CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

In present day, people could easily gain access of information around the world through media. In the past, people may hard to obtain knowledge as the technology to deliver information is still limited and expensive, thus only the higher class people could have access to it. Different from the past, the system to deliver information is already developed in the present, from the first time the print machine was found until today's electronics media.

In the relation of information and communication, semiotics has a great role to reveal and to decode the meanings behind the signs and phenomena in our everyday communication, in this case, the media. Media is a way for a sign, an opinion, or an idea to be actualized by recording it into a certain platform with a proper technology (Danesi, 2002). In around 1000 B.C., the alphabetical form of writing was found, thus made a radical change in the world social structure. In more simple explanation, the alphabetical form of writing made the printed media as the most proper and efficient tool in storing and exchanging ideas and knowledge.

Nowadays, printed media are usually in a form of such as newspaper; tabloid; and magazine, or electronics such as radio; television; and internet. The writer will focus on internet media because people nowadays could access it easily in anywhere and anytime. With freedom and easy access to gain

information, media becomes a window for the author behind it to spread his opinion about a phenomenon. Many people used this as an opportunity to affect the reader to make them agree to what the author's thinking. Whether it is as a product advertisement, a trivial article, or even a radical statement the people behind it tend to use their power to form people's minds and to make them believe what the author has said and with it, this media influences are used by some people to drive people's opinion then create a circumstance of how people will act or think about a phenomenon.

The past decades have produced a considerable increase in scientific and journalistic publications about Islam, the Muslim World, and the position of Muslims in Western Europe. Since 9/11 tragedy, Islamophobia has been one of the hottest topic the media are discussing until today. As written in the article titled *The Rise of Hate Search* from New York Times by Evan Soltas and Seth Stephens-Davidowitz in 2015 described that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes are currently higher than at any time since the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, and since then, there are many of western media often describe Islam as a violent religion (Soltas & Stephens-Davidowitz. 2015).

Richard Schaefer, writer of *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, defined the term Islamophobia itself in early 2000s as a "range of negative feelings toward Muslims and their religion, from generalized bigotry, intolerance, and prejudice on the one hand to a morbid dread and hatred on the other that might manifest itself in discrimination against Muslims, social exclusion, verbal

and physical harassment, hate crimes, attacks on mosques, and vilification of Islam in the media" (Schaefer. 2008)

Many forms of media cover this issue. In the form of articles, news, and movies; Islamophobia also arise as a part of comic books plots and stories. Some comics even specializes their serials to illustrate Muslims and mostly giving their negative opinions. The most noticeable comics which discuss about the issue is Charlie Hebdo comics that give satire regarding Muslim, portraying them as a violent, anarchy, and bigot religion.

This issue led to several cases where Muslims stand against the anti-muslim prejudice. In Britain, Kalim Siddiqui (as cited in Allen, 2010 p.12) wrote an article titled *The Muslim Manifesto: A Strategy for Survival* in response of an emergence of British Muslim identity which were increasingly being marginalized and under pressure in Britain. Many Islamic organizations were formed with a reason in specifically tackling the Muslim discrimination such as Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) and Forum against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR). Furthermore, these acts against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim gave effect in the emerge of activities been locally initiated. Numbers of Muslim communities have strengthen their organizations by monitoring and keeping records of Islamophobic incidents and also doing interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians, such as in Greek where Arcbishop Christodoulos, the head of the Church of Greece, brought together Christian, Jewish and Muslim leading figures to show of solidarity to the public (Allen, 2010 p.119). Germany also has interfaith initiatives called *Christlich-Islamiche Gesellschaft* (Christian-Islamic Society) which

established in a number of cities across Germany that sponsors dialogue between Muslim and Christian (Allen, 2010 p.119). Meanwhile in Netherland, a Commission on Equal Treatment has been established to prevent the growth of racial and religious discrimination (Allen, 2010 p.120)

Not only in the political and social organization, the act of protest against anti-muslims also growing widely in pop-culture. On the contrary of many comics and illustration in Europe with anti-Muslim prejudice, The Muslim Show comic strip, established in 2012 by B'Douin as Facebook page, are giving different view about Muslims. They are one of few that create comics to show how western media falsely framing Muslims to give people a thought that Muslims are bad, also to show that there is a western media which gives different point of view regarding Islam. It is a comedy series depicting the daily lives of Muslims living in western society the drawings usually tell about Islamic Sharia in daily lives but some drawings also discuss about the lives of Muslims in Western society, especially France.

There were a previous studies conducted by Sean A. Guynes in 2014 using semiotics theory in comics. The study analyzed onomatopoeia in western comics of DC and Marvel using Peircean semiotics. The data was a scene from *Batman: The Killing Joke* where, in the image, Batman can be seen choking the Joker while he is laughing with the background of lights from the police car's headlight and siren getting nearer to the them both. The writer was not only analyzing the words and sentences in the scene, but also the meaning behind the image itself. The conclusion of this study reveals the significance of onomatopoeia in comics

because they are giving dynamic setting in static image and portraying sound in the real world. Another research in semiotic done by Ranjan in 2010 titled *Science of Semiotic Usage in Advertisements and Consumer's Perception* questioned how the advertisement could construct and deconstruct the perception of customers of their product by using advertisements. The research was done by using Saussure and Peirce semiotics which concluded that advertisement contextualizes the ideological of the customers and the fashionable world via preferred styles, body aesthetics or social identifications.

There are also a previous research about Islam representation in 2002 titled *Islam and West: Testing the 'The Clash of Civilization' Thesis* by Inglehart and Norris which denied the Samuel P. Huntington's thesis claimed that Islamic and non-Islamic public have different value because of difference in culture. But this research found a failure in Huntington's thesis in which concerns the issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization. The cultural difference separating Islam from the West involves Eros far more than Demos. Different from the first one, the previous research about Muslim's representation in 2012 titled *The Media and Muslims in the UK* done by Sian, Law, and Sayyid provides analysis of Muslim's representation written on 68 news items concerning Muslim in British press, specifically *The Sun, Daily Mail, The Independent,* and *The Guardian* by.using critical discourse analysis. The result that *The Sun, Daily Mail,* and *The Independent* use the term 'us' and 'them' to construct the Muslims as outsider while *The Guardian* is more fair, critical and balance. *The Guardian* even actively

challenges the disproportional level of discrimination against Muslims in the British press.

Writer also conducted research about Muslim's portrayal and semiotics in comics but different from the previous studies, writer took samples from The Muslim Show comic strip and analyzed it using Barthes' semiotic theory, uncovering the 'conventional', 'value', and 'association' in the level of denotation and connotation to reveal the Muslim portrayal in the samples and to seek the act of protest against anti-Muslim prejudice, as the comic is made by a Muslim who lives in a western community.

1.2. Problem of the Study

How Muslim is being portrayed in The Muslim Show Strip Comic?

1.3. Scope of the Study

In this study the writer only focused on analyzing the portrayal of Muslim in The Muslim Show Comic Strip.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to reveal how Muslim is being portrayed in The Muslim Show Strip Comic.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to give contribution for those who are interested in semiotics in literary works, especially for student of English literature study program. Hopefully, by reading this study the reader could have better understanding about semiotics and the related theory.