

Parts in Play:
The Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Collection at McGill University

Loretta Flegel

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

April 2003

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Abstract

Parts in Play:

The Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Puppet Collection at McGill University

Loretta Flegel

This study is a historical survey of the Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Collection housed at McGill University's Rare Books and Special Collections Division. The collection is the result of the efforts of Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, (1888-1990), who actively collected puppet figures, posters, texts, theatres and various other puppet paraphernalia. The thesis' emphasis is on Osborne Stearn's biography and varying roles of her creative career, those of an artist, a performer and a collector. The thesis seeks to insert Osborne Stearn as a vibrant character in Canadian Art History, active in an art practice that has ventured near oblivion in Canada, as well as increase interest in this fascinating collection.

Acknowledgments

To every body and non-body.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the numerous people who have assisted me not only with my research, but also with the emotional support I have so often sought on this project. Dr. Loren Lerner, my advisor, receives special recognition as having given a tremendous amount of time to me during this project; Dr. Jean Bélisle and Dr. Joan Acland, my readers, whose invested time, patience and advice have assisted in making this thesis readable. I would also like to thank Dr. Kristina Huneault and Dr. Brian Foss for their early critical evaluation in this project. Irena Murray and Donald Hogan at McGill University's Rare Books and Special Collections Division deserve a great deal of credit for having opened up the fascinating Stearn Collection to me. I also wish to mention Constance Nebel at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, whose assistance with the Ontario Puppetry Association fonds in the museum's archives further reveal intriguing details. Susan Hart, who photographed these puppet characters, along with my parents, friends, and above all, my sister, who is never forgotten in any project I pursue: I thank you all for allowing me to attempt this wonderful project and meet these little people.

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**Parts in Play:
The Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Puppet Collection at McGill University**

The leading lady, from the moment she leaves the stage and has her legs folded preparatory to being stowed away in her box, never complains about the hardship of her life or the impossibility of living on her salary. Ah! what wives and daughters, and especially mothers-in-law, the ladies of the marionette company would make.¹

Such a bold wish for controllable and wooden women seems an uncomfortable beginning for a discussion of a female puppet artist, performer, journalist and collector, yet it is one that is almost irresistible to use well over a century later as a mark of a gendered medium. Albeit the image itself is macabre, of stuffing a little body into a box; or distasteful, of having docile and dependent women in human relations, the wistful comment reveals much about an audience member who appreciates the medium of puppetry for its ability to suggest an ideal.

However, this is not going to be a written work set up to pinpoint 21st century disgust onto a 19th century journalist. It will, however, be a thesis that attempts to discuss a Canadian, Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, as being a successful artist, puppeteer and collector in early 20th century Canada. Although Rosalynde Osborne Stearn herself had some very prominent connections with Canadian artists and historians, including Marius Barbeau and Arthur Lismer, the fact remains that she and her collection of puppets, theatres, stages, historical texts and prints in McGill University's Rare Books and Special Collections Division is largely unknown.

To begin a discussion on Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, it is most helpful to turn to her biography. Rosalynde Osborne Stearn was born Rosalynde Fuller McAdams, to Mrs. Henrietta Lillian McAdams (nee Fuller) and Mr. Alexander H. McAdams of Hamilton, Ontario, on 4 August 1888. Her father, Alexander McAdams, was a barrister with the firm of Parkes, Macadams (sic) & Marshall. Unfortunately, little is known of Mr. Alexander McAdams, as

¹ *Daily Graphic*, London, 20 September 1876, quoted in McPharlin, Paul and Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, Boston: Plays, Inc., 1969, p.165.

archival research reveals that he had “vanished from Hamilton” in 1891.² Mr. McAdams is not listed in death records in Ontario, and any activity beyond his marriage with Henrietta Lillian McAdams and his initial employment remains to be uncovered. Henrietta Lillian McAdams and her daughter, Rosalynde, are presumed to have returned to reside with Henrietta’s father and mother, Richard and Eliza Fuller, as early as 1892.³

Richard Fuller was considered by the *Hamilton Spectator* to have been a prominent resident of the town. Born in 1829 in Oxford, England, he had worked for Pickford and Company, who were carriers by both land and sea, and then emigrated to Canada shortly after his service in the British Army during the Crimean War. His experience within Canada included employment with the Great Western Railway, and as his obituary states “in 1856 he was promoted to the position of lumber buyer of the mechanical department” of that company.⁴

Richard Fuller’s “intimate knowledge of the Northwest” served him well in his retirement from Great Western Railway, as he “contracted with the Mackenzie government to build the telegraph line from Edmonton to Fort Pelly in advance of the C.P.R.”, which was then constructing the railway in that region. Richard Fuller was further kept busy through his work as president of the Keewatin Lumber company, Keewatin Fower company, as well as director of the G.N.W. Telegraph company, and a member of investigating governors of the Royal Humane Society. In the interest of the arts, Richard Fuller also “was a member of the Art school board” in Hamilton, thus becoming involved not just in business, but also in community affairs.⁵

² Letter received from Houghton, Margaret, Archivist, Special Collection, Hamilton Public Library, dated 27 April 2001.

³ *ibid.* Please also see Craig, Marina, “Fell in love with golf 76 years ago”, *Hamilton Spectator*, March 1971, Hamilton Public Library.

Richard and Eliza Fuller had four children: Margaret Elizabeth (1858-1902), Mary Emma (1865-1926), Henrietta Lillian (1865-1963), and an infant son (1866-1866).⁶ Eliza Fuller's record contains few details of her life, as her maiden name and the date of her marriage to Richard Fuller are unknown.⁷ Eliza Fuller was born in 1838 and died in May 1904, pre-deceased by an infant son as well as her eldest daughter, Margaret Elizabeth. Her husband, Richard, died shortly after, as his obituary lists "About five weeks ago Mrs. Fuller died, and the death of his wife was a severe shock to Mr. Fuller, weakening him visibly".⁸

This would leave Henrietta Lillian McAdams, her daughter, Rosalynde, and Henrietta's sister, Mary Emma Fuller, living together in their late parents' residence on Emerald Street in Hamilton. Henrietta Lillian McAdams married Alexander Gale Osborne the following year on location at the residence on 16 September 1905. Alexander Gale Osborne (1858-1944) is by 1919 vice-president of the James Turner Company, and later became its president in 1922. Luck appeared to be short-lived for Alexander Osborne, as the company was sold in 1923, and he is listed in the Hamilton City Directory as boarding with his brother, John Y. Osborne, separately from Henrietta and Rosalynde, by 1924. Alexander Osborne boards "with his brother and others until he enters St. Peter's Infirmary where he dies in 1944".⁹

It is interesting to note that Rosalynde (McAdams) Osborne took the name Osborne, but it is as yet undiscovered whether it had been an official adoption by Alexander Osborne. Both

⁴ "Richard Fuller Dead: An Old And Highly Respected Resident of Hamilton Has Passed Away", *Hamilton Spectator*, 13 June 1904, author not listed, page not listed, Hamilton Public Library. The obituary reads "Upon the fall of Sebastopol he (Richard Fuller) emigrated to Canada".

⁵ Both quotes are from "Richard Fuller Dead", *Hamilton Spectator*, 13 June 1904.

⁶ Houghton, Margaret, 27 April 2001.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ "Richard Fuller Dead", *Hamilton Spectator*, 13 June 1904.

⁹ Houghton, Margaret, 27 April 2001. Alexander Gale Osborne's funeral register lists him as having died of syncope on February 29, 1944. Henrietta Osborne is listed as his wife, but there is no mention of Rosalynde. Curiously, neither Rosalynde nor Henrietta was listed on Alexander Osborne's newspaper

Rosalynde and her mother are by this time boarding with Mary Emma Fuller, who died in 1926, leaving Henrietta Osborne the sole owner of property at 7 Turner Avenue, which was to become the site for Rosalynde Osborne's performances.

Rosalynde Osborne's artistic training begins in Hamilton with John S. Gordon, and then later she worked with Stan Forbes, RA, in England, under whom she studied painting and was considered to be a competent watercolourist. In a 1925 exhibition of the "Hamilton chapter of the Women's Art Association", Rosalynde Fuller Osborne is mentioned as a "Maker of Marionettes", and also for having contributed "two water colors, very broad in treatment, and showing beautiful handling of colour. They are: Honfleur, France, and Candebec, France".¹⁰ A later exhibition with the Women's Art Association in Hamilton in 1929 has the critic writing:

Miss Rosalynde Fuller Osborne has four examples of her art, her Silvermoon Roses being remarkable for its simplicity and beauty of placement; while a widely different picture—Ketchopolus Market—is recondent of French teaching, clean and direct, and showing much freshness in the bright scene depicted.¹¹

In Montréal's *Gazette*, Rosalynde F. Osborne is also listed as having exhibited in the Art Association of Montreal's 45th spring exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in March 1942. Among the other many exhibitors included are such names as Laura Muntz Lyall, A.R.C.A., Marc-Aurel de Foy de Suzor-Côté, R.C.A., and Maurice Cullen, R.C.A.¹² In addition to this, Rosalynde Osborne also majored in advertising at the New York School of Applied Design, and worked for several years in the Studio Building in Toronto, "where Group of Seven artist Lawren Harris was her landlord".¹³

obituary, although Henrietta Osborne did use the following listing in the Hamilton city directory "Henrietta (wid Alex) Osborne".

¹⁰ "Judge Gauld Opens Women's Art Exhibit", *Hamilton Spectator*, December 1925. (author not listed, page not listed) *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹¹ "Higher Standard Evident at Show", *Hamilton Spectator*, 19 November 1929. (author not listed, page not listed) *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹² "Spring Exhibition at Art Galleries", *Gazette*, Montréal, Friday 2 March 1942. (author not listed, page not listed) *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹³ McKay, Ken, "Stearn, Mrs. Rosalynde F. (Osborne)", *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

Rosalynde Osborne devoted a great deal of time to the art of puppetry, having seen a Tony Sarg performance of *The Rose and the Ring* in 1919 in New York. This prompted her to study with an associate of Tony Sarg, Lillian Owen, in Gloucester, Massachusetts, until she began her own practice in 1923 with performances of *Punch and Judy of Long Ago*. Rosalynde Osborne continued to perform many other pieces in Hamilton and maintain an exhibition schedule with the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists throughout the 1930s.¹⁴ Along with these exhibitions, she also collected international puppets, theatres, texts and posters, encouraged other puppeteers in Canada and wrote on her colleagues in Canada in periodicals on puppetry, *Curtain Call* and *Puppetry*. These puppets, as well as her own creations, were not simply used for performances, but were also included in exhibitions, such as an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario) in 1935 in the sculpture court of that institution.¹⁵

Rosalynde Osborne became a charter member of the Puppeteers of America, “and was later named Master Puppeteer, one of the first Canadians to achieve international recognition for her work with puppetry”.¹⁶ She was also responsible for having gathered together puppeteers from across North America to a May 1939 conference in Hamilton, featuring Paul McPharlin as the keynote speaker, and a performance by Walt Wilkinson, both then internationally known puppeteers.¹⁷

Osborne Stearn, in her writing, often mentions her accomplishment of having produced a film *The Clouds*, by Aristophanes, which her company, King Cob Marionettes, produced for the

¹⁴ McKay, Ken, “Stearn, Mrs. Rosalynde F. (Osborne)”, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, CMC.

¹⁵ “Marionettes Seen at Art Gallery” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 1935, (newspaper fragment, no author listed, no page listed), *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹⁶ McKay, Ken, “Stearn, Mrs. Rosalynde F. (Osborne)”, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, CMC.

¹⁷ “Puppeteers Hold Convention Here: Practicers of Ancient Theatrical Art Attended From Many Centres”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 22 May 1939, (no author listed, no page listed), Hamilton Public Library.

Classics Clubs at the University of Toronto and McMaster University in Hamilton in 1938. This film was a collaborative effort between Rosalynde Osborne's company and with Classics Professor Clement Hodgson Stearn, who directed the chorus in the original Greek text. Clement Stearn's wife at the time, Lillian Stearn, with whom he had two children, died in 1944. Colin Stearn and Rosalynde Osborne were later married in 1947.¹⁸

The King Cob Marionette company had dissolved in 1943, having been in existence for 20 years. Within that time span, not only had Rosalynde Osborne Stearn performed and exhibited her own works, but she had also amassed a large collection of puppets and puppet paraphernalia. For her time, she was the only performer in Canada who had developed an international collection of over 200 puppets, and many more objects of interest in puppetry. Her collection remains an important element in the history of puppetry, with pieces dating back to 1760, and with an international scope.

Considering the amount of time and energy Osborne Stearn devoted to the medium of puppetry, it remains to be unearthed as to why she has received little recognition in Canadian art history. The first argument to this vacancy is that it may be based on choice of medium. This is an interesting suggestion, as puppetry may seem to be archaic with the arrival of other technologies. It is a time-intensive medium, bringing together sculpture, painting, literature, music and dance. I intend to argue that in fact puppetry, specifically the work of Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, should be considered relevant in Canadian art historical study as it is an aesthetic practice, while at the same time it incorporates and reflects the social and historical contexts during which it was created. This will be the formation of the first chapter, "Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Artist", where I will look at her work in relationship to the work of her contemporaries.

¹⁸ By this point in time, Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's stepson Colin Stearn has stated that she no longer performed. Personal communication with Colin Stearn, February 2000.

Another argument to explain Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's oblivion may also be due to the subject matter of performances, how prolific one was in their performances, etc. In this regard I intend to focus on Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's performance career, specifically looking at her film *The Clouds*, by Aristophanes, in the second chapter, "Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Performer". *The Clouds* was performed in 1938, captured on film, and then re-presented to other audiences by Classics Professor, Clement Stearn, who placed the piece into a more contemporary context by translating the original Greek script and adding contextual references. This chapter will be devoted to studying Osborne Stearn's interpretation of *The Clouds*, why it was chosen and what meanings the play may have had for audiences in various temporal contexts.

A third point on which I wish to reinstate Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as having art historical significance in Canada will be to look at her valuable collection of puppet paraphernalia. I will turn my focus to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's collection now housed at McGill University in the third chapter, "Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Collector". This large collection that was gathered within approximately 20 years remains as yet without a great deal of documentation. There are fragments of correspondence with antique dealers, brief descriptions of pieces that are well over 100 years old, unknown or partial texts for provenance. What comparison does this collection have to other collections in Canada and the United States? What was the basis of the collection, and what model was used? Is it an adequate representation of an art form with a lineage to antiquity? These questions will be the foundation for further exploration of the Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Collection at McGill University.

It is my hope that through these stages: artist, performer and collector, I will further be able to present Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as a fascinating Canadian within the context of art history.

Chapter 1:
Scene 1: Castings
Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Artist

Rosalynde Osborne Stearn passed away in 1990 in St. Peter's Infirmary in Hamilton, Ontario, having had a very active career devoted to puppetry in Canada. After her marriage to Clement Stearn, she relaxed her performance career and only occasionally collected pieces for the large collection at McGill University, which she left with the university library in 1954, under the curatorial guidance of Richard Pennington, then a puppet enthusiast.¹ These activities briefly sum up a dedicated devotion to puppetry in Canada, for which she is remembered. Osborne Stearn is considered to be among one of Canada's primary puppeteers in early 20th century Canada, as is evident in Kenneth McKay's statement that she was seminal in having initiated "a dynasty of puppeteers that continues to the present".²

Her professional career in puppetry warrants more attention within this chapter, as well as an examination of the strong national and international cultural tradition puppetry carries. By examining Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's glove puppets and marionettes, I intend to prove that her puppets are indeed objects of valuable study in aesthetic terms—they are kinetic sculptures. The sculpted faces, choice of colouring on puppet bodies, length of bodies, costumes, all these are visual elements through which a puppet body itself is relevant to aesthetic study.

Along with this perspective, I intend to show that Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's creations are also interesting in socio-cultural contexts, with puppet characters that have had long traditions of representation. Her colleagues, and indeed puppet history is laden with stereotypes and pre-

¹ This collection will be dealt with in more detail at a later point in this text.

² McKay, Kenneth, "Chapter 5: Puppetry in Ontario", *Puppetry in Canada: An Art to Enchant*, Willowdale, ON: Ontario Puppetry Association Publishing Company, 1980, p.62.

informed representations of the human body, whether that be based on race, class or gender. Facial expression, bodily form, costume, along with language and movement in performance are all means through which puppetry has long informed audiences of culturally accepted characteristics.

However, puppetry has not only served to reaffirm generally accepted truths, quite the contrary, in fact. Puppetry has had a very long tradition of belonging both in temples, churches, as well as on the street, fairground, or also in palaces, theatres and homes. In fact, Ellen Sheridan, writing in *American Home* in 1935 claimed “Nothing has contributed more to the happiness of our home than our little puppet theater”.³ Paradoxically, puppetry also fits into the realm of the underground, the critical, necessary underbelly of society. This is the history that Canadian puppetry brings to us.⁴

In order to discuss Rosalynde Osborne Stearn’s pieces, I will first set the historical stage within Canada, as it will place Rosalynde Osborne Stearn into a Canadian artistic tradition. Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, in her research for *Enciclopedia Dello Spettacollo*, traces the history of puppetry in Canada to First Nations Peoples. “Canadian Puppets”, Osborne Stearn writes, “are first referred to in ‘Jesuit Relations’, 1655, when a priest saw a marionette, animated by an Indian of the Onontagué, an Iroquois tribe”.⁵ She goes on to note that:

The Northwest coast Indians, particularly those of the Bella Coola, Tsimshian, Haida and the Niska tribes in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the Skeena River district, use puppets....The marionettes are carefully made and well jointed. Sometimes their strings, made from spruce or fern roots, control two motions at once.⁶

³ Sheridan, Ellen, “Puppet homemakers”, *American Home*, November 1935. (pages not listed) *Ontario Puppetry Association (OPA) Collection*, Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC), Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 130.

⁴ It is largely through Rosalynde Osborne Stearn’s research and writing that information regarding Canadian puppetry is traceable. Other sources include Micheline Legendre and Paul McPharlin.

⁵ Osborne Stearn, *Enciclopedia Della Spettacollo*, 1951. (unpublished ms.) *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 19, p.1.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp.1-2.

Although Osborne Stearn has provided few details of this art form in Aboriginal cultures, she goes on to suggest that “As the Indians had no written records, the origin of puppets among these first inhabitants of Canada must be a matter for speculation”.⁷

Osborne Stearn, like other authors, Micheline Legendre, and Paul McPharlin and Marjorie Batcheldor McPharlin, spills ink contributing a lineage of puppeteers in Canada to European Canadians.⁸ These authors trace one such lineage back to the *Mémoires* of Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, who writes sentimentally on “Daddy Marseille” and his theatre in Québec City. “Daddy Marseille” was in fact Jean Natte (1713(?)–1803), a former soldier and painter from Marseille, France, who emigrated to Québec in the mid-18th century.⁹ Marseille’s theatre, although destroyed in 1837, came to fruition in 1775 in Québec City, in the Faubourg Saint-Jean, and the performers were also known to have played in “the homes of the heads of the best Canadian families who wished to entertain their children and those of their friends”.¹⁰

The Marseille theatre was well known for having hosted the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria’s father, who visited Québec City from August 1791 to January 1794. De Gaspé gives the account of the theatre’s performance of the American siege of Québec City in 1775, where the city was cut out of hard paper and painted realistically to suggest the illusion of the siege. The royal family was also paraded by on stage, very realistically rendered to look as if they rode by on horse and carriage. De Gaspé notes that the sight of his family moved the Duke to tears, since he

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.* At this point, Osborne Stearn differentiates between “first inhabitants” and “first culture” when she writes “In the Eastern part of Canada where the first culture was European, marionettes are recorded by Phillippe Aubert de Gaspé...”, as opposed to suggesting that Aboriginal peoples were existing as a culture.

⁹ McPharlin, Paul, and Marjorie Batcheldor McPharlin, “Eighteenth-Century French Puppets”, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, Boston: Plays, Inc., 1969, p.80.

¹⁰ De Gaspé, *Mémoires*, as quoted by McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.81.

had not seen his family for such a long time. It was a testament to the ability of the Marseille's craft that they were able to perform such an illusion. De Gaspé's *Mémoires* read:

Lorsque le Prince reconnut son cher père et sa chère mère qu'il n'avait pas vus depuis longtemps, il se tint à quatre pour cacher son émotion, mais quand il aperçut son petit frère Rodolphe le coeur lui crevit (sic) et il se cacha le visage avec son mouchoir.¹¹

This performance was to be considered a "triumph" for the Marseille theatre, "the memory of which they cherished to their deaths".¹²

This theatre was then taken over further by Jean Natte's stepson, "Master Barbeau", when "Daddy Marseille" passed on at the age of 90 in 1803. This Québec City theatre, however, does not survive into a contemporary context due to historical upheaval. Although it survived through the continental war of 1812, it succumbed to destruction in the Patriotes rebellion of 1837, supposedly due to rebellious performances. De Gaspé's account suggests that the destruction of the theatre may in fact be political. He writes:

Les marionnettes...n'existaient plus dans mon souvenir, la main d'un despote en a fait une razzia pendant des troubles de 1837 et 1838. On craignait, je suppose, que Polichinelle ne grossît avec sa troupe les bataillons des rebelles...¹³

McPharlin and Batcheldor also make note of this event, quoting an example from de Gaspé:

There were, as a matter of fact, some very redoubtable fighters among the puppets. 'Bring on the Germans!' manager Barbeau would cry, and straightway there entered a dozen Teutons of both sexes. Having danced with naked swords in their hands, the men finished by falling to blows, to the great alarm of the lady Germans, until two or three of the warriors were strewn on the ground.¹⁴

¹¹ De Gaspé, *Mémoires*, as quoted by Legendre, "Le bon et le truand", *Marionnettes, Art et Tradition*, Ottawa: Éditions Leméac, 1986, p.104.

¹² De Gaspé, *Mémoires*, as quoted by McPharlin *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.82.

¹³ De Gaspé, *Mémoires*, as quoted by Legendre, *Marionnettes, Art et Tradition*, p.105. Legendre uses the term "Polichinelle", while McPharlin uses the term "Punch".

¹⁴ De Gaspé, *Mémoires*, as quoted by McPharlin *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.82.

Such performances would be viewed as spreading discord and inciting revolt among the populace, even to the point that the state felt compelled to destroy the property and remove all puppets. De Gaspé's translated account reads:

The police, after having demolished and looted the theatre of Sasseville, who had succeeded Barbeau, paraded in the streets for some time with their *opima spolia* on their shoulders, shouting 'Here's rebel A,' or 'rebel B or C', giving the names of the imaginary leaders of the rebellion who certainly did not exist in the district of Québec.¹⁵

So it follows that a theatre, its proprietors and their performers, who once entertained the Duke of Kent, is eventually destroyed due to political upheaval. Paul McPharlin and Marjorie Batchelder muse "Were these puppets the first in America to meet destruction as political martyrs?"¹⁶ It is a striking example of the extremities to which puppetry plays, from being attended by a figurehead of the state to becoming an enemy of the state. It was used to uphold the social structure in which it found itself, as with "Père Marseille" and "Mère Marseille", two French artists who entertained an emblem of British sovereignty shortly after Québec had been handed over from France to become an English colony, the complexity of which would be an interesting study in itself. Further to this, it became viewed as a means, by using "Punch" or "Polichinelle"—a hybrid character exported from Europe—to "swell the ranks of the rebels".¹⁷

This theatre destroyed, there is little else in the way of puppet activity listed by Osborne Stearn, Legendre, and McPharlin and Batchelder,¹⁸ but of particular interest, other details are contained in the text *The Mysterious Stranger, or Memoires of Henry More Smith* by Walter Bates, then Sheriff of King's County, New Brunswick. Henry More Smith, "alias Henry

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.85.

¹⁷ It is probable that Polichinelle was represented in this theatre, as Punch has different characteristics from Polichinelle. However, there are similarities between the two, as this one character has been represented in various means and is named differently across Europe. Micheline Legendre refers to Punch as "The King", as one feature of Punch is that his hat was at once both a king's crown and a jester's chapeau. Please see Legendre, *Marionettes, Art et Tradition*, pp.48-50.

¹⁸ François Baillairgé lists "marionets" (sic) from 1785 and an "ôtomate parlante" from 1792 in his unpublished ms. *Journal du sculpteur François Baillairgé de 1784 à 1800*, Musée du Québec.

Frederick Moon, alias William Newman”¹⁹ proved to be an elusive felon. He had been charged with being a horse thief, and while awaiting proceedings for that charge, he was further charged with burglary and had the death penalty hanging over his head. Osborne Stearn notes:

Henry More Smith...was a man extraordinarily gifted with his hands, and during the time he spent in Kingston gaol he made ten puppets out of straw, taken no doubt from his bed, dressing them in rags from his own clothing.²⁰

McPharlin and Batcheldor also record that his puppet making was “at least as a change from filing off his shackles, sawing his bars, ripping down the wall, and giving every indication that he was unhappy locked up”.²¹

This is hardly the description of a performer who one would expect to fit into the social norm, however, it is later revealed by Sheriff Bates that More Smith was in fact pardoned for exactly that. McPharlin’s and Batcheldor’s account is rather detailed:

Sheriff Bates was so impressed that he wrote a letter to the *Royal Gazette* of 11 July, couched in the hyperbole of a veritable press agent. Reading it, the public flocked to his show. “The most extraordinary, the most wonderful of all”, wrote Bates, “is that in this time he had prepared, *undiscovered*, and at once *exhibited* the most striking picture of genius, art, taste and invention that ever was and I presume ever will be produced by any human being placed in his situation, in a dark room, chained and handcuffed, under sentence of death, without so much as a nail or any kind of thing to work (with) but his hands, and naked”. The Sheriff should have accepted cleverness from a young man so handy at making saws from old knife blades and cutters from watch springs.²²

In fact, as McPharlin and Batcheldor note, he became somewhat of a celebrity, while the crowds who came to see his performances “brought Smith thread and needles, calico and ribbons, and even a small pair of scissors which he was permitted to use”.²³ His persona became larger

¹⁹ McPharlin, “Fantoccini and Variety Bills”, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.94.

²⁰ Osborne Stearn, “Puppetry in Canada”, *Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo*, (unpublished ms for entry) OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 19.

²¹ McPharlin, “Fantoccini and Variety Bills”, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.94.

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*, p.96.

than his criminal activities, and as “a celebrity, he of course had to be pardoned”.²⁴ His pardon was conditional that he return to England, but he instead went to the United States, “stole some spoons from a hotel in New Haven” and was further incarcerated, landing him a sentence in Simsbury Mines, Connecticut. McPharlin and Batcheldor are amused with this performer, writing, “Thanks to his side line of crime, we have a detailed description of this puppeteer”.²⁵

With this early history in Canada of revolutionary and imprisoned puppets, it must be stated that its history is not only aligned with the underground, but is certainly no stranger to social congruity. Other performances in Canada listed by Osborne Stearn include a visit to the Theatre Royal in Victoria by the Royal Marionettes in September-October 1876, and that “Punch and Judy shows were...found at Fairs, and were sometimes asked to entertain at children’s parties”.²⁶

Unfortunately, there appears to be little activity in comparison with other countries, a sentiment that Legendre espouses. “Il faut reconnaître immédiatement que l’histoire des marionnettes au Canada et au Québec est fort modeste”, she writes, “On y est loin, par exemple, de la diversité et de la continuité des États-Unis.”²⁷ Osborne Stearn, however, in her short article, chooses to include visiting performers, including Oliver and David Lano’s company from the United States, who “travelled as far as Windsor, Ontario”.²⁸ She also lists an Italian troupe, Picolli Theatre, as well as several other American performers, including Tony Sarg’s Marionettes and The Red Gate Shadow Players.

²⁴ McPharlin, *Puppet Theatre in America*, p.96.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ For a detailed description on the legal wranglings of the Royal Marionettes, please refer to McPharlin, “The Odyssey of the Royal Marionettes”, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, pp.156-200.

²⁷ Legendre, “Le bon et le truand”, *Marionettes, Art et Tradition*, p.102.

²⁸ Osborne Stearn, *Encyclopedia*, 1951.

There are fewer details regarding performers across Canada in comparison to the United States throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Osborne Stearn's writing suggests that there is more significant activity within Canada in the 20th century, however, in her various articles in *Puppetry*, which reported on puppet performances and artists on an international scale. As example, in 1939 she wrote:

Six Canadian puppeteers attended the 1937 Puppet Conference, as against one in 1936. Does this mean that puppetry has increased six times in Canada? Probably not, although a notable increase in interest may be detected among the public, who no longer thinks the puppeteer an adult freak, playing with dolls!²⁹

Although there seems to be a touch of despair in her language, one can also detect a sense of humour in these lines.

Canada's large geography and isolated communities contributed to the lack of permanent puppet theatres, but that is not to suggest that puppeteers who did perform were not successful. For example, Osborne Stearn writes in this same article:

The most ambitious performance was given by the Keogh-Heddle Marionettes of Toronto, who played *The Nutcracker Suite* accompanied by the Toronto symphony to a capacity audience of several thousand.³⁰

The Keogh-Heddle company had been started by David and Violet Keogh as Kay's Marionettes in 1925 and began performances in 1928. This company later joined with Muriel Moodie-Heddle, who was initially an assistant to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn at King Cob Marionettes, to create the Keogh-Heddle Marionettes in 1936. This company gained notoriety for performing with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Massey Hall "Christmas Box" concerts, but also did a great deal of musical interpretation with the TSO of performances such as: *The Nutcracker Suite* by

²⁹ Osborne, Rosalynde F., "Canada", *Puppetry*, 1937, p.33, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 11 File 5.

³⁰ *ibid.*

Tchaikowsky, *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saens, *Clare de Lune* by Debussy and Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*.³¹

Muriel Heddle's career was also quite successful, having started puppetry as an assistant to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn with King Cob Marionettes from 1930-33. Her focus was ballet, and after successfully performing with the Keogh-Heddle company, Muriel Heddle went on to begin her own company in 1940, known as: Muriel Heddle's Marionettes, the Royal Puppet Ballet and the Royal Canadian Puppet Ballet. Lucy Garvin from the Ontario Puppetry Association notes that Heddle probably used from of the figures from her experience with the Keogh's. Garvin notes that:

Publicity materials for Keogh-Heddle productions and for some of Muriel's own productions use the same photos or are obviously the same puppets.³²

Osborne Stearn also lists other companies throughout Canada who were involved in the medium, and they included such companies as the Maycourt Marionette Club from London, Ontario; Ethel Sutherland's Marionettes from Winnipeg, Manitoba; Pameo Puppeteers from Kitchener, Ontario; as well as a troupe from the Metropolitan Church in Regina, Saskatchewan.³³ Osborne Stearn's reporting includes both professional troupes as well as troupes of children and teenagers who performed within Canada. She writes:

During the Christmas season a class of children at the Art Gallery of Toronto gave a performance of *Pinocchio* with rod-puppets, under the direction of Dorothy Medhurst, who also taught and directed a class of children in Aurora.³⁴

³¹ Document prepared by Lucy Garvin, contract researcher, 22 January 1996, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Osborne, Rosalynde F., *Puppetry*, 1937, p.33; 1938, pp.17-18.

³⁴ Osborne, *Puppetry*, 1937, p.33.

It is clear that Osborne Stearn does not particularly distinguish between reporting on amateur and professional puppet theatre, giving both modes of performance space in her articles, leaving the reader with a sense that the art is thriving. In fact, her opening statements in her 1937 article explain her *raison d'être* for these inclusions, that "The most promising development has been the growth of the art among children, the puppeteers and audiences of the future".³⁵

Osborne Stearn's own career in puppetry began under the tutelage of Lillian Owen in Gloucester, Massachusetts, after having seen one of Owen's associates, Tony Sarg, perform *The Rose and the Ring* in New York in 1919. This was a four-year period, after which Rosalynde Osborne Stearn started her own company, King Cob Puppets, and began to perform with glove puppets.³⁶ In 1923, her first performance *Punch and Judy of Long Ago*, was given acclaim by Paul McPharlin and Marjorie Batcheldor McPharlin as "the first production of the new era".³⁷ *Punch and Judy* shows were notorious for being accommodating to contexts and very fluid in performance, cast and language. Characters in *Punch and Judy* were not "written in stone", and there could be any number of characters in a cast, including crocodiles, dogs, a dragon, a parson, etc.³⁸ McPharlin and Batcheldor note that fluidity was seminal in Osborne Stearn's performance, "hoping to bridge the gap between the *Punch* shows familiar to most British Canadians and the newer puppetry in this play by Mary Stewart".³⁹

Osborne Stearn's King Cob Puppets evolved to become King Cob Marionettes when she turned to string puppetry in 1930. Her repertoire mostly included variety acts, short pieces, akin

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ King Cob was the racing greyhound belonging to Lord Daintree in 19th century England and has been credited being one of two sires responsible for most purebred Greyhound dogs. (On-line) Available: http://www.greyhound-data.com/overview_sires.htm

³⁷ McPharlin, *Puppet Theatre in America*, p.435.

³⁸ *ibid.* Texts to consider on *Punch and Judy* include: Speaight, George, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*, London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1955; Leach, Robert, *The Punch and Judy Show: History, Tradition and Meaning*, Athens, Georgia, U.S.A., University of Georgia Press, 1985.

³⁹ McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, p.348.

to short stories in literature. Variety acts were a tradition in puppetry, as a means to provide audience members a “pre-game show” prior to the main performance—if there was one—or perhaps to flaunt a performer’s technical prowess.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, scripts of these pieces are unavailable, so there is much left to speculation as to the performances that took place. For example, the Art Gallery of Ontario has on record two performances of Osborne Stearn with her puppets, but with few details as to what the performances were and which figures were used.⁴¹ As well, Osborne Stearn’s and Richard Pennington’s correspondence suggests that there is much more information required to complete the McGill library catalogue of the puppet collection, including the list of performance pieces in which her characters were a part, although Osborne Stearn signed the puppet figures that she had created.⁴²

It is interesting that Osborne Stearn felt compelled to sign her puppets, as this action echoes that of an visual artist signing a painting, sculpture, a musician claiming a composition, or a writer claiming authorship of a literary work. In this way, Osborne Stearn is claiming authorship of the figures that she had created. It also appears to have been a very necessary action, as without proper documentation many of the pieces within the collection could very easily be misattributed to other artists. Signing her work is a means of placing importance into the figures themselves as being significant within the collection.⁴³

⁴⁰ McPharlin’s text gives an example of such variety acts in his detailed description of the Royal Marionettes, McPharlin, *Puppet Theatre in America*, pp.158-9.

⁴¹ I am indebted to staff at the AGO archives, personal communication, January 22, 2003; and “Marionettes seen at Art Gallery”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 20 December 1935. (author not listed, page not listed) OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁴² Pennington, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 29 December 1958, writes “Sometime I would like to photograph...all the puppets and ask you to annotate the photographs of all those you gave to us”. Her written reply to Pennington on 19 January 1959 in this regard is accommodating: “as to your idea of photographing the items in the collection, I think it a very good one. It would seem to be about the only way to identify as labels get lost and some things are impossible to sign although you would find that I had done just that on some of the feet”, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁴³ In conversation with Osborne Stearn’s stepson, Colin, he had mentioned that his stepmother had suffered from dementia later in life, adding relevance to the fact that she had signed so many pieces. Although much is left to be discovered, at the very least Osborne Stearn’s own work is noted. Colin Stearn, Personal communication, 29 February 2000.

Having exhibited watercolours, Osborne Stearn has invariably been written about as a visual artist in that medium while puppetry is viewed in light of being childish. “Are we all children beneath a veneer of grown-up-ness, or has Miss Rosalynde Osborne, who is bringing up a puppet family in Toronto, the gift that magics us?”⁴⁴ the *Mail and Empire* reviewer asks readers. The author goes on to write:

Miss Osborne, who is a Hamilton girl, is really a water-color artist (her work is well-known, for she has been exhibiting for some time at the academy shows). But she has taken as a hobby an art that was in full flower in China a thousand years before Christ, an art practiced by our own red Indians from the beginning of their tribal rites.⁴⁵

It is then suggested that Osborne Stearn is *really* a watercolour artist, and the interest of puppetry is somewhat incongruent to her artistic endeavours. Although puppetry is listed as an ancient art by the author, their initial question infantilizes the medium.

Other authors saw Osborne Stearn’s puppetry as having artistic merit, but as the following example shows, it is only within a constricted understanding, as one *Hamilton Spectator* article notes that “Miss Osborne, who is a clever sculptor, makes all the dolls used for performing purposes”. This statement contains interesting imbalances. On the one hand, the author suggests Osborne Stearn is “a clever sculptor”, but in the same breath refers to her creations as “dolls”, once again purveying a juvenile quality to the medium. However, the author’s praise for puppet making appears genuine, as they continue, “a close examination of one (puppet figure) quickly discloses the fact that many, many hours of work, with great patience and care, were needed to make the hundreds of marionettes that are included in her collection”.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ “Marionettes”, *Mail & Empire*, 28 March 1929 (author not listed, page not listed) Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library Archives.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* The racial and cultural comparisons in this statement reveal much about the contextual framework in which Osborne Stearn was working.

⁴⁶ All citations from “Famous Puppets in Local Studio”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 1 February 1936, p.4, (author not listed) Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library Archives.

The processes involved in Osborne Stearn's puppets are rather labour-intensive. A miniature body, or more specifically a "character" with specific intentions must be first modelled. In the case of Osborne Stearn's glove puppets and marionettes, the heads are hollow, which requires a technique of modelling and casting. For glove puppets, a hollow head is necessary in order for the puppeteer to manipulate its head with one, two or three fingers of his or her hand, depending upon comfort, and often tradition. For example, the "Punch" method is to control the puppet head with the index finger, with the third finger and thumb moving the arms.

There are several ways to achieve this. The head is often modelled with plasticine or clay on a stand with a wooden base and allowed to solidify. This head is then coated with petroleum jelly or a very thin layer of damp paper in order to protect the modelled head. The papier-mâché is then applied to the head and neck with a cold water paste and allowed to dry. This step must be repeated if there is any shrinkage during the drying stage, as well as to modify details. Once dry, the head is then cut in two pieces to remove the shell, and must be reattached by dampening the edges of the shell and forcing it together. The head may be further smoothed with sandpaper in order to rub out the head's seam.

The second method is plaster casting and is similar to the first method in the modelling stage, but the difference is that the head is taken off the stand, its neck plugged with the same material as the head and placed into a container of mixed wet plaster. Once the plaster has solidified, the head and plaster surface is coated with vaseline and additional "markers" or "posts" of clay or plasticine are placed on either side of the head to assure that the mould will come apart easily. Wet plaster is then placed on top of the bottom layer of plaster and the head and allowed to dry. Once this has dried, the mould is then split at the markers, and it can be lined with papier-mâché to create the head. Once again, this is a process that would require the head to

be sized after being removed from the mould and sanded to erase the seam.⁴⁷ The head may then be painted and embellished as desired.

This is simply in the process of making the head of a figure. The bodies also require ingenuity and patience. In the case of glove puppets, the body is provided by the costume, which is sewn to the neck of the glove puppet. The costume as a result must be solid to hide the puppeteer's hand, and in the case of Osborne Stearn's Punch and Judy characters, given elaborate necklines to hide these seams. The costume often requires a wire to be run through the bottom hem of the costume, as the figures are often stored hanging upside-down during or after a performance. The costume is lightweight and will not harm the figure's head in this manner. However, for display purposes in an exhibition, a figure may be placed on a vertical rod. This is somewhat more dangerous in the long-term, as with time the rod may in fact puncture the heads.⁴⁸

With marionettes, the process of manipulation is not as simple. The figure's joints may in fact be hidden under costume, but there are specific laws of equilibrium and knowledge of human movement that must be applied in stringing a marionette. The torso and appendages can be made of wood, carved to resemble the human form, cylindrical or less shapely; or it may be created using papier-mâché as described above, or possibly even cloth. Wood is a preferred medium as it provides the figure with significant weight. The limbs are joined with metal fasteners or eyelet hooks to the torso in a manner that mimics the human form: the upper arms to the shoulders, upper and lower arms jointed at the elbows and hands at the wrists; thighs are connected to the hips, calves are jointed at the knees, and feet are jointed at the ankles. In the

⁴⁷ Both methods are described in detail in Wall, *The Puppet Book*, pp.68-99.

⁴⁸ I must here acknowledge Larry Baranski, Puppet Curator at the Detroit Institute of Arts for his wealth of knowledge on conservation techniques as well as his expertise on display. (Larry Baranski, personal communication, March 2000)

case of Osborne Stearn's marionettes, she often made the hands and feet out of papier-mâché, giving her flexibility in their shape.

These joints are further strung in such a way that will allow the figure to move with a sense of equilibrium. In the case of Spirit of Water, (Fig. 1), Osborne Stearn used an apparatus akin to an airplane to control the puppet's motion. This essentially consists of a four pieces of wood attached in the form of an airplane: body, wings and tail. The "body" is split in two parts and joined to bend in a perpendicular motion so that the "wings" and "tail" can be manipulated separately. The wings' tips control the figure's shoulders, while another eyelet hook is placed on the front of the wings slightly in from their edges to manipulate the head. These joints are primary for the figure to be balanced. The front portion of the body is perpendicular to the wings and an eyelet hook is placed under the airplane's "nose" to manipulate the arms with strings running to the figure's hands. The figure's legs are manipulated by strings attached to both edges of the airplane's wings and to the figure's knees and feet. Finally, the figure requires that its back be attached to the control mechanism at the "tail" end of the body. These attachments ensure that the puppet will be balanced, as each side of the body coincides with the side of the control mechanism. This also allows the puppeteer to manipulate the upper and lower portions of the marionette with both hands.

It is useful to look at Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's figures as miniature sculpture for the purposes of framing her in art history, but that would be only partially adequate to an already established tradition of puppet making. In fact, sculpting is part and parcel of the puppet making process, but so are costuming and painting, as well as a puppet maker requiring knowledge of mechanics in order to get the creatures to move. It is not one strict form of representation that needs to be reviewed, rather, it is more complex than this. Frank Proschan, writing in the *Journal*

of *American Folklore* in 1981 lists that puppetry, as a form, “borders on and overlaps with other traditions of performing objects”.⁴⁹

This is not to suggest that the processes involved do not have aesthetic or cultural merit. The process of modelling and casting are sculptural, and a puppeteer requires a knowledge base of the human form in order to create an imitative human figure. Take, for example, item P47 of the Stearn Collection, “String puppet of a bronze dancer representing the Spit of Fire. By the Canadian puppeteer, Rosalynde Osborne Stearn. Papier-mâché. 17 inches” (Fig.2), and the aforementioned character, item P48, a “string puppet of a silver dancer representing the Spirit of Water. By Rosalynde Osborne Stearn. Papier-mâché. 15 inches.”⁵⁰ With these two figures, Osborne Stearn has created the hands and feet larger, a trick similar to figure drawing, in that the proportion of these extremities appears suitable with enlarged hands and feet.

These complex figures and mechanisms not only have aesthetic interest, but are also historically significant in terms of character personification. In short, puppets are often stereotypes come to life in miniature form. McPharlin’s text *Puppet Heads and Their Making* explains that:

Illusion holds with the spectator so long as he sees the puppet a *dramatis persona*. Once he becomes aware of its strings, joints and mode of operation, rather than of what it is acting, the spell is broken.⁵¹

Thus not only is the piece required to be visually succinct in order to personify a character, but McPharlin believes that the figure itself must contain within its representation a full sense of embodiment, while the technical aspects must become secondary in order for illusion to succeed.

⁴⁹ Proschan, Frank, “Puppet Voices and Interlocutors”, *Journal of American Folklore*, vol.94, no.374, 1981, p.542.

⁵⁰ *Rosalynde Osborne Stearn Collection*, McGill Rare Books and Special Collections Division, Redpath Library, 1956.

⁵¹ McPharlin, Paul, *Puppet Heads and Their Making: A Theorem*, Birmingham, Michigan: Paul McPharlin, 1931, p.6.

While Frank Proschan agrees with the principle that a puppet bears some elements of personification, he adds the warning:

But, although the visual message and the aural message are complementary, the visual image and the gestural repertoire are restricted. The puppet never bears all the marks of the person, animal or spirit it represents. Certain signs are selected for inclusion and others are omitted.⁵²

For example, in McPharlin's text *Puppet Heads and their Making*, he lists the character "Water" as a character in Maeterlinck's fairy play *The Bluebeard*, or possibly in another fantasy play, and suggests that a character, Water, "needs long undulating tresses and tearful eyes".⁵³ In Osborne Stearn's *Spirit of Water*, we cannot see McPharlin's suggestion of "long undulating tresses and tearful eyes" (Fig.3). In fact, the *Spirit of Water* figure by Rosalynde Osborne Stearn greatly differs from McPharlin's suggestion.

McPharlin's theorem on *Puppet Heads and Their Making* is rather revealing of what a puppeteer may produce in order to convince an audience of a specific character. He writes:

While voice, gait and bodily attitude help to determine puppet character, the head is of prime importance. Not only the face, but the shape and size of the head, the hair and headdress count. In the lineaments of the face may be shown emotional traits and marks of age.In its hair and headdress may be shown sex, station and period.⁵⁴

The figure, Water, as described by McPharlin, and the accompanying image differs from Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's figure, *Spirit of Water*.

⁵² Proschan, "Puppet Voices", *Journal of American Folklore*, p.538.

⁵³ McPharlin, Paul, *Puppet Heads and Their Making*, Birmingham, Michigan: Paul McPharlin, 1931, p.15. Osborne Stearn's characters in these instances were used as dancing figures. Personal correspondence, Speller, Library of the Art Gallery of Ontario, February 2003.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.6.

Osborne Stearn's figure clearly has human characteristics, but the head is not the tell-tale suggestion that this character should be understood as water. Rather, Osborne Stearn's figure appears sexless in its facial features, form and colouring. It does not have "long undulating tresses" for headdress, and its face appears vacant of any emotion. Rather, the suggestion that this character is Spirit of Water rests more with its long, undulating turquoise cape and reflective silver colouring. Another interesting element is the importance of hair, and Osborne Stearn's figure's headdress suggests a head of short hair, while McPharlin's characteristic "tresses" suggest an almost effeminate quality with its hair.

In this case, Osborne Stearn has used colour, rather than hair and facial features, to characterize figures. She has avoided any signification of male or female in these instances, either in costumes or in headdresses. The Spirit of Water's reflective silvery coating draws associations to mirrors, Narcissus gazing into a pool and admiring himself. The figure's blue-green cape is sheer and may be manipulated in such a fashion that it appears to be flowing, allowing the audience to associate water and waves.

Spirit of Fire on the other hand is bronze, and that orange-golden colour draws association to heat. Its costume consists of strings of reflective beads that, when the figure is moved, energetically jerk back and forth as opposed to flowing smoothly like fabric. In these ways, Osborne Stearn has left out signifiers of gender for two elements, and has instead played on other associations to provide characterisation.

Another relevant figure that exhibit the complexities of character identification is Maggie Tosh, item P49(1), described in the McGill catalogue as "Maggie Tosh, Aberdeen fishwife. 18

inches” (Fig. 4).⁵⁵ The origin of Maggie Tosh is speculative.⁵⁶ We have been given some background on her person, we know that she is Scottish and that she is married to a fisherman, as the term “fishwife” suggests. Her eyes are cast down, her eyebrows heavy. Lines around her mouth are heavily pronounced with dark colouring, and her cheeks are bright red. The figure’s hair is kept swept back underneath a black kerchief. She wears a green woollen shawl over a pink blouse, and her red skirt is covered with a green and white checkered apron. A review in the *Hamilton Spectator* suggests her age and size, referring to her as “the old Scotch fish wife, ‘you could smell her for a mile’ according to the song she sang in a little voice that seemed to just fit her wee person”.⁵⁷

With these terms “character” and “caricature” there is an opening into an incredibly long tradition in puppetry, as well as in satirical cartoon. Characters in plays are meant to be reflections of a person in society, representations of social habits, whether they are informed by class, race or gender. Art historian E. H. Gombrich, in his examination of caricature explains that “Every culture and every language contains innumerable references to a common stock of knowledge which are not felt to be allusions because they are immediately accessible to anyone”.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Maggie Tosh’s role in the play *Monday* is unknown. Please refer to “Odds and Ends”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 16 March 1934, (author, page not listed) OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁵⁶ The name Maggie Tosh is in existence, however, genealogy researcher Colin A. Milne suggested that “To my knowledge there is no list or similar (genealogical) documentation relating to specific Aberdeen fishwives. If pressed, my own judgment is that the name Maggie Tosh is fictional as the surname is not one that is particularly common in the Aberdeen area and is not one of the common fishing family names.” (Colin A. Milne, personal communication, Thursday 23 January 2003)

⁵⁷ “Odds and Ends”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 16 March 1934. The author listed this character as “Maggie Look”. As well, the author did not refer to other puppet figures as “wee” persons.

⁵⁸ Gombrich, E.H., “The Cartoonist’s Armoury”, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art*, p.133.

Puppetry is a medium through which many sensory references are instantly at play: from physical and facial traits, to style of dress, to movement, to language and possibly even to music. Further to this, there are specific traditions within puppetry that are adhered to, traditional narratives still exercised that may specifically belong to a unique context. These elements simultaneously bombard the puppet audience in such a way that the performance demands a great deal of suppositions and references among audience members in order for the show to be successfully received. By the same token, puppeteers are also required to acknowledge their context and their audience. The language, text, and motion used are typically required to have some terms of references with the audience. Proschan offer these restrictions on puppetry performance:

The traditional performer, whether puppeteer or actor, must combine a legacy of conventionalised conceptions of how people behave, how they move and speak, with his own perceptions of life around him, fashioning characterizations which are inevitably unique yet which must necessarily be recognisable to the audience.⁵⁹

For example, in terms of visual perception, each character adheres to a certain set of social and cultural elements placed upon them by social structure. Paul McPharlin's treatise on *Puppet Heads and Their Making* is one such example of a puppeteer's belief in character representation. As quoted earlier, he believed that puppet faces determine "emotional traits and marks of age...sex, station and period". He further suggests that "In its (facial) contours may be shown mentality, race and health".⁶⁰ This has taken visual elements into an expanded role in his suggestion of a character's mentality and health, along with class, emotion, gender and race that are revealed in the face of a figure. However, in order for an audience member to read this meaning, they must understand the context in which a performance is being given. Gombrich suggests that "the spread and intelligibility of this lore will clearly vary from group to group."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Proschan, "Puppet Voices", *Journal of American Folklore*, p.527.

⁶⁰ McPharlin, *Puppet Heads and Their Making*, p.6.

⁶¹ Gombrich, "The Cartoonist's Armoury", p.133.

If the desired character's class status is at stake, there may be specific visual codes the puppet creator has to adhere to.

Fashion is one means in which we are given keys to Maggie Tosh's class status. In the case of Maggie Tosh we are given information and are asked to make immediate judgments on what she does on a day-to-day basis. On one level, we have the visual image of Maggie Tosh. She is dressed in an apron, there is a shawl over her shoulders and her hair is swept under a kerchief. An apron suggests work, whether it is worn by a woman or man, and in such professions as cook or chef, blacksmith, butcher, carpenter, etc., to protect clothing. It appears as if this character's costume has provided us with the clue that since she wears an apron, she works. It is possible that we are meant to conclude that she has seen a great deal of work, but this does not refer to Maggie Tosh's health or mentality.

Another element of consideration is language, and considering the language available, that "you can smell her for a mile", we are asked to make assessments on several sensory levels. Her scent alone is not enough of an indication of Maggie Tosh, as she is in fact a puppet figure, and on stage is quite incapable of emitting any kind of odour except for the materials that were used in creating her body and costume. Frankly, Maggie Tosh doesn't sweat as a result of papier-mâché's lack of necessary glands, and the figure may in fact only absorb other odors of the stage. However, her rank as an "Aberdeen fishwife" or "Scotch fish wife" allows the audience to defer to her occupation and her declaration that she probably smells like fish, or would smell like this if she were a living, breathing, human entity. Once again, however, the audience is still left without a sense of her mental and physical health.

“Age” given to us in language. The “Odds and Ends” review suggest that Maggie Tosh is an “old Scotch fish wife”. Where the writer draws this assumption may be visual or it may once again be in language and motion. Perhaps Maggie Tosh reveals to the audience that she has undergone many years of labour, or maybe her song—which remains a mystery—is lamenting her youth. Perhaps her character moves slowly across the stage in a manner that would suggest her years. Or, it is entirely possible that the *Spectator* critic judged Maggie Tosh to be quite old from her visual appearance. Lines in her face are emphasized through dark colouring on her reddish skin, a wrinkly forehead, revealing traces of age. However, this still would leave Maggie Tosh’s mental and physical welfare unknown.

The hints given to decipher mental and physical wellness in Maggie Tosh are not contained solely within the language used in her performance, the details given in the Stearn catalogue as to her identification or with her physical appearance. The emotive quality of her downcast glance may be telling, but it is perhaps sadness, an emotion, not mentality that is suggested by her dropping eyelids. Fatigue may also be read into this visual feature, but that is more a physical trait than a mental trait. The mentality of Maggie Tosh lies more within the audience’s reading of her character than it does with any given physical evidence.

Proschan notes that a puppeteer, within his/her context, must avail to the audience certain perceptions familiar to their context, as well as his/her own perspicacity. To this presentation of conceptions, he adds this caveat:

This is not to claim that either the conventional conceptions or the artist’s own perceptions accurately mirror ‘real’ life—they may be distortions or pure fantasies, but they must be familiar to the audience in order to have meaning.⁶²

⁶² Proschan, “Puppet Voices”, p.527.

In other words, Proschan suggests that the puppet performer and the audience of the show all come with preconceived beliefs and ideas, and it is through familiarity with the subject, and repeated images and ideas that the meaning of the performance will be generally understood, regardless of accuracy. It is these distortions in conventions that are of interest in the case of the “mentality of Maggie Tosh”.

In order to judge Maggie Tosh’s mental state, which will inevitably dictate her behaviour to the audience, we involve ourselves in a difficult set of rules of perception. We make judgments based on what little information is available, but it is an incredible wealth of information that springs to mind in the term “fishwife”. *Aberdeen and its Folk*, a text written in 1868 and credited to “A Son of a Bon-Accord in North America” gives the following description:

The fish-wives of Aberdeen and of the neighbouring villages on the Kincardineshire coast rival their sisters of Newhaven in the various attributes for which these dames and damoiselles are celebrated, viz., a frame strong and well-knit, a comely face, a frank and hearty manner, and a "gift o' the gab," which often stands them in good stead in the disposal of their commodities.⁶³

This description continues on to elucidate the behaviour of the fishwives:

And, while Newhaven has been justly famed for its succulent bivalves, in the vending of which, while in season the streets of the Scottish metropolis are made musical by the well-known cry, ‘Cauler oo-oo’.⁶⁴

Others have accented this image of the “type”, particularly in their acknowledgement of the “gift o’ the gab”. Lady Nairne’s (1766-1845) lyrics in *Caller Herrin’* gives the image of hardy women, calling in the night and repeating the call to sell their wares:

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonnie fish and halesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth ?

⁶³ A Son of Bon-Accord in North America, *Aberdeen and its Folk, From the 20th to the 50th Year of the Present Century*, Aberdeen: Lewis Smith, 1868.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
 Dream'd ye aught o' our puir fellows,
 Darkling as they faced the billows,
 A' to fill the woven willows?

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
 They're no' brought here without brave darin',
 Buy my caller herrin',
 Haul'd through wind and rain.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
 Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin',
 Wives and mithers maist despairin',
 Ca' them lives o' men.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
 Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
 Gather in their braw pelisses,
 Cast their heads and screw their faces.⁶⁵

There are numerous references to class disparity and the difficulty of work for the fishwives and their husbands, done in the course of the night and early morning, “When ye were sleepin’” suggest the song, “Dream'd ye aught o' our puir fellows”. The fish are caught in the evening or early morning and brought to market on the backs of these women in heavy baskets, and are also treated prior to sale and consumption. *Aberdeen and its Folk* describes the scent in the curing and smoking process:

Aberdeen can boast of the world-renowned Finnan haddock, possessing a flavour and yielding a fragrance due, not, as the Southron imagines, to the effects of pungent wood-smoke, but to the mellowed and sublimed ether of peat-reek.⁶⁶

Perhaps this is why Maggie Tosh sings out that “you can smell her for a mile”. Hauling fish steeped in the “sublimed ether of peat-reek” would permeate her clothes, and perhaps be the reason why “Ladies...Cast their heads and screw their faces” when passing by a fishwife.

⁶⁵Oliphant, Carolina, (Lady Nairne), 1766-1845, *Caller Herrin'* (Air by Niel Gow), *The Scottish Minstrel*, vol. v. (c. 1823). This melody, however, was meant to reflect the streets of Newhaven, not Aberdeen.

⁶⁶ *Aberdeen and its Folk*, 1868.

Bearing these descriptions in mind, Maggie Tosh appears the embodiment of a fishwife, but at that she is fictional. She is portrayed with elements of the characterization, yet she remains a caricature, brought to life, not as an individual, but as a “type”, a simplified personification of a fishwife, in short, a caricature. Although caricature and puppetry are different media, the two practices are often intertwined by their representations and necessary attachment to specific historical, social and cultural contexts. A caricature is simplistic in order for it to be instantly recognizable. It reflects some elements of character, while other details are omitted. Rudolph Arnheim, writing in the *Art Journal* in 1983, makes this point regarding caricature and the concept of the “normal”. He writes:

The “correct” proportion of the human figure is present in memory only, and one needs little flexibility to find oneself transferred to a world governed by its own independent normal proportion and by the particular dynamics derived from that proportion.⁶⁷

This idealization of the normal figure as conceived by memory is key in the formation of stereotypical imagery.

It is also relevant in the very controversial “sciences” of physiognomy and phrenology, forceful laws that dictated the summation of character based upon appearance, personalized by the eighteenth century German theorist, Lavater. Arnheim expands:

When Lavater and his avid disciples, such as the young Goethe, described the physiognomy of individuals, they were intuitively guided by the perceptually organized totality of the expressive pattern. Trying to be systematic, however, the same Lavater endeavored to define in his writings the expression of each separate part of the head and to determine the expression of the whole from the sum of the parts.⁶⁸

Physiognomy had its place in empirical knowledge at Lavater’s time, was, according to a re-released version of his work in 1876 “confused and sophisticated with falsehoods, termed occult

⁶⁷ Arnheim, Rudolph. “The Rationale of Deformation”, *Art Journal*, vol. 43/4 (Winter 1983), p. 321.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.322.

reasonings". However, this edition's editors intended to reinsert "the noble science of Physiognomy" into the 19th century as proven science. "There can be no doubt of the truth of physiognomy", Lavater writes, "All countenances, all forms, all created beings, are not only different from each other in their classes, races, and kinds, but are also individually distinct."⁶⁹

The difficulty of such reliance on intuitive beliefs to determine character is echoed by Adam Gopnick in his *Art Journal* article, "High and Low". He writes:

The caricature...attempts to seize a recognizable likeness from the flux of appearances. Psychologists theorize that caricatures work so well not because they create an illusion of instability in an arrested image but because their external forms in some way mirror the internal structure of our mental representations, the idealized and schematized internal imagery that our minds use to "presort" and structure perception.⁷⁰

Gopnick takes this one step further, however, in discussing why caricatures, while they may represent our conceived ideals and pre-existing conceptions based on contextual influences, do not in fact belong in the same category as accurate portraits. He describes that:

What that seems to imply is that the mind has knowledge about its own perceptual functionings. Our conceptual system *knows* that it uses exaggerations, simplifications, and generalizations to encode our knowledge of appearances and can recognize these deviations when confronted with a cartoon or caricature.⁷¹

As this reasoning follows then, although caricature is viewed as inaccurate by the mind's ability to catch itself employing such elements of exaggeration and reduction, it still exists as a powerful tool of representing precisely those exaggerations and reductions of representations, or the pre-conceived ideals of one's character based upon what one lacks, or has in excess.

⁶⁹ Quotes are from Lavater, J.C., *Physiognomy: or the Corresponding Analogy Between the Conformation of the Features and the Ruling Passions of the Mind: being a Complete Epitome of the Original Work of J.C. Lavater*, London: William Tegg and Co., 1876, p.3.

⁷⁰ Gopnick, Adam. "High and Low: Caricature, Primitivism, and the Cubist Portrait", *Art Journal*, vol. 45/4 (Winter 1983), p.373.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

Since, more than anything else, Rosalynde Osborne's figures are *characters* who act/ behave, and not individuals per se, they require this very ambivalent ability to represent existing contextual stereotypes of character and behaviour. How Maggie Tosh *should* look and behave was *supposed* and pre-inscribed. A supposition is a contextually created ideal, even though one is aware that it is a supposition. The ideal and the real cross paths, while it is the desire to see the ideal that is fulfilled, while the mind is aware of its idealization.

Puppetry, as a medium of creative representation, includes a history of representing easily recognizable, "universal" characters. Proschan suggests "The portrayal in puppetry of foreigners is frequent".⁷² Proschan contributes these recurring tropes in the medium to puppetry's fugitive nature, as they occur generally at fairgrounds, carnivals or in different villages and towns. "Significant here", Proschan writes, "is that they also overwhelmingly are or were itinerant traditions performed by itinerant puppeteers, and often in areas of multilingualism."⁷³ In such contexts of multivocality, a neatly packaged, easily understood representation was necessary in order for the performance to achieve success among crowds that may or may not share similar points of reference.

To conclude, Gopnik first asks, "If caricatures reflect the mind's internal representations, then why don't we mistake a cartoon or a caricature for a realistic drawing or portrait?" He then responds to his own question when he suggests that "the mind has knowledge about its own perceptual functioning".⁷⁴ In this case, we are fully aware of the mind's ability to quickly process complex information into simplistic ideas, subjecting these ideas to any number of

⁷² Proschan, "Puppet Voices", p.545.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Both quotes are from Gopnick, Adam. "High and Low: Caricature, Primitivism, and the Cubist Portrait", p.373.

misinterpretations. We are given information, we process it, and even though we know that Maggie Tosh is a fictional being, we apply preconceived ideals into her image and read her according to these ideals.

Although physiognomy, the process of judging character based on appearance no longer maintains its post as a science, strains of its pervasive lineage is handed down to the future in caricature, cartoon, and through puppetry. Osborne Stearn's miniature bodies, like other methods of cultural representations, are relevant as visual objects, both in their constructions as kinetic sculptures, as well as characters that reveal a specific context, to be read now and in the future.

Chapter 2:
Scene 2: Entrances and Exits
Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Performer

This chapter will be devoted to Osborne Stearn's work on *The Clouds*, analyse her figures and discuss how *The Clouds* differed from her previous performances. This chapter will also look into the discrepancies between the available English text for the play and the performance in 1938 and attempt to contextualize the re-reading of the film in a later context. By so doing I hope to portray Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as having created a piece that is rich in layers of meaning and available for interpretation, time and again.

Professor Clement Hodgson Stearn from McMaster University in Hamilton, Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's husband and collaborator on the puppet film of Aristophanes' *The Clouds*, translated, interpreted and presented this puppet version in the mid-twentieth century.¹ The date of this particular statement and an entire English translation of Act I is speculative. Osborne Stearn and her King Cob Marionette company performed *The Clouds* in 1938 at McMaster University and also at the University of Toronto, and in the same year the colour film was originally made. However, there are references within this interpretative text that suggest a later date than 1938.²

The film *The Clouds*, now housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization within the Ontario Puppetry Association collection, has seen better days. The audio is unavailable for the duration of the film, so one cannot verify if the English text of Act I: Scene I is the language used

¹ It is probable that it was Professor Stearn who wrote this available script for *The Clouds*, as handwritten notes accompanying this text include the original Greek text in his handwriting.

² Language both within Professor Stearn's "Introduction" and "Act I: Scene I" both suggest a later date than 1938 and place the piece into the 1950s. I have dated these documents to 1955 since Professor Stearn hosted the second annual conference of an organization, CADESS (now CUACE) at the University of Toronto in 1955.

within the film. As such, it will be useful to turn to other English translations of the original Greek comedy, but not without a thorough investigation of the Osborne Stearn's figures and performance.

I cannot begin to explore *The Clouds* without first placing it into context. In terms of performance, *The Clouds* seemed an unusual choice of script for Osborne Stearn. Her previous works included *Punch and Judy of Long Ago* (1923) and variety acts. It seems like a large jump to have first performed for audiences of children and then for members of the Classics Clubs in two major Ontario universities, McMaster and the University of Toronto.

This jump also comes as a surprise when one looks at what Osborne Stearn's contemporaries were performing. Two other colleagues and Charter Members of Puppeteers of America—to which organization Osborne Stearn also belonged—David and Violet Keough, were performing oeuvres such as *Aladdin* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* in the 1930s, while other pieces in their repertoire included: Tchaikowsky's *The Nutcracker/Casse-Noisette* (1937-1940s); Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, a series of pieces including: *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Pagoda Princess*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Hop 'O My Thumb* (music by Ravel, 1937-1940s); Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* (1936-37); and Cydalise's *Entrance of the Little Fauns* (nd). Another Charter Member of Puppeteers of America and Osborne Stearn's former assistant, Muriel Heddle, was performing similar pieces with the Keough's, and included such performances as Paul White's *Mosquito Dance* (1938-1940s) and Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1940).³

³ Original document prepared by Lucy Garvin, CMC Contract Researcher, 22 January 1996, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection (OPA)*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

A repetitive element that comes up in most of these performances is the attachment to classical music. Garvin's research reveals that Heddle "specialized in ballet"⁴, and it is apparent from both Heddle's and the Keough's musical repertoire that these pieces were also performed to music by such composers as Saint-Saens, Mussorgsky, Debussy and the aforementioned composers, Ravel and Tchaikowsky. Some performances, such as Heddle's *The Christmas Box*, were performed at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Massey Hall, and the Keough's are listed as having performed at the Art Gallery of Ontario. While the subject matter of much of these performances appears to be childlike in nature, the very contexts and musical associations with these pieces suggest that there were not only children in the audience.

However, the difference between puppet ballets and a puppet performance accompanied by a Greek chorus is relatively large. Although both performance "types" are considered classical, the audience appeal is altered considerably by what sounds accompanied the pieces. It would be, one would assume, easier for children to sit through Tchaikowsky's *Nutcracker Suite* than it would for them to thoroughly enjoy a murmuring Greek chorus and an argument entertaining philosophical schools of thought.

Canadian puppeteer Micheline Legendre, in *Marionnettes, Art et Tradition*, suggests that Osborne Stearn is an "eclectic" performer, and ranked her as a pioneer in puppetry in Canada due to her extensive training with Lillian Owen. Legendre further adds:

Cette filiation explique sans doute en partie la qualité du travail de Rosalynde Osborne, le choix éclectique de ses pièces, ses recherches et ses activités multiples. Il faut rappeler ici sa production *Les Nuées* d'Aristophane, montée avec ses marionnettes à fils et présentée aux Universités de Toronto et de McMaster, en 1938.⁵

⁴ Garvin, 22 January 1996, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁵ Legendre, "Les pionniers", *Marionnettes, Art et Tradition*, Ottawa, Éditions Leméac Inc., 1986, p.110.

Other writers agree with the notion that Osborne Stearn is seminal to puppetry in Canada, one in particular, former editor of the magazine *Drama*, J.J. Hayes, considered Osborne Stearn to be “the only Canadian puppet worker we know”.⁶ At one point Osborne Stearn reinforced her position as not only as a puppet historian and collector, but also as a performer in correspondence to McGill University librarian, Richard Pennington. She writes that “As a matter of fact I made puppets and gave shows sometime before I became interested in collecting”.⁷

Along with having performed at the then Toronto Art Gallery (now the AGO) in 1935, Osborne Stearn had been asked specifically by Arthur Lismer, former director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, to give a course on puppetry in 1942, only to have the project terminated due to “neglect, the war, and apathy”.⁸ She was also sought out to give lectures on the medium of puppetry and stage design, and throughout her career also considered herself to be a strong practitioner of the medium.⁹

The performance *The Clouds* was one to which Osborne Stearn gave a great deal of emphasis as having been a very successful endeavour (Fig. 5). Aristophanes’ comedy about old versus new, status quo versus avant-garde, was produced by the King Cob Marionettes in 1938 at a performance held for the Classics Club at McMaster University. “This was in all probability”, Professor Stearn writes as an introduction to viewing the film, “the first presentation of the puppet stage of this particular play, the ‘Clouds’”. This is not to suggest that other puppeteers were not

⁶ Hayes, J.J., *Drama*, March 1930, mentioned in correspondence from Osborne Stearn to Pennington, 5 January 1960, *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁷ Osborne Stearn, to Pennington, 24 January 1960, *OPA*, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁸ Lismer, Arthur, to Rosalynde Osborne (Stearn), 26 July 1942, *OPA*, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁹ “Gives Talk on Theatre Design”, *Hamilton Spectator*, 9 February 1939; “Famous Puppets in Local Studio”, 1 February 1936, p.4, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

also performing Aristophanes' pieces, as Stearn admits "at least one other of his comedies has been thus produced formerly".¹⁰

Puppetry as a medium did exist in ancient Greece as various puppet historians, including Legendre, concur. "L'histoire de la Grèce antique a conservé le nom de plus célèbre 'névropaste' ou 'montreur de marionnettes' Pothin. Contemporain et rival en popularité d'Euripide et d'Aristophane, Pothin, tout comme eux" writes Legendre, "donne des spectacles au Théâtre de Dyonisos à Athenes."¹¹ She continues:

Ces marionnettes sont petites, ordinairement de terre cuite, et la plupart représentent les personnages du sexe féminin. Quelques-unes sont rudimentaires, n'ayant que des articulations aux épaules, et sont munies d'un anneau sur la tête pour y passer un fil de soutien, ou plutôt une tringle. D'autres, par contre, ont un système d'articulation fort remarquable: tête sur pivot et fils passant à l'intérieur des membres de la marionnette.¹²

It is interesting that Legendre shows admiration for such inventiveness as a pivoting head in a puppet. This is a method of motion that Osborne Stearn applies in all of the characters she created for the 1938 production of *The Clouds*, as she placed wires inside the figures' heads and attached a ball in the centre, which allowed for a puppet's head to easily rotate.

¹⁰ Both quotes are from Stearn, C. H., "Introduction to film excerpts from Aristophanes' *The Clouds*", produced by the King Cob Puppeteers, 1938", c. 1955, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 121. This is relevant as it shows that Professor Stearn is speaking in the past. One other discrepancy that is instantly recognizable in this document is in Stearn's statement that "the King Cob Puppeteers (were)...under the direction of Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, assisted by her husband, Professor C.H. Stearn of McMaster University". Osborne Stearn and Professor Stearn were married in 1947, nine years after the film had been produced.

¹¹ Legendre, *Marionnettes, Art et Tradition*, p.16. Also see Von Boehn, Max, "The Origin of the Puppet Show" *Puppets and Automata*, New York: Dover, 1972, pp.15-16.

¹² Legendre, *Marionnettes*, p.18. It is also interesting is that most of the surviving pieces from this era have been read as representing female figures and not male figures, suggesting a kind of feminine representation of ancient Greek theatre. However, considering that throughout *The Clouds*, Strepsiades' wife is mentioned within the play at the beginning and the end, but she does not appear in Osborne Stearn's cast, nor in Arrowsmith's translated script, it is a wonder that the puppet figures are female. However, as relevant in *The Clouds*, there is a great deal of trans-gender references.

When Osborne Stearn donated her collection of puppets to McGill University, Richard Pennington was thrilled at the arrival of her *The Clouds* cast. "I have been down to see them," he writes, "and am delighted. In fact these are some of the best puppets I have seen; and not only amusing but perfectly in character. Aristophanes would have been amused, I'm sure."¹³ It is worthwhile to look at this cast of characters and how Osborne Stearn represented them.

With only two exceptions, it is not noted as to Osborne Stearn's references for these characterizations, and as such, I will be using the text, *Life in Ancient Greece*, by T. G. Tucker, which was published in 1906, for costume in context. As it is a turn of the century text the ideas presented therein were possibly readily available to Osborne Stearn. I would also not rule out Professor Colin Stearn's input into these characters as these performances were a collaborative effort between Osborne Stearn's company and Professor Stearn. Be that as it may, however, there is no indication in Osborne Stearn's records if he in fact gave input into the characters.¹⁴

First and foremost, it is prudent to introduce the starring family of the play, Strepsiades and Pheidippides (Fig. 6). Strepsiades,¹⁵ who is described by Stearn as a "successful but illiterate farmer", is to the right.¹⁶ Strepsiades wears a white tunic and mantle lined with a red and gold fringe, he's balding on top of his head, revealing his age, and whatever hair he still retains is unkempt. This gold fringe is reflective of the geometric style of painting on pottery, common from 1000-700 BCE in Greece.¹⁷ Historian T. G. Tucker also notes that it was not uncommon to

¹³ Pennington, Richard, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 21 September 1956, OPA, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹⁴ This list of characters is incomplete, as the only available Stearn text ends before Pheidippides enrolls in the Thinkery, rendering several of the characters inconsequential to the discussion. However, wherever there is reference to a character by either Osborne Stearn or her husband, I have included the description.

¹⁵ Arrowsmith notes that "Strepsiades", roughly translated from ancient Greek, means "turning, twisting, wriggling", or perhaps a "Debtodger". Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by Arrowsmith), New York: Mentor, 1962, p.135.

¹⁶ Stearn, C. H. "Introduction", c.1955, OPA, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 121.

¹⁷ This border reflects the geometric style of pottery painting common from 1000-700 BCE. Speltz, Alexander, *The Styles of Ornament*, New York: Dover Publishers Inc., 1959, pp.43-66.

see men's tunics and mantles "adorned with coloured borders, embroidery or striped, either worked in or sewn on, and not seldom fringes or tassels were added".¹⁸

The colour of these pieces of clothing was often dependent upon age, as Tucker notes that white was most commonly used for older men. Here Osborne Stearn is faithful to this custom, clothing Strepsiades in white. Added to this, Aristophanes' characterisation of Strepsiades is that Strepsiades, although a farmer, was attempting to better his stead in society through marriage. We see this duality represented by Osborne Stearn through her use of the gold and red fringe. Strepsiades, although rough and coarse in action and language, is presented as embellishing his costume and possibly his social status with the elaborate fringe of his tunic and mantle.

Pheidippides, on the other hand, is looking his playboy best with groomed blond hair framing his face, thin, raised eyebrows, and what could be described as blue "eyeshadow" above his wide eyes. His cheeks are a pale red, but his lips are a bright crimson. His cloak is brown and fringed in yellow and black. According to Stearn, Pheidippides "has inherited love of horses" from his father, but his "extravagant socialite mother" is the influence for the son's "spendthrift habits".¹⁹ Tucker notes that in terms of costume for "fashionable young men" in ancient Athens, "purple, red, frog-green, and black were to be met with, but yellow was a colour for women only".²⁰ Osborne Stearn's presentation of Pheidippides clues into these customs of adornment and costume, as the yellow and black border on his costume signify a sense of femininity, recalling his mother's influence. An element that is also telling of Pheidippides' character is the length of his tunic. Pheidippides' tunic is a little north of the knee in comparison to that of Strepsiades' dress. Tucker notes that if one was simply wearing a tunic in ancient Athens, it was

¹⁸ Tucker, T. G., *Life in Ancient Athens*, London: MacMillan and Company, 1906, p. 67.

¹⁹ Stearn, C.H., "Introduction", c.1955, OPA, CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 121.

²⁰ Tucker, T.G., *Life in Ancient Athens*, pp.73-4.

often considered to be in a state of undress. The two pieces of dress together were intended to hang just below the shins, as Strepsiades models for us, unlike his relatively flamboyant son.²¹

Strepsiades' Slave is next on the cast of characters, and although he is not in costume, Stearn notes that the figure doubles for other performances and was needed for that purpose prior to sending *The Clouds* collection to McGill University (Fig. 7).²² "I felt", writes Osborne Stearn, "that Strepsiades could not afford a good slave and would have to settle for a strong one, but ugly!"²³ The Slave's mouth is crooked and gaping wide, his nose is large and bulbous, his eyebrows thick and black, and his eyes are crossed toward the nose. This character, unfortunately, receives no spoken lines in both Stearn's short script nor in Arrowsmith's translation, perhaps suggesting that the Slave's ugliness is related to class status, or perhaps even a level of intelligence.²⁴

Two other of Osborne Stearn's figures from *The Clouds* are Unjust Argument or Sophistry on the right, and Just Argument or Philosophy on the left shown in Fig. 8. These characters are described in the Arrowsmith translation by Philosophy, who sees himself as:

BUILD, Stupendous.
 COMPLEXION, Splendid.
 SHOULDERS, Gigantic.
 TONGUE, Petite.
 BUTTOCKS, Brawny.
 PECKER, Discreet.²⁵

²¹ Tucker, *Life in Ancient Athens*, p.73.

²² Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, dated 27 November 1956, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Physiognomy will not be discussed at length here as it was referred to in chapter one. However, please refer to Lavater, *Physiognomy*, London: William Tegg and Co., 1876, pp.46-80, for a list of conceptions of facial features and their "meaning". In several instances of Osborne Stearn's play, the Slave is shown to be dimwitted, and Strepsiades' violent temper is further evidence. Tucker writes, "the incorrigible idler, the thief, or the runaway, was treated with rigorous measurements". Tucker, T.G., *Life in Ancient Athens*, pp.45-6.

²⁵ Aristophanes, *The Clouds* (transl. by Arrowsmith), p.90.

Sophistry, on the other hand, is described by Philosophy as the following:

BUILD, Effeminate.
 COMPLEXION, Ghastly.
 SHOULDERS, Hunched.
 TONGUE, Enormous.
 BUTTOCKS, Flabby.
 PECKER, Preposterous.²⁶

These two descriptions lend to the suggestion that Sophistry, or Unjust Argument is feminine, while the more conventional wisdom, the older generation, is considered masculine. Colin Stearn suggests as much when he describes the scene in the film:

We see two persons engaged in a hot argument, one tall and dressed in a gown of archaic style, the other quite naked in the manner of the prevailing modern styles affected by young men-about-town. (Today the two sexes play an opposite role in this regard!)²⁷

This description also plays further on the alterations in dress code, since, as Stearn suggests, a gown would be effeminate in costume, while lack of elaborate clothing (or any clothing at all, for that matter) is masculine. It is also worthy to note here that Stearn considers these two characters to represent “two sexes”, even though Unjust Argument is a male character with a phallus.²⁸

Osborne Stearn has represented these figures using two specific references to Greek pottery, both ancient and contemporary. Colin Stearn writes “The older man is represented after the stile (sic) of black-figure sixth century pottery (BCE); the young man after the red-figure vase-style of contemporary Greece.”²⁹ The long, black figure, with its elegant linear quality and geometric decorations are reminiscent of the sixth century Attic pottery, where black figures were

²⁶ *ibid.* As well, representations of the phallus in Greek ceramics from the sixth century onward changed in that it became smaller.

²⁷ Stearn, “Introduction”, *The Clouds*, c.1955.

²⁸ Representation of the phallus in Greek pottery painting became less and less extravagant in red-clay figures than prior representations. Please see Boardman, John, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

²⁹ *ibid.*

visible on a terra cotta background.³⁰ “Contemporary” in this sense would refer to Aristophanes’ time period, the fifth century BCE, when many of the human forms visible on vases and other pottery were opposite of those in the previous style in that red figures appeared on a black background.³¹ The fact that Osborne Stearn would copy styles indicative of two separate time periods in Greece is telling of her commitment to produce characters in their appropriate historical context.

Next up in the cast of characters are Sokrates’ Students at his Thinkery (school).³² These are portrayed in Fig. 9 and Fig. 10. In Fig 9, the students are in the centre and off to the left. The students within Sokrates’ Thinkery are typed as being emaciated, starving, dedicated to their profession almost to the cost of their health. Take this example from Stearn’s translated script:

Student: ...our researches are solemn mysteries. Listen, Sokrates has just discovered, through his great striving after knowledge, hot to solve the greatest problem of the age—an empty cupboard. You see, last night, we discovered we had nothing in school to eat.

Strepsiades: Goodness, how did you ever manage supper?

Student: A combination of science and legerdemain. He quickly sprinkled the table with a fine layer of ashes. Then he deftly bent a skewer into the shape of a compass and drew a vast arc whose perimeter the hook of his compass encountered somebody’s cloak. Quickly flicking his hand, he pulled back the compass and catch. He pawned the cloak; we ate the proceeds.³³

The Stearn scene is significantly shorter than Arrowsmith’s translated text, as the Student in the latter version tells Strepsiades of several Thinkery “discoveries”, involving: a flea’s jumping distance, a gnat’s intestinal tracts and flatulence, as well as a lizard’s ability to interrupt

³⁰ Morris, Sarah P., *The Black and White Style: Athens and Aigina in the Orientalizing Period*, New York, Yale University Press, 1984, pp.83-92.

³¹ Also on this point, portrayals of the mythic Ganymede, Zeus’ cupbearer, are frequent in this style. He is represented as a nude male youth, often seen with Zeus in hot pursuit and/or gatherings of clothed men. Ganymede is often viewed as a sign of pederasty in ancient Greece. Pederasty was known to have been practiced by Sokrates, on which Aristophanes comments in *The Clouds*. Please see Boardman, John, “The Gods”, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1987, p.224, plates 77, 82.

³² Sokrates has been misassociated with the Sophists in this play. See Arrowsmith’s “Introduction” and “Aristophanes and Sokrates”, pp.7-13.

³³ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. By C. H. Stearn), c.1955.

Sokrates' study of the moon's orbit through defecation. These stories all lend credibility to Aristophanes' characterisations of the Sophists presented in this play. Osborne Stearn's characters are portrayed as starving students: they have sunken cheeks, their mouths are gaping, their hair is unkempt, and their cloaks have been patched up. These students are also barefoot, a condition that Tucker considers endemic among "ostentatious philosophers", who, according to Tucker wore "short mantles, (and) also showed their artificial hardihood by refusing shoes".³⁴

Lastly, but certainly not least of all, is the character Sokrates, recognizable as the philosopher Socrates, who was tried and executed in 399 BCE (Fig. 11). In the introduction to Plato's translated text *Five Dialogues*, Grube writes:

Socrates was often confused with...Sophists in the public mind, for both of them were apt to question established and inherited values. But their differences were vital: the Sophists professed to put men on the road to success, whereas Socrates disclaimed that he taught anything....³⁵

Arrowsmith also spills ink in his introductory remarks on Aristophanes' *The Clouds*, claiming that "Aristophanes is deliberately exploiting Sokrates here as a convenient comic representative of the sophist corruption which is the play's real subject".³⁶

Here we see Osborne Stearn's representation of the character as a white-haired and bearded man, clothed in white. His eyebrows are furrowed, creating wrinkles in the centre of his forehead. He, like Strepsiades, is balding. His feet are bare, just as his students were, a detail, according to Tucker, in Socrates' case that signified the philosopher's choice to place himself on equal 'footing' with fellow Athenians who were unable to afford footwear.³⁷ He wears a white

³⁴ Tucker, T. G., "The Social Day of a Typical Citizen (Till Dinner)", *Life in Ancient Athens*, p.75.

³⁵ Plato, *Five Dialogues*, (transl. By G.M.A. Grube), Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981, p.3.

³⁶ Aristophanes, "Introduction", *The Clouds*, (transl. by W. Arrowsmith), p.9.

³⁷ Tucker, *Life in Ancient Athens*, p.75.

mantle that is full-length, a style that was “loud and pretentious”.³⁸ These two elements of costume do much to support Aristophanes’ personification of Socrates becoming the farcical emblem of the Sophists, in that he is pretentious to a fault. On one hand, the character’s feet reflect poverty, while on the other hand, his long cloak serves to reinforce his arrogance. “I walk upon the air and look down upon the sun from a superior standpoint”, is Sokrates’ first line in *The Clouds*, bearing witness to an overly confident intellectual.³⁹

Unlike all of the other characters in this play, however, Sokrates does not have a gaping mouth. In fact, Sokrates’ facial features stem from a long line of historical representations of a white-haired and bearded man who is balding. One example in particular of Socrates as an ageing man, with white hair and beard, is Jacques-Louis David’s *Death of Socrates*. Numerous busts of the philosopher also appeared after his execution in 399 BCE, revealing these attributes.

The comedy of the play lies within its hopeless absurdity. Harmony is achieved only after there has been tremendous destruction. The play’s author, Aristophanes, was considered a conservative in his day, and was also extremely critical of the Athenian government of his time.⁴⁰ As translator William Arrowsmith comments in his 1962 edition of the play’s English translation remarked:

To the *agon* was added the famous, passionate defense of the Old Education, a speech clearly designed, through in the power of conviction and moral seriousness, to show Aristophanes’ critics that what was at stake in this play was nothing less than the fate and future of civilized Athens.⁴¹

Within *The Clouds*, controversial elements include the satirization of the character, Sokrates; a major debate between “old school” and “new school” ideologies; and burning Sokrates’ Thinkery

³⁸ Tucker, *Life in Ancient Athens*, p.73.

³⁹ Aristophanes, *The Clouds* (transl. by C. H. Stearn), p.4.

⁴⁰ Aristophanes. *The Clouds* “Introduction”, (transl. By William Arrowsmith), pp.1-13.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.8.

by Strepsiades. The play begins with disrupted slumber and ends with chaos, resulting in a warning of the tenuous hold that a civilized social structure has upon its citizens.

In Professor Stearn's 1950s version of *The Clouds*, there is emphasis placed on contemporary events, as opposed to strictly permitting the play to remain in ancient history. This performance does not deny the passage of time in between *The Clouds* first performance, "presented in Athens in 422 BC but staged in 1938 AD by the King Cob puppeteers of Hamilton, Ontario".⁴² Consistent references to political and social events surrounding political upheaval in the 1950s make the play seem fresh and amusing to his contemporary audience, with intersecting histories and echoed personalities spliced from their original context and juxtaposed with each other.⁴³ For example, on one of Strepsiades' early tirades, Stearn's translation reads:

Strep.: Things weren't like this in the old days before the war. Why, you can't whip your slaves here anymore, or they'll run away to the desert to the Spartans, or become Reds and try to start a union, or something. Bah.⁴⁴

However humorous these mirrored personalities and mixed geographies may be, there is an overwhelming sense of misery that accompanies this play, both in Stearn's dialogue and in the original text. For example, Strepsiades' opening remark refers to "Reds". Although a colourful reference, it is not intended to be visual, it is a contemporary socio-political movement.

The following synopsis of *The Clouds* is based upon the only available Stearn text, and encompasses a portion of the entire play. Osborne Stearn's *The Clouds* begins with the Slave heaving a bed onstage with his back, as he pushes from the floor with his feet. In the bed, the farmer, Strepsiades, wakes up for reasons of pecuniary stress and curses his son for being a

⁴² Stearn, "Introduction", c. 1955, *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 121.

⁴³ Such emphasis on contemporizing the play for the audience is in keeping with Professor C.H. Stearn's sensibilities of bringing the public closer to academia in Hamilton.

playboy and spending his money (Fig. 12). Strepsiades' ill temper quickly rears its ugly head as he kicks his slave off-stage for the rest of the action, an argument that takes place between himself and his son, Pheidippides.

Apparently, this is not the first incident of loose spending in the family, as the audience finds out, this is largely due to Strepsiades' wife's habits and noble rank. Strepsiades the farmer is a rather squat, older man, prone to bouts of sheer rage and vulgar language, while his son is more intent on racing horses and enjoying the company of other young attractive men. Already in the first few lines, Strepsiades is presented as a hard-working buffoon, ruminating on clearing his debts that an ungrateful son has bestowed upon him. Strepsiades' wife is referred to as a spoiled heiress with little regard for a man's earning power and effort, while it is *her* son is ungrateful and unwilling to give up his habits.⁴⁵ This is plainly evident when Strepsiades' mutters to himself:

Strep: But I'll say this for your mother: she was a worker....All day long she'd sit at her loom, shoving in the wool, and then in bed at night, she'd work on me for more. Expense meant nothing to her. CLIPPED? I was shorn. And I'm still being clipped, by her beloved son.⁴⁶

It is interesting that not only the family dynamic is presented to the audience in the first few moments of the play, but also that the social dynamic is presented. A farmer is seen to be a foolish man with no concept of the more refined social graces, while a woman of noble birth is only alluded to as being untouched by reality. In the play, she is protected and does not appear on stage to admonish either her son or her husband. The son, a conflation of the two characters, and a symbol of "the next generation", lacks a concept of what is to befall him and would rather enjoy

⁴⁴ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, Act I: Scene I, (transl. by C. H. Stearn) c. 1955, p.1.

⁴⁵ It is relevant that Strepsiades' wife is not once portrayed with *The Clouds*. Although referred to in text, she is never present to defend against Strepsiades' onslaught of insults. When Aristophanes wrote this play, he was directly referencing Perikles' family blood line, the Alkmainods, "one of Athen's most aristocratic families". Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by William Arrowsmith), pp.135, 155.

a Hedonistic upbringing free from pain and responsibility. Aristophanes intended to criticize his context on various levels, and in this first scene he had begun to set the stage for impending doom in the sheer futility of his characters to succeed in their ascribed roles—this is a failing family.

What is also important to note is the underwritten moralistic tone of this first scene: a failing family is often a trope for a failing society.⁴⁷ Very strict and conservative evangelical interventions warn heavily against family breakdowns, the family having had frequent use in religion as an allegory for social past, present and future. Christianity has ‘the Holy Family’, a succinct unit untainted by sexual intercourse and matrilineal extensions, a model used for its holiness, wholeness and wholesomeness. Unlike the slightly effeminate, ungracious son, and brutish, ambitious father, the Christian model is one of humility, compassion and obedience.⁴⁸

Humility and obedience are clearly lacking in this family, however, since Pheidippides, although confessing that he dearly loves his father, hesitates when his father requests a favour of him. Stearn writes:

Strep: ...But if you really love me, my boy, I beg you, implore you, beseech you, do what I ask. PLEASE.
Pheid: That depends. What are you asking?⁴⁹

Strepsiades does not immediately answer, ensuring a promise, a verbal agreement from his son prior to making the formal request.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* According to Arrowsmith, this marriage between an ambitious farmer and noble lady was not uncommon in Aristophanes’ context. It was one of the social elements that Aristophanes was criticizing when he wrote *The Clouds*.

⁴⁷ I here say “often” because the family, as a unit, is not solely used to represent the apparatus of the State, and vice versa. There are similarities, but as Michel Foucault stated: “The family, even now, is not a simple reflection or extension of the power of the State”, in “The History of Sexuality”, *Power/Knowledge*, p.188.

⁴⁸ Evangelical references are also inherent in Stearn’s Introduction to *The Clouds*, since Stearn describes the debate between Just Argument and Unjust Argument as “Those two are trying in vain to agree on moral values—again, very twentieth century! ‘Zeus does not exist’ some said; ‘God is dead’ say some....So the play ends, the poet coldly pronouncing this a condign punishment for those who insult the gods.” CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 121.

Pheid: I promise. So help me—Dionysos.

Strep: Good. Now look over there. Do you see that old shack with the dinky door?

Pheid: Yes, but what are you driving at, Dad?

Strep: My boy, that little hovel is the THINKERY. Intellectuals live there, professors who will teach you—and what's more, prove it—that the whole atmosphere is a Cosmical Oven and we're not really people but little bits of charcoal blazing away. What's more, for a fee, of course, they offer a course called the Technique of Winning Lawsuits. Honest or dishonest, it's all one.⁵⁰

Pheidippides is not immediately convinced of Strepsiades' request and when the realization hits Pheidippides that the Thinkery is actually operated by "that fraud, that barefoot pedant with the look of death, that humbug Sokrates", the contract is null and void. Even though Strepsiades insists that he will starve if his son does not go, Pheidippides replies, "By...Dionysos, I won't. Not on your life. I wouldn't go there if you bribed me with every racehorse in E.P. Taylor's stable!"⁵¹ At this declaration, Strepsiades, enraged, kicks his son off-stage and is faced with the daunting task of having to enroll in the Thinkery himself. With this, Strepsiades exits the stage, and his slave returns to wheel the bed off-stage in order to prepare the stage for the Thinkery, but falls when the bed begins to move of its own accord.

Students at the Thinkery enter the stage on the left and move to either side of the stage, as well as in the centre. They immediately look to the ground, bent over at their hips. Strepsiades enters from the right and has a brief introduction to important matters at the Thinkery. Aristophanes' characterization of Strepsiades is telling in the scene of his enrollment at the Thinkery. Strepsiades is all too willing to show the crudities of his class and status as Stearn illustrates in this exchange:

Strep: ...Hey porter!

Voice: Go bang on your own door. Who are you?

Strep.: Strepsiades, son of Pheidon.

⁴⁹ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. By C. H. Stearn), c.1955, p.2.

⁵⁰ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C.H. Stearn), c. 1955, p.2.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, both quotes are from Stearn's translation. E. P. Taylor was an Ontario horse-breeder, made famous by having bred two horses that won the Kentucky Derby in the 1960s.

Student: By golly, the way you come here and kick in our door I think your name should be Stupidities. Do you realize that you've just caused the miscarriage of a great scientific discovery?

Strep.: Oh, please excuse me. I didn't realize. You see, I just came from the country.⁵²

The Student is at first reticent toward Strepsiades, but when Strepsiades divulges his intention of enrollment, the Student quickly tells Strepsiades of the wonderful studies available to Students of the Thinkery. Strepsiades sees the Students hunched over, surveying the ground, is visibly perturbed and asks the question:

Strep: ...Great Herakles, what zoo is this?

Student: What's so strange about it? What's wrong?

Strep: That student. What's he doing, bending over like that?

Student: He's engaged in geological research, a survey of the earth's strata.

Strep: Of course, looking for worms.

Student: No, that one is a graduate student doing research on Hades.

Strep: Oh, Hell. But why is his rear end scanning the skies?

Student: He's taking a minor in Astronomy.⁵³

Strepsiades further inquires as to certain instruments available to Students, and is told that they are used for surveying land. "What a clever gadget!" Strepsiades exclaims, "Some parts of it (the whole world) could do with surveying—or at least, non-partisan inspection by neutral observers."⁵⁴

At this point, Strepsiades notices a basket in the air and queries on whom is inside. The Student replies that it is Sokrates, and hastily retreats, as do all the other Students, when Sokrates enters centre stage from above, slowly lowered in his basket. "Ah sir," Sokrates greets Strepsiades, "I walk upon the air and look down upon the sun from a superior standpoint", a comment that brings Strepsiades to his knees.⁵⁵

⁵² Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. By C. H. Stearn), c.1955, p.3.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.* One can also glean from this statement a reference to the United Nations.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

After a brief discussion with Sokrates about, among other things, that “the gods...are a mere expression coined by vulgar superstition”, Strepsiades insists that he is ready to commit to an education. Sokrates calls to *The Clouds*, whether they “hover on Mount Mimas’ snows or over Lake Maiotis”, who slowly descend into sight. Strepsiades can’t immediately see them and asks Sokrates for a little help. “Look:”, replies Sokrates, “just offstage”.⁵⁶ *The Clouds* enter, from above, kicking violently as they are lowered onto the stage from the left (Fig. 13). The six Clouds wear large, pointy hats, have large, hooked noses with bright red rouge on their cheeks. They dance awkwardly with their veils in front of Strepsiades and Sokrates, who are in conversation:

Strep: Oh, now I see them. Say, they look like ladies.

Sok: Well, what did you expect, idiot?

Strep: Well, I always have thought Clouds were just fog, and drizzle and mist.

Sok: Clearly then, you must also be ignorant of the fact that they are also patrons of a varied group of Gentlemen, comprising: chiropractors, prophets, longhairs, quacks, fops, charlatans, fairies, existentialist poets, scientists, dandies, astrologers, university professors, and other men of leisure. And because all alike, without exception, walk with their heads among *The Clouds* and base their inspiration on the murky Muse, *The Clouds* support them and feed them. Heaven knows, nobody else does!⁵⁷

The Clouds, in the meantime, are dancing with each other, and as Osborne Stearn portrays them they are somewhat awkward in their motion. They bump one another over simultaneously attempting to move toward each other from across the stage and have to try it again before their coordination onstage is acceptable. *The Clouds* eventually leave the stage, allowing Sokrates to prepare Strepsiades for the long journey of discovery on which he is going to embark. Strepsiades believes his only choice is to undergo this training, as he states “Ladies, you’ve convinced me completely. Anyway, thanks to my thoroughbreds, my son and my wife, I have no choice”.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Both quotes are from Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C.H. Stearn), c. 1955, pp.3-4.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.4.

⁵⁸ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C. H. Stearn), p.6.

Aristophanes' challenges marriages between classes in this context.⁵⁹ "Strepsiades' marriage to an Alkmaionid wife is, of course, a *mésalliance* between a prosperous farmer and a daughter of the dissolute and luxurious city nobility", Arrowsmith writes.⁶⁰ Additionally, whatever wealth Strepsiades, the farmer, had attained is treated with some disdain. His money has not been gotten by means of innovation, but through marriage. His debts are to be "wiped clean" through deception—a deception that Strepsiades hopes he will be able to perform once his knowledge of "the new thought" is complete. In other words, the ignorant farmer tries to wipe out his debts with a quick fix of attained knowledge. At the conclusion of *The Clouds*, however, he is unable to fully grasp the extent of this knowledge with disastrous results.

The continuation and conclusion of *The Clouds* at this point is derived from the Arrowsmith translation. After a brief session of tutelage with Strepsiades, Sokrates threatens to resign, as the mentor finds his pupil to be crass, difficult, and utterly hopeless in attaining the lessons that he extols to him. "Palpable rubbish. As your tutor, I hereby resign", Sokrates resolutely states after Strepsiades suggests suicide as a means out of a lawsuit.⁶¹

Strepsiades, still intent on learning the "the Immoral Kind of argument", decides that he will learn it second hand, through Pheidippides. At first, both Sokrates and Pheidippides are hesitant, Sokrates referring to the young man as a "fumbling foetus" with "great sulking lower lips", and Pheidippides telling Sokrates to hang himself.⁶² At Strepsiades' urging, however, Pheidippides is enrolled and his first lesson is an argument between "Philosophy" and

⁵⁹ Arrowsmith, Notes on *The Clouds*, p.135.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* Arrowsmith continues: "Presumably, such alliances were not uncommon in the late fifth century, and Aristophanes clearly intends to show the progress of corruption in Strepsiades, ruined by his playboy son and luxurious wife."

⁶¹ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by W. Arrowsmith), p.79.

⁶² Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, p.79.

“Sophistry”. As they are introduced to the audience, the two schools are relegated to time and gender. “Philosophy” is the old school and “Sophistry” the new. After a short debate, “Sophistry” defies “Philosophy’s” perspectives, turning the old school off the floor. The “new school” has won the debate, and, despite being warned against insisting on Pheidippides’ education, Strepsiades feels that he will soon be able to avoid his debts.

Upon his son’s return from the Thinkery, and after Strepsiades has arrogantly driven his creditors from his property, Strepsiades feels his investment was worthwhile. However, Pheidippides soon turns on his father and physically attacks him after a quarrel over music. The “new school” has turned on the “old school” and the future is violent. Despite Strepsiades’ suggestion that Pheidippides turn his anger to a future generation, Pheidippides responds with the possibility that he may not have a child to discipline, therefore he must flog his father. In this, the possibility of no new generation looms. There may not be a future of which to speak.

Finally, in complete frustration, Strepsiades decides to burn down the Thinkery and destroy Sokrates. As Sokrates and his student exit the building, wheezing and sputtering, Strepsiades states the initial greeting given to him by Sokrates: “I walk upon the air and look down upon the sun from a superior standpoint”.⁶³ The play concludes with Strepsiades and his followers chasing and violently attacking Sokrates and his followers. During the routed exit, two of Strepsiades’ creditors are trampled, and Strepsiades is cleared of his debts. However, the ending is tragic. The Thinkery has been violently destroyed, burnt to cinders, characters have been whipped, abused, and there is no triumphant knowledge of which to speak. Both schools of thought are chased down and their homes incinerated. The curtain closes, and the future is hopeless. As Stearn notes in his introduction, “So the play ends, the poet coldly pronouncing this

a condign punishment for those who insult the gods”.⁶⁴ As such, this play presents a harsh lesson for “knowing one’s place” in the social and cosmic hierarchy.

The Clouds also suggests that the future, if given a great deal of freedom, will turn its back on the lessons of the previous generation, or, worse still, will abuse the past and thus commit the same crimes as have been done in history. Stearn begins his “Introduction” claiming that “Aristophanes wrote the “*Clouds*” at a time when teenagers were a problem, causing anxiety for distracted parents who tried in vain to check both their misconduct and their spending—a very modern condition!”⁶⁵

Intergeneration cyclical violence is also explored toward the end of *The Clouds*, as is shown in the latter scenes of the play whereby Pheidippides reverses violence shown towards him as a young boy. When Pheidippides whips Strepsiades, the father is shocked and questions his son as to the reasoning behind his actions. In a cruel twist, Pheidippides defends his actions with his father’s disciplinary measures:

Pheidippides: ...Now then, answer my question, did you lick (whip) me when I was a little boy?

Strepsiades: Of course I licked you. For your own damn good. Because I loved you!

Pheidippides: Then *ipso facto*, since you yourself admit that lovings and lickings are synonymous, it’s only fair that I—for your own damn good, you understand?—whip you in return.⁶⁶

It is this interest in the bridge between two generations that is useful to suggest that Osborne Stearn’s performance is melancholic. A past that has never really existed cannot be

⁶³ *ibid.*, pp.33, 131, and Stearn, *The Clouds*, c 1955. This is particularly cynical as Strepsiades had initially made excuses that he is a buffoon and felt he deserves such a greeting from the master. By turning it around in this last scene, Strepsiades attempts to reverse the roles of learned and ignorant.

⁶⁴ Stearn, “Introduction”, c 1955.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by William Arrowsmith), p123.

recalled without some forms of pretension and cohesion of fragments. Certainly classical Greece had left fragments of its existence worn down from ravages of wars and passing time. Few historical eras have been able to completely present themselves in a concise fashion for posterity, often because we may not see time leaving us as we age. Our space is occupied for a little time before a new space is entered.

When Strepsiades is presented a map of Athens, he exclaims “That, Athens? Don’t be ridiculous. Why, I can’t see a single ruin”.⁶⁷ Stearn’s use of the word “ruin” is telling of a particular context. Arrowsmith’s translation has Strepsiades declaring, “Why, I can’t see a single lawcourt in session”, and asking, “Where are my neighbours of Kikynna?”⁶⁸. Furthermore, one must imagine that a ruin would be well understood in a 20th century context. The Acropolis of Athens, as it stands in the 20th century teems with an abundance of crumbling white marble and tourists. It would seem that Strepsiades reference is geared toward a 20th century audience, who would understand that the visual representation of Athens was not akin to that on a map.

This statement is more complex than this. True, Stearn wrote this reference in the middle of the twentieth century for an audience who had, presumably, similar visual references at their disposal in their memories; and yes, it would appear that Strepsiades is catering to the audience before him. However, it is in this declaration of “ruin” that suggests an allegory of a melancholy concept of time in which the past and present are spliced and restructured.

Allegory is a very alluring means of re-presenting history. Craig Owens, in his article *The Structure of Allegorical Desire*, suggests that allegory is powerful because it does not deny the fragmentary nature of historical events. An interpretation is allowable, thus permitting for a

⁶⁷ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C. H. Stearn), c.1955, p.3.

⁶⁸ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by W. Arrowsmith), p.31.

contemporary artist, performer, scholar, to alter its meaning to successfully coincide with their own. Owens writes that allegory is “a conviction of the remoteness of the past, and a desire to redeem it for the present—these are its two most fundamental impulses”.⁶⁹ When Strepsiades fails to see ruins, the character admits to obtaining prior knowledge that as a 20th century North American audience, we would be able to see them, even though technically Strepsiades should not be aware of the ruin that is to befall Athens.

Celeste Olalquiaga, in her text *The Artificial Kingdom*, suggests that “allegories and ruins contextualize their corresponding foundational texts by placing them within the cycle of life and death, that is, within the materiality of history.”⁷⁰ When Strepsiades bemoans the ruinous state of Athens, he essentially inserts himself into the mid-twentieth century, rendering his own context, that of fifth century BCE Athens, as no longer existing in its entirety. In that one statement, Strepsiades has tolled the death knell for Athens and defied the prospect of a “Golden Age”. Olalquiaga also stresses that “allegory moves towards the constitution of a narrative based on a symbol’s disintegration, simultaneously erasing and anecdotally maintaining that symbol’s primary meaning”.⁷¹ In other words, the mode of allegory creates a history based upon ruin, which both eradicates and structures the crux of the “symbol’s” significance.

In this case, what would the symbol be? Would it consist of the actual Athenian acropolis? Would it be the Thinkery? Would it be Strepsiades’ house, or would it encompass all of these structures within its folds to symbolize the society in which it was formed, in the public sphere, in the schools and in the privacy of the domestic sphere? The suggestion here is that it is

⁶⁹ Owens, Craig, “The Structure of Allegorical Desire: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism”, *October*, vol. 12, 1980.

⁷⁰ Olalquiaga, Celeste, “Allegory and Loss”, *The Artificial Kingdom: A Treasury of the Kitsch Experience*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, p.128.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p.122.

in fact the social structure that is being symbolized, and as such is both being destroyed and constructed in its presentation.

When Aristophanes wrote *The Clouds*, it is relevant to remember that Athens was under the governance of Perikles.⁷² The democratic structure was at this time “the most radical”, and in Aristophanes’ eyes, “corrupt, effete, cruelly imperialistic, avaricious,” and “cursed with a system (e.g. the law courts) which practically guaranteed further excesses and injustices”.⁷³ Athens was in the thrust of the Peloponnesian Wars with Sparta and other city-states, had been hit by a massive plague and the city had been placed under siege. In this context, the city hardly lives up to the description of its “Golden Age”, usually synonymous with the statesman, Perikles. In fact, one imperialist policy to which Aristophanes was not particularly endeared to is contained in this exchange:

Student: ...And you see this island squeezed along the coast? That’s Euboia.

Strepsiades: I know that place well enough. Perikles squeezed it dry.⁷⁴

The island of Euboia had been colonized by Perikles in 457 BCE and he had exploited the land and its inhabitants to such an extent that the island revolted in 445 BCE. Arrowsmith writes, “This time, however, the treatment of the island was so severe that it was commonly said (at least by his enemies) that he had ‘stretched Euboia on the rack of torture’”.⁷⁵

By way of contrast, the Stearn interpretation of this second stage of geographic discovery is evidence of a historical re-telling of events:

Student: ...And you see this island? That’s Cuba.

Strep.: I know of it. Castro seems to have squeezed it a lot smaller than it used to be.⁷⁶

⁷² Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by Arrowsmith), “Notes”, p.155.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.32.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.140, 152.

⁷⁶ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C.H. Stearn), p.5.

The Cuban revolution took place between the years 1953-1958, rendering the Stearn script relevant to this time frame. In this case, it is Fidel Castro who is rendered synonymous with Perikles. Ironically, Perikles is associated with democratic thought and progression, while Castro is viewed as anti-democratic, yet they are placed in the same reference as dictatorial leaders. In this case, the meaning of political structure is analyzed, perhaps suggesting that although existing in different time periods and contexts, the two supposedly adversarial structures in fact have much more in common than is theorized.

Joel Fineman, in his article *The Structure of Allegorical Desire* notes that “allegory seems regularly to surface in critical or polemical atmospheres, when for political or metaphysical reasons there is something that cannot be said”.⁷⁷ In Aristophanes’ era, teeming with disease and war, drama appears to be the vehicle through which criticism can be meted out to politicians and academics alike. The playwright specifically took this event as a means to draw attention to political corruption, much in the same way that Stearn would specifically refer to Castro as emblematic of dictatorial power. By placing these two political systems on the same footing, in fact in the same reference, Stearn has created a sense of inevitability and hopelessness, in short, melancholy.

Melancholic memory, rather than nostalgia, is the memory brought on in this performance. The difference between the two is relevant. Nostalgia suggests completion, continuity, and a sense of hope, while melancholy is palimpsest, never completed and with a

⁷⁷ Fineman, Joel, “The Structure of Allegorical Desire”, *October*, vol.12, 1980, p.48. Olalquiaga suggests further that allegory runs rampant “during times of crisis, when social standards and conventions break down...because of its fragmentariness and mobility”. Olalquiaga, Celeste, “Allegory and Loss”, pp.123-5.

sense of impending doom. Ruins, fragmentary in essence, contain within themselves the ever-presence of their death or passing.

“The object that the event is inscribed in is itself prone to physical decay,” Olalquiaga notes, “a form of aging that is irrelevant to nostalgia (which replaces it with another intact version) but that reinforces the sense of loss that melancholia strives to attain.”⁷⁸ The past was not perfect, it was in ruins. Theorist Julia Kristeva points out that a melancholic sense of time is one which is “regressing to the paradise or inferno of an unsurpassable experience”, and further suggests that:

...melancholy persons manifest a strange memory: everything has gone by, they seem to say, but I am faithful to the bygone days, I am nailed down to them, no revolution is possible, there is no future.⁷⁹

It is almost the disparaging and saddened “I told you so” of jaded parents when a tragedy befalls a younger generation. We see this as Strepsiades mutters to Pheidippides in the first scene, “Ah, go on back to sleep, blast you. But I warn you, my lad, someday these debts are going to land on you”.⁸⁰

As this strange memory persists, it is interesting to note that this unsurpassable experience may be one that is not wholly representable, rather it is manufactured by the imagination in order to become a completed event. So in order to attain the unattainable, a melancholy event, since it “is already gone and lived intensity is by definition fleeting”, it must re-interpret available fragments, repeating its destruction to time, or, in other words, “attempt crystallizing transitoriness itself – that fugitive experience which it so desperately longs for”.⁸¹ If

⁷⁸ Olalquiaga, “Mythical Memory”, p.297.

⁷⁹ Both citations are from Kristeva, Julia, “Life and Death of Speech: A Past That Does Not Pass By”, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p.60.

⁸⁰ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. By C. H. Stearn), c.1955, p.1.

⁸¹ Both quotes are from Olalquiaga, “Mythical Memory”, p.296.

such a fugitive experience exists, it is best repeated in terms and language that is segregated from the immediate event. Kristeva suggests this when she writes:

It is a subjective construct, and as such it falls within the realm of a memory, elusive to be sure and renewed in each current verbalization, that nevertheless is from the start located not within a psychic space but within the imaginary and symbolic space of the psychic system.⁸²

In this case, a puppet show is the language employed to speak of contemporary angst and unrest within Canada and abroad. Complete hopelessness, despair and depression repackaged into tiny fictional bodies acting out a plot that is equally as hopeless and fixated on death and impending doom. In the final element of the *Strepsiades*' geographical lesson, Arrowsmith's translation is as follows:

Strepsiades:...But where's Sparta?

Student: Right over there.

Strepsiades: That's MUCH TOO CLOSE! You'd be well advised to move it further away.

Student: But that's impossible.

Strepsiades: You'll be sorry you didn't, by god.⁸³

Whereas the Stearn interpretation reads as follows:

Strep: But where's Washington?

Student: Right over here.

Strep.: But that's much too close to Canada. You'd be well advised to move it farther away.

Student: But that's utterly impossible.

Strep.: You'll be sorry you didn't, by golly.⁸⁴

⁸² Kristeva, "Life and Death of Speech", p.61.

⁸³ Aristophanes, *The Clouds* (transl. by W. Arrowsmith), p.32.

⁸⁴ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. by C.H. Stearn), p.3.

Considering that Sparta and Athens were at war at the time that this play was written, Strepsiades' suggestion seems logical, that an enemy should be relocated so that it can no longer lay siege to the city, thus securing the city-state of Athens. Stearn's re-reading, however, was not made at a time that Canada was in armed conflict with the United States, or is there more meaning in that reference than a direct war? This comment on Canada's proximity to its powerful southern neighbour, although appearing to be satirical, carries with it a pearl of angst and mistrust. In this statement, it is the future that looks bleak if things continue as they are.⁸⁵ Never far from conflict, this piece represents a struggle between past and present, traditional and unorthodox knowledge.

The Clouds despair and disillusionment comes through loud and clear in various moments, such as when Strepsiades accepts Sokrates' challenge to learn from him:

Strep.: ...if all you require is hard work, insomnia, worry, endurance, and a stomach that eats anything, why, have no fear. For I'm your man as hard as nails.

Soc.: And you promise faithfully in my path, acknowledging no other gods but mine, to wit, the Trinity—Great Chaos, *The Clouds* and Bamboozle?

Strep.: If I met another god walking down the street, I'd cut him dead.⁸⁶

Not only is the status quo here maintained but also a desire for the intangible is prevalent. This melancholic play, wanting the past that still somehow does not exist, was chosen well by Osborne Stearn. *The Clouds*, as one text, contains the double intention of criticizing social change, as well as longing for a time that is somewhat beyond language and description, and as such, imaginary and perfect. In this longing, the realization that this perfection is not recoverable—and thus dead—comes to life.

⁸⁵ There are any number of reasons for this reference: Canada's role in the Korean War with the United States, the McCarthy era, the Bay of Pigs crisis, and further in the future, conflicts in Vietnam and Iraq. Regardless, the prospect suggests a frightening future.

⁸⁶ Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, (transl. By C. H. Stearn), c.1955, p.4.

This despair is evident in Osborne Stearn's following poem *Sea of Troubles*, where futility is apparent in the most absurd claims, not unlike *The Clouds*. Osborne Stearn writes:

Said a cow to a fish,
 "I only wish
 I could I swim the way you do."
 Said the fish to the cow,
 "If you knew how I wish that I could moo!"

"Let us unionize now,"
 Cried bossy cow,
 Just one idea in her head;
 "For then we can strike and grab what we like;
 "Twill be best for us both," she said.

"Your beef", burped the fish,
 "Is not my dish.
 The idea is tasteless to me!
 My father was fried
 Soon after he died,
 The result of a strike at sea."

"I *will* have a row,"
 Bawled the bellicose cow,
 As she tossed herself into the ocean.
 But the fish heaved a sigh
 As he watched the cow die....
 What's the moral? I haven't a notion.⁸⁷

To summarize, in performing this play, Osborne Stearn and her husband reflect a discouraging view of a completed society. They show their existing society as one that is as transitory as others that have preceded it, ancient Athens, like contemporary Canada, is not a fixed, whole society. Generations upon generations will continue to clash violently, as the Stearns both saw in WWI, in WWII, in Cuba and Korea, and that future generations have come to see in the many years following.

⁸⁷ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, *Sea of Troubles* (nd), OPA, CMC, (Acc.R95-2), Box. 3 F.121.

Chapter 3:
Scene 3: Continuation
Rosalynde Osborne Stearn as Collector

This chapter is devoted to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's career as a puppet collector: how the collection was pieced together, its intention from the Osborne Stearn's perspective, and its relationship to other collections. Further to this, Osborne Stearn's collecting habits revealed much about her professional relationships to puppetry associations and individual colleagues. Osborne Stearn would quite regularly suggest that McGill University collect works by contemporary puppeteers to continue the life of a historic collection and to support puppetry in North America. She once explained her devotion to building a collection of puppets to Richard Pennington:

For instance, the germ of collecting may have planted in my mind at the age of seven when I was given a doll by the then Commandant of the Royal Military College Colonel Lee, afterwards Lord Lee of Ensfield, whose great collection of silver is now in the Hart House, Toronto University. Unfortunately, although I was told to keep this doll it has disappeared.¹

A "germ" is an interesting term through which to suggest beginning to collect things. It at once suggests disease, but also has the metaphoric quality of referring to the process of growth, "germination". A collection is an odd entity. It consists of any number of things. Obsessive expertise combined with the time, means and space to preserve those objects of desire are the root of collecting. Theorist Walter Benjamin notes that "the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories". These memories are placed into a "circumscribed area"² and live through the objects themselves. The desired objects begin in their own sphere, create memories in their places and spaces and times, and then, at long last, end their long journey in the hands of a

¹ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, Librarian, McGill University, dated 19 January 1959, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

² Both quotes are from Benjamin, Walter, "Unpacking my Library", *Illuminations*, (trans. Harry Zohn), New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., p.60.

connoisseur, one who wishes to immortalize the objects' death by owning every second of its life. There are lives ended and began again in new spaces and times.

Rosalynde Osborne Stearn's collection of puppets and puppet paraphernalia is no exception to this rule. As a practicing puppeteer herself, she had a great deal of knowledge as to what might be valuable within a collection. Osborne Stearn has stated in correspondence to Richard Pennington of McGill University that she had intended to create a collection of international scope and historic importance, and as such, she collected puppets from many regions and genres. Strings, shadows, hand puppets, all are examples of a rich interwoven history of puppet performances. Osborne Stearn laments of the collection's shortcomings in a letter to Richard Pennington, "With the exceptions of professional Sicilian puppets and the poupées-joruri (sic) of Osaka, which I tried to get, the collection has fairly complete examples of all types of puppets."³

In terms of size and scope, Osborne Stearn's collection was, for its time, the largest collection of puppets and historic puppet paraphernalia in Canada. Her North American colleagues, Paul McPharlin and Marjorie Batcheldor McPharlin, boasted a larger collection than Osborne Stearn, but with the similar emphasis of representing puppetry in an international scope through as many time periods as possible. The McPharlin collection is now housed and preserved at the Detroit Institute of Arts and carries examples of Osborne Stearn's work.⁴ This is similar to Osborne Stearn's collection in that she collected works from colleagues in a kind of "puppet

³ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, 28 December 1951, *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁴ A note of thanks to Puppet Curator, Mr. Larry Baranski, for having been so candid and informative about the legacy of the McPharlin collection. (Larry Baranski, personal communication, March 2000)

exchange”, including works from McPharlin, Batcheldor and Walt Wilkinson.⁵ Osborne Stearn was very supportive of her colleagues’ works, as she had suggested these additions to Richard Pennington in her correspondence with him.

One other public collection in Canada that now rivals Osborne Stearn’s collection is the former Ontario Puppetry Association’s collection now housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Québec. The Ontario Puppetry Association’s paper collection in the museum’s archives includes a significant portion of Osborne Stearn’s correspondence and information on her performing career, auxiliary to the McGill collection.⁶ In fact, Osborne Stearn was declared an honorary member by the Association, and pieces of her collection were sought after by the Association for an exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum.⁷

Further to this, correspondence with the Association reveals an interesting relationship to McGill vis-à-vis the collection at Redpath Library, McGill University. In a letter addressed to McGill University, Ken McKay of the OPA wrote to request pieces of the Osborne Stearn collection to exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. McKay went on to recommend that the “Association might be able to provide housing for the Stearn Collection” due to the fact that the OPA had been “assured of housing” in the “new Palmerston Branch of the Public Library (Toronto) in addition to office space and storage”.⁸

⁵ Osborne Stearn also edited portions of the collection’s catalogue where it was listed that McPharlin had created a figure by insisting the figure was created by Batcheldor. Walt Wilkinson was a well-known puppeteer in Britain and the United States, and had published a popular text, *The Peep Show*, in 1921.

⁶ Osborne Stearn donated her puppetry archives to the OPA in 1971, Ken McKay, “Stearn, Rosalynde F. (Osborne)”, unpublished document, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁷ McKay, Ken, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 23 January, 1974, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁸ McKay, Ken, in a letter to the Chief Librarian, McGill University, dated 26 March 1971, OPA, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

Other letters of this kind generated by OPA members around the time of a major exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum suggest that, from the view of the OPA, they would be better suited to house the Osborne Stearn Collection than its original inheritors. Mrs. R. H. Downie, then Programme Secretary at the ROM, in a letter to Ken McKay of the OPA, wrote "I was really upset to see the condition of the puppets and the way in which they are stored". Mrs. Downie goes on to suggest that the McCord Museum would be better suited to conserve the pieces, and that she has "put a flea in both their ears", but was not hopeful of a positive outcome to her suggestion.⁹ Osborne Stearn herself was showing disappointment in the McGill collection by the 1970s, as she wrote to Ken McKay, "Don't forget that I will back you up on your offer to the Redpath Library. It would be on a permanent loan basis if that would suit them better."¹⁰

This step never came to fruition, and the Osborne Stearn Collection remains with McGill's Rare Books and Special Collections Division at the Redpath Library, McGill University. It was an interesting turn of events in that the benefactor was beginning to wonder about the collection's condition. Consideration should also be given to the fact that it was specifically the OPA that was writing to Osborne Stearn repeating anecdotes of persons who provided updates on the collection's condition.¹¹

Osborne Stearn's collection as a whole, or pieces of it, were not only actively sought after by the OPA, but "If you have anything at all representative for which you would like to find a home", writes Hugh Parrish, Treasurer for the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild, "I would

⁹ Downie, H.R., in a letter to Ken McKay, dated 28 March 1973, *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹⁰ Osborne Stearn, in a letter to Ken McKay, dated 2 March 1971, *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹¹ McKay, Ken, in a letter addressed to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, wrote the following: "(Incidentally, one of our newest members who lives in Montreal, says that McGill Library, because of space limitations, would like to find a new home for the Stearn Collection of puppets. If there is any truth to this story, you can be sure that OPA would be happy to assume responsibility for them.)" *OPA*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

mention that the Guild has started a Permanent Collection, to which we would be glad to add anything that you can spare".¹²

Be that as it may, Osborne Stearn donated her collection of some 170 puppets and shadows to McGill's Redpath Library in 1958, although correspondence between Osborne Stearn and librarian Richard Pennington span a longer period of time, beginning in 1951.¹³ The collection, while in Osborne Stearn's hands was not a stagnant one, nor is it of the same volume some five decades later. The collection continues to grow and alter dependent upon interest and available resources. At the time of the donation, certain restrictions and expectations were placed upon the collection both by beneficiary and benefactor. For example, in a letter to Richard Pennington, Osborne Stearn writes "If yoo (sic) think it advisable I could continue to collect good and unusual specimens for the library. I would like to talk this over with you. P.S. I mean at my expense!"¹⁴

As a matter of fact, there was a great deal of collaboration and respect between Pennington and Osborne Stearn in terms of professional opinions and expertise. Pennington actively sought out dealers and followed advice from Osborne Stearn as to purchases, and Osborne Stearn would freely communicate purchases and gifts that she had received to Pennington. It appeared that Osborne Stearn was more than willing to accept knowledgeable advice from Pennington in order to enhance the international scope and quality of the collection.

¹² Parrish, Hugh, Treasurer, The British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 21 January 1952, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹³ The final date for the donation of the collection may be considered earlier, as the National Library of Canada lists that McGill University received this collection in 1956, and lists from McGill's inventory of puppets would suggest that the bulk of the collection was received in 1956. The date, 1958, comes from a document created by Ken McKay for the Ontario Puppetry Association for a list of members.

¹⁴ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, dated 17 March 1952, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

For example, when Pennington notified Osborne Stearn that McGill had received the collection, she responded:

I was happy to know that the puppets had arrived safely, and I am delighted to hear that they are in appreciative hands. I realize of course that there (are) blank spots; no German, no professional Sicilian, and none from Osaka, and worst of all no American Indian. Since I last wrote you I have succeeded in buying two Turkish Shadow Figures which when they arrive will be given to you. These came through the American diplomatic corps, and if we like them they can get more.¹⁵

Pennington would also share possible material to add to the collection, including not only figures, but also books to add to the extensive library of puppetry texts. Pennington's correspondence with Osborne Stearn on 22 September 1952 provides details of rare 19th century material that Pennington had purchased for the collection, and on 12 January 1953 Pennington provides a list of 20 texts that he had purchased to add to the library.¹⁶ With Osborne Stearn's admittance that there were cavities in the collection, Pennington wrote to her, "I am in touch with a dealer in Sicily now, an old family that has long been in the puppet profession, and the Italian Embassy is finding me an address for Neapolitan puppets."¹⁷ At times it would be difficult to segregate what pieces were part of the Osborne Stearn Collection of Osborne Stearn's own research and which of the pieces had been collected by Pennington and subsequent curators.

¹⁵ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, dated 8 December 1952, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120. It is of interest to note here that Osborne Stearn's article for *Enciclopedia Dello Spettacollo* lists several museums that house Aboriginal puppets: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, ON; Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.; U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.); Museum of the American Indian, New York, NY (U.S.A.); Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wis. (U.S.A.); Chicago Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. (U.S.A.). Osborne Stearn, *Puppetry in Canada*, (ms. for *Enciclopedia Dello Spettacollo*), 1955.

¹⁶ Pennington, Richard, correspondence with Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, 22 September 1952 and 12 January 1953, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120. In one undated piece of correspondence, Pennington asks Osborne Stearn about two Commedia dell'Arte figures and Liègeois figures that he had purchased. The Liège figures, according to Pennington had belonged "to a set either of the Champions of Christendom kind of play or to a set of Crusaders".

¹⁷ Pennington, Richard, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 18 June 1956, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

Pennington, a puppet enthusiast, had wanted to create a detailed catalogue of the collection, writing to Osborne Stearn, "My ultimate aim is an illustrated catalogue; but the cost is still the difficulty, and I may yet have to appeal to Mr. Massey's Arts Council".¹⁸ Osborne Stearn was interested in this concept, and in correspondence with Pennington arranged to meet with him to discuss his goal. Her response to Pennington's comment on the Arts Council was relatively discouraging. "I do not feel very confident", she writes, "about this council for aid to small affairs or individual artists. Perhaps if the international aspects of the puppets was stressed, the visits and gifts from an ambassador, etc., it might command attention...".¹⁹

The catalogue was still on Pennington's "to-do list" in 1960, when he wrote to Osborne Stearn of its progress:

I am still intending to issue the Catalogue of the Stearn Collection, and we have planned to produce it at the same time as the catalogues of three similar special collections, the Colgate Printing Collection, the Southam Napoleon Collection and the University's Manuscripts.²⁰

The catalogue was produced in 1961, but not according to Pennington's original idea. He refers to it simply as a "Finding List", a quick listing of close to 200 glove and string figures, shadows and rod puppets, several hundred books, 16 toy theatres and approximately 50 prints and posters, placing the number of items in the Osborne Stearn collection in the neighbourhood of 2,885 items.²¹

¹⁸ Pennington, Richard, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 21 September 1956, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

¹⁹ Osborne Stearn, Rosalynde, in a letter to Richard Pennington, dated 27 November 1956, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

²⁰ Pennington, Richard, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 7 November 1960, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

²¹ Please refer to the National Library of Canada's website special collections directory for a brief description of the collection's history and holdings. (On-line, available: http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/collections/spcol_e.htm)

In comparison with other collections in North America, Osborne Stearn's collection is considerably relevant, as it presents both a historical and contemporary focus from approximately 1720 to 1950. Other collections in North America include: the McPharlin Collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts, in Michigan, U.S.A.; the Ballard Institute at the University of Connecticut, Connecticut, U.S.A.; the Bil Baird Collection at the Charles H. MacNider Art Museum in Mason City, Iowa, U.S.A., the Centre for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.; the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.; the Margeurite G. Bagshaw Collection at the Toronto Public Library, Toronto, Canada; and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Québec, Canada.²² Each of these institutions houses a collection relative to that of the Osborne Stearn Collection in either size, focus or intent.

For example, the McPharlin collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts was initiated by puppeteer Paul McPharlin, and boasts the largest collection in North America of puppet figures, theatres, texts and other related material. This collection is probably closest to the Osborne Stearn Collection in focus, as both Osborne Stearn and the McPharlins were colleagues. McPharlin was a speaker at the first national puppetry conference in Hamilton as a guest of Osborne Stearn, who was the conference organizer. Of interest, this collection boasts such popular figures as Jim Henson's 'Kermit the Frog' and Rufus Rose's 'Howdy-Doody', made renowned through the magic of television and raising the collection's profile.

The "germ" of this collection also has at its base a great deal of work done by the McPharlins, and includes shadows, strings and glove puppets and its intent is one of display and research. The 800-plus figures have largely been maintained through the efforts of Curator Larry

²² This is not an exhaustive list of institutions with puppetry holdings. In the interest of space, this listing includes some of Osborne Stearn's colleagues and collections of a similar nature, size and historical scope.

Baranski, who considers the storage cabinets for the figures to be akin to a “morgue”, where the puppet bodies are laid flat in drawers and pushed into climate controlled cabinets.²³ This institution has published a catalogue of its holdings, and regularly gives performances with pieces of its collection.²⁴

Bil and Cora Baird’s work, now preserved at the Charles H. MacNider Art Museum in Mason City, Iowa, is preserved under the directorship of Richard Leet. The Bairds gained renown for their work in the 1962 film *The Sound of Music*, for having produced the figures, costumes and set for “The Lonely Goatherd” marionette show, and for having performed this section of the movie.²⁵ The collection of the Bairds’ work is on permanent display in the museum and not used as a research collection. Richard Leet, the museum’s Director, explained that the conservation of the pieces, in particular, damaged marionette strings, is the responsibility of Peter Baird, Bil and Cora’s son.²⁶ Specifically designed display cases were built to house the collection on display, as they are climate controlled and kept relatively dark so as not to fade costume material. Bil Baird had also published two texts on puppetry: *The Art of the Puppet* and *Puppets and Population* in 1965 and 1971 respectively.

The Centre for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia, has a collection of Javanese and Balinese shadow puppets as well as marionettes. It was initiated in 1978 and envisioned by benefactor, Nancy Lohman Staub, as being a global collection intended for display and

²³ Mr. Baranski was quite candid in conversation as to the repair measures taken to preserve the collection. The collection’s profile is significant, as it serves both purposes of research and exhibition.

²⁴ Phil Huber, now a puppeteer working for Mediterranean resorts and the puppeteer behind John Cusack and John Malkovich for the movie *Being John Malkovich* (Jonze, 2000), has performed for the DIA. (Larry Baranski, personal communication, March 2000)

²⁵ Enright, Robert, “Civil Disobedience: The Artful Puppetry of Ronnie Burkett”, *BorderCrossings*, Vol.13 no.4, Fall 1994, p.9.

²⁶ Conversation with Richard Leet, Director, Charles H. MacNider Art Museum, Mason City, Iowa, 14 March 2000.

educational purposes.²⁷ Although global, the collection is relatively contemporary to other collections across North America. This institution has published the text *The World of the Wayang: Puppetry of Indonesia*, in 1990, based on its collection of shadow puppets.

The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, also holds a collection of puppets, the Stanley Marcus Collection, which are mostly historical in nature and not contemporary. Professor Maria Wells, having published an article in *FMR*, a Milanese magazine for puppetry, was the scholar involved with the collection at the centre. Its strength lies in its Indian Rajasthani collection, as well as Commedia dell'Arte and Belgian *Chanson de Roland* pieces.²⁸ This collection, due to its historical value and rare pieces, is primarily a research collection available to scholars and academics in literature and theatre.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has a rather small collection of puppets, but includes approximately 25 glove puppets, several papier-mâché figures and a few Asian shadows.²⁹ The collection itself had existed prior to the institution's existence and has not been built upon. It is used primarily as an educational tool in an "Art-to-go" program within the community. In terms of shadow puppets, although they are a large part of the Osborne Stearn collection, and with other collections across North America, the Seattle Art Museum's collection of puppets is devoted to collecting Asian shadows from Indonesia and China.³⁰

²⁷ Conversation with Susan Kinney, 14 March 2000. Susan Kinney was extremely helpful in providing contact information for the Charles H. MacNider Art Museum as well as discussing conservation procedures at her institution. She also was quite encouraging for this research project.

²⁸ Conversation with Professor Wells, 24 February 2000. India is often considered to be the "birthplace" of puppetry based on available written records, with some dispute among historians. Rajasthani puppets are considered to be sacred objects, as puppet performances were often held on water. The *Chanson de Roland* is a Charlemagnean legend that has had its own peculiar history and tradition. Please consult bibliography for further reference.

²⁹ Conversation with Alicia Hudson, Cleveland Museum of Art.

³⁰ Contacting this museum about the details of its collection proved to be difficult, as I had to receive approval prior to speaking with the conservation department. The collection, however, is specific in its focus of collecting and preserving Asian shadow figures. Conversation with museum Infodesk staff, 4 April 2000.

Finally the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Québec, holds the largest collection of puppets and puppet paraphernalia in Canada. The history of this collection coincides with two large donations from the Ontario Puppetry Association and John Conway. These are largely working collections used for display, educational programming and research purposes.³¹ The Ontario Puppetry Association is the conflagration of four provincial organizations: the Eastern Ontario Guild of Puppetry, the Toronto Guild of Puppetry, the South Western Guild of Puppetry and the “Community Programs Branch” in October 1956. This organization had established the OPA Puppet Centre in North York, Toronto in 1980, where it displayed puppets and encouraged related activities surrounding the art of puppetry. The centre closed down in 1993 and the collections transferred to the CMC in 1996.

The John Conway Collection at the CMC was donated in 1988. John Conway was best remembered in Canada for having been televised on CBC as the puppeteer for the *Uncle Chichimus* television show beginning in 1952 and ending in 1966. He was trained with the Heddle Troupe of Marionettes, and some of the pieces in the Conway Collection are from this troupe of performers. The Conway Collection consists of figures, as well as photographs, slides, recorded interviews and *Uncle Chichimus* shows. Constance Nebel, the Puppet Curator with the museum has produced the exhibition catalogue *Strings, Springs and Finger Things* showcasing pieces from the museum’s collection.

The Osborne Stearn Collection is still rather prominent within North America, even though its profile isn’t as renowned as that of the CMC or the DIA. Its importance lies in its

³¹ I have been delighted to have had correspondence with Constance Nebel at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, who is the resident puppetry authority. She has been extremely helpful in my research, not only for researching the Osborne Stearn holdings available in CMCs archives, but also with putting me in contact with other institutions around North America.

international historical focus and mid-20th century North American donations. Osborne Stearn, as a collector, not only sought out unique international pieces of antiquity but would frequently suggest that contemporary puppeteers be represented in her collection to Richard Pennington. Historically, however, the collection's oldest pieces from the *Commedia dell'Arte*, Brighella (Fig. 14), and Harlequin (Fig. 15, Fig. 16).

As well, the Osborne Stearn collection boasts a complete Punch and Judy set originating in c. 1820, purchased from antique dealer J. Kyrle Fletcher in London. (Figs. 17-19) This cast includes: from Fig. 17 (left to right) Judy, Punch, Gentleman; from Fig. 18 (left to right) Beadle, Parson; from Fig. 19 (left to right) Constable, Ghost. This set's provenance was listed by J. Kyrle Fletcher as follows:

They were purchased by their late owner from a puppeteer named Green who worked at Margate in the summer and in the suburbs of London in the winter. This purchase was about 1880 and the set was then complete as it exists today. Green took them over from an uncle of the same name about 1850. It was about this date that some of the figures were added to the set.³²

As a tradition, Punch and Judy is fugitive and fluid in that a cast of characters and language can differ depending upon context. Its cast could include any number of extra characters, like Toby the Dog, a Crocodile, a Devil, a Hangman, a Baby and many others. This set is listed as being "complete" in 1880, suggesting that the original performer's cast did not include all the characters now in existence. As for which characters were added in 1850 is unknown, and left to speculation. The changing cast is not unusual—frugal performers decided to economize their materials, thus making it easier to add variety or to perform more frequently, encouraging hybridity within the Punch and Judy tradition.

This set is peculiar to Punch and Judy shows as the characters were sparse and did not include the previously listed cast possibilities. The “Baby” is an almost standard character in Punch and Judy since the mid-eighteenth century, as Speiaght’s script of a “Punch and Judy text” reveals.³³ Another element of this set may in fact be that there may be a “twin” set, comprising of eight figures for the city street performances, eight puppets for the beach, resort or country performances, so that a family troupe could split into two and simultaneously perform in rural areas outside an urban centre.³⁴ This is evident in the documentation provided by J. Kyrle Fletcher insofar that the family performers responsible for this set performed both in London suburbs and on Margate Beach (Kent).

The performers themselves have also been difficult to trace, as puppet historian George Speiaght’s records of “Punch and Judy Men”, although a valuable resource for researching performers, has cavities in the listing.³⁵ This is due to the fact that the Punch and Judy tradition of performance has largely been a public activity, the performers setting up on the street, beach, or wherever they may be able to find space and an audience. Robert Leach, in his text *Punch and Judy: History, Tradition and Meaning*, describes performances on the “Blackpool sands”, (Manchester) an area that “became synonymous with working class merry-making. Pitches on the sands were obtained by ‘scramble’ at each outgoing of the tide, showmen wading through the waves to stake their place, and fights over claims were by no means unknown.”³⁶ This “free-for-

³² Fletcher, J. Kyrle, in a letter to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 27 July 1936, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

³³ Speiaght, “Appendix: a Punch and Judy text”, *Punch and Judy: A History*, London: Studio Vista, 1970, pp.147-8. In this version, Punch throws the baby out the window, then kills Judy and is subsequently arrested for his actions.

³⁴ Speiaght, George, “Punch and Judy Men”, *A History of the English Puppet Theatre*, (2nd ed.), Carbondale, Illinois: Illinois University Press, 1990. For interest’s sake, Speiaght lists a puppeteer by the name of the “Amazing Mumford”, who may be better known in TV as Sesame Street’s magician.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Leach, Robert, “The Swatchel Omis”, *Punch and Judy: History, Tradition and Meaning*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985, p.116.

all” on a public beach is just one element of how difficult it was to track and record Punch and Judy performers.

Leach tracks particular lineages of performers, as puppetry was quite often handed down from one generation to another. For example, he also traces a “Green” family of performers, “The Green tradition begins with Joe and Ted’s great grandfather, a London ‘pearly’, who, according to family legend, had a show”.³⁷ Anecdotal information is also indicative of Punch and Judy performers, making a definite identification extremely difficult. Leach admits that this family tradition “cannot be proved, but one of Mayhew’s interviewees who entertained...had worked in the 1840s with a man named Green”.³⁸ Whether or not this is the same “Green” as in the Osborne Stearn collection cannot be verified. The probability of this is slight, as the family in Leach’s text performed on Blackpool Sands, and Osborne Stearn’s family performed at Margate. The probability that does exist, however, is in Leach’s reference to *Mayhew’s London*, where a Punch and Judy performer by the name of Green is interviewed, though the connection is at best tenuous.

It remains, however, that this set of 19th century Punch and Judy characters is telling of that particular tradition, which has been viewed by historians as a culturally significant medium. Leach suggests, for example, that “the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 allowed husbands to divorce adulterous wives (women were not allowed to divorce their husbands until 1923)”, rendering Punch’s violence and murder of his wife and child emblematic of social issues. “Punch’s advice” notes Leach “to those who marry—*Don’t*—had become proverbial”.³⁹ Along

³⁷ Leach, *Punch and Judy*, p.116.

³⁸ *ibid.* These two families are probably not in the same lineage, as one family performed at Margate beach, the other at Blackpool sands, but the example is useful in presenting how the Punch and Judy shows were by and large hybrids, changing from each generation. The Mayhew reference quoted here is *London Labour and the London Poor*.

³⁹ Both quotes are from Leach, “Victorian Reality”, *Punch and Judy*, p.95.

with this, the magazine *Punch* is named as a homage to this anti-hero, who was seen to be a satirical character, rebelling against strict social mores.

Punch's lineage, as traced by historians such as Leach, Speiaght, Batcheldor and Legendre, all refer to his underground roots. Speiaght suggests that Punch was imported from Italy and France in the 17th century, converted from names such as Pulcinella and Polichinelle into Punchinello, and eventually Punch in the 18th century.⁴⁰ Batcheldor takes Punch's anti-heroic nature as having roots specific to English drama. She writes:

Drama in the early seventeenth century in England was the subject of bitter quarreling between the Puritans who thought it stemmed directly from the Devil and those who wanted to be entertained—even with the Devil's work. Under royal protection, the dramatists' tongues wagged freely in protest against their persecutors, and the Puritans became one of the favorite butts of dramatic satire.⁴¹

Further to this, Punch's popularity at carnivals and on the streets and beaches of England, particularly in the 19th century Victorian era, placed the dramatic form on the margins of social and cultural expression. Leach quotes from historian Edward Gosse:

The remains of a single nomadic race are still extant in England, who may be found journeying about from town to town during the season of fairs and feasts. On the eve of a town or village fair you find, converging from nearly all points of the compass, a motley crew of tumblers, organ-grinders, nut and gingerbread-sellers, toymen, swingmen, hobby-horsemen, and last, but not the least interesting of the lot, Punch and Judy exhibitors and showmen, who for a single day throw a violent life into even the most demure village.⁴²

⁴⁰ Speiaght, "The Ancestry of Punch", *Punch and Judy: A History*, p.141.

⁴¹ Batcheldor, Marjorie, "Puppets in Europe During the Renaissance: Sixteenth Century", *Rod Puppets and the Human Theatre*, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1947, pp.102-3. In fact, both Speiaght and Batcheldor note that during Cromwell's Commonwealth era, the puppet show was the only form of theatre allowed (1640-1660). Dramatist's opinions toward the medium during this time bubbled over in works by both Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare.

⁴² Gosse, Edward, as quoted by Leach, "Victorian Reality", *Punch and Judy: History, Tradition and Meaning*, p.96.

Punch's violence and social criticism was eventually tamed by such performers as Walt Wilkinson, whose Punch and Judy show was intended for children, as opposed to performers whose main character was a murderer.

Other pieces within the Osborne Stearn Collection also carry historical significance, and due to correspondence with J. Kyrle Fletcher, are a great deal more easily traced, for example, shadow puppets from Lotte Reiniger's performance *The Little Chimney Sweep* collected in 1936. Reiniger was a German animator and filmmaker who attempted to flee Germany in 1936 with her socialist husband, Carl Koch (screenplay for Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*). William Moritz from the California Institute of the Arts writes:

Although not Jewish, Carl Koch and Lotte Reiniger were closely identified with leftist politics (Bert Brecht counted them among their good friends) and deplored the rise of Nazism. They immediately tried to leave Germany in 1933, but were not able to get emigration visas into France, England or other European countries.⁴³

Koch and Reiniger continued to bounce back and forth around countries, accepting work in Italy with filmmaker Jean Renoir, but were forced to return to Germany in 1944 and only managed to emigrate to England in 1949. Reiniger continued to work on animated shadow films, performed and published her text *Shadow Theatres and Shadow Films* in 1970. The Reiniger pieces in the Osborne Stearn Collection were collected in 1936, as J. Kyrle's correspondence with Osborne Stearn was dated 17 September of that same year. These are objects that represent not only an artist contemporary to Osborne Stearn, but also a pioneer in the field of film animation, and as such carry significant historical relevance.

⁴³ Moritz, William, "Lotte Reiniger", *Animation World*, June 1996, Vol.1, no.3, (On-line, available, web-published magazine.)

Each piece in the collection comes with its own history and carries with it significance, bringing with it “an absorbing history of its own”, regardless of whether it was contemporary to Osborne Stearn or an unknown performer.⁴⁴ Further to this, it is valuable to look at correspondence of Osborne Stearn’s in order to see what other pieces she had attempted to acquire. A letter addressed to Osborne Stearn in 28 December 1936 reveal that she did in fact attempt to acquire Japanese puppets, but was unsuccessful in the attempt. Her correspondent writes to her:

I got the address of a curio dealer in Osaka who is supposed to be an authority, but as they cost about \$50 U.S. (*illegible*) I decided not to buy one unless you would like one for your collection and want to spend that much.⁴⁵

As a result, this is one area of the collection that Osborne Stearn felt was missing when she initially donated the collection to McGill University.

Collections swallow objects. Osborne Stearn effectively seeks an object that was once circulating elsewhere, then takes it from its original context and places it into her own. A collection effectively resurrects an object by removing its other past and state, documenting that state as no longer existing for the object, and places it into its own organs. It is not unlike the effect of chopping the umbilical cord and making a new life from a painful separation. The collection, as a body, does continue to grow, but it grows with dead parts. The collector herself may treat the acquisition, as Walter Benjamin stipulates, as a renewal or “rebirth”, which would necessitate its prior death.⁴⁶ Osborne Stearn’s puppets successfully claim certain regions as now belonging within her space, and reflect the international geographical divisions in place at her

⁴⁴ Peal, Nan, “Puppets go on Display”, *Silhouette*, Friday 26 October 1951, p.4, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120.

⁴⁵ Letter addressed to Rosalynde Osborne, dated 28 December 1936, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120. The signature, and much of the letter is illegible, but it traces Osborne Stearn’s attempt to secure international puppets in order to bridge gaps in her collection.

⁴⁶ Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library”, p.61.

time. It is a kind of conquering—instead of people, this collection conquered objects—objects that just happen to be little people.

Puppetry has an ability to transgress the boundaries of physical isolation. As Petra Halkes writes in *Parachute* magazine:

Puppets represent two contradictory desires of selfhood in our cultural history, one of connectedness and one of self-sufficiency. The puppet, moved by strings or rods, or by hand inserted into cloth body, can only come to life through a voice and movements of the puppeteer, forming a most literal, close connection to its creator. Yet it appears to move of its own volition, and so forms an ideal, illusory image of self-sufficiency. The dialectic between the wonder of creator bringing to life an inanimate mass...and the deceit of dead matter moving ostensibly of its own accord, is always connected with the puppet.⁴⁷

This open assault against the human body, a neatly packaged “self”, by a non-body renders the pieces in this collection simultaneously alive and dead. In fact, it is relevant to note that in corresponding with Richard Pennington, Osborne Stearn describes the death of one of her puppets. “I think one of the Chinese Shadows was lacking a head”, Osborne Stearn communicates to Pennington, “Quite appropriate!”⁴⁸ This statement is relevant for its context, considering the Chinese Head Tax in Canada was but a distant memory, but it also reflects the fact that these bodies portray a transgression against the complete and succinct body.

While there is a very real danger in stereotypical faces in puppets, there is also an intriguing ambivalence within these little bodies. While they undoubtedly entrench perceived generalizations—whether they be positive or negative—they also ironically work to destroy the very neat perception of the individualized body and deny a “self” that is segregated from its

⁴⁷ Halkes, Petra, “Phantom Strings and Airless Breaths”, *Parachute*, vol.92, December 1988, p.14.

⁴⁸ Osborne Stearn, in a letter to Richard Pennington, dated 8 December 1952, *Ontario Puppetry Association Collection*, Gatineau, QC: CMC, Acc.R95-2, Box 3 File 120. It would be difficult here to surmise exactly what was meant by this declaration, whether it was meant to be cynical or otherwise.

community.⁴⁹ In short, the puppet body challenges the concept of “I” as an entity that exists, thrives without rupture or inconvenience. Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin writes in *Rabelais and His World*:

The new bodily canon, in all its historic variations and different genres, presents an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual. That which protrudes, bulges, sprouts, or branches off (when a body transgresses its limits and a new one begins) is eliminated, hidden, or moderated. All orifices of the body are closed. The basis of the image is the individual, strictly limited, the impenetrable façade.⁵⁰

Bakhtin’s theory of the grotesque body, oozing, protruding, growing, gaping, and dying while giving birth is an additional means through which to discuss the figures in Osborne Stearn’s collection. Bakhtin believes that the grotesque body is at one with the cosmos, it does not repress fecundity, sexuality, eating, defecation and all sorts of bodily functions that conservative sensibilities found to be reprehensible.

These little puppet bodies, while they undoubtedly represent the status quo also represent the more subversive side of puppetry by their very existence. Cavities and orifices are not closed, but are left open in order for the puppet performer to manipulate the body. What is intriguing about looking at the puppet as transgressing this line between the isolated figure and the non-isolated figure is the apparatus that accompanies the figure. Marionettes are stringed bodies, hung from above. Shadows are rod puppets, pushed from below. Glove puppets are hollow figures, entered anally by a human hand. These methods of control are a grim reminder that life exists for the puppet only through the manipulation of a larger force. Life is only possible for the non-living through human interaction. Yet these bodies represent life and extend past the human

⁴⁹ I am by no means defending the propagation of stereotype, far from it. I am interpreting these figures in such a way that they may be used to destroy the concept of a neatly packaged “self”, one that exists without its community.

⁵⁰ Bakhtin, Mikhail, “The Grotesque Image of the Body”, *Rabelais and His World*, Boston, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1968.

body in their ability to move their joints and legs in motions that would render the human body ill at ease or even decapitated.⁵¹

Frank Proshcan, in his article “Puppet Voices and Interlocutors”, writes that “special talents of puppets can counterbalance their restricted movements or frozen visages”.⁵² In this sense, these little bodies require attachments, whether directly to a human body, or through mechanical means. Their faces are “frozen”, ensuring the audience that they are dead wood, while their motions exceed human action. But within these two extremes of frozen faces and decapitated bodies, the illusion of reality is suggested, although never completed. In a twist of action and motion, the bodies are given life while they simultaneously represent death.

Many puppet historians note that puppetry has been the vehicle for supporting and degrading the existing social structure and its institutions. For example, historian Marjorie Batcheldor lists that puppets were “often regarded with suspicion, as being a little too close to necromancy”.⁵³ She elucidates:

The good fathers were much divided on this question of the admission of the arts, but those in favor of them...finally won the controversy, although the opposition continued to fight diligently. So it came about that the people of the Middle Ages...were awed by sacred images: crucifixes which moved their heads and had blood oozing from their sides, leering devils, and lachrymose Madonnas shedding real tears.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Proshcan, Frank, “Puppet Voices and Interlocutors”, p.528. The direct quote is as follows: “There are many things that a puppet can do that human actors can’t or won’t do: decapitations are a favorite trick of puppeteers, for example.”

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Batcheldor, Marjorie, “Puppets in Europe: Ancient and Medieval Times”, *Rod Puppets and the Human Theatre*, p.71.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.69.

Acts such as ventriloquism were synonymous to dealing with black magic, and in fact, Batcheldor lists that Thomas Aquinas in fact went so far as to “destroy” a creation by his mentor, Albert the Great, “because it always won in syllogistic arguments”.⁵⁵

Regardless, the Catholic Church sponsored pageants, mystery plays, and other puppetry within its institution throughout the Medieval period. One particular cult that has survived throughout this time period and is still in practice, although altered, is the portrayal of the Nativity by St. Francis of Assisi. The history of this particular cult “undoubtedly began with the early veneration of the grotto in Bethlehem”, attended by “streams of pilgrims”. This scene eventually became miniaturized, narratives added and “the crib became a true puppet show”.⁵⁶

However, the Protestant Reformation gave the upper hand to those opponents of drama within Christian religious institutions in certain European regions. “The English Protestants were unusually zealous” notes Batcheldor, citing that this forced once popular drama inside churches outside to “municipal festivals, processions, and games”.⁵⁷ The iconoclast movement was at work in the Netherlands, destroying likenesses, including puppets, and thus forcing mechanical bodies into a different sphere, that of the museum.⁵⁸ Martin Luther, on the other hand, “did not prohibit the use of mysteries; in fact, his translation of the Bible which for the first time made it accessible to all German people, increased their interest in the plays”.⁵⁹ Although puppetry was seen as “useful in proselytizing”, the figures’ extra-physicality prompted institutions like the

⁵⁵ Batcheldor, “Puppets in Europe, Ancient and Medieval Times”, p.69.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.77-9.

⁵⁷ Batcheldor, “Puppets in Europe During the Renaissance: Sixteenth Century”, p.81.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.82. Batcheldor described the Doolhoff (Labyrinth) as having housed a few of the wooden figures that managed to escape destruction.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

Catholic Church to ban puppetry in the Council of Trent (1543-1563). Such actions “served to increase performances given in the squares and market places by the guilds”.⁶⁰

In a puppet’s make-up, that it is a body and a non-body, an inhuman, moveable figure renders it dangerous. Although they exist through human manipulation, the fact remains that they are bodies that exist beyond the human body. In fact, the very possibility that these little wooden, paper, plaster and animal hide creations could be “bodies” initiates apprehension to the audience. Proschan describes the experience of seeing a puppet show, and claims “If we did not see the humans, how frightening it could be!”⁶¹ How frightening that such mimesis exists, that the body can transgress its own apparent limitations to mimic itself in non-corporeal materials. It reminds us that these bodies can oppose the self, while mimicking and retaining elements of the self. The human self is then not whole, it can be spliced, divided, disseminated. It is a partial and reliant entity, not complete and self-sufficient.

As already noted, puppetry’s links to caricature—also a vehicle for dissonance—allows it to be very politically active. Its wanderlust is a reminder of uncivilized society, an affront to stability and sedentarianism. One of the most tenacious figures who has become the signifier of living beyond the moral order and satire is Punch, whose lineage and present status as he is presented in the Osborne Stearn collection is traced by historians like Batcheldor and Speiaght.⁶² In France, Polichinelle was a hybrid character brought by Italian players under the name of Pulcinella. The Opéra and Comédie Française, institutions that had been granted monopolies on theatrical productions in France in the 17th century, treated most other companies with mistrust,

⁶⁰ Batcheldor, “Puppets in Europe During the Renaissance: Sixteenth Century”, p.82.

⁶¹ This direct reference is taken slightly out of context, but remains relevant. Proschan touches on the Japanese puppetry form of *Bunraku*, wherein the human scale puppets are manipulated on stage, and the performers are presented with these bodies. Proschan, “Puppet Voices and Interlocutors”, p.548.

⁶² *ibid.*, p.99. Batcheldor supports links by other puppet historians who trace “Policianelo” or “Pulcinella” as having descended from Maccus or Mandacus, “masks of the Atellan farces”.

often forcing human drama to turn to puppetry. “At the same time”, Batcheldor continues, “theatrical entertainment at the fairs was growing in importance, attracting the aristocracy as well as the common people”.⁶³

Puppet performances at these fairs, teeming with humanity in the convergence of languages, customs, as Proschan notes “overwhelmingly are or were itinerant traditions performed by itinerant puppeteers, and often in areas of multilingualism”, and with these intersecting languages, “the portrayal in puppetry of foreigners is frequent”.⁶⁴ Foreign languages, customs, dress, movement, histories, all of these would be present at the fairground or on the street, and were often signifiers of a system beyond which the audience would normally function. Added to this, “domestic” figures would be also portrayed with the foreign figures, such as the example given by historian George Speiaght in “A Punch and Judy text”:

Enter a Distinguished Foreigner. Shallabala!
(Punch aims at and misses him. He disappears and bobs up on the other side)
The Illustrious Stranger. Shallabala!
(Punch makes another failure. The Interesting Alien bobs up in another direction.)
The Native of Other Lands. Shallabala!
Punch. Why don't you speak English?
The Continental Personage. Because I can't.
Punch. Oh!
(He lays the Man from Abroad dead at one blow.)
The Expiring Immigrant. Shallabala!
(He dies)⁶⁵

The interaction between the two figures, although adversarial and violent, places both Punch and his so-called nemesis in the same space and time. As such, these figures, foreign and domestic alike, became exotic.

⁶³ Batcheldor, p.103. Also see *Histoire Générale des Marionnettes*, Paris: Jacques Chesnais, 1947.

⁶⁴ Proschan, Frank. “Puppet Voices”, p.545.

⁶⁵ Speiaght, George, *Punch and Judy*, p.146, quoted from Brough, Robert, *The Wonderful Drama of Punch and Judy*, London: Papernose Woodensconce Esq., 1854.

Theorist Susan Stewart, in her text, *On Longing*, suggests that:

For the invention of the exotic object to take place, there must first be separation. It must be clear that the object is estranged from the context that in which it will be displayed as a souvenir; it must be clear that use value is separate from display value.⁶⁶

As a conqueror, a victor, “the exotic object represents distance appropriated”, writes Stewart. She continues:

...it is symptomatic of the more general cultural imperialism that is tourism’s stock trade. To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as arising directly as exterior and foreign, on the other it must be marked as arising directly out of an immediate experience of its possessor.⁶⁷

In other words, Osborne Stearn’s collected objects must be self-referential and also occupy a context outside of her own. Her colleague’s failed attempt to secure joruri figures from Osaka is one such example where the self reference and experience of the figures are second hand to her, she has only received a letter describing her correspondent’s initial refusal to purchase the figures. However, it is still an experience that is relevant, and, had these figures been secured for her collection, would be a souvenir of the immediate experience communicated to her.

This personal experience is seminal in the building of the collection, since, as Stewart notes:

The danger of the souvenir lies in its unfamiliarity, in our difficulty in subjecting it to interpretation. There is always the possibility that reverie’s signification will go out of control here, that the object itself will take charge, awakening some dormant capacity for destruction.⁶⁸

In order to for this destruction to be avoided, there must be the availability of an interpreter, or the collector, who is armed with expertise, authority, experience of the object, acting as a buffer

⁶⁶ Stewart, “Objects of Desire”, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, London: Duke University Press; 1993, p.149.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.147.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.148.

between the strength of the “foreign” object and reining it into a more digestible format. Stewart further notes that:

In most souvenirs of the exotic, however, the metaphor in operation is again one of taming; the souvenir retains its signifying capacity only in a generalized sense, losing its specific referent and eventually pointing to an abstracted otherness that describes the possessor.⁶⁹

Osborne Stearn, as the collector and historian, is the significant interpreter in this sense. It is due to her knowledge base that we are left with “unusual specimens” of international puppets. As a collector, she connects audience and figures in such a way that they may interact within the safety of McGill’s library. Her vast library of texts explain unknown or possibly unfamiliar elements to the audience, and each figure is listed, thanks to the efforts of both she and Richard Pennigton, with a name, number and tag to assist us in surveying the population.

These 170-odd figures now rest on shelves in little cardboard coffins, translatable as a result of Osborne Stearn’s expertise and orderly configuration by library staff. These collected objects both reaffirm cultural “otherness” or abnormality while maintaining a space for conformance and normality. However, it is a fraudulent normalizing effect—it fails miserably in that the objects that have been forced into conformity within the collection’s parameters remain always slightly on the periphery, never actually fully entering the ever-elusive centre. “For what else is a collection but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent that it can appear as order?” Benjamin asks.⁷⁰ The bodies themselves, transient in space and in time, deny any complete categorization, they only have the appearance of doing so. They transgress the human body as both its extension and impossible imposter. They have performed in repeated instances, never once adhering to one single meaning, their old “bones” tired but still capable, granting further time for the curtain to fall.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Benjamin, “Unpacking my Library”, p.60.

Parts in Play Denouement

Arline Custer, from the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, sent a message of consolation to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, who parted with her large collection during the 1950s:

It was very generous of you to give your collection to the library. You will miss having it close at hand and you won't be able to use it easily, at least for a while, but when the collection is arranged you will be sharing the use of it not only with the local people, but with people all over the world, and I'm sure that will be a great and lasting satisfaction.¹

Custer encouraged Osborne Stearn in that she would experience "a great and lasting satisfaction" from the donation with a receptive international audience. This audience has consisted of puppet aficionados, performers, scholars and museum professionals who view it as an important collection of artifacts from a medium with an exceptionally long lineage.

However, research on Osborne Stearn has proved to be, at the best of times, an uphill battle. She is not mentioned in art historical discourse, published resources on her work are few, and many of her records contain holes, leaving the researcher to speculate on both her own work, her references and her collection. A fragmented history is almost always presented to the researcher, allowing one to insert meaning and relevance where facts and feelings are not spelled out. In this case, however, I believe that one thing is primary: Osborne Stearn was engaged in a medium that is viewed as an "average text".

¹ Custer, Arline in a letter written to Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, dated 22 December 1952.

Barbara Spackman, in her literary study of so-called “decadent” writers, suggests that the main body of literature, art and cultural expression in a given context is reinforced by all the murky waters that surround it. She writes:

An average text, from this point of view, is one that marks no epistemological break as recognized by cultural criticism, one that has not been institutionalized as required reading in the history of a national literature or culture. An average text is one that has lost the round of literary fisticuffs from which the “great writers” of its age emerge.²

In other words, average texts are those that at first glance border on the mundane, and possibly the world of children. Texts that have been, according to Spackman, “rendered... ‘ridiculous’, ‘unreadable’, labeled... kitsch”.³ Unlike the “institutionalized” texts, the average expressions step back and allow the other expressions to take the spotlight at present and for posterity.

However, to indulge in a double entendre, “institutionalized” at once presents us with a paradox. It may refer to a requirement of understanding a social context, a “must read” that has been given a seal of approval by institutions and authorities, whether they are schools, museums, churches or governments. “Institutionalized” also refers to the ill, the incarcerated, the segregated. It contains both the subversive and the paradigmatic. Would this then suggest that these “institutionalized” texts represent all that is sick, all that is chained, all that is marginalized, while the “average” texts would then in fact re-enter the stage as the most telling of the social context? Maybe so.

In constructing this study of Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, her work, her performances and her collection, it has come to light that this medium presents meanings far deeper than initially

² Spackman, Barbara, “The Island of Normalcy”, *Decadent Genealogies*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, pp.3-4.

³ *ibid.*

expected. Osborne Stearn reveals much to us about class division and stereotype, as in the case of Maggie Tosh, who stands as an emblem of the working class, a fishwife whose life is that of servility. In Osborne Stearn's rendition of *The Clouds*, her characters' representations are historically astute. Their costumes and characterizations reveal a great deal not only about Aristophanes' Athens, but also portray a sense of her own context, allowing new readings to surface, as in Strepsiades' geography lesson, which reveals social memory. Thirdly, Osborne Stearn's collection stands as a valuable tool for further research into this medium, whose sordid and illustrious history continues to this day, bearing witness to and representing brutality and racism, but also acting as social critic of social inequities.

It is my hope that further study will be conducted on this collection, otherwise its founder, like the bodies themselves, may in fact have to face the curtain and leave the stage. Such average texts deserve further enquiry in order to view more fully beliefs, hatreds, and social standards as they are set. If the "institutions" only were responsible for representation, it would result in a poverty of representations and missed lives. For those who may think that puppetry—parts in play—contains little significance to shedding light on social and cultural history, I will leave with a quote from Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, who, in their text, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, note "It is indeed one of the most powerful ruses of the dominant to pretend that critique can only exist in the language of 'reason', 'pure knowledge' and 'seriousness'".⁴ These resting bodies playfully and eerily remind us of our impurities despite ourselves.

⁴ Stallybrass, Peter and Allon Whyte, "The Fair, the Pig and Authorship", *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London: Methuen, 1986, p.41.

Figures

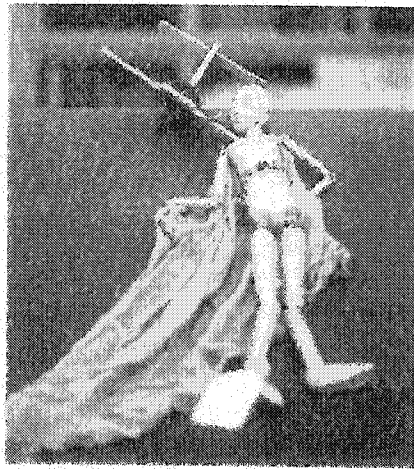


Fig. 1
Spirit of Water
Photo: Susan Hart

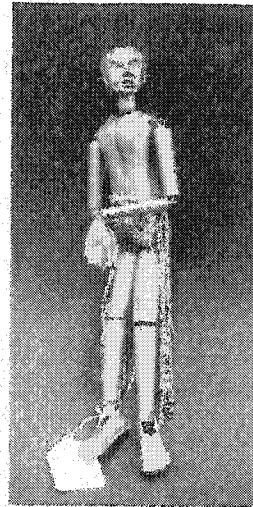
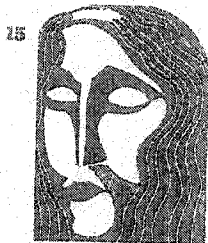


Fig.2
Spirit of Fire
Photo: Susan Hart



Successful as the deep sea, a head to present the de-
scribes in what follows, in fair play, The. How hard, as in
your other fantasy, needs long, unfolding, textual and
lucid eyes.

Fig.3
Water
Woodcut by Paul McPharlin



Fig.4
Maggie Tosh
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.5

Rosalynde Osborne Stearn with *Clouds* characters

Photographer unlisted, photo reproduced in:

"Greeks on Strings", *Globe and Mail*, Tuesday 23 October, 1951.



Fig.6

Pheidippides (right)

Strepsiades (left)

Photo: Susan Hart

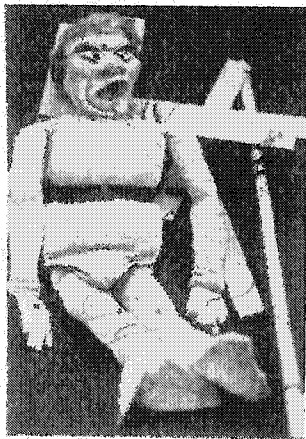


Fig.7

Slave

Photo: Susan Hart

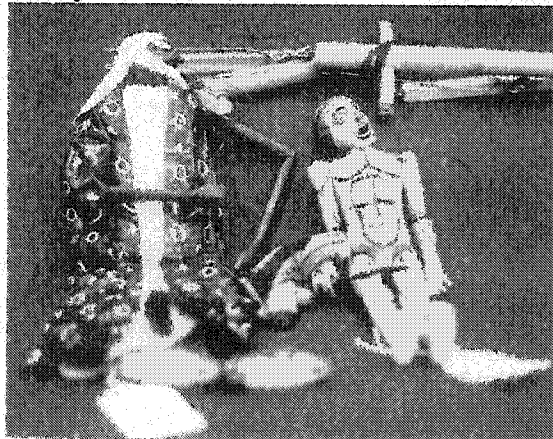


Fig.8

Just Argument (left)

Unjust Argument (right)

Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.9
Students
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.10
Students
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.11
Socrates
Photo: Susan Hart

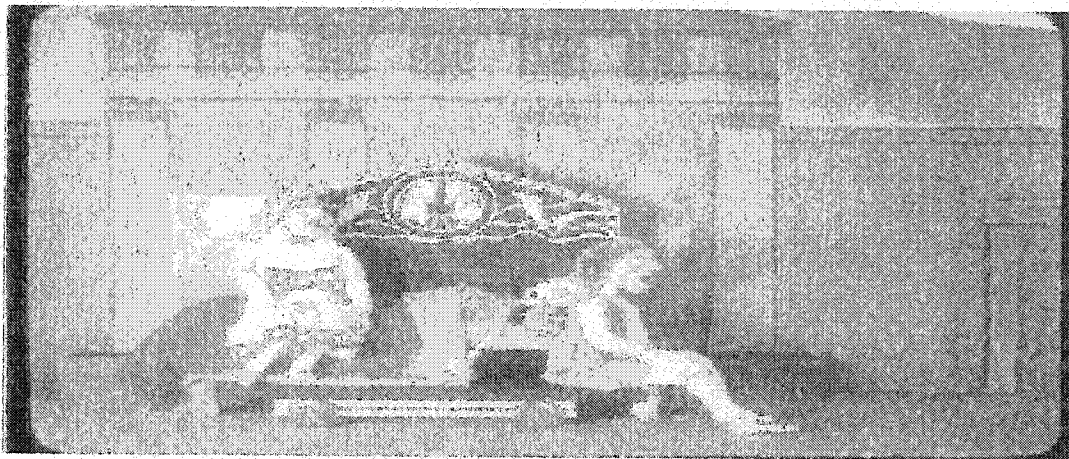


Fig.12
Film Still: *The Clouds*
Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, 1938
Archives, CMC

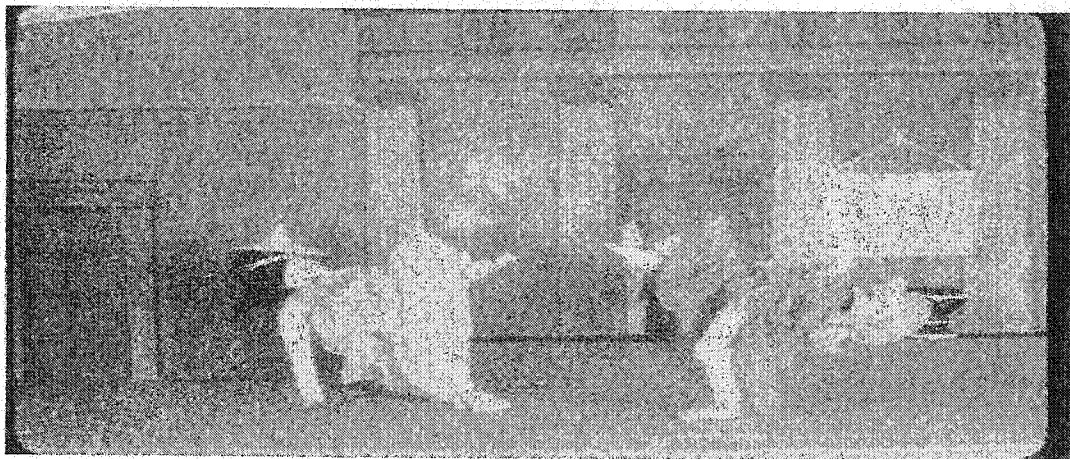


Fig.13
Film Still: *The Clouds*
Rosalynde Osborne Stearn, 1938
Archives, CMC

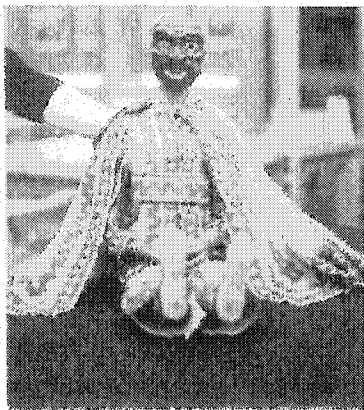


Fig.14
Brighella
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.15
Harlequin
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.16
Harlequin
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.17
Judy (left)
Punch (centre)
Gentleman (right)
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.18
Beadle (left)
Parson (right)
Photo: Susan Hart



Fig.19
Constable (left)
Ghost (right)
Photo: Susan Hart

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