

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Representation

The concept of representation is important to connect between the meaning and language. People use language as a way to communicate, to deliver a message, to pass thought to other people; and the language can be done in verbal or non-verbal way. Therefore, it is essential to reveal the meaning behind the language which is produced and exchanged between people.

Representation has two systems. The first system is carried inside each person's head which all the objects, people and events are correlated in a sort of concept called *mental representation* (Hall, 1997, p. 17). The second system is representation is the *language*, because without a language one cannot share his/her thought which is still an abstract mental conceptual. Therefore, to translate the abstract idea into a certain words, sound, or images, one should undergo the process in the language (Hall, 1997, p. 18).

There are three approaches in explaining the representation. The first is *reflective approach* by which the meaning is thought in the object, person, idea, or event in the real world; meaning it is reflecting or imitating something in the world which is called 'mimetic'. The signs of this approach are related to the shape and texture which they represent (Hall, 1997, p. 24). The second is *intentional approach*. Different from the first one, this approach argues that each person has their own unique meanings in language. The third approach is called *constructionist approach* which differentiates between the material world and

symbolic practices. This approach suggests that social actors are the one who constructs the meaning by using their culture, linguistic, and other representational system (Hall, 1997, p. 25).

## 2.2. Muslim Representation in Media

Before explaining about Muslim representation in Media, we should go back to when the time western civilization –European – got oppressed by the spread of Islam in Spain, France, and Balkans, after their first contact in Damascus and Egypt and lost their holy city of Jerusalem. The encounter made Europe saw Islam as a challenge and threat that disturb the stability (Esposito, 1994). In response, an important figure named St. John of Damascus set an anti-Muslim discourse at that time. Consequently, Europe's Christian elite began the long history of codifying what might be described as its subjectively informed scholarship about Islam and Muhammad (Allen, 2010, p.27). Also, the Byzantine Empire called on entire European Christian kingdom to unite and form a 'militaristic pilgrimage' what is known as the Crusaders. In the process, however, the Crusaders not only killed the Muslims but also Jews as the Vatican also labeled them as heretical. Even so, the Vatican used the threat of Muslim armies as scapegoat for fueling the motives to fight the Muslims so they could wage the war and reflecting the Crusaders as the army that what will bring unity to Europe.

Contrast to the period of Crusader, the period of colonialism saw Islam and Muslim as an inferior, subordinate tradition, and unable to keep up with the

European values of truth. Ahmed (1999) said that Islam and Muslim is a civilization doomed to barbarism and backwardness for ever (Allen, 2010, p.33).

Muslim representation has a very close relation to the Islamophobia. A report entitled *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all: report of the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia* (Runnymede Report for short) is highly influencing how people see this phenomenon and also brought it into recognition to the public and political. The report defined Islamophobia as ‘shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike or most Muslims (Allen, 2010, p.3-4). It is seen as a model for the research which constructs the understanding of Islamophobia.

The tragedy of 9/11 was consequently bringing unfortunate representation for the Muslim. Since the tragedy, the acknowledgement of Islamophobia has been far more increased than ever before (Allen, 2010, p.83). As Muslim communities in UK are the second largest faith communities in the Europe, they are also easily recognized with their traditional Islamic attire. This ‘difference’ of Muslims in the land of Britain raised the notions of otherness and inferiority; This otherness and inferiority, plus 9/11 event as the catalyst, will in turn create negative visualization over the Muslim communities (Werbner & Modood, 1997). As result, the Muslims are often seen as a threat, dangerous and as terrorists warring the West. In one of the article of *Manchester Evening News* titled ‘A Cultural Divide Breeds Suspicion’ clearly showed the image of Osama bin Laden in front of the newspaper, giving interpretation of how the Muslims that are living

close are similar to this man, creating stereotype for the people into viewing “all the Muslims are the same” (as cited in Allen, 2010, p.86). Furthermore, Islamic Human Rights Commission claimed there are about 674 attack on Muslims were recorded post 9/11, ranging from psychological harassment to physical violence and material damage (Islamic Human Rights Commission. 2002). From the articles and reports above, it can be concluded that representation of Muslims in media is often described as a negative group and is given bad interpretation towards all Muslims.

### 2.3. Media

Media is one way to simply communicate to each other or even to shout out ideas and opinions to the public. Television, radio, and print advertising could encourage or persuade people. New developments in the technological world have made the internet an innovative way for individuals and families to communicate easier than before. Social media networks have created a phenomenon on the internet that has gained popularity over the last decade. People use social media sites such as Facebook to share and to post moments of what they are doing at any given time (Sponcil, 2012).

Printed media such as newspaper uses paper as the medium, layers of sheets are stacked together and folded to make it cheap and fast in process and in deliver news while tabloid, catalogue and magazine usually uses more expensive papers that stapled together and formed into book, making it more durable than

newspapers. Electronic media such as Radio, instead of printed words, deliver message to the listener from the broadcast station by radio-wave and received by the receiver antenna that turns into sound. Television, however, not only produces sounds but also provides images the viewer can see. Also there are internet media which is very popular these days, as the news and information could be received faster than ever before.

From publishing dairy blogs into reviewing a hot topic at the moment, media have functions to relay messages, to give knowledge, and to deliver information from one to another. By this, the article in *Journalism Quarterly* argues about the media being carefully used for social control and distributing knowledge by both public and private sector (Donohue, 1994). All media, however 'realistic' it is, are not simply recording an event, but rather, making an infinite number of representation of the event (Chandler, 2007, p.67).

In the era of digital, comics which usually published in printed media could also be digitized and be put on the internet. With the popularity and interactivity offered by the Internet and World Wide Web, media organizations see the Web as a medium they must conquer if they are going to survive (Quint, 2001).

#### 2.4. Comic

Illustration which considered as comics were arguably published in 1780 in a satirical magazine (in which the first recorded examples of “speech balloon” are seen), but most agree the true comics began at May 5, 1895 in the New York *World*. The single-panel humor cartoon was illustrating young hooligans, The Yellow Kid, which was the most popular fictional characters at that times (Petty, 2006). In the earliest age, all of the comic strips were humorous until they developed over time and the writers realized the genres can be expanded and added more various plots into the stories.

Comic definition itself has gone through time to time of changing. McCloud in his book suggest that comic is an art-form which could be used as a medium to hold any number of idea in any number of images (McCloud 1993) while Hayman and Pratt argued that comic is a juxtaposed pictures which have a narrative with or without texts (Hayman and Pratt 2005, 423). Their definitions of comics as narrative pictures, however, got critics from Meskin in his *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* which argued that pictures are not necessary for comics and the notion of juxtaposition made the definition too broad, and comics do not need to be narrative, even Some have argued that if the best definition of comics thus far has that many holes in it (Meskin, 2007).

In conscious comparison between cartoon and photographic of the same image, people would judge the photographic image would be more realistic, but at the same time people would be much more easily to recognize an image in

cartoon as of its simplicity in drawing rather than the photographic image (Chandler, 2007, p.67).

#### 2.4.1. Comic Formats

In term of formats, comic has several different of it. According to *prezi.com*, there are six types of formats: 1.) Comic Strip, a short work of comics originated from the newspaper. 2.) Dailies, comic strip which runs 6 days a week in the comic section in a newspaper. 3.) Gag/Editorial cartoon, usually single-panel comics. 4.) Comic book, a periodical, normally thin and stapled together comic. 5.) Graphic novel, hard to pin down, but usually refers to self-contained, book-length form. 6.) Webcomic, not restricted by style or size, this comic appears on Web ([www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)).

#### 2.4.2. Elements in Comics

Comic is widely known for the use of panels, which separates each pictures into one story. There are special terms used in the layout of the comic, such as *Gutter*, means the space between the panels. *Tier*, a single row of panels. *Splash*, a large, often full page, image used in the introduction of the comic story. *Spread*, an image that spans in two or more page.

Caption is another element of comics, it is a section where words appear in a box separated from the rest of the panel or page, usually to give voice to a narrator but can sometimes used for the characters' thoughts or dialogues. The other element is Speech balloon that is used as an indicator of speech contained the

characters' dialogue, the tail of the balloon is indicating which character is speaking and it is often called as pointer. The speech balloon is usually round-shaped, but can also be in the shape of rectangle or even jaggy shape, it depends to the manner and action while the character is speaking. Furthermore, there are also an element called thought bubble, an object used to contain characters' thought, the pointer is usually in the shape of bubbles, hence the name.

The sound effect also part of the comics, words that indicate sound in the comic panel such as 'POW', 'BANG', or 'WHAM'. The last element of comics is called Emanata, it is a text or icon that appears frequently above the characters' head representing what the characters' are thinking, for example: the question mark (?) to indicate confusion, light bulb to indicate an idea, or a row of 'zzz' to indicate that the character is sleeping (<http://www.readwritethink.org>).

#### 2.4.3. History of Comics

Based on *A Brief History of Comic Books* from Heritage Auction Gallery by John Petty development was divided into 5 stages: Golden Age, Atomic Age, Silver Age, Bronze Age, and Modern Age. Most agree that Golden Age started from 1938 and ended at 1949, heavily influenced with the theme of action after the first publication of *ACTION COMICS #1* in which marked the beginning of Golden Age. The Atomic Age started in 1949, marked by many trends on crime stories or horror themed comics. In Silver Age (1956-1970), many writers began to make comics about science fiction. Also, the writers of superheroes from the Golden Age began to collaborate their works, resulting into series which



contained many superheroes to gather, to team up and to fight together; For example, Justice League of America, X-Men or Fantastic Four. Many arguments were stated to define the end of Silver Age, for many, however, the Silver Age ended when Gwen Stacy (Spider-Man's girlfriend) was killed. That was the first time death was real in comics and "Happily ever after" was no longer a guarantee in the end of the story. After it, comic writers came with new ideas that are relevant with the current issues such as drugs, poverty, pollution, and racism. These transformations of comics theme marked the Bronze Age (1970-1980) of comics. Finally, history of comics came to Modern Age which started from 1980 to present. Comic producers started to think of how their product could reach the readers wider and faster than ever. This stage marked by how multiple of media were used in order to publish comics. The result that now we could find comics in various formats from traditional printed comic books, graphic novel, to web-based comics.

These days, comics are more diverse than it was ever been. Readers could find comics to fit their taste, including crime, horror, superheroes, romance, even the current issues. The web comic became popular after the significant use of internet by people right now. Writers and publishers see this chance and competing with each other, not only to gain popularity but also to share ideas and expression contained in their comics. The multimedia medium is thereafter the most effective ways to share and publish the comics.

## 2.5. Semiotic

Semiotics could be found all around us and yet, in the same time, nowhere at certain specific. It presents itself in psychology, sociology, anthropology, in cognitive science such as philosophy and epistemology, linguistics and even the science of communication (Porcar, 2011). It is concerned as how signs (languages, images, objects) could represent meanings and could generate our senses in order to comprehend its meanings. In term of visual images, semiotics plays role in the study of symbolism in which an image or object depicts a hidden meaning behind it. The meaning behind images or objects could be quite unique to different societies due to different cultures in the world resulting a complex inter-relationships and understanding between the individual whom seen the images or objects (Curtin,2011). Danesi (as cited from Priyambodo, 2015, p.16) declared that semiotic study has been spread in all aspect of human life, such as study of language, eye contact, gesture, visual communication, media, myth, narratives, advertising, and even literary works.

A sign is words, images, or objects which used to refer something else (Eco, 1976). For example, a sign we could find on the streets like a stop sign, no park sign, or icons in our computer like save icon, undo icon, and bold icon. Meanwhile, signifying process is how the meaning of a sign is produced, giving an image or an attribute in order to relate it with the meaning. More importantly, the sign is heavily influenced by the cultural ideas we have learned (Potts 1996, 21). So each society and culture has their own unique sign and meaning.

Saussure divided signs into two parts, those are 'signifier' and 'signified', and the relation between them is called 'signification'. The signifier is the form of the sign itself while the signified is the concept or the meaning it refers (Saussure. 1983). Saussure also suggested that sign is arbitrary, which means the signifier has no connection whatsoever to the signified. Sound of word has nothing to do to what it denotes, for example, the word 'tree' has nothing related to the tree itself (Chandler, 2007, p.22).

Charles Sanders Peirce was also studying about signs and 'semiology'. He developed the sign in form of three-part model consisting of: 'representament' the form which the sign takes, 'interpretant' the sense made of the sign, and 'object' something beyond the sign to which it refers (Peirce. 1931). Within those models, Peirce also adopted three modes to distinguish the form of signs which are consisted of: 'symbol' a mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified which relationship must be agreed upon and learned, 'icon' a mode in which the signifier is being similar in possessing some of its qualities, and 'index' a mode in which the signifier which link can be observed or inferred (Bruss 1978).

#### 2.4.1. Roland Barthes

One of the most influential theorists of the way visual images transmit meanings was Roland Barthes, a French literary theorist and semiotician. Barthes (as cited in Chandler, 2002, p.142) divided meaning of signs into two, denoted meaning and connoted meaning. Denoted meaning refers to what already shown

in the image, often refers to 'literal' or 'obvious' meaning of a sign, whereas an art historian named Erwin Panofsky even described that denotation is a visual represent which image can be recognized by all viewers from any culture and any time (Panofsky, 1970). Barthes argued that there are meanings at deeper level of rather literal level of denotation; that is connotation. As Fiske stated the denotation is what is photographed and the connotation is how it is photographed (Fiske, 1982).

Further analysis by Barthes concluded that denotation is not the first meaning, it just happens to be appeared so. In other word, denotation is just another connotation and the connotation is producing the illusion of denotation. This process is of creating meaning is not ideological but rather a way to explain or create the 'natural' meaning of the sign itself (Barthes, 1974). Silverman also stated that when an individual first learn a denotation, that very individual already gained knowledge and accept the ideology of dominant connotation at the same time (Silverman, 1983).

Barthes also suggested the order of signification which consists of denotation as the first-order of signification, involving signifier and signified at the level. The second-order of signification is connotative which involve the denotative as its signifier and additional signified which could lead into another connotative, this create a chain level of analysis where the signifier and the signified depends on which level it operates (Barthes, 1977). In closer look, Barthes argues there is a connotation called *myth*. This connotation is the result of combination between the first and second-orders of signification to produce an

ideology which is dominant in that time which by Fiske & Hatley (1978) and O'Sullivan (1994) called it as the third-order of signification.

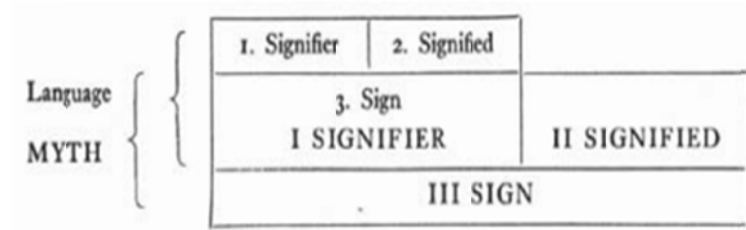


Figure 2.1.

In one of his famous analysis in his essay 'Myth Today' Barthes critically described how the young Negro in the image looks faithful in serving the France great Empire without any discrimination in the first piece then Barthes continued by explaining about how myth works after the first explanation. The image of young Negro described became different, from loyal and indiscriminate transformed into condemnation of the saluting Negro by French imperialism (Barthes, 1987).

Barthes also suggested three models of sign which consist of: 'conventional', 'value', and 'association' (Chandler, 2007, p.17). Firstly, conventional is a model of sign that shows the relation between the signifier and signified. It depends on the society and culture, means that people have to learn to know the meaning of sign, for example numbers and alphabets. Secondly, value is a model of sign which has a clear correlation between sign and other sign, such as metaphors or sound effect. Thirdly, association is a model of sign where people

can define the correlation between the signifier and signified by his or her sense of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, or tasting something, for example voices, views, heat, sweets, or smells.

## 2.5. The Muslim Show

Produced by B'Douin Publishing (FRANCE) and directed by Norédine Allam, famous French author known and recognized for his work for M6 Interactions and Jules Verne Museum. He left school at 17 year-old to become a cartoonist. In the process, he created in Amiens on 2HB studio will initially specialize in graffiti. The studio gained a quick successes and offers of business partnerships. Over a hundred of graffiti and murals are made throughout France. He became one of the leading figures of the emerging culture of neighborhoods and participated in numerous national conferences. In 1999, he was working on the colors of *Les poussières de l'infini* and became a draftsman for comics taken from the TV series *Léa Parker* on M6. Also at M6 Editions, he scripted the *Maïsha Africa* series with Greg Blondin drawing, tracing the humanitarian experience of the association of Sonia Rolland's "Maïsha Africa" ([www.bedetheque.com](http://www.bedetheque.com). 2013). In 2006, under his leadership, the studio 2HB was chosen for the 33 Asterix albums in the framework of the project "great collection" ([bd.amiens.com](http://bd.amiens.com). 2013). Finally in 2009, he created *The Muslim Show* series with Greg Blondin and Karim Allam ([www.europe1.fr](http://www.europe1.fr). 2014).

This comic is translated by Tukha Al-Jibouri, Hanae Chelly, Mohamed Ali into 13 languages including English, Indonesian, Italy, Spanish, Russian,

Japanese, and China. This comic strip started on August 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 on Facebook as a fanpage which now has 720,979 likes. Unlike many other comics or caricatures in Europe, The Muslim Show comic strip puts its view in Muslims' point of view; 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. Furthermore, it often illustrates satires of how western media put false information about Muslims.

There was a significant change to the characters that appeared in the comics which were used to be colorful. in 6 September 2015, Allam, the author of The Muslim Show series announced publicly in BDouin website that he would change his style of drawing into black silhouettes due to his mistakes of portraying living beings 'realistically' which is prohibited in Islam ([www.le-bdouin.com](http://www.le-bdouin.com), 2015.)

## 2.6. Theoretical Framework

This research is conducted in order to reveal Muslim portrayal in the Muslim show comic. The portrayal can be seen through analysis by using semiotics concepts of Roland Barthes on the signifiers (pictures, dialogues and colors based on 'conventional', 'value', and 'association'). Then the signifiers that indicate Muslim portrayal will be analyzed and elaborated using Roland Barthes' theory of Semiotics.