

From Riau to Singapore: A Content Analysis of the Rushdiah Club's Major Published Writings (ca. 1890-1950)

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Abstract

This study examines the prominent Malay literary organization in the Sultanate of Riau-Lingga: Rushdiah Club's writing and printing activities. It provides a descriptive content analysis of books on various subjects that were published by the printing presses under the auspices of the members of the Rushdiah Club in Riau, Singapore and Penang from 1893 to 1950. Specifically, these presses were Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah and Matba'ah al-Riyawiyah in Riau-Lingga; Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah (better known as the Ahmadiyah Press) and al-Imam Printing Company Ltd. in Singapore; and Jelutong Press in Penang. The objective of this paper is to discuss the roles of the Rushdiah Club, particularly its contribution to the Malay societies by flourishing the writing and printing culture. Furthermore, this paper investigates how their publications had constructed a specific pattern of Islamic thought and culture as the members joined intellectual debates over the issue of Islamic reformism. The analysis of the catalogues involves two phases: firstly, examining the writers; secondly, itemizing them according to categories, content, and characteristics of the books. The finding of the study indicated that the most common theme is Islam and religion, which is about 73 books (36.86%). This study also contends that the Rushdiah Club which was strongly anchored by the Islamic ethos, responded to colonialism through non-violent means.

Keywords: Rushdiah Club, Penyengat, Riau, Malay literature, Islam in Indonesia

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tiny island of Pulau Penyengat, “lies directly opposite Tanjung Pinang, the main town of Bintan island, in the Province of Riau, Indonesia. It is less than 2 kilometres long, about 3/4 kilometre across at its widest point, and paths allow easy and quick access to its villages (kampong), graves and historical remains” (Hooker, 1989). Riau, named after its major islands, is located about forty miles from Singapore. In the eighteenth century, Riau was the major entrepot on the sea route from India to China. The eventual political decline of this kingdom started when it launched a failed attack on Dutch-controlled Malacca in 1784. Consequently, Riau increasingly succumbed to the Dutch power and in 1830 the Dutch officially established their control over Riau.

Despite its political decline, Riau remained as a prominent literary, cultural, and religious centre in the Malay world. During the second half of the nineteenth century it was the home of writers and scholars such as Raja Ali Haji (ca. 1809-1870), who produced works from the history of the region to essays and poems on Malay culture and Islam. In 1866, Raja Ali Haji finalized *Tuhfat al-Naftis* (The Precious Gift), an epic of his Bugis ancestors’ involvement in the Malay world. Moreover, Riau was a convenient stopover for religious scholars and pilgrims traveling from the Middle East to the Malay world, as the royal family had been renowned for its patronage of religious scholars and Islamic activities. In addition to its great literary and religious activities, the Malay spoken in Riau was considered one of the finest in the Malay world as a whole. As recognition of this, the spoken Malay of Riau was adopted as the standard Malay in British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies until 1928 (Gordon, 1999).

Moreover, the late nineteenth century also witnessed the establishment of a religious study group known as the Rushdiah Club on Penyengat Island. It is also arguable that the Rushdiah Club is actually the first formal Malay literary organization established in Indonesia. It brought together intellectuals and scholars in the Sultanate of Riau-Lingga to engage in various types of literary and intellectual activities. Moreover, intellectuals associated with the Rushdiah Club would later produce among the finest literary works of the time, which became well-known in the Malay-Indonesian world as a whole (Rahman, 2011). The Rushdiah Club used printing activities to disseminate their ideas and to express their resistance to Dutch colonialism through non-violent means. In the light of that this study focuses on the Rushdiah Club’s printing activities by providing a catalogue and classification of the writings of the members of the Rushdiah Club. These writings were published by the printing presses under the auspices of the members of the Rushdiah club in Riau, Singapore and Penang from 1893 to 1950. Specifically these presses were Matba’at al-Ahmadiyyah and Matba’ah al-Riyawiyah in Riau-Lingga; Matba’at al-Ahmadiyyah (better known as the Ahmadiyah Press) and al-Imam Printing Company Ltd. in Singapore; and Jelutung Press in Penang.

2.0 BRIEF PROFILE OF THE RUSHDIAH CLUB

Despite the appearance of important studies on the Rushdiah Club, many queries of this intellectual organization have yet to be conclusively answered. The background of the establishment of this organization can be traced back to the Dutch domination of the Riau-Lingga Sultanate. As mentioned earlier, Riau’s failed attack on Dutch-controlled Malacca in 1784 resulted in the latter’s intervention in Riau which culminated with the Dutch official control of Riau in 1830. As a result of Dutch military prowess, the Riau people became powerless in confronting the former militarily. Therefore, instead of confronting against the Dutch physically, the Riaunese resorted to the intellectual and cultural programmes as a reaction against the colonial power. It was within such historical milieu, the Rushdiah Club was established on Penyengat Island in the late 19th century.

The nucleus of the Rushdiah Club originated from the *Ahli Musyawarah* (the consultative council) of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom which served as the source of reference for the Sultan to solve the problems of the kingdom (Hamidy, 2003a). In view of its importance to the Kingdom, it regularly received the financial support from the Sultanate. Indeed, the Kingdom’s patronage of this group of scholars facilitated and led

to the eventual establishment of the Rushdiah Club. Gradually, as this organization continued to grow it needed an institution to coordinate and promote their ideas, literary creativity, and intellectual activities. Thus, the 10th YTM, Raja Muhammad Yusuf, who understood the vital roles of these scholars generously, supported them with a library and a printing press, which simultaneously marked the formation of the Rushdiah Club as an official organization.

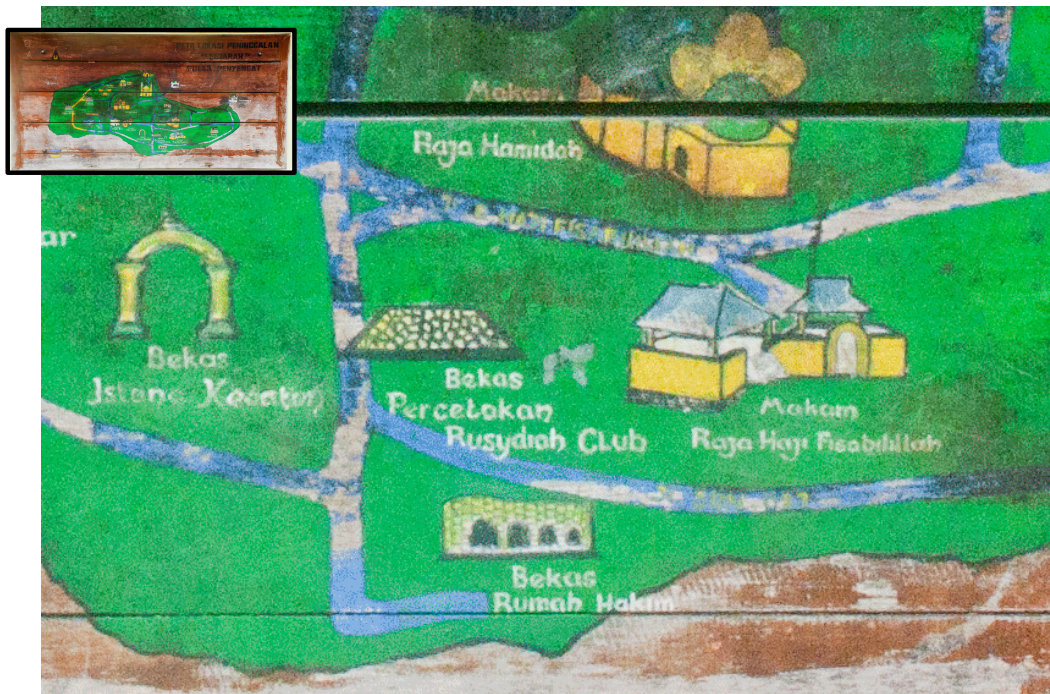
The existing studies on this subject use various nomenclatures for this organization –Rushdiah Club, Rusydiah Club, Rusydiah Klab, Kelab Rusydiah and Persekutuan Rusydiah. For consistency and convenience, this study adopts the first nomenclature. The Rushdiah Club's name consists of two words, which combines words deriving from Islamic civilization and the West. It is written as *Rushdiyyah Klāb* in Arab-Malay script (*jāwī*). Rusydiah comes from an Arabic word *rashada* denoting to get the guidance or right path, or from *al-rushd* denoting reason, mind, or the ability to know 'the right way', or from *al-rashīd* an intellectual, scholar or thinker (Munawwir, 2002). The word Club derives either from English or Dutch; denoting society or organization.

There is disagreement among scholars concerning the foundation date of the Rushdiah Club. UU Hamidy and Muchtar Lutfi argue that Rushdiah Club was established around 1892 (Hamidy, 2003b; Hamidy, 2003c). However, they provide no evidence and justification in determining 1892 as the establishment date for the Rushdiah Club. Timothy P. Barnard, on the other hand, contends that the Matba'ah al-Riyawwiyah Press and the Rushdiah Club probably existed between 1895 and 1905. His argument is based on the fact that the Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah was established in 1895, which coincided with the printing of the Rushdiah Club's work *Taman Penghiburan* (Barnard, 1994). The only written list of the Rushdiah Club members is the *Taman Penghiburan*. However, it is not a complete list of the members of the Rushdiah Club because many more Rushdiah Club members are not in the list. This is so because *Taman Penghiburan* is primarily a programme booklet and not a register of the members of the Rushdiah Club.

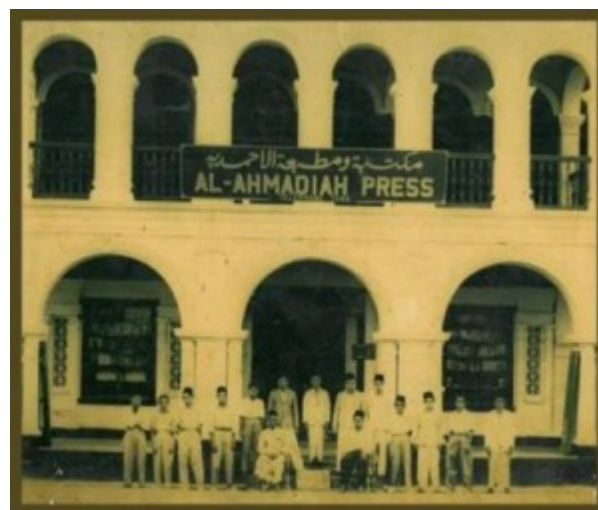
3.0 PRINT CULTURE DURING THE TIME OF THE RUSHDIAH CLUB

The printing press under the control of Rushdiah Club members can be divided into two categories, according to their ownership. First, printing press under the control of the palace and Rushdiah Club; and second, the private and individual printing presses under the control of a member of the Rushdiah Club.

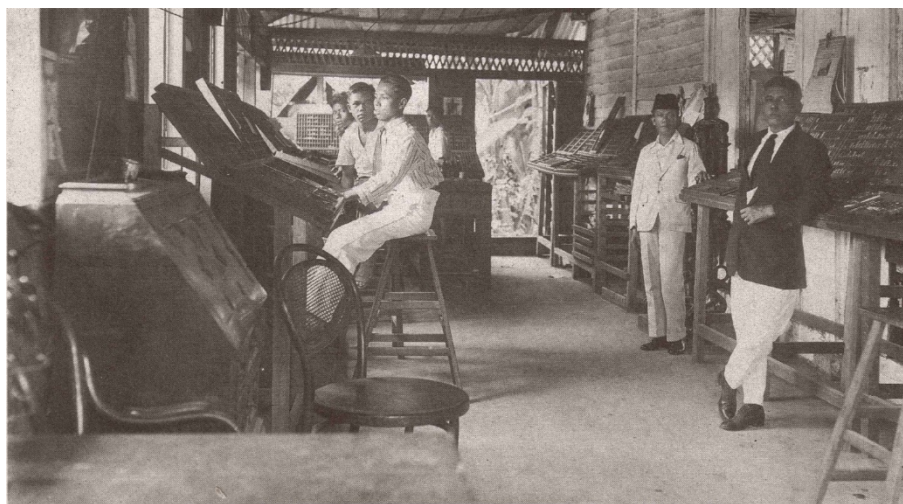
The printing press under the first category was Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah and Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah, which were established by the YTM X Raja Muhammad Yusuf al-Ahmadi. The YTM gradually entrusted this printing press to the Rushdiah Club's management. Though having different names, Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah and Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah are actually the same printing press. Whereas the name Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah for printing official state documents such as *Khutbah Jum'ah* and royal law; Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah was used for publishing non-state publications, which were meant for public or private consumption (Hamidy, 2003a). It should be clarified that the name Ahmadiyyah had nothing to do with Ahmadiyyah (Qadiani) heretical sect. Rather, it was the epithet of the YTM X Muhammad Yusuf al-Ahmadi. Moreover, al-Ahmadi was a follower of Ṭarīqah Naqshabandiyyah Mujaddidiyyah Ahmadiyyah. On the other hand, the private and individual printing presses under the control of a member of the Rushdiah Club were Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah (better known as the Ahmadiyah Press) and al-Imam Printing Company Ltd. in Singapore; and Jelutong Press in Penang.



Map of Penyengat Island. 'Bekas Percetakan Rusydiah Club' next to Kedaton Place and the tomb of Raja Haji Fisabilillah is the previous site of Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah or Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peta-Pulau-Penyengat.gif>



Ahmadiyah Press, a legacy of its predecessor from Riau-Lingga, was located on 101 Sultan Road, Singapore. Today, the building now is used as a hotel, the Sultan Hotel. Source: http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Riau-Lingga_Sultanate



On the right was Sayyid Syekh al-Hadi standing at Jelutong Press in Jelutong, Penang. Source: The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh al-Hady (1999: 169)

4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE RUSHDIAH CLUB'S PUBLICATIONS

It might be useful to catalogue all books printed by the printing presses under the auspice of the Rushdiah Club members in Riau, Singapore and Penang from 1893 until 1950. This catalogue is prepared based on the researchers' visits to relevant libraries and archives in Riau, Malaysia and Singapore; book notices or reviews in contemporary periodicals and bibliographies of other books which discuss the relevant works under study; and from the catalogues compiled by the existing studies on the topic such as the catalogues of UU Hamidy (1985), Ian Proudfoot (1993) and Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak (1992).

UU Hamidy conducted a research on classical documents in Riau, entitled '*Naskah Kuno di Riau*' funded by the Toyota Foundation in 1995. He found around 137 documents where 91 documents were printed, by lithography and typography (Hamidy, 2003). Ian Proudfoot's survey begins from 1817 and ends at 1920. It is based upon the holdings of thirteen public collections in Britain, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. This is Proudfoot's intensive inventory of early Malay printed books published in the Straits Settlements, the Malay states of the Peninsula, and immediately associated areas like Riau up to 1920 (Proudfoot, 1993). In addition to that, the catalogue recorded by Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak, is the most comprehensive catalogue which covers Malay books published from 1921-1949, completing the previous work by Proudfoot. It provides a total of 1.739 titles of books along with their relevant information as far as bibliographical documentation is concerned (Ishak, 1992).

After going through the resources mentioned above, a total of 198 books on various subjects have been identified. Out of these works, only 16 works were published by Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah and al-Ahmadiyyah in Riau and the remaining 182 works were published by other presses – al-Imam Printing Press, Jelutong Press and Ahmadiyah Press. These probably do not represent the accurate numbers of the publications due to several factors. For example, as the political situation in Riau deteriorated, in 1905, the Sultan ordered his subjects to burn the palace and destroy many documents; that possibly included many printed books from Matba'at al-Riyawwiyah and Matba'at al-Ahmadiyyah. Moreover, according to Tengku Muhammad Fuad, a descendant of Tengku Bilik binti YTM X Raja Muhammad Yusuf, Riau experienced severe economic crisis during the period of Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation (1962–1966), which forced Riaunese to sell their book collections, including old manuscripts, to Malaysia and other countries (personal communication, February 3, 2011). The analysis of the catalogues entails two step processes: firstly, by examining the writers; secondly, by evaluating the categories, content, and characteristics of the books.

4.1 WRITERS

During the 19th century, book writing was not considered to be a full-time job. Writing was seen as a secondary source of income. Most Malay writers, including the Rushdiah Club members, had other jobs at that time, particularly as royal employees, colonial officials, traders, or businessmen. Writing could definitely not create a sufficient income to cover all family and living expenses. As a result, the synthesis of writer-printer, writer-publisher, writer-book seller, and editor-printer, were prevalent. In many cases, authors prepared their own manuscripts and printed them using their own printing machines.

From 1893 until the 1950s, there were many writers, translators, adapters, or editors that wrote at least once. These authors came from various ethnic origins, like Riaunese, Arabs, Patani, Acehese, Banjar, Minang, etc. Even after the abolishment of the Sultanate, some Riaunese were still keen to send their manuscripts, to the al-Imam printing company, the Jelutong Press, or the Ahmadiyah Press. Their aim was to reach a broader audience, so that their ideas could be read by wider audience in the Malay Archipelago. *Syair* and *hikayat* were usually written by scribes, compilers, or translators, who received the stories orally from their ancestors.

Table 1
20 Active Writers

No	Name	Quantity	Information
1.	Muhammad Said ibn Haji Sulaiman	20	
2.	Sayyid Shaykh al-Hādī	15	Rushdiah Club (RC) member
3.	Shaykh Abdurrahman Siddiq ibn Muhammad 'Afif Al-Banjari	11	
4.	R. H. M. Sa'id b. R. M. Tahir b. Abdullah	7	
5.	Raja Ali Kelana	5	RC member
6.	Raja Ali Haji	5	
7.	Abu Muhammad Adnan / Raja Abdullah ibn Raja Haji Hasan	5	RC member
8.	Sayyid Alwi al-Hādī	4	
9.	Raja Aisyah Sulaiman	3	RC member
10.	Ahmad ibn Yaakob al-Johori	3	
11.	Muhammad Tāhir Jalāluddīn	3	
12.	Ismail Abdul Karim	2	
13.	Tuan Husein Kedah al-Banjari	2	
14.	Muhammad Said ibn Haji Sulaiman	2	
15.	Muhammad Yunus b. Abdul Hamid	2	
16.	Rushdiah Club	2	RC
17.	Raja Haji Muhammad Tahir ibni Almarhum Murshīd	2	
18.	Raja Khalid al-Hitami	1	RC member
19.	Raja Ahmad Tabib	1	RC member
20.	R. Jumaat b. R.Said	1	

Our analysis of the various catalogues demonstrates that there were approximately 76 Malay writers, 13 Malay translators and 25 unknown or anonymous writers. While six members of Rushdiah Club published their works individually, the Rushdiah Club printed two works as their communal works;

Taman Penghiburan and *Khuṭbah Jum‘ah* which were published in Penyangat by Maṭba‘at al-Riyawwiyah in 1313 AH. Besides, the Rushdiah Club had translated two of their communal works from Arabic to Malay and later printed by Maṭba‘at al-Aḥmadiyyah in Penyangat. They are *Risālat al-Fawāid al-Wāfiyyat fi Sharh Ma‘na al-Tahiyyat* in 1312 AH and *Kayfiyyat al-Dhikr ‘ala al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqshabandiyyah al-Mujaddidiyah al-Aḥmadiyah* in 1313 AH. The data also indicates that three members of Rushdiah Club were actively involved in translating some Arabic works into Malay.

Table 2
Translators

No	Name	Quantity	Information
1.	Syed Al-Hadi	3	RC member
2.	Ismail bin Abdul Karim	3	
3.	Rusydiah Club	2	Rushdiah Club (RC)
4.	Muhammad Sa'id bin R. Muhammad Tahir bin Abdullah	2	
5.	Zainal abidin bin Ahmad (Za'ba)	2	
6.	<i>Al-Imam</i> magazine team	1	
7.	Abu Muhammad Adnan	2	RC member
8.	Raja Badriah Muhammad Thahir	1	RC member
9.	Muhammad Basyuni Imran	1	
10.	Muhammad Zain bin Haji Ayub	1	
11.	Muhammad Yusuf bin Sultan Maidin	1	
12.	Tambi Ali bin Tambi Kecil	1	
13.	Ahmad Nawawi Muhammad Ali	1	
			21 books

Based on Table 1, the most active writer was Muhammad Said ibn Haji Sulaiman. He actively contributed in Pakatan Bahasa Melayu Persuratan Buku-buku Diraja Johor (P.Bm.P.B.D). This institution had published 15 books on linguistic from 1936 to 1947, consisted of dictionary, grammar, linguistic and spelling. Muhammad Said ibn Haji Sulaiman had written 20 books, mainly on linguistics which published by P.Bm.P.B.D and printed by Ahmadiyah Press, Singapore.

The second most active writer was Sayyid Shaykh al-Hādī, with 15 works published by the aforementioned presses; especially his own Jelutong Press. He is regarded as a novelist *par excellence* and one of the pioneers of the Malay novel. Moreover, he was prominent Malay reformist, who played a pivotal role in promoting reformist ideas in Malaya. Indeed, al-Hadi was regarded as the second most important reformist figure after Shaykh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin (Zakariya, 2009).



Picture: Novels written by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hādī

Shaykh Abdurrahman Siddiq ibn Muhammad ‘Afif Al-Banjari was the third most active writers. His works mainly focused on Islamic themes like Qur’ān & Hadith, law, history and *taṣawwuf*.ⁱ Raja Aisyah Sulaiman was the only female writer and she contributed three works, which were all printed after her death. Raja Aisyah Sulaiman wrote two *syair* and one *hikayat*.ⁱⁱ The lack of female participation in the field of writing was probably due to the unsupportive culture of that time. Most parents married their daughters off when they were teenagers, and they would only have focused on their household matters from then onwards.

4.2 CATEGORIES, CONTENT AND CHARACTERISTIC OF THE BOOK

This study would be incomplete without the descriptions of the general trends of writings published by the aforementioned presses. It is observed that the most popular topic for writers was Islamic or religious theme. There were 73 books published under this genre representing 36.86% from the total of 198 printed books published by these presses. The second most important theme was literature at 26.3% and non-fiction was the third at 17.17%. ‘Language’ category was 11.11% and ‘general or unknown’ category constituted 6.56%. “Periodicals” category only consists of four titles.

Table 3
Categories

No.	Categories	Presses in Riau	Other presses	Total	
		Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	%
1.	Islamic	4	69	73	36.86
2.	Literatures	3	49	52	26.3
3.	Non-fiction	9	25	34	17.17
4.	General/Unknown	-	13	13	6.56
5.	Language	-	22	22	11.11
6.	Periodicals	-	4	4	2.0
	Total	16 Works	182 Works	198	100%

4.2.1 Islamic Content

In this study, Islamic works are divided into six categories as shown in the table (Table 4 below). The category of theology and philosophy seized a top place in the works of religious writers. Almost more than quarter of the contents of Islamic works (31.5%) were of this nature. Great efforts were undertaken to describe and elucidate the existence of God; the essence of faith, life, death and

resurrection; the five pillars of Islam or framework of the *Muslim* life; Islam and reason; the intention on worshipping activities (*an-niyyah*) and the philosophy of destiny (*taqdir*).ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 4
Contents of Islamic Books

No.	Categories	Presses in Riau	Other presses	Total	
				Quantity	%
1	Theology & Philosophy		23	23	31.5
2	Tasawwuf & Tarīqah	3	5	8	11
3	Qur’ān & Hadith		8	8	11
4	Worship : Prayer & Duā’		5	5	6.9
5	Islamic History		11	11	15
6	General	1	17	18	24.6
	Total	4 Works	69 Works	73 Works	100

The second most important subject (24.6%) is the ‘General’ category which consisted of any other works, such as sermon (*khuṭbah*), ethics (*adab*), inheritance, advice and law (*hukm*).^{iv} The third most important subject (15%) is categorised under 'History', which covers the writings on Islamic society, politics and history, and biographies of the prophets, *sirah*, the companions and other Islamic figures.^v

Works grouped under 'Taṣawwuf & Tarīqah' are related to the traditional Islamic science of self-improvement and spirituality (sufism) and the nature of Sufi spiritual order especially the Tarīqah Naqshabandiyyah.^{vi} This category covered about 11%, identical to the category of 'Qur’ān & Hadith'. The category of 'Qur’ān & Hadith' covered themes on some *tafsir* (exegesis) of some Quranic verses, explanation on *hadith*, and the method in *tajwid* (the art of the Quranic recitation).^{vii} Other less important subjects were grouped under the category of 'Worship: Prayer & Do‘a'. Among the typical books are the guides to perform ibadah like *ṣalāh* (prayer) and *du‘ā’* (supplication). Although written in Malay, books about Islam usually used Arabic title and often used ‘*kitāb*’ or ‘*risālah*’ in their titles.

4.2.2 Literary Content

The second most common variety of work was the category of literary materials. The trend in Malay literature after 1920 was characterized by the emergence and proliferation of contemporary literary works, substituting the conventional *syair* and *hikayat*. As seen from the table, novel or storybooks occupied the first place (44.2%) of the total literary books. The data also indicates that poetry and biography were the least popular literary forms.

Table 5
Contents of Literature Books

No.	Categories	Presses in Riau	Other presses	Total	
		Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	%
1	Syair (poetry)	2	14	16	30.8
2	Poetry		2	2	3.8
3	Fictional Prose (Hikayat)	1	9	10	19.3
4	Fictional Prose – Novel / Storybook		23	23	44.2
4	Biography/Memoir		1	1	1.9
5	Total	3 Works	49 Works	52 works	100

Two of the most popular literary genres were novel and short story. In lieu of its popularity, the contemporary periodicals also allocated permanent section for shorts stories. Journal, magazine and newspaper also followed this trend by dedicating some pages for literary prose such as short stories or serial stories. A case in point was *Al-Ikhwān* journal which devoted some space for the *Cherita Rokambul*, a seven-volume famous series of French detective stories (Gordon, 1999).

Malay novel writing can generally be categorized into two parts. Firstly, the translated novel or adaptation of modern Arabic^{viii} and Turkish^{ix} works, some of which were adaptations from European originals.^x Adapted novel from Egypt usually conveyed message on the social development wrapped with a love story. Some issues about women emancipation, marriage, and the roles of the youth were typical. Secondly, the original local writing with a touch of local characters and social background. The original writings emphasized issues on romance, moral and ethics like behaviours and relation between men and women and how Islam perceived it.^{xi} Most initial original writings imitated the Egyptian variations in topics, but shortly they advanced into more miscellaneous themes.

The adaptations and translations of western literary works such as works by Ismail ibn Abdul Karim which translated from English: *Hantu Mencari Anak*, *Cerita Penyiasat Rahsia Sulit atau Mr. Peace dengan Lima Kejahatan*; *Rumah Buruk di Tepi Jalan atau Mr. Peace di Amerika* or translated from Arabic by al-Hādī: the French adventure novel ‘Rocambole’. It is observed that the issue of colonialism hardly appeared in the fiction books. Nevertheless, political themes were indirectly touched in these fiction books.

Syair was the second popular form of literary works about 30.8 % and *hikayat* followed the next position with 19.3% of total literary works. *Syair* as continuing popular genre used for four centuries was printed to satisfy popular taste and demand. It is still popular because of its flexibility to be used to discuss any new issues and contemporary events. The *syair* and *hikayat* can be employed to portray the attitudes of writers and readers of the period towards the feudal system and religion within new historical milieu. *Syair* mostly consists of romantic stories and some of them were religious advice to satisfy the Muslim readers.

4.2.3 Non-fictional Contents

The third most popular category is non-fiction, consisting of social science, history, politics, science and technology, health and medical knowledge and law. The ‘social science’ was the most widely discussed category and covered around 26.47% of total non-fiction works. It was classified under both sociology and education sub-categories. Among the most discussed themes were the questions of marital issues, parent’s guidance of teaching children, description of virtuous behavior and ethics within the boundaries of Islam, iniquity problem, women's greater role in nation-building.

Table 6
Contents of Non-fiction books

No.	Categories	Presses in Riau	Other presses	Total	
		Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	%
1	Social Sciences	1	8	9	26.47
2	History & Politics	1	8	9	26.47
3	Science& Technology	2	3	5	14.70
4	Health & Medical Knowledge	1	1	2	5.9
5	Law	2	1	3	8.82
6	General	2	4	6	17.64
	Total	9	25	34	100

The category ‘history & politics’ covered 26.47% of total non-fiction works. Books on history and politics themes were identical, rarely touched and hardly critical against the questions on colonialism. The books on history were mainly discussed about the genealogy and the history of the Malay Sultanates and their neighbouring kingdoms.^{xii}

Some of the books discussed about the national revival, like *Kitab Hadiah Kebangsaan* (The National Gift) published in 1933. It contains two articles based on Muhammad Abduh’s writings and two original articles by Pandita Za’ba: “*Kemiskinan Orang-orang Melayu*” (The Poverty of the Malays) and “*Jalan Keselamatan bagi Orang-orang Melayu*” (The Salvation of the Malays).

In 1906, *Matahari Memancar* (The Rising Sun), was published by Imam Printing Press and sold for two Malayan dollars per copy (Gordon, 1999: 12). It is a history of the Japanese people and translated by Dato' Haji Abdullah from Arabic of *al-Shams al-Mushriqah* by Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamil. It assisted to kindle the sense of pride and optimism among the readers for the awakening of Oriental peoples including the Malays.

The category 'Science and Technology' covered about 14.70% of total non-fiction works. The science and technology here means a 'very modest' science and technology, the Islamic astronomy or *'ilm al-falak*. The works provided information such as the prayer time schedule, the calculation of Hijriah date, month and year correspondent with the Christian calendar, a table for calculating the commencement of the month from lunar sighting, description of advantageous and inauspicious days and importance of planets, form for recording date of marriages, births and deaths, table showing favourable hours for certain activities or the determination of *qiblah* (direction of prayer/Mecca).^{xiii} The catalogue also shows that category of law (8.82%)^{xiv} and Health & Medical Knowledge (5.9%) were the least popular category under non-fiction works.

4.2.4 Contents of Language Books

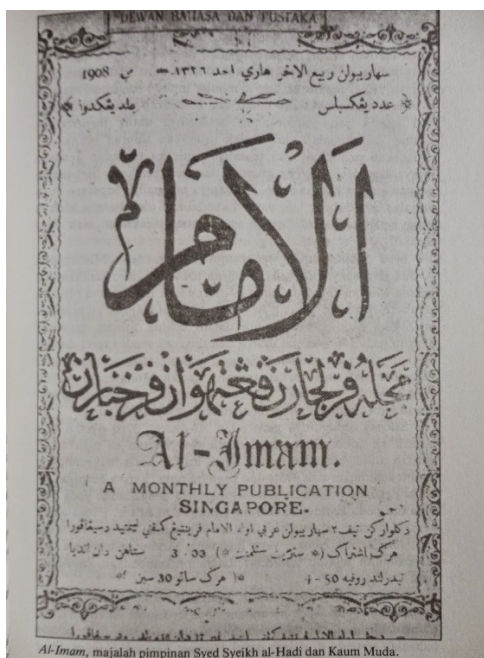
Table 7
Contents of Language Books

No.	Categories	Presses in Riau	Other presses	Total	
		Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	%
1	Linguistic	-	14	14	63.64
2	Dictionary	-	8	8	36.36
3	Total	0 Works	22 Works	22 works	100

In accordance with Rushdiah Club's aim to promote language and Malay literature, the presses printed many books on language (11.11% from the total works). Linguistic was the most favorite theme for this category. More than half of the contents of language works (63.64%) were of this nature. Great efforts were made to explain the linguistic issues of Malay language like structure, grammar and spelling.^{xv} There was only one work describing the linguistic issues of the English language written in Malay by Zainal Abidin Sultan Maidin and it was used as school textbook. The rest of the works were dictionaries and they constituted about 36.36% or eight dictionaries of Malay language.

4.2.5 Contents of Magazine/Journal/Newspaper

The 'periodical' category represents only about 2% from the Rushdiah Club's total works. There were four periodicals printed by the presses under Rushdiah Club. They consisted of magazine, journal and newspaper. One of them was *Mutiara*, a monthly magazine consisted of short stories printed by Ahmadiyah Press. The other three periodicals were *al-Imam* magazine, *Al-Ikhwān* journal and *Saudara* newspaper and they invariably had the same mission- promoting Islamic reformism. Many columns in the *Al-Imam* magazine, *Al-Ikhwān* journal, and *Saudara* (Brother) newspaper, were devoted for the ever-growing discussions and debates between *Kaum Muda* (reformists) and *Kaum Tua* (traditionalists), religious mal-practices, social corruptions, issues of education, and national revival.



Monthly Periodical *Al-Imam*, published in Singapore by Ahmadiyah Press

Al-Imam also provided a column for questions and answers on religion. In comparison to *Al-Imam*, *Al-Ikhwān* journal was less didactic and more attractive in terms of contents. Its contents are quite varied ranging from religious articles, news reports and general articles, such as ‘Scouts’, ‘Co-operatives’, ‘the poverty of the Malays’, and a detective story called ‘*Rokambul*’ (Gordon, 1999: 142). The remaining pages were given to three other serials: the *al-Tārīkh al-Islamī* (History of Islam), *Tafsīr al-Fātiha*,^{xvi} *Alam Perempuan* (Woman’s World).^{xvii} *Al-Tārīkh al-Islamī* was written by al-Hādī and this serial was a continuation of his first attempt *al-Tārīkh al-Islamī* published in 1922.

Saudara, like other newspaper, were loaded with both foreign and local news, as well as political issues. *Saudara* was characteristically unlike *Al-Ikhwān*, focusing on current news and not directly involving religion. Meanwhile, *Saudara* gave more focus to local, national, and neighbouring countries, such as Indonesia, *Al-Ikhwān* posted selected foreign events from Muslim countries, like Afghanistan, Turkey, and India. *Al-Ikhwān* remained a religious and non-political magazine.

From the discussion on the categories and contents of the works above, we can raise some questions. What were the criteria of the selection on category to be printed? Was it based on profit (commercial) or merit (excellence and importance)? There were several works which were commercially printed like literary works such as *syair*, *hikayat* and novel. On the other hand, religious books were also printed with the aim to get profit too but still religious tendency and importance motivated their production in the first place.

Other question is what was the usage of those printed publications? The usage of publications from these presses was varied. Non-fiction and religious books were consumed publically and privately. Only publications intended for governmental use, which were circulated around the palace, were not sold to the public. Meanwhile, books on languages were used for teaching material in *madrasah* or school; literature books, like *syair* and *hikayat*, were enjoyed together with oral recitals in front of people.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The archeological discovery on the printed texts of the Fatimid Egypt, dated as early as 10th century, had marked a “revolution” in the transmission of knowledge by facilitating mass-production of printed books. Although Muslims in Middle East had practiced printing 500 years before Gutenberg’s Press created

(Geoffrey Roper, 2017), in much of the Muslim World, especially in the Malay World, print technology became established only in 1619 by the establishment of Dutch in Batavia. (Putten, 1997) Later in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Muslim lithographic print shop flourished in Singapore and Riau, played a pivotal role in the dissemination of ideas to a broader Muslim audience. (Putten, 1997)

In Riau, the Rushdiah Club utilized printing effectively to promote their ideas to wider audience in the Malay Archipelago. Indeed, the Rushdiah Club through publications had made immense contribution to the Malay-Indonesian world through the knowledge empowerment of the Malay society in the Dutch East Indies, Peninsular Malaya and Straits Settlement. Without a doubt, book printing broadened the intellectual vistas of its audience. As a result the literate Malays in the Archipelago who were exposed to these writings developed political consciousness and they in turn engendered broader changes in their respective societies. Besides, the printed materials that promote progressive Islam emphasized the significance of Muslim unity vis-à-vis the encroachment of Western colonial powers. Moreover, it suggested recommendations to alleviate the socio-economic and political problems confronting the *ummah* in the Malay Archipelago. In conclusion, in response to the political decline of the *ummah* in the region in general and Riau in particular, the Rushdiah Club utilized pens and printers to awaken the Malays from their slumber in order to meet the challenge of Western domination of the world and the malaise of the *ummah*.

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Notes

ⁱAmong Abdurrahman Siddiq's important works are Siddiq, A. A. (1931). *Kitāb Asrār al-Ṣalāt min 'Uddat al-Kutūb al-Mu'tamadah*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Siddiq, A. A. (1335AH). *Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Kerajaan Banjar*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Siddiq, A. A. (1322AH). *Risālah 'Amal Ma'rifah*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; and Siddiq, A. A. (1355AH). *Majmu'at al-Āyat wa al-Hadith fi Faḍā'il al-'Ilm wa al-'Ulamā' wa al-Muta'allimin wa al-Mustami'in*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.

ⁱⁱAmong her prominent works are, Sulaiman, R. A. (1926). *Syair Khadamuddin*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press. 1926); Sulaiman, R. A. (1929). *Syair Seligi Tajam Bertimbal*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press; and Sulaiman, R. A. (1929). *Hikayat Syariful Akhtar*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.

ⁱⁱⁱAmong the important works are Syeikh Muhammad Thaiyib bin Mas'ud al-Banjari, (1908). *Miftāh al-Jannah fi Bayān al-'Aqīdah*. Singapore: al-Imam Printing Press.; Muhammad Yunus bin Abdul Hamid and Muhammad Shazali Uthman. (1935). *Cahaya Islam*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi. (1931). *Kitab Ugama Islam dan Akal*. Penang: Jelutong Press.; Tuan Haji Ikhsan Surabaya. (1931). *Panduan Pelajaran Agama Islam: Ringkasan Bicara Iktiqad dan Ibadat*. Penang: Jelutong Press.; Anonymous. (1932) *Umbi Kemajuan atau Falsafah Takdir dalam Agama Islam (Sukatan Azali)*. Penang: Jelutong Press.

^{iv}See, for example, Anonymous. (1909). *Tarbiyat wa al-Ta'lim*. Singapore: al-Imam Printing Press; Shaikh Muhammad Arif al-Bukhari. (1928). *Amalan Kemudian Sembahyang Jumaat dan Khutbah Jumaat yang Amat Ringkas dan Pembila bagi Dahulu daripada Jumaat*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Abdul Salam Achik al-Jawi. (1925). *Kelebihan Haji dan Kelebihan Air Zamzam*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Nuh bin Said Abdul Muttalib. (1939). *Kifayat al-Mubtadi': Pada Menyatakan Beberapa Perkerjaan Fardhu Kifayat yang Bersangkut dengan Mayat-mayat seperti Memandikan, Mengafankan, Talkin dan lain-lain*. Penang: Jelutong Press.

^vSee, for example, Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman. (1938). *Tawarikh dan Manusia: Mengandung Tawarikh dari Zaman Nabi Adam hingga Tahun Masihi 1938 (Peredar Angka 4)*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Ahmad bin Yaakob al-Johori. (1939). *Ringkasan Tawarikh Perputeraan Nabi Muhammad s.a.w*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Muhammad Yusuf bin Sultan Maidin. (1931). *Kejatuhan Kaum Islam dan Pergerakan Baharu*. Penang: Jelutong Press.

^{vi}See, for example, Muhammad Ṣalīh Ibn Sayyid 'Abdurrahmān al-Zawāwī. (1313 AH) *Kayfiyyat al-Dhikr 'ala al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqshabandiyyah al-Mujaddidiyah al-Aḥmadiyah*. Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Aḥmadiyah.; 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad Ṣalīh al-Zawāwī, (1312 AH). *Risālat al-Fawā'id al-Wwāfiyyat fi Sharh Ma'na al-Tahiyat*, Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Aḥmadiyah.; Anonymous, (1321 AH). *Dhikr Ism Dhat 'ala al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqshabandiyyah*. Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Aḥmadiyah.; Raja Ali Kelana. (1926). *Ini Rencana Mudah pada Mengenal Diri yang Indah*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Shaykh Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri (n.d.). *Mawā'iz al-Badi'ah*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.

^{vii}See, for example, *Tafsir Juz 'Amma Yatasa'alun*, Muhammad Abduh's commentary on the final section of the Quran translated by al-Hādī published in 1927 by Jelutong Press. Other were Muḥammad Ṭāhir Jalāluddīn. (1931). *Itāf al-Murīd fi Ahkām al-Tajwid*, Penang: Jelutong Press.; Sayyid Shaykh al-Hādī. (n.d.). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*. Penang: Jelutong Press.; Abdurrahman Siddiq Al-Banjari. (1355 AH). *Majmu'at al-Āyat wa al-Hadith fi Faḍā'il al-'Ilm wa al-'Ulamā' wa al-Muta'allimin wa al-Mustami'in*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Ahmad Zuhri Muhammad Salleh. (1940). *Al-Amin fi Arba'in min Ahādith Sayyid al-Mursalīn*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.

^{viii}A novel written by al-Hādī: *Hikayat Anak dara Ghassan* (Story of Ghassan's Daughter) or *Hindundengan Hammad* (1928-1929), a tale of over 1000 pages, narrating the love of Hind, an Arab Christian princess, for Hammad, an 'Arab prince, at that time of Prophet Muhammad, being an adaptation of the Lebanese Jirji Zaidan's novel *Fatat Ghassan* (The Maid of [the] Ghassan [tribe]. *Cheritera Dhu 'l-Ruhain* or 'Possessor of Two Lives' (1930-1), a tale of 540 pages with a Turkish background, adapted and expanded from Arabic by Abdul Rahim Kajai.

^{ix}A novel written by al-Hādī: *Hikayat Chermin Kehidupan* (The Mirror of Life), a Turkish tale stressing the importance of chastity, published in 1929.

^xThe *Cherita Rokambul* which was written by al-Hādī adapted from Arabic, originally French serials. The *Hikayat Pembelaan dalam Rahasia* (Story of a Secret Upbringing) or *Kaseh Saudara kepada (sic) Saudaranya* (The Love of Kin) (1929-30), a work of 579 pages adapted from English by al-Hādī's son, Sayyid Alwi al-Hādī and edited by al-Hādī.

^{xi}See, for example, *Angan-angan Kehidupan* (Life's Dreams or Aspirations of Life) with the English subtitle 'The Moral Trainer'. It was issued in monthly instalment of approximately 100 pages each, completed by February 1931 and sold very cheaply to subscribers. *Hikayat Puteri Nur ul-'Ain*, atau *Bahaya Bercherai Talak Tiga dan Berchina Buta* (The Story of Princess Nur ul-'Ain or the dangers of Threefold Divorce and resorting to China Buta) (1929), a short story of 200 pages.

^{xii}See, for example, Raja Ali Kelana. (1317 AH). *Perhimpunan Plakat*. Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Riyawwiyah.; Muhammad Saleh bin Haji Awang. (1931). *Mengkaji Sejarah Terengganu*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman. (1939). *Perihal Tanah Jawa (Peredar Angka 16)*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Muhammad Hassan bin Dato' Kerani. (1347 AH). *Al-Tarikh Silsilah Negeri Kedah Darul Aman*. Penang: Jelutong Press.

^{xiii}See, for example, *Jadwāl Taqwīm 1895 Bulan Arabi yang Masuk di dalamnya Haribulan Orang Putih Terpakai di dalam Duabelas Bulan 1313*. It was an almanac for use of mosque officials, table of equivalent days for 1313 AH in the Christian calendar (June 1895-June 1896). Proprietor was Ali b. Ahmad al-Attas ('*ala dhimmat*). It consisted of 32 pages, typeset *jāwī* on 21 x 26 pages, with 21 x 25 cm folding table. *Jadwāl Taqwīm 1897*, atable of equivalent days for 1315 AH (June 1897-May 1898). See Proudfoot, 280.

^{xiv}For example: Riau-Lingga Sultanate. (1311 AH). *Undang-undang Polisi Yang Terpakai di dalam Kerajaan Riau Lingga dan Sekalian Daerah Takluknya*. Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Riyawwiyah.; Riau-Lingga Sultanate. (1895). *Furuk al-Makmur*. Penyengat: Maṭba'at al-Riyawwiyah.

^{xv}Raja Ali Kelana. (1922). *Bughyatul'l-'Ayni fī Ḥurūfī al-Ma'ani*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Abu Muhammad Adnan. (1926). *Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Penolong bagi yang Menuntut Pengetahuan yang Patut*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Raja Ali Haji. (1927). *Pengetahuan Bahasa Kanun Logat Melayu Riau dan Lingga dan Johor dan Pahang*. Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.; Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman. (1937). *Jalan Bahasa Melayu*, Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press.

^{xvi}Commentary on the First Chapter of the Quran written by Shaykh Muhammad Abduh which was translated by al-Hādī and later published in 1928.

^{xvii}A translation of Qasim Amin Bey's work *Tahrir al-Mar'a* (Emancipation of Woman) in 1930