

**THE REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH PAKISTANI MUSLIM IN THE
CITIZEN KHAN SITCOM SERIES**

A Graduating Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor
Degree in English Literature



By:
Addifa Rosyadani
16150040

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
SUNAN KALIJAGA STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
YOGYAKARTA**

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Addifa Rosyadani

Addifa Rosyadani



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YOGYAKARTA



NOTA DINAS

Hal : Skripsi
a.n. Addifa Rosyadani

Yth.
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Di Yogyakarta

Assalamu'alaikum wr. wb

Setelah memeriksa, meneliti, dan memberikan arahan untuk perbaikan atas skripsi saudara:

Nama : Addifa Rosyadani
NIM : 16150040
Prodi : Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Judul :

**THE REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH PAKISTANI MUSLIM IN
THE *CITIZEN KHAN* SITCOM SERIES (2020)**

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Atas perhatian yang diberikan, saya ucapkan terima kasih.

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STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA
Yogyakarta, 28 November 2020
Pembimbing,

Febriyanti D. Lestari, M.A
NIP. 19810203 200901 2 007



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 513949 Fax. (0274) 552883 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

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Tugas Akhir dengan judul : The Representation of British Pakistani Muslim in Citizen Khan Sitcom Series

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : ADDIFA ROSYADANI
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 16150040
Telah diujikan pada : Senin, 25 Januari 2021
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A-

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR



Ketua Sidang

Febriyanti Dwiratna Lestari, SS., MA
SIGNED

Valid ID: 607e5548b73c



Penguji I

Dr. Witriani, S.S. M.Hum.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 6012d10b4c89f



Penguji II

Harsiwi Fajar Sari, SS., M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 607fb3816a339



Yogyakarta, 25 Januari 2021

UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya

Dr. Muhammad Wildan, M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 608134ffdd13c

**THE REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH-PAKISTANI MUSLIM IN
CITIZEN KHAN SITCOM SERIES (2012)**

By: Addifa Rosyadani

ABSTRACT

The increasing spotlight on Pakistani Muslim in the post-9/11 mass media has emerged not only through mainstream news but also through entertainment media. Most of the media portray Pakistani Muslims negatively. The sitcom *Citizen Khan* is one of the entertainment products that contribute to the dissemination of such representation. Through his characters, *Citizen Khan* represents the stereotype of Pakistani Muslims as a result of Islamophobic issues. This study aims to examine the problems of stereotypes of British-Pakistani Muslim using the theory of representation from Stuart Hall. The researcher also used qualitative research in which the results of the analysis are described through narrative and visual aspects. The study found that British-Pakistani Muslims are portrayed in some stereotypes such as racist, patriarchal, in identity crisis, conservative, and hypocritical. Furthermore, Mr. Khan as the director and main character in the sitcom is portrayed as stingy, selfish, arrogant, patriarchal, and controlling. Researchers also found that negative stereotypes towards Pakistani Muslims in the media were reinforced by Islamophobia after the tragedy of 9/11.

Keywords: Sitcom, Stereotype, Representation, British-Pakistani Muslim Representation Theory, Film Theory

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**THE REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH-PAKISTANI MUSLIM IN
CITIZEN KHAN SITCOM SERIES (2012)**

Oleh: Addifa Rosyadani

ABSTRAK

Meningkatnya sorotan Muslim Pakistan di media masa pasca 9/11 tidak hanya muncul melalui pemberitaan tetapi juga melalui media hiburan. Sebagian besar media menggambarkan Muslim Pakistan secara negatif. Serial sitkom *Citizen Khan* merupakan salah satu produk dari media hiburan yang turut menyebarkan representasi tersebut. Melalui karakternya, *Citizen Khan* merepresentasikan stereotip Pakistani Muslim sebagai akibat dari isu Islamofobia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji stereotip Muslim Pakistan Inggris dengan menggunakan teori representasi dari Stuart Hall. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif yang mendeskripsikan hasil analisis melalui aspek naratif dan visual. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Muslim Pakistan Inggris digambarkan dalam beberapa stereotip seperti rasis, patriarki, mengalami krisis identitas, konservatif, dan munafik. Terlebih, Mr. Khan sebagai sutradara dan karakter utama dalam sitcom ini digambarkan sebagai orang yang pelit, egois, sombong, patriarki, dan pengontrol. Peneliti juga menemukan bahwa stereotip negatif terhadap Muslim Pakistan di media diperkuat oleh Islamofobia setelah tragedi 9/11.

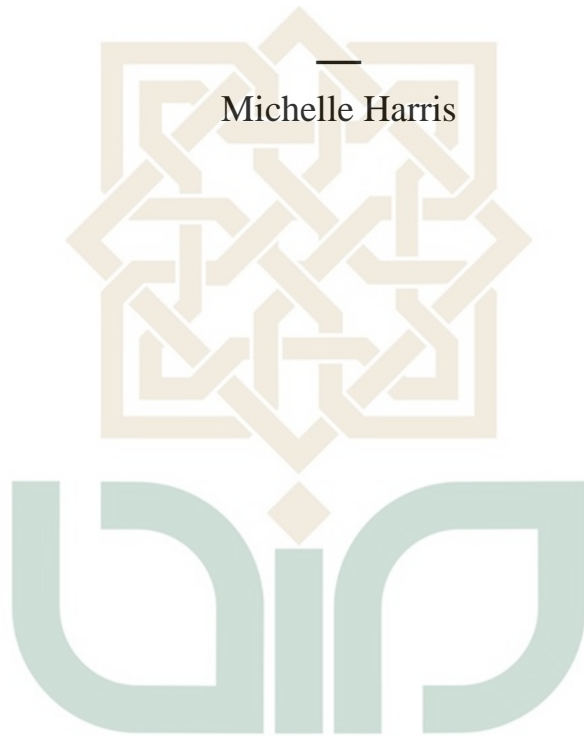
Kata kunci: Sitkom, Stereotip, Representasi, Muslim Pakistan Inggris, Representasi Teori, Film Teori

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MOTTO

“Be so rooted in your being that nobody's absence or presence
can disturb your inner peace.”

Michelle Harris

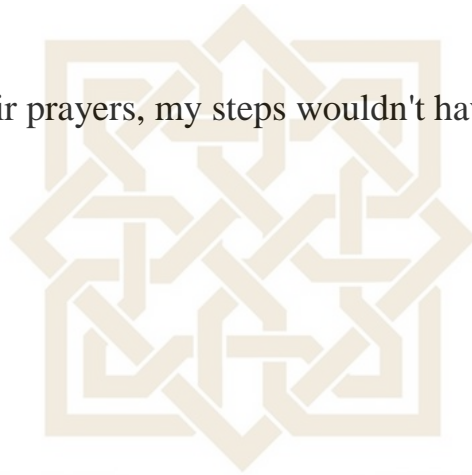


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DEDICATION

My parents

Without their prayers, my steps wouldn't have made it this far.



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The researcher realized that this paper is very far from perfection because of the lacking knowledge of the researcher. Therefore, any constructive criticism and suggestions are always welcomed for the researcher in improving this paper.

Yogyakarta, November 2020

The Writer

Addifa Rosyadani
Student ID.16150040

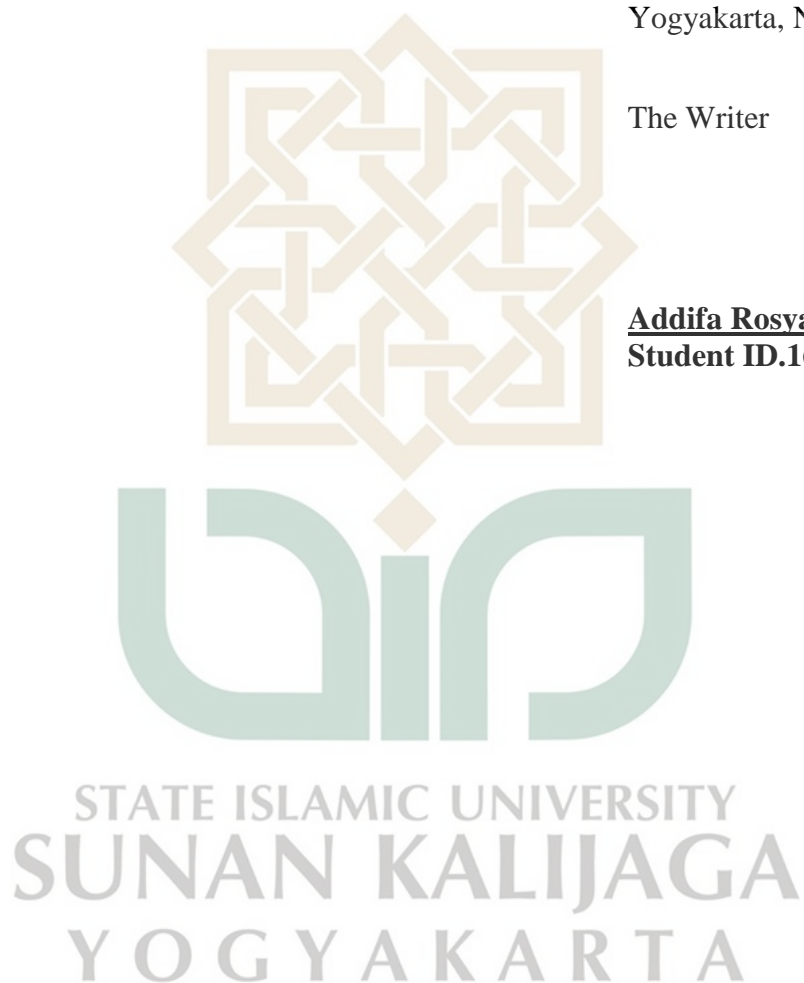


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Based on the results of the 2011 census of ethnic group and local authorities in the United Kingdom, Islam is recorded as the second largest religion in Britain. The Muslim reached 2,786,635 or 4.4% of the total population. According to ethnic composition of British Muslim that was released by the Office for National Statistics, Pakistani occupied the highest position in Britain by reaching 38% among other ethnicities such as Arabs, Bangladeshi, and Other Asians (2011 Census). Along with the growth of the British Muslim population, the presence of Muslim in the British media has also increased in recent years. The increase in the appearance of Muslim in the British media is also one of the effects of 9/11.

9/11 was a series of suicide attacks in the United States coordinated by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001. This tragedy had a devastating effect on Islam. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the West begins to see Muslim as a threat. Muslims are seen as cruel, irrational, barbaric, and conservative, while the West is seen as modern, progressive, rational, civilised, humane and liberal. Media reports about Muslim have made most media portray Muslim negatively. Those reports contribute to the spread of Islamophobic

ideas. Islamophobia is an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslim that are perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life. Islamophobia already existed before 9/11, but the increase in frequency of reporting over the past decade has greatly expanded. The mass media disposes to raise a stereotype and racial discrimination. However, Islam and Arabs keeps receiving negative stereotypes in the American media (Abraham, 1994). This sitcom clearly shows about the stereotype and racism about the British-Pakistani Muslim. It gives the focus of attention to the character itself. According to Allport (1954), stereotyping 'knowledge' could become embedded in culture and society and institutionalized in language, institutions, literature and the media. However, what is inside the film is not completely the real situation and also not completely the imaginary situation, but this happens to represent the audience's interpretation.

The increasing spotlight of Muslim in the media after 9/11 tragedy is not only conveyed through the news but also spreads in various entertainment media. These include newspapers, cartoons and some television programs. One of the products of the television program that will be the focus of this research is sitcom (situational comedy). Sitcom is a television series that involves the same characters in different situations each week in a thirty minute per episode. One of the main factors that distinguishes one sitcom from another is the setting of place from the

sitcom. Reinforced by Mills's statement in his book titled *TV Genres*, the sitcom produced for British television is called Britcom which is linguistically a clipping or a combination of phrases british and sitcom (2009). One of the sitcom series that ironically propagates Muslim misrepresentations after 9/11 I *Citizen Khan* (2012).

Citizen Khan is a British Sitcom produced by BBC. This sitcom was first aired in 2012. The producer in this sitcom is Adil Ray as well as the main character. The script from this sitcom is written by Ray, Anil Gupta, and Richard Pinto. This sitcom was set in Sparkhill, East Birmingham. As the BBC has described, *Citizen Khan* describes the daily life of a Pakistani Muslim family. The sitcom presents the problems that characters often face related to their identity. In its first screening, *Citizen Khan* received 200 complaints from audience because it is considered as amock to Muslim.

The BBC criticizes this sitcom for its portrayal of the Muslim. In Commons debates, BBC says that the sitcom had received criticism because staff on BBC programmes who instead wanted to reflect diversity in the UK were considered to have reflected Islamophobia issues. Rupa Huq intercalated that *Citizen Khan* also portrays the backwardness of Pakistani Muslim families. The sitcom was even accused of stereotyping Pakistani Muslim until Adil Ray, the director of this sitcom received non-verbal terror from audiences who feel aggrieved by the Muslim depiction.

This paper aims to analyze further how Muslim, particularly the British-Pakistani Muslim, are represented in *Citizen Khan* using representation theory by Stuart Hall. His constructionist approach is believed to be able to reveal how British-Pakistani Muslim is constructed in this sitcom. Also, since this is a study of film, this research also applies film theory to analyze the data. From a total of 34 episodes, the study will focus on the first and second episodes of the sitcom. The researcher chooses the first and second episode because these episodes show data related to the topic that the researcher will analyze.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of study above, the researcher arranges the research question as follows:

How are British-Pakistani Muslim represented in the *Citizen Khan* Sitcom series?

1.3 Objective of the study

Based on the problem statement this paper aims to find out how British-Pakistani Muslims are represented in *Citizen Khan*. It is especially the first and second episodes, using Stuart Hall's representation theory and film theory.

1.4 Significance of the study

Hopefully, this research would contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon related to Muslim misrepresentation which is reflected in entertainment media such as sitcom. This paper can be used as a reference for future researchers on the representation of British-Pakistani Muslim in sitcom. It can also be a reference of the use of Stuart Hall's representation theory.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher finds some researches that analyze *Citizen Khan* sitcom series as the object of research. The difference among this research with previous researches lies in the theory and the topic of research.

The first literature is *Ethnic Labeling in Citizen Khan Sitcom Series* written by Muflihatunnisa English Literature of Adab and Cultural Science State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga 2020. In this graduating paper, the researcher talks about the ethnicity of the characters and focuses on Ethnic Label as an identity marker. The differences from the researcher's paper are based on the theory used. This research applies Representation theory by Stuart Hall while the previous research uses Language and Identity theory by Joanna Thornborrow and Ethnography of Speaking by Dell Hymes.

Second, the researcher found a research that also uses *Citizen Khan Sitcom Series* as an object to analyze. The difference of this research with the previous research is on the theory and the focus of the research. The research is a thesis written by Sayed Mohammed Bilal Kadiri, as a student in Lancaster University. The title of this thesis is "*A Corpus-based analysis of the Construction of Identities in the BBC Sitcom Citizen Khan*". In this thesis, he analyzes four war films and one of them is *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*. He focuses on the representation of Arabs and Muslims and how the aforementioned populations in their retelling of history based on the war films. The thesis uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This thesis aims

to address this gap by investigating language usage and the construction of identities in the BBC sitcom *Citizen Khan*, which is centred around a family living in the Sparkhill area of Birmingham.

Third, the researcher found an article that also uses *Citizen Khan Sitcom Series* as an object to analyze. The difference of this research with the previous research is on the topic and the focus of the research. The article written by Tim Miles from Loughborough University. The title of this article is “*Halal? Ha! LOL: an examination of Muslim online comedy as counternarrative*”. In this article, hhe focuses on analysing counter-narrative to representations of Muslim as extrimists. This article aims to address the representations of Muslim as humourless and extrimist also often also reinforces Islamophobic stereotypes.

Fourth, the researcher found an article that also uses *Citizen Khan Sitcom Series* as an object to analyze. The difference of this research with the previous research is on the topic and the focus of the research. The article was written by Tahir Abbas from Leiden University. The title of this article is “*Citizen Khan or citizens can't? Dossier on popular culture: Introduction*”. This article collects scientific commentary on the debate that show raised. This article explores the various issues arising from the programme itself and the context in which the issue arises and raises concerns about the representation of identity, gender, cultural norms and values, class characteristics, as well as the BBC's role as the institution behind its production. The difference between this article with the research

is on the issue that this research focuses solely on the representation of British-Pakistani Muslims and stereotypes displayed through the airing of this sitcom.

The fifth article that researcher found also used *Citizen Khan* as an object of analysis. The title of this article is “*Situating Citizen Khan: Shifting representations of Asians on screen and the outrage industry in the social media age*”. This article was written by Rupa Huq. The article looks at the way British Asians have been portrayed in post-war British popular culture who have historically concentrated on representations on screen and considers this alongside the upcoming academic analysis up to date with many commentaries on the BBC1 situation television comedy *Citizen Khan* from Autumn 2012. This article is different from the research analyzed because it focuses more on the representation of British Asians after post-war British while this research is more to the representation of British-Pakistani Muslims.

The sixth literature found by researcher is an article written by Tahir Abbas, student of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Science, Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey. The title of the article is ‘Last of the dinosaurs’: *Citizen Khan* as institutionalization of Pakistani stereotypes in British television comedy. This article focuses on misrepresentation as a function of the structural characteristics of the workings of a large organisation which has become out of touch in relation to the diverse

communities of Britain. The difference of this research with the previous research is on the topic and the focus of the research.

The researcher goes along to look at the consistency of representation of Pakistani Muslim in the media. The researcher also realizes that there are many studies that discuss the representation of Muslim in various literary works. However, what distinguishes this research from the previous research is the theory, the settings, and the background of the director. This research uses representation theory by Stuart Hall where this theory allows the researcher to look wider how the meaning is formed not only through a text but also the context. The unique side of the sitcom also comes from the background of the director. In previous studies, most of the objects that examine representation of Muslim are Hollywood's productions and the directors mostly come from white dominant groups. Meanwhile, *Citizen Khan* was directed by Pakistani Muslim itself and set in Britain.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

1.6.1 Representation Theory

According to Hall (2005: 18-20), representation is the ability to describe or imagine. Representation becomes important considering that culture is always shaped through meaning and language, in this case, language is one form of symbol or one form of representation. The meaning of the culture itself is always mediated by language to be shared with each member of the culture. From this, Hall expressed the importance of

representation as a means of communication and social interaction, even asserting representation as a basic need of communication without which humans cannot interact.

Furthermore, Hall (1997:15) divided representation into three approaches; (1) Reflective representation, (2) Intentional representation, and (3) Constructionist representation. Reflective representations are languages or various symbols that reflect meaning. An intentional representation is how a language or symbol spells out the speaker's personal intent. While constructionist representation is how meaning is reconstructed 'in' and 'through' language.

Constructionist approach is an approach that uses any language system or system to represent the concept. The main relevance of the approach constructivist research is about the explanation that the language contained in the media in the form of a collection of signs (articles, photos, videos, sentences) has meanings that represent the culture that exists in our society, including the mass media. To further clarify the theory of representation, then it is necessary to be clear about various related components such as language, meaning, concept, and sign.

A language that involves all processes of meaning construction. The concept that is on our minds must be translated into a universal language, so that we can share our concept and ideas with written language, oral language or photos as well as visuals. Signs are what represents the concept

we carry everywhere in our heads and automatically together form a system of meaning in culture.

In this graduating paper, the researcher prefers to use the constructionist approach to analyze the characters and stereotypes in *Citizen Khan* Sitcom series.

1.6.2 Film Theory

The second of the theories that researcher uses is film theory. To support the researcher to find out meaning through scenes in the sitcom, researcher apply the *mise-en-scene* theory. *Mise-en-scene* is a concept used to describe all aspects of visuals that exist when producing a film. Such as settings, properties, actors, costumes used, lighting, and others. As stated by Sikov, *Mise-en-scene* is the step to understand how a movie is produced and reflected through the meaning. *Mise-en-scene* consists of the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed such as settings, props, lighting, costumes, make up, figure behavior, camera angle and cinematography (2010: 16). All of those aspects not only play a narrative role, but also visually.

Besides, camera angle is also required in analyzing the scene. Camera angle has a meaning from where the shot is taken (Turner G, 1999:60). This camera angle is very useful in creating audience perception through cinematography. Sikov (2010) defined some shots in camera angle. First is Eye-level shot, in this type when the camera is placed at the

level of an adult's eye. Second is low angle shot, it is called low because the shot is taken when the object is shot from a lower position. Third, high-angle shot is when the object that is shot from an upper position. Then, there is a shot called Close-up. It is a shot that isolates an object in the image, making it look large, and a long shot that is taken from a long distance.

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher applies a qualitative method. Qualitative research focuses on the search for meaning obtained from the result of the analysis. Data analysis will be carried out by defining events, plots, shots, and dialogues in *Citizen Khan* sitcom series episode 1 and 2 in the first season. The reason why the researcher chose first and second episodes on the *Citizen Khan* sitcom series is because it contains the data that are relevant to representation.

The results of data analysis will be linked to the theory of representation by Stuart Hall. Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative approach emphasizes the qualities of entities, process and meaning that are not experimentally examined and measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (2000: 8). This research uses observation methods by collecting data from the sitcom and looking for some previous research references from the library. Therefore, the researcher takes an interpretation of the meaning of the data that has been collected and categorized.

1.7.2 Data Source

The researcher has two data sources: primary data and secondary data. The primary data for this research are taken from *Citizen Khan* sitcom series season 1 especially from the first and second episode. The researcher chooses the first and second episode of season 1 is because these episodes have represented the entire episode to support the topic the researcher wants to discuss. The unit data comes from the scene and dialogue in narratives which indicate the practice of representation. The secondary data for this research are taken from resources through books, journals, articles, and websites which relate to the research topic and the object of analysis.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

There are some steps that researcher has to take to collect the data. First, the researcher reads the sitcom thoroughly to get the meaning and visual element. Second, the researcher collects the scenes, plot, and dialogues, captures the shots, and sorts them into the table of variables. Third, the data will be categorized by the most representative scenes or dialogues which are in accordance with the representation theory.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

In this research the data are analyzed with a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher divides the data into sections by category by examining scenes and dialogue from the sitcom. The categories are representations and stereotypes. Then, the researcher needs to know the

relationship among the data: representation; identity, culture, and ethnicity, and stereotypes; stereotypes of Muslim as racist, as patriarchal, as experiencing identity crisis, as conservative, and as hypocritical.

The researcher then analyzes the data in the form of scenes by looking through *mise-en-scenes* and explaining each frame in the sitcom. The next step for data analysis is to interpret them based on representation and film theory to discover the meaning of the problem. In the final step, the researcher draws the conclusion from this study.

1.8 Paper Organization

This study is composed of four chapters. The first chapter consists of the background of choosing this study, problem statement, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. The second chapter consists of theoretical background. The third chapter consists of analysis of *Citizen Khan* sitcom series. The data found are to be analyzed using post-colonial theory with a domination approach. The last chapter consists of the research conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

Citizen Khan manages the audience to see how British-Pakistani Muslim are poorly represented. The depiction of Mr. Khan as the main character reflects the stereotypes as a result of Islamophobia. The increasing presence of Muslim in the media has shown that there is a relation between 9/11 and Islamophobia in the negative representation of Muslim in the media. Moreover, the hegemonic dominant group also plays a big role in this representation because most of media owners have a background with a dominant identity.

Adil Ray, as the producer and the main character in this sitcom who is also a Pakistani Muslim is represented negatively by Mr. Khan's character. Mr. Khan is described as superior, discriminative, and irrational. Based on some scenes in *Citizen Khan*, Mr. Khan's character discriminates against fellow Muslim of different races, such as on the scene when Mr. Khan claims that Dave is not a proper Muslim just because he is white and behaves badly towards Omar who is not Pakistani. Meanwhile, the female characters in the sitcom go through various patriarchal processes, such as in the scene of Mr. Khan fully arranging his daughter's marriage as well as underestimating the role of women in the family by saying that women are servants.

Sitcom as a medium of communication is often used as a medium to convey the ideas of its director. In this sitcom Adil Ray as director who is a Pakistani

Muslim conducts a critique of Pakistani culture itself. This criticism was conveyed by the director through a process of representation of the character with the aim of describing the social, cultural and condition of Pakistani Muslim.

According to the analysis, the researcher concludes that most of the scenes in this sitcom construct the negative images of British-Pakistani Muslim. Stuart Hall's representation theory demonstrates that the media often uses negative stereotypes to represent minority group which in this context is Muslim. The researcher concludes that this sitcom has the same structure and pattern as other Hollywood's product of media. Media often shows the stereotypical view of the dominant hegemonic group towards the ethnic minorities. The negative images of Muslim in this sitcom exemplifies the consistency of the Orientalist discourse, but ironically this time is by the Muslim director himself.

4.2 Suggestion

This research is only concerned to portray the representation of British-Pakistani Muslim. To get a deeper understanding of the representation issue especially in the sitcom, the researcher suggests for future researchers to be more concerned about the media and humor theory.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

I. PERSONAL IDENTITY

Name : Addifa Rosyadani
Place of Birth : Wonogiri
Date of Birth : 29 March 1998
Religion : Islam
Address : Pokoh RT 03/ 05, Wonoboyo, Wonogiri, 57615
Email Address : rosyadani@gmail.com
Contact Person : 085832531399

II. FORMAL EDUCATION

1. SDN IV Wonoboyo 2005 - 2011
2. SMPIT Al-Huda Wonogiri 2011 - 2014
3. SMAN 2 Wonogiri 2014 – 2015
4. S1 UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta 2016 – 2021

III. PERSONAL SKILLS

Language : Indonesian, English

Computer : Microsoft Office, CorelDraw