jortner points out, 'the placement of Japanese theatre in the realm of tradition has meant that it is studied primarily from the Asian studies angle instead of a theatrical one... there [is not] any mention of the new forms of art, theatre, and literature. *Nō* plays were written and used for propaganda throughout the war, yet in reading Reischauer [and many other Japanologists] one might think that innovation in the Japanese theatre ended with the Meiji restoration in 1863' (Jortner 2011: 311). Whilst there was certainly a decrease in playwriting in comparison to the eighteenth century ningyo joruri was by no means a dead art. The demand for new plays, as well as well-loved classics, was very real as Japan's ningyo joruri troupes sought to entice audiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This started to manifest itself in a sort of revival of the contemporary story-telling and reportage that characterised Chikamatsu Monzaemon's domestic plays (*sewamono*). Although, following cinematography's 1897 introduction to Japan, film played 'the most significant role as the new medium that popularised war' (Shimazu 2009:27), the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw new ningyo joruri plays based upon current events, especially Japan's imperial ambitions. For example, in 1885 the Kobayashi Rokutayu Theatre of Awaji performed *A True Account of the Kagoshima War* in Tokyo and in 1906 the Awaji Gennojo Theatre performed *Russo-Japanese War Chronicle* in Kobe (Kikukawa 202: 386-7). This trend was expanded during World War II when the Bunraku Theatre, already partially linked to the state (see chapter 3), became a government propaganda tool staging new plays depicting glorified accounts of contemporary events. Starting with *Three Glorious Human Bombs* in 1932 (revived 1940) at least ten new shows were produced before 1945 with such catchy titles as *Departing for The Front* (1941, revived 1942), *Invigorating National Prestige* (1942) and *Spirit of Brave Wild Eagle Pilots* (1944) (Brandon 2009: 391; Boyd 1986: 12; Leiter 2006: xl). Similar propaganda plays appeared in noh, kabuki and even in the all-female Takarazuka Revue Theatre. The Japanese government's use of popular theatres as propaganda tools

---

<sup>40</sup> The story of a wronged war hero who has to disguise himself as a Buddhist priest to evade capture.

<sup>41</sup> It was based on an earlier noh play *Ataka* and was adapted for kabuki in 1840.

demonstrates how, in wartime, 'politics and culture are intimately entwined' (Shimazu 2003: 115) both by the state using culture but also culture using the state. Lower status arts, such as ningyo joruri, were able to gain proximity to the otherwise inaccessible classes in wartime, so elevating their societal position.

Such propaganda shows are easily disregarded as the excesses of wartime propaganda and therefore unrepresentative of 'authentic' ningyo joruri. However, such shows were popular with the public, several eliciting revivals, and even with the Bunraku Theatre's performers. Puppeteer Kiritake Monjuro proudly announced that 'We are putting all our efforts into making new plays on the theme of the War of the Greater East Asia a huge success. We trust they will convey, if but slightly, our valiant soldier's bravery' (Brandon 2009: 213). Whilst these plays have not become part of the Bunraku Theatre's postwar repertoire they were popular at the time and proof ningyo joruri was still a living theatre. In light of Japan's defeat it is unsurprising these jingoistic, imperialistic plays had no role to play in 1950s Japan, not least because of American theatre censorship. As with wartime kabuki plays (*kiwamono*), 'had there been no war or had Japan been victorious' these plays might have had a place in peacetime 'But the nation had suffered humiliation and defeat. There were no brilliant military conquests or glorious sacrificial deaths to dramatize' (Brandon 2006: 79).

S. N. Eisenstadt describes how one Japanese attempt to 'overcome modernity' in 'The search for the authenticity of Japanese collectivity and the evaluation of modernity in relation to such authenticity' was through emphasising 'the uniqueness of the spiritual essence of the Japanese people or collectivity. This direction was, needless to say, susceptible to extreme nationalistic manipulation' (1996: 76-77). Such manipulation was brazen during World War II but enacted more subtly in the postwar period. The Bunraku Theatre turned to staging older texts that harked back to a period of stability and Japanese cultural and political self-determination, partly as escapism from the devastation of World War II and the shame of defeat. Ningyo joruri was only briefly censored by the Americans, between 1946 and 1947 (Pringle 2009: 190), and so was soon able to redevelop its pre-war repertoire. The desire to stage 'classic' texts was supported by its audience for whom 'The microcosmic view of feudal life which Bunraku offered was a refreshing change from the destroyed city that surrounded them; it allowed their thoughts to wander back to the eighteenth century and see Japan at the height of her glory.' (Boyd 1986: 24). The Bunraku Theatre's owners, the Shochiku Corporation controlled by twin brothers Otani Takejiro and Shirai Matsujiro, also supported this move. After the Emperor's surrender Otani made a public declaration to 'preserve our nation's traditions and maintain the chastity and purity of our performing arts' (Otani in Brandon 2006:7). As Brandon points out 'Otani had the foresight to see that traditional culture could be the immovable rock

to which Japanese might cling. Otani was arguing that if this bold example of local culture was preserved without change, perhaps the Japanese nation itself could survive its humiliating defeat' (Brandon 2006: 8). The defeated nation was seeking to replace military prowess with cultural prowess. This would be coupled with economic growth as a non-militaristic way of 'enhancing the [nation's] international prestige' (Pyle 1979: 19). A government official, Ima Hidekai, soon supported Otani: 'Japan was defeated in the war, but in culture we have not been defeated by the Americans. We ourselves as well as others must recognize that we have a splendid cultural tradition that is not equalled by foreign nations' (in Brandon 2006: 8). Traditional culture was now to be Japan's display of national strength. This did not mean the Bunraku Theatre stopped staging new plays. In the postwar years, as well as versions of Western dramas, such as *Hamlet* (1956) and *Madam Butterfly* (1956), the Bunraku Theatre also staged adaptations of Japanese novels, such as *The Hunter and the Female Fox* (*yuki wa konkon sugata no mizuumi*) (1956) and Jun Takami's novel *Mizuumi no Hi*,<sup>42</sup> as well as adaptations of popular films such as Watanabe Kunio's 1957 film *The Emperor Meiji and the Russo-Japanese War* (*meiji tennō to nichiro sensō*), adapted by the Bunraku Theatre the same year (Yoshida 2006: 102). However, on the international stage 'Bunraku' was always presented as a traditional, 'classical' form. Productions like *The Emperor Meiji and the Russo-Japanese War* with its 'emperor-centred nationalism' (Shimazu 2003: 112) were for the domestic market only. They did not fit with the vision of Japanese culture the government wanted to export.

However, at the war's end, despite Shochiku's lobbying ningyo joruri was still not fully a part of the Japanese establishment's idea of respected culture (see chapter 3). Whilst foreign interest had greatly increased, official domestic interest was less forthcoming. This was due to the Japanese ruling-classes' snobbery who were brought up 'to despise popular culture and entertainment' (Tschudin 2001: 44), shunning kabuki and ningyo joruri, in favour of the aristocratic noh. This attitude was so entrenched that the Emperor saw neither ningyo joruri nor kabuki until 1947 the year after he renounced, that pinnacle of class division, his divinity (Leiter 2006: 353; Pringle 2009: 196). Some headway was made before the war. In 1926 the Bunraku theatre burnt down forcing the company to tour extensively (Ortolani 1996: 227). This increased Bunraku's exposure to the public and high-ranking government officials, in particular army chiefs, leading to a troupe entertaining Japanese soldiers in mainland China during the war (Ashmore 2005; Boyd 1986: 14).

---

<sup>42</sup> Joruri text by Sawako Ariyoshi and shamisen by Seiroku Tsuruzawa IV.

Since the 1930s, driven by Bunraku's spiralling costs, Shochiku had actively 'lobbied for *bunraku* to become part of Japan's national theatres' (Pringle 2009: 188), which initially resulted in the 1933 Diet bill calling for the preservation and subsidization of the Bunraku Theatre (Boyd 1986:13; Leiter 2006: xl). This advocacy was bolstered by the development of idea of the 'theatre of the nation (*kokumingeiki*)' (Fukushima 2009: 352), which 'was defined as "a theatre devoted to raising to its highest level, the present form of [Japanese] culture which has been shaped by the past"' (Yamamoto 1931: 386), and as 'a theatre in which the spiritual essence of the [Japanese] people is expressed and nurtured' (Iizuka 1941: 45). In short, the movement was designed to facilitate the "'advance of the Japanese people" (*nihon minzoku hatten*), a nationalist agenda that won the support of the military government' (Robertson 1991: 165). As per Otani's wishes the Bunraku Theatre could become part of this 'spiritual essence' of Japan. Shochiku was ultimately successful in their advocacy, leading to the 1947 Imperial visit and the 1955 declaration of Bunraku as an important cultural property a status that excused it from paying tax (Havens 1982: 67). Havens suggests that 'prodding from foreigners' (1982: 66) was also vital in persuading the Japanese authorities to preserve the Bunraku Theatre. Fabion Bowers was such an advocate. He saw the preservation of Japan's performing arts as both a duty to Japan and the wider world. Writing in 1952, he somewhat prophetically suggested that were the Bunraku Theatre 'to collapse economically, public opinion, both national and international, would force the Japanese government to subsidize it' (1952: 219). The acceptance of Bunraku by the ruling elite enabled Shochiku to abandon Bunraku altogether in 1963 and allow it to become 'a ward of the state' (Havens 1982: 52) under the auspices of the newly established Bunraku Association (*bunraku kyokai*) (see chapter 3 for more information on this period).

With state funding the rejuvenation of the Bunraku Theatre was set. However, the process of transforming it into a national theatre had necessitated its external classicisation so that it could present a vision of an authenticated, unique, ancient puppet tradition to hungry foreign audiences as one of the Japanese state's 'instruments of cultural diplomacy' (Havens 1982: 98). Although new productions appeared after 1963 the role of the Bunraku Theatre has primarily been to represent an authenticated vision of Japan's 'spiritual essence' (Eisenstadt 1996: 77). Graham Huggan argues that authenticities have 'become valuable *commodities*' (Huggan 2001: 158). In the case of the Bunraku Theatre this commodification was enacted by both interested foreign parties and the Japanese government whose desire to make the authentic Bunraku a cultural ambassador is made clear in the 1968 London performances' programme:

It is our hope that these touring performances will contribute to the promotion of mutual understanding and amity between the countries visited and Japan. (Shinkokai 1968).

This role has also helped reinforce the Bunraku Theatre's 'position within the Japanese theatre system' (Leiter, Scholz-Cicono 2001: 13) as 'reports of successful tours in the Japanese press help[ed] raise the profile of individual performers along with the arts they represent.' (Thornbury 2001: 215).

### **British Motives for Mythologisation:**

The 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances in London represented the intersection of two radically different attempts to revitalise theatrical performance in response to the demands of the modern world. Japan's need to redefine itself internationally after World War II was a compelling reason to fund and promote a mythologised Bunraku that meshed with the desire of Shochiku and others to preserve the theatre. As a result this one ningyo joruri troupe has led a rarefied and hallowed existence ever since, largely free of the financial realities faced by its competitors. This fully state-sanctioned Bunraku myth was strongly at play during the 1968 tour. The programme for the London performances describes Bunraku as 'undoubtedly one of Japan's most fascinating theatre arts. No one can deny that it is entirely unique even among puppet plays. This old art of more than three centuries history has a peculiar picturesque aura that places its stage in a special little world of its own' (Shinkokai 1968). The Japan Cultural Society wanted to leave no doubt in the audience's minds that Bunraku was a first-rate Japanese performing art, unique in the world, and of great age and pedigree.

By contrast Britain as a victorious nation had no political impetus to buy into Japan's mythologizing. However, years of fragmentary and sometimes erroneous accounts had piqued British theatre practitioner's interest in Bunraku because of and not in spite of its mythologised status. There were two main groups of British interest:

First the somewhat beleaguered puppet community that from Edward Gordon Craig onwards, had yearned 'for recognition that the puppet is an adult art' (Speaight 1955: 296). Disgruntled puppeteers bemoaned that 'There is too prevalent a misunderstanding that puppets are for children only' and cries that 'It cannot be too strongly emphasised that puppetry is an Art adaptable to all ages and temperaments' largely fell on deaf ears (Marks 1953: 76). The continued connection between children's theatre and puppetry in the mid-twentieth century

is nicely illustrated by Earle Ernst who recounts that because 'In the West the marionette theatre has never been seriously considered, except by a handful of people... it is not unusual to see a foreign couple in Japan taking their small children to the Bunraku Theatre, having heard, doubtless, about the marionette plays, and determined to give the children a jolly afternoon. After an hour or so they leave in bewilderment, if not anger, at not having seen the Japanese version of a Punch and Judy show' (Ernst 1959: 47). The resentment of British puppeteers in the mid-twentieth century was not without cause. At the opening of a photographic exhibition of *World Puppetry*, held at London's Olympia in 1959, Arts Council representative Eric White announced to the assembled puppeteers that 'He regretted that it was impossible for the Council to allocate any money to the art; any further extra grant money must go to Covent Garden' (Bussell 1959: 7) – meaning the already heavily funded Royal Opera House.<sup>43</sup>

The mythologised Bunraku, however, offered a vision of serious adult puppet theatre that could counter this 'hostile artistic environment' and the mistrust of puppets that many theatre professionals held (Francis 1983: 16). This separation between 'puppetry' and 'theatre' was often still very much in evidence throughout the twentieth century. In 1977, British puppeteer Barry Smith ran some discussions about puppetry's role in theatre at the Young Vic at which many 'practitioners of 'mainstream' theatre' still 'felt that the puppet world was some sort of separate, mystical enclave, unwilling or unable to think of itself as part of theatre in general' (Smith 1977: 3). This ghettoization of British puppetry in the early and mid-twentieth century could be partially seen as the fault of Britain's puppeteers for making work that simply did not interface with 'mainstream' theatre. Neither the marionette nor the glove puppet of *Punch and Judy* obviously lent themselves to the human stage, especially when still contained within a small proscenium, playboard or portable booth.

So, when the adult, theatrical and highly mythologised Bunraku Theatre performed in London in 1968 awe-struck puppeteers, such as John Blundall, rushed backstage to meet Kiritake Monjuro and the other Bunraku Theatre performers (Blundall 2011). It was not long before puppeteers, and other theatre makers appeared to be making use of ideas gleaned from watching the Bunraku Theatre. So, for example, In 1971 a young Christopher Leith, soon to be a renowned figure in the British puppet scene and later artistic director of the Little Angel

---

<sup>43</sup> In many ways little has changed. Despite the more frequent funding of work involving puppetry in the UK today such disparities between established art forms, in particular the Royal Opera House, and puppetry are still very real. For example, the Little Angel Theatre in London, now an established beacon of British puppetry, has never received core funding from the Arts Council.

Theatre, presented his adaptation of *Beowulf* using visible puppeteers in combination with 'actors seated with a musician at a special lectern' to recite 'the text in Japanese *jōruri* style' (Jurkowski 1996: 366).

Second a group of theatre makers, who had no specific training in or affiliation to puppetry, showed a great interest in the London performances. Since the late nineteenth century the avant-garde in Europe had been championing a rejection of naturalism in an attempt to 're-theatricalize theatre' (Fuchs 1904 in Fisher-Lichte 2002: 289). Many theatre practitioners had looked to the perceived traditional theatres of Asia for inspiration. Amongst these, Edward Gordon Craig, Paul Claudel, and Jean-Louis Barrault all looked specifically at ningyo joruri. They were all full of praise for Japanese puppetry Craig declaring 'it must silence those who imagine that a Puppet is something silly and not to be considered seriously as a fine means of expression' (1921: 32), Claudel praising 'the magnificent art of Japanese puppetry as practised at the Bunraku Theatre at Osaka' (1972: 51) and Barrault stating that 'Bunraku is the highest form of theatrical art' (Barrault 1974: 248).<sup>44</sup> A younger generation of theatre makers were also taking an interest in Japanese theatre. According to Peter Daubeny, Peter Brook had attended the 1967 World Theatre Season's noh performances five times and they had had a very 'deep effect' on both Brook and Peter Hall (in Billington 1967: 8). For theatre makers, such as Brook, the Bunraku Theatre also represented a revolutionary and novel balance of realism and artificiality that helped further remove theatre from its nineteenth century naturalistic constraints: 'in the Japanese marionettes, the *bunraku*, where the actions are incredibly realistic – the marionettes are picking up little books, drinking sake, sewing, doing all the little gestures of life, and yet around them you see black-hooded people, visibly manipulating them. There is no attempt at illusion. I think this is always a balance one has to find' (Brook in Moffit 1999: 90). But for Brook and others this admiration of Bunraku was always framed by and to some extent reliant on an understanding of Bunraku's 'thousands of years of tradition' and the authenticating power that supposedly carried (Brook 1988: 218).

Whilst for Brook and other 'mainstream' theatre makers Bunraku offered another compelling source of theatrical inspiration, for the UK's puppeteers it offered so much more than just its technologies and techniques, it offered the hope of respectability and acceptance by the 'mainstream'. As Christopher Leith said on the occasion of a subsequent visit by the Bunraku Theatre: 'Bunraku truly can be called, "Adult Puppet Theatre", and in an environment sceptical

---

<sup>44</sup> The Osaka Bunraku theatre would also go to the Paris Odeon in 1968, at that time under Barrault's direction.



of the potential of puppets, it is to be hoped that the coming visit... of the Bunraku will encourage and give inspiration to British puppeteers and their audiences' (Leith 1983: 16). The fact that theatre practitioners other than puppeteers flooded to see the 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances (and subsequent visits) was proof both that adult puppet theatre could work and that it could be taken seriously by 'mainstream' theatre artists in the UK.

### **Myth to Mantra:**

As previously stated 'tradition is closely bound up with authority ' (Giddens 1994: 82). The myth of Bunraku' three tenets: uniqueness, ancientness and classicisation; all support an understanding of Bunraku as *the* representative traditional puppet theatre of Japan. As we have seen both British and Japanese parties sought to channel the authority of this perceived tradition. However, all three of these attributes were only ascribed to the Bunraku Theatre in the early-mid twentieth century and therefore the historical tradition they purport to describe is questionable and its authority somewhat moot. Giddens goes on to argue that 'all traditions... are invented traditions. What gives tradition its 'genuineness', its authenticity... is not that it has been established for aeons; nor is it anything to do with how far it accurately encapsulates past events... Tradition is the very medium of the "reality" of the past' (Giddens 1994: 93-4). Authenticity, according to Giddens, 'Depends upon the connection of ritual practice and formulaic truth' (93-4). The myth of Bunraku has supplied just such a formulaic truth. Its propagation has created a mantra of the unique, 300 year old, classical Japanese puppet theatre. Such sound bites are easily absorbed and repeated, as London's theatre critics willingly did in 1968. The World Theatre Season performances were the ritual enactment of this formulaic truth formed during the preceding fifty years. Moreover, the relative simplicity of this formulaic truth has enabled others outside the Bunraku Theatre to co-opt the ritual and set themselves up as 'the wise person or sage' with 'access to [the] symbols which perpetuate the necessary "aura"' (Giddens 1994: 83) in the case of British 'Bunraku-style' puppets, as discussed in this chapter's second half, these symbols are visible and/or multiple manipulators.

The co-opting of this authenticity by British practitioners may seem to rely on the old duality of the colonial power and the subaltern. However, in the case of the myth of Bunraku such a clear duality, so often the bedrock of postcolonial and intercultural theory, does not seem to apply. Throughout the twentieth century Japan was more of an economic and military equal to Britain than a subordinate and there is no historical colonial relationship between the two countries. The interactions that the creation of the myth of Bunraku describe are notable

because they involve a level of symbiotic complicity, more synchronous than conspiratorial, between Japanese and non-Japanese parties. This does not mean that these exchanges were free from exoticisation. Rather, exoticisation was carried out willingly by both British and Japanese sources and driven by the demands of cultural diplomacy and marketing rather than colonial exploitation. It is perhaps more productive to see the exporting and importing of global Bunraku in terms of a commodity traded and sold within two equally capitalistic, market-driven societies.

However, in order to do this, official Japanese rhetoric has had to essentialise ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre. Graham Huggan has discussed how Aboriginal writers in Australia have proved 'adept in "playing the market" to their own ideological ends' within a 'commodified discourse of authenticity' (Huggan 1994: 176). Likewise the 'discourse of authenticity' that surrounds the myth of Bunraku has proved lucrative to multiple parties who have all played the market: the primary purveyors of the 'authentic' mythologised Bunraku, i.e. the Japanese government and the Bunraku Association, have gained financial, national and international prestige through the global success of one of one of Japan's 'authentic' traditional performing arts; and non-Japanese parties, such as the British theatre community, have enhanced their theatre and puppet practice by channelling the mythologised Bunraku's formulaic truths.

As much as Bunraku was exoticised by practitioners and critics in Britain it was also essentialised by Japanese parties both on the inter and intracultural level. The Bunraku Theatre's careful integration into the Japanese establishment by Shochiku (see chapter 3) and then its further assimilation into world theatre practice by the Japanese government involved a high level of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1996: 196). On the global level, this essentialism was driven by a desire to present the highly complex art form ningyo joruri in a digestible form. This led to ningyo joruri's flattening out into the mythologised and essentialised, but highly marketable, undifferentiated idea of Bunraku we are now familiar with. British parties accepted and furthered this flattening out both as a result of genuine interest in the Bunraku Theatre's performance practice but also because the mythologised Bunraku fitted with the ideological and artistic desires of British theatre makers (especially puppeteers) in the 1960s. British theatre makers were fascinated by Japanese 'traditional' theatre because it offered new ideas to help revitalise their own theatre. In a sense it was a resource to be mined for new raw materials and large profits or at least an imported commodity that could be imitated and further flattened for the local market. The success of British companies still making use of 'Bunraku' in the early twenty-first century shows how successful this was.

Did Japan self-exoticise and mythologise consciously? Certainly the ruling classes were looking for authentic, traditional Japanese culture to export after World War II, but the mythologisation of Bunraku is as much due to their ignorance as their intention. When they sought to engage with ningyo joruri they went to its most accessible exponent – the Shochiku backed Bunraku Theatre – in doing ningyo joruri was bypassed and Bunraku alone woven into their official rhetoric of traditional theatres. As a result, the only clear subaltern within the creation of the myth of Bunraku is found in the intra rather than intercultural. As discussed in chapter 3, the myriad other ningyo joruri troupes spread across Japan lose their agency and perceived authenticity through the Bunraku-centricity caused by the myth of Bunraku. As Barbara Thornbury points out, in her related study of the mythologisation of kabuki in North America, audiences ‘came to equate kabuki with Japanese culture as a whole—thus making it less likely that other performing arts from Japan... would be given opportunities to be presented and attract serious critical attention in the United States’ (Thornbury 2008: 195). If Bunraku is all ‘Japanese puppetry’ there is no need to look for other examples: if we know Bunraku, we know it all. Later in the twentieth century, as more ningyo joruri companies gained greater international exposure, they too are interpreted through the lens of the mythologised Bunraku and are either subsumed into it or appended to it as a lower stratum of Bunraku: ‘distinctive collectivities are wiped out under this “undifferentiated term”’ (Griffiths 1994: 168).

However, the Bunraku myth has also negatively impacted on the Bunraku Theatre in two important ways. First, because of the mythologised Bunraku’ success, many other Japanese ningyo joruri troupes are now presented and received, in the minds of the non-specialist audiences, as ‘undifferentiated’ from the Bunraku Theatre when touring outside Japan. This can even work with non-Japanese companies. The Bunraku Bay Troupe from Columbia, Missouri is made up of current and former students from the University of Columbia who have undertaken a two-month summer course, partly spent working with the amateur Imada Ningyo Joruri Theatre near Iida, Nagano prefecture.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the troupe’s leader, Professor Martin Holman, strongly differentiates his troupe from the Bunraku Theatre (Holman 2009) his choice of name makes it harder for others to do so. So when the group featured in the American sitcom *Animal Practice* (2012), framed as a Japanese troupe performing in Japan to a Japanese audience, within the context of the undifferentiated ‘Bunraku’ this performance can be seen as representing the ‘ancient’ ‘unique’ ‘classical’ art of Bunraku. As a slot on American

---

<sup>45</sup> Formally this programme took was done in collaboration with the Tonda and then Kuroda ningyo joruri troupes.

primetime television is more international exposure than the Bunraku Theatre will get in a decade, academic differentiation at this point seems pointless. Second as the Bunraku label becomes undifferentiated globally a whole range of vaguely related global puppet-styles start to be seen as related, equivalent or even surpassing the Bunraku Theatre, as with London-based puppeteers Blind Summit Theatre who are purportedly 'doing for ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry what South Park did for cartoons. They subvert the medium to make cutting edge, puppet-led theatre' (British Council 2010).

Griffiths argues for the reassertion of the 'local and specific' (1994:168) in reassessing Aboriginal groups. Such a process seems vital to the discussion of ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre. Only by doing this can we start to understand the multiple global exchanges enacted under the mythologised Bunraku's influence and create a more nuanced understanding than either this myth or the simplistic duality of colonial power and subaltern allow. That we must reassess this situation so extensively is testament to the pervasive power of the myth of the 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' Bunraku and how well it has served to preserve the Bunraku Theatre and bring it, but it alone, into the modern world.

## **Part 2 – British 'Bunraku-style' Puppets:**

At the start of this thesis it was proposed that 'Bunraku-style' puppets are now common in the UK but that their labelling as such is confused and primarily relies on two dominant signifiers or macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness' – visible and/or multiple manipulators – the 'symbols which perpetuate the necessary "aura" of the "guardians"' of the mythologised Bunraku (Giddens 1994: 83). As the second half of this chapter shows the labelling of British puppets and other theatre practices as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style', and the adoption of these two macro-signs, develops rapidly following the 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances. However, it fast becomes clear that British 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' puppets are far from homogenous entities. In 1999, three decades after the advent of British 'Bunraku-style', David Currell attempted to define what he calls '*Bunraku-Style Rod Puppets*' in his book *Puppets and the Puppet Theatre*. After a brief, but generally accurate description of ningyo joruri, (labelled Bunraku, of course) Currell offers this description of contemporary '*Bunraku-Style Rod Puppets*' technologies:

The technique [ningyo joruri] has been adapted to a range of practices with one, two or three-person operation. The neck is often angled somewhat and the basic head-grip

is made from a rod or a strong strip of plywood. If plywood is used, one end is built into the neck, and the other end is made into a pistol-grip handle by gluing on shaped pieces of wood.

The hand is attached to the arm with or without a flexible wrist joint. A control rod, operated from behind, is inserted into the heel of the hand or the arm at the elbow or wrist, as appropriate. The hand-control rod (which may be weighted if required) can act as a partial counterbalance to the arm, so that it does not hang lifeless by the puppet's side when it is not being operated. Toggle hand controls may be added (Currell 1999: 21-22)

Currell's description is striking because it is so vague. It tries to account for a wide range of different puppets under the same moniker. He lists so many alternatives and variations pertaining to '*Bunraku*-Style Rod Puppets' (note the number of 'or's) it is quite clear that he is hedging his bets as to the term's exact meaning. Currell's struggle simply reflects the difficulty of uniting a range of puppets that differ greatly in their technologies and techniques under the same label. His desire to group these puppets together results from the over-privileging of visible and/or multiple manipulators as the primary macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness'. Currell gets into this mess because he, like many others, assumes that all these puppets are significantly derived from the Bunraku Theatre's performance practice so justifying the 'Bunraku-style' label. However, as we will see in this and following chapter this is a fallacy. These puppets are, in fact, the result of the complex interweaving of many different atoms.

The adoption of the 'Bunraku' and 'Bunraku-style' labels is more often the result of British puppet practitioners' insecurities about reception of their work by 'mainstream' theatre than the a clear and dominant connection to the Bunraku Theatre. Frequently the decision to label work as 'Bunraku' primarily rests with the puppet's creator, critics and other external commentators will usually follow suit. In certain cases, however, especially in the aftermath of 1968, critics ascribe 'Bunraku-ness' even when the practitioner has not. For all the excitement the Bunraku Theatre caused in the British theatrical community in 1968 British theatre makers' response was rarely to actively investigate the technologies and techniques of ningyo joruri. Rather than the serious digestion of Japanese puppet theatre Tsubouchi Shoyo predicted in 1924 (see chapter 1), British puppeteers and other theatre makers predominately latch onto the perceived authoritative 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku after 1968. This allows for a wide range of technologies and techniques to be labelled 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' as long as they embody the macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness': visible and/or multiple manipulators. However, not all puppets embodying these characteristics are labelled 'Bunraku'. There are

multiple examples of puppets using visible and/or multiple manipulators that are not labelled 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' by their practitioners or, therefore, by external commentators. Firstly, this is because these two ideas are not exclusive to the Bunraku Theatre and were already in existence in Europe, and other parts of the world before 1968. They only get labelled as 'Bunraku' or Japanese after the Bunraku Theatre's visit – as Naoko Shimazu points out many 'so-called culturally essentialist symbols and values exist widely (obviously in different garbs) in other cultural contexts' (Shimazu 2006: 181). Secondly, as the adoption of 'Bunraku-ness' primarily results from a desire to channel the mythologised Bunraku's 'aura', if that 'aura' is not necessitated then there is no reason to frame a puppet as 'Bunraku'. As a result, artists who are confident in their own work and brand tend not feel the need to use an 'exotic' label to spice up their publicity (Edwards 2006: 4; Francis 2007). As a result, the labelling of puppets as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' can be very inconsistent.

As mentioned in chapter 1, it was not until the 1990s that a sustained increase in the status and use of puppetry in British theatre took place. As much as the 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances, and subsequent visits, impacted British theatre, the example of the mythologised Bunraku alone was not sufficient to fully ingratiate British puppetry with 'mainstream' theatre. However, the 1990s and 2000s British puppet boom, that led to increased use of puppetry by 'mainstream' theatre, such as National Theatre's seemingly unstoppable *War Horse* (2007-present), ran parallel with a renewed increase in the labelling of puppets as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'. Further this really took hold long after the Bunraku Theatre's most recent British visit in 1991. This chapter contends that the increase in references to 'Bunraku' and the enhancement of puppetry's position in the UK, during this period, was primarily due to an influx of theatre from Europe and North America that brought with it an equally undifferentiated understanding of 'Bunraku' and so furthered its proliferation as a descriptor for contemporary puppets. This is not to deny the impact that domestic puppet practitioners such as Faulty Optic, Doo Cot, Stephen Mottram, Green Ginger, Improbable and Blind Summit Theatre had on the perception of puppetry in British theatre but rather to suggest that the reception of their work was greatly bolstered by external influences that provided examples of puppetry as an integral part of a broader theatrical language. Further, some of this imported work also relied upon the perpetuation of the mythologised Bunraku as a guarantor of practice. Not only has this cemented a distorted understanding of ningyo joruri in the UK, but it has also disenfranchised the many other atoms contained within these so-called 'Bunraku-style' puppets including the creativity of the practitioners who make them.

### **The Rise of 'Bunraku' in Britain:**

The 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances were not British practitioners and critics' only chance to see ningyo joruri in the flesh. Over the next thirty-three years the Bunraku Theatre returned to the UK three more times. In 1976 the troupe made its first and only visit to Scotland, performing at the Edinburgh International Festival. In 1983 they appeared in Nottingham thanks to the local council buying in a 'Festival of Japanese Arts' touring Europe that year. Finally in 1991 the Bunraku Theatre returned to London for the UK-wide 'Japan Festival'. A few Bunraku Theatre members also returned to London in 1994 in *Shunkan*, a collaborative production with noh and kabuki artists. All of these performances primarily served to bolster the position of the mythologised Bunraku within Britain and did little to deepen understanding of either the Bunraku Theatre or Japanese puppetry more broadly. The same undifferentiated understanding of Bunraku as the 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' Japanese puppet theatre appeared each time the troupe performed in the UK, although the excitement and breadth of the 1968 coverage was never repeated. So in 1976 the Bunraku Theatre was again received as 'one of the classical forms of native theatre' (Stage and Television Today 1976: 28), 'simply another name for Japanese puppetry' (D L 1976: 11) and it was understood that 'Bunraku got its name from the family of Bunrakuken in the early 17th century' (Young 1976: 3) – only two and a half centuries out. As in 1968 British critics focussed on the performance's visual elements, perfectly encapsulated by Robert Cushman in the Observer who felt 'sorry for the Japanese audiences who, understanding him [the narrator], must miss the full exoticism of the entertainment' (Cushman 1976: 22). The 1983 performances drew little attention, probably because of the performances' location. However, once again, the Bunraku Theatre was presented as 'the only professional Bunraku company in Japan' that apparently reached its heyday in the seventeenth century (ITN 1983). In 1991 the Bunraku Theatre was initially scheduled to perform a version of *The Tempest* adapted by Yamada Shoichi (Slater 1991: 18; Sasaguchi 2009), however, the production was not ready on time. Instead the Bunraku Theatre performed *The Love Suicide at Sonezaki* and *Fishing for Wives*.<sup>46</sup> Again the Bunraku Theatre was praised in exultant terms being described as 'the finest puppet tradition in the world' (Rea 1991) and 'a marvellously refined art' (Crisp 1991: 19). However, the critical response was no more nuanced than on previous visits with many glib pronouncements, such as Bunraku 'is puppet theatre for adults' (Miller 1991: 10) or 'large-scale puppetry' (Riley 1991: A33) with a strong focus on the apparently '2ft high puppets' that 'are so intricately made that each of

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Tempest* was eventually staged the following year in Osaka and Tokyo – see Fujita 1998 for a discussion of the production.

them is operated by three people, and the lead puppeteer spends more than ten years learning the art' (Rea 1991).

Academics and other 'authoritative' commentators also propagated essentialised ideas of 'Bunraku' after 1968, also primarily focussing on the performance's visual aspects. The 1968 Bunraku Theatre shows in London were part of a larger European tour including performing at the Théâtre des Nations, organised by Jean-Louis Barrault, in Paris, as well as in Germany and Italy. The Paris performances are of particular significance because it was here that the famous French literary theorist, semiotician and critic Roland Barthes first encountered ningyo joruri. The Bunraku Theatre strongly impacted Barthes and he published the essay, *Leçon d'écriture*, in the avant-garde literary magazine *Tel Quel*, only a few months later. He revised and republished this essay in various different guises in his books *Empire of Signs* (1970), *Image, Music, Text* (1977) and the journals *The Drama Review* as *On Bunraku* (1971), and *Diacritics* as *The Dolls of Bunraku* (1976). His writings have given strong theoretical sustenance to reductionist visions of 'Bunraku' that primarily accentuate the visual elements.

It is clear from Barthes' writings that he did not have a developed understanding of ningyo joruri – for example he mistakenly believes the foot-puppeteer 'supports the puppet's body' (1971: 76). Barthes is more interested in using the Bunraku Theatre as a springboard for his own theorising than discussing ningyo joruri's particularities on their own terms. He is frequently derogatory about aspects of the performance that he finds harder to stomach. So, the narrators apparently 'express the text (the way one squeezes fruit)' labelling it an 'essentially vulgar' or 'trivial' function (1971: 76; 1977: 175). British critics echoed this sentiment, alienated by the supposed 'clicks, twanglings, and the menacing moo cow noises uttered by the narrators' (Hope-Wallace 1968: 6), leading to declarations that in Bunraku 'it is the visual element that counts' (Wardle 1968: 15). As a result Barthes almost entirely bypasses the shamisen player. Whilst he sees the performance of ningyo joruri as 'Three Scripts' these he identifies as 'the puppet, the manipulator, the vociferator; the effected gesture, the effective gesture, the vocal gesture' (1971: 76) excluding the vitally important shamisen player from this performative triad. He only mentions the shamisen player's 'slightly out of phase (and therefore impertinent) beats' (1971: 76) as the narrator's accompanist and he is derogatory about both. Barthes' conception of the 'vociferator' is abstract rather than specific – he sees vocal text as important just not the specific sound and content of the Bunraku Theatre's performance. The importance of Barthes' theorising is that it provides strong theoretical justification for European practitioners and critics' near exclusive focus on the visual aspects of ningyo joruri and rejection of the shamisen and narration. Barthes



perpetrated, and added great intellectual stature to, the puppet-centric European approach to ningyo joruri that almost universally focused on visible and multiple manipulators.

Following 1968 the mythologised Bunraku's acceptance was very real. An idea of 'Bunraku' and particular performance tropes crept into British theatre practice and criticism with remarkable alacrity. So, a round up of the Edinburgh Fringe in the Guardian, only a few months after the Aldwych shows, describes the performers of Keele University's production of *Macbeth* as 'like Bunraku puppeteers' because they guide 'the sleepwalking couple from act to bloody act, handing them messages, daggers, crowns' (Bryden 1968: 21). In 1969, the puppets in Barry Smith's Theatre of Puppets production of *The Crystal Palace* at the Hampstead Theatre Club were apparently 'worked in the Japanese manner, i.e. not suspended marionettes but dolls animated on stilts by masked controllers' (Hope-Wallace 1969: 6). In 1971, the puppeteers in Christopher Leith's *Beowulf* 'were, of course, in full view of the audience. The partnership of operator and puppet was similar to what we saw in the Japanese Bunraku' (Speaight 1971: 20). This trend was particularly marked amongst critics and practitioners who witnessed the 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances, such as Times critic Irving Wardle, who experienced 'the peculiar magic' of the Bunraku Theatre in 1968 (Wardle 1968: 15). In his review of *The Possessed*, an adaptation of Dostoevsky's *The Devils* by the Polish Stary Theatre, featured at the ninth and tenth *World Theatre Seasons*, he writes that 'echoing the style of the Bunraku puppets, Wajda introduces a black-cowled chorus who start by serving mainly as scene-shifters, and then take an increasingly dominant part in the action until they are finally manhandling the actors like dolls' (Wardle 1973: 11). Such comparisons continue in the following years with productions such as Gordon McDougall's *The Tempest* at the Oxford Playhouse: 'Borrowing freely from the traditions of the Japanese Kabuki and Bunraku theatres... Three black-clad stage hands perform Prospero's sorcery at Ariel's bidding, discreetly hiding their faces in the Japanese manner' (Chaillet 1976: 11). It is notable that 'Bunraku's adoption as a theatrical reference point is applied to both puppet and 'mainstream' theatre equally – 'mainstream' British theatre practice and criticism, having warmly received the Bunraku Theatre in 1968, clearly saw 'Bunraku' as a worthy theatrical reference point, in stark contrast to the theatre establishment's hostility to domestic British puppetry at the time.

This rhetoric was not limited to dramatic theatre. Some dance was also seen as borrowing from 'Bunraku'. So the Scottish Ballet's 1973 production *Three Dances to Japanese Music* choreographed by Jack Carter, was described as 'Jack Carter's "impression of Japanese theatre using devices of kabuki, noh, and bunraku"' (Murray 1973: 12) in which Carter used 'the black-clad attendants, who by tradition are invisible, to lift and carry characters' as well as 'to effect costume changes' (Percival 1973: 10). Two years later, Carter's *Shunmakei* was similarly

received: an 'oriental story of a lady-warrior wreaking revenge on the bandits who killed her husband' supposedly told 'in the manner of the Japanese Theatre' (Bland 1975: 26) and in 1975 Kenneth Macmillan's ballet *Rituals* drew comparison with 'Bunraku' in its presentation of human dancers as 'life-sized dolls... manipulated throughout by two groups of four men' (Percival 1975: 14).

At the most, these shows make use of very select ningyo joruri tropes, none tried to seriously replicate it.. After 1968, no serious attempt is made to engage with ningyo joruri or imitate the Bunraku Theatre's specific performance practice. No British theatre makers ran off to Japan to hammer on the Bunraku Theatre's doors and demand to study with them. Rather for British practitioners and critics Bunraku, 'the Japanese puppet theatre', was a useful resource to mine when making their own work. As a result the tropes they adopt are limited: predominately visible and/or multiple manipulators.<sup>47</sup> Because 'Bunraku-ness' was primarily reduced to these two tropes ningyo joruri's specific technologies and techniques were largely unimportant to British 'Bunraku'. Therefore nearly any puppet technology, regardless of origin, could be labelled as 'Bunraku' when used with visible and/or multiple manipulators. This allowed the proliferation of 'Bunraku' and 'Bunraku-style' as largely undifferentiated terms within British theatre practice.

Puppetry, of course, was the commonest situation in which visual and multiple manipulators were found after 1968. Soon wildly divergent forms were being labelled 'Bunraku' because they used visible and/or multiple manipulators. The practitioners who most prominently investigated and/or channeled ningyo joruri tended to be making work for adults. Some of these puppets resulted from genuine, but limited, enquiry into ningyo joruri – direct attempts to 'steal the art' through the observation of books, photographs and film – others were almost entirely unrelated. Barry Smith's Theatre of Puppets continued to perform in 'the Japanese manner' with *Playspace* (1972) Marlowe's *Dr Fustus* (1977), and Beckett's *Act Without Words* and *Come and Go* at the Young Vic Studio (1979), which made use of 'bunraku style puppets' (Moreley-Priestman 1985: 10). However, it was 1979's *Pierrot in Five Masks* (revived 1981) that was Smith's clearest attempt to approximate ningyo joruri's technologies and techniques. This show was more 'an on-the-spot display of skill' (Khan 1981: 9), using a three-person puppet, than a dramatic piece. Smith clearly looked at the technologies and techniques of ningyo joruri to some extent. In particular he located the head control within the body and

---

<sup>47</sup> I use manipulator here rather than puppeteer because 'Bunraku-ness' did not necessitate puppets, as in the case of Kenneth MacMillan's *Rituals* where it was people who were manipulated.

used an approximation of the ningyo joruri left-arm control (*shashigane*) but on both the puppet's left and right arms. The use of an extended shashigane-like control on both arms changes the relationship of the puppeteers to the puppet. The point of this control in ningyo joruri is to enable the left-arm puppeteer to be slightly removed from the puppet, allowing space for the foot-puppeteer. Applying this to both arms also forces the head-puppeteer away from the puppet's form and into a more uncomfortable and restricted position. Smith's puppet's legs were also controlled with the inverted 'L' handles of ningyo joruri. The puppeteers all wore black from head-to-toe but, in the manner of European black theatre (discussed later), the setting was also black. Rather than the open artificiality of ningyo joruri, where black clothing only renders the wearer conventionally invisible, Smith's black clothing sought to literally hide the manipulators.

By contrast Christopher Leith's 1971 production of *Beowulf* (revived 1979), made neither obvious technical enquiry into ningyo joruri's three-person puppets nor claimed to be 'Bunraku'. The show almost exclusively used one-person puppets, mounted on the puppeteers' bodies, with each puppeteer controlling the puppet's arms via rods and the puppet's head via a string, looped around the puppeteer's head, more in the manner of otome bunraku than three-person ningyo joruri. In contrast to most British responses to ningyo joruri Leith made reference, at least formally, to ningyo joruri's narrators and shamisen players, placing 'actors seated with a musician at a special lectern' to recite 'the text in Japanese *jōruri* style' (Jurkowski 1996: 366). Leith claims he did not seek 'to emulate or copy the Bunraku style – It wouldn't interest me' rather it was the 'big themes' and 'big scale' of the 1968 Bunraku performances that interested him (2014). However, he acknowledges he drew inspiration from the 1968 performances in his decision to split the narration and puppetry but is keen to emphasise that this was also 'part of the zeitgeist' of the times:

In the whole art scene of the 60s and 70s, everything was up for grabs. Things were being broken apart and put back together. It was perfect for someone like myself because that's what I'd already seen in the Japanese theatre. (Leith 2014).

However, despite Leith's lack of intention and exclusive use of one-person puppets, the puppeteers' visibility was quickly linked to the Bunraku Theatre's practice: 'The operators were, of course, in full view of the audience. The partnership of operator and puppet was similar to what we saw in the Japanese Bunraku' (Speaight 1971: 20).<sup>48</sup> However, perhaps even

---

<sup>48</sup> Leith did go on to make use of three-person puppets primarily during workshops he ran at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the 1980s and at the time he happily described them as 'Bunraku-style' (Leith

more importantly for the British puppet community *Beowulf* was seen as ‘that rarest of all birds, a truly adult puppet play’ (Francis 1971: 21) and the show went on to become the first British puppet show performed under the auspices of the National Theatre.

The ‘adulthood’ of the 1968 Bunraku Theatre shows was recognised by British puppeteers and theatre makers alike. As Christopher Leith says ‘the audiences to these theatres from Japan were adult audiences, when the Bunraku came over it was adults in the audience!’ (2014). This distinction was reflected in the British theatre world’s response to the 1968 Bunraku Theatre performances, which inhabited the world of ‘theatre’ rather than ‘puppet theatre’ in British theatrical consciousness – they attracted major newspapers’ premier and took place in the Aldwych – a theatre usually inhabited by grand ‘mainstream’ theatre projects, not puppetry.<sup>49</sup> The Aldwych, at the time, was a venue no British puppeteer could dream of performing in. The Bunraku Theatre’s performances, however, provided a clear example of puppetry as ‘theatre’ rather than ‘puppet theatre’ opening up the potential for it to be embraced by ‘mainstream’ theatre..

The positioning of ‘Bunraku’ within ‘mainstream’ theatre enabled it to become a legitimiser of British puppetry through use of visible and multiple puppeteers. As the mythologised Bunraku was seen as an exemplar of world-theatre practice its formal choices, including the use of puppets, were legitimate. So, for example, in defence of criticism levelled at the open-staging and black-clad puppeteers of *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* (1981) Barry Smith and his producer Alan Judd first countered with: ‘The nature of the story, which demands a number of acting areas, determined our choice of open stage presentation which, of course, calls for a neutralising form of dress for the operators’ (1982: 6). This is a reasonable justification for the use of visible puppeteers. However, they proceed to support this statement by saying that ‘This is a problem common to all open stage work, including Bunraku’ (Smith & Judd 1982: 6), the implication being that if Bunraku does it, it must be acceptable.

The ‘theatrical’ nature of ‘Bunraku’ was also harnessed by ‘mainstream’ British theatre. By identifying the Bunraku Theatre’s performances as ‘theatre’ not puppetry, ‘mainstream’ theatre practitioners could use ‘Bunraku’ without being ghettoised as puppeteers. This also

---

1985: 19). When I asked Leith about these puppets and their technologies he quickly distanced them from the specificity of the Bunraku Theatre, of which he is well aware, describing these puppets as ‘not at all Bunraku-y’ (Leith 2014).

<sup>49</sup> In years immediately before the Bunraku Theatre shows the Aldwych hosted Peter Brook and the RSC’s productions of *Marat/Sade* (1964) and the anti-Vietnam War play *US* (1966) both avant-garde productions but avant-garde within the context of ‘mainstream’ theatre.

meant there was no need involve domestic British puppets or puppeteers when using 'Bunraku'. For example, Guy Sprung's 1974 production of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, at the nascent Half Moon Theatre in East London, made use of 'puppet-figures, operated by black hooded Bunraku-style manipulators' (Billington 1974: 12). What is significant about Sprung's production is that the puppets were made and directed without the involvement of puppeteers. Sprung also used the puppets alongside human actors. Whilst Guardian critic Michael Billington declared that 'the experiment seems pointless and half-hearted' (Billington 1974: 12) the co-existence of the puppet and the actor was one of 'Bunraku's biggest offers to 'mainstream' British theatre. These 'Bunraku-style' figures soon found their way to the National Theatre where in the Cottesloe Theatre's inaugural show, Ken Campbell's 1977 eight-hour sci-fi epic *Illuminatus!*, featured 'a black mass with Bunraku puppets' (Wardle 1977: 13).

The adoption of 'Bunraku' inspired puppets by 'mainstream' British theatre was initially quite limited but it set an important precedent for British puppeteers. If 'Bunraku' was now part of 'mainstream' theatre then surely if British puppeteers used 'Bunraku' they would be part of 'mainstream' theatre? This furthered the idea of 'Bunraku-ness' as a validator of British puppet practice, especially puppetry that aspired to attract adult audiences. This relied upon 'Bunraku's mythologised status as the 'unique', 'ancient', 'classical' puppet theatre of Japan: a serious *adult* puppet theatre form. For British puppeteers the Bunraku Theatre's enthusiastic acceptance was as much predicated by its mythologized status as its technologies and techniques.<sup>50</sup>

As much as British puppeteers justified their work with 'Bunraku', the inverse was also true: 'Bunraku' became an epitome of puppet practice to attain. As the mythologised Bunraku was easy for critics and other commentators to adopt it became a standard against which all other

---

<sup>50</sup> Another international 'adult' puppet company also visited London in 1968 and bolstered puppetry's position in the UK's theatrical consciousness. During the summer of 1968 Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre appeared on London's streets and, alongside the Bunraku Theatre, was seen as taking 'puppetry far outside the world of nursery games' that British puppetry supposedly inhabited (Wardle 1968: 15). Both companies were viewed in more reverent terms than were applied to contemporaneous British puppetry and given a ritualistic grandeur that inspired Times critic Irving Wardle to suggest that 'it would be good to see one true puppet company established in Britain to preserve a tangible theatrical link with the world of daemonic possession and sympathetic magic' (Wardle 1968: 15). However, although the Bread and Puppet Theatre inspired individual practitioners and projects it did not have the same formal and ideological impact as the Bunraku Theatre, possibly because Schumann's large, rough parade puppets did not so easily lend themselves to 'mainstream' British. Moreover, because they were presented in English, they were thematically defined in a way that the Bunraku Theatre's puppets were not. The Bunraku Theatre's puppets were largely removed from their thematic context because British practitioners did not understand Japanese, so they could more easily be placed wherever an artist desired.

puppetry could be judged, Writing in the Times in 1972 Charles Lewson offers a roundup of that Christmas' puppet shows in London. Lewson starts his assessment with this parable: 'In seventeenth-century Japan Kabuki actors were instructed to model themselves on the perfection of puppets, for which the leading dramatists wrote. Today the Bunraku tradition is fresh and overwhelming in its power. Apart from Mr Punch we have no tradition of puppetry.' (Lewson 1972: 8). The implication is clear: Bunraku is a great artistic tradition, the like of which is not found in the UK, therefore British puppeteers should strive to emulate it. Unsurprisingly this leads into five largely unfavourable reviews, although Lewson was slightly charmed by Violet Philpott's *Tommy Rot*. None of the shows reviewed claimed to be 'Bunraku', adult or 'mainstream' theatre – they were all children's puppet theatre, performed in puppet friendly venues. However, the mythologised Bunraku had created a yardstick against which all puppet theatre could now be judged.

Christopher Leith's *Beowulf* suffered a similar fate when revived in 1979, under the auspices of the National Theatre, and thrust before a wider audience: '[Leith] seems on the evidence to have been fired by the Japanese Bunraku theatre into attempting a puppet-play of comparable obscurity. Finding a suitable theme in the Anglo-Saxon he loaded it down with oriental music, while neglecting the Bunraku's sense of scale. He gave his puppets no environment, making them difficult to look at... Boredom arrived early and stayed late.' (Cushman 1979: 15). Even internationally famous performers fell short of the Bunraku yardstick. When Philippe Genty appeared in London in 1980, at which point his work was still more variety than theatre, *The Times* proclaimed that 'even though the Philippe Genty company is several leagues above the average Christmas pantomime blacklight act in skill... It is puppetry for sports arenas... Puppetry is an art, and anyone who has seen Japan's Bunraku puppets will know how magnificent it can be. M. Genty, for all his skill, is too much a populariser to display much artistry' (Chaillet 1980: 11).

In this way the mythologised Bunraku was a two-edged sword. It provided an exemplar of serious, adult puppet theatre, so legitimating British puppet practice. However, inversely, it could be used to critique British productions that fell short of critics' expectations following the 1968 Bunraku Theatre shows. Failure to achieve 'Bunraku-ness' was an assessment of skill and theatricality rather than formal characteristics derived from ningyo joruri. Other than the two tropes of visible and multiple-manipulators, ningyo joruri's formal specificities were largely ignored by British practitioners and critics alike.

This does not mean that no British puppeteers developed a more involved interest in ningyo joruri. John Blundall, who ran backstage during the Bunraku Theatre's 1968 performances and

befriended Monjuro Kiritake, already had an interest in ningyo joruri before 1968. Blundall experimented with three-person puppets in 1967, whilst working for Jane Phillip's Caricature Theatre in Cardiff, during the development of a BBC TV version of *A Pilgrim's Progress*. However, these puppets never made it to the final production, which was performed with one-person black-theatre puppets (Blundall 2011) although they were soon seen as 'reminiscent of the Japanese Bunraku' (Stage and Television Today 1968: 3). Blundall had a lifelong interest in Japanese 'artists, art and culture' and saw Japan and Russia as his 'spiritual and creative homes' (Blundall 2005: 8). He travelled to Japan and befriended Japanese practitioners. However, he never studied with the Bunraku Theatre and after Monjuro Kiritake's death his relationship with the troupe lessened. He later developed a relationship with the more accessible Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre,<sup>51</sup> however, always as an observer, he never studied ningyo joruri in Japan. Despite this, he claimed to 'create authentic, Bunraku, Kuruma Ningyo figures and Noh masks to the highest professional standards' (Blundall 2008: 22). This was the result of some direct instruction from a noh mask carver and his own personal study of ningyo joruri and kuruma ningyo from books and kuruma ningyo workshops he instigated at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières, France in 1989, led by Nishikawa Koryu IV (Bodson; Niculescu; Pezin 2009: 274). His tacit knowledge of Japanese puppetry, compared to other British practitioners, was extensive. However, he primarily learnt by 'stealing' through observation and personal experimentation.

As a result of his interest in Japanese theatre Blundall was well aware of the distinction between the Bunraku Theatre and ningyo joruri. However, this does not mean, that he did not use the mythologised Bunraku. In 1989, The Cannon Hill Puppet Theatre, led by Blundall, was supposedly using 'for the first time in Britain, puppets handcrafted in the Japanese style Bunraku, to present Andersen's *The Snow Queen*' (Nettall 1989: 20). Like many British 'Bunraku-style' productions before and after it the puppets in *The Snow Queen* had little correlation with ningyo joruri. However, serious enquiry was made into the technologies of another form of Japanese puppetry: kuruma ningyo, the result of the Charleville-Mézières workshops earlier that year. Blundall even made a close approximation of the technically challenging kuruma ningyo left-arm control that must be held and controlled by the

---

<sup>51</sup> One of the many injustices that the mythologised Bunraku has caused is that while no Western practitioner has studied with the Bunraku Theatre several have studied with the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre, including John Blundall, Nenagh Watson and Julie Taymor. However, when these artists return home they are reported to have been studying Bunraku and so the Awaji ningyo joruri is largely bypassed.

puppeteer's left hand, while simultaneously controlling the puppet's head.<sup>52</sup> This is a rare example of a British practitioner actively looking at the technologies and techniques of Japanese puppet form, albeit in a selective manner designed to enhance his own practice rather than learn the original art form. However, Blundall did not escape the mythologised Bunraku. By labelling his puppets as 'handcrafted in the Japanese style Bunraku', he denied kuruma ningyo's agency and perpetuated the use of Bunraku as an undifferentiated term. Further, in the show's publicity he brought into the essentialised caché 'Bunraku' carried in British Theatre practice as an exoticised marketing tool, a role it still plays today.

Blundall had an unusually high level of interaction with Japan, both because of his own interest and his work with the international puppet organisation Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA). Outside the Bunraku Theatre's UK visits other artists, such as Barry Smith, had little chance to directly engage. However, other sources were available. Copies of images from *Pictures from Backstage at the Theatre* by Shokosai Hanbe (discussed in previous chapters) were reproduced in the UK by Edward Gordon Craig in 1915 and 1921. By the latter half of the twentieth century there were also many photographic books of ningyo joruri available in the UK. These sources were bolstered by the partial codification of the ningyo joruri's technologies in popular English-language puppet making books, in particular Hansjürgen Fettig's 1973 book *Glove and Rod Puppets A Handbook of Design and Technique*. Fettig's book was widely read and appreciated by British puppeteers so much so that by 1987 there was already a shortage and demand for copies (Da Silva 1987: 56). Fettig discussed 'Bunraku' as 'the most complete, the most complicated and probably the most sophisticated rod puppet in the world' (1973: 145). Fettig's observations are based upon an unnamed Japanese book he borrowed from the Munich puppet museum. Fettig never saw ningyo joruri performed and as such his understanding of its technologies and techniques was purely based upon the drawings in that book (he could not read the accompanying text). Regardless he produced relatively accurate descriptions and drawings of the puppet's head, including some internal mechanisms, and the male shoulder board. Fettig's inclusion of 'Bunraku' as just another example of rod-puppetry should have served to counter the mythologised Bunraku by placing it on a level with other rod puppet mechanisms. However, in some ways the opposite was true. By placing these technologies on a level with other rod-puppets Fettig furthered ningyo joruri's undifferentiation – they become part of a range of rod techniques detached

---

<sup>52</sup> Other European kuruma ningyo inspired puppets such as Zlatko Bourek's production of Tom Stoppard's *15-minute Hamlet* (1982) have only used one arm (in Bourek's case the actual arm of the puppeteer) so simplifying the puppet's technologies.



from their original cultural context. As such they are atoms that can be used in service of the mythologised Bunraku, as denoted by visible and/or multiple manipulators, but their use is not necessitated. Again it would seem reasonable to assume that Fettig's book would inspire more detailed attempts to explore ningyo joruri but beyond Smith's and Blundall's experiments few practitioners seem to have actually tried to replicate ningyo joruri's technologies.

Despite the mythologised Bunraku's prevalence after 1968 the use of visible and/or multiple manipulators was not always linked to it. British artists who had travelled in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s, before the 1968 Bunraku Theatre shows, were more likely to see the appearance of the 'live actor' on the puppet stage as a broader, less specifically Japanese trope, and 'not a development without roots, for all current developments are the result of the work and experiments of countless previous generations of puppeteers world-wide' (Blundall 1991: 1). Whilst the identification of the two primary macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness' (visible and/or multiple manipulators) by critics and practitioners seems to be a direct result of the Bunraku Theatre's visits this does not mean such ideas did not already exist in Europe, including the UK, prior to the 1968 performances.

### **A More Complicated Story:**

The use of multiple and visible manipulators did not appear ex nihilo in 1968. Some British puppeteers had started to realise the potential for 'borrowing' ningyo joruri's formal features, in particular visible and multiple manipulators, before the Bunraku Theatre's 1968 shows. Writing in *The Puppet Master*, the journal of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild, in 1957 Guild member Lucian Amaral discussed the 'increasing interest being taken today in the remarkable technique and dramatic achievement of the Japanese puppet theatre' highlighting two formal aspects in particular that 'single out the Japanese puppet stage for all others' (Amaral 1957: 13): 'the technique of manipulation by three operators' and the 'different view of what is "real" on the stage...they are not concerned with creating an *illusion*, but with an imaginative *reality*; and that therefore it does not worry them at all if the audience can see the manipulators behind the dolls' (1957: 13-14). Amaral does not just focus on formal features. He has a clear ideological reason for writing about 'Japanese puppets' as he 'hopes that those who read this will be prompted to become more closely acquainted with the subject, because it seems to him that such widening of our horizons is essential to the development of our native puppet theatre' (13). Within the British puppet community both the dominant signifiers

of 'Bunraku-ness' (multiple puppeteers and/or visible puppeteers) and 'Bunraku' as a guarantor of serious adult puppet theatre were developing a decade before 1968. However, attributing the adoption of visible and/or multiple manipulators to the influence of the Bunraku Theatre/Japanese theatre alone does not bear scrutiny. The same ideas can develop and exist in multiple different cultural contexts 'each claiming to be unique' (Shimazu 2006: 181). Just because British puppetry was using visible and/or multiple manipulators after 1968, and sometimes labelling these ideas as Bunraku, it does not mean these devices were solely derived from the 1968 Bunraku Theatre visit.

### **The Awaji Gennojo Theatre in the USSR:**

Some might try to dismiss the Bunraku Theatre's mythologizing in Britain as the result of circumstance: after all, out of Japan's ningyo joruri troupes only the Bunraku Theatre has performed in the UK. However, this is not the case in mainland Europe where the Awaji Gennojo Theatre visited Moscow and St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) in 1958, ten years before the Bunraku Theatre's first European tour. This was the first ningyo joruri troupe to perform outside Japan to a foreign audience.<sup>53</sup> The tour came about because the Awaji Gennojo Theatre was invited to perform in Tokyo in 1957 thanks to the mediation of Nakatsubo Hideo of the Japanese Puppet Theatre Association based in Yokohama (Kikukawa 2002: 325). Attending this performance was the director of Moscow's National Art Museum who invited the theatre to perform in the USSR (Law 1997: 204). The Soviet organisers believed Awaji ningyo joruri would be a hit in the USSR because it could be presented as an art of workers and farmers, fitting with the USSR's socialist ideals (Kikukawa 2002: 325). 1958 was only the second year after diplomatic relations between Japan and Russia recommenced (Togo 2010: 233-5). This meant the Awaji Gennojo Theatre was a pre-eminent cultural ambassador for the Japanese state. Eleven puppeteers, two shamisen players, three narrators and one stagehand travelled to the USSR on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1958. As the Awaji troupes were so depleted following World War II, the USSR troupe contained members of three theatres: the Awaji Gennojo Theatre, The Ichimura Rokunojo Theatre and the Yoshida Denjiro Theatre (Kikukawa 2002: 326). The troupe presented scenes from *Kiichi's Book of Strategy* (*kiichi hogen sanryaku no maki*) (1731), *The Courtesan of Naruto* (*keisei awa no naruto*) (1768) and *The Battle of Ichinotani* (*ichinotani futaba gunki*) (1751), as well as the entirety of *The Nine-tailed Fox*

---

<sup>53</sup> The Bunraku Theatre first toured abroad in 1962, visiting Seattle. During World War II Bunraku Theatre performers also performed in China but only for the Japanese troops (Ashmore 2005).

(*tamamonomae asahi no tamoto*) (1751, revised 1806), *The Tycoon's Exploits* (*ehon taikoki*) (1799) and *The Miracle at the Tsubosaka Temple* (*tsubosaka reigenki*) (1887), performing thirteen times with the final show on the 28<sup>th</sup> April. The Moscow shows included a joint performance with Moscow State Central Puppet Theatre run by the highly influential Russian puppeteer Sergei Obraztsov. This performance interspersed ningyo joruri with performances by Obraztsov's theatre (Kikukawa 2002:326). Following the Moscow shows the troupe spent eight days performing in St. Petersburg.

The Awaji Gennojo Theatre's reception in the USSR seems to have been very positive – 'the farmers art' was praised as an 'amazing traditional art' by Russian audiences (Kikukawa 2002: 326). Inna Solomonik recounts how: 'The artistic techniques of this tradition presented the Soviet puppeteers with unexpected opportunities and turned upside down many of their ideas about the "language" of puppet theatre' (1992: 268). These new ideas were soon played out in Sergei Obraztsov's 1961 production, the *Divine Comedy*, which saw the reduced use of a playboard and the introduction of openly visible puppeteers (Solomonik 1992: 268). In the following years a more 'open style of performing was used in Eastern European and Soviet puppetry' as a result of the Awaji Gennojo tour (Solomonik 1992: 268). Obaztsov confirms this in his own writings. He describes how, in 1961, they took the 'plunge' and performed in 'the Japanese manner' despite initially having doubts that 'the actors distracted the audience from the puppets' (Obraztsov 1981: 212, 282). Obtaztsov's interest in and comprehension of 'the Japanese manner' was clearly limited and his puppets' technologies bore little relation to those of ningyo joruri. They were simple carved-foam full-bodied puppets 'totally lacking in any inner technical details' (1981: 282). Obraztsov describes them as 'closer to marionettes' (1981: 282). They were manipulated by both single and multiple manipulators, depending on the scene. Obraztsov had no desire to publically proclaim any link to Japan. He wrote about the visible puppeteer: 'does it really matter to [the audience]... that this classical Japanese device has existed for centuries?... [they] may not know that, and are not obliged to know it' (Obraztsov 1981: 212). Moreover Obraztsov was keen to emphasise that his work was different to the 'Japanese manner.' He focuses on the puppet and puppeteer's co-presence, suggesting the puppeteers embody the puppet's soul because the audience sees them enter and take hold of the puppets, and proudly proclaims that 'The Japanese theatre has nothing to do with this' (Obraztsov 1981: 212). Obraztsov followed *The Divine Comedy* with *I-Ho-Ho!* (1964), which also used black-clad multiple manipulators including elevating the head-puppeteer stage-clogs as in ningyo joruri (Obraztsov 1981: 284). This trend was continued in productions, such as *The Puppet Theatre Presents Tonight...* a satirical take on television, which featured three-person puppets (Obraztsov 1981: 284-5).

Although the Awaji Gennojo Theatre's tour clearly impacted Russian puppetry that in turn influenced Eastern and then Western European theatre this link has been entirely ignored. Unfortunately for the Awaji troupe and international understanding of ningyo joruri Obratsov's fervent self-belief meant he never mentioned them in relation to his work. When Western Europe encountered these ideas in Russian and Eastern European work it immediately interpreted them through the lens of the already mythologised Bunraku. For example, when renowned British puppeteer Eric Bramall saw Henryk Ryl's production of the Ramayana in Poland in 1962 he described the "'figure puppets"... manipulated by operators dressed entirely in black, [as] somewhat after the style of Bunraku' (Bramall 1962: 23). The myth of Bunraku was already fast developing in British puppeteers consciousness in 1962.<sup>54</sup>

### **A Growing Internationalism:**

Again the Awaji Gennojo Theatre's performances were not entirely responsible for the rise of visible and multiple manipulators. During the 1950s British puppeteers became increasingly international in their outlook. The wide availability of books and, to a lesser extent, film made the globe's disparate puppet arts more accessible. As Eric Bramnell told his fellow puppeteers: 'Puppetry is at the outset international. It breaks down colour bars and language bars... And there is at this time a greater international exchange of puppets and puppeteers than ever before in the history of the world' (Bramnell 1955:8). Trips to Europe were possible once again, after years of war, and the resurgence of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA) in 1957 increased opportunities to attend international festivals. In the mid 1950s, however, marionettes still dominated British puppetry and technologies, such as rod puppets, were still recent revelations. In 1958 puppeteer and historian George Speaight (1914-2005) was still 'impressed by the range of expression of which the rod puppet is capable, and the many different technical means of controlling them... I am convinced that as a dramatic medium the rod puppet – with its sure and direct control – is greatly superior to the string-controlled marionette' (Speaight 1958: 12-13). The adoption of these technologies was not universal nor necessarily fast – John Wright's Little Angel Theatre, for example, only started experimenting with rod-puppets in 1964 (Wright 1986: 16). Newer puppet forms were still

---

<sup>54</sup> The Awaji Gennojo Theatre was not the only Japanese company to visit Europe in the 1950s. Also in 1958, Taiji Kawajiri and the PUK Theatre of Tokyo performed at the first *World Festival of Puppeteers* held in Bucharest, using puppets adapted from kuruma ningyo: 'Taiji Kawajiri from Japan showed a fascinating dance, putting his own feet into his puppet's shoes, wearing black himself, like some weird shadow behind his figure' (Puppet Master 1958: 3). This report shows that devices like the visible black-clad puppeteer were still alien British puppeteers.

labelled according to their perceived country of origin regardless of whether the contemporary enunciation bore any relationship to the named form. For example, at the 1956 British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild Exhibition, Jan Bussell and Ann Hogarth supposedly performed 'propagandist Gloves, Javanese rods, and Chinese shadows' (The Performances 1956: 15). This growing internationalism meant some British puppeteers, in the 1950s and 1960s, were aware of developments taking place in European puppetry.

Both visible and multiple manipulators were being used in Europe before 1968 and not necessarily in the context of the Bunraku Theatre, as we saw in Obratsov's work. Certainly following the Awaji Gennojo Theatre's visit these two tropes spread from Russia across Europe. However, prior to 1958 the visible puppeteer was already part of European theatre in cabaret and music hall. Artists such as Sergei Obratsov, Albrecht Roser, Jan Bussell and Anne Hogarth had started playing with these open performances in the early twentieth century. American puppeteers, such as Bob Bromley, also appeared in London and visibly performed with their puppets (Speaight 1955: 238, 296). As Eileen Blumenthal says, 'By the 1920s and 1930s, puppeteers – including Karl Schichtl in Germany and the Yale Puppeteers in the U.S. – were using either a waist-high masking curtain or none at all. Other prominent puppeteers adopted the practice, including Frank Paris in America and Albrecht Roser in Germany' (Blumenthal 2005: 72). A young John Blundall was also performing in the circus ring with puppets in the 1950s (Blundall 2011). Although there is a jump from the visible solo-performer, to visible puppeteers in a broader theatrical setting, the precedent was already set. Further, the total removal of the playboard and use of the open-stage is not the example ningyo joruri provides. Whilst the ningyo joruri puppeteers are literally visible they are conventionally invisible and are contained behind a series of playboards that demarcate the ground of the playspace. This creates a puppet-orientated playspace in which humans, dressed in black or not, are intruders. Ningyo joruri does not allow for the co-presence of the puppet and actor/manipulator.

However, in the mid-twentieth century, European practitioners started to remove the playboard and allow both the actor-manipulator and the puppet to roam across the stage space. By the mid-1950s, Jan Wilkowski (1921-1997) and the Theatre Lalka in Poland were playing with the co-presence of the actor-manipulator and puppet.<sup>55</sup> In 1956 Theatre Lalka staged *Guignol in Trouble (Guignol w Tarapatach)*, directed by Wilkowski and designed by Adam Lillian, in which Wilkowski played a wandering French puppeteer who stages a play

---

<sup>55</sup> Wilkoski was artistic director of Theatre Lalka from 1950-1968.

within a play so creating a necessity for 'the simultaneous presence of the actor-manipulator and the puppet, applying a Brechtian principal to the classic Guignol' (Waskiel 2009: 762, Rubin 1995: 661). Jurkowski argues that Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* was influential in distancing the puppeteer from the puppet in Poland and Eastern Europe (1996: 293/4). However, Wilkoski's Guignol puppet was still contained within a framed puppet parts of the set becoming informal playboards. Theatre Lalka also made use of multiple, visible manipulators in productions such as *The Carol Singers in the Street* (1963) which used large three-person rod puppets.<sup>56</sup>

Theatre Lalka's experiments do not seem to have been driven by a desire to imitate Japanese sources but 'to show not unity but the artificiality of the puppet and its theatre' (Jurkowski 1998: 292). This was part of a broader modernist trend in theatre to highlight theatricality over naturalism in an attempt to 're-theatricalize theatre' (Fuchs 1904 in Fischer-Lichte 2002: 289) that was championed from the early twentieth century onwards by artists such as Edward Gordon Craig. As Jurkowski points out, an 'obvious way to demonstrate the puppet as artificial actor was to reveal its manipulator, and in consequence to abandon the booth and the screen' (1998: 293). Removing the 'illusion' of the puppet stage was as much a European artistic desire as a reaction to encounters with ningyo joruri. This was bolstered by Artaud's total theatre 'in which the different means of expression would act on all senses of the spectators' (Jurkowski 1998: 3). If the puppet was to become one theatrical element in a broader palette it had somehow integrate with the wider stage and share the same space as human actors, masks, musicians etc, which meant escaping the playboard.

In Britain the visible puppeteer first appeared in the solo performances of puppeteers such as Ann Hogarth and Jan Bussell (Jurkowski 1998: 293). However, although some British practitioners adopted the fully visible puppeteer many veered towards using techniques that continued to hide the puppeteer albeit in a different manner to playboards and booths. Even when British puppeteers, such as Barry Smith, sought to make work directly inspired by ningyo joruri they often still masked the manipulators. In particular the trickery of black theatre became a popular way of utilising visible and multiple manipulators but also keeping them

---

<sup>56</sup> In the UK Theatre Lalka along with Theatre Grotteska would go on to be seen as great users of 'modified Bunraku techniques and in combining dolls with masked actors' (Wardle 1975:12). However, to label such developments as 'Bunraku' or even 'modified Bunraku' is reductionist as developments, such as the open-stage, had no precedent in ningyo joruri and were as much the innovation of European theatre practitioners as attempts to replicate the Osaka Bunraku Theatre, still relatively unknown in the mid-1950s.

largely hidden. This was also predominantly true of Obraztsov's first uses of visible and multiple manipulators.

In black theatre puppeteers dress in black and perform against a black background. Black velvet is often, as it does not reflect much light. The puppet is lit in a restricted, vertical shaft of light that illuminates the puppet alone, enabling the puppeteer to remain hidden in the darkness. This can be accentuated by the use of ultraviolet lamps and bright and day-glow colours. Such stage trickery has its roots in nineteenth century magicians' black and was rediscovered by Konstatin Stanislavski in the 1920s (Violette 2009; 497). French puppeteer George Lafaye (1915-1984) is credited with the redevelopment and popularisation of black theatre, in the early 1950s (Violette 2009: 497; Philpott 1969: 132). Lafaye took his work all across Europe, even to Russia (Cramesnil 2009: 9).

Black theatre is a form of cloaking in the same manner as a playboard – it is designed to hide the puppeteer and give the illusion of the puppet moving of its own volition. As the illusion of black theatre is so comprehensive it allows the puppeteer and puppet to be in close proximity, and forgo using strings or long. Naturally this led to direct manipulation, where the puppeteer directly holds the puppet, and short-rod manipulation. Black theatre also changes the puppeteer's position in relation to the puppet. Black theatre allows the puppeteer to stand directly behind the rather than below the puppet, as in rod-puppetry, or above the puppet, as in marionettes. As a result the potential for more than two people to manipulate the same puppet increases. Artists, such as Lafaye, started experimenting with multiple manipulators in the 1950s.

Black and blacklight theatre was well established in the UK by 1968. John Wright wrote a helpful guide to blacklight in *The Puppet Master* in 1952 stating that the 'practice has been developed only quite recently... But the possibilities it has in puppetry are so obvious and so considerable that I am sure we are going to see a lot of fluorescing skeletons and other fine phenomena in the very near future' (8). In 1967 the Caricature Theatre, run by Jane Phillips, in Cardiff made a production of *The Pilgrim's Progress* for the BBC in which the characters were embodied by one-person puppets performed using black theatre. The Little Angel Theatre also started using black theatre, performing *The Soldier's Tale* with Daniel Barenboim and the English Chamber Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1968, in which the fully articulated 'rod-puppets' were manipulated by multiple performers (Osborne 1968: 6; Walsh 1968: 20). It was revived in 1971 and 1972 at the Little Angel Theatre. The Little Angel continued this experimentation with *Armal and the Night Visitors* (1972) and *Angelo* (1974), an adaptation of Quentin Blake's book of the same name. As with many black theatre productions all these

shows used a playboard to provide the ground for the puppets (Wright 1986: 153). Black theatre was not an open theatre it was still contained within puppet space. This continued to be true later in the twentieth century. For example, *Faulty Optic*, the British adult-puppetry stars of the 1990s, were still performing black theatre 'from behind the various metallic contraptions and mechanisms of which... [their] sets consisted' (Francis 1996: 17): their playboards. Although the black clothes of black theatre sometimes means the technique is linked to ningyo joruri it was actually a separate with a very different symbolism and function – to render the wearer literally invisible.

Despite their use of visible and/or multiple manipulators such shows did not necessarily self-identify as 'Bunraku'. In his 1986 book *Rod, Shadow and Glove Puppets* John Wright writes about the use of black theatre without any reference to 'Bunraku' or ningyo joruri. The Little Angel's puppets' technologies were also distinct from ningyo joruri. According to Wright the puppet of Angelo was 'basically a rod puppet 30 inches (75cm) high... The chief operator holds the wooden rod in one hand and with the other hand controls the two hands of the puppet by means of short thin rods. A second operator holds a leather tag attached to each of the puppet's heels' (Wright 1986: 151). Wright made no direct attempt to imitate the Bunraku Theatre and had little impetus to do so. The Little Angel already had a strong reputation as a producer of children's theatre and no outward desire to reposition its work as adult.

Whilst Obratsov was inspired to use visible and multiple puppeteers by seeing ningyo joruri, other practitioners, such as Jan Wilokowski, appear to have theatrically revealed themselves for other reasons. The 1968 Bunraku Theatre shows, therefore, seem to have been only one of several sources that provided examples of visible and multiple manipulators: 'The theory and the models existed; it was only a question of time before the puppet player would perform without the screen, visible to the spectators, as normal practice' (Jurkowski 1998: 293). What the mythologised Bunraku offered was legitimation – an example of these ideas within the context of serious, adult theatre that could interface with 'mainstream' British theatre. The multiple sources of visible and multiple manipulators mean there is great inconsistency in the labelling of these tropes as 'Bunraku'. Whilst there is an initial surge in shows being labelled 'Bunraku' after 1968 this dies down and by the 1980s. References to Bunraku become irregular. Whilst all British 'Bunraku-style' puppetry embodies at least one of the macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness' it is usually only the framing of the show by its creators that dictates whether a piece of theatre is seen as 'Bunraku'. Framing work as 'Bunraku', seeks to channel the perceived 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku, as was the case with John Blundall's *Show Queen*. Other works that could easily be construed as 'Bunraku', for example, the Little Angel's *Angelo*, were not because they were not framed as such. However, when *Angelo* was revived



in 2005 the puppets were immediately labelled 'bunraku table-top puppets' (Hemming 2005). This reflects a great resurgence in references to Bunraku towards the end of the 1990s and throughout the 2000s that is not primarily driven by further exposure to ningyo joruri but by a string of imported shows, mainly from North America, that bring with them a familiarly undifferentiated and mythologised idea of 'Bunraku'.

#### **'Ameriku' and other 'Bunraku-style' Intrusions:**

Despite the example the Bunraku Theatre set British theatre makers it did not serve to greatly increase the standing of puppetry in the UK during the second half of the twentieth century. By the early 1990s British puppetry was still languishing in the dual confines of children's and puppet theatre. There were some incursions into adult and mainstream theatre in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Christopher Leith's *Beowulf* (1971 & 1979) and Barry Smith's *Act Without Words* (1979) and *Master Peter's Puppet Show* (1985), both using 'bunraku-style figures' (Moreley-Priestman 1985: 10), British puppeteers had largely failed to persuade 'mainstream' theatre of the virtues of puppetry. A few non puppet-specific theatre makers, such as Peter Brook, had made tentative use of puppetry and object manipulation in shows, such as *The Conference of Birds* (1977), but these were produced without the involvement of puppeteers.

However, the 1990s saw several domestic puppet companies develop that successfully garnered critical adulation for work specifically aimed at adults, including Faulty Optic, Doo Cot Green Ginger and Stephen Mottram. Complementary to these domestic developments and, to some extent, driving the change in perception of puppetry was a great influx of work from outside the UK that made prominently used puppetry whilst also being seen as 'mainstream' theatre. Artists such as Philippe Genty, Robert Lepage, Julie Taymor and Handspring Puppet Company all started visiting the UK during the 1990s. Some of these productions were avant-garde, such as Robert Lepage's work, and some more commercial, such as Julie Taymor's *Lion King* (London debut 1999), but they all came to the UK with pre-established reputations as 'good' or 'important' theatre and so played large, prominent, 'mainstream' theatre spaces. This had a huge impact on the perception of puppetry in Britain, attracting the attention of non-puppet specialists and raising the visibility and prominence of puppetry as an art form.. Some of these productions, especially those from North America, brought with them strongly undifferentiated ideas of 'Bunraku' that renewed the myth of Bunraku in Britain.

The USA's connection to Japan was far greater than Europe's after World War II: 'Each country extended to the other special privileges that they did not extend to other countries' (Pempel

2004: 1). As a result the Bunraku Theatre became a major cultural diplomat in the USA. Following its first visit in 1962, it visited the USA with far more frequency than anywhere else in the world. This meant a great number of American theatre artists adopted a mythologised understanding of Bunraku and started labelling puppets as 'Bunraku', 'Bunraku-style' or even 'Ameriku'<sup>57</sup>. In the last three decades of the twentieth century artists, such as Robert Wilson, Lee Breuer, Julie Taymor and Robert Lepage, all proclaimed to use 'Bunraku'. In Breuer's case this actually extended to a rare collaboration with Bunraku Theatre puppeteers in *The Warrior Ant* (1986 & 1989) (Cole 1992). When these American artists visited the UK they brought with them their self-declared 'Bunraku-style' puppets so adding further fuel to the undifferentiation of 'Bunraku' in Britain.

The end of the 1980s and start of the 1990s brought a series of tragic shakeups for the British puppet community. In 1989 Barry Smith died aged only 59, shortly followed by Jim Henson who died suddenly aged only 53. Although American, Henson had worked extensively in the UK, including filming *The Muppet Show*, *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth* there. He had provided training and stable employment for many puppeteers and puppet makers as well as financial support for puppet festivals such as Puppet Theatre '79 and Puppet Theatre '84. In 1991 John Wright died leaving a big question mark about the future of The Little Angel Theatre one of the UK's foremost puppet companies and training centres. This was compounded by the closure of the UK's other major puppet producing theatre and training centre, Cannon Hill Puppet Theatre, in 1992.. John Blundall then moved to Glasgow, where he lived until his death in 2014. Devoid of a theatre space his output and influence became increasingly less prolific. These events disrupted the status quo of UK puppetry and were seemingly setbacks for the sector. However, whilst all were personal tragedies, they opened up new opportunities and directions for British puppetry. The distancing of the Henson empire from the UK created less interest in their style of hand-rod lip-sync puppets and less impetus for British puppeteers to specialise in this technique. John Wright 's death led to Christopher Leith's appointment as artistic director of the Little Angel Theatre in 1993, following two years under Lyndie Wright's directorship. Under Leith the theatre's proscenium was opened up to allow the 'magical world behind it' to spill out onto a newly constructed forestage (Shaw 1996: 8) creating space for 'actors to be on stage with puppets' (Shaw 1996: 9), allowing a far broader range of shows to

---

<sup>57</sup> This is not a widespread term but reflects the large number of supposedly 'Bunraku-style' shows in the USA. According to American puppeteer Steve Abrams it was suggested, slightly in jest, as an alternative to 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' during a 'a late night pub discussion with some puppet folk including Jane Henson' (Abrams 2014).

take place in the theatre. In 1995 the Little Angel dropped the word 'Marionette' from its title a symbolic move away from the constraints of the past.

Into this void came a new wave of British puppeteers that started recasting puppetry as an acceptable medium for adults. Faulty Optic, who styled themselves as 'animation theatre' (Cavendish 2000: 11), made their debut in 1988 with *My Pig Speaks Latin* which they followed with a series of successful shows throughout the 1990s and 2000s including *Snuffhouse Dustlouse* (1990), *Shot at the Troff* (1996) and *Tunnelvision* (1998). The company eventually disbanded in 2011. Their macabre but often funny shows gained them a loyal following and made them unlikely leaders of the resurgent British puppet scene, despite spending much of their time touring mainland Europe with its readily available funding and audiences for adult puppetry. Faulty Optic's style of full-bodied rod puppets manipulated using one to three people in black theatre had its roots in the black theatre productions of the Little Angel Theatre, such as *Angelo*, where both Gavin Glover and Liz Walker trained and where they 'learnt 80% of what we do' (Prior 2007: 16). This they combined with the macabre animations of the Brothers Quay and Jan Svankmayer, the automata of Paul Spooner and the kinetic art of Jen Tinguely (Shaw 1997: 13). Continuing in the vein of the Little Angel, Faulty Optic made no claims to 'Bunraku-ness' even though their puppets easily fitted within British understanding of 'Bunraku-style'. As a result they were rarely referred to as such by outside commentators.

By contrast Doo Cot made far greater use of the mythologised Bunraku. Nenagh Watson, who ran Doo Cot with Rachael Field, was actively and openly interested in ningyo joruri citing the 1991 performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall as the event 'that triggered my personal admiration for Bunraku' (Watson 2009: 10). Watson had also spent time at Cannon Hill with John Blundall, whose great love of all things Japanese was infectious. These impulses led her to make some active investigation into ningyo joruri, to try and 'steal' some of the art, most notably in Doo Cot's productions *Peacock* (1994) and *Fold Your Own* (2006), the result of a funded trip to Japan. According to Watson 'Making the puppets for *Peacock* was a quest to construct as near to Bunraku techniques as we could. It was crazy – all I had was a small paperback book on Bunraku written in Japanese' (Watson 2009: 10). However, other than a very limited approximation of some of the technologies of ningyo joruri the puppets predominately embodied a constructed aesthetic perhaps best described as 'scrap heap puppetry' (Manning 1994: 28). As with Faulty Optic, it was predominately the macro-signs of visible and multiple puppeteers that signified 'Bunraku-ness' in Doo Cot's work, although in *Fold Your Own* they made use of a Gabu puppet head they acquired in Japan. However, unlike Faulty Optic, Doo Cot made repeated reference to Bunraku. They advertised *Peacock* as 'a production with music by Sylvia Hallett, inspired by the Bunraku and Wayang Kulit puppet

techniques' (The Stage 1994: 13). The show was in fact the true story of a gay man and his pet peacock and primarily dealt with issues around homophobia. Whilst there is nothing wrong with artists discussing influences on their work it is odd to do so within the extremely limited confines of publicity copy. Defining the show in terms of 'two ancient rod and shadow puppetry styles – Japanese Bunraku and Indonesian Wayang Kulit' is clearly an attempt to channel the 'aura' of these 'ancient' traditions and so deflect comparison with domestic British puppetry. This is not dissimilar to the deflections that Faulty Optic made by casting themselves as 'animation theatre' or 'theatre of objects' (Bayley 1995). Such terms were ways of deflecting attention from the use of puppetry that was so readily associated with children's theatre and reframing work in a way that was more palatable to the wider theatrical community. This was very much the same approach that had taken place with the channelling of Bunraku in the decades before.

Companies like Faulty Optic and Doo Cot attracted some attention from the wider theatrical community. Faulty Optic were regulars at the London Mime Festival and Doo Cot was selected as part of the Barclay's New Stages season at the Royal Court in 1995 and both companies were highlighted as leaders in a puppet renaissance, along with Green Ginger and Stephen Mottram, 'companies [that] are taking puppets out of the kiddies' ghetto and into the mainstream' by Guardian critic Lyn Gardner the same year (8). However, all of these companies remained firmly within the world of puppetry in the sense that they were all self-contained small companies of 1-2 people who made touring shows for predominately studio spaces. As lauded as this work was, it just did not interface with 'mainstream theatre'. This was not to say that the wider theatre world was not taking an interest in puppetry. In 1992 the National Theatre had staged its first tentative use of puppetry by the National Theatre in *Dragon*, although the puppetry was limited to 'various actors waving rod puppets around... a remotely controlled head... [and] A 'hummanette' and left puppeteers wishing the National would make 'bolder, more imaginative use of puppetry soon' (Francis 1993: 17). However, this was still a rare and rather half-hearted experiment in which the puppetry was almost there to look intentionally kitsch and slightly amateur. It is telling that the second half of Gardner's article on the renaissance of British puppetry in 1995 focuses on the influence of foreign artists, including the 'French illusionist, Philippe Genty', 'the much-copied Robert Lepage [who] has shown how to mix actors and animation with his Bunraku-style puppets in *The Seven Streams Of The River Ota*' and 'South Africa's Handspring, a company so celebrated that it is rumoured the director of the Jim Henson Foundation will be flying over from the States especially to see them' (Gardner 1995: 8). Whilst domestic companies were starting to find adult audiences it was the work of prominent foreign practitioners that really ignited interest

in puppetry as a tool to be used more broadly in the creation of theatre. All of these companies arrived with work that made use of visible and/or multiple manipulators. However, only some artists framed their work within the context of the mythologised Bunraku. What is interesting is that when work is framed as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' it is uncritically read as such but when it is not framed in this way generally it is read within the context of the contemporary artist's own practice.

Philippe Genty who had visited in the 1960s and 1980s with his variety and blacklight creations returned to the UK in the 1990s with a far more theatrically confident voice and became a regular visitor, with productions such as *Dérives* (Edinburgh 1990), *Desirs Parade* (Edinburgh 1991; London 1992), *Driftings* (London, 1991) and *Forget Me Not* (London, 1993). Genty was now creating fantastical and often quite abstract pieces of visual theatre on a large scale making heavy use of dance choreography, puppetry and other object manipulation. In particular he started to present full or half-bodied puppets manipulated by visible and multiple puppeteers that drew on 'the principle of the bunraku, sculpting puppets with heads that are disproportionately small compared to their bodies' (Genty 2013: 127). Genty did not, however, make great claims to 'Bunraku-ness' but rather presented his work in terms of itself rather than external influences. Genty is very happy to admit that 'he picked up techniques and ideas from the artists he saw, especially the Bunraku puppeteers of Japan' (Bishop 2006: 23). However, the fact that he does not seek to limit his work by this one influence has meant that neither have his external commentators.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Genty did in fact spent six months in Japan in the 1960s during which he made a full ningyo joruri puppet whilst staying in Tokyo with the Takeda Marionette Theatre. This is an interesting event, as it does not appear that Genty was working with a puppet maker experienced in making ningyo joruri puppets but primarily his own intuition and through 'stealing' from what he could observe in Japan. The result was an impressively accomplished, although slightly crude, version of a male three-person puppet. It is clear that Genty was making approximations of some of the technologies and form of the puppet. The figure is large samurai puppet and is more on the scale of an Awaji or Tokushima ningyo joruri puppet than one from the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. The puppet has an attempt at the bunhichi head and the octopus-grabbing hands (*takotsukamite*) (see chapter 4). However the construction of the hands is quite different to actual octopus-grabbing hands – Genty has fully articulated all the fingers, including the thumb giving each finger the correct number of joints. He also misunderstands the left-arm control (*shashigane*) making the wooden rocker much larger so that the puppeteer pulls this directly rather than the string attached to it. Particularly intriguing though is that Genty then took the puppet with him to Osaka to show the Bunraku Theatre, who he also filmed, and claims they were very impressed with it (Genty 2013: 46) implying that either it was serviceably made or the Bunraku Theatre puppeteers are just very polite. Genty made his own black clothes to wear to perform with this puppet but not in the style of the ningyo joruri. Instead he created black velvet clothes in the style of European black theatre and on his return to France in 1967 he started to experiment with black theatre for which he relates that he initially wore the same velvet blacks that he made in Japan (2013: 71). This is a fascinating layering of formally very similar ideas that appear in disparate parts of the world but end up having elided symbolisms.

This general disinterest in framing work as 'Bunraku' was repeated by South African Handspring Puppet Company (discussed further in chapter 6). Handspring's visits were important examples of puppetry being used in a serious, adult theatrical context and although they did not play the size of venues that Genty did in the 1990s they were very much presented within the context of theatre rather than puppet theatre thanks to their inclusion in the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) in 1991 with *Starbrites* and in 1999 with *Ubu and the Truth Commission* as well as the British Festival of Visual Theatre in 1995 with *Faustus in Africa*. They also brought *Woyzeck on the Highveld* to Leeds in 1993 and Glasgow in 1994 but these shows seem to have largely gone unnoticed. These festivals placed Handspring alongside theatre companies rather than puppet companies and they performed in theatre not puppet spaces such as the Tricycle Theatre and the Battersea Arts Centre. Whilst they did not reach huge audiences nor achieve widespread renown in the 1990s they did reach theatre makers and not just puppeteers perhaps most importantly Tom Morris who had just become artistic director of the Battersea Arts Centre when Handspring performed there in 1995 and would later ask Handspring to make and direct the puppets for the now infamous *War Horse*. Handspring Puppet Company also managed to melt the puppet-hardened hearts of many of Britain's mainstream critics with the Guardian finding their puppets 'dazzling' (Billington 1991: 36) and the Times praising their 'Miraculous puppetry' (Peter 1995: 10). As with Genty they offered a vision of puppetry working with and alongside human actors and other theatrical devices and dealing with serious adult subject matter and like Genty they did not frame this in relation to 'Bunraku'.

Whilst Genty and Handspring had an impact on the perception of puppetry in the UK it was the influence of North American artists that primarily reignited the idea of contemporary 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' puppets. Robert Lepage, the famed French-Canadian theatre maker became a regular visitor to the UK in the 1990s and with him came and host of Oriental allusions including 'Bunraku' puppets most notably in *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* the first, work-in-progress version of which appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1994 followed by the complete version in 1996 at the National Theatre, London. In *The Seven Streams of the Rive Ota* Lepage apparently made use of 'everything from hi-tech cinematography to Bunraku puppet theatre' (Gore-Langton 1996: 43). Whilst the play split critics who saw it, even its greatest detractors were entranced by the 'epilogue, played in the Bunraku style, with black-clad performers manipulating 4ft high puppets, [which] is done with such exquisite sensibility that judgment is willingly suspended' (Peter 1994: 10/28). Lepage has never made any serious attempt to explore the intricacies of ningyo joruri rather he 'plays with resources that are borrowed from other cultures, particularly Oriental traditions such as

Bunraku puppet, Noh theatre, Javanese shadow puppets, and Tai-Chi. These forms are not approached in their original contexts or as the result of anthropological studies, but rather as resources, as provocation, as a game, a way of telling a story or an object whose meaning can inspire performers' (Dundjerović 2009: 140). Despite this the puppets in *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* were very much framed as Bunraku, both within and without the play, and this framing is happily repeated by critics and commentators. Like John Blundall in the late 1980s Lepage was presenting his work directly as Bunraku but he was doing so much more prominently and within a highly undifferentiated Oriental context (supposedly Japanese puppets telling a Chinese story). This was a more direct channelling of the 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku than had been seen in the UK before. There is a clear implication in the presentation of these puppets that Lepage has mastered 'Bunraku' on its own terms.

This was echoed even more prominently in the work of the Julie Taymor who framed the decade starting with *Juan Darien: A Carnival Mass*, at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1990 and ending the millennium with her now ubiquitous production of Disney's *The Lion King*, which opened in London in 1999, two years after its New York debut. This was followed shortly by a revival of the 1984 production *The King Stag* directed by the Romanian director Andrei Serban for which Taymor had designed costumes, masks and puppets in 2001. Like Lepage, Taymor brought with her 'bunraku-style' puppets as part of her 'trademark global cocktail shaker of cultures, styles and idioms' (Johns 2001). However, more than any other practitioner she also brought the notion of authority and mastery of Bunraku. For not only did Taymor claim to use 'Bunraku' but it was made very clear that she had 'studied the Bunraku style of puppet' in Japan (Owen 1999: 6). Taymor did visit Japan in the 1970s with the intention of studying ningyo joruri but she did not head for the exclusively male and closed Bunraku Theatre but for Awaji 'where the masters would accept a female apprentice' (Blumenthal 1995: 13). In the end Taymor spent only a month in Japan and whilst 'she found Japanese performance extraordinary' she did not linger because she 'felt it was on a pedestal, separated from everyday life. It lacked the connection to community that had so attracted her in Indonesia' (Blumenthal 1995: 17). Despite the briefness of her visit and the fact that she went to Awaji not the Bunraku Theatre she very visibly identifies many of her puppets as 'Bunraku'. So in *The King Stag* there was 'the bony old man, a life-size Bunraku-style puppet' (Taymor 1995: 88) and in *Juan Darien: A Carnival Mass* several characters are identified as 'Bunraku' (Taymor 1995: 133-4). However, it was the commercially successful and inescapable *The Lion King*, is now in its fifteenth year in London, which had an especially large impact on British theatre. The show makes extensive use of visible puppeteers as well as identifying the character of Timon in particular as 'Bunraku'. Taymor describes how after much

experimentation, including toying with a puppet based on kuruma ningyo she settled on 'a Bunraku-style puppet' (Taymor 1997: 67). The visibility of this apparently 'Bunraku-style' puppet reaffirms a distinctly vague and undifferentiated idea of 'Bunraku'. Although the puppet does make use of technologies that are drawn from ningyo joruri it also clearly contains many other atoms. It is a one person puppet with its feet attached to the performer's feet, a cable connecting the puppet's head to a band around the top of the puppeteer's head so that the puppet's head tracks the movement of the puppeteer's (as in otome bunraku) and arm controls that extend out of the puppet's forearm at the elbow. These arm controls are clearly inspired by ningyo joruri and they allow the puppeteer to control the wrist joint. However, the puppet's head is also a lip-sync hand puppet and the puppeteer's right arm can place the puppet's right arm into a holster attached to the puppeteer's right leg and then use his right arm to manipulate the puppet's mouth. Clearly there are atoms at play here other than those of ningyo joruri including the lip-sync puppets of Jim Henson as well as the ingenuity of Taymor and Michael Curry in devising elements such as the holster for the right arm. These ideas are carefully woven together by the puppet's creators and as such it seems reductive to label them all as 'Bunraku-style'. Taymor suggests that primarily it is the convention of the visible puppeteer, which denotes the puppet's 'Bunraku-style' nature (Taymor 1997: 67). Taymor's exploration of ningyo joruri was very limited but the fact that she so publically went to Japan has given her an 'aura' of 'Bunraku-ness' that she has happily claimed and that few others can match. This is not to belie her considerable talent but her frequent recourse to framing her work in terms of Asian theatre forms smacks of exoticism and through the global success of *The Lion King* in particular has perpetuated a strongly undifferentiated understanding of 'Bunraku'.

All these outside influences created a vision of puppetry that was theatrical and integrated with 'mainstream' theatre in a way that domestic puppet companies such as Faulty Optic and Doo Cot had not managed. As such, these foreign incursions helped provide a context for British theatre to start to make broader use of puppetry and British theatre companies such as Improbable and Simon McBurney's *Complicite* started to actively experiment with puppetry in the mid-1990s. Improbable, were not puppeteers by training and for 'them puppets are merely part of the overall effect, being made and discarded as the show required' as such 'there is little reverence paid to professional practice' (Mhar 1996: 10). This led them to the conviction that that 'you don't need to work with professional puppeteers to produce good puppetry' (Mhar 1996: 10). As such they have rather existed outside the world of puppetry experimenting with improvised, assembled puppets made of sellotape (*70 Hill Lane* – 1996), random objects and junk (*Animo* – 1996). They found surprise West End success with the 1998



'junk opera' *Shockheaded Peter* in collaboration with musical trio The Tiger Lillies (Judah 1998: 21). As with their earlier work the puppetry had a rough assembled aesthetic that reflected the company's pluralistic idea of the puppet as 'anything that is moved on stage in a way that suggests it has a life of its own' (Crouch & McDermott 2001: 11). Despite using visible and multiple manipulators they have not made any claims of 'Bunraku-ness' and have not been labelled as such. However, they have significantly helped raise the profile of puppetry within British Theatre.

Simon McBurney's Complicite also started to make use of puppets as 'part of the totality of theatre' (Mendus 2000: 9) during the late 1990s. The company was no stranger to object manipulation and Clive Mendus, an actor who has worked with the company regularly, argues that puppetry was always present in Complicite's work and born out of their training at the Lecoq school and exposure to European puppetry, such as the work of Philippe Genty (2000: 9). However, it was not until 1997 and Complicite's production of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the National Theatre that the company made use of an actual puppet. Sue Buckmaster masterminded the creation and direction of several puppets to represent the child Michael in the production. Buckmaster says that she made a 'bunraku-type puppet' as it offered 'more theatrical possibilities' (Buckmaster 1997: 6) meaning that it could exist within a broader theatrical space. The framing of the puppet as 'Bunraku' led to the inevitable reception of it as such by the press: 'a simple puppet's body manipulated by a handler with his face covered as in the Japanese puppet theatre, the Bunraku' (Peter 1997: 14)

Both the puppets of *Improbable* and *Complicite* were born out of theatrical necessity rather than a desire to 'use' puppets for the sake of using puppets. This was also true of productions like *The Lion King* where the puppet was as much a solution as a starting point. This pragmatic approach to puppetry is illustrated by the use of an old broken chair to represent 'a 5000 year old corpse' in *Complicite's Mnemonic* (1999). As Simon McBurney says:

'It became clear to us that any literal representation would be more than faintly ludicrous. The words alone that described his appearance were stronger than any banal prop.

But something had to stand in for his presence.

So we used a chair.

But the chair was more evocative if broken.

So we used a broken chair.' (Simon McBurney in *Complicite* 2010: 99)

The chair was adapted and given joints to make it function better as a puppet but the illusion of it just being an object was set by McBurney's character sitting on it and appearing to break it earlier in the show. Despite not being framed as 'Bunraku' the chair did attract some comparison with 'Bunraku: 'the actors turn a broken chair into the shape of a body and lay it to rest on its side, just as the Alpine iceman was found, with the loving but impersonal care of Japanese Bunraku puppet masters' (Peter 1999: 6). This reflects the renewed proliferation of 'Bunraku' as an undifferentiated term in the wake of *The Lion King* and Lepage's work.

References to 'Bunraku' further increased in the new millennium leading to claims by some of a 'minor boom in *bunraku*' in the UK (Dobson: 2005: 280). *The Lion King*, in part, precipitated the first major 'mainstream' British production to make use of puppets in the new millennium. In 2003 London's National Theatre produced an epic six-hour two-part adaptation of Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. The production made heavy use of puppetry both large and small scale. However, Nicolas Hytner, the National Theatre's then artistic director, and his team made no attempt to involve domestic British puppeteers. Instead they went to the USA and to the workshops of Michael Curry who co-created the puppets for *The Lion King* with Julie Taymor. Over 120 puppets were made for the show, forty-six by Curry and the rest in the National Theatre's workshops (Cauchi, et al 2004: 36). Hytner did not specifically frame these puppets as 'Bunraku', however, neither did the production go out of its way to be seen using 'puppetry'. There was clearly a drive to not associate with domestic British puppetry and a genuine belief that this was something 'no-one had done this before' (Butler 2003: 26). As actor Sam Barnett said about his role animating one of the principal daemon (ethereal animal) puppets in the show 'I've never done anything like this before. And I haven't seen anything like it done' (Barnett in Butler 2003: 21), as though the act of manipulating an object in order to give it the illusion of life was an entirely new concept to theatre practice. Although the production did not frame itself as using 'Bunraku' its reception said otherwise. So Hytner apparently makes the daemons 'theatrically poetic, chiefly by the Bunraku-style use of puppets' (Macaulay 2004: 4) and 'puppet figures skilfully manipulated by black-clad actors in the manner of Japanese theatre, a dramatic convention we immediately accept' (Hewison 2004: 3). Again this discrepancy reflects the renewed use of 'Bunraku' as a descriptor for British theatre in the twenty-first century in the wake of *The Lion King* and the other 'Bunraku' intrusions of the 1990s. *His Dark Materials* of course did not make any serious allusions to ningyo joruri beyond the black dress of the puppeteers.

Over the next decade there was a spate of shows that made use of puppets that were framed as 'Bunraku'. The Globe Theatre's *The Golden Ass* by Peter Oswald (2002) in which the 'Cupid/Psyche tale... is acted out as if on Japanese Bunraku puppet theatre' (Macaulay 2002:

10) although 'for which, alas, the actors do not have the skill' (Peter 2002). The Little Angel Theatre, now led by Steve Tiplady scored a coup when they were asked to work on a puppet version of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* with the RSC in 2004. The production was directed by Gregory Doran, then an associate director at the RSC, who was directly inspired to use puppets for this dramatization of Shakespeare's poem by seeing the Bunraku Theatre during a tour to Japan with the RSC in 2000. Doran was interestingly drawn to the Bunraku Theatre for some of the same reasons that British puppeteers had looked to it earlier in the century. In particular he was 'very impressed by the fact that the entire, very large audience was adult' (Doran in Hemming 2007: 36). In many ways formally the production was one of the closest approximations of ningyo joruri to be staged in the UK, in the sense that it looked at the broader staging as well as visible and multiple manipulators. Doran chose to have the text narrated from the side of the stage and accompanied by a guitarist whilst the puppets on stage played out the visuals of the narrative. However, there the comparisons largely stop. The puppets did have a simple nodding head control located in their chest but their general form was wooden, full-bodied and covered in leather that in shape and technology had more in common with the Little Angel's marionettes than ningyo joruri. As a result of Doran's interest the show was directly framed as using 'Bunraku' and this was backed up by Steve Tiplady who already self-declared his own 'Bunraku-ness' – 'the table-top puppetry that I do is taken from an old Japanese form called Bunraku, in which you do see the puppet operators' (Tiplady in Cripps 2004: 18). As a result the show was seen as 'Combining elements of the Jacobean masque and of Japanese Bunraku puppetry' (Taylor 2004: 17) with the puppets 'manipulated, Bunraku-style, by black-clad puppeteers' (Financial Times 2004: 10) with even a suggestion that somehow the RSC and the Little Angel had done what Japan's puppeteer's could not:

'In Bunraku, Japan's sophisticated puppet theatre, the manipulators who bring the dolls uncannily to life are shrouded in black but constantly visible to the audience. So bewitching is this RSC production by Gregory Doran, with puppetry direction by Steve Tiplady, of the Little Angel Theatre, that you often forget that they are there' (Marlowe 2004: 24)

In terms of the puppets' performance, this production was not that different to *Angelo* or the Little Angel's other black theatre productions of the 1970s, again the puppeteers wore black against a largely black background and the puppets were predominately performed with two people working one puppet. Primarily all that had changed from the 1970s was a slightly different, but no more ningyo joruri, design for the puppets and more importantly the framing.

This focus on 'Bunraku' was repeated in the RSC's 2005 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* apparently 'memorable above all for its Bunraku-style use of puppets' again designed by Lyndie Wright and directed by Steve Tiplady (Macualay 2005: 12). 2005 also saw Anthony Minghella's production of *Madam Butterfly* debut at the English National Opera apparently featuring 'Blind Summit Theatre's skilled Bunraku Japanese puppetry' (Finch 2008: 26), discussed in detail in chapter 6, as well being the year that the Little Angel's *Angelo* was rebranded as 'bunraku table-top puppets' (Hemming 2005). They were no more 'Bunraku' then they had been in the 1970s but in this increasingly Bunraku orientated world of British theatre it now made sense to see them this way. 'Bunraku-ness' had once again become a highly valuable attribute but one that was now as much rooted in the puppets of North America as in the ningyo joruri of Japan.

### **Conclusion:**

This is a necessarily constrained look at several decades of theatre history in which many hundreds of shows were made that used puppets. However, it does demonstrate the complexity and variety of ideas and forms that were and are thought to embody 'Bunraku-ness' in contemporary British theatre and what a difficult task David Currell set himself when he tried to define '*Bunraku-Style Rod Puppets*' in 1999. Whilst the first half of this chapter showed the development of an essentialised and mythologised understanding of 'Bunraku' based on the mantra of Bunraku as the unique, 300 year old, classical puppet theatre of Japan the second half has discussed how this reductionist view towards ningyo joruri allowed British puppeteers to co-opt that 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku through the adoption of the macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness': visible and multiple manipulators. The assumption that these tropes are innately 'Bunraku' is clearly reductive in light of the 1958 Awaji Gennojo tour and the development of these ideas within Europe prior to serious exposure to ningyo joruri. Further the existence of work after 1968 that embodies these tropes but does not frame itself as Bunraku is testament to fact that 'Bunraku-ness' is as much a state of mind as it is a collection of technologies and techniques.

The invocation of 'Bunraku' by British artists reflects how ideas that may already exist around you in your home culture can suddenly appear more appealing and powerful when encountered in another culture. This was aptly illustrated by the late Hoichi Okamoto of Dondoro Theatre. As a Japanese puppeteer and Butoh artist looking at Europe the ideas that

he saw as innately European could easily be construed as 'Bunraku' under the two macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness':

'What strikes me in Europe, is that puppeteers often manipulate in full view, without a black hood to hide them as we do in bunraku. In Japan that does not exist. In certain European pieces, the actors dance around a stationary puppet. And that is puppet theatre. I find that very exciting. What first got me to borrow/try out Western puppet methods, was to dare to show much body as an actor.' (Hoichi Okamoto in Okamoto & Paska 2000: 39)

However, Hoichi Okamoto did not then try and label his work in terms of its perceived 'European-ness' but rather as the work of Dondoro Theatre.

Attempts to channel the 'aura' of the mythologised 'Bunraku' was often more an act of 'naming or... renaming' British puppets, as 'a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 1998: 31), than a serious attempt to explore the theatrical practice of ningyo joruri. Even on the level of the technologies of the puppets of ningyo joruri very few British artists made serious attempts to seek to 'steal' them through going to Japan, watching video or studying books. John Blundall was probably the most devoted to actually acquiring some of these technologies but solely in the service of creating his own work and often still framed in relation to an undifferentiated understanding of 'Bunraku'.

What is striking about these different puppets created in Britain during the twentieth century is the breadth of variation in the technologies and techniques that they embody. This brings us back to the interweaving of cultures through theatre that Erica-Fischer Lichte describes, as discussed in chapter 2. What this chapter has not done is attempt to carefully trace the many atoms of these supposedly 'Bunraku' puppets. This following chapter will do just that with the puppets of two companies prominent in British theatre today: Blind Summit Theatre and Handspring Puppet Company.

## Chapter 6 – Two ‘Bunraku-Style’ Case Studies

### Introduction:

In the summer of 2011, two new puppet productions by two different theatre companies premiered at two geographically distant festivals: the Edinburgh Fringe and the Out the Box Festival in Cape Town, South Africa. They were only two amongst thousands of shows performed at the many arts festivals held across the world that summer. Two shows lost in a seething global mass of sixty-minute *Hamlets* and unassailably upbeat improv troupes. There would be nothing remarkable about this if it was not for the fact that thematically and formally the shows were highly synchronous. Whilst the productions were different in many ways, they both devoted a significant portion of time to a meta-theatrical deconstruction and explanation of the technologies, techniques and ontology of the puppet they used. The shows were *The Table* by London-based Blind Summit Theatre and *I Love You When You Are Breathing* by Cape Town-based Handspring Puppet Company. Both are monologues, each featuring just one puppet manipulated by three black-clothed but otherwise unmasked and visible performers, and both relish in the comedy of the puppet and puppeteer becoming aware of each other, for example both feature a puppeteer taunting the puppet by deliberately letting go of part of its body as well as familiar pop culture references, both finding an opportunity for their puppet to moonwalk – always a crowd -pleaser.<sup>59</sup>

These two productions are striking firstly because both companies decided to articulate their performance practice in public and in doing so codify it, laying it out for all to examine; secondly because, as with previous productions, the two companies adopted different approaches to the framing of their work, especially in their use or lack thereof of ‘Bunraku’ or ‘Bunraku-style’ as a description of their practice. None of the ideas expressed in these shows were new – they had all been codified before either orally in workshops or, in Handspring’s case, written down: *I Love You When You Are Breathing* is based on a 2010 essay by Basil Jones that overlaps with his earlier essay *Puppetry and Authorship* (2009).<sup>60</sup> Neither were the puppets original – Moses, the star of *The Table*, was a recycling or recasting of a puppet made

---

<sup>59</sup> *The Table* was a triptych when it debuted in 2011 but Blind Summit then developed the Moses section and cut the other two.

<sup>60</sup> The first version of *I love You When You Are Breathing* was performed at the 2010 Out the Box Festival by Basil Jones, Adrian Kohler and Jason Potgieter. Potgieter then reworked and adapted the text for 2011 with a new cast and is now credited as the adaptor and director. The 2011 production is considered the show’s debut. The text of the 2010 version was published in *Puck*, the journal of the Institut International de la Marionnette in 2010 (Jones 2010).

to play Goldstein in Blind Summit's adaptation of George Orwell's *1984* (2009) and the unnamed puppet in *I Love You When You Are Breathing* was a recasting of the Young Mr B puppet from Handspring's second collaboration with London's National Theatre – *Or You Could Kiss Me* (2010) – a point that is openly highlighted during a moment of backchat from the puppet to one of its puppeteers: 'Listen to me lady, do you know who I am? I played Basil Jones in the West End. The West End! That's London fucking England honey!' However,



**Figure 46 - The wooden puppet of *I Love You When You Are Breathing* (photo Handspring Puppet Company)<sup>61</sup>**

it is notable that these two puppets, whilst clearly being vastly different in construction, articulate similar ideas about puppet manipulation and agency. They also both fall within the criteria of contemporary 'Bunraku-ness' outlined in the previous chapter, both making use of visible and multiple manipulators. To what extent then can they and the ideas that they put forward be said to be Bunraku? Whilst Moses in *The Table* openly declares that he is 'a Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet' (see chapter 1) no such allusions are made in either the text or framing of Handspring's show. This division is reflected more broadly in the general practice of the two companies, with Blind Summit making frequent claims of 'Bunraku-ness' and Handspring generally shying away from such comparisons except to occasionally footnote an influence. However, this has not stopped others from making such comparisons for them,

---

<sup>61</sup> Source Handspring Puppet Company <http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/wp-content/themes/canvas/functions/thumb.php?src=http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/ILYWBprint-612.jpg&w=960&h=540&zc=1&q=90> (Accessed 23.06.2014).

as the British puppeteer-actor Finn Caldwell did when he described *Or You Could Kiss Me* as 'a westernised version of Bunraku (Japanese puppet theatre)' (Caldwell 2010:15).

Whilst chapter 5 discussed some of the technologies and techniques of British 'Bunraku-style', this chapter offers more detailed case studies of Blind Summit Theatre and Handspring Puppet Company as two of the most influential puppet companies in contemporary British theatre. Handspring is, of course, a South African company but their long relationship with the UK and in particular the success of *War Horse* (2007-ongoing) has made them prominent players within British theatre. Between 2006 and 2010 they were largely resident in the UK and they have continued to both work and tour here since, collaborating with the Bristol Old



**Figure 47 – Cardboard headed Moses in *The Table* (photo Lorna Palmer)<sup>62</sup>**

Vic on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2013, revived in 2014, as well as establishing a British arm of the company, Handspring UK, which produced its first production *Crow*, inspired by the poems of Ted Hughes, in 2012. Both companies are still active and influential in British theatre and as such their relationship or lack thereof to the Osaka Bunraku Theatre and ningyo joruri is a current issue that affects other contemporary British theatre practitioners.

---

<sup>62</sup> Source Blind Summit Theatre <https://plus.google.com/photos/118103513122468234630/albums/5627118231312068161/5841805569578995858?banner=pwa&pid=5841805569578995858&oid=118103513122468234630> (Accessed 27.06.2014)



In order to ascertain the true 'Bunraku-ness' of Blind Summit and Handspring, this chapter delves into the intricacies of how some of their puppets are constructed and performed, through analysis of the 'atoms' contained within their macro and micro-signs and so unravels and demonstrates the complex interweaving of technologies and techniques from which they are made. As will be shown, this extends beyond the purview of ningyo joruri, meaning the labelling of such puppets as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' is a perpetuation of the mythologised and essentialised Bunraku outlined in chapter 5. As such it is reductive and misleading, not only disenfranchising other ningyo joruri troupes but also the very creativity of Blind Summit and Handspring. Rather it will be shown that these puppets are a 'tissue of quotations' (Barthes 1977: 146) constructed from a wide range of 'atoms' (Jurkowski 2013: 97) and as such are positive sites of interculturalism physically embodying the 'interweaving' of cultures that Erica Fischer-Lichte describes within the theatre of the twentieth century (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 391) but, importantly, interweaving that is guided by weavers, the puppet-makers, "semionauts" who produce original pathways through signs' (Bourriaud 2002: 18).

### **Blind Summit Theatre:**

In recent decades no British Theatre Company has so frequently made reference to Bunraku in describing their work as Blind Summit Theatre. Founded by Nick Barnes and Mark Down in 1997, Blind Summit have since gone on to become one of the most prominent puppet theatre companies in the UK. In the last eighteen years the company has made several highly acclaimed original productions, in particular *Low Life* (2005) and *The Table* (2011), both of which have toured extensively nationally and internationally. Despite this, little has been written about Blind Summit beyond the occasional interview or article in puppet-related magazines. As a result, this introduction will offer more background information on the company than is found in the equivalent section on Handspring Puppet Company.

Nick Barnes studied Drama at the University of Hull and during his time there started to experiment with puppetry, both as a performer and designer. This included touring a production of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* using humanettes<sup>63</sup> to the Edinburgh Fringe in 1990. It was here that Barnes had his first serious encounter with puppetry:

---

<sup>63</sup> Humanettes are puppet bodies with an actor's head, often worn around the actor's neck hanging down in front of the actor's torso. (Barnes 2011).

'That year was a great year for the Edinburgh International festival because Philippe Genty was there, and Julie Taymor – so a double whammy. I'd never seen either of them before. She was doing *Juan Darien* and he was doing *Dérives*. The Genty just completely blew me away. I walked across the Meadows [a large park in central Edinburgh] after the show and thought that's the sort of stuff I want to do' (Barnes 2011).

Unbeknownst to Barnes, a young Mark Down was also around Edinburgh that summer. Down was still a medical student at Cambridge at the time and was at the festival visiting friends, one of whom dragged him to see the Genty show:

'We were about ten minutes late and they let us in for free. We stood right at the back and I thought it was incredible. I didn't know it was puppetry back then. About four or five years later I was at Central [School of Speech and Drama] for an interview and someone was talking about Genty as puppetry and my ears picked up and I thought oh that's puppetry. I thought it was Punch and Judy' (Down 2011)

It was not until 1997 that Barnes and Down met when Barnes held auditions for the development of what would become Blind Summit's first show *Mr China's Son* (2002). In the seven years since they saw Genty in Edinburgh, both Down and Barnes had moved to London and completed postgraduate courses in theatre. Down studied acting at the Central School of Speech and Drama and Barnes stage design at the Slade. Whilst at Central, Down was further exposed to puppetry through the enthusiasm of British puppet advocate Penny Francis, then a tutor on the Advanced Theatre Practice Course on which Down was enrolled. As a result Down found opportunities to experiment with puppetry: 'I kind of discovered I was good at it' (2011). Barnes' course at the Slade did not afford him much opportunity to experiment with puppets. However, in the summer of 1992, Barnes attended a month long course led by Philippe Genty at the Institut International de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières, France. The course was primarily devising and performing, which as Barnes admits 'I sort of slightly struggled with, but loved. I didn't really consider it my forte' (2011). However, during the month Barnes also did some puppet-making and Genty 'demonstrated how he makes one of his puppet heads. He sculpted a head of somebody for one of their projects and took us through the mould making process – it was an afternoon or something, it wasn't terribly in depth – but it just gave me enough of a clue so that when I got back I had a go at making a puppet myself' (Barnes 2011). As Barnes admits Genty is 'probably the biggest single influence on me. I basically started out by copying his puppets more or less' (2011) and certainly Barnes' early puppets are very

similar in design to some of Genty's figures although aesthetically they are more naturalistic than Genty's 'beautifully bizarre puppets' with their 'exaggerated faces' (Barnes 2011).

A trip to China in 1996 prompted Barnes to start making several puppets based upon his experience of meeting a victim of the Cultural Revolution, He Liyi, an elderly English teacher (Barnes & Down 2006: 20). The resulting puppets were heavily based on the marionette portée (lit. carried puppet) of Philippe Genty. As Barnes explains these are 'very simply a puppet which is carried by a handle on the back of the head with a second handle on the puppet's back. Otherwise, it is controlled directly by the puppeteers holding the puppets wrists and ankle joints; there are no other mechanisms involved' (2014). Barnes faithfully copied the technologies of Genty's puppets but 'stuck some legs on them' (Barnes 2011) (some of Genty's puppets float legless across the stage) and so he needed more operators. This led to auditions, meeting Down and the creation of Blind Summit.

*Mr China's Son* eventually debuted in 2002, since when Blind Summit have only produced five other original shows as a company – a children's show *The Spaceman* (2004), a highly skilled and funny puppet cabaret inspired by the works of Charles Bukowski, *Low Life* (2005), an adaption of Orwell's *1984* (2009), existential puppet monologue *The Table* (2011) and the surreal *The Heads* (2013) – a spin-off from the first version of *The Table* when Moses and his musings were part of a triptych of mini-shows.<sup>64</sup> The majority of Blind Summit's output since *Mr China's Son* has been collaborations with other, often notable, theatre companies (around eighteen and counting) and part of their success as a company has been positioning themselves as the UK's foremost puppet-makers and puppet directors for hire. Their reputation has come from these collaborations at least as much as it has from their own productions and given the list of those they have collaborated with it is easy to see why. From Anthony Minghella to Simon McBurney to Danny Boyle, Blind Summit have managed to work with some of the biggest names in British theatre and their profile has risen accordingly. In fact it was their work on Anthony Minghella's 2005 production of *Madam Butterfly* at the English National Opera, following hot on the heels of the first run of *Low Life*, the show that was their real artistic breakthrough, that brought the company to a wider audience and gave them and their puppets exposure and authority that few other British puppet companies can match as

---

<sup>64</sup> The company also lists many other productions on their website such as *Pirate Puppetry* (2003-6), *Martin's Wedding* (2005), *A Puppet in the Works* (2004) and *The Other Seeder* (2010) but these were one-off, limited-run or short shows and/or scratch performances that were more experiments than fully developed dramatic pieces.

Mark Down says: '21 sold-out shows at BAC's studio is just 1,000 people – one show at ENO is 2,500 people' (in Prior 2006: 10).

Integral to this early and continued success has been their positioning as performers of 'Japanese Bunraku' or at least performers who have 'taken the traditional Bunraku form and worked it into something of their own' (Prior 2006: 9). Whilst *Mr China's Son* was the start of the company using three-person puppets, it was not until *Madam Butterfly* that the Bunraku label was applied. Blind Summit were hired for *Madam Butterfly* as a result of Anthony Minghella's wife and choreographer, Carolyn Choa, seeing a performance of *Mr China's Son*. Choa and Minghella then hired them to be, as Choa saw it, 'Bunraku' puppeteers performing as British proponents of 'a Japanese art form' (Prior 2006: 9). Whilst Choa recognised this was in many ways a continuation of 'the fantasy evocation of Japanese culture' that Puccini's opera creates (Prior 2006: 9), the framing of Blind Summit as Japanese Bunraku puppeteers was lapped-up and their performance seen as authentically Japanese by many commentators and the 'Bunraku' label repeated ad infinitum by the media. So we get 'Blind Summit Theatre's skilled Bunraku Japanese puppetry' (Finch 2008: 26) performing 'a wan Bunraku puppet made flesh by three wonderful puppeteers' (Seckerson 2005: 44). Almost exclusively the reception of Blind Summit's puppetry in *Madam Butterfly* does not distinguish the puppets' British origin, but rather situates them as 'oriental' and/or 'Japanese', one review even stating that it was 'one oriental touch too many' (Morrison 2005: 17). Even Penny Francis said that it as 'an almost authentic copy of the Bunraku style' (2007). The perceived 'Japanese-ness' of the puppets is particularly ironic considering the puppet that was used to play Sorrow in *Madam Butterfly* was originally designed to play a young and Chinese He Liyi in *Mr China's Son*. After Chao saw the show in 2002 she asked Blind Summit if she could literally 'recast him' for *Madam Butterfly* (Blind Summit 2012). However, labelling the puppet as Bunraku was purely the result of Minghella and the show's producers rather than Blind Summit. As Mark Down told me, 'we didn't set out to make Bunraku puppetry and we didn't call it Bunraku puppetry until after *Madam Butterfly*. When we did *Madam Butterfly* they [the ENO] wrote a thing in the programme all about how we did Bunraku. Then I realised the value of saying that we did Bunraku' (2011). For Down 'Bunraku' is a hook that allows their audiences to discuss their work:

'It allows the audience to go away and talk about what you've done. So, rather than saying "they did this thing and there were two people, I think, or maybe three", the audience can say "it's Bunraku and its always done like this and what Blind Summit have done is they've brought it into the modern world". Even if that isn't what we've actually done it gives them something to say' (Down 2011).

The honesty and pragmatism of this statement is testament to the fact Blind Summit do not really believe that they are doing 'Bunraku', but they are commercially savvy enough to understand the power of being able to label their work clearly and distinctly so giving their audience a way to tell others about their work, whilst also making the audience feel clever they now know about this 'Japanese art form'. As has been outlined throughout this thesis the three-person puppets of Europe and North America have been given many names but of all of them 'Bunraku' is by far the catchiest and coolest sounding – who wants to talk about 'rear-rod puppets'? Blind Summit's adoption of 'Bunraku' as a descriptor for their work after *Madam Butterfly* is an unsurprising response by a young company whose first experience of serious success involved being told they are performing 'Bunraku'. It offers an identity that is clearly not British and as such distances their work from domestic British puppetry. As a company they generally do not engage in the contemporary British puppet scene and are not always comfortable being puppeteers. Down in particular is a puppeteer who is uncertain about and even adverse to the art form:

'I might to go so far as to say that Genty's *Dérives* is the only puppet show I've ever enjoyed... in reality puppetry is pretty boring, most of it. It's not my choice of a night out... I think for us the show is often the solution for puppetry, puppetry being the problem. As in I'm fascinated by the problem of puppetry being boring. When I see puppets I find them completely fascinating and then I see shows and I find them boring so I'm interested in making shows that are as interesting as the original impulse' (Down 2011).

However, whilst the Bunraku label was thrust upon them, it is not a framing that Blind Summit have resisted. This is in part due to the fact that since being labelled 'Bunraku' they have developed a partial interest in Japanese puppetry.<sup>65</sup> Whilst Down admits that he has only ever seen the Bunraku Theatre on video, he claims a more conceptual link to Japan:

'A lot of our sentiment is very Bunraku-ish. I mean it's quite formal and detailed and realistic and character led and story led... I think the structure of our work in the relation of narrative to emotion is quite like kabuki or Bunraku in that a tilt of the head is very moving and when you get it right it really affects people and when you get it wrong it really doesn't do anything' (Down 2011)

---

<sup>65</sup> Barnes went to see the Bunraku Theatre in 1991 in London: 'it hasn't made that much of an impression. I thought it was beautiful, in its way, but I think you're up against so much as a Westerner trying to understand it, or at least I was anyway. I remember the shamisen being impressive, very impressive' he also sites an interest in the aesthetics of the Bunraku Theatre's (Barnes 2011).

Down's identification of the power of small visual moments in both ningyo joruri and Blind Summit's work is testament to his role as an informed observer as a practicing puppeteer. However, as an informed observer of puppetry more than Japanese puppetry and beyond general observations, he has made no great exploration into ningyo joruri or the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. These observations developed after *Madam Butterfly* and, as such, have been reverse-engineered onto Blind Summit's practice.

Ever since *Madam Butterfly* Down and Barnes have repeatedly situated their work in relation to 'Bunraku'. Their website states they are 'subverting and reinventing the ancient Japanese art form of Bunraku puppetry for contemporary worldwide audiences' (2014). This sentiment has appeared in publicity, websites and publications about Blind Summit. Whilst early twentieth century commentators romanticised the greatness of Bunraku, Blind Summit have consciously positioned themselves as the 'Bunraku Revolutionaries' who are purportedly 'doing for ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry what South Park did for cartoons. They subvert the medium to make cutting edge, puppet-led theatre' (British Council 2010). The use of 'Bunraku' in promotional material of this nature demonstrates the extent to which it has become a part of the consciousness of the British theatre world – a buzzword for selling seats. But this statement goes beyond using Bunraku as an exotic marketing tool. Instead the implication is that Blind Summit are not just equal to 'ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry', but above it as they have the requisite understanding and mastery of the art to be able to 'subvert' it. This is done using the double-edged sword of 'ancient' that both characterises Bunraku as venerable and old, implying a set of skills and techniques refined over generations that Blind Summit have acquired, and at the same time tells us that Bunraku is old-hat, ripe for updating and even tongue-in-cheek mockery. Whether Blind Summit are referring solely to the Bunraku Theatre or using the word to mean ningyo joruri in general is unclear. However, it is inescapable that the word 'Bunraku' refers specifically to Japan and not some westernised 'Bunraku-style'.

This quotation is clearly publicity talk and as we have seen both Barnes and Down play down the influence of the Bunraku Theatre on their work. Instead they primarily cite Philippe Genty and, to a lesser extent, Handspring Puppet Company and Faulty Optic as artists who have inspired them (Barnes 2011; Down 2011). So, why does Blind Summit talk about subverting Bunraku rather than one of these other companies? They could easily claim that their puppets are 'Genty' or 'Genty-style', so why chose 'Bunraku'? As much as others thrust 'Bunraku' on them during *Madam Butterfly* they have since knowingly adopted 'Bunraku' as their predominant identity in preference to 'Genty' or even, to some extent, 'Blind Summit'. There appear to be two primary factors driving this self-essentialisation. First is the 'value' they

discovered the 'Bunraku' label had in the broader theatre world. On this level, adopting the Bunraku moniker was a business decision in response to the market and as such was a continued reflection of the power of the mythologised Bunraku outlined in chapter 5. Second is the geographical proximity of the Bunraku Theatre in relation their other more dominant influences: it is far easier to claim mastery over an art-form from the other side of the world, that few people in the UK have a developed understanding of, than to claim mastery over companies far nearer to home, who could easily object or to whom your work can be easily compared. If Blind Summit claimed to be 'Genty-style' they would be inviting direct comparisons and cross-analysis with Philippe Genty's work. This would inevitably go badly because in reality Blind Summit's work, beyond the design of some of their puppets, is very different to Genty's. They are fully aware of this and their relationship with Genty is only partial, as Barnes says 'Mark and I, as a company, slide between Genty's wonderful magical nonsense and the tethered ideas that spring from a text' (2011). Partially what they found attractive in the work of Handspring Puppet Company and in ningyo joruri is the strong use of narrative and text that balanced out the visual dreamscapes of Genty, as Down says 'I really love a good play' (2011). They clearly do not believe that they are 'Genty-style' and as such do not claim to be. In the same way they do not believe they are 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style', yet this label is claimed without objection from external observers., It is telling that in the programme notes for the Tokyo run of *Shunkin*, a *Complicite* show made in collaboration with the Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo in 2008, for which Blind Summit made the puppets, the quotation was altered so that Blind Summit were simply subverting 'puppetry' rather than 'ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry': a bolder but less culturally specific claim and an easier one to make in the homeland of ningyo joruri.

In recent years Blind Summit have partly moved away from the three-person, naturalistic humanoid puppets of their early work. Their work on the 2009 production of *His Dark Materials* at the Birmingham Rep resulted in the company starting to experiment with animal puppets as well as new methods of construction and new materials, especially plastezote – a flexible but fairly firm polyethylene foam that can be worked in sheets or carved. The company continued the animal theme in *Complicite's A Dog's Heart* (2010) and *The Master and Margarita* (2011) as well as Tectonic Theater Project and Gotham Chamber Opera's *El Gato Con Botas* (2010) in New York. These puppets are more stylised and at times cartoony in comparison to the company's earlier work, although they are still highly detailed and carefully sculpted and formed. *1984* (2009) prompted the company to create corrugated cardboard puppets and this has become another recurrent technique in their work forming the basis of *Call of the Wild* (2010) and of course *The Table* (2011). Within their own shows there has

generally been a shift towards using simpler puppets and staging. *1984* hardly featured any puppets at all and *The Table* only one.

Throughout their career so far Blind Summit have created all sorts of puppets from small single-person to large five-person puppets. They have continued to generally frame their work as 'Bunraku' despite these changes in technologies and techniques, specifically they tend to label their three-person puppets Bunraku, although not always and not exclusively. Whilst there is no intent to cause offence, appropriate or seriously to claim to be performing in the same manner as the Bunraku Theatre, in Blind Summit's work it is hard not to level accusations of exoticism against them for their continued claim of mastery over a strongly undifferentiated understanding of 'Bunraku'. However, we have not yet gone into the technologies and techniques of their puppets and in doing so we will further ascertain if their claims of 'Bunraku-ness' and the assessment of other authorised observers that they are 'an almost authentic copy of the Bunraku style' (Francis: 2007) has any serious merit. In particular we will discuss the three-person puppets that they used in *Madam Butterfly*, *Low Life* and of course *The Table*.

### **Handspring Puppet Company:**

In comparison to Blind Summit, much has been written about Handspring Puppet Company; as such there is less need to delve into the company's history. The 2009 career-spanning book *Handspring Puppet Company*, edited by Jane Taylor, has offered a level of documentation and discussion of their working practice that few other puppet companies can rival. This is in part due to the company being at a later stage of their working lives, but also testament to the many high-quality and internationally-acclaimed productions that the company have produced during their career. In particular, the international success of *War Horse* (2007) has brought the company a level of trans-global success and fame that few puppets other than The Muppets can match. As well as being regularly written about they have featured on prominent forums such as the popular lecture series TED and in the UK the *War Horse* puppets have become regulars at moments of national pomp and circumstance such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. In many ways *War Horse*, with its sentimental story and now visible establishment credentials, is an odd work to represent Handspring Puppet Company who through their career have largely made overtly political, often anti-establishment, and artistically challenging works, in particular their first three collaborations with visual artist and director William Kentridge – *Woyzeck on the Highveld* (1992), *Faustus in Africa* (1995) and *Ubu*



*and the Truth Commission* (1997) – all of which dealt with social and political issues in South Africa, including the divisions of apartheid. However, what *War Horse* represents brilliantly is the exquisite craft of both their puppet-making and puppet direction, and centrality of the puppet in their productions.

Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones founded Handspring Puppet Company along with Jill Joubert and Jon Weinberg in Cape Town in 1981. All four of them were graduates of Michaelis School of Fine Art. The company's first five shows, *The Honey Trail* (1981), *Kashku Saves the Circus* (1982), *Gertie's Feathers* (1983), *Mbira for Pasella* (1984) and *13 Clocks* (1984), were aimed at children and it was not until 1985 that they produced their first show aimed at adults, *Episodes of and Easter Rising*, by which time both Joubert and Weinberg had left the company, with Kohler and Jones having run it ever since.<sup>66</sup> Since 1985 the company has produced or collaborated on sixteen productions for adults – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1988), *Carnival of the Bear* (1988), *Tooth and Nail* (1989), *Starbrites!* (1990), *Woyzeck on the Highveld* (1992), *Faustus in Africa* (1995), *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (1997), *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* (1998), *The Chimp Project* (2000), *Zeno at 4am* (2001), *Confessions of Zeno* (2002), *Tall Horse* (2004), *Or You Could Kiss Me* (2010), *Ouroboros* (2011), *I Love You When You're Breathing* (2011), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2013) – and one very prominent piece of children's theatre *War Horse* (2008).

Kohler and Jones are, of course, South African, but throughout their careers they have regularly interacted with the UK. In the late 1970s a recently graduated Kohler (later joined by Jones) arrived in the UK to study at the Canon Hill Puppet Theatre (*The Times of Swaziland* 1981), under the demanding and often critical eye of John Blundall. Blundall found Kohler to be 'a brilliant carver' (Blundall 2011), which led to a semi-permanent London residency between 2006 and 2010 during which they worked on two collaborations with the National Theatre, London: *War Horse* (2007, 2008 and since 2009 on-going in the West End) and *Or You*

---

<sup>66</sup> The company's work predating *Episodes of and Easter Rising* has fallen out of the official canon of Handspring's work and does not feature on their website or in their 2009 retrospective *Handspring Puppet Company*. Various other productions are also omitted from the official Handspring canon including a shadow puppet show *Amos and Boris* (1987) and the company's first production with the Market Theatre in Johannesburg *Carnival of the Bear* (1988), although this is listed in the back of the 2009 retrospective, as well as their television work and commercial puppet making projects such as puppets for a dramatization of Roald Dahl's *BFG* at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town (1993) (Badenhorst 2005: 149,152,157; Fuchs 1994: 19). The decision to remove the children's work from the company's official canon reflects a shift in the company from their original aim to 'produce new children's theatre with puppets' (Kohler 2009: 42) to a company that makes puppet theatre for adults as well as a reflecting that from *Episodes of and Easter Rising* onwards Handspring became Jones and Kohler's company alone.

*Could Kiss Me* (2010). Prior to this the company toured four shows to the UK - *Starbrites* (1991), *Woyzeck on the Highveld* (1993 & 1994), *Faustus in Africa* (1995), *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (1999) and, following the second run of *War Horse* at the National Theatre, London in 2009, revived their 1998 production *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* for the Edinburgh International Festival (2009). Since the end of their UK sojourn in 2010 they have toured *Woyzeck on the Highveld* and *Ubu and the Truth Commission* to the UK in 2011 and 2014 respectively as well as collaborating with the Bristol Old Vic on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2013. During their many visits they have also run practical workshops in the UK, starting with a school's workshop in 1991 run in collaboration with Faulty Optic, an attempted masterclass in 1995 (cancelled due to lack of interest, an unthinkable prospect post-*War Horse*), a successful, week-long masterclass in 1999, and a one day masterclass in 2006 during the development of *War Horse*. Since the success of *War Horse* Jones and Kohler have not personally offered any practical workshops, only talks and demonstrations of their current and past work, although in 2011 members of the touring cast of *Woyzeck on the Highveld* offered a one-day masterclass in London. These multiple visits to and projects in the UK have influenced a younger generation of British practitioners, such as Blind Summit (Barnes 2011) Mervyn Millar, Finn Caldwell and Toby Olié and reflects the internationalism of a company that has consistently worked across the world.

This is not to suggest that Handspring's relationship to the UK has been exclusive. Ever since their first adult show, *Episodes of and Easter Rising*, which they took to the Seventh World Festival of Puppetry in Charleville-Mézières, France international touring has been central to their practice. This has largely been dictated by finance – much of Handspring's funding has come from abroad, in particular from Europe. As Jones says, 'there was a marked difference in our income depending on when we were abroad or when we were in South Africa. For overseas performances we negotiated a fee per performance... in South Africa... it has become normal for us to anticipate a loss' (Jones 2008:104-106). This has meant that since *Woyzeck on the Highveld* every Handspring show has opened in Europe rather than South Africa and the majority of each show's performing life has been in Europe and the USA. The only exceptions are *Tall Horse* (2004), *Ouroboros* (2011), and *I Love You When You're Breathing* (2011) all of which opened in South Africa.<sup>67</sup> Despite the financial weighting from Europe, Handspring has

---

<sup>67</sup> All of Handspring's shows have then been performed in South Africa except *Zeno at 4am* (2001), *Or You Could Kiss Me* (2010) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2013). At the time of writing *War Horse* has yet to visit South Africa, although it is scheduled to tour there later in 2014, by which point the production will have already toured to the USA, Canada, Holland and Germany.

very much maintained their own aesthetic and pointedly South African subject matter but interestingly often using European texts as the vehicles for their ideas.

Travel has afforded Handspring a developed international outlook and so it is unsurprising that their puppets are 'atomically' complicated. Partly as a result of limited examples of African puppetry, the company has looked abroad for inspiration. This has primarily involved looking at European forms, as Kohler says 'Our knowledge of figure theatre had developed through a hands-on sharing of ideas between puppeteers and from books and films that... had a decidedly Western bias' (2009: 118) and the company cite the influence of Sergei Obraztsov and European rod puppetry, in particular the designs of German puppet master Hansjurgen Fettig, as major influences (Sichel 2009: 168; Miller 2006: 7; personal communication 13th November 2010). They were affected by seeing work whilst touring in Europe such as 'a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the legendary Czech company, DRAK' at the Seventh World Festival of Puppetry in Charleville-Mézières, France (Kohler 2009: 49). Jones and Kohler also learnt from the few South African puppeteers in operation in the 1970s, in particular Lilly Herzberg who mentored Kohler when he was first working at the Space Theatre in Cape Town after graduating from art school (2009: 44). However, this brought them primarily European puppet forms. It was Herzberg who introduced Kohler to rod puppetry:

She was a communist in the days when it was still illegal in South Africa and she'd formed links with the Eastern Block puppeteers and she believed that the rod figure was much more dynamic than the string figure which I'd grown up with. She basically persuaded me that it was a more appropriate form for puppetry in South Africa. You can introduce people faster to the rod puppet than you can to the marionette. The marionette is a jewel like figure that takes a long time to master and all of its movement is vertical. The lateral movement is not so easy to achieve with a string puppet. So we adopted the rod puppet primarily (Jones & Kohler 2010).

Jones expands on this idea of the rod being suitable for South African puppetry:

What he [Kohler] inherited from Europe was a rod control inside a puppet at chest level. He felt it was more appropriate, and better for us, at pelvis level. So he moved the central control of the puppet downward in the puppet. This was very important for us and gave a sense of African movement. It was a real but subtle innovation which made a profound difference. (Jones in Sichel 2009: 163)

This desire to find an African identify for Handspring led the company to their first major non-European influence, the Bamabara puppets of Mali. Jones credits his discovery of Bambara, 'an

authentic African form of Drama’, as part of the reason that he first agreed to set up Handspring with Kohler, Joubert and Weinberg in 1981 (Sichel 2009: 153). For Jones it was the fact that Bambara ‘was a tradition that was apparently utterly unconnected to and uninfluenced by western traditions... a truly African art form’ (Jones & Kohler 2010) that could offer Handspring and their practice roots and local context. Local is of course problematic considering that Mali is over 6,000 miles away from Cape Town. However, it is considerably more local than other parts of the world if you are based in South Africa. Thematically Bambara also resonated with Handspring as it was more serious, with ‘an element of social satire’, than the puppetry Jones and Kohler had experienced during the 1950s and 1960s that Jones describes as ‘the nadir of puppetry’ (Jones & Kohler 2010).

This drive to discover more serious and artistic puppet theatre led to the identification of Handspring’s second strongly non-European influence: ‘the Bunraku theatre of Japan’ (Kohler 2009: 118). Whilst it was stated in the introduction to this chapter that Handspring shy away from comparisons to ‘Bunraku’, this is not necessarily because they have a highly developed understanding of Japanese puppetry, ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre or that they have escaped the global mythologizing of the Bunraku Theatre.<sup>68</sup> Throughout their career they have made repeated reference to ‘Bunraku’ usually as an undifferentiated term for ningyo joruri as well as using it to represent essentialised ideas of ningyo joruri. So, for example, Kohler talks about *Episodes of an Easter Rising* as the company’s ‘first experiment in the Bunraku or ‘exposed’ style of performing’ (2009: 48) despite the fact that it was a short string marionette show for which there is an equally prominent history of people working in view of the audience in cabaret and variety. As with other artists, such essentialised comparisons have leaked out into broader discussion of Handspring. For example, in 1985, reviews of *Episodes of an Easter Rising* helpfully explain that ‘this being the Japanese Bunraku Theatre form of puppetry, it allows the puppeteers to be visible to the audience’ (Engel-brecht 1985).

As Kohler tells me neither he nor Jones have ‘encountered the full on Bunraku tradition live’ – they have ‘only seen it on film and in books and read a lot about it’, however, Kohler claims that ‘nevertheless it has been a huge influence’ (Jones & Kohler 2010). Kohler describes watching ‘a white-faced Japanese Bunraku woman’ in a film shown at the Port Elizabeth

---

<sup>68</sup> On a spreadsheet of puppet books that have influenced their practice that was once downloadable from their website the only books on Japanese puppetry were the most obvious and available English-language texts – Barabara Adachi’s *The Voices and Hands of Bunraku* (1978), and *Backstage at Bunraku* (1985) and Donald Keene’s *Bunraku* (1965) and *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (1961) all of which focus nearly exclusively on the Bunraku Theatre and present an undifferentiated view of ningyo joruri as Bunraku.

Theatre Appreciation Group early in his career and how it 'reinforced a growing belief that animated figures could communicate great drama and express complex human emotions' (2009: 44). As with the Bambara of Mali for Jones it was what the Bunraku Theatre represented as much as the actualities of practice that inspired him:

Their biggest influence for me was their professionalism... the lack of professionalism in puppetry in those days [1950s & 1960s] was something that turned me off a lot, as someone who had a Fine Arts training. So the discovery of this ancient tradition, almost fascistic form of training of ten years apprenticeship on the legs. That really impressed us hugely and was a big inspiration to us as people who were thinking of becoming professional puppeteers. (Kohler & Jones 2010)

Kohler identifies ningyo joruri's 'scale' and the 'naturalism' as features that piqued his interest and importantly it was an example of a puppet theatre that was 'most often talking about human beings in daily drama and that was inspirational' (2010). Kohler also cites techniques, such as the visible manipulator and the use of multiple manipulators, and technologies, including 'Bunraku elbow controls', 'Bunraku head control[s]' and 'Bunraku blacks' (meaning the black clothing sometimes worn by puppeteers in ningyo joruri), as ideas Handspring use that he sees as stemming from 'Bunraku' (Kohler 2010, Kohler 2009: 62-3, 69). The puppets they primarily identify as 'Bunraku', in their own work, are both those that require three-person manipulation, such as the puppet of Emilie from the original run of *War Horse*, which Basil Jones describes as 'a fully articulated three-person Bunraku puppet' (Jones in Taylor 2009: 38).<sup>69</sup> In other puppets they tend to only identify individual technologies such as 'Bunraku elbow controls' (Kohler 2009: 62). The extent of this will be discussed later.

However, whereas Blind Summit have adopted 'Bunraku' as a primary descriptor of their work, Handspring have a more gentle relationship to the Bunraku Theatre. This is not say that they do not discuss their puppets in relation to 'Bunraku' but when they do so it is primarily within the context of citing an influence rather than identifying a marketable label/image for their work. So their 2010 co-production with London's National Theatre *Or You Could Kiss Me*, which

---

<sup>69</sup> The puppet of Emilie was cut from the 2009 revival and all subsequent versions of the show because, as Basil Jones says, 'the form of manipulation we had chosen, which involved one of the puppeteers working on their knees, was not appropriate for the scale of the Olivier stage' (Jones in Taylor 2009: 38). This reflects one of the great formal differences between ningyo joruri and 'Bunraku-style' puppets. The playboard and elevation of the three-person puppet in ningyo joruri allows the puppet to move through the stage space easily and at times rapidly. The desire of many Western artists to use their three-person puppets on an open stage has either led to work on a table-top, essentially as a stand-in and more solid playboard, or the puppet being performed on the stage floor meaning the puppeteers generally have to crouch down over it, assuming the puppet is smaller than life-size.

featured the most extensive use of three-person puppets with visible manipulators of any production in their career and despite fulfilling the two predominant macro-signs of 'Bunraku-ness' in Britain – visible and multiple manipulators – was hardly labelled as such. Any reference to a specific puppet tradition, let alone 'Bunraku', was noticeably absent from the show's publicity. A few brash comparisons with Bunraku did surface from people connected with the production such as Finn Caldwell who labelled the show as 'like a westernised version of Bunraku (Japanese puppet theatre)' (Caldwell 2010:15), however, they were few and did not originate with Handspring. This shying away from labelling their work as 'Bunraku' reflects that both Jones and Kohler 'are loath to admit to any one authentic signature' (Sichel 2009: 168). 'I'm a hybrid puppeteer,' says Kohler. 'I have my Japanese stuff, I have my Central European stuff; some of the controls I use are German. And you know string puppets were what I grew up with. I basically use what intrigues me' (Kohler in Millar 2006: 27). Jones and Kohler are keen to point out the multiplicity of their influences, the 'atoms' from which they build their puppets. As much as they discuss their work in relation to 'Bunraku', the Bambara puppets of Mali (Kohler 2009: 53), Asian shadow puppetry (Sichel 2009: 168) and a whole host of other sources, they avoid defining their puppets within the remit of a particular tradition of cultural framing. Jones and Kohler present their puppets as those of Handspring Puppet Company – a brand-name replete with logo just like the Bunraku Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company. They will talk about the influence of Bunraku and German puppeteer Hansjurgen Fettig in the same sentence as Lacan, but they do not try to sell their puppets as Bunraku any more Lacanian. Handspring brings their particular understanding of puppetry and puppet-making (that they are the first to admit is only ever 'what's interesting us at the moment') to any project (Jones in Bidgood 2011).

### **Technologies & Techniques:**

To ascertain the 'Bunraku-ness' of Blind Summit's and Handspring's puppets it is necessary to look at the atom's from which they are built. This section offers analyses of both companies' three-person puppets using the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2 that looks at the dual signification of the macro and the micro-sign in contemporary puppetry.

### **The Macro and Micro-signs of Blind Summit Puppets:**

In recent years Blind Summit's practice has diversified away from the naturalistic, sculpted three-person puppets of *Low Life* (2005), *Madam Butterfly* (2005) and *Shunkin* (2008). However, this has not necessarily diminished or focussed their claims of performing 'Bunraku'. As discussed in chapter 1 the cardboard and stuffed cotton puppet of Moses from *The Table* (2011) has declaratorily self-identified as a 'Japanese Bunraku table-top puppet' and similarly the company labelled the three-person cat it made for *El Gato Con Botas* as 'Bunraku' (Blind Summit Theatre 2010) inevitably resulting in it being labelled 'a terrific human-size Bunraku puppet' by external commentators (Propst 2010). By contrast the almost identical cat Blind Summit made for Complicite's *Master and Margarita* (2011) was not framed as 'Bunraku' and as a result no external commentators labelled it as such. For the sake of simplicity this section will focus on the three-person puppets of *Madam Butterfly* and Moses from *The Table*, with which this thesis began, both of which have been repeatedly characterised as 'Bunraku' as well as the puppets of *Low Life*, which are formally similar to the puppets from *Madam Butterfly* but were largely not framed or received as Bunraku certainly not until after the success of *Madam Butterfly*. Given Blind Summit's endless recasting of their puppets, it is difficult to talk about certain puppets exclusively in relationship to particular productions and where appropriate the puppets' other roles will be acknowledged.

#### **i) Overview:**

There is a division between the form and technologies of Moses and the puppets of *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* that makes their claimed shared 'Bunraku-ness' seem rather confused. Moses is a c.600mm tall puppet with a stuffed fabric body, an angular, geometric corrugated cardboard head, sculpted hands cast in polyurethane resin, and almost no internal or external technologies. His facial aesthetic is deliberately constructed and abstracted, almost cheap-looking, and was developed for the agitprop inspired *1984* which was entirely made of cardboard. His stuffed body comes from Blind Summit's workshop puppets that they use for teaching and training puppeteers. These, according to Nick Barnes 'owe their existence to [American puppeteer] Dan Hurlin who lent us a similar set to work with when we led a workshop for students at Sarah Lawrence College, New York' (Barnes 2013e). The three-person puppets of *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* are generally between c. 600-1000mm except for the plumber Bud in *Low Life* who was much smaller c.300mm and a recasting from the scratch performance *Martin's Wedding* (2004). They all feature carefully modelled heads and hands

cast in fibreglass or polyurethane resin or modelled directly in miliput, a two part resin compound primarily used by plumbers for filling cracks in pipes. As with Moses they are full-bodied puppets, meaning that their entire form is described with fully modelled limbs, torso, neck and head usually with an internal skeleton. Only Bud, the smallest puppet, features rod controls on his hands and legs and does not have a fully described body, his bulk primarily being made up by his costume. This is due to the relative size of Bud meaning that his internal skeleton with clothes on top adequately describes his form. In contrast to Moses, aesthetically, all the three-person puppets in *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* are more naturalistic with carefully modelled facial features that can even be semi photo-realistic, as in the case of Kevin from *Low Life* who is a representation of Hollywood actor Kevin Spacey.

So what is the macro-signification of the technologies and techniques of these puppets? This is a difficult question to answer, as it is largely dependent on the framing of the puppet. All of these puppets embody the two macro-signs of the mythologised 'Bunraku' outlined in chapter 5: visible and multiple manipulators; and more specifically they all use three manipulators that is of course the specific number of manipulators predominately used in ningyo joruri. Moreover in *Madam Butterfly* the puppeteers all wear full blacks, including head coverings, clearly meant to reflect the black clothes sometimes worn in ningyo joruri. However, the *Madam Butterfly* costumes are more thinly veiled allowing the puppeteers' faces to be seen. In *Low Life* and *The Table* all the manipulators have their heads and hands uncovered and wear dark if not black casual clothing. From this it could be construed that these are 'Bunraku' puppets but only if we accept and adopt the highly essentialised idea of 'Bunraku' that its mythologisation in the twentieth century created. There are clearly other ideas at play in the macro-signification of these productions.

Firstly the manipulators often speak for the puppets. This is a broadly held concept in puppet theatre found across the world but of course not in ningyo joruri with its strict splitting of the puppet's form and voice. At times the puppeteers will speak to the puppet whilst simultaneously manipulating part of the puppet's form. So in *Low Life* the puppeteer controlling Kevin's right arm asks nonchalantly 'Alright Kevin?' to which Kevin replies 'Yeah I'm alright. Yeah. You alright?' and so on. The puppeteer fulfilling the dual role of manipulator and character separate to the puppet is also completely foreign to ningyo joruri.

The puppets are performed without anything approximating the elaborate stage setting of ningyo joruri and without the exclusive use of playboards. In *Madam Butterfly* Sorrow is performed directly onto the stage floor so that he inhabits the same space as the human actors around him. In *Low Life* the puppets are performed on, behind and in front of the main



piece of set 'the bar'. At times this does, in effect, act as a sort of playboard. However, it never serves as the ground of the piece. It is seen as the bar of the establishment in which the play is set. The puppets always exist within the same space as the puppeteer-actors. So when Bud is released from his tool box, from where he first enters, he discovers that he is standing on a stool that is one and half times his own height and so slightly diminishes his enthusiasm to 'just get the old whatchamacalled out the van' a situation that is only resolved through an elaborate Hollywood-style action sequence involving Bud jumping and swinging between bits of furniture accompanied by American nu-metal band Limp Bizkit's version of the *Mission Impossible Theme*. Throughout this sequence many different elements of the scenery become playboards, in the sense that they provide a frame for Bud's performance, but at the same time they are still part of the room of the bar in which Bud is having a drink. Dramaturgically the discrepancy between Bud's size and his environment is simply explained by him being a puppet. Even Moses in *The Table*, who is very much bound to his table and which forms a pseudo-playboard and a frame for his performance, is part of the larger space of the theatre. Moses talks to the audience and is fully aware that there is space outside and underneath his table, which he knows is just a table, and he gets very upset when a woman sits down at his table to read. These are all puppets that exist within a broader theatrical staging than those of ningyo joruri that are constrained by a very set theatrical space. This taps into the structural changes that took place in European puppetry in the middle of the twentieth century that revealed the puppeteer and took the puppet out of the constraints of the puppet booth and playboard (see chapter 5). This open use of the stage space reflects the influence of Philippe Genty, Handspring Puppet Company and European theatre more broadly on Blind Summit's practice as much as ningyo joruri. As such limiting the macro-sign of the performance to 'Bunraku' seems reductive.

## **ii) The Head, Neck and Head Control:**

As mentioned above the heads of these puppets are split between the carefully sculpted heads of *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* and the angular cardboard form of Moses in *The Table*. In *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* Barnes created all the head following the same basic process:

The first part of the puppet to be sculpted is the head, which I sculpt in either plastaline or clay. From this original, I make a mould, using silicone rubber encased in a fibreglass or jesmonite shell. The shell provides the silicone with support when the

original is removed. I clean up the mould and then make a resin and fibreglass cast (Barnes 2013c)

This is a fairly standard modelling and casting process used by many fine artists, prop builders and other professionals but is vastly different process from the painstakingly slow carving and coating of ningyo joruri puppet heads. However, ultimately they both produce a head form that in essence is not dissimilar, as do many other making methods and as such there is nothing especially 'Bunraku' about the forming of Barnes' heads. However, in some of the puppets, such as Kevin in *Low Life* Barnes deliberately made the head small in proportion to the body, in a similar manner to the puppet's of the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. However, when I ask about the link Barnes immediately rebuts the link:

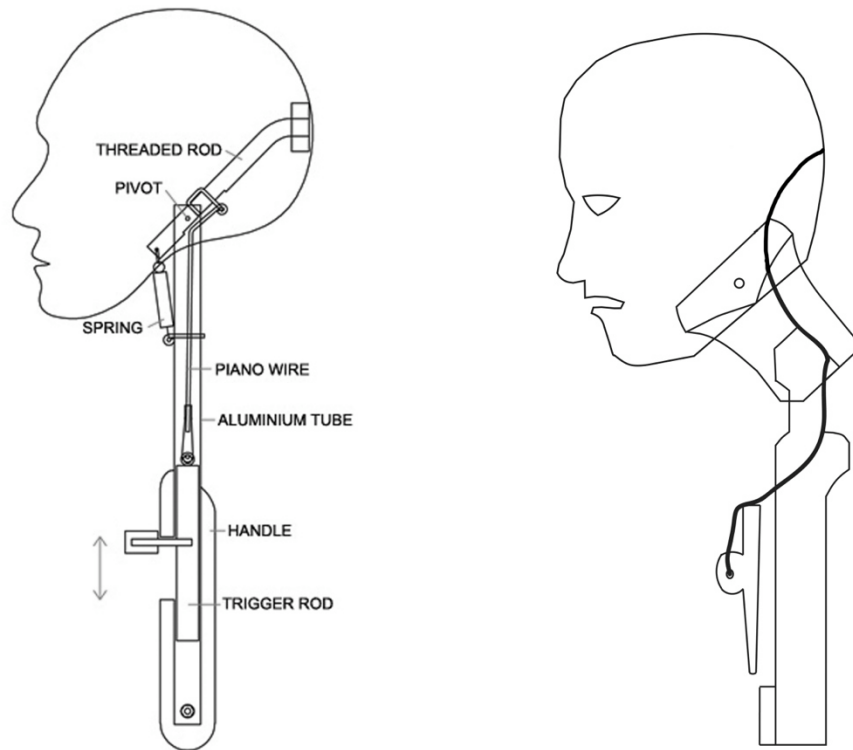
'Well that was a Genty note or tip and it sort of varies now I certainly don't follow it rigidly. In fact now I probably tend to aim more proportionally accurate. But I don't think it harms for the head to be smaller it can lend a certain intensity to it (Barnes 2011).

There is a danger that part of the perceived 'Bunraku-ness' of some of Barnes' early puppets is their perceived 'Japanese' physiognomy. As discussed this is a highly suspect assumption given that until *Shunkin* in 2009 the only Asian characters Barnes had made were Chinese.

Moses' head, by contrast, is made by simply hot-gluing together corrugated cardboard shapes. Obviously there is a high level of skill involved in designing the geometric shapes that are then carefully assembled to form Moses' highly expressive face. Unlike many of Blind Summit's puppet's Moses does not have a neck and his head is greatly oversized for his body. As such aesthetically and formally there is no obvious link with ningyo joruri.

But what about the micro-signs of the head, neck and head controls – the technologies hidden inside. It is here that we perhaps find the most direct influence of ningyo joruri. In puppets such as the Cleaner and Bud in *Low Life* Barnes makes use of what he calls his 'tilting head mechanism' that he directly claims is 'based on the bunraku puppet head mechanism' (Barnes 2013c). Barnes' head control is made of vastly different materials but fulfils the same basic function as the ningyo joruri head control. On the front side of the handgrip is a single trigger that when pulled down causes the head to rock back. This Barnes achieves by mounting the fibreglass head on a metal rod that pivots where it meet the metal tube that forms the basis of the puppet's neck and through which runs a length of piano wire that connects the trigger with the metal rod. The head is permanently attached to the control and the whole unit mounts into the body with the handgrip located in the puppet's chest and accessed from a slit in the

puppet's clothing behind. This again is reminiscent of ningyo joruri. However, there are many differences, not least the angle of the head in relation to the head control and more importantly Barnes' control is clearly a devised approximation of the ningyo joruri head control rather than an attempt to replicate it. As such, it also contains large amounts of Barnes' own ingenuity and creativity. It is clearly inspired by ningyo joruri but to limit its framing to 'Bunraku' alone starts to deny Barnes' own creative input.



**Figure 48 - Nick Barnes head control (left) and ningyo joruri head with draw-peg system (right)<sup>70</sup>**

However, when we look at Sorrow from *Madam Butterfly* and Moses from *The Table* it fast becomes clear that the macro-sign of visible and multiple manipulators is obscuring the micro-signification of the puppet's atoms. Sorrow has no such head control but rather his head is jointed to his neck and then body via a length of webbing. His head is then controlled by a small handle that sticks out the back of his head. This same handle is also found on the backs of the heads of the Cleaner and Kevin in *Low Life* who also have the 'tilting head mechanism'.<sup>71</sup> This control is taken directly from Philippe Genty's marionnettes portées (see Genty 2013:276). Genty's puppets rarely make use of a head control located in the body of the

<sup>70</sup> Left image – source Blind Summit <http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/head.html#> (accessed 25.06.2014)

<sup>71</sup> The control at the back of Kevin's heads was removed in later version of *Low Life*.

puppet – the oversized puppets of *La Fin des Terres* (2005) being the obvious exceptions – and instead opt for very direct manipulation without rods or other controls. Similarly Moses' head control is a simple wooden handle attached to a short length of angled aluminium that then attaches to a length of webbing attached to the puppet's body. This is an incredibly simple control that Barnes developed himself and that has no technological parity with ningyo joruri. Both this control and the marionnette portée head control of Genty are designed around a different relationship between the head puppeteer and the puppet than is found in ningyo joruri. These controls work best when the puppet is diagonally below the head puppeteer rather than diagonally above, as is the case in ningyo joruri and Barnes' head control on Moses is specifically angled for this configuration.

### iii) The Torso:

The bodies of Barnes' puppets tend to be fully described. In Moses this means a simple stuffed cotton form that is akin to a child's stuffed toy. In the puppets of *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* the bodies are made of sculpted foam mounted onto an MDF frame. If the body is to be fully covered by clothing, such as Kevin in *Low Life*, a soft foam rubber is used and then covered in stockingette, a loose weaved fabric designed to act as a barrier between the foam and the clothes to allow the clothes to move more freely. If the body is going to be visible, as in Sorrow in *Madam Butterfly*, then the form is covered in a more solid foam, such as Styrofoam, which is then covered in fibreglass and sanded smooth (Barnes 2013a). Obviously this is a completely different approach to ningyo joruri where the puppet's body is primarily described by the bulk of its clothing. This was a decision that was instinctive for Barnes. When I ask him why he opted for full-bodied puppets he says 'I suppose I never considered that you wouldn't' although he does also talk about the 'lovely body shapes underneath his [Genty's] puppets (Barnes 2011) and they were clearly a strong inspiration. Of course once a puppet's body is hidden beneath clothing these construction methods are difficult to distinguish. However, they do have a performative impact. As the puppets of ningyo joruri have almost no bodily form they need to be constantly animated and if dropped they crumple and the illusion of the body is gone. With the full-bodied puppets of *Blind Summit* they will maintain their form even if abandoned momentarily or dropped. As Barnes says:

'I was very keen to make something that looked complete. That without the people would crumple in a natural way but equally you can hold it up as one person and it stands there and looks like what it is' (Barnes 2011).

This again is a very alien idea to ningyo joruri and is born out of European theatre practice and perhaps the realisation that it is not always possible to hire enough puppeteers to fully control all the puppets at the same time.

#### **iv) Shoulders, Arms and Hands:**

Like his puppets bodies Barnes' puppet's arms are similarly fully defined. Unlike ningyo joruri where only the sections of the arms that protrude from underneath the puppet's kimono are formed, the rest being string, Barnes shapes the entire arm and hand. For Moses this just means more stuffed cotton for the arms. However, the arms of Kevin and the Cleaner are more complicated. The internal skeleton of these arms is made from aluminium set into MDF. The MDF gives shape to the line of the front and back of the arm while the aluminium provides strength for the pivot joint at the elbow and tensile strength across the length of the arm. The shape of the MDF also serves to limit the joints so that they cannot hyperextend unnaturally. The wrist and shoulder joints are done with webbing attached to the aluminium skeleton of the arm that goes into the hand and shoulders respectively. The hands are modelled like the head although often in Supersculpy, a polymer based modelling clay that can be hardened in a domestic oven, rather than clay. The Supersculpy is formed around a wire armature to stop the fingers breaking as they are modelled. A mould is made in the same fashion as for the head and the hand is usually cast solid in polyurethane resin. All these puppets, including Moses, have polyurethane hands.

Sorrow from *Madam Butterfly* and Mildred from *Low Life* are similar to this except that all their joints are webbing, meaning that they need very careful manipulation, as the joints are less limited. The puppet's shoulders are primarily defined by the form of the body but underneath the foam there is an L-shaped piece of aluminium that runs across the body from shoulder to shoulder and the webbing of the arms is attached this. Only the smallest of Barnes' puppets, such as Bud in *Low Life*, have rod controls on their hands. These are purely there to stop the puppeteers' far larger hands from obscuring the puppet. With the larger figures the puppet's hands are held directly by the puppeteers. This again shows the influence of Genty's marionnette portée that almost never have rod controls as well as the fact that Barnes 'just doesn't like them' (Down & Olié 2005). Generally the micro-signs of the arms of Blind Summit's puppets betray no obvious connection to ningyo joruri. Barnes has clearly not taken an great interest in the many hand controls use in ningyo joruri preferring the more direct control of

Genty's puppets and inserting a lot of his own ideas in the jointing and structure of the puppets.

#### **v) Hips, Legs and Feet:**

Again underneath all the clothing the macro-sign of Barnes' puppet's could be 'Bunraku' but as with the other parts of the body the micro-sign says something different. Moses once again is simply stuffed cotton with some rather lovely little shoes on his feet. The legs of the puppets from *Low Life* and *Madam Butterfly* share a similar basic construction with the arms. On Kevin and the Cleaner the feet are attached to the leg with a pivot joint at the ankle. On Sorrow and Mildred the ankle joint is webbing. On all these puppets the hip joint is also webbing connecting to the aluminium at the top of the legs. The hips themselves hang down from the main body on two straps of webbing. As with the arms the macro-signification of the legs could be seen to be pointing towards ningyo joruri, however, the technologies underneath, the micro-signs show the influence of Genty but also in particular Barnes' own creativity. The inclusion of ankle joints is also very alien to ningyo joruri and means that even on the broader macro-level these puppets appear to be other than 'Bunraku'.

### **The Macro and Micro-signs of Handspring Puppet Company's Puppets**

As stated earlier the puppets of *Or You Could Kiss Me*, one of which was then recast in *I Love You When You Are Breathing* have been described as 'a westernised version of Bunraku (Japanese puppet theatre)' (Caldwell 2010:15). In order to ascertain the validity of this statement and others like it we must identify and analyse the multiple 'atoms' the puppets from the show. During November 2010, whilst Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones were performing in *Or You Could Kiss Me*, I was fortunate enough to be able to interview them for the Puppet Centre Trust and go backstage to look at, talk about and play with the puppets in the show. As a puppeteer and puppet maker this was a fascinating experience and the following is a description and analysis based upon that experience. Adrian Kohler made five puppets for *Or You Could Kiss Me*: two young men (Young A and Young B – who later became the star of *I Love You When You Are Breathing*), two old men (Old A and Old B) and a dog. Of these I most closely examined the Young A puppet and it is on him that I will focus.

### **i) Overview:**

As with Blind Summit's puppets the three-person puppets of *Or You Could Kiss Me* embody the macro-signs of visible and multiple puppeteers. However, within the show anything from one to five puppeteers could be working a puppet at any one time. Visual and multiple puppeteers in this context are very much generic theatrical tools rather than an attempt to replicate the techniques of ningyo joruri. As discussed in chapter 5 these ideas have broader origins than ningyo joruri alone. There were other ideas such as spoken narration and accordion music that could be seen as reflecting the role of the narrator and shamisen in ningyo joruri just as the narrator and shamisen player perform alongside the puppets of ningyo joruri. But alongside these similarities are other ideas that clearly have no root in ningyo joruri – the talking puppeteer, the direct manipulation of the puppet's head by the puppeteer's hand, the constant swapping of puppeteers and even the deliberate screening of the puppet by its manipulators. As well as ningyo joruri we are also seeing the influence of the show's director Neil Bartlett who Kohler says 'wasn't bound by any of the conventions that we are all steeped in and so he felt completely free to give the manipulators a voice and an opinion on the action' (Jones & Kohler 2010a), as well as Jones, Kohler and the other performers in the show.

As with Blind Summit's puppets Handspring's puppets in *Or You Could Kiss Me* and again in *I Love You When You Are Breathing* exist in the same theatrical space as their manipulators and the puppets often recognise and interact with their manipulators. Like *The Table* Handspring's *I Love You When You Are Breathing* involves a single puppet talking to the audience but given the near life size scale of the Young Mr B puppet he does this at floor level rather than on a table. Similarly in *Or You Could Kiss Me* most action takes place at floor level with the puppets' human co-stars both serving as other characters and their manipulators. However, there are two sequences where the puppets leave the stage surface. First during a swimming scene where the stage space becomes the water of the ocean and the puppets swim, floating high above the stage floor. There is a dramaturgical motive for this decision as it beautifully creates the feel of swimming and allows the puppets and puppeteers to move more freely. The second time is during a squash match. Here the decision to elevate the puppets is purely to allow them to move more freely and frenetically. Whilst this could be construed as approximating the puppets of ningyo joruri who are constantly performing a metre in the air both these sequences seem to be as much born out of dramatic necessity as any direct formal nod to ningyo joruri and given the general differences in stage space it does not seem a serious connection.

Examining the puppets of *Or You Could Kiss Me* it soon becomes clear that they contain a wide range of technologies and that only a few of these 'atoms' have any precedent in the three-person puppets of ningyo joruri. The four human puppets in *Or You Could Kiss Me* are an

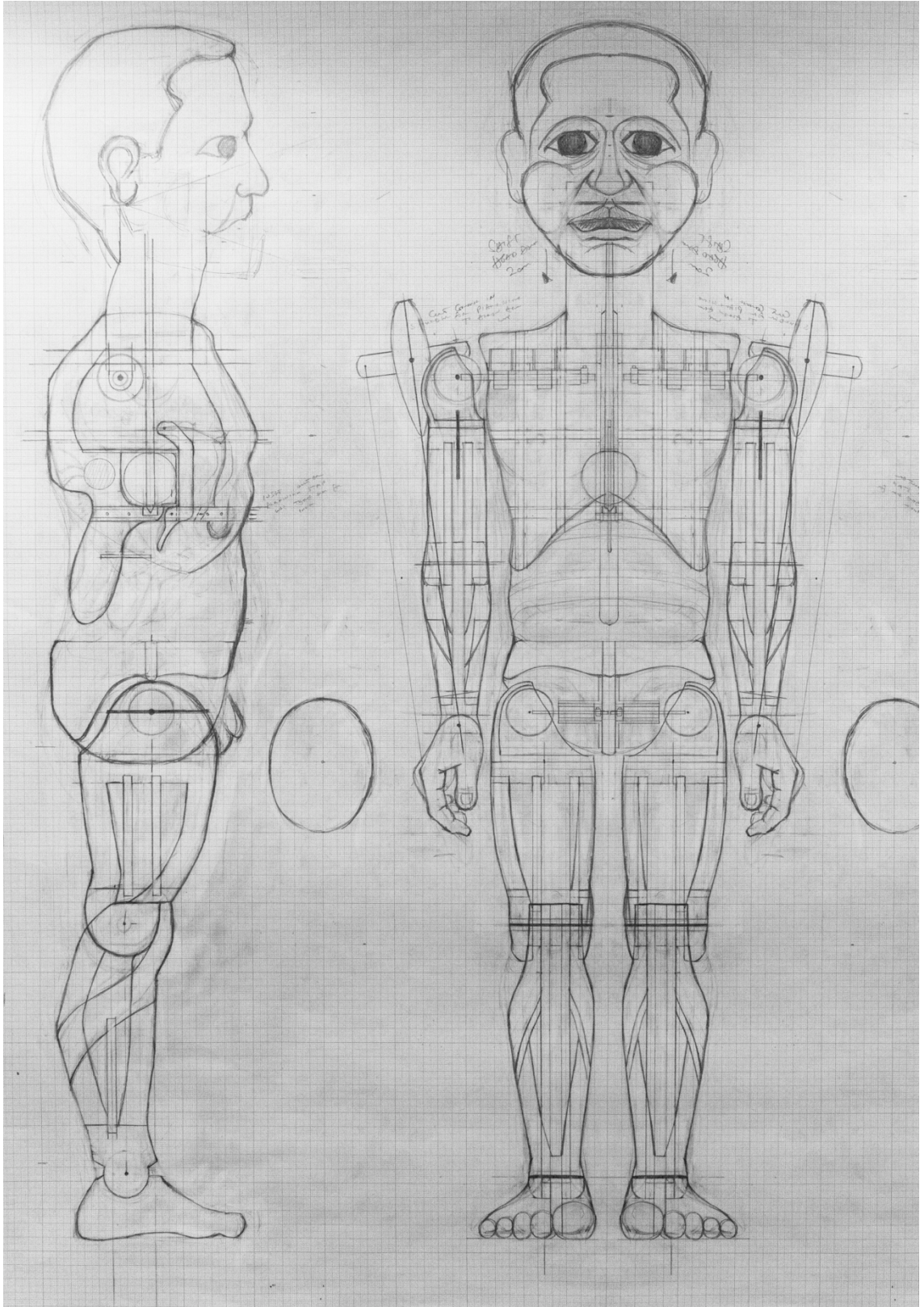


Figure 49 - Drawing of puppet by author based on the puppets of *Or You Could Kiss Me*



interesting mixture of naturalism and artifice as the naturalistic contours of the body are broken up by the constructed nature of the limbs. Kohler says he deliberately 'revealed the structure of the puppet whilst suggesting the skin surface with strategically placed carved outer surfaces of the body' in part to 'celebrate' the puppets joints (Kohler 2010). The puppets are proportionally correct, an unusual design concept in much western puppetry (Kohler 2010), and one very alien to ningyo joruri, giving them a certain naturalism alongside Kohler's predominately constructed aesthetic apparently influenced by canoes Kohler's father made (Sichel 2009:163). Kohler suggests that primarily the naturalism they were aiming for lies more 'in the performance quality than the way it looks' (Kohler in Bidgood 2011)

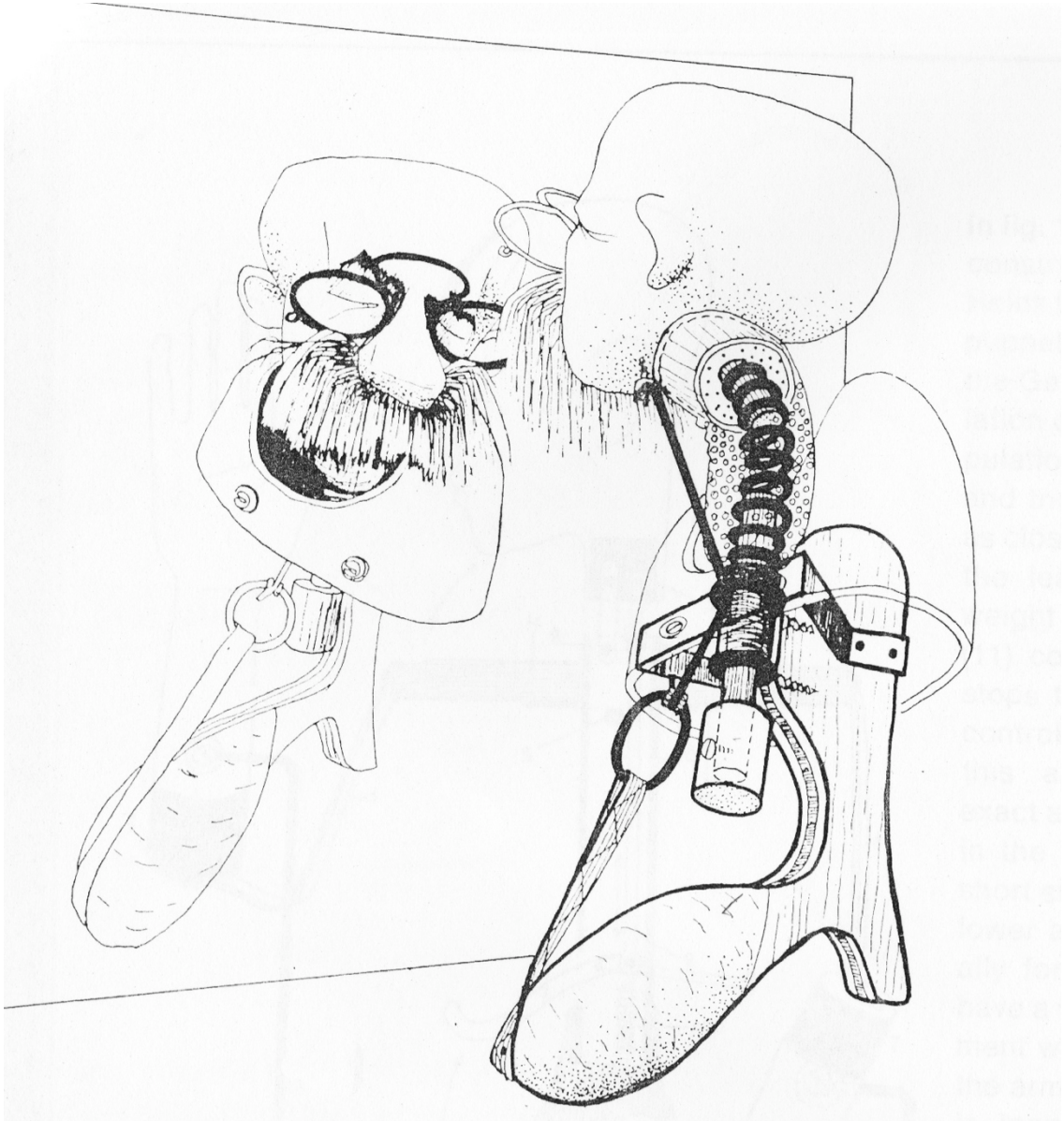
The predominant material in all the puppets is plywood. Kohler makes the limbs and torso with layered contours of plywood connected by short lengths of dowel. The plywood frame creates the puppet's constructed feel, reminiscent of a model aeroplane. Select areas of the limbs, the hands, the feet and the head are carved in greater detail out of jelutong, a light hardwood found across parts of Southeast Asia, commonly used in puppet making and the wood that Adrian Kohler tells me he uses in for his puppets' heads and hands. On the arms Kohler has built up certain sections using papier mache (6 toilet rolls, liquidized to form a pulp, one bag wallpaper paste and some PVA). All joints are padded with thin strips of plastezote to dampen the noise of wood hitting wood.

## **ii) The Head, Neck and Head Control:**

Mr A's head and neck are carved from jelutong. They were both carved as solid blocks and then split in half, hollowed out and then glued back together. The line of the split is clearly visible across the puppets face. This is a similar carving practice to ningyo joruri but the aesthetic is vastly different. The roughly carved wood is left plain except for the hair and eyebrows, which are lightly painted. The eyes are black, faceted plastic beads, designed to catch the light and give the eyes life and depth. The head can turn from side to side and look up and down, pivoting just below the ear on a length of piano wire, with a spring acting as a return. The neck is mounted on an aluminium rod that runs down through the body to a control at the base of the puppet's torso.

The control inside the torso is based upon the rod puppet controls found in Hansjürgen Fettig's 1973 book *Glove and Rod Puppets*. When I ask Kohler about Fettig his eyes light up and he earnestly tells me to go find the book in a library and photocopy the whole thing (the book is out of print, rare and much sought after by puppeteers across the world, second hand copies

can sell online for between \$150-\$350). Kohler's passion for Fettig's designs is clear and when, later, I manage to track down a copy of the book Fettig's influence is clearly seen. The control in Young A is rod puppet control with a pistol grip handle that, bar a few alterations, replicates a Fettig design almost exactly. An aluminium rod runs from the base of the torso through the grip and up through the torso to the neck. The base of the rod rests in a Teflon cup allowing it to move freely.



**Figure 50 - Pistol grip control by Hansjürgen Fettig<sup>72</sup>**

At the height of the grip the rod runs through a wooden ball which the puppeteer can grip between thumb and forefinger and use to rotate the rod and head. Next to ball is a metal ring,

---

<sup>72</sup> Source Fettig 1973: 45

attached to thick, waxed thread. The thread runs up through the torso through a small metal tube in the back of the neck and is attached to the back of the head. So, when the metal ring is pulled the head tilts backwards. The metal ring is held in place by a rubber band attached to the torso. When I visit Kohler he is busy replacing this rubber band in the Young A puppet, they apparently break frequently. The middle finger is used to control the head tilt. This means the grip must be held between the palm of the hand and the ring and small fingers with some extra support from the crook between thumb and forefinger. A lot of stress is exerted on these areas as the puppet is heavy but it is possible to make the movement of the head fluid and expressive.

As described above the head/neck control is an adaptation of a rod puppet control designed by German puppet master Hansjürgen Fettig and bears no relation to the free moving ningyo joruri head/neck control. This 'pistolgrip' control is rigidly attached to the torso, allowing the puppeteer to maintain control even when the puppet's body is parallel to the floor. A similar action with a ningyo joruri puppet would cause the puppet's torso to slump, lifeless towards the floor. The macro-signification of this control could well be interpreted by an audience as 'Bunraku-style' as the puppeteer inserts his/her hand into the rear of puppet's torso to control the head through a mechanism hidden within the torso. But the 'atoms' of this mechanism clearly signify the influence of German rod puppet design with some of Kohler's own adaptations. Again the macro-sign cannot be trusted without examining the micro-signs.

### **iii) The Torso:**

Young A's torso has an internal plywood frame, like the puppet of Tadashi in *The Chimp Project* (see Kohler 2009b: 100). This includes a shoulder board providing a secure surface to attach the arms to. The rest of the form, which is solid and closed, is made by gluing Styrofoam into the gaps between the plywood and then shaping it to follow the contours of the body. The Styrofoam is then covered in layers of brown paper and painted. The torso is hollow with a large opening at the base of the spine to allow access to the control mechanism inside. The fully described form of Kohler's puppet again is not inspired by ningyo joruri. It seems to draw on a combination of the solid, fully articulated John Wright style marionette bodies that Kohler started his puppet making career with (Kohler 2009b: 46-47), the open constructed forms of Kohler's animal puppets, 'inspired by the shape of canoes built by Kohler's father' (Sichel 2009:163) and the loose carving style that Kohler developed under the influence of William Kentridge (Kohler 2009b: 72). By contrast, as discussed earlier, the ningyo joruri puppet almost

entirely lacks a body. Again the macro-sign of both puppets could lead to simplistic comparisons but when the 'atoms' of each are revealed the micro-signification points to very different places.

#### **iv) Shoulders, Arms and Hands:**

The shoulders use a kind of ball and socket joint. Thick piano wire, running through a teflon rod, comes out of the side of the torso at shoulder height and into a wooden ball. The ball is free to rotate on the piano wire allowing the arm to swing forwards and backwards. The arm is mounted onto the ball by means of a carved jelutong upper arm section that pivots around the ball on a piece of piano wire perpendicular to that coming out of the torso. This allows for the arm to swing out to the side.

A third of the way down the upper arm is a swivel joint that allows the entire arm below this joint to swivel away from the body. Where the two parts of the upper arm meet are two flat plates of plywood. A short length of thick piano wire encased in Teflon runs through both bits of plywood to create a central pivot. Each end of the piano wire is locked off using a small brass clamp from an electrician's terminal block. This allows for the joint to be adjusted or taken apart if necessary. A large felt washer sits between the two plywood plates to minimise the sound the joint makes as it rotates. The swivel of the arm is heavily limited using rubber bands. Kohler tells me this joint is a new innovation added to allow for greater fluidity during scenes in *Or You Could Kiss Me* where the puppets swim and play squash. This sort of intricate jointing is not necessary in ningyo joruri as the upper arm is only string and therefore has unlimited movement potential. However, such freedom is also limiting as it makes movements such as swimming harder to achieve with a sense of naturalism.

We can also see more contemporary sources of influence in Kohler's design that in no way signify ningyo joruri. Kohler's use of the brass clamps of electrician's terminal blocks as limiters was suggested by the National Theatre workshops during *War Horse* as was the use of Teflon that, as Kohler explains, is used to create a lubricated sleeve for the wire pivots. This creates a beautifully fluid movement in all the pivots on the puppet. Even the vertical aluminium rod that controls the head and neck rests in a Teflon cup.

The forms of both the upper and lower arms are constructed from plywood sections connected with dowel and occasional bits of carved jelutong to give some indication of the surface of the skin. The elbow joint is a fairly standard pivot joint with piano wire encased in

Teflon used for the pivot. The lower arm contains a control for the tilt and rotation of the hand that is adapted from ningyo joruri arm controls. A rod extends out of the lower arm at angle sufficient to keep it away from the elbow joint. At the elbow end this broadens out into a handle where a flat piece of aluminium, goes through the rod, perpendicular to it, and pivots on a length of piano wire. Attached to either end of the aluminium is thick waxed thread, and these run one to either side of the hand. The hand is attached to the end of the rod with a hinge joint, the angle of which Kohler tells me is tricky to get right. The rod attaches to the arm through a snug hole in the wrist allowing it and the hand to rotate. Kohler says that the extra movement this control brings is largely unnecessary and hardly used but adds a level of fine detail to the puppetry, a sentiment that aligns with Handspring's professed interest in micromovement (Jones 2009: 256). The hands are again carved from jelutong and it is telling of the weight problems these puppets have created that even the delicate hands have been split in half and hollowed out.

The macro-sign of the arm, as seen in performance, seems to signify a technology derived from the left-arm control of the ningyo joruri puppet. Certainly their performance use is similar – a control that allows the puppeteer to manipulate the puppet's hand from the elbow and so avoid reaching over the puppet. The rocking control for the angle of the hand clearly derives from the left arm control of ningyo joruri (*shashigane*) and Kohler even refers to these controls as his 'Bunraku elbow controls' (Kohler 2009b: 62). However, if we break down this control into its 'atomic' micro-signs we can see influences other than ningyo joruri. Kohler's controls are set at a fixed angle to the forearm whereas the ningyo joruri left-arm control pivots where it meets the arm. Kohler's fixed controls allow for the arms to be dropped by the puppeteer and still hang naturally whereas the ningyo joruri left-arm control would hang awkwardly below the body. Kohler uses the same control for both arms whereas the ningyo joruri puppet's right-arm control is embedded in the elbow, the puppeteer's hand hidden by the puppet's thick kimono. As Kohler's puppets are nearly naked the longer rod is used to allow a separation between the puppeteer's hand and the puppet. The rotational movement of the hand/arm control is also Kohler's innovation. Such movement is unnecessary in the puppet's of ningyo joruri as the lower arm is connected to the body by a piece of chord allowing the whole lower arm and hand to be rotated as one. Kohler has also chosen to leave the thread that controls the hand exposed, heightening the constructed aesthetic [figure 1].

#### **v) Hips, Legs and Feet:**

The hips again have a basic frame of plywood. They are suspended below the torso on two thick bits of chord, one on each side of the body. The shape of the stomach is created by moulded bits of rattan cane connected by a section of gauze to each other and the torso and hips. The shape of the bottom is made from carved soft foam to prevent the back of the legs causing noise as they come into contact with it. The legs are suspended from the hips using a similar joint to the shoulders. A thick piece of piano wire extends out of the pelvis parallel to the floor. Each end of this goes into a piece of curved shaped wood that like the ball in the shoulders is free to rotate around the piano wire. The leg pivots on this bit of wood by means of another length of piano wire perpendicular to the first. So again we have a joint with double movement.

As with the upper arms there is a swivel joint a third of the way down the upper leg, which is made in the same way as the one in the upper arm. The knee and ankle joints are both hinge joints. The general aesthetic of the legs is the same as the arms: constructed using a plywood frame with small sections of carved jelutong to suggest the skin. At the back of the foot there is a curved aluminium grip for manipulating the feet and legs.

The leg control used in these puppets clearly derives from the ningyo joruri foot control. However, Kohler mounts the control on the puppet's foot, rather than calf, to allow for expressive movement needed in the show. Ningyo Joruri puppets do not have ankle joints and so the control can be successfully placed in the calf. So whilst on first inspection the foot control 'atom' appears to signify ningyo joruri alone, with more detailed analysis we can see that the 'atomic' structure is more complicated and involves a great deal of Kohler's own innovation.

#### **Focus, Breath and Fixed Point:**

The puppets of both Handspring and Blind Summit demonstrate a wide diversity of atoms in their technologies. Some of these clearly are derived from looking at ningyo joruri, most notably Nick Barnes' rocking head controls and Adrian Kohler's arm controls. However, in both cases these technologies have been altered to best suit the performance practice of the company using them. So Blind Summit extended the rocking control to form an extra grip on the back of the puppet's head so that it could also be performed as a marionnette portée. Similarly Handspring have adapted the left-arm control of ningyo joruri to allow the arm to

hang freely. On some level both these companies have actively sought to 'steal' some of the atoms of ningyo joruri through the observation of books and video. However, they have not sought to do this in the same way or for the same reasons as the ningyo joruri practitioners of Awaji, discussed in chapter 4. Neither company aims to perform ningyo joruri but looks to it for specific and limited technological and thematic inspiration. These atoms are then woven in with their own creativity and atoms from other sources such as the rod controls of Hansjürgen Fettig or the intricate aluminium skeleton that Nick Barnes devised. In the work of both these companies there is a huge amount of personal creative discovery in the creation of their puppets. This is reflected further in the techniques that they use with their puppets. Neither company learnt their manipulation technique through an apprenticeship or the study of a particular form but rather they have had to devise their performance practice from kinaesthetic experimentation. This was only articulated later in their careers when it became necessary to communicate these ideas to others as happened with *War Horse*:

'We had never formally conceptualised what these principles were, relying in our work as puppeteers, on instinct and the needs of the moment. Now we needed to teach how a puppet thinks, the importance of stillness, the uses of breath. We had to develop a method' (Kohler 2009: 140)

Interestingly though both companies have arrived at some very similar performance techniques. Whilst the puppets of these two companies are aesthetically and often technologically very different they do share certain ideas about the manipulation of puppets that extend beyond the use of multiple and visible manipulators. In *The Table* and *I Love You When You Are Breathing* Moses and Young Mr B, respectively, outline some of their key points of manipulation and these ideas have been further expanded upon by both companies in workshops and essays such as *Puppetry and Authorship* by Basil Jones (2009). In *The Table* Moses outlines Blind Summit's three points of puppetry: focus, breath and fixed point and these align very cohesively with Handspring's ideas of eyes and eyeline, breath, and stillness.

Focus/eyes and eyeline is a concept with two parts. First, it is essential that the puppet's focus i.e. what it is looking at is purposeful and controlled. Second, it is important for the puppeteer to focus on the puppet as Basil Jones says 'If you 'abandon' your puppet by making eye contact with the audience... you can't expect them to pay attention to your own puppet' (2009: 264). These have become 'golden rules' within much global puppetry. However, it is not such a set rule in ningyo joruri. Some head-puppeteers do stare fixedly at the back of their puppet's head but others stare detachedly out into space with the puppet's head only appearing in his/her peripheral vision. Either way it is important that the head-puppeteer's face is impassive: there

'must be a thick iron door that closes between the puppet and the puppeteer' (Yoshida Bungoro in Ueno-Herr 1995: 243-4). By contrast the act of looking intently at the puppet and often speaking for the puppet, as seen in Handspring and Blind Summit's work, is a visual act of energy transference from the puppeteer to the puppet and as such necessitates rather than denies the recognition of the anima of the puppeteer.

Breath for both Handspring and Blind Summit has a tripartite function. The first is to signify life in the puppet – if the puppet breathes, ever so subtly the puppet has agency, if it stops it dies. The second is to act as a signalling system to the audience: a definite and slightly extended in-breath before a movement highlights and frames it. The third is as a signalling and synchronising system between performers – by synchronising their breath the three puppeteers can easily maintain an equal tempo and a sudden change in breath from the lead puppeteer can signal a change as Basil Jones says 'make your breath audible to your fellow puppeteers' (Jones 2009: 264) These ideas have interesting but different parallels in ningyo joruri. The idea that the puppet needs to breathe to have life is not a clearly defined concept in ningyo joruri. From discussion with members of the Awaji Ningyo Joruri Theatre it seems that any breath displayed by the puppet is really a side effect of the puppet's close connection to the body of the main puppeteer rather than a key point of manipulation. In particular when the head puppeteer uses the bamboo cane support (*tsukiage*), hanging from the puppet's shoulder board, to take some of the puppet's weight a direct connection is formed between the puppeteer's diaphragm and the puppet but again this is not really an articulated idea of agency through breath. Breath is used for signalling in ningyo joruri but not amongst the puppeteers, who communicate physically – the foot puppeteer wedges his arm into the waist of the head-puppeteer – and visually with both the foot and left-arm puppeteers watching the movement of the puppet's head. Breath forms the basis of communication between the shamisen player and narrator. As Tsuruzawa Kanji VI, shamisen player in the Bunraku Theatre, said 'A tayu must narrate by making the best use of the shamisen player's breath, and the shamisen player plays the shamisen using the tayu's breath as a fulcrum' (Tsuruzawa Kanji VI in Ueno-Herr 1995: 41). This in turn signals to the head-puppeteer who partly times his/her movement in response to the breath of the narrator and shamisen. Handspring have explored a similar relationship with opera singers in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* (1998 & 2008) where they discovered that 'If the puppet breathed in at the same time as the singer, and then performed the next sung phrase as a slow breathing out, the energy and the impulses of the singer and the puppet could blend' (Kohler 2009: 99).

Fixed point is a term found in mime and dance and one that Blind Summit seem to have acquired from Philippe Genty (Genty 2009: 222). For Bind Summit this equates to the puppet's



need for to be rooted through gravity and to largely maintain a fixed point when standing rather than shuffling or sliding around and only move when a definite movement, such as a step, takes place. This is reflected in Handspring's practice in their concept of stillness, a slightly different take on this idea. They describe it more in terms of stillness allowing time for moments to "land' with the audience' (Jones 2009: 264) This focus on fixed point is very important when your puppet makes definite contact with a physical surface, a table in Blind Summit's case and the floor in Handspring's. There is a definite tactile physical connection that an audience understands and expects to be adhered to. The puppets of ningyo joruri, however, because they perform behind a playboard stand and walk on air. As a result a different approach is taken when walking or standing the puppet's legs are kept slightly apart with the knees bent so that it is almost bow-legged to suggest that the legs are taking the weight of the puppet's body. The weight of movement is also sometimes indicated through the feet puppeteer stamping his foot on the ground. Generally there is a lot more fluidity in the line of the 'floor' than a table allows. However, stillness is definitely used in ningyo joruri in particular in the concept of *ma* the 'pauses' that punctuates the overall flow of the kata, or overall shape, of the performance (Ueno-Herr 1995: 279-80). These moments of stillness provide points for the audience to register the puppets expression or pose before it carries on to the next bit of action.

These are only three of the many ways in which these puppets function and whilst they all vary they are all comparable takes on similar concepts. There is no real suggestion in either Handspring or Blind Summit's work that they have done any form of serious study of the manipulation techniques of ningyo joruri, let alone actual training. Nor did either Handspring or Blind Summit train or collaborate with the other. Further, both companies have only articulated these ideas in the past few years long after they were both established practitioners. The synchronicity of these ideas therefore is remarkable and further emphasises the possibility of similar ideas appearing in different and remote situations. This reinforces that similar performance tropes can appear in different situations and not necessarily be related as was seen with visible puppeteers in chapter 5. The large amounts of separate personal intuition and creative discovery in the practice of these companies further disrupts the idea of a homogeneous 'Bunraku-style'. Just as the singularity of the myth of Bunraku as the unique, ancient, classical puppet theatre of Japan disenfranchises other ningyo joruri troupes so the perpetuation of 'Bunraku-style' fails to recognise the wide range of atoms in these puppets that necessarily involves large amounts of the contemporary artists own creativity and innovation.

## Conclusion:

Given the multiplicity of influences in these puppets as seen in both their macro and micro-signification it seems futile to try and categorise them solely in relation to a very specific puppet art from Osaka. That is not to deny the influence of Bunraku, but to place it alongside the many other influences in these puppets, some of which have been discussed in this chapter. Whilst many puppeteers have used 'Bunraku' to legitimise their practice in response to the indifference of the theatrical establishment the unending continuation of this actually delegitimises their practice. Blind Summit's work is repeatedly framed in relation to 'Bunraku' because that is how they frame it themselves. Whereas Handspring, even though their puppetry may embody similar performance technologies and techniques, rarely get framed as 'Bunraku' and instead their work is seen as theirs. Rather than validate performer's work as a serious adult theatrical form, the 'bunraku' label instead highlights a certain insecurity and lack of belief in the artist's own work that s/he feels the need to, at least partially, frame it within the context of Bunraku rather than let it speak for itself.

Erica Fisher-Lichte suggests that 'Interweaving cultures in performance... result[s] in something completely new and beyond the scope of any single participating culture' (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 400). For Fisher-Lichte this is enacted in the moments of performance, which become 'sites of inbetweenness' where neither participant is dominant (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 401). This we see not only in the performance of Handspring and Blind Summit's puppets but also in the collision of technologies hidden inside these puppets. The puppet becomes a meeting ground for technologies and techniques from across the world and, as such, a site of intercultural exchange, embodying Fischer-Lichte's idea both physically, in the body of the puppet, and liminality, in performance. We have seen, through analysis of the macro-signs and micro-signs of the puppet's 'atoms', quite how reductive it is to frame these puppets as 'Bunraku', an assertion that both denies the 'tissue of quotations' from which the puppet is made and attempts to erroneously attribute its origins solely to the Osaka Bunraku Theatre.

Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo have proposed that intercultural theatre practice sits on a linear continuum between collaborative and imperialistic (Gilbert & Lo 2002: 38). At the collaborative extreme you have theatre that 'tends to emphasise the processes and politics of exchange rather than the theatrical product per se' at the imperialistic extreme work 'driven by a sense of Western culture as bankrupt and in need of invigoration from the non-West' (Gilbert & Lo 2002: 39). Handspring's use of technology and technique seems to sit happily equidistant from these two poles. They have looked outside of their immediate cultural sphere to find new inspiration from Britain, Japan, Germany, Eastern Europe and Mali but they have

remained respectful of these influences, constantly declaring them and never seeking to claim the authority of these traditions for themselves. Blind Summit, by contrast seem to veer more towards the imperialistic extreme that Gilbert and Lo describe with their casual appropriation of Bunraku. Whilst this is problematic it is clearly not malicious and as the company grows in stature the drive to need to label themselves as 'Bunraku' decreases as, like Handspring, the value of their own brand, Blind Summit Theatre, increases. As Basil Jones says, 'All artists steal. Who is to say whether it is stealing or borrowing? If all your energy goes into that, it's a waste of time' (Sichel 2009: 158). Whilst this lacks some of the refinement of Fischer-Lichte's arguments it points to the same truth that all artists are continually involved in intercultural interweaving.

Handspring are also aware that their puppets are not objects of 'gem-like beauty' but 'instruments' which ultimately find their meaning as part of the complex 'authorial process of a play... a multi-generational semiotic system with numerous authors, and including the authority of the audience' (Jones 2009: 260). No matter how carefully the 'decisive preconditions' of a performance are set unforeseen elements may emerge in the audiences reception (Fischer-Lichter 2009: 391). In the case of *Or You Could Kiss Me* this meant some critics insisting on labelling these puppets as 'Bunraku', despite Handspring's sensitive framing. In the case of Blind Summit it meant the external labelling of their puppets in *Madam Butterfly* that led to them buying into the power of the mythologised Bunraku.

This is frustrating considering the careful interweaving of many different 'atoms' within these puppets make them far more than just 'Bunraku'. Such interpretations miss the richness of these puppets. As Basil Jones says:

There's a sense in which three people working together kind of mirror a real human better than an ordinary actor on stage, in that we always have several trains of thought working together in our heads... it's kind of more like a real human being than a real human being. Or certainly it highlights aspects of that multiplicity that is us.  
(May 2010b)

Just as three people manipulating one puppet creates a more representative complex character so our engagement with the technologies and techniques of the puppet must allow for multiple agents of influence and a complex 'atomic' structure. In doing so we start to recognise that the puppet can be a site of positive and respectful cultural interweaving, dispelling brash comparisons with 'Bunraku', and becoming a complicated, intriguing character in its own right.

## Conclusions – Beyond Bunraku

The process of collating and revising this thesis has been revealing about my own thoughts in relation to ningyo joruri and the Bunraku Theatre. During the course of this research I have held various different understandings of 'Bunraku' and ideas on how we should relate to it. At the outset of my research, even though I was aware of the existence of other ningyo joruri troupes in Japan, I thought I was researching *bunraku* as an undifferentiated term for all ningyo joruri. I had already absorbed the highly essentialised and 'Bunraku-centric' vision of Japanese puppetry presented in the standard English-language texts such as Donald Keene's *Bunraku* (1965) and Barbara Adachi's *Backstage at Bunraku* (1985) and even though these texts hinted at other examples of ningyo joruri in Japan and different forms of Japanese puppetry my viewpoint was already decidedly Bunraku-centric. Even when I was well into the research and had a more developed understanding of Japanese puppetry, I was still writing *bunraku* or sometimes *Bunraku* rather than ningyo joruri for the art-form but ningyo joruri for individual troupes, so Awaji ningyo joruri performing *bunraku*. In hindsight it seems bizarre that I so readily adopted this clearly highly undifferentiated and essentialised term. However, this simply reflects the widespread nature of a mythologised and undifferentiated understanding of Bunraku in contemporary British puppet practice and in the English language literature.

Now at the end of this research it seems so apparent and important to argue not only for the specificity of the Bunraku Theatre and ningyo joruri but the specificity of the practice of contemporary theatre-makers across the world who have no desire to actually perform ningyo joruri and are using puppet forms that are distinctive, individual and rooted in their own creativity as much as any external influence. We have seen, in particular in the puppets of Handspring Puppet Company and Blind Summit Theatre how diverse the 'atoms' of contemporary puppets can be and how fundamentally different to ningyo joruri. This diversity has meant that it is almost impossible to define what 'Bunraku-style' means. As has been seen, even the broad macro-signs of Bunraku-ness adopted after 1968, the visible and multiple manipulator, have equivalent origins in other puppet theatre forms and their adoption in Europe was as much a result of a general modernist drive towards deconstructing and opening up of the puppet theatre as the influence of ningyo joruri and, especially in light of the influence of the 1958 Awaji Gennojo Theatre tour to the USSR, certainly not the result of the Bunraku Theatre alone. Despite this, references to 'Bunraku' have prevailed, largely due to what the mythologised Bunraku represented as a serious, adult puppet theatre rather than the specifics of its performance practice.

Following 1968 British theatre-makers primarily channel the 'aura' of the mythologised Bunraku rather than the technologies and techniques. This is despite the availability of sources on ningyo joruri through books and videos or even opportunities to travel to Japan, a journey that was easily achievable in the second half of the twentieth century with the advent of cheaper air travel, that would have allowed British practitioners to 'steal' the art. The fact that few practitioners sought to travel to Japan to study their puppet arts, John Blundall and Julie Taymor being notable exceptions, is indicative of the lack of interest that most contemporary theatre-makers have in the specificities of ningyo joruri. It seems then logical and necessary to propose that we seek to re-evaluate how we present our puppets in relation to ningyo joruri and perhaps time that we stopped the vague and inauthentic allusions to the Bunraku Theatre.

There is plenty of precedent for this. We no longer think of vertical short-rod puppets in terms of wayang golek nor do we think of shadow puppets in terms of 'Ombres Chinoise'. However, for many years both rod puppets and shadow puppets were variously described in terms of their perceived nation of origin as they still were in the UK in 1965 when Jan Bussell and Ann Hogarth were reported to be performing 'propagandist Gloves, Javanese rods, and Chinese shadows' (The Performances 1956: 15). 'Ombres Chinoise' the beloved term of the eighteenth, nineteenth and even early twentieth century has now fallen by the wayside. This is unsurprising as the shadows described in this manner were 'more closely related to the silhouette-portraits than to the exquisitely cut and coloured and mobile Chinese shadows' (Philpott 1969: 174) and 'thus are – if anything – more like Javanese than Chinese shadows' (Speaight 1955: 143). Further, there is now greater understanding of the many shadow puppet forms found across the world and recognition that labelling our contemporary shadow puppets thusly has more to do with the 'spirit of chinoiserie' (Speaight 1955: 143) than any real idea of descent from or replication of a theatrical form found exclusively in China.

Similarly with rod puppetry, where previously there was 'no specific designation for a rod-puppet, except the Javanese *Wayang Golek*' (Batchelder 1947: xiii). However, we now happily talk about rod puppets without recourse to particular nations or art forms that make use of rod puppets, thanks in part to Marjorie Batchelder's 1947 book *The Rod Puppet and the Human Theatre* that so carefully demonstrated that 'reference to rod-puppets are not only inexact, but they are scattered through a wide variety of sources' (Batchelder 1947: xiii) and that 'there are many ways of constructing rod-puppets' (Batchelder 1947: 204) hence necessitating a pluralistic term, rod-puppet, that could encompass them all.

Somehow, in the UK and many other countries we have yet to reach a similar situation with the puppets now referred to as 'Bunraku-style' despite the variation in technologies and

techniques that this term can be applied to. By contrast the situation is very different in Japan where, as in the West, contemporary Japanese puppetry makes use of visible and multiple puppeteers but without any reference to the Bunraku Theatre. During my visit to the Iida Puppet Festival in 2011, at least eight of the thirty-six shows presented by Japanese companies in the official programme (many more shows take place outside of the main festival programme) made use of visible puppeteers and/or multiple puppeteers. Muchu Puppet Theatre's *What's the Main Procession?*, for example, was the tale of an old man suffering from flashbacks of his experience during World War II and his struggle to deal with them. The play was solely aimed at adults and was text heavy but beautifully illustrated with a simple full-bodied multi-person puppet, a miniature representation of the principal puppeteer/performer, primarily performed on a table top as well as a few shadow puppets. The whole show was performed in thrust. The main performer/puppeteer was an integral part of the action and the focus shifted between his storytelling and the puppet's actions. Whilst this style of performance is not uncommon in Japan these shows are not seen as 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style'. None of the audience or company members I spoke to saw this work as linked to ningyo joruri or the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. When I made such comparisons I was repeatedly told that ningyo joruri and Bunraku are separate and different to their modern puppet relatives.

This is not to say that ningyo joruri has not had a conscious influence on any Japanese artists. Sawa Noriyuki consciously uses 'Bunraku' in his performance practice but primarily as a puppeteer who lives and performs in Europe. Sawa never trained with the Osaka Bunraku theatre or any other ningyo joruri troupe but his use of 'Bunraku' carries a certain cultural caché in Europe largely based upon his Japanese origins. For example British puppeteer Neneagh Watson, formerly of Doo Cot, made clear that working with Sawa, who she sees as 'a Bunraku-trained Japanese puppeteer now living in Prague' was important to 'the animation of the [ningyo joruri] puppet head in *Fold Your Own*', a show Doo Cot made in 2005, in order 'to conjure through our working process an 'authentic' way of being with an icon so loaded with tradition' (Watson 2009: 10). For Watson it is clear that Sawa's 'Japaneseness' somehow sanctioned both his and Watson's own use of a performance tool that she felt 'othered' from. However, within a Japanese context Sawa makes no reference to Bunraku or claim to be performing Bunraku instead making reference to his training in Czechoslovakia and his use of, what he calls, figure puppets (Sawa 2008).

The debate around the legitimacy of using 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' as descriptors for contemporary puppet practice is not new amongst puppeteers. In 1987 British puppeteer Tom Herbert expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation: 'I am not too happy with the term 'Bunraku style puppets' because I feel it is not only the method of operating the puppet that is

involved, but that the whole style of Japanese presentation is implied here, and so the term can be misleading' (Herbert 1987: 9) and the debate continues today. Informally there are also discussions amongst puppeteers on the topic. The online listserv Puptcrit has had several such discussions, most recently earlier this year again resulting in no clear consensus about what 'Bunraku-style' is, what else these puppets could/should be called but with a general recognition that the continued reference to 'Bunraku' is misleading although there are still some who assume that "'bunraku-style" is... the most widely used term for puppetry that is directly influenced by the Japanese form' (Bell 2014) although it was not specified which Japanese form.

In reality the debate has not really shifted since Tom Herbert decided he was not 'too happy with the term 'Bunraku style puppets'. This is testament to the power of the mythologised Bunraku that has maintained an undifferentiated idea of Bunraku as 'the traditional puppet theatre of Japan' (Japan Arts Council 2004) within theatre practice, theatre criticism and even within the bulk of the now considerable learned literature on Japan's performing arts. It is perhaps at this last group that my criticisms are most keenly aimed. The world of English-language Japanology and Japanese theatre studies has almost entirely failed to communicate the great diversity and wealth of Japanese puppet theatre to the world and has continually obfuscated the subject through the anachronistic use of Bunraku as the name of all ningyo joruri. For specialist subjects, including Japanese puppet theatre, academic and quasi-academic books are often the only source of information available and so gain readership from a non-academic audience. Donald Keene's 1965 book *Bunraku* became a standard text both for academics and puppeteers, hence its undifferentiated vision of Bunraku had a considerable impact. Therefore it is the academic literature that I suggest needs to revise itself first by focussing on the 'local and specific' (Griffiths 1994:168) and differentiating between the history and practice of the Bunraku Theatre and the nationwide Japanese performing art ningyo joruri. In time this will affect the broader culture.

As the example of Blind Summit shows, as long as 'Bunraku' remains a valuable, exoticised commodity, artists will continue to exploit it; given the frequently subaltern status of puppetry it is hard to blame them. However, as theatre-makers, if the most interesting fact about our work is its apparent 'Bunraku-style', then we should make better work. Deferral to framing our work in this manner demonstrates our insecurities not our strengths. Whether 'Bunraku-style' remains in use amongst professional puppeteers, for want of a better name, is almost irrelevant. Closed communities will always have their own shorthand terms that say more to them than to an outsider. What must change is reference to 'Bunraku' or 'Bunraku-style' as a way of publically defining contemporary artists' work. The multiplicity of signs at play in these

puppets clearly shows that they are only in part derived from, often vague, notions of ningyo joruri. Contemporary artists should have the confidence to talk about their work in terms of themselves – they are the creators, the weavers, and the authors. Authorship is still a political battle for puppeteers despite advances in the recognition of puppet theatre and it is not furthered by the artistic insecurity that leads people to hide behind the smokescreen of the mythologised, exoticised, Bunraku.



## Glossary

*aibiki / shirihiki* – a small stool the *tayū* sits on

*ashizukai* – the third puppeteer who controls the puppet's feet

*bachi* – ivory plectrum for shamisen playing

*butai geta* – wooden stage clogs

*dogushi* – headgrip of the *kashira*

*furi* – common place human movements that the dolls imitate

*futozao* – thick-necked shamisen used in bunraku (it is the bass of the shamisen family)

*geki* – play

*geza* – small area offstage for other musicians

*hara* – the inner centre of emotions and spirit in the puppet

*hidaritezukai* – the second puppeteer who controls the puppet's left arm

*hitorizukai* – the manipulation of one puppet by one person.

*jōruri* – a form of chanted narration, usually accompanied by music, performed in Japan from the early sixteenth century onwards.

*kama / nodogi* – the neck piece

*kashira* – the puppet's head

*kata* – poses struck to display the grace of the doll and the beauty of the kimono line or to portray a dramatic climax of action or mood. Also used for certain stylised movements.

*kendai* – lacquer reading stand for narrator's script

*komaku / yokomaku* – curtain either side of the stage through which the puppeteers enter

*kurogo* – the black clothing the puppeteers wear / the puppeteers when dressed in said clothing.

*kuruma ningyō* – a puppet form derived from *ningyō jōruri* in which a puppet is controlled by a single puppeteer sitting on a rolling box

*ningyō* – dolls/puppets.

*ningyō jōruri* – A theatrical form that combines large puppets with *jōruri* and *shamisen*.

*ningyōshi* – puppet maker

*omozukai* – the principal puppeteer who controls the puppet's head.

*rendai* – a portable props table used on stage during a *ningyō jōruri* performance.

*sanninzukai* – the manipulation of one puppet by three puppeteers.

*shamisen* – a three stringed plucked instrument used to accompany *jōruri*.

*sashigane* – the control rod and mechanism for the puppets left arm/hand

*tayū* – a chanter who performs *jōruri*.

*tsume* – simple one-man puppets used to represent minor characters in *ningyō jōruri*.

*unazuki* – the nodding head mechanism

*yuka* – auxiliary stage, sometimes with revolving circular dais, for narrators and *shamisen* players

*za* – theatre

*zōri* – plain straw sandals

*zokin* – the puppeteer's black hood

## Bibliography

- ABBOT, C., 2005. Animating the Dream. *Puppet Notebook*, (4).
- ABBOT, C. and BELL, J., 1996. Puppetry on the Internet. *Animations*, 19(3), pp. 19.
- ABRAMS, S., 2014. The Name Bunraku. *Puptcrit* 112 (25).
- ADACHI, B., 1992. Shifting Triangles: The interplay of the Three Elements of Bunraku. in M. WASZKIEL (ed), *Present Trends in Research of the World Puppetry*, Unima Poland, pp. 42-52.
- ADACHI, B., 1985. *Backstage at Bunraku: a behind-the-scenes look at Japan's traditional puppet theatre*. New York: Weatherhill.
- ADACHI, B., 1978. *The Voices and Hands of Bunraku*. Mobil Sekiyu Kabushiki Kaisha.
- AINSLIE, SARAH., WARREN-FISHER, RUSSELL., COMPLICITE (THEATRE COMPANY), 2010. *Complicite: rehearsal notes – a visual essay of the unique working methods of the company*. London: Complicite.
- ALEXANDER, C., 2001. *Complicite: Teacher's notes - Devising*. Complicite.
- AMARAL, L., 1957. Japanese Puppets. *The Puppet Master*. 5(4), pp. 13-17.
- ANDO, T., 1970. *Bunraku: The Puppet Theater*. New York: Walker / Weatherhill.
- ANDO, T. and DUNN, C., 1967. *Nihon no Dentō #3: Bunraku*. Tokyo: Tankosha.
- ANIMAL PRACTICE, 2012, [TV Programme] Universal Television and American Work, NBC, 10 October 2012.
- ANIMATIONS 1995. Barry Smith's Puppets. *Animations*, Feb/March, pp. 17.
- ANIMATIONS, 1994. Theatre Sans Fil Workshop. *Animations*, 17(2), pp. 19.
- ANIMATIONS, 1985. The Barry Smith Theatre. *Animations*, 8(5), pp. 71-72.
- ARNOTT, P.D., 1969. *The Theatres of Japan*. London; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press.
- ARTAUD, A., 2010. *The Theatre and its Double*. Richmond: Oneworld Classics.
- ASAHI SHINBUNSHA., TŌKYŌ HONSHA., KIKAKUBU., JAC PROJECT., 1981. *Ikiteiru ningyō shibai: Michinoku kara Okinawa made Nihon jūdan*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- ASCH, L., 2005. The Giraffe that Conquered Paris. *American Theatre*, 22(5), pp. 64-65.
- ASHCROFT, B., GRIFFITHS, G., TIFFIN, H., 1998. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London; New York: Routledge.
- ASHMORE, D-J., 2013. The Authenticity of the Other: The Kuiraiishi-no-ki and Japanese Ritual Puppet Theatre. *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, 13 (3), [online] Available

at: <<http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcs/vol13/iss3/ashmore.html>> [Accessed 2 Feb 2014]

ASHMORE, D-J., 2007. Who Owns Culture? Negotiating Folk Tradition at the Nishinomiya Ebisu Shrine. *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, [online] Available at: <<http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2007/Ashmore.html>> [Accessed 23 March, 2011]

ASHMORE, D-J., 2005. Kiratake Masako's Maiden's Bunraku. *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, [online] Available at: <<http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2005/Ashmore.html>> [Accessed 2 Feb 2010]

ASTELL-BURT, C., 2008. Assistive Technology. *Puppet Notebook*, (10), pp. 11.

ASTELL-BURT, C., 1993. Reading the Signs. *Animations*, 16(2), pp. 16-17.

ASTELL-BURT, C., 1987. Faulty Never! *Animations*, 11(2), pp. 37.

ASTLES, C., 1992. Fear of the puppet? *Animations*, 15(2), pp. 34.

AWA NO BUNKA KENKYUKAI, 2007. *A Bilingual Introduction to the Puppet Theater of Tokushima*. Tokushima: Shikiku University.

AWAJI NINGYŌ KYŌKAI. 2011. *Hikitake shiryō : Awaji ningyō jōruri ganso uemura gennojō za zahon*. Minamiawaji: Awaji Ningyō Kyōkai.

BADENHORST, Z., 2005. *South African Puppetry for the Theatre since 1975*, M. Tech, Tshwane University of Technology.

BANHAM, M., 1995. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

BANU, G., 2000. Nous, les Marionnettes... Le Bunraku Fantasma du Theatre du Soleil. *Alternative Theatrales*, pp. 68-70.

BANU, G., 1994. Gesamtkunstwerk and Kabuki. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 1(2), pp. 55-65.

BARDSLEY, J., 1998. Hamlet et le Probleme de L'Homunculus. *Puck*, (9), pp. 76-81.

BARNARD, K., 1954. Rod Puppets. *The Puppet Master*, 3(1), pp. 184.

BARNES, N. and DOWN, M., 2006. Blind Summit Theatre. *Das Andere Theater*, 64, pp. 20-21.

BARNES, N., 2013a. *Body*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/body.html>> [Accessed 16 June 2014].

BARNES, N., 2013b. *Hands*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/hands.html>> [Accessed 15 June 2014].

BARNES, N., 2013c. *Head*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/head.html>> [Accessed 15 June 2014].

BARNES, N., 2013d. *Puppet Design*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/design.html>> [Accessed 21 June 2014].

- BARNES, N., 2013e. *Workshop Puppets*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/workshop\\_puppets.html](http://www.blindsummit.com/puppets/pages/workshop_puppets.html)> [Accessed 4 March 2014].
- BARNES, N., 2011. *Interview with Nick Barnes*. 14.03.2011.
- BARRUALT, J., 1974. *The Memoirs of Jean-Louis Barrault - Memories For Tomorrow*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- BARTHES, R., 2000. *Mythologies*. London: Vintage.
- BARTHES, R., 1977. Death of the Author. In: R. BARTHES, ed, *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana Press, pp. 142-149.
- BARTHES, R., 1976. The Dolls of Bunraku. *Diacritics*, 6(4), pp. 44-47.
- BARTHES, R., 1974. *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- BARTHES, R., 1971. On Bunraku. *The Drama Review: TDR*, 15(2), pp. 76-80.
- BARTHES, R., 1982. *Empire of signs*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- BARTLETT, N. and HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY, 2010. *Or You Could Kiss Me*. Oberon Books, London.
- BASSETT, K., 2004. THEATRE: The most wooden performances ever... Superb! *The Independent on Sunday*, pp. 20,21.
- BASSETT, K., 1994. Show Time for the Wordless Wonders - Theatre. *The Times*, pp. 39.
- BATCHELDER, M., 1948. *The Puppet Theatre Handbook*. Herbert Jenkins, London.
- BATCHELDER, M., 1947. *Rod Puppets and the Human Theatre*. Ohio State University.
- BATES, A., BOYD, J.P., LAMBERTON, J.P., and ATHENIAN SOCIETY, 1903. *The Drama; its history; literature and influence on civilization*. London: Athenian Society.
- BAYLEY, C., 1995. They've got no strings... Clare Bayley on the theatrical power of the new puppetry. *The Independent*.
- BAYLEY, C., 1994. Japanese no-how. *The Independent*, 14 Jul, pp. 26.
- BAYLEY, C., 1994. Not just child's play - Christmas Shows. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 8/35.
- BEANLAND, N. and MOONEY, S., 2005. Daemon Puppets. *Puppet Notebook*, (2), pp. 16-17.
- BEAUMONT, C.W. and HOLME, C.G., 1938. Puppets and the Puppet Stage (Special winter number of the Studio). London.
- BEFU, H. and GUICHARD-ANGUIS, S., 2003. Globalizing Japan ethnography of the Japanese presence in Asia, Europe and America. London: Routledge.

- BELL, C., 2010. Beyond All Endurance. In: N. DHILLON, ed, *Shun-kin (Programme)*. pp. 12-13.
- BELL, J., 2014. The Name Bunraku. *Puptcrit* 112 (26).
- BELL, J., 2008. *American Puppet Modernism: Essays on the Material World in Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- BELL, J., 1999. *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- BELL, J., 1997. Puppets and Performing Objects in the Twentieth Century. *Performing Arts Journal*, 19(2), pp. 29-46.
- BELL, J. and DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS, 2000. *Strings, Hands, Shadows: A Modern Puppet History*. Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts.
- BENDICT, D., 2010. Or You Could Kiss Me. *Variety*, 420(9), pp. 29.
- BENJAMIN, W., 1968. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In: W. BENJAMIN, ed, *Illuminations*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pp. 217-252.
- BERESFORD, K., 1995. Lord of the Rings (Review). *Animations*, 18(2), pp. 22.
- BERSON, M., 1995. Asian influences on Western theatre. In: M. BANHAM, ed, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 47-54.
- BHARUCHA, R., 2001. Consumed in Singapore. *Theater* 31(1), pp.107-127.
- BHARUCHA, R., 1993. *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- BHARUCHA, R. and FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2011. *Dialogue: Erika Fischer-Lichte and Rustom Bharucha*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.textures-platform.com/?p=1667>> [Accessed 19 September 2012].
- BIDGOOD, J., 2011 The Kohler and Jones Show. *Animations Online* 32, [online] Available at: <<http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aothirtytwo/handspring.html>> [Accessed 13 Mar 2011]
- BILLINGTON, M., 6 October, 2010. *Or You Could Kiss Me*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2010/oct/06/or-you-could-kiss-me-michael-billington>> [Accessed 26 Nov 2010].
- BILLINGTON, M., 1994. Megaton Symbol. *The Guardian*, 17 Aug, pp. A5.
- BILLINGTON, M., 1991. Market Optimism. *The Guardian*, 5 Jul, pp. 36.
- BILLINGTON, M., 1987. Revelation on the Circle Line. *The Guardian*, 24 Aug, pp. 10.
- BILLINGTON, M., 1983. Clear bias – Michael Billington Starts an Occasional Series. *The Guardian*, 10 Jun, pp. 15.
- BILLINGTON, M., 1977. Illuminatus. *The Guardian*, 7 Mar, pp. 8.

- BILLINGTON, M., 1967. Peter Daubeny Looks Back. *The Times*, 2 Jun, pp. 8.
- BIRD, I.L., 1880. *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkô and Isé*. London: J. Murray.
- BISHOP, C., 2006. Sucked into the Subconscious - Dance. *The Sunday Times*, pp. Culture 23.
- BLAND, A., 1975. Big Bad Bandits. *The Observer*, 23 Feb, pp. 26.
- BLEWITT, D., 1995. Opera Review: The Magic Flute. *The Stage*, 15 Jun, pp. 16.
- BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, 2014a. *About Blind Summit*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/aboutBST.htm>> [Accessed 8 Aug 2014].
- BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, 2014b. *The Boy*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/MadamButterflySORROW.htm>> [Accessed 16 July 2014].
- BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, 2010. *El Gato Con Botas*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.blindsummit.com/El%20Gato%20Con%20Botas%20-%20Puss%20in%20Boots.htm>> [Accessed 4 Oct 2012].
- BLOOM, H., 1973. *The Anxiety Of Influence; A Theory Of Poetry*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- BLUMENTHAL, E., 2005. *Puppetry : a world history*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Publishers.
- BLUMENTHAL, E., 1995. Julie Taymor. In: E. BLUMENTHAL, J. TAYMOR, *Julie Taymor, playing with fire : theater, opera, film*. New York: H.N. Abrams, pp. 6-53.
- BLUMENTHAL, E., TAYMOR, J., 1995. *Julie Taymor, playing with fire: theater, opera, film*. New York: H.N. Abrams.
- BLUNDALL, J., 2011. *Interview with John Blundall 04.02.2011*.
- BLUNDALL, J., 2008. The World Through Wooden Eyes. *Puppet Notebook*, (12), pp. 22.
- BLUNDALL, J., 2005. Going Home? *Puppet Notebook*, (3), pp. 8-9.
- BLUNDALL, J., 1991. The Future of the Puppet Theatre. *The Puppet Master*, 15(1), pp. 1-2.
- BODSON, L., NICULESCU, M. and PEZIN, P., 2009. *Passeurs et complices = Passing it on: Institut international de la marionette, Ecole nationale superieure des arts de la marionette*. Montpellier; Charleville-Mezieres: Entretemps; Institut international de la marionette.
- BOWERS, F., 1973. *Bunraku : Japan's Classic Puppet Theater*. Creative Arts Television.
- BOWERS, F., 1952. *Japanese Theatre*. New York: Hermitage House.
- BOYD, M., 2009. Surviving and Succeeding: The Yuki-za Marionette Theater Company. In: S. L. LEITER, ed, *Rising From The Flames : The Rebirth Of Theater In Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, pp. 217-230.

- BOYD, J., 1986. *The Bunraku Puppet Theatre from 1945 to 1964 : Changes in Administration and Organization*. PhD, City University New York.
- BRAMALL, E., 1962. Visit to Poland. *The Puppet Master*, 7(2), pp. 22-24.
- BRAMALL, E., 1955. *Puppetry Year Book 1955*. Wallington, Surrey [England]: Carwal.
- BRANDON, J.R., LEITER, S. L., 1997. *Japanese Theater in the World*. New York: Japan Foundation : Japan Society.
- BRANDON, J.R., 2009. *Kabuki's Forgotten War: 1931-1945*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- BRANDON, J.R., 2006. Myth and Reality : A Story Of Kabuki During American Censorship : 1945-1949. *Asian theatre journal*, 23(1).
- BRANDON, J.R., 1998. Kabuki: Changes and Prospects: An International Symposium. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 15(2), pp. 253-269.
- BRANDON, J.R., 1990. Contemporary Japanese Theatre Interculturalism and Intraculturalism. In: E. FISCHER-LICHTE, M. GISSENWEHRER and J. RILEY , eds, *The Dramatic touch of difference : Theatre, Own and Foreign*. Tübingen: G. Narr, pp. 89-97.
- BRANDON, J.R., 1989. A New World: Asian Theatre in the West Today. *TDR (1988-)*, 33(2), pp. 25-50.
- BRANDON, J.R., 1974. *Theatre in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- BRAZELL, K., 1998. Japanese Theater: A Living Tradition. In: K. BRAZELL, ed, *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 3-43.
- BRAZELL, K., ed, 1998. *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- BREUER, L., 2012. Travailler le Bois. *Puck*, (17), pp. 109-112.
- BRITISH COUNCIL, 2010. *Blind Summit Theatre*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-performanceinprofile-2010-blind-summit-theatre.htm>> [Accessed 28 Jan 2011].
- BROWN, R., 2001. Object Relations. In: D. ANTHONY, ed, *Puppetry into Performance: A User's Guide*. Central School of Speech and Drama, pp. 14-16.
- BROWNSTEIN, M., 2002. Hozumi Ikan. In: H. SHIRANE, ed, *Early Modern Japanese Literature an Anthology, 1600-1900*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 347-348.
- BRUMANN, C., COX, R. A., 2009. *Making Japanese heritage*. London; New York: Routledge.
- BRYDEN, R., 1968. Edinburgh Notebook. *The Observer*, 25 Aug, pp. 21.
- BUCKMASTER, S., 1997. South Bank Success. *Animations*, 20(6).



- BULL, J., 2004. The Establishment of Mainstream Theatre 1946-1979. In: B. KERSHAW, ed, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre 3, Since 1895*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 326-348.
- BUNZŌ, T., 2003. *Bunraku: Japan's Traditional Puppet Theatre*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.keenecenter.org/sen/2003\\_text.html](http://www.keenecenter.org/sen/2003_text.html)> [Accessed 2 Feb 2010].
- BUNZŌ, T., 1989. Edo Joruri. In: A. GERSTLE, ed, *18th Century Japan: Culture and Society*. Sydney; Boston: Allen & Unwin, pp. 51-59.
- BURKE, S., 1998. The Death And Return Of The Author Criticism And Subjectivity In Barthes, Foucault And Derrida, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- BUSH, C., 2005. The Other of the Other?: Cultural Studies, Theory, and the Location of the Modernist Signifier. *Comparative Literature Studies*, 42(2), pp. 162-180.
- BUSSELL, J., 1985. Definitions be Damned - Observations, Reverent And Otherwise, On The Endless Controversy About What Is A Puppet And When Is It Art. *Animations*, 8(4), pp. 51.
- BUSSELL, J., 1959. World Puppetry. *The Puppet Master*, 6(2), pp. 7.
- BUTLER, R., ed, 2004. *Darkness illuminated*. London: Oberon.
- BUTLER, R., 2003. *The Art Of Darkness: Staging The Philip Pullman Trilogy*. London: National Theatre/Oberon.
- CALDWELL, F., 2010. Interview with Finn Caldwell. In: B. CLARE, ed, *Or You Could Kiss Me - Background Pack*. London: Royal National Theatre Board, pp. 15-16.
- CAMERON, C., 2009. Shining Light In The Dark – Pick of the Week. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 14.
- CANNING, H., 2009. Catch Her If You Can - Persian Royalty Meets Far Eastern Fashion In A Fine Reconstruction, While A Rossini Farce Is A Real Soap Opera, Says Hugh Canning. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 31.
- CANON HILL PUPPET THEATRE, 1981. New Ideas in Creative Puppet Theatre. *Animations*, 4(5), pp. 5.
- CAPOTE, T., 1957. The Duke in his Domain. *The New Yorker*, 9 Nov.
- CARLISLE, A.D., 1872. *Round the world in 1870*. London: King.
- CARTER, A., 1979. Japanese Puppets. *The Guardian*, 28 Mar pp. 14.
- CARTER, A., 1979. Enter Beowulf, With Strings Attached. *The Guardian*, 20 Mar, pp. 8.
- CAUCHI, D. and ET AL, 2004. The Production. In: R. BUTLER, ed, *Darkness illuminated*. London: Oberon, pp. 31-46.
- CAVAYE, R., GRIFFITH, P., SENDA, A., 2004. *A Guide To The Japanese Stage : From Traditional To Cutting Edge*. Tokyo; London: Kodansha International.

- CAVENDISH, D., 2000. Theatre: More Than Words Can Say - The London International Mime Festival Is Back In Town And It Defies Description. *The Independent*, pp. 11.
- CHAILLET, N., 1981. Japan Behind the Screen. *The Times Preview*, 16-22 Oct, pp. viii.
- CHAILLET, N., 1980. Holiday Puppetry - Philippe Genty. *The Times*, 29 Jul, pp. 11.
- CHAILLET, N., 1976. Borrowing from the Japanese. *The Times*, 6 Oct, pp. 11.
- CHAILLET, N. and WARDLE, I., 1980. Edinburgh: A Slide Into The Past And A Glance Into The Future. *The Times*, 1 Sept, pp. 15.
- CHANTHAWIT, N. and PRAMUALRATANA, P., 1998. *Thai puppets & Khon masks*. Bangkok: River Books.
- CHIKAMATSU, M., MIYAMORI, A. and NICHOLS, R., 1926. *Masterpieces of Chikamatsu : the Japanese Shakespeare*. London: Routledge.
- CLARE, B., 2010. *Or You Could Kiss Me - Background pack*. London: Royal National Theatre Board.
- CLAUDEL, P., 1972. *Claudiel on the Theatre*. Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press.
- COALDRAKE, A.K., 1997. *Women's Gidayū And The Japanese Theatre Tradition*. London; New York: Routledge.
- COHEN, M.I., 2010. *Performing Otherness: Java And Bali On International Stages, 1905-1952*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- COHEN, M.I., 2007. Contemporary "Wayang" in Global Contexts. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 24(2), pp. 338-369.
- COLE, S.L., 1992. Lee Breuer Directs *The Ant Warrior*. In: S.L. COLE, ed, *Directors In Rehearsal: A Hidden World*. New York ; London: Routledge, pp. 199-216.
- CONANT, E. P. 2006. *Challenging Past And Present: The Metamorphosis Of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.
- COOPER B., G., 2006. Haozkla, *The Stage* [online] Available at: <<http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/13797/haozkla>> [Accessed 29 Sept 2010]
- CORCORAN, M.G., 1990. Salman Rushdie's Satanic Narration. *The Iowa Review*, 20(1), pp. 155-167.
- CORTAZZI, H., 2009. *Japan in late Victorian London: the Japanese Native Village in Knightsbridge and the Mikado, 1885*. Norwich: Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures.
- COSTA, M., 2009. Puppet State: Blind Summit's Puppets Regularly Upstage The Actors They Appear With. Will 1984, Their Orwellian New Show, Be Different? *The Guardian*, G2: Arts.
- COTON, A., V., 1968. Charm of Japanese Puppetry *Daily Telegraph*, 11 June.

- COTON, A., V., 1968. Taste for the Unconventional Challenged. *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Jun.
- COX, R., 2006. The New Age of Puppetry, *The Scotsman* [online] Available at: <<http://living.scotsman.com/features/The-new-age-of-puppetry.2798847.jp>> [Accessed 29 Sept 2010]
- CRAIG, E.G., 1921. Postscript. *The Chapbook*, (20), pp. 30-36.
- CRAIG, E.G., 1915. A Note On Japanese Marionettes. *The Mask*, 7(2), pp. 104-107.
- CRAIG, E.G., 1911. *On The Art Of The Theatre*. London: Heinemann.
- CRAIG, E.G., NEWMAN, L.M., 1989. *Black Figures: 105 Reproductions With An Unpublished Essay*. Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton.
- CRAMESNIL, J., 2009. Lafaye (Georges). In: H. JURKOWSKI and T. FOULC, eds, *Encyclopédie Mondiale des Arts de la Marionnette*. Montpellier; Charleville-Mézières: Entretemps ; Unima, pp. 419.
- CRIPPS, C., 2004. Preview: THEATRE: With no strings attached - Japanese techniques bring new life to a one-man puppet show of Pinocchio. *The Independent*, pp. 18.
- CRIPPS, C., 2004. Puppetry: The God of Small Strings - Shakespeare's poem 'Venus and Adonis' Comes to the Stage in Miniature. *The Independent*, pp. 14.
- CRISP, C., 1991. Bunraku Puppets. *The Financial Times*, 3 Oct, pp. 19.
- CROUCH, J. and MCDERMOTT, P., 2001. The Gap. In: D. ANTHONY, ed, *Puppetry into Performance: A User's Guide*. Central School of Speech and Drama, pp. 11-13.
- CROWTHER, B., 1957. Screen: Brando Stars in 'Sayonara': Off-Beat Acting Marks Film at Music Hall The Cast. *New York Times*, pp. 39.
- CURRELL, D., 2004. *Making and Manipulating Marionettes*. Ramsbury: Crowood.
- CUSHMAN, R., 1979. Fats on the Stage. *The Observer*, 25 Mar, pp. 15.
- CUSHMAN, R., 1976. In Praise of the Devil. *The Observer*, 5 Sept, pp. 22.
- D L, 1976. National Puppet Theatre of Japan at Edinburgh. *The Stage and Television Today*, (4978), 9 Sept, pp. 11.
- DAILY NEWS, 1885. Burning Of The Japanese Village. *Daily News*, 4 May
- DA SILVA, R., 1991. Japan: a Brit-Aussie at the Iida jamboree. *Animations*, 15(1).
- DA SILVA, R., 1987. Where have all the Fettigs Gone. *Animations*, 10(3), pp. 56.
- DA SILVA, R. and DA SILVA, J., 1987. Report from a trip to Japan 1987. *Animations*, 11(2), pp. 27.
- DA SILVA, R. and DA SILVA, J., 1987. Creating Audiences. *Animations*, 11(2), pp. 27.

- DAVIS, G., V. and DAYMOND, M.J., 1994. *Southern African Writing: Voyages And Explorations*. Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi.
- DINWOODIE, G. B., JANIS, M. D., 2008. *Trademark Law And Theory: A Handbook Of Contemporary Research*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: E. Elgar.
- DOBSON, M., 2005. Writing About [Shakespearian] Performance. *Shakespeare Survey*, 58, pp. 268-297.
- DODD, S., 2010. An Outstanding Storyteller. In: N. DHILLON, ed, *Shun-kin (Programme)*. pp. 10-11.
- DOWN, M., 2011. *Interview with Mark Down 15.06.2011*.
- DOWN, M., 2008 From the Frontline *Animations Online* 25, [online] Available at: <<http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyfive/frontline.html>> [Accessed 31 Mar 2011].
- DOWN, M., 2006. *Questions for German UNIMA Magazine*.
- DOWN, M. and OLLIE, T., 2005. *Interview with Mark Down of Blind Summit Theatre*.
- DRISCOLL LYNCH, J., 1989. Theodora Skiptares' Performing Objects. *TDR*, 33(2), pp. pp. 137-160.
- DUNDJEROVIĆ, A. S., 2009. *Robert Lepage*. London; New York: Routledge.
- DUNN, C., 1991. The Respective Roles of Puppet and Chanter in Bunraku. *Animations*, 15(1), pp. 3-4.
- DUNN, C., 1975. Introduction to the Study of Japanese Puppets. *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, pp. 22-35.
- DUNN, C.J., 1966. *The Early Japanese Puppet Drama*. London: Luzac.
- ECONOMIST., 2001. Books And Arts: Light And Shadows; Contemporary Theatre. *The Economist*, 25 Aug, pp. 1-69.
- EDWARDS, G., 2006. English Puppetry to 1925. *Das Andere Theater*, 64, pp. 4.
- EDWARDS, O., 1901. *Japanese Plays and Playfellows*, London: W. Heinemann.
- EIMEI, K., 1990. Some Thoughts on Contemporary Japanese Puppet Theatre. In: L. KOMNIZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press Washington, pp. 76-79.
- ENGEL-BRECHT, G., 1985. An Adult Puppet Show. *The Citizen*, 21 Aug.
- ENKEL, E. and GASSMANN, O., 2010. Creative Imitation: Exploring The Case Of Cross-Industry Innovation. *R&D Management*, 40(3), pp. 256-270.
- EPPSTEIN, U., 1993. The Stage Observed. Western Attitudes Toward Japanese Theatre. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 48(2), pp. pp. 147-166.

- ERA, 1895, Advertisements & Notices. *The Era*, 5 Jan.
- ERA, 1887, Advertisements & Notices, *The Era*, 19 Mar, pp. 21.
- ERNST, E., 1959. *Three Japanese Plays From The Traditional Theatre*. London; New York: Oxford University Press.
- ERULI, B., 2009. The Crossroads of Puppetry. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Passing It On*. Charlevilles-Mezieres: l'Etretemps / Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 62-73.
- ETTINGHAUSEN, R., GRABAR, O., 1987. *The Art And Architecture Of Islam*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.
- EXAMINER, 1868, Advertisements & Notices, *The Examiner*, 18 Apr.
- FETTIG, H., 1997. *Rod Puppets and Table-Top Puppets*. DaSilva Puppet Books.
- FETTIG, H., 1973. *Glove and Rod Puppets A Handbook of Design and Technique*. Harrap, London.
- FINCH, H., 2008. This moving soprano is a Butterfly worth waiting for. *The Times*, pp. 26.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2014. Introduction - Interweaving Performance Cultures Rethinking 'Intercultural Theatre': Toward an Experience and Theory of Performance beyond Postcolonialism. In: E. FISCHER-LICHTE, T. JOST and S.I. JAIN, eds, *The Politics Of Interweaving Performance Cultures : Beyond Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-21.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2011. Interweaving European and Japanese Cultures at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Japanese Guest-Tours in Europe . In: S. SCHOLZ-CIONCA, A. REGELBERGER, eds, *Japanese Theatre Transcultural: German and Italian Intertwinings*. München: Iudicium, pp. 23-31.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2010. Interweaving Cultures In Performance: Theatre In A Globalizing World. *Theatre Research International*, 35(03), pp. 293-294.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2009. Interweaving Cultures in Performance: Different States of Being In-Between. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 25(4), pp. 391-401.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2008. *The Transformative Power Of Performance : A New Aesthetics*. London: Routledge.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2005. *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual : Exploring Forms Of Political Theatre*. London: Routledge.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2002. *History Of European Drama And Theatre*. London: Routledge.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 2001. The Reception of Japanese Theatre by the European Avant-Garde (1900-1930). In: S.L. LEITER and S. SCHOLZ-CIONCA, eds, *Japanese Theatre And The International Stage*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, pp. 27-42.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 1997. *The Show And The Gaze Of Theatre: A European Perspective*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 1996. Interculturalism in Contemporary Theatre. In: P. PAVIS, ed, *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 27-40.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., 1992. *The Semiotics of Theater*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., GISSENWEHRER, M., RILEY, J., 1990. *The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre, Own and Foreign*. Tübingen: G. Narr.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., JOST, T., JAIN, S. I., 2014. *The Politics Of Interweaving Performance Cultures : Beyond Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E., THOMASIU, R., ARJOMAND, M., 2013. *The Routledge Introduction To Theatre And Performance Studies*. London: Routledge
- FITZGERALD, A., 1990. SEASONAL SHOWS: Hans down winner. *The Stage and Television Today*, 11 Jan, pp. 34.
- FLINK, S., 1968. Playbill Programme: Japan, Bunraku National Theatre, Aldwych Theatre, World Theatre Season 5th Anniversary Season. *Playbill*, 3(6).
- FLOOD, F.B., 2001. *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies On The Makings Of An Umayyad Visual Culture*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- FOUCAULT, M., 1984. What is an Author? In: M. FOUCAULT and P. RABINOW , eds, *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, .
- FOUCAULT, M., RABINOW, P., 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- FOUQUET, L., 1998. Du Castelat a l'Ecran Robert Lepage. *Puck*, (11), pp. 34-40.
- FRANCIS, D., 1982. Barry Smith's Theatre of Puppets - *Isabella or the Pot of Basil* (review). *Animations*, 6(5), pp. 6.
- FRANCIS, P., 2012. *Puppetry: A Reader in Theatre Practice*. London: Palgrave.
- FRANCIS, P., 2008. Faeries *Animations Online* 24, [online] Available at: <[http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyfour/reviews\\_faeries.html](http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyfour/reviews_faeries.html)> [Accessed 15 June 2012]
- FRANCIS, P., 2008, Why Has Puppetry Become So Widely Used And Studied In The Last 20 Years? What Makes For Good Production? What Are The Criteria For The Reviewer? *Animations Online*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.theatre.lv/en/index.php?parent=215>> [Accessed 29 June, 2011].
- FRANCIS, P., 2007 What's in a name? *Animations Online*, 21, [online] Available at: <[http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyone/ao21\\_whatsinaname.html](http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyone/ao21_whatsinaname.html)> [Accessed 16 Oct 2010]
- FRANCIS, P., 2006 Company Profile: Doo Cot *Animations Online*, 18. [online] Available at: <<http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aoeighteen/profile-dooocot.html>> [Accessed 27 Feb 2011]

- FRANCIS, P., 2006. Out The Box - The Variety of South African Puppetry. *Puppet Notebook*, (7), pp. 12.
- FRANCIS, P., 2004 Respect! *Animations Online* 7. [online] Available at: <http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aoseven/respect.htm> [Accessed 5 Mar 2011].
- FRANCIS, P., 1999. Handspring Puppets - Ubu and the Truth Commission (review). *Animations*, 22(6), pp. 18.
- FRANCIS, P., 1998. Charleville Trends. *Animations*, 21(2), pp. 13.
- FRANCIS, P., 1998. Phelim Mc. Dermott et Julian Crouch - Alchemistes du Theatre Improbable. *Puck*, (11), pp. 82-87.
- FRANCIS, P., 1996. Faustus in Africa (Review). *Animations*, 19(2), pp. 18.
- FRANCIS, P., 1996. Shot at the Troff (review). *Animations*, 19(5), pp. 17-18.
- FRANCIS, P., 1994. Woyzeck on the High Veld, Handspring Theatre (Review). *Animations*, 17(6), pp. 18.
- FRANCIS, P., 1993. Darwin's Dead Herring (Review). *Animations*, 16(4), pp. 18-19.
- FRANCIS, P., 1993. Dragon (Review). *Animations*, 16(3).
- FRANCIS, P., 1992. British Puppet Theatre: Its Present State And Future Perspectives. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 1(1), pp. 67-74.
- FRANCIS, P., 1992. Charlevilles-Mezieres: The Ninth World Festival And The Problem Of The Acting Puppeteer. *Animations*, 15(2), pp. 32-33.
- FRANCIS, P., 1991. 'Starbrites' at the Tricycle (Review). *Animations*, 15(1), pp. 17.
- FRANCIS, P., 1989. Christopher Leith. *Animations*, 12(3), pp. 59-60.
- FRANCIS, P., 1989. Slovakian Successes. *Animations*, 12(3), pp. 48-49.
- FRANCIS, P., 1987. The Henson Style: Labyrinth the new film. *Animations*, 10(2), pp. 39-40.
- FRANCIS, P., 1985. Jim Henson. *Animations*, 8(2), pp. 21.
- FRANCIS, P., 1984. Puppet Theatre 84 - A Personal Report. *Animations*, 7(5&6), pp. 69-72.
- FRANCIS, P., 1983. The Dark Crystal - a new film by Henson Associates. *Animations*, 6(2), pp. 15-16.
- FRANCIS, P., 1983. John Blundall and the Midlands Arts Centre. *Animations*, 6(3), pp. 15-16.
- FRANCIS, P., 1980. Criticism and the Puppet Theatre. *Animations*, (October/November), pp. 3.
- FRANCIS, P., 1979. Centre News. *Animations*, (February/March), pp. 2.

- FRANCIS, P., 1979. What's On. *Animations*, (February/March), pp. 4-5.
- FRANCIS, P., 1979. What's On. *Animations*, (Oct/Nov), pp. 8-9.
- FRANCIS, P., 1978. The DaSilva Puppet Theatre. *Animations*, (August), pp. 8.
- FRANCIS, P., 1977. John Wright an Appreciation. *Animations*, (Christmas), pp. 8.
- FRANCIS, P., 1971. Chris Leith. *The Puppet Master*, 9(7), pp. 21-22.
- FRANCIS, P. and STEPHENSON, C., 2008. *Interview with Penny Francis*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bl.uk/projects/theatrearchive/francisp.html>> [Accessed 11 Jan 2011].
- FREELAND, B., 1982. Rennes Festival of Traditional Arts: A Layman's View. *Animations*, 5(5), pp. 6-7.
- FRIEDMAN, G., 1986. Puppets Against Apartheid. *Animations*, 9(3), pp. 48-49.
- FUCHS, A., 1994. The Market Theatre: Drama for a New Society? Targeting the Spectator. In: G. DAVIS V. and M. J. DAYMOND, eds, *Southern African writing: Voyages and Explorations*. Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, pp. 13-24.
- FUJITA, M., 1998. Tradition and the Bunraku adaptation of *The Tempest*. In: T. SASAYAMA, J.R. MULRYNE and M. SHEWRING, eds, *Shakespeare and the Japanese stage*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 186-195.
- FUKUSHIMA, Y., 2009. To the Rhythm of Jazz: Enoken's Postwar Musical Comedies. In: S.L. LEITER, ed, *Rising from the Flames: The Rebirth of Theater in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, pp. 335-360.
- GARDNER, L., 1995. Hands Up, You're History. *The Guardian*, 23 Oct, pp. A8.
- GENTY, P., 2013. *Paysages Intérieurs*. Arles: Actes Sud.
- GENTY, P., 2009. Working Notes - A Journey Between Perception, Inner Feelings And Interpretation. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Passing It On*. Charlevilles-Mezieres: l'Etretemps / Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 212-229.
- GENTY, P., 1965. *Rites et Jeux : Marionnettes d'Orient et d'Occident*. [film], UNESCO.
- GENTY, P. and TRESGOT, A., 1969. *La Tour du Monde des Marionnettes*. [film].
- GERSTLE, A. and HIROSHI, S., 1997. Margins Between the Real and Unreal: Bunraku. In: J.R. BRANDON and S.L. LEITER, eds, *Japanese Theater in the World*. New York: Japan Foundation : Japan Society, pp. 59-64.
- GERSTLE, C.A., 1999. Takemoto Gidayu and the Individualistic Spirit of Osaka Theater. In: J.L. MCCLAIN and O. WAKITA, eds, *Osaka, The Merchant's Capital Of Early Modern Japan*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, pp. 104-124.
- GERSTLE, C. A., 1989. *18th Century Japan: Culture And Society*. Sydney; Boston: Allen & Unwin.



- GERSTLE, C.A., INOBE, K. and MALM, W.P., 1990. *Theater As Music: The Bunraku Play "Mt. Imo And Mt. Se: An Exemplary Tale Of Womanly Virtue"*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan.
- GIBBONS, J., 2001. Gender and the Japanese Puppet Theatre. *Visual Sociology*, 16(2), pp. 59-73.
- GIDDENS, A., 1994. Living in a Post Traditional Society. In: U. BECK, A. GIDDENS and S. LASH, eds, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition And Aesthetics In The Modern Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 55-109.
- GILBERT, H. and LO, J., 2007. *Performance And Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions In Australasia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- GILBERT, H. and LO, J., 2002. Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis. *TDR*, 46(3), pp. 31-53.
- GLADWIN, J., 1999. British Festival of Visual Theatre. *Animations*, Dec/Jan, pp. 16-17.
- GLOVER, G., 1996. Mico-Theatre En Video Live. *Puck*, (9), pp. 78-83.
- GOODMAN, D., 1971. New Japanese Theatre. *The Drama Review: TDR*, 15(2), pp. 154-168.
- GORE-LANGTON, R., 1996. (Pause) For Dull Effect, Fun For Cash. *Daily Express*, 27 Sept, pp. 43.
- GRABSKY, P. and BICKERSTAFF, D., 2009. *Making War Horse*. [DVD] National Theatre/ Seventh Art Productions.
- GRAPHIC 1873, A Japanese Theatre, *The Graphic*, 19 July
- GUARDIAN, 1991. Japan Festival In London - Advert. *The Guardian*, 7 Sept, pp. A15.
- GUARDIAN, 1968. Rape Of Colwyn Bay. *The Guardian*, 11 May, pp. 8.
- HACHIMONJIYA, J., DUNN, C.J., and TORIGOE, B., 1969. *The Actors' Analects (Yakusha rongo)*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- HALL, S., 1995. The Rise and Rise of Doo Cot. *Animations*, 18(4), pp. 12-13.
- HARES, M., 1986. Impressions of Charleville. *Animations*, 9(2), pp. 32.
- HAVENS, T.R.H., 1982. *Artist And Patron In Postwar Japan: Dance, Music, Theater, And The Visual Arts, 1955-1980*. Princeton: Princeton U.P.
- HAYMAN, R., 1971. Jean-Louis Barrault. *The Times*, 6 Mar, pp. 17.
- HEGGEN, C., 2009. The Puppeteer-Actor's Body - Communicating a training experience. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Passing It On*. Charlevilles-Mezieres: l'Etretemps / Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 180-201.
- HEMMING, S., 2007. Theatre - String Theory Wooden Actors Have Never Been More In Demand, As Puppetry Moves Centre-Stage In Mainstream Theatre. *Financial Times*, 10 Feb, pp. 36.

- HEMMING, S., 2005. Angelo, Little Angel Theatre, London (review). *The Financial Times*, 7 Dec.
- HERBERT, T., 1987. What's in a name? *Animations*, 11(1), pp. 9.
- HERZBERG, L., 1981. Why I do write for the Puppet Theatre. *Animations*, 4(2), pp. 3.
- HERZBERG, P. and KOHLER, A., 2006. A Feisty Memoir. *Puppet Notebook*, (7), pp. 8.
- HEWISON, R., 2004. Daemons Have A Dream Debut At The National - First night. *The Sunday Times*, pp. News 3.
- HEWISON, R., 1999. Tired and in need of a lift - Drama. *The Sunday*, pp. Culture 20.
- HIRONAGA, S., 1976. *The Bunraku Handbook : A Comprehensive Guide To Japan's Unique Puppet Theatre, With Synopses Of All Popular Plays*. Tokyo: Maison Des Arts.
- HIRONAGA, S., 1964. *Bunraku; Japan's Unique Puppet Theatre*. Tokyo: Tokyo News Service.
- HOBSON, H., 1968. Third Time Lucky. *The Sunday Times*, 16 Jun.
- HOGGART, S., 1991. The Discreet Charm of the Japanese. *The Observer*, 25 Aug, pp. A16.
- HOLMAN, M., 2009. *US Bunraku Troupe*. [online] Available at: <[chaari.wordpress.com/2009/06/24/us-bunraku-troupe/](http://chaari.wordpress.com/2009/06/24/us-bunraku-troupe/)> [Accessed 28 Aug 2011].
- HONJOH, H. and NARABE, K., 2009. *Artist Interview – The World of Hidetaro Honjoh*. [online] Available at: <[http://performingarts.jp/E/art\\_interview/0901/1.html](http://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0901/1.html)> [Accessed 19 Jan 2011].
- HOPE-WALLACE, P., 1968. The Bunraku National Theatre Of Japan at the Aldwych. *The Guardian*, 11 Jun, pp. 6.
- HOPE-WALLACE, P., 1968. Seneca's Oedipus at the National Theatre. *The Guardian*, 20 Mar, pp. 9.
- HORWELL, V., 1994. Noh, Not Exactly. *The Guardian*, 13 Jul, pp. A4.
- HOWARD, T.E., 1974. The Puppet Theatre in Japan. *The Puppet Master*, 10(1), pp. 5-7.
- HOWNAM-MEEK, M., 1952. Puppets in Japan. *The Puppet Notebook*, 4(3), pp. 54-56.
- HOZUMI, I., 2002. Souvenirs of Naniwa. In: H. SHIRANE, ed, *Early Modern Japanese Literature An Anthology, 1600-1900*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 348-351.
- HUTCHISON, Y., 2010. The “Dark Continent” Goes North: An Exploration of Intercultural Theatre Practice through Handspring and Sogolon Puppet Companies’ Production of *Tall Horse*. *Theatre Journal*, 62(1), pp. 57-73.
- HUTERA, D., 2011. Oh! Let My Puppets Go - Donald Hutera Enjoys A Long Wait For A Biblical Epic That Never Appears Edinburgh Theatre. *The Times*, pp. 12.
- HUTERA, D., 2009. Flying First-Class to Neverland - first night. *The Times*, pp. 12.

- HYTNER, N., 2004. The Director. In: R. BUTLER, ed, *Darkness illuminated*. London: Oberon, pp. 15-30.
- ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS 1979. In's Guide To Events - Theatre. *Illustrated London News*, 31 Mar, pp. 5.
- ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, 1968, A New Season Of World Theatre, *Illustrated London News*, 20 April, pp. 13.
- IMMOOS, T., and MAYER, F., 1977. *Japanese Theatre*. New York: Rizzoli.
- INDEPENDENT, 2004. Theatre And Beyond. *The Independent*, pp. 41.
- INGRAMS, E., 2007. A Tale of Two Horses. *Puppet Notebook*, (8), pp. 20-23.
- INGRAMS, E., 2005. Japan's Living Traditions. *Puppet Notebook*, (3), pp. 10-11.
- INOURA, Y., and KAWATAKE, T., 1981. *The Traditional Theater Of Japan: Yoshinobu Inoura & Toshio Kawatake*. Warren, Conn.; Abingdon.
- ITN, 1983. *Arts Roundup*. London: ITN. [video]
- ITO, K., 1997. Bunraku: The Traditional Puppet Theater of Japan. *The Puppetry Year Book*, 3, pp. 49-62.
- IWATA, Y., 1995. The Transfiguration of Mr Punch. *Animations*, 18(2), pp. 14-15.
- JACOB, C., 1929. *Chefs-d'Oeuvre de Tchikamatsou, le Grand Dramaturge Japonais*. Fontenay-aux-Roses; Paris: impr. des Presses Universitaires de France, Louis Bellenand ; impr. Ernest Leroux.
- JAPAN ARTS COUNCIL, 2014. *Japan Arts Council*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.ntj.jac.go.jp/english.html>> [Accessed 16 Jan 2014].
- JAPAN ARTS COUNCIL, 2004. *What is Bunraku?* [online] Available at: <<http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/bunraku/en/contents/whats/index.html>> [Accessed 13 December 2010].
- JAPAN SOCIETY OF BOSTON, 1983. *Bunraku Puppet Theatre of Japan*. Boston: The Japan Society Of Boston
- JENSON, J., 1995. Mapping, Naming and Remembering: Globalization at the End of the Twentieth Century. *Review of International Political Economy*, 2(1), pp. 96-116.
- JOHNS, I., 2001. A Bit Of A Dry Spell - Theatre. *The Times*, 17 Aug.
- JOHNSTONE, K., 1994. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*. [S.l.]: Methuen Drama.
- JONES, B., 2010. Je t'Aime Quand Tu Respires. *Puck*, (17), pp. 99-108.
- JONES, B., 2010. The Woodwind Family. In: N. BARTLETT and HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY, eds, *Or You Could Kiss Me*. London: Oberon Books, pp. 16-20.

- JONES, B., 2009. Puppetry and Authorship. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 253-269.
- JONES, B., 2008. Financing Handspring Puppet Company. In: J. GIBBS and J. PLASTOW, eds, *African Theatre 7: Companies*. Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: James Currey, pp. 94-108.
- JONES, B. and KOHLER, A., 2010. *Interview with Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler at Central School of Speech and Drama 09.11.2010*.
- JONES, B. and KOHLER, A., 1998. Puppeteer's Note. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. University of Cape Town Press, pp. xvi-xvii.
- JONES, B. and KOHLER, A., 1995. *Talk And Demonstration At The London International Festival Of Theatre*. [DVD].
- JONES, B., KOHLER, A., LUTHER, T., 2009 Statement of Practice Handspring Puppet Company *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 2(3), pp. 345-354
- JONES, S.H., 2013. *The Bunraku Puppet Theatre Of Japan : Honor, Vengeance, And Love In Four Plays Of The 18th And 19th Centuries*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- JONES, S.H., 2002. *Miracle at Yaguchi Ferry: A Japanese Puppet Play and Its Metamorphosis to Kabuki*. In: S.L. LEITER , ed, *A Kabuki Reader: History And Performance*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 284-328.
- JONES, S.H. and TAKEDA, I., 1985. *Sugawara And The Secrets Of Calligraphy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- JORTNER, D., 2011. Founders of the Field: Japan Introduction. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 28(2), pp. 309-313.
- JUDAH, H., 1998. Too Much Of A Terrific Thing - Arts. *The Times*, pp. 21.
- JUDD, A. and SMITH, B., 1982. A Reply to Jude Kelly and Derek Francis. *Animations*, 5(3), pp. 6.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 2013. *Aspects Of Puppet Theatre : A Collection Of Essays*. London: Palgrave.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 2013. The Sign Systems of Puppetry. In: H. Jukowski, *Aspects Of Puppet Theatre: A Collection Of Essays*. London: Palgrave, pp. 90-114.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 2008. *Métamorphoses: La Marionnette au XXe siècle*. Charleville-Mézières; Montpellier: IIM, Institut international de la marionnette ; l'Entretiens éd.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 1998. Puppet Theatre: Touching the Sacred Roots. In: D. RUBIN, ed, *The World Encyclopedia Of Contemporary Theatre. Volume 5, Asia/Pacific*. London; New York: Routledge.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 1996. *A History Of European Puppetry Volume One: From Its Origins To The End Of The Nineteenth Century*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- JURKOWSKI, H., 1996. *A History Of European Puppetry Volume Two: The Twentieth Century*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

- JURKOWSKI, H. and FOULC, T., 2009. *Encyclopédie Mondiale Des Arts De La Marionnette*. Montpellier; Charleville-Mézières: Entretemps ; Unima.
- KAHN, N., 1981. Isabella. *The Guardian*, 3 Dec, pp. 9.
- KALB, J., 2006. Candour and Edge: A Response to Michael Billington. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 16(3), pp. 331.
- KAWATAKE, T., 1971. *A History Of The Japanese Theatre II: Bunraku And Kabuki*. Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai.
- KEENE, D., ed, 1998. *Four major plays of Chikamatsu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- KEENE, D., 1990. *No and Bunraku: Two Forms Of Japanese Theatre*. New York; London: Columbia University Press.
- KEENE, D., 1971. Kabuki, Theatre With Tradition And Popular Appeal. *The Times*, 29 April, pp. 8.
- KEENE, D. 1965. *Bunraku: The Art of the Japanese Puppet Theatre*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, Ltd.
- KELLY, J., 1982. Barry Smith's Theatre of Puppets. *Animations*, 6(5), pp. 6.
- KENNEDY, D., 2004. British Theatre 1895-1946: Art, Entertainment, Audiences – An Introduction In: B. KERSHAW, ed, *The Cambridge History Of British Theatre 3, Since 1895*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 3-33.
- KENNY, D., 1974. *On Stage In Japan: Kabuki, Bunraku, Noh, Gagaku*. Tokyo: Shufunotomo.
- KENTRIDGE, W., 1999. Faustus in Africa. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 9(4), pp. 28-44.
- KENTRIDGE, W., 1998. Director's Note. In: J. TAYLOR , ed, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. University of Cape Town Press, pp. viii-xv.
- KENTRIDGE, W. and KAPLAN, C., 2005. The Time-Image. *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 27(2), pp. pp. 28-44.
- KENTRIDGE, W. and TAYLOR, J., 2009. In Dialogue. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 176-211.
- KERSHAW, B., 2004. British Theatre 1942-2002: an Introduction. In: B. KERSHAW, ed, *The Cambridge history of British theatre 3, Since 1895*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 291-325.
- KERSHAW, B., ed, 2004. *The Cambridge History Of British Theatre 3, Since*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- KHUMALO, N., 2010. *Or You Could Kiss Me*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/or-you-could-kiss-me-2.htm>> [Accessed 13 Nov 2010].

- KIKUKAWA, K., 2002. 1958 Sorenpō Kōen. In: KANEO KIKUKAWA, ed, *Awaji Ningyō Jōruri Dentō Geinō*. Nandan: Hamada Type, pp. 325-327.
- KIKUKAWA, K., ed, 2002. *Awaji Ningyō Jōruri Dentō Geinō*. Nandan: Hamada Type.
- KINCAID, Z., 1931. The Life-Like Japanese Marionette Theatre. *The London Illustrated News*, (4836), pp. 1056-1058.
- KINCAID, Z., 1925. *Kabuki, the Popular Stage of Japan... With illustrations*. Macmillan & Co.: London, 1925: .
- KIRBY, E.T., 1972. The Mask: Abstract Theatre, Primitive and Modern. *The Drama Review: TDR*, 16(3, The "Puppet" Issue), pp. pp. 5-21.
- KIRBY, M., 1972. The "Puppet" Issue: An Introduction. *The Drama Review: TDR*, 16(3), pp. pp. 3-4.
- KIRITAKE III, K. and NARABE, K., 2008. *Artist Interview – Kanjuro Kiritake III*. [online] Available at: <[http://performingarts.jp/E/art\\_interview/0806/1.html](http://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0806/1.html)> [Accessed 19 Jan 2011].
- KNIGHT, K., 1993. A Host of Holiday Highlights - Children. *The Times*, pp. 3/9.
- KNOWLES, R., 2010. *Theatre & Interculturalism*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- KOBAYAKAWA, K., *Bunraku*. Osaka: Bunraku Kyokai.
- KOHL, S.W., 1995. *Bunraku: The Doll Theater of Japan*. In: B. MITCHELL, ed, *The Doll Puppet Theater: Bunraku Puppets in the Whitman College Collections*. pp. 12-31.
- KOHLER, A., 2010. Challenge of the Human Figure. In: N. BARTLETT and HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY, eds, *Or You Could Kiss Me*. London: Oberon Books, pp. 11-15.
- KOHLER, A., 2009. Engineering Movement. *Ingenia*, 40, pp. 27-32.
- KOHLER, A., 2009. Thinking Through Puppets. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 42-150.
- KOHLER, A., 1991. The Making of Starbrites. *Animations*, 15(1), pp. 8-9.
- KOKUSAI BUNKA SHINKOKAI (JAPAN CULTURAL SOCIETY), 1968. *Synopsis for Bunraku*. Japan: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai (Japan Cultural Society).
- KOMINZ, L., 1990. Japanese Puppetry: Bunraku and Beyond. In: L. KOMINZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press Washington, pp. 46.
- KOMINZ, L., 1990. Puppet Language, Human Body: The Imitation of Puppets in Classical Buyo Dance. In: L. KOMINZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press, pp. 63-75.
- KOPANIA, K., 2010. *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton.

- KOTT, J., 1984. *The Theater Of Essence : And Other Essays*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- KRAUSS, E., S. and PEMPEL, T.J., 2004. *Beyond Bilateralism : U.S.-Japan Relations In The New Asia-Pacific*. Oxford [etc.]: Oxford University Press.
- KROFLIN, L., 1997. Hamlet On Wheels. In: D. SZILAGYI, ed, *Puppet Art at the Turn of the Millenium - 17th Congress of UNIMA*. UNIMA Hungary, pp. 80-85.
- KRUGER, M., 2012. South African Adult Puppetry: Tracing The Roots Of Contemporary Eclectic Puppetry. *South African Theatre Journal*, 26(2), pp. 172-184.
- KRUGER, M., 2011. Puppets And Adult Entertainment In South Africa: A Tale Of A Tentative Start, Evolving Prejudices, New And Lost Opportunities, And A Fresh Momentum. *South African Theatre Journal*, 25(1), Pp. 13-34.
- KRUGER, M., 2010. Social Dynamics in African Puppetry. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 20(3), pp. 316.
- KUME, S., 1988. *Awa No Ningyōshi To Ningyō Shibai SōRan*. Tōkyō: Sōshisha Shuppan.
- KURE, B., 1920. *The Historical Development Of Marionette Theatre In Japan*. New York: Columbia University Print. Office.
- LANCASHIRE, T., 2011. *An Introduction To Japanese Folk Performing Arts*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- LATSHAW, G., 2000. *The Complete Book Of Puppetry*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications.
- LAVER, M.S., 2011. *The Sakoku Edicts And The Politics Of Tokugawa Hegemony*. Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press.
- LAW, J.M., 2010. In the Shape of a Person – The Variety of Ritual Uses of Effigy in Japan. *Puppet Notebook*, (17), pp. 14-17.
- LAW, J.M., 2009. A Heady Heritage - The Shifting Biography Of *Kashira* (Puppet Heads) As Cultrual Heritage Objects In The Awaji Tradition. In: C. BRUMANN and R.A. COX, eds, *Making Japanese Heritage*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 111-123.
- LAW, J.M., 1999. *Japanese Puppetry: From Ritual Performance To Stage Entertainment*. In G. Tanabe, ed, 1999. *Religions of Japan in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- LAW, J.M., 1998. The Awaji Tradition. In: K. BRAZELL, ed, *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 393-417.
- LAW, J.M., 1997. *Puppets Of Nostalgia : The Life, Death, And Rebirth Of The Japanese Awaji Ningyo Joruri Tradition*. Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press.
- LAW, J.M., 1995. *Religious Reflections On The Human Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- LAW, J.M., 1990. *Puppets Of The Road: Ritual Performance In Japanese Folk Religion*. PhD, University of Chicago.

- LAWRENCE, S., 1999. Backstage: Not Just For Kids. *The Stage* (6178), pp. 27.
- LEDGARD, A., 1995. A Vision That Worked. *Animations*, 18(2), pp. 6-7.
- LEDGARD, A., 1991. What Happened to Themba? *Animations*, 15(1), pp. 14-15.
- LEE, J.D., 2010. *The Japan Of Pure Invention: Gilbert And Sullivan's The Mikado*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- LEE, S., 2000. Edward Gordon Craig and Japanese Theatre. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 17(2), pp. 215-235.
- LEITER, S.L., 2013. *Kabuki At The Crossroads Years Of Crisis, 1952-1965*. Leiden: Global Oriental.
- LEITER, S.L., ed, 2009. *Rising From The Flames: The Rebirth Of Theater In Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- LEITER, S.L., 2007. *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- LEITER, S.L., 2006. *Historical Dictionary Of Japanese Traditional Theatre*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.
- LEITER, S.L., ed, 2002. *A Kabuki Reader: History And Performance*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- LEITER, S.L. and SCHOLZ-CIONCA, S., 2001. Introduction. In: S.L. LEITER and S. SCHOLZ-CIONCA, eds, *Brill's Japanese Studies Library*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 464.
- LEITER, S.L. and SCHOLZ-CIONCA, S., 2001. *Japanese Theatre And The International Stage*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill.
- LEITH, C., 2014. *Interview with Christopher Leith 12.06.2014*.
- LEITH, C., 1997. Little Angel Spreads its Wings. *Animations*, 20(6), pp. 16.
- LEITH, C., 1994. Speculations. *Animations*, 18(1), pp. 12-13.
- LEITH, C., 1985. Training the New Puppeteer. *Animations*, 8(2), pp. 19.
- LEITH, C., 1983. Bunraku: The Classical Puppet Theatre Of Japan. *Animations*, 6(5), pp. 15-16.
- LEITH, C. and ANIMATIONS, 1999. Moving Forward. *Animations*, 22(6), pp. 12-13.
- LENOIR-KINGHAM, G., 1962. The Black Theatre: a Czech Novelty. *The Stage and Television Today* (4244), pp. 14.
- LEWSON, C., 1972. Time Out with Puppets. *The Times*, 3 Jan, pp. 8.
- LEY, G., 1999. *From Mimesis To Interculturalism : Readings Of Theatrical Theory Before And After 'Modernism'*. Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press.



- MACAULAY, A., 2005. Never has Shakespeare shown such charm or relevance. *Financial Times*, 22 Apr, pp. 12.
- MACAULAY, A., 2004. Bound by an Intermittent Spell, *Financial Times*, 5 Jan, pp. 11.
- MACAULAY, A., 2004. Visit to parallel universes is out of this world REVIEW HIS DARK MATERIALS, NATIONAL THEATRE: *Financial Times*, 11 Dec, pp. 4.
- MACAULAY, A., 2002. Why Rylance is Golden, *Financial Times*, 21 Aug, pp. 10.
- MACAULAY, A., 2001. Serban fails to conjure up the required magic THEATRE: *Financial Times*, 21 Aug, pp. 14.
- MACE, E., 1968. Briefing *The Observer*, 2 Jun, pp. 22.
- MAHR, J., 1996. African Echoes. *Animations*, 19(4), pp. 7.
- MAHR, J., 1996. The Puppet Mutineers. *Animations*, 19(4), pp. 10-11.
- MANCHESTER GUARDIAN 1910. The Japanese-British Exhibition. *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 Jun.
- MANCHESTER GUARDIAN 1884. From Our London Correspondent. *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 Dec, pp. 8.
- MANNING, E., 1994. Opera and Dance: Puppets pull it off. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (5905), pp. 28.
- MARGOLIES, E., 2009. The Street of Animation. In: E. MARGOLIES, ed, *Animated Bodies*.
- MARGOLIES, E., 2006. In Breathing Hands. *Puppet Notebook*, 7, pp. 12-13.
- MARGOLIES, E., 2005. Butterfly Causes Storm. *Puppet Notebook*, (4), pp. 5.
- MARGOLIES, E., 1999 Company Profile – Complicite *Animations Online* 27 [online] Available at: <[http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyseven/profile27\\_complicite.html](http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyseven/profile27_complicite.html)> [Accessed 17 Nov 2010]
- MARKS, S., 1953. Comments on the Exhibition *The Puppet Master*, 1(8), pp. 75-81.
- MARLOWE, S., 2004. Bewitching Puppets Tug At The Heartstrings - Venus and Adonis. *The Times*, pp. 24.
- MARRANCA, B., DASGUPTA, G., 1991. *Interculturalism And Performance: Writings From PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- MARRANCA, B., 1991. Thinking About Interculturalism. In: MARRANCA, B., DASGUPTA, G., ed, *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications, pp. 9-26.
- MARTZEL, G., 1993. L'Horloge sans Cadran: Les Techniques du Bunraku. *Puck*, (6), pp. 102-107.
- MARTZEL, G., 1990. Japon: Du Rite Au Spectacle - Ningyo et Joruri. *Puck*, (3), pp. 89-94.

- MARX, G., 2009. A Matter of Life and Death: The Function of Malfunction in the work of Handspring Puppet Company. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 225-252.
- MASK, 1914. Puppets In Japan - Some Notes By A Japanese. *The Mask*, 6(3), pp. 217-220.
- MAY, D., 2010. *Choreographing Breath*. [video] [online] Available at: <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/choreographing-breath>> [Accessed 1 Dec 2010]
- MAY, D., 2010. *Choreographing Thought*. [video] [online] Available at: <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/choreographing-thought>> [Accessed 1 Dec 2010]
- MAY, D., 2010. *Interview with Neil Bartlett*. [video] [online] Available at: <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/interview-with-neil-bartlett>> [Accessed 1 Dec 2010]
- MAY, T., 1996. *The Victorian Undertaker*. Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications.
- MCBURNEY, S., 2010. Learned by Heart: Simon McBurney on *A Dog's Heart*. *A Dog's Heart (Programme)*. ENO, pp. 19-25.
- MCBURNEY, S., 1997. *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. [video]
- MCCAW, D., 1999. Puppetry and the International Workshop Festival. *Animations*, 22(5), pp. 19.
- MCCLAIN, JAMES L., WAKITA, OSAMU,, 1999. *Osaka, The Merchant's Capital Of Early Modern Japan*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- MELLO, A., 2008. Warm Up and Play. *Puppet Notebook*, (11), pp. 16-19.
- MENDUS, C., 2001. The Art of Manipulation. In: D. ANTHONY, ed, *Puppetry into Performance: A User's Guide*. Central School of Speech and Drama, pp. 8-10.
- MESCHKE, M., 1998. Sweden's Marionetteatren at 40. *Animations*, 22(1),.
- MESCHKE, M., 1974. Some Unpopular Reflections Concerning the Morale of Puppets in UNIMA. *The Puppet Master*, 10(2), pp. 11-13.
- MILLAR, M., 2008. War Horse The beginning or the end? In: D. PRIOR M., ed, *Animated Advances A Review Of Puppetry And Related Arts*. Puppet Centre Trust, pp. 41-43.
- MILLAR, M., 2007. *The horse's mouth : staging Morpurgo's War horse*. London: National Theatre in association with Oberon Books.
- MILLAR, M. and BURNS, K., 2006. *Journey Of The Tall Horse : A Story Of African Theatre*. London: Oberon.
- MILLER, K., 1991. Getting To Kimono All About Japan. *The Stage and Television Today* (5762), pp. 10.
- MITFORD, A.B., and ODAKE, 1871. *Tales of Old Japan In Two Volumes ...* London: Macmillan.

- MIYAJIMA, T. and CLAUDEL, P., 1931. *Contribution à l'étude du théâtre japonais de poupées ... troisième édition, etc. [With Plates, Including Portraits.]*. Osaka.
- MOERAN, B., 1997. *Folk Art Potters Of Japan: Beyond An Anthropology Of Aesthetics*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press.
- MORI, M., 2002. The Structure of Theater: A Japanese View of Theatricality. *SubStance*, 31(2), pp. 73-93.
- MORLEY-PRIESTMAN, A., 1985. Music Stage: Spitting image of Don Quixote. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (5426), pp. 10.
- MORLEY-PRIESTMAN, A., 1984. No beef about Argentinians. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (5389), pp. 12.
- MORLEY-PRIESTMAN, A., 1979. More Play Reviews: Barry Smith Theatre of Puppets. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (5113), pp. 20.
- MORLEY-PRIESTMAN, A., 1979. Puppet Theatre '79: The Great British Puppet Revival. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (5109), pp. 37.
- MORRIS, T., 1994. The Seven Streams of the River Ota. *The Times Literary Supplement*, 9 Sept, pp. 18.
- MORRISON, R., 2005. Butterfly Flits From Sumptuous To Sterile - Opera. *The Times*, pp. 17.
- MOXON, N., 1971. A Visit to Japan. *The Puppet Master*, 9(7), pp. 16-17.
- MRÁZEK, J., 2005. *Phenomenology Of A Puppet Theatre: Contemplations On The Art Of Javanese Wayang Kulit*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- MUNE, TORASUKE,, 1986. *Awaji Nogake Jōruri Shibai: Mune Torasuke Shashinshū*. Ōsaka-Shi: SōGei Shuppan.
- MURRAY, J., 1973. Lowland Fling. *The Guardian*, pp. 12.
- MURRAY, D., 2001. Japanese Shakespeare Delights, *Financial Times*, 23 Jul, pp. 09.
- NAKANISHI, H., 2012. Awaji Ningyō Jōruri To Ōsaka. In: H. HISABORI and T. MATSUURA, eds, *Kōkai Kōen Ensō-Kai 'Awaji Ningyōjōruri To Ōsaka' Jisshi Hōkoku*. Ōsakaichiritsudaigaku Daigakuin Bungaku Kenkyū-Ka Toshi Bunka Kenkyū Sentā, pp. 2-8.
- NAKANISHI, H., 2002. Awaji Ningyō No Hatten: Genroku Ki Kara Edo Sue Made. In: K. KIKUKAWA, ed, *Awaji Ningyō Jōruri Dentō Geinō*. Nandan: Hamada Type, pp. 66-98.
- NAKANISHI, H., 2002. Awaji Ningyō No Hirogari. In: KANEO KIKUKAWA, ed, *Awaji Ningyō Jōruri Dentō Geinō*. Nandan: Hamada Type, pp. 127-152.
- NETTELL, S., 1989. What's going on. *The Guardian*, 13 Dec, pp. 20.
- NEWMAN, B., 2006. Mechanics and magic (The National Bunraku Theatre of Osaka). *Dancing Times*, 96(1148), pp. 21.

- NEWMAN, L.M., 1989. Introduction. In: E.G. CRAIG, ed, *Black Figures : 105 Reproductions With An Unpublished Essay*. Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton.
- NICULESCU, M., 2009. On the Path of Experimentation. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Passing It On*. Charlevilles-Mezieres: l'Etretemps / Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 28-61.
- NICULESCU, M., ed, 1997. *Marionnettes en Territoire Japonais*. Charleville-Mézières (7 Pl. Winston-Churchill, 08000): Éd. IIM.
- NIIMI, KANJI,, 1976. *Awaji no Ningyō Shibai*. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten.
- NIIMI, KANJI,,SŌ, TORASUKE., 1968. *Awaji Ningyō Shibai*, Kōbe: Nojigiku Bunko.
- NODA, M., 2010. Why the West misunderstands Japanese culture. In: N. DHILLON, ed, *Shun-kin (Programme)*. pp. 8-9.
- NOMA, S., 1996. *Japanese Theater: From The Origin To The Present*. Osaka: Osaka Kyoiku Toshō.
- OATES, M., 1993. Angelo (review). *Animations*, April/May, pp. 19.
- OGA, T., MIMURA, K. and KENNY, D., 1984. *Bunraku*. Osaka: Hoikusha Publishing Co.
- OKAMOTO, H. and PASKA, R., 2000. Jouer Sur la Frontiere Entre l'Anime et l'Inanime. *Alternative Theatrales*. Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 65-66.
- OKAMOTO, S., 2001. *The Man Who Saved Kabuki: Faubion Bowers And Theatre Censorship In Occupied Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Ollie, T., 2008. From The Frontline: Horse Play. *Animations Online* 22. [online] Available at: <[http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aotwentytwo/ao22\\_frontline.html](http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aotwentytwo/ao22_frontline.html)> [Accessed 28 Oct 2010].
- OLIVER, C., 1980. Wildstars. *The Guardian*, 22 Aug, pp. 9.
- ORR, I.C., 1974. Puppet Theatre in Asia. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 33(1), pp. pp. 69-84.
- ORTOLANI, B., 1995. *The Japanese Theatre: From Shamanistic Ritual To Contemporary Pluralism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- OSBORNE, C., 1968. Little Angel Puppets at the QEH. *The Guardian*, 16 Aug, pp. 6.
- OSHIMA, K., 1972. Takuo Endo and the Relationship between Actors and Dolls. *The Drama Review: TDR*, 16(3), pp. pp. 94-102.
- OWEN, M., 1999. Long Live the King. *Sunday Times, The (London, England)*, pp. Culture 6.
- OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 2014 - "*bunraku, n.*". [online] Available at: <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/24817?redirectedFrom=bunraku#eid.>> [Accessed 23 May 2014]
- PARKER, D. and PARKER, S., 1990. Touring in Japan. *Animations*, 13(2), pp. 27.

- PARKER, H.S.E., 2005. *Progressive Traditions: An Illustrated Study Of Plot Repetition In Traditional Japanese Theatre*. Leiden: Brill.
- PATE, A.S., 2008. *Japanese Dolls: The Fascinating World Of Ningyō*. Tokyo; North Clarendon, Vt.: Tuttle Pub.
- PAVIS, P., 1996. *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge.
- PAVIS, P., 1992. *Theatre At The Crossroads Of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- PECKNOLD, A., 1989. *Mime : The Step Beyond Words, For The Actors Of Dance And Drama*. Toronto, Ont.: NC Press.
- PEMPEL, T.J., 2004. Challenges to Bilateralism: Changing Foes, Capital Flows, and Complex Forums. In: E. KRAUSS S. and T.J. PEMPEL, eds, *Beyond bilateralism: U.S.-Japan relations in the new Asia-Pacific*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-33.
- PERCIVAL, J., 1975. Puppets in an Eastern Dance - Rituals. *The Times*, 12 Dec, pp. 14.
- PERCIVAL, J., 1973. Scottish Theatre Ballet. *The Times*, 21 Aug, pp. 10.
- PETER, J., 2002. Come the Revolution. *The Sunday Times*, 25 Aug, pp. Culture 20.
- PETER, J., 1999. Through a Glass, Sharply. *The Sunday Times*, pp. Culture 16.
- PETER, J., 1997. Portrait of Undying Love. *The Sunday Times*, , pp. Culture 14.
- PETER, J., 1995. The Critical List. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 10/54.
- PETER, J., 1994. Nowhere to Go But Up. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 10/28.
- PHILLIPS, J., 1979. John Blundall an appreciation. *Animations*, (February/March), pp. 8.
- PHILPOTT, A.R., 1969. *Dictionary of Puppetry*. London: Macdonald & Co.
- PIMPANEAU, J., 1978. *Fantômes Manipulés : Le Théâtre de Poupées au Japon*. Paris: Centre de Publication Asie Orientale.
- PLOWRIGHT, P.S., 2002. *Mediums, Puppets, And The Human Actor In The Theatres Of The East*. Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press.
- PLUMWOOD, V., 2000. Belonging, Naming and Decolonisation. *Ecopolitics, Thought & Action*, 1(1), pp. 90-106.
- PRESS JUNIOR, P., 1974. Punch and Judy in Japan pt. 1. *The Puppet Master*, 10(1), pp. 8-10.
- PRESS JUNIOR, P., 1974. Punch and Judy in Japan pt. 2. *The Puppet Master*, 10(2), pp. 7-9.
- PRESS JUNIOR, P. and PRESS SENIOR, P., 1976. Punch and Judy in France . *The Puppet Master*, 11(2), pp. 7-9.

- PRINGLE, P., 2009. Mitsuma Kai vs. Shōchiku: Occupation Reforms and the Unionization of Bunraku. In: S.L. LEITER, ed, *Rising From The Flames: The Rebirth Of Theater In Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, pp. 185-216.
- PRINGLE, P., 1999. *Patronage of Gidayu Narrative Performers of Japanese Bunraku Puppet Theatre 1896-1945*. PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- PRINGLE, P., CHIKAMATSU, M., and UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA. 1992. *An Interpretive Guide To Bunraku*. University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- PRIOR, D.M., 2010. Rien Que du Theatre. *Puck*, (17), pp. 51-58.
- PRIOR, D.M., 2008 On Emotion *Animations Online* 25, [online] Available at: <<http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aotwentyfive/reviews.html>> [Accessed 12 Feb 2011]
- PRIOR, D.M., ed, 2007. *Animated Encounters: A Review Of Puppetry And Related Arts : Animations In Print. v. 1*. London: Puppet Centre Trust.
- PRIOR, D.M., 2007. Blind Faith - An Animated Encounter With Anthony Minghella And Carolyn Choa Reveals The Story Behind Their Collaboration With Puppeteers Blind Summit On Madam Butterfly. In: D.M. PRIOR, ed, *Animated Encounters: A Review Of Puppetry And Related Arts : Animations In Print. v. 1*. London: Puppet Centre Trust, pp. 9-11.
- PRIOR, D.M., 2007 Company Profile: Faulty Optic, *Animations Online* 20. [online] Available at: <<http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aotwenty/faultyoptic.html>> [Accessed 23 May 2011]
- PRIOR, D.M., 2006 Company Profile: Improbable, *Animations Online* 16. [online] Available at: <<http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aosixteen/profile.html>> [Accessed 23 May 2011]
- PRIOR, D.M., 2005a. At the Heart of the Fringe. *Puppet Notebook*, (4), pp. 6.
- PRIOR, D.M., 2005b. Total Puppetry: Dorothy Max Prior looks at how puppetry fared at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, *Animations Online* 15 [online] Available at: <[http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aofifteen/festivalfocus\\_totalpuppet.html](http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aofifteen/festivalfocus_totalpuppet.html)> [Accessed 16 Jun 2011]
- PRIOR, D.M., 2004 Grown-Up Puppetry. *Animations Online* 11. [online] Available at: <<http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aoeleven/featureone.html>> [Accessed 30 Jul 2011]
- PROPST, A., 2010. Puss in Boots. *Theater Mania*, [online] Available at: <[http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/10-2010/puss-in-boots\\_31001.html](http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city-theater/reviews/10-2010/puss-in-boots_31001.html)>, [Accessed 16 Jun 2014]
- PROSCHAN, F., 1983. *Puppets, Masks, And Performing Objects From Semiotic Perspectives*. Berlin; New York; Amsterdam: Mouton.
- PUPPET MASTER, 1962. The Little Angel Theatre. *The Puppet Master*, 6(11), pp. 10-11.
- PUPPET MASTER, 1958. Bucharest, *The Puppet Master*, 5(9), pp. 3.
- PUPPET MASTER, 1956. The Performances. *The Puppet Master*, 5(3), pp. 15.

- PUPPETEERS UK, 2011. *Puppeteers Directory [Homepage of Puppeteers UK]*, [online] Available at: <<http://www.puppeteersuk.com/dirwordsearch.asp?search=jeremy+bidgood&Submit=Search>> [Accessed 2 April 2011].
- PYLE, K.B., 1979. The Japanese Self-Image. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 5(1), pp. 1-4.
- QUENNELL, P., 1932. *A Superficial Journey through Tokyo and Peking. [With plates.]*. London: Faber & Faber.
- RAMPLEY, M., 2005. *Exploring Visual Culture : Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- RAMPLEY, M., 2005. The Rise and Fall and Rise of the Author. In: M. RAMPLEY , ed, *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 149-162.
- RATCLIFFE, M., 1991. Heads turn only for the master. *The Guardian*, 29 Sept, pp. 56.
- REA, K., 1991. Theatre Flees The Shadow Of The Past - Arts of Japan. *The Times*, 10 Oct.
- RECOING, A., 2009. I Is Another. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Passing It On*. Charlevilles-Mezieres: l'Etretemps / Institut International de la Marionette, pp. 202-211.
- REMSHARDT, R., 2010. War Horse, and Stovepipe. *Theatre Journal*, 62(2), pp. 271-275.
- RILEY, C., 1991. Turning Japanese. *The Guardian*, 22 Jun, pp. A33.
- ROBERTSON, J., 1995. Mon Japon: The Revue Theater as a Technology of Japanese Imperialism. *American Ethnologist*, 22(4), pp. 970-996.
- ROBERTSON, J., 1991. Theatrical Resistance, Theatres of Restraint: The Takarazuka Revue and the "State Theatre" Movement in Japan. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 64(4), pp. 165-177.
- RÖPKE, I.M., 1999. *Historical Dictionary of Osaka and Kyoto*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.
- RUBIN, D., 1995. *The World Encyclopedia Of Contemporary Theatre. Vol. 1*. New York: Routledge.
- RUSHDIE, S., 1988. *The Satanic Verses*. Reading: Vintage.
- SAID, E.W., 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- SALTZMAN-LI, K., 2007. Bunraku. In: S.L. LEITER , ed, *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, pp. 578-582.
- SASAGUCHI, R., 2009. Swept Away by 'Tenpesuto'. *The Japan Time*, [online] Available at: <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2009/08/28/stage/swept-away-by-the-tenpesuto/#.VArN8GSwKkR>> [Accessed 16 Jan 2014]
- SASAGUCHI, R., 2004. UNESCO Top Honor For Bunraku Puppet Theater. *The Japan Times* [online] Available at: <<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/ft20040204a1.html>> [Accessed 15 Mar 2012]

SASAYAMA, T., MULRYNE, J. R., SHEWRING, M., eds, 1998. *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SAWA, N. and NARABE, K., 2008. *Artist Interview – A Look Into The World Of Performer Noriyuki Sawa With The New Form Of Puppetry Known As "Figure Theatre"*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.performingarts.jp/E/art\\_interview/0807/1.html](http://www.performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0807/1.html)> [19 Jan 2011].

SCHECHNER, R., 2000. Performance As a "Formation of Power and Knowledge". *TDR*, 44(4), pp. 5-7.

SCHECHNER, R., 1991. Intercultural Themes. In: MARRANCA, B., DASGUPTA, G., eds, *Interculturalism and Performance : writings from PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications, pp. 308-320.

SCHECHNER, R., 1982. The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde . In: SCHECHNER, R., ed, *The End Of Humanism: Writings On Performance*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

SCHECHNER, R., ed, 1982. *The End Of Humanism: Writings On Performance*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

SCHECHNER, R. and TAYMOR, J., 1999. Julie Taymor: From Jacques Lecoq to "The Lion King": An Interview. *TDR (1988-)*, 43(3), pp. 36-55.

SCHOLTZ, A., 'Almond-Eyed Artisans' / 'Dishonouring the National Polity': The Japanese Village Exhibition in Victorian London. *Japanese Studies*, 27(1), pp. 73-85.

SCHOLZ-CIONCA, S., REGELSBERGER, A., 2011. *Japanese Theatre Transcultural: German And Italian Intertwinings*. München: Iudicium.

SCHULER, C., 2008. Editorial Comment. *Theatre Journal*, 60(1), pp. vii-viii.

SCHUMANN, P., 1991. The Radicality of the Puppet Theatre. *TDR*, 35(4), pp. pp. 75-83.

SCHWARTZ, B.D., SKIPITARES, T., TAYMOR, J. and JENNER, C.L., 1983. Interview: Working with Puppets. *Performing Arts Journal*, 7(1), pp. pp. 103-116.

SCOTT, A.C., 1973. *The Puppet Theatre Of Japan*. Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle.

SCOTT, S.M., 2010. *Toys and American Culture: An Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood.

SECKERSON, E., 2005. Two Rings and a Magic Butterfly. *The Independent*, pp. 44.

SENNETT, R., 2008. *The Craftsman*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

SHARP, J., 2007. Forgotten Roots of Japanimation: Masters of Puppets. *Film International*, 5(1), pp. 58-71.

SHAW, P., 1997. Sweet F.O. *Animations*, 20(2), pp. 12-13.

SHAW, P., 1996. New Directions. *Animations*, 19(2), pp. 8-9.

SHAW, P., 1993. The Making of Dragon. *Animations*, 16(2), pp. 12-13.



- SHAW, P., 1993. A Particular Vision. *Animations*, 16(3), pp. 8-9.
- SHELLARD, D., 1999. *British Theatre Since The War*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- SHEWRING, M., 1998. Hideki Noda's Shakespeare: The Languages Of Performance. In: T. SASAYAMA, J.R. MULRYNE and M. SHEWRING, eds, *Shakespeare and the Japanese stage*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 94-109.
- SHIBAYAMA, Y., ed, 1988. *World Puppetry Festival XV UNIMA Congress - Programme*. Japan: Takeyoshi Nishio.
- SHIMAZU, N., 2014. Diplomacy As Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955. *Modern Asian Studies*, 48(01), pp. 225-252.
- SHIMAZU, N., 2009. *Japanese Society At War: Death, Memory And The Russo-Japanese War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SHIMAZU, N., 2006. Conclusion - Towards Nationalisms in Japan. In: SHIMAZU, NAOKO,, ed, *Nationalisms in Japan*. London: Routledge, pp. 181-187.
- SHIMAZU, N., ed, 2006. *Nationalisms in Japan*. London: Routledge.
- SHIMAZU, N., 2003. Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Postwar Japan. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38(1), pp. 101-116.
- SHINKOKAI, K., BUNKO, 1968. *World Theatre Season 1968: Bunraku 10th-22<sup>nd</sup> June, The Aldwych Theatre, London (Programme)*. Japan Cultural Society.
- SHIRANE, H., ed, 2002. *Early Modern Japanese Literature An Anthology, 1600-1900*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- SHŌKŌSAI, H., ASANO, K., HATTORI, Y., 1973. *Shibai gakuya zue*. Tōkyō: Kokuritsu Gekijō Chōsa Yōseibu Geinō Chōsashitsu.
- SHULMAN, M., 1968. Is That Dummy A Dolt Or A Genius? *Evening Standard*, 11 Jun.
- SHUTTLEWORTH, I., 2008. On Emotion. *Financial Times*, 17 Nov, pp. 19.
- SHUTTLEWORTH, I., 1996. Streams that Lead to Zen. *Financial Times*, 24 Sept, pp. 15.
- SICHEL, A., 2009. Escaping the Puppet Ghetto. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 151-175.
- SIDDLE, R., 2006. Indigenous Nationalism and the Ainu. In: SHIMAZU, NAOKO,, ed, *Nationalisms in Japan*. London: Routledge, pp. 110-130.
- SIEFFERT, RENÉ., WASSERMAN, MICHEL., 1983. *Théâtre classique*. [Paris]: Maison des cultures du monde: Publications Orientalistes de France.
- SIEGEL, H., 1959. The Bunraku-za Theatre. *The Puppet Master*, 6(2), pp. 15-16.
- SIMMEN, R., 1975. *The World of Puppets*. New York: Crowell.

- SKIPITARES, T., 2004. The Tension of Modern Bunraku. *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 26(1), pp. 13-21.
- SLATER, D., 1991. Now It's Medieval Murder for Lindsay. *Daily Mail*, 7 Sept, pp. 18.
- SLUTSKAYA, N., 2006. Creativity and Repetition. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 15(2), pp. 150-156.
- SMITH, B., 1977. Theatre of Puppets at the Young Vic. *Animations*, (Christmas), pp. 3.
- SMITH, B. and JUDD, A., 1982. A Reply to Jude Kelly and Derek Francis. *Animations*, 6(5), pp. 6.
- SMITH, BECCY., 2007 Back to the Future *Animations Online*, 20, [online] Available at: <<http://animations.puppetcentre.org.uk/aotwenty/backtothefuture.html>> [Accessed Feb 27 2011]
- SMITH, BECCY., 2004 Blind Summit: A Company Profile. *Animations Online* 7, [online] <<http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animationsonline/aoseven/blindsummit.htm>> [29 Mar 2011]
- SMITH, R., 2010. Putting Puppets in the Round. In: B. CLARE and L. HALL, eds, *Or You Could Kiss Me (production programme)*. Cantate Print Ltd, London.
- SMITH, G., 1861. *Ten weeks in Japan*, London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts.
- SŌKYOKU NYŪMON KUDEN KAN 1801. Awaji.
- SOLOMONIK, I.N., 1992. *Traditsionnyĭ teatr kukol Vostoka. Osnovnye vidy teatra ob'emnykh form*. Moscow: Nauka.
- SOMMERVILLE, C., 1962. International Puppet Festival. *The Puppet Master*, 7(2), pp. 13.
- SPEAIGHT, G., 1980. *John Wright and the Little Angel Theatre*. London: Potheinos.
- SPEAIGHT, G., 1971. Beowulf. *The Puppet Master*, 9(7), pp. 20.
- SPEAIGHT, G., 1958. Some Personal Impressions of Bucharest and Liège. *The Puppet Master*, 6(1), pp. 12-13.
- SPEAIGHT, G., 1955. *The History of the English Puppet Theatre, etc. [With illustrations.]*. pp. 350. George G. Harrap & Co.: London.
- SPENCER, C., 2010. Or You Could Kiss Me, National Theatre, review. *The Telegraph*, 6 Oct.
- SPENCER, C., 2007. War Horse: Horse play is no puppet show. [online] Available at: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/drama/3668613/War-Horse-Horse-play-is-no-puppet-show.html>> [Accessed 15 May 2011].
- SPENCER, C., 2004. Triumphant Transformation. *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 Dec.
- SPENCER, C., 2004. Working with the wrong material. *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 Jan, pp. 18.

- SPIVAK, G., 1996. More on Power and Knowledge. In: G. SPIVAK, D. LANDRY and G.M. MACLEAN, eds, *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works Of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New York: Routledge, pp. 174-214.
- SPIVAK, G. C., LANDRY, D., MACLEAN, G. M., 1996. *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works Of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New York: Routledge.
- STAFFORD, N., 2007. *War Horse*. Faber and Faber, London.
- STAGE AND TELEVISION TODAY, 1976. More News From The Edinburgh Festival. *The Stage and Television Today (Archive: 1959-1994)*, (4961), pp. 28.
- STAGE AND TELEVISION TODAY, 1968. Colwyn Bay Festival. *The Stage and Television Today*, 23 May, pp. 3.
- STANLEY, N.J., 2003. History As Theme Park: Reconfiguring the Human Journey in the Art of Theodora Skipitares. *TDR (1988-)*, 47(2), pp. pp. 34-70.
- STAUB, N., 2005. International Significance of Ningyo Joruri Bunraku. *Puppetry Yearbook*, 6, pp. 231-238.
- STAUB, N., 2002. Craig's Vision Realized: Julie Taymor's The Lion King. *Puppetry Yearbook*, 5, pp. 139-148.
- STAUB, N., 1997. Besides Bunraku: The Incredible Variety of Japanese Puppetry. *The Puppetry Year Book*, 3, pp. 21-42.
- STAUB, N., 1997. Book Review: Michiko Ueno-Herr, *Masters, Disciples and the Art of the Bunraku Puppeteer's Performance*. *The Puppetry Year Book*, 3.
- STAUB, N., 1997. False Assumptions. In: D. SILAGY, ed, *Puppet Art At The Turn Of The Millenium*. UNIMA: Hungary, pp. 33-36.
- STAUB, N., 1990. Bunraku: A Contemporary Western Fascination. In: L. KOMNIZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press Washington, pp. 47-52.
- STAUB, N., 1998. Le Theatre Hybide de Julie Taymor. *Puck*, (11), pp. 104-106.
- STEWART, M., 1982. The Craig Connection. *Animations*, 5(5), pp. 3-15-16.
- SZALWINSKA, M., 2011. Tears for souvenirs. *The Sunday Times*, pp. 19.
- TADA, K. and TADA, H., 1985. *Jōruri Ningyō no Horikata*. Tōkyō: Nichibō Shuppansha.
- TAKAHASHI, A. and NARABE, K., 2009. *Artist Interview – Another Fascination Of Bunraku: The World Of The Tokoyama Hair Designer*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.performingarts.jp/E/art\\_interview/1006/1.html](http://www.performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/1006/1.html)> [19 Jan 2011].
- TAKAHASHI, J., KALLAND, A., MOERAN, B. and BESTOR, T.C., 1989. Japanese Whaling Culture Continuities and Diversities. *Maritime Anthropological Studies*, 2(3), pp. 105-133.
- TAKAHASHI, Y., 1993. *Bunraku*. Tōkyō: Heibonsha.

- TANITCH, R., 2004. Six-Hour Epic Of Great Spectacle. [online] Available at: <[http://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/122204/r122204\\_02.htm](http://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/122204/r122204_02.htm)> [14 Oct 2012].
- TANIZAKI, J., 2001. *Some Prefer Nettles*. London: Vintage.
- TAXIDOU, O., 1998. *The Mask: A Periodical Performance By Edward Gordon Craig*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic publishers.
- TAYLOR, J., 2009a. Introduction. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 19-41.
- TAYLOR, J., 2009b. Preface. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Handspring Puppet Company*. Parkwood, South Africa: David Krut, pp. 11-18.
- TAYLOR, J., 1998. Writer's Note. In: J. TAYLOR, ed, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. University of Cape Town Press, pp. ii-vii.
- TAYLOR, J., KENTRIDGE, W. and HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY, 2001. Ubu and the Truth Commission. In: H. GILBERT, ed, *Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology*. London: Routledge, pp. 25-47.
- TAYLOR, P., 2004. Venus and Adonis, Little Angel Theatre, London. *The Independent*, [online] Available at: <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/venus-and-adonis-little-angel-theatre-london-29556.html>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2010].
- TAYMOR, J., 1997. *The Lion King: Pride Rock on Broadway*. New York: Hyperion.
- TAYMOR, J., 1995. Productions. In: E. BLUMENTHAL, and J. TAYMOR, eds, *Julie Taymor, Playing with Fire: Theater, Opera, Film*. New York: H.N. Abrams, pp. 54-202.
- THORNBURY, B., 2013. *America's Japan and Japan's Performing Arts: Cultural Mobility and Exchange in New York, 1952-2011*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- THORNBURY, B., 2008. America's Kabuki-Japan, 1952–1960: Image Building, Myth Making, and Cultural Exchange. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 25(2), pp. 193-230.
- THORNBURY, B., 2007. Other Japanese Puppet Theatres. In: S. LEITER, ed, *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Greenwood Press, pp. 582-583.
- THORNBURY, B., 2007. Puppet Theatre: Japan. In: S. LEITER, ed, *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Greenwood Press, pp. 577-578.
- THORNBURY, B., 2001. The View from Japan: The Traditional Performing Arts as Cultural Ambassadors Abroad. In: S.L. LEITER and S. SCHOLZ-CIONCA, eds, *Japanese Theatre and the International Stage*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, pp. 213-230.
- THORNBURY, B.E., 1997. *The Folk Performing Arts : Traditional Culture In Contemporary Japan*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- THORNBURY, B.E., 1994. The Cultural Properties Protection Law and Japan's Folk Performing Arts. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 53(2), pp. 211-225.

- TILLIS, S., 1992. *Toward An Aesthetics Of The Puppet: Puppetry As A Theatrical Art*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- TIMES, 1975. Sir Peter Daubeny - A Major Theatre Influence. *The Times*, 7 Aug, pp. 14.
- TIMES, 1955. Azuma Kabuki Dancers And Musicians. *The Times*, 13 Sept, pp. 12.
- TIMES, 1958a. Tale Of The 47 Ronin. *The Times*, 29 Apr, pp. 3.
- TIMES, 1958b. Triumph Of The Puppeteer's Art In Japan. *The Times*, 13 Mar, pp. 3.
- TIMES, 1919. The Theatre In Japan. *The Times*, 18 Dec, pp. 10.
- TIMES, 1910. The Japanese Drama. *The Times*, 19 Jul, pp. 56.
- TIMES OF SWAZILAND, 1981. Introducing Voets, Muzz and Dora. *The Times of Swaziland*, pp. 5.
- TITIRIJAI, 2010. *Window to Japanese Puppetry*. Tolosa: Guipúzcoa.
- TŌGŌ, K., 2010. Japan's Foreign Policy, 1945-2009 The Quest For A Proactive Policy. Leiden: Brill.
- TOPF, H., 1985. Topf Reports Braunschweig. *Animations*, 9(11).
- TOSHIKAZU, N., 2005. The Takayama Festival and Whale Baleen *Isana*, 32 [online] Available at: <[http://www.whaling.jp/english/isana/no32\\_01.html](http://www.whaling.jp/english/isana/no32_01.html)> [Accessed 10 Jun 2014]
- TOTMAN, C.D., 2000. *A History of Japan*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- TOWSEN, J., 1972. The Bread and Puppet Theatre: The "Stations of the Cross". *The Drama Review: TDR*, 16(3), pp. 57-70.
- TREWIN, J., C., 1968. Farce Among the Furs. *The Illustrated London News*, 22 Jun, pp. 33.
- TSCHUDIN, J., 2006. Le Theatre de Poupees Japonais Avant le Annees 1730. *Puck*, (42), pp. 38-42.
- TSCHUDIN, J., 2001. French Discovery of the Japanese Theatre. In: S.L. LEITER and S. SCHOLZ-CIONCA, eds, *Japanese Theatre And The International Stage*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 27-42.
- TSUBOUCHI, S., 1926. A Letter From Doctor Shoyo Tsubo-Uchi, The Best Authority On Japanese Drama. In: A. MIYAMORI and R. NICHOLS, eds, *Masterpieces of Chikamatsu : the Japanese Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, pp. 359.
- TUFTS, N., 1972. Puppet Masters. *The Guardian*, 17 Mar, pp. 11.
- UENO-HERR, M., 1997. Traditional Puppetry in Japan, An Overview. In: M. NICULESCU, ed, *Marionnettes en Territoire Japonais*. Charleville-Mézières (7 Pl. Winston-Churchill, 08000): Éd. IIM, pp. 17-24.
- UENO-HERR, M., 1995. *Masters, Disciples, And The Art Of The Bunraku Puppeteer's Performance*. PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

UENO-HERR, M., 1990. An Introduction to the Art of Bunraku. In: L. KOMNIZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press Washington, pp. 53-58.

UM, H., 2005. *Diasporas And Interculturalism In Asian Performing Arts*. New York; London: Roudledge.

UMAZUME, M., ed, 2000. *Awaji Ningyo Shibai*. Awaji Puppet Theater Book Editorial Committee.

UNION INTERNATIONALE DES MARIONNETTES and NICULESCU, M., 1967. *The Puppet Theatre Of The Modern World: An International Presentation In Word And Picture*; London,: Harrap.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, 2008. *Japanese Studies Program*. [online] Available at: <<http://japanesestudies.missouri.edu/bunrakupuppets.shtml>> [Accessed 4 Jan 2010].

V&A NETWORK, 2013. *V&A Acquires The Original Joey Puppet From The National Theatre's West End Stage Production Of War Horse*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/network/war-horse>> [Accessed 26 Feb 2014].

VALENTINE, J., 1998 Naming the Other: Power, Politeness and the Inflation of Euphemisms. *Sociological Research Online* 34. [online] Available at: <<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/3/4/7.html>> [Accessed 3 Nov 2013]

VAN WERSON, G., 1991. Opera and Dance: Bunraku The Puppet Theatre of Japan. *The Stage and Television Today*, (5768), pp. 16.

VARIETY, 1968. Legitimate: Daubeny Wants His Own Choices Of Soviet's Legit. *Variety*, 14 Feb, pp. 65-66.

VIEW LONDON, 2011, Puppet Cabaret at Wiltons Music Hall. *View London* [online] Available at: <<http://www.viewlondon.co.uk/whatson/puppet-cabaret-at-wiltons-music-hall-article-11229.html>> [Accessed 30 Oct 2011].

VIOLETTE, M., 2009. Noir (Theatre). In: H. JURKOWSKI and T. FOULC, eds, *Encyclopédie Mondiale Des Arts De La Marionnette*. Montpellier; Charleville-Mézières: Entretemps ; Unima, pp. 497-498.

WAGNER, R., 1975. *The Invention Of Culture*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

WALSH, S., 1968. South Bank Festival. *The Observer*, 18 Aug, pp. 20.

WARDLE, I., 1977. Illuminatus! *The Times*, 11 Mar, pp. 13.

WARDLE, I., 1975. Not hag-ridden by the past. *The Times*, 2 Apr, pp. 12.

WARDLE, I., 1973. Unmistakable Sense of Genius - The Possessed. *The Times*, 22 May, pp. 11.

WARDLE, I., 1972a. Kabuki - Sadler's Wells. *The Times*, 6 Jun, pp. 13.

WARDLE, I., 1972b. Noh - Lyceum Theatre. *The Times*, 22 Aug, pp. 7.

WARDLE, I., 1972c. The Possessed. *The Times*, 30 May, pp. 8.

- WARDLE, I., 1968a. A Doll with a hidden hand. *The Times*, 15 Jun, pp. 19.
- WARDLE, I., 1968b. The Peculiar Magic Of Japanese Puppets Bunraku National Theatre Of Japan *The Times*, 11 Jun, pp. 15.
- WASKIEL, M., 2009. Wilkowski (Jan). In: H. JURKOWSKI and T. FOULC, eds, *Encyclopédie Mondiale Des Arts De La Marionnette*. Montpellier; Charleville-Mézières: Entretemps ; Unima, pp. 761-762.
- WATANABE, Y., 1939. *Bunraku, Japanese Puppet Play*; Tokyo: Japan photo service.
- WATSON, N., 2009. From Loofah to Swazzle. *Puppet Notebook*, (15), pp. 10-11.
- WATSON, S., 2014. Whaling in Japan the Bunraku Argument. *Liberty Voice*, [online] Available at: <<http://guardianlv.com/2014/04/whaling-in-japan-the-bunraku-argument/>> [Accessed 3 Apr 2014].
- WHITEHEAD, A., E., 1980. Why I don't Write for the Puppet Theatre. *Animations*, (June/July), pp. 3.
- WILSON, P.J., 2004. *The Space Between : The Art Of Puppetry And Visual Theatre In Australia*. Sydney: Currency Press.
- WRIGHT, J., 1986. *Rod, Shadow And Glove Puppets From The Little Angel Theatre*. London: Hale.
- WRIGHT, J., 1952. Using Black Light. *The Puppet Master*, 4(1), pp. 8-10.
- WRIGHT, J., 1951. *Your Puppetry*. London: Sylvan Press.
- WRIGHT, L., 1999. Right from the Start. *Animations*, Oct/Nov, pp. 14-15.
- YAMADA, S., FUKUDA, F., 1980. *Kashira : Nihon no Ningyō Shibai*. Tōkyō: Rippū Shobō.
- YOSHIDA, B., 2006. *Bunraku no kashira : Kokuritsu Bunraku Gekijō shozō*. Tōkyō: Nihon Geijutsu Bunka Shinkōkai.
- YOSHIDA, B., 1990. Yoshida Bungoro – An Artist Remembers. In: L. KOMINZ and M. LEVENSON, eds, *The Language of the Puppet*. Washington: Pacific Puppetry Centre Press, pp. 59-62.
- YOSHINAGA T., SAITO S., AND YAMAGUCHI H., 1958. *Masterpieces of Japanese Puppetry, Sculptured Heads of the Bunraku Theater*. Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co.
- YOUNG, B.A., 1976. Bunraku. *The Financial Times*, 2 Sept, pp. 3.