

Exploration on Islamic Literature Policy in Malaysia

Mohd Faizal Musa

Institute of the Malay World & Civilization (ATMA),
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract: During the 70s, modern Islamic literature in Malaysia transformed in to a phenomenon. Applying Syed Husein Alatas's socio-historical methodology this paper explained how Islamic literature became 'a policy' in secular Malaysia. The acceleration of this growth is caused by the rise of Islam in the world that gave an impact on Muslims in Malaysia. Clearly, the literary world was not spared from the heat of this revival. The furor took place with the active involvement of missionary bodies. It also happens because of the solid acceptance by literary figures and the support by government or authorized Islamic institutions, including the official body of literature. The phenomenon of Islamic literature can be traced through the publication of works of Islamic literature, the activities of Islamic literature and literary discourses about Islam. The enthusiasm was also endorsed or supported by the government directly and indirectly through their involvement. Similarly, non-governmental bodies also help to promote Islamic art. Part of the successful propagation on Islamic Literature in Malaysia, is politically, Islam was accepted as an official religion. Thus, the government's efforts to implement Islamic values in general cannot be disputed significantly. Today, Islamic literature became a recognized policy for the establishment.

Key words: Islamic literature • Dakwah • Islamic art • literary policy • literary phenomenon

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia had been always dubbed as an Islamic (but) also a secular state. A careful look in to Malaysia will lead scholars to a complex, deeply diverse and heterogenous society which foundation came from many cultures, civilizations and religions [1]. In order to understand Malaysian style of secularism it is necessary to look at Malaysian Constitution. The fact is that, Malaysia adopted Islam as the religion of the federation and not a full-fledged secular state just like United States of America, Singapore or Turkey. It is significant to note that even though Islam became the official religion of Malaysia, The White Paper dealing with the 1957 constitutional proposals stated clearly that 'there has been included in the proposed Federal Constitution a declaration that Islam is the religion of the Federation. This will in no way affect the present position of the Federation as a secular state...' [2].

This essay attempts to guide readers to understand a micro aspect of overlapped sense of secularism and Islam in the area of literature policy.

In the early decades of the 70s, the revival of Islamic movements, or global Islamic missionary movement

created awareness among Moslems and marked significant impact in the community. Shafie Abu Bakar stated that this revivalism caused the acceptance of Islam as ad-Deen, or a perfect religion, that encompasses various aspects, including in the field of writing and literature. This situation according to him "created a new phenomenon of Islamic literature [3]."

In Malaysia it is generally accepted that Islamic literature derived from a broad space of Islamic arts, which is based on tauhid (monotheism) and akhlak (morals), this is while the aspects of truth are championed and were not overcome by the artistic aspects. Also, it is accepted by the practitioners that the aspects of truth should be prevailed without offsetting the literary quality. Islamic Arts, in this context literature, is also known to be displaying amar makruf and nahi mungkar (promoting good deeds and prohibiting any kind of corruption) while having the core story or narrative in accordance with the sharia (Islamic law). Normally the researchers of Islamic literature would also take into account the personal attribute of the authors since the act of writing is viewed as an act of ibadah or worship to Allah and the product is expected to provide benefits to the ummah (Moslem society) as a whole.

Apparently, though Islamic art has long existed, the occupation of the West against Muslim countries including Malaysia had resulted in negligence of the Islamic literature for a period of time. However, it makes a come back in the 1970s in the modern and westernized form. Regardless of the small number of discussions about the nature of Islamic literature before the 70s, the Islamic literature in the decade emerged as a phenomenon and is quite widespread. It should be stressed that Malay literature in Malaysia had significant changes in history, influenced by the discourse of Islamic literature and literary products.

It is essential to identify the groups and individuals that have strengthened the idea of Islamic literature in Malaysia. For this purpose, the study is limited to ensuring the extent of the government, government bodies and non-governmental organizations support and the patterns of activity of Islamic literature that became a phenomenon. In order to understand this interesting subject, a socio-historical method in accordance with Syed Hussein Alatas's, proposal had been chosen. According to him, in order to study any Islamic phenomenon in a specific region, a socio-historical method should be put forward. Alatas pointed out five factors to be examined in order to understand any emergence of Islamic phenomenon. The text quoted below from his 1968 essay shows how this method operates:

Essentially this socio-historical method is the understanding that every belief, idea of man or major phenomenon should be seen as a fact that possesses an absolute unity with time, place, culture, group and environment, in which such beliefs, ideas, or phenomenon originate. Thus, to know and understand a particular phenomenon, five questions should be asked: When did the phenomenon originate; Where; In which culture; Which grouped is associated with the phenomenon; In what environment does the phenomenon occur. Before we proceed further, it is necessary to point out that the word 'phenomenon' is used in the widest sense, including also the emergence of a belief or idea [4].

In order to ensure a smooth discussion, this paper will be divided into sub-topics. To facilitate discussion, the data accumulated is handled in such order; the phenomenon of Islamic Literature in Malaysia; second, the factors of the phenomenon; third, how it

started; fourth, discussion on the involvement of Non-Government Organization and government agencies in stimulating the Islamic Literature phenomenon; finally, the conclusion.

The Phenomenon of Islamic Literature in Malaysia:

It has been accepted by most of the literary scholars in Malaysia that the beginning of the modern literary form in Malaysia emerged together with such novels; *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* (1925-1927) by Syed Sheikh al Hadi, *Kawan Benar* (1927) and *Iakah Salmah?* (1929) both works are written by Ahmad Haji Muhammad Rashid Talu [5]. At this stage, the factor of Islam as a pillar of narratives, are not in the position or never been detected in any discussions in modern Malay literature. According to the study of Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, the earliest novels of this country have adopted 'the idea of liberalism' and the application of this idea in the literary works have "an impact in the development of modern Malay literature [6]." Subsequently according to him, the emergence of the '50's Literary Movement' or ASAS 50 in championing the trend of realism in literature has put "the Islamic literature away" while making the literary movement itself "a secular movement in the brink of Malaysia's independence." ASAS 50 is as an influential literary movement in the 50's upholding the slogan 'the art for community'. ASAS 50 as well, added Abdul Rahman, is affected by symptoms of "atheism and communism." The assertion made by him, based on the writings of Hamzah Husin, one of the founders of ASAS 50.

Abdul Rahman's study should be observed carefully. In addition, Sahlan Mohd Saman was also disputing the 'purity' of ASAS 50 which according to him full of 'deviation' as such as "fighting for the proletarian-agrarian, lashing out against the clerics and middle-class society [7]." Clearly, Abdul Rahman and Sahlan allegations are matched. In fact, according to Sahlan, the ASAS 50's struggles are full of propaganda against Islam and the opposition itself could jeopardize the Islamic faith. Sahlan also point out that the literary atmosphere in the 50's is filled with evil and this lasted until the era of the 70s. According to Sahlan, 'deviation' or irregularities committed by the ASAS 50, among others, is "worshipping other human being, greed related, challenging intellectual, moral and psychological aspects of Moslems and resisting spiritual value." Sahlan Mohd Saman views definitely strengthen the argument that Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah is not alone in seeing the

position of the ASAS 50 as a literary and cultural movement that are far away from Islam. In addition, the views are also delivered by Sahlan again in an international seminar. The 'International Seminar on Malay Literature V', held in Kota Bharu, Kelantan was joined organized by the Malay Literature Department of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (the official body for language and literature in Malaysia) and the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism. Seminar participants were about 150 people, among them researchers, scholars and literary figures from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore.

Long before that, Kassim Ahmad already stressed that ASAS 50 directly marginalized Islam in any of their position. He said the ASAS 50 is affected by ideology of nationalism and Islam is only ranked among the writers and literary movements after they realized that nationalism are failing to "be a source of inspiration" among themselves. Kassim Ahmad statement was made in a seminar on ASAS 50 on 22nd and August 23rd, 1980. Kassim assertion can be seen in the quote below:

Selepas Perang Dunia Kedua dengan kemunculan ASAS 50 aliran Islam langsung tidak kelihatan. Aliran ini ditimbus oleh gelombang bersejarah nasionalisme yang besar. Tetapi sekarang setelah nyata kegagalan nasionalisme untuk terus menjadi sumber ilham kepada kaum penulis, Islam muncul kembali, sesuai dengan kemunculannya semula di seluruh dunia, sebagai sumber ilham alternatif bagi kaum penulis kita. Translation: After World War II, Islam did not appear during the emergence of ASAS 50. The literary flow is filled by a huge wave of nationalism. But now that the nationalism failed to be a source of inspiration to those authors, Islam emerged again, in accordance with the re-emergence of Islam in the world, as an alternative source of inspiration for our author community [8].

Those allegations and responses submitted above are appropriate observations and sufficient enough to make an argument that Islam is not in the position of modern Malay literature since the publication of the novels *Hikayat Faridah Hanum*, *Kawan Benar* and *Iakah Salmah?* In fact, during the 50s, ASAS 50 deliberately ignore the Islamic factor and the movement itself was a secular literary movement.

However, according to S. Othman Kelantan at the same time, situated at some distance away, the establishment of an educational institution called the Islamic College in 1956, has spawned a group of students who wrote and applied elements of Islam in their poetries [9]. The intended poets, among others, are Adi Rumi, Marhan, AR Hadhrami and Badaruddin HO. In addition of writing Islamic poetries, Badaruddin HO also wrote an article entitled 'Seni Sastra dan Islam' or in english, 'Literature and Islam' [10]. In this period also "Islamic Poetries" are written by Zulkfli Muhammad, Syed Naquib al Attas, Juhari Ahmad and Suhur Antar-Saudara and their writings can be tracked down through religious publications such as magazine and newspaper named Qibla, al-Islam, Dian, Pengasuh, Qalam and Warta issued by Johor Religious Department [9].

It should be emphasized that the above conditions is not a literary phenomenon in Malaysia at that time. It is an isolated development. The poets passion in Islamic literature, declined without developing into a discourse or any significant symptoms. The more dominant stream of literature in the 50s till the 70s, remain, according to Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah the "flow of naturalism, hedonism, marxism and existentialism or absurdism." He draws this conclusion based on the proliferation of works with the elements of sex, erotic and the philosophy of existentialism in the 70's [6].

Sahlan Mohd Saman also argued that in the early 70s the arts community in Malaysia has been influenced by Western thinking and that they question God. Just like in the works of Albert Camus, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Sartre, Nietzsche and Alain Groblet. Sahlan regretted that such philosophy or belief influenced Malay authors which he said could affect their faith [7]. This situation occurs in the literary community before the Islamic Literature slogan popularized by Shahnon Ahmad, a well known writer and the campaign was utilized in stages since 1977. This is in fact an important shifts, Islamic literature finally got the attention needed and became a phenomenon in the late 70s, as will be discussed later.

The term phenomenon or *gejala* in Malay, according to the Kamus Dewan is "a fact or event that can be observed." The same dictionary also gave second definition, "phenomenon or *gejala* is a statement or event that can be given and explained scientifically [11]." Thus, the meaning given above perceived that phenomenon considered as "the facts that can be explained."

In addition, another encyclopedia site, Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenon> - linked the term phenomenon with the philosopher, Immanuel Kant. The philosopher, Kant explains the phenomenon was "an experience that can be understood by studying the process of the experience." Hence the term phenomenon contrary to the term 'noumenon' which describes a situation that cannot be explained by the fact, or basically, it is an experience that has no reason or basis. According to this encyclopedia site again, in terms of certain scientific discipline, a phenomena is associated with a series of symptoms that can be observed prior to the something, like a strong wind that eventually would cause a heavy storm or earth tremors as a sign of impending volcanic eruption [12].

In this paper, this definition allows the conclusions of the phenomenon of Islamic literature "involves the signs, statements, events, perhaps a kind of furor that the environment involving extensive Islamic literature, can be felt and observed and analyzed for its influence is spreading." Therefore, based on this understanding, the Islamic literature as literary phenomenon will be addressed in this paper.

The Factors of the Phenomenon: The phenomenon of Islamic literature in Malaysia exploded because of several factors that can be observed. One of the reasons is that the emergence of the idea of Islamic literature is a part of the Islamic revival in the 70s. The so called 'resurrection of Islam' is said to begin right after Muslim society stepped into fifteenth century hijrah.

The Islamic awareness as a whole then impacted on the community at the global level. This is caused by several events. It occurs, among others, because of Zionist's act of terrorism in Palestinian territories, the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 and the awareness of the economic strength of Muslims, which is located on petroleum products. Accordingly, the rise of Islam is to be noted for example in the emergence of various Islamic missionary movements. These missionary movements have gained a place among the Muslim community at large. The concept of Islam as ad-deen (Islam as the way of life) which comprehensively covers many areas of life has become a slogan by most organizations of this mission. This concept is as a reaction to the ideology of secularism [3].

In Malaysia, the universally rise of Islam also have an influence. This revival can be seen through the role of government bodies and non-governmental organizations. Missionary movements such as Darul Arqam, the Muslim Youth Movement (ABIM), Muslim student associations

at universities, PERKIM (association for newly converted Muslims) and Jamaat Tabligh are all actively involved in various Islamic missionary activities. According to Mohamed Anwar Omar Din at the same time, the presence of the early seeds of Islamic literature is widely accepted by many non-governmental bodies including the religious opposition party, PAS (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia). The government of Malaysia did not want to miss the boat and also gave the reaction needed for Islamic activities. National Council for Islamic Affairs of Malaysia (JAKIM) and the Islamic Affairs Department at the Prime Minister (BAHEIS) for example has been set up in 1968. This allows missionary activities become official at the government level [13].

The rise of Islam at the international and national level as well, accelerated the acceptance of Islam as ad-deen. Therefore, this Islamic awareness also allows a place in the literary field. The concept of Islam as ad-deen clearly suggests Islam as a good way of life. This means that Islam is not just viewed as a religious aspect only, but also covers various fields of life including arts and cultural fields. In response to the Muslims *volksgeist*, literature as a part of the culture and the arts were then affected by the conditions that have been noted.

For example, semi-government bodies, YADIM (Islamic Dakwah Foundation of Malaysia) with their output, a magazine named Da'wah provides a space for short stories carrying Islamic values, while promoting Islamic literary [14]. In August 1977, a magazine named Dewan Sastra published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (The National Arts Council of Language and Literature), which is another government body responsible in the case of literature, language and culture, has been focusing on Islamic literature in its publication. This edition includes articles by Mohd Kamal Hassan and Ismail Ibrahim as a reaction to the article written by Shahnun Ahmad entitled 'Islamic Literature' in another Magazine, Dewan Bahasa, July 1977.

How It Started? Racial riot on May 13, 1969 has caused the government to take measures to overcome the economic disparity between races. Since then, a policy has been introduced to overcome the divisions of the economic cake. The establishment of the New Economic Policy or Dasar Ekonomi Baru somehow 'shaped' group of writers in the 70s. The group is said to be 'the second generation of authors' that have distance themselves from ASAS 50 [15]. This situation is important to mention here when considering the allegations that Islam has not got a reputable and dominant place in the literature in the 50s or simply to say, the ASAS 50 took secularism as their back ideology.

Thus, the re-emergence of Islamic literature as part of the literary life in the 70s, also gained a place among the authors. The younger generation of writers disassociated themselves from the ASAS 50 and took Islam as a substitute to secularism.

This is an important beginning for the Islamic literature. The strengthening of Islamic literature is widely accepted and well planned. As a reaction to the rise of Islam, activities of Islamic literature as a phenomenon has been widely held involving government and NGOs. The strengthening of the Islamic literary phenomenon can be detected through, first; organizing the writing contest, second; through the publication of literary works and books about Islam, third; through research on Islamic literature and activities like reading Islamic poetries. The re-emergence of Islamic literature as an alternative to secular literature then became inevitable.

Non Government Involvement: The rapid growth of Islamic literature has been nurtured by the NGOs. There are many examples to reinforce the statement. However, only a few significant examples will be revealed here. On 28-29 July 1973, Persatuan Sasterawan Trengganu (Pelita) and National Writers Front (GAPENA) has organized a 'Symposium on Literature and Religion', held in Terengganu [16]. The symposium was followed by the Hari Sastera V in Kuala Terengganu on 24 to 27 July 1978 in which the theme of the conference is 'Islam as a Source of Arts'. Later on, GAPENA as the largest and the most influential writer's block organized a gathering named Symposium Darul Iman on December 8, 1981 and from that moment, its officially disseminate the concept and the idea of 'Islamic literature' [17]. On May 30, 1976 a combination of student associations, Angkatan Belia Islam Semalaysia and several other organizations have established Gabungan Penulis Islam Malaysia (GAPIM) or Muslim Writers Joint Forces. GAPIM openly aspires to attract writers to the literature of Islam and to return to the tradition of Islamic [18].

Other non-government organization such as Al Arqam also joined the furor by publishing anthology of poems such as *Di Ambang Pintu Kiamat, Cahaya, Di Antara Rintihan dan Harapan dan Dari Allah Kita Datang Kepada Allah Kita Pulang*. Among the famous poets who joined the effort was Al Arqam's own boss Ashaari Muhammad and Salleh Abu Bakar. In addition, this was followed by series of poetry reading activities. For instance, an 'Islamic Poetry Night' by Yayasan Al Arqam, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and student associations became a regular phenomenon that also boost the Islamic literature.

The organisation of 'Islamic Poetry Nights' was first started in 1968 in Kota Bharu and held again by Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka on 21 April 1978 named 'Spiritual Poetry Night.' Organizing for the second time on June 16, 1979 Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka collaborated with GAPIM. Until 1984, such 'Islamic poetry night' was organized as many as six times. The Islamic poetry reading is also performed together with religious (nasyid) singing and this kind of activity was also spread outside Kuala Lumpur.

Government Involvement: As mentioned in the beginning, Islamic art also getting attention at the federal government and states level. Government involvement is most clearly seen through the promotion and sponsorship of prizes for literary competitions. Islamic Affairs Department at the Prime Minister Office for example, organized an Islamic short story writing competitions. Shafie Abu Bakar, a scholar and an author acknowledges the 'rapid growth of Islamic literature' has been helped by the government involvement.

Islamic Literature was further strengthened by the involvement of government institutions in organizing writing contests with Islamic wares. For example, since 1975 until 1986 the Islamic Affairs Department at the Prime Minister Office, known as Pusat Islam (the Islamic Center) has organized a short story writing contest for seven times, producing seven anthology of short stories written by famous and new writers [3].

Among the anthologies of short stories resulting from this competition is *Tantangan, Tuhan, Bagaimana Akan Kucari-Mu, Mati, Runtunan* and *Sebuah Lampu Antik* [18]. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka then works together with the Islamic Affairs Department to organize writing competition across genres involving poetry, short stories, novels and stage plays. Among the works published as the results of the competition is *Madrasah* an anthology of short stories (1982), *Asar Belum Berakhir* an anthology of stage plays (1984) and a novel entitled *Hidayah* (1984) by Harun Salleh [17].

Terengganu state government through Yayasan Islam Terengganu also organized Islamic novels writing competition. *Ku Ingin Kasih Mu* by Siti Hawa Mohd Hassan was an output from the competition. Anugerah Darul Iman or Darul Iman Literary Award was then organized by the same state in 1983 and works published from it are; *Seorang Guru Tua* (1985) by Abdul Rahman Harun, *Arbain* (1985) by Sabda S, *Fajar di Hujung Malam* (1991) by Hasan Ali and *Sekepal Tanah* (1995) by Rahimidin Zahari.

The Islamic Literature mania also 'infected' East Malaysia. In addition to the state of Trengganu, Sabah State Government through the Department of Chief Minister also participate in boosting the phenomenon of Islamic literature by organizing writing contest in conjunction with the 15th century Hijri [3]. *Di Sebalik Kubah* (1986) by Harun Salleh was published from this competition. The Sabah branch of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in collaboration with the Sabah Islamic Affairs Department also organized many poetry writing contest and created a prize named 'Tokoh Sastera Islam' began in 1994. From 1987 to 2000 there were 13 Islamic poetry anthologies were published from this collaboration [17].

Obviously Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka played an effective role in fueling the Islamic Literature phenomenon. It is important to stress again that Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka is a government body. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka was continuously collaborating with various institutions and state governments. According to Hamzah Hamdani in one of his essay, those organized competition has helped to reinforce Islamic Literature's position in Malaysia. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka cooperation with Yayasan Pelajaran Islam in organizing Islamic Literature Prize since 1987, for example, has helped to strengthen the definition of Islamic art in Malaysia. Prizes were given away and launched by the Minister of Education at that time, Dato 'Seri Anwar Ibrahim, which indicate an indirect involvement of the senior minister in the government to uplift the Islamic literature in this country.

Hadiah Sastera Islam or Islamic Literature Prize competitions help to produce various works across genres. From 1987 to 2000 the competition was organized for about 10 times. There are five published novels, among others, *Asraq* (1987) by Azizi Haji Abdullah, *Nurul Hidayah* (1990) by Hasan Ali and *Mereka Yang Tertewas* (1990) by Hassanuddin Mohd Isa. Two compilation of short stories were also published, *Cahaya Langit* (1987) by Abdullah Hussain and *Keabadian* (1992) by Siti Aishah Murad. Three other anthologies of short stories were *Embun Hidayah* (1991), *Syahdu* (1993) and *Baitullah ke Nabilah* (1994). Even tv drama scripts were generated from Hadiah Sastera Islam and this shows that Islamic awareness was placed widely in all areas of writing.

As for the genre of stage plays, three stage plays were produced through the organization of Hadiah Sastera Islam, *Angin Madinah* by Faisal Tehrani, *Gelanggang Tuk Wali* by Ismail Kassan and *Kembalikan*

Aku Ke Laut by Sairah Haji Antin. Two of the plays were chosen as the official play for Theatre Festival organized by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism on an annual basis.

To include an argument, *Mereka Yang Tertewas* by Hassanuddin Mohd Isa was subsequently chosen as literature textbook for high school students. This choice reflects the seriousness of government to promote Islamic literature in to the mainstream. It shows that the government recognized Islamic literature in Malaysia. This is a very important move considering Malaysia is not entirely a Muslim country but consists of other religions as well. By doing so, the 'Islamization through literature' creep in Malaysian schools 'affecting and effecting' young generation of all races and religions. In sum, this step showed how successful the propagation on Islamic Literature in Malaysia. In fact, no recorded rejections are found on the selection of *Mereka Yang Tertewas* by Hassanuddin Mohd Isa in schools.

Apart from organizing literary prizes, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka also help research works on Islamic literature. Among the published research work includes *Mengenang-Mu: Puisi-puisi Melayu Berunsur Islam 1933-1986* (1989) by Ahmad Kamal Abdullah and Mohd Hanafi Ibrahim and *Puisi Melayu Lama Berunsur Islam* (2000) by Wahyunah Abdul Ghani and Mohamad Shahidan. This research effort also extends to the holding of nadwah, seminars and symposium on Islamic literature.

A seminar on 'Islamic Literary Theory: Methods and Implementation' (Seminar Teori Sastera Islam: Kaedah dan Penerapannya) by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka from 26 to 28 September 2000 for example, has formulated a certain stand to the Islamic literature. The outcome of the seminar reads:

"Falsafah sastera Islam kita ialah keyakinan dan pegangan kita, yang disertakan dengan perjuangan dan penghayatan yang berterusan, bahawa sastera yang benar dan bermakna serta menyelamatkan ialah sastera yang berdasarkan faham alam, faham ilmu dan faham nilai kita dalam Islam dan tradisinya, yang di dalamnya kita zahirkan semua potensi rohani, intelektual, moral dan jasmani kita, dalam membina peradaban dan budaya kita melalui sastera, serta kita mampu mempertahankan jati diri sastera dan budaya kita demikian dalam arus globalisasi dunia. Bahkan kita bukan hanya mampu mempertahankan jati diri sastera dan budaya demikian dalam proses globalisasi itu, tetapi kita mampu menentukan arus

globalisasi itu dalam hubungan dengan bangsa-bangsa di dunia”. Translation: Islamic literature is our belief and stand, that comes with the struggle and continued appreciation, that a true and meaningful literature is a literature that based in understanding the nature, in understanding the knowledge and in understanding our Islamic values, principals and traditions, in which we reveal all sorts of potential may it be spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically, in defend of our civilization and culture through literature, we are able to maintain its identity in the era of globalization. We are not only able to maintain the cultural identity and literature in the process of globalization, but we are able to determine the relationship with the nations of the world [19].

The effort to establish a philosophy of Islamic literature shows how Islamic Literature was given a special place and significance in the development of Malay literature in general. In fact, Islamic literature has been defined as core consideration to the development of literary and cultural challenges through globalization. This is even more effective because ‘the business is run’ by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, the one that officially in charge and has the power to determine the development of literature in Malaysia.

Finally, the strengthening of Islamic literature was translated through the publication of Islamic literary discourse. During the 90s the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka actively published books on Islamic art, among others, *Sastera Sufi* (1992) by Baharudin Ahmad, *Pendidikan Estetika Daripada Pendekatan Tauhid* (1992) by Mohd Affandi Hassan, *Asas Kesusasteraan Islam* (1990) by Ismail Hamid, *Teori dan Pemikiran Sastera Islam di Malaysia* (1991) by Nurazmi Kuntum and *Persuratan Islam* (1994) by Muhammad Bukhari Lubis.

CONCLUSION

It is no doubt today, Islamic literature is accepted as ‘a policy’ in secular Malaysia. The discussion above clearly shows how ‘secular literature’ transformed and evolved in to Islamic literature and had become a widespread phenomenon in Malaysia since the 70s and continued until now. This phenomenon did not appear suddenly but triggered by a number of important factors. The rise of Islam in the world impacted Muslims in Malaysia and infiltrated through literature.

The awareness on religion involves the dissemination of Islamic activities including literature. Since then, the idea of Islamic literature started to receive public attention

in Malaysia. Interestingly, the idea is fully supported by governments, government agencies and non-governmental organizations through various literary activities with Islamic patterns. As shown above the Islamic Literature policy was not contested since, politically, Islam was accepted as an official religion.

REFERENCES

1. Aziz, A. and A.B. Shamsul, 2004. The Religious, The Plural, The Secular and The Modern: A Brief Critical Survey on Islam in Malaysia, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3): 341-356.
2. Hashim, M.S., 1962. The Relationship Between Islam and the State in Malaya, *Intisari*, 1(10): 8-9.
3. Abu Bakar, S., 2000. Persuratan Melayu: Pengucapan Tamadun Islam, In *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, (eds), Mohd Taib Osman and A. Aziz Deraman, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 432: 432-433, 433.
4. Alatas, S. H., 2007. The Method of Studying Islam, In *Moral Vision and Social Critique*, (eds.) Azhar Ibrahim Alwee and Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib, The Reading Group, Singapore, pp: 94-97.
5. Hussain, S., M.T. Ahmad and J. Jaafar, 1981. *Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu Jilid 1*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 111.
6. Abdullah, A.R., 1998. *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 222-225, 261-264.
7. Mohd Saman, S., 2004. *Sastera Islam di Malaysia: Antara Tuntutan dan Pengisiannya*, In *Sastera Islam Citra Nurani Ummah*, (ed.) Mohamed Anwar Omar Din, Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, pp: 100-101.
8. Ahmad, K.A., 1981. ASAS 50 dan Sumber Ilhamnya Dalam Warisan Asas 50: Kumpulan Kertas Kerja Ceramah dan Bengkel Asas 50 dan Sastera Melayu Moden, Institut Analisa Sosial and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 19.
9. Kelantan, S.O., 1987. *Arah Pemikiran Sastera Malaysia*, Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, pp: 91-134.
10. Badaruddin, H.O., 1966. *Konsep seni sastera dalam Islam*, Dewan Bahasa, February, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 66-70.
11. Kamus Dewan, 2000. Third Edition, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 351.
12. Kant, E., 2011. [http:// en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Phenomenon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenon), accessed 16th June.

13. Omar Din, M.A., 2004. *Sastera Islam Citra Nurani Ummah*, Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, pp: 22.
14. Mohd Tahir, U.M., 1989. *Sastera Islam: Malaysia's Literary Phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s*, *The Muslim World*, July-October, pp: 232.
15. Zakir, S.M., 2003. *Empat Jalur Sastera Melayu: Mencari Nilai Agung*, In *Sastera Melayu: Warisan Jati Diri dan Jagat*, (ed.) Mohamed Pitchay Gani Mohamed Abdul Aziz, Angkatan Sastrawan 50 and National Library Board, Singapore, pp: 43-44.
16. Hussein, I., 1987. *Perkembangan Sastera Kebangsaan: Peranan Gerakan Masyarakat, Institusi dan Penerbitan*, In *Perkembangan Sastera Kebangsaan: Esei/Kritikan Pemenang Hadiah Sastera 1982-1983*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 5-6.
17. Hamdani, H., 2002. *Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Sastera Islam: Catatan Pengalaman Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia*, *Jurnal Pangsura*, 8 (14): 87-88-90.
18. Kuntum, N., 1991. *Teori dan Pemikiran Sastera Islam*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, pp: 21-22.
19. *Teori Sastera Islam: Kaedah dan Penerapannya*. 2000. Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.