Disciplining Rock Music and Identity Contestations: Hybridization, Islam and New Musical Genres in Contemporary Malaysian Popular Music

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Abstract:

Sometime in 1989, Margaret Scott, a Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) journalist, observed the heightening fervour of Malay rock music among ardent young Malay followers calling themselves 'kutus', when at the same time Islamic fundamentalism was on the rise. Fast forward towards the end of 1997, however, Raihan, a *Nasyid* (Islamic religious song) group, signed by Warner Records, sold a record-breaking half-a-million of their debut album. Since then *Nasyid* musical groups and Raihan wannabes began to mushroom creating a new hype in Malaysian popular music and industry, culminating in the *Nasyid pop* 'success' story. The focus of the article is to analyse how, at a particular phase in the evolution of Malaysian popular music, 'rock' was 'disciplined' to make way for the rise of other musical genres, in this case*, Balada Nusantara (Irama Malaysia)* and *Nasyid pop*. Taking a critical perspective, I argue that the 'transition' from rock to these musical genres occurred on a terrain which involves several levels of contestation, constituted by the juxtapositions of different institutions and social actors - such as the role of the state, state actors, political parties, the mediation of Islam and national culture, and ultimately, the 'agency' of non-state actors and the creative nucleus.

Keywords: *Balada Nusantara; biopower; governmentality; hybridity; identity contestation; Islamic revivalism; kutus; localisation; Malaysia; Naysid pop; popular culture; postcolonial state*

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, the landscape of Malay(sian) popular music has always been vibrant, fluid and accommodative to outside influences. 'Localisation' or 'hybidisation' has become an important characteristic of its identity (1); the legendary late P. Ramlee's popular composition, *Azizah* and the internationally-acclaimed *Getaran Jiwa* for instances, are known to be elaborations derived from nuances of Indian and Chinese music respectively. P. Ramlee became a household name both as a singer-songwriter and a film star (later director). His songs and films found popularity in the Malayo-Indonesian world through the medium of the then expanding and successful Malay movie industry based in Singapore. (2)

Eventually local popular Malay music became an integral part of the music industry base which was dominated by foreign-owned subsidiaries of multinational 'giants' until today. The industry was initially pioneered by EMI (British), which was later followed by other internationals such as WEA (American), BMG Pacific (German), Polygram(Dutch), Sony and Pony Canyon (both Japanese), moving from an initial base in Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, the current capital of Malaysia. (3)

In the 1960s and 70s, the Government TV network, RTM (Radio TV Malaysia), became an important creative base in generating an orchestral form of modern Malay music - pioneering new arrangements and an alternative interpretation to existing Malay traditional musical genres such as *Dondang Sayang,* and *Asli.* Another creative icon, Ahmad Nawab, seven years younger than P. Ramlee, moved from RTM to EMI to carve himself a niche in the commercial world of Malay popular music. With the famous Indonesian singer, Broery, he elaborated on the Indonesian style; while with the Malaysian singing sensation, Jamal Abdillah, he moved closer to P. Ramlee's blend of music by adapting a more Hindustani-based flavour into his compositions for the artiste. Later on, with the legendary female singing diva, the late Sharifah Aini, he found both styles suitable. It was apparent that the nature of musical sub-styles that he created was tailored to the particular character and orientation of the individual singer.

There was a demonstration of similar dynamism and local adaptability of Malay music during what is known as the '*pop yeh yeh*' era which began in the mid-60s. This was the Malay local pop answer to the explosion in the West of the type of pop music propelled by the electric guitar band sound coming from groups such as the Shadows, Dave Clark Five, the Beatles and Rolling Stones. The *kugiran* (electric guitar band) craze lasted for almost six years; it was both emulation and adaptation, but definitely it had a distinct local flavour, with new energy, which was both popular and commercial.

Hence, the evolution of Malaysian popular music has consistently been characterized by fluidity and openness. Its current playing field, for instance, seems to accommodate almost all musical genres under the sun, ranging from rock to blues, pop, r*n*b, rap, hiphop, to *irama Malaysia* (Malaysian rhythms), and other traditional Malay genres (such as *joget, asli, dondang sayang, dangdut*), *Nasyid pop* (religious songs) and lately, Indie music.

This article examines how at a particular phase in the evolution of Malaysian music, 'rock' was 'disciplined' to make way for the rise of other musical genres, in this case, *Irama Malaysia (*or *Balada Nusantara)* and *Nasyid pop*. Rather than perceiving the

above transformation as unproblematic and simply the rational outcome of a 'natural' process of change, the article takes a critical perspective. The 'transition' from rock to these musical genres occurred at several levels of contestation, articulated by the juxtapositions of different institutions, organisations and social actors - such as the role of the state, state actors, political parties, the mediation of Islam and national culture, and ultimately, the 'agency' of non-state actors and the creative nucleus.

I will attempt to piece together selective events and snippets relating to Malaysian popular music, and making sense of it in terms of identity contestations and hegemony in contemporary Malaysian popular music. The specific focus is on 'disciplining' Malay rock music in post-colonial Malaysia and the emergence of other musical genres that are perceived to be more in tangent with the state-sponsored notion of "national culture" or "national identity", especially in relation to Islam. But firstly, a brief foray into the bigger picture of the National Cultural Policy (NCP) and how it has influenced the representation of Malay culture and identity, and the governance of Malay popular music in post-colonial Malaysia,

'National Culture' and 'National Identity' in Post-Colonial Malaysia

The discourse on national identity and culture in Malaysia has been mainly driven by the grand narratives of the nation-state, which are "primarily homogenizing and essentialist" (4), framed by a 'dominant ethnic' Malay cultural and civilizational terms of reference (5). Historically, Malaysia has always been touted as an excellent example of a 'plural society' mediated through measured ethnic management. In Malaysia, the May 13 1969 bloody racial riots were the first early indication of the fragile nature of its multiculturalism. As a solution, the well-known state-engineered New Economic Policy (NEP), from 1970-1990, was launched to redress some of the economic imbalances between the Malays and the different non-Malay ethnic groups (6). But parallel to the above economic strategy was also the formulation of the National Cultural Policy (NCP) in 1971 which represented the first "official" attempt to 'regulate' multiculturalism in Malaysia. As a consequence, a state-driven "national culture" (NC) policy was

conceptualized and launched to provide an overarching "national identity" with a view of providing a 'superstructural' umbrella for integrating all the different ethnic/religious communities into the Malaysian nation-state.

Amongst the main principles of the 1971 NCP, are the following:
1. The NC of Malaysia must be based on the cultures of the people indigenous to the region;
2. elements from other cultures which are suitable and reasonable may be incorporated into the NC; and
3. Islam will be an important element in the NC. (7)

In the context of the Malaysian *realpolitik*, it is evident that the NCP's representation of Malay culture and Islam as a unitary base is problematic. The UMNO (the Malay ruling party) version of Islam (which converges with the "national") has always been contested by PAS (Pan Malaysian Islamic party), and in the political arena, the contestation consistently revolves around the struggle of claiming legitimacy as to who is the sole definer and arbiter of Islam in Malaysia. It should also be noted that in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution, some Islamic countries, including Malaysia, also had to grapple with the discourse on political Islam (8), a fact which also intervened into the traditional political contestation between PAS and UMNO (9). During the 1999 General Elections, for instance, the above rivalry was further accentuated by the 'Anwar factor', leading to a further erosion of Malay support for UMNO, shifting to PAS and the new predominantly Malay-based opposition – *KeAdilan* (National Justice) party led by Anwar Ibrahim. Even though *Barisan National* (the ruling coalition front) was returned to power with two-thirds majority in parliament, political analysts believed that the survival of the Malay-based UMNO in the election was heavily dependent on non-Malay votes (10).

In the past, the UMNO vs PAS rivalry had even led to UMNO supporters being branded as *kafir* or infidels by PAS leaders. It also created opposing interpretations of traditional Malay culture. Hence PAS more fundamentalist interpretation of what constituted 'legitimate' Islamic cultural practice had rendered some traditional Malay popular

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cultural forms as no longer Islamic (for instance, the banning of Malay traditional performances of *Mak Yong* and *Wayang Kulit* in the PAS-dominated state of Kelantan since 1995). Indeed, in 1999 General Election when the predominantly Malay populated state of Terengganu also fell into PAS control, it was announced that another well-known Terengganu-based Malay traditional performance – *Ulik Mayang* – could be up for review as to whether it constituted a legitimate Islamic cultural activity (11).

In the Pas-sponsored newspaper *Harakah*, a columnist, in an article titled: "*Melayu Bukan Islam, Islam Bukan Melayu*" (Malay is not Islam, Islam is not Malay), lamented on what he considered as the non-Islamic nature of a Malay traditional *adat*-based cultural practice in Sarawak of East Malaysia, known as *menimang bubu*. Apparently, the ritual, popular amongst the Sarawakian Malay Muslim fisher-folk involved the act of *memuja semangat* (worshipping spirits) (12).

It is obvious that Malay popular music and its 'identity', as it evolves in the Malayan nation-state, will be subjected to the same scrutiny as it seeks to re-negotiate and re-position itself vis-à-vis the national culture's identity claims of the nation-state and the central government's on-going political contestation with Islam as represented by PAS.

Chronology of Multi-sited Ethnographic Snippets of Malaysian Popular Music

April 1989: Reporting Malay Rock craze and Identity-making amongst Malay youths

Margaret Scott, A Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) journalist, wrote an article, entitled "*Kutu* Culture Clash" (13). It was written during the heydays of the rock craze in Malaysia and the reporter, based on her short 'fieldwork' concluded that a new Malay youth subculture, associated with heavy metal rock music, was on the rise – the term *kutu* was a vernacular subcultural term; *budaya kutu (<u>kutu</u>* culture) was coined by Scott herself.

Parts of her revealing "ethnography" is cited in the following:

"Their procession begins every Wednesday after the sun sets. Up the hill to a dusty outdoor stage behind the government television station they come by the hundreds, mostly young, mostly male, mostly Malay. They are called *kutus* and they have come to listen to loud rock music. "Rock is our life', a young man yells after the music begins. 'This is our music'. These Wednesday night concerts in the open air promise an escape for Kuala Lumpur's young and restless. With the strictures of Islamic fundamentalism pressing in on one side and, on the other side, the drudgery of working or looking for work in a place where the unemployment rate is more than 35% among 15-24 year olds, rock music offers relief: membership in the club of the *kutus,* Malaysia's version of punk rockers.

Kutus and their music are the flip side of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, a contrast to young men in Arab-style robes and young women in veils. *Kutus* emerge as the underbelly of this revival. *Dakwah* (missionary Muslims) inhabit the universities and *kutus* inhabit the shopping malls. When being young and Malay means choosing sides between the club and the *dakwahs* at one extreme and the clubs of the *kutus* at the other, popular culture becomes a partisan pastime. *Kutu culture*, a provocative, challenging alternative, *is a convenient target for what is at the root a debate over national identity.* Banishment has not worked. Despite the restrictions on concerts and television appearances, rock - particularly heavy metal - music is more popular than ever. About 12 of the 15 albums released every month are by local heavy metal rock bands. According to M.Nasir, "We are searching for what it means to be Malay in the modern world". But why heavy metal? Because its loud and its got minor chords and its offensive and it's a badge of distinction and its got clothes to go along with it and its only for young Malays and because *dakwahs* don't like *it.* The popular music scene is a mirror of some of the contradictions of modern Malaysia" (14) (author's emphasis).

In another set of ethnography written in 1992, based on a study of group of working-class Malay youth who were rock fans (*Mat rockers)* in Singapore, Shirlene Noordin, also made strong arguments about the association between rock metal music and 'identity':

"The *mat rock* subculture is a symbolic articulation of the alternative value system… These Malay youths handle the problems faced by the working-class community in general…differently from the parent culture. For example, the way they dress and behave differ greatly from the parent culture… for the youths, rock/metal music and the style that comes with it provide them with a venue not only to assert their *difference* from the dominant culture and its values but also gives them a *separate identity* from the Malay parent culture…

But they "are not carrying out a subtle revolution against the dominant society…They have no desire to change society or society's perception of them. What they are doing is to show that they are different, that they do not share the same concerns as the rest of society. The main trait of the *Mat Rok* subculture is its

*unstructurednes*s. Leisure becomes an important aspect of their lives, even if they end up doing nothing. This 'doing nothing' is seen as a form of activity in its own right. It gives them a kind of freedom because it is done by choice….by 'doing nothing', they show that they are not controlled by anybody or anything." (15)

The appeal to rock is because the music is not "disciplined" for rock/metal music is about *"fluidity"*, hence there are no boundaries for the music and the instrument. It is "such disregard for boundaries and restrictions in the musical form" that appeals to the members, indeed, the "choices of music reflect their attitude and the different values they hold" (16) (author's emphasis mine)

July 1989: Malay mainstream's response

In a respectable mainstream literary magazine, *Dewan Budaya*, published by the government-sponsored publishing house, *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, an article, titled '*Budaya Kutu' yang Menggugat' (Kutu* Culture which Threatens), written by Abu Hassan Adam*,* highlighted the writings of Scott, published in FEER, to the Malay-reading public. The writer questioned why *Kutu* culture merely affected the Malays and warned of the danger of rock music, especially of youths being out of touch with traditional Malay music. He cited the legendary Malay artiste, P.Ramlee, who, whilst he was also influenced by western music, still fought to champion the "purity" (*kesucian)* and "integrity" (*kemurnian*) of Malay music till his demise (17).

Popular Music Scene in late 1980s & early 1990s, and the Islamic Response

Lockard, the author of *Dance of Life* (18) summarised the popular music scene in Malaysia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in the following way:

"By the late 1980s and early 1990s, heavy metal groups had become the chief focus for expressing youth alienation from mainstream lifestyles and values, although the groups faced sporadic restrictions on their public performances. Local bands like Gersang, Headwind, Search, Ella and the Boys, and the Singapore-based Rusty Blade produced best-selling records…In 1989 the heavy metal tinged Search released the first music video by Malaysian musicians and also achieved success in Indonesia, their *Fenomena* album sold an astonishing 500 copies… The success of Search came despite the arrest of several members on drug charges and the resulting departure of their lead guitarist, Hillary Ang. Heavy metal groups proliferated, playing a mix of local compositions and cover versions of western numbers, discos, staged battles of the bands, attracting enthusiastic teenage fans….

By the mid 1990s many new heavy metals groups had appeared, with names such as Silent Death, Infectious Maggots, Braindead, Deflowered, Silkhannaz, and Sludge, mostly singing in English; they offer brooding lyrics about death, hatred, and negativity. Their long hair and distinctive dress flout television codes, limiting them to live performance outlets….

Other trends are also apparent. Former Sweet Charity leader Ramli Sarip (a Singaporean) achieved stardom as a bluesy hard rocker. Known as Malaysia's *rock raja*, Ramli left Sweet Charity in 1986, after sixteen years and seven albums. Sweet Charity's style was loud, longhaired music; in the mid 1980s, they had been a necessary inclusion in any concert because of their attraction to youth." (19)

But he also touched on the Islamic position and response in the country, during the early and mid-1980s:

"Religious organizations as well as the militant *dakwah* (missionary) groups and religious-based political parties brought Islam into the forefront of public discussion, generating debate on the proper role of religion in Malay life, of Islam in a plural society, and of Islamic requirements on the activities and dress of women.
By the late 1980s the major Islamic opposition party as well as some Islamic officials were calling for the banning of popular music as immoral and incompatible with any Islamic state that might develop. Hence, in 1986, the Association of Muslim *Ulama* (religious officials) declared all forms of pop music to be *haram* (forbidden), and labeled all women who sang for a living as violating Islamic requirements for female modesty. Some villages dominated by the *Parti Islam*, which seeks to establish an Islamic state, have prohibited the distribution of newspapers and magazines carrying stories about popular music. Stage shows by pop singers, especially Malay women...are occasionally disrupted or protested as "morally degrading", sometimes at universities where militant Islamic groups are influential."(20)

1993: an 'academic' writing, correlating popular/rock music with "social ills"

In the early 90s, there was public outcry against the phenomenon of l*epak* (loitering) amongst Malaysian youth especially in urban shopping complexes. This was soon linked to other "ills" including *bohsia* (the term carries a promiscuous connotation to describe urban female Malay youths with loose morals) and other "decadent" activities (21). From *lepak* to *bohsia* it was not long before 'correlations' were made by the authorities between these "social ills" and certain kinds of pop music, especially rock concerts and music.

In 1993, a book "*Muzik Rock dan Nilai Moralnya*" (Rock Music and Its Moral Values) was written by Sulaiman Noordin (22), an Associate Professor, from one of the local universities. The following is an excerpt of his writings:

> "Nowadays we often read and see disturbing symptoms in both our own society and foreign countries, for example, the increase of illegitimate children born, homosexual activities between individuals, cases of rape, sodomy and child abuse by their own parents. The reasons for such decadence are numerous. Many researchers have found that "popular" music is closely related to these activities.
> 'Popular music' these days is not simply a form of entertainment free from wrongdoings (*kesalahan*): it activates free sex, drug abuse and the occult teachings. The promoters of rock music have become very serious about their trade by utilizing sophisticated scientific techniques to manipulate the taste of their audience. These include Pavlov's psychology, subliminal techniques, backward masking and hypnosis. These techniques are actually used to attack the minds of our young generation, our sons and daughters. Among the effective means of promoting this "New Morality" is through music, films, reading, radio, TV, concerts, cassettes and video " (23) (author's translation).

The book is full of assertions, based on very selective citation of certain writings drawn from the western experience, with very little attempt to substantiate by using empirical research on the local situation.

1994: Salem Concert Watch Campaign and Reviewing "Hedonistic" Entertainment Culture

Sometime in 1994, the proposed 50-70 series of Concert Salem Celebrations for the year 1994, sponsored by major cigarette companies to be held throughout the main towns of Malaysia, came under fire. The concert was seen to be in opposition to the values of local culture and the NCP. Apart from the concert being seen as encroaching on public peace and religious sentiments, it was also perceived to threaten the "creation of a Malaysian young generation based on a resilient, authentic and integral culture" (24).There were other reasons given for their protest – including fear of drugs as well the fact of youth below 18 years being apparently allowed in, with six free cigarettes given to each of them at the point of entry. The local vernacular also publicized that in one of the concerts that

had already taken place, Salem Ella USA in Gopeng, the young concert fans were given free alcoholic drinks in addition to the free cigarettes. Led by PKPIM (*Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia*), the National Association of Muslim Students Malaysia, together with 18 other state-based associations as well as those from the higher educational institutions, a campaign to acquire a petition of 2 million signatories to protest against the concert was launched. At the meeting held at Masjid Negara (National Mossque) on 27th march 1994, about 300 students came to show their support. (25)

The above was followed by a seminar titled: *Serangan Budaya Hiburan "Hedonistik" menjelang Abad Ke 21*" (The Assault by Hedonistic Entertainment Culture on the eve of the 21st Century), which was organised by the "Salem Watch" Committee from PKPIM, together with BAHEIS and Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka. The objectives of the seminar were to follow through and review some of the major issues and implications which arose from the Salem Concert, by way of a discourse on western entertainment culture and hedonism. (26)

Localising & Hybridizing Genres

Alternative identity-making in Malaysian popular music- March 1990: the launching of *Balada Nusantara* and birth of *Irama Malaysia*

Watching the beginnings of the 'rock craze' in the region gaining a strong foothold in the region by the mid-1980s, Manan Ngah, a Malay composer, began to elaborate an alternative genre. He drew inspiration from his first attempt to showcase a Malaysian version of 'World music' during the 1988 "World Carnival' Sports Aid presentation. This was held in September 12, 1988, which showcased the first Malaysian live "World Music" global presentation During this world event, for ten minutes, at 12.30 after midnight, a Malaysian musical "showcase" was presented live to the whole world as part of the Global TV London's production of "World carnival" Sports Aid 88 (27). Manan Ngah was selected by the Malaysian official TV government network, RTM to be the musical director, and through his creativity, a first Malaysian genre of "world music", a "fusion" ("hybrid") integrating traditional (ethnic) and modern popular music was 're-

invented' and performed by Malaysian musicians, artistes and dancers. A year later, in late 1989, he publicly announced the arrival of his new genre as *Balada Nusantara* (28).

On 24ᵗʰ March 1989, Manan Ngah launched the album – *Sheqal* – the first Malaysian popular musical form based on the genre *Balada Nusantara*, which was given official recognition (*pentakrifan)* by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The significance of the above musical genre to Malaysian cultural authorities as a contemporary Malaysian musical form was symbolized by the fact that the ceremony was launched by the then Chairman of the Committee of advisors on National Culture in Malaysia, Professor Tan Sri Awang Had Salleh (29).

Already, before the *Sheqal* launching, dominating the popular charts and TV3 *"Muzik-Muzik"* weekly song contest programme with refreshing compositions such as *Sekadar Di Pinggiran* (sung by Francesca Peters) and the haunting *Merisik Kabar* (rendered by the late Sudirman), glimpses of Manan Ngah's to-be-named *Balada Nusantara* were already apparent. It was only a matter of time before he officially announced the name. When the day finally came, the creative effort was well-received both by the Malay fans (*peminat)* as well by those from the circle of Malay intellectual and cultural elites *(budayawan*) in the country. Songs from *Sheqal*, such as *Cinta Nusantara* and *Zapin Rindu-Rinduan*, representative of Manan's *Nusantara* genres became overnight hits and were among the Malay pop music top-charters.

In a written statement, Manan Ngah defined *Balada Nusantara* as a 'hybrid':

> "an original composition, the product of a synthesis or *hybrid* generated by the influences of world music which are dominant in the cultures of nations of Asean, Southeast Asia and Asia, and which highlights the musical aesthetic values of Europe, Spain, Latin America, Arabia, India and China which have been integrated into a Malay music base, in the context of a Malay world, *Nusantara"* (30) (author's emphasis).

In a personal interview with the author, Manan emphasized that the above "hybridization" was a part of the 'old globalisation', as he emphasized that:

"There must be an awareness in music that we have what we have. We should be prepared to take from outside what we feel is more appropriate – we don't have to feel superior or inferior. This is a fact which has always been with us from before. And when we look at our own history, it is evident that our forefathers then were more progressive and innovative than we are now with the existence of *Joget, Dondang Sayang, Nasyid* and *Ghazal,* and others… In reality, our ancestors had much earlier on created a synthesis or a hybrid form as a product of integrating the aesthetic values of Hispanic, European, Arabic, Indian and Chinese origins into Malay artistic work." (31)

For the thinkers' among this emerging crop of music makers, there was a nagging fear that since Malaysian contemporary music depicted such strong western influences, this would eventually marginalize if not wipe out altogether the presence of Malay traditional music from contemporary popular Malaysian music. Thus for concerned maestros like Manan Ngah and M. Nasir, rather than allow the above factor to take its natural course and "drown the traditional feel", *Balada Nusantara* represented an attempt to "intensify" this "traditional' feel in contemporary Malay music. For them, the act of naming the genre was not only timely, but it was at once an important political act of 'resistance' in the struggle for cultural identity in the Malaysian-global nexus music world. As Manan emphasized:

"It should be remembered that (for) the artistic synthesis in "*Balada Nusantara*" …what is more primary is the Malaysian values depicted in the aspects of its melody, rhythm and harmony." (32)

For M. Nasir, what he called *Muzik Nusantara* (Nusantara music) expressed the long-overdue "need to stake a claim over our own music," especially considering the current pervasiveness of cross-cultural influences in both western and eastern music (33). Hence local composers and musicians should review again their own heritage of cultural treasures *(khazanah)* and "local knowledge" – the *Inang, Zapin, Keroncong*, *Ghazal, Joget, Dondang Sayang,* even *Dikir Barat* (traditional rap) – and contemporarise them – or as M.Nasir suggested in the following media statement: you simply 'pop' their music!

"Reggae music originates from Jamaica but why has it been accepted by the west and the whole world. It is because such music has been adapted to the elements of contemporary music. If we want our traditional music to be recognized in the eyes of the world, then we just have to pop these melodies." (34)

Both Manan and M.Nasir however admitted that they were not the original creators of *Balada* or *Muzik Nusantara*; they were merely its propagators and ideologues. Hence, as Manan asserted:

> "In reality *Nusantara* music had already been in existence for a long time. A large component of the Malay songs composed in the past had characteristics of *Nusantara* music. Only the name of the music was not there." (35)

The act of naming immediately created its snowballing effects in the music industry. Thus both M. Nasir's initial solo albums – *Solo* and *Saudagar Mimpi* – were already strong testimonies of his own *Nusantara* genre. Special mention should be made of *Mustika* - the Javanese gamelan and angklung-inspired hypnotic and lyrical piece in *Solo*. The later album, *Saudagar Mimpi*, which was again followed by *Canggung Mendonan* (showcasing the fusion with *silat*-inspired rhythm award-winning song - *Mentera Semerah Padi)* and *Phoenix Bangkit* again proved beyond doubt his rightful place as one of the few visionary architects and interpreters of modern *Nusantara* music in the region. The last album represented an attempt by Nasir to blend contemporary Malay music with the rhythms from those of the Moorish Islamic world – another hybrid genre which was increasingly becoming more global than the initial *Nusantara* music. Since the late 1990s, Malaysian contemporary music has also been graced by the arrival of Pak Ngah, another Malay creative icon, who provided another *Nusantara* variant – but also uniquely distinctive in blending a genre which synergized contemporary Malay music with traditional percussion instruments and collective chanting. The top charter such as *Cindai*, sung by the very popular local artiste Siti Nurhaliza, represented a sample of such a genre.

Even Ramli Sarip, the "Rock King" *(Papa Rock)*, after leaving his rock band, Sweet Charity, also brought out two albums. The first- *Ehsan* - also represented a move in the same genre as M. Nasir and Manan Ngah – but with a definite personal identity of Ramli's own style. His earlier solo albums such as *Perjalanan Hidup* and *Istilah* were more in the mould of rock ballads, blending folk with acoustics. Long before Raihan appeared on the scene with their blend of contemporary *Nasyid pop*, he was already belting out songs with strong social and religious messages *(lagu-lagu ketuhanan)* for the

young generation. Already his experimentation in the evergreen duet with Khadijah Ibrahim in the *Inang*-inspired track *Doa Buat kekasih* was ample evidence of his potential to evolve a *Nusantara*-oriented genre; his later effort – *Zaman* - was an attempt to contemporise Malay traditional rhythms such as *Asli* and *Keroncong*, with the title track song, being a refreshing *Asli* duet with the veteran S.M Salim. Earlier, S.M Salim was also riding high in the Malaysian top charts after "re-inventing" himself in his comeback to the local music scene with his own composition of the catchy *Joget* titled – *Apa nak Jadi*. He continued his successful streak with a modern and upbeat rendition of another *Joget,* titled *Satu*, in which he combined forces with the younger Zainal, a well-known R.A.P (Roslan Aziz Production) singer of the top-charter *Hijau* fame.

In light of the above new consciousness and move to assert a new musical genre which represented local identity in a world dominated by western and global music, it came to no surprise that TV3 *Musik-Musik*, the popular song contest programme also took on a pro-active role by delineating a separate category called *Irama Malaysia* (Malaysian Rhythms) as a way to recognize the *Balada Nusantara* musical genre created by Manan Ngah and M.Nasir. Under the new format, *Musik-Musik* also began to give annual recognition and awards to winning compositions in the above category. In this way, it indirectly encouraged music producers and songwriters to also compose songs which they could creatively blend and fuse with traditional musical elements.

In the beginning, such an effort already brought to the fore some interesting variants of the genre from other younger composers apart from Manan Ngah, M. Nasir, and Pak Ngah, who initially hogged the limelight, e.g. Pak Pandir's *Yang Remeh Temeh*; Azman Abu Hassan's interpretation of the classic *Siti Payung*; Wan Zul's blend*, Khazanah dari Malaya*; Tok Ki's *Asli, Seni Berzaman*, and even from Japan, Sandi Suzuki' rendition of Makuto's in *Ikan Kekek* and *Lenggang Kangkung*. It is also interesting to note that with the adverse publicity surrounding rock music, TV3 also began to promote a more Malaysian–modulated type of rock music, by re-categorising the rock category as *balada* (ballads) in its signature *Musik-Musik* programme.

1992-1994: The State's call for the formulation of a Nasyid New Era (Nasyid Era Baru) Project

In the beginning, in confronting rock music, the state adopted coercive measures and regulations such as banning rock concerts, excluding some groups from getting airplay over radio, and denying the appearance of long-haired artists on the government television network. Gradually, however, the state began to think discursively and creatively to assert hegemonic influence.

At one stage, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, heading the Religious Affairs Section (BAHEIS), was prepared to stage a *Dakwah* rock concert as a way of "responding" to the influence of rock over the Malaysian youth (36). Already the DBKL (The Kuala Lumpur City Municipal) had begun to introduce a national annual *Dakwah* song writing competition as a way to encourage contemporary songwriters and musical talents to pool their creative energies towards enriching the *Nasyid* repertoire, and re-create a new *Nasyid* genre (37).

It was obvious that the state, via BAHEIS of the PM's Department, had for some time been thinking of how to effectively reformulate and recreate its *Nasyid* re-packaging through its series of national *Nasyid* seminars which it jointly organised with the Selangor State government. The second one was held in November 1992 in which major resolutions were passed, which became the basis of policies implemented by *Jawatan Kuasa Kemajuan Muzik Berunsur Islam Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam* (The Committee for Developing Music with Islamic Orientations in the Religious Affairs Section) of the Prime Minister's Department. (38)

In another first national *Nasyid* Workshop held on October 24th, 1994, one of the issues discussed was how to develop strategies in popularising *Nasyid* songs. There was much re-thinking about working towards improving the quality of *Nasyid* in terms of melodies, musical composition as well as lyrics so as to make them more socially relevant to contemporary human conditions both locally and globally. The project was to formulate a

Nasyid genre for the New Era (*Nasyid Era Baru*). In addition, the strategies also touched on recordings as well as identifying *Nasyid* groups that could successfully render *Nasyid* songs effectively and with quality. (39)

According to Tan Sooi Beng, the concept of *nasyid era baru* was actualized in a live television performance at the national *nasyid* competition in 1994 and this performance was repeated at the closing night of the 1995 Qur'an Reading competition. The project was the product of a synergy between local lecturers from University Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and foreign consultants from Egypt. She noted that "The *nasyid era baru* was a total performance incorporating *nasyid* song, dance, theater, poetry, and chants including the use of costumes and props" (40), and cited a UiTM lecturer, Fakhariah bt. Datuk Hj. Lokman, a producer and *nasyid* composer for the performance, who proclaimed that "the use of new media as well as digital lighting and sound systems and the use of contemporary forms of art showed Islam as dynamic and capable of adaptation and assimilation in order to survive the conditions of the modern world. The new form is universal, conveys Islamic ideals, promotes the understanding of Islam as a world-view and creates unity among all of the world's nations." (41) The occasion was also graced by the performance of local pop celebrities such as Fauziah Latiff, Sharifah Aini and Ning Baizura who were "clad in fashionable Islamic clothes". (42)

It was not long before a new commercial form of *nasyid* known as *pop nasyid* began to emerge in Malaysia. Commercial *pop nasyid* songs were sung *a capella* (in two or three part harmony) or with instrumental accompaniment, and continued to maintain lyrics praising Allah and extolling Islamic values and the teachings of The Prophet. They were produced and distributed to mass audiences by recording companies, with participation by both international and local labels. The latter constituted of production houses formed by some of the leaders of the creative nucleus of the dissolved *Darul Arqam* and by some of the *nasyid* artistes themselves. The new genre also adapted various types of Anglo-American pop music (such as the music of boy bands Westlife and Backstreet Boys), while incorporating world beat and local rhythms. Percussion instruments from Malaysia and other parts of the world were also employed (43). Hence, *Nasyid* pop is clearly also a

product of hybridization. It is also interesting to note that as *nasyid pop* became popular, *nasyid* groups were also able to entice rock icons, both singers and musicians to be a part of their recorded *nasyid* songs and video clips. (44)

But in explaining the success of '*Nasyid pop*', its genesis must be sought outside the boundary of state prerogatives. The resurgence of *Nasyid* music in the industry, pioneered by Raihan (followed by Rabbani & Hijjaz, and others) owed its legacy to the Islamic religious sect, *Darul Arqam*, which was founded by Ashaari Mohammad in 1971, and which by 1975, was operating its own communal Islamic village (Arqam village) in Sungai Penchala, near the capital city. It was an urban-based movement attracting about 10,000 to 12,000 educated middle-class Malay followers, which was eventually banned by the Malaysian government in 1994. In its heyday, *Nasyid* music became an integral aspect of its cultural life and *dakwah* movement, and potential *Nasyid* singers were recruited, groomed and stringently trained for the task. *Nada Murni* became a famous household name (and indeed on many occasions was invited to sing on government tv station, RTM) whose reach under the aegis of *Darul Arqam*, was already global. When *Darul Arqam* was disbanded in 1994, it was only a matter of time before the *Nasyid*-singing talents from *Arqam* were 'released' into the local music industry.

Former Arqam-based *Nada Murni* members , when interviewed, claimed that they were part of the creators of *Nusantara Nasyid,* drawing their inspiration from a fusion of the Arab and Malay world, elevating it to a contemporary form. They apparently synthesised influences from such genres as *dikir barat* (Malay traditional rap), *Melayu Asli* (traditional Malay song), *joget* (traditional Malay dance) and others. Over time they too evolved; with *Nada Murni* (initially known as: *Putera Al-Arqam* or Al-Arqam Princes) being frequently invited for national, regional and international performances, they soon began to perfect their overall creative skills with emphasis on movements (e.g adapted from Malay martial arts, the *silat*), and indeed, the whole packaging of modern show biz, including scripting, lighting, stage set, backdrop and visuals. But

notwithstanding the 'show-biz' glitz, their songs never deviated from *dakwah*, and their spiritual make-up always maintaining a balance between a disciplined mind-set (focusing on a denial of 'glamour' and ego that normally came with 'show biz'), and *ibadah* (obligatory religious practices). *Nasyid* singers were exposed to continuous religious knowledge *(ilmu)*, through lectures *(ceramah)* even during their journey to their various performances. To be the chosen one, a *nasyid* singer must have exemplary Islamic behavior and not just a good voice. In *Arqam*, a cultural wing, MAKSIS *(Madrasah Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Islam*) was established as a base to facilitate the training of potential *nasyid* singers and cadres. Its leaders were confident that *nasyid* singers who graduated from *Arqam* would have acquired the mental discipline and focus to handle the world of entertainment (*hiburan)*; that *dakwah* would always be a part of their *nasyid*. Their fears were for those new *nasyid* singers in the industry, who they felt could easily lose themselves (*terumbang ambing)* in the world of artistes and their glamour, with only their 'recording company' to take care of them.

Nasyid **and Raihan as Pop Music and going global**

Towards the end of December 1997*, The Star* ran a feature article in praise of Raihan's debut *Nasyid* album which was a phenomenal success, selling a record-breaking half-a-million units in the country. (45) Earlier in the year the same paper also ran another article under the heading: "Raihan goes International", disclosing that the Raihan group was invited to perform at the prestigious Prince's Trust Royal Gala Concert in Edinburgh, the event marking the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh. Warner Music, the international label under which Raihan records also revealed that a deal was being finalized with the Erato label in France for a world-wide release of Raihan's multi-platinum *Puji-Pujian* album. The Erato imprint had released albums by the Three Tenors, Jose Carreras individually, and more. It also happens to be a Warner Music International affiliate. (46)

Meantime, in the popular music landscape of Malaysia, at this particular juncture, the standing of Raihan as a popular musical group was equivalent if not higher than any of the best non-*Nasyid* pop artiste or group. The group's video clips became a regular daily feature on local TVs and *Nasyid* artistes and bands had become a visible entity in any major 'entertainment' and musical award celebrations. Raihan's association with the international scene had also enhanced its local standing. Indeed, Raihan had not only arrived but *Nasyid* pop had also come to stay in the new pop culture scene of the nation state. *Nasyid* groups such as Rabbani, Hijjaz and others began to mushroom, giving birth to numerous other wannabe Raihans in the contemporary Malaysian music industry. The *Naysid* pop 'success' story does not stop here – on 11th October 2002, The Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM) started a *Nasyid* Charter IKMI.fm, for two hours, every Friday night, and there are apparently further plans afoot to upgrade the current charter into a *Naysid* Annual Competition Award format. (47) IKIM also began to initiate an annual musical award equivalent to the long-running TV 3 mainstream POP MUSIK-MUSIK awards for contesting *Nasyid* songs.

Conclusion
'Disciplining' Rock and the birth of New Musical Genres (*Balada Nusantara* and *Nasyid Pop*) in Post-colonial Malaysia

The above paper, by way of utilising selective multi-sited 'ethnographic' snippets and events, is an attempt to situate the emergence and influence of 'rock music' during a specific phase of the Malaysian "modernization project", and how the state attempted to deal with it. But the issue is not simply about the state vs rock music, as the state was involved at several levels of contestation.

In the first instance, pertaining to the above 'rock' consumption of popular culture, the question of 'agency' at this level is one of "identity-making" amongst Malay youth. From the state's perspective, such "identity-making" was perceived to 'deviate' from and contest the core tenet of the NC (and 'national identity') relating to Islam. In addition, the

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state was not the sole definer of Islam, as it was always in contestation with PAS interpretation of culture and identity. Hence the state and PAS relationship had always been characterized by claims and counter-claims of what constituted 'legitimate' Malay Islamic /cultural practices. Popular music happened to be one of them and this became even more problematic for the state when de-legitimizing claims by PAS on contemporary popular culture could no longer be repelled nor justified by UMNO, and presented a serious threat to the latter's position.

However since the issue dealt with youth, rather than a political party, or a movement or a group of 'dissenters' as such, it was not appropriate for the state to use its repressive apparatus, such as the ISA (Internal Security Act) by putting the youths concerned under detention. Indeed, in the initial phase of the state's confrontation with 'rock' the state did experiment with various 'sanctions'. But these could only be temporary stop-gap measures. The state realized that hegemony would have to be established in other ways.

In the case of rock music, even though the youths affected were ethnically Malays, the state also realized that as a long-term strategy, it would be unwise to bring these Malay youths down to their heels by force or coercive measures. But along Gramscian lines, the state was also looking for another alternative: i.e. a long-term effective measure would be for the state to support, strategize and even intervene (or "conspire"), in the creation of alternative musical genres (which could also be 'popular') for the consumption of Malay youth. Equally important from the state's perspective, it was also imperative that these new alternative musical genres were deemed 'suitable', in manifesting the values of 'national identity/culture', especially in order for UMNO to head off the persistent 'Islamic' demands coming from PAS.

Fortunately for the state, in the re-creating of *Balada Nusantara* or *Nusantara* music by the likes of Manan Ngah and M. Nasir (who were subsequently followed by other friends), such a creative 'movement' was pioneered by a voluntary spirit of artistic struggle (*semangat perjuangan seni*) to articulate a local "identity" of Malay/sian music in the face of globalization, without the overt involvement of the state. These leaders

represented the creative nucleus of the local music industry who took it upon themselves to formulate and re-formulate their art form with a strong sense of locality and history; hence the *Nusantara* musical genre and all its variants and 'hydridization'. In the contemporary scene of Malaysian popular music, the above genre has already come to stay, but analytically, it should be noted that it was borne out of 'agency' and a political/cultural struggle located outside the state (UMNO)-PAS terrain of contestation. Nor were the members of this creative nucleus, when immersing themselves in their artistic 'work' too overtly or consciously motivated by the 'grand narratives' of the 'nation' and its claims about national culture. Unwittingly, however, the product of their creative work had contributed to the enhancing of state hegemony.

In contrast, the genesis of *Nasyid pop* appeared to be borne out of conscious state engineering, especially through the work of the religious and bureaucratic arm of the state, BAHEIS. In this development it was also 'ideologically' supported by other groups such as PKPIM, DBP and other associations which constituted of Malay/Muslim members. Indeed some of these groups might not necessarily be aware of the machinations of the state, but in their struggle against the 'common enemy' (such as the 'Salem Celebration 94', or the fight against 'hedonist entertainment'), they became common allies. The constant 'threat' posed by these forms of 'entertainment' *(hiburan)* always constituted a strong rallying point to contest and resist the "westernized/non-Islamic" 'negative' influences perceived to encroach upon their Islamic and "national" cultural values.

In the final analysis, as far as the state was concerned, the birth of the new *Nasyid* genre, i.e. *Nasyid Era Baru,* would be a strategic way of ensuring some form of hegemony, however prolonged and tedious the process would take in the arena of popular culture and in its own contestation with PAS Islam. From the viewpoint of capital (the multi-national recording companies such as Warner, EMI , BMG, Polygram and others which traditionally dominated the local music industry), such an alliance with the state and 'Islam' was ideologically unproblematic, as long as *Nasyid Pop* was able to bring in the profits. For the Malay/Muslim fans of popular music, it would make them feel that

contemporary Malaysian popular music has some element of Islamic identity rendering it more acceptable.

With the vantage of hindsight, it could also be said that the birth of both popular genres, *Nusantara* music and *Nasyid pop*, has gone a long way in 'disciplining' rock music in post-colonial Malaysia. (48) In the case of *Nasyid* pop, whilst the state did initiate and exercise its hegemony, the genesis of modern *Nasyid* in Malaysian popular culture reveals another narrative which takes the real praxis and struggle to the 'agency' of *Nada Murni* and its *Darul Arqam*.

The empirical details of the *Nasyid* story while it was hatching in *Darul Arqam* will require another paper. It is clear here, however, that in 1979, the Iranian Revolution had caught the imagination of many Muslims in the Southeast Asian region, especially the post-Iranian revolution model of Islamic governance. In Malaysia, PAS in particular came under its influence; towards the end of 1981, the *ulama* (religious clerics) of the Pas Youth went to Iran to support the success of the revolution and the Iranian *Ulama.* (49) Hence, after Mahathir took over the political leadership of Malaysia in 1981, one of his domestic concerns was to instil Islamic values (*penerapan nilai-nilai Islam*) into the administration of the nation as a way to counter PAS assertion of its brand of Islam, as well as to accelerate the co-option and mainstreaming of the *Dakwah* (renewed commitment to religion) movement, prevalent at universities and mediated by organisations such as ABIM (the National association of Muslim Youth). (50) It was also under Mahathir that *Darul Arqam* was banned by the Malaysian government on the charge that it was a deviant Islamic sect. (51) It also came to no surprise that in the later part of his office, in 1992, it was the Ministry under the Prime Minister's department, heading the Religious Affairs Section (BAHEIS), through The Committee for Developing Music with Islamic Orientations in the Religious Affairs Section, that started to brainstorm and initiate the idea of '*Nasyid Era Baru* (of the New Era). It was also clear that from the state's perspective, one of the ways to contest 'political Islam' (especially the threat of PAS) was to engineer an agenda of Islam in popular culture, which would simultaneously serve to 'discipline' Malay rock.

Ironically the origins of new *Nasyid* can be traced to *Darul Arqam*, the very organization that the government had banned. As described by Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid on the role of *Darul Arqam*:

"There is wide acceptance that *Darul Arqam*, via its main *nasyeed* Nada Murni and the Zikr, was chiefly responsible for popularizing *nasyeed* as a modern musical genre in Malaysia since the mid-1980s. *Darul Arqam* cultural performances were distinctive for integrating contemporary musical instruments, such as the use of percussion and modern instruments, with the classical *nasyeed* melody as inherited from its Sufi origins. All three most popular nasyeed groups in contemporary Malaysia, viz. Raihan, Rabbani and Hijjaz, trace their origins to *Darul Arqam's* multiple cultural troupes." (52)

Notes & References

(1) Many studies on popular culture have recognised 'localisation' and 'hybridisation' as logical processes in which recipient cultures appropriate and rework oncoming external or 'global' cultural forms to make them their 'own' or imprint upon them with a local identity. See Siti Zanariah Ahmad Ishak, "Cultural Hybridity: Adapting and Filtering of Popular Culture in Malaysian Television programmes", *Malaysian Journal of Media Studies,* Vol.13, No.1, 2011 (pp. 1-15); Eirlys E Davies & Abdelali Bentahila, " Code switching and the globalisation of popular music: The case of North African rai and rap", *Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*. Volume 25, Issue 4, 2008 ((pp. 367–392); (Eds.) Chan Kwok-bun, Jan W. Walls, and David Hayward, *East-West Identities: Globalization, Localization, and Hybridization* (International Comparative Social Studies), Leiden: Brill, 2007.

(2) On Malay cinema, see Hatta Azzad Khan (1977) *The Malay Cinema*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan.

(3) See Zawawi Ibrahim (1995*) Popular Culture at the Crossroads: Malay Contemporary Music (An Analysis of Creativity and the Industry*), Cendekia, Monograph series of Akademi Pengajian Melayu, Universiti Malaya (pp.26-27).

(4) Zawawi Ibrahim (2010), "Contesting 'Nation': Renegotiating Identity and Multiculuralism in the New Malaysian Cinema", in (eds.) Doobo Shim, Ariel Heryanto, Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, *Pop Culture Formations across East Asia*, Seoul: Jimoondang (p.87).

(5) Sumit Mandal (2008),"The National Cultural Policy and Contestation over Malaysian Identity", in (eds.) Joan M. Melson, Jacob Meerman and Abdul Rahman Embong, *Globalisation and National Autonomy: The Experience of Malaysia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. For a review of the original compilation of the papers presented at this historical event, see: Kementerian Kebudayaan Belia dan Sukan (1973) *Asas Kebudayaan Kebangsaan.*Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Sukan.

(6) See (eds) (2013) Terence Gomez & Johan Saravanamuttu *The New Economic Policy in Malaysia: Affirmative Action, Ethnic Inequalities and Social Justice*, Petaling Jaya: SIRD; NUS & ISEAS: Singapore. Also Halim Salleh (2000) 'Globalisation and the challenge to Malay Nationalism: on the essence of Malaysian Nationalism', In Leo Suryadinata (ed.) *Nationalism and. Globalisation: East and West,* Singapore: ISEAS; Also Loh, Kok Wah (2002), 'Developmentalism and the limits of Democratic discourse', In Loh, Kok Wah and Khoo Boo Teik*, Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practice,* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon

(7) Aziz Deraman (1992) *Tamadun Melayu dan Pembinaan Bangsa Malaysia,* Kuala Lumpur: Arena Ilmu (p. 112); also see Zawawi Ibrahim (2000), "Anthropologising "National Culture" in Malaysia: Representing and Contesting Culture in the Age of Fragmentation," *Soumen Antropologi,* (Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society) Vol.25, No.2.

(8) Mohamed Nawab bin Mohamed Osman (2014), "Transnational Radical Islamism and its impact in Indonesia and Malaysia", in *The Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

(9) For analyses of the traditional political contestation between UMNO and PAS, see Clive Kessler (1978) *Islam and Politics in a Malay State, Kelantan* 1838-1969, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; also John Funston (1980) *Malay Politics in Malaysia:* A *Study of United Malays National Organisation and Party Islam,* Kuala Lumpur : Heinemann.

(10) See Shamsul Akmar (1999) "It's Time for Malays to Take Stock", *The Star* Dec23rd (p.23); Also Zainuddin Maidin (1999) 'Menangani Undi Protes', *Utusan Malaysia,* 2nd Dec.p.6; pp.12-14; Zainah Anwar (1999) ,'Is an Islamic State possible? , *New Straits Times,* Dec 22nd, pp. 12-14.

(11) See New Straits Times, Friday, December 31st.1999, p.16.

(12) Lanh (1999) "Melayu Bukan Islam, Islam Bukan Melayu", *Harakah* 20th December

(13) Margaret Scott (1989) "Kutu Culture Clash", *Far Eastern Economic Review,* April 13th, pp.36-37.

(14) ibid.

(15) See Shirlene Noordin (1992) *Mat Rokers: An Insight into a Malay Youth* Subculture. Unpublished Academic Exercise, Degree of Bachelor of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore (p.58).

(16) ibid, p.47

(17) Abu Hassan Adam (1989)' Budaya Kutu yang Menggugat', *Dewan Budaya,* July
(p.43)

(18) See Craig A.Lockard (1998) *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

(19) ibid, pp256-257.

(20) ibid, p.248.

(21) See, for instance, research reports and publications prepared during this period, Amariah Buang *(1997), Tindakan Terhadap Isu masalah Sosial- Moral Di Kalangan Remaja Malaysia.* Report prepared for Datin Sri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (mimeo); Also, Shamsudin A. Rahim (1994) *Tingkah Laku Lepak Di Kalangan Remaja (Kajian Di SemenanjungMalaysia)* Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

(22) Sulaiman Noordin (1993) *Muzik Rock dan Nilai Moralnya.* Bangi: Pusat Pengajian Umum, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

(23) ibid, p.4.

(24) See *Warta PKPIM (1993)* No.2, P.6.

(25) ibid, p.10.

(26) See *Seminar Sehari: Serangan Budaya Hiburan 'Hedonistik' Menjelang Abad Ke*

21. 24th July 1994, at Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka. Organised by: Jawatankuasa "Salem Watch", Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM), in co-operation with: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam (BAHEIS), Jabatan Perdana Menteri & Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

(27) *Utusan Malaysia* (1988), Seni dan Hiburan, 'Nama Malaysia Sekarang Di Bibir 4 Dunia", by Fauzan Uda Ahmad, September 13th.

(28) *Berita Minggu* (1989),"Manan Ngah Perkenal Muzik Balada Nusantara", December 3rd

(29) See the programme of the official launching of *Balada Nusantara* & *Sheqal*, 24th March 1990, Auditorium, Arkib Negara, Jalan Duta, Kuala Lumpur.

(30) An excerpt from the text of the official launching of *Balada .Nusantara* and *Sheqal, 1990.*

(31) Cited in Zawawi Ibrahim (1995) *Popular Culture at the Crossroads: Malay Contemporary Music*. Cendekia: Siri Monograf Akademi Pengajian Melayu, Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.p.5.

(32) Cited in ibid, p.18.

(33) *New Straits Times* (1989), Times 2, December 14th.p.10.

(34) *Utusan Melayu,* (1989), 13 December, p.15.

(35) ibid.

(36) *Berita Harian* (1992), Isnin, Julai 13th. P.1S.

(37) ibid. The term *nasyid* originates from the word *ansyada* meaning "cantillation of poetry", and it was apparently a *nasyid* song that was sung by the people of Medina when greeting Prophet Muhammad's first entry into Medina from Mecca. Today, *nasyid* refers to a type of Islamic devotional song with texts praising Allah or incorporating other religious themes, such as universal love, good morals, or brotherhood in Islam. It was claimed that In Malaysia, *nasyid* was first performed informally by Islamic teachers and students as interludes during Qur'an reading sessions prior to World War II. *Nasyid* songs also became an important aspect of *dakwah*, i.e. to spread the teachings of Islam and Prophet Muhammad, and instil Islamic morals and practice. *Nasyid* songs were traditionally sung *acapella* or accompanied by Malay frame drums such as the *rebana* or *kompang*. Malay gradually replaced the Arabic lyrics which were used initially. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Religious Department at both the state and national level began to organise and encourage *nasyid* performances at schools and at Qu'ran reading competitions. As Islam was an integral component of the Malaysian national culture policy, *nasyid* was also promoted by the government through contests organised at schools and universities, and these were given national television coverage. *Nasyid* songs were sung in to emphasise development through Islam as well as the usual messages for followers to serve Allah and abide by the Qur'an. *See* Tan Sooi Beng (2007) "Singing Islamic Modernity: Recreating Nasyid in Malaysia" in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia.* Issue 8-9 (March 2007). *Culture and Literature.*

(38) See: "Resolusi Seminar nasyid Peringkat Kebangsaaan kaIi Ke-2", Pada I-2nd November 1992.' In *Seminar Nasyid Peringkat Kebangsaan kali Ke* 3 (1993) Organised *by* Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam, Jabatan Perdana Menteri & Kerajaan Negeri Selangor; Dewan bankuet, MPSA. Shah Alam. Selangor. 13th September.

(39) See Rumusan Kertas Kelja (1994), Lampiran A, *Bengkel Nasyid Peringkat .' kebangsaan Kali Pertama,* Bilik Persidangan, Tingkat 2, Pusat Islam Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. Organised by Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam, Jabatan Perdana Menteri.

(40) See Tan Sooi Beng (2007), op.cit.

(41) ibid.

(42) Cited in Tan Sooi Beng, ibid. *New Straits Times* [*NST*], 12 February 1994).

(43) See Tan Sooi Beng, ibid.

(44) For example, the video clip of the song '*Dari Tuhan*' (From God), the lyrics of which are in praise of God, represents a subtle appropriation of rock by *nasyid pop* both musically and visually. The song was sung by the *nasyid* group Raihan, but featured Awie, the iconic lead singer from the popular rock band 'Wings' as a guest singer. The background music is hybridized with the inevitable rock solo inflections played by none other than Man Kidal, the legendary left-handed rock guitarist from the infamous rock band 'Left-Handed'. The video clip deliberately lingers on Man Kidal's guitaring and locks to emphasise his identity as a rock musician contributing to the *nasyid* genre, which is intermittently combined with shots of a long-haired Awie (clad in a traditional loose white top but without wearing the male Islamic headgear, the *songkok*) and Raihan members, who are uniformly attired in white but wearing black *songkok* on their heads

(45). See; Jason Cheah (1997) "Remarkable Raihan. In *The Star,* Dec. 31st. Section 2
(p.2S)

(46) Daryl Goh (1997) "Raihan Goes International". In *The Star,* August 11th. (p.21 Entertainment)

(47) See *Berita Harian* (2003)," Carta Nasyid IKIM.fm., Makin Popular", September

(48) This view may slightly differ from the approach taken by Tan Sooi Beng, "Singing Islamic Modernity: Recreating Nasyid in Malaysia" in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia. Issue 8-9 (March 2007). Culture and Literature.*

(49) See Mohamed Nawab bin Mohamed Osman (2014), "Transnational Radical Islamism and its impact in Indonesia and Malaysia", in *The Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

(50) See Sylva Frisk (2009) *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, Copenhagen: NIAS Press. P 48.

(51) Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2006) "The Banning of Arqam in Malaysia", in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* (Canberra), vol. 39, no. 1 (2005), pp. 87-128

(52) Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2010), "Contestations and Peace Building between the State and Autonomous Islam", in (ed.) Francis Loh Kok Wah, *Building Bridges, Crossing Boundaries: Everyday Forms of Inter-ethnic Peace Building in Malaysia*, Petaling Jaya: PSSM.