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Title: Exploring the Art of Shadow Puppetry through Multimedia: (A Study of Animation, Video and Interactive Activities)

ABSTRACT

The study examines the emerging multimedia practices in shadow puppetry across traditional and contemporary puppetry. Analyzing the interface between traditional puppetry and technology through: theoretical, historical enquiry, case studies and by collaborating with contemporary and traditional puppeteers with varied capacities.

Shadow puppetry is precursor to animation, cinema, photography, theatre and various other performing arts. It's a unique form of performing art, which also requires the performer to be an exquisite craft worker to carve out Semi-transparent or Opaque Images of humans, divine creature, animals, etc.; using animal hide (traditional shadow puppetry), acetate sheet, paper and plastic (contemporary puppetry). Traditional shadow puppetry is a folk tradition and as most of the folk traditions it thrives on improvisation and is passed down as an oral text from one generation to other.

Theoretical framework: The research drew a theoretical foundation from emerging theories in the field of communication and cultural studies (performance studies, media archaeology, remediation and cultural approaches), sociology (sites of practice of traditional puppetry), ethnography (folklore studies) and semiotics (studying varied sign system of puppetry).

Performance study is a trans-disciplinary area of study that puts performance and practice at the forefront and gives new dimensionality to 'participant observation' allowing critical analysis. Schechner (2013) defines performance as *"Ritualized behaviour conditioned and or permeated by play",* both rituals and play have an influence to transform and move the audience to different state of mind.

The theoretical analysis moved forward by analysing puppetry through *semiotics*, studying varied sign system of puppetry. The Researcher used analytical model by providing history of each company and their respective founding artists, production analysis of their significant productions, and documenting and analysing troupe's practice. The researcher systematically reviewed the multimedia based performances to synthesis the available evidence to clarify how and why *remediation interventions* may have worked in order to create a new visual aesthetic.

Methods and tools: The study is qualitative in nature, and employed the mixed methods. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study area includes Kerala, Karnataka and Delhi. Fieldwork was conducted to collect the primary data in all the above states.

Findings and conclusions: The narrative pursues a nonlinear format and is subconsciously interpreted by audience participation. Analysing visual parameters reveal that aesthetic of their production is shaped from their experience as live human performers, exposure to traditional styles of puppeteering such as: Bunraku, Togalu Gombeyata and European string and glove puppetry. Remediation of traditional shadow puppets into new visual media of animation is visible in both the case-studies. Animation was used for flashback sequences in About Ram to create grandeur war abstract sequences to fill the lacuna in the narrative. The definition of puppetry has change subsequently it is no longer limited to an anthropomorphic character but can be any object. While working on collaborative multimedia based projects the researcher had no set manual, the visual aesthetic language evolved with the practice.