

# WAYANG KULIT



ANTHRO 495

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

LUCAS BEATCH



# CONTENTS

**03** OVERVIEW

**07** INTRODUCTION TO  
JAVANESE HISTORY

**13** PUPPETS AND  
STORYTELLING

**24** READING VISUAL  
CULTURE

**34** THE DHALANG

# OVERVIEW: TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

This Teacher's Resource was made in conjunction with the exhibition *Shadow Strings and Other Things: The Enchanting Theatre of Puppets* at The Museum of Anthropology UBC, curated by Dr. Nicola Levell (Assistant Professor, Anthropology, UBC). This guide is divided into sections based on themes: Introduction to Javanese History, Puppets and Storytelling, Reading Visual Culture, and The Dhalang. Each section contains a general introduction to the topic, as well as information and resources appropriate for different levels of students. The sections designed for different groups have been organized by the following colours for **Primary**, **Middle**, and **Secondary** school students and contain activity guides for each group. While this is the case, teachers are encouraged to draw upon information from different sections as they see fit. You know your students best!





## OVERVIEW: TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

"Puppets are knowledge holders and storytellers. They are important actors in the transmission of cultural knowledge, stories and values from generation to generation. Used in ceremonial and secular contexts, puppets depict epics and folktales, the supernatural, everyday life and political satire to educate, entertain and enchant.

Puppetry is a dynamic, living art. Although threatened by globalizing tendencies, new media and technologies, through the passion and creativity of its makers and performers, it continues to exist and expand, drawing on novel storylines, materials and techniques.

The exhibit design and interpretation strategies will support the visitors' understanding of these ideas."

Dr. Nicola Levell, curator.



## OVERVIEW: TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

This leaf-shaped shadow puppet is known as a kayon (“tree”) or gunungan (“mountain”) and represents the “tree of life,” or axis of the universe that connects the earthly world with that of the spirits. At the beginning of each performance, the puppet master (dhalang) begins with a prayer. The first puppet he raises is the kayon, which he dances, spins, and flutters in the air, breathing life into the surrounding puppets. The kayon continues to be used throughout the performance for a variety of purposes. Its presence may indicate a change of scene, the entrance of a major character, elements of nature, or pieces of scenery such as a palace. The kayon may also be used to symbolize abstract themes such as war, and destructive forces of nature such as fire and storms. Appropriately, the kayon is also the final puppet to be used in a performance—bringing to a close this depiction of the events of the spirit world.

For this reason, the presence of the kayon in this teacher's resource guide demarcates the beginning of a new chapter.

# INDONESIA HAS A RICH AND COMPLEX CULTURAL HERITAGE



# INTRODUCTION TO JAVANESE HISTORY

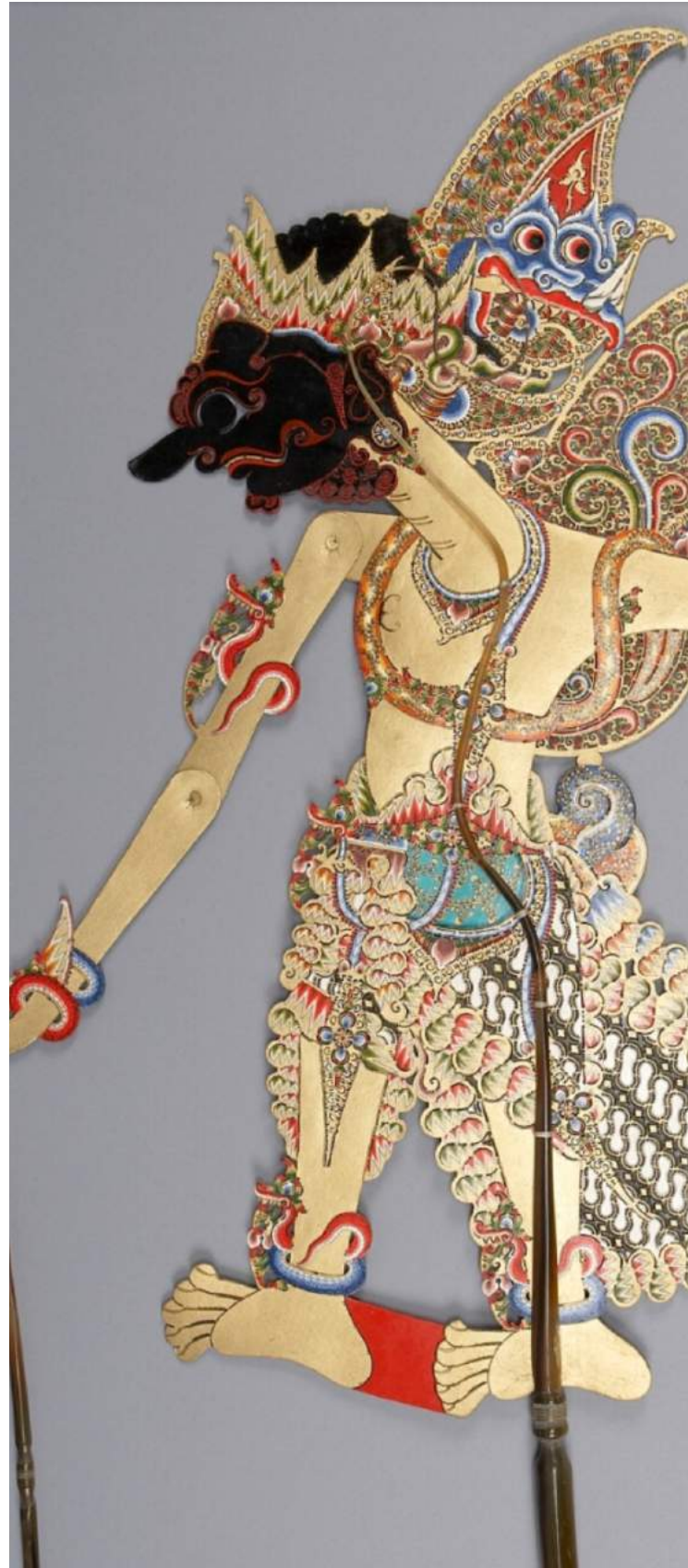
The Wayang Kulit shadow puppets of Indonesia have a long recorded history in Java. Wayang performances date back to at least 930 A.D., but were likely a part of active community life in the years prior. This timeline reflects the introduction of Hinduism to the area, and the most popular stories depicted are excerpts from the Mahabarata and the Ramayana, epics composed in India thousands of years ago.

Wayang are used to depict the relationships between good and evil, and express the importance of respect, duty and loyalty. Shadow puppets have been designated by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

The term Wayang translates to shadow, and kulit translates to skin, referring to the water buffalo hide these are made from.

A thin cotton screen separates the audience and the dhalang (the puppet master), who animates the figures using his voice and different movements. An oil lamp lights the scene. Although you only see the puppet's silhouette, they are painted and decorated. The Wayang performance is paired with a Gamelan orchestra.

For more information on the significance of Wayang Kulit please visit:  
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/wayang-puppet-theatre-00063>





# INTRODUCTION TO JAVANESE HISTORY

Primary school students

Indonesia is a nation consisting of 17,508 islands strung over 5,200 kilometers. Indonesia is the fourth-most populated country (after China, India, and the USA) and has a population of 264 million people (2017). Notably, the most populated of these is Java, with 141 million people inhabiting the island. Located between the Indian Ocean to the West and Pacific Ocean to the East, this location has significantly shaped its history. It is only in relatively recent times that Java has been a part of the nation-state Indonesia. This region was first consolidated through the construction of the Dutch colonial empire, the Netherlands Indies. Most of the population speaks the national language, Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian), in addition to some of the many indigenous languages in this region.

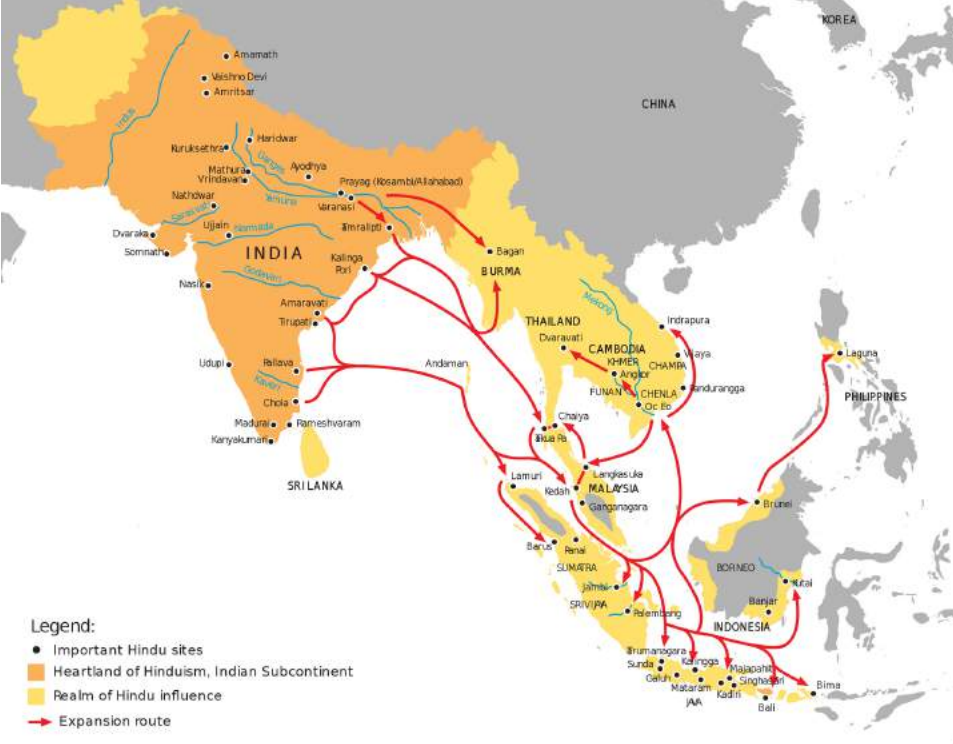
The majority of the population, around 88 percent, is Muslim, making Indonesia the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.





Central to the story of Java is the monsoon winds. These winds facilitated trade in Southeast Asia by creating favourable conditions for sailing. Rather than viewing the ocean as something that separates islands, it would be more accurate to view it as a highway in this region which connected communities hundreds of kilometres apart. Spices from this region even travelled as far as Rome by the beginning of the common era.

Trade, ideas and religion travelled as well. The introduction of Hindu traditions, such as the Wayang Kulit, came to Java around 930 a.d. The map on the left shows the spread of Hinduism from India.

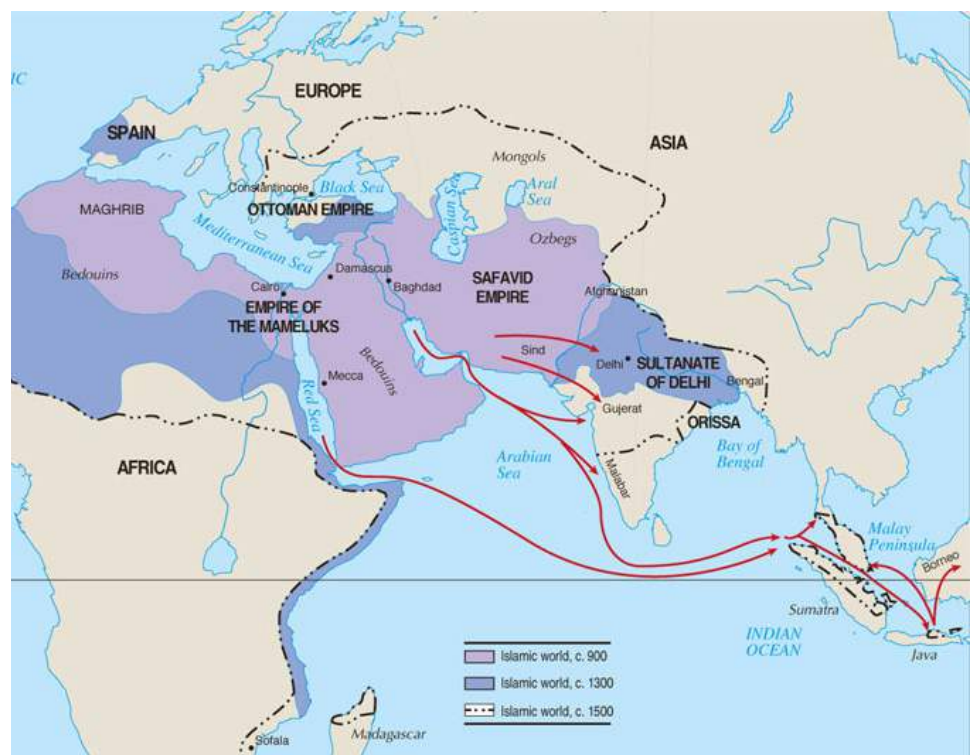


Hinduism brought with it a highly structured agricultural society. This led to prosperous kingdoms which relied on rice farming and were able to sustain large populations.

After many years of flourishing Hindu (and Buddhist) tradition, Islam spread to Java and began to play a significant role around 1200. The map on the right shows the spread of Islam via the sea during this period. This helped regulate trade as the Islamic network had a sophisticated body of laws concerning merchants. While Islam came to be the dominant religion, some Hindu traditions still continued, such as Wayang Kulit. This may be because Islam forbids the depiction of the human form of Allah, (the Muslim name for God), and it has been argued that this is why the Javanese characters generally do not have overly realistic facial and body features. Today, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, with over 225 million people recorded in 2017 as identifying as part of the Islamic community.

## INTRODUCTION TO JAVANESE HISTORY

Middle school students





# INTRODUCTION TO JAVANESE HISTORY

Secondary school students

Events in the 17th Century had a huge impact on Java. Beginning with the Portuguese and other European powers appearing in Southeast Asia via large ships. This included the Dutch, whose trading company, the VOC (United East Indies Company), eventually came to overpower local rulers and dominate the islands. What brought them there was the lucrative spice trade which they immediately tried to monopolize.

This marks the beginning of colonialism in this area and had profound effects on the economic, political and social landscape which are still felt today. While this is true, it is important to note that the peoples who lived in this region were not simply victims and they played an active role, including organizing numerous revolts. However, the Dutch were determined to maintain control and did so under harsh measures. One example of this can be seen in 1620-23 when the Dutch decided that rather than negotiate with local farmers, they would exile all those who lived on the island Banda, and massacre those who resisted. The Dutch then proceeded to replace the local population with slaves whom they did not have to negotiate with.



One of the largest impacts the Dutch had on the region was consolidating the territory into one state, known as the Netherlands Indies. This meant the unification of Java, Sumatra, and other islands which make up Indonesia today. Prior to this, separate kingdoms governed each area.

Dutch occupation remained into the 20th Century until the onset of the Second World War. The Netherlands Indies joined an economic embargo which was imposed upon Japan by the United States and its allies. At this time, Japan had been supplied by a

large amount of the rich resources in what is now Indonesia, such as rubber and oil. Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbour, Japan invaded the region and effectively defeated the Dutch forces on March 8, 1942.

## INTRODUCTION TO JAVANESE HISTORY

By this time, Indonesia had already been suffering because of the Great Depression. While at first many were excited about the Japanese liberating them from the Dutch, it became clear quickly that they too were primarily seeking resource extraction at the expense of local populations. In fact, so much rice was sequestered back to Japan that towards the end of the war there was famine in Indonesia. Additionally, thousands of Indonesian women were forced into sexual slavery for Japanese troops to become "comfort women."

In September 1944, facing the end of a losing war, Japan publicly promised independence for Indonesia and in 1950 the Unitary Republic of Indonesia was formed.



# PUPPETS ARE STORYTELLERS AND TRANSPORTERS



# PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING

“Puppets are storytellers and transporters. They bring the past into the present. The supernatural into the real. The satirical into the social sphere in a playful way.” - Dr. Nicola Levell

Hinduism has a number of holy texts. One of the most well known is called the Ramayana, which translates to "Rama's journey." This story is over 2000 years old, and was passed down orally for many years.

When Hinduism came to Java, so did many of its stories and legends such as the Ramayana. Wayang Kulit was a medium in which this story could be transmitted to the general public and served as an early form of entertainment and a guide for how to live one's life.

For a video on the importance of storytelling and the Ramayana visit: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be)





The Wayang Kulit shadow puppets of Indonesia have a long recorded history in Java. Wayang performances date back to at least 930 A.D., but were probably a part of community life in the years prior. As previously mentioned, the timing reflects the introduction of Hinduism to the area, and the most popular stories depicted are excerpts from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, great epics (long stories, often with moral implications) composed in India thousands of years ago.

Generally speaking, Wayang are used to depict the relationships between good and evil, and express the importance of respect, duty and loyalty.

The term Wayang translates to shadow, and kulit translates to skin, referring to the water buffalo hide these are made from.

A thin cotton screen separates the audience and the dhalang (the puppet master), who animates the figures using his voice and different movements. An oil lamp lights the scene. Although you only see the puppet's silhouette, they are painted and decorated. The Wayang performance is paired with a Gamelan, or orchestra.

Please find an abbreviated version of the Ramayana on the next few pages which should be read to students. Also check out: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be)

## PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING



**APPENDIX B: READ ALOUD VERSION OF THE RAMAYANA,  
ADAPTED BY SARAH WILLNER**

**Part 1: The Early Life of Rama**

The entire kingdom of Ayodhya in India shared the sadness of their king, Dasharatha, who had three wives but no children. In deep meditation, he was told how to enact a ceremony and distill a pure butter to give to his wives. After drinking it, they became pregnant and had many sons.

The King's servant Mertadah discussed the magical qualities of the butter. "How come that doesn't work for me?" Mertadah's old and wise father, also a valued servant of the King, replied, "Any old butter won't do. It's the meditation that makes it work."

The King's favorite son was Prince Rama, son of his wife Kausalya, who was studious, brave, thoughtful, and loyal. Everyone agreed that Rama should become king after his father. His father decided to hold the inauguration before he died, to make sure that his choice would be carried out peacefully. Tualen and Mertadah kept to the King's side around the clock to carry his wishes to the people.

Fabulous preparations were made for the ceremony. People came from all over the kingdom to attend the inauguration of their beloved Prince Rama.

**Part 2: Rama's Exile**

But all did not go as just as planned. On the eve of the ceremony, another of Dasharatha's wives, Queen Kaikeyi, was overcome with jealousy. Why shouldn't her son, Bharata, Rama's brother, become king? Was he not as good as Rama? She remembered that long ago she had taken very good care of King Dasharatha after he received a wound on the battlefield and he had promised to grant her a wish ...

She ran to his bedside. "Queen Kaikeyi, why do you come to me at this late hour of the night?"

"To remind you of our love for each other."

"Yes, my dear, I never forget it."

Queen Kaikeyi moved closer. "But it seems that you have forgotten your promise, to grant me a wish closest to my heart."

King Dasharatha felt his heart beat faster. What was she getting at?

Queen Kaikeyi continued, "I now call for you to grant me the wish closest to my heart. Choose my son, not Rama, to become king after you. And banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years."

King Dasharatha was confused and shocked at this last-minute block to his plans. But he kept his word and sadly agreed to carry out Queen Kaikeyi's wish.

Rama, though surprised by his father's new decree, faithfully prepared to live in the wild forest for fourteen years. His brother Bharata, who loved Rama and was embarrassed by his mother's conniving, gently took Rama's sandals and placed them on the throne. "You are the true ruler of Ayodhya. I will merely maintain the throne, awaiting your return."

"We cannot stay here without you. We are coming with you." Rama's wife Sita and his loyal brother Lakshmana also took off their finery, put on the modest clothing of hermits, and joined Rama walking past the heartbroken people of Ayodhya into the forest.

### **Part 3: Abduction of Sita**

In the forest, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana meditated and learned how to live peacefully with the plants and wild animals. But one day the demoness Surpanaka, wandering through the forest, caught sight of Rama and fell in love. When she approached him, he cut off one of her ears and pushed her away. Enraged, she went home to her far southern island kingdom of Lanka and complained to her brother Ravana, the ten-headed demon king.

Two servants of Ravana and Surpanaka, the vain Delem and the pin-headed, blundering Sangut discussed the situation. Delem confided in Sangut, "Hmm. If Ravana really wants to bother Rama, he should make off with his wife." Sangut agreed, "Yeah! Rama and Sita are sooooo perfect. Kidnapping his wife would be sooooo annoying!" Delem glared at Sangut. "You are annoying."

At first, Ravana couldn't be bothered to punish Rama. But Surpanaka enticed him, "Didn't you know that Rama has one of the most beautiful women in the world as his wife? Ravana considered this and grew more interested. "I would love to steal her away ..."

Ravana flew north to the forest. He persuaded his uncle to change himself into a lovely golden deer and run out in front of Sita. "How entrancing is that little golden deer! I must have it!" Sita implored Rama to capture the golden deer for her, never resting until Rama reluctantly agreed. He left his brother Lakshmana to guard Sita, and pursued the golden deer into the forest.

As soon as Rama left his companions, the deer cried out using Rama's voice, "I am hurt! Lakshmana, if you love me, help me!" Lakshmana was faced with a horrible choice: rescue his brother or continue to guard Sita from the perils of the forest, as he had sworn to do? Lakshmana thought fast. "Sita, I will go. But I am drawing this magic protective circle around you. Do not go outside it for anything or anyone!" And he ran into the forest after his brother.

At once, Ravana stepped into the clearing near Sita, disguised as an old man. "Ah, madam. Could you please get some water for this old and tired hermit?" Sita was now faced with a difficult choice of her own. Stay safe, inside the magic circle, but disobey her duty to help an elder person in need?



She just barely leaned out of the circle towards the water jug, when Ravana threw off his disguise and swept her up, rushing airborne towards his kingdom of Lanka.

Rama and Lakshmana realized that they had been tricked and raced back to the clearing, now empty not only of their beloved Sita, but also of any clues as to where she had gone.

Rama and Lakshmana searched for Sita throughout the forest they encountered the magical bird, Jatayus, who had just fought Ravana in the air. He was fatally wounded. Before dying, Jatayus told Rama and Lakshmana who Sita's kidnapper was, and where they were going. Rama and Lakshmana prayed together and helped Jatayus' soul go to heaven.

Later, another bird, Garuda, helped heal the brothers' wounds during battles in the forest on their way to find Sita.

#### **Part 4: Destruction of Lanka and Sita's Rescue**

Rama and Lakshmana then enlisted the help of Hanuman, the powerful Monkey King. Agile and swift in body, loyal to his friends, Hanuman brought together his entire monkey army to help bring Sita back.

With the army of monkeys, Rama and Lakshmana finally reached the end of the land. From the southern tip of India, Hanuman flew over the ocean to Lanka to spy. Sita was surprised to see the monkey materialize in her garden prison. "Has Rama truly sent you, or is this just another of Ravana's ploys to get me to marry him? I have not given in to any of his demands." To prove that he had been sent by Rama, Hanuman gave Sita one of Rama's rings. Now convinced, Sita gave him a flower from her hair as a message to Rama. Hanuman raced back to the mainland.

But the monkey army first needed to figure out how to cross the ocean straight to Lanka. On Hanuman's command, the monkeys made a bridge of trees, stones, and even their bodies, to carry Rama and Lakshmana to Lanka. There, they all joined in the terrible fight, as the two sides clashed using supernatural powers and magic weapons. Rama and the monkey army defeated the demons, and the brothers were reunited with Sita.

Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita thanked Hanuman and his monkey army, and returned to Ayodhya. The fourteen years of exile were over, and Prince Rama could now take his place as king. Rama's brother gracefully returned the throne to his wise brother Rama, with his wife Sita and brother with Lakshmana by his side. Wise, old Tualen and his son Merdah stepped up to serve translate for Rama and Sita. The kingdom was restored to harmony.



# PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING

Primary school students

Start a class discussion on modern day superheroes and shed light upon the story pattern of heroes and villains. Share examples of stories that have a hero and an antihero counterpart. Relate to comics or figures your students are familiar with such as Batman and the Joker, Simba and Scar (The Lion King), and ask what the hero is often trying to do. Typically this can be reduced to restoring order in the world. In order to be a hero, there must be an opposing force.

Ask students: How is the Indonesian storytelling tradition similar to or different from the storytelling traditions that you are familiar with? Where and how do we learn about these types of stories today?



Many of the contemporary stories we hear today are based off of traditional epics which originate in the past. Ask the class if anyone has seen the movie Avatar. Discuss the meaning of the word avatar with your students. Explain that one hero that is celebrated by millions of people all over the world is Rama. Rama is an avatar of the Hindu god, Vishnu. This is a Hindu story that still inspires us today.

Star Wars was also greatly influenced by the Ramayana. For a summary of Star Wars, visit: [starwars.com](http://starwars.com).

Ask your students which story you are describing:

"A beautiful princess is kidnapped by a powerful but evil warlord. With determined urgency, a mysterious non-human entity delivers a distress call to a budding young hero. The youthful hero, a prince, comes to the princess's rescue, aided by a noble creature that is half-man and half-animal. In the end, after a war that epitomizes the battle between good and evil, the beautiful maiden returns home. The valiant efforts of the prince and his comrade, who were assisted by an army of anthropomorphic bears in the fight to return the princess to safety, are duly rewarded, and peace and righteousness once again engulf the kingdom."

As you can see, this abbreviated story could be used to describe the plots to both the Ramayana and Star Wars.

## PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING

Middle school students





## PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING

Both the Ramayana and Star Wars contain the same archetypal characters, a young hero-prince (Rama/Luke), a virtuous princess who must be rescued (Sita/Leia), a morally ambiguous but loyal friend (Hanuman/Han Solo), and a master and servant of evil (Ravana/The Emperor and Indrajit/Darth Vader). Both stories are set in a fairy tale time long before the time of their audience; in the Ramayana Hindu cosmology, in Star Wars a faraway galaxy.

Use the next page as a worksheet for students to make connections between the two dramas.

## HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES: STAR WARS AND THE RAMAYANA (STORY OF RAMA)

Compare and contrast popular morality epics, Star Wars and the Story of Rama.

| STAR WARS                                       |  | THE RAMAYANA   |
|---|--|----------------|
| Character name                                  | Qualities of the character<br>(evil, revengeful, greedy, etc.) | Character name |
| Luke Skywalker                                  |  |                |
| Princess Leia                                   |  |                |
| Aniken Skywalker and<br>identity as Darth Vader |  |                |
| C-3PO   |  |                |
| R2-D2   |  |                |
| Chewbacca                                       |  |                |
| Han Solo  |  |                |
| Yoda  |  |                |



For another example of how stories are transmitted to us, view this video made by SFU students, featuring the kidnapping of Sita portion of the Ramayana as reported in a Hitchcock-style docu-news format.

<https://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/exhibits/past-exhibits/wayang-kulit/videos.html>

The video asks its audience to consider the following:

“Was Sita right in trying to help who she thought was just a poor man in need of assistance? She only wanted to give him a bowl of food. I am sure without knowing the outcome like we do now, we’d never be able to decide if it was the right decision. It happens to the best of us, an impossible situation, where no matter what you choose, a right and a wrong is being done. Maybe you can think of a time when this happened to you. What was the consequence of your choice?”

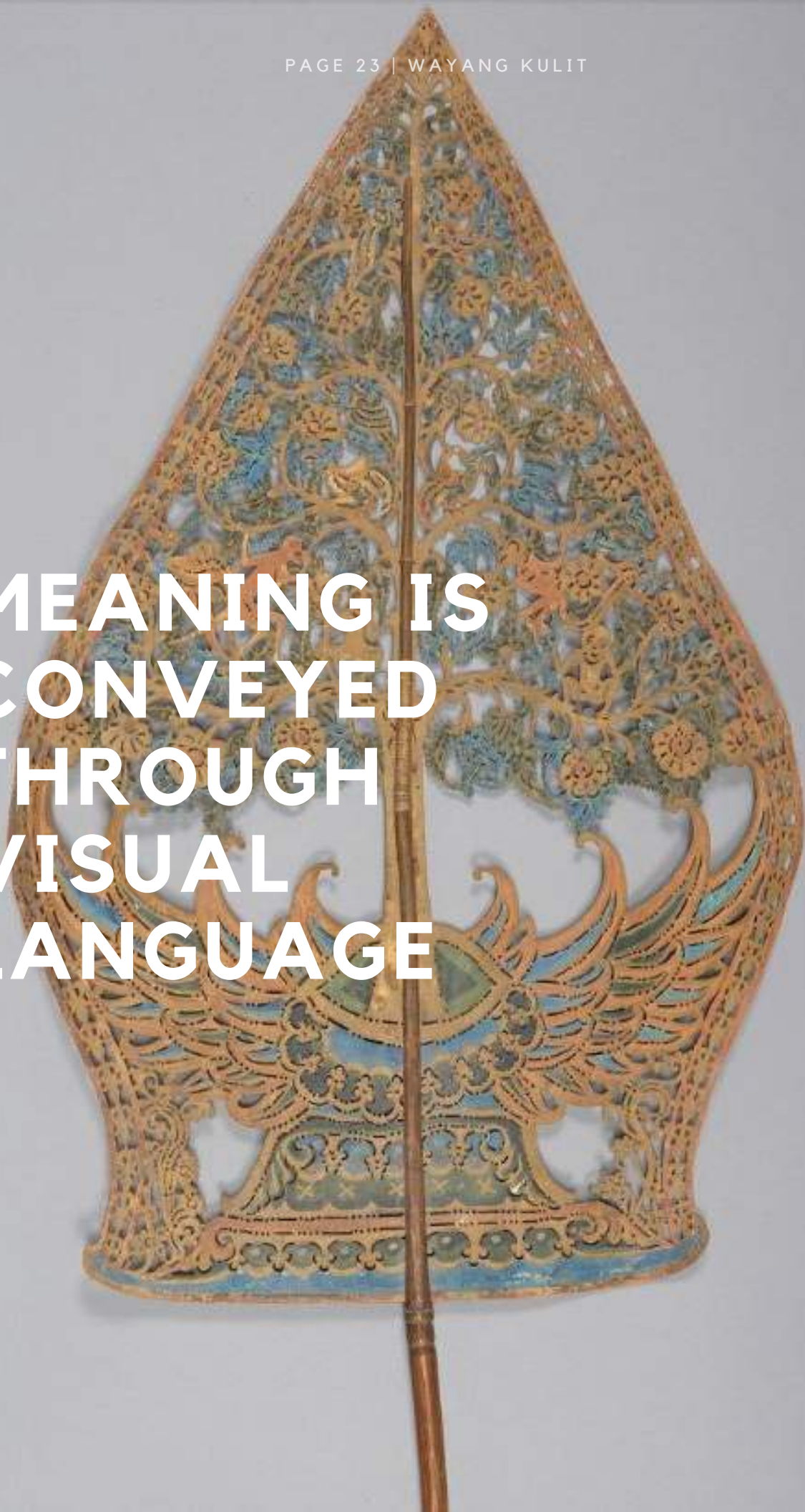
In addition, feel free to open the class discussion to speak about the role of TV and movies today. Compare and contrast this information with what they have learned about Wayang Kulit thus far.

## PUPPETS AND STORYTELLING

Secondary school students



**MEANING IS  
CONVEYED  
THROUGH  
VISUAL  
LANGUAGE**



# READING VISUAL CULTURE

Just like spoken or written language, there are different visual languages across the globe. How do we interpret visual cues and how may this differ? The presence of visual representations may be universal, but how we interpret signs can be unique. Speak of significance of colour, lines and scale. How does a SHADOW puppet use visual cues against the backlit screen?

Discuss how we read images and how meaning is conveyed in visual representations. The goals of this is to create an awareness of visual culture through learning how to actively read images.





# READING VISUAL CULTURE

The Wayang Kulit are made using a visual language which appears different from traditional Western cultures but they employ similar techniques, such as the symbolism of colour and shapes.

For the construction of puppets the preferred material is buffalo skin, because it is thin, flexible and easy to work with. This is carefully stretched out on a bamboo frame and placed to dry in the sun. Larger pictures are drawn on the thickest areas of the skin. First the body is cut out, then the head and finally the eyes. The maker would then move on to the stage of painting. The most commonly used colours are black, red, ocher, white and blue. The gold parts are coloured last. Finally, you can fasten your arms and the forearms to the body of the puppet, and attach the sticks that are made of bamboo or buffalo horns.

Each puppet is portrayed in profile, but the upper body is turned so both shoulders can be seen. The bodies of the figures are generally slim, but there are exceptions to this. Each body is configured in order to be easily recognizable from a distance. The colours of the faces are used to express the psychological traits of the character. In fact, all bodily features are reflections of temperament and spiritual strength of the character and are recognized and understood by the audience.





## READING VISUAL CULTURE

For example, a figure who is portrayed with fine features would reveal the refined and sophisticated qualities of their personality. Similarly, characters with large and round red faces reflect uncontrolled or brash personalities. In addition to various physical features such as these, the clothing and ornament on each figure also lend clues as to a figure's personality.

The ideal person, who is spiritually refined, polite, self-controlled and restrained has elongated narrow eyes, and a long nose pointed downwards as a sign of humility. Their face can be white, black or gold.

The opposite, would be someone who is rude, aggressive or has an uncontrollable temper. They would typically be depicted with a fat and bulging body, covered with mats of unkept hair and have a broad foot stance.

Generally speaking, the smaller a character is, the more refined it is and the larger they are, the more rude.



## READING VISUAL CULTURE

Remember, people in Java believe that they must pay attention to both good and evil to keep the world in balance. The struggle—and story—of good and evil never ends; this continual interaction is what makes the world go around. These traits are often embodied by characters. The main conflict in the Story of Rama is Rama and his cohort fighting against Ravana. But this is also a struggle for Rama’s self-knowledge of himself as an avatar of Vishnu. Rama must constantly defeat Ravana. The people in Java view this idea that noble and evil are necessary for the universe to have balance as “dynamic opposites.”



Discuss as a class: What are some examples of dynamic opposites? (day/night, yin/yang, ocean/mountain).

Brainstorm the characteristics of a noble and evil character. Invite students to contribute words that describe "good" and "bad" characters. Write these on the chalkboard and leave them up for the next activity.

Have your students create drawings that depict a good character, and a bad. Ask: How would a noble character in our culture look? How would an evil character in our culture look? Tell them to try to show what this person is like, using colours, facial expressions, gestures, or props to provide hints for the viewer.

Use the worksheet on the next page to help describe their characters. What types of lines did they use when depicting the different characters and why? When everyone is done, display the pictures on the bulletin board, and allow students to ask questions about each other's pictures.

## READING VISUAL CULTURE

Primary school students



## BRAINSTORM YOUR CHARACTERS

Use descriptive words to design your own pair of characters. Use a thesaurus to find antonyms that will help you define how the characters, when put together, create balanced opposites.

What is the problem or the center of rivalry between these two characters?

| CHARACTER +   |  | CHARACTER - |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Describe the face, hands, and body.   |  |             |  |
| Describe how this character might act. Does your character have special powers? |  |             |  |
| Describe 3 things this character might own.                                     |  |             |  |
| Give your person a name. Why did you choose this name?                          |  |             |  |
| Design a hat for this character.  |  |             |  |



# READING VISUAL CULTURE

Middle school students

Compare and contrast depictions of Rama and Ravana from MOA's collection, such as those provided on this page. Prompt students by providing questions in the center of a large piece of paper. Students silently write their ideas and discuss as a group afterwards. Some examples of questions are:

How are Ravana and Rama similar?

How are they different?

What about Rama gives you clues that he is a hero?

What about Ravana gives you clues that he is a villain?

What do you see? What do you see that makes you say that? What more do you see?

Reveal how the artist depicted their character qualities to identify them to a non-literate audience.



## READING VISUAL CULTURE

Secondary school students

Within the context of independence, Wayang Suluh was developed in the 20th Century. These are identical to Wayang Kulit, except the characters are all contemporary people, such as farmers, teachers, sultans and officers. See here two puppets from MOA's collection which depict Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX (the second Vice President of Indonesia) and a Dutch colonial officer. Suluh translates to "bright glow" and these were made in order to educate the public. This also created a forum in which social critiques could be safely discussed.

Compare and contrast how Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX is represented vs the Dutch officer. (hint: look at the clothing and how it may indicate antiquity or out-datedness)

Discuss puppets and their potentiality for social criticism.

What do you see? What do you see that makes you say that? What more do you see?

**THE FLOWER  
HAS BEEN  
PICKED, MAY ITS  
FRAGRANCE  
SPREAD**





# THE DHALANG

A dhalang is a puppet master. In order to be a dhalang, one must be an expert in knowing and interpreting literature, in puppet making and movement, in singing and directing the music, and, of course, in making jokes.

Ultimately, the dhalang connects the community with its cultural history and with the spirit world. Traditional Wayang performances are conducted as much to honour the ancestors and appease the spirits as they are to acknowledge living relatives during a family celebration. Therefore, the early part of a performance in particular is seen as a way to summon one's ancestral forces. Similarly, at the end of a performance, the dhalang says, "The flower has been picked, may its fragrance spread," meaning that the audience has received knowledge from him and, it is hoped, they will use this knowledge to the benefit of the community.

For this and more information, please visit: <http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/role-puppet-master-dalang-indonesia>





## THE DHALANG

Now it is time for students to become the puppet master! Using the worksheets and characters created in previous lessons, they will bring their heroes and villains to life by cutting out their drawings and using popsicle sticks to prop them up.

Using what you have learned, the importance of visual cues, movement, and sound, create a short dialogue using the worksheet attached.

Students will then perform their quick skit (about 30 seconds to 1 minute long) and at the end will discuss what elements they used in order to further their story line. Allow time for students to ask questions about each other's performances.

Finish off by reinforcing the value of storytelling and by pointing out similarities to the way we learn about stories today and the performances of Wayang Kulit.

## DIALOGUE YOUR DILEMMA

Noble character name \_\_\_\_\_

Opposing or demon character name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your character's dilemma or problem in the world?

---

---

### **DIALOGUE is when characters talk to each other.**

2. Write some dialogue in which your characters talk about their conflict. Write at least two lines for each character. Make sure they are talking about the problem in some way!

Noble character says:

---

---

Demon character says:

---

---

Noble character says:

---

---

Demon character says:

---

---



## THE DHALANG

Middle school students

This age group will create a more complex puppet show than the previous group, including at least 4 characters and working in groups of 2. Use worksheets BRAINSTORM YOUR CHARACTERS and DIALOGUE YOUR DILEMMA found in this package in order to keep your students focused.

Remind your students: the size, shape, and features of a puppet tell us about the personality and character type: a large body, round eyes, and splayed stance usually mean a coarse character like a demon. A slim body, modest profile, almond eyes, and a closed stance signifies a refined character like a princess or god. Students do not have to follow the Javanese style, but must be able to explain their choices in why they decided to depict certain characters certain ways.



# THE DHALANG

Secondary school students

Secondary students will bring their puppets to life using both video and shadows to enhance their project.

Video performances will be made in groups of 4, and each will be 5 minutes long with at least 6 characters. Students are encouraged to base characters on contemporary figures and provide critique similar to the Wayang Suluh.

In order to create their puppets, it is suggested that students use thin cardboard or manila file folders to create something sturdy enough that can still be carved into with an exacto-knife.

These will be presented in class with a short written component talking about the challenges and opportunities the medium provides, and explaining their choices. The written component should also reflect upon the value of oral histories in contrast to written historical records.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/geography-southeast-asia>

[http://education.asianart.org/sites/asianart.org/files/resource-downloads/Rama\\_3.pdf](http://education.asianart.org/sites/asianart.org/files/resource-downloads/Rama_3.pdf)

[http://education.asianart.org/sites/asianart.org/files/resource-downloads/Rama\\_3.pdf](http://education.asianart.org/sites/asianart.org/files/resource-downloads/Rama_3.pdf)

<https://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/exhibits/past-exhibits/wayang-kulit.html>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hinduism>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>

<https://www.britannica.com/art/wayang>

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/introduction-puppet-theater-wayang-indonesia>

[https://ia800202.us.archive.org/24/items/TheHistoryOfIndonesiaTheGreenwoodHistoriesOfTheModernNations/\\_The\\_History\\_of\\_Indonesia\\_The\\_Greenwood\\_Histories\\_of\\_the\\_Modern\\_Nations\\_.pdf](https://ia800202.us.archive.org/24/items/TheHistoryOfIndonesiaTheGreenwoodHistoriesOfTheModernNations/_The_History_of_Indonesia_The_Greenwood_Histories_of_the_Modern_Nations_.pdf)

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/wayang-puppet-theatre-00063>

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Indonesia/@0.2591493,111.4253239,4z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x2c4c07d7496404b7:0xe37b4de71badf485!8m2!3d-0.789275!4d113.921327>

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Indonesia/@-4.0396524,108.73112,5z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x2c4c07d7496404b7:0xe37b4de71badf485!8m2!3d-0.789275!4d113.921327>

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Java/@-7.4650046,109.2967757,6.75z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x2e7aa07ed2323237:0x86fe1c59d6abed60!8m2!3d-7.6145292!4d110.7122465>

<http://steadyrun.com/differences-and-comparison/difference-between-summer-monsoon-and-winter-monsoon/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism\\_in\\_Southeast\\_Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_in_Southeast_Asia)

<https://gibaulthistory.wordpress.com/chapter-7/>

<http://the-history-girls.blogspot.com/2013/05/who-really-discovered-australia-by.html>

# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_W66ObmsSmQ&feature=youtu.be)

<https://medium.com/@damiengwalter/the-3000-year-old-sacred-story-that-inspired-star-warsstar-wars-the-last-jedi-continues-a-40da4e0d1834>

<https://sites.google.com/site/swaminarayanabcbook/home/starwarsandhinduism>

<https://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/exhibits/past-exhibits/wayang-kulit/videos.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLt-iZ-SJAE&feature=youtu.be>

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0100898>

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/role-puppet-master-dalang-indonesia>

