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Abstract

The significance of this research lies in an analysis of Malay Muslim Women dress codes in relation to a specific period of time between the 1970s and 1980s in Malaysia. This period of time has been termed an Islamic Resurgence catalyzed by Malaysia's independence from colonial rule in the late 60s. During this period Muslim Malay women found an unprecedented political voice through the reintroduction of Islamic cultural values and practices. This research identifies specifically the role of dress in this unprecedented political female empowerment. Further, the research identifies the coincidental framework of an absence of Malay women's experience in historical accounts of Malay's history and the absence of post-colonial voices omitted from Malaysian thresholds of tolerance with respect to educational discourse and practice. The research asks questions as to why woman's experience has gone unnoticed in mainstream Malaysian history. And, does this omission have any relation to the exclusion of post-colonial critiques in Islamic scholarly environments. Further, the research privileges the voice of history as that documented through oral histories as a way of accounting for the everyday experience of (women's) existence. In doing so it provokes questions around how political 'official' histories of place and experience are brought about through what philosopher historian Michel Foucault would describe as (a method of) counter-memory. Through methods of oral histories and an analysis a language of counter-memory manifests in this research project as another history of the marginalized or other (in this case of Malay women). Like a literature their voices make up the unorthodox histories of experience. In this respect it embraces a phenomenological political historical analysis of the ordinary Malay woman through a study of Islamic dress codes. Lastly, the research looks at the relation between commodity culture in terms of fashion and that of dress as a fundamental element to spiritual and intellectual practices.

The following list of categories outlines the key areas for this research investigation:

- The primary Oral History as the Qur'an and Hadith: a constant and alive mechanism in everyday Islamic life
- Methodology as an Islamic practice: Phenomenological-Hermeneutics; Counter-memory (archeological genealogy) Oral Histories of Islamic Malay Women's everyday experience; and Ethical procedures as espoused in Islamic culture
- Auto-ethnographic analysis with respect to my own experience as a Islamic Malay Women (of this relevant resurgent period)
- Understanding Islamic Practice through a spatial and temporal analysis of everyday Women's Islamic Dress
- Political History: An untold History of Malay Woman's experience located through the Islamic Dress
- Islamic Resurgence: Malay Women's Freedom located through Islamic Dress

- Post-colonial critiques: Transparency, Image and the Open Gaze of technology
- Islamic Dress and Commodity Culture (the fashion system)
- Suppressed Voices: Why Postcolonial and Women experience are omitted from Malaysian Culture today?

Introduction

This research brings together the experience of Malay women through Malay Muslim dress in relation to the post-independence phenomenon that I am naming here as an Islamic Resurgence. Further, this experience is framed through research into post-colonialism alongside the absence of historical discussion in Malaysia on the experience of Muslim women through dress. Post-colonialism as an area of study is not well known (or received) in Malaysian research contexts. This absence points to a complication with respect to Malaysia's historical evolution as both a colonised Imperialist country that has a far-reaching historical connection to Islamic beliefs and practices. As a Malay (Islamic) woman who has lived through Malaysia's transition from colonial dependence to independence, together with an education experienced from both inside and outside Malaysia, my experience of identity via dress offers a complex account. This situates my research inside, in part, an auto-ethnographic methodology whereby I represent the subjective experience of an Islamic Malay women with relevant experience in this resurgent period. Starting from this position, this research fundamentally arises out of a priority of faith as a Muslim, with a secondary layer coming from my relation to women, with a third layer being that of a subject who has experienced first-hand relations within Malaysia as well as values and perceptions from non-Malay, Western scholars. Post-colonialism provides a complex folding of an identity formation as woman and colonial subject. Post-independence from British colonial rule has given rise to a broad formation of Post-colonial studies since the 1960s that have critiqued perceptions of cultural difference based on Eurocentric framing understood as universal.

The rationale of bringing this type of research that combines an experience of Malay women through dress in relation to post-colonial critiques into proximity with the phenomenon today in Malaysia known here as Islamic Resurgence, is to innumerate on the varieties of meaning and perception with respect to history's writing. That is, this research attempts to offer something that can be made 'assimilable' to those (scholars, theorists, educators) within Malaysia as well as those that reside outside. The topic of Malay dress (specifically with my focus on the Hijab) and post colonialism is almost without discussion in the history of Malaysia, pointing to the reluctance for any historical excavation behind the dress experience of the Muslim Women in Malaysia. Similarly as alluded to above, from my research to date, there is little occurrence of the effects of post-colonial critique with respect to a Malaysian audience after post-colonial-independence. An ultimate significance of this research is therefore to act as a catalyst in terms of bringing about wider discussion with respect to the identity of Malay women post-independence for a future Malaysian context. Further, not only is the topic of "Muslim dress" and "Post-Colonial" subjects largely unknown in Malaysian history, key research methods such as 'Oral Histories', central for this research approach, is not familiar (i.e. valued) amongst academic historians in Malaysia. Therefore the significance of this research is to expand the field of (historical/genealogical) pedagogical and scholarly practices in Malaysia with respect to the evidencing of histories. History in my mind (through the influence of 'historians' such as Foucault) is a complex topic that will need considerable address in this project. Oral histories account here for narrative experiences of the everyday experience of contemporary Malay women in order to bring about a counter-memory (Foucault: 1977) to official histories of place and experience. Through methods of oral histories and an analysis a language of counter-memory manifests in this research project as another history of the marginalized or other (in this case of Malay women). Like a literature (as Foucault has noted with respect to counter-memory) their voices make up the unorthodox histories of experience. Histories here can be perceived as storytelling, neither fictional nor factual, but rather evocative of experiences that twist (history) free from archaic notions of truth and fiction. This binary thinking of truth versus fiction with respect to history is a notion that has been de-bunked through postmodernist and

poststructuralist critiques of Modernity and, of which, post-colonialism is one such development (Derrida: 1998). History in its telling via the oral form has a far more fundamentally philosophical and ethical approach (or model) that stems, in part for this research, from the hermeneutic process and its ethics in relation the Muslim practice of interpreting the Qur'an. This process is explained in fuller detail within the literature review. Fundamentally, the question arises around how a subject (a Malay woman living in contemporary time) is, partially an embodied entity of Qur'anic principles. The 'body' or subject of woman in my analysis therefore becomes, to a degree, a 'text'. The notion of the body as a 'text' stems from a wider cultural and critical theoretical framework in poststructuralism and post-colonialism suggesting that subjectivity is saturated in multiple references of meaning that move and shift beyond the notion of a stable subject's reality (again, both Jacques Derrida [1998] and Michel Foucault [1977] are important figures for this type of critique of *author*-ity, originality and the body as an inscribed 'textual' entity). Further, in line with this research's significance I would see and hope that my research topic and methodological approach would be the opening for more research ventures (from other researcher) in this field that, in turn, contributes to a better understanding of knowledge and awareness for a wider reach into the public's (both Western and Malaysian) perception.

Finally, it should be noted that the research provides me with a complex series of negotiations with respect to an overarching concern for faith and experience. I have noted above my three-tied structure from which my research practice unfolds (Muslim, Woman, 'Global' subjectivities). The most complex negotiation is that which reveals conditions and experience of a Malay Muslim whose subjectivity comes from an 'unchanging' text (the Qur'an) in relation to changing identity through forces of cultural difference. Directly between these two conditions of non-change and continual shift is that of the contemporary Malay women's experience. Ultimately, dress here is the mechanism from which my research brings into dialogue this serious and complex relation of a monolithic text with respect to practices of difference. As my title alludes, since post-independence (from 1957), there has arisen an Islamic resurgence as that movement which reaches back into Malay's past, further back than a time of colonial dependence, and reminds us of a solid ground based on faith from which our lives sprung. The research aims, in its honour and fidelity to the Qur'an as that source from which our people's identity most significantly springs, to discuss the paradoxical framework for a Malay women's 'identity' based on 'unchanging' Qur'anic principles in relation to the shifting reality of everyday living as a subject of post-independence. This paradox opens up the site of the research's significance and rationale in terms of testing out how these two powerful (political-socio) discourses (faith and *acculturated* nationalism) intersect. This paradoxical locale is further enumerated in spatial terms with respect to women's dress (specifically the *hijab*).

Spatially my research deals with depth (of an identity that reaches far back and remains in some way the same) and a surface that appears to shift in relation to the global forces of (different motivations; political, national, economic, social) continuous change. I have already spoken of the temporal aspects above with respect to stasis and movement (the Qur'an and global living respectively) — space cannot be engaged with without the mention of time. Space in relation to gender also becomes a discursive frame for evidencing wider relations between the depth of an unchanging identity formation (via faith) and the continuous surface movement of everyday lives (influenced by cultural differences, western and non).

Historical background and frameworks

Often the topic regarding the Islamic Resurgence has been discussed especially through written work done from outside of the premises of Malaysian production (academically or national media). Further, as stated earlier, within a Malaysian context the subject area of postcolonial theories and their discussion discussions is markedly absent from historical discourses. Due to these notable absences, women and gender studies areas which should be one of the most significant theories in postcolonial histories (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007) are not activated for popular discussion and social debates within different disciplines within Malaysian academic

experience. As a consequence of both Islamic resurgence memories and postcolonial arguments silenced from the Malaysian issues of debates and discussion within (in the first important spatial instance) the site of the University, this results in unspoken histories (counter-memories) of post independence revival in coincidence to the *hijab* development among Muslim women in Malaysia. As mentioned earlier, taking myself as an auto-ethnographic subject for this research, this has certainly been the case in my own personal experience. The research will test this out further with a number of subjects (see 'Design of Study' section) in relation to my own experience and rigorous analysis according to the aims of the project.

My research is structured through two fundamental frameworks: Firstly, through a hermeneutic approach that explains internal and fundamental principles of the *hijab* in relation to Islamic codes of dress. And secondly, through post colonial studies as a support to the phenomena itself, which addresses aspects of Malay history that could be seen (in support) as openings into the very Islamic resurgence phenomenon. Both approaches are important because there is a profound intersection between the two. The hermeneutic explanation of *hijab* and Islam code of dress helps describe the content of the occurrence of such post colonial phenomena, which is in this case, the Islamic Resurgence.

Let us begin here with two images below that 'depict' a group of women going through a development process from colonial dependence to a post-colonial embrace of Islam according to a specific period of time.

The black and white photo on the left was taken during the 1970s, where an awareness of Islamic dress is not a matter of concern and Islamic identity not popular. Note that independence for Malaya (what we now call Malaysia) came in the late 50s (1957) and became Malaysia in 1963 as known today (excluding Singapore, which separated out in 1965). The photo on the right portrays today, 35 years on. Note the same two women in the middle with their overt change in appearance with respect to codes of dress. The colour photo on the right details two generations of women, mothers with their daughters. However, the awareness over identity formation with respect to Islamic dress code has taken a different effect through different ages of introduction. The older women experienced their youth in the 1970s during a complex time that had a stronger ethos of colonial dependence (even though Malaysia was an independent country). These older women thereby went through a much later process of *hijab*-recognition in distinction to their daughters. For their daughters (my generation), we have been familiar with veil adorning during our youth. Primarily these two generations of women with their different experiences through dress-signification are the subject focus for this research. It should also be noted that the distinction between "colonial" dependence and independence is not a simple transformation or

binary. Rather, Malaysia today still exists as a country whose parliament is based on Westminster (UK) with a Prime Minister as the head of the government and, a judicial system based on English common law. Further, during Malaysia's independence it is a founding member of ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations formed in 1967 and embraces a legacy that could be simply stated as one of capitalism in the globalised market place). It is also a member of the Commonwealth of Nations (set up in 1929 with its London declaration in 1949 — it represents 53 sovereign states of which 51 were formerly part of the British Empire). It is also a founding member of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (started in 1969) and a Monarchy consisting of thirteen states and three federal territories. This is a complex cultural political mix of western and non-western governing structures and systems that make its identity as a country anything but straightforward. Alongside this given this research is engaged with the complex relation between faith and nationhood, the influence of Christianity further complicates issues of subjectivity. There is also the three dominant races of Malay, Indian and Chinese that adds another layer to relations of nationhood, faith and modes of progression that has created tensions between everyday experience and identity formations. This research has to systematically account for why it is exclusively dealing with the complexity of Malaysia that takes the Malay people to be the representation of a Nationalistic ethos in relation to what has been marginalized prior to an Islamic Resurgence of the 1970s and 80s i.e. its Islamic faith (Islamic). However, the most significant marginalization for this research is that of Malay women's everyday existence both pre and post-independence and how, the resurgence has to a degree given 'voice' to these women. It recognizes that in doing this research excludes other marginalized voices such as those unofficial i.e. non-Nationalistic Malaysians from Chinese and Indian women's experience. This research acknowledges the complexity of women as a subject in Malaysia and will account for non-Malay women's histories if they appear significant in relation to the Islamic resurgence.

Explanation of the general term of Islamic dress

The first most important keyword for this proposal is at large the main purpose of the whole research, which is the dress. In this research, the dress is known as the 'veil' or 'hijab'. These two words have interesting distinctions in terms of what they appear to connote. The use of this English word "veiling" is generally perceived to describe the well-known dress behavior of adorning the hair, neck and chest area with a veil or scarf. This term "veiling" with these same connotations has also been perceived and used by Muslim women throughout the whole world and it is a general description used in many issues regarding it globally. The word "Hijab" on the other hand describes the covering of the body entirely with the inclusion of reducing attraction to the body's itself as well as restricting the silhouette or the shape of the body from being made visible to a public.

The hermeneutic approach to my research specifically explains the internal meanings of the hijab and veiling experience through an etymological or sense of origin, providing the basis for my analysis on the hijab and Islam code of dress. As mentioned earlier, the description on the origin, derivation and development of Islamic words beginning from the Qur'an and Hadith is critical for Islamic research process. Every story or fact told within the Islamic context would usually begin with hermeneutic-etymological strands as a way to bind it in the Islamic circle.

There are many passages in the Qur'an that mention women and their situation with respect to body cover. The most direct revelation and most often cited reference specifically about the women's veiling is from the verse An Nur or the Light (24:31):

> And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn

unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed. Qur'an, An Nur (24:31; Al Qur'an Mushaf Malaysia dan Terjemahan," 2004; The Qur'an (translation)," 1997)

And from Al Ahzab or the Punishment (33:59):

O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of the outer garments (jilbab). This is more suitable and they will be known (as chaste believing women) and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. (33:59; Al Qur'an Mushaf Malaysia dan Terjemahan," 2004; The Qur'an (translation)," 1997)

The above-cited, for example, via my own application, interpretation, sourcing in relation to the topic, is further treated through the hermeneutical process i.e. through the comparable literature between the Islamic and western scholars.

Fadwa El Guindi is one of the main key scholars that I will use for my literature and research analysis. Her exegeses are important for the hermeneutical transition or bridge from the Qur'an interpretation over the *hijab* and also the western dress. It was from her written work that I have resourced themes and frameworks regarding hijab and Muslim women issues.

The importance of El Guindi to my research is her work that brings together comparative research between Malaysian-Islamic culture and Arabic-Islamic culture. That is, an Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia manifested due, partially, to influences and comparable situations in the Middle East. Having said this, Malaysian Muslims are quite unfamiliar with global incidences and influences surrounding the Arabic world (Haque, 2002). Her work has provided a significant perspective for comparable discussions with respect to Islamic culture in relation to Malaysia and Arabic countries.

El Guindi's work has been helpful in terms of refining a hermeneutic research approach with respect to oral histories. For instance, she goes through a process of connecting words from Arabic scriptures to everyday Islamic situations. In her text, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*, she reveals the connection to the Qur'an and two accelerating trends with respect to either adorning the Hijab or that of Western fashion. *The Visible Self* by Eicher, Evenson and Lutz(Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2008), has been a significant source to help her own analysis with respect to these differing trends.

Another term for the Islamic dress which will be used interchanging with the word hijab and veiling is called as the *Al-Ziyy Al-Islami*, which later spreads throughout other Muslim communities. *Al-Ziyy Al-Islami* means women's Islamic dress (Guindi, 1999). In the late 1980s, this identification of Muslim's dress is widely known in Malaysia. It is translated later in Malay language as *Busana Muslimah*. *Busana* means dress or couture and *Muslimah* translates as Muslim women. During the resurgence, the popular ensemble of the *Busana Muslimah* was the *Purdah*. The *Purdah* ensemble is a long loose fitting maxi dress, covering the ankle and to match with a wide, round-edged veil long enough to reach the waistline. Another crucial item of wear are socks and at times there is an additional item termed the *niqab*, which is a face cover that leaves only the eyes visible.

The components of the *purdah* at the beginning of its development during the 1970s until middle of 1980s composed a wide, bulky silhouette through plain solid dark or pastel colours, absent of printed motifs and was thus has limited decoration. The *purdah* ensemble was almost the *ideal* dress in terms of resembling what is required and understood according to the Qur'an and Hadis texts. With the prominent look of this hijab-*purdah,* during the Resurgence, a stark contrast was noticeable in relation to other dresses often worn by the Muslim women that had a strong western influence. This resulted in a significant gap between women who adopted the hijab and those who did not.

Fig. 1 *Purdah*   Fig. 2. *Purdah* (19th Century figures)
Fig. 3 Niqab

Fig. 1 Purdah: http://www.flickr.com/photos/vgasparis/4133802828/ (Moroccan Women + Son)

Fig. 2. Purdah: http://commonerwoman.blogspot.com/2008/12/full-covered-clothing-fashion-of-womens.html
Fig, 3: (http://www.muslimbase.com/hijabs/niqab-veil-c-416_500.html

Postcolonial exegesis and the unrecorded history

My second keyword for this literature circulates around Postcolonialism. One of the reasons why my literature encompasses the postcolonial theme is due to the time period relevant to the resurgence phenomenon and how this is situated in the context of postcolonial theoretical discussions. Approximately ten years post Malaysia's independence in 1957 an Islamic movement permeated Malaysia's culture. It was a wave that had currency across many other Muslim countries also. Among these others were Egypt, Turkey and Iran that had also been through the acculturating forces of colonisation from powers such as Britain and France. In these countries a force of Islamic fundamentalism and ideals returned. This research aims to suggest the differences as well as proximities of these countries in order to site the conditions particular to

Islamic Malay women's experience during this time period. In terms of postcolonial studies, Edward Said has been a major influence in situating the differences and similarities with respect to the other of colonisation.

In one of his interviews (for the Media Education Foundation, Jhally: 1998), about his seminal text *Orientalism*, Edward Said discusses how orientalism was viewed under the 'white-western'[1] point of view, rather than encountering the reality of an oriental situation i.e. of certain society from the point of view of difference. Difference becomes assimilated according to the Eurocentric conditions and values of 'white-western' framing of that time. For Said, in this text, the Arabs or the Middle-easterners were his case in point. Said elaborates in this interview on what he describes as '*the creation of ideal other for Europe*' (refer here to 'Orientalism as a Tool of Colonialism'), in which history of the oriental had been de-politicized by having the creation of the colonized image outside the actual history. Or to put it another way, that the Oriental was given power according to the acculturating process of becoming the image of a colonial idealized other (for Europe). This is a complex process of culture building in relation to political power. Orientalism thereby refers to a time out of counter-memory (the voice under erasure according to official history making). If official histories come to being in the voice of the victor, then Eurocentric historic accounts of Arab and Middle Eastern colonized histories makes the subject known as the orient, a subject idealized as exotic other to and for Europe. This would be Said's point. For this research it is important to take account of how our subjectivities are complicated in terms of official histories in relation to counter-memories. How does this resurgent period enable the counter memory from an idealized colonial 'subject speak? This is a key question for the research.

In another significant Said text, *Invention, Memory, and Place* (2000) he goes on to account for the missing postcolonial discussions in Malaysia. In being left untold this silence was a means to create an invention of other history:

> In other words, the invention of tradition was a practice very much used by authorities as an instrument of rule in mass societies when the bonds of small social units like village and family were dissolving and authorities needed to find other ways of connecting a large number of people to each other. The invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past. Suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way (Said, 2000)

The effects of this invention of tradition as a manipulative process for functioning cultures in a certain way can be witnessed through Malaysians, and especially politicians, resistance towards the phenomenal issues brought by the Islamic Resurgence. This research also needs to keep interrogating the Islamic Resurgence for how it may also fall into areas of inventing tradition. This will keep the research a rigorous process and open with respect to the inherited legacies of knowledge dissemination, structures and systems for which our understanding of subjectivity occurs.

Issues of post-colonialism may have been a sensitive area, racially, as Malays would have been tenser with acquiring knowledge about certain histories. For instance, the history of illegal mass-migration of the Indians[2] and Chinese from the previous century allocated by the East India

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[1] Edward refers the white-western as the people from the European countries and the United States of America. This could also been found in his book the *Orientalism* ("Orientalism as a Tool of Colonialism 2/4 Edward Said; Said, 1978).

[2] During colonial rule one could suggest that tradition was manipulated in the segregation of Malaysian populations. Further, postcolonial debate as per illegal mass-migration could now be construed as 'unfair' treatment from point of view of mainstream Malays that privilege themselves as the indigenous culture of Malaysia. However, this is a complicated position as Malaysia (from 1963) was a country made up of a wide variety of multi-culturalisms (and prior to this has a complex history of migrating people). Would an invention of tradition by a eurocentric position privilege an indigenous or original people here? It does not appear so. However, how do we claim indigenous when so many periods of 'colonialism' have occurred over thousands of

Company (Lee, 1988; Nagata, 1974). This research will focus on the invention of traditions that postcolonial theory (such as Said's) make aware. Three significant areas of this research will ask questions from the point of view of postcolonial theory:

i)   the aspects of eurocentrism that influence the identity of Malaysians

ii)   Islamic Resurgence's resistance to a eurocentrism

iii)   the untold history (counter memory) of postcolonial women's experience in Malaysia's socio-cultural everyday life.

Edward Said's critiques add relevance to the condition of Muslim Malay attitudes upon receiving the call for the Islamic Resurgence (to return to the root of Islamic faith and principle as the manual for governing Muslim living). Said's statement below activates this relevance:

> To produce knowledge, you have to have a power to be there and to see in expert ways, things that the natives themselves can't see (Foundation, 1998)

Said's statement can be contextualised as a response to the historic period of an Imperialism's manifestation towards the orient with the example of Napoleon Bonaparte conquest over Egypt in 1778 (Foundation, 1998; Jhally, 1998). Relevant here is the corresponding aspect of a colonial influence that triggers Malaysia as a whole toward a notion of 'western superiority' during the post-independent period of Malaysia. Said discusses a situation on which the Egyptian situation being under conquest was recorded by the French in a way that suited the European audience. The Egyptians having not known their own situation being recorded in the ways that the French had favoured and were not given any chance to reply to that French opinion. The proximity of this situation to Malaysians is noted here particularly with respect to how Malays[3] perception of themselves is a result of how *"Eurocentrism is reflected in the state of mental captivity"* (Alatas, 1995). What I mean by this is Malays had been so attached to the British ideals as perpetuated through thoughts and manners. Syed Farid Alatas claims through a state of eurocentric mental captivity, imitation of behavior permeates all levels of thinking and ability, resulting in the dependency of the 'Western' idealistic points of view toward the world and its order. This research looks at the intersecting moment, as espoused by the phenomenon of the Islamic Resurgence, of Malay subjectivity as influenced by eurocentric and Islamic thought.

Hijab and the Islamic movements from other countries

Through this Islamic movement, western influences from colonisation were seen as the "intrusion" to the Muslim women's "space" (Guindi, 1999)[4], especially in regards to the absenteeism of the hijab during those periods. The rise of the western ideals that rejected veiling amongst Muslim women promoted by Reza Pahlavi of Iran and Qasim Amin of Egypt brought concern from many Muslims throughout the world including Malaysia (Cole, 1981; Hoffman-Ladd, 1987). In return, scholars such as Mawdudi from India, Al-Faruqi from the United States and Al-Attas from Malaysia himself, had been significant promoters to a resurgence of an Islamic way of life (Haque, 2002). This promotion can be thematised through what is described as the

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centuries whereby the more accurate term for the movements and habitation of these islands (known today as Malaysian) were by tribal peoples from elsewhere. This research needs to be aware of how easy it is to fall into the trap of adopting the rhetoric of ownership as transferred from notions of Nationalism that colonialism is part of. Research suggests that Malays during the British occupation were pushed to the villages and secluded from the outside world especially from having rights to a proper education. On the other hand Chinese and Indians had their own formal education brought from their mainlands. The Chinese were provided opportunity to have businesses in many of the Malays lands, and given the chances to open small towns and industries. It is histories such as this that are not well known and have been opened up through postcolonial discussions — discussions that add tension to the political landscape of my country.

[3] The Malays were the subject of interests of the British residences written or research work such as Stamford Raffles and Frank Swettenham, because of the British identification of the Malays as the original inhabitants of the Malay land which is now known as Malaysia.

[4] Al-ziyy al-Islami or the Islamic dress as women's space on Islamic identity.

'Islamization of Knowledge'[5] (Dangor, 2005). Thus, it is not surprising that the awareness of *hijab* for Muslim women had flourished earlier amongst the university students before it became popularised amongst others. The site of the university here is a significant space in terms of Institutional site of resistance to eurocentric idealism. The call for the Islamic resurgence targeted through a deeper philosophical understanding of cultural belonging and identity could easily be acquainted with the discrete (female, for instance,) communities in (Malaysian) universities. It is an important spatial site for political questioning with respect to postcolonial critiques. One can say that the site of the University is founded on Western idealism with respect to notions of freedom of knowledge and since the 1970s (the Resurgent period) the role of the University globally becomes a site for protest and change. Again, this intersecting of western and Islamic thought and behaviour is extremely complex and interesting for this research. That is, politically the notion of Said's 'invention of tradition' could be used as a more complicated critique for how women in relation to the site of the university and Islamic thought found a new kind of independence.

The veiling movement of university students in Turkey during the early 1980s had brought another spark to many countries with a majority of Muslims. Nilufer Gole, the author of 'The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling' (Schwiebinger, 2000), discusses the deep social and cultural cleavages between the secularists and Islamists in Turkey, where people of the same nation, religion and gender contradicted — one was either influenced by western values with the other of Islamic. Veiling appears to have become an extension to confrontations with respect to values of Islam versus West. This research believes it is not such a simple binary opposition and with more critique we may find the values are blurred and don't easily constitute and either/or scenario. Gole explains that woman's participation in Islamist movements symbolises a new sense of belonging and ushers in a new community of believers. The veil is a symbol of commonality of identity and the Muslim.

Another example by Susan Brenner whereby she elaborates the wave of this Islamic Resurgence influenced an Indonesian political scene. Islamic discourses at this time issues is a revival that she describes as bringing in a spirit of newness in the life of the Indonesian women especially to the students at the university campuses. Brenner claims that one of the outstanding impact appears in Islam being taken as the dynamics and bases as modern (forward) life (Brenner, 1996).

In relation to the resurgence one can start to get a sense of how dress symbolised through the adornment of the veil and linked to space (i.e. the site of the university, the site of the body in relation to gender, and the site of the community, *ummah*) has a complex series of relations to (Malay) Muslim identity through political, social and cultural frameworks. It is also key to trace these identity links through language both in a popular context but particularly with respect to the site of the Qur'an.

Hijab as women's space

The third keyword for my research is the word *hijab* in relation to it as a space (of woman). In terms of a hermeneutic discussion of the relationship between Hijab as space/barrier and Hijab as material clothing, El Guindi (Guindi, 1999)[6] discusses the issue of intrusion of space to women's privacy by referring verses from the Qur'an. El Guindi leads the discussion on woman's

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[5] " the concept of 'Islamization of knowledge' and of the social sciences was originally conceived by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman in the late 1960s….Abu Sulayman together with Isma'il al-Faruqi became the driving force behind the Islamization project. The efforts of Muslim scholars resulted in the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington in 1981 and the International Islamic University in Malaysia…..In sum, the Islamization project demands a revisit of the Islamic heritage, and the development of a new epistemology, paradigm of knowledge and methodology" (I. Al-Faruqi, 1988; Dangor, 2005)

[6] (Guindi, 1999) p.113.

space beginning from the word "*awrah*", which briefly derives the body parts that should be covered or not revealed to others.[7] The aspect of *awrah* is important here because in Islamic studies no enquiries of Hijab would be completed without discussion on the term *awrah*. From El Guindi's text *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*, she reveals three context of *awrah*, "one in reference to men intruding on women's privacy at times of exposure of women's bodies (24:31), and another referring to "homes" being exposed to theft and intrusion mentioned in the context of a battle (13:33), while the third is a reference to sexual privacy". Spatial diagnosis with all three contexts is gleaned in terms of inside and outside, self and other, public and private. Intrusion and protection with respect to one's personal space is central in all three contexts

I) Hijab as women space for privacy and seclusion from the public "eye" or "gaze"

Exegeses from Al-Ghazalli and Foucault are meaningful to allocate the elements of gendered space proposed by the Islamic resurgence. These exegeses link with feminisms' notions in postcolonial theory. Both scholars are relevant resources under the area in the qualitative research method with respect to a phenomenological perspective called 'Symbolic Interactionism.' This perspective stems from the works of many researchers such as John Dewey (Dewey, 1930) and Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 1969). The symbolic position of this notion comes from the main verses about ordering women to cover the whole body and veil their head and chest area in the Qur'an is ironically within the chapter on the "Light" "and Punishment". A hermeneutics between light and punishment would bring some proximity between the work of Al-Ghazalli and Michel Foucault. A close reading of Al-Ghazalli as having the awareness of oneself through the idea of "God is eyeing" has an interesting proximity with Foucault's spatial critique of modernity's "gaze" via an analysis of the Panoptic prison where it is from the guard's watchtower (as the all-seeing-gaze) easier detection is gained with respect to any movement from others (prisoners). The effect of this is an awareness of oneself (being watched) promoting self-regulation. However, these two theses help explains two contradictory opinions between the Muslim and the Western philosophers.

The awareness of a Muslim towards having the awareness of oneself via a gaze through the presence of God at all time and calculating deeds makes them more careful over their wellbeing. The effect of this translates as the intensity of the gaze (God is eyeing), the more interior you've become. Eyes, he advocates, are to be trained as means to control the public gaze of men in relation to the female subject — the eye is where everything begins. Linking with Foucault, Al-Ghazalli suggests the body has the ability to be (self)-disciplined, though both habit of it and the omnipresence of God's "eye". Through habit (discipline) the hardship of enduring it becomes lessened. Behaviour of refrain between the public gazes creates an invisible space or barrier between gendered subjects. As earlier discussed, the spatial consideration of bodies and sites is important for this research. I have mentioned the relation of the *hijab* to the Qur'anic principle of minimizing the body's form through a loose and silhouette form of adornment. Here two types of invisible spaces can be detected as pertinent to gender and dress codes. The invisibility of the female body between *hijab* and her body (interior) that 'folds' out into another region of the public space between genders; the invisible barrier constructed through habit forming of a male gaze deflected. There is an interesting section to be developed in my thesis with respect to the invisible and visible spaces of 'contact'. I would remind you of those more visible sites of encounter that signify the Islamic resurgence linked to dress, such as the site of the university, the site of the body in relation to gender, the site of the community, *ummah*) and the site of language, as previously discussed.

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[7] The Arab-English direct translation to *awrah* is, "blemish, imperfection, flaw and defectiveness", rooted from the syllable a-w-r (Guindi, 1999) or arr (Ahmad & Zainol Abidin, 2004). Other verse from the Qur'an (7:26,27), is *saw'ah* would mean "genital" (Guindi, 1999). However, the interpretation of *awrah* frequently used by the Muslim scholars is the body parts that are not supposedly exposed to public or between genders (Ahmad & Zainol Abidin, 2004). The blemish or flaw as translated would rather explain the sensual sight that would arouse sexuality between genders.

While the link between Foucault's spatial analysis of power, space and the gaze has an interesting connection to the work discussed above, there seems to be both an overt and subtle cultural difference here that I conceive in relation to light and shadow. In *Discipline & Punish*, Foucault extends his analysis of power and bodies in terms of how the body has gone through disciplinary treatments and is therefore open to manipulation. The body is shaped and trained so that it is most likely to perform as an obedient, responsive, skilful and forceful subject. The Panoptic Prison is one of the most cited examples of how Foucault analyses these relations of subject, power, space and the Institutional gaze. The gaze of the Institution changes according to what kinds of subjective behaviour is beneficial for its programmes and practices. The Panoptic principle (as an Institutional gaze) is based on ideals of Humanism that suggest freedom equates with transparent societies. In the construction of Modernity, all societies should be aware and contribute (*doxa,* opinion) to the regulation of how societies form. That is, all men are born free and equal (liberty, fraternity and equality). In terms of the Prison, its diagrammatics of power resided in bringing prisoners out of the darkness (shadows), where they could behave illicitly and put them into a system where an all-eye-surveillance (from the central guard tower and transparent 'walls') enabled the prisoner to perceive a constant gaze. That is, no prisoner would know when and when they were not being viewed. In this sense transparency became a mechanism of power that produced a body of self-regulation. A Humanist ideal turned into a mechanism of power. Instead of a down-casting gaze (that promoted a shadow-effect through a looking away), full-transparency (that manifests today in the abundance of technological surveillance systems and devices etc) describes a much more light and open gaze.

Both Ghazalli and Foucault in their analysis perceive that the body becomes a kind of machinery that could be trained and discipline to suit certain societal and cultural functions and purposes. Both understand that under the "gaze" from another a lack of 'freedom' is produced in the one being gazed upon regulating their behaviour. While it can suggested that in Muslim culture the male is regulated to overt their gaze from women through the gaze of 'God is eyeing', the female subject is not being gazed upon and in this sense has another kind of 'freedom' to move within the public space. While Foucault discusses a full transparent gaze that promotes an open gaze-space, Ghazalli analysis depicts a blocking-view. Foucault and Ghazalli both concur that discipline organizes an analytical space. For this research it is important to analyse the different forces of disciplinary mechanism that produce spatial relations. Culturally, 'Western' and Muslim perceptions of *Hijab* wearing is contradictory in part because of the lack of understanding between different conceptions of visibility and invisibility, light and shadow. In general terms, Islamic culture promotes an ideal of opacity, while the West encourages an ideal of transparency. What is important for the critiques of Foucault and Ghazalli here is the contradiction of their critiques. Foucault brings emphasis to opacity as a mode of resistance to be overcome in the ideal of transparency. Whereas, Ghazalli emphasizes a too great transparency to be resisted in an idealized opaque covering over.

2) The feminist space as the discussion within the Islamic resurgence context

Feminism (postcolonialism) applied in Malaysia with respect to the oral histories will be an important hermeneutic variable for describing aspects of gendered space and dress for this research specifically for its postcolonial inquiry. These inquiries fall into two notions: Firstly, the dress of *hijab* is dealt with in terms of a mechanism that suggest a voice for women to be heard (as mentioned above with respect to an adherence to Islamic principles of opacity and the body). Secondly, and in contradiction to the first, the *hijab* is perceived as a form of masculinist domination over the female body. These two notions are identified through several written work from Othman (Othman, 2006), Ong (Ong, 1990), Anwar (Anwar, 1987), Nagata (Nagata, 1997) and Kessler (Kessler, 1972). The work of Susan Brenner although not regarding the Malaysian situation, but Indonesia, brings relevant correspondence to this research's enquiry into the adornment of the *hijab* during the relevant period (1970s and 80s, and further through up to 1996).

Firstly, the notion of a feminist space with respect to adorning the *hijab* as a platform for women to be heard politically and socially. As the amount of female students has risen in universities throughout Malaysia, the concern over female rights to public spaces has also increased[8]. At universities, female students have the opportunity to study the Qur'an and Hadis text more in-depth. From this experience together with promotion from colleagues, students developed a much stronger understanding of what it means to practice as a Muslim and the relevance of this practice to their wider socio-cultural life. As already emphasised, the resurgence of Islamic understanding enabled through wearing the hijab (i.e. the *purdah*) is critical given its appropriate guidance with respect to seclusion or privacy for Muslim women. This is the hypothesis of this research and, through oral histories the research will ascertain as to how the combination of wearing the *hijab* through an increase in female attending Malaysian Universities, factors of curriculum change (i.e. studying Qur'an and Hadis texts) for women and women's everyday behaviour according to gendered conventions that can be discerned in the public spaces of Universities, give women a more politicised voice. Further, how has the historic events of an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia since the 1970s contributed to this 'voice'. For instance, the research will investigate how during the resurgence the *hijab* became particularly popular by female students in the universities. The idea of female rights with respect to their visibility in public spaces seems significant with respect to their participation in public spaces, i.e. be present within the university campuses. Dress, it can be hypothesised became a socially 'appropriate' mechanism for empowering Muslim women in public sites. This will be an interesting point of critique with respect to the notion I have outlined earlier with respect to Said's 'invention of tradition'. For example, could one suggest that the wearing of the *hijab* is a invention of tradition for the purposes subverting a masculinist oppression of these women — If becoming educated i.e. appropriately inhabiting once was considered the site for men, meant adorning oneself in the *hijab* so that one could study (whatever one wished i.e. the Qur'an for instance) then this is a complex use of tradition (this point touches on my second variable). Further, as I have suggested above, the University system is an inherited eurocentric site that espouses notions of freedom of knowledge in line with values of Enlightenment. These contradictions must be rigorously assessed in the research hypthothesis.

Susan Brenner's research even though within the Indonesian scope has noted a similar situation. University students asserted the adornment of the *hijab* as a means for power to represent their female subjectivity alongside an Islamic identity (Brenner, 1996). One further interesting aspect of *hijab* adornment is with respect to a characteristic of pro-Islamic fundamental feminism. Nagata notes that its adornment signified this alignment to pro-Islamic life not only for female Muslim students but for a wider public. With female students wearing the *hijab* their images were disseminated through popular press and circulated through different Islamic and non-Islamic countries. This scenario according to Nagata, is called as the 'dakwah' or Islamic fundamental promotion (Nagata, 1980).

Secondly, the notion of feminism that I've touched on above incorporates the idea that the *hijab* is a means of gender-control as a masculine form of oppressing women. Norani Othman is one such writer supporting this feminist position known as the Sisters of Islam. The claim here is that the appearance of veiling or *hijab* adornment among women, especially in universities, is a primitive and propagation means by Islamist political parties or societies. This is an interesting point in terms of Said's point on the 'invention of tradition'. She also claims that it is through the *hijab* mechanism gender segregation and social control of Muslim women occurs (Othman, 2006). Although I have a more nuanced and questioning opinion here in relation to Norani Othman's view, both points she raises need to be taken account of. Both in light of how complex the wearing of the *hijab* is during the period of the resurgence and today. Further, her work is important as supporting evidence over the existence of a feminism that rejects the *hijab* in Malaysia. Further support for this position is through Aihwa Ong, who claims the act of adorning the *hijab* or *purdah* signifies a foreign cultural form for Malays. The representation of the

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[8] (Williams & Vashi, 2007),p.271

hijab on the Malay female body with the invention of terms such as 'subversive bricollage' i.e. a collage of mixed elements of foreign cultures and traditions on the body equates, for Ong, as cultural dislocation (Ong, 1990). This would find proximity to Said's position on the complexity with respect to the appropriation of culture for political aims. Both writers (Othman and Ong) express a resistance towards the behavior of veiling. This research wished to expand on the more complicated possibilities for analyzing this form of adornment that does not result in a simple resistance or full embrace according to one disciplinary agenda. It is more interested in how histories of everyday Malay women's experience express another record to official histories. This may result in affirming analysis around masculine oppression, inventions of tradition for different political (pro-Islamic or Eurocentric) positions, emancipation of women in terms of access to different forms of knowing and education etc.

Hijab and Fashion: a post Islamic Resurgence Issue

Fashion is another important variable for this research that would bring into the analysis of the *hijab* in relation to aesthetics. As it is known the development of the *hijab* in relation to Muslim women does not stop during the period around the Islamic Resurgence. On the contrary, it continues to increase into contemporary day into multiple facets of women's lives. However, it has a complex developmental relation to the acceleration of western forms of life that permeate Malaysian society today.

Today, the *hijab* or Islam code of dress undergoes new developmental stages through construction and deconstruction in relation to the influence of the fashion system. In terms of construction, the *hijab* has been outlined as coming back into wearing practice through what this research perceives as an Islamic Resurgence. Is it a question (such as posed with respect to the site of the University) that Malay (Islamic) women in general are more visible in public spheres of society? If so, is the adorning construct in and through the Islamic Resurgent stage a means for woman's self-actualisation? If so, this research asks the question as to what is the relation to self-actualisation in relation in to the 'original' religious purpose of a submission to God, by protecting oneself from the public gaze. Paradoxically an increase in the public spheres could equate with both emancipation and opacity in public. This brings together the two legacies mentioned earlier in relation to Foucault's critiques of Modernity and Ghazalli analysis of Islamic culture with too much transparency that needs to be resisted through opacity.

When the fashion system takes hold the *hijab*, the terminology of this word begins to go through a process of change from an element that evokes philosophies (faith and gender) of space to a term corresponding to an ensemble material. Margaret Maynard, on her book *Dress and Globalisation* has given a variety of examples of dress in terms of how they influence other dress in terms of forms of fashionable exchange (Maynard, 2004). During the Islamic Resurgence the Islamic dress is revived or reconstructed back to its traditional norm within modesty guidelines. With the existence of fashion this reconstruction of Islamic dress comes across a process that conforms to ideals of fashion's (global) trends.

Thus, my research takes account of fashion as that system that 'contaminates' and 'dilutes' the meanings affiliated with traditional Islamic codes of modesty and gender codes of behaviour espoused within these lines of tradition. One has to realize that the *hijab* in today's context (and in the Resurgence period) had shifted from other earlier times, and in this sense, we can see that there is only processes of contamination with respect to dress codes. There is no "pure" meaning of this *hijab* dress rather only contestations of meaning. Aligning a notion of intrusion with 'invention of tradition' is quite key here as it proposes that another 'western' fashion gaze permeates cultural difference under the ruse of Western modes of emancipation. This research will develop a section on 'dress and commodity' around such inventions of freedom in relation to fashion. It is a complex topic in relation to what I have described above in terms of feminisms and Islam women's newly acquired 'voice'. Fashion here viewed as an intrusion to the *hijab* or veiling system is claimed by some (Eicher et al.:2008; Roach-Higgins, Eicher, & Jonhson: 1995; Rubinstein: 2001; Simmel: 1904), that fashion would normally transform the appearance of social

forms, apparel, aesthetic judgment and the whole style of human expression. One can argue that the *hijab* as that clothing that symbolizes Islamic practices is without commodification. But this would be a naïve suggestion as it is very hard to declare something is outside of a certain system of cultural exchange. In terms of the *hijab* as a form of dress pertaining to Islamic custom, it is more than just a practical use-value item. Further, it signifies an exchange value in its relation to Islam. It is a symbolic form beyond its practical dress sense and in this way it is amongst the system of exchange. However, when it enters into the fashion system it becomes symbolic of a different kind of exchange in terms of capitalist commodity culture that produces different effects (and affects) on the wearer. The research will enquire as to how the *hijab* as a commodity in fashion works for and resists theological (symbolic) perspectives of the *hijab*. Ultimately, (in this fashion context) the research asks the questions around whether a contemporary reconstruction of the *hijab* or veiling through the fashion system could support the traditional Islamic meaning of the *hijab* or not?

As the brief conclusion to this literature review proposal, the literature references that I would like to implement would comes under keywords of postcolonial-islamic resurgence intersections; *hijab* as the means of privacy and also gendered space; *hijab* is by means an instrument of for feminism and religious identity, *hijab* as the subjugated voice to be heard; *hijab* and fashion. My Methodological frameworks include an Autoethnography, Oral Histories and a phenomenological-hermeneutics with respect to an analysis of both and in relation to practices of interpretation espoused in understanding the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith texts. The research focuses on the context of an Islamic Resurgent period (1970s-1980s in Malaysia) analysed through theories of postcolonialism for which some feminisms are situated. The next section will describe the design of the study in terms of methodology.

Research Methodology

My research precedes from an autoethnolographical methodology that position my being in the centre as a Malay woman who has experience the transition from pre to post colonial time, including the Islamic Resurgence. Autoethnography is a method of enquiry that differs from more traditional anthropological ethnographic approaches in so far as it takes the self as the subject in difference to a qualitative research method that researches participants through observation and interviews. As the subject, I take into consideration my own subjective experience rather than the beliefs and practices of others. Bochner and Ellis, (2006) in their text *Communication as Autoethnography* suggests it is a process of self discovery for people who are perhaps in the middle of transformation (with respect to struggles).[9] As a woman who has gone through significant cultural change through processes of historic change in relation to my country, this research in part, opens up questions for me as to the more complex accounting for my identity as an Islamic Malay woman, who happens also to be studying a PhD in New Zealand. The three terms Islam, Malay, Woman each in their own way hold complex ideas around my subjective experiences.

Another approach to the research methodology is that of Oral Histories which accounts for the everyday experiences of a sample of Malay women. In the section on literature reviewed, I showed a group of women photographed from the Muslim background (p. 6) and my intention is that these women would become one group of subjects for the oral histories. The characteristics of my respondents, aside from being Muslim and woman include their ages be between 20 – 40 years old during the period from the 1970s to 1980s with the lived proximity to the time event of the Islamic resurgence. Other potential characteristics of the respondents for my research are women who had been engaged in the space of the university and have had an experience of *hijab* adornment. Although this characteristic is not compulsory to all respondents I would like to

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[9] The method of autoethnography according to Bochner and Ellis shows "…people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles" (2007: 111).

have a few with this experience because one of my hermeneutic variables occurs in the space of the university as mentioned earlier.

I am concerned with these characteristics of respondents in order to fulfill the concerns of my interviewing environments. In qualitative methodology the researcher looks at settings and people holistically; people, setting, or groups in the context of their pasts and at the location where they acknowledge things about themselves (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). These phenomenological perspectives view human behavior, what people say and do, as a product of how people define their world. In order to support the above respondents with phenomenal background of an event, Herbert Blumer (1969) suggests that qualitative researchers must attempt to suspend, or set aside their own perspectives towards it. The Muslim women, whom I might be interviewing, should have their own frames of self-experience reference over the phenomenological event of the resurgence. While I will take my own self to be a subject in this research, I must attempt to suspend any pre-given or tightly-framed self opinions with respect to these other responding womens' experience. In constructing the interview questions my aim is to have these as open as possible so that my own experience does not divert (or overly mediate) the encounters given by these women.

Two significant characteristics of an Oral History methodology that I find suitable for this research is, that in the first instance, its sense of narrative-centred approach to learning stories from real-life experience personalities. Secondly, it serves as an inductive research input (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) which would feed historical information rather than having it structured and controlled like a common interview technique. It is after all a major narrative approach and my further process of data collection is to find keywords from my respondents through their stories.

How would I implement oral histories in relation to an analysis of the postcolonial thematic as mentioned earlier? I have a framework of historical methodological process as suggested earlier by invoking Foucault's notion of counter-memory and Said's notion of 'invention of tradition'. Oral histories need input from the recognised phenomenon or case to proceed with, which in my case is an Islamic resurgence postcolonial event. Oral histories are important to hermeneutic research because they provide information about particular issues or phenomena based on real life experiences. It is from this position of real life (phenomenological) experiences that we can build an understanding as to the cultural constructs we are embedded in:

> Phenomenology assumes that we all have a pre-scientific, natural attitude toward the world around us, to the events we experience, and to the culture we have inherited, as these things appear to our consciousness; this natural attitude gives us a framework for interpreting our experience (Kirby, 2008).

It is clear to understand how phenomenological approaches correspond to my auto-ethnographic approach. In designing these two process of analysis one gives a better understanding to the other. Auto-ethnographic experience is enabled through a better understanding of methods of phenomenological interpretations. Implicit in my own subjective everyday experience I have been immersed in a form of phenomenological hermeneutics through my acculturated subjective positioning as Islamic. Here Oral Histories, Autoethnography and phenomenological hermeneutics find correspondence: Why would hermeneutic methodological processes be relevant to oral histories research? The derivation of Qur'an and Hadith is done under hermeneutic elements which would discuss the real life experience of a person. In conjunction with the hermeneutical approach, the oral histories could come to help in finding narratives about the respondent's life, which is often left unspoken or unwritten in the historical research. Another point of view towards oral history method is that, history does not exist outside human consciousness (Yow, 2005). A hermeneutic approach enriches the research work as to give direction and meaning to the gathered data from the oral history that have been previously documented. Oral histories foster appreciation for the personal experience and the untold stories that vanish without careful consideration. It helps recover and preserve human experience that otherwise goes undocumented. Malay women's experience is not a history that has been

'told' and it is important due to this large omission that oral histories become an integral part of explaining their experience.

Aside from that, since my issue is with regards to the Islamic dress and women matters, I have to abide with a starting point of connected to language and (dress) terms that explain an etymological method. I have attempted to show this in the writing up of this D9 as I have named keyterms along the way that each find variable points of entry to this research project. Etymology or terms derived from Islamic practice will form a basis in the hermeneutic approach due to key languages difference amongst Arabic, Malay and English. Not only that it is my responsibility to do research parallel to the Islamic method of hermeneutic basis, I have come to realise that the process of the compilation for the Hadith, which is the Prophet Muhammad SAW statements, preaches and observational behaviours is formulated through oral histories. The Hadith is the oral history that has been systematically supported by layers of cautionary treatment through well-known and reliable scholars[10], so as to allow it to stay truthful in its adaptation to a contemporary world. The hermeneutical fundamentals would help give input to my direction of interviewing questionnaires. Thus, the overall summary of my method is best explained here as a combination of Oral Histories, Autoethnography with a phenomenological-hermeneutic bases.

In support with the Gadamer's approach, phenomenological hermeneutic research would need several characteristics in order to implement my data collection (Blumer, 1969; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). First, it should be concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives. In this case of research, the person as my subjects of investigation has Islamic fundamental background and would have gone through the experience of the Islamic resurgence occasion. Second, it should have the essence of inductive analysis or input. My instrument of data gathering is based upon series of the interviews as means for fulfilling the oral history method. My respondents would be the primary subjects, resources and references because her position is as the narrator of my analysis

The importance of analysing this phenomenal event with regards to Islamic sacred texts of Qur'an and Hadith as the starting point of my method is through hermeneutic approach as perceived by Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, 2004). As discussed, prior to fundamental Qur'an and Hadith hermeneutics that takes into consideration the importance of an etymological understanding of language with respect to laws, behaviour and functions of society. Gadamer perceives hermeneutics as an approach rather than method with the intention of revealing conditions that facilitate understanding over an event. The approach of Gadamer's hermeneutics is where literature sources and the process of acquiring data should goes back and forth from one another ("Ways In and Out of the Hermeneutic Circle,"). So the task of my data analysis is going to be a continuous movement that shuttles to and fro from my hermeneutics in relation to oral histories and my own subjective background history and those official histories that have claimed more orthodox understandings of Malaysian identity. What I have realise is the pattern of my methodology might be changing at later period in which my respondents could become the primary sources and their words would become my citations at the end of the thesis for this hermeneutic-phenomenal research method.

Understanding is achieved by our interpreting within the circular process, in which we move from a whole to the individual parts and from the individual parts to whole within the hermeneutic circle (Debesay, Naden, & Slettebo, 2008; Gadamer, 2004). Further, this kind of

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[10] Notable scholars are identified by consistency of words and behaviours. Books compiled by them had been the reference to the present scholars. Words from the prophet had been passed on from notable scholars such as his friends (which were the four caliphs Abu Bakar, Ummar Khattab, Uthman Affan and Ali bin Abi Talib), wives (Aisyah and Ummu Salamah), daughters (Fatimah and Ruqayah) and his descendents (Hussin, Mahdi etc.). Other notable scholars intertwining amongst and after these above people were from school of thoughts Shafie, Maliki, Hanafi, Ghazalli and Hanbali. The compilation was done with four collections of books which are from the Bukhari, Abu Muslim, Abu Dawud and Abu Hurairah. There are many other notable scholars that identified consistent with the above scholars.

Hermeneutics which spans from the first and most significant Oral History of the Qur'an (as the interpretation of God's speeches) combined with the Hadith, provides me with strict ethical frameworks for proceeding.

The ethical framework that I could follow is,
- the Qur'an and Hadith text should not be changed and interpreted by myself. Interpretation of the Qur'an translation would be supported by the reliable well-known organisation or personality such as the Malaysia Islamic Department.
- Every issues and opinions made for the Islamic matters should first be referred to the Al-Qur'an and Hadith.
- Any discussions or formulations of ideas and reasoning should also use the Qur'an and hadith as primary sources.
- The used of Hadith text and compilation should come from the noted scholars such as Abu Muslim, Hurairah, Bukhari and Abu Dawood.
- My arguments should be pro-Islamic principle and at avoidance of bringing any negativity towards Islam.

An Islamic Hermeneutic research with respect to the Qur'an and Hadith[11] is my primary basis for analysis with respect to practices and programmes of behaviour in relation to Islamic women's dress code. Hermeneutic in Islam is known as the *Takwil*, which means the behaviour of researching process, referencing back and forth from the Qur'an and Hadith to the real life issue or case study. A further process and discussion is based on both Islamic scholars and Western to help explain the issue or case study. From the Journal of Scriptural Reasoning, Yamina Mermer has stressed that the Qur'an is usable for understanding the past, present and the future. It is some sort of alive mechanism that speaks human matters and situation in this world (Mermer, 2005). Mermer describes the Qur'an as that reference full of hidden clues with respect to the idea (future) of what happens to the world.

> Throughout Muslim civilization, all typically Islamic institutions of learning have always given much attention to Islamic thought and its history, mainly though the study of relevant Arabic texts….but it also includes philosophical and scientific thought within the framework of Islamic civilization…. (Waardenburg, 1998)

The above citation indicates the importance for a Muslim researcher like myself to embark on Islamic culture with an approach toward honouring the essence of the Qur'an and Hadith texts whenever any point of view or stand is made. Al Faruqi has elaborately pointed out the centrality of the Muslim belief as that which stems from the God as main reasons to live. He discussed that the essence of religious experience in Islam is the God as final end to the Muslim world, thus any Muslim would not have a divided life from God, either in thoughts or behaviours (I. R. Al-Faruqi, 1973). That is the reason why in every aspect of researching the life experience of the Muslim or Muslim community, one needs to begin with the primary source of references from the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an not only explains the past/history of other prophets it also explains Islamic laws, functions and conducts of Muslims. Part of the Qur'an's content explains the time and situation of the Prophet and his surroundings. The revelation of the Qur'an was an on-going process throughout the Prophet Muhammad's time.(Sachedina, 2005)[12]

Critical theories as briefly mentioned above, "…*informs practical action or suggests what to do, but theory is also modified on the basis of its use* (Neuman, 1997)" In my case this would be the intersection of a

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[11] Prophet Muhammad SAW, compilation of statements, and preaches, as well as the behavior observations of his and the period during his time.

[12] Historical Method in Scriptural Reasoning (The Nature of Scriptural Reasoning in Islam) "There was an implicit recognition of the actuality that understanding the Qur'an required understanding of the history in which Muhammad emerged as the Prophet of God and launched his mission to establish the ideal public order"(Sachedina, 2005)

point of view between Western and Islamic scholars. "…..*A critical theory grows and interacts with the world it seeks to explain.*" This hermeneutic approach could be considered phenomenological in the sense of giving account of experience for Malay women during the Post-colonial and Islamic Resurgence events. In this case, the Post-Colonial event of the Islamic Resurgence that arises through enquiries about development process of experiencing Islamic dress – the Hijab or the veiling behaviour amongst the Malay Muslim women in Malaysia. Terms such as "Hijab", "veil", "space", "gaze", "faith/*tawhid*", "privacy", "intrusion and contamination" and "gender" "feminism" circulate around this discussion. That is the reason why a hermeneutic approach is required, as a means to create research questions towards such post-colonial issues.

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