ISLAMOPHOBIA IN S. K. ALI'S *LOVE FROM A TO Z*

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Abstrak

Islamofobia telah menjadi isu umum dalam perbincangan sekarang ini. Islamofobia merupakan sikap negatif terhadap Islam yang memungkinkan mengarah pada diskriminasi ataupun tindakan kekerasan lainnya terhadap para Muslim berdasarkan rasa benci, takut, maupun superioritas atas Muslim sebagai kelompok minoritas. Islamofobia tidak hanya dapat ditemukan di kehidupan nyata tetapi juga sering kali direpresentasikan melalui karya-karya fiksi, terutama novel. Penelitian bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana Islamofobia digambarkan dalam novel *Love from A to Z* karya S. K. Ali menggunakan konsep Islamophobia sebagai rasisme budaya sekaligus untuk mengungkap bagaimana Zayneb, sebagai korban dari Islamofobia, menanggapi Islamofobia menggunakan model pengembangan identitas minoritas oleh Atkinson dkk. Islamofobia sebagai rasisme budaya digambarkan melalui isu busana Muslim, isu anti-Arab, dan merendahkan nilai Islam. Dalam menanggapi Islamofobia, Zayneb mengembangkan tahapan identitas minoritas dengan mencela diri sendiri, menjadi sadar dan kecewa akan Islamofobia, membela diri, dan terlibat dalam gerakan untuk melawan Islamofobia.
Kata Kunci: rasisme budaya, Islamofobia, minoritas, Muslim

Abstract

Islamophobia has been a common issue in today's discourse. It is a negative attitude towards Islam that possibly leads to discrimination or other violent actions against Muslims based on a feeling of hatred, fear, or superiority over Muslims as a minority group. Islamophobia is not only able to be found in real life but also is occasionally represented through fictional works, especially a novel. This study aims to describe how Islamophobia is portrayed in S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z* using the concept of Islamophobia as cultural racism and to reveal how Zayneb, as the victim of Islamophobia, responds to Islamophobia using a minority identity development model by Atkinson et al. Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism is portrayed by presenting Muslim attire issue, anti-Arab issue, and disdaining value of Islam. In response to Islamophobia, Zayneb develops stages of minority identity by self-deprecating, becoming aware and upset about Islamophobia, standing up, and involving in a movement to fight back against Islamophobia.
Keywords: cultural racism, Islamophobia, minority, Muslims

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is a common issue nowadays, especially in countries with Islam as a minority religion, such as American and European countries. It is not a recent issue yet it has remained to exist a long time ago. Allen stated that the term Islamophobia has a recent history when it is used to indicate an attitude of non-acceptance and discrimination against the population of the Muslim community in the "West" which is in the United Kingdom around the late 1980s or the early 1990s (Lopez, 2011). Islamophobia may be defined as a non-acceptance attitude towards Islam, groups of Muslims, and individuals of Muslims based on stereotypes and prejudices (Stolz, 2005). Considering the statements above, Islamophobia is not only feelings of hatred and fear of Islam or Muslims but is also potentially be able to lead to negative actions such as discrimination and violence directed against Muslims. Moreover, as Islam is associated with strong terrorist activities, Muslims, Arabs, and even people whose name sounds like Muslims often become a target of discrimination (Alalawi, 2015)

Various things are indicated as the cause of Islamophobia. Some of the causes are the 9/11 incident or the WTC tragedy in New York, the 7/7 attack in London, honor killing by people of Muslim majority countries and other violent events in the name of Islam leading people to assume and have negative stereotyping of Islam as not a good religion. Islam is portrayed as a religion and culture that implement violent, lunatic, and uncivilized values due to the 7/7 attack (Shaw, 2012). GhaneaBassiri argued that most Americans tend to identify Islam with intolerance, misogyny, exclusivism, and coercion (Ernst, 2013).

The phenomenon of Islamophobia is not only able to be seen in real life but is also depicted in any social media, movies, or literary works. For instance, one of the popular Netflix original series, *Elite* (2018), portrays a scene of Nadia, a Muslim character, who removes her hijab and then she goes to the club to drink alcohol and has sex with her white boyfriend. By representing a Muslim character as described above, could be an example of Islamophobia by showing a sign of rejection of Islam values and adopting Western freedom.

In literary works, there is a novel portraying Islamophobia entitled *Love from A to Z*. The author of this novel is S. K. Ali. She became a finalist for the 2018 Morris Award after writing her previous novel, *Saints and Misfits*. Her debut novel leads her to win critical acclaim for portraying an unapologetic Muslim American teen's life. The novel is about a multiracial—Pakistani, Guyanese, and Trinidadian—Muslim young girl named Zayneb Malik who lives in Indiana, USA. As a minority, she often gets unfair treatment from people, especially one of her teachers in her class, and is targeted to discrimination and hatred.

Furthermore, Islamophobia is an interesting issue. Although it has been discussed in several studies, none of them studies Islamophobia in *Love from A to Z*. There is a study about Islamophobia in literary works as well that is written by Widjayanti (2017). Yet it analyzed Islamophobia in an English-translated French novel entitled *The Age of Reinvention* written by Karine Tuils. This study revealed that the author of the novel tends to experience Islamophobia by using some ironies to portray Muslims through the characters as fatalist and immoral as well as portraying Islam as an uncivilized religion, barbaric, supportive of terrorism, and irrational in the novel.

Many researchers believe that Islamophobia is rooted in racism. Since Islamophobia occurs from prejudices or stereotypes based on racial groups perceive another certain racial group that has cultural differences, it is believed that Islamophobia is a new type of cultural racism. Islamophobia as cultural racism has actually been discussed by Yel (2021) in his article *Islamophobia as Cultural Racism: The Case of Islamic Attire in Turkey*. This article explained that misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims in Turkey is often demonstrated by Turkish media that leads into Islamophobia between the secular and the traditionalist groups in Turkish society. The media especially demonstrate the misrepresentation by making Islam invisible or disparaging Muslims' attire, ways of living, style, and behavior when portraying Muslims in various media mass forms.

There are also several studies investigating how people, especially victims, respond to Islamophobia. One of the research regarding response to Islamophobia is *Veiled Muslim Women's Strategies in Response to Islamophobia in Paris* by Najib & Hopkins (2019). It explored the particular strategies in order to avoid unfair treatment by the victims of Islamophobia. It used qualitative interviews to get the results. The results showed three main strategies in terms of political and feminist geographies of Muslim women in response to Islamophobia.

Therefore, it is interesting to conduct research on Islamophobia in a literary work–in this case in *Love from A to Z*. In conducting this study related to the background of the study, this paper argues that Islamophobia is depicted in S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z* as a form of cultural racism and Zayneb, the main character in the novel that is acknowledged as a minority and a victim of Islamophobia, responds to Islamophobia by developing several stages of minority identity development. This study is expected to be significant to enrich the writer's and readers' understanding of the phenomenon called Islamophobia portrayed in literary works. This study is also expected to provide new insight and reference for the next research about the Islamophobia issue, especially in literary fields.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is constructed from two words, Islam and phobia, which literally means fear or dislike or hatred of Islam. A broader meaning of Islamophobia has been defined by several researchers. According to Imhoff & Recker (2012), Islamophobia is prejudiced views of Islam that potentially lead to negative actions against Muslims. Similar to Imhoff and Reckker, Moosavi (2015) referred to Islamophobia as stereotypes that are developed generally about Islam and/or Muslims that can have an impact on discriminating against or harassing Muslims. Meanwhile, Bleich (2011) stated that Islamophobia is indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directly including aversion, jealousy, suspicion, disdain, anxiety,

rejection, contempt, fear, disgust, anger, and hostility pointed toward Islam or Muslims.

There are many existing behaviors and forms of Islamophobia that can be identified. Those behaviors and forms are acknowledged as actions of Islamophobia that can be classified into several categories. Sayyid (2014) explained five main clusters of Islamophobia as follows: attacking on people perceived to be Muslims, attacking on mosque or other Muslims related properties, intimidating Muslims or people who are friendly to Muslims, treating Muslims unfairly in institutional settings, and disdaining Islam and/or Muslims in the public domain.

The forms of Islamophobia could occur in a variety of ways. It could be carried out by individuals or groups of people. The forms of Islamophobia could be based on the uninspected assumptions and beliefs in any society in terms of opinion, policies, or even becoming the basis of state regulations and interventions against Islam and Muslims (Sayyid, 2014). The forms of Islamophobia also could be spoken out through several media such as the internet, magazines, newspaper, etc. either in factual or fictional projects (Sayyid, 2014).

Islamophobia has multiple conceptual forms as explained by Grosfoguel (2012). First, Islamophobia is categorized as a form of cultural racism. It is a cultural superiority attitude towards a group of people framed in terms of the inferior habits, beliefs, behavior, or values of a group of people. It is in line with Modood's statement that Islamophobia may be best interpreted as a form of cultural racism due to the rejection and discrimination towards Muslims because of their identifier of not being white and their perceived culture (Lopez, 2011).

Second, Islamophobia is one the forms of orientalism. According to Said, orientalism is a term that comprises all ideas, thoughts, cultural depictions, reports of the military, and declaration of European and American superiority over the Middle East, especially the Arab or Muslim countries of Northern Africa and the Mediterranean (Haldrup & Koefoed, 2009). As part of the construction of west superiority over Muslims, an argument of cultural racism used against Muslims is Islamic people's patriarchal and sexist abuses of women. This argument aims to defend an accusation of Muslim people's uncivilized and violent values or behavior according to western people.

Third, Islamophobia is an example of epistemic racism. The hegemonic identity politics and epistemic privilege that Western people have led to a superior attitude by downgrading non-Western knowledge and considering the rest of epistemologies and cosmologies as myth, folklore, religion, or culture below the status of philosophy and science. This attitude leads to epistemic racism that can produce orientalism about Islam due to their belief that Muslim thinkers are inferior compared to Western/Christian thinkers.

Last, Islamophobia as Eurocentric social science. Several European humanists and scholars have demonstrated that Islamic knowledge is inferior to the West since the 16th century. They considered that Islam cannot be compared to the superiority of Western values because Islam values are lack of individuality, rationality, and science. In addition, Islam is regarded as an irrational doctrine, and Muslims are considered to be irrational and fatalist people. Thus, it is concluded that any serious knowledge cannot come from Muslims.

Minority Identity Development

The minority identity development model has been utilized by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue to elaborate on the developmental process of an individual that they may experience as part of a minority group in developing their identity (Viladrich & Loue, 2009:7). It establishes five stages of development that are experienced by discriminated or oppressed people when struggling to conceive themselves regarding their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between two cultures (Arumugham, 2018).

Those five stages are as follows: first, conformity. At this stage, people of a minority group develop attitudes of self-deprecating toward self, group-depreciating toward others of the same minority, discriminatory or neutral toward others of different minorities, and appreciative towards the dominant group. During the second stage, dissonance, people of a minority group are in internal conflicts that challenge their current attitudes. They begin to be aware of the conflict between self-depreciation and appreciation, group depreciation and appreciation, and feel the same way towards other oppressed groups. The third stage is resistance and immersion. People of a minority group appreciate themselves and their minority group, feel empathy for other minority experiences and have a culture-centric perspective for them while developing a deprecatory attitude towards the dominant group. In the next stage, introspection, people of a minority group become more concerned with self-appreciation, assertive appreciation of the minority group, the ethnocentric basis for judging other minority groups, as well as dominant groups-depreciation. The final stage is synergetic articulation and awareness. During this stage, people of a minority group become more appreciative towards themselves, their own minority

group and other minority groups, and also selective in appreciating the dominant group.

METHOD

This is a literary study using post-colonial approach that develops a discussion of Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism using the concept of multiple forms Islamophobia issued by Grosfoguel (2012) consisting of Islamophobia as cultural racism, orientalism, epistemic racism, and Eurocentric social science. This study also contains a minority identity development model constructed by Atkinson et al. (1979) to reveal how the main character as a minority in the novel responds to Islamophobia. The data of this study are taken from written primary data. The data are narrations, statements, monologues, or dialogues from *Love from A to Z* novel by S. K. Ali. This novel is the first edition published by Salaam Reads in 2019 in New York and consists of 342 pages. This study also uses references such as articles, books, or other sources of information regarding the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

The data for this study are collected by essentially several steps to support the analysis. The first step is close reading *Love from A to Z* novel repeatedly and intensively to understand the contents of the novel. Second, highlighting or labelling narrations, statements, monologues, or dialogues related to the research problems. Last, categorizing the data based on the forms of Islamophobia and classifying Zayneb's responses to Islamophobia according to the minority identity development model. The data are analyzed using the following steps after being collected. First, interpreting the data from *Love from A to Z* novel based on the concepts of Islamophobia and the minority identity development model. Second, finding out references from articles or books regarding the study examined to support the analysis. Third, analyzing the data from *Love from A to Z* novel and classifying the data based on the multiple forms of Islamophobia and resistance strategies. Last, concluding the data analysis of this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis demonstrate two main discussions which are the portrayal of Islamophobia in S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z* and the main character's responses to Islamophobia. These two main discussions are based on the focus of the study. The analysis is presented as follows.

1. The Portrayal of Islamophobia

Muslims Attire Issue

Islamic people are often associated with several identifiers such as men with beard and women with their hijab or headscarf, including in America. American Muslim women who wear hijab are considered that they express their Muslim identity (Haddad, 2007). Who would have thought that Muslim attire especially Islamic women's clothing has become one of the controversial topics that causes conflicts among Muslims, and between Muslims and non-Muslims (Abraham, 2007).

In S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z*, there are several portrayals of Muslims clothing issues, especially the hijab that leads to Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism. One of the portrayals is demonstrated through the narration from Zayneb's point of view in the situation of facing a character called the Hateful Woman in the following quotation.

> *She swore under her breath when she saw me. Hijabi me. Muslim me, on an airplane.* (p. 4).

The quotation above as an indicator that a character called the Hateful Woman experiences Islamophobia. The narration is the situation when Zayneb is on the plane transiting in London on the way to Qatar. She sits next to a woman called the Hateful Woman. At the very first time, the Hateful Woman has obviously shown that she hates seeing and being near a Muslim. Her hatred is indicated by showing discomfort and bad attitudes when seeing Zayneb wearing a hijab, since a hijab is associated as a religious symbol and such a dressing culture of Islam.

As we know, Muslims attire has been a common discourse globally, especially in western countries. One of the examples is the French government agreed on an internationally controversial hijab ban worn by Muslim women who attend public schools in 2004 (Hamdan, 2007). The hatred or disagreement against Islam and anything related to Islam, especially Muslim attire, occurred in several countries becomes a challenge for Muslims. That situation is also similar to a portrayal of Zayneb's situation in the novel when Zayneb visiting her aunty in Doha, Qatar.

> *"As I told you yesterday, your niece needs to have proper swimwear to use the pool here."*
>
> *"Yes, of course!" She continued smiling. "And voila, today she is not wearing cotton leggings or a T-shirt. Instead, it's spandex, same as my swimsuit, same as yours when you swim, Marc."*
>
> *"We have rules, Natasha." He put his hands on his hips. "This is a condominium complex catering to expat who like certain standards." (p. 152).*

The phrase 'proper swimwear' that Zayneb needs to wear indicates how Marc, the pool guard, forbids Zayneb to wear *burkini*—swim scarf attached and a zippered cap covering her hair—which is a swimsuit that commonly used by Muslim women to swim. The phrase 'expat who like certain standards' reflects non-Muslim or western people not originally coming from Qatar that is not fond of being around Muslims. They perceives attitudes of hatred towards Zayneb who wear Muslim attire while swimming.

The situation faced Zayneb above is a form of discrimination towards a Muslim in a public place. The characteristic to ban on alleged religious symbol, while prevailing to all religions, is an impeccable example of indirect discrimination that is aimed at minority religions (Abraham, 2007). The prohibition for Zayneb to swim wearing the *burkini* from the non-Muslim people then is considered as indirect discrimination based on hatred of Islam or known as Islamophobia.

Anti-Arab Issue

Muslims are associated with the people of Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and Islamophobia is associated with anti-Black, anti-Arab, and anti-South Asian racism in Britain as well as many people in the United States associate Islam with African-Americans and Arabs of all ethnicities (Grosfoguel, 2012). Regarding the statement above, Islamophobia is associated with anti-Arab racism in several western countries. Thus, anti-Arab racism represented by some characters in the novel could be considered as a form of Islamophobia.

> *When she saw the Arabic I wrote in you, Marvels and Oddities, she pressed the flight-attendant call button incessantly… "She's threatening me. Writing something about me the whole time."* (p. 26).

This quotation strengthens the Islamophobia that comes from the anti-Arab view indicated by the Hateful Woman. It shows how she fears and feels threatened after recognizing Zayneb writing Arabic words in Zayneb's journal. Her feeling of fear leads her to press a flight-attendant call button in order to be moved and not sit next to Zayneb anymore. Zayneb eventually has been treated unfairly due to the situation. She is accused as a bad person just because she wears a headscarf and writes Arabic words without even having a chance to explain the truth while the Hateful Woman is believed with ease and moved to the better cabin just because she is white.

The Hateful Woman assumes that Zayneb would like to do something bad to her. This situation causes prejudice and the prejudice leads to injustice for Zayneb.

It is due to the Hateful Woman's accusation that Zayneb is an evil just because she is a Muslim and writes Arabic words. The prejudice comes from today's discourse that Islam is associated with a minority group that undertakes negative actions such as terrorism, violence, and intolerance. This prejudice is often carried out by the majority group of people, especially in Western countries.

Another anti-Arab issue is also perceived through another character named Fencer, Zayneb's teacher. Zayneb, who is described as a Pakistani, Guyanese, and Trinidadian Muslim girl, receives disgraceful treatment and/or discrimination from her teacher as she is the only Muslim in the class. The following quotation can be seen as a confirmation.

> *"Yes, or, to put it more precisely, you can say that it looks like the majority of those countries follow Islam. Anything else? Zee-naab?"* (p. 8).

The way Fencer pronounces Zayneb's name with *Zee-nab* instead of pronouncing it correctly with *Zay-nub* although Zayneb has reminded him many times, clearly explains how he hates anything related to Islam. As we know that 'Zayneb' is an Arabic name and mostly used by Muslims. Therefore, Fencer intentionally mocks her in front of her classmates by mispronouncing Zayneb's name since it is from Arabic words to intimidate Zayneb as she is the only Muslim attending his class.

Since Islam is associated with strong terrorist activities, Muslims; Arabs; and even people whose name sounds like Muslims often become a target of discrimination (Alalawi, 2015). Said (in Grosfoguel, 2012) stated that the new wave of anti-Arab racism related to Islamophobic discourse through cultural racism before and after the 9/11 incident has been based on the long term excessive representation of Arabs as terrorist and violent in newspaper, movies, television, radio, and other Western media. The underlying reason Fencer discriminates, and mocks Zayneb in public is similar to the Hateful Woman that is due to the negative portrayal of Arabs as Muslims causing an anti-Arab view as a part of Islamophobia.

Disdaining Values of Islam and/or Muslims

The cultural superior attitudes of disdaining values or habits or behavior of Muslims as a minority group in the west is considered as a form of Islamophobia. This kind or Islamophobic form is also found in the novel which is portrayed by Fencer. He brings a handout about an honor killing undertaken by the majority of people in Muslim countries in the class discussion. He delivers an argument that makes honor killing become a Muslim

phenomenon. A teacher as an educator that should be a 'safe place' for students, do otherwise instead by being intolerant and showing his Islamophobia. It can be seen in the following quotation.

> *"Sir, we came to the conclusion, with the chart, the certain countries were weaker at upholding women's right."*
>
> *"And was there something that these countries had in common? Come on, people. Someone other than Mike?"*
>
> *"They were all Muslims?" said Neomi, a girl with long blond bangs covering her eyes.*
>
> *"Yes, or, to put it more precisely, you can say that it looks like the majority of those countries follow Islam. Anything else? Zee-naab?"* (p. 8).

The dialogue between Fencer and Zayneb's classmates, Mike and Neomi, above clearly shows the situation of Islamophobia. Fencer's intention by carrying an honor killing topic in the class indicates his hatred towards Islam and Muslims. He has a view that Islam is a strict and violent religion and argues that Islamic people are the same as Eastern countries people who are willing to abuse women and are patriarchal. Muslims are considered inferior to Western people due to the accusation that people of Muslim countries do not have the ability to uphold women's rights compared to people of Western countries.

This view about Islam and Muslims that exists among Western people leads to a point that Islamic people are inferior to Westerners. This can be considered to be the construction of orientalism as well. Orientalist view is based on the attitude of claiming that the West is more progressive while claiming the orient as static or even backward (Shands, 2008). Furthermore, Orient is claimed as unreliable compared to the West, needs to be obedient, and is a threat to the West (Moosavinia et al., 2011). This is along the lines of Fencer's attitude towards Muslims by considering them barbaric and unreliable due to an honor killing that is believed as a Muslim value. The way Fencer intimidates Zayneb and disdains Muslims is to show his superiority towards Muslims.

Another portrayal of Islamophobic form by disdaining Islam value is found in the novel. The novel presents another Islamophobia situation mostly through Fencer and the dialogue between characters. This quotation can be seen as a confirmation.

> *"Can anyone give the class examples of repressive governments?" …"Places where to speak up freely will get you in trouble. Where to*

> *be a woman is to be condemned. Where religious laws, like sharia law, result in stoning and honor killings."*
>
> *"Why did you have to refer to sharia law specifically?"*
>
> *"It's an example. I like to use real-world examples."* (p. 328).

The quotation above shows Fencer's Islamophobic prejudice. His prejudice is that Islam is an irrational religion due to the repressive rules that is often applied by Muslims. For example, the prohibition of free speech and utilizing violence in punishment. This brings us to a conclusion about how white people negatively portray Islam and Muslims. Muslims are considered irrational and fatalist people who obey repressive religious laws. It also indicates an accusation of Islam as a doctrine of unity that has to be obeyed by people who are following Islam which is not in accordance with the Eurocentric perspective.

Moreover, Fencer also regards Islamic laws and Islamic people as inferior to European/Western laws and Western people. He rejects mentioning European repressive laws due to a feeling of superiority and mentions sharia laws specifically. His accusation is Islam cannot be compared to Western values superiority due to Islamic people's lack of rationality, science, and individuality.

2. Response to Islamophobia

Social discrimination or intolerance usually can occur due to prejudice and or the feeling of superiority from people of any majority group. It is also usually subjected to minority groups or groups that are different in terms of illness, disability, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other diversity (Bhugra, 2016). The discrimination or unfair treatment that is experienced by people of a minority group will definitely cause an impact on them. To relieve the impacts of discrimination, people tend to undertake something as a response to injustice. One of the examples is Zayneb, the multiracial Muslim girl, the main character in S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z*.

As a Muslim, which is a minority group in the United States, Zayneb faces challenges in carrying her belief in the form of Islamophobia by other people. One of them includes her teacher in the class named Fencer. In analyzing Zayneb's response to Islamophobia, this study uses Atkinson et al.'s minority identity development model. This model contains five stages of minority identity development, conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and synergetic articulation and awareness. It will explain situations that are developed by

Zayneb in response to Islamophobia in this novel as though at two stages of the minority identity development model.

Being a Muslim in the Western country is not quite easy for several Muslims. This can be seen in the novel portraying Zayneb as the multiracial girl who experiences discrimination because she is a Muslim. In response to the hatred and injustice treatment she experienced due to being a Muslim, Zayneb perceives an attitude of self-deprecating and has low self-esteem yet at the same time she begins becoming aware of and upset about a belief in the majority group's judgment about Muslims and how they treat Muslims unfairly. This attitude is developed at the conformity stage. It can be seen in the following quotations.

> *I didn't have to open my mouth or do anything for people to judge me. I just had to be born into a Muslim family and grow up to become a visible member of my community by wrapping a cloth on my head.* (p. 28)

This response to Islamophobia is shown by Zayneb when the incident on the plane. She is accused by the Hateful Woman that she is threatening to do negative things, and makes her treated unfairly just because Zayneb writes Arabic words in her journal. She believes that the underlying reason for this is that she is a Muslim. Zayneb shows a low self-esteem attitude about being Muslim, being the minority. Since the tragic event of 9/11, the Muslim community has been continuously negatively affected (Haniff, 2003). When the incident happened, the flight attendant easily immediately believes in the Hateful Woman and would not like to listen to Zayneb's explanation. The flight attendant immediately believes due to the fact that the Hateful Woman is white and Zayneb is a multiracial Muslim wearing hijab who is often stereotyped and portrayed as a criminal, a terrorist, etc.

> *If I had been that white, blond girl with a lap full of a journal, a pen, headphones, and a coffee in my hand, would Hateful Woman have slammed her carry-on so hard above me? Would she have excused the time I'd taken to get up, thinking of her own daughter or granddaughter and how it took them a while to get their stuff together? Would she have made small talk and gotten to know me a teeny bit? Then would she have smiled fondly at me like the flight attendant walking by the coloring girl had smiled at her right now?* (p. 29).

Another Zayneb's response to Islamophobia is shown through the quotation above. It shows how Zayneb

feels upset about the white privilege. She acknowledges that being white would be heard more, more respected, treated more kindly, would be seen the same not be seen as 'the others,' and would not be seen as someone who would do bad or negative things the way she as a minority has been seen. The white community is considered superior to other communities, especially the minority Muslim community. The personal injustice treatment, discrimination, and the lack of respect that she receives just because of the fact that she is a Muslim make her feel upset and wrathful. This feeling grown up by Zayneb is considered as the dissonance stage of minority identity development in which conflict of attitude between minority-majority group-appreciating and minority-majority group-deprecating.

In addition, in response to Islamophobia, Zayneb develops attempts to fight against Fencer. She thinks Fencer's actions that always harass Islam and oppress Muslims both at school and in cyberspace are supposed to be stopped. He has to be responsible for what he has done that harms others. It is shown by the following quotation.

> *"I see your use of the word 'sharia' as an addition to the long list of ways you try to negatively portray people of my faith." I stood up. "And I'm not taking it. I exercise my right to speak up freely. And my right to leave a place where I am subjected to discrimination and hatred."* (p. 328).

The quote above shows Zayneb's response to the Islamophobic treatment of Fencer, who often discriminates against Zayneb because of the fact that she is a Muslim. Zayneb responds to Islamophobia by standing up and fighting back. It is an action to deal with the cause of the problem directly (Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Zayneb's resistance is based on feelings of anger and disappointment over the injustice she experienced as a Muslim who is a minority group in the United States. Thus, Zayneb cannot avoid and accept the discrimination she experienced anymore. She decides to stand up and fight back against Islamophobia.

In reaching this stage of willing to fight back against the injustice she has experienced, Zayneb is driven by previous feelings of disappointment, sadness, and anger. She finally fights back against her Islamophobic teacher by being brave to speak up in front of the class. She expresses what she feels. She points out the word that is used by Fencer, 'sharia' in the class discussion. She considers that the use of the word 'sharia' is intended by Fencer to represent Muslims and Islam negatively. Thus, Zayneb cannot remain silent about the negative accusation of her

religion and her fellow Muslims. This encourages Zayneb to finally stand up and speak up against Islamophobia.

Furthermore, in an attempt to fight Islamophobia, Zayneb is involved in a movement plan as well. This movement is arranged and run by Zayneb and her fellow minorities. It is an online movement arranged due to Fencer's online activities showing Islamophobia.

> *She was talking about the online movement our friend Ayaan had recently joined, #EatThemAlive. Its primary function is to take down your regular neighborhood-variety racists and supremacies through Internet sleuthing.* (p. 9).

This shows a situation when Zayneb and her friend Kavi discuss an online movement campaign in which their friend Ayaan has recently joined. Ayaan and the movement inspire Zayneb to rely on her fellow Muslims as they are also a victim of Islamophobia and other discrimination or injustice treatment. Relying on caring for people who have the same challenges is one of the ways to deal with oppression (Shorter-Gooden, 2004). She is also be involved in a movement plan that is arranged with her friends Kavi and Ayaan to resist their teacher's Islamophobia which leads to discrimination.

The movement arranged by Zayneb and her friends is aimed to show Fencer's true identity. They would like to show that he is a racist and Islamophobic person to the school so that he receives what he is supposed to receive which is to be punished for his actions. This is based on feelings of anger and disappointment over the attitude of the majority group who always feels superior and has the right to be arbitrary towards minority groups as well. This action is considered and included in the resistance and immersion stage, the third stage of the minority identity development model.

CONCLUSION

Being a Muslim, as a minority group living in the midst of a majority group in a Western country is not quite easy. Unfair treatment and discrimination including Islamophobia are things that are often experienced by Muslims. Due to the rise of Islamophobia cases that occur in the Western countries, Islamophobia is often used as the main topic discussed in literary works. One of them is a novel that has been analyzed by the writer telling about a multiracial Muslim girl called Zayneb who is a victim of Islamophobia.

Based on the analysis, this study shows that Islamophobia is a negative attitude towards Islam. The negative attitude is based on hatred, fear, or a mistaken perception of Islam. It is generally known that Islamophobia potentially leads to discrimination or other acts of violence. In S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z*, Islamophobia is described and demonstrated through the characters depicted in the dialogues of the characters and the storyline. Based on their actions and utterances towards Zayneb, a multiracial Muslim girl as the main character of the novel, clearly shows fear or hatred towards Islam. Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism is shown by several characters in the forms of presenting Muslims attire issue, anti-Arab perspective, and disdaining Islam and/or Muslims' values.

In addition, Zayneb, as the main character of the novel, who is a victim of discrimination and injustice as a result of Islamophobia, responds to this in several ways. The minority identity development model by Atkinson et al. becomes a reference in describing Zayneb's responses to Islamophobia due to the fact that Muslims in the Western countries are a minority group. According to the results of the analysis, it is acknowledged that Zayneb's responses to Islamophobia only include two stages of the minority identity development model out of a total of five stages. She does not go through the first stage but goes straight developing to the second stage—the dissonance stage—and third stages—the resistance and immersion stage. This is because there is no data that represents Zayneb's responses to Islamophobia as in the other three stages of the minority identity development model.

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