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Heritage of Nusantara specializes in religious studies in the field of literature either contemporarily or classically and heritage located in Southeast Asia. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines.

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DEVELOPING AN INDEPENDENCE STATE: SOME INSIGHTS FROM QALAM PUBLICATION

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Abstract

This article is to identify a few concepts on independence and proposed a necessary approach in developing an identity of the country by analysing articles written in Qalam periodicals by three figures, Edrus, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Muhammad Isa Anshary. Qalam is a socio-politics periodical in Jawi script published in Singapore in 1950 until 1969. By analysing the writings, it is believed that proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945 inspired the development of Malaysia as a sovereign country and influenced readers in Malaya, Singapore and Brunei in which their countries were still struggling for independence.

Keywords : *Qalam magazine, nasionalism, Islam, Edrus, Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Muhammad Isa Anshary, Malaysia-Indonesia, and Malay nation.*

Abstrak:

Makalah ini bertujuan untuk melihat beberapa gagasan kemerdekaan dan cadangan kepada pembentukan identiti negara menerusi tulisan tiga tokoh iaitu Edrus, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy dan Muhammad Isa Anshary yang terdapat dalam majalah Qalam. Qalam merupakan sebuah majalah sosiopolitik bertulisan Jawi berbahasa Melayu yang diterbitkan di Singapura pada 1950 hingga 1969. Berdasarkan kepada analisis terhadap tulisan-tulisan ini, makalah ini mendapati bahawa proklamasi kemerdekaan Indonesia pada 1945 telah memberi inspirasi kepada pembentukan negara Malaysia yang berdaulat dan memberi pengaruh kepada pembaca di Malaya, Singapura dan Brunei yang masih berusaha membebaskan diri dari belenggu penjajahan.

Kata kunci : Majalah Qalam, nasionalisme, Islam, Edrus, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Muhammad Isa Anshary, Malaysia-Indonesia, dan bangsa Melayu.

1. Introduction

The end of Second World War indicated the development of independent states in south-east Asia. Even though the struggle from colonialism lasted for hundreds of years, since the age of exploration, people still have debates and queries over efforts about developing the nation and its identity. Malaysia and Indonesia are neighbouring countries that share many similarities such as culture, custom, language and religion. For such nations, independence is a time to honour the liberation for selfgovernment based on the efforts of their local people.

Sukarno announced the proclamation of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945 after Japan was defeated during the Pacific war and Japan withdrew from Indonesia. However, the official acknowledgement of the independence was made by the Dutch on December 27, 1949. Malaysia achieved its independence on August 31, 1957 and was known as Malaya at the time. Malaysia was formed on September 16, 1963 with the joining together of Sarawak and Sabah to form Malaysia. Singapore pulled out of the Federation of Malaysia in 1965 and became an independent state.

The proclamation of Indonesian Independence was made earlier than the other countries in the region. Thus it became a source of inspiration for Malaysia to govern the country with its own identity. Ideologies and actions by prominent leaders, namely Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, Mohammad Natsir, Sutan Sjahrir (even though criticized), guided other leaders while, at the same time, communism and Western values were ideologies that threatened the self-governing efforts.

Debates over the struggles for independence was evident in newspaper and magazine publications. The publications became an important medium in developing intellectualism and the society and politics of the Malays¹. The publications not only recorded the events that occurred during the time, they also indicated the thinking and quality of the people². In some ways, the newspapers and magazines were the historical sources that recorded the developmental phases of a nation from pre to post-independence.

One of the important publications that documented the phases was the Qalam, 228-editions of a monthly magazine written in Jawi (an Arabic alphabet used by Islamic languages). Publication included Malay, from 1950 until 1969. Its 19-years of publication were sufficient enough to be an eye-witness account of all the independence struggles. Consequently, Qalam is considered to be a historical source in recording the important events in Malaysia and Indonesian calendar.

2. About Qalam

Qalam was published by Qalam Press owned by Syed Abdullah bin Abdul Hamid al-Edrus, better known as Edrus. Not only a publisher and owner of the Qalam Press, he is also an author, reporter, editor, and cameraman who managed the important publications, distributed in the peninsula, southern Thailand, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Singapore areas. Therefore, after his sudden death on October 20, 1969, Qalam ceased to publish and the Qalam Press closed down due to the inability to replace his capabilities.

Qalam was initially published in Singapore and then moved to Petaling Jaya in 1967 until it ceased publication in 1969. The Qalam was known for its critical views related to social, politics, religion, culture, and language issues that occurred in Malaysia. During its early publication, the Qalam focused more on issues in neighbouring Indonesia, especially on their post-independent struggles. It was also concerned over the world crisis, after the Second World War, when many countries continued the fight for independence and sovereignty over nation-states. As a periodical in Jawi script, the Qalam encountered publication challenges with others using Rumi, a Roman script in the Malay language. At that time Rumi was promoted nationwide to replace Jawi as the main medium of writing. Thus, the Qalam has become very special since its concept was different and remained significant even with the presence of Rumi writing.

Recognizing the value of the Qalam as a historical source, the Klasika Media-Akademi Jawi Malaysia and the Centre for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS), Kyoto University, Japan, worked together in digitizing and Romanizing the Qalam magazine. The four-year project, successfully ended in 2015, managed to create a database of all the Qalam articles which can be accessed in three different languages - Malay, Japanese and English.³ This database is very useful for reference purposes since it not only collected and integrated articles from the Qalam but it also enhanced the utilization of this material by providing the Romanization of the Jawi script.

3. About the Publisher

Edrus was born in Pontianak, Kalimantan on July 11th, 1911. As a young man who loved challenges, Edrus moved to Singapore in 1929⁴ and worked as a typesetter at the Anglo-Asiatic Press which was later known as the Warta Malaya. Edrus expanded his expertise in publishing by becoming a proof-reader, clerk, and reporter. His association with many renowned local reporters, such as Othman Kalam, Abdul Rahim Kajai and Ishak Hj Muhammad, helped shape him as a skillful writer. All these experiences made it possible for him to set up his own printing company, which was known as the Qalam Press, in September 1951.

The Qalam magazine made its debut in July 1950 and in its early days, was printed in several factories around Singapore. Later it was printed by the newly established Qalam Press, its own printing company. The Qalam Press also printed various publications such as a newspaper and books, especially those that were written by Edrus himself. His critical attitude towards current issues made him responsive and reactive in giving opinions through critical writings. Owning his own printing company made it possible for Edrus to publish his writings. It was no strange fact that he was able to produce various forms of writing such as novels, novelettes, and literature reviews that provided general knowledge about language and literature, religion, and general analyses⁵. Twenty-seven novels were identified as his writing under various pen names such as Edrus, Ahmad Lutfi, Ahmad Zulfi and Anak Melayu.

Edrus invited many prominent writers such as Za'ba, Ahmad Sonhadji Muhammad, Abdullah Basmeh, Mohammad Natsir, Sutan Takdir, Hamka and Kiyai Abdul Wahid Hashim to contribute their writings in the Qalam. His editorial team also translated articles from foreign sources and published them in the Qalam, making it known as being responsive to international issues.

The Qalam Press portrayed Edrus' determination in writing as he built it using his own money, and help from close friends, without receiving funds from any institutions. As a comparison, Utusan Melayu Press⁶, a big publishing company during that time, which was founded by Yusof Ishak in 1939 was a consortium that was set up by few entities.

4. Historical Events Recorded by Qalam during its 19-Years of Publication

The Qalam recorded many historical events in Malaysia through its 228-editions during 19 years of publication. Some of important events were:

- i. 1950: Qalam Press start its operation, first edition was July-August
- ii. 1951: Nadra tragedy (December)
- iii. 1955: Baling Talks between Malayan Communist Party and the British government (December)
- iv. 1955: First election of the federal (July)
- v. 1956: Independent rounds in London (January)
- vi. 1956: Establishment of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (June)
- vii. 1957: Independent (August)
- viii. 1963: Confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia (until 1966)

- ix. 1963: Formation of Malaysia (September)
- x. 1965: Singapore separated from Malaysia and gain independence (August)
- xi. 1967: Qalam Press moved to Petaling Jaya (September)
- xii. 1967: Peristiwa Keranda 152 (issue on national language)
- xiii. 1969: Racial Riot (13 Mei)
- xiv. 1969: Edrus died (20th October). Final publication of Qalam was in September

5. Analysis through Writings in Qalam Magazines on Independence

Perspectives about independence and developing the self-regulating state were the main aspects that were being analyzed through the writings of these three figures in the Qalam. Identify the three figures Their views were based on the first 20 publications in the Qalam (from 1950 until 1954), in two different countries: Indonesia who had declared its proclamation and Malaysia who still struggled for independence. The writings were

- i. "Melawat Indonesia Merdeka (1)", by Edrus in Qalam, No.1 (Julai-Ogos 1945),
- ii. "Melawat Indonesia Merdeka (2)", by Edrus in Qalam, No.2 (Sept 1950),
- iii. "Melawat Indonesia Merdeka (3)", by Edrus in Qalam, No.4 (Nov 1950),
- iv. "Melawat Indonesia Merdeka (4)", by Edrus in Qalam, No.5 (Dis 1950),
- v. "Melayu Atau Malayan", by Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy in Qalam, No.3 (Oct 1950),
- vi. "Perjuangan Kebangsaan di Malaya", by Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy in Qalam, No.6 (Jan 1951)
- vii. "Di Sekeliling Perjuangan Umat Islam Indonesia: Garis Pokok Perjuangan Masyumi (1)", by Muhammad Isa Ansary in Qalam, No.41 (Jan 1954),
- viii. "Di Sekeliling Perjuangan Umat Islam Indonesia: Garis Pokok Perjuangan Masyumi (11)", by Muhammad Isa Ansary in Qalam, No.42 (Feb 1954).

These three writers brought different perspectives on developing an independent state. Edrus represented the nation's hope after the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence and acknowledgement of independence by the Dutch government. Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy discussed the Malay nation and nationalism in Malaysia, while Muhammad Isa Anshary's point of view was the importance of Islam regarding the political struggles in Indonesia.

6. Independence on Edrus's perspective (1911-1969)

Edrus' view on developing independent nation was presented in his four series of writings entitled Visiting Independent Indonesia (Melawat Indonesia Merdeka). These writings were inspired by his visit to Jakarta during the handing over ceremony from the Dutch to Indonesia on 27 December, 1949. Seeing the ceremony as a historical event and "hoping that it will be a memory in the future",⁷ Edrus braced himself to attend the ceremony using his own money as a journalist even though he was not officially invited. Besides that, his purpose-as concurred by one of his friends-was "to show an example to the people of Peninsular" (note the page number and the source).

After he arrived at Tanjong Priok Port, until the end of the ceremony, there were five things that attracted Edrus' attention: the social condition of the society, language, religion, the economy, and the struggles for independence.

i. Social condition of the society: While at Tanjong Priok Port, Edrus observed the way the custom officers and labor workers (which he called coolie) worked. He wished that there would be positive changes for the officers, labor workers, and passengers after independence. The changes could improve local society's etiquette and work ethic, for those who were known for their politeness and integrity. The workers would no longer be influenced by the harsh and rude colonial attitudes.

Besides that, the regulations would be tightened and inspections would be handled fairly by the staff, especially by civil servants who were supposed to show good examples to society. Infrastructure enhancement, such as health infrastructure, would lift up the social condition of the society which had suffered the aftermath and life struggles of war. Those conditions made the workers' living stressful because of neglected health. Finally there should be a better balance in the economies between islands in Indonesia due to "crowding people in Jawa Island (which land is small)" and relocation to emptier islands.

- ii. Language: During the ceremony, Edrus witnessed how Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX represented Indonesia by giving a speech in Indonesian. It affected Edrus deeply because most official speeches were made using English in Malaya. Because of that, Edrus hoped that the Malay language would be used as the main language after Malaya achieved independence. He said, "We as Malays should not use foreign language in states or federal meeting but our own in order to honor it. Who will be proud of our own language if it is not us?"⁸
- iii. Religion: Edrus believed that people's understanding towards religion should be strengthened. By saying this, he was referring to Sukarno, who always included religious messages in his speeches. According to Edrus, in his early involvement in politics, Sukarno "as a leader to a political organization promoted nationalism but neglected religious message in his speeches".⁹ The changes in Sukarno showed his maturity as a leader of the nation, and Edrus felt this was happy news. Edrus hoped that all Malay leaders would make religion as their main objective because "only by religion thus Malays is saved and can be saved from foreign's gush". Furthermore, religion strengthens Malays' spirits and souls.
- iv. Economy: Seeing how the Chinese, known as Tionghua, conquered Jakarta's economy worried Edrus, as Indonesians did not gain any benefit from the profit but the Chinese themselves had significant gains. At that time, Edrus saw the Chinese not as part of Indonesia like now, and concluded that it would be a harmful situation to the nation. Edrus told the readers, of the Qalam, to patronize and master national economics so they will be able to govern properly. There should not be any imbalance in interracial economies so wealth and businesses could not be monopolized by a certain race lest it negatively affected other aspects.
- v. Struggling for independence: The struggling was cause for

all, regardless whether they were a commoner, leader, royalty or nobleman. Indonesia was able to achieve independence by involving people of all levels in the society, such as the royals (Sultan Hamengkubuwono, Pangeran Diponegoro), religious scholars (Raden Patah), other scholars (HOS Tjokroaminoto) or commoners. Having all people involved strengthened Edrus' belief that Malaya must also include everyone in the society to fight for independence. He repeatedly stated the importance of people's voices because "Our noblemen should remember that they were raised by Malay common people".¹⁰ The victory will be sweeter because everyone fought for the same cause.

7. Independence on Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy's Perspective

Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy (1911-1969) was the third Yang Dipertua of Parti Islam Se-Malaya (PAS) who held the position from 1956 till 1969. He was better known as a leftist nationalist. Two of his articles on Malay nationalism were considered as core references on the struggle for independence.

Dr. Burhanuddin stressed the importance of understanding the foundation goals and objectives of the struggling, because if the understanding was neglected or confused, the struggle would be in vain. Regarding the Malay and Islam, Dr. Burhanuddin asserted that the foundation of the struggling is the motherland, while the objective is independence and total freedom for the nation and its people.¹¹ Thus, at that time, Dr. Burhanuddin criticized Malay's loss of focus; he claimed it was full of doubt and insincerity due to multiple objectives and goals. History taught that a nation's loss and defeat by the enemy was caused by carelessness, weakness or selfish interests.¹²

In the words of Hang Tuah, "Tak Melayu hilang di dunia", the Malay nationalism struggle was meant to "protect and preserve the right and justice for the Malays and its society".¹³ Dr. Burhanuddin often asserted that what was meant by nationalistic struggle was the Malay struggle, not Malayan. The definition of Malay, according to Dr. Burhanuddin was bangsa (nationality) not puak (community). Because of that, Dr. Burhanuddin strongly objected the Malayan struggle because it represented

the whole of Malaya but did not reflect the real spirit and the fight of Malay nationalism. (The word Malayan was then used when Peninsular Tanah Melayu changed to Malaya).

Then, Dr. Burhanuddin stressed the Malay rights. According to him, the Malay people are the host, therefore if the Malayan wish to enter their house it is appropriate to respect the host. In the neighboring country, its nationalistic struggle was dubbed Indonesia, not Netherland East Indies, which then begs the question: Why must Malay Nationalism be substituted with Malayan?

Both leftist and rightist struggles were meant for Malay nationalism, not Malayan. People should be united and see eye to eye in this struggle. Therefore, if there were any leaders who chose not to understand and wanted something different, change them for others. To quarrel is to lose before the fight. "It is in this same spirit and ambition that all Malays united and distance themselves from working on other people's interest, only then Malay nationalism forces will become stronger". He encouraged the Malay people to unite and condemn the idea of Malayan Union to failure in 1948.

In the end, Dr. Burhanuddin stated that "Believing wholeheartedly on our own Malay nationalistic ambition and continue fighting for it is what determined the safety and success of our struggle.¹⁴

8. Independence on Muhammad Isa Anshary's Perspective

Muhammad Isa Anshary was born on 1916 in Maninjau, Sumatera and was known as 'The Podium Lion' due to his eloquence and attractive speeches. Muhammad Isa was involved in multiple organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Masyumi. While in Masyumi, Muhammad Isa strongly suggested the establishment of the state of Islam in Indonesia, which led him to have hot debates with President Sukarno. His two articles in Qalam talked about the Masyumi struggles in establishing a state of Islam in Indonesia.

Muhammad Isa highlighted what the colonialist did to religion. Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch and resulted in religion being separated from society's daily life. Islam was immobilized in politics. This matter was stressed as early as school where religion was subjugated and marginalized in the curriculum. The religious schools, pesantren or pondok, were no longer a dream and their graduates were no longer revered. Muhammad Isa dubbed those who separated religion from everything as the agents of imperialism, especially the local youths who were influenced by the idea. "To them, religion is a personal matter between you and God. To them, religion is only a path to the Hereafter."¹⁵

Such perspectives motivated the nationalists, because nationalism did not count religion as its component. Religion and beliefs were no longer important. As consequence, an idea of statehood without Islam was tried to be shaped. Masyumi, according to Muhammad Isa, asserted that it was the Islamic party that held dear the idea of Muslim statehood. This meant that the union between religion and politics was vital in establishing a nation in accordance with Qur'an and hadith. Islam as a complete religion is a practical way of life in every level of society. Thus, in politics Islam was made priority.

Therefore, Masyumi in its struggle must be "brilliant in politics, planning strategy and tactics to suit time, space and probability."¹⁶ Muhammad Isa differentiated between politics in Islam and political Islam. According to him, political Islam made Islam a horse to political will; this is when one just uses religion for his personal gain, to get a promotion, or to obtain power and wealth. Whereas politicians who use politics as a part of Islam are those who become involved in politics to struggle for the Islamic society and nation. Such a politician obeys his religion and performs his political duty righteously.

"He joins Islamic party neither to play nor following his whims, neither to enjoy nor halfheartedly, but to follow what his hearts demand, as a sacred duty."¹⁷ As Islam is a complete way of life comprised of beliefs and convictions, thus his behaviours in politic must be based on believe and conviction too. Tauhid, iman and ihsan was implemented and eventually he will know why and how to be a politician.

9. Conclusion

Indonesia and Malaysia are two neighbouring countries that share many similarities such as culture, custom, language and religion. After the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence in 1945, Malaysian leaders were seen to follow Indonesian leaders' steps in shaping their country. Qalam in its early publications provided people with invaluable information about the Indonesian leadership that urged the people to ponder the best ways that can be practiced by their leaders after the declaration of independence.

Post-independence efforts were very crucial since it involved the shaping of a sovereign state that wanted to be free from any negative influences. During the 1960's a strong communist threat was introduced by the leaders, giving a clear signal that without efficient leadership, an independent state could fall into bad hands. This meant that the independence gained was valuable and that imperative steps needed to be taken to protect the nation.

10. Ending

The three different views from Edrus, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy dan Muhammad Isa Anshary in Qalam showed the different perspectives on independence and the development of a country. Freedom from colonialism did not mean that the efforts could end, but efforts are still needed to maintain a progressive nation and state. Dr. Burhanuddin's view on nation-state and Muhammad Isa's on Islamic-state urged collective efforts from the people for building the country.

Indonesia's political struggles inspired the Malaysians in shaping its country. Any turbulence that occurred after independence was part of the maturing process for leadership development, and included the efforts of its citizen in preserving the independence and sovereignty of the country.

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- ² Ibid.
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- ⁵ Ibid

- ⁶ An interview with Syed Ahmad Luthfi on 5th Disember 2012 at Tiara Ampang, Menara Nilam, Kuala Lumpur
- ⁷ Qalam, No 1 (July-August1950)
- ⁸ Qalam No.2 (September 1950)

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9 Ibid
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- ¹⁰ Qalam No.3 (October 1950)
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Qalam No.3 (October 1950)
- 13 Ibid
- ¹⁴ Qalam No.6, (January 1951)
- ¹⁵ Qalam No.6, (January 1951)
- ¹⁶ Qalam No.6, (January 1951)

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The number of the words is between 10000 to 15.000 words. References, tables, figures, appendices and notes are included in those words. As for the abstract is 150 words with 5 key words. The articles with quotations and passages from local or foreign language should be translated into English. Electronic submissions are welcome and should be sent to mail journal.

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The citation referred in the text is written by giving the names.

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- 3. When the author published more than one cited document in the same year, case letters chould be added: e.g. Johnson (1994a) discussed the subject.....
- 4. If more than two authors, only surname of the first author and at all: e.g. Wilson at all (1997) conclude that....
- 5. Anonym is written: e.g. A recent article (Anon 1993) stated that.....
- 6. If the source is quoted from another work: e.g. Study by Smith (1960 cited in Jones 1994: 24) showed that....(note: in the references, Jones is the main bibliography)
- If the idea is cited, page numbers are not written.e.g. Nunan (1996) but if the idea is specific, number is required: e.g. Allwrith (1992: 56) provides an example of.....
- 8. Short quotation of less than one line or direct quotation may be written: e.g. "good practices be taught.....(Smith 1996: 15)
- 9. Diagrams should be referenced in full details (author and date).

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Personal communication is cited in the text only: e.g. According to J.O. Reiss, Many designers do not understand the needs of disabled people (Personal communication, April 18, 1977).

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The references are listed in alphabethical order of authors "surnames. If it is cited more than one item by a specific author, they should be lited chronologically and by letter (e.g.1993a, 1993b).

Reference to a book

E.g.: Mercer, P.A. and Smith, G. , 1993. Private viewdata in the UK. 2nd ed. London: Longman.

Reference to a contribution in a book

E.g. Bantz, C.R., 1995. Social Dimensions of Sofware Development in J.A. Anderson, ed. Annual Review of Software Management and Development. Newbury Park, C: Sage, 502-510.

Reference to an article in a journal (author, year, title, volume and part number as well as page number

E.g. Evans, E.A., 1994, Approaches to Intelligent Information Retrieval. Information Processing and Management, 7 (2), 147-168.

Reference to a conference paper

e.g. Silver, K., 1991. Electronic mail: The New way to communicate. In. D.I. Raitt, ed. 9th International online information meeting, London 3-5 December 1996. Oxford: Learned Information, 323-330.

Reference to a publication from a corporate body (e.g. a government department or other organization).

E.g. UNESCO, 1993. General Information Program and UNISIST. Paris: UNESCO, (PDI-93/WS/22).

Reference to a Thesis

E.g.: Agutter, A.J. 1995. The Liguistic Significance of Current British Slang. Thesis (PhD). Edinburgh University.

Reference to Electronic Material

1. Reference to individual works: e.g. Holland, M. (1996) Harvard System (online). Poole, Bounemoth University. Available from:

http:// Bournemoth ac.uk /service depths /lis / LISPub / harvardsyst. html (accessed 15 april 1996).

- Reference to E-Journals (author, year, title, volume (issue), location and available from: URL (accessed Date): e.g. Korb, K.B. (1995) Persons and Things: Book Review of Bringsjord on Robot Conciousness. Psychology (online), 6 (15). Available from: gopher: // wachau. ai. univie. ac. at: 70 / 00 / archives / psicologquy / 95.V6/0162 (Accessed 17 June 1996).
- Reference to mailbase/listserve e-mail lists (author, time (day, month, year), subject, Discussion List (online) Available from and accessed date: e.g. Brack, E.V. (2 May 1995). Re: Computing Short Courses. List Link (online) Available from: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk (Accessed 17 Aprl 1996).
- Reference to Personal Electronic Communication (E-mail): Senders, time (day, month, year), Subject of Message. Email to Recipient: e.g. Lowman, D. (Deborah-lowman@pbsinc.com). (4 April 1996). RE>> ProCite and Internet Refere. E-mail to P. Cross (pcross@bournemouth. ac.uk).
- 5. Reference to CD-R0Ms: eg. Hawking, SW. (1994). A Brief History of Time: an Interactive Adventure (CD-ROM).Crunch Media.

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هريتيج اوف نوسانتارا مجلة دولية لبحث المؤلفات والتراث الديني

السنة الخامسة، العدد 1، 2016

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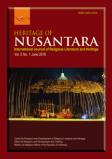
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