

## Islamizing the “Feminine, Feminist and Female” Voices in three Malaysian Short Stories by Anglophone Women Writers

Nor Faridah Abd. Manaf\*

**Abstract:** *There has been a great concern among Muslim teachers of English on the need to study English literary texts from the Islamic perspectives. But how does one Islamize literary texts written in English by non-Muslims? Will this not be another hegemony of one ideology over the other? There also are concerns among Muslim scholars about the position of Western literary criticisms among which is feminism, which is seen as a Western import, out to corrupt the Muslim world. What is clear here is the existence of distrust of one cultural force against the other. This paper aims to explore the impact of creative encounters between Islamic criticism and feminism. The Islamic reading of English literary texts (Malaysian Anglophone women’s writing) serves as a model to deconstruct meanings in the texts to suit local sensibility and sensitivity. It is also to dispel the popular belief that Islam will clash with any ideology, and civilisation. This paper illustrates how meeting of Islam and Western feminism brings a deeper understanding of human experiences and the nature of being of mankind.*

Feminism and literary writings in English are often seen as Western imports and hence viewed as having nothing in common with ideals and principles of Islam. Western feminism and English Literature are often seen as separate studies which have no bearings in promoting the good values of Islam. The aim of this paper is to illustrate that Islam is a compatible and adaptable religion which fits in any ideology and

---

\*Dr. Nor Faridah Abd Manaf is Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Malaysia, e-mail <fabma@pc.jaring.my.> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the IIUM’s International Conference on *English and Islam*, December 20-22, 1996.

cultural world view. This paper seeks to understand the impact of creative encounters between Islamic criticism and English writings taking as illustrations English literary texts by three Malaysian women writers.

The core objective of this paper is to provide a culture-specific interpretation in an attempt to decolonise as well as to Islamize literary criticism especially that of Western feminist theoretical framework. This is important because Islamic interpretations and readings of English texts and literary theories have long been ignored. A distinguished Muslim scholar and poet Syed Ali Ashraf's article on "Islamic Principles and Methods in the Teaching of Literature" is a good example of how articles by Muslim scholars on the need for Islamic interpretations and readings of English texts remain isolated even in Muslim countries.<sup>1</sup>

It is hoped that this paper would signify a positive beginning for "the subaltern" Muslim voice to be heard and read. This exposition is needed as one of the key problems in the so-called First World academy is the tendency to exclude most Asian and Black theory, criticism and creative writing. As Maggie Humm points out, the three major issues focused on by Third World feminist criticism are really the politics of universalism; cultural controls and misrepresentations; and the homogeneity of the canon.<sup>2</sup> These issues are also the concerns of this paper in asserting its Islamic literary voice as well as Islamic literary critique.

It is hoped that the positive encounters of Western feminist and Islamic readings of English texts done in this paper, will help enrich our multicultural understanding of one another. The Qur'an says in chapter 49, verse 13:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other); verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

Before we could move on to the texts, I must explain the "borrowed and accepted" Western framework offered by Elaine Showalter which is used as a source of comparison in this paper. Showalter's argument on women's writing is that, women go through a historical evolution of a tradition of women writing which enable

them to have a literature of their own.<sup>3</sup> The paper selects Elaine Showalter's criticism as one possible representative of Western feminist criticisms to illustrate the fact that there are meeting points between Islamic reading and Western feminist reading.

The three concepts of "feminine," "feminist," and "female" are coined by Showalter. She believes that women writers, chronologically, go through these three phases of "evolution" before they discover themselves or find their centre. The first phase is a phase of imitation of a dominant tradition (often male) which Showalter calls "the feminine." The second phase or level of maturity is when writers move to protest and advocate minority rights and values which Showalter calls "the feminist." The final phase is when writers move on to self-discovery which Showalter describes as discovering "the female". Showalter's three phases of writing tradition and womanhood are congruent with the Islamic principles of womanhood and their freedom to live according to their *fiṭrah*. *Fiṭrah* is the God-given natural self. In Islam, there is no spiritual gender differentiation between a man and a woman where *fiṭrah* is concerned. Islam sees *fiṭrah* as the need to find happiness and tranquility and it provides guidelines on how this can be attained. Syed Naquib al-Attas' books *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul* and *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam* elaborate lucidly on the Islamic perspective of happiness and *fiṭrah*. According to al-Attas, *sa'ādah* (happiness in Islam) relates to two dimensions of existence: *ukhrawiyyah* (hereafter) and *dunyawiyyah* (the present world). He points out that happiness of the hereafter is closely connected with the present world especially in three things: the self (*nafsiyyah*), the body (*badaniyyah*) and things external to the self and the body (*kharijiyyah*) that promote the well being of the self, the body and the external things and circumstances in relation to them.<sup>4</sup>

The following discussion will examine various ways women protagonists in Anglophone texts seek their *fiṭrah*/happiness and how they stumble along the way and cope with their adverse female experiences. In "Mariah," issues on polygamy are raised (the protagonists are Malay women); in "The Viewing Party," issues on the rights of a woman in choosing her own husband are dealt with, and finally, in "Victim," issues relating to the female body are brought to light. Polygamy, marriage rights and the female body are not considered problematic issues at all in Islam for guides and regulations

are clearly explained in the holy Qurʾān and in various teachings and practice of the Prophet Muhammad (SAS). Unfortunately, these matters become big issues not only in the West but also in many Islamic states around the world. Widespread distortions and misinterpretations take place. Camillia Fawzi El-Solh and Judy Mabro wrote that it was common to confuse the prescribed teachings of Islam and the distorted culture-related practices of it.<sup>5</sup> The model used in this paper is based on the “prescribed” Islam—using Qurʾān and the tradition of the Prophet as its quintessential source.

This paper will synthesize Islamic ideas regarding the three thematic concerns listed above with those provided by Western feminisms (at least by one school of thought of Western feminisms championed by Showalter). It is believed that a true reconciliation of the West meeting the East will take place—nations and tribes knowing one another and finding that we are all equal and humbled before our Creator.

### **Women’s Writing in English in Malaysia**

The earliest testimony of women’s writing in English in Malaysia by a Malaysian is a poem by Johor Bahru-born, Hedwig-Aroozoo Anuar (now a Singapore citizen) in 1946. However, it should be noted that the present article is only concerned with literary writings in English by more recent Malaysian women writers. It gives a special focus on three female writers who have published in the early 1980s and 1990s. They are Lin (who wrote “Victim”), Celine Pereira (who penned “The Viewing Party”) and Che Husna Azhari who told the tale of “Mariah.” Lin and Pereira were published in the *Her World* anthology of short stories in 1982. Their stories were two of fourteen prize-winning entries in the *Her World* short story competitions held over a number of years in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Che Husna Azhari is a self-published writer and “Mariah” was published in Che Husna’s third book called *Melor In Perspective* (1993). Che Husna is a Malay Muslim while Lin and Pereira are both non-Malays and non-Muslims. Their “assumed” cultural differences will be explored and examined through the Islamic literary approach used in this paper and one will see if there are indeed differences which cannot be reconciled and meeting points truly are impossible.

### **“The Viewing Party”**

Pereira in “The Viewing Party” is concerned with questions of choice and rights in choosing one’s husband within an Indian tradition. Vasanthi is caught by surprise by a “viewing party” who wants to know if she is well-suited as a wife for a young lawyer who is not named in the story. He is merely described as “the young man.” Some common traits in an Indian arranged marriage involve a “viewing party” from the male side who would view any potential candidate to see if she is well-suited. If she is, both families will get together and decide on a dowry which does not necessarily mean money. Some grooms (or groom’s parents) would demand other things like cars, apartments, land, etc. Once dowry is agreed upon, marriage will take place. In the past, an Indian bride had little say in her choice of a husband. It was often decided by her parents or elders in the family. Earlier works in the 1960s reflected this situation. “A Question of Dowry” and “Everything’s Arranged” are two fine examples which spoke of the pain faced by Indian women with little choice. In Pereira’s story, the old tradition is broken by the young and the educated (sadly, the figure is still represented by a male) the lawyer groom-to-be.

The young man requests that he should at least know who he is marrying. He asks if he could take Vasanthi out to get to know her. This is accepted on the condition that they are chaperoned by Vasanthi’s little brother, Ravi. The couple seems to get on well until the young man is left alone with Ravi. “Let’s be friends, Ravi,” says the hopeful lawyer. He reaches out and takes Ravi’s hand. Ravi bites hard in return. The hopeful lawyer yelps and hits Ravi on the side of his head. This is how Pereira ends the story:

The families of the two young people were left wondering why two people so obviously suited to each other ended up with each marrying someone else.<sup>6</sup>

Pereira has hinted at the possibility of male violence in the young lawyer and her ending shows how she protests against such a choice of a husband. Tamil wives are vulnerable to domestic violence if their dowry settlements are not met. The humanist voice in Pereira when she challenges the question of a woman’s rights in determining a good and responsible husband is also a voice supported by Islam which makes it compulsory to seek a woman’s approval before she is betrothed or married to a man. Professor Hammudah Abdalati outlines

some points on the position of woman in Islam where marriage is concerned:

The two parties should acquire a fair knowledge of each other in a way that does not involve any immoral or deceptive and exploitative behaviour. A woman is given the right to make sure that the proposing man is a suitable match. A woman has a right to demand a dowry from her suitor according to her standards and also according to his means. If she wishes to disregard this right and accept him with a little or no dowry, she may do so.

Complete maintenance of the wife is the husband's duty. She is entitled to that by virtue of marriage. If she happens to have any property or possessions, that will be hers before and after marriage.<sup>7</sup>

A good husband in Islam is one who provides for his wife's material, sexual and spiritual needs. The few scenes portrayed by Pereira which show the young man's dark side are signs that promote the struggle for justice for women in having full control of their destiny in marriage. Reading the story with an Islamic understanding would make one empathise further with the notion of the subaltern first raised by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak when she asks, "Can the subaltern speak?" According to Spivak, "The subaltern is the name of the place which is so displaced...that to have it speak is like Godot arriving on a bus."<sup>8</sup> What is implied here is the constant struggle and difficulty of being the "speaking subject." The subaltern remains an oppressed figure until she speaks.

The silenced and subaltern voice of Pereira's women is hinted at in the story. When Pereira writes on a woman's rights to choose her own husband, she becomes a speaking subject in what Showalter has termed "the feminist" phase whereby women writers move to protest and advocate minority rights and values. It is also the Islamic voice which would struggle for the well-being of a woman towards building a happy *ummah* or the imagined community. The well-being of a woman, especially a wife, is well defined in the teaching of Islam (though not necessarily practised in today's divided Islamic world). Two examples would suffice to show how refined the position of women in Islam is. One is on how God makes the husband answerable in the hereafter for his wife's well being. This includes minor incidents such as her proper dressing: if the tie of his wife's pants snaps into two, he is to provide a spare tie on the spot or else, he is made responsible for any possible embarrassment faced by the wife. The second example is, a husband is also made responsible to ensure his

wife's safety that he is to shield her from the front if a threat comes from the front and shields her at the back if the threat comes from behind.<sup>9</sup> A woman is allowed to earn her own income even when she is married but as stipulated earlier by Abdalati, her money is her money and her husband has no legal claim to her earnings. On the other hand, a wife has legal rights to the income of her husband. A husband has to provide his wife with a monthly allowance—even if she is earning more than him. Islam acknowledges a wife's/mother's contributions to the household that in times of divorce, a non-working wife/mother (as in getting paid salary) gets her financial dues from her marriage.

It is important that a woman is aware of her legal rights in Islam. The "feminist" framework offered by Showalter helps reassert the need of knowing and fighting for those rights which are already there for women in Islam.

#### **"Victim"**

"Victim" is a story of Siew Moy, a 16-year old rubber tapper girl, who has been raped while out tapping in the early hours of the day. Lin highlights how rape victims are in return punished by the society which should be supporting them. Siew Moy first has to face her family. Except for her practical-minded father who wants to report to the police straightaway, the family feels shamed that she is raped. Later, the police's interrogations of the whole affair make Siew Moy feel as though she is to be blamed for being raped. "Do they doubt me? Are they blaming me, instead of those creatures?" she asks.

The biggest blow of humiliation is when Siew Moy is examined by a male doctor at the hospital where she has to undergo a medical examination to confirm her report. Lin is hinting at some insensitivity shown by certain institution/authorities in Malaysia when handling rape victims. There seems to be very little respect and empathy for the victim. A raped body seems to be a dirty body. And this is how Siew Moy is treated by her mother after the rape—like dirt. Siew Moy has to go through some old Chinese ritual bath to make her pure again so that she would be "marketable" again for marriage. On another occasion, Siew Moy is berated by her mother for trying to live normally again—going out in her village, dressing up as she pleases:

When Siew Moy returned from her visit, her mother was waiting for her. "You stupid girl! Where have you been? Haven't you learnt your

lesson? Do you want it to happen again? Aren't you ashamed to show your face in the village? You are a ruined girl, can't you get that into your thick skull?"

Siew Moy did not answer; she tried to control herself as she started to walk to her room. Before she could do so, her mother began again: "And look at that tight T-shirt! Take it off! Do you want to tempt them again? Take it off, I tell you! You shameless girl, flaunting your body to the men!"

Before she could enter her room, her mother stopped her again. "Your hair must be cut! It makes you look too sexy! No wonder you were molested! Come here! I'll cut it for you now."

"No! No, Mama! Don't cut my hair!" Siew Moy protested. Her waist-length hair was the pride of her teenage life. "No, Mama! No!" she pleaded.<sup>10</sup>

Lin raises the issue of a woman's right to be protected and of the female body to be respected and loved. She challenges the common belief that the woman is to be blamed if she gets raped—she asks for it. She satirises the common belief that a woman's physical attributes must be covered in order not to tempt men or invite rape in return. Like Pereira, Lin adopts that "feminist" voice and falls into Showalter's second phase of women's writing tradition—protesting and advocating minority rights and values.

Contrary to many writings regarding the female body in Islam, Muslim women enjoy a considerable amount of freedom where dress code is concerned. Islam has a dress code for both men and women. It is just unfortunate that women's dress code in Islam is blown out of proportion not only by the West but also some men in the Muslim world. Now, this is a separate issue for Muslim feminists—who should set an agenda to fight this imbalance of focus upon dress codes in Islam.

I would like to quote Hammudah Abdalati again with regard to the female body issue as raised by Lin in her story. Abdalati points out that in any woman's or man's clothing and adornment, Islam takes into serious consideration the principles of decency, modesty and *fiṭrah* (nature) of the person as a man or a woman. Thus in dealing with the female body, we have to deal with the male body as well for in Islam, there is no spiritual dichotomy between the two. God addresses both men and women alike regarding this matter. Abdalati sums up the etiquettes in Islam well in the following extract:



The clothing material and the dressing manners which may stimulate arrogance or false pride and vanity are strictly prohibited. So are the adornments which may weaken the morality of man or undermine his manliness. Man should remain loyal to his manly nature, which God has chosen for him, and keep away from all the things that are likely to weaken or endanger his character. This is the reason why Islam warns man not to use certain clothing materials e.g. pure silk, and certain precious materials e.g. gold, for the purpose of adornment. These are things which suit the feminine nature alone. The handsomeness of man is not in wearing precious stones or flaunting in pure and natural silken clothes but in high morality, sweet nature and sound conduct.

When Islam allows woman to use the things which are forbidden for man and which are suitable for the feminine nature alone, Islam does not let woman go loose or wander unrestricted. It allows her the things which suit her nature and, at the same time, cautions her against anything that might abuse or upset that nature. The manner in which women should dress up, beautify, walk and even look is a very delicate question, and Islam pays attention to the matter. The vision of Islam in this respect is focused on the general welfare of women. Islam has served advice to both man and woman to help women in particular to retain and develop their dignity and chastity, safe from being the subject of idle gossip or vicious rumours and suspicious thought. The advice is imparted in these Qur'anic verses:

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them. And God is well-acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except before their husbands, their fathers...(and certain other members of the household); and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments (24:30-31).<sup>11</sup>

How does all this information fit in Lin's story? One, it speaks for Lin's struggle for the protection and respect of the female body. The responsibility to ward off exploitation of the body (in this case, rape) is not only a woman's responsibility but also a man's ("lower thy gaze" says God in the Qur'an).

Rape victims in Islam are to be treated kindly. They can marry like any other women without any imposed conditions. The pain and suffering in Siew Moy at the end of the story (when she has no other

alternatives but to go mad) shows that the well-being of the female body (as well as the male body) is important in sustaining mental health and the soul as a whole in order to attain the *fiṭrah* of the self i.e., happiness. That is why dress code and proper manners in Islam are placed as important in a Muslim's life—regardless of gender—as one of the many ways to care for the body against abuse of all sorts. This is not to imply that all rape cases are motivated by sexual desire, for certain feminist analysis explains rape in terms of male aggression and dominance and the desire to humiliate a woman. Vicky Randall points out the views of many radical feminists on the role of physical violence in women's oppression.<sup>12</sup> She quotes Susan Brownmiller's book on rape, *Against Our Will*, as an example. Brownmiller argues that rape—the threat and the ideology of it—have been “nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.” Whichever interpretation you choose to explain “rape”, whether it is sexual desire or pure show of male aggression/dominance that causes it, the bottomline would be, rape is an attempt to do *zulm* to the body. *Zulm* is a term to denote the misappropriation of the body.

### “Mariah”

“Mariah” is a story about a physically attractive Malay divorcee of that name, who is in her forties but looks twentyish. This is a typical portrayal of an East Coast Malay woman who seems not to age. Mariah earns a living by selling a variety of rice. The East Coast is known as a place for exotic foods. A plate of rice can mean five or more types of rice: *nasi lemak*, *nasi kerabu*, *nasi belauk*, *nasi dagang*, *nasi minyak*, etc. Men rush out to eat *nasi belauk* for breakfast at Mariah's stall but according to the narrator, “the *nasi* was not much to crow about, but it was a combination of Mariah's swaying as well as her easy smile that made all the men flock to the village square. Many a *nasi belauk* breakfast remained cold and uneaten in the houses as men ignored their wife's cooking and paid tribute to Mariah's instead.”<sup>13</sup>

The conflict in the story begins when a saintly man—a religious leader of the community—falls in love with Mariah (for she reminds him of his lost love when he was young) and wants to take her as a second wife. There is a moral connotation when the *imam* (like Pereira, Che Husna does not name the man but his being is defined by what he does—as an *imam* or religious leader of the village mosque)

loses out to his lust when he marries Mariah not to protect her as a widow as the Prophet had done when he married *old* widows. The Imam married Mariah to fulfill his sexual fantasies. His first wife, Cik Yam, is portrayed as a typically good and obeying Muslim woman—who dresses moderately, does not gossip or displease her husband, etc. However, Cik Yam is childless and that is a reason good enough to take a second wife for some men in Malaysia who would use or misuse the rights to polygamy to validate their selfish sexual indulgence. However, this is not what happens between the Imam and Cik Yam. When he seeks her approval to take a second wife, he tells her the truth and tells her kindly:

The Imam chose the occasion well. It had to be on a Thursday night, the eve of Friday. After prayers and long supplication, the Imam went to his bedroom. Cik Yam was sitting on the bed waiting for him to finish. He knelt by the bed and kissed Cik Yam's hands. Cik Yam was surprised by this reverent show of affection but did not say anything. Cik Yam waited. The Imam kissed Cik Yam's knees and then placed his head on Cik Yam's lap. Cik Yam stroked his head lovingly. Immediately as if released by a valve the Imam's hot tears fell on Cik Yam's skin as it seeped through the *sarong*. Cik Yam lifted the Imam's head and looked at him questioningly. Fifteen years of marital bliss had left its mark. Love and understanding shone through Cik Yam's also tear-filled eyes.

"Tell me what grieves you, my husband, and I will make it better for you," Cik Yam whispered to the Imam. At these words the Imam felt himself choke, but he steeled himself. He told Cik Yam of his unrequited love for the Sheikh's daughter. He told Cik Yam of his pain and longing. He then told Cik Yam of Mariah, how he fought his emotions and how he had lost. He begged Cik Yam's forgiveness, kissed the hem of Cik Yam's *sarong* and asked for her permission to take Mariah as his second wife."<sup>14</sup>

The Imam in *Che Husna* is often described as an honest man but a little self-centred. Cik Yam makes a little protest upon receiving the news but in the end, gives her approval on the grounds that the Imam will treat her justly and equally as outlined by the religion. Equality in polygamy means treating all wives equally in terms of material, sexual and spiritual needs. For example, the Imam gives Mariah RM 1000 for her monthly allowance, Cik Yam must get the same. If he spends three nights at Mariah's place, she gets the same and so on and so forth. It is difficult to stay just and perhaps that is why God warns men that if they cannot be fair to their women, then they can only marry

one. Polygamy in Islam is to help and protect women not to use or abuse their well-being. Cik Husna hints on the tendency of abuse in the practice of polygamy in "Mariah." Mariah is not at fault for breaking up Cik Yam's marriage. Despite her appearance, she is not portrayed as the bitch in this story. She is equally a victim—just as Cik Yam is. They both believe in the goodness of the religion. Mariah has refused all other proposals but the Imam's because she has hopes that the religious leader will provide and guide her in spiritual matters. In short, she thinks of her own salvation for the hereafter. She is sincere. Cik Yam, too, is sincere. She approves because she believes that her husband can be fair as expected of any polygamy practitioner in her religion. The women in this story are all presented as saintly, although victims. The satire is of the Imam and men like him. Cik Husna does not criticise polygamy but rather the abuse of it in this story. The women stand out in triumph in the eyes of a Muslim critic because of their strength in their faith—that they are willing to sacrifice their love. (Cik Yam sacrifices her love for her husband—she is willing to share him in the name of her faith. Mariah sacrifices her love for her independence—she has refused many proposals from men with money and position before because she enjoys her freedom earning her own living but decides to marry the Imam because he is a man of religion: someone who could guide her in religious matters. Using a Western feminist framework, the women have discovered Showalter's third phase which is discovering the "female" (the core to their being). Perhaps Cik Yam is more liberated in the sense that she has given up her dependence on her husband or a man for that matter. A woman cannot be truly seen as "emancipated" until she is willing to be independent of anyone especially of man and starts to believe in her own God-given strength and potential. This is parallel to what Showalter defines as making that self-discovery and finding the core of being when she coined the term 'female' to describe the third phase of the writing tradition historical evolution.

### **Conclusion**

This paper attempts to decolonise literary theories and criticisms and provide a model for reading new literature in English. The paper has shown that Islamizing the "feminine," "feminist" and "female" voices in contemporary Malaysian short stories written in English by three women writers is not something experimental or far fetched an idea. If Islamic reading can serve as a model to decolonise the mind, other

culture-specific models can be used as well to deconstruct new literature in English. Such approaches can alleviate the many misunderstandings that take place around our global village. This paper has illustrated how the meeting of the two cultural forces debunks any allegations of a clash of two civilisations (Islam and the West). Such meetings enrich our understanding of human experiences, life situations and the nature of being of mankind, the world, and its Creator.

---

## Notes

1. See M. Badawi "Issues in Contemporary Theory of Literature and Literary Criticism from an Islamic Perspective," In Jalal Uddin Khan & Adrian H. Hare (eds.) *Islam and English: Creative Encounters* (Petaling Jaya: International Islamic University Malaysia 1996), 56-72. Also see related articles in the above volume. Ashraf's article is published in S.H. Nasr (ed.), *Philosophy, Literature and Fine Arts* (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University & London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 22-40.
2. Maggie Humm, *A Reader's Guide To Contemporary Feminist Literary Criticism* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 252-3.
3. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977).
4. Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 1-2.
5. Camillia Fawzi El-Solh & Judy Mabro (eds.) *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 1-27.
6. Celine Pereira, "The Viewing Party" in *Her World Short Stories: How To Hook A Husband and Other Stories* (Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1982), 27.
7. Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1975), 179-80.
8. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "On the Politics of The Subaltern" as quoted by John Beverly, "The Margin at the Centre On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)" in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (eds.) *Decolonising the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 110.
9. Hassan Din, "Pasangan suami isteri bahagia di dalam Islam" (The happy couple in Islam), a talk given at Malacca State Mosque, June, 1996.
10. Lin, "Victim," *Her World Short Stories: How to Hook a Husband and Other Stories* (Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1982), 52.
11. Abdalati, *Islam in Focus*, 111-12.
12. Vicky Randall, *Women and Politics: An International Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 26.

13. Che Husna Azhari, "Mariah" in *Melor In Perspective* (Bangi: Furada Publishing House, 1993), 71.
14. *Ibid*, 80.