

**STUDY ON CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
OF MALAYSIA-CHINA SHADOW PUPPET
THROUGH ICONOLOGICAL AND
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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by

DONG MINGHUI

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LIST OF NON-ENGLISH TERMS

<i>Wayang Kulit</i>	Name of shadow puppetry in Malaysia and Indonesia
<i>Zhonagyuan Piying</i>	China Central Plains Shadow Puppetry
<i>Pohon Beringin</i>	Tree of life, a scene puppet in Wayang Kulit
<i>Nang Talung</i>	A type of shadow puppetry in Southern Thailand
<i>Nang Yai</i>	A type of shadow puppetry in Central Thailand
<i>Nang Sbek</i>	Name of shadow puppetry in Cambodia
<i>Sbek Thom</i>	Cambodian shadow puppetry
<i>Kharagoz, or Karagöz</i>	Shadow puppetry in Turkey
<i>Dalang</i>	Puppeteer in Malaysia or Indonesia
<i>halus</i>	refinement
<i>Kasar</i>	roughness
<i>Ramayana</i>	An all-popular epic in South and Southeast Asia
<i>Mahabharata</i>	An ancient Indian epic
<i>Mak yong</i>	Mak Yung, the traditional Malay dance-drama form
<i>Memadah</i>	the ritual performance
<i>kenduri</i>	The ritualistic offerings in ceremonial practice
<i>kelir</i>	The screen in wayang kulit performance
<i>batik sarong</i>	Cloth wrapped around the body
<i>seluar</i>	Trousers
<i>Wacinwa</i>	Chinese-Javanese Shadow Puppet, Wayang kulit Cina-Jawa

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KAJIAN HUBUNGAN RENTAS BUDAYA WAYANG KULIT MALAYSIA - CHINA MELALUI ANALISIS IKONOLOGI DAN KONTEKSTUAL

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka hubungan silang budaya antara Wayang Kulit Malaysia dan wayang kulit China, dengan memberi tumpuan kepada ciri artistik yang dikongsi dan dimensi budaya yang unik melalui analisis ikonologi dan kontekstual. Dengan menjalankan penyiasatan yang menyeluruh, kajian ini mendedahkan intipati seni wayang kulit, memupuk pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang tradisi ini serta menggalakkan pemuliharaan dan evolusinya. Kajian ini bermula dengan menelusuri trajektori sejarah dan perkembangan wayang kulit di kedua-dua negara. Melalui analisis dokumen yang teliti, ia mengkaji asal-usul wayang kulit di Malaysia dan evolusinya di dataran tengah China. Penyelidikan ini menyerlahkan laluan berpotensi yang memungkinkan pengaruh wayang kulit China terhadap Wayang Kulit Malaysia, sekali gus menyingkap jaringan pertukaran budaya dan interaksi yang rumit. Fokus utama kajian ini adalah analisis ciri-ciri budaya yang terdapat dalam wayang kulit. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan ikonologi Panofsky, kajian ini mengenal pasti metafora budaya dan simbol yang dikongsi dalam reka bentuk, warna, dan bentuk patung wayang. Selain itu, teori kontekstual Malinowski diaplikasikan untuk memahami pengaruh konteks budaya dan situasi terhadap perkembangan dan penyesuaian wayang kulit dalam kedua-dua tradisi. Pendekatan dual ini menyediakan perspektif yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana estetika wilayah dan konvensi sejarah membentuk seni ini, mendedahkan persamaan dan perbezaan yang wujud. Kajian ini memuncak dalam analisis perbandingan antara Wayang Kulit dan wayang kulit China, menekankan hubungan visual dan budaya antara kedua-dua tradisi.

Melalui pemeriksaan mendalam terhadap simbol budaya, metafora, dan ritual persembahan, kajian ini menyerlahkan ikatan silang budaya yang mendalam. Bukti visual seperti penggunaan sistem lima warna, motif *Tree-of-Life* (phone beringin), dan elemen simbolik lain menunjukkan pengaruh budaya China dalam Wayang Kulit Malaysia, sambil mengakui evolusinya yang tersendiri dalam konteks sosio-budaya Malaysia. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini memperkayakan pemahaman tentang evolusi wayang kulit dan hubungannya yang kompleks dengan budaya serantau. Dengan menggabungkan analisis sejarah, ikonologi, dan teori kontekstual, kajian ini mencerahkan interaksi dinamik antara estetika, budaya, dan evolusi seni. Ia bukan sahaja memperdalam wacana tentang seni tradisional ini tetapi juga menyokong pemuliharaan dan kesinambungannya dalam memupuk dialog dan pemahaman silang budaya.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the cross-cultural connections between Malaysian Wayang Kulit and Chinese shadow puppetry, focusing on their shared artistic features and unique cultural dimensions through iconological and contextual analyses. By conducting a comprehensive investigation, this research unveils the profound artistic essence of shadow puppetry, fostering a deeper understanding of these traditions and promoting their preservation and evolution. The study begins by tracing shadow puppetry's historical trajectory and development in both nations. Using meticulous document analysis, it examines the origins of shadow puppetry in Malaysia and its evolution within China's Central Plains. This exploration highlights the potential pathways through which Chinese shadow puppetry influenced Malaysian Wayang Kulit, shedding light on the intricate web of cultural exchange and interaction. An essential focus of this research is the analysis of cultural characteristics embedded in shadow puppetry. Employing Panofsky's iconological approach, the study identifies shared cultural metaphors and symbols in puppet designs, colours, and forms. Additionally, it applies Malinowski's contextual theory to understand the influence of cultural and situational contexts on the development and adaptation of shadow puppetry in both traditions. This dual methodology provides a nuanced perspective on how regional aesthetics and historical conventions have shaped these art forms, revealing both their commonalities and distinct characteristics. The research culminates in a comparative analysis of *Wayang kulit* and Chinese shadow puppetry,

emphasizing their visual and cultural connections. Through an in-depth examination of cultural symbols, metaphors, and performance rituals, the study highlights the profound cross-cultural ties between the two traditions. Visual evidence, such as using the five-colour system, Tree-of-Life motif, and other symbolic elements, underscores the Chinese cultural influence on Malaysian Wayang Kulit, while acknowledging its localized evolution within Malaysia's unique sociocultural context. In conclusion, this research enriches our understanding of shadow puppetry's evolution and its intricate ties to regional cultures. The study illuminates the dynamic interplay between aesthetics, culture, and artistic evolution by combining historical analysis, iconology, and contextual theory. It deepens the discourse on these traditional art forms and advocates for their preservation and continued relevance in fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Shadow puppetry is a performing art and a kind of traditional craft skill. Shadow puppetry has a long history, during which it has undergone a long historical evolution, and its interpretations have changed over time. It is an ancient art form with unique graphic visual cultural symbols and a unique way of transmission. In its long production and development process, close relationships between regional cultures have gradually been reflected where the shadow puppets' shape shows aesthetics and world views. Noticeably, it is closely related to the visual characteristics that are formed under different cultural backgrounds. There was a period when shadow puppetry became a popular form of mass entertainment and was widely circulated, even spreading to other countries. Consequently, shadow puppetry exhibits a variety of characteristics in different regions and occurs in many cultures under various guises.

This thesis is intended to be a deep discussion, dialogue, and analysis related to the complexities of cross-cultural communication based on the figures of *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*¹ of Malaysia and *ZhongYuan Piyong*² (中原皮影) of China. By

NOTE: There are many different conventions regarding the construction of names in Western and non-Western system that affects in-text referencing and in footnotes. For example, traditional Chinese names usually position the family name first (e.g. Khor Kheng-Kia) and the Anglicized Chinese names follow the Western convention (e.g. Kheng-Kia Khor). In Malay/Muslim traditions, there are no family names therefore, the father's name becomes the son or the daughter's end name for example, Mohd Ali Abdul Rahman in which the name of the author is Mohd Ali and Abdul Rahman is the father's name. Due to these various conventions and to avoid confusion, I have decided not to use the Western system in general but instead I decided to use full names in footnotes and wherever applicable throughout this dissertation to avoid confusion.

¹ *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* is shadow puppetry's name in Bahasa Malaysia in Kelantan Malaysia. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, points that *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* is known as *Wayang Kulit Siam* or *Wayang Siam*. This is the principal Malaysian shadow play and one of the oldest traditional art forms in Malaysia. It is based in Kelantan and there are about a dozen active puppeteers, but this number is rapidly diminishing. Interview with Dr. Ghulam in UM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in October 2019. Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (21 November 1939 – 10 November 2022) was a Malaysian academic and writer. He was an expert in traditional Malay and South-East Asian theatre as well as one of the leading writers of Malaysian English Literature.

² Wei Li Qun (魏力群), a Professor at School of Art, Hebei Normal University, proposed the term of Central Plains shadow puppetry, after the formation of Chinese shadow puppetry in the ancient Central Plains in the Yellow River Basin, the capital city of the Northern Song Dynasty became the earliest prosperous place in the history of Chinese shadow puppetry. Interviewed with Professor Wei in Beijing in September 2019.

examining the visual characteristics of these two types of shadow puppets, this research will trace the spread route of shadow puppetry from China to Malaysia through various Southeast Asian regions to identify the connection between these two types of shadow puppetry. Studying the shapes and characteristics of the shadow puppets and their cultural meaning can help us to understand the different regional cultures. Understanding regional and traditional cultures more profoundly is achievable by examining shadow puppets' characteristics and cultural metaphors. It can also help prevent the loss of cultural traditions, enriching cultural diversity.

The proposed research systematically collects, analyses, and interprets information and data to increase the understanding of the cultural connotation and metaphor of *Wayang Kulit* Malaysia and Chinese shadow puppetry (Henceforth, unless stipulated otherwise, the term shadow puppetry and its variants refer to the general aspects of both *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* and *ZhongYuan PiYing*. Italics are no longer used in the following text). However, previous researchers have mainly focused on the study of performances and storytelling. This thesis investigates cross-cultural connections by tracing the shadow puppet characteristics of Malaysia and China through the analysis of icons, artistic symbolism, and contextual analysis.³

Although traditional cultures have distinct national characteristics, it is essential to maintain the diversity of world culture and preserve the meaning of regional culture in order to retain an understanding of traditional cultures. Tracing the path and clarifying the context of the development and dissemination of Malaysia's *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* and China's *Zhongyuan Piyong* will help us understand the impact of art development, the power of culture, and its dissemination. Thus, cultural

³ Contextual analysis involves looking outside of the work of art in order to determine its meaning. This involves examining not only the context in which the work was created, but also later contexts in which the work was and continues to be consumed. Contextual analysis focuses on the cultural social, religious, and economic context in which the work was produced.

exchanges between Malaysia and China should be strengthened, and bilateral cooperation and social development between the two countries should be promoted. By focusing on the traditional art forms of these two types of shadow puppetry, a better understanding and appreciation of the cultures of Malaysia and China and their surrounding regions can be achieved.

Correspondingly, shadow puppetries accommodate an open array of possibilities portraying as objects or metaphors for interpretation and action while capturing the essential features of affect, meaning, and intention that suggest human narrative propensities, motion, and emotional responses.⁴ The metaphors from different cultures are both homogeneous and heterogeneous. In this thesis, this author attempts to discuss the similarities and dissimilarities of cross-culture metaphors of shadow puppets by comparing the shape, colour, and design of the puppet figures of Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Zhongyuan Piyong. This thesis will seek to explain how the Malaysian and Chinese shadow puppetries relate to one another, highlighting their similarities and dissimilarities.

1.2 Background of the Study

Global economic integration has promoted the joint development of human societies and also impacts the development of regional culture. The convergence of culture is unavoidable in the world. With the advent of urbanised metropolitan cities dating back more than 5,000 years and the beginning of commercial activities, cultural exchanges have occurred between individuals living in various societies. Unavoidably, cultures get influenced and shift through contact with other cultures.⁵ Preserving the

⁴ Kenneth Gross, *Puppet: An Essay on Uncanny Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 125-26.

⁵ Abderrahman Hassi and Giovanna Storti, "Globalization and Culture: The Three H Scenarios," in *Globalization-Approaches to Diversity* (IntechOpen, 2012), 6.

unique traits of different cultures and the global diversity of cultures has garnered significant attention from the international community. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) introduced the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. Article 1 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity⁶ emphasises that preserving cultural diversity ‘is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind.’ Being a ‘source of exchange, innovation, and creativity,’ cultural diversity is vital to humanity and inextricably linked to safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Mutual recognition and respect for cultural diversity is a fortiori and is the appropriate safeguarding of the ICH of the diverse peoples making up the world, which is essential for promoting harmony in intercultural relations by fostering better appreciation and understanding of the differences between communities of human beings.⁷

At the heart of Southeast Asia, Malaysia has had more than 2,000 years of exchanges with China. The connection between the two places dates back to around A.D. Chinese historical records detail the official and civil exchanges between the two countries. This friendship reached its height during China’s Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and the Sultanate of Malacca (1403–1511).⁸

The friendly exchanges between China and Malaysia continued to advance through the Maritime Silk Road and peaked in the 15th century. From the third year of Yongle (永乐) to the eighth year of Xuande (宣德) in the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He (郑和) made seven voyages to the Western Ocean. Southeast Asia was the leading

⁶ UNESCO., "Records of the General Conference," ed. Scientific and Cultural Organization United Nations Educational (Paris2001), 61.

⁷ Federico Lenzerini, "Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Living Culture of Peoples," *European Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (2011): 103.

⁸ 苏莹莹 Su Yingying, "The Spread and Inheritance of Chinese Culture in Malaysia 中国文化在马来西亚的传播与传承," *Social Sciences in Chinese Universities 中国高校社会科学* 6 (2015): 96.

destination of his first three voyages and the necessary place for the following four voyages. It was the area where Zheng He's fleet mostly stayed and for the longest period. Among the seven voyages Zheng He made, he arrived in Malacca five times.⁹ The relationship between China and the Malay world was often strengthened during the Ming Dynasty with the Malacca Sultanate.¹⁰ By 1409, Malacca established relations with China and successfully freed itself from Siamese rule.¹¹

In modern history, Malaysia is the first ASEAN member state to establish diplomatic ties with China and has significantly contributed to promoting friendly relations between ASEAN and China. In recent years, with frequent high-level visits and active people-to-people interactions, the pragmatic cooperation between the two countries in various fields has made steady progress.¹²

This study examines one such communication and cultural mixing between China and Malaysia's traditional cultures. This study focuses on ZhongYuan Pi Ying, the Shadow Puppetry of Central Plains of China, and Wayang Kullit Kelantan of the Northeastern Peninsula Malaysia, thereby contributing to a better understanding of the two peoples' distinct regional cultural backgrounds. Shadow puppetry is a popular entertainment in ancient times in Malaysia and China, and even in modern society. The connection between the shadow puppetry of Malaysia and China shows the artistic communication of intangible cultural heritage. Different cultural representations have different meanings. Different customs and habits represent different cultural understandings. Further expansion of the breadth and depth of the cultural exchange between the two countries better promotes mutual understanding and cultural blend.

⁹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰ KU BOON DAR, "Preserving the Cultural Bond Towards Strengthening Sino-Malaysian Friendship," *International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation (Iman)* 4, no. 3 (2016): 87.

¹¹ Fauziah Shaffie and Ruslan Zainuddin, *Sejarah Malaysia* (Fajar Bakti, 2000), 7.

¹² Su Yingying, "The Spread and Inheritance of Chinese Culture in Malaysia 中国文化的传播与传承," 96.

The development of shadow puppetry in these two countries is different. Although elusive social legacy observes society's ceaseless advancement and humankind's advancement, Chinese shadow puppetry has been recorded as the world's impalpable social legacy as a Chinese show delegate. This legacy was inscribed in 2011 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.¹³ Currently, China is effectively completing the legacy and scattering of shadow play culture to advance the spread of shadow play culture globally, which is helpful for social trade between nations.

In 2008, UNESCO listed the *wayang kulit* theatre in Indonesia as humankind's intangible cultural heritage.¹⁴ Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Wayang Kulit Gedek in Malaysia are popular folk-art forms that have not been listed in ICH. As a popular form of folk art, Wayang kulit Gedek and Wayang Kulit Kelantan once enriched the masses' cultural life and played an important role in popular culture. As a typical folk-art form in Southeast Asia, which has typical characteristics of multicultural integration, there is no reason why they have not been listed as an intangible cultural heritage.

1.2.1 Shadow Puppetry in Different Cultural Backgrounds

Different names in different countries know Shadow puppetry. In Malaysia and Indonesia, it is known as "*wayang kulit*". In China, it has been called "Pi Ying Xi" (皮影戏). In France, it has been called "*ombres chinoises*", which means Chinese Shadow.¹⁵ In Turkey, it is called "*Karagöz*," representing the hero of a Turkish shadow

¹³ "UNESCO - Chinese Shadow Puppetry." n.d. Accessed May 29, 2021. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/chinese-shadow-puppetry-00421>.

¹⁴ "UNESCO - Wayang Puppet Theatre." n.d. Accessed May 29, 2022. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/wayang-puppet-theatre-00063>.

¹⁵ Amy, Tikkanen. 1998b. "Ombres Chinoises | Shadow Theatre, Chinese Theatre, Puppetry." Encyclopaedia Britannica. July 20, 1998. Accessed November 28, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/art/ombres-chinoises>.

play.¹⁶ By combining different regional aesthetic design characteristics, intricate sculpture, and several musical melodies, shadow puppetry was able to create unity and harmony for people from all social lifestyles.¹⁷ Its existence proved the way it was handed over through the centuries. Having it around for such a long period created a cultural value for each country where shadow play existed, creating the respect it deserved. People started to identify themselves with the characters and tried to emulate them. However, it is essential to understand the shadow puppetry characters, their background, conception, implications, and influences to present them correctly.

1.2.2 Cultural Dynamics of Shadow Puppetry

Shadow puppetry in Malaysia has a similar life to China's shadow puppetry. Traditional Wayang Kulit Kelantan is the most prominent shadow puppet theatre in Malaysia. Today, however, this ancient theatre is on a rapid decline.¹⁸ Likewise, China's shadow puppetry is also in a declining trend. While both societies have their own culture and traditions, shadow puppetry has the same trend.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural society comprised of natives and immigrants, representing a comprehensive mix of art, customs, and thinking cultural characteristics. Malaysia's society is presented in Malay, Chinese, Indian, Eurasian, and aboriginal communities' cultures of both the peninsula and northern Borneo.¹⁹

¹⁶ Amy, Tikkanen. 1998. "Karagöz | Traditional, Ottoman, Puppetry." Encyclopedia Britannica. July 20, 1998. Accessed November 28, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/art/Karagoz>.

¹⁷ Dahlan Abdul Ghani, "The Art of Shadow Play: Key Frame Animation for Wayang Kulit Kelantan" (University of Malaya (Malaysia), 2015), 23.

¹⁸ Mary Beth Osnes, "A Survey of Shadow Play in the Malaysian Traditional Shadow Puppet Theatre" (University of Colorado, 1992).

¹⁹ Nag, Oishimaya Sen. 2019. "The Culture of Malaysia." WorldAtlas. April 2, 2019. Accessed November 6, 2023. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-culture-of-malaysia.html>.



Figure 1.1 China and Malaysia Map²⁰

With Zheng He's (郑和 1371-1433) seven voyages to the western seas, the number of Chinese immigrants from Nanyang to the Malay peninsula increased one after another, reaching its peak in the late 19th century. The Chinese took root in the Malay peninsula and continued to practice Chinese culture and customs. Therefore, Chinese culture, art, and customs are important to Malaysian culture and art.²¹ The Peninsula's Chinese are mostly Hokkien and Cantonese, whereas East Malaysia's are

²⁰ "Southeast Asia Political Map." n.d. Accessed May 29, 2024. <http://www.geographicguide.net/asia/southeast-political.htm>.

²¹ Cartwright, Mark. "The Seven Voyages of Zheng He." World History Encyclopedia. Last modified February 07, 2019. <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1334/the-seven-voyages-of-zheng-he/>.

Hakka and Fuchou (Hokchiu). Some Chinese families, known as *Baba* or *Nyonya* (Peranakan Chinese), arrived on the Malay Peninsula in the sixteenth century. This group has combined Malay attire, music, and language with Chinese customs, etiquette, and religion.²² All this background gives Wayang Kulit Kelantan a chance to be analysed through the context of Iconology and dig deep into the social-cultural influence on the figures' visual characteristics, to examine the connection and the influence between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and China Central Plains Shadow Puppetry.



Figure 1.2 The possible spread route of Central Plains Shadow Puppetry²³

From cultural development, China, much like Malaysia, is a nation where multiple ethnicities and cultures coexist harmoniously. This area can be termed poly-ethnic since fifty-six different ethnic groups make up the diverse culture of this region. Fifty-six different ethnic groups present different characteristics in their cultures.

²² Patricia Matusky and Tan Sooi Beng, *The Music of Malaysia: The Classical, Folk and Syncretic Traditions* (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 2.

²³ The possible spread route of Central Plains Shadow Puppetry: One is from Central China to Cambodia, then from Thailand to Northern Malaysia. The other is from Central China, Chaozhou to Taiwan, and other places to Malacca, Indonesia, and Western and Southern Malaysia.

Hence, the central plain of China is a cultural melting pot area, which is evident reflected in the culture of China as a country. The Central Plains' cultural diversity reflects not only the various ethnic groups but also a result of the region's position as a hub for cultural exchange and integration. As a cross-geographical region, the central plains of China also show the development of cultural diversity, where multiculturalism is an essential feature of the central plains.

In this regard, the emergence of the shadow puppet seems to be one of the most interesting topics to discuss since it will help trace the evolution of the art type under the influences of different cultures. This thesis discusses the occurrence of the same artistic element and the development of shadow puppetry in multicultural backgrounds. It discusses whether they have a specific correlation and homogeneity regarding their artistic transmission track and characteristics.

1.2.3 The Decline of Shadow Puppets

With the development of society, people's lifestyles have undergone tremendous changes. Moreover, as a result, the development of the ancient art of shadow puppets has gradually become irrelevant to the masses. The art has not adapted to the rhythm of a fast-paced social life. Due to the performance's continual period, as Tong Yun had written in the book *Shadow Play* when the shadow puppeteers came to a village, a dwelling cave, or a yard, they would set up the bright piece and put on their shows at a single location for more than ten days or even for a couple of months in a row.²⁴ Progressively, shadow puppetry was supplanted by media such as Television or Radio and then the Internet, thus making it a form of art that is gradually disappearing and on the point of extermination.

²⁴ 童芸 Tong Yun, *Shadow Play 皮影戏* (Hefei, Anhui: Huang Shan Shu She, 2016), 96.

However, the predominance of shadow play has diminished over the years, mainly due to the proliferation of contemporary technology and digital forms of entertainment. With the emergence of new entertainment, such as movies, radio, T.V. shows, and video games, among others, traditional shadow puppetry has gradually faded away in people's daily lives, encountering the risk of extinction.²⁵ With the growth of technology, people's lifestyles have experienced significant changes. The *Wayang kulit* has not adapted to the rhythm of fast-paced social life. The decline has come about due to a number of complex and interrelated factors—the process of modernization that has virtually brought the cinema and the videotape recorder to even the remotest of villages.²⁶ The traditional art of shadow puppetry has gradually been replaced by newer forms of media such as television, radio, and the Internet. As a result, this ancient art form is on the brink of extinction and is slowly losing its relevance.

According to Tan Kian Lam, Abdullah Zawawi bin Haji Talib, and Mohd Azam Osman in 2008, the art of shadow play is slowly disappearing simply due to the younger generation's lack of interest.²⁷ In this modern and globalized society, the younger generation is more interested in new media and digital resources on the Internet, and seldom watches the ancient art form. As scholars Dahlan Ghani and Mohd Ishak stated, "In many parts of Asia, the art of shadow play is slowly disappearing simply because of the younger generation's lack of interest in the practice."²⁸ Correspondingly, according to Matusky and Tan Soon Bing, rural theatre

²⁵ Yan Shi et al., "Restoration of Traditional Chinese Shadow Play - Piyong Art from Tangible Interaction," *Computer Animation and Virtual Worlds* 25, no. 1 (2014): 33.

²⁶ Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, *The Malay Shadow Play: An Introduction*, South-East Asian Cultural Series (Penang, Malaysia: Asian Centre with the co-operation of the National Academy of Arts, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, 1997), 11.

²⁷ Abdullah Zawawi bin Haji Talib Tan Kian Lam, and Mohd. Azam Osman, "Real-Time Visual Simulation and Interactive Animation of Shadow Play Puppets Using OpenGL," *International Journal of Computer, Electrical, Automation, Control and Information Engineering* Vol:2, No:9, (2008): 2934.

²⁸ Dahlan Abdul Ghani, Mohd Sidin Bin, "Preserving Wayang Kulit for Future Generations," *IEEE Multimedia* (2011): 2.

and music troupes have declined as traditional music and theatre are converted into spectacles to capture urban and foreign audiences. Only a few Wayang Kulit Kelantan troupes have remained from the 100 or so in 1970. Purist and orthodox Muslim critique may have contributed to this fall; Islamic purists consider traditional Malay theatre haram because it is performed for spiritual purposes such as healing. They claim that humans and puppets foster worship and invoke spirits during performances.²⁹

Ghani interviewed Prof Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof in 2010, and he explained why *Wayang kulit* is gradually disappearing due to economic factors. Earlier observers of Malay society said that poverty among the Malays was partially a result of this social value, namely, the desire of educated Malays for government service or paid employment. Economically, participation in traditional artistic endeavours or popular culture did not provide sufficient revenue. It did not entice young people to participate.³⁰ Throughout their observation, they noticed that shadow puppetry was declining due to the decreased interest of the younger generation. Therefore, the following research aims to promote the younger generation's interest, i.e., to change shadow puppetry into a digital resource to attract the attention of young people. However, they have not considered the real reason for this phenomenon.

Fundamentally, the real reason is the young generation's lack of interest in traditional culture. According to American researcher Beth Osnes, in her 2010 book *The Shadow Puppet Theatre of Malaysia: A Study of Wayang Kulit with Performance Scripts and Puppet Designs*, *Wayang kulit* has declined significantly since her study started in early 1989. Although there are still some performances to be found, culture has changed, and many of its practitioners have died, those who have supported this

²⁹ Matusky and Beng, *The Music of Malaysia: The Classical, Folk and Syncretic Traditions*, 11.

³⁰ Dahlan Abdul Ghani, "The Study of Semiotics Wayang Kulit Theatre in Malay Culture Society," *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico* Vol. 18 (2012): 332.

type of form in its intended setting.³¹ This researcher is considering the reasons for the decline of shadow puppetry, which stems from the cultural environment in which it is practised.

Boon Jong Fook indicated in his thesis that the most worrying factor is ensuring the *Wayang kulit* art form's continued existence. If no concrete and practical measures are taken, extinction is unavoidable. Furthermore, suppose the authorities and private organisations only undertake the preservation of this art, and there is no effort to popularise it- to enable it to reach out to a broader society, consequently, it certainly may be lost forever.³²

Therefore, the research on shadow puppetry clarifies the culture of shadow puppetry, maintains the original culture of shadow puppetry, and shows the value of shadow puppetry's traditional culture to the younger generation to gain more of the population's interest in this ancient art form. As with this research's objective, the concentration should be on shadow puppetry research in order to clarify the culture of shadow puppetry, preserve the original culture of shadow puppetry, and demonstrate the value of shadow puppetry's traditional culture to the younger generation to pique the public's interest in this ancient art form.

Since shadow puppetry is declining in Malaysia and China, this will result in the demise of this ancient art. According to the researcher's observation, a *dalang* has no successor. Pure performance is not suitable for the development of the present society. Modern people are more accustomed to a fast-paced life and enjoy various sensory stimuli that are brought about by new media. They prefer media visual arts such as movies, television, and online videos to traditional shadow puppetry.

³¹ Beth Osnes, *The Shadow Puppet Theatre of Malaysia: A Study of Wayang Kulit with Performance Scripts and Puppet Designs* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and Londo: McFarland, 2010), 11.

³² Boon Jong Fook, "Wayang Kulit Gedek in the State of Kedah Darul Aman a Study on Performance Structure" (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2007), xii.

Therefore, young people are reluctant to follow in their father's footsteps. When the practice of the *dalang* is still here, there is great significance to studying it during its existence. Suppose society's development emphasises, for example, new media over traditional shadow puppetry, as this appears to be the case now. In that case, the study becomes even more essential to preserve previous generations' cultural characteristics.

1.2.4 The Urgency of Research

Shadow puppetry is considered to be one of the most ancient forms, but its origin is unclear.³³ Puppets have been used to voice dissent, as they have the latitude to say things humans cannot and are a bit withdrawn from reality.³⁴ Four forms of shadow theatre were designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. These four forms were integrated into the List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO: the *Sbek Thom*, Khmer Shadow Theatre from Cambodia (2008), the *Wayang Puppets* Theatre from Indonesia (2008), the *Karagoz* from Turkey (2009), and the Chinese shadow puppetry from China (2011).³⁵ Currently, in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's *Wayang kulit* is well protected and is on a good trend. However, UNESCO has not designated Malaysia's *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* and *Wayang Kulit Gedek* represent the unique characteristics of a unique cultural community. Shadow puppet has always had a role in society, whether in education, entertainment or as a governmental instrument. So, the current study must pay more attention to Malaysian shadow puppetry.

³³Joseph Nechvatal, "The Magic of Light and Shadow in Asian Puppet Theater," (Published at Hyperallergic2015), 2.

³⁴ Nechvatal, Joseph. 2015. "The Magic of Light and Shadow in Asian Puppet Theater." Hyperallergic. October 9, 2015. Accessed May 29, 2021. <http://hyperallergic.com/242170/the-magic-of-light-and-shadow-in-asian-puppet-theater/>.

³⁵ This UNESCO declaration included wayang kulit, wayang klitik, wayang golek and shadow puppet.

The puppets of Malaysian Wayang Kulit are an essential type of traditional craftsmanship of humanity. According to Amin Sweeney (1972), in the mid-20th century, Kelantan had around 300 *dalangs* (puppeteers).³⁶ In correspondence, Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof discussed in his 1997 research that Wayang Kulit Siam³⁷ must be regarded without reservations as one of the most important of the Malays' many artistic and cultural forms. It was widespread and extremely popular in Kelantan at one time, as indicated by the research conducted in the 1970s, which confirmed the existence of well over one hundred *dalangs*.³⁸ Today (1997), less than a dozen puppeteers are actively involved in Wayang Kulit Siam. This fate is shared by other traditional performance genres as well.³⁹ Notably, Dehghanharati Mahmoud counted the *dalangs* in Kelantan in 2017: there are five traditional *dalangs* (Pak Yousof, Pak Nasir,⁴⁰ Pak Rahim,⁴¹ Husain and Mohamad Nizam) and one modern *dalang* (Pak Dain⁴²) who is involved in Wayang Kulit Kelantan performance.⁴³ Depending on the researcher's investigation, it is notable that the number of *dalangs* in Malaysia is decreasing, which means shadow puppetry in Malaysia is declining.

Upon an interview with Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof in October 2019,⁴⁴ it can be concluded that there is currently a maximum of 10 *dalangs* in Malaysia, a few of which

³⁶ Amin Sweeney, *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow-Play* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972), 12.

³⁷ As the process of the research, the name of wayang kulit siam already changed into Wayang Kulit Kelantan.

³⁸ The *dalang* (puppeteer) is the person who is fully responsible for puppet movements and also controls the entire show. The puppeteer-narrator in wayang, (dhalang, in Javanese, *dalang* in Bahasa Malay). A *dalang* is the head of his troupe who gives performances sponsored by patrons. He (or she) hires some or all the musicians who will accompany the performance directed by the *dalang*'s verbal and sound cues. The *dalang* delivers the narration, mood songs, and all the dialogue as he presents a story for three to eight hours. As in all forms of wayang kulit, the *dalang* is the ritual specialist, manipulator, and narrator.

³⁹ Yousof, *The Malay Shadow Play: An Introduction*, 5.

⁴⁰ Pak Nasir is a puppet maker who learned from his father. He is the one of a few *dalang* can carve puppet in current time.

⁴¹ Pak Rahim is the famous *dalang* Pak Hamzah's son, he had ever been a *dalang* after Pak Hamzah passed away, but in the interview, he said he also has his own job to do something for earning a life. Now he has an inheritor is his nephew.

⁴² Pak Dain, a *dalang* in Kelantan, has a *wanyang kulit* puppet collection and workshop in Kelantan.

⁴³ Dehghanharati Mahmoud, "Pak Dogol and Wak Long in Wayang Kulit Kelantan" (University of Malaya, 2017), 1.

⁴⁴ An interview with Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof in October 2019 in Cultural Centre University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

will be included in the further fieldwork research in this study. The author interviews four *dalangs* in Kelantan, including Pak Chu,⁴⁵ Pak Rahim, Pak Dain, and the Puppet Maker Pak Nasir (see the figures in Appendix E).

While *wayang kulit* is a primary cultural and theatrical form, current research in English lacks updated and complete information on the physical act of *wayang kulit* craftsmanship and information on the histories and current circumstances surrounding its carver. The majority of scholarly works available on *wayang kulit* commonly focus on the form's literary and linguistic elements, the origins of performance, or the history and training of a *dalang*. Discussions on craftsmanship that exist are generally consigned to a few pages or more, often to a few paragraphs of information within larger studies. Existing scholarship on *wayang kulit* craftsmanship tends to focus on the documentation of the puppets themselves as images in photographic collections or on the idea that craftsmanship has declined due to issues such as economic hardships and globalisation, without a focused examination of the carver themselves or the extensive history of the craft and its techniques.⁴⁶ So far, research on Indonesian shadow puppetry has been at the forefront of the world; it has been conducted by local scholars in Indonesia and some scholars from the United States and Southeast Asia. In many studies, researchers have also noticed a lack of research on shadow puppets' visual art, thus, they have begun to consider the visual research of shadow puppetry.

Similarly, shadow puppetry research in China and Malaysia is not as good as in Indonesia. More research is carried out on the evolution of performance and repertoire. In addition, visual art research is scarce. Hence, this research will focus on the shadow puppets' visual characteristics and their respective cultural metaphor,

⁴⁵ Pak Chu named Eyo Hock Seng, he is the only Chinese *Tok Dalang* who is active in Kelantan puppetry. He has a inheritor is his grandson currently.

⁴⁶ Kristina L. Tannenbaum, "Carving out a New Future: Wayang Kulit Craftsmanship in Central Java, Indonesia" (2018), 3.

while maintaining the base material and its original and regional cultural environment of shadow puppetry.

Tan Sooi Beng has noted that for a sustainable cultural development initiative, communities must be empowered and confident to act to effect positive changes in their lives. Additionally, there is a need to democratise research and encourage collaboration between the researcher and the community so that the latter is engaged and feels a sense of ownership over the entire transformation process.⁴⁷ Therefore, the importance of studying verbal art forms such as *Wayang kulit* is to better understand traditional Malay culture through the interaction of inherited cultural materials and emerging social realities, encourage puppeteers to pass on the excellent moral qualities of the characters in shadow puppetry, and build a harmonious social culture.

1.3 Problem Statement

Although research on cross-cultural influences between Asian nations has been widely published in the field of fine arts, there is a near absence of studies that directly analyse the connection of visual characteristics between the People's Republic of China and Malaysian shadow puppets. The current research gap lies in the lack of a comparative study of the visual design elements that are unique to China's Central Plains shadow puppet and Wayang Kulit Kelantan, particularly concerning the cross-cultural connections between Malaysia's Wayang Kulit Kelantan and China's Zhong Yuan Pi Ying. This study aims to bridge this gap by systematically analysing these shadow puppet forms' visual elements, design, and artistic symbolism. Using the classic shadow puppets Sheng and Seri Rama, Dan and Siti Dewi, warriors and clowns

⁴⁷ S. Pettan and J.T. Titon, *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, ed. Tan Sooi Beng, Chapter 3 Cultural Engagement and Ownership through Participatory Approaches in Applied Ethnomusicology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 111.

in both, this thesis investigates the connections between China's and Malaysian shadow puppets with regard to visual elements of colour, shape, and cultural connotations. It explores how cultural, historical, and artistic influences have shaped their development and how they reflect and communicate cultural narratives. Additionally, this research examines the similarities and differences in the metaphors and artistic expressions of these two puppetry traditions. It seeks to illuminate the region's rich cultural aspect and shared heritage, contributing to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural influences and the global preservation of these traditional art forms.

The research on the intrinsically linked focus of Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Chinese Shadow puppets, and the visual characteristics of puppets and their culture, has not attracted much attention in Malaysia and China. The current research gap in the field of shadow puppetry, particularly in the context of cross-cultural connections between Malaysia's Wayang Kulit Kelantan and China's Zhongyuan Piyong, is marked by a notable lack of comprehensive contextual analysis. Lacking a more profound comprehension of shadow puppets' visual elements, artistic symbols, and cultural connotations as influenced by regional culture, this void impedes the efficacy of cross-cultural understanding of shadow puppets. This thesis proposes to bridge these gaps by not only focusing on the aesthetic and narrative aspects of Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Zhong Yuan Pi Ying but also considering the broader cultural, historical, and political contexts that shape these art forms.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the alarming decline in the practice of Malaysian shadow puppetry genres, particularly over the last quarter-century, with Wayang Kulit Kelantan facing the threat of extinction and a dwindling number of active *dalangs* (puppeteers).

According to Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, it becomes problematic in terms of shadow puppetry's development and inheritance since the status of all four Malaysian shadow puppetry genres has declined dramatically in recent decades, most notably in the past quarter-century. The *Wayang Kulit Melayu* is in danger of extinction, whereas a few *dalangs* are performing the other three types *Wayang kulit* (Except *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*). The overall number of active *dalangs* in the whole country is believed to be about fifteen.⁴⁸ In an interview with Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, the researcher noted only five active *dalangs* in Kelantan.⁴⁹ According to Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof and Kheng-Kia Khor's discussion, *Wayang Kulit Gedek*, the Malaysian version of Thai *Nang Talung*, is almost extinct, it becomes *Wayang Kulit Kampung Asun*, which is maintained by a single puppeteer in the eponymous village in the northern state of Kedah.

On top of that, Dahlan Abdul Ghani, in discussing the future of *Wayang kulit*, has also written that even though the belief is that *Wayang kulit* is slowly becoming extinct, it is hoped that advances in technology and globalisation will not be a barrier to the arts, which should continue to flourish.⁵⁰ The future of *Wayang kulit* is not in the puppeteer's hands, it is more of a collective effort of various parties.⁵¹ That requires further research in this area.

Historically, studies on shadow puppetry have predominantly been the domain of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, with a focus on regional practices and lacking an integrated approach to cross-cultural examination. Research has often been siloed, with Chinese studies largely isolated and Malaysian research adopting a more international perspective yet not fully exploring the connections with other traditions.

⁴⁸ Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, *Issues in Traditional Malaysian Culture* (Trafford, 2013), 112.

⁴⁹ Interviewed Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof in October 2019 at University Malay.

⁵⁰ Bin, "Preserving Wayang Kulit for Future Generations," 5.

⁵¹ Ghani, "The Art of Shadow Play: Key Frame Animation for Wayang Kulit Kelantan," 58.

Recent shifts towards digital and visual art analysis in shadow puppetry highlight the evolving nature of the field but still leave a gap in comparative studies between Chinese and Malaysian traditions.

As an influential visual art, shadow puppetry carries more cultural elements than ordinary modern art. Many puppets can be passed down as works of art. Once the art loses its cultural context, it will become isolated and helpless and become a new art form. Therefore, the research of shadow puppetry should not only focus on itself but also pay attention to its cultural environment. Reviewing the previous work, most of the research on shadow puppetry was studied by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. Most Chinese shadow puppetry studies are independent and do not pay much attention to cross-cultural relations. Due to the limitation of language and cultural background, the research object is only Chinese shadow puppetry that could be seen in the works of Wei Li Qun (魏立群) (1995,1998), Jiang Yuxiang (江玉祥) (1992, 1997, 1999), Sun Jianjun (孙建军) (2003), Kang Baocheng (康保成) (2011) and Li Yuezhong (李跃忠) (2006, 2013, 2019). In terms of Malaysian Wayang Kulit research, there are several thorough studies on Wayang Kulit Kelantan. The research perspective is more international. The researcher has so many international scholars, and the local researchers also have international views, such as Patricia Matusky (1993), Amin Sweeney (1972), Beth Osnes (2010), and Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (1993, 1997, 2000, 2010, 2013) etcetera.

In addition, studies into visual art analysis have grown in shadow puppetry in recent years. In the latest research, digital puppetry was the most significant focus. Ghani Dahlan focused on shadow puppetry digital research and turned it into the puppets' value. He described the symbolic value of each form of engravings, symbols,

and puppets listed in the *Wayang kulit* (shadow play) semiotics in 2012.⁵² In his latest study, he studied the sound of *Wayang kulit* in 2016.⁵³ Fiona Wong E Chiong began to study the visual elements of the figures in Wayang Kulit Kelantan, presenting a detailed visual analysis of two types of Kelantanese *Pohon Beringin* puppets⁵⁴. Most previous studies about *wayang kulit* focus on the Malaysian Wayang Kulit itself, and less on connecting with other types. Some shadow puppetry research is related to Southeast Asia, including Indonesia and Thailand. However, comparative studies of shadow puppetry between China and Malaysia are infrequent.

Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof and Kheng-Kia Khor conclude in their studies, *Wayang Kulit Kelantan: A Study of Characterization and Puppets*, the study of characterization and designs of Malaysian Wayang Kulit Kelantan is a preliminary attempt to examine the aesthetics of the puppets, with selected examples of typical figures from the main categories. What becomes evident is the presence of multicultural elements (Thai, Javanese, local) that have served to shape the Ramayana narrative as interpreted and presented by Kelantan puppeteers and many other aspects of the Shadow Puppetry as an art form.⁵⁵ They had already considered the “multicultural features” in Wayang Kulit Kelantan when they conducted their research. However, their perspective is limited due to the fact that they are native researchers from Malaysia. They had taken into consideration the cultural influences that existed throughout the country and Southeast Asia. However, they had not taken into consideration the impact of other cultural aspects of shadow puppetry, particularly

⁵² "The Study of Semiotics Wayang Kulit Theatre in Malay Culture Society."

⁵³ "The Art of Noise: Understanding Digital Sound Effects in Wayang Kulit (Shadow Puppets)," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 47, no. 1 (2016).

⁵⁴ Fiona E Chiong Wong and Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, "The Visual Elements in the Pohon Beringin Figure of the Kelantan Shadow Play," *Malaysian Journal of Performing and Visual Arts* Volume 4 (2018).

⁵⁵ Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof and Kheng-Kia Khor, "Wayang Kulit Kelantan: A Study of Characterization and Puppets," *Asian Theatre Journal* 34, no. 1 (2017): 24.

the culture of the shadow puppetry's origin place, which was Chinese culture, on *wayang kulit*. This research will fill the gaps in the current *wayang kulit* research.

According to Abdul Aziz Shuaib and Raja Iskandar Raja Halid, the entry of foreign epics such as the *Ramayana* and the production of local indigenous stories have enriched the traditional Malay performing arts. These stories are used in the *wayang kulit* puppet performances in Kelantan and Terengganu. It was developed through centuries of cross-cultural interaction. Art is flexible and dynamic, evolving with time and is influenced by its political and cultural context.⁵⁶ In studying the cultural connection and influence between the two countries' shadow puppets, it is necessary to investigate how shadow puppetry has flowed from China to Malaysia and how the different regional cultures influence the same type of art to show other characteristics.

1.4 Objectives

This research focuses on the characteristics of different regional cultures and their impact on different shadow puppetry types. This study involves a cross-cultural survey of shadow puppetry from the visual art aspects and traditional cultural angles to understand the artistic essence of shadow puppetry better, which can then be better inherited and developed.

This study will be conducted from a cross-cultural artistic communication perspective with reviews on shadow puppetry history in China and Malaysia. It will analyse its traditional cultural values, focus on shadow puppets, and examine the choice of colours.

⁵⁶ Ab Aziz Shuaib and Raja Iskandar Raja Halid, "The Search for the Middle Path: Islam and the Tradisional Malay Performings Arts," (2011): 3.

The underlying forms and the puppet's elements form a visual art perspective. From the perspective of cultural transmission, this thesis will trace the conventions of the different historical and regional cultures and aesthetics on Malaysia's *wayang kulit* figures and China's shadow puppetry figures. So, the objective of the proposed study is:

1. To examine shadow puppetry's evolution and historical trajectory in China and Malaysia.

Through the analysis of documents, this thesis will explore the possible propagation path of Chinese shadow puppetry's spread to Malaysia by examining the origin of shadow puppetry in Malaysia and the historical trend of shadow puppetry in China's central plains.

2. To comparatively analyse the cultural characteristics, common cultural metaphors, and cultural symbols of shadow puppetry by using the contextual approach to investigate the influence of cross-cultural and regional cultures on the visual art characteristics of shadow puppets in China and Malaysia.

This thesis analyses the visual characteristics of Chinese and Malaysian shadow puppets and differentiates their different artistic styles in shape, colour, and composition, clarifying the distinct cultural features of shadow puppetry figures. From the perspective of cross-cultural transmission, this thesis will examine the influence of different historical and regional cultures and aesthetics upon Malaysia's *wayang kulit* figures and China's shadow puppetry figures. This objective focuses on the elements, characteristics, and cultural metaphors of Chinese and Malaysian shadow puppetries.

3. To investigate the cultural connection and roots of Malaysian Wayang Kulit and Chinese shadow puppetry, based on the shadow puppetry's cultural characteristics, common metaphor, and visual symbol.

This study investigates the connections in the aspect of visual character between the shadow puppets of two countries with the exploration of their development and historical trends.

In conclusion, this thesis will study the similar and dissimilar features of shadow puppetry figures and trace the origin of Malaysian shadow puppetry through figure characteristics by employing context theory to analyse the data of shadow puppet figures and the interview results from the participants, the historical records and characteristics of China's and Malaysia's shadow puppets and to differentiate their different styles and colours to understand each country's cultural metaphor better.

1.5 Research Questions

Considering the highlighted issues and the aims of this study, three main questions can be raised:

1. How has shadow puppetry spread across China, Southeast Asia, and Malaysia?

This research question aims to map the historical trajectory of shadow puppetry, from its roots in China to its widespread presence in Southeast Asia and Malaysia. By analysing historical documentation and interview data, the study will distinguish the pathways through which Chinese shadow puppetry influenced *wayang kulit*, pinpointing the origins of shadow puppetry within each cultural context.

2. How does each shadow puppetry form its unique visual representation and artistic features in the shadow puppetry spreading to adapt the local aesthetic habits?

This question will focus on the aesthetic features of shadow puppets. How do Wanyang Kulit Kelantan and the Central Plains shadow puppets show their particular shape and colour under their original cultural background? The question will examine