

CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPES: ISLAM VOICES AS A FORM OF DECOLONIAL FEMINISM IN UZMA JALALUDDIN'S NOVEL *AYESHA AT LAST*

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Abstract

Halal Fiction is a sub-genre that seeks to represent Muslims in a way that reduces Islamophobia. Islamophobia often perpetuates grand narratives that marginalize women's identities, particularly in regions where the population is predominantly Muslim, such as the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. A descriptive-qualitative approach is one methodological strategy within decolonialism, aimed at redefining heteropatriarchal Islamic principles. This approach can be informed by feminist decolonial theory, as proposed by Françoise Vergès. The novel *Ayesha at Last* addresses inequality in marriage and Islamic paradigms through its characters Ayesha and Farzana. This portrayal challenges the perception of Islam as immoral, particularly among Muslim women. Farzana believes that Ayesha has become a moderate Muslim woman, eroding traditional Muslim values, which she deems unsuitable for her son Khalid to marry into. The research aims to challenge stereotypes of Muslim values, advocating for equality between men and women regardless of geopolitical and educational status. The findings reveal that through the character of Ayesha, who transitions from traditional to moderate Islam, the novel demonstrates that Islam is a religion that upholds equal values between men and women, without any inherent differences or harm to one another.

Keywords: *decolonial; halal fiction; islamophobia; women muslim*

1. Introduction

Halal fiction also directly tries redefining Islamic principles to Western views. This redefinition occurs due to a misunderstanding of prejudice on the perspective that Muslim nations are colonized and inferior nations; hence, equality will never occur, especially since the 9/11 incident in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, resulting in the majority of the population being Islamophobia (Hashmi, 2020).

Islamophobia started in post-World War II, after the geopolitical war between the colonial and the colonized and the existence of civil hegemony through the wars in Kashmir, Palestine and various Muslim countries (Jaber, 2022). Muslims are always a dwarf nation. Muslim communities experience anxiety about being stereotyped as their religion is regarded fundamental, and radical, and does not depict equality among humans (Zanfrini, 2020). The stereotypes constructed by the West result in the acceptance of a wrong

interpretation of Islamic identity. Thus, this is to be normalized so that Islam tends to be apathetic about education and counterattacks (whitewashing) against the oppression carried out by Orientalist (Elman, 2019). The existence of communities like ISIS makes Islam strengthen the perpetuation of the phenomenon of Islamophobia (Abbasi, 2022). The spread of hatred towards the West results in blockades of power relations in carrying out intellectual supervision of judgments against Muslims before achieving independence as stated by Edward Said:

The Occident have superior resources in the cold war against the Orient by stalling the time until the Orient feels threatened so that its authentic identity will emerge by itself (Jaber, 2022).

The existence of identity discrimination against Muslims is the impact of Islamophobia in the post-9/11 tragedy. Various bad prejudices tarnish Muslim identity from public spaces to the concept of Islam which is highly dogmatized by heteronormative laws both biologically and socio-culturally. The cessation of accepting innocent Muslim immigrants means that this racism continues, leading to policies that perpetuate the oppression of Islamic identity (Shams, 2022). Various Western media carry out propaganda to discredit Muslims as a scary people with deviations that apply through politicization with intensive supervision so that the discourses spread marginalize the identity of Islam. The phenomenon of Islamophobia that has a fatal impact is oppressed subjects who do not speak out for the protection of Muslim women and children. Thus, the potential for creating an inclusive or globalist society is hampered and obstructed, one of which is Canada (Ali, Iqbal, & Din, 2022).

Women are subjects who have always been marginalized, subordinated, and domesticated by the patriarchal system that has been passed down from generation to generation. Thus, the feminist movement emerges to destroy the myths of inequality that occur in social construction. Women are always looked down upon because the scope is repetitive, namely the kitchen, the well, and the mattress; consequently, they are 'deliberately' never to become independent and educated individuals (Romens, 2021).

Decolonialization is a deconstruction of phenomena that occur structurally and systematically from European imperialism (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Decolonialization is also a new movement that triggers more diverse and intellectual subjects for both men and women, resulting in the emergence of so-called feminist decolonization (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 39). This feminist decolonization creates intersections to reduce heteropatriarchal identities; thus, many identities begin to vary from marginalized groups such as LGBTQIA+, Africans, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia (Vergès, 2021).

Uzma Jalaluddin is a Pakistani writer who immigrated to Canada and became an immigrant. Uzma has also published works such as *Ayesha at Last* (2019), *Hanna Khan Carries On* (2021), and *Much Ado about Nada* (2023) as a form of voicing equality and hybridity without excluding or undermining any party.

Ayesha at Last appraises the story of Ayesha, a Pakistani immigrant, who moves to Canada at a young age. Ayesha is also identified as a female character who adheres to the values of equality by defending her Islam. Later, she meets the Mirzad family, who are misogynistic, fundamentalist, and patriarchal (Jalaluddin, 2019). The medieval practices in depoliticizing and normalizing the Islam women to show authoritarian to be submissive

subject as tradition of secularism are showed in this novel towards Vergès framework (Vergès, 2021: 43-44).

The research objective is to reveal the representation of Muslims as a form of feminist decolonization in the novel *Ayesha at Last*. The research result is to describe the existence of a mistaken paradigm towards Islamic culture through the narrations of the characters in *Ayesha at Last*.

2. Literature Review

Decolonial feminism is a feminist movement that seeks to redefine the feminist movement, which is perpetuated through narratives from the perspectives of white skin, capitalism, and the bourgeois class. It results in superiority that marginalized people from the East, skin of color, and Islamic culture.

According to Vergès, decolonial feminism is the result of a redefinition that raises resistance to the colonial construction of bourgeois and white society, which is perpetuated by breaking down sexism, racism, capitalism, and imperialism. In addition, Vergès also states that there is judgment and exploitation of Eastern culture, especially *Hijab* and Islam. It causes feminist decolonization as an intervention against superior European imperialism (Vergès, 2021: 11).

Decolonial feminism also aims to civilize humans more humanely than Eurocentric feminism. Eurocentric feminism always focuses on marginalization rather than equality, especially for women who are not born white and have their freedoms reduced. Moreover, European feminism is built on the basis of social class that advantages the bourgeois and the whites or commonly known as *femoimperialism/femonationalism/femo-fascism* (Vergès, 2021: 52). Thus, in order to revolutionized against European ideology, the decolonial feminism prioritizes to rewriting European ideology in the twenty-first century, defined as the convergence between xenophobia and Islamophobia (Vergès, 2021).

Decolonial feminism has implicated equality and alignment, dominated by patriarchy and masculinity, identified with male power (Vergès, 2021: 55). Vergès also states that decolonial feminism tries to fight against the cultural hegemony that has been constructed by patriarchy. This resulted in both parties, both men and women, being deceived by the social system formed by colonial slavery (Vergès, 2022: 92).

The urgency in the decolonial feminism movement is the struggle to contest the dichotomy of advantage and disadvantage derived from political project of human beings (Vergès, 2022: 22). This will restore the misunderstanding of the binary narrative inherited by the Western paradigm. Thus, the injustice and inequality always experienced by people of color will create a leap imagination of utopian civilization, especially for anti-Islam or Islamophobia (Vergès, 2022: 33).

Some of literature review would guide this research more comprehensive. The first research is Basyir, Hilma, and Rizka's research entitled 'Islam, Feminisme dan Gender', arguing that Islam is a religion that has equality in individual obligations and rights without discrimination in shackling the freedom of every Muslim (Basyir, Hilman, & Muharamah, 2023).

The second research is Cristina Horvath's research in 'Female Filiations as a Locus of Politicization in Faiza Guene oeuvre: An Intersectionalist Reading of Kiffe-Kiffe Demain and La Discretion' regarding the political discussion of parent-child relations, which explores the

comparison of two novels and the representation and reconstruction of marginalized societies as a critical femonationalist discourse in Contemporary France, which raises issues of Islamophobia and Anti-Immigrants (Horvath, 2022).

The third research is Katherine Bullock's research on media representation of the use of the *Hijab* in Contemporary Muslims, which describes that the wearing of the hijab is considered violent, a threat, and controversial. It is indicated by the war launched by the Taliban, which destroys and overthrows the true Muslim identity; hence, what is shown by a handful of media has not been a comprehensive result yet (Bullock, 2000).

The latest research is conducted by Sidra Noor and Muhammad A. Malik, who investigate the perceptions and experiences of women wearing the *hijab* through interviews with 15 participants in Pakistan. This research results in three reasons for wearing the *hijab*: reflection of Islam, family Norms, and dress. However, on the negative side, there are judgment, discrimination, and harassment for the identity of wearing the *hijab* (Noor & Malik, 2021).

3. Research Method

The research method is descriptive-qualitative. The material object is Uzma Jalaluddin's novel, entitled '*Ayesha at Last*', and published in 2019. This novel is about redefining the representation of Muslim and (un)veiled-women to become empowered moderate-Muslim. The main data are collected from some parts of narratives, dialogue, and some article researches related to the analysis to be discussed. Then, the data are classified, combined within Decolonial Feminism which deconstructs the excerpt of the novel through dialogues, narrative, and expressions in voicing Islamophobia. Collected data are analyzed through Vergès lens and depatriarchalized women's policy to be, such moderate women Islam, marriage, and Islam paradigm through Ayesha's perspective. All of these representations aim to equalize the position of Islam and women without dogmatic and patriarchal colonization formed by Western nations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Moderate Islam Women

In the novel *Ayesha at Last*, we see Ayesha's transformation in showing that Islam should be a religion that has an equality value.

[...]—exploring the world, falling in love—the first as impossible as the second. She had no money, and falling in love would be difficult when she had never even held someone's hand before (Jalaluddin, 2019: 10).

From the quotation above, Ayesha aspires to explore the world rather than having a relationship with someone. This is in stark contrast to Farzana, Khalid's mother, who still prioritizes that Muslim women should conform domestic work as shown in the quotation below:

"It is so difficult to find a truly well-trained girl these days. So many modern ideas about education and careers. When I was growing up, a girl knew her role." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 61).

With this dialogue, Farzana has degraded her fellow women, that women should obey manners especially towards their elders. At the moment, the change of modern civilization makes Muslim women appear to not acquire traditional women's skills such as cooking, sewing, and reciting the Quran.

Ayesha's bedroom was her favourite room in the house. With her twin bed pushed against the wall, she had plenty of space for books, every one of which she had read. Her desk was full of textbooks and resources from teachers' college, and there were posters of Shakespeare and Jane Austen on the wall (Jalaluddin, 2019: 38).

Ayesha shows us the decoration of her room which is filled with a variety of books by British authors who are also influenced by her uncle, Sulaiman. This results in educated Muslim women being potentially disruptive subjects such as Farzana's desire to choose a partner for Khalid, with Hafsa being more suitable than Ayesha.

"I know my son better than anyone else, and I think he would be far happier with you than with someone as outspoken and opinionated as Ayesha."
(Jalaluddin, 2019: 125)

Farzana becomes a reproductive controller for her son Khalid in a relationship so that the traditions that have been adhered remain intact according to the deep-rooted rules. Not only that, Farzana also regulates habits that should not be done by a Muslim with the following quotation:

"She talked about the importance of modesty. She made sure to mention that a pious Muslim woman should never ride a bicycle, as it draws too much attention to her legs." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 145).

On the other hand, Ayesha could drive a car for work and is also a career woman which goes against traditional Muslim values as stated below:

Ayesha parked her car in the driveway and slowly removed her key from the ignition. It was six o'clock, and she had survived her first week as a substitute high school teacher (Jalaluddin, 2019: 22).

By contesting the two points of view, Ayesha and Farzana, it is seen that the changes are made from traditional values to moderate Islamic values. Moderate Islam is known as an antidote that is more tolerant of fellow human beings than conservative and totalitarian ones (Van Es, Laan, & Meinema, 2021). In addition, Ayesha has a strong determination in making decisions towards her dreams in the following quotation:

"There was so much pressure to take the road more travelled. I didn't want to disappoint my family. But now I think I'm ready to chase a dream. [...] I was thinking overseas. See the world, write." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 257).

The dialogue above is a character strengthening of Ayesha's character that is in accordance with the goals designed through Vergès' perspective in creating a utopian paradigm that is emancipatory, empowering, and pragmatic (Vergès, 2021: 83).

4.2 Marriage

Several expressions of Islamic propagation are more realistic in the novel *Ayesha at Last* (2019). They are not shackled by Western thoughts or stigmatized as a country that will never be a superpower. Some of them are the paradigm of the positioning of woman in marriage always constructed by the majorities with false interpretation.

Love comes after marriage, not before. These Western ideas of romantic love are utter nonsense. Just look at the American divorce rate (Jalaluddin, 2019: 2).

From the above quotation, the Western-constructed romance paradigm is intersected with the Eastern romance paradigm. In Eastern romance, real love always comes after marriage because otherwise, it is considered lust and blind desire, and adultery.

"I will find you the perfect wife—modest, not too educated. If we cannot find someone local, we will search for a girl back home." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 2).

The dialogue uttered by Farzana shows that she has been stigmatized by a socially constructed paradigm that empowered and educated woman is not credible criteria for a life partner for her son, Khalid Mirza. It is because a woman with strong independence tends to be identified as rebellious, especially towards her parents. Immediately, we argue that there is a trauma behind Islam which tends to appear apathetic towards education so that it acts radically over the expulsion of Hindu and Buddhist groups in parts of South Asia (Sikander, 2021).

Traditional arranged marriages were a bit like horse trading, Ayesha had always thought. Photographs and marriage resume detailing age, height, weight, skin color, job title, and salary were sent to the families of prospective brides and grooms before the first visit was even arranged, a sort of vetting process for both parties. Details about family were often sent through a trusted intermediary, usually a mutual friend and sometimes a semi-professional matchmaking aunty (Jalaluddin, 2019: 33).

Ayesha thinks that traditional marriage by arranging someone she does not want is coercion, with the addition of unreasonable criteria for a life partner by paying attention to the origin, quality, and rank. With a myriad of rules, many women feel humiliated by the shackles of this hereditary tradition, which causes women to feel uncomfortable and unable to choose their partners.

"Marriage is not a bad thing if you find the right person and your judgment is not clouded by emotion. I hope you are not thinking about marriage too, just yet. You need to focus on your new job and career. A husband can be such a distraction." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 44)

The quotation indicates that Saleha, Ayesha's mother, considers marriage to be not bad a suitable partner is found and not controlled by personal decisions and emotions. She also suggests that having a husband would be a disaster and a distraction for Ayesha, an independent personality.

“We are South-Asian—you really do marry the whole family. But to let your parents choose for you, without any input of your own—I know you are traditional, but that is crazy. Even Hafsa wants to talk to one hundred guys before she picks one.” (Jalaluddin, 2019: 115)

This dialogue implies that the reader is given an overview of the tradition of marriage in South Asia; marriage is not similar to the West, which prioritizes self-confidence and integrity in their choices. Meanwhile, in Eastern culture, such as in South Asia, marriage is a union of two families, which creates an agreement between families and abandonment of the subject who carries out/ has a marriage. As we know, that mostly the South Asian people who immigrate to West would choose women from the same demographic and geopolitical realm as long as the male dominates the marital status (Shams, 2022).

“She had heard stories of girls being forced into marriages against their will, of course. It happened around the world, across different religions and cultures, and the practice disgusted her.” (Jalaluddin, 2019: 220).

From the dialogue put forward by Ayesha, she has heard various stories worldwide, both cultural and religious; there have been practices of legalizing forced marriages. Therefore, women do not have the will to make normative decisions in the social structure. This also makes it frightening to look at Islam with the existence of power relations that form a culture of forced marriage without the consent of the woman being married (Mardhatillah & Na'im, 2022).

“Farzana pretends to be a pious Muslim, but she is hiding a terrible secret. Twelve years ago, when she found out her only daughter, Zareena, had had an abortion, she did something unthinkable. She forced her into an arranged marriage with a stranger in India, and then she flew back to Canada, leaving her daughter all alone. She was only seventeen years old. This past year she arranged the marriage of her son, Khalid, an awkward fanatic with no friends, to Hafsa, the daughter of Brother Sulaiman. She did this even though she knew Khalid was in love with someone else. She was willing to doom Hafsa to an unhappy marriage just so she could remain in control of her son's life.” A picture of Hafsa popped up on the screen, smiling innocently at the camera.” (Jalaluddin, 2019: 241).

Based on the video confession by the character ‘Tarek’, Farzana is a mother who does not recognize her daughter, Zareena, who has just aborted her biological child at 17 years old. In addition, Hafsa has become a pivot for Farzana to re-legitimize by rejuvenating Hafsa as a wife who is still innocent, obedient, and fully controllable for her son, Khalid's life partner.

Allah placed love in your hearts and created you as two separate individuals. The Islamic view of marriage is not the same as secular romantic love. I have been married for more than twenty-five years, and my wife and I are vastly different people. I think the reason we are still married and happy, most of the time, is because we have learned to

forgive each other for not being ideal. We accept each other's limitations.”
(Jalaluddin, 2019: 263).

In this quotation, Islam and love do not align with society's generalized understanding of romance. Love and compassion, based on Islam, is about loving and accepting each other without judging and limiting the individual's growth because it makes a marriage always intact and happy.

“Arranged marriages are not only practiced by South Asians. They are common all over the world. Think of it as a facilitated introduction”,
Ayesha soothed. (Jalaluddin, 2019: 344).

Lastly, Ayesha has always seen and heard that the practice of arranged marriages does not only occur in South Asia but also in all parts of the world. It indicates and reemphasize that women will constantly be objectified; thus, men always claim their power over women and will never be equal, as Islam desires.

After we have seen through the marriages, Islam has no condition in constructing the marriage, although it looks as simple as no discrimination between the lovers.

4.3 Islam Paradigm

The Muslims that we have inherited from childhood are Muslims who discredit equality in socializing and subordinate women and it turns out that this also has an impact on men who are shackled in expressing themselves. This shows that there is a slip-up in the values espoused in the writings of the Orientalist. Verges states that society has so far overly refined Western writings, thus making all right-wings writings a tragedy (Vergès, 2022: 78).

If only Khalid had shaken Sheila's hand, things would have been so much easier. Her friend Ayesha had no problem shaking people's hands, and she was Muslim. (Jalaluddin, 2019: 19).

Based on the statements above, her friend perceives the difference between her friend Ayesha and her co-worker, Khalid, regarding the understanding of place, role, and action; the Muslim paradigm generally adheres to the teaching that touching hands is unlawful for both men and women. However, the act of shaking hands will not fade Muslim identity. In fact, the gesture of shaking hands for a Muslim indicates a soft heart in accepting fellow human beings as long as there is no lust and no exaggeration (Ramdani, Noorhidayati, Rohandy, & Apriani, 2022).

“If it truly disturbs you, I promise to stop. Just as soon as you promise to quit your job. Nice girls from good families shouldn't work outside the home.” He twinkled at her. “Nana, you're so sexist,” Ayesha said. “Who said I'm a nice girl?” (Jalaluddin, 2019: 23).

Based on the statemenst above, Islamophobia emphasizes discrimination against women in the workplace, whether it is better to stay at home or work without the *hijab*. This has fatal consequences because women are considered to have certain propaganda in socio-cultural formation in the workplace (Ahmed, Quinn, Limaye, & Khan, 2021).

“If you're bored, why don't you join us?” she said, loud enough for her voice to carry. “I'm here with my best friend. She's Muslim too. Why don't

you meet her? I'm sure you have a lot in common." Khalid glanced at the young woman at the next table, and his expression of disapproval deepened. Ayesha was now holding three cigarettes in her hand and had a colourful cocktail in front of her. The look on his face betrayed his doubts about the Shirley Temple's virginity. "I do not wish to be introduced to your friend. I stay away from the type of Muslim who frequents bars," he said. At the neighbouring table, Ayesha stiffened. "To be honest, I regret coming here tonight," Khalid continued. "My companions are only interested in drinking alcohol and accosting women, and it will be impossible to have a serious conversation. I hope I haven't offended you, Clara. I try not to judge other people's choices." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 35).

In the statements above, it can be seen that there is prejudice and judgment against women wearing the *hijab* who come to the discotheque, as if it is an insult to Islam. In fact, Ayesha as an immigrant, has hybridity, namely as an Eastern person who has sublimated to Western values without losing her identity as a Muslim (Zohdi, 2017). Thus, the attitude shown by Khalid who upholds traditional Islamic values, results in Ayesha performing a poetry recital against prejudice against the views of women wearing the *hijab*.

[What Do You See?]

*What do you see when you think of me,
A figure cloaked in mystery
With eyes downcast and hair covered,
An oppressed woman yet to be discovered?
Do you see backward nations and swirling sand,
Humpbacked camels and the domineering man?
Whirling veils and terrorists
Or maybe fanatic fundamentalists?
Do you see scorn and hatred locked
Within my eyes and soul,
Or perhaps a profound ignorance of all the world as a whole?
The crowd roared. Her body swayed slightly, eyes liquid and focused on a
spot at the
back of the room. She continued.
Yet . . .
You fail to see
The dignified persona
Of a woman wrapped in maturity.
The scarf on my head
Does not cover my brain.
I think, I speak, but still you refrain
From accepting my ideals, my type of dress,
You refuse to believe
That I am not oppressed.
So the question remains:
What do I see when I think of you?*

*I see another human being
Who doesn't have a clue.
(Jalaluddin, 2019: 36)*

The discourse of oppression against women who wear the *hijab* makes Ayesha take political action (Vergès, 2022) so that no more subjects will be hurt because of their clothing, namely the *hijab*. The hijab is indeed symbolized as a Muslim woman who adheres to her religion, but this attitude is heteronormative which shackles women in the formation of a heteropatriarchal socio-cultural identity (Sheen, Yekani, & Jordan, 2018).

The Toronto Muslim Assembly employed a casual segregation policy. Unlike most other mosques, where men and women prayed in separate rooms and sometimes even on separate floors, the mosque had no physical divider. Khalid cautiously moved toward the women's section (Jalaluddin, 2019: 51).

The absence of gendered-space discrimination in the Toronto Muslim group indicates that Islam is a religion that is equal in worship for both men and women. Traditionalist Islamic values result in unequal space for worshiping God except for Muslim special moments such as Ramadan and Eid (Ghafournia, 2020).

Farzana looked at her dismissively. "It is difficult to find a truly well-trained girl these days. So many modern ideas about education and careers. When I was growing up, a girl knew her role." "So true, Farzana", Aliyah said. "A girl should know how to cook at least three different types of rice, twelve or more meat dishes, and at least as many vegetable curries. When I was married, I had sixty-five recipes memorized", she said. "Finally, she should show deference and modesty of character. She must not speak when her elders are talking. She must be quiet and refined, never gossip or joke. I find a girl who laughs in public has been raised in a very inferior household. She must never talk back to her mother-in-law and should spend her days sewing, cooking, and reading the Quran." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 75).

Furthermore, Farzana emphasizes more and more that women nowadays, by freeing themselves with education and careers, will never be able to serve the household and tend to fall apart. Nowadays, women are also unfamiliar with the scope of kitchen cooking, thus further exacerbating the shackles that women who can cook are the primary condition for a household to achieve prosperity. Ultimately, the identity of women who contend and argue and think critically also destroys women's identities that society wants. Necessarily, women are individuals who are compassionate and also submissive so as not to pit two families against each other and that marriages remain peaceful and intact.

"No, no—the problem is that your choices are terrible and you are wasting too much time in pointless debate. The theme will be "Islam: The Only Pure Choice". I will order a banner and flyers tomorrow. As for the tagline, let us keep it simple: "Follow Islam, Stay Pure". The colors will be white and green, like the Pakistani flag". "Sister Farzana, you cannot just bulldoze our meeting", Ayesha said, her resolve to be quiet, rupturing with an almost audible crack. "You do not think Islam is the only pure choice?" Farzana

asked. "What kind of a Muslim are you?" "You are twisting my words", Ayesha said, her face turning red. "Perhaps, it is your heart that is twisted. Everyone knows you were impersonating your cousin Hafsa for several weeks. Jealousy is so ugly in a woman". Ayesha was shocked but did not back down. "Insults are not going to work, Farzana Aunty. You have two options: Stay and contribute to the discussion in a respectful manner, or leave". Farzana turned to the imam. "Abdul Bari, I am appalled at the shameful behavior of your committee members. The executive board will be hearing about this. Let us go, Khalid. The caterer is waiting for us". She stalked out of the room. After a moment of embarrassed silence, Khalid followed (Jalaluddin, 2019: 218).

The dialogue uttered by Farzana implies that she attempts to legitimize her domination by manipulating society by branding the name of the conference as she wishes, namely Islam: Pure Identity. Hence, she could empower all people to follow 'traditional' Muslim teachings that are adhered to by Farzana with an emphasis on heteropatriarchy.

"At Livetech, everyone must be comfortable wearing different hats and working in flexible roles. I'll leave you to it." She walked out of the room, smiling grimly. "Admit it, Sheila. You don't like me because I'm Muslim. Sheila pasted a wounded look on her face. I find that highly insulting. Amir still works here." "Amir is a light-skinned Persian man who does not identify as Muslim. My appearance makes you uncomfortable." "Employee dress code—" Sheila started, but Khalid interrupted her by pulling out a printed copy of Livetech's code of conduct. He took his time riffling through the pages before reading aloud: Livetech recognizes the rights of all employees to express their religious beliefs through dress and behavior. Livetech encourages all such religious freedoms and supports a diverse and respectful work environment. Sheila blanched. "Well, in your case . . ." she said, stumbling over her words. "I'm a peaceful man," Khalid said. He realized he was enjoying himself. "But when the NCCM—a Muslim advocacy group, perhaps you have heard of them?—approached me looking for a test case on workplace Islamophobia, I considered it my duty to speak up." (Jalaluddin, 2019: 254).

Islam in the workplace is a casual daily topic in the West. After post-tragedy 9/11, Islam is often seen as a threat and a group of terrorists who burnt White to the ground. Thus, every institutional institution discredits their fears by marginalizing a group of Muslims. This results in limitations in having jobs, especially for men, as well as a snowball effect on people of color as long as their religious identity is Muslim (Ahmed et al., 2021).

From this section, we investigate that Islam paradigm has been written through colonization and post-tragedy 9/11 which makes Islamophobia spread into all nations even the Muslim has hesitation with their religion.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, decolonial feminism aims to expose the traditional Muslim practices that hegemonize the Islamic paradigm, veiled women, and Islamic socio-culture through Ayesha as an agent of revolutionary women's struggles. For example, Farzana (Khalid's mother) is imbued with Islamic values shaped by Orientalist interpretations and attempts to pass these values on to Khalid by forcing him to marry a submissive woman. Conversely, Ayesha, as an educated and integrated woman, has multiple options for her livelihood. Moreover, arranged marriages, as perpetuated by matchmaking between families, have created a separation from self-choice, which is more liberating for principles and honor. Decolonial feminism, as demonstrated by Ayesha, illustrates that Islam, often portrayed as a marginalized religion, actually accepts one another without conflict, prioritizing logic and reasoning over incidents that burden the domestication of wounded lives in both men and women.

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