CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The depiction of Islam in the western culture is not newly developed. As stated by Ridouani (2011, p.4) ", that the Western representation of Muslims and Arabs is not a recent fabrication but it had been operational and deep-rooted in the West conceptualization ever since the first contacts with Arabs and Muslims. According to Oathman in his paper titled "Islamophobia, the First Crusade and the Expansion of Christendom to Islamic World" (2014, p.89), the negative portraits of Islam were spreading during the Crusade War until the Cold War, developing an islamophobia view.

On the First Crusade, Pope Urban II in 1905 overspread a view about Islam as a heretic belief and an anti-christ movement. He also compared Islam to barbaric people, merciless and coldblooded in order to expand the Imperial Christendom to the Islamic World. For example, in the past Arabs and Muslims were largely recognized in the West as "erotic", "primitive", "ignorant", "slave traders" among other many derogatory terms.

The portrayal was more degraded after the bombardment of Twin Tower or 9/11 tragedy in 2002. The word "Islamophobia" begin to widely used to show the fear of the society toward Islam. The word has been coined because there is a new reality which needs naming — anti-Muslim prejudice has grown so considerably and so rapidly in recent years that a new item in the vocabulary is needed so that it can be identified and acted against (Alshammari, 2013 p. 177).

According to Alshammari (2013) in his work, *Islamomphobia,* Islam regarded as a dangerous thing and it has to be acted against. Islamophobia made many people started to think that Islam is a cruel religion. As the result. Islam is often being related to the act of criminal like

terrorism. He also noted that there are some of the unquestioned perceptions by non-Muslims toward Islam and Muslims. First, the Islam Religion portrays a monolithic. Then, Islam is inflexible and cannot adapt to the society development. Moreover, he found that Islamic religion has completely different values in comparison with other faiths and cultures. Islam is considered inferior as perceived by the west. It have barbarism traits, archaic, and relatively irrational.

Before the death of Osama Bin Laden, Islam is associated with terrorist and Al Qaeda. However, after the execution, the negative portrayal of Islam is not end yet. Many think that Osama Bin Laden's death would end the negative association between Islam and terrorism fabricated by Western media for many years after 9/11 (Yusof, 2013. p. 104). Unfortunately, the shooting of Charlie Hebdo magazine's office in early 2015 by two brothers Said and Cherrif Kosachi, who belong to Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda, after the magazine publish a satirical caricature about Prophet Muhammad made the portrait of Islam back as it were before. Western Media, then, publish news and articles toward the issue and saying that Islam cannot take jokes and kill the freedom of speech. (Faradilah, 2016, p.12).

Paris' bombardment in 2015 made the Islamophobia and every negative thought about Islam in the western are stronger than before. This time, Islam is associated with the extremist of Iran and Syria Islamic State (ISIS) and said that their action is on behalf of their "Jihad". This incident led to a view that Islam taught the believer to kill those who are outside the Islam. Muslims became increasingly discriminated after the bombardment and they have to accept their "previous identity" of being associated with terrorism.

Literally, the concept "jihad" is not confined in violent acts and war as it is conceptualized and recognized in Western world, but it is open to different acts and performances that a Muslim can perform. Jihad, for example, can be applicably related to an individual "refraining from

wrongdoing", to a "woman agonizing in child-birth", to a "man struggling and endeavoring to up-bring his family", besides, of course, taking a "holy war" as a defence but never as an attack. However, Jihad has been shifted as it is fabricated by western media.

These fabricated depictions of Islam have already proven by D. Rindouani on his work *The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media (2011)*. The study attempts to seek how Muslim and Arab are conceptualized in the western media. The media that Rindouani analyze are some Disney movies (Aladdin), the Arabian's clothes and some painting drawn by Arabian artists. This research is focus on the "orientalism" of Arabian art and culture in the eye of western media. The finding revealed that there are some distortions in the way of western interpreting Arabs and Muslims. Muslims depicted as an evil doer in many media.

Nowadays, where internet and cyber culture is inseparable with our daily life, the view about Islam supporting terrorism is stronger than before. The freedom of speech on the internet made it as one of the best places to give critics. The critics, then, expressed through many media toward many ways, such as blog post article, online news, and cartoons.

Cartoon is a two-dimensional <u>illustration</u>, possibly animated. Cartoonists create some cartoons as the media of their critics toward Islam or showing their Islamophobia. To make it more acceptable, they made it as jokes. They mock on the values of Islam, like *jihad, tawhid,* and the reward for being a *shahid,* 72 angels in Heaven. They regard their mocking as the part of "dark jokes".

As quoted from *britannica.com*, dark jokes or black jokes is a comic work that employs black humor, which, in its most basic definition, is humor that makes light of otherwise solemn subject matter, or gallows humor. Black jokes treat serious subjects in a playful and ironic manner.

By using dark jokes, many cartoonists criticize on how threatening Islam is in their eyes, but in humorous way. One of the cartoonist that also using dark jokes in his works is *Lectrr.be*

Lectrr.be is website that contains some caricature and cartoon produced by the *Lectrr.be*'s website owner. The printed version of *Lectrr.be* is well known around Germany, France, Switzerland and some other country in Europe. The website often produced some cartoons about the hot issue in the society. The cartoonist of this website also made some satirical cartoons toward Islam. Some of the cartoon and caricature may insult Muslims as it regarded as offensive cartoons. He get the attention after the Charlie Hebdo Massacre. *Lectrr* became one of the pioneer of cartoonists around Western Europe in criticizing Islam after the attack. He made several cartoons toward the tragedy. His artwork had already shared in many media such as magazine, *Pinterest* (a picture sharing social media), *Facebook, Twitter* with more than hundreds likes and shares.

To reveal how Islamophobia portrayed in the cartoons shared in the website, the author took four cartoons which taken from *Lectrr.be* under the "Islam" label and reputed as the most relevant to the research as the materials. The materials that the author choose mostly published in 2015 because there are many terrorist attacks over the Europe, which some people relate it to Islam. The research attempts to reveal how Islamophobia portrayed in the cartoons. The author used Roland Barthes' semiotic. Then, the signs are elaborated with the Islamophobia findings by Alshammari (2013) and dark jokes elements to disclose the intended meaning of the cartoons.

Semiotics is the theory of sign. The word "sign" comes from *Semion* which meaning a sign. This theory developed by Ferdinand Saussure. The term from Saussure is the theory of sign. Theory of sign are about *sign*, *signifier* and *signified.* The Saussure theory of sign becomes a basic to develop the semiotics theory. One of the figure who developed the theory is Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes itself is a famous figure for his theory on semiotic. In his book, *Mythology*, he developed two systems of semiotics. Those are denotation and connotation. Barthes makes use of Saussure's theory of the sign and signification. The sign is therefore a compound at a signifier and a signified. The plane of the signifier constitutes the plane of expression and that of the signified the plane of concept.

Yenu Faradilah's *Islamophobia in Cameroon Cardow's Political Cartoon*, which conducted in 2016 works on revealing the extent of islamophobia represented in the cartoons using Social Semiotic theory by Kress and van Leuween. She took seven Cameroon Cardow's cartoons that have been extracted from eaglecartoon.com. The study found that islamophobia in the Cameroon Cardow's cartoons represented to the extent Islam is a joke and an old religion. Since those cartoons were published mostly in America, the study only represents how Islamophobia occurs in America.

The author has decided to choose *Lectrr.be*'s cartoons as material to be researched because there are not many researches regarding Islamophobia in the English Literature Department of State University of Jakarta. Moreover, there are no researcher that took *Lectrr.be* to be his or her material in the English Literature Department, State University of Jakarta, or Indonesia.

1.2 Research Question

This research works through the question "How is islamophobia portrayed in cartoons in the *lectrr.be*?"

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study has purpose to see how Islamophobia is portrayed in the cartoons made by *Lectrr.be*.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is the cartoons toward Islam shared in *lectrr.be* with "Islam" tag on it. The release dates of the data is in 2015.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study has the significance to give the reader knowledges about Islamophobia.