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Islamic Identity Crisis in White Teeth (2000) by Zadie Smith

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# *Dedication*

*To My Family: my parents, my siblings and my  
little nephew.*

*To all my friends who accompanied me through this  
journey.*

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## **Abstract**

The diversity of cultures existing in the world had created a dynamic society which is known as a multicultural society. It had engulfed different cultures within in one society. However, the development of multicultural society was not sufficient to the harmony of society, in such a manner, intercultural society was introduced to the mass. The Muslims living in those societies experienced identity loss and deconstruction due unsuitable governmental policies and subjective representation against Islam. In this context, *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith explores how Muslims immigrants are influenced by the nature of these multicultural and intercultural societies and their policies. The methodology used in this work is mainly descriptive and analytical concentrating on the novel at hand and the document relating the theme of study. The work hereby is composed of three chapters, whereby the first overviews both multicultural, intercultural societies, and the discussion of identity; and second chapter, reveals how Islam originated in Britain and how it is represented to the British population and the world, discussing as well the concepts of multi-faith and freedom and draw link between integration and assimilation and their effect upon Islamic identity construction; in third chapter, the work aimed in analyzing Muslims characters in the novel and how they constructed their identity in these societies. In the end, the analysis has revealed that the adopted policies and the existence do affect in the construction of Islamic identity on two folds, one is direct impact where they are supposed to dissolve inside a melting pot, and the other is indirect influence where it causes either for mental or physical discrimination that led the characters to abandon their identity and compromise it for the sake of existence in the societies. Based on the research's result, the dissertation conclude that the multicultural novel *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith is an attempt to denounce the idea of third place and raise an awareness on the struggle immigrants face every day in these societies with their policies.

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
General Introduction.....	1
I. Chapter One: Multiculturalism, Intercultural, and Identity, Creation and Influence.....	4
Introduction.....	5
1. Multiculturalism.....	5
1.1 Definition of Multiculturalism.....	5
1.2 The Shortcomings of Multiculturalism.....	6
2. Intercultural Society.....	8
2.1 Definition of Intercultural Society.....	8
2.2 Discussion Aspects of Intercultural Society.....	9
3. Identity.....	10
3.1 Definition of Identity.....	11
Conclusion.....	12
II. Chapter Two: Islamic Identity Crisis.....	13
Introduction.....	14
1. Islam in Britain.....	14
1.1 Origin of Islam in Britain.....	14
1.2 The Representation of Islam in Britain.....	16

1.3 The Paradox of Multi-faith and Freedom in Britain.....	20
2. Strategies Undertaken by Immigrants to be Accepted in Britain....	22
2.1 Assimilation.....	23
2.2 Integration.....	24
2.3 Impact of Assimilation and Integration on Individuals.....	26
Conclusion.....	28
III. Chapter Three: Islamic Identity Crisis in White Teeth.....	30
Introduction.....	31
1. Multiculturalism.....	31
1.1 History.....	31
1.2 Compromising Identity.....	32
1.3 Assimilation and Integration.....	34
2. Intercultural Society.....	35
2.1 Hybrid Generation.....	35
2.2 Adapting Identity.....	36
2.3 Belonging Nowhere.....	37
3. Jihad and Dissolution.....	38
3.1 Discrimination and Refuge.....	38
3.2 Jihad.....	39
3.3 Dissolution.....	40
Conclusion.....	42
General Conclusion.....	44
Works Cited List.....	46

## **General Introduction**

The existence of different cultures in one society does contribute to create a dynamic Multicultural society. This latter proves to be a unique society different from any other ordinary society. Otherwise said, the different cultures which exist within one society, do create instability and lead policymakers to issue specific set of policies in order to bring harmony in their society. However, these policies do not only promote harmony solely, they also caused other unwanted result as the loss of identity. In this view of things, the essence multiculturalism and its policies became rather a hindrance to the development of the society leading the government to search more appropriate society namely the intercultural one.

In addendum, the intercultural society is nearly similar to multicultural one, however, while the former promotes the interaction between cultures, the latter failed to reach it. This set of policies required sensitivity and at the same time, it promotes compromising identity. With this in mind, intercultural society still causes not only to harmony, but to loss of identity.

In the novel under scrutiny, namely *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, a discussion about the construction of identity within the society of multicultural is made. The novel itself, gives a dimension of how Muslims immigrants in Britain seek to construct their identity with the challenges presented by the society and governmental policies. Interestingly enough, Smith explores how Muslims are influenced by those societies and their policies.

Many reasons do motivate my analysis of the selected novel. One of them is the curiosity to unveil the great influence implemented by both intercultural and

multicultural societies upon the construction of the identity of immigrants and especially Muslims immigrants. This curiosity is followed with the desire to understand how could fiction bring to life the authentic discussions between the secularist and Muslims views and how they would affect each other; knowingly or unknowingly. In this sense, the aim of this dissertation is to analyze how Smith's *White Teeth* portrays the influence of intercultural and multicultural societies and their policies upon the construction of Islamic identity.

In order to reach the purpose of my research, I guided my work with a number of questions notably:

- How is Islam represented in the context of multicultural and intercultural societies?
- How could strategies theorized to bring harmony and stability among society's member create a loss of identity?
- How could the existence of multiple cultures in one society provoke the loss of Islamic identity?

Whilst the questions need a full research, specific hypotheses are suggested. First, we have to understand that all religions are exposed to representation and Islam might be the most victimized of religions. This representation of Islam is restricted under the values of secularist views of British society, however, the diversity existing that drew to the creation of multicultural and then intercultural societies, still brings a challenge to how Islam is actually represented. Second, strategies that should lead to a stable community resulted to a compromised one, where members of society compromised to bring harmony and peace. Finally, the existence of many cultures at the same time in the same place led to Muslims to compromise their Islamic identity and keep distance

between different cultures. However, the loss itself is due to the excessive stereotypes and mocked representations.

This dissertation will be divided into three chapters. First one, I will discuss the background and aspect of intercultural, multicultural policies with relation of their influence upon immigrants. Secondly, I will shed light on how Islam originated in Britain and how it is represented. Besides, this chapter will discuss the policies implemented in both societies and how the latter have affected the Islamic identity. Third chapter will deal with the analysis of the Muslims characters in *White Teeth* and how Multicultural and intercultural and their policies influenced the construction of their identity.

# Chapter One

Multiculturalism,

Interculturalism, and

Identity: Creation and

Influence

## **Introduction**

The world is highly diverse. There might be no country in the world with no degree of diversity in it. As Sen (2006) said: “the world is increasingly divided between religions (or ‘cultures’ or ‘civilizations’)” (qtd. in Antonsich 8). Moreover, this diversity of cultures created what is termed with Multicultural society. However, as the Canadian lawyer Aylet Shachar (2001) explained understanding it: “requires that we recognize that we are dealing with a highly dynamic system of inter-related interactions occurring between the group, the state, and the individual” (qtd. in Grillo 27). In such a manner, we have to recognize the difference between multicultural and multiculturalism which is a set of policies decided to obtain harmony in this society. But, any policy has its shortcomings, and multiculturalism is no different. Due to its shortcomings, intercultural society was created. Still, there are some aspects of it that were debated such as interaction, the degree of sensitiveness implemented in communication, and the method to deal with history conflict. Besides, these cultural interactions play a major role in the construction of identity. Since identity is the self-reflection of individuals, but it is also the image of how others perceive one. In short, the multicultural and intercultural societies shape one’s identity.

### **1. Multiculturalism**

#### **1.1 Definition of Multiculturalism**

After the world war two, Britain needed workforce. Through this need, a call was made toward the colonies of the old empire to cross distance and to join their mother home Britain. As a result, many cultures existed together. However, soon later the word multicultural evolved to be multiculturalism, and confused researchers and policy

makers. The Eminent Persons Report for the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2011) recognized this confusion:

We are of course well aware of this debate, but find that the term ‘multiculturalism’ is used in so many different ways, meaning different things to different people and in different countries...that in the end it confuses more than it clarifies. (qtd. in Barrett 6)

It is rather a realization that multiculturalism does not mean the existence of different cultures in the same society, but rather, they are the policies and strategies that were adapted by the government to deal with the diversity in this society (Hall 2000). That is why; I find that the term co-existence has another meaning that could give an optimistic connotation of a peaceful interactional existence between them, but this cannot be necessarily true. Therefore, the existence can be in separate ways, thus, it should be given another definition than the ones attributed to it.

## **1.2 The shortcomings of Multiculturalism**

These shortcomings can represent the factors that led to the transition to another narrative which is intercultural society. However, the political leaders during the era of multicultural like Blair and Cameron were working for the sake of their harmonized society with the existence of diversity. In such manner, we can see Blair admitting multiculturalism when he said: “Blood alone does not define our national identity . . . . It is precisely this rich mix that has made all of us what we are today” (qtd. in Jameson 204). Hence, he asked for more creative, tolerant, and outward-looking nation. However, his call was not without obstacles.

First, the distinction which was made between the co-existence and existence earlier exposes to us the first shortcoming of multiculturalism which is separateness. This shortcoming is well expressed by Ranjit Sondhi (2009) “Such multicultural policies led, albeit unwittingly, to the creation of culturally and spatially distinct communities... there was everything to be gained from difference and non-mixing” (qtd. in Barrett 7). This means that the policies which were adapted led to different cultural communities to have separate lives without interaction. He further explains it: “As a result, far from being a system that spoke to the whole of society, multiculturalism spoke only to each specific minority in isolation” (7). This situation led to another occurring problem which is losing interaction between minorities and majority “This served to maintain the exoticism and essentialism of minority cultures hindering a two way conversation with the majority culture” (7). In short, we can say that multicultural promoted unwillingly to separation between cultures.

Second, multiculturalists focused on race as an essential form of culture, but this was lacking. This focus led to neglect the culture itself. Barrett (2013) argued that: “interculturalism is constructed around the multi-faceted nature of ‘difference’, whereas, multiculturalism was founded – and remained rooted – on the outmoded concept of ‘race’” (14). In the end, it created racism. Lastly, while tolerance should be represented as an advantages of multiculturalism, in this chapter it represented here as a form of disadvantage. The definition of tolerance that it is offered here is of Santos and Nunes (2003): “‘tolerance’ does not require active involvement with ‘others’ and reinforces the sense of superiority of whom speaks from a self-appointed place of universality” (qtd. in Brasil and Cabecinhas 8). In this sense, tolerance became an act of benevolence and kindness and only the strong express it to the weak if the strong wanted to. Hage before him in (2000) shared this elaboration when he said: “Tolerance

always presupposes a control over what is tolerated” (qtd. in Antonsich 1). At the same time, tolerance does not mean, in all senses, acceptance of the other; it might, however, be a primitive phase that does not obligatory evolve. Thus, tolerance is a hindrance to the harmony of cultures. In conclusion, multiculturalism should not turn to an unchangeable production, but to continuous, ever-evolving policies which protect harmony in the societies.

## **2. Intercultural society**

### **2.1 Definition of intercultural society:**

Intercultural society does not differ completely from multicultural one with its distinction of offering a platform of interaction between individuals of different cultures. However, intercultural is still in a nurtured phases. Wood, Landry, and Bloomfield (2006) argued that for the full development of interculturalism “requires openness as a prerequisite and, while openness in itself is not the guarantee of interculturalism, it provides the setting for interculturalism to develop” (qtd. in James 14). Thus, dialogue and openness in interaction are essential for successful intercultural society.

Unlike multiculturalism that was based upon the difference in race and skin color, intercultural recognized difference within cultures. This difference is valued through communicative process of performing identity. Thus, communication is a key element; that is why; there is intercultural communication competence which is developed in order to have a healthy communication with regard to different cultures. In this regard, Gudykunst et al (1996) paraphrased Kim, Sharkey and Singalis (1994): “found that using interdependent self construals is associated with concern for others’ feelings, and using independent self construals is associated with a concern for clarity in

conversations” (Gudykunst et al, 518). In my opinion, both lead to one consequence, which is understandable conversation of both parties. In conclusion, intercultural society emphasizes on interaction and dialogue. This society is on-going process of development in order to create one society with different cultures that interact together with no reason of categorization and prejudice.

## **2.2 Discussion Aspects of Intercultural Society**

First, the eternal conflict that we can observe in intercultural society is history which as W. Stephan (1999) defines as: “the single most important seedbed of prejudice” (qtd. in Ting-Toomey 7). So, it is history that can cause a war zone between cultures which can be treated through a sincere interaction to find a middle ground between them. Arruda (2002) argues this estrangement of the other: “surprises more to the extent that, in fact, the other is not so different, but a similar one that we cannot allocate” (qtd. in Brasil and Cabecinhas 9). Therefore, history can be a hindrance to intercultural society without a healthy interaction. In addition, to be intercultural sensitive is to be willing to communicate intercultural. As Chen and Starosta explain it: “an individual’s ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication” (qtd. in Tong and Chen 151). At the same time, Rahim (1988) discussed the qualities of sensitive persons who are ready to acknowledge that they are: “may be wrong or the issue is much more important to the other party,” that is why they are willing to “give up something with the hope of getting something in exchange from the other party when needed” (156). This method of giving up needs should require two main aspects: one is that it must not be essential to the identification of the person, and second is that it should be a two-way sacrifice.

In summary, the success of intercultural society relies on how individuals can debate those aspects mentioned beforehand. While, those were seemingly essential for the full development of this society, we can through excessive research find other aspects to debate. Without forgetting the real essence of intercultural which is to people to “feel free to act as human beings, without being categorized in terms of diversity by whatever administration or policy that encapsulates them” (Zabata-Barrero 3).

### **3. Identity**

#### **3.1 Definition of identity**

Identity is a feeling felt by person. So, it is the sense of belonging to a specific social group, a culture, or even a nation. Ting-Toomey (1999) defines identity as: “the reflective self-conception or self-image that we each derive from our cultural, ethnic, and gender socialization processes. It is acquired via our interaction with others in particular situations” (qtd. in Huang 1). This definition of Ting-Toomey gives a summarized reflection of identity and how it is possessed.

Needless to say that identity cannot be innate knowledge, but something that realized through time and experience. Based on Ting-Toomey previous definition, it leads us to say that the question of ‘who we are’ or ‘who I am’ is shaped by our experiences in life and our legacy that is linked to our culture. However, this process of shaping identity is on-going process that can be shaped and re-shaped through time and place and even situations. That is why; identity is a reflection and a discovery of self.

Furthermore, to understand clearly how we identify ourselves we have to reflect on how Carbaugh (1996) explained the usage of identity by individuals: “[identity can be]... invoked, used, interpreted with, displayed, performed, and so on in particular

social scenes” (qtd. in Jameson 224). This gives us an insight that identity is a supple concept which is relative to one’s own self. However, at the same time, it is rather a subject to change and exposed to interpretation which might not be correct. In this way, we can relate identity to how our thinking and the style we live personally and socially, originated from one particular culture or to multiple, related to one nation or many. This case leads us to understand identity as a self-definition. Henceforth, identity is what one individual define oneself accordingly to the influence of the society, cultures or the relation to nation where they live, and this influence can be known, and felt, or unknown, and unrealized by them. In conclusion, identity is a self-reflection that can be realized only through full understanding of personal self and the environment surrounding the individual. It is endless by time, unlimited by place, the social and individual’s manners and generational evolution.

## **Conclusion**

Multicultural and intercultural societies are faces to the same coin with simple distinct features. These features, however, should have promoted to harmony caused to questioning of identity. In this work, both societies will be under the radar to criticize their influence upon the identity of Muslims immigrants. The next chapters will draw attention to us how these both societies caused for the creation of policies and representations that promoted Islamophobia and the deconstruction of Islamic identity. Since identity is the self-discovery, but it is also the self-reflective and this discovery and reflection can be affected by how others perceive one.

# Chapter Two

## Islamic Identity Crisis

## **Introduction**

Islamic identity crisis resurfaced initially due to the globalization and its effects, however, it can, also, be the main result of Islamic minority living in non-Muslims majority. The origin of Islam in Britain dated back in 1960s and 1970s and has now reached 4.6 percent of its population. However gradual the increase of Muslims was in Europe and Britain, it reopened as Savage argues: “debates on several issues: the place of religion in public life, social tolerance in Europe, secularism as the only path to modernity, and Europe’s very identity” (qtd. in Poole 30). This presence raised the debate about how Islam is represented whether objectively or subjectively, and how it is mostly stereotyped thus spreading Islamophobia. Besides, it questioned the concept of multi-faith and freedom in the context of secularism where Islam is specifically neglected and marginalized. Moreover, for the sense of including immigrants, the government worked on the processes of assimilation and integration which deals with creating a relationship between immigrants and natives, however, this relationship was complex and mostly led to creating a melting pot that encouraged the creation of clones rather than humans. These two policies led to Muslims, especially, to question their religion and emulate to the mainstream society.

### **1. Islam in Britain**

#### **1.1 Origin of Islam in Britain**

The aftermath of World War two was devastating to Britain, which led them to call for help from its own colonies; or rather its former colonies. The purpose of this call was to create the workforce which was lost during the war. As a result, Britain was

flooded with foreigners from different countries. Few colonies of the kingdom claimed Islam to be the dominating belief. Thus, Islam was introduced to Britain again through immigration and not through conquest and Imperial purpose.

Immigration influx started with the arrival of foreigners from the commonwealth countries mainly Caribbean and South Asia. The Caribbean started arriving to Britain during 1940s and later during the 1950s; immigrants from Pakistan and India started to come to Britain (Indians in Britain). However, this arrival did not reach to its peak till the late 1960s and early 1970s due to the changes of immigration and nationality acts that led to family settlement rather than labor immigration, and then it declined later (Indian in Britain). As a consequence, Britain became the most heterogeneous, as The Guardian put it in 21 January 2005: “London’s Muslim population of 607,083 people is probably the most diverse anywhere in the world, besides Mecca” (qtd. in Vertovec 12). This heterogeneity is a result of diverse countries of origin of people arriving to Britain.

Regardless of this diversity and increase in the number of immigrant Muslims in Britain, immigrants reached to a number of 1.6 million Muslims in Britain making up 2.7 percent of the whole population as recorded in the Office of National Statistic in 2003 (Indian in Britain). With this in mind, GLA<sup>1</sup> in 2003 declared that the India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran during the year 2001 had the ranks of 1, 3, 6, and 25 (in order) in the top countries of birth of immigrants in Britain. While there are other 21 countries of birth, which are the source of immigrants (Centre on Migration). In conclusion, the number of Muslims in Britain, as recorded in census in 2011, has increased to be 2.7 million Muslims about 4.8 percent of the population of Britain

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<sup>1</sup> GLA is an abbreviation to Great London Authority or called as well city hall, its main duty is administering locally in London. It is led by the Mayor of London.

(British Muslims in Numbers). However, this increase of number is not associated with the approval of native British to Muslims or Islam in general.

## **1.2 The representation of Islam in Britain**

Islam as an ideal religion played a significant role in the development of many other civilizations, such as Abbasid Caliphate, Ottoman, Al-Andalus and many others. However, every religion is a victim to representation and Islam may be the most victimized of religions. In that sense, Islam is represented by the believers and non-believers of it; while this representation is apparent in the practices and behaviors of the former, the latter is apparent in the ways they portray it through media and their intellectual research papers and books. To such realization, we can observe that representation of Islam in Britain is filled with paradoxical intentions.

First major representative of Islam is the Media. As Stiranti (2011) explains the great influence of Media upon citizens:

Postmodernism describes the emergence of a society in which the mass media and popular culture are the most important and powerful institutions, and control and shape all other types of social relationships. They dominate our sense of reality, defining the world and us. (qtd. in Frenk 27).

This definition of the world brings us to reality that our judgments are either led or misled by media. This force is not an objective; it is rather subjective one, as Angela Philips (2008) explained: “[media is a] means by which the interest groups of the elite jockey for power.” And only they can be represented, she adds: “in representing only those interests that are already deemed ‘significant’ it further confirms and re-establishes their significance” (qtd. in Poole 25). Since this representation favors the strongest in a community that dethroned

religion and established secularism as the mainstream system of command, they will obviously deform Islam. Especially that they consider Islam as “an aggressive, conservative force with values at odds with liberal secular democracy” (Grillo 2). In addition, the media in Britain was purposely in a quest of demolishing the good image of Islam and at the same time spread Islamophobia in the community. In this sense, Ansari claims in his report (2002) that “The media in Britain continues to reinforce Islamophobic attitudes in the majority community” (24). In the same fashion, Allen C (2001) brings to light that: “the media’s portrayal and representation of Islam has been one of the most prevalent, virulent and socially significant sources of Islamophobia” (24). There is no doubt that the media’s influence over their audience shapes their attitude toward a particular group. Furthermore, the media can never be an innocent source of representation. To illustrate, the 1997 Runnymed Report on Islamophobia explained the stereotyping Muslim and Islam are exposed to in the media with an example of headlines in *The People*: “slaughtering goats, burning books, mutilating teenagers ... and still they want me to respect the Muslim ways?” (24). Similarly, in a survey of the coverage of Islam and Muslims in the British media before 11 September 2001, four stereotypes rose which are “intolerant”, “misogynistic”, “violent” or “cruel”, and “strange” or “different” (24). These main stereotypes and images defined the attitudes of citizen toward Islam.

Moreover, after 9/11 the media did not stop its deforming approach into representing Islam. The *Daily Telegraph* for example put a great effort to emphasize that Islam promote violence and that Muslims were happy for the demolish of the Two Towers: “A religion that sanctions violence” it also claimed that: “many Muslims rejoiced at the tragic loss of American lives” (25). These depictions of Islam in media do not only influence the non-Muslims attitude toward Muslims, but it causes the

questioning of Islamic identity among Muslims community. As an illustration, Sajidah Choudhury, a councilor and the Director of the Slough Race Equality Council, said:

I certainly have felt a much greater slant against Muslims from the media... It takes a great deal of energy to remain objective and fair when the average Muslim can only see through the media what the...West... is doing to impoverished nations” (25).

In short, the media’s influence upon people can never be measured, for it is the sole judge of how one community is behaving and how others perceive it.

Third kind of representation can be found in the research papers and books that could capture the image of Islam on different perspectives. After the 9/11 there was a great attack toward Muslims and Islam, but some authors took into their role to redefine Islam and explore the misery Muslims suffered during that time, one of them was Laila Halaby author of *Once in Promised Land* (2008) who portrays the sudden change of Muslims family due to the attack on Trade Centre Towers, and how they turned from innocent into criminal without committing any. In contrast, there are other authors who sustained the image of violent Muslims in their works. John Updike in his novel *Terrorist* (2006) misquote or uses mistranslations in order to depict a violent backward image of Islam, in this context, Marandi and Tari point out that:

Updike’s use of this infamous translation<sup>2</sup>—and the extent to which he relies on Western sources for his materials about Islam and the fact that he does not quote one single Muslim source on the interpretation of the Qur’an, or Hadith, and Shari’ah—suggests that he may have knowingly misrepresented the reality of Islamic thoughts and teachings. Considering the representation of the Qur’an,

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<sup>2</sup> The infamous translation is of N. J. Dawood which was published by the Penguin Classic in 1956.

Updike takes two approaches for twisting its reality. He uses both the error of translation through using the distorted translations as well as selectivity with extensive use of abrupt quotes, random and incomplete verses. In this way, he often selects verses and chapters of the Qur'an based on his denigrating purposes and without contextualization. (qtd. in Bounar 66)

This misquoting is due to the fact that Muslims and the world do not read Quran, so, it is simple to use the verses which support your arguments. It is a reason enough to understand the simplicity of misrepresenting Islam as long as the community does not really put any effort to find different perspectives than the ones offered. In addendum, few events hosted some dialogues and debates to bridge points of conflict between Islam and the West, however, these events were never sincere in their quest; as Koningsveld (2015) argues that “the search for points of conflict is not carried out in order to understand the behavior of Muslims but mainly in order to stress differences and distinctiveness, implicitly emphasizing the superiority of the Western Culture” (qtd. in Bounar 44). To conclude, though this kind of representation was not so popular among people, it invoked other representations such as Media and filmmaking.

Despite these misrepresentations, there were others which balanced between the authentic Islam, and the one that promoted violence. Indeed, we have to draw a line between extremism and Islam. As The Sun emphasized after the attack on Trade Centre Towers: “Islam is not an evil religion” at the same time, it reminded their readers that the “religion they practice is one of peace and discipline” (qtd. in Frenk 25). No doubt that this spread of words such as “ ‘extremists’, ‘terrorists’, ‘fundamentalists’ and ‘fanatics’ served to perpetuate the view that Muslims and Islam are violent and frighteningly dangerous” (25). As a result, Patrick Sookhdeo (2006) said: “a naïve multiculturalism leads not to mosaic of cultures living in harmony, but to one threatened

by Islamic extremism” (qtd. in Grillo 20). Though he might not come in an objective perspective, especially that he is a spokesman of Christian minority over the world; he actually pointed out to the fact that Islam as a general is not the extreme one. In contrast, David Cameron (2011) stated clearly that: “the ideology of extremism is the problem; Islam emphatically is not” (3). In like manner, The Times wrote: “there is a world of difference between Islam the great religion and Islamism the ideology of submission” (qtd. in Poole 20). All in all, whenever Islam is represented either in media, books, or other sources of representation, its representation becomes subjective and must be under judgment. This increase of misrepresenting is due to the unknown nature of Islam to the West, thus we have to judge the representative of Islam first in order to be fair with the religion.

### **1.3 The paradox of Multi-faith and freedom in Britain**

Freedom means in Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary edition 3: “the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited” and it means also: “a right to act in the way you think you should” (CALD 3, Electronic version). With this in mind, the concept of faith raises as a personal choice, and people would have the ability to choose to embrace the religion they wish. However, can we really claim that the British society promote both freedom and multi-faith? This question is answered through the analysis of conducts of British government and people.

To begin with, the representation of Islam may have put us into the track of rejecting the concept of multi-faith especially that it was hostile one against Islam in particular than the others. However, the government of Britain introduced a different type of schools which were called faith-schools. The introduction aimed to spread the nature of multiplicity and diversity of religions. But this aim backfired on the society,

and some started to question the efficacy of these schools and their impact upon British society and its policies. In this sense, Ralph David Grillo expressed this concern advancing:

Lord Dick Taverne argued that faith schools “promote particular faiths, not Enlightenment values [and] over-emphasise religious identity”. They are “introspective, ghettoised and a nucleus for the fomenting of violence” (Viscount Bridgeman); “agents of social division and social exclusion” (Lord Lucas); “damag[e] social cohesion”. (19)

Again, it was actually the Islamic faith schools that were put into questions; as Patrick Sookhdeo (2006) argued that:

[Faith schools] nurture values that are radically different from those of the prevailing society ... Christian denominational schools as well as Jewish schools continue to play an important role in community cohesion. Whether Islamic schools can fill such a role is highly questionable. Has the time come to say no to Islamic schools, whilst allowing the others to exist, even though this may seem unjust? (20)

This realization is a proof that the concept of multi-faith is cracked against what we call ‘unreasonable fear of unknown’. This fear is the basis of Islamophobia that spread more intolerance and at the same time, exposed the British society to be in fact not multi-faith.

However, the British secularist society had given another opportunity for the Muslims to be part of this multi-faith society. Opportunity is incarnated in the condition of not acting as Muslims. To illustrate, one informant emanate this through saying: “I sometimes feel certain liberals don’t mind you calling yourself Muslim as long as you

don't actually do those things that make you Muslim" (29). In contrast, the MCB<sup>3</sup> rejected the Clark report commenting: "It is not for the state to define the theological boundaries of the Islamic faith and to create an 'approved version of Islam'. Such an aim is contrary to the spirit of our free society..." (22). In regard to the MCB comment, it is obvious that the British government tried to surround Islam with limitations based on the interest of its society even if it had to sacrifice one of their principles which is freedom of religion. As a result, we can distinguish that multi-faith was granted as long as Islam does not interfere, for it, as Casanova argues, "reveals the limits of modern secularists' toleration" (31). In short, the concept of multi-faith can be fulfilled if all religions have equal footing in the society.

In addition, the people in the society decide, through their actions, if it is a multi-faith or not. The Guardian in 2002 published a poll where it indicated that 69 percent of Muslims felt that: "the rest of society does not regard them as an integral part of life in Britain" (qtd. in Ansari 17). This truth can be observed through the discriminating acts against Muslims in particular. Besides, in Britain, even if it is denied, Muslims were never a part of that society even if they were born British. In the light of that claim, Ansari (2002) put clearly in his report: "In many ways, British Muslims –British citizens, refugees or asylum-seekers – are seen as 'outsiders', marginal in their relationships to wider society and as second-class citizens" (17). To conclude, the existence of Islam may have fractured the backbone of multi-faith and free society, but, the real blow was from the government and people who could not tolerate or accept it. All in all, a society that promotes freedom must exert control, and for a successful multi-faith society, tolerance and high regard of the fairness of actions are obligatory.

## **2 Strategies undertaken by immigrant to be accepted in Britain**

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<sup>3</sup> MCB is abbreviation of Muslims Council of Britain.

## 2.1 Assimilation

It might be a policy that was made in order to ease the life of immigrants, or a strategy by immigrants in order to be accepted in the society, either ways, assimilation went through creation, development, and decline.

In addendum, assimilation may be considered as strategy as was suggested by Giddens:

The immigrants' traditions of origin are not erased under pressure from the dominant local tradition, but blend into it to form new cultural patterns. In this way, the culture of a society is enriched by the diverse values and norms introduced to it from the outside, while diversity is also created by the ethnic groups themselves through their adaptation to the social environment in which they find themselves. (qtd. in Kurcewicz 358)

In other words, the creation of a new cultures means that the original culture will be merely a part either essential or not, it is unknown. However, assimilation was to give up things which were seen unnecessary to both majority and minority groups, a question raised: why would the majority give up any of the elements of their identity for the expanse of minority? In short, this strategy is unrealistic. In the same context, Hieronymi (2005) suggested that: “refugees are also those who are willing to sacrifice aspects of their identity linking them to their country, culture, language and community of origin and willing to seek and accept a new identity in their country of asylum”(139,140). It is suggestive through the word “willing” that they have a choice of the matter, however, the fact is that they are giving them one or few limited choices which are either you become one of us, or you are an “outsider”; in other words: “live somewhere else”, and this was clearly stated with Trevor Phillips earlier. In contrast, in

a report was published in 2005 which was chaired by Sir Bernard Crick, in it; there were specific characteristics of Britishness:

To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order. ... So to be British does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost. (qtd. in Meer and Modood 484)

In conclusion, assimilation as either strategy or a policy plays a huge role in the immigrants' lives. So, for a well assimilated society, both policymakers and natives should take into account the fragility of immigrants and asylum seekers in this host country

## **2.2 Integration**

Integration might be different than assimilation, but, it came as a result for the great criticism against assimilation. To put it differently, integration is another process in order to include immigrants in the host community.

Moreover, the function of integration is highly debated. Rinus Pinnex argues that integration is a process which should offer legal/political, and socio/economic, and cultural/religious rights all included in one policy. With this into account, Charles Jaret in his book *Contemporary racial and ethnic relations* (1995) discusses that integration as a subprocess where immigrants adapt the new culture while preserving their own/old culture (*Immigrant Integration: Acculturation and Social Integration* 7). Still, there is a paradox of adapting the cultural elements of the host community while preserving one's own culture, this paradox stems from the fact that if we consume the host culture, eventually the origin elements of culture will perish either purposely or accidentally.

Nonetheless, Muslims minorities have no lawful representation. This shortcoming is highly observed in example provided by Meer and Modood which regard the case of *Nyazi v. Rymans Ltd* (1988) where the Muslim plaintiff could not be protected by the Race Relation Act (1976) stating that: “Muslims include people of many nations and colours, who speak many languages and whose only common denominator is religion and religious culture” (qtd. in Meer and Modood 483), this incidence showed that minorities cannot be protected on the ground of their diverse religion. In reality, there are no legislations that would protect Muslims in UK; in this manner, the Advisory Committee on the FCNM<sup>4</sup> noted that:

at present there is no comprehensive legislation to protect individuals from religious discrimination ... groups, such as Muslims ... do not have this protection unless they are linked to a recognised ethnic group... These matters are of particular concern and relevance for national minorities within the United Kingdom. (qtd. in Ansari 28)

This method might be a way to keep the Muslims away from the judicial integration, especially that the same act which does not protect Muslims, it protects Sikh and Jews. To illustrate, a spokesperson of IRHC stated: “like its predecessors, the Act<sup>5</sup> will be interpreted in a discriminatory manner by the same judicial system that has interpreted Muslims out of the equation as far as equal opportunities and civic rights are concerned” (29). However, it is highly needed as can be recognized by the Advisory Committee on FCNM: “legislation is necessary both as an effective tool to address concrete cases of religious discrimination and as an awareness raising measure” (28). So, in this regard, it

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<sup>4</sup> Advisory committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is an independent committee which is concerned in the evaluation of the implementation of the framework convention in state parties and advising the committee of Ministers.

<sup>5</sup> Article 13 of Human Rights states that all citizens have the freedom in their state or country where they live.

plays two roles, one is to protect Muslims from discriminatory behaviors, and to raise mutual tolerance.

Finally, integration is the process where all immigrants of different minorities; religious, racial, or cultural are on equal footing in all aspects with the natives of the country. To reach this definition, policymakers must not deny the diversity existing in the United Kingdom, and issue acts which cannot be misinterpreted and include all the aspects of minorities with no discrimination. In the end we have to remember the words of MP Ruth Kelly (2006) “integration and cohesion are not states but process. They need to be worked at, built up, and nurtured” (qtd. in Shi 112).

### **2.3 Impact of Assimilation and Integration on Individuals**

The ones that are greatly influenced by these two processes are the immigrants due to their vulnerability and their quest to be recognized into the host community. While the natives of the country feel the drastic change and diversity in their country, they will question their identity and if they should keep up with what is going on. So, basically, these two strategies or policies play the distinctive role of realizing, or at best, balancing the impact diversity produces. However, during this process, they create different situations where they impact the community itself.

First, these two policies were perceived in a negative way. Marrin Minette (2007) wrote to the Sunday Times: “integration was a dirty word, almost as sinister as assimilation... The social policies based on it have kept people in ghettos and bred mistrust and suspicion” (qtd. in Grillo 11). The fact that minorities lived in separation and isolated from majority eased for the stereotypes to lead perceptions toward each other. Another prospect was the heavy burden that was laid upon immigrants in order to assimilate in the host community. In this regard, Humberger (2009) quote and comment

on Charles Jaret; “The intrinsic cultural traits are those are ‘vital ingredients of the group’s cultural heritage’... The supposition is that in time, while the assimilation process advances, the immigrants will abandon their intrinsic cultural traits” (7). This leads us to question: how much do natives of host country expect from immigrants to abandon? Furthermore, the capacity of incorporation of immigrants to the values of host community has its limits. Henceforth, Sussman (2005) argues:

If we have incorporated many aspects of host country behaviors, values and ways of thinking into our own repertoire, our ideas about ourselves may also have changed. Social psychologists call this self-concept disturbance. Who we are and how we think about ourselves may not be as clear to us as it was before the sojourn began. (qtd. in Frenk 31)

As a consequence, our self-identification is altered based on host community values and traditions. Moreover, immigrants living in near hostile environment will try to consume more of the host values in order to be accepted and not treated hostilely. Another view to incorporating too much of the host values and tradition is to be a “World Citizen”, however, this view is challenged and even criticized that the concept itself neglect the idea that most of those citizens of world will no longer feel intimate to any country origin and host. With this in mind, Julian Vargas Frenk (2011) discussed this idea:

An optimistic outlook over these phenomena is the idea that these migrants are now cosmopolitan citizens, although that is not usually the feeling they have. It is more likely that people will feel unsafe and frustrated because they have the experience of being foreigners everywhere, and in many cases this loneliness and inadequacy feelings bring about dysfunctional individuals. This means that they become a source of social problems. (31, 32)

One conservative observation, judging that the person might turn to a social problem seems far expectation. However, the feeling of not belonging is evident that the “World Citizen” is a concept that might be more ideal than a realistic. Again, the feeling of having new concepts introduced in our system of thoughts represents a struggle. Kim (1995) illustrated it: “a dialectic relationship between push and pull, or engagement and disengagement” (qtd. in Jameson 220). In conclusion, immigrants push themselves to the limits of losing some elements of their origin culture and identity in order to be recognized in the native society.

In short, the impact of assimilation and integration can be reduced if the natives and policymakers regarded the way immigrants might add to the diversity and harmony of the host community. To put it differently, Iner and Yucel (2015) point out: “If Muslims are given the freedom to practise their faith and called to a mutual effort for integration, they are more likely to develop a constructive Muslim identity in harmony with their ancestral and Western culture” (13). In the end, policymakers and natives should consider that the immigrants are not an enemy to them, but vulnerable citizens that wish to be recognized and accepted. In the same time, immigrants should work effortlessly to recognize the difference between the communities and reach to one constructive mutual tolerant and cohesive society with conserving one’s identity.

## **Conclusion**

The existence of Islam that takes about 4.6 percent of the whole population of Britain does not take the majority but caused great disturbance in the government policies and society’s elements. The reason of this disturbance was due to the stereotypes and false images that were created by the media and radical authors. This led in turn to discrimination and defiance of the concepts of multi-faith and freedom.

Furthermore, for the sake of organizing diversity, policymaker concluded that they needed to issue acts which were in the favor of natives and at the same time including the minorities that were seen fit to their society, however, Muslims minority were never a part of it. As a consequence, Muslims started to lose their grip to their religion due to impact coming from representation, discrimination and social inclusion.

# Chapter Three

Islamic Identity Crisis in

White Teeth

## **Introduction**

White Teeth was written by Zadie Smith (1975), and was published in 2000, in her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Bringing to the world an impressive work of fiction that won both the Guardian First Book Award and the James Tait Black Memorial prize for fiction. White Teeth is fictional novel surrounds its characters with questions of identity within a multicultural society interrogating then the assets of a more appropriate society namely the intercultural one. Hence, in this chapter, the Muslims characters, who are immigrants to British land, are analyzed. Finally, this same chapter highlights how both the existence and interaction with multiple cultures can create a great influence upon Islamic identity shaking its equilibrium.

### **1. Multiculturalism**

#### **1.1 History**

History is a series of past events happened either at witness of one's senses or were told or were read. However, history presented a huge obstacle to settled life in the multicultural society. This history creates obstacles among immigrants and natives and suddenly to immigrants; it becomes a present and possible future. Smith claims that in the social relationship between Immigrants and natives, history is a significant factor: "Too much history," was Shiva's enigmatic answer, as he dished up the Chicken Bhuna. "Too much bloody history" (Smith 146). Maybe it was not such an enigmatic answer; the psychology of a relationship is based upon the stereotypes and the prejudgment already existing in the mind. So, the moment something comes out of place; even if it were a result of an innocent mistake, the result would be based not on the mistake itself but upon the history the other party knows and suddenly an innocent mistake becomes purposeful one.

Another factor is the fact that history much to our denial attitude is still plays a judgment to our future actions. On page 73 of the novel, Archibald Jones is not welcomed to the company dinner because of a black wife. In addition, people give great importance to things that they share in our lives with others either were good or bad. The authoress said: “It escalates in moments, and they make a mockery of that idea, a neutral place [multicultural society]; instead they cover the room with history past, present and future history (for there is such a thing)...” (464). the readers understand that the debate between different cultures that were based on religion and secularism is based not upon each ones’ principles, but of history they share between them. Principles become trivial in front of history, and the later turned the sole judgment of everything existing or will exist.

In conclusion, history is the essential factor that brings cultures to debate and misunderstanding. With this in mind, it can be conclude that not only the immigrants are constant in their lives, but also natives, though readers have to realize that Muslims are mystically constant when it comes to history, maybe because they worship the achievements they built long time ago, and live in that different era from modern time. In the end, Samad and Millat were examples given by the authoress in this novel.

## **1.2 Compromising Identity**

Compromising identity means to give away one component or more of identity in order to gain other things, but the reality of it is that the moment one loses a component of one’s identity; adapting another one, which will certainly be of different identity, will be obligatory. This to Muslims is very fatal; the reason is that losing one component means that Muslims will adapt another which might be of different side of their own principles of Islam.

First, we have to understand that “Identification is often a matter of imposition and resistance” (qtd. in Howarth 19), so, it is a manner of pulling and pushing and this would create a middle ground for compromising identities. With this in mind, it is concluded that the pushing and pulling is employed on both sides; natives and immigrants, and this would give immigrants a fighting chance. However, the immigrants are the minority in this equation, so, it became unfair situation. In this regard, Smith explores this idea of compromising explaining as been something were done by all immigrants and maybe even natives. This was shown when Irie wanted to convince Millat of the meeting: “She made her own personal plea for compromise, peace and caution (everybody was doing it)...” (Smith 460), the information between brackets is an indication that peace in multicultural society was through compromising something. While, Irie who gave personal plea for Millat to come to the meeting, Samad who recited a Christian saying which is “To the pure all things are pure. Can't say fairer than that” (137) compromised his way of thinking. Furthermore, Samad who said “I wish to return to the East!” (145) was thinking like a Christian with the heart of Muslim who gave him a new identity unknown to him. His secret relationship with Poppy-Burt Jones, who is the incarnation of all the desires Britain might offer, is rather an indication that Samad was not betraying his wife but his culture as well. This form of compromising was a kind of reference to another lost component which is that in Islam there was no room for compromising. In this sense, the narrator claims: “But of course he was in the wrong religion for compromises, deals, pacts, weaknesses and can't stay fairer than that” (140), the readers instantly realize that the reason for this compromise is the lust to flesh, while the fact brings us to another aspect that this compromise stems from the interaction of Muslims immigrants with the British culture which is incarnated in Poppy-Burt Jones.

Another essential reason for compromise which might be the most dangerous one is to compromise for the sake of pleasing others. Millat who was described by a narrator as “Social chameleon” (269), compromised his identity to please others. This fact was assured when the narrator said: “He had to please all of people all of the time” (269). In such manner he became too many characters at the same time, for he was

To the cockney wide-boys in the white jeans and the coloured shirts, he was the joker, the risk-taker, respected lady killer. To the black kids he was fellow weed-smoker and valued customer. To the Asian kids, hero and spokesman. (269)

In this manner, it is concluded that the reason to imbed too many characters to please others will cause to create too many personalities and at the same time a new unknown identity to the origin one. Suddenly, his identity becomes stranger to him and to the ones around and certainly to the first generation of immigrants.

In short, compromising identity is defined as the process of letting go specific components of identity to gain other missing things. Moreover, we find that compromising comes in order to gain the recognition of others, as did Millat; and this form of compromising gives a kind of competition to the principles of Islam which means that pleasing others becomes as a religion or simply something should be worshipped.

### **1.3 Assimilation and Integration**

Assimilation and integration might cause a massive loss of identity to immigrants. While the realization of peace between immigrants and natives is what both parties should seek, the processes of assimilation and integration become dangerous to Islamic identity.

To put it differently, Samad describes the second generation of Muslims immigrants as:

nothing but trouble. They won't go to mosque, they don't pray, they speak strangely, they dress strangely, they eat all kinds of rubbish, they have intercourse with God knows who. No respect for tradition. People call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption. Corruption! (190)

The reason of creating a new assimilated or integrated identity is to have harmonized society without violence, but to Muslims in secular societies, this leads them to renounce their principles or not to completely abandon, but to ignore them. Another reason is the aspect of deluding young Muslims to adapt host culture “They’re Englishifying him completely! They're deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion” (345). In the novel, Chalfins represent the secular culture which is based on science, statistic, and logic. In this manner, the conclusion of the novel is that there are some assimilating actions where the society is the one causing them deliberately or otherwise, especially against Muslims who are seen different. In summary, assimilation and integration can be a form of harmonized society, but it can be a great factor to losing identity.

## **2. Intercultural Society**

### **2.1 Hybrid Generation**

Hybrid identity is the inclusion of multiple identities as one; with this a hybrid generation was created. The essential feature in this generation is that it does not recognize hybrid or belonging to a specific group, but it has its own identity and ethos. Hybrid generation was created when the second generation immigrants were involved with different cultures. As Smith declared in the novel *White Teeth*: “Involved is neither good, nor bad. It is just a consequence of living, a consequence of occupation and immigration” (439), as it is a consequence it becomes a reason to an end.

In this sense, we can notice the hybrid form in the Raggastanis when the narrator describes:

Raggastanis spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing...but more as a collective big brother than a supreme being” (231).

The group did not have any supreme culture but of one united culture that defined them as Raggastanis. At the same time, readers can observe that the authoress is describing an intercultural (interaction is main feature) society, if all cultures were to co-exist together without competition or supremacy. But, one can observe that the first generation of Muslims immigrants are very well aware of the distance between them and the second generation “The children have left us, they are abroad,” said Samad over the phone to Archie... “They are strangers in strange lands.” (425). Hybrid generation is deformed form of identity, and to Muslims, it is full lost of one’s Islamic identity. For even in Raggastanis—with its mixed cultures—Islam was not guiding principle to their life. Thus, one have to realize that to be hybrid does not mean harmony, but it means reshaping one’s origin culture to meet the host culture. In short, intercultural can cause the interaction between cultures, as a consequence, it can create a new identity different or defying the original one.

## **2.2 Adapting Identity**

Adapting an identity is no simple thing, for it means that the person thinks that his own is either lacking or he is ignorant of one of its components. Suddenly, one’s identity does not identify him, and turns him a foreigner. Smith described Samad as: “The foreign man in a foreign land caught between borders” (178). Furthermore, Samad asked Majid: “Why are you always trying to be somebody you are not?” (150), the

question raised to their mind one memory which is that Majid in one day tried to change his name to Mark Smith. This adapting of another name was merely a stage of adapting full new identity. For the name itself has the connotation of identity and culture, and to change it means that one is trying to abandon one's own and turn to someone else. This adaptation might be a result of trying to be one with the group; for Majid was a friend with many other different kids who had different lives. Hence, his wishing to be different than his family is misrecognition to his identity and culture. Smith described his ambitious desire as malaise: "But this was just a symptom of a far deeper malaise. Magid really wanted to be in some other family" (151). But this malaise can be the result of influence and ignorance of one's identity. In short, adapting can be a result of compromising identity, interaction with different culture and of ignorance of one's identity.

### **2.3 Belonging Nowhere**

The most frightening nightmare of Muslims immigrants is to have no place to belong to. The reality of such thing can be called dissolution of identity. Samad frantically described this fear of not belonging: "And then you begin to give up the very idea of belonging. Suddenly this thing, this belonging, it seems like some long, dirty lie" (407), belonging to an identity means that you have a strong grasp of all its aspects of recognition and affirmation. But, when one lacks one of those two aspects, belonging to it becomes a burden and then he starts to think to become: "Social chameleon" as did Millat, but what he really had: "And underneath it all, there remained an ever present anger and hurt, the feeling of belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere" (269). This paradox is the result of not finding one essential identity to belong to. With this in mind, immigrants ask themselves infinite questions of how to be accepted in the community and their answers might cause to themselves and identity a

confusion and Muslims become stuck in between, as Millat was: “neither one thing nor the other, this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali; he lived for the in between, he lived up to his middle name, Zulfikar, the clashing of two swords” (351). Suddenly, they become unsuited to live with Muslims or to be a part of secular society. This realization of not belonging is a result of the constant negotiation of identity.

### **3. Jihad and Dissolution**

#### **3.1 Discrimination and Refuge**

Discrimination is unfair treatment against a person or a group based on specific aspects, while refuge is to shelter oneself from attacks or anything that seem harmful or disturbing to oneself. The discrimination Muslims receive is upon two aspects; one of them is physical discrimination, while the other is more mental one. At the same time, the refuge they seek is of two aspects as well; they either turn extremists like KEVIN’s members or to be assimilated among the majority.

First, discriminating Muslims physically is reassured by the authoress describing the situation of Mo “The second reason for Mo's conversion was more personal. Violence. Violence and theft...he had been a victim of serious physical attacks and robbery, without fail, three times a year” (472). These repeated actions can create hatred toward the host community and in no time it escalates to extremism and the thought of repaying rise in the mind of the victims “He wanted a little payback. For himself” (473). Suddenly, “A radical new movement where politics and religion were two sides of the same coin” which was KEVIN: “an extremist faction dedicated to direct, often violent action, a splinter group frowned on by the rest of the Islamic community” (470) becomes a refuge to the discriminated, though the same movement was heavily

criticized by the Muslims population in England and the founder of it himself was rejected in Riyadh.

On the other hand, mental discrimination comes from the feeling of not belonging, for when one is not accepted in a specific place, this same person will seek refuge in different places. This was proven with Millat who was “running away from himself and he's looking for something as far away from the Iqbals as possible” (346) and at the same time he sought refuge in the Chalfins. Another proof of this is analysis of “Marjorie the analyst suggested that Millat's religious conversion was more likely born out of a need for sameness within a group than out of any intellectually formulated belief in the existence of an all-powerful creator” (442). This need of becoming in a group may create unreasonable solidarity even against what is right, the same as Millat joining to KEVIN. At the same time, we can distinguish that among immigrants themselves, assimilation can be employed with conservative regard to the nature of it, as an example “Shiva had joined KEVIN...because he was sick of the stick that comes with being the only Hindu in a Bengali Muslim restaurant” (502). In the end, discrimination causes hatred and sought to refuge, and then revenge and most likely leads to extremism.

### **3.2 Jihad**

Jihad has two different connotations, one is to fight non-believers of Islam physically or intellectually, and the other is to fight one's sinful desires. However, when it comes between Muslims immigrants and the secularist host community, it is no longer about real fighting, though we should not ignore some physical actions which were undertaken by both parties, it is jihad between cultures. In the novel at hand, Alsana is confused between protecting the culture and letting others live, Samad

clarifies: “It is not a matter of letting others live. It is a matter of protecting one's culture, shielding one's religion from abuse...” (235). However, this mission of shielding one's culture from abuse might be taken by both parties, the problem is that the equation is not equal one of them fear “infection, penetration, miscegenation...” while the others is afraid of: “dissolution, disappearance” (327). Suddenly the readers realize that the third war Alsana was talking about was war of culture: “My husband fights the Third World War every single bloody day in his head, so does everybody...” (235). this struggle between cultures represents another reason for delusional Jihad. In such manner, that kind is a fight sought for personal profit while it is disguised by the cover of fighting for Islam, and having no rules of real Jihad. At the same time, the jihad they are looking for becomes a way of making a mark, and let others recognize their existence simply the same as what happened with the case of Salman Rushdie. It becomes a fuss to “make our mark in this bloody country” (295). In the end, the real Jihad is to keep one's identity untainted through upholding to it with pure knowledge of the Islamic faith.

### **3.3 Dissolution**

The grasp of identity in a mixed world filled with different cultures abuse each other is a great challenge. In the host community where religion is discarded and secularism is the main foundation for its laws, Islam is highly surrounded with challenges either on purpose or not. Suddenly, to Muslims immigrants, dissolution becomes a reality rather than a nightmare. For as the narrator claimed: “Faith is hard to achieve, easy to lose” (39), Majid and Millat lost the way of their first generation immigrants, and this led to dissolution of their identity.

To begin with, intercultural and multicultural societies brought a great challenge for harmonized and settled life, it, also, brought a challenge of keeping one's identity untainted. But for Majid, another factor played its role of dissolution of his identity which is globalization. This new factor connected people across continents without history or seen obstacles: "Rather than let simple dates rule the roost. Because this was all about people. People making a connection across continents, across seas" (365). This factor had unlimited access to people all over the world. However, while it might be seen as negligible to power and superiority of cultures; it is rather a strong tool to show superiority and powers of specific countries. This reality is seen through media where Islam is oppressed and that because of the weakness of the countries basing their humane laws upon it. With this in mind, we can imagine the life of Majid who lived in India where Islam is merely one of many other religions, at the same time, having contact across distances with the empire that colonized his country. In a prejudged mind, the equation is unfair, for anyone would think that the colonizer is always superior over the colonized, and this leads to agreement with whatever is seen right from the colonizer even if it were defiance of one's identity or religion. And then after a long period of time, he becomes "...More English than the English..." (406). His decision of studying the English law and trying to impose it over the divine law is an indication that Majid had switched roots, and that his identity is dissolved in the host.

However, Majid was not alone, for his twin brother Millat strayed from his origin path as well. Samad describing their situation: "...They have both lost their way. Strayed so far from the life I had intended for them..." (406). Though readers have to acknowledge that the life of Samad was based on tradition, "To Samad, as to the people of Thailand, tradition was culture, and culture led to roots, and these were good, these were untainted principles", but at the same time authoress criticized traditions: "If

religion is the opium of the people, tradition is an even more sinister analgesic, simply because it rarely appears sinister” (193). In this manner, readers can conclude that the sought of roots through traditions brings doubts to one’s identity, that is because traditions are liquid and can be altered and selected through time. In the end, we observe that both Majid who were sent home and Millat who lived among host culture have lost their ways in different ways “...The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here is fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist...” (407). In short, dissolution is the full assimilation of the host community, and it is the desire of shielding one’s identity to extremism and defiance of Islamic principles of Jihad.

## **Conclusion**

The novel *White Teeth* displays a facet of multicultural societies. Though, we have to take into consideration that in this modern era multicultural society was replaced by intercultural society—which might have the same meaning and content except of the difference in the chance of interaction between cultures in the later one. The novel might suggest that both societies can promote not only for harmony, but for loss of identity. In this chapter, I went through analyzing few of Muslims characters that lived in both multicultural and intercultural societies, and thus I can observe the denunciation of authoress of the third place—in such manner, both intercultural and multicultural became similar to their end—“A neutral place. The chances of finding one these days are slim...” and then she kept informing her readers the many aspects that must be wiped off in order to start as new “Race. Land. Ownership. Faith. Theft. Blood. And more blood. And more. And not only must the place be neutral, but the messenger who takes you to the place, and the messenger who sends the messenger. There are no

people or places like that” (457). Suddenly, readers are invited to witness impossibility of its existence, what they are face against is a result of what many cultures stuck or involved with each other unwillingly, but, at the same time they seek to co-exist.

## **General Conclusion**

Through my work, there was one objective which was to analyze the impact of multicultural and intercultural societies and their policies on the construction of Islamic identity. First, an overview discussion on both multicultural and intercultural societies brought to us an insight of how they function and an examination of their aspects. Besides, it shed light on the fact that multiculturalism does not mean the co-existence of multiple cultures at the same time, rather it meant the policies exerted to harmonize a society where diverse cultures exist together. Moreover, the shortcoming of its policies which were incarnated in the promotion of separateness, focusing on race rather than culture and the concept of tolerance led to the creation of intercultural society. Though the intercultural society might not differ completely from multicultural one, it gave a new dimension missing in earlier policies which is the interaction between cultures. However, it represented history as a hindrance to the full development of this society and that it required more sensitivity which must be processed from the two sides. Lastly, the discussion of identity and its identification exposed to us that identity can be relative to people and that it is a process of self-discovery. At the same time, the discussion itself raised the issue that multicultural and intercultural society lead to compromise identity and to influence the process of self-discovery.

Secondly, it focused more about the origin in Britain of Islam that came through immigrants and how it was represented there. The analysis showed that Islam is represented subjectively and that it is victim to stereotyping. Thus, this representation led to the demolition of Islamic identity among Muslims immigrants. Besides, this chapter discussed the concept of multi-faith and freedom where it was concluded that

their existence is irrelevant to the society itself, however, it might have chance of existence if Islam did not play a role in it. Furthermore, it brought to light how policies or strategies like assimilation and integration played a major role in the construction of identity in general and Islamic identity in particular. Finally, the chapter was further discussion of how both intercultural and multicultural societies affected the construction and building of Islamic identity.

Finally, the last chapter acted as a practical study of the second and first chapters, where the characters of the novel *White Teeth* were analyzed based on the study done beforehand. The chapter focused on the analysis of Samad and his sons Millat and Majid and Mo and their quest for identity under the umbrella of Multicultural and intercultural societies. The existence of many cultures at the same time led to the dysfunction of their Islamic identity. In the context, the impact of assimilation, integration, and stereotyping led characters to dissolve their identity and seek refuge in others. Hence, the policies and the society of multicultural and intercultural had a great impact upon the construction and loss of their Islamic identity.

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