
Main Puteri and Wayang Kulit : An Analysis on Magic Belief Among The Malay Community In Malaysia. Study In Terengganu And Kelantan.

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Abstract

The traditional Malays belief in animism and the existence of magical elements which dominated and controlled the whole of the nature [1]. Historically, Malays had experienced several phase of changes that influenced their belief beginning with animism, Buddhism, Hinduism and ended with Islam. In spite of Islam became the religion of Malays, there are also have other belief which contradict with Islam. Mohd Taib Osman [2] outlined five beliefs in the Malay community. It consist of believe in Allah and the Prophet, versus of the Quran, the elements of spirits, extraordinary powers and the element of magic. The view of the existence of magic among Malays affected their daily life in some aspects. This beliefs was manifested clearly in some of the traditional culture art performances include Main Puteri and Wayang Kulit (shadow play). Therefore, this paper will explain in details regarding to the several items in these cultural performances which could be the evidences about the belief in magic in Malay's world-view. Under this scope, researcher used three techniques of data collection; interview, participant observation and document analysis for completing the study. The study have shown that the Malay have their own perception about the element of magic in their daily life generally and particularly in these cultural art performances. The trust and the recognition about the elements of magic in Malay mindset such as spirits of the dead, ghost and deities have clearly exposed in Main Puteri and Wayang Kulit show. Therefore, this paper is expected to expose the current Malay's belief on the magic element through these two cultural art performances, Main Puteri (Princess Play) and Wayang Kulit (Shadow Play).

Keywords:

Malay Culture;
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1. Introduction

The ancient Malay community belief were based on animisme thought which believe the nature are also inhabited with magical creatures [3] [4]. During the mentioned timelime, humans believe the existance of extraordinary power in every object, which is these powers are always refers as the spirit possessed in animals, trees, mountains, sea and more [5]. According to [6], There are at least five types of Malay community heritage beliefs such as the belief in Allah and his messenger, belief in Quranic verses, belief in sorcery, belief in the spirit, caretaker, ghost and mystical creatures.

Mohd Taib Osman [2] also explains the Malay belief is reflected in three types of images that combined the islamic religion teaching, traditional belief inherited from their ancestors and the empirical or scientific knowledge. Eventhough islamic teaching had been the domain way of life, the traditional belief is also influencing the Malay community daily life especially in the aspect of culture.

In the Malay community belief, the belief in the existance of the elements outside of the human boundary capability or better known as supernatural can be clearly seen in several Malay cultural heritage. The community belief on the existence of the elements in a mystical life brings them to the next step which is the devotion of the magical matters. Magic is an effort to control, manipulate and overtake the magical powers for the certain individual profit [7] [8]. This point of view is also supported by [9], in his book entitled “*Malay Magic*” it is stated that magic is a form of effort to manipulate a situation for individual satisfactory. For Malinowski, his opinon is magic can be divided into three parts, they are for what purposes it’s been used, what is the thing to be done and what are the chantshh to be used.

According to [1], in his book entitled ‘*The Malay Magician*’ the magical system had begun since thousands of years ago. In history, there are plenty of hinduisme and islamic influences applied in the rituals practised by the community members. In the ritual, the magic practitioner will lead the ritual and ask for assistance from the outside force which is the supernatural powers such as asking the gods to solve the problems faced by them. This ritual was held to recover the hustle situation so that the situation back to a calm and peaceful condition from any problems such as natural disaster or tragedy [7]. For the conclusion, magic is a type of knowledge, practice and method or step for human to gain control of their environment for achieving a purpose or goal for their intention by using supernatural powers.

The view about the existence of extraordinary power or magic had been part of Malay community belief and influenced their daily routine. So, this paperwork will elaborate related with magic belief in Malay community that shown in the form of their traditional cultural performances which are “Princess Play (*Main Puteri*)” and “Shadow Play (*Wayang Kulit*)”.

Princess Play Performance.

There are several traditional folks cultural performances that can be categorised as an alternative in traditional medical and it includes Princess Play and Shadow Play. These performances are not only functioned as just an entertainment by ancient community, but it is better known as a shaman healing ceremony as a result from the usage of psychotherapy method, which is a cure ceremony by healing the patient soul [8]. In the Princess Play healing ceremony, the patient who experienced the broken—willed, treacherous from somebody and losing their memory will be cured through those ceremony [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [8].

Princess Play performance also act as a healing ceremony by using a psychotherapy method. According to [8], Princess Play is a Kelantanese indogenous psychotherapy method thad had been practised many years ago. It is a method that imagining in the thought by Kelantanese Malay related with a physiology and medical about illness and their treatment methods. This view is supported by [13], from his view he stated the Princess Ply performance emphasize more on pycological field. He added that the ceremony is a type of Kelantanese people psychotherapy based on the method used that not just related with the patients, but also involvement from the community around.

In the Princess Play performances ceremony, Banks [15] stated that usually a magic practitioner will be possessed by a mystical creature which is possession of mystical creatures symbolised a reincarnate of good forces elements that have the knowledge regarding the source of the illness

faced by the patients. However, this point of view is a little bit different from [16] that stated it has an art aspect or elements within the treatment ceremony. In the Princess Play ceremony, it not only just emphasized in the aspect of behaviour but also in the aspect of the process on how the practitioner using the spirit to conduct the way of the healing process itself and symbolised a level of an art depends on the practitioner's finesse.

The Princess Play ceremony also overviewed from its symbolic aspect which is according from a study done by [17] in the ritual, it is said that the body of the Tok Puteri (the one who lead the ceremony) possessed by a mystical creature and the event occur afterwards is he will shake his head and hips. According to the writer, Tok Puteri act as mentioned before to scare off the spirit whom disturbing the patient

Shadow Play Performance

Shadow Play is a type of performance that also known as a traditional theater that using the light and shadow principles [18]. The cultural heritage was a form of entertainment that exist in the early stage in the beginning of Malay race where it witnessed the Malays were still believed in the animism. The Malay people way of thought on the spirit concept and the belief in the mystical dimension resulted the birth of rituals such as the Shadow Play. In the early stage, Malay drama had a strong connection with the religious behaviour and procedures that contain spiritual feature [19].

Malay drama or theater is not intended to provide entertainment but rather a spiritual purpose as to placate the spirits of ancestors who have died. On this day, the belief in the existence of spirit in every object that needs the worshipping ritual still prevalent within the community. For this reason, there are many spiritual ceremonies that are believed is needed to be the link between the real world and the mystical world known as *magico ritual*.

Shadow Play performances acted as an attempt or effort to call out the spirits for help and drove out the bad spirits whom disturb the children who have the weak willed soul [19]. Eventually, from time to time, it became a favorite type of entertainment of the Malay community and finally it became the performance held as the driving force for the arts of Malay community.

Shadow Play is a form of traditional theater that reflects the cosmological beliefs formed by animism, Hinduism and Islam [20]. The influence of other cultures found in the stories of the Shadow Play performances showed that the Malay community has exposed to many elements of foreign culture and absorbed as a parts of their life. The stories that presented in the shadow play are the stories that close to the audience and can be accepted by the community. Therefore, the storytelling in Shadow Play was able to describe some of the ways of life in the Malay community from various aspects including their way of thinking, especially with regarding the beliefs. Shadow Play performance is not only serve as an entertainment only but, it is loaded with a lot of messages that lead to good values and role models in the Malay community.

Magic Usage in Malay Community

Malay community beliefs towards the mystical world has led to the worshipping practice in the form of magic. Magic is an effort to control and manipulate and also conquered mystical beings for the sake of certain individuals. Magic is a real matter and unique because human has difficulties to prove whether something unusual is really occur or it just some sheer nonsense. Previous primitive society uses magic to control the nature event for their own sake whether to prevent them to suffer from a disaster or catastrophe. Among the nature disasters are floods, drought, disease to livestock and their crops.

Magical practices are not only concentrated among primitive communities, but also occurs among the traditional Malay community. In the context of the Malay community, belief in magic were existed before the Hinduism and Buddhism came in and spread. It was started with animism and followed by folk stories detailing events such magical about magical weapons that could change the form of men, about men who have magical powers and defeat their enemies, and the natural surrounding that can bewitch [21]. Through these stories, magics are applied in the form of a specific invocation of spells, as well as the behaviour and the usage of objects, of which these elements can build an ceremony in their daily lives such as those found in the performances of Princess Play and Shadow Play. According to [22], every magical ceremony can be divided into

three elements which are, the things of used, of the thing done and the things of spoken. However, the discussed in this paper only focuses on two magical elements, that are what are the equipment and materials used in the ceremonies of Princess Play and what are the spoken words and conveyed through the stories of the Shadow Play.

2. Research Methodology

The research area is concentrated in two states respectively Terengganu and Kelantan. For the Princess Play performance, Malay Heritage Art group from Padang Luas village located in Jerneh Besut, Terengganu had been chosen while for the Shadow Play performances, the Golden Voice group of Kemasin located in the district of Bachok, Kelantan had been chosen. Both groups had been chosen because they are still active in running the performances of Princess Play and Shadow Play compared with the other groups in other place.

The informants selected in this paperwork are consist of the Princess Play team members such as Tok Puteri (The one who lead the Princess Play performance) fondly known as Pak Su Rani and some members of their group, and also a member of a team from the Shadow Play called Tok Dalang (The one who lead the Shadow Play Performance) or known as Pak Mat. The selection was made based on those who can provide cooperation and information during the research was conducted.

The issues of concern in this paperwork is to examine the use of magic in the Princess Play and Shadow Play performances practiced and owned by them. Therefore, this paperwork was done not only to determine more accurately about the matters related with the Main Puteri and Shadow Play performances in the context of the local Malay community, but also to identify the usage of magical elements in the performances.

This paperwork was conducted by applying the qualitative methods. The use of this method enable us to reveal and provide an understanding of the event occur related to any of the lesser known phenomenon [23]. According to [24], qualitative data is able to describe and explain in detail and in depth on a particular phenomenon occurs. Three techniques used by us in preparing this paper are participating observation, interviews and document review.

Interview is one of the techniques to collect data that allow us to obtain information from the informant by giving the questions related to the research to be carried out. Through the interview process, survey information gathered directly by us from the informants. The interview will be conducted based on the research questions that have been submitted, in which each question will be divided according to the themes of smaller questions to ease the process of interviews and facilitate the process of collecting data obtained by us.

Participating observation is one of the technique that is also used by us. By using this technique, we had done the observations and participated in some daily life activities of local community members and interviewing them related with the research. This situation is done to get an accurate images or the empirical reality connected with any element that became the subject of the research done by us. The collection of data through participating observation techniques will be divided into two parts, observation and participation. Observation is a research technique that is often used in research to obtain preliminary information required by the researcher [25]. According to [26], this technique is a basic technique for data collection. We will make continuous observations during the performance of Princess Play and Shadow Puppet held for research purposes. We will not only observe and examine each performance structure that are played, but also carry out some observation of the behaviour and character of each member of the group during the performance is played. In addition, this technique also allows us to get the response given by the research informant by observing every behaviour of the informant during the interview process is ongoing.

When it comes to participation, it is a special technique because we have the opportunity to participate in the activities related to the issues that specifically studied. There are two levels of participation that will be used by us in this research, they are the level of passive and the level moderate level. In this passive stage, the researcher merely functioned as an observer, in which researchers will only observe any behavior of community members involved and also watched the whole Princess Play and Shadow Play performance done by them. In the other moderate level, we will participate in the activities carried out by the research informants as it not a comprehensive

study, in which we will not comprehensively engaged by helping Princess Play and Shadow Play team in the preparation of the necessary equipment in those performances.

The documents study is a technique that functioned to explain the phenomenon occurs in more detail as well as being the foundation or base for the research results that will be done. In this case, we will explain the aspects related to the element of belief particularly the Malay community magical belief and the folks cultural performances that had been practiced before, particularly in the Princess Play and Shadow Play performances ever carried out by the community members in the area other than the area studied by us. Some of the documents that will be used as references are books, articles, theses, research reports and websites that are related to Princess Play and Shadow Play will be examined.

3.Results and Analysis: Magic in Princess Play Performance

In the healing ritual of Princess Play, the use of music and equipments such as rebab, canang, flutes and many others play a very important role in the healing process of patients. In the early stages, Princess Play only consist of elements such as spells, chants and stories that all are purposely to gladden the heart and reduce the burden suffered by a patient. The spoken element in the healing process cannot resulted a positive effect without being accompanied by the sounds of musical instruments. Furthermore, the use of musical instruments used in the performance also plays a very important role in determining every song and rhythms performed.

Based on a survey that was conducted in Padang Luas village, Besut, Terengganu, there was a team of Princess Play Performance that still active and practiced till this day. The team also did not miss in emphasising on the use of musical instruments in every treatment ceremony conducted on the patients. This situation is alligned with the magical theory based by [27], in which he said the magical functioned as a control for the members of the community to seek protection and help from a supernatural power, especially in healing ritual of the patient.

According to one of the informant team members that was known as Pak Su Rani, every musical instrument has its own symbols and meanings inside the human soul. It was found that there are six types of musical instruments used by the team involved and among them, a pair of *gongs*, drums, flutes, *geduk*, *rebab*, and two *kisis*. Generally, each member of the team will handle only one equipment for them to be able to focus on each song played. Normally, the number of members of this team consists of eight to nine people, including those who played a supporting role in the preparation of food offerings to the summoned creature.

The usage of each of these musical instruments are connected to every element in the human body. *Rebab* is the most important tool and should not be abandoned and these tools usually instructed by Tok Minduk. The usage of *rebab* represents the human spine because it is the most important element in the structure of the human body. Without a healthy spine, men are unable to stand up with the perfect balance to support their bodies. Based on the reason,, the rational of the *rebab* used in the process to heal the patient's condition fit perfectly because of the habits of the patient reaction during the recovery process is carried out as it stands, dance, martial art and so on.

The other finding is the use of a pair of *gongs* are also represents a pair of human boobs, which is every man no matt,er men or women have breasts of their own. According to Pak Su Rani, a pair of gong is also known as a light of human milk and every beat on them will be done alternately by beating them to the right and to the left and made repeatedly by the music played. Drum symbolizes the human heart conditon, in which the heart is also the most important element in the structure of the human body. Without the heart, man cannot live in this world and so is the Princess Play performance, In other words, without drums, each music performed is not complete and there will be infallible.

Then, the flutes were used on purpose to show the wind conditions or human emotion themselves. For the reason, there is an opinion stating that the Princess Play was done to persuade a patient. Wind energy (emotion) is one element that exists within every human being. These elements have a very big influence in determining the character and personality of human beings because every human being has a different character and personality in each of them. These elements will also determine the inclination or someone's favourite and vice versa [8].

In addition, the symbolic use of the *kisi* (a grid, a rod or a lattice) is also important in the Princess Play performance. *Kisi* represents the pulse of every human being. There are two types of

pulse is representing two human pulse. They are smooth pulse and rough pulse. According to Pak Su Rani, smooth pulse mentioned represent the pulse at our hand while the rough pulse is a pulse that occurs in the stomach which is the human heartbeat. Pulse plays a very important role in the structure of the human body. Life and death of a person can also be determined through either the beat rhythm of the pulse whether fast, medium, low or no pulses are detected. Similarly, in the Princess Play performance, where the importance of sound or rhythm resulted from the beaten *kisi* can not be denied in the healing ceremony because it influenced the condition of the patients treated.

Finally, the importance of the last musical instruments that will be discussed in this paperwork is *geduk*. *Geduk* is a musical instrument that was used in every Princess Play performance. It plays a role in representing the structure of a human chest. Chest is the part that lies between the position of the shoulder and stomach. Each people whether it is men and women have a distinctive chest condition. Normally, for the men they have a wider structural on the chest area, while for women, they have the contrast breast structure in which they have a smaller chest size. *Geduk* importance in the Princess Play performance reflect the position of the chest that lies in the structure of the human body. It is mean that, with the absence *geduk*, someone's body structure is imperfect and at the same time it will lead to imperfections in the rhythm and songs presented in the performance.

Magical Elements in The Storytelling Of Shadow Play.

Animism is a way of thinking that believe and acknowledge the existence of the mystical creatures known as jinn (genie) and the community kept the belief even after embracing Islam [28]. The stories presented in the Shadow Play has many elements that against our logical sense. The content of the characters involved in the Shadow Play narration and storylines performed indicate the existence of the elements of belief in the extraordinary power in the stories presented. Stories presented by Tok Dalang is a story that is learned and inherited from one generation to generation.

Magical elements can be found in a story that is presented in Shadow Play, entitled 'Genor Sari', which tells the story of the the battle between human and a jinn (genie) in winning a princess. It is a story of a jinn who fell in love with a princess named *Princess Mulia Adil* but his desire had been barred by *Emperor Serama*. The hostility between the *Pancung Langit jinn and Pancung Papat Jinn* with the *Emperor Serama* lasted until he had to sent two warriors to fight with the jinns. The warriors named Angnila and the Angada were sent to fight but were defeated by the jinns who were using supernatural powers. Steam from the earth spirit is a weapon used by those jinns to weaken the strength of the two warlords. Finally, those Jinns were defeated by his Majesty of the *Emperor Serama's* son named *Lord Hanuman Kera Putih* that had long a meditation to gain the ability to defeat the jinns. Genor Sari's tale tells the story about the human life that mixed with the supernatural elements involving genies and gods. In addition, the story of 'Genor Sari' also tells the story of human beings with the high status such as the royalty like *Maharaja Serama* and *lord Hanuman Kera Putih* who had an extraordinary powers and magic to defeat their enemies.

The same thing goes with the story told in The tale of the "Beluru Sulung Limau Dara". In the story, there were characters of gods, genie and incarnations animals. In this story, a nobleman who is looking for the origin of *Raden Mas Bayu Andra* who has a twin brother that incarnated as a black horse named 'Black Horse with the power hair and copper nail' who can speak like humans. The story of *Raden Mas Bayu Andra* who met with god named *Dewa Ismi Dewa* came down to earth by disguising as an old lady to give the knowledge and power to the prince of *Raden Mas Bayu Andra*. With the knowledge provided by the gods, *Raden Mas Bayu Andra* succeed in defeating his enemy named *Jin Kilat Kris Halulintang Alam* which had been hostile to the *Emperor Serama*. In the Shadow Play narrating, the stories presented featuring a lot of characters who have supernatural powers. and human beings that possessed an incredible miracle. People who have supernatural powers or superhuman consists of royalty blood which in the context of Malay community, the king is the highest hierarchy and is always associated with the power that is different from ordinary people.

4. Conclusion

Ancient Malay community is certainly had a strong faith in animisme ideology and it has been passed down and inherited to the next generation. This event led to a small group of peoples

today who still hold these beliefs and practices. This situation can be proved from the beliefs some of the community members towards traditional Malay cultural performances itself through Princess Princess and Shadow Play. Both of these performances not only functioned as a mere entertainment, but they reflect the belief of the magical and extraordinary powers contained in these performances. Through the Princess Play performance, the belief on the magical element are reflecting the way of the particular community member way of thinking who still with the practice in the Princess Play team. It is because they assume that every musical instrument has the meaning and symbol of its own. The same thing goes within the Shadow Play, the belief in extraordinary powers or supernatural clearly reflected in the narrative style presented by Tok Dalang. Someone with the title of Tok Dalang is not only capable of playing variety of voices, but also knowledgeable and have great confidence in the interpretation of each story submitted for the public viewing. Although this is only a foundation research, another deeper research must be made by various parties for modern society today are not only able to understand the patterns of thought and the belief on magical and extraordinary powers held by the Princess Play and Shadow Play involved, but they also can learn significantly behind the acceptance of a certain number of members of the community through both of these performances that still actively practiced today.

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