



## Deconstruction of Shirin's Islamic Identity in A Very Large Expanse of Sea Novel

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### **Abstract**

#### **Purpose**

*This research aimed to reveal the inconsistency in Shirin's Islamic identity in this novel using Derrida's deconstruction concept or theory.*

#### **Method**

*As this research tried to unveil Shirin's Islamic identity focusing on the female main character, Shirin. This research used a qualitative approach to analyze her Islamic identity. The data were obtained by reading and marking sentences or paragraphs of the novel related to the proposed problems. The collected data were analyzed was qualitatively using relevant concept or theory. Unveiling Shirin's Islamic identity was based on the concept of Islamic identity construction proposed by Lori Peek comprised ascribed, chosen, and declared identity.*

#### **Findings/Result**

*This research finds that the Islamic identity in Shirin's character that the novel portrayed is an ascribed identity from her parents; and a declared identity from the religious crisis experience. However, Shirin's Islamic identity is disturbed by how she portrays her declared identity. The positive portrayal that she shows as a Muslim is being a common American, which is similar to others.*

#### **Conclusion**

*Therefore, Shirin's Muslim identity is inconsistent because she violates Islamic rules and neglects Islamic teachings. It can be concluded that Shirin unconsciously deconstructs her Islamic identity by being a common American teenager.*

#### **Keywords**

*Deconstruction, Identity Construction, Islamic Identity.*

### Abstrak

#### Tujuan

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap inkonsistensi identitas keislaman Shirin dalam novel dengan menggunakan konsep dekonstruksi Derrida.

#### Metode

Penelitian ini mengamati identitas keislaman Shirin yang berfokus pada tokoh utama perempuan yaitu Shirin, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisis identitas keislamannya. Data diperoleh dengan membaca dan menilai novel yang berkaitan dengan analisis. Kemudian analisis pendukungnya berdasarkan artikel dan buku. Identifikasi identitas Islam Shirin didasarkan pada konsep konstruksi Identitas dalam identitas Islam yang dikemukakan oleh Lori Peek yang dianggap berasal, dipilih, dan dinyatakan sebagai identitas.

#### Temuan/Hasil

Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa identitas keislaman dalam tokoh Shirin yang digambarkan dalam novel tersebut merupakan identitas yang dianggap berasal dari orang tuanya; dan identitas yang dinyatakan dari pengalaman krisis agama. Namun, identitas keislaman Shirin terganggu oleh cara dia menggambarkan identitas yang dinyatakannya. Penggambaran positif yang ia tunjukkan sebagai seorang Muslim adalah menjadi orang Amerika pada umumnya, yang tidak berbeda dengan orang lain.

#### Kesimpulan

Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa identitas Muslim tidak konsisten karena melanggar aturan Islam dan mengabaikan ajaran Islam. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa Shirin secara tidak sadar mendekonstruksi identitas keislamannya dengan menjadi remaja Amerika pada umumnya.

#### Kata Kunci

Dekonstruksi, konstruksi identitas, identitas Islam

### المخلص

#### الهدف

لاحظ هذا البحث الهوية الإسلامية لشيرين . التركيز على الشخصية الأنثى الرئيسية، شيرين، هذا البحث استخدم نهجاً نوعياً لتحليل هويتها الإسلامية. وكان الهدف من هذا البحث هو الكشف عن عدم الاتساق في الهوية الإسلامية لشيرين في هذه الرواية التي استخدمت أعمال البناء التي قرأها جاك دروريدا.

#### الطريقة

وتم الحصول على البيانات بقراءة الرواية المتصلة بالتحليل ووسمها. ثم استند التحليل الداعم الى مقالات وكتب . ويستند تحديد الهوية الإسلامية لشيرين إلى مفهوم بناء الهوية في الهوية الإسلامية الذي اقترحه لوري بيك، وهي الهوية التي تُنسب وتُختار وتُعلن.

#### النتائج

ويستنتج هذا البحث أن الهوية الإسلامية في شخصية شيرين أن الرواية المصوّرة هي هوية مرتبطة، من والديها؛ وهوية معلن عنها، من تجربة الأزمة الدينية. غير ان الهوية الإسلامية لشيرين تُزعجها الطريقة التي تُصوّر بها هويتها المعلنة . والصورة الإيجابية التي تظهرها كمسلمة هي أن تكون أمريكياً مشتركاً لا يختلف عن الآخرين. ولذلك، فإن هويتها الإسلامية غير متنسقة لأنها تنتهك القواعد الإسلامية وتتجاهل التعاليم الإسلامية.

#### الخلاصة

من الممكن أن نستنتج أن (شيرين) تقوم دون وعي بتفكيك هويتها الإسلامية بكونها مرافقة أمريكية مشتركة.

#### الكلمات الرئيسية

التدمير، الهوية والتشبيد، الهوية الإسلامية.

## INTRODUCTION

The tragedy called 9/11, or WTC, occurred in the United States on September 11, 2001, when a network of terrorists hijacked a plane by crashing it into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Muslim people were startled by this tragedy because the suspect was a Muslim, Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda. Some Americans considered Islam the cause of this deadly attack, affecting their view of Muslims. In Lori Peek's book (2011, p. 5), Edward Said stated that Islam has long been misunderstood and misrepresented in the United States and the Western world. A religious personage in the United States who is an evangelical Christian leader, Franklin Graham, expressed hatred of Islam by describing Islam as "a very evil and wicked religion" and The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (PBUH), as a "demon-possessed pedophile (L. A. Peek, 2011, p. 5)."

According to Kettani, the predicted number of Muslims in America in 2000 before 9/11 was around 5 million (Kettani, 2010). The minority of Islam made the Americans who hate Muslims express their hatred towards them. Therefore, Muslims in the US who show their Muslim identity, especially women wearing hijab, have experienced much intolerance from American society. They are discriminated against by people ignoring them, disrespecting them, and mistreating them (Marzouk, 2021, p. 1).

Regarding to this novel having the post- 9/11 settings, *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* tells about Sixteen-year-old Shirin, a Muslim girl from California who struggled to face the impact of the tragedy of 9/11. This novel was published by HarperCollins in 2018. As Shirin continued her life daily, she faced many intolerances and hatred in school until strangers around her were on the street. In this novel, Tahereh Mafi, the author of this novel, emphasizes Shirin as the main character fighting for her identity as a Muslim by expressing her talent as a break-dancer, which plays a vital role in her journey as a Muslim. However, the researcher argues this novel has inconsistencies in Shirin's Islamic identity. Then, to analyze this novel, the researcher proposes two research questions. First, how is Shirin's Islamic identity depicted in this novel? Second, how does the depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity deconstruct Shirin's Islamic identity? Based on these questions, this research aimed to reveal the deconstruction of Shirin's Islamic identity, that the novel depicted.

Shirin's character constructs her Islamic identity based on the category of the development process of Islamic identity construction proposed by Lori Peek. She states three categories of Islamic identity development: ascribed, chosen, and declared identity (L. Peek, 2005, p. 223). The research found Shirin construct her Islamic identity based on ascribed and declared. On ascribed identity, Shirin's Islamic identity is from her parents raised her as a Muslim. For declared identity, Shirin's Islamic identity is from her maintaining her Islamic identity and keeping it safe from the hatreds because the crisis of the 9/11 tragedy by she showing a positive perception of Islam in order to eliminate the negative things about Islam in society which as terrorism and violence. It is congruent with what Peek said about the 9/11 tragedy made Muslims want to keep their identity safe in front of the people by showing the perception of Islam which is not as they thought: terrorism and violence (L. Peek, 2005, p. 232). In the novel, Shirin is depicted as a Muslim who is not different from others, which is as being a common American teenager.

The depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity in her declared identity made her Islamic identity is disturbed. It can be proven through the dissemination of interpretations from the lines that the novel's author depicted Shirin through the point of view of the first person. In order to deconstruct Shirin's Islamic identity, the researcher found the inconsistencies through the Deconstruction reading proposed by Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is looking at the text to bring out the contradictions that hide behind society's inherent concepts and beliefs without the text itself realized (Derrida & Spivak, 2016).

There have been several research examining this novel and Islamic values in a literary work using deconstruction, such as Brittany (2019) who analyzed *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by focusing in the main theme in order to specify the recurring social issues in the

novels affecting young adults. Ultimately, the analysis of this research was to determine whether the novels could be used in a lesson or placed in a school library. Another previous research examined this novel is Qoonita (2019) who identifies the main characters aimed at revealing the moral values in the novel's theme through the main characters, Shirin and Ocean James. This research found that respect and kindness to each other appeared in this novel as the moral value that the readers may learn. The next previous conducted by Suwito et al. (2020) who analyze the Islamic spiritual sides *Kanjeng Ratu Kidul* myth, aimed to examine *Kiai Ibnu Hajar's* view about *Kanjeng Ratu Kidul*, which people believe. The examination of the spiritual aspects employed Derrida's deconstruction theory comprises logo centric, binary opposition, and difference. This research found that *Kiai Ibnu Hajar* about people's belief in *Kanjeng Ratu Kidul* should be deconstructed to meet the teaching of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Even though both previous research and this research use the same object, they are different in how it is analyzed. This research analyzes the Islamic identity in Shirin's character, aimed to be deconstructed based the novel depicted. In comparison with the third previous study related to Deconstruction in Islamic value, this research used the Undecidability approach of deconstruction and Islamic identity construction concept to reveal the inconsistencies of Shirin's Islamic identity. In addition, the result of the research the reader is expected to increase knowledge about Islamic teachings in literary work and increase awareness among Muslims for obeying Islamic rules.

## METHOD

To describe and analyze the collected data from the novel, the approach to conduct this research that the researcher used a qualitative approach. According to Frederick Erickson, qualitative is a way to investigate the discovering and describing narratively what particular people do in their lives and what the actions mean to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 87). This research discovered the Islamic identity of Shirin's character in the novel and examined it by identifying and describing it. As this research used a qualitative approach, the research design that the researcher used was content analysis to analyze the Islamic identity of Shirin's character. Content analysis is a qualitative research designed to analyze the content of sources of data, such as literary works in novels, films, and poems (Jabrohim, 2017, p. 7). In order to use qualitative methods, the researcher analyzed the data based on the theories or approaches that were relevant. Qualitative analysis data is associated with critical research of qualitative data supported from sundry perspectives based on approaches or relevant theories (Farkhan, 2011, p. 61). The researcher collected the data by reading the novel several times in this research. The second reading focused on the Islamic identity of Shirin's character and marked the novel's lines related to this analysis as evidence.

Based on the data collection, the researcher identified the construction and development of Islamic identity in Shirin's character. The analysis of Shirin's Islamic identity is based on the concept of identity construction, particularly from the Islamic perspective proposed by Lori Peek. However, the researcher assumes there is inconsistency in Shirin's Islamic identity. The inconsistency is identified through the deconstruction reading proposed by Jacques Derrida. As a result, with Deconstruction criticism, many conflicting interpretations of the Islamic identity of Shirin's character were identified through Undecidability, the Deconstruction approach. Islamic teaching and practice supported the analysis of conflicting interpretations, based on the Holy book of Islam, al-Qur'an.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher took *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* novel as the research object. As the novel's story tells the journey of Shirin facing post-9/11 effects, the data that were analyzed mainly on her Islamic identity, which contains her adherence to Islamic teachings.

As the author of the novel depicted Shirin in the first-person point of view, data for analysis is obtained through Shirin's monologue and dialogue with other characters. In addition, the data analysis is selected to represent the issues relevant to the concept of identity construction in the Islamic identity of Shirin's character and how the concept of Islamic identity in Shirin's character is deconstructed through Deconstruction's reading. To support the arguments based on the research question, this subchapter reveals the depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity in the novel and how the depiction deconstructs Shirin's Islamic identity. Then, its result is discussed by comparing with the previous research findings.

### **Shirin's Islamic Identity Construction**

To identify the Islamic identity that is constructed in Shirin's character, this subchapter reveals the concept of Islamic identity in Shirin's character applied. The concept is based on Lori Peek's category of the Islamic identity development process. According to Lori Peek, there are three category processes in Islamic identity development which are ascribed identity, which comes since was born from parents' belief in Islam; chosen identity, which comes in young adulthood choices of religious activity; and declared identity, which comes from a religious crisis, maintaining the Islamic identity safe by showing positively religious attribute (L. Peek, 2005, p. 223).

A *Very Large Expanse of Sea* was set in the post-9/11 tragedy in which Muslims were being disrespected by American society. The novel depicts Shirin as the first person to tell her life story as a Muslim as a minority. Shirin's environment after a year of the tragedy of 9/11 could be called bad for her because she faced much intolerance and hatred. Therefore, Shirin and her family were constantly moving to seek a place to live in a suitable environment. The story began when she entered a new school. In the new high school, while she was moving to the next class, she was treated as usual: rudely staring, prejudicing of hiding something in her hijab, and shouting to tell her back to where she came from (Mafi, 2018, p. 8). From the story, the depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity is found in two of three categories that are proposed by Lori Peek which are ascribed identity and declared identity.

#### *Ascribed Identity in Shirin's Islamic Identity*

The researcher found that the Islamic identity of Shirin's character is from her parents' belief in Islam. Shirin is being Muslim since she was born. The novel depicted where her parents are from and also got experienced humiliation by society as living in the 9/11 tragedy. It is proven in the passage below of Shirin's monologue in the novel.

My parents were actually pretty great, as far as human beings went. They were proud Iranian immigrants who worked hard, all day, to make my life—and my brother's life—better. Every move we made was to bring us into a better neighborhood, into a bigger house, into a better school district with better options for our future. They never stopped fighting, my parents .... but my life had been so easy in comparison to my parents' own upbringing (Mafi, 2018, p. 12).

The passage above implies that Shirin, being Muslim is from her parents' belief in Islam described as ascribed identity. Ascribed identity means a person categorized as a Muslim since he was born and the parents raised him as a Muslim (L. Peek, 2005, p. 224). The researcher found Shirin's parents are Muslims because they are Iranian immigrants and also got intolerances and humiliation by society after the 9/11 tragedy, which the context implies worse than Shirin had. The novel depicted Shirin as a Muslim as an ascribed identity because she is thought to fasting on Ramadan by her parents, which are shown that they spent a month of Ramadan, and Shirin loved it.

Ramadan was, honest to goodness, my favorite month of the year,... Most people weren't big fans of fasting for thirty days—each day from sunrise to sunset—but I loved it.. It gave me a sharpness of heart and mind; I experienced clarity then as I rarely did during the rest of the year... After surviving a month of serious focus and self-discipline, I felt like I could overcome anything (Mafi, 2018, p. 188).

The novel shows Shirin's family fasting in Ramadan which is from the parents to do so. Therefore, the Islamic identity of Shirin's Character is ascribed identity, which is from her Muslim family. Fasting in Ramadan is Islamic obedience for Muslims as it is one of Islam's five pillars. Under Quran Surah al-Baqarah verse 183, Allah said that fasting is required for Muslims conducted, so that Muslims are more pious to Allah. The obligation for fasting here means that at certain times in the month of Ramadan was ordered by Allah to the former Muslims (Abbas & Afifi, 2020, p. 22).

#### *Declared Identity in Shirin's Islamic Identity*

The Islamic identity embedded in Shirin's character appears through the religious crisis experiences, the 9/11 tragedy. The novel depicts Shirin living in a Muslim minority country where Islam's oppression occurred. Shirin got the oppression because she maintained her Muslim identity by wearing a hijab. Here, the category of Shirin's identity is declared identity. Lori states that Islamic identity development as a declared identity means developing an Islamic identity affected by an incident of a religious crisis (L. Peek, 2005, p. 230). The data below reflects that she experienced the religious crisis of the 9/11 tragedy but kept her Islamic identity and maintained it against hatred by wearing a hijab. The data is taken from the monologue of Shirin's character and the dialogue between Shirin and Amna.

it felt good—and because it made me feel less vulnerable in general, like I wore a kind of armor every day. It was a personal preference (Mafi, 2018, p. 47).

“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. 265)”

The identification of Shirin's Islamic identity here is relevant with the concept saying that religious identity is constructed because of Muslims maintaining their identity in a Muslim minority country or even amid Islam being oppressed (Duderija & Rane, 2019, p. 65). Shirin maintains her Muslim identity by keeping wearing a hijab, a garment of Muslims' attribute appearance. According to Sheen et al., wearing a hijab represents a person's identification as a Muslim, especially women displaying their modesty in enforcing Islamic teachings (2022, p. 2).

Shirin keeping her hijab is portrayed in Chapter 5, Page 47, and Chapter 33, Page 265. The context of Chapter 5 shows her hijab as the armor protecting her. She also said that hijab is a personal desire that a woman can wear whatever she wants. She chose it because she felt comfortable and secure. In Chapter 33, Page 265, that Shirin kept her hijab became the response to the bullies. As we understood, Shirin got insults for wearing a hijab. Thus, she kept wearing it to eliminate the power of bullies. The power of bullies here means that the bullies succeed if Shirin leaves her hijab, but here Shirin keeps wearing it on her head.

The evidence of Shirin keeping her hijab is also in Chapter 1, Chapter 11, and Chapter 21. Those chapters emphasize the hijab was comfortable for Shirin and the hijab was a medium for her privacy as she was in control of managing who could see her hair (Mafi, 2018, p. 90). Even though her father asked her to stop wearing the hijab for good by explaining that Shirin's life would be easier, she stood assuring herself to her father that she was fine by wearing the hijab (Mafi, 2018, p. 172).

Therefore, based on the passage, Shirin has maintained her Muslim identity by wearing her hijab even though many people insult her and ask her to leave her hijab. This novel depicts Shirin adhering to Islamic teaching as Allah (God) ordered in the Quran Surah an-Nur verse 31 and the Quran Surah al-Ahzab verse 59. The verses state Allah asks Rasulullah (PBUH) to convey Muslim women to wear the hijab covering their chest and entire body in front of the public, except for their husband and their family, in order to protect them from harm (Yunianti, 2022, p. 1). Shirin believes in keeping wearing the hijab to protect herself from the bullies of the effect 9/11 tragedy. Wang states that religious identity is formed based on a person's principle of religion and realizes those viewpoints by maintaining them through the experience of religion (Henera et al., 2017, p. 7). As a result, Shirin's willingness to wear the hijab shows her adherence and obligation as a Muslim to Allah (God), as her religious experience constructed her Islamic identity in herself.

In the category of declared identity, Peek's research also states that the 9/11 tragedy made Muslims want to keep their identity safe in front of the people by showing the perception of Islam which is not as they thought: terrorism and violence (L. Peek, 2005, p. 232). In Shirin's case, she keeps wearing a hijab, maintaining her Muslim identity, and keeping it safe by doing activities like other common American teenagers, implying she is not different from others. It is proven by her dialogue with another teenager in accepting differences and joining the talent show like other students.

The first evidence is when Shirin made conversation with her break-dance mate, Bijan.

“Oh—don't worry,” he said quickly. “I'm like eighty percent gay.” “That's nice,” I said, irritated, “but this isn't about you.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 16)

“Yeah, and let's keep it that way, okay? I'm not interested in having that conversation right now.” “Okay.” “Maybe, like, on my deathbed.” “Whatever you want,” I said, and shrugged. “Your eighty percent is safe with me.” (Mafi, 2018, p. 126)

The conversation between Bijan and Shirin implies Shirin's responding to the differences. The difference here is being gay, which Islam forbids. Islam forbids gay because it is an act that is heinous and goes beyond the boundaries of human nature (Nasution et al., 2019, p. 148). In Shirin's response, she accepted the difference and became friendly with Bijan and she kept the secret safe. Here, she acts like she does other teenagers in America who accept gay even in Islam forbids it.

The second piece of evidence is when she confidently joins the talent show, as other students do. After performing at a talent show, finally, she got accepted by people around her.

I'd figured out a long time ago how to get As without trying; my secret to success was that I genuinely didn't care. I felt no pressure to perform, so I usually did fine. (Mafi, 2018, p. 55)

Somehow, I wasn't a terrorist anymore. I'd leveled up. They now saw me as some kind of exotic-looking break-dancer. Our performance had deactivated their alarms. I was deemed cool. Safe (Mafi, 2018, p. 276).

The evidence above implies that Shirin maintains wearing a hijab, her Islamic identity, while she performs breakdancing. Here, she keeps her Islamic identity safe by joining a talent show to show her Muslim identity is not included in the terrorist community. It implies Shirin is a Muslim that aimed to show people that Islam is not portrayed such as in negative things terrorism and violence, which, finally; she got accepted by society. Muslims show a positive portrayal where Islam is under oppression. Shirin maintains her Islamic identity by doing activities like other teenagers in America do, implying she is not different from others. She treats people equally by making friends with others and accepting their differences. Likewise, she shows her talent in breakdancing, in a talent show as

other students did, which made her accepted by society. Thus, it implies that Shirin as a Muslim depicted as not as the society thought about Islam: terrorism and violence. In this novel, Shirin is a Muslim who depicted Islam is tolerant and does not support terrorism.

### **Deconstruction of Shirin's Islamic Identity**

The researcher assumes that Shirin's Islamic identity contains an inconsistent implied meaning. The inconsistency is found in the depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity using Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction. Deconstruction is a strategic reading containing incoherent sense in the text's meaning from its structure or the content itself behind the concepts and beliefs inherent in society (Derrida & Spivak, 2016; Sen, 2022, p. 59). The depiction of Shirin's Islamic identity is based on the two concepts of Lori Peek's Islamic identity development process, which are ascribed identity and declared identity. This subchapter focused on the declared identity of Shirin's Islamic identity, which reveals how she maintains her Islamic identity, keeping it safe by doing activities like other common American teenagers. Shirin's Islamic identity is disturbed by her behaving like a typical teenager in America, implying she does not differ from the majority that are non-Muslims. The researcher used the undecidability approach in deconstruction to reveal the inconsistency of Shirin's Islamic identity. The approach aims to reveal the meaning of the text containing contradictory meanings (Satria et al., 2022, p. 224). As deconstruction is a reading strategy, the undecidability approach attempts to find the interpretation of a specific context in the novel through multiple readings. Multiple readings mean interpreting a text in two stages. The first stage of reading includes the regular interpretation of the object or text, then the second stage, using deconstruction, focuses on the same object resulting in multiple meanings causing the undecidability of the text (Parker, 2020, p. 118). The first stage reading of the declared identity in Shirin's Islamic identity construction proposed by Lori Peek has been identified in the previous subchapter. Shirin maintained her Muslim identity by wearing her hijab even though many people insult her and ask her to leave her hijab. In Peek's research, the identity construction of declared identity category is included when someone is in a crisis circumstance, such as a Muslim being rejected by society after the 9/11 tragedy, and he keeps his identity by positively showing their identity (L. Peek, 2005, p. 230). In Shirin's case, she shows she is Muslim and not as they thought: terrorism and violence, by behaving like a typical teenager in America where the majority are non-Muslims, she accepted the differences and joined the talent show performance.

From the way Shirin showed her declared Islamic identity, the researcher finds the discrepancy in her Islamic identity through the second stage reading by the undecidability approach. This discrepancy shows the obscurity of her adhering to Islamic teaching, proven in the data below. Meanwhile, the category of Islamic identity construction by Lori Peek as chosen identity argues that the Islamic identity of a person can be found in how he reflects his belief in religious activity (L. Peek, 2005, p. 226). In Shirin's case, as she shows her declared identity being a Muslim that does not differ from others, a common American teenager, she neglects Islamic teachings which produce she does not perform a fully religious activity in her daily life.

There was nothing about the idea of kissing Ocean that felt wrong to me (Mafi, 2018, p. 141).

"Please," he whispered. "Let's just be together. Hang out. I want to spend more time with you." I gave in (Mafi, 2018, p. 182).

He stepped, somehow, even closer to me. He wrapped his arms around my waist and just held me there, like that, for a moment (Mafi, 2018, p. 217).

We broke apart, fighting to breathe, holding on to each other .... He was gripping my body like he'd never let me go, like he was hanging on for dear life (Mafi, 2018, p. 293).



The selected sentences describe the scene of Shirin and Ocean's relationship. The first selected sentence placed on Page 141 implies that Shirin's thought about having an intimate physical touch relationship was not wrong. Shirin's thought is led by doubting her feeling for Ocean because of having accidental touch while they are in the class. Shirin's thought leads to the inconsistent meaning of her Muslim identity, which makes Shirin's Islamic identity disturbed.

In the following selected sentences in the data above on Page 182, Shirin and Ocean finally get together to build a relationship. That is a conversation between Shirin and Ocean; Shirin had many considerations thinking of being together with Ocean. Then, Ocean insists that Shirin be together, and Shirin follows her heart, agreeing to have a relationship with her. Likewise, the following sentence on Page 217 shows the scene of Ocean and Shirin being together and being close to each other while they are in Shirin's bedroom after Ocean had dinner with Shirin's family. In the same way, Shirin and Ocean's relationship is more intimate, as reflected in the last selected sentence, Page 293, after they separated because of the horrible moment the public knew their relationship. They hugged and kissed as if they could never be separated again and lived that moment a very romantic way. Shirin is very emotional about everything that happens in their relationship, which finally has subsided. Those sentences in the data above assured Shirin disturbed her Muslim identity in which she despises Islamic teachings and rules for building a relationship with Ocean and depicting it romantically in the novel.

The intimate romance between Ocean and Shirin also happens on Page 163 and Page 194, depicting their activity when being together. Here, Shirin is not concerned about Islamic teaching that she must be obligated to. These relationship substances are forbidden in Islam to conduct by a couple before marriage. As stated in the *Quran Surah al-Isra* verse 32, Allah warns his servant, Muslims, not to approach adultery with the consequence of entering a destructive path that explains it is a despicable deed. Adultery means sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not legible or unmarried. The Surah said the approach to adultery is the thing oncoming to adultery, such as seducing, closing to each other, touching, and kissing (Wiranto & Akib, 2022, p. 36).

Islam allows the things mentioned above to be done only by a couple already in a marriage bond. Through marriage, the consequences of entering a lousy path can be avoided by being two-two in the room with the opposite sex except for their wife or husband (Ilham et al., 2022, p. 604). Here, Shirin and Ocean were not married, and they did the forbidden thing explained above in Islam. Besides the analysis of the relationship between Shirin and Ocean, this substance of the couple's relationship is a new point of view from the previous research conducted by Qoonita Radiya. The previous research discussed the moral values in Shirin and Ocean's relationship against the effect of the post-9/11 tragedy revealing respect and kindness to each other and bravely expressing the self-truly differing from anyone (Radiya, 2019, p. 62). The new point of view from the moral value perspective is that this analysis is based on the Islamic perspective analyzing the substances of the relationship between Shirin and Ocean. This analysis shows that Shirin and Ocean's relationship bypassed Islamic teachings and made Shirin's Islamic identity disturbed. The subsequent evidence below interprets Shirin did not conduct morning and afternoon prayers that Muslims were obligated to.

If we'd done our morning prayers and Navid and I would spoon cereal into our mouths and lie that we had, and my mom would roll her eyes and tell us to make sure we at least did our afternoon prayers, and we'd lie that we would, and my mom would sigh, heavily, and then Navid would leave for school (Mafi, 2018, p. 286).

It shows Shirin and her brother, Navid, prevaricated they had prayed when her mother asked them whether they had prayed. The morning and afternoon prayer here includes the five obligatory prayers called Salat. Salat is one of Islam's five pillars, meaning it must

be conducted no matter the circumstances (Mujab & Shabir, 2022, p. 98). The five obligatory prayers mean Muslims must do Salat five times a day. The perform five times Salat is at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and after dark, termed as *Fajr*, *Zuhur*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, and *Isha'* prayer (Chamsi-Pasha & Chamsi-Pasha, 2021, p. 93). This case is under the Quran Surah an-Nisa verse 103, and Surah Ar-Rum verses 17-18. Those verses interpret Allah stating that Salat is an obligation for Muslims or believers to do in the evening, dawn, until the afternoon to praise Allah for belonging to everything in the heavens and the earth (Mujab & Shabir, 2022, p. 99). However, Shirin is a Muslim who had maintained her Muslim identity but lied about performing Salat. She does not conduct morning prayer, *Fajr*, afternoon prayer, or *Asr*, as her mother asked. It implies Shirin disturbed her Muslim identity by leaving one of the five pillars of Islam, a Muslim obligation.

The second stage reading implies Shirin is a Muslim showing as being a common American teenager where the majority are non-Muslims, implying she was like others, made her despite Islamic rules in her activity. The implied meaning is based on the declared identity in the construction of Shirin's Islamic identity, which produces the deconstruction. The deconstruction reveals that from how Shirin shows Islamic identity positively by behaving like a typical common teenager in America, Shirin disturbed her Muslim identity by doing Islam's forbidden thing, which is in contrast with what Lori Peek assumed in chosen identity. Chosen identity is the Islamic identity of a person is on how reflecting his beliefs in religious activity (L. Peek, 2005, p. 226).

## CONCLUSION

*A Very Large Expanse of Sea* began when Shirin entered a new school where she got so much hatred and intolerance that she felt habitual to people who hate Muslims. The researcher identifies that the novel's story is inconsistent, particularly in Shirin's identity as a Muslim. The researcher found Shirin's Islamic identity is constructed through the development process proposed by Lori Peek, which is ascribed and declared identity. Shirin's Islamic identity is ascribed identity is from her parents, who raised her as a Muslim. Shirin's Islamic identity in declared identity is when she is against hatred by maintaining her Islamic identity by wearing hijab and showing her Islamic identity is safe for people for being as not as they thought: terrorism and violence. The positive Islam that Shirin shared is when her activities are not different from American teenagers by accepting differences, even Islam forbids.

However, there are inconsistencies in Shirin's Islamic identity that the researcher has identified by employing Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction. Shirin kept wearing a hijab against the bullies and keeping it safe by being a common American teenager to eliminate the thinking of Islam as terrorism and violence. She does things Islam that forbids through the Quran: having an intimate romance before marriage bound with Ocean and lying about conducting prayer in which they did not perform the obligatory Islamic prayer. This case means Shirin has disturbed her Muslim identity because she violates Islamic rules and neglects Islamic teachings. Shirin unconsciously deconstructs her Islamic identity by being a common American teenager.

For better analysis, the researcher recommends other interested researchers to analyze Shirin's character using the relevant literary criticism theory. The analysis could be from a psychological perspective, cultural perspective, or social perspective focused on Shirin neglecting Islamic teaching.

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