

A Study on the Visual Elements of Shadow Puppets in Southwest China

Cheng Xiaochun ¹, Musdi bin Hj. Shanat ²

^{1,2} Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, MALAYSIA

¹ Chongqing Technology and Business University, 400067 Chongqing, CHINA

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the shadow puppets in Southwest China, as one of the principal styles of Chinese shadow play and has been a popular local performing art and storytelling tradition. The Chinese shadow play is beautifully crafted, and the design follows traditional moral evaluation and aesthetics. Thus, the main objective of this study is to understand the visual elements and aesthetic characteristics of the shadow puppet characters, and how the socio-cultural background influences them. Scholars have less explored shadow puppets in the visual realms. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method based on iconography theory. The researcher had collected and studied samples and generalizes the cultural causes and visual characteristics. Therefore, this research will contribute to providing more insight into the aesthetic world of shadow puppets and give inspire towards modern art and design industry. It also delivers as a symbol of cultural identity and loyalty among the young generation.

Keywords: Chinese shadow puppet; Visual elements; Aesthetic characteristics; Cultural identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese shadow play, or shadow puppetry, is a kind of theatrical form with colourful puppets that are made of animal hide or paper. It performs with instrumental music and singing and storytelling. Georges Sadoul (1999), a French movie historian, indicates in his book *Histoire du cinéma mondial* that the shadow play is “the originator of sound movies”. A complete performance of shadow play includes stage, lighting, screen, music performance, shadow puppet characters, storytelling, among which the shadow puppets undoubtedly play the leading part in showing the highly visual features. Chinese shadow play in the early days was performed to pray for the blessing and worship the god. Then, with the secularization of belief, shadow play became one of the ways of entertainment for people (Jiang, 2015). Its visual elements are closely related to folk beliefs. As traditional entertainment, shadow play is on the verge of extinction due to the impact of modern culture, hence four types of shadow play performances have been listed in the world intangible heritage. They are Cambodian and Indonesian shadow play, Turkish

shadow play, Chinese shadow play and Syrian shadow play (UNESCO, 2018), which are all located in Asia. Compared with other types, Chinese shadow puppets have their unique visual characteristics.

Wei Liqun, a well-known scholar of Chinese shadow play, advocates that Chinese shadow play are divided into northern shadow play, western shadow play, and central-south shadow play according to geography and the image of shadow puppets. Among them, the western shadow play has the longest history (Wei, 2008). Chinese shadow play conveys the information of cultural history, social belief, oral tradition and moral principles, and so forth. People's cognition of history, culture, and morals derives from various operas. Wang Hong(1622-1702) (Wang, 1999) of the Qing Dynasty states in the *Shanzhi*: "People prefer to dramas to read the books". Scholars have done more research on the developing history of shadow play, its performance skills and repertoire. However, less studies focus on the visual elements of Chinese shadow puppets, which remain relatively obscure. As a traditional art form that combines performance, narration, music, and animation, visual styles is so rich in cultural connotation that it deserves studies in depth.

This article used qualitative descriptive research methods, employed the iconography theory of Erwin Panofsky, from the perspective of visual ethnography, observes the representative characters of shadow puppets, studies the collected image materials and understands the correlation between folk culture and the symbolic visual elements of shadow puppets. The objective of this study is the visual elements of Southwest Shadow Puppets, including form, colour and pattern. This paper aims to summarize the visual and aesthetic characteristics of shadow puppets in Southwest China and explore the possibility of integrating the visual elements of shadow puppets into modern design, which highlights the cultural characteristics of the nation in the era of globalization.

2. THE HISTORY OF CHINESE SHADOW PLAY

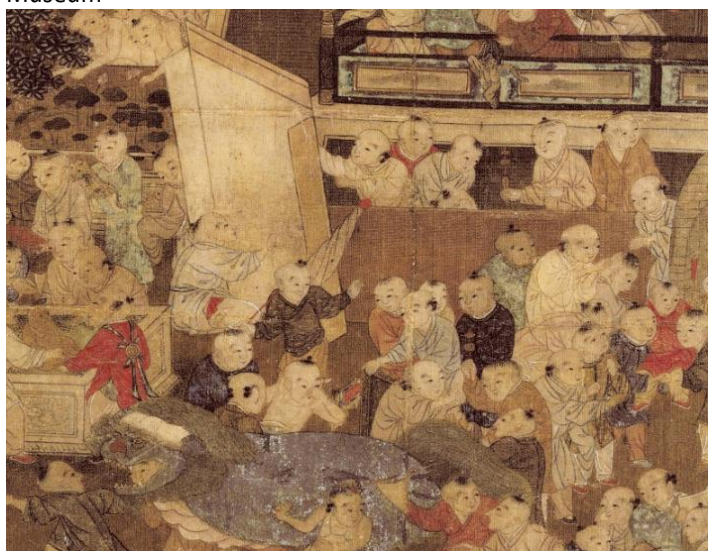
Chinese shadow play used to be a popular form of folk drama art, which is closely related to religion, drama and folklore. According to Chen (2003), Chinese shadow play was well documented in Song Dynasty(960-1279), although it was scattered in records since Han Dynasty(202B. C.-A.D.220). The life of Chinese people has been influenced by agricultural civilization in ancient times. They believed that the nighttime was a period of high incidence of criminal activities. Also, due to the prevention of fires, a curfew institution from 8:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. in the next day had been implemented until Song Dynasty (Hang, 2015). When the commercial economy was developed and the curfew system was gradually abolished. From many Song Dynasty poems, it can be found that night entertainment at night was diverse. For instance, Xin Qiji, a famous poet of Song Dynasty, wrote the poem "*Qingyuan, Yuanxi*" (Egan, 2006), which described the outdoor scene on the night of the Lantern Festival:

One night's east wind adorns a thousand trees with flowers

And blows down stars in showers...
I look for her in vain.
When all at once I turn my head,
I find her there where lantern light is dimly shed.
(Translated by Xu Yuanchong and Xu Ming)

Shadow puppets must be performed at night, so the abolition of the curfew makes it possible. The literature of the Song Dynasty had many records in terms of shadow puppets. “*Shadow play*” a chapter of Gao Cheng’s *Origin of things* (Gao, 1975), describes that during the reign of Emperor *Renzong* in Song Dynasty, someone created a shadow puppet in order to visualize storytelling, so the shadow plays narrates the story of the Three Kingdoms came into being. “A Hundred Children’s Happiness in Spring” (see Figure 1), drawn by the court painter Su Hanchen of Song Dynasty, depicts a scene of children performing shadow puppets. Since then, shadow play has been widely spread in China. Compared with other dramas, it is more affordable and combines multiple performance forms such as images, animation, music, and narration. It has mainly been performed for entertainment, or in religious ceremonies, weddings, funerals and other special occasions. However, since the film appeared in China in the 1930s, shadow play begins to decline and even faces extinction. It can only be seen in museums and special performance venues.

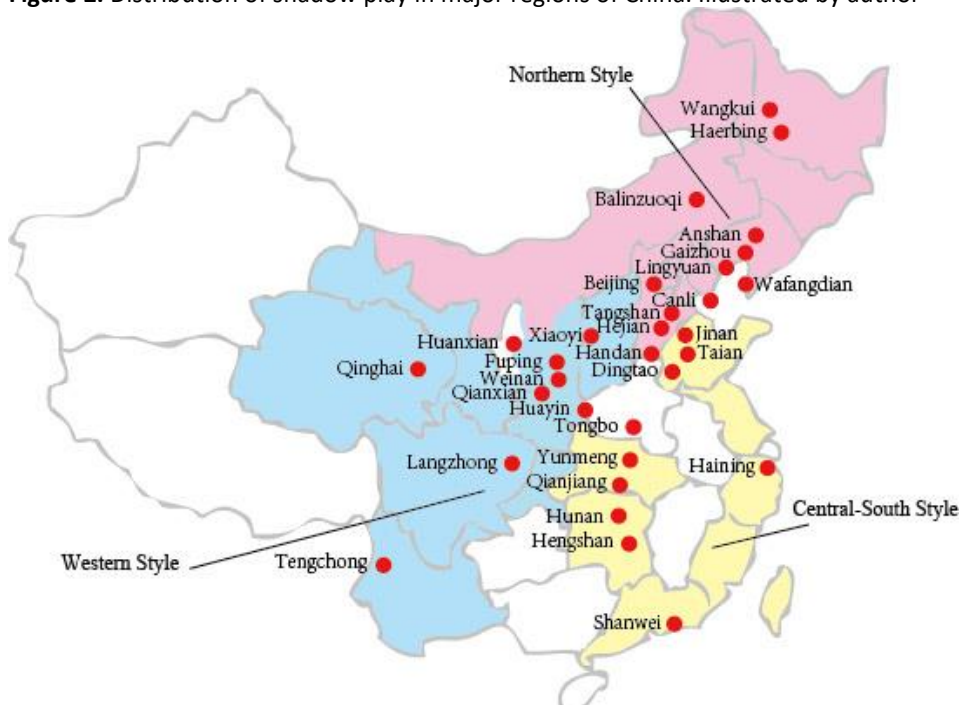
Figure 1. “A Hundred Children’s Happiness in Spring” by Su Hanchen © the Palace Museum



3. CLASSIFICATION OF CHINESE SHADOW PUPPETS

In ancient China, shadow play was widely spread, except for Tibet and Xinjiang. It blends with the local dialect and folk culture, when various types of shadow play were derived in the process of dissemination, 32 types of shadow play have been on the list of China's national intangible cultural heritage (Center, 2014) (see Figure 2). According to the different types of agricultural civilization, Chinese shadow play can be divided into southern style represented by rice culture and northern style represented by millet culture, with the Yangtze River as the boundary. According to the singing style and dialects, it can be classified into *Laoqiang*, *Daoqing*, *Qin* opera shadow play. However, dialects have obvious regional characteristics. Shadow play has the same visual form in some places, but their singing styles are evidently different due to various dialects. Scholar Wei (2008) suggested classifying them into northern, western, and central-south styles, according to the characteristics of their visual styles. The western style is represented by Shaanxi and Sichuan shadow puppets. These two regions are both located in southwest China due to their geographical proximity, so the visual elements of these two kinds of shadow puppets have many common features. The samples of shadow puppets collected in this study come from these two regions.

Figure 2. Distribution of shadow play in major regions of China. Illustrated by author

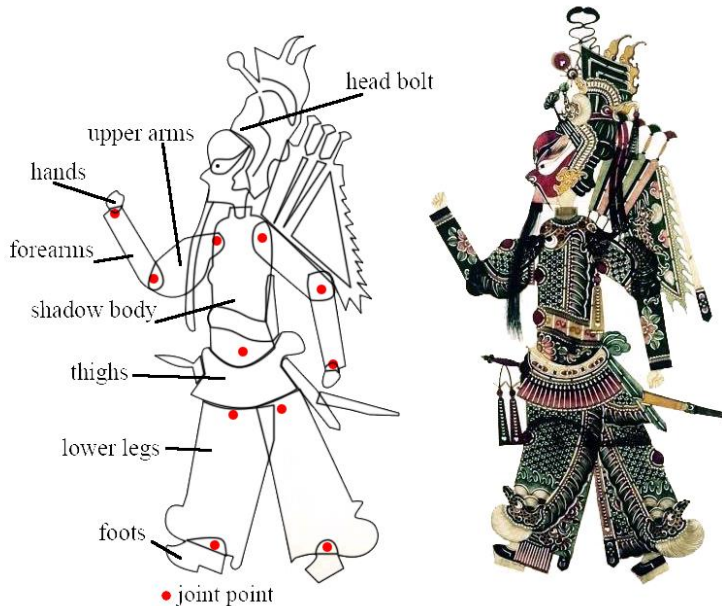


4. VISUAL ELEMENTS OF SHADOW PUPPETS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

In terms of content, Chinese shadow play is deeply influenced by traditional drama (Fu, 2008), which is the major source of the repertoire of the shadow play. In form, storytelling is retained. Many old puppeteers can perform dozens of traditional repertoires. Some of which are inherited by oral, and others by intact scripts. Western shadow play is no exception. The famous traditional Chinese drama, such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West*, and *The West Chamber*, are common in western shadow play. That is, the characters in these stories, except for certain ones, can be used both in drama and shadow play. In China, the shadow puppets are usually made of the skins of local livestock, such as coats, donkeys and cattle. Thick paper is used only in Hunan province (Huo, 2011). In Northwest China, shadow puppets are made of sheepskin; in the north, they are made of donkey leather; and in the west, cowhide is used.

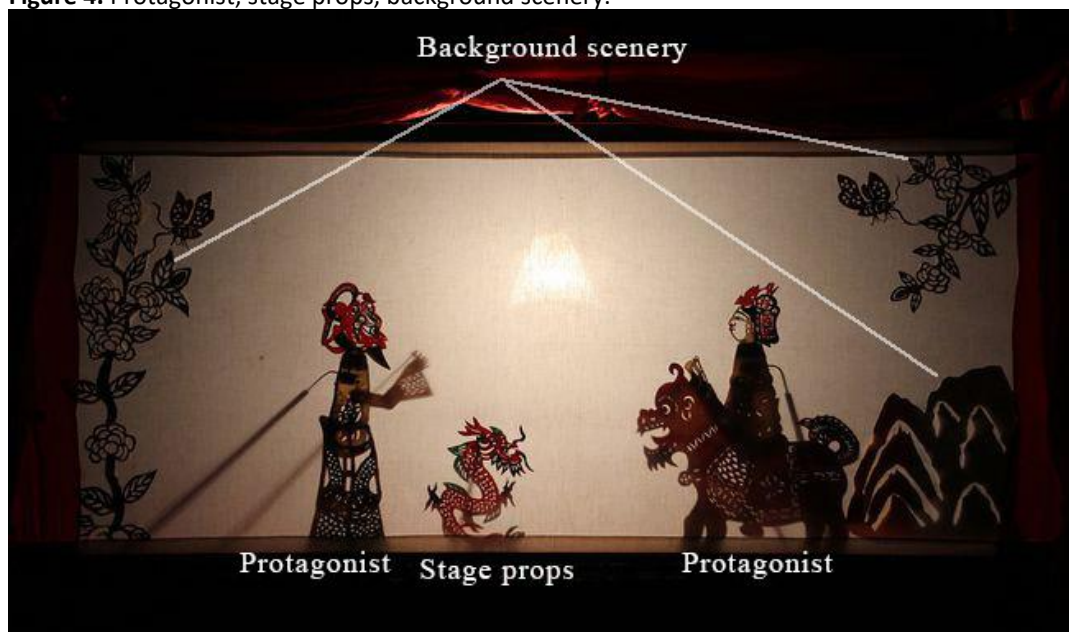
A complete shadow puppet is composed of 8 parts, a head bolt (*toucha*), upper arms, forearms, hands, a shadow body (*cuozi*), thighs (often covered by clothes as a whole), lower legs and feet (see Figure 3). It's usually between 25cm and 30cm high. Its joints of shoulders, elbows, wrists, waist, knees, and ankles are all movable like real people, which is very flexible during the performance.

Figure 3. Guanyu in armour (*Shenkao*) (Image: Collected by author)



The components of the scene in shadow play can be divided into 4 parts, the head bolt (*toucha*), shadow body (*cuozi*), stage props and background scenery. The head and shadow body can be separated, which is convenient to be combined into different roles, depending on the different repertoires. According to different stories, stage props include plants, furniture, mounted animals (such as horses, tigers, etc.), In the mythologies, clouds, dragons, monsters, flying apsaras can also be the props. The background scenery plays the role of telling the audience when and where the story happens.

Figure 4. Protagonist, stage props, background scenery.



4.1. Head bolt

The function of the head bolt is to identify the characters. The puppeteer matches a head bolt with a shadow body from the numerous spares according to the repertoire in advance. The head bolt is an important hallmark to distinguish characters, which are carved and painted with highly detailed. According to their roles, they can be divided into four roles — *Sheng*, *Dan*, *Jing* and *Chou*, which are featured with different traits of character through stylized visual elements. The head bolt includes two parts: crown and face. Since the shadow puppets are performed on a flat screen, where they can only conduct plane motion, their faces are always viewed from the side. The five parts of their face, eyebrows, eye, nose, mouth and beard are exaggerated according to the characteristic of the role. The crown part can express the social rank of the character, and it is divided into crowns, helmets, hats, and kerchiefs. This study analyzes the representative characters of the four roles.

Table 1: The representative characters of the four roles: Sheng, Dan, Jing and Chou

<i>Sheng</i>	Male role	Young man (<i>xiaosheng</i>), aged man (<i>laosheng</i>), martial man (<i>wusheng</i>).
<i>Dan</i>	Female role	Bubbly girl (<i>huadan</i>), young dignified woman (<i>qingyi</i>), older woman (<i>laodan</i>), martial woman (<i>wudan</i>).
<i>Jing</i>	Supporting male role	Strong or rough man (<i>huanian</i>)
<i>Chou</i>	Jester	Humorous characters: frail clowns (<i>wenchou</i>), martial clowns (<i>wuchou</i>).

Sheng represents male roles, including young man, aged man, and martial man. Aged man (*laosheng*) mainly plays the role of an emperor or middle-aged and old people with important positions, while the martial man (*wusheng*) is a brave general or a hero in the forest outlaws. The young man (*xiaosheng*) refers to an intellectual in general (see Figure 5). As we see in Figure 5, his nose is protruding. His eyes are looked from front angle and shaped like a fish, in order to better show the expression of his eyes. The eyebrow is depicted as an oblique straight line, and ears are big and long, which is a symbol of good fortune. The headdress with decorative patterns in the front is a hat (kerchief) folded by a piece of cloth and tied with a fabric band., the front of the headdress carves flower-like decorative motifs. This is a typical character of a young intellectual in ancient China. In terms of perspective processing, the figure's face is carved in profile, the eyes are from the front side, while the headdress is in a three-quarter profile. This design can show the appearance characteristics of various parts of the character's appearance as completely as possible.

Figure 5. Young man (*xiaosheng*) (Quote from National shadow puppetry museum in Chengdu)



Dan refers to the role of women of different ages, personalities and identities. There are following several types: A young dignified woman (*qingyi*) (see Figure 6), a bubbly girl (*huadan*) referring to a lovely young woman, an elderly woman (*laodan*), and *wudan*, which refers to female generals or marshals who are good at martial arts. In Figure 6, it is

a typical *qingyi* head bolt. Compared with Figure 5, her forehead is more prominent and the chin is receded, which reflects people's aesthetic at that time. A red dot on the lip indicates lipstick. The arched eyebrow, which differs in male and female in shadow puppets, arc-like eyebrow implies a gentle personality of women. The curved bangs on the front of the forehead connecting with the eyebrows are the significant difference from the *Sheng* character. It can also make the shadow puppet more stable. The hairstyle is made into triangles, a popular hairstyle in ancient times. There is a green headscarf, with a red ball-shaped decoration in the front of it, which is influenced by the headgear of characters in ancient drama. The face feature of *dan* and *sheng* is that is carved with the hollowing out technique. That appears Transparency under the illumination of the light, showing the clean and tidy face of the character, which is in contrast to the latter two characters.

Figure 6. Young dignified woman (*qingyi*) (Quote from Xi'an shadow puppet art museum, China)



Jing mainly refers to the male roles with outstanding characteristics in personality, morality as well as appearance, which can be identified through the profile and colour of the face. For instance, the audience can distinguish the morality and personality of the character by colour. There are always four colours, red, black, white, and green are used. Red represents loyalty, white duplicity, black courage, and green chivalry. The head bolt of *Guanyu* is shown below (see Figure 7). *Guanyu* is, a well-known general in ancient China, is famous for his loyalty. So the face of the character is pigmented in red, which is a distinct representative of its personality. The contour of this head bolt is also drawn from a profile view, while the eye is drawn from a front view. There is a protruding part of the chin, which is used to stick the real beard. His eyebrows were almost straight and his brows were furrowed, showing his serious expression. He wears a highly-elaborated

general's helmet, like a blooming lotus, which is divided into three tapering parts with intricate decorations. Each part is bounded by cirrus ornaments. The hair and the cloth behind the neck are filled with dense vertical lines.

Figure 7. General *Guanyu (Jing)* (Quote from Xi'an shadow puppet art museum, China)



Humorous characters are generically called *Chou* (jester). Which always makes people laugh in the performance. So it can create a relaxed atmosphere by using *Chou* to reveal the inferiority and ugliness of his personality, which creates a relaxed atmosphere to the drama. Therefore, the facial features of this character are exaggerated, especially the shape of the eyes and mouth. The visual styles are similar in comparison with the *jing*, both of which implement incised carving skills so that most parts of the face can be pigmented. The painting is carefully executed, with a large space of a single colour. Generally, the patch of white between nose and eye is the mark of *Chou*. As we see below (see Figure 8), This jester opened his mouth as if he is speaking, he always plays the role of joke-telling during the performance. A smile on its face, so his eye becomes wrinkled and curved downward. He was also wearing a sumptuous headdress, highly detailed, consisting of curly grass, flowers and petals. There are two hat wings on the back of the headdress, the hat wings are symmetrically distributed, which indicate that he is a low-ranking official in ancient times. The design of these hat wings is quite special because it shows the appearance of two cap wings overlapping, which demonstrates the shadow puppet maker's conception of realistic perspective.

Figure 8. Jester (*chou*) (Quote from Xi'an shadow puppet art museum, China)



4.2. Shadow body

The figures of shadow body are similar to the drama's figures, they can be divided into civil official costumes (see Figure 9), military officer costumes (see Figure 10), and female costumes (see Figure 11). These costumes are filled with various simple but repetitive patterns and abstract motifs, such as snowflakes, waves, T-shaped, dot-line, gyration, and petals patterns, these patterns are derived from the Chinese traditional embroidery, while the play performs, these perforations produce refined beautiful shadows through the light. A shadow puppet troupe usually has more than two hundred head bolts and more than one hundred shadows. The combination of the different kinds of heads and bodies of various characters can create most of the characters in the repertoire. On the other hand, some stories possess specific characters, whereas these stories are usually quite popular, such as the protagonist in "Journey to the West", the emperor, and the heroine, and so forth. In order to perform these repertoires, special shadow puppet characters are also needed.

Figure 9. A shadow body in civil official's costumes (Quote from National shadow puppetry museum in Chengdu)



Figure 10. A shadow body in military attaché in armor (Quote from National shadow puppetry museum in Chengdu)



Figure 11. A shadow body in female's fancy costumes (Quote from Digital museum of shadow)



4.3. Stage props and background scenery

Stage props and background scenery are also indispensable components in order to create a realistic scene. They can help the audience immerse themselves in the virtual world of shadow puppets. The most common props are plants and furniture. If it's a story about deities and monsters, there will be animals (mount of the deity) and clouds that represent the story is taking place in the wonderland. Figure 11 shows a stone and hydrangea growing around it, which is a very common flower in China. Figure 12 shows a typical chair in daily life in the late Qing Dynasty (1636-1912). The ornaments of this chair are filled with snowflakes, foliage, petals and tendrils. It is noteworthy that these highly simplified symbols are derived from the complicated shapes in real life, from which it is not difficult to find the symbols are influenced by other folk-art forms and aesthetic aspects.

Background scenery includes nature (Figure 13), the palace (Figure 14), pavilions, courtyards, and so forth. It is usually so large that it almost covers the entire screen. And it is put up of several small pieces connected in series with cowhide cords, which are typically folded together and fixed on the screen during a shadow play performance. The background scenery can help the audience generally unfamiliar with the narrative to understand.

Figure 11. Hydrangeas around a stone (Quote from Xi'an shadow puppet art museum, China)



Figure 13. Chair (Quote from National shadow puppetry museum in Chengdu)



Figure 13. Mountain (Quote from Digital museum of shadow)



Figure 14. Building entrance (Quote from Digital museum of shadow)



5. DISCUSSION

This section uses iconography theory to analyse the characteristics of the visual elements of shadow puppets in Southwest China. According to Erwin Panofsky (1983), a noted art historian, developed this theory describing three levels of meaning in an artwork: The first level of meaning Panofsky called “pre-iconography”, the second level was called “iconography”, and the third level was called “iconology”. The pre-iconography defined a

generic description of the objects and actions represented in the picture. The iconography was analysis, it was to identify specific meaning which was built on the practical knowledge, also called “educated knowledge”. The iconology was interpretation, it was based on the accurate pre-iconographic description and correct iconographical analysis of an artwork.

5.1. Pre-iconographical description

As an outstanding representative of Chinese shadow play, the figure of shadow play in Southwest China has created a set of unique and non-realistic visual languages, instead of being displayed with only one certain perspective. The contour of head and the shadow body are looked in profile, while the eyes, eyebrows and patterns are looked in front. This system of visual styles is characterized by multi-angle and multi-side viewing in the same space. The three-dimensional object is unfolded on a plane to avoid overlapping between figures. The concise and precise silhouette is highlighted, without emphasizing the real perspective, so as to avoid chiaroscuro. In terms of patterns, inside the simple outline is filled with intricate patterns composed of the floral motif and abstract elements.

The common characteristics of the head bolt are the prominent forehead and the small mouth, while *jing* characters are identified with the round nose and deep eye. Most of the male characters are distinct with heavy features, which follow the rule that “level eye and brow represent loyalty; round eye fierceness; linear eye gentleness; and leopard-like eye bad temper”. The female character (*dan*) has a beak-shaped nose and a small mouth, dotted with indistinct vermilion, which appears quite delicate and charming. It conforms to the description of “curved eyebrow, linear eye and small mouth with a little vermilion dot”. Similar to the figures in new-year pictures, the body proportion of the characters is 1:6 so as to show their visual features to the maximum extent.

In terms of colour, Chinese traditional folk arts prefer bright pure colours such as red, yellow, blue, white and black. However, the main colours of shadow puppets are red, green, and black. This is because the animal hide is used as the material that appears in yellow under the light. The blue tends to look black under the light, and the blue painted on the raw hide naturally appears green. So it is more suitable to use green instead of blue. The white in the shadow puppet is the colour of the light from the hollow part. Therefore, the combination of red, green and black, coexisting in harmony, becomes the unique colour system of the shadow puppet. Together, these shaped the distinctive visual style of shadow puppetry in Southwest China.

5.2. Iconographical analysis

The iconographical analysis of the shadow puppets focuses on an exploration of the cultural connotations of the artistic characteristics on the primitive nature of folk art, primitiveness does not mean being inferior in terms of aesthetic or production techniques, nor does it refer to an initial state in the process of evolution towards a more

mature art form. It is for artworks and styles that are untrained and at the same time lacking in the mastery of traditional classical techniques and contain an improvisational charm in the transmission of skills in an apprenticeship system. The interpretation and handling of objects are rustic and unsophisticated.

Based on the aforementioned characteristics of the visual elements, the researchers find that it presents two features: the minimum models of the motif and the pragmatic aesthetic model.

The statement of the minimum model comes from Gombrich's (2002) definition of primitivism. It refers to the fact that the visual characteristics of folk art must satisfy a minimum level of popular recognition of the object, so that the viewer can recognize the object depicted, a level of recognition that is based on the premise that the maker, the performer and the audience share a common cultural background. For cultural traditions are visually transmitted through symbols that can be understood in common. The motifs that appear on the shadow bodies of the puppets, such as the wave pattern on the costumes of the ancient civil officials, the snowflake pattern on the costumes of military officials, and the petal pattern on the costumes of women, are recognizable to the audience, identifying the characters.

The scholar of primitive art, Boas Franz (1966), in discussing the forms of existence of primitive art, points out that utility is often dominant in the creation of primitive art. The shadow was not created for aesthetic purposes, but for a clearly practical one. According to the author's research, it was found that the engravers and performers usually did not recognize the artistic aesthetic nature of the work. Subjectively it is of practical significance, although objectively it has an aesthetic pleasure for the audience. The engravers of beautiful shadow puppets, which has been praised by scholars and artists alike, denies its aesthetic value. Both the maker and the performer argue that such an act is not artistic creation, but has an obvious utilitarian and practical purpose, as the original shadow play performance was intended to serve the purpose of edification and blessing. The aesthetic artistry of the final product can be seen as the result of 'unconsciousness', an important distinction between folk art forms and pure art forms, and without this distinction, folk art loses its basis of existence. Creating an aesthetic pleasure that can be felt by every member of society is also a significant motivation in the design of shadow puppets, because aesthetic pleasure makes the purpose of the art form easier to achieve.

5.3. *Iconological interpretation*

By looking at the preceding images one can see that the patterns, whether on the characters' costumes, the brickwork on the buildings in the scenes, or the patterns on the furniture, all appear to be arranged in a regular pattern. This pattern comes from the shadow engraver's summary and sorting out of natural phenomena in the real world.

The image of the real world has its own characteristics. The shadow maker, on the other hand, inherits traditional production experience and aesthetic concepts, which is the

subjective consciousness of the maker. In the design process of the shadow puppets, the maker refuses complete imitation of the natural world and does not reproduce the objective world in a strictly rational manner according to the laws of nature, but starts from his own aesthetic experience, by observing, summarizing, inscribing and refining the visual elements in the natural world, and in the expression of the visual style, with his own understanding of the characters in the shadow puppets world, combined with his own emotions, he brings the real-world representation is raised to an ideal-world.

This feature can be clearly seen in the composition of the visual elements of the shadow puppets' patterns. The visual elements of the shadow puppets contain several perceptions based on the experience, but the design of the patterns breaks the constraints of natural laws and expresses their visual characteristics through the reconstruction of the objects. For instance, in the production of the characters' hairstyles and costumes, the maker integrates the realistic clutter of the objects into simple, fluid shapes, and for the costumes, the complex clothing patterns and occasional variations in details are abandoned, all replaced by patterns which represent the character traits. For the perspective and spatial expression, the engraver has more freedom in his or her expression and completely abandons the rules of perspective in the real-world. The design constantly changes the angle of observation; the figure's hood is the three-quarter side, the figure's face is frontal but can also be seen as the side, the body and sleeves are frontal, and the trousers have the same angles as the face, with one trouser leg on the left being frontal and the one the same as that of the sleeves. This design combines different points of vision, from the engraver's self-awareness, with the observations of the natural world, and the choice of motifs incorporating his or her own emotions, in order to express an ideal shadow world that maximizes the visual characteristics of the object.

6. APPLICATION

The Chinese shadow play enjoys a reputation for its particularly visual elements. However, more and more visual artworks nowadays ignore the unique cultural background of China under the influence of contemporary popular culture. In order to inherit the unique visual elements of shadow puppets, artworks that combine traditional elements with modern technology are encouraged. For instance, the animated short film named *The Peach Colony* (M. Chen, 2006) (see figure 15, 16), directed by Chen Ming, was based on the well-known poem of the same name written by Tao Yuanming. The director attempted to borrow visual style from shadow puppets and integrate them into the animation industry. A variety of traditional Chinese art forms are used on the 3D technology platform. For instance, the figure of character and its colour are equipped with distinct visual styles in shadow puppets, and the movement of the characters also conforms to the feature of shadow puppet animation. The background scene is inspired by traditional Chinese ink painting.

Figure 15. Screenshot of *The Peach Colony* (Source: www.bilibili.com/video/av287754868/)



Figure 16. Screenshot of *The Peach Colony* (main role) (Source: www.bilibili.com/video/av287754868/)



7. CONCLUSION

The performance of Chinese shadow play is not interrupted since the Song Dynasty, and the southwest shadow play is one of the oldest genres. The story and visual styles of shadow play have been strongly influenced by traditional Chinese drama. This paper has

indicated the characteristics of the visual elements of shadow puppets in Southwest China, which is the source of inspiration for art and design and can stimulate artistic creativity. Although shadow play as a form of performing art inevitably perish under the impact of contemporary culture, its visual styles with cultural connotations and the uniqueness of culture, are worth preserving and disseminating to improve the visual identity in the era of globalization.

REFERENCES

- Center, C. I. C. H. P. (2014). *China's national intangible cultural heritage list*. [Http://Www.Ihchina.Cn/](http://www.ihchina.cn/). <http://www.ihchina.cn/project#target1>
- Chen, F. P. (2003). Shadow theaters of the world. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 62(1), 25–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1179080>
- Chen, M. (2006). *The Peach Colony*. GDC.
- Egan, R. C. (2006). *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (First Edit). Harvard University Asia Center.
- Franz, B. (1966). *Race, Language and Culture*. The Free Press.
- Fu, J. (2008). *History of Chinese Drama*. Shanghai Ancient Books Press.
- Gao, C. (1975). *Shi wu ji yuan ji lei [A Compendium of Sources on Various Matters]* (Reprint So). Taipei: Xinxing shuju.
- Gombrich, E. H. (2002). *The preference for the primitive: Episodes in the history of western taste and art*. Phaidon.
- Huo, X. (2011). *Chinese Shadow Play*. China Publishing Group Corp.
- Jiang, Y. (2015). *Chinese Shadow Play and Folklore*. Sichuan People's Publishing House.
- Panofsky, E. (1983). *Meaning in the visual arts*. University of Chicago Press.
- Sadoul, G. (1999). *Histoire du cinéma mondial*. FLAMMARION.
- UNESCO. (2018). *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. [https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?term\[\]=vocabulary_ich-80](https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?term[]=vocabulary_ich-80)
- Wang, H. (1999). *Shanzhi* (Reprint 19). CHUNG HWA BOOK CO.
- Wei, L. (2008). *Folk Shadow Play*. Foreign Languages Press.