

**MODERNIZING TRADITION:
THE MEDIA AND *DIKIR BARAT* OF KELANTAN**

**Raja Iskandar Bin Raja Halid
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
rajaiskandar@umk.edu.my**

Abstract

Dikir barat is an art form which is both traditional and popular in Kelantan. It involves solo and group singing, hand clapping, synchronized body and hand movements, accompanied by percussion instruments. One unique aspect of *dikir barat* is when songs or verses are composed extemporaneously by the singer during a competition with another group. Topics for such 'debate' are not predetermined and may range from the profane to the profound. *Dikir barat*'s popularity made it a suitable means of disseminating information and instilling values to the masses. The government saw this potential, and *dikir barat* was thus "plucked" out of its folk roots, "cleaned" and promoted through the media as one of Malaysia's cultural heritage. Competitions and performances were broadcasted on national TV and its songs played on the airwaves. From its humble origins in the kampongs of Kelantan, *dikir barat* was suddenly pushed into the limelight and became known nationwide. Schools and universities began to form their own *dikir barat* groups. Audio and video recordings further popularized *dikir barat* and made it a marketable cultural commodity with a thriving CD and VCD industry in Kelantan. *Dikir barat* also goes online. Albums, performances and artists are promoted through the internet, while songs and videos are freely uploaded on YouTube and other sites. This paper hopes to provide a descriptive account and preliminary analysis of the role played by the media in the transformation of *dikir barat*, against the backdrop of the changing cultural, social and political dynamics of Malaysia.

Introduction

My ex-neighbour's son in Kota Bharu was like any other young, twenty-something lad you would find in many cities throughout Malaysia. He loved fast cars, fancy clothes, and loud music – the effects of globalization. These are viewed as the symbols of success and modernity – of being 'cool' and 'hip'. However, instead of the usual hip hop tunes thumping out of his Proton Wira's speakers; the only clear down beat sounds were made by the gong – the gong of the *dikir barat*. How could a young man, living in an era of what Michael Ignatieff (1989) calls the '3-minute culture', with satellite TV's, YouTube, i-Phones, MTV; could be oblivious to the barrage of western music (including local mainstream tunes) and

still listens to a musical genre almost a century old? Probably to him, and many others in Kelantan, it's the coolest thing to do. After a number of encounters with the thundering sounds of dikir barat emanating from his car (sometimes as early as six in the morning), questions started to linger in my mind as to how this art form not only survive to this day but is gaining popularity among the younger generation.



An all female dikir barat group from Universiti Malaysia Kelantan.

(Photograph: Ahmad Humaizi, 2010)

Dikir barat is categorized as a *traditional* Malay art form originated from the east coast state of Kelantan (Mohd Ghazali Abdullah, 1995; Azmi Mohd Nasir, 2006). It involves solo and choral singing, hand clapping, synchronized body and hand movements (sometimes even dance) accompanied by percussion instruments. A dikir barat group is made up of solo singers called *jogho* (leader) and *tukang karut* (composer of improvised lyrics), a group of about 15-30 chorus singers called *awok-awok* and 4-5 musicians playing the *rebana*, *canang*, gong and maracas. The most unique aspect of dikir barat is when songs or verses are composed extemporaneously by the *tukang karut* during a competition with another group. This is where the true talent (or lack of it) of the *tukang karut* is revealed to the audience. Themes or topics for the 'debate' are not predetermined and as Zaharan Razak (2008) describes it, "can range from the trivial to the profound (even if only hinted at),

the satirical to the barely risqué and ribald, with stock human follies and social foibles being fair game” (zveloyak.blogspot.com). Occasionally emotions run high and intense rivalry spilled over from the stage into the audience, ending with a few black eyes (Grace Chen, 2007). Unlike Mak Yong and Wayang Kulit, where the audience is ‘taken’ on a mystical journey, dikir barat talks about mundane everyday life, with trivial matters such as marriage and family issues. Form the sacred to the profane; it mirrors the temporal nature of everyday life in Kelantan, in Schechnerian term, from the ‘rawness’ of life’s experiences, it is ‘cooked’ and presented in a ‘palatable’ way (Schechner, 2003). This is described by Zaharan Razak (2008):

“Perhaps one of the greatest appeals of dikir barat is its ability to look at a trivial subject or mundane object and bring it to life inviting the audience to look at the familiar with humour or in a new light. Dikir barat practitioners would rant and wail about water buffaloes running loose, frogs creating a ruckus in the night and house geckoes living their separate lives in human households... You will smile sheepishly, or knowingly, listening to Munirah (yes there are female practitioners too) taking a risqué dig at the lack of birth control in “Anak tok de besar, nok boleh hok lain pulok ..” (the child has yet to grow) (zveloyak.blogspot.com)

Oral tradition forms the bedrock of the creative dynamism and sustainability of dikir barat, and as a symbolic continuation of the tradition in Kelantan. Its tales are weaved with such skill and spontaneity by the *tukang karut*, resembling a master *dalang* (puppeteer) of the old days. The use of the ‘witty Malay verses’ (Tan, 2005) known as *pantun* or the Malay ‘quatrain’ (Ghulam Sarwar, 2004) and the act of *berbalas pantun* or verse debates between opposing *tukang karut* shows the deep rootedness of dikir barat in this ancient Malay literary expression.

Kelantan has always been the bastion not only of Malay traditional culture but also Islamic education. Known as *Serambi Mekah* or the veranda of Mecca, for centuries it has been known as a centre for Islamic learning and scholarship. Although Islam prohibits the consumption of alcohol and the free mixing of the opposite sexes, the government was tolerant to the religious needs of non-Muslim minorities. Today, except for a few karaoke outlets in Kota Bharu, entertainment joints such as bars, nightclubs or cinemas are virtually non-existent. Stage shows or concerts are also rare due to the strict entertainment rulings imposed by the state government. Dikir barat thus provides an alternative for Muslim youths looking for lively entertainment and social gathering, an avenue for them to express

themselves in a creative way. It is one of the few legal forms of live entertainment left for the general public in the state of Kelantan.

Dikir barat today is not only popular in its place of origin, but has been well received throughout the nation. Although still being shunned by the mainstream music industry, its popularity still spills over into countries such as Singapore and Brunei, not so much for its songs but as a vehicle for cultural and youth activities. From its humble beginnings as an art form played in kampongs during weddings, dikir barat has become a marketable cultural commodity with a thriving CD and VCD industry. Scores of popular artists such as Cikgu Sulizi, Halim Yazid and Munirah mushroomed, each with his or her unique style. Dikir barat has also branched into different genres, with new songs performed by a solo or duet artists with modern music accompaniment. This paper hopes to provide a descriptive account and preliminary analysis of the role played by the media in the transformation of dikir barat, against the backdrop of the changing cultural, social and political dynamics of Malaysia.

History

The origin of dikir barat is still obscure. There are a number of theories regarding its history and development. One of the most popular theory points to Patani, southern Thailand as dikir barat's probable birthplace, where it is called *dikir karut* (Mohd Ghazali Abdullah, 1995). This was obviously due to the term *barat* which refers to the Malay region of southern Thailand. However, opinions differ as to which area of southern Thailand did it originated from. A place called Pulau Kerengge in Narathiwat, Southern Thailand was mentioned and dikir barat was said to have been introduced by a person named Pak Sa to Kelantan in 1931. It was also said to be the inspiration of local cowboys during the 1930's and also developed by Husain Mok Nab Lombong from Pulau Tebu (*ibid.*). Another name, Haji Mat Salleh (1927-2006), better known as Mat Leh Tapang or Pak Leh Tapang from Kampung Tapang, was also believed by many to be the inventor of dikir barat which was influenced by the dikir from Patani (Abdul Hadi Yusuf, 2006). Even the term *tukang karut* was said to have been Mat Leh Tapang's idea. He started composing *pantun* and was later copied by a number of other tukang karut such as Dollah, Wahid, Zakaria Awang Ikan Duyung, Seman Wau Bulan and Hussin Keling. These pantun was officially known as *dikir* during the 1940s and a decade later Pak Leh Tapang was already a well known performer throughout Kelantan.



Pak Leh Tapang (Utusan Malaysia, 2006)

Parody and Familiar Tunes

Dikir barat often uses *lagu cedok* or familiar melodies to accompany its songs. This is called *Karut Matang* and is one of the most important elements in dikir barat (Ahmad Fathi Ibrahim, 2007). These famous tunes include mainstream pop, Hindustani, Dangdut and traditional Malay songs which are normally rearranged and sung in Kelantanese. This is not dissimilar to what “Weird Al” Yankovic did to Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” during the 1980’s. Similar to Iban pop music in Sarawak, this parody of familiar songs goes down well with listeners, making them memorize the songs faster and easier. One example is Cikgu Sulizi’s “*Beruntung Jadi Anak Kelantan*” (Lucky to be a Kelantanese) which is based on the traditional song “*Jong Jong Inai*”. Another example is the famous 70’s song “*Seiring dan Sejalan*” (Side by Side) sung by Sharifah Aini and Broery Marantika which was used in the dikir song “*Sapo Dale Jambe*” (Who’s in the Toilet).

Profanities

Dikir barat reveals the paradoxical nature of Kelantanese society. The outward portrayal of religiosity and piety is at times contradictory to the undercurrents of the society. As pointed by Eddin Khoo, defiance does exist within the masses against state policies and this is illustrated in the high number of attendees to wayang kulit performances, now considered an underground art (Fauwaz Abdul Aziz, 2006). This refusal to be drawn into the religio-political “simplified notions of self and community” can also be seen in the ‘unIslamic’ elements found in dikir barat. While on one hand we have dikir artists such as Cikgu Sulizi singing about the importance of respect and knowledge – in tandem with the teachings of

Islam – we also have Seman Wau Bulan and Pok Teh using lurid sex and profanities on the other. Although scorned by the authorities and members of the public, the existence and use of profanities in dikir barat shows the creative audacity of the Kelantanese. Similar to contemporary rap and hip hop music in the U.S., these sexually explicit lyrics have become part of the whole appeal of dikir barat, which resulted in its temporary proscription in 1998. Some argued that these lyrics have deeper meanings which are meant as social critiques, addressed to a particular audience that accepts it openly and light-heartedly.¹

Dikir Barat as Media

When the Islamic opposition party PAS ruled Kelantan in 1990, new rulings on the performing arts were imposed which brought about the banning of public performances of Mak Yong and Wayang Kulit, which was deemed 'unIslamic'. However, dikir barat was seen as a convenient way in which information can be disseminated to the public. It was then utilised by the state government as a means of promoting Islamic values and lifestyle. In an article in the New Strait Times (1996), the Chief Minister of Kelantan, Dato' Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said that "dikir barat should not only be regarded as a form of entertainment, but also [as] a means to disseminate information" (pp. 4). Although subject to a temporary proscription in May 1998 on the grounds that organizers turned concerts into "a form of entertainment incorporating immoral elements like indecently dressed female performers and free mixing of both sexes" (New Straits Times, 1998:2), dikir barat was allowed to be performed provided that certain guidelines were met. Islamic themed songs filled the market as Brennan (2001) recalled, "in the dikir barat tapes I collected in 1999 there was a substantial quantity of overtly *dakwah* oriented songs" (pp. 308). One latest example is Cikgu Sulizi's song "Tuntutlah Ilmu" aimed at instilling good learning habits among school children. Today dikir barat are being used by authorities to disseminate information regarding drugs abuse, forest conservation, nationalism, the importance of the Malay language, the learning of English and racial unity under the "1 Malaysia" concept. In May 2010, a cultural show organized the tourism ministry saw dikir barat performed by 5000 people and went into the Malaysia Book of Records².

Transforming Dikir Barat

Dikir barat went through a number of stages in its evolution against a backdrop of political, social and economic changes throughout the past half century. From its humble beginnings in the kampongs of Kelantan, dikir barat was shoved into the limelight by the

¹ According to an informant, the profanities are not meant to arouse but as a sincere and direct way of conveying a message in a song, which was well understood and received by the rural folks

² The Malaysian version of the famous Guinness Book of World Records.

state media and organizations, resulting in its nationalization and transformation. It created two versions of the art form – the folk and the ‘official’ or ‘nationalized.’ This was the similar process that other traditional art forms such as *ronggeng* (Tan, 2005) and *zapin* (Mohd Anis, 1990) went through. To a certain extent, *dikir barat* was sterilized, formalized, institutionalized and proudly presented to the world as a Malaysian national heritage.

National Culture Policy

The aftermath of the May 1969 racial riots saw the government taking steps in trying to forge better relations among the main races in the country. Besides the affirmative action in bridging the economic gap between the ethnic Malays and the Chinese minority through the implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1971, the National Culture Policy was also introduced. This new policy was a guideline in an effort to assimilate the different races, to mould a Malaysian cultural identity based on the indigenous Malay culture or cultures within the larger “Malay world”, including countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia and the South Pacific Islands. However, elements from other cultures deemed suitable may be accepted as part of national culture, which is based on Islamic values. This was followed by the establishment of Kumpulan Budaya Negara (National Culture Group) in Kuala Lumpur under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in 1972. It was the start of a rigorous effort in pooling the nation’s talents in the traditional performing arts under one roof, to nurture future professional artists, and perform to local and international audiences (Tan, 2005). Subsequently, the Kompleks Budaya Negara or National Cultural Complex was built to institutionalize, guard, nationalize and propagate the Malay performance traditions. The policy was also implemented with the help of public universities where Malay performing arts were included in the curriculum and activities (Tan, 1993).

Inter-State Migration

During the New Economic Policy between 1971 and 1990, Kelantanese youths started to migrate out of the state due to economic and education reasons (Ishak Shari, 1994). Many settled in states of Terengganu, Pahang and Selangor (Swee-Hock Saw, 2007), and even countries such as Singapore (Makiko Hanami, 2002) and Brunei. These youths banded together and formed *dikir barat* groups to entertain themselves. Kelantanese construction workers in Singapore were even encouraged by their employers to perform *dikir barat* as a means of monitoring their activities (Mohd Nawi³, personal communication, 2010). Performances were conducted in universities by Kelantanese students, thus spurring

³ Mohd Nawi, 56, is an abstract expressionist painter and lecturer who hails from Kuala Kerai, Kelantan.

tremendous interest among students from other states. Unlike the more complex and elaborate performance structure of Mak Yong and Wayang Kulit with their inherently imbued spiritual innuendos, Dikir Barat is largely secular and can be easily learnt. This was further encouraged by universities and government authorities, as part of the national cultural agenda in forging better ties and understanding among races, besides promoting dikir barat as a national heritage. These Kelantanese 'diasporas' played an important role in the spread and promotion of dikir barat. The federal government also saw the potential of dikir barat among the youths.

Radio and Television

The growing popularity of dikir barat in and outside of Kelantan made it a suitable medium for the Malaysian government to reach the masses. In 1964, the first district radio station, Radio Malaysia Kota Bharu officially went on air where traditional Kelantanese music was promoted, reaching listeners as far as southern Thailand, northern Terengganu and Pahang. Dikir barat later became a regular fixture not only on local radio but the entire nation in the early 1970s broadcasted by Radio Malaysia (The Straits Times, 1973). Competitions are regularly organized at state and national levels to not only encourage participation among the youth but also to promote certain national agendas.

In 1974, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) a state owned media organization organized the *Pertandingan Dendang Rakyat* or the folk arts competition, involving group performances such as *boria* and dikir barat. This was the turning point for dikir barat where its performance structure and style was formalized to suit the needs of television broadcasting. The traditional circular position of the *awak-awak* was replaced with them sitting in horizontal rows facing the audience. New glittery uniformed costumes, and competition rules were also introduced and performance themes were determined by the organizers.

Recording Industry

Recordings of Malay songs began in the early 20th century and by the 1920s and 1930s gramophone recordings of popular *bangsawan*⁴ songs were available in major towns of Malaya (Tan, 1993). This was followed by recordings of songs from famous Malay films of the 1940s and 1950s. Dikir barat was probably recorded as early as 1953 by Radio Malaya as part of a project to build a sound library (The Straits Times, 1953). The opening of Radio Malaysia Kota Bharu in 1964 further encouraged the recordings of dikir barat and it further flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. This was due to the exposure of dikir barat performances

⁴ Malay opera, usually performed in major towns of Malaya.

on state television in the mid 1970s which had a wide ranging effect on the art form. Individual dikir barat stars began to emerge and were capitalized by a small recording industry in Kelantan. Audio cassettes started to be sold, replaced by CDs and now include VCDs. These recordings further popularized dikir barat not only in Kelantan but throughout the country. Halim Yazid, one of the famous artists, was reported to have sold 20,000 copies of his "Innovasi" album (Grace Chen, 2007). With 7 albums and 4 VCD's under his belt, he could easily have outsold many famous mainstream artists and due to his popularity, he now commands a fee of RM3000 for a 3-hour show (*ibid.*).

Music Videos and Karaoke

Although the use of visuals to accompany a piece of music was already used for decades, it was during the early 1980s that the term "music videos" was popularly used in the United States. These videos were mainly promotional tools aired on television to introduce new singles and albums. The past two decades saw the emergence of music videos in the Malaysian music industry, usually together with a 'minus-one' or karaoke version of popular songs. Dikir barat too has its own version and this has changed the way Kelantanese enjoy this highly popular folk art. Although the involvement of women in dikir barat is not new, the advent of music videos further fuelled the emergence of new young female artists, but not without arising controversies. Some see this as an encroachment into 'sacred' territory and creating unnecessary friction among practitioners. Suddenly, the world of dikir barat now has its own raunchy VCD version, with girls doing the controversial and sexually provocative *gerudi Inul* dance⁵, a feat which no female artist dares to do in Kuala Lumpur. One such group is called Jagoh comprising of young female singers and has produced a series of hot selling VCD's. Issues of authenticity were raised by dikir barat practitioners as to whether this new phenomenon is dikir barat or just *lagu loghat daerah* (folk songs) (Mastika, 2010). Although it may seem to deviate from the 'original' dikir barat, Farok Zakaria⁶ asserts that it is still considered as dikir barat, as a separate genre within the tradition (personal communication, 2010).

The Internet

The internet is another avenue in which dikir barat is heavily promoted. Numerous websites on dikir barat can be found, allowing the free downloading of songs, videos and providing rooms for discussions among enthusiasts. Concert dates, competitions, articles and discussions regarding dikir barat can be found in websites such as dikirbarat.net,

⁵ A dance made famous by controversial Indonesian *dangdut* singer Inul

⁶ A professor at the Heritage Department, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan specializing in the performing arts of Kelantan

dikirbarat.com and dikir-barat.super-resources.com. YouTube is also used to upload performances and promote new artists and songs. A random search on the site produced more than 3,000 hits and up to 379,000 views on some popular videos. Halim Yazid has his own site halimyazid.com and a Facebook fan page for promotional purposes. Cikgu Sulizi too formed his own company SLZ Production to market not only his albums but also musical instruments and costumes on the internet. He also provides consultation services and classes on dikir barat. This use of the internet is clearly aimed at enlarging the young, educated and urban fan base, not just in Kelantan but the whole nation.

Conclusion

In an interview with the Economist in 1995, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, a Kelantan prince and Member of Parliament claimed that "in Malaysia's quest for industrialisation, those in power accept any development, whatever the cost to the environment. In Kelantan we resist" (pp. 28-30). This resistance is also evident in the area of performing arts. When the federal government declared wayang kulit as a national art form in 1971, many practitioners resisted the attempt to sterilise and assimilate it into the national mainstream (Fauwaz Abdul Aziz, 2006). However, this resistance to the west coast mainstream political and cultural hegemony was not apparent in the case of dikir barat, and this has contributed to its creative dynamism. While filling the vacuum left by the dying arts of Mak Yong, Wayang Kulit and Menora, as performative manifestation of Kelantanese identity, dikir barat readily accepted the federal government's involvement and assistance. Dikir barat competitions were organized regularly and even televised nationwide, allowing an avenue for greater creative expression and innovation – a chance to be national stars. Similar to the music of Latin America and the Caribbean, dikir barat was "cleaned up" and "modernized" to be elevated and accepted as a national cultural heritage (see Tan, 2005 and Mohd Anis, 1990). Intense competition and rivalry resulted in groups donning new glittering costumes and introducing new choreographies in their performances. Dikir barat is also being 'shaped' in Kelantan under the present PAS administration in its efforts to promote the all-encompassing Islamic cultural identity. In spite of this newly "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm, 2003:1) or cultural construct, one fundamental element remains unchanged though – the language.

The Kelantanese dialect, is assumed by Zuraidah Mohd Don (2003) as "being a central component in the ethnolinguistic formation for the people of Kelantan in the process of constructing an inclusive sense of statehood and also of maintaining membership of being Kelantanese" (pp. 55). This is crucial in the expansion of dikir barat as not only a traditional art form, but also as popular culture and in creating a new Kelantanese identity. It still gives the Kelantanese 'authority' over the art form and would determine its creative trajectory. The

successes of Halim Yazid and Cikgu Sulizi in the national front have become the source of inspiration and symbols of pride for Kelantanese. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to overshadow the many dikir barat groups⁷ in its motherland, who are performing at grassroots levels while still addressing local issues – the very foundation in which dikir barat was built upon.

The myriad of issues and styles used in dikir barat has made it a vibrant and exciting art form. From traditional to popular, it has transformed itself and adapted to the social dynamics of its surroundings – with the help of the media. It branched and ventured into different territories, created new genres - including controversies - and exploited for economic and political reasons. Nevertheless, dikir barat may well be their last bastion and hope, the last man standing in the battle between traditional culture and beliefs, and the Islamic driven post-colonial social restructuring process in this era of a borderless world.

⁷ Estimated at around 100 by Pedikir, a dikir barat association based in Kelantan.

References

- Abdul Hadi Yusuf (2006). *Pak Leh Tapang Pengasas Dikir Barat*. Downloaded from http://utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2006&dt=0326&pub=utusan_malaysia&sec=Sastera&pg=sa_01.htm&arc=hive on 1 January, 2011
- Ahmad Fathi Ibrahim (2007). "Karut dan Tukang Karut Dalam Persembahan Dikir Barat". *Warisan Kelantan XXI*. Kuala Lumpur: Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, pp. 94-115
- Azmi Mohd Nasir (2006). "Aspek Nasihat Dalam Dikir Barat". *Warisan Kelantan XXV*. Kuala Lumpur: Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, pp. 159-176
- Brennan, C. (2001). "Religion, Cultural Identity, and Kelantan's Dikir Barat". *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 2001, 12:3, pp. 302-311
- Fauwaz Abdul Aziz (2006). *The Unpredictable Kelantanese*. Malaysiakini.com.
- _____ (1995). "Thank God it's Friday". *Economist*, 7/1/95, Vol. 336 Issue 7921, pp. 28-30
- Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof (Ed.) (2004). *The Encyclopedia of Malaysia, Vol. 8, Performing Arts*. Singapore: Archipelago Press
- Grace Chen (2007). *The Magic Touch of Dikir Barat*. Downloaded from <http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2007/11/15/central/19384837> on 6 July, 2010
- Hardwick, P.A. (2009). *Stories of the Wind: The Role of Mak Yong in Shamanistic Healing in Kelantan, Malaysia*. Phd. Dissertation, Indiana University
- Ishak Shari (1994). "Rural Development and Rural Poverty in Malaysia: The Experience during the New Economic Policy (1971-1990) Period" in Jamilah Ariffin (ed.), *Poverty amidst Plenty: Research Findings in the Gender Dimensions in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications.
- Makiko Hanami (2002). *Gender in a Rural Malay Community: Between Adat and Islam*. Phd. Dissertation, University of California.
- Mohd Anis (1990). *The Zapin Melayu Dance of Johor: From Village to a National Performance Tradition*. Phd. Dissertation, University of Michigan
- Mohd Ghazali Abdullah (Ed.) (1995). *Teater Tradisional Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kebudayaan Kesenian dan Pelancongan
- Schechner, R. (2003). *Performance Theory*. Oxon: Routledge
- Swee-Hock Saw (2007). *The Population of Peninsular Malaysia*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Tan Sooi Beng (1993). *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Tan Sooi Beng (2005). "From Folk To National Popular Music: Recreating Ronggeng in Malaysia". *Journal of Musicological Research*, 24: 287-307, 2005

The Straits Times, 20 December 1953, "They are Collecting a Library of Malayan Sounds", pp. 12.

The Straits Times, 9 June 1973, Miscellaneous Column 1, pp. 15

Zuraidah Mohd Don (2003). "Kelantanese in a New Ethnolinguistic Environment". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. Vol. 2003, Issue 161, pp. 55-79

Zaharan Razak (2008). *The Many-Splendored Appeal of Dikir Barat*. Downloaded from <http://zveloyak.blogspot.com/2008/12/many-splendored-appeal-of-dikir-barat.html> on 2 July 2010