

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION OF SAMIRA AHMED'S
*HOLLOW FIRES***

THESIS

By:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG
2023**

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*HOLLOW FIRES***

THESIS

Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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2023**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Religious Discrimination of Samira Ahmed’s *Hollow Fires***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, April 10, 2023

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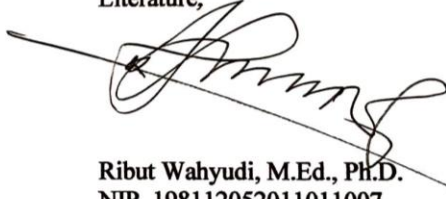
This to certify that Anida Hasnah's thesis entitled **Religious Discrimination of Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*** has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.).

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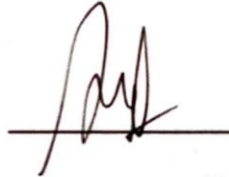


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MOTTO

“So, surely with hardship comes ease. Surely with ‘that’ hardship comes ‘more’ ease.”

—*Surah Ash Sharh 94:5-6*

“Actions have consequences.”

—*Samira Ahmed, Hollow Fires*—

DEDICATION

This thesis is kindly dedicated to:

My dearest parents, *Bapak* Hadi Muhlisin and *Ibu* Anis Untari,

My beloved siblings, Fathoni Hadi Putra and Dzuratu Maknunin,

Thank you for taking me by granted, and also for all of your prayers, loves and support for me.

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All praises and thanks always belong to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin, the most Gracious and the most Merciful. By His grace and guidance, I can complete writing this thesis. Our *Shalawat and Salaam* are always delivered to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, who has guided us from the darkness to the lightness of Islam.

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Finally, despite the weaknesses and imperfections of this thesis. Therefore, to make this thesis better, comments and suggestions are welcomed. I hope this thesis can be beneficial for literary criticism study, particularly in the religious discrimination field.

Malang, 2023

Anida Hasnah

ABSTRACT

Hasnah, Anida. (2023). *Religious Discrimination of Samira Ahmed's Hollow Fires*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, MA.

Key words: Discrimination, Religious Discrimination, Sociology of Literature

From time to time, religious discrimination have become an important topic, including literary works. Various issues occur from various causes. As an essential topic of literary works, religious discrimination becomes a topic that reflects social issues that are ingrained in society due to religious membership in literary work. One literary work that raises the topic of religious discrimination is the novel *Hollow Fires* (2022), written by Samira Ahmed. This study aims to analyze the portrayal, causes, and impacts of religious discrimination in *Hollow Fires*. This study applies the theory of religious discrimination because its analysis focuses on human problems rooted in religious discrimination. Specifically, this analysis uses the religious discrimination theory by Kevin Boyle (2004), which focuses on types of religious discrimination and its causes. Also, the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters. The data are taken from words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs from the dialogues and narratives in the novel *Hollow Fires* by Samira Ahmed. The study results show that religious discrimination portrayals in *Hollow Fires* by Samira Ahmed are direct religious discriminations. Moreover, the religious discrimination portrayals in the novel are caused by two factors. Namely, religious hatred and religious prejudice that cause the Muslim community to be discriminated against. Then, as a result of religious discrimination, this study shows two negative impact categories, bullying and negative treatment experienced by the Muslim community in the novel.

ABSTRAK

Hasnah, Anida. (2023). *Disriminasi Agama dalam novel Hollow Fires milik Samira Ahmed.* Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, MA.

Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi, Diskriminasi Agama, Sastra Sosiologi

Dari masa ke masa, diskriminasi agama menjadi topik penting pembahasan, tak terkecuali di dalam karya sastra. Berbagai masalah timbul dari berbagai alasan. Sebagai topik penting dalam karya sastra, diskriminasi agama menjadi topik yang mencerminkan isu-isu sosial yang mandarah daging di masyarakat karena keanggotaan agama dalam karya sastra. Salah satu karya sastra yang mengangkat topik diskriminasi agama adalah novel *Hollow Fires* (2022) karya Samira Ahmed. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggambaran, penyebab serta dampak dari diskriminasi agama dalam *Hollow Fires*. Analisis penelitian ini menggunakan teori diskriminasi agama karena fokus analisis ini adalah masalah antara manusia yang bersumber pada diskriminasi agama. Lebih spesifik, analisis ini menggunakan teori diskriminasi agama milik Kevin Boyle (2004), yang berfokus pada bentuk diskriminasi agama dan penyebabnya. Serta dampak diskriminasi agama pada karakter-karakter muslim. Data-data diambil dari kata, frasa, kalimat, dan paragraf yang terdapat pada dialog dan narasi dalam novel *Hollow Fires* karya Samira Ahmed. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggambaran diskriminasi agama dalam *Hollow Fires* karya Samira Ahmed adalah diskriminasi agama langsung. Selanjutnya, penggambaran diskriminasi agama di novel tersebut disebabkan oleh dua penyebab. Yaitu, kebencian agama serta prasangka agama yang menyebabkan umat muslim terdiskriminasi. Lalu, dampak dari tindakan diskriminasi agama, penelitian ini menunjukkan dua kategori dampak negatif, perundungan dan perlakuan buruk yang didapat oleh komunitas muslim di novel.

مستخلص البحث

حسنة، النداء (٢٠٢٣)، تفريق الديني في الرواية *Hollow Fires* عند سميرة أحمد. البحث الجامعي، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و أدبها، كلية العلوم الإنسانية. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: أكوغ واراناتا كسوما الماجستير.

الكلمة الرئيسية: التفريق، التفريق الديني، الأدب الاجتماعية

منذ تطور هذا الزمان، صار تفريق الديني موضوعا مهما في البحث وكذلك في الأدب، المسائل نجمت بتنوع الحجج، التفريق الديني كموضوع مهم في الأدب صار موضوعا ينعكس على قضايا الاجتماعية ثبتت في المجتمع بسبب دخول الدين في الأدب احدى الرواية التي تتعلق بموضوع تفريق الديني هي *Hollow Fires* (٢٠٢٢) صانعها سميرة أحمد، أما هذا الاشقرار هدفا لتحليل التصوير والأسباب وهكذا التأثير على تفريق الديني في *Hollow Fires*، اسخدم هذا التحليل الاستقراء نظرية تفريق الديني، لأن تركيز هذا التحليل هي المسألة بين الناس التي مصدرها تفريق الديني، وبلخصوص، اسخدم هذا التحليل نظرية تفريق الديني عند Kevin Boyle (٢٠٠٤) التي تركز على شكل التفريق الديني على طبيعة المسلمين، أخذت البيانات من الكلمة، والجملة والفقرة التي تقع في رواية *Hollow Fires* من المحادثة وحكاية عند سميرة أحمد الحصول من التحليل يدل البحث على أن تصوير التفريق الديني في رواية *Hollow Fires* عند سميرة أحمد هو التفريق الديني المباشر، والتالي تصوير تفريق الديني في تلك الرواية له سببان هما الظن والكراهة من الدين التي تسبب على تفريق امة المسلمين، وتأثير على تفريق الديني من هذا التحليل له تأثيران السلبيان هما الاشهزاء و المعاملة السوءة وجد هما المسلمون في هذه الرواية.

TABLE OF CONTENT

THESIS	i
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	ii
APPROVAL SHEET	iii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
ABSTRAK	x
مستخلص البحث.....	xi
TABLE OF CONTENT	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Problem of the Study.....	5
C. Significance of the Study	6
D. Scope and Limitation	6
E. Definition of Key Term.....	6
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
A. Sociology of Literature	8
B. Discrimination.....	11
C. Religious Discrimination	12
D. Types of Religious Discrimination	12
1. Direct Religious Discrimination.....	13
2. Indirect Religious Discrimination	14
E. Causes of Religious Discrimination.....	14
1. Religious Prejudice.....	15
2. Religious Hatred.....	16
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD	19
A. Research Design.....	19
B. Data Source	20

C. Data Collection.....	20
D. Data Analysis	21
CHAPTER IV: FINDING AND DISCUSSION	22
A. Religious Discrimination Portrayed in Samira Ahmed’s <i>Hollow Fires</i>	22
1. Direct Religious Discrimination Caused by Religious Prejudice	22
2. Direct Religious Discrimination Caused by Religious Hatred.....	34
B. The Impact of Religious Discrimination towards Muslim characters in Samira Ahmed’s <i>Hollow Fires</i>	38
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	49
A. Conclusion	49
B. Suggestion.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
CURRICULUM VITAE	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, problem of the study, approach, theory, the significance of the study, scope and limitation, previous studies and gap of study, research's purpose, and the importance of writing the topic.

A. Background of the Study

Discrimination is an inevitable issue within society. Discrimination occurs for several reasons: race, ethnicity, religion, belief, and other grounds. Islamophobia is one of the forms of religious discrimination subjected to Muslims. Islamophobia has four aspects: discrimination, prejudice, exclusion and violence (Jaber, 2022, p. 333). One of the most controversial religious discrimination directed toward Muslims is *The Trump Effect*, a campaign by Donald Trump that promised a “total shutdown of Muslims” in America. Furthermore, there are several issues of Islam discrimination, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar or Burma, Uyghurs in China, and Muslims in India and Kashmir. Due to these issues, we should start raising our awareness and acknowledging the form of discrimination.

A literary work that addresses a social issue is called a social issue literary work. Social problems such as class, conflict, racism, and many more have become essential issues in literary work. Some of the new modern social issues literary works are *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett (2020), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Min Jin Lee's book entitled *Pachinko* (2017).

Moreover, there are some classical literary works such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813), and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868). Another literary fiction issues a social problem is the newest Samira Ahmed's work entitled *Hollow Fires* (2022), which is also the object of this research.

As a former high school newspaper editor in Batavia, Ill, Ahmed used to ask tough questions about several issues flooding the air. One of Ahmed's purposes in writing *Hollow Fires* (2022), which she shares during her interview with Time, is to ask questions about the way media speaks about murder and hate crimes, particularly concerning race, ethnicity, and religion (Mansoor, 2022). As she starts to ask questions in the form of narrative through *Hollow Fires* (2022), Ahmed ties social issues into the novel's elements using several actual accidents to shape the narrative. For instance, the religious discrimination presented in a narrative where Dina Ali was told to go "home" and harassed by a stranger by calling her a racist name and trying to strip her hijab off.

Literature is a direct reflection of various facets of social structure (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972, p. 13). Furthermore, as a mirror of real life, a literary work has problems, solutions, and value within the work. As a social issues-themed literary work, Ahmed uses narrative strategies to ask questions about social issues and raise the readers' awareness of race, religion, and ethnicity problems in *Hollow Fires* (2022). Therefore, to articulate the nature of the issues, solutions, and value within the novel, the novel is examined using a sociological perspective in literary criticism. As a foundation of work, this analysis uses scientific theory about

religious discrimination from Kevin Boyle (2004) to break down the social issues reflected in the novel.

As a scientific study, therefore, this study as a form of systematic and organized, needs principal scientific guidances (Soeratno, 2003, p. 14). One of the principal scientific guidance of this study is theory. Furthermore, to scientifically and comprehensively answer the problem of study, this study uses the theory of religious discrimination by Kevin Boyle (2004). The topic of this study is religious discrimination, specifically Muslim discrimination. Boyle (2004), in his book, specifically said that religion is the social membership factor that causes discrimination in society. Furthermore, Boyle (2004) also denotes the types and causes of religious discrimination. Correspondingly, religious discrimination is also the dominant topic in the novel. By applying this theory, the researcher hopes this study can scientifically articulate the topic and find the portrayals of religious discrimination in *Hollow Fires* (2022).

Many researchers have done literary analysis of social issues works in literary criticism. For instance, social discrimination study written by Sosrohadi & Wulandari (2022) highlights the origin of discrimination in the novel and the elements that cause the discrimination based on Fulthoni's theory (2009). Identically, a journal article from Jimmi & Mawadah (2021) describes the different forms of discrimination and their impacts that the main character has to deal. Another study using Fulthoni's theory is an undergraduate thesis by Hastuti (2019), which demonstrate how prejudice happens in the work of R.J Palacio and describes why insecurity, ignorance, and pride cause discrimination.

A discrimination analysis in literature also focuses only on one type. According to Theodorson & Theodorson (1969, p. 115-116), discrimination is the unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical, attribute, such as racial, ethnic, religious, or social-class membership. Correspondingly, Ritmi & Marlina (2021) write an analysis based on the racial discrimination depicted within *We Cast A Shadow* (2019), which aims to investigate how the novel reflects the racial discrimination that African-American characters face. Similarly, a study by Idris, Wahyuni, & Prautomo (2020) presents a study that focuses on finding the social class influence on racial discrimination and the effect of discrimination. Another study concerned with gender discrimination, unequal treatment faced by women characters, and the factor that supports the women characters to fight against discrimination is presented by Firdausy (2021). Moreover, Mu'ad (2020) presents a religious discrimination study through his undergraduate thesis. This study explains the types, causes, and ways that *The Golden Legend* portrays unequal treatment based on religion against Pakistani Christians.

Literary work that focuses on religious discrimination also concerns Islam discrimination issues. The study that deals with Islamophobia is a journal article by Rahayu (2021). In her paper, Rahayu (2021) proposes an analysis that describes how *Mencari Hilal* presented Islamophobia and the ideology presented in the movie to trigger the audience to reconsider their religious beliefs using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. Another study focusing on Islam's discrimination and racism and the history of why Muslims are discriminated against in The United

States is a paper from Akbar & Sakinah (2020). The last Islam discrimination study is an undergraduate thesis written by Asrori (2022), which examines the types and causes of religious discrimination in *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*. Moreover, Asrori's thesis employs Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination (2004), a theory that this study employs to examine *Hollow Fires* (2022).

Based on those previous studies, the researcher concludes that analyses focusing on religious discrimination are still a little compared to other discrimination. The researcher aims to analyze *Hollow Fires* (2022) in this study by applying a sociology of literature analysis. The researcher attempts to highlight religious discrimination and the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters in the novel. Moreover, the essential part of analyzing *Hollow Fires* (2022) is to raise the readers' awareness and enrich their knowledge about religious discrimination.

Furthermore, as human beings, a human cannot separate ourselves from social issues. As social and religion always come along with pros and cons. Acceptance and discrimination are unavoidably present in our life. Literature also has the value of enhancing understanding self and others (Mundi Rahayu, 2009, p. 1). Therefore, the researcher argues that analyzing Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fire* (2022) using a religious discrimination focus may lead to an accessible source for the readers, literary work, and ourselves to understand religious discrimination.

B. Problem of the Study

The research is expected to respond to the following questions, according to the research:

1. What are the religious discriminations portrayed in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*?
2. How are the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*?

C. Significance of the Study

As a result, the researcher expects this study to provide practical and theoretical contributions to literary work studies. Practically, this study can be helpful for the readers and enhance the reader's academic knowledge about discrimination, especially religious discrimination. Hopefully, this study can theoretically enhance the development of literary criticism and the references of religious discrimination critics for future studies, notably for the sociology of literature analysis.

D. Scope and Limitation

The researcher will examine a novel by Samira Ahmed entitled *Hollow Fires* (2022), discussing the religious discrimination that occurs in the novel using the sociology of literature. Furthermore, this study focuses more on the portrayals and the impacts of religious discrimination experienced by Muslim characters in *Hollow Fires* (2022).

E. Definition of Key Term

To prevent misinterpretations, there are several key terms used in this study:

- Discrimination** : The unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical, attribute, such as racial, ethnic, religious, or social-class membership (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969, p. 115-116).
- Impact of Religious Discrimination** : A domino effect of religious discrimination.
- Religious Discrimination** : Unfair treatment on the basis of religion (Boyle, 2004, p. 67).
- Religious Hatred** : A 'religious prejudice' that shades over into a deep-seated hostility and form 'religious discrimination' (Boyle, 2004, p. 69).
- Religious Prejudice** : A practice of the stereotyping of particular religious groups through attitudes that can wound individuals and form a basis for exclusion and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2004, p. 68).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter contains several relevant studies in literary works on literature criticism. It contains the literary approach and theory of the analysis. In section presents a description of the sociology of literature approach, the explanation of discrimination and religious discrimination, followed by religious discrimination's kinds and causes, and religious disadvantage.

A. Sociology of Literature

The term "sociology of literature" is derived from the terms "sociology" as well as "literature". Thus, it is best to distinguish between sociology and literature before discussing the sociology of literature. In 1839 sociology was proposed for the first time by Auguste Comte. *Sociology* is a term referring to the science of society. According to Theodorson & Theodorson (1969, p. 401), sociology is the scientific study of human behavior. Sociology studies social patterns and processes in society, social interaction, and social behaviour to comprehend the elements and factors of social behaviour. Literature, is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation (Wellek & Warren, 1954, p. 89).

Wiyatmi (2013, p. 7) denotes that sociology and literature have the same object of study, namely humans in society. Therefore, as sociology and literature have the same scope of analysis, both studies can be combined into one. Literature can be explained with sociology theory or referred to as the sociology of literature. A literary criticism uses the sociology of literature means the analysis of the literary

work studied from a sociological perspective and discusses social aspects in the novel.

Several well-known sociology of literary figures are Ian Watt, Diana Laurensen, Alan Swingewood, René Wellek, and Austin Warren. Those figures classify the concept of the sociology of literature. Ian Watt (1964) in Wiyatmi (2013, p. 25) divides the sociology of literature study into three types: 1) The social context study of the author, discusses the social position of the author in society. 2) Literature, as a mirror of society, aims to discuss how the author described literature reflecting society and reality at a certain point. 3) Social function of literature, which discusses the social values within the literary work and how those values contribute to the social change of the society.

Laurensen and Swingewood in Wahyudi (2013, p. 57) classify the concept of the sociology of literature approach into three parts: 1) Literature as a society's mirror, which discusses how literature as a socio-cultural document is used to see a social phenomenon in a certain period. 2) Literature seen from the production process of its authorship, discusses the situation during the production time of literary work and the social background of the author. 3) Literature concerning history and literary work discusses the literary work as an image of manifestation of historical events and as a literary work itself.

In Wiyatmi (2013, p. 25), Wellek and Warren (1994) divide literary sociology into three categories: First, the sociology of the author, discusses the social background of the author as the creator of the work. Second is the sociology of the

literary work, which discusses the problems and aspects of the work itself. Third, the sociology of the reader, discusses the reader of literature and the influence of literary work on the reader.

According to the classification above about the sociology of literature. The researcher concludes the scope and concept of the sociology of literature approach into three aspects: the author, literary work, and reader. Nevertheless, the researcher in this study will only analyze some of the three elements of the sociology of literature but only the work itself. This study will focus on exploring the object as the literary work itself, and sociology acts as a tool to understand the social aspect within the literary work. The analysis of the sociology of literature focuses on literary work is called the objective-sociological paradigm. According to Kurniawan (2012, p. 12) in Syafitri (2018, p. 82), objective-sociological paradigm focuses on the objective or autonomous analysis of the sociology of literary works. Therefore, the research examines social life and societal elements of literary work as a field of analysis.

The sociology of literature aims to derive the insights of writers concerning society or to relate literature to the structure of society, in the manner of the sociology of knowledge (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969, p. 405). The sociology of knowledge is an area of sociology that looks at how different knowledge systems interact with one another (scientific, religious, philosophical, aesthetic, political, legal, etc.) and social and cultural factors. Therefore, using the sociology of literature in the manner of sociological knowledge, this study will shape the

knowledge and thought of religious discrimination and how the culture and society within the object present that knowledge.

B. Discrimination

Unequal treatment of groups or individuals according to several memberships is refer to discrimination. According to Fulthoni, Arianingtyas, Aminah, and Sihombing (2009, p. 3), discrimination is caused by skin colour, ethnicity, class or ethnicity, and can also be caused by differences in sex, economy, religion, and so on. Discrimination is usually referred to as a shorthand way to refer to refusal actions to equal treatment to individuals or groups considered members of some social categories. An action made by the powerful majority in its interactions with the vulnerable minority.

According to Fulthoni and others (2009, p. 4), discrimination occurs in a society divided into five kinds of discrimination. Discrimination based on ethnicity, race, and religion/belief; discrimination based on sex and gender; discrimination against persons with disabilities; discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS; and discrimination based on social caste. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is a federal agency in the United States that administers and enforces civil rights laws prohibiting workplace discrimination. The EEOC classify the various types of discrimination that occur in the United States based on; age, disability, equal pay/compensation, genetic information, harassment, national origin, pregnancy, race/colour, religion, retaliation, sex, sexual harassment, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

Therefore, in the case of the object study, the *Hollow Fires* (2022) novel by Samira Ahmed. The discrimination within the object of study caused by the religion membership of the Muslim characters. The Muslim characters receive discrimination since they are Muslim. The prejudice towards Muslims and Islam encourages the discriminators to practice unequal treatment against Muslim characters in the novel.

C. Religious Discrimination

Discrimination is treating people or groups indifferently according to several memberships, namely national origin, race, politics, and religion or beliefs. Discrimination is usually related to an act committed by the dominant majority against weak minorities. Religious discrimination is a shorthand for discrimination based on religion. According to Boyle (2004), the term is used to describe those attitudes, actions, circumstances and dynamics in which, in relation to factors concerned with religion, an individual or group is treated less favorably than another individual or group either of a different religion, or of no religion (p. 67).

Religious discrimination has been a heated societal topic in recent years. At the same time, religious militancy and extremism engendered by majorities and minorities, represents a huge challenge in many countries developed and developing (Boyle, 2004, p. 2).

D. Types of Religious Discrimination

The types of religious discrimination according to Kevin Boyle (2004) classified into two kinds, there are:

1. Direct Religious Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as the action or behavior of treating one person or group less favorably than another. A bias against a group or individual part of particular membership. Crime is one of the religious harms that comes from discriminatory behaviors. Therefore, by this kind of religious harm, discrimination involves a direct action to harm a certain individual or group due to their membership to a certain religion. According to Boyle (2004), direct religious discrimination occurs where there is deliberate exclusion of people from opportunities or services on grounds related to their religious belief, identity or practice (p. 73). Boyle illustrates the practice of discrimination as, 'A treats B less favourably than another person ("C") is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation' or 'A subjects B to a detriment' (Boyle, 2004, p. 73).

Direct religious discrimination does not always come from religious prejudice, hatred, and disadvantage. However, similar to racial prejudice, it is possible for these dimensions and dynamics to translate into directly discriminatory behavior when they inform decisions taken by individuals holding positions of power within the public, private and voluntary sectors (Boyle, 2004. p. 73). For instance when a teacher gives a harmful and prejudicial attitude toward a Muslim student for their 'Islam' appearance, it can influence other students' behavior toward that Muslim student due to the power and status the teacher holds.

2. Indirect Religious Discrimination

Boyle states that indirect religious discrimination rooted in the policies and practices of organisations which can result in patterns of exclusive recruitment policies, employment practice and service provision (2004, p. 74). This term is an effect of exclusivity of historical decisions, the pattern of behavior, contemporary structures and organizations that may not be subjected to religious prejudice or hostility, regardless they could be associated with the elements of spiritual disadvantage.

However, if such historical patterns are not openly reviewed in light of the implications of religious plurality, they may unwittingly result in prejudice against persons of other faith traditions. Examples of this can include culturally exclusive requirements and provisions in terms of diet, clothing, religious festivals and a range of other matters (Boyle, 2004, p. 74).

E. Causes of Religious Discrimination

One of the most important aspects of analyzing a discrimination event in society is distinguishing between the dimensions of unfair or unequal treatment and considering how these dimensions interact with one another so that potential solutions are appropriate for the nature of the problem. In line with the importance of distinguishing racial prejudice, racial disadvantage and racial hatred in racial discrimination study. From the racial discrimination study, discrimination is found

as a result of racial hatred and prejudice. Therefore, it is to parallel analytical categories used in relation to unfair treatment on the basis of religion (Boyle, 2004, p. 68). Furthermore, Boyle says that religious discrimination is motivated by two factors: religious prejudice and religious hatred.

1. Religious Prejudice

Boyle denotes that religious prejudice is a practice of the stereotyping of particular religious groups through attitudes that can wound individuals and form a basis for exclusion and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2004, p. 68). This practice of stereotyping is deeply ingrained in the Western's perceptions toward Muslims. Religious prejudice often rooted in the historical inheritance of a conflictual relationship that has developed over many centuries involving the overlap of religion, politics and warfare (Boyle, 2004, p. 68).

Religious prejudice also manifested itself in ignorance. Despite living side by side, sometimes for decades, a large number of interviewees from minority religions and communities felt that members of the majority society knew very little about them (Boyle, 2004, p. 68). Moreover, those who are not religious often seem to exhibit considerable levels of fear and suspicion towards people who have a strong religious identity and commitment (Boyle, 2004, p. 69). This statement comes from the nature of society where people with an adverse history with religion or religious people can tend to generalize

all the members of the particular religious group or even all religious groups based on that adverse history.

2. Religious Hatred

According to Boyle (2004) stated, “religious hatred is a 'religious prejudice' that shades over into a deep-seated hostility and form 'religious discrimination'” (p. 69). Religious prejudice may result in no specific discriminatory behaviors. At the same time, when both intensified and developed in a settled attitude of mind, emotion and will, ‘religious prejudice’ can spill over into, and fan, manifestations of ‘religious hatred’ (Boyle, 2004, p. 69). However, when religious hatred becomes severe, it may lead to intimidatory or violent behavior directed towards adherents of the opposing religion. Religious hatred can also be stimulated and nurtured by organised cadres such as those of extreme racist and fascist groups (Boyle, 2004, p. 69). Moreover, the specific prejudicial hatred toward Muslims and Islam has been characterized by some rooted in a phenomenon called “Islamophobia”.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

The research framework of this study is presented in this section of study, consist of research design, data sources, data collection and data analysis.

A. Research Design

The research analysis is conducted under the literary criticism method as a research design to analyze the research's object. Literary criticism is the overall term for studies concerned with defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating works of literature (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 67). Therefore, the researcher uses literary criticism because this study will examine a novel as an object. The object of study is a fiction literary work entitled *Hollow Fire* by Samira Ahmed, published on 2022. Therefore, as a scientific study, this analysis examines the social phenomenon that happened in the novel related to religious discrimination using sociology of literature. This study will analyse the novel to discover the deeper meaning of religious discrimination depicted in *Hollow Fires* (2022) by Samira Ahmed and the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters.

The theory provides just a variety of tools that readers can employ to answer the questions that literature raise (Castle, 2013, p. 8). Therefore, to answer the problems of the study, this study will use a theory by Kevin Boyle (2004) of religious discrimination. The researcher will simply analyze the text in the novel as

a source of the data. Therefore, the researcher will find the data through narration and dialogues related to Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination.

B. Data Source

This study only discusses religious discrimination in *Hollow Fires* (2022) by Samira Ahmed. Moreover, as a literary criticism study, the primary and only data source of the research is literary work *Hollow Fires* (2022) by Samira Ahmed. This novel was published by Little, Brown Book Group in New York, the United States of America, on May 10, 2022, with 416 pages. Moreover, the fact that this book is a social issues book. The data presented in the form of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs of dialogues and narrations in the book are related to social issues and problems surrounding the characters and place of the story and how are the impacts of religious discrimination toward the Muslim characters.

C. Data Collection

The data will be taken from the literary work by reading the novel to find out the religious discrimination form and and how are the impacts of religious discrimination toward the Muslim characters that is presented in the novel. The following steps are used to collect data:

1. Applying a close-reading to understand content of the novel,
2. Implementing data annotation by highlighting and underlining the data concentrates in religious discrimination and the impacts of religious discrimination toward the Muslim characters,
3. Note-taking the result of data annotation from the novel,

4. Categorizing and reasoning the data according to the religious discrimination types and the impacts of religious discrimination toward the Muslim characters.

D. Data Analysis

Subsequently gathering the data, the analysis will be conducted according to several steps below:

1. The researcher gathers supporting data, such as previous studies, to draw the study gap and read books related to the theory used,
2. The researcher analyses the collected data by implementing the theory and sociology of literature approach,
3. The researcher elaborates on the data related to religious discrimination and the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters by providing evidences from the object and supporting evidences to respond to the problem of the study,
4. The researcher concludes the result of the study and wraps the research problem.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter of the study attempts to answer the research problems proposed in the first chapter, those are 1) what are the religious discriminations portrayed in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*, and 2) how are the impacts of religious discrimination toward Muslim characters in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*.

A. Religious Discrimination Portrayed in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*

Hollow Fires (2022), written by Samira Ahmed, is a social issue literary work. This novel narrates various social issues, particularly religious discrimination towards the Muslim community in the novel. In simplicity, religious discrimination is discrimination received by a particular member of a religious group or even the whole religious group. According to Boyle (2004), religious discrimination most inclusively be characterised as unfair treatment on the basis of religion (p. 67). There are two kinds of religious discrimination that Boyle (2004) denotes in his book, direct religious discrimination and indirect religious discrimination. Boyle (2004) also defines the motive of religious discrimination into two, namely religious prejudice, and religious hatred. Correspondingly, Ahmed in her book, *Hollow Fires* (2022), also narrates this social issue, and along with that, in this chapter, the researcher attempts to study the portrayal of religious discrimination and its cause in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fire* (2022).

1. Direct Religious Discrimination Caused by Religious Prejudice

In terms of definition, direct religious discrimination is similar to the other kind of other direct discrimination. The difference lies in the social membership that the victim of discrimination has. As for religious discrimination, social membership lies in religious membership. Direct religious discrimination is a direct unfair treatment addressed to someone or a group of a particular religion. Correspondingly, the same pattern of that concept Boyle denotes that direct religious discrimination comes from religious hatred, and religious prejudice. It is possible for these dimensions and dynamics to translate into directly discriminatory behavior when they inform decisions taken by individuals holding positions of power within the public, private and voluntary sectors (Boyle, 2004, p. 73).

Direct religious discrimination can be translated as when a person or a particular group of religious groups are intentionally excluded from opportunities or services because of their religious belief, identity or practice. Boyle (2004) asserts that direct discrimination would, for example, include decisions made by potential employers to exclude Muslims from employment because of their religious belief, identity or practice (Boyle, 2004, p. 73).

According to Boyle (2004), direct religious discrimination is caused by two factors, namely religious prejudice and religious hatred. Religious prejudice involves the stereotyping of particular religious groups through attitudes that can wound individuals and form a basis for exclusion and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2022, p. 68). Stereotyping is, for example, deeply entrenched in relation to the perceptions of Muslims in western societies (Boyle, 2004, p. 68). In the novel *Hollow Fires* (2022), the portrayal of direct religious discrimination lies in negative

stereotyping of the Muslim community and characters that lead to direct discrimination. Those the researcher has collected data on several forms of direct religious discrimination.

a. Direct Religious Discrimination by school board

The first portrayal of direct religious discrimination in Samira Ahmed *Hollow Fires* (2022) caused by religious prejudice is the direct religious discrimination done by Jawad Ali's English teacher, Patricia Jansen, toward Jawad.

When Jawad Ali arrived at school Tuesday morning, he was excited to show off a cosplay jet pack he'd put together in an after-school class. But things didn't go exactly as he'd hoped. His English teacher mistook the costume accessory for a bomb and alerted administrators, who called the Chicago Police Department.

In the transcript of the 911 call released by the police, English teacher Patricia Jensen can be heard frantically describing Ali as "an Arab student" who was wearing "something like a suicide bomber vest." (Ahmed, 2022, p. 7)

The datum shows the direct religious discrimination caused by religious prejudice. According to the definition of religious prejudice by Boyle (2004, p. 68), prejudice is a term of stereotyping a particular religious group through attitudes that caused exclusion. In the transcript of an article by News/Crunch Online Magazine, Patricia Jensen—Jawad's Honors English teacher, mistakes the costume that Jawad made for Halloween as a bomb vest and alerted the school administrator.

Further, on Tuesday morning, Jawad excitedly arrives at school to show his cosplay jet pack for Halloween costume when his Honors English teacher frantically reports him for bringing a 'suicide bomber vest' due to her prejudicial thought that Jawad as a Muslim and Arab always associated with terrorist activity. The terrorism is an issue popularly campaign by the US government especially after

the 9/11 with the credo of “War on terrorism” (Rahayu & Mediyansyah, 2020, p. 2).

How did she mistake my costume jet pack for a bomb? Easy. She never really looked at it. She was only looking at me. Well, part of me, anyway. The Iraqi part. The Muslim part. The hard-to-pronounce-name part. She never ever got my name right. I don't even know if she tried. Which is weird because sometimes she'd talk about this dead Russian writer she loved. He wrote a book about a guy who went crazy and killed an old lady. My teacher didn't seem to have any trouble pronouncing his name. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 44-45)

Further, in the second data, Jawad says that it is not the first time that his Honors English teacher did an exclusion toward Jawad. Patricia Jensen always has this prejudicial behavior towards Jawad that has treated Jawad differently since long ago because of his religion. In this narrative, Jawad talks about the different treatment that his English teacher always had toward him, the ignorance and never trying to treat him right, just the way she treats others. The exclusion is in the form of double-standard behavior where Patricia always treats Jawad differently. Ignoring that she does not look at Jawad's jet pack to ensure that it is not a bomb vest, she just does not give him a second thought before reporting him to 911.

Another data that depicts the portrayal of religious discrimination caused by religious prejudice can be seen from the act of Safiya and Usman's US History teacher. It states in the data that Safiya reminisces back her religious discrimination history that she experiences along with Usman when she tries to tell the Police officer about the recent discrimination she experiences.

My mind slipped back to the time when my US history teacher basically made me and Usman explain our feelings about 9/11 in front of the whole class. We weren't alive when it happened! And he asked us stupid questions about whether we condemned the act. Duh. But he never ever asked white kids if they condemned slavery, or the Trail of Tears, or the assault on the Capitol, or took responsibility for the culinary crime that is chocolate hummus. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 247)

Thus, the direct religious discrimination she and Usman's teacher did to her and Usman is when the teacher made Safiya and Usman explain their feelings about something that they never lived to experience it. The US History asks them to explain the 9/11 event in front of the class but never do the same or ask the same thing to the other kids, even if they have a history related to the US history.

b. Direct Religious Discrimination by stranger

Long before, Jawad had experienced direct religious discrimination due to society's negative prejudice toward Muslims. Jawad had witnessed and experienced religious exclusion when he was a kid, along with his mother done by strangers at the street.

I was so excited to ride on the bus and pull the cord to ding for our stop. When we got off and headed toward the store, I heard fast steps behind us, like someone running, then a loud voice: "Go home, terrorist! Ragheads!"

My mom didn't even turn to look; she grabbed my hand and hurried toward the store. That's when a white man—maybe he was a teenager—ran up along the street side of the sidewalk and tried to pull my mom's hijab off her head. She screamed and jerked away, pushing me toward the store. An uncle inside saw us from the big window and came hurrying out, and the guy who'd attacked us darted across the street and down another block. My mom was crying. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 285-286)

Religious identity is one of the things that trigger society to throw negative assumptions toward whom it belongs. Based on the datum, it can be seen that the attacker that launched direct exclusion toward Dina Ali and Jawad Ali recognized them as Muslims because of the religious identity symbols that Dina wears. Hijab is a religious identity symbol for Muslim women. The narrative says that the discrimination faced by Dina and Jawad is in the form of hate speech and physical attacks. Jawad and his mother head toward a store when suddenly a stranger yells racist names at them as the Muslim community and calls them terrorists due to their

appearance where Jawad's mother wearing hijab—the religious identity of Muslims, and also the Westerner's prejudice that Muslims always connected to terrorism. To top it off, another attacker forcefully tries to strip the hijab from Dina's head as well. The discrimination is classified as direct religious discrimination motivated by negative prejudice toward Muslims.

c. Direct Religious Discrimination by Police officer

Basically, after Jawad's Honors English teacher reported him to the Police, Jawad was sent to the Police for an investigation of terrorism accusations. Instead of justice, the Police discriminated against Jawad by ignoring Jawad's statement and took him into custody.

Chicago Police Department spokesperson Jim Leary told reporters, "Police attempted to question the juvenile multiple times, but all he kept saying was that it wasn't real. He declined to give further details." Ali was taken into custody to ascertain that he wasn't "a sleeper, taught to blend in or distract," Leary went on to say. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 8)

From the datum above, it can be seen that the direct religious discrimination against Jawad shows within the transcript of the news report where the Police did the exclusion during the crime questioning. The discrimination is rooted in the prejudice of stereotyping the Muslim community that Muslims are connected to terrorist activity due to the historical inheritance of a conflictual relationship between the USA and Muslims. The Police questioned Jawad about his jet pack costume and the accusation that his teacher reported to the Police. Jim Leary, Chicago Police Department spokesperson, tells the reporters that during questioning, Jawad keeps explaining that his jet pack is not a bomb vest and declines to give further information. The Police did not believe Jawad's explanation

about his jet pack and declined his explanation. Instead, they keep believing their assumption and take Jawad into custody to ascertain that Jawad was not ‘*a sleeper, taught to blend in or distract,*’.

The discrimination that Jawad received does not stop right there. A Police Commander also discriminated against him through an interview with mass media after Jawad’s release.

Upon the teen’s release, the police said he would not be charged with any crime for bringing a “suspicious object” to school.

Commander Phillip McCarthy said Ali should have been “more transparent and forthcoming” rather than repeatedly describing the device as a “jet pack.” McCarthy continued: “The department is cognizant of his age and, at this time, will not be charging him with any crimes, including a possible felony count of planting a hoax bomb.” (Ahmed, 2022, p. 8)

According to the data above, it can be illustrated that direct religious discrimination again happened to Jawad and was done by the Police officer in his statement in an article released at Jawad’s release from custody. The exclusion is in the form of critics made by Commander Philip McCarthy, who criticizes Jawad’s answer during the questioning with the Police. The Police Commander, McCarthy, asserts that Jawad’s answer should be more “*transparent and forthcoming*” with his answer during the investigation. This discrimination is motivated by the religious prejudice that Islam and Muslims, with a conflictual history in the USA, are always connected to terrorist activity. However, rather than clearing the misunderstanding about the jet pack that disadvantages Jawad. The Police officer chooses to criticize Jawad’s answer during the questioning and will not see the truth that Jawad says because Jawad’s answers are not “*transparent and forthcoming*” based on the Police’s preferences.

Further, Jawad narrates and reminisces about the scenes where he was arrested brutally by the Police. There were no concerns about his mental health or the fact that he was still a minor during the arrest. All the Police officers care about is the fact that Jawad is a terrorist carrying a ‘bomb vest’ at school.

They walked me out the school door on a bright October day in handcuffs. Hands behind my back, like I was a criminal. I told them over and over that it was a jet pack for my Halloween costume. But it was like they didn't understand English. I was trying so hard not to cry. All I kept thinking, kept saying, was It's not real. It's a jet pack. It's not real. It's not real. Please. Kids were in the hallway taking pictures, livestreaming, whispering. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 12)

From the datum, it can be seen that Jawad receives direct religious discrimination from the Police officers. As a Muslim, Jawad was reported by his Honors English teacher for bringing something like a ‘bomb vest’. Due to the historical inheritance that the USA has toward Muslims, both the Police and school board come to the conclusion that Jawad is a terrorist. The Police immediately arrested Jawad without any further information after they got the terrorism accusation report by Patricia Jansen directed to Jawad. Considering Jawad is still a minor, he is supposed to be ‘treated differently based on his age’. In contrast, Jawad was mistreated because of his supposed crime and his being a Muslim, knowing how bad Muslims’ image is in Western society, even though he keeps on saying that what he carries is a jet pack and not a bomb.

Although he keeps on defending himself, the Police will not listen. Without a clear explanation of the accusation, Jawad was handcuffed and treated like a criminal due to a supposed crime report. This discrimination is rooted in religious prejudice of westerners that Muslims are connected with terrorist activity, that

during the practice of the arrestment that the Police would not give a second thought about Jawad's explanation.

Furthermore, through the transcript of the phone call by Safiya Mirza with Patricia Jansen, Jawad's former Honors English teacher. The direct religious discrimination can be seen through the validation of the Police officer says to Jansen.

Safiya: I'd like to talk to you about Jawad Ali and the toy jet pack he made. You were the one who called it in to the police.

Ms. Jensen: Of course I did. He had a bomb! I was trying to save the lives of every child in that school. I was doing my job.

Safiya: According to the 911 tape, you said, "An Arab kid has a bomb. They want to kill us all. Why do they hate us?" But it wasn't a bomb. It was a costume—

Ms. Jensen: I know what it was. A threat. I know what you're trying to do—twist my words, take them out of context. One of the cops told me I'd done the right thing. That these people infiltrate our schools. They stay quiet, unsuspecting. Like ghosts, he said. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 48-49)

Basically, in the datum above, Safiya is confronting Jansen about her accusation toward Jawad. Jansen is the one who reported Jawad to the school board and the Police for mistakenly bringing a 'bomb vest' to the school. Even though Jawad is clear from the accusation, Jansen still thinks that he had a bomb during that time when she reported him to the Police, due to the stereotyping in Western society that as Muslim, Jawad is connected with terrorism activity. Due those prejudice and her personal thoughts about Jawad's jet pack, Jansen validates her prejudice and accusation towards Jawad by reporting Jawad to the Police. Based on Jansen's, the Police officer supports what Jansen by giving a statement and saying that Jansen's action by reporting a supposed threat is '*the right thing*' to do.

The last portrayal of religious discrimination shows in the narrative below. An article by Channel 13's *Chicago Nightly News* reported the found news of Jawad Ali.

Police are canvassing the neighborhood to determine if anyone might have seen something suspicious. An early search for Jawad included the woods in Jackson Park but apparently stopped at the lagoons. Neighbors are wondering why police did not bother to push farther into the park.

Lizzie Chao, local resident, had joined in the initial search. "I don't understand why they didn't comb through every inch of Jackson Park. The police established the search perimeters and we stopped at the Garden of the Phoenix. My God. To think that he was here the entire time." [shakes head] "I wish we could've done more. For him. For his poor parents. No one should have to face that." (Ahmed, 2022, p. 274)

Jawad was found dead after missing for nearly two weeks, when the mass media and local residents criticized the Police. Jawad was found in a rarely frequented area of Jackson Park. The Police previously held an early search for Jawad around the neighborhood, including the woods in Jackson Park. However, due to some possible allegation surrounding Jawad's case the Police stopped the search at the lagoons at Jackson Park and did not bother to search at any farther location at the park. Instead, due to the surrounding negative stereotyping that accuses the Alis of terrorism because of their religion as Muslim. Society does not criticize the Police action when they changed the possible kidnapping case to a possible runaway but excludes Jawad and his family for possible faking his case.

d. Direct Religious Discrimination by mass media

The next direct religious discrimination is done by the mass media. Due to Westerners' negative perception of Muslims. William Kemp writes an article about the possibility of the Alis faking a kidnapping case.

The police investigation continues, according to sources inside the department. “It’s cast a new light on him. On his whole family.” Faking a kidnapping is a crime. Sources would not confirm whether Ali’s parents were now also under investigation, possibly linked to a larger false-flag operation incorporating sympathizers at state and local governments who used the bomb hoax and kidnapping as a way to gain sympathy for Islamist causes. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 197-198)

Supported by the Police investigation and insider source from the Chicago Police Department. Within the transcript of a news article, Kemp accuses the Alis of faking a kidnapping to help the government gain sympathy for Islamists. Due to the untransparent policies and practices that the Police followed during Jawad’s disappearance case. The Police would not give a clear situation about Jawad’s disappearance, which disadvantages Jawad and his family’s image in society. Due to this untransparent practice of policies, conspiracy theories about Jawad faking his disappearance flooded society, including mass media journalists like Kemp.

Another datum that shows direct religious discrimination can be seen from the religious prejudicial act of the mass media and James Hardy—principal of DuSable Preparatory High School. The exclusion is in the form of double-standard behavior that the mass media and Hardy give to Richard and Nate.

Windy City News Now

“BRILLIANT,” “ATHLETIC,” STRAIGHT-A STUDENTS INDICTED ON MURDER CHARGES

Eighteen-year-old Richard Reynolds and seventeen-year-old Nathan “Nate” Chase, both seniors at DuSable Preparatory High School, were arrested Wednesday for the murder of fourteen-year-old Jawad Ali, an Iraqi refugee who gained notoriety for his own arrest when a teacher mistakenly thought he had brought a bomb to his school.

Chase, the son of alderman Ted Chase, and Reynolds, the scion of one of Chicago’s wealthiest families, are described as “fine young men” by teachers and neighbors. Both families reside in Kengrove, a wealthy, tight-knit community of manicured lawns and mansions. Many wondered if the police had made a grave mistake. “I refuse to believe either of these outstanding students could have committed such a heinous act,” James Hardy, principal of DuSable Preparatory High School, said. “I’ve known these boys and their families for years, and both of them have bright futures ahead. I truly worry for their mental and emotional health in this era of social media lynch-mob justice and cancel culture.” (Ahmed, 2022, p. 360)

Within this transcript of article, the mass media and Hardy show how they doubted the crime that Richard and Nate committed and worried about Richard and Nate's mental health. On the contrary, from the beginning of the article until the end, the mass media keep on shading Jawad about the bomb accusation and quoting Richard and Nate with a positive image where they keep on referring to Richard and Nate as "*brilliant*", "*athletic*", "*straight-A students*" and "*fine young men*", but keep relating Jawad to the bomb accusation. Despite, the fact that Jawad is the victim in this case, while, Richard and Nate are the culprits.

Another act of stereotyping the Muslim community with a negative perception by mass media can be seen through a transcript of radio show by The Kayleigh Barr Show aired on Sharp Channel Radio. The transcript criticizes the government's treatment given to Nate and Richard and shares their negative assumption that Islam and Muslims are always connected with terrorist activity.

And what about this Iraqi refugee Chase and Reynolds are accused of killing? Unlike Chase and Reynolds, he had a rap sheet. He was arrested at school for suspected terrorist activity. Sources tell me his parents, who we welcomed into this country under a refugee program that clearly needs to be stopped, have been under surveillance by Homeland Security. That the South Side Mosque they attend is a known hotbed for sleepers and anti-American activity. Has anyone even considered that Jawad Ali was killed because of a disagreement with fellow terrorists? You see this kind of thing in gang activity all the time. The cockroaches kill their own and then set it up so an innocent party is the fall guy. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 378-379)

The claim "*That the South Side Mosque they attend is a known hotbed for sleepers and anti-American activity,*" which the radio announcer utters to defend Nate and Richard, comparing Jawad and his family's religion with Nate and Richard's behavior, shows the negative prejudicial thought toward Muslim and Islam. Accuses Muslims and the South Side Mosque as terrorists and anti-American headquarter. According to the datum, not only saying that the mosque is a terrorist

headquarter, through the radio show, the mass media indirectly implying that Jawad and his family as a Muslim and the South Side Mosque's member is part of terrorists. As a terrorist, it is possible that who killed Jawad is the '*fellow terrorists*' and says Richard and Nate as an innocent party.

2. Direct Religious Discrimination Caused by Religious Hatred

As Boyle (2004) asserts that religious prejudice may have no discernible discriminatory outcomes. Therefore, when this behavior intensifies, it can turn into religious hatred. Moreover, when such 'religious hatred' becomes intense, in certain circumstances it can result in intimidatory and/ or violent behaviour towards the religiously 'other' (Boyle, 2004, p. 69). Within the novel, *Hollow Fires* (2022), other than religious prejudice, Ahmed also portrays another religious discrimination motivated by religious hatred.

Religious hatred can also be stimulated and nurtured by organised cadres such as those of extreme racist and fascist groups (Boyle, 2004, p. 69). Correspondingly, with this reference, Richard Reynolds and Nate Chase, two of the characters in the novel who are also a member of White supremacist group, who think that they are superb rather than any other race and religious groups, committed direct religious discrimination due to their hatred toward Muslims and Islam.

To begin with, the portrayal of direct religious discrimination motivated by religious hatred is the death threat message sent by Richard Reynold and Nate Chase to Jawad Ali, a Muslim teenager accused as a terrorist for bringing a jet pack.

Along with the Nietzsche's white supremacist quotes, Reynold and Chase threaten to kill Jawad.

State's Exhibit 1

Text messages sent to Jawad Ali, Nov 8–11, 2021, via Burner app

Stare into the abyss, and the abyss stares back

This is the way the Bomb Boy ends. This is the way the Bomb Boy ends. Not with a bang but a whimper 🤖

Nobody is more inferior than those who insist on being equal 🤖

Bomb Boy. Bomb Boy. Tick Tick Tick Tick... 🍌 (Ahmed, 2022, p. 23)

From the State's Exhibit shown by the Police indicates that the exclusion experienced by Jawad is in the form of hate speech and dead threat. Richard and Nate threaten to kill Jawad by implying that Jawad's life will end "*Not with a bang but a whimper*". This discrimination action is motivated by Nate, and Richard's hatred for Muslims, whom they think are inferior.

Furthermore, not only sent a death threat to Jawad Ali. Reynolds and Chase also sent a death threat to the Muslim community at the South Side Mosque. South Side Mosque is a holy place and religious identity of Muslims located on the South Side of Chicago, a place where the Muslim community prays and gathers.

Dear Muslim Scum,

We will be coming to your mosque. It will be a massacre on a scale never seen.

Christchurch will pale in comparison. You can pray all you want to your God.

But God is Dead. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 24)

The narrative above illustrates the death threat mail postmarked in London sent to the South Side Mosque during winter break. This death threat targeted the Muslim community in the South Side Mosque, where the sender threatened to launch a massacre toward the Muslim community in South Side Mosque. A massacre in the scale that no one had ever seen before, even worse than the

Christchurch. This discrimination action is motivated by Reynolds and Chase's hatred toward Islam.

The discriminatory treatment that Reynolds and Chase launch toward the Muslim community not only stop at sending death threat toward Jawad and the South Side Mosque's congregation. The discriminatory action escalated to a vandalism terror.

Red paint stained the windows my parents always worked hard to keep clean:

GO HOME

FUCKING TERRORISTS

14/88 (Ahmed, 2022, p. 238)

Exclusion based on religious hatred is one of the reasons that cause direct religious discrimination. In the datum above can be seen the slurred word and racist name that Reynolds painted at a Muslim's family house—Safiya's house windows. The exclusion based on religion that Reynolds does is in the form of hate speech. Reynolds, with his hatred, vandalizes Safiya's house window and paints it to ask them to 'go home', implying that Safiya's family needs to leave the USA and calls them with a slurred word and racist name '*fucking terrorist*', to show his rage toward them as a Muslim that always connected to terrorism. According to Boyle's theory, this action is classified as direct religious discrimination due to Reynolds' deliberate exclusion toward a certain religious group—the Muslim community.

Hatred continues to cause direct religious discrimination that Reynolds and Chase committed against the Muslim community. Later, Reynolds and Chase team up again to attack Safiya Mirza, a Muslim teenager who is also Reynolds and

Chase's schoolmate, who is the victim of direct exclusion rooted in their religious hatred.

*Richard grabbed my left hand. Hard. "Hang on. I wanted to talk, remember?" His voice was still so calm, almost sweet.
 "Cool. We can grab a table and chat inside." I tried to pull my hand away, but he squeezed it, twisting my wrist.
 "No. I think here is good."
 "Let go of me." I wanted to scream those words but they came out like a raspy whisper. I couldn't even tell if I was breathing anymore. I couldn't feel any air moving through my lungs.
 Richard was still smiling up at me. Smiling. As he twisted my hand, sending sharp pains shooting up my arm. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 331)*

The direct religious exclusion is in the form of a physical attack. Based on the narrative above, Reynolds, who has a meeting with Safiya, is seen to physically assault Safiya by grabbing Safiya's hand without her consent. Reynolds's rage and hatred toward Muslims escalated the religious discrimination into deliberate intense physical assault when Safiya tried to pull her hand away, but Richard would not let Safiya go. Instead, he squeezes her hand and twists her wrist. The incident gets intense when Safiya tries to fight against Richard, which gets him furious.

*"You dirty raghead!" he howled.
 I glanced over my shoulder and saw him stand up, sway a bit as he stepped into a pool of light from the streetlamp. Blood smeared his face; his eyes filled with rage. My legs felt like lead, my hand throbbed, but I forced myself to move. A car sped down the street, and I jumped off the curb, waving my hands, trying to flag it down, but the driver laid on the horn and swerved around me. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 332)*

The datum above explains the situation when Safiya and Richard tangled up in an intense fight, where Richard tried to assault Safiya, and Safiya tried to fight against him. During this fight, Richard calls Safiya with an offensive term for the Muslim community. The word "raghead" is a racist name that people usually say to mock Muslims because of their religious identity symbols that wear headdresses

such as the headscarf, keffiyeh, and turban. Despite not all Muslims wearing headdresses, this term has become a general term to mock Muslims.

Diaz: He says the opposite. Said you called it a game, that's why you toyed with Safiya, wanted her as your plaything, that's why you hacked the school newspaper. He said you bought the burner phones. Said you picked the spot to dump the body and—

Richard: That fucking liar! That weak piece of shit. He did it! All of it! I never laid a hand on that raghead skittle. All I did was drive. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 358-359)

Another religious hatred that manifested into direct religious discrimination that Richard does is during his questioning with the Police Officer. Richard is interviewed at the Police station as the result of the crime that he committed toward Jawad Ali and the assault toward Safiya Mirza. During the interview, officer Diaz tries to gather information from Richard by saying that Nate already tells him about the detail of the crime that they committed. This statement makes Richard furious and mock Safiya by calling Safiya as a “*skittle raghead*”.

B. The Impact of Religious Discrimination towards Muslim characters in Samira Ahmed's *Hollow Fires*

Actions have consequences. The second research problem will explore the impact of religious discrimination received by Muslim characters in the novel. These impacts are a domino effect of religious discrimination. Initially, non-Muslims have never done these actions toward Muslim characters in *Hollow Fires* (2022). Therefore, these actions have emerged due to the recent activity of religious discrimination experienced by the Muslim characters in the novel.

The impacts found after this research discovered the portrayals and causes of religious discrimination suffered by Muslim characters in the novel. Those

discriminations led to several negative experiences received by the discriminated characters as the effect of religious discrimination.

a. Bullying received by Muslim character

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a national public health agency of the United States, based on Gladden (2014) defined bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated (p. 7). Bullying can happen in a real-life place and over digital devices. Bullying may involve various behaviors, including physical aggression by physically hurting a person, verbal aggression by verbally abusing them by saying or writing a malicious comment, and deliberately isolating a particular person to taint someone's relationship in society.

The following datum, it can be seen the impact of religious discrimination experienced by Jawad Ali. The result of religious discrimination is bullying behavior by a school member of Bethune High, Jawad's school.

*In my real life, on my first day back from my three-day suspension for the "bomb hoax," someone had taped a shooting target—the kind that looks like a bull's-eye—to my locker. Then someone yelled at me. Others started yelling, too. Like a chant: Bomb Boy. Bomb Boy. Bomb Boy.
At that moment, right then, it felt like I was dying inside. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 16)*

During Jawad's first time coming back to school after his three days suspension from the recent discrimination behaviour he had experienced. He starts to get bullied by a fellow school member of Bethune High. Based on the narrative, someone had taped a shooting target at Jawad's locker. He also mentions another

bullying behaviour that he gets. One of them is verbal bullying when someone at school starts to make a fuse by yelling at him and is followed by the others. “*Bomb Boy. Bomb Boy. Bomb Boy*”, the word that they yell that they use to bully Jawad, a yell like a chant that hurt Jawad’s feelings until he felt like dying inside.

The act of bullying against Jawad Ali as the impact of discrimination does not stop right there. Another verbal aggression can be seen through the datum below:

Then I visited my old locker. They never reassigned it. Maybe they think it’s haunted. (Spoiler: It is.) It’s empty. A shell. Three days after my suspension had ended, someone duct-taped another sign to my locker: Go home, raghead! I peeled it off, but sticky residue from the tape is still there. That stripe of tacky gunk outlasted me. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 18)

Jawad narrates that he visited his old locker at Bethune High. The school board has not reassigned his locker, nor has that sticky residue from the tape he tried to peel off. The sticky residue from a sign that someone duct-taped to his locker to bully him. The sign that said “*Go home, raghead!*”, and the verbal bullying that called Jawad with an offensive name-calling for Muslims.

The police never gave me my jet pack back. Guess they destroyed it to make sure it wasn’t a bomb. It meant I didn’t have a costume for Halloween, which was okay because I didn’t feel much like dressing up anymore. A couple weeks after I got back from suspension, things finally started quieting down. “Bomb Boy” stuck, but mostly life was getting back to normal. My parents even said I could maybe go back to makerspace club after winter break. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 21)

Furthermore, after a couple of weeks post-bomb allegation and after the suspension. Finally, things relating to the recent accusation started to quiet down. Even Jawad's parents said that Jawad might come to the makerspace club again after his parents asked him to stop going to makespace for a while. However, although things finally quieted, the bullying still stuck, and people still bullied him by calling him '*Bomb Boy*'.

Bullying can occur over digital devices, such as smartphones and computers. This bullying behaviour is called ‘cyberbullying’, where it may occur through short message services, chats, online forums, and other social media where people can see it publicly, participate and share. Cyberbullying is sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or derogatory content about another person.

Cyberbullying is performed by Twitter users, who are seen sharing their negative thoughts toward Muslims and Jawad as a part of the Muslim community.

They tweeted anti-Muslim tweets, as in the transcript of Twitter below:

My face burned with rage as I doomscrolled through Twitter, looking for news on Jawad but instead finding hateful, anti-Muslim tweets, egged on by some racist right-wing radio host:

The only good Muslim is a dead one. #bombboy #JWad

That raghead got what he deserved. #bombboy #JWad #NoShariaLaw

#Bombboy planned his own “kidnapping” so he could get the reward money.

Ready Aim Fire #JWad? #bombboy [Photo of Jawad in a target]

If you want me to believe in your Redeemer, you’re going to have to look a lot more redeemed. #bombboy (Ahmed, 2022, p. 147-148)

Safiya is scrolling through Twitter to look out for some news about Jawad Ali when she found those hateful and anti-Muslim tweets about Jawad and the Muslim community. After Jawad was found dead and murdered, also the mass media informed this murder crime news, conspiracy sites, and theories emerging in society, and one of them was Twitter. The cyberbullying happened through tweets that Safiya found. The bullying agenda is in the form of a conspiracy theory that Twitter users made up about Jawad’s case and accused him of faking his disappearance and throwing a racist name at Jawad.

b. Receiving Negative treatment by others

Another behavior that resurfaces as the result of religious discrimination is the negative treatments received by Muslim characters. Negative treatment is a manner of treating a particular person awfully. Apparently, Jawad, as the character that the image has been tainted due to religious discrimination, and the people around him gets several awful treatments from society. This negative treatment experienced by Jawad Ali can be seen in the following narrative:

The news reports kept calling us Iraqis. Eye-rack-eez. That's how they said it. Like we weren't Americans at all. Like my parents and I didn't have US passports. Like my mom didn't protect them like prized possessions. But that wasn't the story the reporters wanted to tell. This was:

**CHILD OF IRAQI REFUGEES ARRESTED FOR BOMB HOAX
ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR QUESTIONS LAX NATURALIZATION POLICIES
IN LIGHT OF ALLEGED BOMB THREAT
POLICE: IRAQI IMMIGRANT STUDENT ARRESTED FOR HOAX BOMB HAD
RECORD OF TRUANCY (Ahmed, 2022, p. 16)**

From the datum, it can be seen that Jawad Ali receives negative treatment as an effect of the recent terrorism accusation in the form hate speech. The hate speech is in the form of news reports where the mass media keep calling the Alis as Iraqis or mockingly referring to them as 'Eye-rack-eez'. Moreover, through news report's title, the mass media refused to consider the Alis as Americans, although they are American. Another hate speech was when the Illinois State Senator questioned the naturalization policies. Those treatments show the hate toward Muslims by implying that Americans will never connect themselves as terrorists, but Iraqis and Muslims will.

In the narrative, Safiya talks about the impacts of the religious discrimination in her mosque and the South Side Mosque's congregations experienced recently. The impact is negative treatment by the Police officer and society in the form of marginalization.

Everyone wanted us to go around like it was a regular December. Fa la friggin' la. Deck the halls. Down the eggnog. Fire up the TV yule log. A normal winter break—for Muslims whose mosque had been sent a letter about a possible mass shooting. Nothing to see there, I guess. The note had been postmarked on December 16 in London. London. Why the hell would anyone in England want to threaten a small community mosque on the South Side of Chicago? How did they even know we existed? The police gave us extra patrols at Jummah after the community pushed for it, but generally the police department was treating the letter like a prank. (Ahmed, p. 24-25)

Safiya narrates how badly society treats the massacre threat toward the Muslim congregation of the South Side Mosque. Society marginalizes Muslim congregations by refusing to consider the massacre threat as a real threat. People were asking the Muslim community to act normal like the regular day. The Police practice marginalization toward the Muslim community by treating the death threat as a prank letter. They do not want to give a proper investigation and prevention. The Police only give extra patrols during Jummah after the Muslim community pushes them for the extra patrols.

The act of giving negative treatment to Jawad Ali can be seen through Safiya's narrative. In the narrative, Safiya points out some adverse treatment in the form of hate speech that the mass media gives to Jawad by giving misinformation about Jawad's past.

He was a minor, but it didn't keep the faux news sites from digging into his past—what kind of "past" can a fourteen-year-old kid have? They got a couple other students who'd gone to middle school with him on record saying he was "kind of a loner," that he'd "missed a lot of school in eighth grade," that he and his parents went on "a trip to Arabia or something." News stations edited and spliced the footage to make it seem

suspicious. Showed pictures of Jawad fist-bumping another brown kid with the chyron TERRORIST FIST JAB? (Ahmed, 2022, p. 47)

From the datum above, it can be seen how concerned Safiya is toward Jawad's situation. The mass media purposefully gave misinformation about Jawad's past by digging into his past and interviewing his former schoolmates. The mass media purposefully '*edited and spliced*' the information given by Jawad's former schoolmates and made their statements about Jawad's past life seem suspicious. Other than that, the mass media also made up a conspiracy theory by showing a picture of Jawad fist-bumping another brown kid and quoted it as a '*terrorist fist jab*' to strengthen the terrorist allegation surrounding Jawad.

When I went back to school after my arrest, I got switched into a different Honors English class. I was fine with it; at least I didn't have to see my old English teacher every day. The first time she saw me in the hall after I got back, she turned around and went the other way. I guess she didn't want to deal with me, either. My parents told the principal they thought the teacher should apologize to me for what she did. She didn't apologize, and she sure didn't seem sorry. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 66)

The data above shows the awful treatment that Patricia Jansen, Jawad's former Honors English teacher, gives toward Jawad. The awful treatment that Jansen did was in the form of marginalization. It shows that during the time after his arrest, Jawad got switched to a different Honors English class. Jansen is responsible for Jawad's situation at that time. In fact, she owes him an apology because of the mess she caused by accusing Jawad as a terrorist. Instead of apologizing to Jawad, Jansen chooses to neglect Jawad's presence in the school, not only by purposefully switching his class but also by avoiding any meeting with Jawad.

Another awful treatment Jawad received is forced action by Bethune High's principal confronting Jawad. The activity can be seen in the data below:

I tried to use that saying once in school, when I was back from suspension for the jet pack and the principal pulled me into his office.

Him: *Young man, do you understand the ruckus you've caused? What do you have to say for yourself?*

Me: *[looking down at the floor, whispering] Hindsight is 20/20?*

He angry-frowned when I said that, crossed his arms in front of his chest while looking down at me. I shrunk back, tried to make myself as small as possible. I was invisible most of the time, except when I really wanted to be. It was like everyone was finally paying attention to me when all I wanted to do was hide. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 141)

From the narrative above, it can be seen that Bethune High's Principal assaulted Jawad by forcefully pulling Jawad into his office as soon as he saw Jawad after his suspension ended. As a school principal, instead of welcoming Jawad and trying to help Jawad fit in again in school with the new situation after the bomb accusation, he accused Jawad for purposefully causing chaos. The word "*understand the ruckus you've caused*", shows how he verbally harasses and accuses Jawad of the jet pack accident. Although the Police have already cleared Jawad's name from the accusation, his principal still thinks Jawad is responsible for that accident.

In addition, not only Jawad was the one who directly got the religious discrimination and received the impacts of the discriminatory behaviour. However, Suleyman Ali and Dina Ali, Jawad's parents, received the discrimination as well as the impact of discrimination.

Suleyman: *I did get a strange text this morning, but it didn't say private number like the other texts. It wasn't a ransom and didn't say anything about Jawad.*

Usman: *Did you tell the police?*

Suleyman: *Yes, of course. I tried calling the number, too. But there was only a message saying "This number is no longer in service."*

Dina: *Such a strange message about dead gods. And Superman? The store has also been getting prank calls. Saying terrible things about Jawad, calling him Bomb Boy. And other worse things. Horrible, hateful things. (Ahmed, 2022, p. 161)*

Further, Suleyman and Dina share that they have been getting awful treatment by strangers as a result of the religious discrimination that their family experienced.

During their interview with Usman, they say they have been getting texts from strangers about dead gods and quoting some White supremacists' quote. Dina also explains that besides texts, the store they own gets hateful prank calls from strangers saying terrible things about Jawad and other horrible and hateful things.

The Police officers do the last and the most impactful effect of religious discrimination faced by Jawad Ali. The negative action was done by the Police officer whom Safiya criticizes when she finds Jawad's dead body. The negative effect is in the form of marginalization by neglecting Jawad's disappearance case.

I stood and inched closer to the embankment as they gently removed the body. My limbs were numb. My mind blank, erased. I moved closer, as close as the yellow crime-scene tape would let me. I'd already trampled on the murder scene, a cop complained. I wanted to scream, The only reason I stepped anywhere near the crime scene is because the police ignored the crime. A missing Muslim boy, a refugee, an Iraqi, wasn't worth too many news cycles. Wasn't worth the full investigation. And now Jawad was dead. They didn't say it was him, of course; not to me, anyway. Something about notifying the parents to identify him. They talked around me like I wasn't there. A part of me felt like I wasn't. (Ahmed, 2022, p.269-270)

In the narration above, Safiya narrates the scenes where she found Jawad's dead body. She was shocked. She is shocked by seeing Jawad's dead body and by the fact that the Police were ignoring Jawad, ignoring Jawad because he is a Muslim, a refugee, an Iraqi, and accused as 'terrorist'. The Police awfully treated Jawad's disappearance case, did not give his case a full investigation, and discriminated Jawad, until the case turned into a murder case, where Jawad was found dead.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researcher presents a conclusion from the study's results in this chapter. Correspondingly, the researcher also presents suggestions for future research concerned with religious discrimination studies.

A. Conclusion

The result of the study can be concluded, based on the analysis above, that *Hollow Fires* (2022) by Samira Ahmed portrays the religious discrimination. This study defines the type and causes of religious discrimination, mainly in one type and two causes. The portrayal of religious discrimination is in one form of direct religious discrimination. The direct discrimination is caused both by religious prejudice and religious hatred. The religious prejudice is performed by the stereotyping behaviors that ingrained in Westerners toward Muslims due to the historical accident involving Muslims and done by Schoolboard, Police Officers, and mass media. Meanwhile, Richard Reynolds and Nate Chase's hatred toward Muslims stimulated them to deliberately discriminate against Muslims in novel.

The impact of religious discrimination towards Muslim characters found in the novel is rooted in the religious discrimination that Muslim characters received as a member of Islam and being discriminated against by others. Significantly, the impacts are in the form of bullying and negative outcomes of exclusion. Bullying involves several activities, such as physical aggressiveness by physically injuring someone, verbal aggression by verbally abusing them by making or writing a

spiteful statement, and intentionally isolating a certain individual to taint someone's connection in society. Moreover, Westerners have negative assumption toward Muslims that they think are connected with violence, crime, and terrorism. These negative assumptions and hatred toward Muslim disadvantaged Muslim characters in the novel, especially Jawad, his family, and the Muslim community of The South Side Mosque. As a result of discrimination activities, Jawad's schoolmates and the general public bullied him and the Muslim community. Other than that, the general public, Bethune High's school board, and the Police treated Jawad, his family, and Muslims awfully.

B. Suggestion

Based on the analysis of the novel *Hollow Fires* (2022) by Samira Ahmed. It can be used as an opener for society to recognize the term religious discrimination, its causes and impacts. It can be learned that the impacts do not always occur in terms of mental breakdown, but also further exclusion or awful treatment done by the other person in the society. Another thing that can be learned is through *Hollow Fires* (2022), as a human, we should be aware of the event surrounding us, helping others to come out from problems and stand up for ourselves.

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