

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Stereotype arises when one group of people feel better than the other. The prejudice of negative stereotype emerges due to the differences between certain race, religion, class, color, gender etc. Stereotyping sets up a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'deviant', the 'normal' and the 'pathological', the 'acceptable' and 'the unacceptable', what 'belongs' and what does not or is 'other', between 'insiders' and 'outsider', 'us' and 'them'(Hall 258). Stereotypes place a particular group of people in the situation where they are made to feel like an 'other' and the rest are the more powerful ones who help to construct the stereotype. Several assumptions constructed stereotype to those who marginalized. They tend to put the images of 'other' to those groups of people and are unable to research or obtain the valid information about the group in which they stereotype.

In United States, stereotypes began to emerge in one of the most known tragedy, link to Muslims, the September 11 attacks. This tragedy known as 9/11 tragedy, was when four airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center towers in America which was alleged to be controlled by a militant Muslim group called Al-Qaeda. This tragedy created certain stereotype toward Moslem in America. As Crockatt explained about the stereotype in *After 9/11, cultural dimensions of American global power* that President Bush explained the attacks of September 11

has been a widespread stereotype of Islam, especially in the West, which associate it with terrorism (55). Americans now believe that Islam is a religion that permits terrorism and violence as a way to fight against their enemies. In the case of 9/11 tragedy, the negative stereotype were then attached to every Muslim. This stereotype has created some discrimination toward Muslims in not only America, but in other parts of the world. People have been influenced by this view, and therefore attack Muslims countries although not all Muslim concur terrorism. After the 9/11 attacks, people began to separate themselves from groups of people with substantial Muslim populations, such as women who choose to wear the full-face veil (Crockatt 64). Western opinions towards Muslim have now tended to place any Muslim in lower position.

Muslim then became more interesting to discuss after a certain group of Muslim namely Punk Muslim emerged. Punk Muslim is a phenomenon and community that happened in around the world after a novel entitled *The Taqwacores* by Michael Muhammad Knights was released (Kalareh 20). It is a phenomenon of how punk and Islam could possibly be compatible. Punk itself as Dick Hebdige said is music that has been traditionally associated with 'scruffy', working-class anti-establishment white British Youth (54). In other opinions, punk is musical form and, like any music, can be (and has been) reinscribed with a wildly divergent set of socio-political agendas (Murthy 7). Furthermore, Punk Muslim is a subcultural scene in which young diasporic South Asian Muslim are resisting essentialism trough punk music (Murthy 1). However, punk Muslim then related to the terms of *Taqwacore*. Based on the research of Kalareh, the terms

Taqwacore and Punk Muslim have been initiated by Knights itself and have different meaning (Kalareh 19). According to his research, *Taqwacore* represent the American subgenre of punk music while punk Muslim is an effort of constructing a new punk version of Islam (Kalareh 19-21).

Muslim therefore become interesting due to the construction of how Punk is associated the religion of Islam or Muslims. Stereotype of Muslim started emerge in film, *The Taqwacores* is one of them which depict Muslim. *The Taqwacores* (2010) is a movie that has presented the issue based on stereotype. The film depicted a character named Yusef, a Muslim student in Buffalo, New York who was looking for a boarding house to live. He found a house where a group of Muslim lived. Most are from Middle East. Yusef feels as though he has found a new family when he discovers the house. He did not know that they are both punk and Muslim at the same time. He is a student that originally wanted to find a boarding house with other Muslims. Their physical appearances are mostly Middle Eastern and all share the same religion, Islam, but their life style and fashion style in heavily influenced by punk culture.

Eyad Zahra, a Syrian-American director and producer, directs the film '*The Taqwacores*'. The film was first released in Sundance Film Festivals and also was nominated for the best film. It also got the nomination from London Film Festivals in 2011. Originally, this film was an adaptation from a novel of the same title by a white Muslim, Michael Muhammad Knight. The fiction of the novel becomes fact trough the bands. After years, the novel inspired Eyad Zahra to make the film version. The writer is interested in analyzing the movie because it

brings the issue of stereotype toward Muslim and Punks, and is also set after the 9/11 tragedies. The depiction of the characters who try to challenge the stereotype of terrorism has brought about a curiosity for the writer to learn more about the stereotype found in the movie.

There are some other movies that portray Muslim as terrorist and the cause of any destruction. These films, among others, are *Paradise Now*, *Five Minarets in New York*, *The Terrorist Next Door*, *Shoot on Sight*, *Four Lions* and *Heavy Metal in Baghdad*. These films have brought about the issue that Muslims are terrorist. Those films portray Muslim as terrorist and a threat against other groups of people. *Paradise Now* is a film about the Palestinian Muslim who committed the suicide bombing, in order to attack Israel. This is a depiction of Muslim as the one who threaten other people through fear tactics such as bomb attack. *Five Minarets in New York* gives a clear picture of Hadji Gumub who is a Turkish Immigrant in America that was suspected as a terrorist. The next film is *The Terrorist Next Door*, which tells about the recruitment of Ahmed Ressam who is claimed as “Millenium Bomber”. In this film, Muslim is depicted as terrorist who threat United States by blowing up an International Airport with a bomb. *Shoot on Sight* portrays a young Muslim who was shot dead by English police. He was suspected as terrorist that was bringing bombs although the bomb was never found. *Four Lions* also brings the terrorist associated to Muslim. This is a comedy film from an English Director which tells about a plan of a Suicidal bombing action fronted by four Muslim men. In this film, the four characters often make mistakes in the way of doing the bombing execution. Meanwhile, *Heavy Metal in*

Baghdad is a documentary film set in Baghdad. The all characters in this film are Muslim and the audience is given an idea of how they want to be heard through their Heavy Metal songs and through their shows, which are performed in the middle of bomb attacks.

All those movies bring the same idea which represents Muslim as terrorist and threat, the cause of any destruction. It is linked to Carlisle suggestion about Islam and Muslim in any popular fiction which is 'Demonized' since 9/11 tragedy (153). People will be and are influenced through movies presented above and others on their point of view toward Muslim. Those movies also have the similarity that all of the directors are all Muslim. It is clear that the idea and opinions of director's toward Muslim appear throughout the movies. A different perspective toward Muslim will appears by how they are represented as terrorist from the Muslim directors point of view. The *Heavy Metal in Baghdad* movie has the same idea of *The Taqwacores* which describes the director's opinion about Muslim. Those movies do not briefly represent Muslim as terrorist, but allow music to become a tool towards a certain point of view to Muslim. *Heavy Metal in Baghdad* exposes the heavy metal music set in Baghdad, a city mostly populated by Muslims. In contrast, *The Taqwacores* exposes the Punk music set In America in 2003, two years after 9/11 tragedy.

As a matter of fact, Muslim theme as depicted in these films is not a new subject in academic discussion. There have been many scholarly discussions about the stereotype of Muslim such as *Arab and Muslim Stereotyping in American Popular culture* by Jack G. Shaheen and Kurosh Amoui Kalareh entitled *Arabian*

Knights: Punk Islam and Selected Works of Michael Muhammad Knight. Shaheen portrayed the stereotyping of Arab and Muslim in popular culture that is related to the writer's study about the popular culture in this case is film. Kalareh focuses the study on the relationship between Knights's work and the overlooked Islamic discourses. Even though those films discuss about Muslim, those studies are not the same with this study. This study will focus on the challenging stereotypes of Muslim, like what Shaheen did but in the specific terms of popular culture which is *The Taqwacores* film. Kalareh may share some similarity in the object of the research with this study, but he focuses on the relationship between Knight's work and Islamic discourses while this study focuses on the representation and stereotyping of Muslim in *The Taqwacores* film.

The writer applies Stuart Hall's Theory of Stereotype to focus on the stereotypes of Muslim and how it is challenged. Stuart Hall in his book entitled *Representation: Cultural and Signifying Practices* defines that stereotyping reduces people in a very few, simple, essential characteristics which are represented as a 'Fixity' by nature (257). The writer applies the theory of Representation and Stereotyping because she believes it to be the most suitable theory to reveal the representation and stereotyping of Muslim in the film.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the explanation of the background above, the writer proposes a statement of problem. The following main problem is:

1. How are Muslim represented in *The Taqwacores* film?
2. How does the film challenge the stereotypes of Muslim?

1.3. Objective of the Study

According to the problem statement that has been structured, this proposal has a goal. It is aimed to answer the statement of the problem. Therefore the objective of this study is:

1. To reveal the representation of Muslim through narrative and non-narrative in the film.
2. To reveal how the stereotypes of Muslim are challenged in the film.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the representation of the characters in the film and how they are challenged. The theory that will be taken is the Representation and Stereotype by Stuart Hall.

The writer hopes for the other researchers who are interested the same issue could find a fascinating and intriguing understanding toward the problem. The issue of stereotype will be a good subject to be discussed in the further study. The writer also expects to gain more knowledge about the Stereotype theory and that the outcomes of this study will expand the reader's point of view about stereotype.

1.5. Outline of Thesis

Outline of the thesis structure giving an easier strategies in conducting this research for the writer. Therefore, the writer gives format of thesis to the following organization strategies.

The first is Chapter 1, Introduction. Chapter 1 contains of the introduction of the issues of stereotype in United States and some of those that occur in similar texts or films. In this chapter, after giving explanation about the primary object and the methods used to conduct the research, also explains along with theoretical background that will be the spectacles.

The second is Chapter 2, Literature Review. This chapter contains of reviews of the studies used to help the research. The writer uses Narrative and Non-Narrative analysis for the main film analysis. This chapter also contains of the reviews of previous studies that are related to this research. The previous studies are very helpful for the writer to understand the issues and it also provides advantage to find what the previous researchers have not done.

The third is Chapter 3, Method of the Study. This chapter contains the methods that are used in the research to obtain the results. There are explanations about the data sources, data collecting, and data analysis.

The fourth is Chapter 4, Analysis. This chapter contains of analysis of the object using two approaches, both Narrative and Non-Narrative approaches. The analysis will focuses on several scenes that reveal the stereotypes and also how it is contested.

The fifth is Chapter 5. Conclusion is the chapter which giving the result from the analysis and discussions in chapter 3. Suggestions are also provided for future research about similar topics and/or similar objects.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

- Stereotype: The process of getting hold of the few ‘simple, vivid, memorable, easily, grasped and widely recognized’ characteristics about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them, and *fix* them without change or development to eternity.
- Representation: The using of language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully to other people.
- Muslim: A person whose religion is Islam.
- Punk: A subculture that emerges in England and has a mission to against capitalism and racism.