

P-ISSN : 1412-6141

E-ISSN : 2548-7744



*Jurnal* **ADABIYAH**  
**The Journal of Islamic Humanities**

**Muzdalifah Sahib, Irnawati, Muh. Amin Sahib, Nur Asiah,  
Nur Faizah Sahib, Saarah Jappie**

*Diaspora and Implementation of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari's Religious  
Moderation Teachings in South Sulawesi and Kalimantan*

**Dahlan**

*Countering Islamophobia to Live in a Harmony in America After the  
9/11 Attacks : A Religious Moderation Reflected in the Novel Yusuf  
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*Challenging Islamophobia by Action (An Overview of the Islamic  
Activist Movement in America from A Fiqh Aqalliyāt Perspective)*

**Triyana, Moh. Dahlan, Kun Hasbullah, Fathur Baldan Haramain**  
*Islamic Religious Understanding in Forming the Mentality of the  
Indonesian Army at Kodim 1802/Sorong*

**Dalilul Falihin, Zulaeha, Ahmad Muzzammil, M. Saleh Mude**  
*Multiculturalism Insight Based on Qur'an and its Relevance to  
Plurality in Indonesia*



**FAKULTAS ADAB DAN HUMANIORA  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI ALAUDDIN**

**Vol. 24 No. 1 (2024)**



**Theme: Islamic Humanities**  
**VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1, January-June 2024**

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### **Jurnal Adabiyah:**

This journal receives a national accreditation from Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Republic of Indonesia, **Nomor 10/E/KPT/2019** on April 4, 2019 with the **SINTA score: S2**.

The Journal has been published by the Faculty of Adab and Humanity of Alauddin State Islamic University, Makassar, since 1997 and has been online since 2016 with the main themes on Humanities and Islamic Studies with the emphasis on interdisciplinary and intertextuality approach.

This journal are published twice a year, on June and December. The themes related to Islamic Studies are textual studies, scriptural traditions, Islamic law, and theology; and those related to Humanities are language, literature, history, and culture.

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## **Countering Islamophobia to Live in a Harmony in America After the 9/11 Attacks : A Religious Moderation Reflected in the Novel Yusuf Azeem is not a Hero (2021)**

**Dahlan**

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Doi: [10.24252/jad.v24i1a2](https://doi.org/10.24252/jad.v24i1a2)

*(Submitted: 03/01/2024, Accepted: 27/06/2024, Available Online: 28/04/2024)*

### **Abstract**

This study discussed the portrayal of islamophobia and how to encounter it to live in a harmony in America after the 9/11 Attacks in the novel Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero by Saadia Faruqi. This research aimed at examining how to encounter islamophobia in the aftermath of the 9/11 Attacks portrayed in the novel. This study applied the qualitative descriptive method to analyse the data and note-taking as the research instrument. This study is represented through the point of view of genetic structuralism of how the author as a Moslem delivers her experiences that takes place in the life of the author in facing the Islamophobia into a novel. This study finds how the main characters struggle to fight against the islamophobia and this study figures out the efforts of countering it until the Moslem are accepted in social community: showing exemplary moral attitudes and actions, Having a courage in facing challenging situations as an attempt to explain the real Islam, showing tolerance (religion moderation) and Love and the author voices these ways to approve to the public about the true face of Islam through a literary work.

**Keywords:** Countering; Islamophobia; Post-colonialism; 9/11 Attacks; Yusuf Azeem is not a Hero

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini membahas tentang gambaran Islamofobia dan cara menghadapinya untuk hidup harmonis di Amerika pasca Serangan 9/11 dalam novel Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero karya Saadia Faruqi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana menghadapi Islamofobia pasca Serangan 9/11 yang digambarkan dalam novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis data dan note taking sebagai instrumen penelitian. Penelitian ini direpresentasikan melalui sudut pandang teori strukturalisme genetik tentang bagaimana pengarang sebagai seorang





muslim menyampaikan pengalamannya yang terjadi dalam kehidupan pengarang dalam menghadapi islamophobia, penelitian ini menemukan bagaimana tokoh utama berjuang melawan islamophobia dan menggambarkan upaya penanggulangannya hingga diterimanya umat Islam dalam masyarakat social, seperti: menunjukkan sikap dan tindakan moral yang patut diteladani, Memiliki keberanian dalam menghadapi situasi yang menantang sebagai upaya untuk menjelaskan Islam yang sebenarnya, menunjukkan toleransi (moderasi beragama) dan Cinta dan Kasih. Penulis menyuarakan cara-cara tersebut untuk menegaskan kepada masyarakat tentang wajah Islam yang sebenarnya melalui sebuah karya sastra.

**Kata Kunci:** Penanggulangan; Islamophobia; Penyerangan 9/11; Yusuf Azeem is not a Hero

How to Cite This Article: Dahlan, Dahlan. "Countering Islamophobia to Live in A Harmony in America After The 9/11 Attacks : A Religious Moderation Reflected in the Novel Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero (2021)". *Jurnal Adabiyah* 24, no. 1 (June 27, 2024). Accessed June 29, 2024. <https://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/adabiyah/article/view/46005>.

## A. Introduction

The rapid development of Islam in last two decades put the Moslem as the second world's largest community, the population is estimated to reach 1.9 billion adherents across the globe following the survey entitled *Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2020* conducted by Pew Research Center in 2015<sup>1</sup>. However, Khader (2016: 2)<sup>2</sup> argued that the public opinion survey in Europe showcased the increasing opposition and fear of European Muslims, where they are seen as threats to the western social fabric, domestic security, and national identity. Furthermore, Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, also reported that the European survey in 2018-2019 revealed that nearly 4 out of 10 people held unfavourable views about Muslim as the result of some acts of terrorism that were accusingly carried out in the name of Islam after the 9/11 Attacks.

Unsurprisingly, Islam is considered an extremist religion, and Muslims are then accused of being terrorists. Moreover, since Islam is often associated with terrorism, Arabs, Muslims, and even people whose bear Islamic names are often experienced poor *treatment* and discrimination (Alalawi, 2015: 58)<sup>3</sup>. However, historically speaking, this anti-Muslim sentiment or Islamophobia has already emerged for thousands of years. It was spread through the discourse of religious texts

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<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center. *The Global Religious Landscape*. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Khader, B. *The Search for Europe Contrasting Approaches*. BBVA. 2016

<sup>3</sup> Alalawi, N. *How Do Hollywood Movies Portray Muslims and Arabs after 9/11? "Content Analysis of the Kingdom and Rendition Movies."* *Cross Cultural Communication*, 11(11), 58–62. 2015.

of Christianity and Judaism and disseminated through their sermon, which often denigrated Islamic values and jurisprudence and insulted the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

These days, the phenomenon of islamophobia exists in any context and media in popular *culture* including literature. As one of the global issues which needs more attention and demands a solution, islamophobia apparently becomes one of the most popular themes to be discussed in literary work, especially in post-colonial literature to raise a concern about post-colonial awareness and a spirit of resistance to global injustice (Bandel, 2013: 140)<sup>4</sup>.

The previous statements above showcase that islamophobia has become an interesting topic that has attracted many researchers' attention to further study such *topics*, especially in analyzing literary works. This idea is emphasized by the function of the literature itself to encounter islamophobia. Since in its capacity as a cultural product and tool to produce knowledge, literature plays a pivotal role to tackle islamophobia through the impartment of actual narratives in portraying the true face of Islam and Muslim as mentioned by Shabeebudheen in his article entitled *Islamicate Literature — A Tool to Tackle Islamophobia (2022)*<sup>5</sup>. In this regard, as a form of literary work novel is ideal for raising important events in human life, especially in a decisive critical condition that consists of various tensions or problems that demand solutions (Nursisto, 2000: 168)<sup>6</sup>.

There are several novels that discussed the issue of islamophobia in the West, particularly in America after the 9/11 Attacks. One of them is a fictional novel entitled *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* written by Saadia Faruqi. The novel was published by Harper Collins, US on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The story revolves around the life of the main character, Yusuf Mohammed Azeem, an eleven-year-old American Muslim of Pakistani descent. The plot highlights the tension between the group of American Christians who called themselves the Patriot Sons and the Muslim minority in the city of Frey, Texas following the commemoration of the twentieth year of the 9/11 Attacks. Since the attacks were orchestrated by a group of radical Muslim terrorists, Al-Qaeda, on behalf of Jihad, it eventually led to Yusuf and his fellow Muslims becoming victims of islamophobia due to the misinterpretation of Islam and negative stereotypes toward Muslims which already thrived and remained intact in western society.

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<sup>4</sup> Bandel, K. *Sastra Nasionalisme Pascakolonialitas*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Hariara. 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Shabeebudheen, M. *Islamicate Literature — a Tool to Tackle Islamophobia*. Traversing Tradition: Society & Culture. 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Nursisto. *Ikhtisar Kesusastraan Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Adicita Karya Nusa. 2000.

There are also several previous studies which have been conducted related to the topic of the research on islamophobia found in literary works such as novels and films:

Pratama (2022)<sup>7</sup> in his thesis entitled *Western Stereotype towards Somali Muslim Portraying Islamophobia as Seen in the Black Hawk Down (2001)* concerned with western stereotypes toward Somali Muslims who are represented through Aidid militia, a Muslim criminal group, as the representation of the East and the American Elite Soldiers who are the representation of the West are portrayed as a savior.

Al Nindita & Al-Hafizh (2019)<sup>8</sup> in their journal entitled *Deception toward British Muslims in Novel Home Fire (2017) by Kamila Shamsie* focused on examining the issue of strategies carried out by the British Government and Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in order to deceive British Muslims. The research was carried out by using a qualitative descriptive method as well as Edward W. Said's orientalism theory and the concept of deception to analyze the deceptions of Muslims in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire*. The result of the research explained that there are two deceptions in different strategies used by both groups.

According to the overview of related previous studies given above, there were several researches that already raised concerns about islamophobia in literature such as in novels and films. However, there is a difference between the prior research above compare to this research in terms of the object and focus of the study. In this research, the researcher specifically examined how the characters of the novel fight against the mis concept of islamophobia of western then show the real face of Islam.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **1. Genetic Structuralism**

Genetic structuralism is part of the sociology of literature which emphasizes literary values only in their intrinsic elements but also in their extrinsic elements. Lucien Goldmann, a Romanian-French philosopher and sociologist, first put forward this theory in his 1956 book *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*. Lucien Goldmann (in Faruk, 2010: 44)<sup>9</sup> sees that a literary work does not only consist of a combination of several elements but is also a product of history that takes place in the lives of the people of related literary works.

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<sup>7</sup> Pratama, E. A. *Western Stereotype towards Somali Muslim Portraying Islamophobia as Seen in the Black Hawk Down (2001)*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. 2022

<sup>8</sup> Al Nindita, N., & Al-Hafizh, M. *Deception Toward British Muslims in Novel Home Fire (2017) by Kamila Shamsie*. 2019

<sup>9</sup> Faruk. *Belenggu Paska-Kolonialisme*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 2007



Endaswara (2003: 55)<sup>10</sup> defines genetic structuralism as a theory that is a combination of pure structural theory with a pre-existing theory. Ratna (2004: 123)<sup>11</sup> sees this theory as one that pays attention to the origins of the creation of a literary work. Rosyidi (2010: 201)<sup>12</sup> added that the theory of 12 genetic structuralism is one of the methods for analysing literary works that focuses on seeing how the relationship between literary works and their social environment. Poonkodi (via Farivar, 2023: 120)<sup>13</sup>. This predominant effect of the language used in the novel is also emphasised for its delivery of various social and cultural components.

Genetic structuralism is a theory that was born to answer the weakness of the pure structuralism theory, which examines literature from its intrinsic elements only, this theory then sees literature as a combination of three elements, namely the intrinsic element of literary work, the socio-cultural background of the author, as well as the background or social history that occurs in the creation of related literary works. There are several concepts in the theory of genetic structuralism used in analysing literary works. The theory includes three concepts:

a. Human Facts

The fact of humanity is an ontological basis for the study of genetic structuralism. According to Faruk (2010: 57)<sup>14</sup>, humanity facts are facts that contain all human activities both verbally and physically and try to be understood in scientific studies. Goldmann (in Chairunisa, 2022: 420)<sup>15</sup> states that human facts include a whole range of human activities and behaviours that are political, social, cultural, philosophical and also aesthetic. Goldman (2013) 13 states that the fact of humanity is a human activity that is a response to collective or individual subjects who are in certain situations or environments. It can be concluded that the fact of humanity is the basis of ontology in the theory of genetic structuralism which includes all human activities and behaviours in response to the political, social, cultural and aesthetic conditions of the surrounding environment.

b. The structure of literary works.

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<sup>10</sup> Endraswara, S. *Teori kritik sastra*. Yogyakarta: CAPS (Center Academic Publishing Service) 2013

<sup>11</sup> Ratna, N. K. *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra dari Strukturalisme hingga Postrukturalisme Perspektif Wacana Naratif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 2006

<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Farivar. *Re-Mapping the Iconic Okonkwo of 'Things Fall Apart' through a Fichtean Map*. 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Faruk. *Belenggu Paska-Kolonialisme*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 2007

<sup>15</sup> Chairunisa, F. F., Sulistiyowati, E. D., & Dahlan, D. Analisis Strukturalisme Genetik Novel Rindu yang Membawamu Pulang Karya Ario Sasongko. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 416-425. 2022.

Genetic structuralism has a structure that is different from the structure in general. Goldmann provides two definitions of literary works. First, literary works are the result or expression of an imaginary worldview. Second, in the process of creating these expressions, the author creates characters, objects, relations, backgrounds, and so on that are related to the imagination.

According to Goldmann, the structure of literary works is thematic. So, the centre of his study is the relationship between the characters and the objects around them. In genetic structuralism, research on a literary work is formulated in three ways: first, research on a literary work is a unit. Second, literary works must contain the tension between diversity and unity as a whole. Third, after the unit has been found, it must be related to its social background.

### c. Worldview

The author's worldview is one of the central concepts of genetic structuralism's theory. According to Lucien Goldmann (2013: 17)<sup>16</sup>, the author's worldview is a collection of ideas, ideologies, and views of members of a particular social group that relate to other social groups.

## 2. Islamophobia

Bakali (in Jaber, 2016: 327)<sup>17</sup> explained that the term islamophobia was first coined in 1922 by, Étienne Dinet and Sliman Ben Ibrahim, French writers, through their work entitled *Accès de Délire Islamophobe* which described islamophobia as a hatred of Islam. However, the term becomes common in usage after a British think tank, Runnymede Trust, published its research on islamophobia in 1997 which described islamophobia as "anti-Muslim racism". In addition, Abadi (2018: 5)<sup>18</sup> also argued that islamophobia is an institutional and systemic form of racism aimed to embarrass and condemn Muslims. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the *Seventh OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia* (2014: 10)<sup>19</sup> defined islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, hatred, and mistrust of Islam and Muslims which manifested through discrimination, intolerance, unequal treatment, stereotyping, hostility, prejudice, and

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<sup>16</sup> Lucien Goldmann. *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*. Ozon: Routledge. 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Jaber, N. *Islamophobia: Definition, History, and Aspects*. Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam. 5 (2), 327-338. 2022

<sup>18</sup> Abadi, H. *The Carter Centre works to understand and counter the rise of Islamophobia. In Countering the Islamophobia industry toward more effective strategies: symposium report and analysis*. Atlanta, GA: The Carter Centre. 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Organization of Islamic Cooperation. *Seventh OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia October 2013 – April 2014. 41st Council of Foreign Ministers*. Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 2014.

adverse public discourse. Further, Miles & Brown (in Ekman, 2015: 1988)<sup>20</sup> stated that islamophobia is hostility towards Islam and Muslims that manifested in the form of racism and hatred.

Hence, Sayyid (2014: 12)<sup>21</sup> argued that islamophobia could occur in various ways and is carried out by individuals or groups of people. It could be based on beliefs and uninspected assumptions in any society in terms of opinion, and policies, or even becoming the basis of state regulations and interventions against Islam and Muslims. In this regard, the form of islamophobia also could be spoken out through several media such as newspapers, magazines, the internet, etc. either in factual or fictional projects.

In a new, pan-European research project devises a solving problem that can be used to counter Islamophobia. It summarizes a range of the best methods and tools we saw used to challenge Islamophobic thought and actions in Europe. The research began by examining the most common Islamophobic ideas that circulated in eight countries: France, Belgium, Germany, the UK, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece and Portugal. While the language and rhetoric of Islamophobia differed in each, we found much of it perceived Muslims, Islamic practices and sites, such as mosques or community centers. The research found many examples of good practice when counteracting Islamophobia. For example, interfaith projects in Germany highlighted conviviality and cultural compatibility between Muslims and non-Muslims.

### 3. Profile of Saadia Faruqi

Saadia Faruqi is a Pakistani American author and interfaith activist. She writes the popular children's early reader series "Yasmin" and other books for children, including chapter books, graphic novels, and picture books. Her middle grade novels include "A Place At The Table" co-written with Laura Shovan (a Sydney Taylor Notable 2021), "A Thousand Questions" (a South Asia Book Award Honor 2021) and "Yusuf Azeem Is Not A Hero". Saadia is editor-in-chief of a magazine *Blue Minaret* for Muslim art, poetry and prose, and was featured in Oprah Magazine in 2017 as a woman making a difference in her community. She lives in Houston with her husband and children.

She was born in Pakistan in the city of lights, the city that never sleeps, Karachi. The city was a great place to grow up. She finished her a Bachelor in Business Administration from the University of Central Florida and a Masters in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Sociology from Baker University in Kansas. She lived in several areas in America . she had stayed awhile in Ohio, Florida and Tennessee before finally settling in Houston, Texas, which is as close to Pakistan as

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<sup>20</sup> Ekman, M. *Online Islamophobia and the politics of fear: Manufacturing the Green Scare*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(11), 1986-2002. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Sayyid, S. *A Measure of Islamophobia*. *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 2(1), 10–25. 2014.

she could possibly find within the U.S. she meant, when there's a Hunan Chef serving a halal buffet, you're pretty much in heaven! she writes nonfiction for a living, mostly for non profit clients who need grant proposals and other kinds of documents. she writes fiction for love. She Sometimes writes about that as well. She has a husband who works with computers, two children, and a gaggle of in-laws close by – the typical Pakistani American family. she likes “back home” food most days, but her favourite things to eat are cheeseburgers and pizza, which make me an international citizen of some sort, if you think about it. her bookshelves are filled with a hundred random titles, ranging from religion to fantasy to cookbooks. But in a perfect world she has an endless supply of mystery thriller novels. She is still waiting for someone to write that perfect Pakistani or Muslim spy/crime story, preferably with a heroine named Saadia. She may be well-known for her children's book, but she actually started her writing career with books for adults. Even though she gets bored. She is an editor-in-chief of Blue Minaret, from this she gets to meet an awesome and uber-interesting array of authors, poets and artists dedicated to chronicling the Muslim experience. Some of her best friends are those she has never met in real life. Art was also used in a number of cases, including Belgium and the UK, to challenge Islamophobic ideas. The Tuffix comic strips by German artist Soufeina, and the 2017 British film, Freesia, highlight the contribution of Muslims in society, and the issues many Muslims face as a result of Islamophobia.

#### 4. Religious Moderation

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) defines the term “Religious Moderation” by initially formulating four indicators of moderate, through the book published in 2019 entitled “Moderasi Beragama” (Kementerian Agama RI 2019, 42–47). One of indicator which is closely related with this study is tolerance. tolerance is giving space and respecting others' rights to believe, express, and deliver their opinion, even if that one's belief is different to others. In this context, tolerance is not only about different in religions (inter-religious), but also in beliefs (among those in similar religion or intra-religious). This is in line with Fahri and Zainuri (via Afifuddin, 2023: 233)<sup>22</sup> who state that Religious Moderation promotes tolerance, mutual respect while still believing in the truth of religion and madhab. Therefore, within the Islamic community, for example, someone is called moderate in religion if they have tolerance against other beliefs and religious organizations in Islam, beside the tolerance to other people with different religion. This study promotes how moderate and respectful of a Muslim lives in the majority of non-Muslim community.

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<sup>22</sup> Afifuddin, Amri Tajuddin, Wahdatunnisa. *Strengthening Counter Terrorism Religious Moderation through Traditional Islamic Education based on Kitab Kuning Literacy at Pesantren Ma'had Aly in Souht Sulawesi*. Journal Adabiyah, Vol 23 No 2: Adab and Humaniora Faculty of UIN Alauddin Makassar. 2023.

## 5. Synopsis of the Novel

*Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* is a fictional novel written by Saadia Faruqi, a Pakistani-American author and an interfaith activist, which was first published by Harper Collins, US on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It tells the story of a young American Muslim of Pakistani descent named Yusuf Mohammed Azeem who just entered the Middle School of Frey. He lived with his parents and a little sister in the fictional city of Frey, Texas, United States. Yusuf, who is eleven years old, is thrilled to live his day as a new sixth-grade student and excited to join Texas Robotic Competition (TRC), which has been his dream since he was in the third grade (Kirkus Reviews, 2021)<sup>23</sup>.

Unfortunately, his supposed-to-be exciting phase of life suddenly turned upside-down following the twentieth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in 2021. The slogan “Never-Forget-Twenty Years” filled the city and the tension between a conservative group of American Christians called the Patriot Sons and the Muslim minority in the city of Frey started to heat up. Having no idea about what is happening around him, Yusuf eventually found himself stuck between fear, hatred, and prejudice from the past and present-day towards his religion and people.

He learned about the 9/11 attacks through his uncle’s journal, Rahman, written when he was around Yusuf’s age in 2001. Time passed, but the condition just got worse after The Patriot Sons filed a complaint and petition against the building of Frey’s first mosque. As their hatred getting erupted following the commemoration of the attacks, the Patriot Sons and most of Frey’s residents started to express their hatred and threatened Yusuf and his Muslim fellas to kick them out of the city. Even though Yusuf is an introverted boy, who does not like being the centre of attention to anybody, he has no option instead of standing up against the bullies who targeted him and his fellow Muslims.

### C. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to collect and analyse the data taken from the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* which depicts how islamophobia is encountered by minority Moslem in America. The novel was written by Saadia Faruqi who fell the islamophobi that takes place in her lives . The qualitative descriptive method is used to collect and analyse the data. In this research, the qualitative descriptive method is used to describe the portrayal of islamophobia and how to tackle it in America after the 9/11 Attacks as reflected in the novel. The researcher used note-taking to observe and to collect then to classify the important points relates to the author’s life experiences and knowledge depicted how to counter the

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<sup>23</sup> Kirkus Reviews. *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero*. 2021.

islamophobia in the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero*, and other supporting sources related to the topic of research

Data analysis of this study is begun by collecting the data then arrange those data into the good sequences, and organizing them into a pattern, category, and basic descriptive units so that the data obtained can be easily read and concluded. In this research, the data collected were analyzed under the genetic structuralism approach in literature focusing on how the author's point of view to encounter islamophobia in America after the 9/11 Attacks in Saadia Faruqi's novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero*.

#### **D. Finding and Discussion**

This chapter provides findings and discussions regarding the portrayal of islamophobia in America after the 9/11 Attacks in the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* by Saadia Faruqi

This chapter also contains the result of data analysis about the portrayal of islamophobia and how the characters encounter it in order to make a harmonious live among the Christian as majority. The genetic structuralism as point of view of this study puts Saadia Faruqi as the author who reflected humanity facts from her experiences and activities both verbally and physically. She represents the fear and the hope of her Moslem community toward islamophobia

In this regard, Saadia believes that the path to peace in this world is to understand and accept other religions. The novel plays a pivotal role to tackle islamophobia through the impartment of actual narratives in portraying the true face of Islam and Muslim. The followings are the descriptions taken by the characters to encounter the islamophobia in which a religion moderation becomes an important part at encountering the islamophobia. The data regarding the attempts of characters to tackle islamophobia are presented based on the plot until the characters meet their dreams that they are accepted in the town where they live.

##### **1. Showing Exemplary Moral Attitudes and Actions**

Showing exemplary moral attitudes and actions as commanded in Islam teaching is one of some descriptions in the novel. Faruqia describes it well such as stated in:

Yusuf's Father: *"That's okay." Abba sighed as he started the car again and began driving toward the dollar store. "I understand what you're saying. Sometimes I worry too much about how people are viewing me, us. but you see, it's also important that the values we learn from childhood are visible to others. Being good and kind and generous are all important, and your friends should see those parts of you all the time."* (Faruqia, 2021: 167)

In this regard, Faruqia transmits the idea that having a good moral can both create a good image and reputation of a Muslim, when the Moslem conducted the



good things. Those things will leave the values and the others will see impressively then they eventually say that Moslem are the persons with a good moral and attitude.

The next data supports the importance of being a good person about how to give and to help one each other as commanded by most Muslim based on Islamic teaching.

Yusuf's fathers: *"I mean, like buying doughnuts so that my friends will think you're generous. It's ... weird."* (Faruqia, 2021: 170)

Yusuf's father advises Yusuf to be habit with sharing and giving, even if it is only by giving a donut. because by giving something means that someone is implementing the values of generosity as taught in the Islamic religion. A society built on good faith encourages its members to support and help each other, especially the less fortunate and vulnerable. This promotes a sense of brotherhood and unity, which contributes to the overall well-being of the community.

The implementation of showing exemplary moral attitude is also voiced by Farah Bajii in an occasion of this novel. Farah states that the Muslim in the town where they live have never done something bad.

Farrah Baji (Yusuf mother): *"We are Americans just like you. In all the time you've known me, have you ever seen me do anything bad? The families who are building a mosque here have always been model citizens of this town. This country. It hurts my heart to hear my neighbors protest my right to worship God, as if I am less than them. It's the principle this great nation was founded on. It hurts my heart to see us all so divided, so angry."* (Faruqi 2021, Pages 167)

Dialogue is taken from the setting when the city council meeting takes a place, many residents opposed the construction of the mosque. Mrs. Geller who is a regular customer of Abba said that she never trusted Muslims, she also accused Azeem of cursing them with the Arabic writing on his wall. Because of this Amma could not hold her emotions anymore, she then said that they (the Muslims) are also American citizens like her (the person who brought down Islam), the Muslims have never done anything bad to them, but why do they prevent Muslims from worshiping. After Amma said this, many people applauded. Then during the voting session about the mosque construction, some people who initially strongly opposed the construction of the mosque now turned to support the construction of the mosque.

In addition, another scene of the novel shows Abba's struggle in facing bullying with the patience such as quoted below:

*"Abba shook his head "No. His father was some government minister. Imtiaz could do whatev he wanted and get away with it I, on the other hand would get punished for offenses like wearing an ink streaked uniform to school"*

*"That sucks." Yusuf paused "I mean. I feel bad for you. Abba shrugged "Life is full of all kinds of people, son. We just have to learn to avoid the bullies and stick with our friends." (Faruqia, 2021: 263)*

The conversation between Yusuf and his Abba explained even though Yusuf was bullied by his friend whose father worked in the government, Abba only said to avoid fighting among friends. Islam always teaches not to return bad things with bad things too and his Abba struggled from bullying without returning the bullying.

Similarly, Yusuf shows the good attitude when he wins the robotic competition, he forgives all the bad things done by Frey on him. He said that his win is also the win for Frey:

*"Yusuf stopped breathing for a second. What did that have to do with robotics? But then he squared his shoulders and looked straight at the camera. "I wasn't arrested. It was all a misunderstanding, and the school apologized for it. It's in the past. It's got nothing to do with the robotics challenge or my future. I'm a part of this town, and my team's win will be a win for Frey." (page 275)*

This scene highlights Yusuf's response to his arrest. he revealed that it was just a misunderstanding and it was over, there was nothing to think about anymore. Yusuf answered casually and did not seem afraid at all. The implied message contained in Yusuf's answer is to show that Muslims are not the same as they think, past events that they always remember do not apply now. and as Muslims, never be afraid of something we do not do. remain in our own stance and let reality prove it.

Those kinds of moral characters shown by characters are in line with Islamic teaching such as mentioned in Alquran Qs An Nahl 97:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةًۢ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Translation:

*"Whoever does good whether male or female, and is believer , we will surely bless them with a good life and we will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds."*

The verse explains that individuals in a society who act with good faith, they are more likely to treat each other with kindness, respect, and fairness. This surely creates social harmony and reduces conflicts and disputes. Faruqia in her novel fosters it well and sends a message for those who are facing and having tendency to counterattack the islamophobia.

## 2. Having Courage in Facing Challenging Situations as an Attempt to Explain the Real Islam.

The plot of the novel depicts how brave the Moslem characters defend their faith and how they explained Islam amidst the prejudice. The data are ordered to follow the given plot. The data from the novel show how the author solves the conflict in terms of encountering Islamophobia. One of the quotations of the dialogue is sketched below:

Aunty Sameena: *"I feel comfortable because I wear the hijab. I feel sorry for women who don't. It's such a big protection." Amma's lips tightened. "The hijab doesn't stop something bad from happening," she finally said, her voice so low Yusuf had to strain to hear over the noise around them. "I can promise you that." Sameena Aunty's forehead crumpled into a frown. "Well. I don't know what to say," she muttered.*" (Faruqia, 2021: 80-81)

Samena's aunt defends Islam in this novel by wearing the hijab and stating that in the front many non-Muslims she feels comfortable and protected because she wears it. Even though Amma doubted her statement, Samena Aunty remained firm in her belief that hijab provides great protection for women.

Similarly, Yusuf tries to encounter the Islamophobia by explaining about the misinformation of Islam delivered most western media, Yusuf states that TNN who have given invalid information about Islam. Such as seen in:

*"Yusuf told him that was ridiculous, that he was no better than those people on TNN whose information about Muslims was 100 percent incorrect."* (Faruqia, 2021: 33)

In the sentence above Yusuf convinces his friend and the public that Islam is not a bad religion, Islam is peace-loving and not violent loving as the non-Muslim Americans think, and most importantly, Islam is not terrorist. Yusuf's attempt to convince his friend and the public is continued in another scene:

*"Luckily he had library on Tuesday. He spent the period researching 9/11 and the war on terror. Uncle Rahman had written one boy's story, as it was happening, in real time. But Yusuf needed to see the big picture: what an entire nation had gone through twenty years ago. Mrs. Levy, the librarian, showed him how to search archive databases on the library computer. "These are connected to the best libraries in Texas," she told him proudly. "You can find anything you need in here"* (Faruqia, 2021: 125)

Yusuf defends Islam by showing his interest in understanding the events of 9/11 and the war of terrorism. Yusuf feels that by understanding the Patriot Sons, he can prevent the Muslims of Frey from being expelled from the city or at least allow them to complete the construction of their mosque. Yusuf also shows a courage in defending Islam by showing patience and forbearance towards others, even though he

experiences discomfort and prejudice from other people towards his religion. The courage is also shown by the character Saba, she undoubtedly wears her hijab at school as stated by Yusuf:

*"Yusuf picked at his rice with his fork. "I don't think so. I think you're brave for going to school every day wearing a hijab. I brought my micro: bit to school one day and look what happen" (Faruqia, 2021: 246)*

The conversation above describes the reader that Basa continues to fight for her hijab as a Muslim identity in the midst of prejudice and hate speech against Islam. Basa is very brave to wear her hijab at school and is not affected by the hatred of people around her after the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. Their hatred after the 9/11 tragedy greatly affected Muslims there and the negative perception of Muslims labelled them as terrorists. Basa is not afraid of this and continues to show her Muslim identity.

Struggle of explaining the real Islam can be obtained in another scene as stated by Yusuf Father:

*Mohammad Azeem (Yusuf father): "That's not fair," Yusuf said. "What If the laws favor the bullies? Like during the Holocaust? Or after 9/11?" Then the people must unite against hatred and choose love (Faruqia, 2021: 254)*

The conversation between Yusuf and his Abba explains that Islam is about peace "people should unite against hatred and choose love". His Abba explains to Yusuf the struggle of Islam through peace and not through bad things. This is in line with Quran Al Anfal verse 6:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Translation:

*"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing."*

### **3. Showing Tolerance (Religion Moderation), Understanding, Love and Conviviality**

Friendship between two people of different religions is well depicted in this novel, they are showing tolerance. Understanding one each other also become a solution at encountering islamophobia, Faruqia successfully transmit the idea of tolerance and how to implement conviviality as shown by the character Yusuf and Danial as narrated in the novel:

*"No, your school definitely has lockers. Mrs. Khan was telling me about how Danial doesn't bring his books home anymore." Yusuf groaned loudly. "Okay, fine. I'll leave them in my locker today. Happy?" She smiled and kissed him on the top of his head. "Yes, darling, I'm happy. I don't want to see my son bent*

*down under the load of all these books." He smiled back as he left. "Stop calling me darling!" "Never!" she replied as she closed the front door after him. Yusuf was still smiling as he met Danial on the corner of the street. He was still smiling as they walked to Frey Middle and entered the building a good twelve minutes before the bell rang. He waved goodbye to Danial as they parted in the hallway. It was only when he reached his locker, which he had been avoiding like the plague..." (Faruqia, 2021: 157)*

In this text, Danial defends Islam by showing his courage and loyalty to his friends, including Yusuf, who is a Muslim. Even though there are prejudices and discomfort from other people towards Yusuf's religion, Danial remains supportive and does not let these prejudices affect his friendship with Yusuf. Danial also shows a courage in advocating Islam.

The next quote is taken from Mrs Terrance. The statement of tolerance is uttered by Mrs Terrance to reduce the tension of hatred of a boy who utters a hate speech to Yusuf:

*"A boy with wispy red hair raised his hand. "It was Arab terrorists. Like him."*

*"Yusuf felt the hair on his neck rise in protest. "Like me?" he squeaked. Why did people think all Muslims were Arab? my family was from South Asia, not that anyone in the class cared.*

*"Miss Terrance scowled heavily. "How old do you think Yusuf Azeem is, fifty? How could he has anything to do with 9/11?""*

*"There was an awkward laughter, but the red-haired boy persisted. "It was his folks. They said that on the news last night.""( Faruqia, 2021: 257)*

This quote depicts Yusuf who is facing direct racist remarks from one of his friends. In this situation, Yusuf responds with a simple yet firm effort where he asserts that not all Muslims are the same. Miss Terrance shows her tolerance by defending Yusuf, she states that Yusuf was not even born during the 9/11 events, so he should not be blamed as if he were responsible for the attack.

Another attitude showing tolerance is well performed by Yusuf. In this scene, Faruqia who is an interfaith activist delivers her idea and experience on the character Yusuf of how to reduce the miss concept about Islam by inserting an idea regarding interfaith project as depicted:

*"Is it Christmas already?" Then he shrugged and gave out snack-sized chocolate bars. Yusuf briefly thought about disguising his voice when he said thank you, but then he realized he didn't know these people, and they didn't know him. He was just a random kid in a Santa suit, enjoying the evening with his friends." (Faruqia, 2021: 184)*

In this line, Yusuf involves himself by participating in a Halloween celebration with his friends, even though he is a Muslim, he wants to show that he can participate in Halloween celebrations like other Americans. Hence, Faruqia delivers the idea of assimilation as one of idea at tackling the islamophobia

Loving and understanding are the points of the solution offered of by the author. Faruqia as the author directly experienced how the miss concept of islamophobia makes him as the object of bullying, and she proposes how to love and to understand one each other as shown in the dialogue below:

*“Cameron: What are you talking about, dude?”*

*“Danial: Yusuf, you need to focus on getting better. And TRC.”*

*“Yusuf Sorry, Danial. We need to defeat the enemy.”*

*“Danial: What enemy????”*

*“Yusuf: You know. A certain boy and his dad. Plus his posse.”*

*“Danial: Wow, okay. You're officially nuts.”*

*“Yusuf: No, I'm not. My dad says love overcomes hate. Personally, I don't believe it, but I'm willing to try.”*

*“Danial: This guy is too optimistic for his own good. Cameron, tell him.”*

*“Cameron: No, he's right. We've tried everything else and failed. Let's try love too. What's the harm? harm?”*

*“Danial: Are you serious? We could end up in jail like him.”*

*“Cameron: That's okay with me. People think I'm a gangster anyway.”*

*“Danial: Unbelievable”*

*“Madison: I'm in too!”*

*“Yusuf. Awww ... Love you guys!” (Faruqia 2021: 255)*

Within this lines, Yusuf mentions that his father believes love can overcome hatred, and even though he is not sure, he is willing to give it a try. Cameron and Madison agree to try the approach of love in dealing with the problem. Yusuf's effort here involves employing a love-based approach to reach out to a group of people who harbour animosity towards Islam.

This is in line with Al-Quran , Al-Hujurat the verse 13.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ



Translation:

*“O humanity, indeed, we created you from a male and female and made you into peoples and tribes. So that you may get to know one another.”*

People hate one another is probably caused that they do not know one another, therefore Faruqia suggests an effort to get know the people who mistrust toward islam is to approach them with understanding and love nuanced inclusive.

#### **4. Portraying the True Face of Islam Through Literature**

What Saadia wrote in the novel is the portrait of true face of Islam. This idea is emphasized by the function of the literature itself to encounter islamophobia. Since in its capacity as a cultural product and tool to produce knowledge, literature plays a pivotal role to tackle islamophobia through the impartment of actual narratives in portraying the true face of Islam and Muslim a). In this regard, Faruqia successfully raises important events in her life in a novel, especially in a decisive critical condition, the novel offers the readers the solution to overcome the tensions of hatred due to the miss concept of islamophobia. Faruqia encourages not only the readers but also the public to express the experience to produce the understanding over the misunderstanding, then generate it by composing a literary work even in the simple literary work like a mini poet or a short narration. Some outstanding novels regarding islamophobia have become the media to bridge the gap between Western and Muslim.

#### ***E. Conclusion***

Based on the findings and discussions on the previous chapter, the study figures out the contributive idea from the author regarding the islamophobia and how to tackle such a miss concept. Based on the theory Genetic structuralism used in this study, the study concludes that the author has a real experience in facing the islamophobia since she lived in several areas in America. Faruqia as the author of this novel involved herself in several activities she also gets to meet an awesome and uber-interesting array of authors, poets and artists dedicated to chronicling the Muslim experience.. in a number of cases, including Belgium and the UK, she comes to challenge Islamophobic ideas. The inspiration of the novel is taken from Tuffix comic strips by German artist Soufeina, and the 2017 British film, *Freesia*, highlight the contribution of Muslims in society as a part of showing the real Islam , due to the issues many Muslims face as a result of Islamophobia.

There are four big efforts which can be highlighted from the novel to encounter islamophobia: showing an exemplary moral attitudes and action, Having Courage in facing challenging situations as an attempt to explain the real Islam, Showing Tolerance (religious moderation), understanding, conviviality and Love, portraying real face of Islam through Art (literature). The Moslem characters transmitted well such kinds of efforts as the solutions to solve the conflict of the novel in which the non Muslim as the majority in western mistrust of Islam and Muslims

which manifested through discrimination, intolerance, unequal treatment, stereotyping, hostility, bullying, prejudice, and adverse public discourse. Faruqia delivers her ideas in the characters created implemented her ideas until they (Moslem) are finally accepted as the community of the town where they live.

These four integrated efforts delivered in the novel will contribute an understanding not only about how to counter islamophobia but also how to instil moral values nuanced inclusive, love and tolerant. The readers as the audiences are expected to be able to construct religious harmonization and moderation which is in line with the government programs related to structuring a religious and harmonious life.

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### Example in footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), h. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1991), h. 190.

<sup>3</sup>Syeikh Ja’far Subhānī, *Mafāhim Al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-’Arabī, 2010), Juz 5, h. 231.

<sup>4</sup>Syeikh Ja'far Subhānī, *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*, h. 8-9.

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Subhānī, Syeikh Ja'far. *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Mu'assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-'Arabī, 2010.

Eliade, Mircea (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

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#### Detail informations of the footnotes:

##### 1. Holy book

Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah/2: 185.

Perjanjian Baru, Mrk. 2: 18.

##### 2. Qur'anic translation

<sup>1</sup>Departemen Agama RI, *al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Darus Sunnah, 2005), h. 55.

##### 3. Book

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad 'Ajjaj al-Khaṭīb, *Uṣl al-Ḥadīth: 'Ulumuh wa Muṣṭalahuh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1989), h. 57.

##### 4. Translation Books

<sup>1</sup>Toshihiko Izutsu, *Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia: Pendekatan Semantik terhadap al-Qur'an*, terj. Agus Fahri Husein dkk (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), h. 14.

##### 5. Voluminous book

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr b. 'Ashur, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, Vol. 25 (Tunisia: Dār al-Suḥūn, 2009), h. 76.

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukharī, *al-Jam' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1999), h. 77.

##### 6. Article in book

<sup>1</sup>Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Metode Intratekstualitas Muhammad Shahrur dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an" dalam Abdul Mustaqim dan Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Studi al-Qur'an Kontemporer: Wacana Baru Berbagai Metodologi Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002), h. 139.

##### 7. Article in encyclopaedia

<sup>1</sup>M. Th. Houtsma, "Kufr" dalam A. J. Wensinck, at al. (ed.), *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), h. 244.

##### 8. Article in journal

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Adlin Sila, "The Festivity of *Maulid Nabi* in Cikoang, South Sulawesi: Between Remembering and Exaggerating the Spirit of Prophet", *Studia Islamika* 8, no. 3 (2001): h. 9.

##### 9. Article in mass media

<sup>1</sup>Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Hubungan Agama dan Negara", *Kompas*, 7 Agustus 2002.

10. Article in Internet

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Shaḥrūr, “Reading the Religious Teks: a New Approach” dalam <http://www.shahrou.org/25> Februari 2010/diakses 5 Juni 2010.

11. Thesis or dissertation

<sup>1</sup>Syahrudin Usman, “*Kinerja* Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam pada SMAN dan SMKN Kota Makassar”, *Disertasi* (Makassar: PPs UIN Alauddin, 2010), h. 200.

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