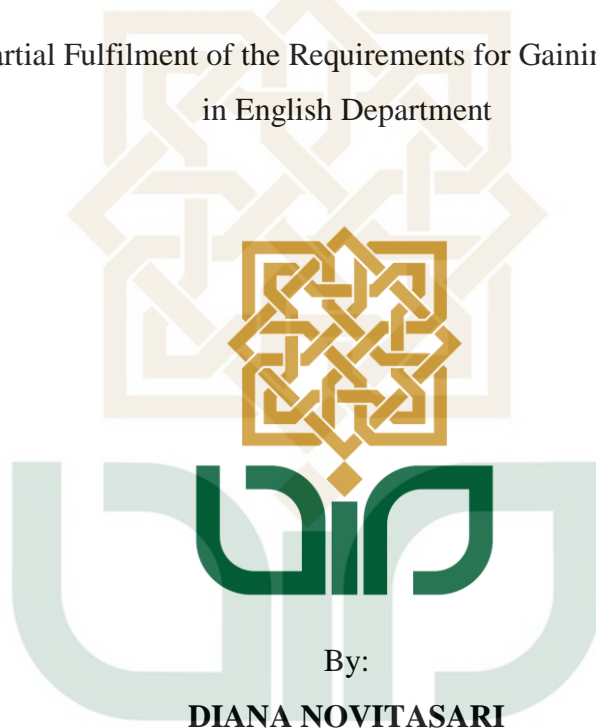**MUSLIM WOMEN'S STRUGGLES FOR IDENTITY IN *MUSLIM GIRL: A***

COMING OF AGE

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor Degree

in English Department

By:

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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YOGYAKARTA

2023

FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

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kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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MOTTO

You can rest, but it's too early.

I need rest, but it's still far.

Even though we can't see the end of our road, we should see it to the end.

The way up without a map.

The maze I don't want to look back.

Run only looking forward.

Shine bright within the darkness.

"GLOW - STRAY KIDS"

DEDICATION

This graduating paper is dedicated to my self, my beloved family.

My dearest people who support and trust me and also all the readers.

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Assalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

In the name of Allah, the Most Generous, the Most Merciful. Praise to Allah and Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, who have blessed me and guided me to finish this graduating paper entitled "*MUSLIM WOMEN'S STRUGGLES FOR IDENTITY IN MUSLIM GIRL: A COMING OF AGE.*"

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   Finally, I realized that this graduating paper is still far from perfect and needs many corrections, and I allowed all readers to give suggestions and advice for better improvement. I hope this graduating paper will be helpful to other researchers interested in this topic.

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Yogyakarta, July 24th 2023

The writer

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MUSLIM WOMEN'S STRUGGLES FOR IDENTITY IN *MUSLIM GIRL: A COMING OF AGE*

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ABSTRACT

The research study title is *"Muslim Women's Struggles For Identity In Muslim Girl: A Coming Of Age."* This research aims to analyze the struggle and formation of self-identity of Amani Al-Khatahtbeh's character. The differences in perceptions of Islam between Americans and her families after 9/11 made Amani question her identity, and she had to struggle for her identity and to be accepted by the American people. The researcher applies the Identity theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets. The researcher used qualitative methods conducted with descriptive analysis. The findings of this research show that identity may develop and transform due to various factors. According to Peter J Burke and Jan E Stets, four primary components are necessary to verify a person's identity: the identity standard, the input, the comparator, and the output. Each of these elements is a process associated with meanings in the environment and the individual. The result of this identity verification is an individual's self-esteem. The result of this identity verification is an individual's self-esteem. If identity verification is successful, a person's confidence will increase, but the opposite will happen if identity verification fails.

Keywords: *Identity Struggle, Muslim Women, Self-esteem*

MUSLIM WOMEN'S STRUGGLES FOR IDENTITY IN *MUSLIM GIRL: A COMING OF AGE*

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul *"Muslim Women's Struggles for Identity in Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age"*. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis tentang perjuangan dan pembentukan Identitas diri dari tokoh utama sebuah novel bernama Amani Al-Khatahtbeh. Perbedaan persepsi tentang Islam antara orang Amerika dan keluarganya setelah 9/11 membuat Amani mempertanyakan identitasnya, dan harus berjuang untuk identitasnya agar diterima oleh orang Amerika. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Identitas dari Peter J Burke dan Jan E Stets. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Identitas dapat berkembang dan berubah karena beberapa faktor. Untuk memverifikasi indentitas seseorang menurut Peter J Burke dan Jan E Stets terdapat empat komponen utama untuk membentuk identitas seseorang yaitu: standar identitas, masukan, pembanding, dan keluaran. Masing-masing komponen tersebut merupakan proses yang berhubungan dengan makna-makna di lingkungan dan di dalam diri seseorang. Hasil dari verifikasi identitas ini adalah harga diri seseorang. Hasil dari verifikasi identitas ini adalah harga diri seseorang. Bila verifikasi identitas berhasil maka seseorang akan mendapatkan rasa percaya diri yang tinggi, namun jika verifikasi identitas gagal maka akan terjadi hal yang sebaliknya.

Kata Kunci: *Identity Struggle, Muslim Women, Self-esteem*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Identity is an agent in identity theory. Everyone has multiple identities, such as friends, parents, co-workers, churchgoers, and clubbers, and each of these identities is an agent. As an example, Mary is a mother and a teacher. Mary may receive knowledge as a teacher that she may share with her children as a mother. In this instance, "teacher" and "mother" share the same individual. The teacher and mother are each agents who can operate individually, in concert, or interact. (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 6-9)

Identity formation is a complex process that involves many different aspects of ourselves and others. It can include our perception, society's perception, beliefs, experiences, and social roles and relationships with others. The result of identity formation is self-esteem. If identity development is successful, a person will have high self-esteem; if it is unsuccessful, the opposite will happen. A person with high self-esteem is more confident in society, whereas someone with low self-esteem feels like failing and disgraced.

It could be a struggle and difficult to shape and develop an individual's identity, especially if there is discrimination and stigma in society. Individuals who identify with minority groups or groups frequently discriminated against or stigmatized may suffer more in developing a positive identity. Society's pressure

and resistance can impact people's self-perceptions and feelings about their identity.

In Muslim Girl: A Coming Of Age, it is clearly described how the main character must struggle to develop her identity in the middle of religious discrimination. Religious discrimination is when you are treated differently from society because of your religion or belief. Religious discrimination is shown openly by American citizens to Muslims in America and causes Muslims in America to be threatened and suffer. Many Muslims do not reveal their identity because of this discrimination. For example, the identity of a Muslim who does not use identity symbols such as the hijab.

This novel is about Amani's extraordinary journey through her teenage years as a Muslim woman, from the Islamophobia, discrimination, and racism she faces daily post-9/11. Amani Al-Khatahtbeh is an American writer, influencer, and the founder and editor-in-chief of MuslimGirl, the United States number-one online magazine for Muslim women. In 2009, she was 17 years old when she founded the online magazine. Moreover, in 2016, she was named to Forbes 30 Under 30 Media list for her work on MuslimGirls. In the same year, she also wrote a book entitled Muslim Girl: A Coming Of Age.

The character Amani in the novel "In Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age" portrays how self-identity as a Muslim can be formed and developed. As social beings, identity is an important aspect of our lives. Identity guides us to actualize

ourselves in society (Stets & Burke, 2000). Social Identity enables people to belong to groups and obtain a sense of belonging in their social context. These identities are vital in shaping one's self-image. Social Identity is significant because it determines how people see themselves and interact with others.

The story began on September 11, 2001, Bowne-Munro Elementary School in East Brunswick, New Jersey, which planned to hold its annual Yearbook Photo Day, but suddenly the Yearbook photo got canceled. These things make the school end earlier than usual. The cause is the accident in Twin Towers, but Amani was too young to understand what had just happened. After that time, Amani started to hear her first racial slur. She was already a class target. She could not do anything and only forced herself to keep her mouth shut and not speak out, fearing the bullying would worsen. The discrimination against Muslims affects her identity and self-esteem in elementary school.

Amani accepts all the insults and bullying until an insult makes her hurt, and she goes to tell her teacher, but the teacher ignores it. Once, when she got terrible treatment from her friend and went to the guidance counselor, the counselor blamed her. Instead of helping and protecting her, the counselor said that Amani must be the problem, so she got a bully, and the counselor also said that Amani was the one who should change herself so their friends could stop making fun of Amani.

Amani had to deal with complicated situations. Even in the sixth grade, she had to lie about her religion so that she didn't get a terrible view. Amani kept trying to survive in many bad cases. Until she finally moved to Jordan and tried to face it bravely, but it was not easy. Many destructive issues continue to haunt Islam after 9/11, and it's like a never-ending story for Muslim people like Amani. She struggles to get out of her mental limits on how far she can go, but she also has to deal with small things like being ignored by those around her just because she's Muslim.

America is known as the land of freedom and immigrants, and people in America can make their own choice without hesitation. However, Amani, a Muslim woman, is still struggling for her identity because society did not approve of Islam after the 9/11 trauma. This research shows how Amani proved herself as Islam in society and adapted to the situation full of stereotypes after 9/11.

Following the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11, many Muslims and other Arab Americans became targets of Islamophobia, discrimination, and racism. This results in religious conflict, making it difficult for Muslims to show their identity as Muslims. Where identity should be the right of all human beings, Muslims in America view it as frightful. Muslims in America feel threatened and exiled in their own country.

This study focuses on Amani's struggle to determine her identity in the face of discrimination and prejudice directed at Muslims by non-Muslims.

4

Discrimination against Muslims is a raging fire that is difficult to put out even now. The impact of this discrimination can cause Amani to doubt her own identity. The difficulties faced by Amani make her question her identity. Amani has to live hateful days because of her identity as a Muslim.

Furthermore, the 9/11 incident made the American public's perception of Islam negative and threatening because it was related to terrorists. While the Amani family taught since childhood that Islam is a positive belief, full of love and peace. The difference in perception between the American public and the Amani family makes Amani confused in determining her identity. Amani began to conceal her identity and lie to strangers to avoid discrimination based on her Muslim identity. The difference in views between Islam in the Amani family and the American public made her struggle for her identity and to be accepted by the American people.

Identity as a Muslim in a non-Muslim society must be found because Identity is like roots of tree that support the tree to grow bigger. A tree that grow big and thick is likened to successful self-esteem. As a result, identifying one's identity as a Muslim is critical to maintaining self-esteem. This study uses the identity theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E to analyze the struggles of Amani, a Muslim woman who was initially confused about her identity as a Muslim. In the end, Amani found and accepted her identity as an American Muslim, even to the point of becoming one of America's most influential Muslim women.

This research is important for people who are still confused about their identity and who are still fighting for their identity. Identity is vitally essential to every person. Identity influences an individual's self-concept, social roles, beliefs, and relationship with the environment. A strong identity can also be the basis for an individual to achieve their goals.

1.2 Research Questions

From the background above, the researcher focused on one research question to be investigating:

1. How does Amani struggle for her identity?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the research problem, this study aims to analyze Amani's struggle as long as she became a Muslim in a non-Muslim majority country and how the formation of the self-identity of the character Amani as a Muslim American in the novel "In Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age" is examined from the perspective of identity control theory.

1.4 Significance of Study

The researcher divides the significance of the study into two parts, there are:

a) **Theoretically,** this research could be a reference for readers, especially for students or lecturers from English Literature. The researcher hopes it will help the next researcher to research the same topic.

b) **Practically,** this research is important for everyone, especially Muslim women, to understand an individual's identity and self-worth. By fully understanding our identity, we can discover our potential. Knowing our identity helps individuals determine how to interact with others. Interaction with individuals of the same frequency can strengthen a person's relationship-building abilities. This research also makes it easier for people to achieve their goals because we can establish stronger personal goals by solidly understanding ourselves. A solid foundation of identity could help someone to stay consistent in achieving their goals and to understand how to face racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher did not find the same object or theory in various existing studies. Therefore the researcher tries to find some research that is slightly relevant to the researcher's research. The research finds some analysis with the same topic but different discussion objects. The first research is entitled "Muslim American Discrimination after the 9/11 Accident as Seen in my name is Khan: A new historicism". This research was written by Sri Rahayu in 2013, a student at the

State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. This research tells about the struggle of Khan, a Muslim with Asperger syndrome, and his family to overcome the complex conditions in the aftermath of the 9/11 accident. Khan and his family get discriminated against and rejected in society because people thought they were the cause of 9/11. The difference between this research and the writer's research is the theoretical approach and the object of the research.

The second research is entitled "Women's Struggle for Identity in Anita Desai's Clear Light of Day." Marjan Heidari, Mina Abbasiyannejad, and Ashkan Shobeiri from the University of Putra Malaysia wrote this research. They wrote this research in The International Journal of Humanities in 2011. This research tells about Anita Desai portrays Indian women as marginalized characters facing challenges and burdens imposed by patriarchal society. Some female characters, Bim, Tara, their mother, and Aunt Mira, are entering a male-dominated society. They survived and struggled to establish their identity using the oppressor's language and culture.

The third research is entitled "Dave's Identity Establishment Seen as Pursuing Freedom as seen in Chesnutt's "Dave's Necklaces". This research was written by Christiana Megastra Cendrawasih in 2017, a student at Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta. This research tells about the process of Dave revealing his multiple identities. The difference between this research and the writer's research is the object of the research because we used the same theory to tell the true identity.

Dave's identity establishment is seen as pursuing freedom, as seen in Chessnutt's "Dave's Necklaces" using theory identity by Peter J Burke and Jan E Stets to analyze what kind of identity theory pursuit is seen as pursuing freedom that Dave experiences in the story. Suppose the Muslim girl: a coming of age identity theory is to reveal her true identity, and self-esteem results from the verification identity. In that case, the chestnut's "Dave necklaces" identity theory reveals his multiple identities. Those are racial identity, religious identity, and master identity.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

This research applies the Identity theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets. An identity is a set of definitions that describe who one is an occupant of a specific role in society, a member of a specific group, or particular characteristics that distinguish them from another. Individuals have meanings they apply to themselves when they are students, workers, parents, or members of specific groups. In the face of disturbances, humans maintain a steady and stable environment by changing their actions (output) to make their perceptions (input) match a reference standard.

Identity is an agent in identity theory. Everyone has multiple identities, such as friends, parents, co-workers, churchgoers, and clubbers, and each of these identities is an agent. As an example, Mary is a mother and a teacher. Mary may

receive knowledge as a teacher that she may share with her children as a mother. In this instance, "teacher" and "mother" share the same individual. The teacher and mother are each agents who can operate individually, in concert, or interact. (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 6-9)

Meaning, Resource, and Interaction are three essential and interconnected elements. These three interconnected factors can influence Amani's identity formation. Identity can be formed through interactions between individuals and among individuals and groups. In social interaction, symbols and meanings are important things. Some components to create symbolic interaction are language, signs, and symbols. Language is symbolic of communication. Social consensus determines a symbol's meaning, which varies by culture.

An identity consists of four fundamental elements: an identity standard, an input, a comparator, and an output. Each of these components is a process that deals with meanings in the environment and within the self (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 62). These four components operate to create a dynamic process that shapes individual identity. Inputs, standard identities, and comparators can influence outputs, influencing individuals' perceptions of themselves and their social context.

The researcher used the Identity Control Theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets because, in this theory, these four stages are related to how the identity of Amani Al-Khatahtbeh can be formed. Identity theory also answers how Amani can

believe in her identity as a Muslim even though there is a lot of hatred towards her. In the beginning, Amani hated her identity because American people hated Muslims. Finally, after a long process, she felt proud of her identity as an American Muslim. Amani has struggled for years to show her Muslim identity with confidence, not only against the perception that Islam is a terrorist but also against his own emotions of low self-esteem.

Identity control theory was concerned with the development of personal identity. Each identity has a set of meanings that can be seen as defining the Identity's personality. The standard Identity is the collecting of meanings within an individual. When it comes to gender identity, for example, people may be called more masculine or more feminine.

Input is known as perception, like how an individual sees itself in some situation. Perceptions play an important role in the identity process. We are attempting to regulate and inform ourselves about our surroundings by our perceptions; our perceptions are our only source of knowledge about what is happening around us.

Comparator is a comparison of meaning through thought. The difference between the input and the standard is then represented by an "error signal." The error signal ultimately alters the patterns and sequences of verbal and nonverbal behavior, which in turn modifies the behavior's situational significance.

Output is a process that produces individual actions after going through the comparator component that compares the meaning. In other words, the output component is the personal response to differences found through meaning. Outputs are individual actions.

The outcome of this identity verification process is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to a subjective evaluation of oneself by oneself. It is a self-attitude or the way we feel about ourselves. The concept emphasizes the reflexive nature of the self, namely its capacity to accept itself as an object and respond to it. The simple procedure of establishing one's identity generates self-esteem, which serves numerous purposes. Failure to verify the identity results in a decrease in self-esteem. However, success in identity verification increases the self-esteem of individuals. (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 80)

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher applied the qualitative research method. According to Creswell, J. W. (2014), in his book entitled *"Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)"* defines Qualitative research as a method for examining and being able to comprehend the significance that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The research process includes developing questions and

procedures, data collection in the participant's environment, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher interpreting the data's meaning. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this type of inquiry advocate for a research approach that values an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexities of a situation. (2014: 41)

1.7.2 Data Source

This research divides the data sources into the main and supporting data. The primary data was taken from Amani al-Khatahtbeh's biography book titled Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age. This includes various elements such as text and dialogue from the novel. The researcher analyzed the text and dialogue from the story related to the identity struggle topic for the main data.

There are supporting data that are interconnected with the primary data. The researcher also searched for some books, journals, and articles related to this research as supporting data. The purpose of "supporting data" is to provide concrete and valid support or evidence to support arguments and opinions in research.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

For this study, there are two steps to collect data. First, the researcher read the book entitled Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age by Amani al-

Khatahtbeh as the object. The researcher identifies the novel's intrinsic aspects, such as theme, plot, setting, characters, and characterization. The researcher analyzes the text and the character related to the struggle for identity as a Muslim woman in America.

To support the research findings, the researcher extensively seeks additional reference data. This includes books, journals, articles, and internet sources that provide relevant information about the formal and material objects of the research. These additional sources contribute to a more comprehensive examination and understanding of the identity struggle.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

There are three steps in the data analysis technique. The first step of analyzing the data is finding the data related to the struggle identity and the novel, and the second is sorting data collected from the story, a related topic with struggle identity, and the theory of Identity by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. States that there are four main steps to finding someone's identity. The last step is the conclusion and suggestion of the research.

1.8 Paper Organization

There are four chapters in this research paper. The first chapter introduces the research that contains the background of the study, problem statement, objective and significance of the study, literary review, theoretical approach,

method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter explains intrinsic elements of *In Muslim Girl: A Coming Of Age*, like the characters, plot, setting, and theme. The third chapter shows the problem analysis in this research using the Identity theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets. The final chapter consists of the conclusion and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the researcher's conclusion and suggestions based on the research's findings. The first section consists of the results and conclusions of the research, while the second contains suggestions.

4.1 Conclusion

The researcher uses Identity theory by Peter J Burke and Jan E. Stets to provide the analysis of Amani's Identity struggles and the outcomes of Muslim Women's struggles for Identity in Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age. The difference in views between Islam in the Amani family and the American public after the 9/11 tragedy made her struggle for her identity and to be accepted by the American people. Amani was questioning her Muslim identity until Amani and her family decided to relocate to Jordan.

Amani, as an Muslim minority, creates meaning, resources, and interaction in Amani identity. Amani viewed Islam as a positive concept before the 9/11 tragedy happened. Amani has begun to perceive negative signals regarding her Muslim identity after the 9/11 tragedy. Stereotypes and bad prejudices towards Muslims from Amani's identity as a Muslim. Interaction with American people who dislike Muslims is the main factor in Amani's struggle with identity. After finding these three elements, it can move to form an identity.

Forming Amani's identity in accordance with Peter and Stets' identity theory:

1. Amani's standard identity is her Muslim identity.

2. Input are people's perceptions of Muslims' badness and Jordanians' perceptions of Islam as a religion of love.

3. The comparator, where Amani began to compare from two perceptions, realized that her Muslim identity was incredible and something to be proud of.

4. The output, self-esteem as an outcome of the verification process of Amani's final identity is where she begins bravely to reveal her identity as a Muslim and becomes one of America's most influential Muslim women.

4.2 Suggestion

After analyzing this research, the researcher suggests future researchers examine other aspects that have not been used in this research. Other theories could be added in the next research such as the theories of Peter J. Burke and Jan E Stets, such as Bases of Identities: Role, Group, and Person, can be added by researchers who desire to examine the same subject and problem.

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