The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/41304 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

**Author:** Emerson, Kathryn  
**Title:** Transforming wayang for contemporary audiences: dramatic expression in Purbo Asmoro's style, 1989–2015  
**Issue Date:** 2016-06-28
Propositions (*Stellingen*)

1. All-night contemporary-interpretive style (all-night *garapan* style) was developed by Purbo Asmoro in reaction to the ”wayang as entertainment” (*hura-hura*) tendencies of the 1990s. He envisioned it as a way of returning meaning and integrity to wayang while embracing innovation.

2. In Purbo Asmoro’s all-night *garapan* style, selected parts of the story are recrafted with innovative techniques in narration, movement, music, characterization, and structure. Other segments remain traditional, while the two comic interludes stem from the *hura-hura* era. Through this contrast, Purbo creates an ebb and flow of dramatic intensity, resulting in a new type hierarchy quite unlike classical tradition.

3. Paradoxically, while *garapan* techniques have their origin in the condensed wayang format created by a group of intellectuals at the conservatory in Solo in the 1970s, these techniques have the effect of actually expanding, elaborating, and thickening scenes when used in an all-night wayang.

4. While the condensed wayang format was created within academia and never became popular, Purbo Asmoro’s all-night *garapan* style was developed with the mass wayang audience in mind. It was acknowledged as worthy of attention in the curriculum at ISI Solo only about twenty years later, in 2009.

5. Wayang has been in a constant state of innovation as far back as we can trace.

6. *Wayang kulit purwa* is not a museum artifact, but rather continues to be extremely popular—more so than the related arts of dance, concert music, *kethoprak*, or *wayang orang*. Superstar dhalang face full schedules with audiences often in the thousands.

7. Social media is increasingly a place where professional dhalang, wayang critics, fan clubs, dhalang students, and wayang sponsors meet, distribute information, and engage in discussions across village, province, island, and international borders.

8. High-profile dhalangs’ performances are frequently broadcast by mass media and rapidly distributed over the internet by sponsors and fans. Because of this, some dhalang feel compelled to develop more variety in story interpretation, narration, dialogue, comedy bits, and musical accompaniment. Many hire artistic consultants to achieve this, Purbo Asmoro not included.

9. The day of the informally-educated, locally-based dhalang, who may only receive supplies of rice, tea, and sugar for his services, is for all practical purposes over.

10. As every dhalang, wayang musician, wayang fan, or wayang scholar knows, sleep is over-rated.
Curriculum Vitae

Kathryn Emerson was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA in 1961. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University in 1983, with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Music and a focus in piano performance. She studied under fortepiano expert Malcolm Bilson, and 20th-century music historian William W. Austin. She received a Master of Arts (MA) in Music from the City University of New York at Queens College in 1985.

While at Cornell, Kathryn was exposed to gamelan by ethnomusicologist Martin Hatch. This inspired her, years later, to join the Indonesian Consulate group in New York City. In June 1986, she took her first study trip to Java. She subsequently moved to San Francisco to continue gamelan studies with Midiyanto S. Putro at Berkeley, while at the same time attending Mills College in Oakland as a graduate student in the School of Education. She earned her California Teaching Certificate in 1991 in their one-year program.

In 1991, she embarked on a three-year study trip to Java, during which she performed fulltime as a gender player for a number of dhalang. In 1995, Kathryn became a teacher at the Jakarta Intercultural School, where she continues to work with international primary-age students in general subjects, as well as gamelan and wayang studies. She spent 12 years (1991–2003) intensely studying gender, kendhang, rebab, and sindhenan for concert music and wayang with a variety of masters in Solo, and performing in venues across Java.

In 2003, Kathryn decided to turn to the study of Javanese language and wayang performance-practice. In 2004 she began studying under Purbo Asmoro, observing and recording his performances weekly. She developed a method of simultaneous translation in which she types on the spot as the dhalang speaks. This text, with interpolated explanations, is projected adjacent to the wayang screen. Using this technique she has toured the USA with Purbo Asmoro four times, as well as France, England, India, Singapore, and throughout Indonesia for foreign audiences. In 2013, they produced the seven-volume, 21-DVD Wayang Educational Package, a precursor to this dissertation.
App-I: The wayang figure "Ki Purbo Asmoro" by artisan Fathur Gamblang of Banyuwangi and Jakarta, 2014.