



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS
IN JOHOR OLD TEMPLE'S PARADE OF DEITIES IN MALAYSIA***

LEE SOO FOON

FEM 2019 6



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By

LEE SOO FOON

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Chan Cheong Jan, D. Lit
Faculty: Human Ecology

Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities is an annual large-scale procession of the local Chinese communities in Johor Bahru that marks a difference from other folk parades by parading with deities of five different clans, and showcasing a vast array of Chinese folk performing arts all in one single event that lasts for five days. Literatures have illustrated the Parade as a symbol of communal vitality but the numerous performances played simultaneously that form the main body of the event are unmentioned. This study examines a possible way to categorise the seemingly eclectically arranged performances, and unveils the details of the huge expository of performing arts in the Parade. Applying Hall's cultural representation coupled with Bohlman's notion on music as representation, this study addresses how the many cultural symbols, signs and icons of different regional origin and of different forms are being arranged enabling the unusual co-existence of five clans and their deities in a single event. Besides, it also scrutinises the effect of representation of each performance genre in determining the roles music plays in the Parade as cultural texts.

Results from long term observation from 2011 to 2015 and repeated search and gathering of information and views from publications and various stakeholders. A taxonomy is devised. It conceptualises performances involved in the Parade in subcategories of dances, instrumental ensembles with songs, and dialectal operas. Dance as a broad category could be approached as masked dance that carries ritual function like Lion Dance, Dragon dances and Big Head Dolls, and the non-masked genres, like Chinese Fan Dance, Martial Arts, Diabolo and Flagpole-waving. Instrumental genre consists of those inherited from ancestry and the locally created ensembles, and is a clear means of proclaiming clan identity. The extremely rare simultaneous staging of five dialectal operas provides a field for competing spirituality. Each opera has its own set of deities and ritual, and brings rich but complex connotations both in social meaning and artistry.

The spirit of co-ruling among clans and the structural frames of “five clans-only” form the backbone of the Parade, of which spirituality is the dominant function and changes over time remain negligible. “Other-representation” is prioritised over “self-representation” among the many performing troupes in the Parade of Deities. Music is needed more for its symbolic, representative nature rather than for music itself. The real social subjects of the Parade are first of all spirituality in relation to deity-worship, then the proclamation of diaspora identity within a multi-ethnic and polarised nation. The Parade is a venue of sustaining cultural memory of the local Chinese, reflecting the paradoxical inter-clan relationship among them, and a testimony of struggle for social recognition.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**REPRESENTASI BUDAYA MUZIK DAN SENI PERSEMBAHAN DALAM
PERARAKAN DEWA KUIL KUNO JOHOR DALAM MALAYSIA**

Oleh

LEE SOO FOON

Ogos 2018

Pengerusi: Chan Cheong Jan, D. Lit
Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia

Perarakan Dewa (juga dikenali Chingay) Kuil Kuno Johor merupakan acara perarakan besar-besaran tahunan masyarakat Cina tempatan di Johor Bahru yang menonjolkan keistimewaan daripada yang lain dengan perarakan bersama lima suku dialek berlainan dan mempamerkan beraneka jenis persembahan rakyat Cina semua dalam satu acara tunggal yang mengambil masa lima hari. Literatur telah memaparkan perarakan sebagai satu simbol kekuatan masyarakat tetapi tiada yang menyentuh tentang persembahan yang besar bilangannya dan yang dimainkan serentak sebagai badan utama kepada acara. Kajian ini memeriksa cara yang bermungkinan untuk mengkategorikan persembahan yang kelihatannya disusun secara eklektik dan mengupas terperinci terkandung dalam pameran seni persembahan besar-besaran dalam Perarakan ini. Dengan menggunakan representasi budaya oleh Hall serta pemikiran “muzik sebagai representasi” oleh Bohlman, maka kajian ini menentengahkan persoalan bagaimanakah simbol, tanda dan ikon budaya disusun sehingga terjadinya kewujudan bersama lima suku kaum sekali dengan dewa mereka dalam satu acara tunggal. Sementara itu, kajian juga meneliti kesan representasi yang dibawa oleh setiap jenre persembahan dalam pengenalpastian peranan dimainkan oleh muzik dalam perarakan sebagai satu teks budaya.

Hasil daripada pemerhatian jangka panjang dari 2011 hingga 2015, dan juga daripada carian dan pengumpulan berulang maklumat dan pandangan daripada penerbitan dan pelbagai pemegang taruh, satu taxonomi telah dibentuk. Ia mengkonsepkan persembahan terlibat dalam perarakan dalam kategori sub, iaitu tarian, ensemble instrumen dengan lagu dan opera dialek. Tarian sebagai satu kategori yang luas boleh difahami sebagai tarian bertopeng yang berfungsi ritual seperti tarian Singa, tarian Naga dan tarian Patung Kepala Besar dengan tarian tidak bertopeng, seperti tarian kipas, tarian seni pertahanan, diabolo dan gerakan bendera. Jenre instrumental terdiri daripada yang diwarisi daripada moyang dan yang dicipta lokal, dan merupakan satu kaedah ketara untuk mengisytihar identiti suku dialek. Pementasan serentak lima

opera dialek yang jarang sekali dilihat di tempat lain membekalkan satu lapangan untuk kerohanian yang bersaing. Setiap opera mempunyai set dewa dan ritual tersendiri, dan membawa konotasi yang kaya tetapi kompleks maupun dari segi makna sosial ataupun kesenian.

Semangat perintah-bersama antara suku dialek dan juga rangka struktur “lima suku sahaja” membentuk tulang belakang untuk perarakan, di mana kerohanian adalah fungsi dominan dan perubahan dari masa ke semasa kekal pada tahap minimal. Antara berbilang pasukan persembahan yang ada dalam Perarakan Dewa, “representasi lain” didahulukan daripada “representasi sendiri”. Muzik diperlukan lebih untuk kesan simbolik dan representasinya daripada untuk muzik itu sendiri. Subjek sosial sebenar dalam perarakan adalah terdahulunya kerohanian berhubung dengan sembahyang dewa, baru kemudiannya pengisytiharan identiti diaspora dalam satu negara yang berbagai kaum dan sudah dipolarisasi. Perarakan Dewa merupakan satu lapangan untuk melestarikan ingatan budaya orang Cina tempatan, untuk menggambarkan hubungan suku dialek yang paradoks, dan juga satu testimoni perihal perjuangan untuk pengiktirafan sosial.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my innermost gratitude to Dr. Chan Cheong Jan for his professional teachings and guidance. Without his advices and endless contributions, I would not be able to finish this study. Next, many thanks are dedicated to the lecturers and staffs of the Music Department who are kind and encouraging me throughout this study. I would like to forward my warmest gratefulness to my course-mates, especially Ling Ching Rou, Julia Chieng and Wong Siao Ern, and friends, Chong Lee Lee, who assisted me in this study.

My deepest appreciation is also extended to the Chairman and the members of the five clans' guild halls of Johor Bahru, and also the scholar of Southern College in Johor Bahru for sharing me the invaluable research data during my multiple fieldtrips.

Last but not least, my most heartfelt thankfulness goes to all my family members for their unconditional support and tolerance during the period of study. One of them worth mentioning is my sister, Soo Fong, who assisting me in the translations of Chinese characters into English texts.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Chan Cheong Jan, D. Lit

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Loo Fung Chiat, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Lee Yok Fee, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Matric No.: Lee Soo Foon (GS30344)

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Signature: _____

Name of Chairman of
Supervisory Committee: Chan Cheong Jan, D. Lit

Signature: _____

Name of Member of
Supervisory Committee: Loo Fung Chiat, PhD

Signature: _____

Name of Member of
Supervisory Committee: Lee Yok Fee, PhD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	Page
<i>ABSTRAK</i>	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
APPROVALS	v
DECLARATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
	xv
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	4
1.3 Objectives of Study	9
1.4 Significance of Study	10
1.5 Literature Review	10
1.5.1 Studies on Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities	11
1.5.2 Existing Methodology Applied in the Study of Parade of Deities	16
1.5.3 Theory of Cultural Representation	19
1.6 Methodology	24
1.6.1 Theoretical Framework	25
1.6.2 Location of the Field	27
1.6.3 Methods in Practice	29
1.6.4 Data Analysis	34
1.7 Definition of Terms	35
1.8 Limitation of Study	37
1.9 Organization of Thesis	37
 2 THE CULTURAL PURSUIT AND SACRIFICIAL RITUAL OF JOHOR OLD TEMPLE'S PARADE OF DEITIES	 39
2.1 The Johor Old Temple	39
2.2 Origin of the Parade of the Deities in Johor Bahru	45
2.3 The Organization of Different Chinese Clans of the Parade of the Deities	47
2.4 Proceedings of Ritual	50
2.5 Summary	68
 3 DANCE GENRES IN THE PARADE OF DEITIES	 69
3.1 Type of the Dance Genres	70
3.1.1 Dragon Dance	71
3.1.2 Lion Dance	75
3.1.3 Qi Ling Dance	79
3.1.4 The Dance of Big Head Dolls	81
3.1.5 Chinese Fan Dance	84
3.1.6 Chinese Martial Arts	86

3.1.7	Stilt-walking	87
3.1.8	Diabolo (Chinese Yo-yo)	89
3.1.9	Flagpole-waving	90
3.2	The Content Structure of the Dance Genres	92
3.2.1	Lion Dance	92
3.2.2	The Dance of Big Head Doll	99
3.3	The Social Meaning of the Dance Genres	105
3.4	Summary	115
4	INSTRUMENTAL GENRES AND SONGS IN THE PARADE OF DEITIES	117
4.1	Type of the Instrumental Genres	119
4.1.1	<i>Chaozhou Daluogu</i> (Teochew Large Gongs and Drums)	120
4.1.2	<i>Fujian Daluogu</i> (Hokkien Large Gongs and Drums)	123
4.1.3	<i>24 Jielinggu</i> (24 Seasonal Drums)	125
4.1.4	<i>Xinshangu</i> (Johor Bahru Drums)	129
4.1.5	<i>Qianqiugu</i> (“Eternal” Drums)	130
4.2	Popular Songs	132
4.3	The Content Structure of the Instrumental Genres	133
4.3.1	<i>Chaozhou Daluogu</i>	133
4.3.2	<i>24 Jielinggu</i>	138
4.4	The Social Meaning of Instrumental Genres	144
4.5	Summary	148
5	DIALECTAL OPERAS IN THE PARADE OF DEITIES	150
5.1	Type of the Dialectal Operas	153
5.1.1	<i>Qiongju</i> (Hainanese Opera)	157
5.1.2	<i>Chaoju</i> (Teochew Opera)	160
5.1.3	<i>Yueju</i> (Cantonese Opera)	163
5.1.4	<i>Gezaixi</i> (Hokkien Opera)	166
5.2	The Text and Proceeding in the Opening Play of the Hainanese Opera	169
5.3	The Text in the Main Play of the Hainanese Opera	175
5.4	The Social Meaning of the Dialectal Operas	181
5.5	Summary	191
6	THE ARRANGEMENT OF SIGNS IN THE PARADE OF DEITIES	194
6.1	Detailed Program of Performance at the Welcome Stage	194
6.2	Detailed Program of Performance at the Parade of Deities	197
6.3	Detailed Program of Performance at the “Xinggong”	212
6.4	Summary	215
7	CONCLUSION	217
7.1	Summary of Study	217
7.2	Conclusion of Study	222
7.2.1	Arrangement of Symbol, Icons and Signs in the Parade of Deities	223

7.2.2	The Role of Music and Performing Arts in Parade of Deities	227
7.2.3	Issues Concerning Cultural Representation of Parade of Deities	234
7.3	Suggestion for Future Study	240

BIBLIOGRAPHY	242
APPENDICES	255
BIODATA OF STUDENT	286
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	287



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 The fieldtrips to Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities in Johor Bahru and a brief note on the data collected.	29
2.1 Schedule of Parade of Deities	51
2.2 Schedules for Night Parade	65
6.1 Program at Welcome Stage, Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities	195
6.2 Night Parade: Johor Old Temple	198
6.3 Night Parade: Hainanese Clan	199
6.4 Night Parade: Cantonese Clan	202
6.5 Night Parade: Hakka Clan	204
6.6 Night Parade: Hokkien Clan	206
6.7 Night Parade: Teochew Clan	210
6.8 Program of Performance at the "Xinggong"	213

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Musical Example		Page
3.1	Ju Tou Hua of Kun Seng Keng Temple's Lion Dance	95
3.2	Tan Bu of Kun Seng Keng Temple's Lion Dance	96
3.3	Xing Li of Kun Seng Keng Temple's Lion Dance	98
3.4	The Xing Li Mode of Foochow Shi Yi Association's the Duo Immortals of Hehe	102
3.5	The Performance Mode of Foochow Shi Yi Association's the Duo Immortals of Hehe	103
4.1	"One of the Temple Music"	136
4.2	Drum Piece "Sink"	141
4.3	The Arrangement of the 24 Drums in the Drum Piece "Sink"	142
4.4	The Multi-layered Style in the Drum Piece "Sink"	143
4.5	The Contrary Style in the Drum Piece "Sink"	143
5.1	" <i>Xiao Kai Men</i> "	170
5.2	" <i>Shui Xian Hua</i> "	173

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Location of Johor Old Temple	40
2.2	1) The main entrance of Johor Old Temple, 2) view of the courtyard of Johor Old Temple, and 3) interior of the main hall.	42
2.3	Layout of Johor Old Temple	43
2.4	Chinese dance during the lighting-up Ceremony in “Xinggong”	52
2.5	1) A team starts to wash the street during the Street Washing Ceremony at Trus Road, and 2) pomegranate branches, pomelo leaves, salt, “hundred rice”, tea leaves and water for members to sprinkle or pour to the sky or ground.	54
2.6	The Roadmap of the Parade of Deities	54
2.7	1) To bath and change new robe for the deity, and 2) invite the deity to take seat on the sedan.	55
2.8	1) The first deity, Zhao Dayuanshuai (Hainan) was moved out from the Johor Old Temple by the male devotees toward “Xinggong”, and 2) the shop which is along the road also set-up altar to show their respect.	57
2.9	Oration of the praying ceremony at “Xinggong”	57
2.10	1) Front view of “Xinggong”, and 2) opera stages.	60
2.11	Devotees gathered at “Xinggong” for praying before the five deities depart to the Night Parade	61
2.12	The ‘Welcome Stage’ at Wong Ah Fook Road	63
2.13	The scenes of the third day night at “Xinggong”	67
3.1	Dragon Dance and its accompaniment cart	72
3.2	1) Lotus Dragon, 2) Straw Hat Dragon, 3) Bench Dragon, and 4) Balloon Dragon.	73
3.3	Lion Dance and its accompaniment cart	78
3.4	1) Qi Lin Dance and its accompaniment cart and 2) The front view of the Qi Lin.	79
3.5	1) The large size dolls, Deity Subao Laoye and White Impermanence, in which height is more than two adults, and 2) Medium size doll, The Harmony Immortals and its decorated	83

accompaniment drum car.

3.6	Big head dolls made out of balloons	83
3.7	Chinese Fan Dance	85
3.8	1) The bare-handed of Chinese Martial Arts, and 2) The armed of Chinese Martial Arts.	86
3.9	1) The Traditional Stilt-walking, and 2) Optimus Prime of Transformer.	88
3.10	Diabolo	89
3.11	Flagpole-waving	91
4.1	1) The wind and string instrument of Teochew Gongs and Drums, and 2) The percussion instrument of Teochew Gongs and Drums.	122
4.2	Hokkien Gongs and Drums	123
4.3	24 Jiellingu	126
4.4	Johor Bahru Drum	129
4.5	Qianqiu Drums	131
5.1	Layouts of Stages in “Xinggong”	154
5.2	<i>Ba Xian</i> (The Eight Immortal) of <i>Qiongju</i> (Hainanese Opera)	158
5.3	<i>Huishu</i> (The Reply Letter) of <i>Chaoju</i> (Teochew Opera)	161
5.4	The <i>Yueju</i> (Cantonese Opera)	164
5.5	<i>Xiongmei sangaozhuang</i> (The Three Petitions of Sister and Brother) of <i>Gezaixi</i> (Hokkien Opera)	167
5.6	1) The Master and his wife carrying “Prince” to the representative of Hainan Association, and 2) Prince is placed in front of the incense table of deity “Zhao Dayuanshuai” to watch a movie.	171
7.1	Cultural Representation of Different Categories of Performing Arts in Johor Old Temple’s Parade of Deities.	228

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Chinese community in Johor Bahru of Malaysia observes a large scale ritual which is formally called *Rou Fuo Gu Miao You Shen* (Parade of Deities of the Old Temple of Johor), which is also commonly referred to as *Chingay* by the local public. *You shen* is also identified commonly with other terms like *Shengjia xunyou*, *Taishen xiang*, and *Shenxiang chuxun* which are ritualistic practices based on ancient beliefs ¹. For example, during the Lantern Festival or on other divine birthdays it is common for Chinese folks both inside China and overseas to hold rituals as a manner of celebration. A ritual celebration may involve a parade of deities (*You shen*) and it usually involves ceremonial processions, drums ensemble and acrobatic performances around streets and roads of a local town in which a temple which house the local deities is located. The ritual held may be an offering of thanks in the form of prayers and celebration for the general well-being of the community or the individuals.

The origin of the parade of deities of the Han people is difficult to trace. It has similarities with other folk procession activities in China, such as *She huo*, *Sai shen*, *Sai hui*, *Miao hui*, *Zou hui* and *Yi zhen*, all of which are street performances situated within religious ceremonies. An array of performances that include items like stilts-walking, lion dance, and dragon dance are common in these processions. It is intriguing to see these folk processions of the Han people, while having similar nature, are given different names. To date, comparative studies of folk processions within the Han culture largely remain unexplored.

An initial search by the researcher revealed that the term “parade of deities” is not even listed in the Music and Dance of Encyclopedia of China (1989), as well as the Music Dictionary of China (1985). The expression is only used in the articles of some Chinese scholars, such as those by Shi, Zhong Jian (2006: 137) and Wang, Wen Ke (2009: 40), in which they mentioned that “a parade of deities” has been quite popular in the Ming and Qing dynasties. For instance, a Chaozhou Opera, “*Lijing ji*”, in the Ming Dynasty (1566) had described the scene as below:

¹ Chinese folk religion, or *Mingjian zhongjiao*, also known as Chinese popular religion, is a general concept that refers to the belief of gods, ancestors and ghosts among the Chinese communities. It is a religious form handed down from the primitive society of the ethnic Hans. Such beliefs precede the institutionalized religions of Han people such as Buddhism, Taoism and others, and are encapsulated in a belief model that illustrates the shared collective social awareness of a community. The model does not encompass a formal system of rituals, scriptures, organizations and religious professions, rather it has its own basic grassroots characteristics, spelling out an inherent belief system operating on its own logical form. (see for e.g. Fu Jen University Academic Resources Network., Accessible: <https://scholar.fju.edu.tw/課程大綱/upload/012234/handout/982/D-9002-05325-.doc>. Last retrieved 20 Dec, 2016)(Lin, Guo Ping, 2007: 7).

In certain days in a year, a parade of deities was held collectively by different villages; besides the prepared offerings and entertainment programs, the villagers carried the deities out of the temple to the street for procession, and they held a dialectal opera, set off fireworks and other recreational activities as well.

Parade of deities is also mentioned, and described with more details, in “*Haiyang xianzhi*”, “*Chenghai xianzhi*” and “*Chaozhou fuzhi*” written in Qing Dynasty.

The early Chinese immigrants to Malaya (Malaysia now) ² had brought along their former residence customs and ritual activities ³. These customs and ritual activities also demonstrate characteristics specific to the particular areas of the diaspora communities. Johor Old Temple’s Parade of Deities (henceforth Parade of Deities, or Parade) is one of the good examples. On the 20th – 22nd of the first lunar calendar, the five deities in the Johor Old Temple, i.e. Zhao Dayuanshuai, Huaguang Dadi,

² Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. The ethnic groups of Malaysia consist of Malay, Chinese, Indian, Eurasians, Iban, Dayak, Kadazandusun, the Orang Asli and many others. As a result of the multi-racial characteristics of the population, Malaysia also has a variety of cultures, religions, social norms and values. The Malaysian Chinese culture had received little attention by the Malaysian government since the Peninsula Malaya gained its independence in 1957. Chinese culture is recognised as contributing to the national unity embellishment, but the elements of the Chinese culture have never been incorporated into the national mainstream culture of Malaysia. The National Cultural Policy implemented in 1971 stated that Malaysian culture must be based on the indigenous Malay culture and the Malaysian Chinese culture was not included as a component in the defining of the ‘national culture’. When the Government re-examined the progress of the national culture in 1983, an organization led by 15 Chinese groups seized the opportunity to present the “National Cultural Memorandum” to the Government to refute and protest on the bias and imbalanced policy; but unfortunately amendment have yet to be forthcoming. Although in the 1990s, the then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had launched a new policy called “Malaysian Nation” to include more Chinese culture components, there is still a lack of attention to the issue till today.

³ As we know, China had experienced much civil and political strife especially in the late 19th century. The Western powers treated China as a valuable trade resource and carved up spheres of influence in China. The Qing government descended into a stagnant, ineffective system of hand-outs. As a result of the upheavals which manifested in insecurity, poverty and the search for business opportunities, the Chinese formed one of the largest waves of immigrants in the history of China to have migrated to the Malay Peninsula. In order to take care of and help these early Chinese immigrants that unfamiliar with the new environment in Malaya and to solve the internal affairs of the Chinese community, some of the temples, ancestral shrines and the unions were thus set up. Even so there are a variety of guild halls, regional organizations and clan groups were established according to the different clans and cultural of Chinese immigrants later. The consistent purpose of all these Chinese organizations is to promote the spirit of co-operation and keep up friendship of the Chinese immigrants and develop a wide understanding with the community. For most of the new immigrants, homesickness is inevitable and painful, however, there are some Xiqu (Thanksgiving Opera) held by the temples or ancestral shrines at the ghosts’ festival or deity’s birthday every year to provide a form of relief from homesickness. Meanwhile various recreational activities were also regularly organized by the guild halls or organizations to relax them after the toil of work. Music and performing arts which serves as one of the art forms that direct expressing thoughts and feelings with sensitivity has become the most popular recreational activities among the Chinese immigrants. Therefore, it is not surprising that those traditional music culture brought over China was thus fruition in Malaya, and sustaining for a long period of time as a major spiritual pillar of Chinese immigrants.

Gantian Dadi, Hongxian Dadi and Yuantian Shangdi, will be carried on shoulders by the five clans of Chinese ⁴ respectively for parading. Along the parades, dragon dance, lion dance, the dance of big head doll, stilt-walk, diabolo (Chinese Yo-yo), flagpole-waving, 24 Jielinggu (24 Seasonal Drums), Chaozhou Daluogu (Teochew Large Gongs and Drums), Xiqu (Dialectal Opera) and assorted performing arts will dedicate their best performance to the Deities. This annual ritual has later become a grand and pompous occasion in Johor, and been gazetted as Malaysian national cultural heritage in 2012, an event of which the Johor Bahru Chinese community is truly proud of.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Marked by rivalries, fighting, and gangsterism, the inter-clan relationship within the Chinese immigrant communities has never been harmonious. Zhan, Yuan Duan, the head of Centre for Chinese Studies in Malaysia, called the long term conflicts within the Chinese community as “disorder” (*luan xiang*), and attributed it to the fundamental structure of social affiliation of the Chinese that is based on “gang”, a principle that prioritises kinship and close associate. (Sin Chew Daily 2009) In addition, as Liu put it,

“The formation of gangs or groups according to clan identity among the early Chinese immigrants in Malaysia is of academic consensus. There were hardly interactions between different clans. Situation was such that certain industries are monopolized by certain clans. For example, the Hokkien people monopolized the transportation of rubber, while the Hakka and the Cantonese monopolized tin mining. Groups with smaller population like the Hainanese had had no choice but to engage themselves in coffee shop catering. Other even smaller clans such as the Guangxi, could only engage in works that others were not willing to pick up (Malaysiakini 2015).”

As can be seen in the above notion, the social differentiation and separation according to clans among the Chinese immigrants in Malaysia had been obvious than ever. A unique condition observed in the Parade of Deities in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, however, seems to overturn this severe impression of interclan relationship of the Chinese. This particular ritual combines multiple clans of the Chinese into one single event and has been organized for over a hundred and forty years. No precedent of interclan collaboration of similar nature is known elsewhere, be it in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asian countries, or even in Malaysia itself. Collaboration involving plural deities, spirituality and languages, all of which are supposed to be identifiers to outline the circle of influence of a clan, is both striking and intriguing. This research was thus conceived by the uniqueness contained in this rare practice of interclan collaboration.

⁴ Five Clans of Chinese mentioned here consist of Hainanese, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew.

Scattered accounts on performing arts of the Chinese community in Malaysia are provided by scholars from China. Kang, Hai Ling (2008) studied Xiqu (opera) of different Chinese clans in Malaysia, while Wang, Jin Yi (2009) attempted a comprehensive account on the diverse performing traditions among the Chinese community in Malaysia. These studies unavoidably lack depth in their examination as scope covered was too wide. Other writings are produced by music scholars in Malaysia, which include Tan, Sooi Beng (1989, 1990) who focuses specifically on *Ko Tai* (performance stage), a commercial stage performance associated with Chinese eateries and restaurants; and Chan, Suet Ching (2001)'s account on the 24 seasonal drums. Besides, there are accounts on oral traditions of Chinese in Malaysia such as those by Lee, Eng Kew (2006) and Ling, Ching Rou (2014). Obviously, the accumulation studies on the Malaysian Chinese performing arts are yet limited as a body of knowledge. Research on ritual music in Malaysia is scarce⁵, and studies on parade of deities of the Malaysian Chinese from performing art perspective are unheard of.

Although the Parade of Deities of Old Temple of Johor has a history of more than 140 years, research literatures about it are scarce; and even if the Parade is mentioned in a writing, the performing traditions contained in the Parade had hardly been given attention where types, forms and other details about these performance remained undocumented. Beside the gap of performance descriptions, there is also little focus on the behavioral aspect of Parade of Deities; especially the interactions between participants through which the sense of happening and togetherness are brought forth in making the event successful. Existing writing about the Parade mainly consists of newspaper columns, such as Tan, Chai Pan's (2007) article entitled "Parade of Deities at January"; Onn, Huann Jan's (2007) "People in Johor Bahru had a Particularly Long Chinese Lunar New Year" and Lee's (2006) "Parade of Deities is a Religious Culture", "The Features of Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities" and "Three Mainstream of Parade of Deities Culture", and, Teoh, Chee Keong's (2007) "Attending a Feast of Folk Culture". Issues discussed in these news columns vary. Tan (2007) took the Parade as an example to express his sentiments about the situation of Chinese culture in Malaysia and its future prospects. Onn (2007) explores the values of negotiation, codependence, and solidarity behind the organisation of the Parade that merges the five clans into a single event, as signified with the terms *wu bang gong he* (literally a communal event celebrated by the five clans). Lee (2006), on the other hand, examines the source of origin of the Parade, tracing it to the customs of *ying da lao yie* in Chaozhou of China (refer to Chapter 2.1, footnote no. 2), besides giving his reflections. Teoh's (2007) article is a reflection of his fieldwork on the Parade. Besides, Onn, Huann Jan (2008, 2011) and Ngu, Sze Nee (2007) are contributors to the scarce academic articles studying the Parade of Deities, both focused on sociological perspectives of the subject. The content of the performing arts of this event has never been documented and examined more than a brief mentioning of the name of the items. Therefore the understanding about the performing arts through research literature until now is unavoidably partial and incomplete.

⁵ Tan, Yng Ling (2017) has recently produced a thesis on the music of funeral ritual of the Teochew in Malaysia. Besides, Ling, Ching Rou (2014)'s thesis focuses on folksongs in funeral ritual of the Sei Yap community in Malaysia.

The lack of documentation of a single Parade of Deities in Johor points towards a larger problem. There is a pressing need to rediscover the many other parades of the Chinese descents in Malaysia, with each of its operating with its functions, traditions and context. Available studies that focus on parade of deities are those written on parades held in the mainland of China. Literature by Tsao, Pen Yeh (2006, 2009), Zhou, Kai Mo (2010), and Liu, Hong (2008) contain their observation of event from the perspective of soundscape. Chen, Chao (2010) inspected the event from the viewpoint of system and life. Wang, Wei's (2001) article is a reflection of his performance in the Singapore Parade. Other writing by Singapore music scholar, Margaret Chan (2010) explored how the parade of deities brought the Chinese culture in Jakarta's streets into the local people's life. Parade of Deities held in diaspora communities outside the mainland of China, as in Malaysia, remain unexamined.

In view of the gaps of study and the scenarios discussed above, three research questions are formulated for this thesis. First, what are the symbols of cultures that are presented in this huge exposition of folk performance of the Chinese in Johor Bahru, in what forms are they displayed and how are they laid out and arranged in the procession? This is a need for a detailed description of the procession of Parade of Deities that could provide taxonomy of the performing arts contained in it, together with explication of the structure, arrangement and order of the program of five Chinese clans involved in the Parade.

Second, what are the roles of performing arts in the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities? This question focuses on the analysis of musical text, in which its functions, structure and performance style will be examined.

Third, what are being represented through the practice of these performing arts in the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities? This question asked for possible interpretations in understanding the real meaning of existence of the Parade of Deities within the larger frame of plural co-existence in the multiracial nation of Malaysia.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to give a socio-musical description of the performing arts genres involved in the entire celebration of Parade of Deities that contributes towards the explication of the role of music and performing arts in one of the diaspora culture in Malaysia. As this is a first research for the subject that contains vast amount of display of performing arts, it is an unavoidable task to provide a documentation of the performing arts involved, meaning to give a systematic description of the quantities and varieties of the performance content that are challenging to be categorized. At the same time, the research examines the multiple functions and cultural representations that are related to each of the main performing art genres involved in the Parade.

The specific objectives are described as follows:

1. To describe the forms of presentation, the ways various presentation items or cultural symbols are combined and arranged in the performing arts involved in Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities;
2. To examine the content structure of the many performances involved in Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities, as cultural texts that represent themselves besides signifying social-cultural meaning;
3. To examine the social meaning that could be decoded from the display of symbols (objective 1) and performance content (objective 2), in the manner of cultural representation.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Although Malaysian scholars had done some research related to the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities, but the topics handled were limited to the aspects of history and anthropology. The detailed studies referring specifically to music and performing arts of the "Parade of Deities" do not exist in Malaysia. Thus, this study will complement the existing research from the perspective of music and performing arts, and bring out a new idea and insights through the understanding of the musical context of the parade of deities. Moreover, this study provides a categorization of huge number of performing arts into a clear system of three main categories. This outcome of the result could offer the organizer of Parade of Deities certain guidelines or criteria in screening the programs in the Parade of Deities. Besides, this study will also add on to the body of knowledge of Malaysian Chinese music and performing art studies, as well as provide a framework of research method to be applied in related topics.

1.5. Literature Review

A large portion of literature study is included in Chapter 2, which has a specific focus to provide background information of Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities. This section focuses on present research literature that is related to the parade of deities of Chinese community in general.

1.5.1 Studies on Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities

Many of the writing about Parade of Deities were published as column in local newspaper. Tan (2007) found that the Parade of Deities was a "cultural context" that the ancestors of the Chinese in the Johor Bahru inherited from "Kangchu" era to now-a-day's "one temple, one burial ground and one school". Thus, "the Chinese community should strategically 'market' this live cultural heritage through 'product development' (the academic studies for the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities), 'product improvement' (to make the performance programs more exciting under the traditional framework of the Parade of Deities), 'brand construction' (Parade of

Deities listed on the travel calendar of Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board), ‘advertising’ (make an advertising using different techniques like booklet, DVD, commemorative T-shirt, auspicious souvenirs and the giant billboards) and ‘product writing’ (photography, film, literary works, travel reports) and so on”. Onn’s (2007) “The Special Long in Johor Bahru’s Chinese New Year Celebration” opined that the Parade of Deities showed the cohesion, creativity, tolerance, adaptability and regeneration of the Johor Chinese society. The local Chinese joined the procession with the Chinese Lunar New Year festivals in order to prolong the atmosphere of the Chinese New Year. All these are the local characteristics of the Johor Chinese Culture which are developed and created by the Chinese people in the multi-ethnic environment with the aim of maintain their root of cultural.

Other newspaper columns such as Lee’s (2006) “Parade of Deities is a Religious Culture” found that the form of parade of deities may have originated from the folklore of “*Yia Tua Lau Ya*” (refer to chapter 2.2) in Teochew, China. The purpose to hold the parade in the first lunar month every year is to pray for peace and prosperity for the coming year to satisfy the psychological needs of the ordinary people. “The Features of Johor Old Temple’s Parade Deities” discovered that besides believers, commercial groups and banks which are along the street would set-up altar to show their respect during the Parade of Deities. There were also a few worshippers of Indian ancestry taking part in this event. They followed all the Chinese traditional steps, such as lay the incense table with red cloth, offer fruit and cakes, incense paper, five cups of tea, and knelt down to worship. This situation shows the diverse characteristics of Malaysian culture. Moreover, spirit medium is not allowed in the Parade activities by the authorities of Johor Old Temple, all the temples affairs are decided by the people, not to the instructions of spirit medium. This behavior is rarely seen at other parades as spirit mediums are usually feared and revered as representative of supernatural world.

The article “Three Mainstream of Parade of Deities Culture” reported that the Johor Old Temple’s Parade of Deities was mainly composed of three major cultures: they are Teochew, Hokkien and Cantonese. The ‘Chaozhou Daluogu (Teochew Large Gongs and Drums)’ from the Chaozhou area is representative the Teochew culture, the ‘Fujian Daluogu (Hokkien Large Gongs and Drums)’ that created by local Hokkien would represent the Hokkien culture, and the ‘South Lion Dance’ which from Guangdong Province, China as the representative of Cantonese culture.

Teoh’s (2007) noted that the Parade of Deities is similar to that of some towns in Taiwan. According to Teoh, the so-called ‘travelling around streets and roads’ has the meaning of inspecting the jurisdiction of a deity. Therefore, deity’s patrol has a meaning of declaring sovereignty. But with the change of geographical environment and the integration of clans in diaspora communities in Southeast Asia, the context of declaration of sovereignty has changed towards more of a pure celebration.

Academic discourse on Parade of Deities primarily focuses on the sociological aspects of the event. For instance, “The evolution of Johor Old Temple and its

traditional Parade of Deities” written by Onn in 2008, who explored both public and personal aspects of the Parade through deep description done from an angle of insider, gave the idea that the Parade of Deities had helped in promoting the collaboration and integration within the Johor Chinese community. Coming from a history of Teochew origin and later became a collaborative event by the *wu bang gong he* (literally means a communal event celebrated by the five clans), the management structure of the temple has since changed from the system of *miaozhu* (literally means temple attendant) to one under the guidance by Tiong Hua Association and five clans of the Chinese. The Management Committee turned away from the attitude of hiring the Indians or unemployed people for “making up the numbers” in the Parade and now rush themselves to carry the sedan chair of the deities. All these evolutions reflect a long process of the internal integration within the Chinese community of Johor Bahru. At the same time, the Parade of Deities is not only a ritual offering for worshipers to pray and worship, it has a function of collective identity. People gathered spontaneously at the old streets of Johor Bahru in the annual Parade of Deities, trying to seek a collective identity of historical memory and imagination besides the prayers for peace and prosperity. Moreover, the revival and reconstruction of the culture of the Parade of Deities is infiltration of multiple inclusive elements of the localization. In other words, the Chinese society of the Johor Bahru has transferred the “tradition” of rural culture of parade of deity of the Teochew in China, and has “localized” regeneration and revival in a “modern” city in Malaysia. Finally, this Parade of Deities has showed the vitality of the Chinese community of Johor Bahru in Malaysia as it has a broad grassroots to support for its success needs, whether from the mobilization of human and material resources or the financing, it is all bear by the Chinese community of Johor Bahru.

Another article “The Carnival of Deities and Human -- The inheritance and revival of the deities Parade of Johor Old Temple of Malaysia” drawn up by Onn in 2011 is a further supplement to “The evolution of Johor Old Temple and its traditional Parade of Deities”. It stated that the Parade of Deities is not merely a religious ritual, but it contains secular entertainment and folk significance. That is, by allowing the existence of carnival culture in the solemn and sacred rituals would let people temporarily get rid of social depression and obtain a moment of emotional catharsis. In addition, the Chinese community of the Johor Bahru has made a choice to consciously maintain the sacred customs, such as the prohibition of the participation of spirit medium in the parade activities, and that the rituals do not belong to Buddhism nor Taoism. Instead, the local Chinese has even added up the Chinese Lunar Year with the Parade of Deities turning it into a carnival of deities and human being. Celebration of Chinese Lunar New Year will not be considered complete before Johor Old Temple’s Parade of Deities take place, in which the Chinese of Johor Bahru had a longer Lunar New Year celebration than other Chinese in Malaysia. Finally, the Johor Old Temple is not only the temple offering for worshipers of five Clans of Chinese to pray and worship, it has been considered as a symbol of unity by the Chinese community of Johor Bahru. This is particularly so after an unsuccessful attempt by the state authority to reclaim some areas of Johor Old Temple for economic development.

Ngu's "The Contemporary Evolution and its Implications of The Event of Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities" in year 2007 explored the mentality and purpose of various classes of people involved in the Parade through field investigation and questionnaire survey. The study found that the Parade of Deities has been changing from the harvest festival of very few people in the early days, to a carnival festival of tens of thousands of people today. The content of the Parade of Deities have been maintained throughout the years, but the superstitious element may have reduced. Compared to its earlier context, the contact between humans and divinity seem to have become closer, and the sacred religious ritual has embraced more elements of a joyful carnival. The Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities has managed to sustain itself partly due to its ability to adapt to the needs of different generations, as well as accommodating new elements injected into the Parade of Deities.

The perspectives that all these writings concern were different. Tan (2007) examines the Parade of Deities from social development perspective. Lee (2006) and Teoh (2007) both approached the Parade of Deities as a culture of deity worship. Onn (2007, 2008 & 2011) and Ngu (2007) both focused on sociological aspects of the subject. Thus far, no musical descriptions on the Parade of Deities are available. Music and performing arts are absent in the studies of Parade of Deities until now, and become a necessary entry point to explore the cultural meaning of Parade of Deities in a more holistic manner.

1.5.2 Existing Methodology Applied in the study of Parade of Deities

In the past, research on the belief system among academics in China was mostly confined to the fields of history, sociology, anthropology and religion. There were few people who have analyzed and understood the ritual tradition in the belief system from the perspective of musicology. Even if there are, most of these Chinese music researchers were limited to the collection (recording, transcription, etc.) and to the discussion of musical ontology such as repertoire, musical morphology, structure of musical instrument and function. When ceremonial music is examined, they rarely consider the role of music and performance in the ritual and belief system. In mid-1980s, Tsao (2006, 2009), a Chinese ethnomusicologist, explored and created a set of theoretical methods suitable for China mainland scholars to study China local music culture after studying and drawing on the three-dimensional theoretical model, "Conceptualization - behavior about music - music itself", of Meriam (1964). He believes that the "belief system" consists of "faith" (thought) and "ritual" (behavior), and most of the rituals are displayed in the realm of "soundscape"⁶. Therefore, he approaches the subject from the viewpoint of the "ritual soundscape", put forward "faith (concept and cognition) - ritual behavior - soundscape in the ritual" as three-in-

⁶ When Tsao (2006, 2009) studied the Taoist activities of Hong Kong in the 80's, he began to realize that it is insufficient to use "music" to represent all the sounds displayed by the Taoist ritual, as there are "audible" and "inaudible" sound on the ritual behaviour, thus his germinated the concept of "soundscape" to make up the of limitations of "music". This inaudible sound refers to a voice that is not audible form the outside, but exists in the intuitive mind of the ritual performers, and is often considered to be a high-level sound within the insider. Due to the limitations of the theoretical approach, the current study can only be limited to the audible sound.

one, indivisible whole. In addition, within this theoretical framework, he also proposed three two-utmost variable thought, “near ~ far”, “insider ~ outsider”, “fixed ~ flexible”, as a method to analyze and understand the ritual sound.

The application of the “near ~ far” variable relation is to define the “attribute of soundscape” of the ritual. That is, the researchers place all kind of “vocals” and “sound” which displayed in the ritual, between the method of “near music ~ far language” or “far music ~ near language”, to understand the pro or sparse, far or near relation of the “soundscape” and its behavior and belief concept, so as to clarify the cultural and morphological characteristics of repertoire (Zhou, 2010: 65).

The “fixed ~ flexible” variable relations refers to a variety of fixed regularities and flexible items of the ritual soundscape in the dissemination. When music operates in the ritual, the use of music materials of certain region, composed techniques, custom of operation and other practices are regarded as relatively fixed factors. However, the results produced by actual application can be regarded as flexible, as applications are subject to different geographical and cultural environment, as well as different ritual occasions and object (Tsao, 2009: 30).

Tsao (2006, 2009)’s theory of “soundscape” provides a good entry point for this study. However, even though soundscape is an organic part of a ritual, physical movements (including the so-called dance action) is equally if not more significant in determining the presentation of a ritual procession. Besides sounds, a ritual is filled with a variety of visual signs and symbols as well. Tsao has ignored the important link of the presentation forms of these symbols, and the interaction and relevance of these symbols when he emphasized the study of soundscape. Moreover, the leading-subordinate relationship between music and rituals has not been explored in the study of soundscape as well.

In year 2010, Chen (2010)’s doctoral dissertation “What soundscape should I give you?” has carried out a different idea from Tsao (2006, 2009)’s theory. She proposed “system - folk organization - ritual soundscape” as her three-dimensional model, and approached the subject from the viewpoint of the “system ~ life”, to construct an analytical framework which can effectively present and interpret the changes of social life in China. The aim of her study is to explore the intervention and influence of the national system and social system on the inner part of the organization in different periods, and thus would lead to the change of the presentation forms of the soundscape when it operates in the parade.

In principle, the researcher agrees with the above statement, but this theoretical framework that applies to cases in the mainland socialism context may not be suitable for the cases of diaspora society in Malaysia that has a constant dynamism with regards to power and identity in a plural society. The structure and organization of Johor Old Temple was affected by the policy of “*Duzun yixing*” (literally means a great reverence status only to Ngee Heng Kongsi, refer to chapter 2, footnote no.3)

from the kingdom of Johor in the mid-19th century during the “*Kangchu*” era. Subsequently, British government in 1914 interfered with the then autonomous operation of Malaysian Chinese’ cultural activities. Since 1914, for more than a century, neither the Johor State government nor the national government has ever been involved directly in the affairs of Johor Old Temple, including the performances in the Parade of Deities. Judging from this entirely different state of governance and autonomy in which the Parade operates in Malaysia, it is difficult as well as irrelevant to apply the model of soundscape presentation and life style changes to the cases in Chinese community in Malaysia.

On the contrary, the Chinese community of Johor Bahru was able to preserve the custom of this Parade of Deities in its complete form due to the non-interference policy of the state authority. The Chinese community was allowed full autonomy to formulate a timeliness system in accordance with the different practical and local process to inherit this “traditional” ritual. Questions remain as to how have the Parade of Deities, a marginalized art, been able to sustain by only relying on its own strength. Also, the cultural meaning and messages being conveyed through the celebration are yet to be examined.

1.5.3 Theory of Cultural Representation

In order to approach the Parade of Deities from the viewpoint of music and performing arts, the thesis adopts the theory of cultural representation as organized by Hall, as well as the idea of music representations as proposed by Philip V. Bohlman. “Representation” refers to the way in which information or knowledge is presented in the mind. In other words, representation is the internal reappearance of external things in psychological activities, therefore, it reflects and represents objective things on the one hand, and it is also the object of further processing of psychological activities on the other hand. Representation can be a specific image, or it can be a word or other way.

Stuart Hall, a British cultural theorist, sociologist and the leader of the Birmingham School, uses the concept of representation, one of the five elements of the circuit of culture originally designed by a group of theorists such as Du Gay who studied Walkman in 1997, as the cornerstone to launch a series of relevant discourse research. Hall (1997) discusses the source of the cultural meaning of things through the concept of representation. He claims that things themselves have no meaning and that the meaning of things is produced and constructed by language and other various cultural symbols operating in language. In short, representation is a process of combining things, concepts and symbols.

In the process of representation, meaning should therefore enter the realm of the practices, because meaning is constantly being produced and communicated in the interaction of individuals and society. When only the members of the same cultural share set of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the

world in a similar way, meaning can thus be circulated effectively within a certain culture by sharing the same ‘cultural code’ (Hall, 1997).

Three different approaches were drawn by Hall for the operation of Representation they are 1) reflective approach, in which language (or cultural objects) simply reflect the true meaning of the people, objects and events in the real world; 2) intentional approach, in which, language (or cultural objects) express only what the speaker or author or painter wants to say and express in his personal intention; and, 3) constructionist approach, in which meaning could be constructed through the expression of language (or cultural objects) beyond the direct operation of 1) and 2). Hall emphasized much on the constructionist approach in representation.

Hall’s approach was derived upon the idea of semiotics proposed by Saussure. The idea of Saussure could be applied in decoding social phenomena. Similar to language, music, performing arts could also be taken as a system of signs, in which form and concepts interacts in the manner of signifier and the signified. Any form of social expression could be considered as a “system of differences”, through which deeper meaning can be derived. That Saussure differentiates between *langue*, a linguistic system, and *parole*, the act of presenting and expressing (Culler, 1976:29) is relevant to conceptualize the Parade of Deities as a system of representation.

Barthes, who extended Saussure’s idea into nonverbal domain, enlarged the signifier and signified Mythologies, and proposed the link between ‘descriptive layer’, a set of signs with a simple, basic, literal message or meaning and ‘connotation layer’s which is based on various ideologies, general beliefs, conceptual structure, social values. (Guided Reading of Li, Yi Hua, 2015) The aim of Barthes’ analysis ‘Myth today’ is to restore or interpret the meanings of symbols that are simplified, distorted, and naturalized.

Hall however argues that semiotics, as the science of meaning, cannot explain the meaning completely and scientifically, because the understanding of representation of semiotics is based on the method in which words act as symbols in the language. Besides, the subject is removed from the center of the language in the semiotic approach. (Chen, Jing 2006:13). He further proposed a discursive approach which places the subject within a discourse, in applying Foucault’s concept of knowledge and power.

Here the term “discourse” is not limited to academic interaction, but refers more to a system of representation in which meaning was produced and interacted surrounding a subject, to which music and performing arts, as well as parade of deities, for example, could be one of the cases. Hall argues that Foucault’s emphasis on the relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power marked an important development in the constructivist representation that we have been describing. It relieves representations from the control of the theory of pure form and gives it a historical, practical and secular operating context (Chen, 2006: 14). Hall argues that

the distinction of the two approaches above is that the semiotic approach concerns how the representation works, and how the language produces meaning, while the discourse approach is more concerned with the consequences and effects of representation (Guided Reading of Wu, Yu Xuan, 2013).

Walton's (2013) "Representation in Western Music" consists of essays by various scholars on the subjects and mentioned instrumental music, opera, popular song, dance, cinema, and the music video. These articles present new investigation about musical representation, with particular focus on Western art and popular music from the nineteenth century to contemporary time. Tuohy (2001) held his observation of the musical representation and transformation of the sonic dimensions of nationalism in modern China. Solis's (2004) "Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles" is another compilation of essays and interviews by world music ensemble directors who addressed their experiences with Javanese, Balinese, Middle Eastern, Chinese, African, Latin American and other countries music ensembles. These articles contain the discussions of the music and cultures represented, cultural "representatives" in the academic institution and community and other issues.

However, if music is used as a representation, its situation is somewhat different from other elements such as sounds, words, notes, gestures, and so on. In Philip V. Bohlman's (2005) "Music as Representation", it is said that one of the most basic principles of ethnomusicology, is that "music is beyond its own". We study music in order to understand not only what music is but to learn more about the cultural context, the ideology and politics, the ways that language functions, the gender and sexuality, and identities of cultures ranging from the smallest group to the most powerful nation. Ethnomusicologists study music, in other words, because it has the ability to represent. Bohlman account that music's power to represent in itself results from a paradox: music represents itself at the same time also represents socio-cultural meanings. That is to say, in order to be "more than itself" (other), music also must be itself (self). Music can be said to be combined with the metaphysical traits of both subject and object. In the following, music can be represented by ten items or ways. In devising items for self-representation of music, that is "music representing music", Bohlman raised a) sound, b) sign (mainly refer to notation), c) structure, d) secular/everyday, e) self-identity as some of the representatives, while for "music representing beyond music", he raised a) silence, b) story, c) sense, d) sacred and e) power (Bohlman, 2005: 205-211).

Dance music in Parade of Deities serves more as a compliment to movements, while a small portion of the dance music could independently be "self-represented", as to be listened on its own. Instrumental ensembles and the songs (singing) in the Parade represent both music itself as well as the social identity that they associate with. Besides, music for the ritual of Opening Play of dialectal opera has also a strong element of "other-representation" in signifying movements and gesture of the actors involved. Music in the Main Play of dialectal opera that demonstrates Bohlman's mentioning of "representational paradox" in a vivid form. Differ from the dances, instrumental genres and songs, dialectal operas are integrative arts that consist of

multiple components, of which each component has a different situation in cultural representation.

1.6. Methodology

This is an ethnography study on music. Its research design emerged mainly from the field of ethnomusicology, but is in close relationship with anthropology, historiography, folklore studies as well as sociology. The intent of an ethnographic research is on capturing the whole picture that exposes how people describe and structure their cultural world (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: 507). According to Harris & Johnson,

Ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork." (2000).

Fieldwork for this study has gone as long as five years, through which a wide range of information was collected. Analysis and interpretation on information gathered would result in giving a complete picture of life in the fields of the Parade of Deities, as it is a social event that encompasses large number of participants of diverse background.

1.6.1 Theoretical Framework

Although this research applies Hall's (1997) cultural representation as its main theory, certain adjustments need to be done due to the nature of the music, which is the central subject of this research. As Bohlman (2005) points out that music represents itself while representing social (i.e.) extra-musical meaning, this study allocates considerable space for the description of the music and performing arts themselves. As such, the outlook of the thesis does not resemble other theses that applies cultural representation theory and has a focus on the first two approaches in cultural representation, they are the reflective and intentional approaches on the performing arts.

A probe into the tremendous social significance of Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities is only possible if the many items of performing arts are first documented and described. As documentation of the performing arts, in any forms, is not available, the thesis is characterized by the unavoidable task of a pioneer study of a music genre, which is to provide a systematic description of the performance content, without which deeper analysis is not possible.

By taking in Hall's cultural representation as the base, and by taking into the consideration of the unique nature of music in representation (that was termed "representational paradox" by Bohlman) and the needs for a systematic documentation of the types of performing arts in the Parade of Deities, the approach adopted by this thesis consists of the three stages:

(a) The description of the forms of presentation, the ways various presentation items, or "symbols" are combined and arranged certain order and manner. This stage deals with the problem of devising a way to categorize the many and seemingly scattered items of performance into meaningful groups that enable a way to perceive the structure of the Parade as a whole which is not explicitly available. It focuses on the categorization of the performance content beyond the present grouping which is based on the clan.

(b) The examination of the content structure of the performance, as being represented by themselves, besides signifying extra-musical and social meaning. The aim of this stage is to depict the artistic meaning that is inherent with the performance, which is a dimension of meaning that occurs in parallel with their social functions and implications. The performances pose self-contained meanings and appeals in their artistry, and these meanings may or may not coincide, contradict or even related to the social functions and meanings that ascribed to them.

(c) The examination of social meaning that could be decoded from the description and examination done in stage 1 and 2, in the manner of constructionist representation. This is the typical approach in Hall's theory, and the matter of subject, code, symbol, knowledge, and power will be dealt with. Themes like the role of the Parade in portraying the identity as a Chinese community within the socio-political climate of Malaysia, for example, will be examined here.

As can be seen in this three-stage approach devised by the researcher, it begins with the task of description and documentation. It may seem having all three representational approaches (the reflective, intentional and constructionist) in one thesis is overwhelming but it is unavoidable due to the nature of the subject, particularly that the Parade is an event where large amount of items (or symbols) are presented concentrated in a short period. To overcome the exhaustive demands in terms of methodology, this thesis begins by grouping the performance items into several groups, and examines each of them through the three stages.

1.6.2 Location of the Field

The "field" for this study is Johor Bahru, specifically the community where the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities takes place, in which the only example of ritual that combines multiple clans of the Chinese into one single event can be observed. Johor Bahru is the capital of the state of Johor, Malaysia. It is the second largest city and

the southernmost city in the Malay Peninsula. Johor Bahru is connected to Singapore through Johor-Singapore Causeway. It is occupying an area of 19,984 square kilometers, comes with a population of 3,385,000, comprising 54% of Malays, 35% Chinese, and 11% Indians and other races.

Johor Old Temple, flanked by modern skyscrapers, is a place of public worship for the Chinese community in Johor. It is located in Trus Road, the downtown of Johor's capital city, Johor Bahru. This temple is one of the oldest structures in Johor Bahru. It was built during the mid of 19th Century by the most influential leader of Ngee Heng Kongsi ⁷ led by Tan Hiok Nee. Although there are no actual records regarding the completion of the temple, the plaque located in the temple shows that the temple is at least 140 years old. The five major deities enthroned in the temple are Zhao Dayuanshuai, Huaguang Dadi, Gantian Dadi, Hongxian Dadi and Yuantian Shangdi. Each of the deities is being worshipped respectively by five Chinese clans of Hainanese, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew. The temple had become a place of worship and a symbol of unity among five Chinese clans nowadays.

Every year in the first lunar month of 19th - 23rd, the temple organizes its annual “Chingay”, known as the Parade of Deities, in return for the blessing of the deities and to pray for peace and prosperity for the coming year for the town. During the festivities, the above-mentioned five deities will be lifted out from Johor Old Temple and toured around the city by the five respective Chinese clans.

1.6.3 Methods in Practice

The fieldwork was done in Johor Bahru from the year 2011 until 2015 in five time periods (refer to table 1.1). The research is done through participant observation, interviews and audio-visual recordings of music practices in the Parade of Deities. Besides, archival material, souvenir book, magazine and other printed materials was also important source of information for the study.

Table 1.1: The fieldtrips to Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities in Johor Bahru and a brief note on the data collected.

Trip	Date	Data Collection
1	February 20 th - 24 th 2011	Recordings: the day and night Parade of Deities, dialectal operas and the Nan Fang Salon of Southern University College.
2	February 2 nd - 13 th 2012	Recordings: daytime events and night parade of deities, dialectal operas. Interviews: dialectal operas, committee of temple administrative, believers and audiences.

⁷ Refer to Chapter 2.1, footnote no.3.

3	February 25 th - March 4 th 2013	Recordings: lighting ceremony in Xinggong and performance of the Hainanese opera. Interviews: Secretary of Teochew Gongs and Drums, students of 24 Jiellinggu, members of the Five Blessings big head doll, guild hall's members, believers and audiences.
4	February 16 th - 21 th 2014	Recordings: the Duo Immortals of <i>Hehe</i> (big head doll) and performing arts of Hakka guild hall. Interviews: scholar from Southern University College, guild hall's members and performers.
5	March 8 th - 12 th 2015	Interviews: masters of Teochew Gongs and Drums, performers of Hokkien Gongs and Drums, and public/audiences.

• Participant Observation

Main research information for this study was collected through field observation in the Parade of Deities. General observations were first conducted in order to obtain an overview of the Parade and to be familiar with the basic socio-cultural structure of the population of the Chinese in Johor Bahru. This included observations of the geographical location of the Johor Old Temple; the location of Xinggong and the welcome stage; the route of the day parade and night parade; the procedure and processes of the rituals. Observations were also made on the distribution of Deities and the parade teams, the type and arrangement of performance troupes.

The second stage of fieldwork focused on more in-depth observation of the organizations behind the Parade. At this stage, the research also made attempt to search and gather relevant printed or written materials, whether formal or informal, that are related to the Johor Old Temple, the guild halls of the five clans, and their heritage gallery. The highlight of the fieldwork was the direct participation in the parade processions as an accompanying person, while observing and recording at the same time, an activity that is known as participant observation. Participant observation produced huge amount of field-notes written after each day of participation, audiovisual recording, as well as information gathered through interviews. Participant observation done in the whole process of the day and night Parade of Deities provided insights into the real scene of happening when the Parade takes place. In-depth interviews were specifically carried out with the dialectal opera troupes at the Xinggong. Some general interviews were also conducted with believers and audiences in order to determine their purpose of involvement in the Parade, as well as their opinions about the performance presented in the event.

Field trips in three year focused on some selected performance genre, such as Chaozhou Daluogu, 24 Jiellinggu, Big Head dolls and others, and in-depth interviews

with the relevant responsible persons, with the intention of collection of oral materials, as well as video and audio recording materials. On the other hand, participant observation was made in the ritual process of Xinggong, and member check with dialectal opera troupes was used to help improve the accuracy of the study. At the same time, communications with the president or members of the five guild halls were on going, and further expansion of the observation and records of believers and audiences were planned.

In the fourth year, the study continued to conduct in-depth observations and in-depth interviews with other selected performing arts, such as Duo Immortals of *Hehe* and Hakka cultural performance. Member check was made with the information gather about Chaozhou Daluogu and 24 Jiellingu. At the same time, an interview was conducted with Onn Huan Jan, a lecturer at Southern University College, to verify the origin of the ritual, and to observe the present situation and to prospect the future development.

In the fifth year, an in-depth observation and in-depth interview with remaining selected performing arts, such as Fujian Daluogu is continued to conduct. Member check with Duo Immortals of *Hehe* was also done. Verification of some of the previous accessed content and records continued until the information reach a saturated stage at the end of the field trip at year 5. All interactions with participants gave insights on their motifs, experience, and feeling in relating themselves to the event.

- **Interviews**

Structured and unstructured interview was carried out not only to collect fresh information, but also to verify and compensate on points of doubt or lacking in the literature. The interview conducted include face-to-face interviews with participants, telephone interviews, as well as group interviews with two to three interviewees in each group. The questions were set before the interview, and were planned specifically accordingly to the type of interviewee. Casual and *ad hoc* questioning was also done when interacting with believers and audiences.

The choice of informants is based on recommendations by the five clan guild hall and also through live interviews by devotees and audiences in the Parade of Deities (see appendix C). The key informants for field interviewed on the Parade of Deities can be divided into three categories. The main criteria for selection the first category is their ability to perform or to relate to the music and performing arts of Parade of Deities through their direct involvement in the past, such as the master of Hainanese dialectal opera, the consultant teacher and students of 24 Seasonal Drums, the mater and members of the dance of big head dolls, the secretary of Teochew Gongs and Drums, and the members of Hokkien Gongs and Drums. They were interviewed on the background, the history or origin of their performing arts, and the past and present overviews of the performing arts of Parade of Deities.

The second category comprises individuals that had held certain responsibilities with the event of Parade of Deities. Hong, Xi Di, the former chairman of the dance of big head dolls, was interviewed for the history of Foochow Shi Yi Association and the origin of the big head dolls. Lim, Kang Yong, the director of Johor Old Temple administrative committee (2006 - 2016), was interviewed for problems and solutions faced by the organization and the prospect of the organization.

Scholar from Southern College, Onn, Huann Jan, and a large number of devotees and audiences, the third category, were also be interviewed on their awareness of the origin of the parades, their opinions, impression, feeling and overall views about the music and performing arts of Parade of Deities, in order to obtain a fuller picture of the social context in which the Parade operates.

The diverse background, role and status of interviewees gave insights on the overall impact of Parade of Deities to the local community. Respondents' opinions, often come with a variety and sometimes disagreement, are evidence to tell the sentiments of the public in understanding the Parade and the deriving issues of larger frames.

- **Audio-Visual Recoding**

Video recording and photography is vital to document and analyze such a huge exposition of performance like the Parade of Deities. A large portion of details needed for examining the cultural symbols and performance content was obtained through audiovisual data.

The audio recordings of interviews were made using ZOOM H2 Handy Recorder and TASCAM DR-40 in Waveform Audio File Format (WAV). The photographs taken were realized with a CANON PowerShot A480 and a SONY SteadyShot DSC-S5000 camera. At the same time, the audiovisual recordings were made in MiniDV tapes using SONY Handycam HDR-HC9 and SONY Handycam HDR-CX210E.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the task of creating a taxonomy for the numerous performance troops in the Parade, providing description of the performance content, and discussing the issue of cultural representation of Parade of Deities with interpretations by connecting the information collected with social-musical theories. Taxonomy began with the challenging tasks of devising main categories and sub-categories for the performance content of the Parade of Deities. This is done by taken into account the order of presentation, the nature of the performance, the function of the performance, perceptions, as well as some existing principles embed in the value system of the Chinese community. Each type or group of performance has its own peculiarity and the way of conceptualizing each category shall reflect the inter-group

differences, for example Dialectal Opera and Lion Dance are vastly distanced both in their historical development, performance styles, and their actual role in the Parade.

Description of performance content is conducted according to the categories developed. As it is impossible to scrutinize every performance, detailed analysis of performance content were done on selected groups that are deemed representative of certain categories. Outcome of description of performance content were then reflected upon research questions and theoretical framework of the study in determining some substantial points that are valid from the viewpoint of cultural representation.

1.7. Definition of Terms

Parade, Parade of Deities, or Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities, in this thesis, when spelled with capitalization, refers to the annual street Parade of Deities of the Chinese Community in celebration of thanksgiving and praying for well-being to the deities worshipped in Johor Old Temple located in the city of Johor Bahru of Malaysia.

Clan refers to a group of close-knit and interrelated families tied to a specific geographical area within the more generic grouping of ethnicity called Chinese or the Han people. The Chinese community at Johor Bahru is made up of five clan groups, namely the Hainanese, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew. These people are the descent of their respective areas of origin in mainland China.

Performing Arts refers to all performances that are presented in the Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities.

Dance in this thesis refers to a broad category of movement based performance of the Chinese that is known with the word *wu*. It covers from a wide range of genre from Lion Dance, Dragon Dance, to Chinese Fan Dance.

Text or **cultural text** in this paper, used synonymous with "performance content", refers to the comprehensive content of a performance, and is not limited to written text. Especially when opera is mentioned, the text of an opera includes the script, story, recitation, singing and instrumental music.

Representation in this thesis refers to that detailed by Stuart Hall (1997: 15) who says "Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things."

Conversion name: Name in Chinese language is generally notated based on the Pinyin system, nevertheless conventional name is used wherever necessary in *Italic font*.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

This study only considers the “Parade of Deities” in Johor Bahru, not the other parade of deities in Malaysia. The subject of the Parade of Deities contains vast amount of display of performing arts which is not unlike an expo, the quantities and varieties of it are huge and come with difficulties to examine. This thesis focuses primarily on the music and performing arts but not on other aspects like management, tourism and political sciences as these aspects would be worthy of a different kind of consideration in another detailed research. As mentioned in Bohlman’s article (2005: 205-211) that music has a nature that carried “representational paradox”, in which music represent itself at the same times it represents social-cultural meaning, therefore a considerable portion of the thesis is devoted in explaining the content structure of the performing arts.

Fieldwork done was confined to five main Chinese clans, Hainanese, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochew, and only at their designated clan houses out of the hundreds clan houses in Johor Bahru. In addition, the research is carried out during the years 2011-2016, and thus the recorded data and information gathered through interviews, observations and related literature collected is specific to that particular timeframe.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis begins by introducing the general background of the study and the main frames of the research design such as problems, objectives, methods and analysis. The following chapter is a complete description of the Johor Old Temple, covering the origin, the organization structure and the proceedings of the five days’ event. From Chapter 3 onwards, description and examination of each of the main category of performance in the Parade of Deities will be provided. Chapter 3 focuses on dances, Chapter 4 on instrumental genres, Chapter 5 on operas. Each of these three chapters begins with a category that describes each of the performance items contained with it, followed by more detailed description on selected examples of performance content. Chapter 3 examines in detail the examples of Lion Dance and the Dance of Big Head Doll, Chapter 4 on Chaozhou Daluogu and 24 Jielinggu, while Chapter 5 features the examples from both Opening Play and Main Play of the Hainanese Opera. A discussion on the issues of symbols, structure and representation is inserted at the end of chapter for each category of dances, instrumental genres, and operas.

After presenting performance of all the three categories, Chapter 6 provides the total picture of how Parade teams, together with their signs and symbols are arranged and presented in the actual Parade of Deities. Finally, in Chapter 7, discussion and conclusion are given with regards to the cultural representation of Johor Old Temple's Parade of Deities through performing arts, placed in a larger discourse of spirituality, political identity, and artistry of the Chinese community in Malaysia.



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