

Discrimination That Nima Experienced as a Muslim in *Home Is Not a Country*

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Abstract:

The objective of this study is to find the main character's experiences facing discrimination in America that has Islamophobia. This Study aims to find discrimination either verbal and non-verbal form that main character faced and the main character's feelings regarding the discrimination. The researcher uses the novel by Safira Elhillo entitled *Home Is not a Country* and focuses on the main character that is a Sudanese American Muslim girl named Nima. The researcher used qualitative methods to observe. The researcher used post-colonial theory that was stated by Bill Ashcroft and the theoretical framework of post-colonial theory that is racism by George M. Fredrickson and Islamophobia that depicted in the novel. The result of the research is Nima experienced, she was mocked by his friend by saying that they dressed like her terrorist mom, it's actually taken from 9/11 attacks, that is the verbal discrimination even non-verbal discriminations also experienced by the main character as she got choked out of his neck, then Nima's feeling regarding the discrimination that she had faced as the main character feared and unbearable because of the action of his environment that has Islamophobic and confuse why his parent bring them to the country that has Islamophobias.

Keywords: Discrimination, Islamophobia, America, 9/11 Attacks

Abstrak:

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan pengalaman tokoh utama dalam menghadapi diskriminasi di Amerika yang memiliki Islamophobia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan diskriminasi dalam bentuk verbal dan non-verbal yang dihadapi oleh tokoh utama dan perasaan tokoh utama terhadap diskriminasi tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan novel karya Safira Elhillo yang berjudul *Home Is Not a Country* dan berfokus pada karakter utama yaitu seorang gadis Muslim Amerika keturunan Sudan bernama Nima. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mengamati. Peneliti menggunakan teori poskolonial yang dikemukakan oleh Bill Ashcroft dan kerangka teori poskolonial yaitu rasisme oleh George M. Fredrickson dan Islamofobia yang digambarkan dalam novel tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah Nima mengalami diskriminasi yang diejek oleh temannya dengan mengatakan bahwa ia berpakaian seperti ibunya yang teroris, hal ini sebenarnya diambil dari peristiwa 9/11, diskriminasi tersebut merupakan diskriminasi verbal bahkan diskriminasi non-verbal juga dialami oleh tokoh utama saat ia dicekik lehernya, kemudian perasaan Nima terkait diskriminasi yang dialaminya sebagai tokoh utama merasa takut dan tidak tahan dengan tindakan lingkungannya yang Islamofobia serta kebingungan mengapa orangtuanya membawa mereka ke negara yang Islamofobia.

Kata kunci: Diskriminasi, Islamophobia, Amerika, Tragedi 9/11

INTRODUCTION

Society based on Rapport and Overing (2000, p.334), they stated that a society is such a group of people or population that is characterized by relative segregation from surrounding populations and has a distinctive culture. A society is a collective of people who are settled in a bound area, who are subject to a single system of political authority, and who are mindful of an entity that is different from other communities in their area such as having different gender, race, and beliefs. People who are aware of differences that exist around them, they will accept or deny it. People who refuse the existence of the differences, the following things that they will do is prejudice or discrimination, and it can be both.

Discrimination is the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, or sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2019). Discrimination form can be in verbal and non-verbal that has direct and indirect effects on society as a whole. A society that allows or tolerates discrimination is a society that prevents people from being able to freely use their full potential. Discrimination makes people unempowered, prevents them from being productive citizens, prevents them from developing competencies, and in many situations, makes it difficult for them to access an occupation, healthcare, or education.

Home is not a country was Safira Elhillo's work that talked about a moving exploration of the challenges faced by first-generation immigrants and his children, the search of Nima for identity in a world that often seems divided, and the power of imagination to shape our reality. The main character, caught between two worlds, Nima, an American Muslim girl, longs for a place to call home and is facing identity struggles. She clings to the name Yasmeen, a symbol of her unchosen life. With her friendships and identity challenged, Nima must face the shadow of what could have been and find her own path to belonging. Nima got discriminations against when she was around school, she got discriminated against because she was Muslims. This article will discuss about discrimination faced by Nima that is portrayed in the novel. I aim my study to explore how Nima experiences facing discrimination around her and how Nima reaction to being discriminated against, so that readers can better understand and explore how Nima experienced getting discriminated against and her feeling that portrayed in the novel. Previous study that conducted by Farahdina Nurtsani (2022) with the entitled *The*



Reflection of Ambivalence Identity and Mimicry in Home Is Not A Country Novel by Safia Elhillo, this study analyzes ambivalent identity and mimicry in Safia Elhillo's novel *Home Is Not A Country*, examining these themes within a post-colonial context. It focuses on the main character's conflicting cultural identities and the mimicry involved in adapting to different cultures. Drawing on Homi K. Bhabha's theories, the research uses a qualitative approach to identify instances of ambivalent identity and mimicry, particularly in behaviors, language, and habits throughout the novel. While this study uses post-colonial theory to analyze the novel in the scope of verbal and non-verbal discrimination, and the feeling of the main character with it. I also hope that through this research, readers can become more aware of the impact of discrimination which does not lead to a better life in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides all the relevant readings from previous works. A literature Review should be organized systematically, for example, by chronological or thematic approach. Provide not only the findings of previous studies, but also a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each of them. The focus of the studies should be highly relevant to the topic of the research paper. Present the information clearly and concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition. Use standard and scientific language. Ensure that every statement is supported by valid references.

Post-Colonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is based on the insight that although indigenous submission has been attained, the history of colonization has changed identities and conditioned the path of how the world is seen. The theory first emerged in the 1960s. Based on Bill Ashcroft (2018, p.7), He stated that post-colonial studies developed as a way of addressing the cultural production of those societies affected by the historical phenomenon of colonialism. From that statement, it draws a narration that post-colonial can study on economics politics, cultures, and behaves which does legacies of the colonization and there's relation in socio-economic and cultural relations between former colonies and today's post-colonial countries, as well as reflections on how the history of colonization has affected colonized country identities and its perspective on the world. One of the branches of post-colonial theory is racism that the researcher uses to analyze the story in the novel.

Racism

The term 'racism' was coined in the 1930s, was first used as a response to the Nazi political project to make Germany a judenrein, or 'clean of Jews'. The Nazis were under no hesitation that Jews belonged to a different race and posed a threat to the Aryan race that native Germans were supposed to be belonging to (Rattansi, 2007). Racism is prejudice, discrimination, hostility directed towards an individual of a different race treated unfairly based on the belief that one's own race is superior. Racism is not just an attitude or a set of beliefs; it also manifests in institutions, practices and structures that are justified or legitimized by a deep sense of difference. Therefore, racism is more than conceptualizing human diversity or prejudging a group that is out of control. Based on George M Fredrickson (2002, p.9), He stated that racism has two components, it is difference and power. Racism stems from a mindset that perceives them as different from us in ways that are persistent and uncompromising. This sense of difference provides the motive or excuse to use the advantage of power to treat other ethnicities in ways that would be considered cruel or unfair if applied to individuals from our own group. But, in this research the issue that will be highlighted in the novel is Islamophobia, which is also a form of discrimination that happened in recent decades that is portrayed in the story.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia, fear, hatred, and discrimination against practitioners of Islam or the Islamic religion as a whole (Kulik, 2023). Islamophobia is a specific type of prejudice that targets Islam and its followers. It involves irrational fear, hatred, or discrimination against Islam or Muslims. Although Islam is a religion and not a race, the term Islamophobia is often used to describe instances where anti-Muslim sentiment intersects with racial or ethnic prejudice. In America, Islamophobia is becoming such a structural, roots, and political interest. This can be found in culture, politics, and policy in America. Physical hate crimes make fundamental differences in racial structures that are often invisible, but a more in-depth observation reveals not just moments of racial violence, but sustained patterns of racial discrimination and exclusion that shape American life, both subtly and conspicuously (Love, 2017: p.83). It means that Islamophobia in America is more than hatred and discrimination.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used qualitative methods to observe and find Nima got discriminated against that depicted in the novel. Researcher started the study by reading the novel *Home Is Not a Country* several times to get the understanding, then put the focus on the main character, Nima, who got discriminated against verbally and non-verbal by those around at school and her feelings from that discrimination. The researchers use themselves to conduct the research by reading the novel and some research to strengthen the research, such as: journal, web page, and news.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Verbal Discrimination that Nima Faced

i'm dressed as your terrorist mom & everyone howls with laughter another wraps a sweater around his head like a turban & i'm your terrorist dad & haitham steps in front don't say that her father's dead but his small voice drowns in all the chaos

In this narration, Nima got verbal discrimination because of She was Muslim that live in the America that was having Islamophobia in the country and her friend acting like a terrorist in front of Nima by wrapping sweater around his head and saying that he is a terrorist dad of Nima then everyone in his around laughing because of what school's mate joking around her, bullying to Nima as a subject since following the 9/11 attacks. September 11 2001 known 9/11 attacks is a chronological event there were four coordinated Islamist suicide terrorist attacks carried out by al-Qaeda against the United States in September 11, 2001. Because of that Nima and other Muslims experienced enhanced prejudice in their residence, also any assumptions that made Nima discriminated lead to feelings of isolation and alienation attacks carried out by al-Qaeda against the United States in September 11, 2001. Because of that Nima and other Muslims experienced enhanced prejudice in their residence, also any assumptions that made Nima discriminated lead to feelings of isolation and alienation.

Non-verbal Discrimination that Nima Faced

he chokes out makes the hair on the back of my neck prickle up he turns & shoves me & i feel the cold metal of the lockers against my back terrorist bitch he spits into my hair

In this part of the narration, Nima got discriminated against again, but this time not only in the form of verbal, but also non-verbal discrimination or offensive action. The part

"made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up" indicates a state of intense fear or anxiety, indicating the emotional impact of the encounter because of what had been done to her in the past. The physical experience adds to the overall sense of discomfort and anxiety. She pushed into the locker and spitted in her hair and were also mocked by harmful words "terrorist bitch". All of this has been done to her just because she is Muslim, and she lives in America that has Islamophobia then something like this which has been done to her.

Nima's Feeling Live in Islamophobic Country

why did you bring us here?
they hate us silence she does not tell me
to speak arabic why did you bring
me here to be tortured to be alone
why would you do that to me?
she opens her mouth to speak &
nothing comes out

This narration depicted a moment of intense emotion and confusion, where Nima is expressing feelings of betrayal, fear, and isolation. Nima has experienced that they are disliked or hated by others in the country, leading to feelings of exclusion. This is due to the discrimination or prejudice that Nima has faced. Nima expressed fear and confusion about the purpose of being brought to this place, Nima was silent when seeking an explanation. Not being told to speak in Arabic showed a desire to communicate in a known language or a plea to be understood, but those all didn't come out from her mouth.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the discrimination that Nima has experienced in *Home Is Not a Country* led to her feeling of isolation and alienation. The discrimination that Nima faced were verbal and non-verbal forms that are portrayed in the story. The discrimination she has faced was because Nima is a Muslim girl that lives in America which has Islamophobia around his people after the event that came upon them which is known as 9/11 attacks, then another Muslim that lives in America after the moment got the effect even, they have no correlations with. One of the examples is Nima who is depicted in this novel and also the discrimination she experienced because she is Muslim.

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