

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The perception of Islam and Muslims in the United States has historically been characterized by negativity, reaching a critical point with the occurrence of the September 11th attacks. This tragic incident further intensified the prevailing sense of animosity towards Muslims within American culture. The most devastating acts of terrorism on American territory in recorded history transpired on September 11, 2001, when a group of 19 individuals affiliated with the extremist organization known as al-Qaeda orchestrated the assaults. The attacks that occurred in New York City and Washington, D.C. resulted in the unfortunate loss of 2,977 lives (Mulroy, 2023).

Among these casualties, 184 individuals perished at the Pentagon, while 40 lives were tragically taken in Pennsylvania. The total number of terrorists involved in the incident was 19, all of whom were killed. The police and fire departments of New York City suffered significant losses, with an estimated 400 officers and firefighters losing their lives (Bergen, 2023). The issue of overall acceptance remains a persistent challenge, as prevailing opinions towards Muslims in the United States have mostly stayed unchanged thus far. This assertion holds particular validity in light of the fact that Islamic doctrines fundamentally contradict the ideological stances that the United States has choose to adopt.

As reported by The Washington Post (2022), a recent college graduate living in New York City as a visibly Muslim woman said that hijab phobia exacerbated after 9/11, and she was hounded down city streets and labeled a terrorist. Moreover, wearing a hijab is both an act of devotion and a way to exhibit modesty, a principle that all Muslims are supposed to follow in their behavior and attire. Amidst heightened public discourse surrounding Islam, Marvel Studios is poised to bring out a female superhero comic featuring a protagonist of Muslim Pakistani blood, who exhibits a remarkable capacity for imaginative thinking.

Adapted from the Marvel comic by Bisha K. Ali with the same title, the series "*Ms. Marvel*" presents the character of Kamala Khan, an adolescent of Muslim Pakistani descent who resides in Jersey City. This series offers a fresh and unique narrative of a Muslim Pakistan Family in America. By centering the topic of discussion on Muslim living shown in the series, the writer assumes that numerous Islamic values are displayed through various situations, such as Muslims worshiping in the mosque and praying before eating in the Islamic manner.

According to Halstead (2007), in Islam, moral values are integral to the ethical framework guiding a Muslim's life. These values are directly sourced from the Quran and the hadith, which encompass the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Based on the preliminary findings, the writer intended to examine mainly into the depiction of Islamic value and their implementation in America throughout the season 1 of *Ms. Marvel* series.

1.2 Research Questions

There exist a multitude of research obstacles associated with the writing of this thesis, specifically:

1. What are the inherent features of the series, including character, plot, and cinematographic components?
2. How is the depiction of Islamic values in the series?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

As constructing the subject matter, the writer has multiple objectives, particularly:

1. To conduct an analysis of the inherent components of the series, including the character, plot, and cinematographic characteristics.
2. To examine the Islamic values portrayed in the series.

1.4 Scope of the Studies

The scope of the research will remain confined to its designated field of study. The writer intends to conduct an analysis of both the intrinsic aspects, including the character of Pakistani Muslims, plot, and cinematography, and the external aspects that pertain to the representation of Islamic values, including its mandatory and recommendatory practice in America within the Ms. Marvel series, which consists of six episodes.

1.5 Previous Studies

The study employed for the purpose of comparing the similarities and differences in question was undertaken prior to the commencement of this

research. Moreover, prior research is utilized as a means to prevent plagiarism in the formulation of a novel study.

The initial research paper titled "*Ms. Marvel as a Representation of the Struggle for American Identity in 2016*," authored by Ashika Prajnaya Paramita. This study investigates five key themes derived from the initial volume of the Ms. Marvel comic book series. This paper examines the significance of this series in the context of Muslim immigrants' efforts to navigate their existence as a minority group within the United States. The findings indicate that Ms. Marvel functions as a conduit for communication inside the marginalized American Muslim community. Moreover, the acceptance of the new superhero has precipitated a transformation within American society, prompting an evolving recognition that Muslim immigrants are integral constituents of their societal fabric.

The present scholarly work, authored by Adnan Mahmutovic, bears the title "*Ms. Marvel: Transnational Superhero Iconography*" in 2021 within the framework of Alexander Beecroft's concept of national literary ecology, the comic book series Ms. Marvel exhibits prominent characteristics that align with the notion of "transnational connections" as described by anthropologist Ulf Hannerz. The central theme of Ms. Marvel is around the complex topic of superhero iconography and its implications for gender and ethno-religious identity. Specifically, it addresses the portrayal of Muslim identity in the post-9/11 United States, highlighting the presence of reductive stereotypes. The international character of Ms. Marvel can be attributed to her dynamic

oscillation between her position within the American literary ecosystem and her alignment with a globalized manifestation of Islamic culture.

The paper preceding this one was initially documented in Indonesian, titled "Stereotype Islam dan Wanita Muslim Dalam Film Marvel Studios: Analisis Representasi Series Ms. Marvel" by Akar Bagaspati (2022). This study examines the portrayal of Muslim women within the framework of Islamophobia and Western gender prejudice. This study employs Stuart Hall's theory of representation and Roland Barthes's method of semiotic analysis to examine the depiction of Muslim characters in the comic book series Ms. Marvel. The research reveals that Ms. Marvel presents Islam in a manner that is inclusive, adaptable, and conservative in terms of gender equality. Additionally, the comic book series also tackles the issue of Islam being misrepresented as synonymous with male dominance.

The fourth study in chronological order was authored by Putri Dinda Safira in 2023, under the original title "Representation of Minority Muslims in the Film Ms. Marvel by Bisha K. Ali." The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the semantic significance of denotation, connotation, and the formation of myths within American society pertaining to Muslim minority groups. This study employs a qualitative methodology, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Stuart Hall and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The prevailing observation is that Muslim minorities in the United States receive a certain degree of tolerance from the surrounding community, albeit their level of acceptability remains undervalued.

Through conducting an in-depth review of numerous studies papers, the writer has highlighted deficiencies related to particular topics and objects. Significantly, there is a dearth of research on the investigation of Islamic values in the Ms. Marvel series. However, this exclusion is in line with the objective of avoiding the repetition of information that has already been analysed in previous studies. The forthcoming analysis will concentrate on delineating the appearance, behaviour, and relationship dynamics of characters within the series, with a particular emphasis on those portraying Pakistani Muslims.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Data Collecting Method

To gather the necessary data for the present study, the writer employs library research, a method described by George (2008) as the process of discovering and locating sources that offer factual information or expert opinions relevant to the research inquiry. This particular element is an essential aspect of several research methodologies at certain stages. In order to facilitate the analysis of the data in the series, the author employs the technique of transcription, which refers to the act, process, or occurrence of moving information from one recorded format to another (Webster, 2023). Hence, the requisite material for this thesis can be acquired from many scholarly sources such as books, journals, e-books, online resources, articles, or videos, which the writer can consult for the purpose of referencing.

1.6.2 Approach Method

In order to analyze the intrinsic aspect of the series, namely its characteristics, plot, and cinematography, a formal approach is required. According to Barsam and Monahan (2010) formal approach involves a detailed investigation of the complex combination of intrinsic aspects. For the purpose of assessing the external aspects depicted in the series, the writer also employs a semiotic approach. As quoted from Barthes (1972), semiotic analysis entails an in-depth examination of the roles that signs—comprising words, images, and objects—play in cultural contexts for the purpose of creating and conveying meaning. He elaborated on the concept of signification, specifically the referential function of signs, by differentiating between denotation and connotation. Denotation pertains to the literal, ‘uncoded’ meaning of a sign. In contrast, connotation encompasses the social and cultural meanings that a sign acquires based on its representation.

1.7 Writing Organization

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter encompasses the background of the study, the scope of the investigation, the objective of the study, the methodology employed, previous research conducted in the field, and the structure of the written work.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents a theoretical framework that encompasses intrinsic components, including narrative features such as characters and plot, as well as cinematography. The first season of the series Ms. Marvel (2022) also includes extrinsic features that depict Islamic values.

CHAPTER III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a study of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of Season 1 of the Ms. Marvel series.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the entire discourse and analysis authored by the writer.