

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN TAHEREH MAFT'S *A
VERY LARGE EXPANSE OF SEA***

THESIS

By:

Diana Nur Rohmatika

NIM 200302110128



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

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**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN TAHEREH MAFI'S *A
VERY LARGE EXPANSE OF SEA***

THESIS

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By:
Diana Nur Rohmatika

NIM 200302110128

Advisor:
Ahmad Khozi, M.A.
NIP 198302142023211011



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

2024

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I state that the thesis entitled “**Religious Discrimination in Tahereh Mafi’s *A Very Large Expanse of Sea***” 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, 12th August 2024

The researcher



Diana Nur Rohmatika

NIM 200302110128

APPROVAL SHEET

This to certify that Diana Nur Rohmatika's thesis entitled **Religious Discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*** 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.).

Malang, 28th Oktober 2024

Approved by

Advisor,



Ahmad Khozi, M.A.

NIP 198302142023211011

Head of Department of English Literature,



Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.D.

NIP 198112052011011007

Acknowledged by

Dean,

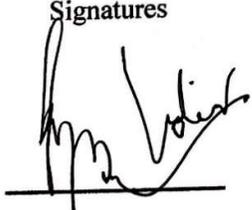


Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP 197411012003121003

LEGITIMATION SHEET

This is to certify that Diana Nur Rohmatika's thesis entitled **Religious Discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) in Department of English Literature.

Malang, 28th Oktober 2024

Board of Examiners		Signatures
1. Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum NIP 196911222006041001	(Chair)	
2. Ahmad Khozi, M.A. NIP 198302142023211011	(First Examiner)	
3. Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M. Pd NIP 197610112011011005	(Second Examiner)	

Acknowledged by,

Dean,



Dr. M. Faiso, M.Ag.

NIP 197411012003121003

MOTTO

“Hatiku tenang karena mengetahui bahwa apa yang melewatkanmu tidak akan pernah menjadi takdirku, dan apa yang ditakdirkan untukku tidak akan pernah melewatkanmu”

(Umar Bin Khattab)

“My mother's prayer is as wide as the sky, and I take shelter under it”

“Life can be heavy, especially if you try to carry it all at once, part of growing up and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch or release. what I mean by that is, knowing what things to keep and what things to release. you can't carry all things, all grudges, all updates on your ex, all enviable promotions your school bully got at the bidge fund his uncle started. decide what is yours to hold and let the rest go.”

-Taylor Swift

Long Story Short, I Survived

-Taylor Swift

DEDICATION

There is no more beautiful sheet in this thesis than the dedication sheet. With gratitude for the Grace of Allah SWT, I dedicate it to myself who has worked hard to complete this thesis. Of course, I also dedicate this thesis to my dearest parents, my beloved siblings, and my friends who always provide support to complete this thesis.

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11. Last but not least, of course to myself, Diana Nur Rohmatika. A big appreciation for taking responsibility to finish what has been started. Thank you for continuing to try not giving up, and always enjoying every process. Thank you for surviving.

This thesis is a manifestation of all the hard work, support, and prayers of the beloved and wonderful people mentioned above. Furthermore, this thesis is far from perfect and still has many weaknesses. Therefore, comments and suggestions are highly desired by the author. With this thesis, hopefully, it can be useful for the study of literary criticism, especially in the field of religious discrimination.

Malang, August 14th 2024

Diana Nur Rohmatika

ABSTRACT

Rohmatika, Diana Nur. (2024) *Religious Discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Ahmad Khozi, M.A.

Keywords: Discrimination, Religious Discrimination, Muslim, 9/11

Muslims in America experienced religious discriminatory behavior after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Muslim women expressed a higher level of concern about religious discrimination than men. One of the literary works that raises the issue of religious discrimination is the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi. This study aims to analyze the depiction of forms, causes and ways to deal with religious discrimination in the main character in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. In analyzing this research, Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination focuses on the forms of religious discrimination and its causes. As well as the main character's way of dealing with religious discrimination in the novel. The data is taken from sentences or paragraphs contained in the dialogue and narration in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi. The results showed that the portrayal of religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi is direct religious discrimination when Shirin was in the surrounding society and at school and indirect religious discrimination when Shirin walks around wearing a hijab. The portrayal of religious discrimination is caused by religious prejudice because of the 9/11 attacks and religious hatred because of the hijab that Shirin wears. Furthermore, the way Shirin deals with religious discrimination is by staying away from society, focusing on her anger, ignoring any bad actions from people around, joining a breakdancing club, and making peace with the surrounding conditions.

ABSTRAK

Rohmatika, Diana Nur. (2024) *Diskriminasi Agama dalam novel A Very Large Expanse of Sea* milik Tahereh Mafi. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Ahmad Khozi, M.A.

Katakunci: Diskriminasi, Diskriminasi Agama, Muslim, 9/11

Muslim di Amerika mengalami perilaku diskriminasi agama setelah adanya serangan teroris 11 September. Terlebih pada wanita Muslim yang mengungkapkan tingkat keprihatinan diskriminasi agama yang lebih tinggi daripada pria. Salah satu karya sastra yang mengangkat isu diskriminasi agama adalah novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* karya Tahereh Mafi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggambaran bentuk, penyebab serta cara menghadapi diskriminasi agama pada tokoh utama dalam novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. Dalam menganalisis penelitian ini menggunakan teori diskriminasi agama milik Kevin Boyle yang berfokus pada bentuk diskriminasi agama dan penyebabnya. Serta cara tokoh utama dalam menghadapi diskriminasi agama di dalam novel. Data diambil dari kalimat atau paragraf yang terdapat pada dialog dan narasi dalam novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* karya Tahereh Mafi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggambaran bentuk diskriminasi agama dalam novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* karya Tahereh Mafi adalah diskriminasi agama langsung ketika Shirin berada di masyarakat sekitar dan di sekolah serta diskriminasi agama tidak langsung ketika Shirin berjalan dengan menggunakan hijab. Penggambaran diskriminasi agama tersebut disebabkan oleh prasangka agama karena peristiwa 9/11 dan kebencian agama karena hijab yang dipakai Shirin. Selanjutnya, cara Shirin menghadapi diskriminasi agama adalah dengan menjauh dari masyarakat, berfokus pada amarahnya, mengabaikan setiap tindakan buruk dari orang sekitar, mengikuti klub breakdancing, dan akhirnya berdamai dengan kondisi sekitar.

مستخلص البحث

رحمتكا، ديانا نور. (٢٠٢٤) التمييز الديني في رواية A Very Large Expanse of Sea بقلم Taherah Mafi. البحث الجامعي. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: احمد غوزي الماجستير

الكلمات الاساسية : التمييز، التمييز الديني، المسلمون، 9/11

لقد عانى المسلمون في أمريكا من التمييز الديني بعد هجمات 11 سبتمبر الإرهابية. علاوة على ذلك، فإن النساء المسلمات يعبرن عن مستويات أعلى من القلق بشأن التمييز الديني مقارنة بالرجال. ومن الأعمال الأدبية التي تثير موضوع التمييز الديني رواية A Very Large Expanse of Sea بقلم Taherah Mafi. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل تصوير شكل وأسباب وطرق التعامل مع التمييز الديني لدى الشخصية الرئيسية في رواية A Very Large Expanse of Sea بقلم Taherah Mafi. وقد تم في تحليل هذا البحث استخدام نظرية Kevin Boyle في التمييز الديني، والتي تركز على أشكال التمييز الديني وأسبابها. وكذلك الطريقة التي تواجه بها الشخصية الرئيسية التمييز الديني في الرواية. تم أخذ البيانات من الجمل أو الفقرات الواردة في الحوار والسرد في رواية A Very Large Expanse of Sea بقلم Taherah Mafi. أظهرت النتائج أن تصوير التمييز الديني في رواية "مساحة كبيرة جداً من البحر" للكاتبة طاهرة مافي هو تمييز ديني مباشر عندما تكون شيرين في المجتمع المحيط بها وفي المدرسة، وتمييز ديني غير مباشر عندما تسير شيرين بالحجاب. تصوير التمييز الديني سببه التحيز الديني بسبب أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر والكراهية الدينية بسبب الحجاب الذي ترتديه شيرين. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن الطريقة التي تتعامل بها شيرين مع التمييز الديني هي الابتعاد عن المجتمع، والتركيز على غضبها، وتجاهل أي تصرفات سيئة من الناس من حولها، والانضمام إلى نادي رقص البريك دانس وأخيراً التصالح مع الظروف المحيطة بها،

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The FBI National Uniform Crime Reporting Program reported that American Muslims experienced religious hate crimes after the September 11 terrorist attacks. This is an increase of over 1600% compared to 2000 making them the second highest group to record such offenses after Jewish Americans. Mosques were burned, bomb threats, physical and verbal attacks were made, and employment discrimination was reported as a hate crime against American Muslims in 2001 and 2002 (Rippy & Newman, 2006). Although America supports religious freedom in accordance with the Constitution, some religious groups still face challenges and inequalities in various aspects of life (Wu & Schimmele, 2021). Muslim women express higher levels of religious discrimination concerns than men. In recent years, the percentage is higher for Muslim women (57%) than Muslim men (43%), proving that being a Muslim in America is difficult. Incidents include being watched by law enforcement or airport security, being treated with suspicion, being called derogatory names, and receiving threats or violent attacks (Salama, 2023).

After the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, the public perception of Islam and Muslims deteriorated. Islam was labeled as a terrorist or adherent of terrorism. The Muslim society was stereotyped as violent, aggressive, and anti-American (Abdullah, 2015). Islam is also marginalized in politics and the entire Muslim

community is perceived as a threat to national security and human rights (Farooqui & Kaushik, 2021).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Muslims have often experienced religious discrimination, both directly and indirectly. This has emerged as religious intolerance which is defined as a strong dislike or fear of another's beliefs that makes one feel afraid, hated, distrusted, or avoided. Religious intolerance often manifests as violence, persecution, and discrimination against those who are perceived to have different views (Rouabhia & Öztürk, 2022).

In response to this problem, in the world of literature, the issue of religious discrimination is also widely discussed and receives special attention. Literary works that raise social issues are commonly referred to as social issues literature (Hasnah, 2023). One of the literary works that raises the issue of religious discrimination is Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. The novel was released in 2018 and offers a visual interpretation as well as a very interesting plot and theme. The novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* tells the situation one year after 9/11. There is a lot going on in the political world, especially for people like Shirin, a Muslim teenager in America. Shirin is a brilliant and complex character. In the first part, she is presented as aloof and unconcerned about the discrimination or racism that befalls her. But on the other hand, Shirin is a caring and vulnerable person who struggles to survive. Shirin is often harassed, ridiculed, and subjected to physical violence and abusive comments because of her race, religion and the hijab she wears (Mafi, 2018). This literary work successfully explores the subject of religious discrimination and what it is like to be a Muslim in a politically charged

environment. The novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* will mesmerize many readers with Shirin's struggles in it.

Due to the interesting issues in the novel, this research will examine discrimination based on religion, which will be focused on the main character in the novel, Shirin. In his book, Kevin Boyle emphasizes that religion is a social component that can lead to discrimination in society. He also explains several forms and causes of religious discrimination (Boyle, 2004). Kevin Boyle's concept of religious discrimination can help scholars understand and interpret the recent disagreements between Islam and the West and the reasons behind how these conflicts are depicted in a novel. By applying Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination, the researcher also hopes that this study can articulate the topic scientifically and reveal the form of religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*.

To support researchers in examining forms of religious discrimination, several previous studies were found related to topics, theories, and objects related to the research. *First*, the article entitled *Discrimination Analysis of the Main Character in Movie Crazy Rich Asians* was published in the Pioneer journal: Journal of Language and Literature (Jimmi & Mawadah, 2021). It discusses various forms of discrimination using the idea of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to reveal the impact that the main character experiences after experiencing discrimination. *Second*, an article entitled *Reflection of Discrimination of Muslim Minority Group in the Novel Verses of Love 2 According to the Concept Critical Discussion Ta Van Dijk* published in the KnE Social

Sciences journal (Morelent et al., 2023). It explains how the novel *Ayat-Ayat Cinta 2* depicts discrimination against Islamic minority groups with Van Dijk's critical discourse concept. *Third*, the article entitled *Religious Discrimination in the Quranic Story of Ashab al-Kahf and Shakespeare's Comedy the Merchant of Venice: A Comparative Study* published in the European Journal of Literary Studies (Rouabhia & Öztürk, 2022). The article uses Bhaba's postcolonial perspective to examine how elements of discrimination in Indonesia based on religion are displayed in Shakespeare's comedy *The Merchant of Venice and the story of Alqur'an Ashab al-Kahfi*.

In addition, there are several studies that discuss the issue of Islamic discrimination, such as a study entitled *The Discourse of Islamophobia in Indonesian Popular Movie "Mencari Hilal"* (2015) which was published in the *Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah dan Keislaman* (Rahayu, 2021). It examines how Islamophobia is portrayed in popular culture in the movie *Mencari Hilal* by using Fairclough's CDA concept which focuses on three levels of micro, meso, and macro analysis. Another research is an article entitled *Intolerance in Maryam and Pasung Jiwa Novels by Okky Madasari* published in the *International Conference on Interdisciplinary Language, Literature and Education (ICILLE)* journal (Khasanah & Wiyatmi, 2019). The article uses Reardon's concept in *Tolerance: the Threshold of Peace* which highlights the form of intolerance in the novels *Maryam and Pasung Jiwa* by Okky Madasari.

There is also research from theses that raise the topic of religious discrimination using the same theory but the objects used are different. Among them are those

from Mu'ad (2020), Asrori (2022), and Hasnah (2023). These three studies apply Kevin Boyle's theory to a novel to identify the forms and causes of religious discrimination in it. Furthermore, some studies raise the same object as researchers but the problems studied and the theories used are different. The *first* research entitled *The Rise of Diversity in Young Adult Fiction* from Radboud University (Rauofi, 2020). The study used an American Studies approach and literary analysis to detect the rise of diversity in young adult fiction in the 21st century in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. The *second* research entitled *Moral Values Reflected in Tahereh Mafi's Novel A Very Large Expanse of Sea* from Darma Persada University (Radiya, 2019). Analyze using intrinsic and extrinsic approaches in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* to reveal the moral value of the main character and its relationship with other intrinsic elements.

Based on the previous studies above, several gaps can be found that make researchers want to examine the issue of religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. There are several studies that use Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination in analyzing literary works. Therefore, in this study, Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination is applied to a novel that is different from previous studies. The researcher wants to apply the theory in analyzing the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* to reveal the forms and causes of religious discrimination faced by the main character in the novel. In addition, there has been no previous research that raises the topic of religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*, thus making researchers want to research this topic.

Like with any social or religious issue, there will be pros and cons to it. Acceptance and discrimination are inevitable in everyday life (Hasnah, 2023). However, the important question is why and what are the causes of this phenomenon of religious discrimination. Are Muslims rejected and discriminated against because of skin color, ethnicity, or religion? Or a combination of all these elements? Therefore, to find out these problems, the researcher conducted a study with the title Religious Discrimination in the Novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi with several research questions as listed below.

B. Problems of the Study

Looking at the phenomenon of religious discrimination in America, as described in the background of the study above, has shown that there are many interesting and important issues to be examined in more depth with several questions formulated as follows:

1. What are the forms of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?
2. What are the causes of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?
3. How does Shirin deal with religious discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions and problems mentioned earlier, the objectives to be achieved in this study are:

1. To explain what are the forms of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*.
2. To explain what are the causes of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*.
3. To provide an explanation of how Shirin deals with religious discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*.

D. Significance of the Study

This research provides two benefits, namely theoretical and practical benefits.

The benefits of this research are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

Theoretically, this research is expected to provide benefits to the development of knowledge and academic insights in literary studies. These benefits are as follows:

- a. Increase theoretical understanding of Kevin Boyle's use of religious discrimination theory.
- b. Improve theoretical understanding of the forms of religious discrimination proposed by Kevin Boyle.
- c. Improve theoretical understanding of the forms of causes of religious discrimination by Kevin Boyle.

2. Practical Benefits

Practically, this research is expected to provide the following benefits:

- a. Allows other researchers to examine various other issues using different objects to study them in more depth regarding religious discrimination.

- b. Contribute to our knowledge about religious discrimination and become a reference that can help researchers out there in analyzing various perspectives in examining a literary work.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study examines the problem of religious discrimination as depicted in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi. This study centers on the problem of religious discrimination that occurred after 9/11 in America. Both Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination and the sociology of literature approach will be used to analyze the religious discrimination depicted in the novel.

In particular, this research will refer to the depiction of religious discrimination faced by the main character Shirin in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. Therefore, this research will be limited to the problems of what are the religious discrimination that Shirin faces in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* and how Shirin deals with religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. By only limiting to these two problems of the study, it does not rule out the possibility of future researchers to conduct research again with a broader focus of the problem so that more optimal and diverse results will be produced.

F. Definition of Key Term

1. **Discrimination:** unfair treatment of a person or group because of different characteristics such as race, religion, ethnicity, or social class (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969)

2. **Religious Discrimination:** unfair treatment of individuals or groups who adhere to a different religion or no religion at all (Boyle, 2004)
3. **Religious Prejudice:** stereotypical portrayal of certain religious groups through beliefs that have the potential to harm and become the basis for marginalization and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2004)
4. **Religious Hatred:** 'religious prejudice' that can spill over into deep-seated hostility that leads to 'religious hatred' (Boyle, 2004)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

This research aims to explain the forms and causes of religious discrimination contained in the novel. Therefore, this research requires a theory as a foundation and analysis knife in analyzing the research data obtained. The theory used in this research is religious discrimination by Kevin Boyle using the sociology of literature approach.

A. Sociology of Literature

The term "sociology" derived from Greek logos, "the study of", and Latin socius, meaning "friend" or "with others" was used by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) to name this new discipline. In addition to discovering social principles, the goal of this new science was to apply them to social transformation (Henslin, 2014).

Literature is a type of social institution that uses language as its medium. The topic of literature and society is framed in a more external and limited way. The relationship between literature and society is strengthened by recognizing, describing, and assessing how society influences literature (Wellek and Warren, 1949). Plato viewed society as a cohesive system centered on social inequality and division of labor. Wise legislation that prioritizes the interests of the whole over the interests of individual components will result in social welfare or social order (Swingewood, 1984).

Sociology of Literature can be defined in several ways. *First*, the sociology of literature was originally a field of discipline to understand literary works that use

social considerations. *Second*, the field of sociology of literature understands every aspect of literary composition and the social elements contained in it. *Third*, the study of the sociology of literature aims to understand literary composition and how society or the background of the work interacts with the work. *Fourth*, the dialectical relationship between literature and society (Khasanah & Wiyatmi, 2019).

In accordance with the categorization of literary sociology mentioned above, authors, literary works, and society are three areas that become the scope and ideas of the sociology of literature approach. However, this research will only take part of the three components of literary sociology, namely the literary work itself. Sociology will be used as a tool to help understand the social components in a literary work, with the main focus of this research being the literary work itself. Therefore, the subject of this research includes social life and the components of society in literary works (Hasnah, 2023).

The sociology of literature is the sociological analysis of literature, following the same methodology as the sociology of knowledge, with the aim of relating literature to social structures or extracting the social insights of its authors. The sociology of knowledge is a branch of sociology that studies how different systems of thought are political, legal, philosophical, aesthetic, religious, scientific, etc (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969). Thus, this research will provide knowledge and understanding of religious discrimination and how culture and society in the novel display information by using literary sociology in the sociological method of knowledge.

B. Discrimination

Discrimination refers to the unfair treatment of people or groups based on shared categorical characteristics such as socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, or religion. It is commonly used to describe the actions of a dominating majority group towards a vulnerable minority group, resulting in unethical and undemocratic behavior. Discrimination in this sense is the active or overt manifestation of negative prejudice against a person or group (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969).

Discrimination is considered to occur when a person or group is treated unfairly. Discrimination can be based on a variety of characteristics, such as age, gender, height, weight, skin color, manner of speech, clothing, money, education, marital status, sexual orientation, illness, disability, religion, and political beliefs (Henslin, 2014). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a US federal agency, is tasked with monitoring and implementing civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in the workplace. Age, disability, equal pay and compensation, genetic information, harassment, national origin, pregnancy, race or color, religion, retaliation, sex, sexual harassment, and sexual orientation and gender identity are some of the categories used by the EEOC to categorize the various forms of discrimination that occur in the United States (Hasnah, 2023).

In this case, the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi is the object of study that raises the issue of discrimination. The discrimination in the novel is caused by religion experienced by the main character, Shirin. Shirin faces discrimination because she is a Muslim. Prejudice against Muslims and Islam

encourages the perpetrators of discrimination to conduct unequal treatment against the Islamic character in this novel.

C. Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination, abbreviated to "Religious Discrimination", refers to behaviors, situations, attitudes, and dynamics that are viewed from a religious perspective. Treating a person or group less favorably than another person or group who adheres to another religion or no religion at all. Such treatment is best described as "unfair treatment on the basis of religion," as stated in the empirical report of the Religious Discrimination study (Boyle, 2004). When a person is treated unfairly because of his or her religion, religious practices, beliefs, or desire for religious accommodation, this is called religious discrimination. It also includes how people treat others because they do not profess or believe in a particular religion (Salama, 2023).

The religious discrimination of the 19th century was largely subsided by the mid-20th century. Since the 1950s, there has been a widespread assumption that religion will be seen as a private rather than a public matter (Boyle, 2004). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, racial and ethnic identity politics took center stage in diversity and identity discourse. While there have been changes in the level of adherence to religious beliefs and practices, these changes are also debatable, and for the most part, religion has only recently begun to re-emerge as a marker of individual and community identity (Boyle, 2004).

In recent years, discrimination based on religion has become a controversial social issue. While this continues to be the case, the underlying problem in many

developed and developing countries is religious extremism and militancy created by both majority and minority groups (Boyle, 2004).

D. The Forms of Religious Discrimination

In his book *The Challenge of Religious Discrimination at the Dawn of the New Millennium*, Kevin Boyle uses the term "religious discrimination". In addition, he distinguishes two forms of religious discrimination: direct and indirect.

1. Direct Religious Discrimination

Kevin Boyle defines direct religious discrimination as actions that aim to deny opportunities or services to someone based on their religious identity, practices, or beliefs. For example, "direct discrimination" could be a prospective employer's decision not to hire a Muslim based on their religious identity, practices or beliefs (Boyle, 2004). Kevin Boyle defines direct discrimination, which also includes discrimination based on religion. He gives the example of an individual A who directly discriminates against another individual B on one of the prohibited grounds. A treats B less favorably than another individual C who has been, or would be treated in the same situation or A disadvantages B (Boyle, 2004) .

Religious prejudice, hatred, or disadvantage are not always the direct cause of discrimination based on religion. However, when such dimensions and processes influence decisions made by people in positions of authority in the public, corporate and non-profit sectors, they have the same potential to manifest overtly discriminatory behavior as racial prejudice (Boyle, 2004). For example, because of the status and power possessed by a teacher, if a teacher

gives a negative and prejudiced attitude to his Muslim students, then this can affect the behavior of other students towards the Muslim students.

2. Indirect Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination indirectly stems from organizational procedures and rules that can establish patterns of exclusionary hiring policies, employment, and service delivery. Therefore, while these discriminatory practices may be related to religious disadvantage at some level, it is critical for everyone to understand the possible impact of past decisions, existing organizational structures, or patterns of behavior that may not be based on religious prejudice or hatred at all (Boyle, 2004).

However, these historical tendencies can inadvertently contribute to discrimination against adherents of different religious traditions if not carefully reviewed in light of the meaning of religious plurality. Examples include food, dress rules, religious festivals, and other culturally specific rules and regulations (Boyle, 2004).

E. Causes of Religious Discrimination

When it comes to racial categorization, it is crucial to distinguish the components of unfair treatment and consider the relationship between them to ensure that the response is appropriate to the situation at hand. When talking about agendas shaped by race and ethnicity, it is crucial to distinguish between racial prejudice, racial hatred, and racial disadvantage. Discrimination is the result of racial prejudice and hatred, but discrimination also causes racial disadvantage. This is done in a similar way to the analytical categories done by Kevin Boyle, which

were used to identify the causes of religious discrimination. Therefore, Kevin Boyle states that religious prejudice and religious hatred are the two causes of religious discrimination.

1. Religious Prejudice

Religious prejudice is the stereotypical portrayal of certain religious groups through beliefs that have the potential to harm others and become the basis for marginalization and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2004). For example, stereotypes regarding the perception of Muslims in Western societies are well-entrenched. Religious prejudice started in conflictual relationships including religion, politics, and wars that have occurred over the years. However, this is not the only source of the problem (Boyle, 2004).

Interviews conducted by Kevin Boyle in the field show that ignorance is often a sign of religious prejudice. It is one of the most frequently used justifications for unfair or prejudiced treatment based on religion. Despite having lived together for decades, interviewees from minority religions and cultures stated that the dominant community knew very little about them (Boyle, 2004). Those who have no religion often show great fear and distrust of people who are strongly religious.

One of the observations made also shows that people often have a tendency to extrapolate bad experiences from other people's religious experiences to all members of the same religious organization or even to an entire religious group, especially if the experience includes religion or religious believers in general (Boyle, 2004). This statement is based on the observation that individuals who

claim to be religious or have had a bad religious experience often make generalizations about all members of a particular religious organization or perhaps all religious groups as a result of the unpleasant experience.

2. Religious Hatred

Kevin Boyle reveals that religious hatred is a "religious prejudice" that can extend into a deep hostility that gives birth to "religious hatred". Religious prejudice can drive and foster the expression of "religious hatred" when both are created in a very strong attitude of mind, emotion, and will (Boyle, 2004). When this kind of religious hatred becomes extreme, it sometimes leads to acts of intimidation and/or violence directed at the religious "other". Highly racist and fascist groups, among organized cadres, can also incite and foster "religious hatred". Religious hatred historically directed in Europe against Jews, has in recent times also been directed against Muslims, who are seen as representatives of an alien civilization fundamentally opposed to European heritage (Boyle, 2004). Some people claim that the origin of this form of prejudice stems from an issue known as "Islamophobia", which was identified in the Runnymede Trust study.

Yet observations from the Religious Discrimination research highlight that many people report experiencing unfair treatment because their religion is also heavily impacted by the everyday and structural aspects of such treatment, even in the absence of religious prejudice and religious hatred. It is therefore important to consider how organizational practices and policies function and

how they contribute to forms of religious discrimination, both directly and indirectly (Boyle, 2004).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology that will be used in analyzing the research. These include research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

The research taken is included in literary criticism. The literary criticism analysis method is used in the research design to analyze the research object. The researcher used literary criticism to examine the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi published in 2018. Therefore, as a scientific study, this analysis will examine the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* which highlights discrimination against Muslim characters, especially the main character Shirin using literary sociology. The novel reveals the religious discrimination that occurred in America one year after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In addition, to answer the problems of the study, the researcher uses Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination, which focuses on the forms of religious discrimination. The researcher also reveals how the main character Shirin deals with religious discrimination in the novel. The text in the novel will be the only primary data source that the researcher will analyze. And the last, the researcher will look for data through narratives and dialogues that are associated with Kevin Boyle's theory of religious discrimination.

B. Data Source

This research will only discuss religious discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. As a study of literary criticism, the only main data source of this research is the literary work itself, namely the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. The novel was published on October 16, 2018 by Harper Collins with 336 pages. The main character in *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* Shirin experiences religious discrimination which will be explained in detail by highlighting the actual situation. The data will be presented in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs related to social issues and problems surrounding the characters and setting of the story, as well as how the main character Shirin deals with the religious discrimination that occurs to her in the novel.

C. Data Collection

The primary goal of data collection is to maintain data that is consistent and rich in detail to explain and support data-driven decision making (Mazhar et al., 2021). The researcher will use various procedures. *First*, the researcher reads the novel repeatedly by labeling important facts using the deep reading technique. *Second*, recording information related to the religious discrimination experienced by the main character. Underlining and highlighting information that focuses on the form of religious discrimination and Shirin's way of dealing with religious discrimination in the novel.

Third, paying attention to the annotated data of the novel. Sorting the data based on discriminatory situations and organizing the data in such a way as to understand the different forms of religious discrimination and the way the main character Shirin deals with religious discrimination. After that, put the data into a table to facilitate the analysis. *Fourth*, obtaining secondary information related to the topic of religious discrimination by finding information from the reference book of religious discrimination theory by Kevin Boyle and articles related to the topic of discussion.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was conducted during and after the data collection process. There will be several processes in analyzing the collected data. Three steps of analysis are applied to the data: condensing the data, displaying the data, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014).

First, data condensation is the first component in the analysis which is a process of selection, focusing, simplification, and abstraction. Researchers read many times and observe carefully then select data that has been obtained from the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* so that it can provide a clear picture of the forms of religious discrimination displayed in the novel. *Second*, display data, namely displaying data from the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* that has been reduced, organized, and easy to understand, so that this research data will be presented in the form of descriptive narrative analysis. *Third*, in drawing conclusions, the data that has been reduced in the previous process is presented regularly supported and linked to the

theory that has been used so that the conclusions produced in this study will be directed to answer research questions (Miles et al., 2014).

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will answer the research problems that have been proposed in the first chapter, 1) What are the forms of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?, 2) What are the causes of religious discrimination that Shirin faces in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?, 3) How does Shirin deal with religious discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*?

A. The Forms of Religious Discrimination Faced by Shirin in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*

A Very Large Expanse of Sea written by Tahereh Mafi is one of the literary works that raises some social issues. The novel tells about social issues, especially religious discrimination that occurred a year after 9/11 that affected the main Muslim character, Shirin in the novel. Simply put, religious discrimination is discrimination based on religion that is accepted by certain religious groups or even entire religious groups. Kevin Boyle reveals that religious discrimination is a treatment that can be inclusively characterized as an unfair act on the basis of religion. There are two forms of religious discrimination that Kevin Boyle has mentioned in his book, that is direct religious discrimination and indirect religious discrimination. Kevin Boyle also discusses religious discrimination caused by religious prejudice and religious hatred (Boyle, 2004). In line with this, the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* also depicts these social issues. Therefore, in this

chapter, researchers will take an in-depth look at the portrayal of religious discrimination and the resistance of the main character Shirin in facing religious discrimination in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*.

1. Direct Religious Discrimination when Shirin was in the Surrounding Society

Direct religious discrimination is an act that aims to deny opportunities or services to an individual based on their religious identity, practices, or beliefs. Kevin Boyle gives the example of an individual A who directly discriminates against another individual B on one of the prohibited grounds. A treats B less favorably than another individual C who has been, or would be treated in the same situation or A disadvantages B. In this case, Shirin, a Muslim woman, experienced direct religious discrimination when she was in the society. The treatment given is in the form of hate speech to physical violence. More details will be explained in the data below (Boyle, 2004).

The first data of direct religious discrimination experienced by Shirin in *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* is about her being associated with a figure who has a connection to terrorism in the past.

“Isn’t it against your religion to date white guys?” “So are you, like, related to Saddam Hussein?” “Why are you even here, if you hate America so much?.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 153)

The data above shows that Saddam Hussein, the former president of Iraq, has been associated by the public with the September 11 terrorist attacks. The acts of terrorism on September 11 caused Muslims to be stereotyped as violent, aggressive, and anti-American (Abdullah, 2015). In the data, Shirin, who is a Muslim, receives

direct religious discrimination due to the terrorist incident in the past which makes her said to be anti-American or hate America very much. Evident from the conversation “*Why are you even here, if you hate America so much?*”, they try to treat Shirin less favorably and do direct religious discrimination.

The sentence quoted above is a form of direct religious discrimination because the society directly discriminates against Shirin, who is a Muslim. More specifically, direct religious discrimination is defined by Kevin Boyle as the act of denying opportunities or services to someone based on religious identity, practices and beliefs. This direct religious discrimination is done directly on one of the prohibited grounds, treats unfavorably, and harms (Boyle, 2004). The act of direct religious discrimination that happened to Shirin was formed because of the past history in which Saddam Hussein was a past figure believed by the community to have a connection with the September 11 terrorist attacks. Despite the fact that there is no conclusive evidence of Saddam Hussein's involvement in September 11. Iraq's history of support in providing training to al-Qa'eda members during the 1990s as well as sheltering terrorists fleeing the U.S. attack in Afghanistan provides a broad picture (Karsh & Rautsi, 2002) that makes Saddam Hussein associated with the September 11 terrorist attacks. Shirin, who is a Muslim, has to take the impact of past events. Treated less favorably than other individuals and subjected to hurtful comments.

2. Direct Religious Discrimination when Shirin was at School

In the second form, Shirin still experienced direct religious discrimination but this time she experienced it in her school environment. As it is known that direct religious discrimination is an act that aims to deny opportunities or services to an individual based on their religious identity, practices, or beliefs. Kevin Boyle gives the example of an individual A who directly discriminates against another individual B on one of the prohibited grounds. A treats B less favorably than another individual C who has been, or would be treated in the same situation or A disadvantages B. In this case, Shirin, a Muslim woman, experienced direct religious discrimination by her friends while at school. The discrimination took the form of hate speech and harmful behavior.

Below is the first data describing the direct religious discrimination experienced by Shirin in *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* when she was at school.

“...some kid passing me in the hall asked if I wore that thing on my head because I was hiding bombs underneath and I ignored him, and then his friend said that maybe I was secretly bald and I ignored him, and then a third one said that I was probably, actually, a man, and just trying to hide it and finally I told them all to fuck off, ... These, the regular injections of poison I was gifted from strangers, were definitely the worst things about wearing a headscarf.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 5).

The religious discrimination that happened to Shirin above is a form of direct religious discrimination because the action is done directly for a prohibited reason. In the data, Shirin, who is a Muslim, is stereotyped as a terrorist who is closely related to the perpetrators of the September 11 bombings. In fact, terrorism is an issue that is often discussed by the US government, especially after the 9/11 attacks with the credo "War on Terrorism" (Rahayu & Mediyansyah, 2020). Therefore,

society has stigmatized many Muslims as terrorists who are synonymous with bombing.

In this case, it is in line with the concept given by Kevin Boyle where direct religious discrimination is one of the actions that aim to deny opportunities or services to someone based on their religious identity, practices, or beliefs (Boyle, 2004). Shirin, who in the data is seen receiving hate speech from friends at her school that leads to rejection based on her religious identity or beliefs. Shirin, who is a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, experienced direct religious discrimination saying that she was a terrorist because of wearing a hijab and hiding a bomb under her hijab. Shirin, who wears hijab to show her identity as a Muslim woman, is accused of being a terrorist because of the past events of the September 11 terrorist bombings.

I only knew that someone had taken a photo of me without my scarf on—without my consent—and was now passing it around. It was a kind of violation I'd never experienced before. I wanted to scream. It was my hair, I wanted to scream. It was my hair and it was my face and it was my body and it was my fucking business what I wanted to do with it. (Mafi, 2018, p. 147-148)

In the second data, it shows Shirin who experienced a form of direct religious discrimination when she was in the toilet to tidy up her hijab as described in the data above. A female friend at her school had taken a photo of Shirin unwearing her hijab in the toilet without her knowledge and consent. This is an offense that can harm Shirin who is a Muslim. As explained by Kevin Boyle, direct religious discrimination occurs when someone directly discriminates against another individual on prohibited grounds, treating them less favorably than other individuals and disadvantaging them (Boyle, 2004).

Shirin being suddenly and deliberately photographed without her hijab is a form of religious discrimination that can harm Shirin. This can be evidenced in the conversation “*someone had taken a photo of me without my scarf on—without my consent—and was now passing it around*” where Shirin is severely harmed by the actions of someone who photographed her without wearing her headscarf for spreading the photo. Because of the perceptions and prejudices created, Shirin is often hated and subjected to harmful religious discrimination. Shirin's nasty girl friend took a picture of her without hijab and shared it as a form of her hatred because Shirin is a Muslim who has always been associated with the terrorist events on September 11. The European Monitoring Center News Letter reveals that after 9/11, research on the rise of Islamophobia identified an ideal victim profile, “The headscarf has become a key visual identifier as a target of hate, with Muslim women frequently persecuted and attacked (Amiriaux, 2005).

3. Indirect Religious Discrimination when Shirin Walks Around

Wearing a Hijab

Indirect religious discrimination comes from organizational procedures and rules that can establish patterns of exclusionary hiring policies, employment, and service delivery. It is important for everyone to understand the possible impact of past decisions, existing organizational structures, or patterns of behavior that may not be based on religious prejudice or hatred at all (Boyle, 2004). This indirect religious discrimination can include food, dress rules, religious festivals, and other culturally specific rules and regulations (Boyle, 2004). In the novel, Shirin experiences indirect religious discrimination behavior. This is in the form of

rejection of Shirin's style of dress and her wearing of a hijab. A more detailed description of the data showing indirect religious discrimination against Shirin will be presented below.

“Listen,” he said, “maybe you should reconsider this whole . . . getup.” He gestured vaguely at my face. “Walking around like this all the time?” He shook his head. Sighed. “I’m sorry, kid, but it’s like you’re asking for it. Don’t make yourself a target. Things are complicated in the world right now. People are scared. Do you understand?” And then, “Do you speak English?” (Mafi, 2018, p. 112)

The data that researchers have displayed above shows that Shirin who experienced direct religious discrimination by a police officer who handled her during a tragedy. Shirin was told to reconsider her hijab because they thought it would make her a target for religious discrimination by society. The complicated world situation associated with 9/11 makes people afraid of Muslims, especially Shirin who wears the hijab. The events of 9/11 destroyed Americans' sense of security, making them anxious. The majority of Americans fear potential terrorist attacks in the future (Zahedi, 2011). This can be shown in the conversation *“Don’t make yourself a target. Things are complicated in the world right now. People are scared.”*

Furthermore, the data is included in indirect religious discrimination because the police made a statement referring to the impact of past decisions which is in line with Kevin Boyle who states that indirect religious discrimination can include food, dress rules, religious festivals, and other culturally specific rules and regulations (Boyle, 2004). This is evidenced when the police officer told Shirin to reconsider her appearance which could make her a target of religious discrimination by the society. The policeman also added a statement about the complicated and

fearful state of the world due to 9/11. The attacks of 9/11 have become a terrifying threat for people around the world as Islamic extremist groups exploit modern technology for propaganda purposes and radicalize their followers (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2019). Therefore, many Americans are still traumatized and afraid of Muslims after 9/11. In addition, this indirect act of religious discrimination is attributed by Kevin Boyle to religious prejudice that began in conflictual relationships including religion, politics, and wars that have occurred over the years. Based on observations, individuals who claim to be religious or have had bad religious experiences often make generalizations about all members of a particular religion or even all religious groups as a result of these unpleasant experiences (Boyle, 2004).

B. The Causes of Religious Discrimination Faced by Shirin in Tahereh

Mafi's A Very Large Expanse of Sea

In line with this, Kevin Boyle indicated that religious prejudice and religious hatred are the root causes of direct religious discrimination. Religious prejudice is the stereotypical portrayal of certain religious groups through beliefs that have the potential to harm and become the basis for marginalization and unfair treatment. For example, stereotypes regarding the perception of Muslims in American society are quite entrenched. Religious prejudice began in conflictual relationships including religion, politics, and wars that have occurred over the years. However, this is not the only source of the problem (Boyle, 2004). Negative stereotypes of the Muslim society that result in religious discrimination are directly depicted in the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*. Meanwhile, religious hatred is "religious

prejudice" that can extend into a deep hostility that gives birth to "religious hatred". Religious prejudice can drive and foster the expression of "religious hatred" when both are created in a very strong attitude of mind, emotion, and will (Boyle, 2004). When this kind of religious hatred becomes extreme, it sometimes leads to acts of intimidation and/or violence directed at the religious "other". Therefore, this section will clarify what causes religious discrimination against Shirin. Therefore, this section will clarify what causes religious discrimination against Shirin.

1. Religious Prejudice Because of the 9/11 Attacks

In this first form, Shirin experiences religious discrimination due to religious prejudice a year after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11. Shirin, who is a Muslim, is often associated with the perpetrators of terrorism on 9/11.

“There were two big differences between me and my brother: first, that he was extremely handsome, and second, that he didn’t walk around wearing a metaphorical neon sign nailed to his forehead flashing CAUTION, TERRORIST APPROACHING.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 4).

The first data above shows that the main character Shirin finds a big difference between herself and her brother Navid. Her brother does not walk in the stereotypical terrorist mold that society has stereotyped Shirin to be. This is shown in the conversation *“he didn’t walk around wearing a metaphorical neon sign nailed to his forehead flashing CAUTION, TERRORIST APPROACHING.”* This illustrates religious discrimination against Shirin due to religious prejudice. In the data, it can be seen that society gives a prejudice or stereotype to the main character Shirin who is a Muslim as a terrorist.

It appears as a strong dislike or fear of another person's beliefs that makes people feel afraid, hated, distrusted, or avoided (Rouabhia & Öztürk, 2022). Shirin, who is a hijab-wearing Muslim, is often assumed to be connected to the attacks of September 11, causing her to experience direct and indirect acts of religious discrimination. The indirect religious discrimination faced by Shirin comes from religious prejudice. Religious prejudice by Kevin Boyle is defined as the stereotypical portrayal of certain religious groups through beliefs that have the potential to harm and become the basis for marginalization and unfair treatment (Boyle, 2004). The unfair treatment of religious prejudice is proven when her brother Navid is not stereotyped as a terrorist as Society does to Shirin who seems to have a nail on her forehead that reads “*CAUTION, TERRORIST APPROACHING.*”

“I didn’t understand how anyone could be so violently angry with me for something I hadn’t done, so much so that they’d feel justified in assaulting me in broad daylight as I walked down the street.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 4).

The next data above shows that Shirin who experienced verbal violence from the American society because they were too angry about the past terrorism incident on September 11 led by Al-Qaeda forces. Although the incident was not done by Shirin, her background as a Muslim woman is often connected to the perpetrators of terrorism on 9/11. There have also been incidents where mosques have been damaged, women wearing headscarves have been attacked, and men who look like Arabs have been labeled as terrorists (Ghumman & Ryan, 2013). This is why Shirin experiences a lot of discriminatory treatment based on her religion due to past events that have led to various prejudices against Muslims.

The cause of Shirin's discrimination is also in line with the cause proposed by Kevin Boyle, that is, religious prejudice. Religious prejudice itself is defined as a stereotypical portrayal of certain religious groups through beliefs that have the potential to harm others and become the basis for marginalization and unfair treatment. This religious prejudice stems from conflictual relationships including religion, politics, and war that have occurred over the years (Boyle, 2004). Therefore, the data provided above is quite aligned and categorized within the concept of the causes of religious discrimination proposed by Kevin Boyle, that is, religious prejudice.

2. Religious Hatred Because of the Hijab that Shirin Wears

Furthermore, in the second cause, Shirin experienced religious discrimination caused by religious hatred because of her appearance wearing a hijab. Some of the behaviors Shirin received included hurtful words and verbal abuse. More details will be discussed below.

“Girls like you don’t deserve to wear hijab,” she said, matching my pace. “It’d be better for everyone if you just took it off.” ... I said, “are what’s wrong with religion. People like you make the rest of us look crazy, and I don’t think you even realize it.” I shook my head. “You don’t know shit about me, okay? You don’t know shit about how I’ve lived or what I’ve been through or why I choose to wear hijab and it’s not your place to judge me or how I live my life. (Mafi, 2018, p. 120)

The data above shows that Shirin experiencing direct religious discrimination by her girl friends at school. They suddenly told Shirin to remove her hijab because they thought it would be better for everyone. It can be seen in the conversation *“Girls like you don’t deserve to wear hijab,” she said, matching my pace. “It’d be better for everyone if you just took it off.”* This certainly shows a form of religious discrimination against Shirin, who is a Muslim woman wearing a

hijab. According to Hate Crime Statistics, compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of crimes against Muslims increased after 9/11. The European Parliament's Declaration on the Prevention of Racism and Xenophobia also condemns the rise of hate crimes against Muslims in Europe, especially against women who wear the hijab (Taylor et al., 2014).

Shirin's girl friend suddenly tells her to take off her hijab is an act of direct religious discrimination committed for a prohibited reason and causes harm to Shirin. The friend's religious discrimination also shows that society, especially Americans, reflects their dislike and hatred towards Muslims. As we know, the attacks of 9/11 have worsened people's perception of Islam and Muslims (Abdullah, 2015). Because of the perceptions and prejudices that are created, it expands into deep hostility that gives birth to religious hatred. Religious prejudice can mobilize and foster expressions of religious hatred when both are created in very strong attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and wills (Boyle, 2004). When Shirin's girl friend insists on telling her to remove her hijab, it shows a deep hostility towards Shirin, which creates a religious hatred.

9/11 happened last fall, two weeks into my freshman year, and a couple of weeks later two dudes attacked me while I was walking home from school and the worst part—the worst part—was that it took me days to shake off the denial; it took me days to fathom the why. I kept hoping the explanation would turn out to be more complex, that there'd turn out to be more than pure, blind hatred to motivate their actions. I wanted there to be some other reason why two strangers would follow me home, some other reason why they'd yank my scarf off my head and try to choke me with it. (Mafi, 2018, p. 4)

The next data above shows that Shirin who experienced acts of religious discrimination directly after the 9/11 attacks. Shirin was attacked by two strangers on her way home from school. The strangers pulled Shirin's hijab and tried to

choking her with it. This can be seen in the sentence *“two strangers would follow me home, some other reason why they’d yank my scarf off my head and try to choke me with it.”* This could happen to Shirin because of the religious hatred that she is a Muslim who is considered by society to have involvement with the 9/11 terrorist incident.

The data clearly shows a form of direct religious discrimination because the action was taken by the society directly to Shirin who is a Muslim. Kevin Boyle gives this example of direct religious discrimination when an individual directly discriminates against another individual on one of the prohibited grounds, treating him or her less favorably than other individuals and disadvantaging them (Boyle, 2004). This can be seen when Shirin is suddenly attacked directly by an unknown man by treats her unfavorably and harmfully. This direct religious discrimination against Shirin is caused by religious hatred. Religious hatred by Kevin Boyle is defined as a religious prejudice that can extend into a deep hostility that leads to religious hatred. This kind of religious hatred sometimes leads to acts of intimidation/violence aimed at other people of the same religion (Boyle, 2004). This is evidenced when two foreign men attacked Shirin and committed violence by pulling off her hijab and choking her with it. Such actions stem from religious prejudice in which Muslims are perceived as terrorists or adherents of terrorism who have involvement with the attacks of 9/11, thus making people hate Muslims. Stereotypes in the media and unfavorable attitudes from the majority of Americans also limit people's freedom of movement and the times and places where they can engage in leisure activities they enjoy. Many Muslim women find themselves

unable or afraid to go out on their own to go to work, shop, and utilize activities outside the home (Livengood & Stodolska, 2004). The negative impact of this blatant stereotyping is often felt by Muslim women who wear the hijab to the point that many of them are hated. As Americans begin to question the type of women they are, they become targets of oppression and hostility. To protect themselves from public vilification, many women stay at home (Haddad, 2007).

C. How Shirin deals with religious discrimination in Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*

As we know, the religious discrimination that happened to Shirin in *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* happened because of religious prejudice and hatred from the society. The amount of religious discrimination against her makes her a quite different person. He stays away a lot, trying not to care which makes him feel upset and angry. Therefore, the second problem formulation will explore how Shirin deals with the religious discrimination that happens to her in the novel.

Various attitudes and actions taken by Shirin when facing religious discrimination in the novel are found from always avoiding and having high anger towards many people to finally being able to make peace and be calmer.

a. Staying Away From Society

As previously said, this issue has taken on a new, unsettling dimension in the post-9/11 era, and the social environment that Muslims, particularly those in Western nations, face has gotten worse. Prejudices and discriminatory inclinations toward Muslims that already exist have so been reinforced (Orhun, 2009). This

makes him feel uncomfortable, always wanting to avoid and stay away from people around him.

In the first data, Shirin shows a fearful attitude towards the people around her so that she avoids and stays away from people, as illustrated in the data below:

I didn't look at people. People were always looking at me, and when I looked back they often took it as an invitation to speak to me, and when they spoke to me they nearly always said something offensive or stupid or both and I'd decided a long time ago that it was easier to pretend they just didn't exist. (Mafi, 2018, p. 1)

The data above shows Shirin who stays away from people because she is too afraid of religious discrimination against her. She tries to avoid the people around her and considers them non-existent to reduce acts of religious discrimination. As it is known, conservative Christian leaders expressed the perception on 9/11 that the image of Muslims and Islamic theology is inherently prone to terrorism and violence (Byng, 2008). This has worsened society's perception of Islam. Because of this, Shirin, who is a Muslim, had to bear the consequences of religious prejudice. A person who experiences discrimination may experience cognitive impairment as a result: anxiety, psychological distress, and depression (Neptune, 2021). Finally, Shirin, who did not want the religious discrimination to continue and damage her mental health, tried to avoid and stay away from the people around her.

In addition, there is another data that shows Shirin facing religious discrimination by staying away from people around her such as her schoolmates,

I wasn't in a hurry to get anywhere; I was only looking forward to being away from people. I had two more classes to get through after lunch but I wasn't sure my head could take it; I'd already surpassed my threshold for stupidity for the day. (Mafi, 2018, p. 3)

The data above shows that Shirin's unwillingness to meet and see her friends because she is too afraid of the religious discrimination she will receive. This internalized discrimination impacts how many young Muslims see themselves. Anxiety and insecurity can be caused by identity issues due to this religious discrimination (Neptune, 2021). Long before September 11, Muslims have been subjected to discriminatory actions. Many Americans have negative opinions of this ethnic group due to the ongoing conflicts with Arab countries, American military involvement in several countries, especially Muslim countries, and previous terrorist acts (Livengood & Stodolska, 2004). Negative attitudes and feelings, such as disgust, envy, suspicion, contempt, anxiety, rejection, aversion, fear, disgust, anger, and hostility (Bleich, 2011). Whereas Islam itself is very respectful and appreciative of the differences between fellow human beings. In Islamic teachings, human relations with each other must always be characterized by mutual respect, tolerance, and rejection of conflict (Novianti, 2020).

b. Focusing on Her Anger

Furthermore, Shirin deals with religious discrimination from the society and people around her by expressing her anger. Anger has been established as a common emotional response to unfair treatment (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). Becoming angry as a reaction to discrimination can trigger one to engage in externalizing coping strategies, and many other reactions (Head & Seaborn Thompson, 2017). Occasionally, Shirin shows her anger towards the way the surrounding society treats her. As shown in the data below,

I hated how long it took for the kids around me to realize I was neither terrifying nor dangerous; I hated the pathetic, soul-sucking effort it took to finally make a single friend brave enough to sit next to me in public. (Mafi, 2018, p. 4)

The above data shows Shirin who is quite upset and angry because she is too tired to prove and educate those around her that she is not scary and dangerous. The attacks of September 11 may have triggered negative sentiments coupled with a loosening of social norms that guide inter-group relations, leading to the beginning of discrimination (Livengood & Stodolska, 2004). It was because of this that Shirin was viewed negatively by the American public, which made her angry and fed up. It was quite exhausting for Shirin to realize and make people around her understand that she was not scary and dangerous to them. It is important to realize the huge impact that discrimination based on religious beliefs can have on a person's psychological and emotional well-being (Salama, 2023).

In addition to the data above, there is other data that also shows Shirin's way of dealing with religious discrimination by focusing on her anger, as illustrated in the data below:

"What thing?" I said, frustrated again. "People are flaming pieces of shit to me, like, all day long, and I'm not supposed to be mad about it?" "You can be mad about it," Jacobi said, and the sound of his voice startled me. He seemed, suddenly, very serious. "But, like, you seem to think everyone is horrible." (Mafi, 2018, p. 67)

The data above shows Shirin who has been frustrated by the bad words of those around her that hurt her, so her anger cannot be contained. This makes him filled with anger and considers everyone the same. Religious discrimination has permeated all aspects of Muslim life and has been experienced in many areas of American society. After the terrorist attacks of

September 11, there was a sharp increase in discriminatory acts such as violence and hate crime incidents against Muslims (Zainiddinov, 2016). Because of this, Shirin was constantly criticized as a form of religious discrimination by the surrounding society, making her angry and thinking everyone was horrible.

In addition to the data above, there is other data that shows Shirin's anger at the behavior of the people around her who are religiously discriminating against her, as below

I'm tired as hell, Mr. Jordan. I've been trying to educate people for years and it's exhausting. I'm tired of being patient with bigots. I'm tired of trying to explain why I don't deserve to be treated like a piece of shit all the time. I'm tired of begging everyone to understand that people of color aren't all the same, that we don't all believe the same things or feel the same things or experience the world the same way." I shook my head, hard. "I'm just—I'm sick and tired of trying to explain to the world why racism is bad, okay? Why is that my job?" (Mafi, 2018, p. 78)

The data above shows Shirin who is tired and so angry with the teacher at her school. Shirin is too tired to deal with the treatment of the people around her. She is often treated like trash and is so tired of explaining to society that religious discrimination or racism is a very bad thing. In addition to religious discrimination from the surrounding society, Shirin also received treatment that leads to racial discrimination. Shirin tries to explain to her teacher Mr. Jordan that people of color and beliefs are not the same. Racism itself is a dominant race's misconception about itself and the other races it dominates (Ghozi, 2010). Here, Shirin, a Muslim, is a minority who has no power to resist the treatment of the dominant group.

Minorities have physical or cultural traits that distinguish them from dominant groups whose members are equalized and placed in less desirable positions in the social structure (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that Shirin is often subjected to racial or other discriminatory treatment because Muslims in America are a minority group that has little place in the social structure. This makes Shirin not visible enough and makes her have a lot of unpleasant behavior that makes her sick and tired of facing the society around her.

c. Ignoring Any Bad Action From People Around

The next way Shirin deals with religious discrimination in the novel is by ignoring the religious discrimination of those around her. This can be seen from the data below,

People still enjoyed referring to me as the Taliban as I walked by, and every once in a while I'd find an anonymous note in my locker telling me to fuck off back to where I came from, and occasionally someone would take the time to point out that towelheads like me didn't deserve to live in their country—but I tried not to let it bother me. I tried to get used to it. I'd heard somewhere that people could get used to anything. (Mafi, 2018, p. 35)

The data above shows that Shirin, who still faces religious discrimination from those around her, especially from her schoolmates, becomes fed up and starts to ignore it. She is still often referred to as a Taliban by people around her. The Taliban is the name given to an Islamic militant and political group that controlled most of Afghanistan from September 1996 to October 2001 (Ahmad, 2012). The Taliban group has been linked to 9/11. Therefore, many Americans often refer to Muslims as Taliban because of this past attacks. Religious discrimination against Muslims is a widespread global

phenomenon, and its adverse effects on mental health and overall well-being are widely recognized (Salama, 2023). Therefore, Shirin, who didn't want it to bother her, tried to ignore it for her own peace of mind.

Furthermore, Shirin is still dealing with religious discrimination from the surrounding society by ignoring these actions, as shown in the data below,

It would make my life easier not to wear it, because if I didn't wear it, maybe people would treat me like a human being."

I broke off another blade of grass. Tore it into tiny pieces.

"But that seems like such a shitty reason to do something," I said. "It gives the bullies all the power. It would mean they'd succeeded at making me feel like who I was and what I believed in was something to be ashamed of. So, I don't know," I said. "I keep wearing it." (Mafi, 2018, p, 168)

In the data above, Shirin seems to ignore the religious discrimination committed by the society who told her to remove her hijab. It is known that since the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Muslim women wearing hijab in America have been antagonized by non-Muslims. They have historically experienced prejudice and discrimination in America because of their religious identity. Living with a hijab for a Muslim woman is quite troublesome in America. A Muslim woman who wears a hijab will be immediately identified with Islam, unlike a Muslim man in America who is not necessarily identified as a follower of Islam. Hijab in general will have a negative impact on the wearer if they are subjected to discrimination (Maghfirah, 2020).

Because of this, Shirin, who is a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, becomes the target of religious discrimination from non-Muslim communities. In the data, Shirin shows her fear and anger towards the

discrimination from the people around her which makes her want to take off her hijab. She also added that if she took off her hijab, it might lessen the burden of religious discrimination against her. The data description, it clearly proves how difficult and troublesome it is to live as a Muslim woman wearing hijab in America.

d. Joined a Breakdancing Club

In the face of religious discrimination, Shirin decided to spend her time joining a breakdancing club with her brother Navid to avoid getting too wrapped up in her anger, as illustrated below.

Breakdancing involved extremely taxing physical work, but it was work that filled me with joy and purpose. In fact, I was so focused on this new life outside of school—and so tired after practice every day—that I hardly had time to be angry about all the assholes littered everywhere. (Mafi, 2018, p.35)

The data above shows that Shirin joining a breakdancing club with her brother Navid, which is done to avoid excessive anger due to discriminatory treatment by the American society. Shirin, who often experiences religious discrimination from the surrounding society, has a high level of anger. By joining a breakdancing club and practicing every day, she no longer has time to get angry and respond to the bad actions of people around her. Joining the breakdancing club was also one of her dreams, so it brings Shirin great happiness.

Breakdancing is one of the ways Shirin survives the religious discrimination that she faces. Shirin, a Muslim woman, often encounters religious discrimination because of the hijab she wears. As it is known that anger has been established as a common emotional response to unfair

treatment (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). However, Shirin didn't want to let her anger control her so she decided to keep herself busy by practicing breakdancing for the sake of her happiness and mental health.

e. Making Peace with the Surrounding Conditions

Shirin's final way of dealing with religious discrimination in the novel is to make peace with the situation. Making peace with the situation here means that Shirin who initially had an indifferent attitude, avoided or stayed away from people around her, faced various challenges with anger, eventually began to be more open, reconciled, and did not consider everyone around her the same, as illustrated in the data below:

I mean, I was happy they weren't calling me towelhead anymore, but the sudden and abrupt transition from nasty to nice was giving me whiplash. I was confused. I couldn't believe people thought I'd forget that just over a month ago they were treating me like an actual piece of shit. My teachers, who, post-Ramadan—when I'd wanted to take a day off to celebrate literally the biggest holiday in the Muslim calendar—had said to me, “We're going to need a note from your parents to make sure you're missing school for a real thing,” were now congratulating me in front of the whole class. The politics of school popularity were baffling. I didn't know how they could change gears like this. They'd all seemed to have abruptly forgotten that I was still the same girl they'd tried to humiliate, over and over again. (Mafi, 2018, p.174)

The data above shows Shirin being accepted by the people around her after performing an amazing breakdancing performance. Shirin looks at the people around her with a confused mind and begins to realize that everyone is not the same. There are still those who treat her as an ordinary human being. Shirin, who was previously called a towelhead and treated like trash, is now accepted by the people around her. Shirin began to accept and reconcile with the people around her. In this sense, Islam teaches its followers to be humane Muslims, that is, Muslims who can make peace with other human beings, and

who can tolerate differences, including the ability to tolerate in certain domains (Novianti, 2020). Although Shirin was often treated unfairly by those around her and was frustrated, she was eventually able to make peace with it and began to be accepted by society.

Furthermore, another data that also shows Shirin's attitude in facing religious discrimination by making peace and starting to calm down is seen in the data below:

I didn't want to be that person anymore. I was tired of focusing on my own anger. I was tired of focusing only on my memories of terrible people and the terrible things they'd said and done to me. I was tired of it. The darkness took up too much valuable real estate in my head. Besides, I'd moved enough times now to know that time was a fleeting, exhaustible thing. (Mafi, 2018, p.186)

The data above shows Shirin's regret when she was still trapped in her anger. Shirin who was too focused on anger began to open up and make peace with the situation. She no longer thinks everyone is the same and thinks it is a waste of time to indulge in her anger. In Islam itself, Islam is not just a religion but also a social structure that provides a comprehensive approach to solving all of mankind's daily problems both spiritual and intellectual. Everything belongs to Allah, who is the supreme transcendent creator and ruler. Nothing happens without his approval. Lasting peace comes from complete surrender to His will and confidence in His mercy (Koenig, 1998).

Based on the explanation above in the Qur'an itself, there are values and practices for Muslims to overcome the trials and tribulations of life. Some of them are Al-Sabr (Patience / Perseverance) which explains that Muslims are encouraged to always maintain patience and fortitude in facing calamities or

problems, which has been explained in the verse of the Qur'an below which reads,

خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ لَهُمْ صَبْرَتُهُمْ وَأَلَيْنَ وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ

"And if you retaliate, then retaliate with the same punishment that was inflicted on you. But if you are patient, surely that is better for the patient" (Qur'an 16:126).

Ocean had given me hope. He'd made me believe in people again. His sincerity had rubbed me raw, had peeled back the stubborn layers of anger I'd lived in for so long. Ocean made me want to give the world a second chance. (Mafi, 2018, p.187)

The next data above shows that Shirin made peace with her surroundings because of Ocean. Ocean is a handsome man who started out as a study group friend and ended up having feelings for each other. He is the one who has been supporting and accompanying Shirin all this time. Ocean gives Shirin a different perspective on the American attitude towards Muslims. He is the one who constantly reassures Shirin that not everyone is the same and treats her badly. Ocean convinces Shirin not to keep focusing on her anger. Because it will only make Shirin feel worse. Eventually, Shirin begins to accept her surroundings and wants to give the world a second chance.

This is quite in line with the values and practices for Muslims in dealing with trials, such as Al-Ihsan (Kindness) which has been explained in the Qur'an verse that it is desirable to treat others with kindness and share and donate the resources owned to those who are less fortunate in terms of

pleasing Allah (Koenig, 1998). This is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an verse which reads,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعْظُمُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good and to giving to Kith and Kin and he forbids all indecent deeds and evil and rebellion" (Qur'an 16:90)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher concludes the study based on her findings. In line with this, the researcher also offers suggestions for future research on religious discrimination.

A. Conclusion

The results of the research that has been done can be concluded, based on the analysis shows that the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi describes a form of religious discrimination. In this research, there are forms and causes of religious discrimination. There are several forms of religious discrimination received by Shirin, such as direct religious discrimination when Shirin was in the surrounding society, direct religious discrimination when Shirin was at school, and indirect religious discrimination when Shirin walks around wearing a hijab. Furthermore, there are several causes of religious discrimination experienced by Shirin, such as religious prejudice because of the 9/11 attacks and religious hatred because of the hijab that Shirin wears.

Furthermore, from the religious discrimination, there were several ways Shirin deal with the religious discrimination that happened to her. *First*, Shirin stayed away from the society because she is quite afraid of the religious response and prejudice she will receive. *Second*, Shirin focuses on her anger. The religious prejudice and hatred that occurred was quite disturbing to her psychologically and

emotionally. *Third*, by ignores every bad action from people around her. *Fourth*, Shirin joined a breakdancing club. The pressure and discriminative treatment from the surrounding society made her busy with the breakdancing club, which brought enough happiness that there was no more time for her to be angry. *Fifth*, making peace with the surrounding conditions. Shirin began to be accepted by the people around her because of her extraordinary potential in the field of breakdancing, making her begin to realize that the society around her, especially American society, is not always bad.

B. Suggestion

Based on the analysis of the novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mafi. This can provide great insight and reinforcement in understanding the term religious discrimination, forms, causes, and ways to deal with it. As we know, religious discrimination comes from religious prejudice and religious hatred. The existence of religious discrimination behavior certainly makes individuals who experience it must have extraordinary abilities in dealing with it. The form of religious discrimination behavior can be in the form of exclusion, even to violence committed by the American society. This will make readers interested in how Shirin, a hijab-wearing Muslim woman in America, deals with religious discrimination in the novel.

From this study, the researcher gives suggestions to future research to use other literary works because this novel is not enough to provide a broad overview of the form of religious discrimination against Muslims in America. This novel features

more young adult romance fiction and less focus on religious discrimination behavior against Muslims in America so the data generated is quite limited. In addition, future research can use a more suitable theory to analyze how characters deal with religious discrimination because Kevin Boyle's theory does not provide solutions or problem solving in dealing with religious discrimination. Future research can also try to research on cases of religious discrimination that occur in Muslim or non-Muslim characters in literary works or social media that are being discussed using supporting theories.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Diana Nur Rohmatika was born in Trenggalek on November 19, 2001. She is a graduated from SMAN 1 Durenan, Trenggalek. While in high school, she was active in organizational and extracurricular activities. She is part of the Paskibraka and Scout organizations. He also joined several extracurricular activities such as robotics and dance. While in the Paskibraka organization, she participated in the Paskibraka competition at the high school level and won the 3rd runner-up prize which was held by SMAN 1 Trenggalek. After graduating from Senior High School, she continued her education by majoring in English Literature in 2020 at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. During his studies, he became a student who was quite active in activities both inside and outside the campus. Some of her activities are being a member of the English Literature Department Student Association (HMJ) during her 3rd semester, being a member of the Srikandi Traditional Dance Student Activity Unit (UKM), also joined the Pesona Humaniora Community, and participated in several committees in campus activities. In addition, she is also active in outside the campus activities, such as joining a wedding organizer and becoming a guide.