

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
THE *KAYON* IN THE SHADOW PUPPET THEATRE  
OF JAVA, BALI AND KELANTAN:  
A VISUAL AND INTERPRETIVE  
UNDERSTANDING OF ITS SYMBOLS**

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To  
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How Wee Ling  
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and my family

With gratitude for their support and sacrifices

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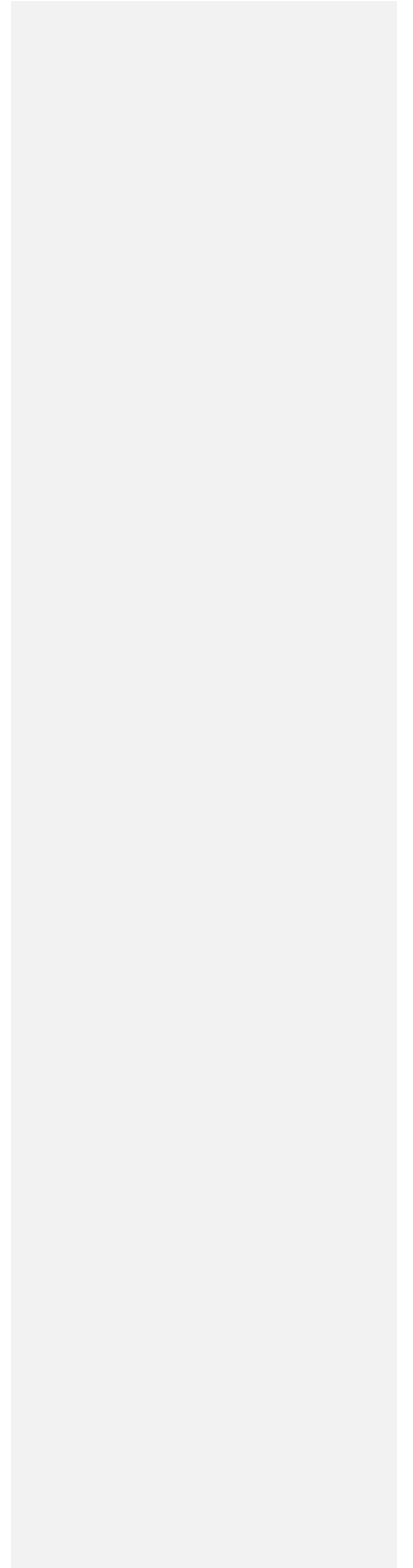
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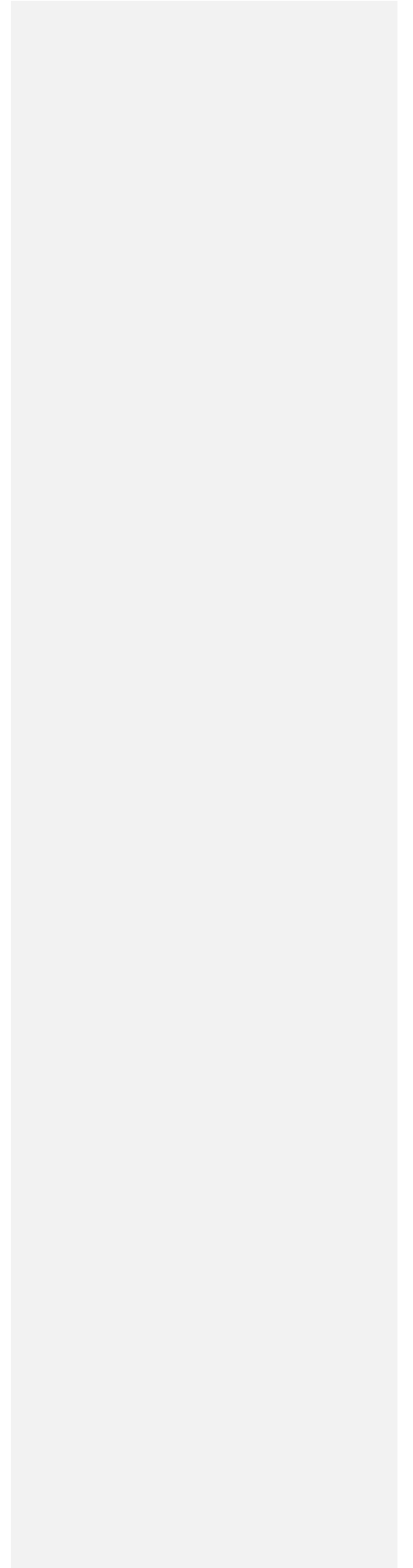
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INTERPRETASI TENTANG SIMBOL-SIMBOLNYA**

**ABSTRAK**

Kayon dari Jawa, dikenali sebagai kakayonan di Bali, dan sebagai pohon beringin di Kelantan, merupakan figura wayang yang berbentuk pokok atau sehelai daun yang digunakan dalam upacara pembukaan dan penutupan wayang kulit di daerah-daerah ini. Wayang yang menyerupai bentuk pokok, dengan kefungsian yang sama, tidak ditemui dalam wayang kulit di luar Indonesia dan Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun ia boleh ditemui dalam bentuk penyamaran dalam wayang kulit Nang Talung di negeri Thai, di mana Maharisi memegang sesuatu objek yang menyerupai kayon. Kayon dalam wayang kulit purwa dari Surakarta (Jawa Tengah) yang digunakan oleh Ki Sumari; kakayonan dalam wayang kulit parwa dari Tabanan (Selatan Bali) yang digunakan oleh Mangku dalang I Wayan Nardayana dan pohon beringin dalam wayang kulit Kelantan yang digunakan oleh Tok dalang Hamzah Awang Amat dari Kota Bharu, Malaysia telah dikenalpasti sebagai jenis kayon yang piawai juga sesuai untuk kajian ini .

Tujuan tesis ini ialah untuk mencari makna kayon secara menyeluruh, dan perbezaan simbol-simbol yang muncul seperti yang telah difahami oleh dalang-dalang dan kustodian atau penjaga wayang kulit di daerah-daerah ini. Kajian perbandingan telah dibuat tentang bagaimana kayon berperanan dalam konteks budaya dan struktur sosial di setiap daerah. Kaedah kualitatif telah digunakan yang menggabungkan kaedah pemerhatian ke atas dalang-dalang dalam persekitaran mereka dan menerusi kaedah temubual secara tidak formal dengan mereka yang terlibat. Kaedah logik abduktif juga

digunakan bagi mendapatkan diskripsi dan pemahaman perbandingan tentang peranan serta penafsiran tentang kayon dan ia dilakukan dengan membuat kajian secara meluas melalui tinjauan literatur.

Penemuan yang diperolehi menunjukkan simbol-simbol tentang kayon telah diserapkan melalui sistem-sistem kepercayaan yang berbeza apabila kosmologi yang berkaitan dengannya berubah mengikut peredaran masa. Ia merangkumi animisme, shamanisme dan penyembahan nenek-moyang, Hinduisme-Bhuddhisme dan Islam. Epik-epik seperti Ramayana dan Mahabharata juga telah menunjukkan pengaruh yang penting terhadap makna simbolik yang mendalam tentang kayon. Setiap dalang lancar sekali dalam mengukuhkan kosmologi yang berhubung kait dengan pelbagai kepercayaan dan epik-epik purbakala. Penemuan juga menunjukkan kayon bukan sahaja merupakan satu tubuh *per se* tetapi juga berkait rapat dengan ritual yang telah dipersembahkan oleh masyarakat yang menyokong wayang kulit ini. Satu lagi penemuan menunjukkan prihal-prihal seperti upacara mencapai kedewasaan, mitos berhubung dengan kedewaan, pelindung roh-roh nenek-moyang, tempat-tempat tipikal, dan pentas, kesemuanya menghasilkan simbolisme tentang kayon.

Tafsiran yang berhubung kait tentang kayon sukar untuk difahami secara visual kerana terdapat dimensi yang tersembunyi untuk memahaminya. Konsep zahir (luaran/fizikal) apa yang boleh dilihat – dan batin (dalaman/rohani) - apa yang tersembunyi – memainkan peranan yang penting dalam memahami kayon secara total tentang teater wayang kulit di daerah-daerah ini.

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE *KAYON* IN THE SHADOW PUPPET  
THEATRE OF JAVA, BALI AND KELANTAN: A VISUAL AND  
INTERPRETIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ITS SYMBOLS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The *kayon* of Java, known also as *kakayonan* in Bali, and referred to as the *pohon beringin* in Kelantan, is an ornate tree-or leaf-shaped puppet with which all shadow puppet theatre performances across these locations are formally opened and closed. A tree-shaped figure, with equivalent functions, does not appear in the shadow puppet theatre outside Indonesia and Malaysia. However, it appears in a disguised fashion in the Thai *nang talung* version of the shadow puppet theatre (the sage carries in his hand an object that resembles the *kayon*). The *kayon* of the *wayang kulit purwa* of Surakarta (Central Java), used by Ki Sumari; the *kakayonan* of the *wayang kulit parwa* of Tabanan (Southern Bali) used by *Mangku dalang* I Wayan Nardayana and the *pohon beringin* of the *wayang kulit Kelantan*, (Kota Bharu, Malaysia) used by *Tok dalang* Hamzah Awang Amat, have been identified as the standard type of *kayon* for this research.

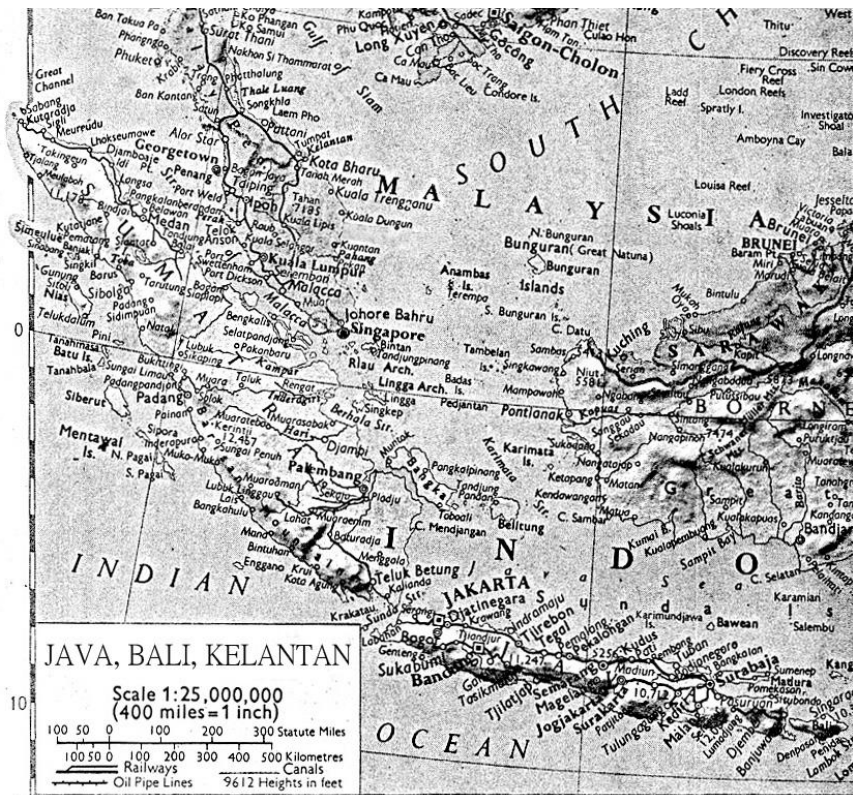
The aim of this thesis was to find the meaning of the *kayon* as whole, and the different symbols that appear on it, as understood by the puppeteers and custodians of the shadow puppet theatre of these regions. A comparative study was conducted of how the *kayon* functioned within the cultural and social structure of each region.



Qualitative methods were used; a combination of observation of the puppeteers in their environment, and informal interviews with them. Abductive logic was used to derive descriptions and a comparative understanding of the role and meaning of the *kayon*, and this was supplemented with an extensive review of related literature.

It was discovered that the symbols of the *kayon* have been absorbed from different belief systems as the cosmology associated with it has evolved over time. These include animism, shamanism and ancestral worship, Hinduism-Buddhism and Islam. The epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have also had a vital influence on the symbolic significance of the *kayon*. Each puppeteer is fluent with the underpinnings of the cosmology relating to the various beliefs and the ancient epics. The findings showed that the *kayon* was not just a figure *per se* but was also closely connected with rituals that were performed by the community that supported this theatre form. The inquiry also found that subjects, such as rite of passage, myths concerning deities, ancestral guardian spirits, palaces as archetypes, and the stage, have had a bearing on the symbolism of the *kayon*.

The meanings attached to the *kayon* go beyond what is visually apprehended; there is a hidden dimension to the understanding of it. The concepts of *zahir* (external/physical) – what is seen – and *batin* (internal/spiritual) – what is hidden – play a significant role in the understanding of the *kayon* in its totality within the shadow puppet theatre of these locations.

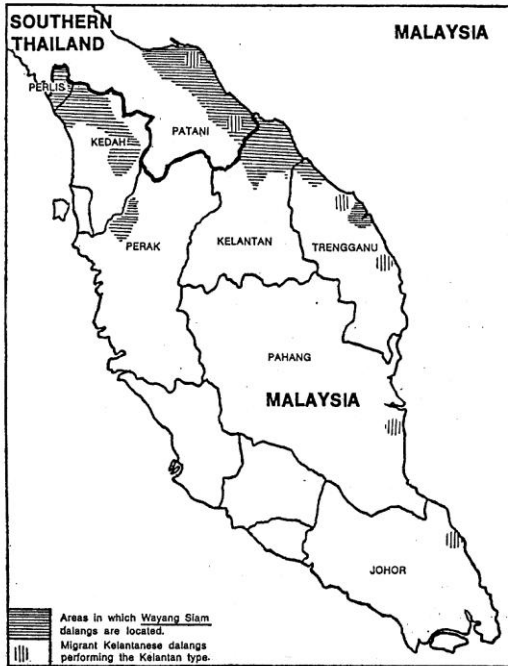


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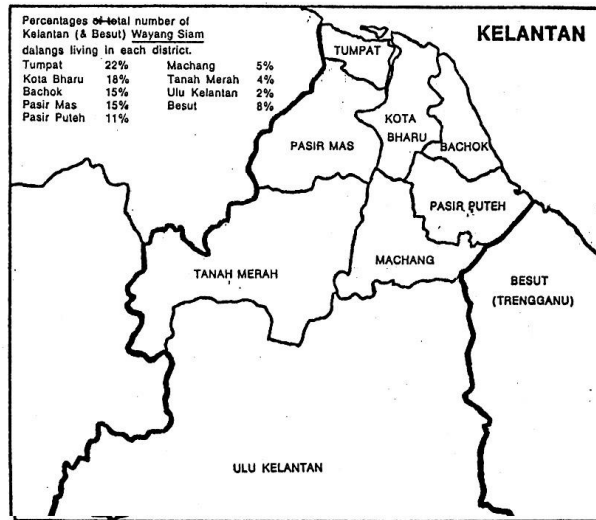
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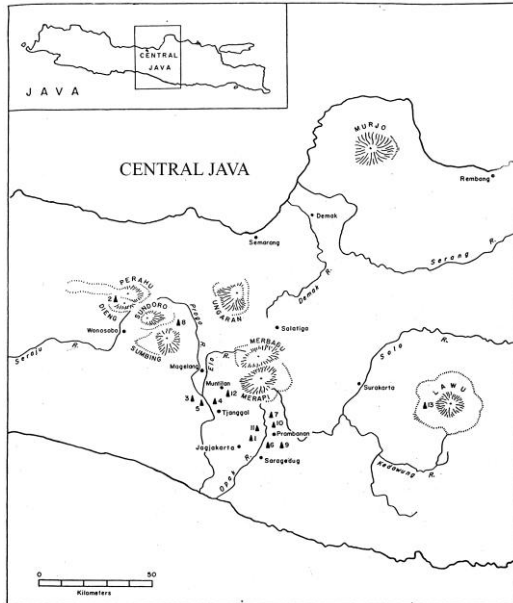
HAROLD FULLARD 1964



*The Wayang Siam in Malaysia and Southern Thailand*  
survey by Sweeney 1972



*Kelantan and Besut.*  
survey by Sweeney 1972

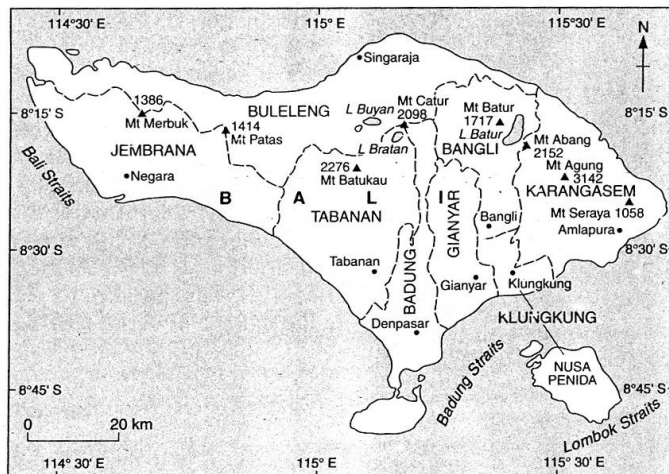


Tjandi or other antiquity	Religious Orientation	Century
Kalasan (1)*	Buddhist	8th-9th
Dieng (2)	Shivaite	9th
Barabudur (3)	Buddhist	9th
Mendut (4)	Buddhist	9th
Pawon (5)	Buddhist	9th
Banjunibo (6)	Buddhist	9th (?)
Sewu (7)	Buddhist	9th
Plaosan (7)	Buddhist	9th
Pringapus (8)	Shivaite	9th
Ratu Baka (9)	Traces of both Shivaite and Buddhist adherents	9th
Prambanan (10)	Shivaite	9th
Sari (11)	Buddhist	9th (?)
Ngawen (12)	Buddhist	9th-10th
Sukuh (13) and Tjeta (13)	Bima cult	15th

\* Numbers in parentheses refer to the sites in Map 1.

Map 1. Sites of principal antiquities in Central Java (▲).

Survey by Holt 1967



The district of Tabanan in Southern Bali  
Survey by Hobart, Ramseyer and Leeman (1996).



*Kayon Blumbangan of Java*



*Kayon Gapuran of Java*



*Kayon Api of Java*



*Kakayonan of Bali*



*Kayon of Kelantan*



*Kayon of Kelantan (Islamic Version)*

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

No *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre) performance can commence or conclude in Kelantan, Java and Bali until the tree or leaf- shaped puppet is placed at the centre of the *kelir* (screen). This particular puppet is commonly referred to as the *kayon* or *gunungan* (tree or mountain). The word *kayon* has its origins from a common term in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu, *kayu* (tree).<sup>1</sup> A striking feature that predominates in the design of all three types of *kayon* in this region is the inclusion of the central tree motif and this becomes more apparent when a comparison of the names of these puppets is made. For instance, it is normally referred to as the *kayon* (tree) in Java, as the *kakayonan* (tree) in Bali and as the *pohon beringin* (tree) in Kelantan. The tree motif is undoubtedly the focal point in the design of the *kayon*, *kakayonan*, and the *pohon beringin*, but the manner in which the tree motif is depicted in each of these puppets is different. The overall structure of the *kayon*, *kakayonan* and *pohon beringin* exhibits individual characteristics that clearly distinguish one puppet from another. Furthermore, they vary in size, colour and composition. A close study of these puppets will disclose subtle variations in the use of different symbols that are incorporated in or around the central tree motif.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Sabina Zurbuchen (1987) *The Language of Balinese Shadow Theatre*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 132

These iconic images are based on themes drawn from the animal kingdom or from mythical creatures that are familiar in these locations. Elements from the natural environment such as rivers, caves and mountains provide further subject matter to be included in the design of these puppets. The mountain in particular is an image which appears in *kayon*, *kakayonan* and *pohon beringin* , but it has been so meticulously incorporated into the design of these three figures that it may not even be obvious immediately. This does not in any way diminish its importance relative to the tree motif; in fact this puppet is also called *gunungan* (mountain). The word *gunungan* originates from a common term in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu, *gunung* (mountain). Both the mountain and the tree image have equal status in terms of their strong mythological and symbolic implications. The terms *gunungan* and *kayon* are used interchangeably by the puppeteers to refer to this figure. For the purpose of this study the term *kayon* will be used generally to describe all three types of puppets collectively, except in the case when the *kayon* of Java, the *kakayonan* of Bali or the *pohon beringin* of Kelantan is specifically singled out for analysis.

Apart from this the *kayon* has to be also seen to operate in the context of the performance mode as well. This includes the preparations that take place behind the screen and other preliminaries that are involved. The puppeteer is directly involved in these preparations and certain formalities are followed. On arriving at the venue, the puppeteer's first task may normally be the setting up of all the various puppets, props and equipment he will use during the performance. He takes the puppets out of the container and selects those which will be used in the actual performance. The puppeteer will assume his regular position by sitting in front of the screen. He arranges the puppets on the banana stems that are placed along the base of the screen or *kelir* following a right to left orientation. Those, on his right and his left representing,

respectively the good and evil forces which, inevitably oppose each other on the *wayang kulit* screen during the course of the performance.

During this whole period of setting up his various items of equipment, the puppeteer simultaneously concentrates on his own spiritual preparation. He usually burns some incense near his performance area, he may also have prepared a number of offerings. The offerings and his incantations are according to the custodians of the *wayang kulit* to announce to the world of spirits in the immediate vicinity that he is about to perform the *wayang kulit lakon* or story; the incantations also serve as apologies to those spirits for any human limitations that the puppeteer might have. It has to be kept in mind that the puppeteer has shamanistic powers and he is able to act as a link between the spiritual realm and the more familiar surroundings of everyday life.<sup>2</sup>

Behind the puppeteer, the musicians are usually already seated by this time and ready to begin at his signal. When the puppeteer has set up all his props, and finished his spiritual preparations, he plants the *kayon* in the centre of the screen. The *kayon* then becomes the focal point for the puppeteer, the musicians and the audience. Not a thing moves on the screen. The *kayon* lies dormant and passive in a void of nothingness.<sup>3</sup> After a brief pause the puppeteer takes the *kayon* from its resting place, and performs a number of actions all of which have great mystical significance.<sup>4</sup> From a passive state the *kayon* is set into motion. These two contrasting modes of existence which are the

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<sup>2</sup> Van Ness and Shita Prawirohardjo (1984). *Javanese Wayang Kulit an Introduction*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 46-48. Cuisinier (1936). *Danses Magiques de Kelantan*. Paris: Travaux et Memories de l'Institut D' Ethnologie de l' Universite de Paris, 33-34. Cuisinier (1957). *Le Theatre D'ombres a Kelantan*. Paris: Gallimard, 89-90. Eliade (1972). *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 344-346. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1992). *Panggung Semar: Aspects of Traditional Malay Theatre*. Kuala Lumpur: Tempo Publishing, 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1997). *The Malay Shadow Play: An Introduction*. Penang: The Asian Centre, 64.

<sup>4</sup> Van Ness and Shita Prawirohardjo (1984), op. cit., 48.



passive and active state underlie the placing and removal of the *kayon* during the opening consecration ceremony.<sup>5</sup>

The *kayon* serves a host of other functions in addition to what is mentioned above. In the course of the performance it is, for instance, commonly used as a bridge, a palace, a forest, etc. It is also used to represent the creation of a supernatural event, particularly when some form of transformation is about to occur. For instance, through the swaying and spiralling movement of the *kayon* by the puppeteer a particular character could magically metamorphose to become another being. In line with this, other catastrophes such as floods, fires, wars, etc, are all depicted with the use of the *kayon* in different configurations created by the puppeteer. At the end of the presentation, a concluding ritual performance is presented and it is here once again that the *kayon* plays a crucial role. It is during this ritual performance that the *kayon* is placed at the centre of the screen and this upright position symbolically indicates that the world has been brought back to its primal state of harmony and serenity. At this point, the stage is cleared and the *kayon* will only be activated by the puppeteer at the commencement of the next performance.<sup>6</sup>

## **1.2 DEFINITION OF THE SHADOW PLAY WITHIN THE CONEXT OF ITS DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA**

The shadow play in Southeast-Asia has been in existence for about a thousand years. Over the centuries there has been constant contact through trade or migration in this region. As a result of this phenomenon there have been cross-cultural influences on the

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<sup>5</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1997), op. cit., 64.

<sup>6</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004). *Panggung Inu: Essays on Traditional Malay Theatre*. Singapore: National University of Singapore, 135-138.

development of the shadow play. It is interesting to note that there is a large concentration of shadow play in Southeast-Asia as compared to other regions.<sup>7</sup>

The term *wayang*, as used in theatre in Indonesia and Malaysia has two separate meanings. First, it is used to refer to a puppet, particularly as used in the shadow puppet performance itself, second, in *wayang kulit* the word *wayang* means 'performance' and *kulit* indicates that the figures used are made of hide or skin.<sup>8</sup>

Basically, the shadow play in this region appears in two forms. One using single-character figures such as the *wayang kulit siam* or alternatively known as *wayang kulit Kelantan*, of Malaysia, the *wayang kulit gedek*, of Malaysia, the *wayang kulit purwa* of Java, *nang talung* of Thailand and *ayang* of Cambodia. (plate 1, 2, 3, 4). The other using large composite figures such as the *nang sbek thom* of Cambodia and the *nang yai* of Thailand.<sup>9</sup> (Plate 5, 6)

The *wayang kulit purwa* of Java is one of the oldest and most established form of shadow play in this region.<sup>10</sup> However, exact details of the *wayang* as to how it was performed in the early period in the Javanese Kingdoms such as Kediri (1045-1222), Singasari (1222-1292) including Majapahit (1294-1478) the last of the Hinduistic

<sup>7</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004). *The Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Performing Arts*. Singapore: Archipelago Press. Volume 8, 24. Bambang Harsrinuksmo (ed) (1999). *Ensiklopedi Wayang Indonesia*. Jakarta: Seni Wangi. Jilid 1, 29-33.

<sup>8</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994). *Dictionary of Traditional South-east Asian Theatre*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 276.

<sup>9</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 9, 184, 251-254. Mattani Rutin (1970). Nang Yai: The Thai Classical Shadow Play and The Wat Kanon Troupe of Rajburi. In *East Asian Cultural Studies*. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies. Volume XV, No. 1-4, 53-60. (eds. Amin Sweeney and Akira Goto). Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann (1996). *The Peoples of Bali*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 38. (eds. Peter Bellwood and Ian Glover).

<sup>10</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 291. Brandon (ed) (1970). *On thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 3. Brandon states that one of the earliest reference to the shadow play is made by a court poet of King Airlangga (1035-1049) from the kingdom of east Java.

Javanese empires, are no longer known. It has been indicated by writers of the shadow play, such as Holt, Sri Mulyono, Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, and Hobart, Ramseyer, Leemann that the *wayang kulit parwa* of Bali as seen today probably retains some of the characteristics of the early styles of the *wayang*. This claim is substantiated by pointing out the similarity between the style, ornamentation of the headdress and composition in terms of clothes of the Balinese *wayang* puppets and the figures depicted on the stone carvings of the East Javanese Panataran Temple and the Surawana Temple. The Balinese figures are, on the whole more naturalistic in design where as the Javanese ones are more stylized.<sup>11</sup> (Plate 7, 8).

The stylized Javanese *wayang kulit purwa* puppets do not, as a rule, represent human personalities in a naturalistic manner. In that they do not possess the same physical proportions as found in human anatomy. According to Sri Mulyono and Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof the elements of stylization in the *wayang* figures were introduced by Islamic religious teachers, and in particular by the nine saints (*Wali Sanga*) of Demak in 1520 to counter the Islamic injunction against naturalistic representation of the human form.<sup>12</sup> (Figure 9).

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<sup>11</sup> Holt (1967). *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 82-83. Sri Mulyono (1978). *Wayang: Asal-usul, Filsafat dan Masa Depan*. Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 110. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 291. Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann (1996), op. cit., 149. Bambang Harsrinuksmo (ed) (1999), op. cit., jilid 1, 30-31.

<sup>12</sup> Sri Mulyono (1978), op. cit., 81. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 292.

The *wayang kulit Kelantan* is more strongly influenced by Java than Thailand. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof states that it is very likely that this style was derived from the Javanese *wayang kulit purwa*, brought into Kelantan towards the end of the Hindu Majapahit period in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and before the Javanese *wayang kulit purwa* itself underwent changes in iconography. The *wayang kulit Kelantan* figures are for the most part naturalistic in design and shares strong similarities with the Balinese *wayang kulit purwa* figures.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore influences from the Thai shadow play are also visible in the *wayang kulit Kelantan*.<sup>14</sup> (Plate 1).

### 1.2.1 Repertoire

The *wayang kulit purwa* of Java, Bali and Kelantan has a repertoire that consists of a large cycle of tales that is drawn from ancient Indonesian and Malay myths and two Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Panji Cycles that originated in East Java during the fifteenth century also form part of the repertoire. From East Java the Panji Cycles spread to Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia. The stories of the Panji Cycle deal with local heroes known under many different names in these locations mentioned above.<sup>15</sup>

The repertoire of the *wayang kulit purwa* in essence reflects the identity of the traditional way of the people in Java, Bali and Kelantan. The Javanese word *purwa* denotes ‘beginning’ or ‘first’ and it is closely linked to the Sanskrit word *parwan* which is used to indicate the chapters of the ancient epics. These ancient stories collectively deal with various deities, ogres’, kings, princes, and heroes; they form the basis for the various *lakon*. At each performance the *lakon* reflect philosophical ideas about man’s

<sup>13</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004), op. cit., 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1997). *The Malay Shadow Play: an introduction*. Penang & Kuala Lumpur: The Asian Centre, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 203-204. Irvine (1996), op. cit., 22. Alit Djajasoebrata (1999). *Shadow theatre in Java: The Puppets, performance & repertoire*. Amsterdam & Singapore: The Pepin Press, 13.

position in the universe. The other aspect that each *lakon* explores is how human beings deal with the divine and demonic powers that influence their life.<sup>16</sup>

The Indonesian myths have grown out of local folklore and ancient beliefs that are of indigenous origin. The creation myth as represented in the shadow play, the origin of the Supreme Being Wisesa (Hyang Tunggal), the origins of Manik and Maya of Ismaya or Batara Semar, Dewi Sri, goddess of agriculture or the birth of Garuda and Naga are some of the themes that come to prominence in the *lakon* of the *wayang kulit purwa*.<sup>17</sup>

By the latter part of the tenth century, Java was a prosperous, thoroughly Hinduized country. Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* had been introduced and accepted by the royal court. The *Mahabharata* was translated into the language now known as Old Javanese by the royal court poets.<sup>18</sup> The main theme of the *Mahabharata* is the tragic conflict between two families of the *kuru* line, descendants of the Bharata, the Pandawa and the Korawa.<sup>19</sup>

The second epic that was brought from India was the *Ramayana*. This epic is attributed to the sage Valmiki and is considered to have been composed just before the Christian era.<sup>20</sup> The Javanese poet, Yogiswara set down the Rama story in literary form and composed the *Ramayana Kakawin* and it is considered to be the oldest Old Javanese (Kawi) literary work that most probably was written in the tenth-century in Central Java.<sup>21</sup> The Rama cycle, chronicles: the birth of Sinta and her marriage to Rama; Rama's banishment to the forest and Sinta's kidnapping by Rawana; Rama's grief and his meeting with the monkey warriors Anoman and Sugriwa; and the many battles

<sup>16</sup> Alit Djajasoebata (1999), op. cit., 93-147.

<sup>17</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 247-249. Bambang Harsrinuksmo (ed) (1999), op. cit., *jilid* 4, 1169-1176. Sri Mulyono (1978), op. cit., 42-43. Brandon (ed) (1970). *On Thrones of God: Three Javanese Shadow Plays*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 149-154.

<sup>19</sup> Alit Djajasoebata (1999), op. cit., 141.

<sup>20</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 224-227. Alit Djajasoebata (1999), op. cit., 141.

<sup>21</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 224-227. Alit Djajasoebata (1999), op. cit., 141.

through which Rama and his allies conquer Rawana's kingdom of Alengka, slay Rawana, and rescue Sinta.<sup>22</sup> Similar to the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* spread into South-East Asia due to the expansion of Indian influence, and in various countries of these region local versions, literary as well as folk, developed.<sup>23</sup> Over the centuries various adaptations of the stories of Rama and *Mahabharata* have been the subject of many shadow puppet performances in Indonesia and Malaysia.<sup>24</sup>

Stories from the Panji cycle are also performed in the shadow play of Java. The Panji stories originated from eastern Java between the eleventh and fifteenth century. The Panji stories are about the adventures of a legendary East Javanese hero, Prince Panji and his bride Princess Chandra Kirana. The Panji stories focus on the romantic adventures of this noble Javanese prince who is in search of his true love and his reunion with his elusive bride. The Panji stories spread from East Java to Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia where the stories and their heroes are known under many different names.<sup>25</sup>

### **1.2.2 The stories of the shadow play of Bali.**

Most Balinese myths are derived from the Hindu-Javanese classical literature which flourished at the courts of East Java between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. A few are also of indigenous origin. The repertoire that is used in the Balinese shadow play is derived from the ancient myths:

<sup>22</sup> Brandon (ed) (1970), op. cit., 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ghulam Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 224-227.

<sup>24</sup> Brandon (ed) (1970), op. cit., 6. Alit Djajasoebrata (1999), op. cit., 141. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 149-154, 224-228.

<sup>25</sup> Brandon (1970), op. cit., 6. Sri Mulyono (1978), op. cit., 299. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 47, 203-204. Irvine (1996), op. cit., 22. Alit Djajasoebrata (1999), op. cit., 13. Bambang Harsrinuksmo (ed) (1999), op. cit., jilid 1, 161-162, jilid 3, 995-996.

1. The *Mahabharata*: Nine of the eighteen volumes (*parwa*) of the epic are known in Indonesia.<sup>26</sup> The earliest version is in Old Javanese prose but they show their proximity to Sanskrit.<sup>27</sup> The central theme of the epic concerns the tragic conflict between the five Pandawa brothers and their first cousins, the hundred Korawa brothers. This culminates in the Great War, the Bharatayuddha, in which the Korawa, who are ogres incarnate, are defeated, and the eldest Pandawa brother, Yudistira, is crowned King of Nastina.<sup>28</sup>
2. Myths associated with the *parwa through* narrating the feats dealing with characters known from the *Mahabharata*. These include Sutasoma (a story of Buddhist origin), Arjuna Wiwaha, the Bharatayuddha and Bima Swarga.<sup>29</sup>
3. The *Ramayana*: This repertoire is drawn from Old Javanese and Balinese versions of the Ramayana which resembles the *Mahabharata* in language and style. It is a long poem known as *kakawin*. The myth tells of the abduction of the beautiful Sita by the demon King, Rawana. Her husband, Rama, finally rescues her with the help of monkey armies lead by the Monkey God, Hanuman.<sup>30</sup>
4. Panji romances, known in Bali as *Malat* tell of the east Javanese prince, Panji, and his many adventures while searching for his beloved princess.<sup>31</sup> These are included in the repertoire. Apart from the Panji romances stories are also derived from chronicles (*babad*), most of which were composed by courts scribes between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The *babad* recount and celebrate the genealogical histories of established high-caste families who trace their descent from nobles of the Majapahit era.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Hinzler, H.I.R. (1981). *Bima Swarga in Balinese Wayang*, Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut vooe Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, vol. 90, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Zoetnulder, P (1974). *Kalangwan: A Survey of Old Javanese Literature*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 68.

<sup>28</sup> Hobart, A. (1987). *Dancing Shadows of Bali*. London and New York: KPI Ltd., 38.

<sup>29</sup> Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann (1996). *The Peoples of Bali*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 138.

<sup>30</sup> Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann (1996), op. cit., 138.

<sup>31</sup> Hobart (1987), op. cit., 40.

<sup>32</sup> Hobart, Ramseyer and Leemann (1996), op. cit., 159-160.

### 1.2.3 The stories of the shadow play of Kelantan.

The main repertoire is made up of a cycle of stories based on the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*. This is one of the two major literary Malay versions of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana, and the other is the *Hikayat Seri Rama*. The original cycle is collectively known as *cerita pokok* (trunk story), which is performed in the Kelantanese-Patani dialect of Malay. The Kelantanese puppeteers prefer on the whole to perform extension or branch stories (*cerita ranting*) of the *Ramayana*. The branch stories are creations of inventive puppeteers that are extensions of the *Ramayana* epic.<sup>33</sup> Selected episodes of the *cerita pokok* are used in the performance and these include: the competition (*swayamvara*) for the hand of Sita Dewi that is eventually won by Seri Rama. Seri Rama and his wife Sita Dewi are banished into the forest by his father upon the instigation of his stepmother. In the forest, Sita Dewi is kidnapped by an evil King, Ravana and he takes her to his kingdom. Seri Rama is in grief and he makes friends with the monkey kings, Hanuman and his brother Sugriva. They wage a war against Ravana's army and rescue Siti Dewi. On return to the palace her purity is questioned. She walks on fire without being hurt. However there are still doubts about her purity and she is banished to a hermitage. There she gives birth to two sons, and she tells her story to Maharisi her guardian. The sons grow up. They meet Seri Rama and they challenge him. Seri Rama discovers the identity of his sons and they are reunited.<sup>34</sup>

The branch stories (*cerita ranting*) of the *wayang kulit Kelantan*.

<sup>33</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004), op. cit., 29.

<sup>34</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004), op. cit., 29. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 304. Sweeney (1972). *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow-Play*. Kuala Lumpur: The National University of Malaysia Press, 89-254, 264-270. He gives a detailed study of the *cerita pokok* and *cerita ranting*. Matusky (1993). *Malaysian Shadow Play Music: Continuity of an Oral Tradition*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 15-28. Wright (1980). *Wayang Siam: An Ethnographic study of the Malay Shadow Play of Kelantan*. Ph. D. dissertation. Yale University. 102-107.



These stories are extensions of the *Ramayana* epic, ‘the Panji’ tales and other local legends and myths. In these stories characters from the *Ramayana* appear and each branch story is a single, complete unit. These stories start after the death of Ravana the demon king. These stories have been handed down from puppeteer to puppeteer through the oral tradition. New stories are added to the existing repertoire to this day.<sup>35</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Patronage

The wayang kulit purwa in Java and Bali, received support in the palaces (*keraton* in Central and East Java and the *puri* in Bali) of noble families. In Java the lineage of the royal families start from Gusti Pangeran Adipati Aryo Mangkunegara I from the eighteenth century till Mangkunegaran VIII of the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

In Malaysia, the only evidence of royal support is when a Kelantan prince Long Abdul Ghaffar (1875-1935) established *kampong* Temenggung, a Kelantanese arts centre, in 1923. The shadow play was among other traditional theatre that was taught in the palace grounds.<sup>37</sup>

#### 1.2.5 Parts of the theatre of the shadow play in Indonesia and Malaysia.

In Java, Bali and Kelantan the theatre or *panggung* have similar components and these are as follow. The screen (*kelir*), the lamp (*lampu*), the puppeteer (*dalang*), a set of puppets (*figura-figura wayang*), the banana stem (*batang pisang*), the music provided

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<sup>35</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004), op. cit., 29. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 45-47. Sweeney (1972), op. cit., 264-272.

<sup>36</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 252. *Ensiklopedi Wayang Indonesia* (1999), op. cit., jilid 3, 880-881.

<sup>37</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 252. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004), op. cit., volume 8, 94-95.

by and orchestra, the stories, the *kayon* ( the tree shaped puppet used in the opening and closing ritual at the centre of the screen).<sup>38</sup>

### 1.2.6 The *dalang*

The success of a shadow play in Java, Bali and Kelantan is mainly dependant on the expertise of a puppeteer. He brings to life the figures by manipulating them at the screen. He provides voices to the characters, narration, commentary and the use of songs to develop the story line. Furthermore he conducts the orchestra by providing appropriate cues for the musicians. He also functions as a shaman (*bomoh*). In addition to this the puppeteer is also a skilled puppet-maker, craftsman and musician.<sup>39</sup>

### 1.2.7 The Function of the shadow play

The shadow play is performed basically for providing entertainment for a particular function. It also plays an important part in traditional ritual situations, such as paying of homage to teachers, rituals for healing and exorcism.<sup>40</sup>

## 1.3 ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The origins of the shadow play in these regions have been the subject of intense scholarly debate from the nineteenth century until now.<sup>41</sup> Brandon for instance puts forward the idea that the shadow play was known to prehistoric peoples in central Asia and that it spread from there before the Christian era and over a period of thousands of

<sup>38</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004), op. cit., volume 8, 23-27.

<sup>39</sup> Brandon (ed) (1970), op. cit., 68-69. Hobart (1987), op. cit., 20, 25, 27-32, 132-137. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 56-57. Irvine (1996). *Leather Gods & Wooden Heroes: Java's Classical wayang*. Singapore: Times Editions. 129-130, 164-169. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004), op. cit., volume 8, 28-29.

<sup>40</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (ed) (2004), op. cit., volume 8, 23.

<sup>41</sup> Alit Dajasoebrata (1999), op. cit., 15-17.

years into India, China and Southeast Asia.<sup>42</sup> Liu Jilin indicates that during the Sung dynasty documentation is available to indicate that the shadow play was popular in Pien Liong (now Kaifeng), capital of the Northern Sung dynasty (A.D. 960-1126) and Lin An (now Hangchow) capital of the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1279).<sup>43</sup>

Pischel, Holt and Brunet suggest that the shadow play may have come from India into Southeast Asian countries about the tenth century. The evidence given is the use of Sanskrit technical terminology, the two Hindu epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and Hinduism- derived mythology and ritual elements that appear in the shadow play of these regions.<sup>44</sup>

Alit Djajasoebata indicates that trade between China and Java had existed since the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD but unlike Indian influences, which affected language and world views at the royal courts (Yogyakarta, Surakarta), Chinese influences were limited to material aspects of Javanese culture such as the form and style of common utensils and technical skills. Chinese influence on the shadow play had not been strong, but it is sometimes evident in the colours and decorative motifs on the shadow puppet figures in the style typical of the northern coast of Java, known as the Pasisir (coast) culture. This area had been an international trading centre for centuries.<sup>45</sup>

The view that the *wayang kulit purwa* was originally found only on Java and Bali, and other places where Javanese people settled, such as southern Sumatra and south Borneo is supported by a number of writers.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Brandon (ed) (1970), op. cit., 2-5.

<sup>43</sup> Liu Jilin (1988). *Chinese Shadow Puppet Plays*. Morning Glory Publishers. 7. Jiryo Miyao (1976). Pei Kau Hi: The Taiwanese Shadow Theatre. In *East Asian Cultural Studies*. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies. 61-66. (eds Sweeney, Akira Goto)

<sup>44</sup> Pischel R. (1906). Das altindische Shattenspiel, *Sitzungsberichte der Koeniglich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, XXIII, 487, 488, 494-498. Holt (1967), op. cit., 128-131. Brunet, J. (1974). Attempts at an historical outline of the Shadow Theatre. In Mohd Taib (ed). *Traditional Drama & Music of Southeast Asia*. 127-129.

<sup>45</sup> Alit Djajasoebata (1999), op. cit., 17.

<sup>46</sup> Bambang Harsrinuksom (ed) (1999), op. cit., jilid, 1, 333. Brandes (1857-1905) carried out work on the Javanese shadow play and he put forward the idea that the form Javanese play in India is different

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof indicates that the Javanese *wayang kulit purwa* had its origins in Java and that there is a possibility that it was performed on this island as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He puts forward two principal arguments to substantiate his view. He states firstly, that despite the undoubted importance of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* that serves as source material for the repertoire, indigenous pre-Hindu tales had an important place in the Javanese shadow play. This suggests that the shadow play had its development before the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. and with the arrival of Hinduism the repertoire later expanded to include the Hindu epics mainly the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Secondly, he indicates that the technical vocabulary of *wayang kulit purwa* includes a large number of native Javanese words. Further evidence for the antiquity of the Javanese shadow play is observed in the unique designs of the figures themselves. He also points out that the shadow play has an important role in Javanese and Balinese community, particularly in the ritual context. This is illustrated through role of animistic beliefs and practices that seems to provide further evidence for its antiquity. In this context, the misshapen figure of *Semar* the main clown-servant (*punakawan*), is important in the shadow play. *Semar* is considered by the Javanese to have been an ancient and highly important indigenous deity who, with the arrival of Hinduism, was given a lesser place in the evolving Hindu-Javanese mythology compared to the Hindu deities themselves. *Semar* nonetheless continues to hold a vital place in traditional rituals (including those unconnected with *wayang kulit*) as well as in Javanese consciousness, so much so that he serves as a veritable symbol for Java itself.

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from the shadow play of Java. The technical terms for instance used in Javanese shadow play are different from the ones used in the Indian shadow play. The shadow play in Java does not use Sanskrit from India. He estimates that the shadow play was in existence in Java around 778 A.D. Ibid, (1999), jilid, 2, 634. Hazeu is also of the opinion that the shadow play in Java existed before the arrival of Hinduism in Indonesia. Sri Mulyono (1978), op. cit., 8-13, 55-57. His research indicates that the shadow play is the creation of the Javanese before the onset of Hindu influence in Java. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004), op. cit., 92-95.

Such observations lead Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof to suggest that the shadow play in Java and Bali existed before the arrival of Hindus in these locations.

### 1.3.1 RECENT RESEARCH ADVANCED BY GHULAM-SARWAR YOUSOF ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE *WAYANG KULIT KELANTAN* (SIAM)<sup>47</sup>

#### 1.3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof there have been very few writers who have traced the origins of *wayang kulit Kelantan*. One of these writers is Mubin Sheppard who indicates that *wayang kulit Kelantan* may have developed in Kelantan about 200 years ago during the reign of Long Yunus (1875-1935).

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof states that there is evidence to suggest that *wayang kulit Kelantan* is certainly older than what has been put forward by Mubin Sheppard. He points out that elements found within *wayang kulit Kelantan* exhibit strong animistic and Hindu influences and therefore unlikely to have been imported at such a late date, as Islam had arrived to Kelantan as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

One of the strong indicators is that *wayang kulit Kelantan* is not performed only for entertainment. He explains that even regular performances intended for entertainment have strong ritual elements in the theatre opening (*buka panggung*) and theatre closing (*tutup panggung*) ceremonies that, to this day, the puppeteers are unwilling to discard.

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<sup>47</sup> Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (2004). *Panggung Inu: Essays on Traditional Malay Theatre*. Singapore: National University of Singapore, 91- 118. See Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1994), op. cit., 133-135, and 280-309. See Mohd Taib Osman(ed) (1974). *Traditional Drama and Music of Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 112-119, and 127-229.

The animistic and Hindu elements become infinitely more significant and prominent in the ritual (*berjamu*) and salutation of teachers (*sembah guru*) and wind blandishment (*semah angin*). Much of this is parallel to what is encountered in the Javanese and Balinese shadow plays.

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof further states that *wayang kulit Kelantan* was introduced into Kelantan from Java either during or soon after the Majapahit period, rather than directly from India or Thailand, although direct or indirect influences from both Indian and Thailand are at the same time clearly evident in mainly upon an examination of the older shadow play styles in Java, Bali and Kelantan, and more specifically upon:

- a. The near-naturalistic design of the shadow figures.
- b. The significance of the *pohon beringin* or *kayon*.
- c. The clown character.
- d. The ritualistic functions of the shadow play, and
- e. The importance of the Bentara Kala story.

#### 1.3.1.2 The near-naturalistic design of the shadow figures

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof indicates that as far as *wayang kulit Kelantan* is concerned, what the original figures were like many never ever be known, considering that the earliest available puppets date from about a century ago. These figures, especially those of the principal characters, Seri Rama, Laksamana and Sirat Maharaja in particular, have undergone transformation during recent decades coming to them directly from the the (*menorah lakon chatri*) folk dance theatre style of Thailand. The headgear and the tail-like feature (*han hoong*) in the costumes of these characters are clearly based upon the costume worn *Phra Suthon*, the principal character in the *menorah*. It is very

possible, however, that overall, the *wayang kulit Kelantan* figures came from pre-Islamic Java with the spread of the proto-*wayang kulit purwa* itself from Java to the northern part of the Malay peninsula almost simultaneously with the eastward movement of the shadow –play from Java to Bali. The present designs represent evolution in the designs with the integration of both indigenous and Thai influences.

#### 1.3.1.3 **The *pohon beringin/kayon/gunungan***

According to Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof the *kayon* is used to open and close all shadow puppet theatre performances in Java, Bali, Malaysia and in a disguised fashion in the Thai  *nang talung*. Such tree-shaped figures with equivalent functions do not appear in the shadow plays outside the above locations mentioned. For instance, no such figure appears in the shadow play tradition of India and China. The *pohon beringin* of the *wayang kulit Kelantan*, is most likely to have originated through the Javanese shadow puppet theatre.

#### 1.3.1.4 **Comic characters**

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof draws attention to the fact that *wayang kulit Kelantan's* pair of comic characters Pak Dogol and Wak Long has a role parallel to these clowns in other Asian traditional theatre styles. The Kelantanese puppeteers link Pak Dogol and Wak Long with the undoubtedly older and more venerable clowns (*punakawan*) of the Javanese and Balinese traditional theatre forms, including *wayang kulit purwa* from which form obviously the use of the *punakawan* spread to other later genres.

Attempts have been made, without much success and without any strong evidence, to connect all comic figures of Southeast Asian shadow play styles to the Vidushaka of the classical Sanskrit theatre, and even to other clowns of the Indian shadow play styles.

However, the clown figures do not directly feature in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*, the two principal sources of dramatic material for the Indian and Southeast Asian shadow plays.

In Java, Semar is regarded as an indigenous figure, possibly originating in pre-Hindu, and most likely an ancient Javanese deity who, with the arrival of Hinduism in Indonesia, was made subservient to the gods of the new religion and to the epic heroes descended from the gods.

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof explains that Javanese *wayang* lore has it that Semar, also known as Betara Ismaya (in addition to a host of other names), is the brother of Betara Manikmaya and Sang Hyang Tunggal, the three gods having been born from a single egg, who are the sons of Sang Hyang Wenang. Eventually, following the resolution to a problem related to succession to the throne, Semar descended to earth, assumed his ugly form, becoming a companion to the Pandawa brothers and their protector.

Parallel stories regarding the origins of Pak Dogol and his descent to earth in his present ugly form are to be found in the *wayang kulit Kelantan* repertoire. Puppeteers in fact maintain that Semar and Pak Dogol are one and the same being. In Kelantan, Pak Dogol is regarded as a manifestation of Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, a brother of Betara Guru (Shiva).



#### 1.3.1.5 Ritualistic performances and the *Bentara Kala* story

According to Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof the Javanese have enriched *wayang kulit purwa* by bringing animistic beliefs and practices together with mystical ideas from both Hinduism and Islam. As a result of this, he points out that the Malay-Indonesian shadow play performances are mostly intended for ritual functions.

He indicates that although seldom performed, *wayang kulit Kelantan*'s ritual (*berjamu*) performance are highly significant, and they manifest undoubted links and parallels with equivalent performances in Java and Bali. In Kelantan the *berjamu* performances are done essentially for the salutations of teachers (*sembah guru*), the blandishment of the humours (*semah angin*) and occasionally for the purification of the environment.

The actual *berjamu* section of the *wayang kulit Kelantan* involves the preparation and giving of elaborate offerings to gods, spirits and even characters from the *Ramayana*. In Kelantan the *Bentara Kala* story, in a slightly variant version, is featured in *berjamu* performances during the concentration of ritual activities on the fourth morning following a three night standard *wayang kulit Kelantan* performance. In this version, *Bentara Kala* chases his victim, a woman named Mak Mabu Kelan Dermi, after he has tasted vegetables stained with her blood. However, she escapes the menace of *Bentara Kala* by disguising herself as a musician.

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof points out that rituals connected with all these theatre genres, like the animistic and Hindu elements have not altogether died out, and the highly important story of *Bentara Kala* is but another example of the links that bind the

Javanese, Balinese and Kelantan shadow play, all of which seem to confirm not only that *wayang kulit Kelantan* probably originated in pre-Islamic times, but also that it possibly developed as a result of the spread to Kelantan of a now non-existent form of Javanese shadow play, possibly a proto-*wayang kulit purwa*.

#### 1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study develops from the premise that even though this particular puppet is used for a similar function in all the opening and closing theatre consecration ceremonies of this shadow puppet theatre, there are marked differences in their physical appearances. When the *kayon* of these three locations are placed in juxtaposition, what immediately becomes evident is that each *kayon* has its own unique features, such as differences in the overall shape, design component, colour and use of various icons. This stark contrast in design indicates that the craftsman (in many instances, the puppeteers themselves) who constructed the *kayon* had to take several factors into consideration in order to produce this highly intriguing and imaginative figure. When a *kayon* becomes damaged due to constant use, it is either repaired or it serves as a prototype for a new puppet to be constructed. By carrying on this tradition the craftsmen have retained the ancient designs, motifs and icons of the *kayon*. Given that the standard conventions of the design of the *kayon* have been maintained over the years, the new puppet that is produced by the craftsman to replace the old one exhibits subtle innovations within the prescribed design. Such considerations can easily be overlooked by the indiscriminating eye. Previous writers have not discussed in detail the craftsman's creative ability to improvise and yet maintain the strict criteria which govern the production of a *kayon*.

Over the years, the ancient oral tradition of passing down the body of knowledge from one puppeteer to the next has slowly declined.<sup>48</sup> The researcher's survey indicates that it is mostly the older puppeteers who function as custodians of this theatre form and it is this group of people who are fluent in the esoteric knowledge of the *wayang kulit*. The puppeteers use a special language to describe the layers of symbolic meanings attached to the *kayon*.

The puppeteers indicated that any study of the *kayon* should naturally take into consideration the way it is used in different rituals. To observe the role of the *kayon* in these rituals, will invariably lead to an understanding of the prime importance of this particular puppet. According to the puppeteers, this will show the powerful symbolic references that are tied to the *kayon* during the opening and closing theatre consecration ceremonies. These rituals have obscure origins in which the *kayon* is used symbolically to represent the myth of creation of *wayang*. This, in essence, deals with the cosmology of the *wayang kulit* that relates to the *kayon* as part of a body of knowledge inherited by the puppeteers from their ancestors. Nowadays, only a few puppeteers are fluent in the rich resource of the cosmology of the *wayang kulit*. This observation provides a legitimate reason for a detailed study of the different viewpoints of the puppeteers of these regions concerning the cosmology of the *wayang kulit*.

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<sup>48</sup> J. Cuisiner (1957). *Le Theatre d'ombres a Kelantan*, 21-22. A. Sweeney (1972). *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow Play*, 31-33. R.M. Moerdowo (1982). *Wayang Its Significance in Indonesian Society*. C.V. Groenendael V.M. (1985). *The Dalang Behind the Wayang*, 113. E.C. Van Ness and S. Prowirohardjo (1984). *Javanese Wayang Kulit*, 42-59. P.J. Zoetmulder (1971). 'The Wayang as a Philosophic theme' in *Indonesia* No. 12, 88-87. M. Sheppard (1977). *Taman Indera*, 69. C. Geertz (1964). *The Religion of Java*, 51. P. Matusky dan Hamzah Awang Amat (1998). *Muzik Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, 2. W. Keeler (1992). *Javanese Shadow Puppets*, 38-49.

Consequently the following question arises: to what extent does the function of the *kayon* epitomize the cosmology of *wayang kulit*? This question leads directly to the etymology of the word *kayon*. In Bahasa Indonesia, *kayon* is derived from the common word, *kayu* (tree), and this is generally the accepted interpretation associated with this tree shaped puppet. In old Javanese (*bahasa Kawi*), *kayon* is often associated *kayun* (life) or *hyun* (affection or intent). In classical Arabic, *hayyun* means life.<sup>49</sup> For the Balinese, *kayon* is linked to *kayun* (thought).<sup>50</sup> Further information on the etymology of the word *kayon* will be given in chapter 2.

With this in mind, one is directed to look at the ‘Tree’ motif that appears at the centre of the *kayon*. The image of the ‘Tree’ is an essential theme that is incorporated into the design of the *kayon* found in all these three locations. According to these puppeteers, the ‘Tree’ motif has a mystical origin in the *wayang kulit* as it is endowed with supernatural powers to sustain life in the world. Due to the mythological associations the puppeteers make with the ‘Tree’ image that is found in the *kayon*, it is commonly referred to as the cosmic tree.

The image of the cosmic tree, symbolically representing creation, exists in many variations in ancient cultures and can also be seen to resurface in different artefacts of present-day societies.<sup>51</sup> Over the millennia, the images and ideas associated with the cosmic tree have gone through the process of acculturation and have survived in a

<sup>49</sup> A.J. Finch an exponent in the Arabic language, says that *hayat*, in everyday spoken Arabic also means life. (30<sup>th</sup> April, 2004).

<sup>50</sup> M. S. Zurbuchen (1987). 18, 132. Indicates the Old Javanese was used about A.D. 1100 in Java and it is of pre-Majapahit origin. J. Brandon (ed.). *On Thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays*, 40. S. Haryanto (1988). *Pratiwimba Adhiluhung: Sejarah dan Perkembangan Wayang*, 162.

<sup>51</sup> E.O. James (1966). *The Tree of Life: An Archaeological Study*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 148-150. R. Cook (1995). *The Tree of Life: Image for the Cosmos*. London: Thames and Hudson, 47, 66-67. J.G. Frazer (1996). *The Illustrated Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. London: BT Batsford, (abr. R.K.G. Temple), Chapter 6 (Tree Worship).

variety of art forms in most part of the world. Extensive research has been conducted on the cosmic tree, particularly in relation to artefacts that incorporate the 'Tree' image. Not only is there an inadequate in-depth research about the image of the cosmic tree in the *wayang kulit*, but there is also a lack of comparative research on the visual image of the cosmic tree of the *wayang kulit*. A comparative as well as a systematic study of the cosmic tree, as contained in the *kayon*, will reveal the extent of either the contrasts or parallels that exist between these *wayang kulit* puppets.

Surrounding the image of the cosmic tree are other visual iconic representations. The *naga*, or snake like figure, is a popular theme that is incorporated into the design of the *kayon*. The *naga* and other iconic images found in the *kayon* have been mostly neglected in comparative studies. Approaching the separate iconic images found within the *kayon* for investigation can further enhance one's perception of this shadow puppet.

Beyond the extent of apparent contrasts and parallels in the iconic images to be found in the *kayon* of these regions, the intrinsic qualities of these three types of *kayon* are not known. In other words, it has not been established whether or not any apparent similarities or differences exist only at a superficial or cursory surface level or, alternatively, whether there is a hidden mystical association between them. Consequently, there is a further possibility that the three different manifestations of the *kayon* of these regions conceal unknown dimensions. This requires systematic and careful investigation.

The physical appearance of the *kayon* and the consecration ceremony in which the *kayon* has a central role are directly linked to the puppeteer and the puppet stage where

the performance takes place. Previous research has not taken a holistic approach of the study of the *kayon*, which should include the puppet stage, and the personality of the puppeteer, the rituals and cosmology. The researcher has taken into account the four aspects of the study of the *kayon* and these include: one, the physical properties of the *kayon* in relation to the cosmology of the *wayang kulit*; two, the consecration ceremony; three, the puppeteer; and four, the puppet stage. The researcher has made a serious attempt to apply the holistic approach to understanding the *kayon* in this work.

In view of what has been put forward so far, three factors come to the fore. Firstly, analyzing the structure of the *kayon* with reference to cosmology, together with the ritual, the puppeteer and the stage, the researcher will provide an initial reading of the subject as a whole. It is important to have a holistic sense of the *kayon*, before starting the examination of its parts because the data that will be collected will be extensive. Among other things, the comprehensive approach will help the researcher to sort out the information in a systematic manner. This will help in putting aside certain misconceptions or misinterpretations about the *kayon*. The more one becomes involved and acquainted with the actual data of the *kayon*, the less one's prejudice or pre-understanding should get in the way. Secondly, when the information regarding the *kayon* becomes familiar using an integrated approach, the character of the reading changes and the different parts begin to emerge. With an understanding of the whole, it will be possible to focus on the parts, that is, the iconic images found within the *kayon*, the cosmology, the consecration ceremony, the puppeteer and the puppet stage, enabling a more intensive analysis of the *kayon*. During this process, similarities and differences in meaning should be observed and consequently a much deeper understanding should emerge. The main thing is to keep one's mind open throughout the entire process and to