

Role of Khadam in the Palembang Traditional Theater

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Abstract. Khadam's presence at Dulmuluk Theater and Bangsawan Theater as one of the reasons for a traditional theatrical performance in Palembang has remained until now. Here the author analyzes Khadam, sees Khadam in terms of character, role and things that influence Khadam's presence. The Khadam character can be seen in terms of physiological, sociological and psychological, such as Khadam is the prince's servant or caregiver, Khadam has a unique appearance, and Khadam has intelligence and likes to make joke. The role of Khadam is as a place to deliver the performance mission, Khadam as an entertainer of the audience from the saturation of routine, Khadam as the life of the survival of Palembang traditional theater. As well as things that affect the presence of Khadam, that is in the Japanese era that Khadam was very effective in conveying Japanese propaganda missions, with a humorous and fun delivery of wrapping that could be accepted by many people or spectators.

1 Introduction

Theater Dulmuluk and Theater Bangsawan are often found in celebrations such as weddings, circumcisions, and other thanksgiving, and also at government events or on television. On a celebration event or community request every week can be enjoyed by Palembang or Pemulutan people and the places are moving depends on which residents in the sub-district requested, while in government events can be enjoyed approximately once or two or twice a year, on the Palembang's anniversary or extension program from several government departments. On television broadcasts, people can enjoy Palembang traditional theater twice a week, usually in one time broadcasting with less duration than the community request, which is less than an hour duration. The analysis focused on the Palembang traditional theater performance, the community request which lasted all night, from 09.00 pm until 03.00 am.

The play of theater tradition departs from oral literature, in the form of rhymes, poetry, legends, fairy tales, and local folklore [1]. The names of the actors in the theater Dulmuluk included Sultan Abdul Hamidsyah, Wasir Suka, Sultan Abdul Muluk, Siti Rohmah, Siti Rofiah, Siti Arohal Bani, Khadam 1, Khadam 2, Raja Hindi, Mak Dayang, Dur Jauhari, King Hindustan, Saudagar Hindi, Saudagar Berbari, Hulu Balang Bukit, Bahsan Pendengki, Datuk Kobi, Sultan Jamaludin, Kadi Pandita, Robbers. While in the theater Bangsawan the cast include *Raja* (king), *Pangeran* (prince) *Putri* (princess), *Mak Dayang* (maid), Khadam 1, Khadam 2, *perampok* (robbers), and other figures, adjusting to the plays performed. In

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addition, the play performed by theater Dulmuluk is derived from the poetry of Abdul Muluk and the poem of Siti Zubaidah, while the plays performed by the Bangsawan theatre come from fairy tales, myths, legends, folklore, and so on. Some of the characters in Palembang traditional theater certainly have different characters from each other who are able to work together to form dramatic performance. The Khadam character has its own special features.

Khadam is the prince's servant or caregiver in the Palembang traditional theater performance. As a contradictory character, Khadam has two domains: as a servant, and as a figure that can be calculated, because his ideas or advice oftenly used by his master, meaning the uniqueness of Khadam as a respected figure, while servants in general are underestimated figures. Beside Khadam as a prince's caretaker or caregiver, he is also the counselor of the problems in the kingdom. Khadam has an important role in the play and also in a traditional theater group, even in the continuation of the Palembang traditional theater.

Khadam can be said as an intelligent figure, knowledgeable, seen from his flexibility in responding current situation and to the opponent. When the remaining time is still long while the material in one scene has been completed, then the Khadam's role here is very much needed, because Khadam is a flexible actor, he can extend or develop a story, associate the story with the current issues. In addition, many moral messages or criticisms in show are more often conveyed by Khadam, in funny and very entertaining style.

Things that makes Khadam as an awaited character is not just because funny and entertaining, but also in terms of the enlightened role of Khadam. His character who is good at joking can be said to be character of the actor, meaning that the person who plays Khadam really humorous in his daily real life, so that the Khadam actor seems natural when acting in a show. In addition, usually the Khadam cast is a descendant of a traditional theater actor and had enough experience as a theater great actor in Palembang (Ilyas, interview, 19 December 2017). Written sources and collective memory data obtained from interviews then compared and simultaneously linked to data on interviews with the actors and observations of the practice of traditional theater performances in Palembang. Base on this, the Khadam cast in the Bangsawan theater and Dulmuluk theater began to be analyzed by looking at (1) the character; (2) the role; and (3) things that influence the Khadam's presence at the beginning of the Palembang traditional theatre development.

2 Methods

This is a field research using qualitative methods. Research locations are in the Palembang city and Pemulutan district, since in both locations there are still many people who requested to this show. Researchers emphasize on the process and events of the show to discuss the Khadam's character and role in the Palembang traditional theater performances, namely theater Dulmuluk and Bangsawan theater. The routines of researchers in watching the shows become an important thing, especially in seeing the action of Khadam in several variations of the show, for example the variations in the play, stage settings, theater groups, or even the Khadam cast, then documenting the performance events, record the show and take pictures, so that the show can be rewatch for deeper analysis. Seeing the Khadam's character, the role and the cause of his presence required interviews with observers, researchers, artists, responders (person who request the show) and Palembang traditional theater maestros.

For data collecting, literatures are also used. There are several books or researches on the Bangsawan and Dulmuluk theaters, although the focus is not on Khadam play. Useful sources of information that can be collected so far include books written by Rahma Bujang, entitled *Sejarah Perkembangan Bangsawan di Tanah Melayu dan Singapura* (History of the Development of Nobles in the Land of Malays and Singapore (1975)) [5]. In the sub-section of this book, Ramah Bujang explains a little about the comedian cast in Theater Bangsawan, the basic character of the Khadam cast. In *Ekologi Sastra Lakon Indonesia* (Literature

Ecology Indonesian Play) written by Jakob Sumardjo, there is sub-section that discusses about literary plays during Japanese times and things that influence the presence of literary play who dominated by comedians [4]. A collection of writings with editor, Achadiati Ikram entitled *Jati Diri yang Dilupakan: Naskah-Naskah Palembang* (Forgotten Identity: Palembang Manuscripts). This book is useful for seeing Palembang from its literary point of view, which strengthens matters that influence the importance of Khadam presence in Palembang society. Furthermore, to reinforce the the Japanese era topic, which the character was favored by the Japanese [6]. Then, Robert Martin Dumas who studied theater Dulmuluk (1991-1992), focus on oral literature. His research is important to see the theater Dulmuluk picture in the past. *Kesenian Tradisional Palembang: Teater Dulmuluk*, a book written by Abdullah Saleh and R Dalyono BA explains the historical sequences of the Dulmuluk theater art formation in Palembang. Besides that, Vebri Al Lintani's book entitled *Dulmuluk: Sejarah dan Pengadeganan*, provided important information in general about the Dulmuluk theater performance. The data analysis technique used is the interaction analysis with a cultural interpretation approach, to find out about the Khadam's role in the Palembang traditional theater performance. The information obtaining process is the interaction model of qualitative data analysis by implementing cycle system.

Data collecting began in Palembang and the show locations. First of all, to make observations, interviews and record the required documents. After the data is collected, it will be reviewed and discussed, by determining the focus and research strategy. In the data analysis phase, the researcher conducted an initial analysis of the data that had been collected. This analysis was carried out if the data regarding the Palembang traditional theater and the Khadam cast were quite complete. The model used in analyzing qualitative data by implementing a cycle system, means that researchers always move and explore the object during the process. After that doing the development of data which is analyzed early in the beginning by describing the datas to get an overview or findings. The researcher arranged the datas presentation by compiling coding and matrix for the sake of further analysis. The researcher also do verifying, enrich and go deepen to the datas. If in analyzing the data is incomplete or unclear, then it is necessary to collect the data again in order to focus more.

3 Discussion

3.1.Character of Khadam Figure

The character here is a living actor, having personality, character, having three dimensional characteristics: physiological, sociological, and psychological dimensions [2]. Likewise the characters found in the theater of tradition in Palembang, namely the Khadam actor. Before discussing furthermore about the background of the Khadam actor emergence in traditional theater in Palembang, the writer will describe the Khadam's characterization first.

3.1.1 Khadam cast on physiological aspect

The presence of the Khadam cast in each of performances is highly waited by the audience, because in terms of appearance the performer is able to make the audience laugh. The range of Khadam age is around 45-50, thin body and there is also Khadam with large belly, medium-sized in tall, while judging from clothing, Khadam always wears eccentric, "weird" clothes, and occasionally wears Palembang traditional clothes. A pair of pants or 7/4, or wearing "frog" clothes, sometimes the waist of the pants over the stomach and often use hat. Khadam mustache is a small box, eyebrows down and thick, sometimes his facial skin is whiter than the arm skin color. The physical role of Khadam is basically unique or "weird".

3.1.2 The khadam figure in the sociological aspect

The word Khadam means servant, comes from the Arabic which is absorbed in Malay and become standard in the Indonesian dictionary. As the prince's guardian, Khadam always follows the prince wherever he goes. However, he is the adviser or the problems solver in the kingdom. He always gives the values of life to the people as well as to the royal order with his humorous style. Beside describing the Khadam characteristics of the sociological aspects in his role in the play, the writer also describes the sociological aspects outside the play that Khadam is a flexible actor, able to extend the short story, high improvisation power, and Khadam is very flexible, he can go to interact with the audience under the stage. Besides that to occupy the specific role usually Khadam has felt to do the other roles. Because being Khadam requires long enough experience, usually when staging using scripts, there is no Khadam dialogue, because Khadam is very trusted by the director for a scene, so Khadam is only given the essence of the story to be played.

3.1.3 Khadam figure on the psychological aspect

Khadam has good character, humorous, patient, has high intelligence, knowledgeable, seen from his superiority in solving problems and providing very wise advice even in a humorous way so that the kingdom and the people obey and believe what he said. Khadam also knows many of the hadiths and the Qur'anic verses as his knowledge in giving ideas or advice.

3.2 Khadam as the Soul of the Theater of Palembang Tradition

There are two kinds of Palembang traditional theater, Dulmuluk theater and Bangsawan theater. They still survive until now, and can be found in the city of Palembang and Pemulutan district. It is inseparable from the Khadam cast in it. Khadam is able to make the audience wait until over, no wonder if the audience from the beginning really wanted to see the Khadam's action on stage. His joyful character made the audience very entertained, singing, poetry, acting skills also added value in himself to be waited by the audience. Besides that, through Khadam the messages can be conveyed. Khadam is very clever in responding to current issues and responds quickly to opponents (other players) on stage, even though in performances they do not use scripts, only narratives are discussed but all players especially Khadam players are very good at exploring the narrative, they will not run out of dialogue.

To understand the Khadam's role in Dulmuluk Theater and Bangsawan Theater, a sample play was needed as a study material. The sample play at Dulmuluk Theater was watched and recorded on February 11th, 2018 by Tunas Muda group, at a wedding event that lasted about six hours (9:00 pm - 3:00 am) this time the drama about Siti Zubaidah was played. For the theater Dulmuluk performance only two sources of play could be performed, sourced from the Abdul Muluk and Siti Zubaidah poetries. From those two plays, Siti Zubaidah played more comedic elements, because Khadam characters appeared more frequent in each scene. Siti Zubaidah's play is a romantic play that depicts the love, courage, and obedience of a woman to her husband. While the sample play at Teater Bangsawan is the play "Pangeran dan Buaya Putih" (Prince and White Crocodile), which was performed on February 18th, 2018, from 9:00 pm till 3.00 am played by the Bintang Selatan group at the circumcision event. The play of "Pangeran dan Buaya Putih" tells the story about life in two kingdoms, the human and crocodile demon kingdom. The crocodile demon king's daughter fell in love with the prince of the human kingdom, but the prince refused, which made the princess angry and made the crocodile demon kingdom go to war with the human kingdom.

In the performance scene, Khadam always follows and accompanies the prince, because his position as the servant of the prince. When the prince is experiencing anxiety or restless,

the Khadam actor will entertain him by singing and dancing. At Dulmuluk theatre, it is common when the Khadam casts a dialogue with his opponent by using poetry or speech, even though Khadam is not required to fully speak like another actors. The initial scene of the show was always the Khadam that was presented first, to attract the audience. Then Khadam presents when the audience is seen already bored, also Khadam presents when he is with the prince. Khadam is able to carry the dramatic flow of the show, like being able to extend the short story, giving a lot of ideas about the continuity of the show.

The following is the Khadam dialogue with Prince (*Pangeran*) and *Mak Dayang* at Dulmuluk theatre played Siti Zubaidah :

- Prince (*Pangeran*) : Kalian ini kok berpantun saling *mengoyo'i* (You guys why are you quiping each other)
- Khadam : *Katek o baso* Indonesia saling *menguyo'i*, kami tu saling *simbad*, pantun berpantun. (We are fighting each other, by interlocking poetry)
- Mak Dayang : *Maksudnyo* saling *mengatai* (That is to say, you quip each other)
- Khadam : *Nah kamu ni dak ado yang akor baso Indonesia, baso Indonesia dak akor baso daerah tepliwat.* (You are improper who is not suitable for speaking Indonesian, Indonesian is not suitable, local language is missing)
- Prince (*Pangeran*) : That is insulting
- Khadam : Walaupun *baso kito dak akor, ado baso komering, ado baso ogan, ado baso meranjat, baso oki* tapi kito tetap bersatu. (Even though our language is not suitable, since there is Komerling language, there is Ogan language, there is Meranjat language, OKI language but we are still united)
- Prince (*Pangeran*) : Correctly Wak Yeng, united We are firm, divorce We....)
- Khadam : Remarry!)
- Prince (*Pangeran*) : Hi... Wak Yeng..., divorced we collapse
- Mak Dayang : *Yes* Wak Yeng..., United we stand, divided we fall. Now what is the elephant dead leaving?
- Prince & Khadam : Ivory!
- Mak Dayang : Dead tiger left?
- Prince & Khadam : Striped
- Mak Dayang : Humans die leaving?
- Prince : Tooth!
- Khadam : No! dead human leave charity and deeds (what we had done in the world
- Prince & Mak Dayang : Waaaw!! Ooo!!
- Khadam : *Apolah dikatoka wong, andai malem ini malem jum'at, besok malem sabtu, kalo kito umat nabi Muhammad lakukan shalat lima waktu.* (It is said to a person, if this night is a night before Friday, tomorrow is a night before Saturday, if we are the people of the Prophet Muhammad, we must pray five times a day)
- Mak Dayang : Means you pray diligently?
- Khadam : Diligent!
- Mak Dayang : Fasting?
- Khadam : Fasting!
- Mak Dayang : Charity?
- Khadam : Charity!
- Mak Dayang : Means you are a *Soleh* child (*Soleh* means very kind child)

- Khadam : *Bukan anak soleh, aku ni anak mang Dol* (Not a soleh child (son of Mr. Soleh), I'm Dol's kid)
- Mak Dayang : Anak soleh tu *maksudnyo rajen* ibadah (*Soleh's* child means diligent in worship)
- Khadam : Bukan ! *Bak* ku bukan Soleh, Dol *bak* ku! (No! My father is not *Soleh*, Dol is my father!)

The following is the Khadam dialogue in theatre Bangsawan on the Pangeran and Buaya Putih play.

- Khadam : (First scene) Hallo everybody, I am Wak Pet Bint terompet, although have no money in my pocket, I never pickpocket other people.
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, teenagers, thank you, thank you, the head was shaved clean, but I was like that for a long time, Wak Pet here still clean will keep the health, diligent is clever base, project fountain. Waiting for friends not to come too, if you work always late, but if the time is for getting salary you will come very fast. Not just money is corrupted but also time, life is not going forward if still like that.

(last scene)

- Prince : I really miss my sweetheart, but how what can I do with this
- Khadam : Why are you so sad the prince, just meet her, why is it so difficult.
We must live with the struggle and the spirit my prince, if you are only sitting in sadness there will be no result. The prince, you must chase her love, prove that the prince is serious, then propose her, marry her.

The dialogue above illustrates the Khadam character who likes to teach good life with humor. Like the sentence on the play of Siti Zubaidah "*Even though our language is not suitable, since there is Komerling language, there is Ogan language, there is Meranjat language, OKI language but we are still united.*" and the sentence "*It is said to a person, if this night is a night before Friday, tomorrow is a night before Saturday, if we are the people of the Prophet Muhammad, we must pray five times a day*". While the dialogue on the *Pangeran and Buaya Putih* plays is "Hallo everybody I am Wak Pet Bin terompet, although have no money in my pocket, I never pickpocket other people." and "clean will keep the health, diligent is clever base." and during observation, "We must live with the struggle and the spirit my prince, if you are only sitting in sadness there will be no result. "

From the Khadam dialogues' quotation and character studies, the writer can conclude some Khadam characteristics, namely wise, provide peace and happiness for those who heard his speech, symbols of people who the way he is, honest, relaxed but sure, lead to simplicity as a role model, a value-giver of kindness in a very pleasant way, does not patronize and covered in humor, a habit of Palembang people, especially the market community. The joke itself can be interpreted as the art that grow and live in all strata of the Palembang people. There are three humor types according to Suhadi, namely the first humor criticism, usually born from the dissatisfaction of the heart of a person or group towards the environment. Therefore this type contains very sharp insinuation or criticism against certain groups or elements. Second, humor lightens the burden of the message, usually to complement the messages that are delivered or clarify something of purposes so that it is easier to understand. The third type is humor that is solely entertainment, just funny, only makes people smile or laugh [3]. While the joke is included in those three types of humor.

Khadam's role is very important in the development of Palembang's traditional theater, it is not an exaggeration to say that Khadam as the soul of Palembang's traditional theater life. If Khadam is abolished in the show, the performance will still run at that time but it becomes

show that lacks flavor and over time will be abandoned by the audience. Nowadays, the density in the world of work or busyness makes people very stressful and tired, so it is not surprising if comedy can be an alternative neutralizing fatigue in society routines for a week.

3.3 Khadam's presence at the Traditional Theater in Palembang

Khadam was found in the traditional theater of Palembang, the Bangsawan Theater and Dulmuluk Theater. It became important in the development of Palembang traditional theater. Before discussing furthermore about the Khadam's presence in the theater, the author explains briefly the presence of the Bangsawan theatre and the Dulmuluk theatre. To play the Dulmuluk theatre, the plays must come from the Abdul Muluk or Siti Zubaidah poetry books. While the name of Dulmuluk itself was taken from Abdul Muluk. Theater Dulmuluk has several stages of presentation from the beginning of the theater emergence until now. The theater Dulmuluk was began with Abdul Muluk's poetry reading. It was firstly read in front of the public in 1854 by a traveling merchant of Arab descent named Wan Bakar. Then developed into several people who read the poem, then using body movements and expressions, and became a complete theatrical performance in the present.

In the poem or yellow book, Khadam is not yet in it. He appeared when the presentation has become a complete theatrical performance. In 1910 the poem reading developed quite rapidly, using musical instruments, complete costumes, property, and the stage of the show in the field. According to Kamaludin's story of his son Ario Kamaludin, that in 1910 he had played in the form of a theater. At Japanese occupation in 1942 theater Dulmuluk experienced a re-development, the audience had used chairs arranged in lane both in front and beside the stage of the show, this theater was also often invited to the regions to perform, besides that the performances had used curtain. This is because the theater is fully supported by the Japanese government as a propaganda tool. Presence of Khadam in a traditional theatrical performance in Palembang, was estimated around 1910 to 1920. The play was originally a tragedy (Lintani, interview June 7 2018). The tragedy here means as expressed by Hornby:

noun, 1. a very sad event or situation, especially one that involves deaths. For example: It is a tragedy that he died so young. Tragedy struck the family when their son was hit by a car and killed – the whole affair ended in tragedy 2. A serious play with a sad ending, especially one in which the main character dies; plays of this type: Shakespeare's tragedies- Greek tragedy compare comedy. (Hornby, 2005:1585)

In this statement it is explained that tragedy is a sad event or situation and as a serious show. Along with the theater Dulmuluk's development, it became identical with comedy. It is known that the theater Dulmuluk has a play that originates from the Abdul Muluk or Siti Zubaidah poetry, so to voice the present issues is very difficult, because the times are always updated while the play is only from the poem, so the presence of Khadam is very necessary in order to connect the story with the current situation. Besides that, according to the theater Dulmuluk maestro, Jonhar Saad, the audience at that time wanted the comedy entertainment because in the beginning, the show was presented up to 7 days and 7 nights. So to make it not boring, Khadam was also an efficient actor to overcome it (Interview, 6 June 2018).

During Japanese occupation (1942) the Khadam's presence was also importantly needed. This was also reinforced by Sumardjo's statement that in the days of Japanese rule came the "art of comedy" which was called a "joke" which contained propaganda because at that time the villagers always misunderstood the terms and intentions of propaganda, so that a more

intelligent actor should explain it. Japanese used the theater as a propaganda tool. Broadly speaking, the content is to give a bad picture of the Netherlands and its allies when colonizing Indonesia, encouraging the people to sacrifice defending the homeland (and Japan) [4].

Whereas in the theater of Bangsawan, this theater developed in Palembang since 1942, which was brought by the theater group Parsi or at that time was given the name Parsi Wayang [5]. The presence of the Bangsawan theatre has been in the form of whole theater or in terms of a more established appearance and has influenced by western theater techniques rather than theater Dulmuluk. The characters consisted were as complete as they are today, meaning that the Khadam character has existed since its presence in Palembang [1].

4 Conclusion

Khadam has a character that is awaited for his presence. A figure that gives lot of good value in typical comedian style. Khadam is one of the most important things for the traditional theater's survival in Palembang. The Khadam character can be seen from the physiological point of view (physical role), for example the unique Khadam body shape, before he casts a humorous narration, the audience has been intrigued by laughing because they see his comical physical shape. In sociology term, Khadam is a prince's servant who always giving good input to problems faced by the kingdom or prince personally. From psychological standpoint, he is a kind, innocent, honest and humorous person.

The role of Khadam is as a deliverer of the show's mission, often to slipping requests that the show indirectly convey the intention requester wants, for example the government's request, like family planning or anti-drug missions and so on. Secondly, Khadam as an entertainer for the audience or society, indeed a comedian. All his words and behavior are comical, so that what is conveyed by Khadam is also easy accepted by the audience. Third, Khadam is the soul of the Palembang traditional theater survival, he is the actor who is always awaited by the audience, even before going to the venue the audience has intended to see Khadam, not only of his comedy, but also the overall appearance of Khadam. The Khadam's presence firstly began as a Japanese propaganda tool. By displaying Khadam, the Japanese felt that its mission would be realized quickly, influencing the Indonesian people to dislike the Dutch and their allies, due generally Malay people are very fond of comical entertainment.

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